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GOLDEN HOURS

IN THE course of his journey from the City of Destruction to Mount Zion, Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress* had the good fortune to be entertained in the Palace Beautiful, a house built by the Lord of the hill for the relief and security of pilgrims on their perilous journey. According to the rules of the house Piety Prudence and Charity were appointed to have some particular discourse with the Pilgrim for the best improvement of time, as Bunyan quaintly puts it in his immortal book. A part of their conversation is thus recorded for us:

PRUDENCE. Do you not find sometimes as if those things were vanquished, which at other times are your perplexity?

CHRISTIAN. Yes, but that is but seldom; but they are to me golden hours in which such things happen to me.

PRUDENCE. Can you remember by what means you find your annoyances at times as if they were vanquished?

CHRISTIAN. Yes; when I think what I saw at the cross, that will do it; and when I look upon my brodered coat, that will do it; and when I look into the roll that I carry in my bosom, that will do it; and when my thoughts wax warm about whither I am going, that will do it.

Bunyan does not draw any moral from the discourse about heavenly things for the obvious reason that the meaning of the allegory stands open for all to understand. Alas, alas, how many of us must sadly confess with Christian that golden hours come but too seldom, in spite of the means we possess of enjoying them whenever we will.

We wonder at the stupidity of poor Pilgrim floundering through the Slough of Despond; we marvel at his folly in losing his roll in the pleasant arbour halfway up the Hill Difficulty; we pity him for forgetting in Castle Doubting that he has in his bosom the key of Promise that will open the door of his dungeon. In like fashion we reprove the disobedience of Moses at the rock, and the fit of despondency of Elijah under the juniper tree, or we are amazed at Peter's sudden despair as he began to sink in the waters that he had just been walking upon. With the Master we cry in dismay, "Oh ye of little faith," as we view the faintheartedness of the disciples. It is not hard to find many examples of such shortsighted folly, such culpable lack of faith; we see and condemn them, perhaps unsparingly, all about us. But what if such "particular discourse" were directed

toward us, what could we reply better than poor Pilgrim? Should we not be constrained likewise to admit that it is but seldom that golden hours come to us. Yet we, too, have the means to vanquish perplexities; in our bosom no less than in Christian's in Castle Doubting is there hidden the key of Promise.

Let us apply to ourselves the lesson which is pointed by the "particular discourse" quoted above. How often do we think of what we saw at the cross? How often do we look upon our brodered coat, or look into the roll that we carry in our bosom, or how often do our thoughts warm about whither we are going? If a recording of our ordinary conversation could be made, unknown to ourselves, and then played back to us, would we not be shocked at its vacuity? If our inward thoughts were translated into words or deeds and put on a screen to be read by ourselves and others, should we not be mortified with shame, not merely at the sin and selfishness they would display but at the absence of God and of thoughts of the things that are excellent. How much of our time and energy is taken up with the humdrum things of life, until like the man with the Muck-Rake we have become so engrossed in the petty things of time and sense as to have entirely forgotten the golden crown that hangs over our head. The psalmist describes the wicked man by saying that "God is not in all his thoughts." We who name His name and call Him our God and Father, might well ask ourselves, "How much is God in my thoughts? How much time and energy do I spend in contemplating Him and His Grace?"

Those who have read *Grace Abounding*, the companion work to the more famous *Pilgrim's Progress*, will recall that one of the first arrows of conviction that found a mark in Bunyan's heart was a bow drawn at a venture. It came home to him, as he stood listening to some godly women talking, that these humble persons spoke with a different spirit and understanding of God and sin and salvation than he himself knew, though at that time he counted himself as a "brisk talker in religion". The most effective preaching is oftentimes done outside the pulpit and church, in those moments when, scarcely aware that others are listening, we give expression to the innermost thoughts of our hearts. Perhaps the best test of a man's real character is what he thinks about when he is alone. Only we ourselves can apply the test, and that is doubtless the moral of the passage from the

famous allegory that we have quoted. Is it not a shameful thing for men and women who are true-born children of the King to be constrained to admit that the golden hours are but seldom their portion? The Word of God exhorts us to "Draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith," and it also tells us how we may fulfill that exhortation: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." (Heb. 10:19-22.)

—W.S.W.

AMONG THE CHURCHES

By H. C. SLADE

After nearly nine months of strenuous labour, including persistent visitation of homes, the Bible School attendance at North Bay, under the leadership of Mr. George Stephens, has increased from six to forty-one. With capable teachers who really have the interest of the children at heart, the school is now divided into five classes. Mr. Stephens reports that each scholar has been supplied with a Bible and he is much encouraged to observe that they bring them every Sunday.

The topic of a Sunday evening address, which was announced in the local paper recently, was the means of attracting a number of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses to the service. This, of course, provided an excellent opportunity for preaching the true doctrines of the faith to a people under delusion of which Mr. Stephens took full advantage. Already several have accepted Christ as Saviour on this field and have followed their Lord in Believer's Baptism.

An intensive house to house visitation campaign is now in operation. Also plans are being made for holding a special evangelistic mission early this summer. We believe the work at this strategic centre, well known as "The Gateway to the North" promises a great future.

A Thriving Young Cause

With building facilities completed, the Church at Tilbury with Rev. C. J. Rogers as pastor is making amazing progress in the work of evangelizing both English and French. Mr. Rogers reports as follows:

The result of the labour, expense and time involved in securing a building for the Lord's work in Tilbury has increased this Church's opportunities many times. Our opening campaign last autumn, at which Dr. Shields, Rev. H. C. Slade, and Rev. Duncan MacGregor were our guest speakers, most effectively introduced our building, message, and Lord to the immediate community. Through a radius of 20 miles our work has become known, and some are looking for pastoral aid throughout this vast area. The bright, pleasant atmosphere created by the design and finishes of our well-appointed building, is more than equalled by the earnest faithfulness, friendliness and strong spirituality of the Lord's people who worship here. The attendance at prayer meeting is larger than our total membership almost without exception. Dozens of homes are inviting pastoral visits in this town and district where three years ago it would be difficult to find ten homes that would allow the Baptist pastor to cross their threshold and read a portion of Scripture. Our most recent addition has been a weekly children's meeting, which has interested some 75 children. About 50 children have attended at one time besides the adults.

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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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Forty per cent of the homes in Tilbury are French speaking, so that more than half the population is French. Only twenty French people professed to have a Bible in their home. Upon request, some of these produced a Bible Story Book, others a Prayer Book. Only two actually have shown us a Bible. Forty-one French homes, and twelve English homes have requested a copy of the Holy Scriptures. At least twelve French-speaking homes have asked to have the Bible read to them since they cannot read or write. The parents of two French homes profess to have been trusting the Lord (secret believers), but did not want their priest to know lest he be angry with them.

The invalid mother in a French-speaking home received Miss Gignac kindly, though her husband usually absented himself from the missionary's visit. The priest soon warned this home to have nothing to do with the missionary's Bible book. But the Word of God is mightier than the word of Rome, and after hearing the Bible read, this French-speaking woman said, "How can the priest be against such a wonderful Book?" Just previous to the missionary's next visit, the priest had called again. He had persuaded the mother to forbid the missionary an entrance. But the Lord of the Word made an opportunity to read a few verses again during this visit. The lady said, "What is wrong with what you read?" Then her neighbours were used to try to "freeze" her soul against "The Word." They said, "Since the good priest makes a special trip to give you communion every three months, you shouldn't let the Protestant visit you." But God's Word appealed to her soul and though she regularly confessed her sins to the priest, she refused to confess to him that reading the Bible was a sin. When this woman became very ill, the neighbours thought she was dying and called the priest. She wanted to tell him she delighted in the visits of the Bible reading missionary, but she was too weak to speak that day. This, one of several similar contacts, is an example of how the fear of Rome breaks down under the power of God's Word. Pray for this and thirty other contacts, that nothing may hinder the presentation and reception of Holy Scripture whose central message is, "Jesus saves, trust Him."

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

A Simple Message of Salvation

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Morning, February 26th, 1950
(Stenographically Reported)

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—Romans 10:17.
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
—Acts 16:31.

Prayer Before the Sermon

Already, O Lord, we have invoked the aid of Thy Spirit. We pray that He may come and take possession of each one of us, that the word preached may profit, being mixed with faith in those who hear. We confess our impotence apart from Him, and we pray that He may clothe His word, the simplest word of the gospel, with divine power that it may be effectual to the salvation of souls. We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

LAST evening in prayer meeting one of our young ladies reported an experience she had had in the office where she works, in giving her testimony to the power of Jesus Christ. There were two fellow-workers, one a Roman Catholic, and the second one a Sunday School teacher. Having spoken to the Roman Catholic, she referred to Calvary, and the Sunday School teacher inquired, "What did you mean by 'Calvary'?" She had never heard of it, or did not remember it. She was glad to be informed that she might answer the questions of her Sunday School class!

It is almost inconceivable that such ignorance of the simplest truths of the Christian gospel should obtain in a country like this. But such is a fact.

Another young lady spoke of testifying to the heads of certain departments in the institution where she works. She asked them if they knew John chapter three, verse sixteen, only to discover that not one of them knew what she was talking about. So has the Bible been displaced from pulpit and Sunday School that we are living in something like a pagan country, where the simplest truths of the gospel are as completely unknown as in Africa or in India.

It occurred to me that there might be someone here this morning who would need the simplest possible statement in respect to the faith that saves the soul, in order to be saved.

Once or twice I have tried to listen, I suppose, to the most popular religious broadcast over many stations in the United States. I happen to know the broadcaster, and I know that every Friday he has to deposit thirty thousand dollars to pay for his broadcast. I say, I have tried to listen to him, but I have never been able to hear it through, for the simple reason that it is so elementary. It is like hearing someone repeating the alphabet. Yet millions need that, because millions have been deprived of a fuller knowledge of the word of God. Still the multitudes need only, and are able only to digest the milk of the word, and know nothing about its strong meat.

A Bottle of Milk

Now here is a bottle of milk for you: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The other

text is: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Much of modern Evangelism — by "modern" I mean that which has obtained for the last twenty-five or thirty years—consists in just that—bidding people believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to be saved.

That is correct. That is basic to the whole gospel message. But you cannot help asking, Who is this Jesus I am asked to believe on? What has He done? Where is He now? What is He doing? What has He promised to do for me? What is the use of asking me to "believe, believe", on someone of Whom I have not heard, and how is anyone to hear unless they have a preacher, and how is anyone to preach unless he be sent, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"?

Milk and Meat Will Not Quarrel

I think it will not hurt those of us who, I hope, are more mature in our experience as Christians, and whose minds we may reasonably hope, are more thoroughly furnished than some others—it will not hurt any of us to look at the foundations again, and to consider these elementary things.

The text I have read to you tells us that we must believe. The other text tells us how we may become possessed of the faith that will enable us to believe, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

All Have Sinned

The whole gospel of Jesus Christ rests upon the assumption that men are sinners, and are in need of a Saviour. If that fundamental postulate be not accepted, then there is no reason for preaching the gospel at all. It is for those who have sinned against God.

Immediately someone will say, "What do you mean by that? We are out of jail. We don't steal. We are not very bad. Why do you call us sinners?"

Must Speak With the Authority of the Word

I went once to an evangelistic service being conducted by some young students. They were very faithful in their preaching. They told the people very plainly that they were sinners. There was a gentleman sitting just in front of me, who seemed to be a man of intelligence, and who seemed to be rather interested in what was being said. When the service was over I approached him and asked him if he had been interested in what he had heard. He replied, "Of course! Who would not be interested in a subject of such profound importance; but the question I should like to ask is this, On whose authority do these young men presume to tell me that I am a sinner?" They had contented themselves with the assertion, but

they had not given the reason why they made that assertion, and faith had not come by hearing, for the reason that they had not heard the word of God.

What the Bible Says About Sin

What we need to hear, if we are to be saved, is what this Jesus says, and what His word says about our sin. That is the all-important matter. We must all begin there. Someone will say, "I don't feel as though I were a sinner. I don't know what particular wrong I have done; and, not knowing, I don't know how to be sorry for the thing that does not appear to me to be evil. I don't feel uncomfortable about my sin, so how am I to know what is meant by being a sinner?"

It is quite true, my dear friends, that we may be sinners without knowing it. We may be very great sinners, and in grave peril without knowing it.

Consult the Great Physician for a "Check-up"

I am very glad that people have formed the habit now of not waiting until they are ill to see their physician. They are wise to go to their doctor for a "check-up". Sometimes I have heard of someone's feeling perfectly well, able to do a good day's work, free from all pain, and of all anxiety on account of any immediate sickness. But when the doctor has examined them, he has looked very sober, and they have said, "Doctor, have you found anything?" He says, "I am afraid so." "But there is nothing the matter with me." "Did you come to me to inquire of me whether there was anything wrong?" "But I don't feel anything." "Wait a minute," and the doctor puts his finger somewhere, and the patient winces. Why? Because there was something in there that the man knew nothing about, but it was something that required immediate attention.

What Next?

Now, faced with a thing like that, what is that patient to do? The question he must ask is, "Can I trust this doctor? Do I believe him? Can it be possible that he has made a mistake? Is what he has told me, true?" If you believe in your doctor, and you have confidence in his medical skill, immediately you have to admit, "I thought I was a well man, but I am not. I did not suppose there was anything wrong, but I have to acknowledge there is."

Now you need to go to the Lord Jesus for what they call "a check-up"; and if you do, undoubtedly He will tell you, "You are afflicted with a disease that always has a fatal termination." He will tell you, "You are dangerously ill." "But I don't feel it." Of course not! "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"; and it is better that you should discover your ailment while you don't feel it. It is better that you should know it is there, and be prepared to have it dealt with at the earliest possible moment.

Only Those Who Know They Are Sinners Can Believe

My dear friends, that is what this scripture means: you cannot believe on the Lord Jesus Christ if you don't believe you are a sinner, because that is what He says you are. You may be a member of the church, but you are not a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, if you do not know, for yourself, that you are by nature incurably sick.

Jesus had never been here were we not sinners. Christ Jesus came into the world—why? "To save sinners."

"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." You have not even the beginnings of faith in your heart if, first of all, you do not believe that you are a sinner. That is what the word of God says. No matter how you feel, He tells us every one, that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." He further tells us that sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Say to your doctor, "You have given me a diagnosis. You tell me what is the matter. What is your prognosis? What lies in the future?" Perhaps he has to say, "Death unless something is done." That is the great Physician's diagnosis, and prognosis. He says there is that in every one of us that will bring us down to death without doubt, unless speedily we go to Him, and receive His treatment.

Repentance and Faith Two Aspects of the Same Thing

There is another thing: The Bible speaks about repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. What is repentance? It is a change of mind, but it is such a change of mind that it brings with it the profoundest sorrow for that of which we have been made aware.

You cannot believe without repenting. Repentance is the other side of faith. If really we believe, inevitably we have come to repentance.

Repentance and Faith Compel Action

What is repentance? Oh, a man says of something he did, "I am sorry." But he is not sorry unless he ceases from doing the things for which he says he is sorry. I heard recently of a man's saying he was sorry. He was ashamed of something. If he is really ashamed, he will openly confess it, and try to make it right. Repentance means a right about face.

Pursuing my metaphor a little further, you hear the physician say you have a serious ailment. Now it will depend upon the extent of your faith as to what you do. If you really believe him, and if you believe what he says, that that thing that he has discovered has death at the heart of it, you will be profoundly moved, but not only that, you will immediately say, "But, doctor, if that be so, what am I to do? How shall I get rid of it?" If you disregard his warning, and think nothing of it, you will go back to your work to-morrow morning, and forget all about it, until you are forced by the progress of the disease against which you are warned, to take cognizance of it, and seek treatment.

We really do not repent until we seek a remedy for our sin. If we really repent we shall turn to Him Who alone is able to help us. Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ go together. That is the manward side of it, that we have sinned, and we are sorry for it, and would like to get rid of our sin.

The God-ward Aspect of Repentance

But there is the God-ward aspect of repentance. I did not know the Physician. To me He was a Stranger. I had not any interest in Him at all, until I consulted Him, and until His skill warned me of my peril. Then I had a different attitude toward Him. He becomes a very important Person, a Factor in my life. I must listen to Him now. I must obey Him. Obey Him! Why should I obey anyone? Not at all, if you don't care about your life. But if you do, true repentance means that you turn about, and this Stranger becomes now one of the most important people you ever met, and you listen intently to what He has to say, and you stand

ready with all your resources to do what He directs you to do.

Who Is Jesus?

Who is the Lord Jesus to you? Just a Figure in a Book, Someone of Whom you have heard. No interest in Him! No reason why you should care what He has to say! But the moment He speaks in such a way as to make you feel that He knows more about you than you do yourself, the moment you find in Him a Person, as did the Samaritan woman, who said, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"—then you say, Why, He is different from everyone! I must change my mind toward Him. I must change my mind toward what is the matter with me; toward what I ought to do—change my mind entirely toward Him Who has informed me of my peril."

What is Jesus Christ to you? More important than father or mother, or brother, or sister, or children, or husband, or wife? He is the one Person Who knows all about you. Says the doctor, "I will arrange for you to have an X-ray." But this Physician of Whom I speak does not need any X-ray. He knows even the thoughts and intents of the heart, and when He tells you what is the matter with you, that is the last word. You don't need to go to anyone else. His word is final. You are a sinner without hope, unless you find hope in Him.

Jesus Paid It All

Now you have become interested in Him, and you believe in Him thus far that you have accepted what He has to say about your state. "But now, Doctor, what can you do for me?" He says, "I have already done the important thing: I have paid all your debts. That is why I came. I went to the cross for you. I died in your room and stead, and every stroke that ought to have fallen upon you, fell upon Me, and with my stripes you may be healed." That is another thing for you to believe about Jesus.

Can Even God Ask More Than That Christ Should Die for You?

Do you believe that the death of Jesus Christ in your behalf is all that a Holy God requires for your salvation? Do you see that the bill rendered to you, for your obligation, has been stamped in blood—"Paid in full"? Do you believe it has been paid in full? Well, that is what it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe that He has taken account of our sin and effected our salvation.

What else does it mean? You may say, "This trouble may come back. I want to know whether I can so completely recover from it that I shall be free from it." Well, "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creation."

Christ Always Perfects His Work

I was thrilled on Thursday evening with one of our ladies who came in to see me. I had seen her a number of times before I knew anything was the matter with her. I never in my life saw a person who seemed to be in such exuberant health. It seemed as though there could not possibly be anything wrong. She seemed to be one of the healthiest persons alive.

After a while she came in to tell me that she was stricken with what is always regarded as a fatal disease. She had to go to the hospital. We prayed for her, as she went to the hospital, and while she was there. But we have seen many, many cases like that.

I was away for a while, and I had not seen her for some time. On Thursday evening I saw her again, much

thinner, but with the same sparkle in her eyes, and the same flush of health upon her cheeks. She said, "Oh, Pastor, I can hardly contain myself." I said, "You look happy." "Yes; my physicians to-day have given me a clean bill of health again. They have told me that the trouble I have dreaded is all gone—no trace of it left, with no likelihood of its recurrence. Oh, I can hardly praise the Lord enough."

Do you see, she had received a further word from her physician, which gave her assurance that now she was well. She believed what he said, that now the danger was past.

A Clean Bill of Health

Is it not a great thing to get a clean bill of health from the great Physician, and to read in His word that He has said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me HATH everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but IS passed from death unto life." To get that from the greatest Authority in the universe, puts a hallelujah into anyone's heart, does it not? Does it not make you feel that life, after all, is worth living? The shadow was upon you, and it looked as though all hope was gone, but He removed it. Then He comes and says: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Could I put it more plainly than I have done this morning? That has been my desire. If there should be one man or woman, young man, or young woman, or boy or girl, in this congregation to-day, who came in here without the assurance of salvation, it has been my prayer that he or she may go out saying, "I know now I am saved."

Let us pray:

O Lord, work in us that faith which will take all that is said in Thy word for granted, that we may receive, without question, what Thou hast said. So may we come with our sins. Thou hast said that if we confess our sins, Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We would come acknowledging that we are sinners, and as Thou dost receive us as we believe in Thy forgiveness. We repent, O Lord, we hate the sins which we have committed, and which have been a pain and a grief to Thee, and we would be delivered completely from them.

Now come to us. Whisper to our hearts afresh the sweet words of assurance. Grant that we all may believe this morning that we have passed from death unto life, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

"NO CONDEMNATION!"

Every genuine convert to Christ is saved from the condemnation of sin. Though Peter's hearers were the very persons who with wicked hands had crucified and slain the Lord of life, yet he gives them hopes of mercy and salvation, by directing their attention to the very person they had crucified. In his name he preaches repentance and remission of sins, even in Jerusalem, assuring them that there is salvation in no other. When they fled to the only refuge, they found mercy, and felt that though Christ's dying for sin was a transient event, it was of perpetual efficacy. The blood of atonement retains its cleansing powers, and makes the message of mercy an everlasting gospel. All who come to God pleading this atonement, are saved to the uttermost, the guilt of sin is removed, the sentence of the law is reversed, and they can never come into condemnation.—ANDREW FULLER.

Spurgeon's Testimony to the Inspiration of Scripture

An Address by Dr. T. T. Shields

Delivered at Cannon Street Hotel Auditorium, London, England, Tuesday Evening, October 8th, 1934,
Under the Auspices of The Bible League of Great Britain

SPURGEON died in eighteen hundred and ninety-two, forty-two years ago, but even now his voice is still greatly missed; and his memory, to a great multitude, is still fresh and fragrant.

I recall years ago reading a sermon by one of the great American Baptist preachers, Dr. P. S. Henson, who was successively pastor in Chicago, New York, and Boston. In Tremont Temple, Boston, he succeeded another great preacher, famous in his day, Dr. George C. Lorimer. In his inaugural sermon, on assuming the pastorate of Tremont Temple, Dr. Henson told his congregation that years before he had succeeded Dr. Lorimer in the pastorate of the First Baptist Church, Chicago. He paid a glowing tribute to his predecessor as a man and as a minister, and said that for several years in Chicago he felt that he was hardly able to make himself heard because the echo of Dr. Lorimer's voice still lingered about the place.

So may the whole world of Evangelical Christianity say of Spurgeon: He is not dead, but speaketh; the echo of the music of his matchless voice can still be heard. The influence of his beautifully symmetrical Christian character, the fruits of his incomparably effective ministry, and the power of the glorious gospel he proclaimed, still abide.

Notwithstanding, since Spurgeon's day, a new generation has arisen to which the great things which he taught have not been ministered. In the realm of theological authority a new Pharaoh has arisen which knows not our Joseph. It is well, therefore, that the whole story should be retold, that the alluring romance of this great figure should be proclaimed afresh as a humbling challenge to a vainglorious generation, and as an inspiration to great multitudes of people who do not esteem as a strange thing the great things of God's law.

In this evening's address I shall refrain from mentioning the details of the inspiringly familiar story of the circumstances of Spurgeon's life, or of his unprecedentedly fruitful ministry. I propose, rather, humbly and gratefully to record my own simple tribute to his greatness, and my own appraisal of his unique place in Christian history; with some attempt to set forth my own view of the philosophy of his life and work. This I shall do by speaking of Spurgeon on this occasion as a Bible preacher.

One cannot, with any hope of accuracy, analyze the Spurgeon phenomenon without recognizing his *apparent precocity*. Perhaps it would not be an exaggeration to say that his place in religious history is comparable to that of Pitt the Younger in the history of this country; for it would probably be correct to say that, by the time he was twenty-one years of age, C. H. Spurgeon was the most conspicuous figure in the evangelical world.

How is his youthful preeminence to be accounted for? That he was a man of uncommon mental capacity I think is generally conceded. He was, by nature, cast in an unusual mold. Moreover, his remarkable native powers had been highly developed, and thoroughly disciplined, at a very early age. Diminutive theoretical educational

technicians have had the audacity to speak of Spurgeon as "uneducated". As well might some miniature hot-house shrub, could it become vocal, describe the giant oak of the forest that had braved a thousand storms, as "uncultivated" because it had not been pampered and petted in its little hot-house pot.

Education consists essentially in developing and disciplining and directing to the highest degree, and to the noblest purpose, a man's natural capacities. The average youthful mind needs, for such development, the direction of an intellectual senior, and the reinforcement and regulation of another's will. Hence the value of the regimen of college and university life. But here and there is found a man possessed of such native qualities that he becomes in himself both student and faculty; and therefore makes more progress in a year than most men would in four or five, and is found to be as mentally mature at twenty-one as the average man would be at twice his age. And in all departments of human activity and progress, history has chiefly been made by men of just such independent personal resourcefulness and power.

By what criteria shall we appraise Spurgeon's *intellect*? One scarcely knows whether to be amused or indignant at the presumptuous attempts of certain religious tapers to estimate the dimensions and potentialities of this intellectual sun through the medium of their six-penny spy glass! I will make a confession: when Dr. T. Reavely Glover made his inexcusably vulgar attack upon the memory of this mighty man of God, my temper outran my judgment. I planned a reply which should reach every Baptist minister in the English-speaking world. I had an initial thirty thousand envelopes made and printed for the job. Then I cooled down. I thought I saw the great and magnanimous Spurgeon smiling. I remembered a Spurgeon story of a minister who called to see Mr. Spurgeon, and told him he was in great trouble. He had a member of his church who was strongly opposed to his ministry. He said that he always sat in the front seat, and as soon as the minister announced his text, this man put his fingers in his ears, and so continued to the end of the sermon. Having told his story, he asked Mr. Spurgeon if he did not think that was a terrible situation, and enquired what he would do in like circumstances; to which Mr. Spurgeon replied, "I think I should ask the Lord to send a fly to light upon his nose." The man saw the humour of the situation, and found relief in a hearty laugh.

That was characteristic of the attitude of our hero. He ever refused to exercise his mind with trivialities. Remembering this, I felt that the vulgar attack made upon Mr. Spurgeon's memory was not worth a reply. Of one thing one may be sure, that by the time the centenary of the birth of some of these critics rolls around, there will be nobody to celebrate it, for the reason the world will have forgotten that they ever lived.

It is difficult to measure the intellectual stature of Spurgeon. I venture humbly the opinion that for native mental capacity and power of absorption, for rational vigour, for analytical acumen, for analogical acquisitive-

ness, for fearless inquisitiveness, and power of courageous exploration, for poetic insight and imagination, for philosophic comprehension, for prophetic vision and compass and perspective, for heroic abandonment to the consequences of knowledge, for daring intimacy with truth—in many centuries few minds have equalled, and none have excelled, that of C. H. Spurgeon.

But when all this has been recognized and acknowledged, there still remains the wonder of Spurgeon's ability as a youth to describe nearly every conceivable phase of human experience, and to play upon every element of human emotional, intellectual, and volitional, life as upon a harp of a thousand strings. When but a youth I recall laying down a volume of Spurgeon's sermons, and enquiring of myself, Whence and how did this youth of twenty-one acquire so intimate a knowledge of the whole gamut of human experience? And one day I found a satisfactory solution of the phenomenon; and in the discovery I thought, and still think, I discerned the explanation of the depth, and breadth, and height, the wealth of content, the timeless character, the enlarging compass and abiding fruitfulness of Spurgeon's ministry. Here it is: "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me: I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."

But no estimate of Spurgeon's intellectual qualities can be even approximately correct which does not take account of *the quality of his spiritual life and endowments*. Challenging as the statement may be, belief is less an exercise of the understanding than an attitude of will: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck." In the First Epistle to Timothy, three times within the compass of three short chapters, conscience is linked with faith. Paul insisting that "faith unfeigned" is inseparable from "love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience"; and that whoever thrusts from him a good conscience, inevitably "makes shipwreck concerning the faith"; and that the full Christian revelation, "the mystery of the faith", is not to be held by any peculiarity of intellectual aptitude, but "in a pure conscience". In Paul's view therefore, if the woof of a man's belief is intellectual, its warp is moral. While religious belief is sometimes regarded as though it were a fabric woven in reason's loom of material called facts, the truth is, that it is not a mere manufacture at all, but a cultivated growth; which, while rising out of the surface-soil of the intellectual, is yet rooted in the subsoil of conscience and the moral nature.

Hence there is a mutually complementary and reciprocal relation between what a man is and what he believes, between what he believes and what he is. A conscience drugged with dereliction will inevitably befog the understanding with unbelief. A man's view of the Bible must, in the nature of the case, be affected by his relationship to the Person the Bible enshrines. Spurgeon's pellucid view of the doctrines of grace, and of the Bible as their authoritative source, was the natural result of his personal intimacy with Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus a person of superior piety, though of mediocre mental capacity and attainments, may have a clearer understanding of divine truth than the greatest intellectual religious theorist.

I remember to have read, but where I have been unable to recall, that Mr. Spurgeon, who was not given to boasting, and who was humbly reticent so far as his own spiritual attainments were concerned, remarked to some friends that he believed that during his waking moments, over a period of twenty years, he had not been unconscious of the presence of Christ. Ah, that is the meaning of such great sayings as this: "And truly our fellowship is with the Father; and with his Son Jesus Christ." I believe Spurgeon's personal relationship to Christ, his unbroken communion with Him, his passionate love for the Master, is the truest explanation of his spiritualized intellectuality, and his intellectualized spirituality—the only possible explanation, indeed, of his attitude toward the Bible and the essential doctrines of the gospel of grace.

I propose to try to give you some idea of *the development of Spurgeon's view of the Bible, and of that system of truth which he conceived the gospel of Christ to comprehend*.

We hear much from our critics about their growth in knowledge, and their progressive acquaintance with facts; much, too, by implication, to our disadvantage, of the handicap of a "static" mind. But within the realm of any man's knowledge there are certain factual elements, which never change; there are facts which never cease to be facts. The multiplication table, in principle, cannot wholly be ignored even by an Einstein. The greatest of all composers, whoever he may be, or may have been, never escaped from the harmonious bondage of the musical scale; while not even a Shakespeare himself could dispense with the alphabet.

Is there no analogy here to elements of spiritual knowledge? May not a spiritual babe know some things from which he will never depart, though he should become a spiritual Methuselah? Why should Christian men boast of the release from the thralldom of "revolution"? It is one of the chief glories of Spurgeon and his ministry that while there was undoubtedly a progression in knowledge; and an enlargement of view, in the essentials of his faith he was to the end of his ministry what he had been at the beginning. And the Scripture adequately explains this fact: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

In many respects the truest indications of the quality of a man's inner self are given in his spontaneous utterances. Sermons are not, or ought not, to be impromptu expressions, but considered presentations of truth. Notwithstanding, the necessity of weekly output injects into the weekly product elements of spontaneity. The preacher who is constantly before the public is more likely to express his heart than his head in his regular pulpit deliveries.

Let us hear then a little of Spurgeon's view of the Bible as expressed in a sermon preached in March, eighteen hundred and fifty-five, at Exeter Hall. As he was born the nineteenth of June, eighteen hundred and thirty-four, and the sermon was preached the eighteenth of March, eighteen hundred and fifty-five, he was three months short of his majority. The text of the sermon was, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing":

"First, then, concerning this book, who is THE AUTHOR? The text says that it is 'God. I have written to him the great things of my law'. Here lies my Bible—who wrote it? This volume is the writing of the living God: each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips, each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit. Everywhere I find God speaking: it is God's voice, not man's; the words are God's words, the words of the Eternal, the Invisible, the Almighty, the Jehovah of this earth. This Bible is God's Bible; and when I see it, I seem to hear a voice springing up from it, saying, 'I am the book of God: man, read me. I am God's writing: open my leaf, for I was penned by God; read it, for he is my author, and you will see him visible and manifest everywhere.' I have written to him the great things of my law."

That is surely a very strong assumption of the verbal inspiration of Scripture.

In the same sermon he speaks of the authority of the Scriptures after this fashion:

"First, my friends, stand over this volume, and admire its authority. This is no common book. It is not the sayings of the sages of Greece; here are not the utterances of philosophers of past ages. If these words were written by man, we might reject them; but oh, let me think the solemn thought—that this book is God's hand-writing, that these are God's words. Let me look at its date; it is dated from the hills of heaven. Let me look at its letters; they flash glory on my eye. Let me read the chapters; they are big with meaning and mysteries unknown. Let me turn over the prophecies: they are pregnant with unthought-of wonders. Oh, book of books! And wast thou written by my God? Then will I bow before thee. Thou book of vast authority, thou art a proclamation from the Emperor of Heaven; far be it from me to exercise my reason in contradicting thee. Reason! thy place is to stand and find out what this volume means, not to tell what this book ought to say. Come thou, my reason, my intellect, sit thou down and listen, for these words are the very words of God. I do not know how to enlarge on this thought. Oh! if you could ever remember that this Bible was actually and really written by God! Oh! if ye had been let into the secret chambers of heaven, if ye had beheld God grasping his pen and writing down these letters, then surely ye would respect them. But they are just as much God's hand-writing as if you had seen God write them.

It would surely be difficult to find a stronger statement than that. Again he speaks of its truthfulness:

"Then, since God wrote it, mark its truthfulness. If I had written it, there would be worms of critics who would at once swarm on it, and would cover it with their evil spawn; had I written it, there would be men who would pull it to pieces at once, and perhaps quite right too. But this is the Word of God; come, search, ye

critics, and find a flaw; examine it from its Genesis to its Revelation, and find an error. This is a vein of pure gold, unalloyed by quartz, or any earthly substance. This is a star without a speck; a sun without a blot; a light without darkness; a moon without its paleness; a glory without a dimness. O Bible! it cannot be said of any other book, that it is perfect and pure; but of thee we can declare all wisdom is gathered up in thee, without a particle of folly. This is the judge that ends the strife where wit and reason fail. This is the book untainted by any error; but is pure, unalloyed, perfect truth. Why? Because God wrote it. . . . Strange that there should be men so vile as to use the penknife of Jehoiakim, to cut passages of the Word, because they are unpalatable. Oh ye who dislike certain portions of the Holy Writ, rest assured that your taste is corrupt, and that God will not stay for your little opinion. Your dislike is the very reason why God wrote it, because you ought not to be suited; you have no right to be pleased. God wrote what you do not like; he wrote the truth. Oh! let us bend in reverence before it, for God inspired it. It is pure truth. Here from this fountain gushes *aqua vitae*—'the water of life', without a single particle of earth, here from this sun cometh forth rays of radiance, without the mixture of darkness. Blessed Bible; thou art all truth."

There is no room there for the modernistic idea that the Bible contains certain elements of truth, but with a large admixture of error. All this which I have quoted from a young man not yet twenty-one!

But now let me quote from two sermons preached in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-seven: the first, in March of that year, and just thirty-two years and a few days later than the sermon from which I have just quoted; the second quotation is from a sermon but a few days earlier in the same year:

"Notice, that our Lord believed in the *divinity of Scripture*. He says, 'How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled?' But if the Scriptures are only the writings of men, there is no necessity that they should be fulfilled. If they are merely the fallible utterances of good men, I see no particular necessity that they should be fulfilled. Our Lord Jesus Christ insisted upon it that the Scriptures must be fulfilled, and the reason was, that they are not the word of man, but the Word of God. The Scriptures were evidently the Word of God to our Lord Jesus Christ. He never trifles with them, nor differs from them, nor predicts that they will vanish away. It is he that saith, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.'

"He, believed in the divine origin of the Scriptures, and also in their *infallibility*. 'How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?' He does not hint that the Scriptures might be a little mistaken. He does not argue, 'I will bring the twelve legions of angels down to deliver myself, and it is no matter to me that then the Scriptures will be made void.' Oh, no! the Scriptures must be true, and they must be fulfilled, and therefore he must be betrayed into the hands of men. He settles it as a matter of necessity that Scripture must infallibly be verified, even to its jots and tittles.

See, brethren, the *priceless worth* of Scripture in the estimation of our Lord. In effect he says, 'I will die rather than any Scripture shall be unfilled. I will go to the cross rather than any one word of God should not be carried out.' The prophet Zechariah has written, 'Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered abroad.' The fulfilment of that prophecy fell due that night, and the Son of God was prepared to be smitten as the Shepherd of the sheep, rather than the word of the Father should fall to the ground. 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life'; but Jesus would give his life for the Scriptures. Brethren, it

were worth while for the whole church to die, rather than any truth of Scripture should be given up. Let all our thousands be consumed upon the altar as one great holocaust sooner than the Scripture should be dishonoured. The Word of the Lord must live and prevail whether we die or not. Our Lord teaches us to prize it beyond liberty or life. . . .

"To come back to our translation: *they received not the gospel as the word of men.* In these days there are some who receive the gospel, but they receive it as the word of men. This is their spirit—'Yes, I know that such is the view that is held by Mr. Black; but there is another view held by Dr. White; and another view is upheld by Professor Gray.' All these different 'views' are supposed to be very much upon a par.' Beloved friends, this is not our way; there is the truth of God, and there is a lie; and I want you always to feel that there is a solemn difference between the true and the false, and that no lie is of the truth. 'Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.' If one says, 'Yes', and the other says, 'No', it cannot be that they are both true. Salvation is of grace, or else of man: it cannot be a joint-stock-company affair. There is truth, and there is error; and these are opposite the one to the other. Do not indulge yourselves in the folly with which so many are duped—that truth may be error and error may be truth; that black is white, and white is black, and that there is a whitey-brown that goes in between, which is, perhaps, the best of the whole lot.

"There is an essential difference between man's word and God's word, and it is fatal to mistake the one for the other. If you receive even the gospel as the word of man you cannot get the blessing out of it; for the sweetness of the gospel lies in the confidence of our heart that this is the word of God. You fall back upon Holy Scripture in the grief of an aching heart; but you cannot rest however soft the pillow of the promise may seem to be, till you can surely say, 'I know that it is of God.' If you have even the shadow of a doubt about it, comfort oozes out. The life of comfort flies before doubt, even as love is said to fly out at the window when want comes in at the door. Prick the heart—ay, with but a needle's point—and life will go; and prick the heart of faith—ay, even with the smallest doubt, and the life of joy is gone! The joy of faith, and the strength of faith, yea, and the life of faith, are gone when you distrust the word of the Lord!"

Let me go on now two years farther to May, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, only three years before his death. Here we have a strong statement respecting the verbal inspiration of Scripture:

"Looking at the text, does it not strike you as a marvel of condescension, that Jehovah, the infinite, should use words? He has arranged for us, in his wisdom, this way of communicating with one another; but as for himself, he is pure spirit and boundless: shall we contract his glorious thoughts into the narrow channel of sound, and ear, and nerve? Must the eternal mind use human words? The glorious Jehovah spake worlds. The heavens and the earth were the utterances of his lips. To him it seems more in accordance with his nature to speak tempests and thunders, than to stoop to the humble vowels and consonants of a creature of the dust. Will he in very deed communicate with man in man's own way? Yes, he stoops to speak to us by words. We bless the Lord for verbal inspiration, of which we can say, 'I have esteemed the words of thy mouth more than my necessary food.' I do not know of any other inspiration, neither am I able to conceive of any which can be of true service to us. We need a plain revelation upon which we can exercise faith. If the Lord had spoken to us by a method in which his meaning was infallible, but his words were questionable, we should have been rather puzzled than edified; for it is a task indeed to separate the true sense from the doubtful words. We should always be afraid that the prophet or apostle had not, after all, given us the divine sense: it is easy to hear and to repeat words; but it is not easy to convey the meaning of another into perfectly independent words of your own: the meaning easily evaporates. But we believe that holy men of old though using their own language were led by the

Spirit of God to use words which were also the words of God. The divine Spirit so operated upon the spirit of the inspired writer, that he wrote the words of the Lord, and we, therefore, treasure up every one of them. To us 'every word of God is pure,' and withal full of soul nutriment. 'Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.' We can heartily declare with the Psalmist, 'Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said that I would keep thy words.'

"Our condescending God is so well pleased to speak to us by words, that he has even deigned to call his only-begotten Son, 'The Word'. 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' The Lord useth words, not with reluctance, but with pleasure; and he would have us think highly of them, too, as he said to Israel by Moses, 'Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul.'

"We believe that we have the words of God preserved for us in the Scriptures. We are exceedingly grateful that it is so. If we had not the words of the Lord thus recorded we should have felt that we lived in an evil time, since neither voice nor oracle is heard to-day. I say, we should have fallen upon evil days if the words that God spake of old had not been recorded under his superintendence. With this Book before us, what the Lord spake two thousand years ago he virtually speaks now: for 'He will not call back his words (Isaiah 31:2). His word abideth for ever; for it was spoken, not for one occasion, but for all ages. The Word of the Lord is so instinct with everlasting life and eternal freshness, that it is as vocal and forceful in the heart of the saint to-day as it was to the ear of Abraham when he heard it in Canaan; or to the mind of Moses in the desert; or to David when he sang it to his harp."

I need give you but one quotation in support of the principle of the equal inspiration of the Old and New Testaments. This also was spoken in the year eighteen hundred and eighty-nine:

"Above all, do not drop into the semi-blasphemy of some, who think the New Testament vastly superior to the Old. I would not err by saying that in the Old Testament you have more of the bullion of truth than in the New, for therein I should be falling into the evil which I condemn; but this I will say, that they are of equal authority, and that they cast such light upon each other that we could not spare either of them. 'What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' In the whole Book, from Genesis to Revelation, the words of Jehovah are found, and they are always pure words.

"Neither is it right for any to say, 'Thus spake Christ himself, but such-and-such a teaching is Pauline.' Nay, it is not Pauline; if it be here recorded, it is of the Holy Ghost. Whether the Holy Ghost speaketh by Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or John, or James, or Paul, the authority is still the same. Even concerning Jesus Christ our Lord this is true; for he says of himself, 'The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's, which sent me.' In this matter he puts himself upon the level of others who were as the mouth of God. He says again, 'For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.' We accept the words of the apostles as the words of the Lord, remembering what John said, 'We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error' (I. John 4:6). A solemn judgment is thus pronounced upon those who would set the Spirit of Jesus against the Spirit which dwelt in the apostles. The words of the Lord are not affected in their value by the medium through which they came. Revealed truth is all of the same quality even when the portions of it are not of the same weight of metal."

Here is a quotation on this subject respecting the fulness of inspiration of the entire Bible, without admixture of error:

"It is also a book pure in the sense of truth, *being without admixture of error.* I do not hesitate to say that I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures from beginning to end. There

may be, and there are, mistakes of translation; for translators are not inspired; but even the historical facts are correct. Doubt has been cast upon them here and there, and at times with great show of reason—doubt which it has been impossible to meet for a season; but only give space enough, and search enough, and the stones buried in the earth cry out to confirm each letter of Scripture. Old manuscripts, coins, and inscriptions, are on the side of the Book, and against it, there are nothing but theories, and the fact that many an event in history has no other record but that which the Book affords us. The Book has been of late in the furnace of criticism; but much of that furnace has grown cold from the fact that the criticism is beneath contempt. "The words of the Lord are pure words"; there is not an error of any sort in the whole compass of them. . . . The new theory denies infallibility to the words of God; but practically imputes it to the judgments of men; at least, this is all the infallibility which they can get at. I protest that I will rather risk my soul with a guide inspired from heaven, than with the differing leaders who arise from the earth at the call of 'modern thought!'"

But once more; in February, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, Mr. Spurgeon confessed his own faith in contrast with the attitude of those who deny the unique inspiration of Scripture:

"These were not a critical, sceptical people. They trembled at the Word, and did not sit down on the throne of usurped infallibility, and call the Scriptures to their bar. There are men abroad nowadays—I grieve to say some of them in the ministry—who take the Bible, not that it may judge them, but that they may judge it. Their judgment weighs in its balances the wisdom of God himself. They talk exceeding proudly, and their arrogance exalteth itself. O friends, I know not how you feel about the prevailing scepticism of the age, but I am heart-sick of it! I shun the place where I am likely to hear the utterances of men who do not tremble at God's word. I turn away from the multitude of books which advocate doubt and error. The evil is too painful for me. If I could be content to be an Ishmaelite, and have my hand against very man, I might seek this company, for here I find every faculty of my being called to warfare; but as I love peace, it sickens and saddens me to meet with the enemies of my soul. If I knew that my mother's name would be defamed in certain company, I would keep out of it; if I knew that my father's character would be trailed in the mire, I would travel far not to hear a sound so offensive. I could wish to be deaf and blind, rather than hear or read the modern falsehoods which, at this time, so often wound my spirit.

"To be for ever holding the truth of God, as though it might yet turn out to be a lie, were to lose all the comfort of it. To be for ever prepared to desert our Lord and Master, to follow some brand-new philosopher, would be perpetual disloyalty. Nay, we have not come thus far at a guess. We have known our Lord and his truth for these forty years, and it is not may-be-or-may-not-be with us now. We neither speculate, nor hesitate; but we know whom we have believed, and by his grace we will cleave to him in life and in death."

These quotations are surely sufficient to establish the fact that from the beginning of his ministry, to the end, Mr. Spurgeon never for a moment wavered in his conviction that the Bible is the very word of God. It is surely folly to talk of honouring Spurgeon's memory while dishonouring the Book he so consistently revered.

To Mr. Spurgeon, the Bible was the supreme court of appeal. So ought it to be with us. Differ as we may in some of our interpretations of what the Holy Book contains, if we are one in our readiness to accept the decisions of the Book as being the final authority upon any subject with which it deals, there is hope of ultimate agreement. But Bible-believers can find nothing in common with those who either deny, or debase, or despise, or even condescendingly compliment, the Bible.

One man may live in a house that has more and larger windows than his neighbour's, and thus may enjoy more sunshine; but the light in each dwelling in such case would be derived from the same source. So, with our varying capacities of perception and reception there will be varying opinions upon many matters. But such light as shines is the light of the Orb of day. But if all the windows be shuttered, and the day be excluded, and tapers of human wisdom be substituted for the sun of divine revelation, the light that is in us must be darkness—and then how great is that darkness!

I have already said that Mr. Spurgeon's view of truth was determined largely by his personal intimacy with the Lord Jesus; and of course it is equally true that his knowledge of the Lord of the Word was communicated through the Word of the Lord. Mr. Spurgeon was a systematic theologian. He ever viewed truth relatively.

Dr. Joseph Parker was himself one of the greatest preachers of his day—perhaps second in popularity only to Mr. Spurgeon himself. And, in the main, he was true to the principles of the gospel. Yet the two men were poles apart in their mental outlook. Parker was a brilliant preacher, but his sermons were devoid of system. I do not mean that they were homiletically defective, but rather that they were without doctrinal order and relation. Someone, I think it was Carlyle, somewhere describes certain editors as editing their papers after the manner of upsetting a cartload of coals. Joseph Parker preached after the manner of emptying a casket of jewels; but they were of all sorts, and sizes, and qualities.

Spurgeon, on the other hand, was keenly logical and analytical; and viewed one truth in relation to another. His conviction of the divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures inevitably made him a Trinitarian, involving belief in the essential Deity of Jesus Christ. Every doctrine he preached was the inevitable corollary of that major premise. The death of Incarnate Deity could be no accident. Hence it was purposeful, adequate, and determinative. An acceptance of the involved principles of substitution and expiation was logically inevitable; and that view of the eternally pre-determined redemptive purpose of the Incarnation made him a Calvinist.

The word, Calvinism, he defines in the preface of the first volume of his sermons:

"The word Calvinism is frequently used here as the short word which embraces that part of divine truth which teaches that salvation is by grace alone."

So then his theological system of grace, as he conceived it, was based upon his conviction of the Deity of Christ. The truths of total depravity, effectual calling, and final perseverance, inhered in the truth of the sovereign immutability of the Saviour he adored.

May I at this point, without offence, call attention to the difference between the abiding residues of these two ministries. It was but a short time after Dr. Joseph Parker's death that his pulpit became the centre from which was disseminated a radical new theology. On the other hand, through varying fortunes, in the forty-two years which have passed since Spurgeon's death, while none of his successors would presume to claim equality with him, the message of the Metropolitan Tabernacle pulpit has continued to be that of the gospel of salvation by grace.

Surely it would be idle to contend that David's sling and stone were no factor in his victory over Goliath; and that that great triumph was to be attributed exclusively to the personality of the shepherd-lad without

any relation to the instrumentality he employed. And would it not be folly, while recognizing Spurgeon's greatness, and desiring that the same abounding fruitfulness should characterize our ministries, to agree to discard, or delete, or emasculate, the gospel he preached?

Let us hear for a moment something from his last great conference address. Thus he spoke:

"After preaching the gospel for forty years, and after printing the sermons I have preached for more than six-and-thirty years, reaching now to the number of twenty-two hundred in weekly succession, I am fairly entitled to speak about the fulness and richness of the Bible, as a preacher's book. Brethren, it is inexhaustible. No question about freshness will arise if we keep closely to the text of the sacred volume. There can be no difficulty as to finding themes totally distinct from those we have handled before; the variety is as infinite as the fulness. A long life will only suffice us to skirt the shores of this great continent of light. In the forty years of my own ministry I have only touched the hem of the garment of divine truth; but what virtue has flowed out of it! The Word is like its Author, infinite, immeasurable, without end. If you were ordained to be a preacher throughout eternity, you would have before you a theme equal to everlasting demands. Brothers, shall we each have a pulpit somewhere amidst the spheres? Shall we have a parish of millions of leagues? Shall we have voices so strengthened as to reach attentive constellations? Shall we be witnesses for the Lord of grace to myriads of worlds which will be wonder-struck when they hear of the incarnate God? Shall we be surrounded by pure intelligences enquiring and searching into the mystery of God manifest in the flesh? Will the unfallen worlds desire to be instructed in the glorious gospel of the blessed God? and will each one of us have his own tale to tell of our experience of infinite love? I think so, since the Lord has saved us 'to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God'. If such be the case, our Bibles will suffice for ages to come for new themes every morning, and for fresh songs and discourses world without end."

Further he added in respect to the Scriptures:

"We are resolved, then, to use more fully than ever what God has provided for us in this Book, *for we are sure of its inspiration*. Let me say that over again. WE ARE SURE OF ITS INSPIRATION. You will notice that attacks are frequently made as against *verbal* inspiration. The form chosen is a mere pretext. Verbal inspiration is the verbal form of the assault, but the attack is really aimed at inspiration itself. You will not read far in the essay before you will find that the gentleman who started with contesting the theory of inspiration which none of us ever held, winds up by showing his hand, and that hand wages war with inspiration itself. There is the true point. We care little for any theory of inspiration; in fact, we have none. To us the plenary verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture is fact and not hypothesis. It is a pity to theorize upon a subject which is deeply mysterious, and makes a demand upon faith rather than fancy. Believe in the inspiration of Scripture, and believe it in the most intense sense. You will not believe in a truer and fuller inspiration than really exists. No one is likely to err in that direction, even if error be possible. If you adopt theories which pare off a portion here, and deny authority to a passage there, you will at last have no inspiration left, worthy of the name."

As to the relation of his belief in, and his use of, the Bible as the word of God, he has this to say:

"To-day it is still the self-same mighty Word of God that it was in the hands of our Lord Jesus. How it strengthens us when we remember the many conquests of souls which we have achieved through the sword of the Spirit! Have any of you known or heard of such a thing as conversion wrought by any other doctrine than that which is in the Word? I should like to have a catalogue of conversions wrought by modern theology. I would subscribe for a copy of such a work. I will not say what I might do with it after I read it; but I would,

at least, increase its sale by one copy, just to see what progressive divinity pretends to have done. Conversions through the doctrines of universal restitution! Conversions through the doctrine of doubtful inspiration! Conversions to the love of God, and to faith in his Christ, by hearing that the death of the Saviour was only the consummation of a grand example, but not a substitutionary sacrifice! Conversions by a gospel out of which all the gospel has been drained! They say, 'Wonders will never cease'; but such wonders will never begin. Let them report changes of heart so wrought, and give us an opportunity of testing them; and then, perchance, we may consider whether it is worth our while to leave that Word which we have tried in hundreds, and, some of us here, in many thousands of cases, and have always found effectual for salvation. We know why they sneer at conversions. These are grapes which such foxes cannot reach, and therefore they are sour. As we believe in the new birth, and expect to see it in thousands of cases, we shall adhere to that Word of truth by which the Holy Spirit works regeneration. In a word, in our warfare we shall keep to the old weapon of the sword of the Spirit, until we can find a better. 'There is none like that; give it me,' is at present our verdict."

Perhaps I ought explicitly to state something which everything I have said thus far implies. When all allowance has been made for his natural qualities, augmented by divine illumination, when we have recognized his personal devotion to Christ, his surrender of heart and intellect to the inspired Word, and the resultant wisdom and skill in its continual employment, we must, at the same time, recognize that his ministry of power was a ministry of the Holy Spirit. I have viewed with a holy covetousness the spiritual frame which enabled the Apostle Paul to write to the Romans; "And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Surely that is an example of the daring of faith! Can anyone other than an apostle speak after that manner? But here is a quotation from a sermon preached two days before C. H. Spurgeon was twenty-one, on the text, "The power of the Holy Ghost":

"It is concerning the power of the Holy Ghost that I shall speak this morning; and may you have a practical exemplification of that attribute in your own hearts, when you shall feel that the influence of the Holy Ghost is being poured out upon me, so that I am speaking the words of the living God to your souls, and bestowed upon you when you are feeling the effects of it in your own spirits."

What a daring thing was that for any man to say, particularly a youth of twenty-one years! We have all known superficial emotionalists who have attributed their psychic activities to the operation of the Holy Ghost. But we have seen these religious ebullitions quickly subside, and leave their subjects in a condition of apathetic deflation. But listen to Spurgeon speaking at a date thirty-three years removed from the date of the daring utterance I have just quoted. Speaking of the Spirit and the wind, he says:

"The spirit of God works differently at different times, according to the necessity of the case, and according to His own will; for He bloweth as He listeth as well as *where* He listeth. Sometimes I have almost trembled to pray for the power of the Holy Spirit: I remember a brother praying that we might be filled with the Spirit of God; and I, being very young then, yet ventured to ask him whether he knew what he meant; and he looked at me with astonishment when I said, 'Where He comes He is the Spirit of judgment, and the Spirit of burning.' It is a blessing, no doubt, to be filled with the Spirit; but who may abide the day of His coming? Like the Lord Jesus, He is as refining fire, and like fuller's soap. We might have had the Spirit much more copiously had we been able to bear the wondrous work within us."

And here is another saying:

"When you hear the Scriptures, and read the Word, the Spirit of God speaks to you. It is well to hear the Spirit whisper in the ear of conscience when He brings home the truth, and makes the mind to feel its power. Sweetest of all is it when the newly-opened ear hears the Spirit of God speak to it with its own peculiar 'still small voice'. Then it is sweetly true 'thou hearest the sound thereof'. My dear hearers, do you know anything about this? Has the Spirit of God so wrought with thee that thou hast recognized the sound thereof? It is a manifest work: hast thou felt it?"

And in this same sermon is a biographical passage descriptive of Spurgeon himself as a mystery:

"The man that lives near to God is a mystery, more or less, at all times. He is not all he desires to be, nor all he hopes to be, but he is far beyond what he ever expected to be. Strange impulses move him at times, so that he does things which he cannot himself account for. He feels that he is bound to do them, and he does them, and has the warrant of having done rightly in the result of what he does. I am sure that every child of God who walks in the light of his countenance, will understand what I mean when I say, that we are moved in singular ways; so moved, that we ourselves hardly know how; but so moved that Wisdom is justified of all her children. Strange is the power of the Holy Spirit over the heart of the regenerate; and this is made manifest in the singular changes of which they are the subjects. God's own people know what it is to sound the deeps, and outsoar the heights. Up, up, up, where the callow lightnings first spread their wings, we mount in ecstasy; and then down we go, down into the abysses where sea-monsters have their dens: such strange beings are we when under the highest power. The wind sighing through the trees, or singing amid the cords of an Aeolian harp, is not more strange than the experience of a genuine child of God. I know what it is to run before Ahab's chariot with Elijah, and I am afraid I know what it is to faint under the juniper, and need to be awakened that I may partake of food; that I may go forty days in the strength thereof. The Christian man does not understand himself, but his varying experiences go to make up that sickness of self and fondness of Christ which is so desirable.

"I will give you two words you cannot explain, just to show the mystery of our manhood. 'Spirituality': now, then, turn to your dictionaries, and see whether they define it. You know what it is: you cannot tell me, and I shall not tell you, because I cannot. There is another word—'unction'. You know what it is. If you hear a sermon that has none of it you know what the absence of it is; but when an unction rests upon the Word, can you tell me what it is? I cannot tell you; but I pray that I may have that unction myself. Of course, the ungodly make jests upon the expression, because it has no meaning to them. Yet the children of God delight in it."

Thus we have seen that toward the close of his ministry Spurgeon laid the same emphasis, and placed the same dependence upon, the power of the Holy Ghost, that he did in the beginning. In his last conference address he spoke of the Holy Spirit as the strength upon which believers must rely. Here are a few sentences:

"Remember, next, that the Holy Ghost will never set His seal to falsehood. Never! If what you preach is not the truth God will not own it. See ye well to this. What is more, the Holy Ghost never sets His signature to a blank. That would be unwise on the part of man, and the Holy Lord will not perpetrate such a folly. If we do not speak clear doctrine with plainness of speech, the Holy Ghost will not put His signature to our empty prating. If you do not come out distinctly with Christ and Him crucified, we may say farewell to true success."

Thus, from the beginning to the end of his ministry the Scriptures were Spurgeon's supreme authority; Christ crucified and risen at once his constant theme and continuous experience; and the Holy Ghost the only

power adequate for Christian living and gospel labour.

I say, therefore, my brethren, if we are to exercise fruitful ministries, comparable to that of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, only as we breathe his atmosphere, as Daniel did, with windows open really toward the heavenly Jerusalem; as we nourish our souls, as he did, upon food from the King's table; as we employ his weapons, preaching the same gospel in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, shall we in any measure emulate him. There is no substitute for these things.

For myself, this is my confession of faith with respect to the Bible: If this building were large enough to hold and did contain all the Biblical scholars of the world; and if they should all unite to tell me that the story of the Deluge is unhistoric; that Moses did not write the Pentateuch; that the book of Jonah is not historically true, I would believe Christ's naked word before the contrary judgment of all the scholarship of the world, and stake the interests of my soul for time and for eternity upon the unsupported word of my absolutely infallible Lord; and, if need be, be a fool for Christ's sake. And I then should be much less a fool for His sake, than the contrary attitude would make me for the sake of agreement with a "scholarship" falsely so-called. For though I thus speak for the purpose of emphasis, I am convinced that the body of thought which is worthiest the high and honourable title of "scholarship", and which represents the findings of disciplined intellectual powers in co-operation with spiritually enlightened and penetrating understandings, will always be found to be in agreement with the word of Him Who is Incarnate Truth.

When we thus approach the Bible as being instinct with the personality and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, what a world of intellectual and spiritual treasure it becomes to us! We have walked with Him among the flowers of Eden; and where the first shadow of the curse fell athwart the path of sinful man. We have seen him walk the waves of the shoreless sea of judgment; and, in the patriarch's tents, in the voice of angels, we have heard the Word which was in the beginning with God. In the tabernacle of the wilderness, with its crimson ritual, and in all the forty miraculous years, we have heard Him speaking in righteousness, mighty to save. We have followed Him with Joshua in His triumphal progress into Canaan's promised land; we have found Him sitting among Israel's judges; and in the fields of Boaz, near to Bethlehem, we have heard His whispered promise of the marriage of the Lamb. Where, indeed, have we not found Him? Is there a scripture path untrodden by His feet? Is there a valley which has not echoed with His voice? Is there a mountain which has not been transfigured by His presence?—"The voice of My beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." And we have followed Him — through historical wildernesses, and biographical mountain solitudes, and through genealogical deserts, only to find that the wilderness and the solitary place are made glad for Him; and in His pres-

ence the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose. In psalmist's melodies; in words of transcendent wisdom; in pregnant type, and glowing symbol; in wheels that are dreadful; in chariots of fire; in seraphic visions of enraptured spirits of prophets, priests and kings, we have seen and heard the form and voice of our Beloved; until, at last, He has come to us from out the grave, being declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, and with perfect knowledge of both worlds, He has joined us on the Emmaus road; where with burning hearts we have heard Him, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expound unto us in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Therefore by the illumination of His presence in its pages; by the seal of His authority upon all its principles, and precepts, and promises; by His own invariable assumption of the Scriptures' infallibility, there is wrought into our deepest spiritual consciousness the unwavering conviction that the Bible is the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever!

"Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the gospel to my heart."

CAN THE ROMAN LEOPARD CHANGE ITS SPOTS?

Rome's Flirtation With the Ecumenical Movement

THE Roman Catholic Church is to-day becoming progressively more international, so a Reuter's dispatch in this morning's newspaper informs us. We rub our eyes in astonishment, and look again at this amazing piece of news emanating from Rome, and this time we lit upon the last paragraph of the dispatch from Vatican City, to the following effect:

"Perhaps one of its earliest fruits is the beginning of a new tolerance and understanding toward other religions of the world: The start of a parallel co-operation with both Protestants and Moslems for the defense of basic human liberties."

On reading such a news item as this, the average reader muses, or at least it is doubtless calculated by those who inspire such dispatches that he will thus muse: "At last the improbable, if not the impossible, has happened: The Roman Church has reformed itself. Here in our own time is the answer to the prophet's question: 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.'" Such, perhaps, is the natural conclusion of one who reads day by day the multitudinous reports from Vatican City that swarm in our daily papers, almost without exception coloured with a tint that is favourable to the papacy. At least that is the natural conclusion of the casual reader who has little acquaintance with the lessons of history, or who is not in the habit of reading his newspaper critically, for there are still many persons who in practice subscribe to the doctrine of the infallibility of the modern press.

Facts Contradict Papal Propaganda

But let the critical faculty be exercised even perfunctorily, and it is at once evident that the picture of the papacy is drawn in rosy colours which are not to be found in the drab reality of Vatican City politics. Take, for instance, the dispatch referred to above. It vaunts the supposed internationalization of the papacy, but

what facts does it offer in support of this hopeful suggestion? Simply this: Twenty per cent. of the personnel in the Roman Church's administration is non-Italian; about one-third of the nuncios and apostolic delegates are non-Italians; a little less than twenty per cent. of the students in the pontifical academy in Rome are foreigners; there is the possibility that the next pope will not be an Italian; and finally thirty-four cardinals are foreigners compared to twenty Italians who hold that office. Is this convincing? It is easy to make predictions as to the nationality of the next pope, but that proves nothing. Even a schoolboy can see at first sight that twenty Italian Cardinals on the spot are worth a hundred on the other side of the world, far removed from first-hand contact with the intricacies of Vatican politics. As to the other figures, they prove the exact opposite of that which they are supposed to prove. French-Canadians would think they were badly done by if they had as small a proportionate representation in the Canadian government as non-Italian Roman Catholics have in papal affairs. And, surely we do not need to add, in the Church of Rome appointments are not made by free voting but by nominations that are handed down from the top of the papal pyramid.

Why Communism Flourishes in Italy

In similar fashion, the pope's speeches and discourses on peace and harmony, on social justice and freedom of the press and of religious worship, are either self-contradictory or are given the lie by Roman Catholic policy and practice in lands where that church holds sway. Will the recent remarks on freedom of the press or the impassioned plea made recently by the pope for religious liberty do anything else than evoke a smile from those who know the record of Roman Catholic intolerance that is written in the annals of Italy, Spain, South America, or Quebec? And how will his pious platitudes on social justice fall on the ears of landless Italians who are aware that the Church of Rome is the largest landholder in all Italy? Little wonder Communism flourishes in this priest-ridden land. The clerically-inspired government is said to be planning to force the division of large estates in order to provide an answer to Communist propaganda, but it is specifically stipulated that the holdings of the priests will not be touched. It is interesting to note how the Italian Communist Party—the largest outside Russia itself—is celebrating "Holy Year" in its own way. We read that 5,000,000 of them went on strike the other day. No less than 7,000 were jailed in Rome, the overflow being sent to the "Queen of Heaven Jail". The stupid blasphemy of so naming a penitentiary, is only matched by the grim humour of filling it with Communist demonstrators!

"The Beginning of a New Tolerance"?

The reference in the above-mentioned dispatch concerning "the beginning of a new tolerance and understanding toward other religions . . ." is doubtless an allusion to the recent Instruction of the Congregation of the Holy Office on the Ecumenical Movement. This papal declaration has been hailed by many, even by Protestants, as a definite step forward in the direction of mutual comprehension with other religions. The text of the pronouncement is before us as we write, and it is difficult for us to conceive how anyone who has seen it could fancy in the wildest flight of imagination that there is any concession to non-Romanist religions or any change of papal policy. The Anglican Archbishop

of York ventured to say that it showed a distinct and welcome advance, but he added that it was disappointing. He said: "The instructions are restrictive rather than permissive and assume that submission to Rome is the only reunion the Roman Catholic Church can contemplate."

As the French-language press of Quebec reports it, Rome warns the faithful to exercise the greatest care in order to protect their faith and at the same time to use meetings with non-Romanists to spread their own faith. Such is the pope's answer to the fanfare of the Amsterdam Conference of the World Council of Churches held last year. Rome is willing to exploit the sentiment created in favour of ecumenicalism so as to lead the unwary into its fold, which it expressly says is the one true church. "True union," the papal statement says, "can be brought about only by the return of dissidents to the one true Church of Christ." The papacy is willing to flirt with the World Council and to entice those whose eyes are dazzled by the magnificent spectacle of its gigantic organization, but it intends to concede nothing to them; it even informs them that they cannot "by their return bring to the Church any essential element that it did not possess before."

Iron-Clad Rules and Regulations

Even such meetings as are permitted, the papal Instruction defines and restricts by iron-clad rules and regulations. We wonder as we read them how human beings with any degree of self-respect can be willing to submit to such systematically dictatorial edicts as it lays down. For example, the following stipulations are made:

"The bishops must follow every action with diligence or make themselves the promoters of it with prudence. They will assign specially prepared ecclesiastics who know the doctrines and the directives of the Holy See as contained in the encyclicals. . . . They must refer periodically to the bishops. . . . None of the faithful may take part in mixed meetings without the special authorization of the ecclesiastical authorities. . . . All these meetings and conferences, public or private, are subject to the prescriptions of the Church which have been set forth in the *Monitum* (warning) of June 5, 1948. . . ."

Much more of the same sort of thing is to be found in the Instruction of the Holy Office. What memories the name of that body calls up! It is better known to history as the Inquisition, the frightful and still unrepentant institution that was responsible for some of the worst excesses ever committed in the long and bloody history of the papacy. This is the unholy Congregation that has charge of talks with ecumenical leaders or any others who know so little of Rome as to suppose that the leopard is capable of changing its spots!

Rome's Inflexibility

There is only one thing that we admire about the latest little law to emanate from the unholy "Holy Office", and we are not reluctant to admit it, though we know our admiration in this respect will not be shared by our ecumenical friends. Notwithstanding, we confess that we admire the expressed determination to make no concessions in doctrine for the sake of religious harmony. This is language that the modernists who control the policies of the ecumenical movement will be at a loss to understand for they are willing to include within their ranks Unitarians and Greek Catholics, fundamentalists and modernists. The secretary of the World Council ingenuously confesses in his allegorical

description of the ecumenical ship that the members of the crew do not even speak the same language! If such succeed in getting into the pope's house it will be at the cost of lending at least lip service to his whole baggage of infallible dogmas, bulls, laws, and authority. If they lend no more than lip-service it will not be the first time that half-hearted converts have been received into the Roman fold by "Holy" Inquisitors whose chief concern is with the outward signs of external submission.

Priests Know How to Exploit Protestant Credulity

It is well known that Roman priests, too, have their own manner of bending their supposedly unchanging church to the political exigencies of the moment. On the eve of the famous Colloquy of Poissy when the Huguenot pastors of France met the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, Theodore de Bèze met the Cardinal of Lorraine in a private interview in the royal palace. The proud prelate was in an accommodating mood and found so much common ground with the Protestant theologians that it seemed as if victory in the forthcoming conflict were already within their grasp. One of the auditors astutely sought to have the wily Cardinal commit his concessions to paper and sign them, remarking: "Bon-homme pour ce soir, mais demain quoi?" (A good fellow to-night, but what will he be tomorrow?)

We have no doubt that the charmingly subtle representatives that Rome will now be free to send to future ecumenical conferences will make a great impression by their private concessions to so-called Protestants who have long since given up any real adherence to the doctrines of the Scriptures, and who, in many cases, know nothing of a personal experience of the saving grace of God in Christ. It is the aim of the far-sighted priests of Rome to entice such silly sheep to the papal fold, and while doing so, they will be able to capitalize on the persistent publicity for church union with which World Council modernists have filled Protestant churches. We warn Protestants in advance that the Roman Hierarchy is preparing to exploit the ecumenical movement, but all the flirtations that may be carried on with Rome will end in nothing except the submission of a few unconvinced Protestants to the pope and the confusion of many uninformed persons in churches where ecumenicity is now being preached as a great new gospel, "which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."—W.S.W.

Sin is an exacting despot who can be vanquished by no created power, but by the sovereign power of Jesus Christ alone.
—MARTIN LUTHER

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BOOK REVIEW

Another Translation of the New Testament

THE NEW TESTAMENT: A TRANSLATION IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE by Charles B. Williams. The Moody Press, Chicago. Price in U.S.A., \$3.00; in Canada, \$3.30.

One can scarcely over-estimate the value and influence of the English Authorized Version of the Scriptures. Its simple, direct, forceful phrases, its dignified tone and reverent language have charmed many millions of people. For the public proclamation of the Word of God and for private devotional reading, no modern translation can be substituted for the Authorized Version without great loss. The truth, as clothed in this stately, suitable dress, has so often been revealed to us, that were it to appear in other than this familiar garment, it would scarcely be recognized. The experiences of the past have glorified for us the atmosphere in which we have beheld its strength and beauty.

It must be remembered, however, that the Lord willed that His Divine revelation in the New Testament should be conveyed to men originally through the vehicle of the *Koiné* Greek. The reverent scholar who will interpret the finer points of sacred truth, as they are presented in the Greek text, will be performing a notable service. Certain idioms of thought and expression peculiar to the Greek may be made plain to those not understanding the original language of the New Testament. Dr. Williams, a linguist and theologian of learning and wide experience, seeks to offer this aid to those who would sincerely study the Word. One can read his translation with profit and with confidence, knowing that the author is himself not merely a scholar of the first rank, but also a humble believer in the inspiration, the infallibility and integrity of the Holy Scriptures.

In presenting this TRANSLATION IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE, Dr. Williams emulates the worthy aim of William Tyndale, who counted not his life dear unto himself, provided he could present the Scriptures, then circulated in the ancient languages only, in the tongue which even the man behind the plow could understand. To remove the barriers of a foreign tongue that the truth of God might freely and forcibly be brought to bear upon the hearts of the people is a God-honouring task.

The translation of the New Testament by Dr. Williams is unique in several ways. For example, it surpasses the other private English translations in its versatile rendition of the tenses of the verbs. The Greek language is most expressive, especially in its subtle use of the various verb tenses. The distinctions of time and kind of action indicated in the Greek verbs cannot be readily interpreted in English, but Dr. Williams has succeeded in blending the Greek idiom with fine English prose. Here are a few examples:

Rom. 3:23, 24. For everybody has sinned and everybody continues to come short of God's glory, but anybody may have right standing with God as a free gift of His undeserved favor, through the ransom provided in Christ Jesus.

Gal. 2:19. For through the law I myself have become dead to the law, so that I may live for God.

Rom. 6:12, 13. So sin must not continue to reign over your mortal bodies, so as to make you continue to obey their evil desires, and you must stop offering to sin the parts of your bodies as instruments for wrongdoing, but you must once for all offer yourselves to God as persons raised from the dead to live on perpetually.

The excellent foot-notes give further hints, helpful to both the English reader and the Greek scholar.

The Moody Press is to be congratulated on its efforts to give wider circulation to this worthy translation of the New Testament which was first published in 1937. The author's purpose is well summarized in one sentence of his Preface, which reads as follows: "May the face of the Christ, who is the theme of this book and the light of the world, shine into the heart and upon the life of everyone who reads it!"

—DR. O. L. CLARK.

GOD HEARS

A man was at work at a city railroad station handling baggage. Some of it was very heavy and difficult to handle alone. He lost patience at last and began to swear. A little girl, hearing his wicked oaths, was shocked. She cried out, "Oh, please don't talk like that, don't you know God hears you?" The man was startled by her earnestness, and looked about as if half expecting to find himself face to face with a listening God. The child's words convicted him of his wickedness. "Don't you know God hears you?" kept ringing in his ears, as he went on with his work. But he did not swear again that day. All that night a voice kept saying over and over to him, "God hears you." It was the turning point in his life. Then with faith he cried out to God, and his prayer was heard. The words of a child had done more than all the sermons he had ever listened to, for they made him think of God as he had never thought of Him before.—*The Irish Evangelical*

Bible School Lesson Outline

Vol. 15 Second Quarter Lesson 2 April 9, 1950

OLIVE L. CLARK, Ph.D. (Tor.)

THE RESURRECTION OF BELIEVERS

Lesson Text: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 50-58.

Golden Text: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."—1 Cor. 15:20.

I. The Proof of the Resurrection: verses 3-8.

Obedience to the truth is the price of revelation (John 7:17), and disobedience to the truth causes one to lose the power of distinguishing truth from error (2 Thess. 2:10-12). Many of the Corinthians had been living in sin (1 Cor. 5:1; 10:14), and the defects in their conduct issued in defects in their creed (1 Tim. 1:19; 2 Tim. 2:16-18), for sin is the father of doubt. These people now questioned the fact and the manner of the resurrection (vv. 12, 35).

When the Scriptures speak of resurrection, the reference

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ADDRESS

is to the body (Matt. 27:52; 2 Cor. 5:6-8). The spirit never dies, but the body is mortal and corruptible (Job. 19:26; 1 Pet. 1:24). The bodies of both saints and sinners will some day be raised (John 5:25-29; Rev. 20:4-6, 12, 13).

The Gospel of the grace of God is based upon two indisputable facts; the death of Christ, and the resurrection of Christ (v. 4). If either of these facts could be disproved, the Gospel as a means of salvation would be nullified, but since both these facts were verified, the Gospel stands firm. The Apostle offers no evidence as to the reality of the death and burial of Christ, for all were convinced of those facts, but he does put forth proof as to the certainty of His resurrection (2 Tim. 1:10; 2:8).

The validity of the Gospel itself was beyond question. The Corinthians had received its message whole-heartedly, when it had been preached unto them (Acts 18:7-11; 1 Thess. 2:13). They owed their present standing in Christ to the Gospel (Rom. 5:2; 1 Pet. 5:12). The Gospel had been the means of their salvation; they had been saved by Christ through the Word (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18). To question the authenticity of the Gospel was to reject the salvation of Christ, for Paul had received the message of the Gospel from the Lord (1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 1:11, 12; Eph. 3:2-5; 2 Pet. 1:16). The Gospel was according to the Scriptures; atonement through the death and resurrection of Christ was taught throughout the Word (John 1:29; Acts 2:25-31; 13:33-37). To disbelieve the Gospel was equivalent to repudiating the authority of the Scriptures. The genuineness of the Gospel proved that the resurrection was an established fact.

Moreover, there were many trustworthy witnesses who could testify to the fact of the resurrection of Christ (Lk. 24:26-48; Acts 2:32). Their testimony could not be gainsaid (Acts 4:33). Christ had been seen alive by Cephas, elsewhere called Peter; by the disciples, known collectively as "the twelve," even when all twelve were not present; by five hundred believers; by James the Apostle; by all the Apostles, since all must be witnesses of the resurrection, in order to qualify as Apostles (Lk. 24:50; Acts 1:3, 4, 22); and by Paul himself (Acts 9:3-6; 26:13, 14, 19).

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body of the believer depends upon the fact of the resurrection of Christ (vv. 12-19; John 5:21; Rom. 8:11). The resurrection of Christ was the surety, the guarantee of the resurrection of believers, just as the first-fruits of the grain are a sign, a promise, a pledge of the coming harvest (Acts 26:33; Eph. 1:13, 14). Also, just as Adam's death involved the death of the whole human family, so did Christ's resurrection provide assurance that the whole race would experience resurrection (vv. 20-23, 45-49; Rom. 5:12-15).

II. The Promise of the Resurrection: verses 50-58.

The Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to disclose the details of the marvellous changes which would take place in the bodies of the believers at the first sight of their Lord on His return (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 John 3:2). The dead in Christ would be raised first, and their corruptible bodies would be glorified and become incorruptible, no longer subject to decay (John 11:25; Phil. 3:21). The living dead would be transformed, and their mortal bodies would become immortal, no longer subject to death (John 11:26; 2 Cor. 5:1-5).

At the present time, Death is an enemy, and although a conquered foe, he still has power (Heb. 2:14, 15; Rev. 1:18). But when Christ returns, He Who vanquished death on our behalf, the prophecy "Death is swallowed up in victory" will become an actual reality (Isa. 25:8; Hos. 13:14; Rev. 20:14; 21:4). It is sin which gives death the right to afflict us (Rom. 6:23), and it is the law which gives sin its power (Rom. 4:15). But Christ has conquered sin and vanquished the law, so that through Him victory over sin, death and the grave is now gloriously possible for us (Rom. 6:9, 14; 7:24, 25; 1 John 5:4, 5).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

- Apr. 3—The Resurrection of Christ Matt. 28.
- Apr. 4—The Witnesses of His Resurrection Lk. 24:33-48.
- Apr. 5—The Believer and the Resurrection Rom. 6:1-13.
- Apr. 6—The Resurrection and Christ the Messiah Acts 2:22-36.
- Apr. 7—The Pledge of the Resurrection 1 Cor. 15:9-19.
- Apr. 8—The Order of the Resurrection 1 Cor. 15:20-34.
- Apr. 9—The Method of the Resurrection 1 Cor. 15:35-49.

SUGGESTED HYMNS

Christ the Lord is risen to-day. Low in the grave He lay. Jesus Christ is risen to-day. Crown Him with many crowns. Thou art coming, O my Saviour! The strife is o'er, the battle done.

WHAT IS HEAVEN LIKE?

No man ought to look for anything in heaven but what one way or other he has some experience of in this life. If men were fully persuaded of this, they would be, it may be, more in the exercise of faith and love about heavenly things than for the most part they are. At present they know not what they enjoy and they look for they know not what.

—JOHN OWEN

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