

THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

by C.H. Spurgeon

Spurgeon's exploration of how current events reflect God's governance, following John Newton's principle of reading newspapers to see divine sovereignty at work and using contemporary events as biblical illustrations.

47 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. BOOK: The Bible and The Newspaper (Articles and Stories)
2. Preface
3. 1. A Voice From The Sea
4. 2. Calling Out The Reserves
5. 3. Ladies' Dress
6. 4. The Deceiver and the Victim
7. 5. Floods In The Streets
8. 6. The Race And It's Spectators
9. 7. Double-Minded
10. 8. A Fox In The Pulpit
11. 9. The Evil Wrought By One Man
12. 10. Sympathy Created By Kindred Experience
13. 11. The Morning Drummer and the Preacher
14. 12. Have To Have More
15. 13. Conscientious Separation
16. 14. Exposing Others To Peril
17. 15. Tale-Bearing
18. 16. Tempting Temptation
19. 17. Review At Aldershot
20. 18. "Quis Separabit?"
21. 19. Life Versus Machinery
22. 20. Home Sickness
23. 21. Religious Sluggards
24. 22. The Withering of Unbelief
25. 23. Sympathy
26. 24. Benefit of Trial
27. 25. Watching
28. 26. Moore's Remonstrance
29. 27. H.C. Wants Money
30. 28. Striking of the Ironclad
31. 29. Tests For Diamonds
32. 30. A Path Strewn With Blessings
33. 31. The Fickleness of Mankind
34. 32. Pearls
35. 33. Safe-Not Saved
36. 34. Diplomacy and Duplicity
37. 35. Labor In Vain
38. 36. Chaotic Theology
39. 37. Want of Stamina

- 40. 38. Blasting Prohibited
- 41. 39. Deserters
- 42. 40. Blame The Scale-Maker
- 43. 41. Spurious Imitations
- 44. 42. Watch-Tower
- 45. 43. Battered Scripture
- 46. 44. The True Wrestler
- 47. 45. The Best Preparation For The Second Advent

Chapter 1

BOOK: The Bible and The Newspaper (Articles and Stories)

The Bible and the Newspaper by

C.H. Spurgeon

Preface

Preface

"I read the newspaper," said John Newton, "that I may see how my heavenly Father governs the world"; a very excellent reason indeed. We have read the newspaper during the last three months that we might find illustrations of the teaching of our heavenly Father's word; and we think we have not read in vain, for we have gathered instances in proof, and facts in explanation, which we have jotted down in these pages. The worlds of nature and of providence are full of parallels to things moral and spiritual, and serve as pictures to make the written book of inspiration more clear to the children of God. The Bible itself abounds in metaphors, types, and symbols; it is a great picture book; there is scarcely a poetical figure which may not be found in the law and the prophets, or in the words of Jesus and his apostles. The preacher is bidden to speak as the oracles of God, and consequently he should imitate their illustrative method, and abound in emblems and parables. A sermon which is full of "likes" is full of windows to enlighten the mind, and hands to hold it captive. Discourses decked with similes will not only give pleasure to the children, but persons of riper years will be charmed and instructed thereby.

Time does not allow us to read the papers with the searching glance which would readily have discovered hundreds of emblems, we have had to give a hasty look as best we could, and hence our harvest is not so rich as that of a more quiet eye. A sense of leisure and of rest is needed if one is to follow the trails of nature, and listen to all her echoes. Not idleness but amplitude of space for thought is a requisite for the weaving of allegory and the fashioning of similitudes. Lacking these essentials, amid the hum of London and the whirl of the wheel of daily duty, we have produced a little home-spun where others might have woven tapestries of golden thread. The things which we have seen and noted we now give our readers, not merely for their entertainment, but that we may encourage in them the habit of looking for emblems and analogies. It is a mental exercise as profitable as it is pleasant. Sunday-school teachers and all other servants of the great parable-making Master would find it an improving occupation to walk abroad in the garden and the field, and resolve to find some instructive similes before they returned home; and it would be almost as helpful to them if they staid at home and did with the newspaper what we have done. This might be done by Bible-classes and other associations of young men, very much to the development of a happy faculty. In a short time they might produce far more excellent specimens than those which are here presented. When they become practised fishermen their nets would probably draw to shore much more precious fish than we in our haste have been able to capture.

Reader, may the good Lord speed us in this and in every other good design.

Thine to help,

C. H. Spurgeon

July, 1878.

1. A Voice From The Sea

A Voice from the Sea "Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly."—Isaiah 29:5.

"The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea."—Jonah 1:4.

About four o'clock in the afternoon of Lord's-day, March 24th, the inhabitants of London were startled by a sudden hurricane which all at once brought with it darkening clouds of dust, and for a short season raged furiously. Sitting in our study in quiet meditation, we were aroused and alarmed by the noise of doors and windows, and the terrible howling of the blast as it swept upon its headlong course. Unhappy were travellers across heath and moor who were overtaken by such an overwhelming gust, for it gave no warning, and allowed no time to seek a shelter. It was soon over, but it was followed by cold and dreary weather, and it would seem to have been a token that winter meant to make another struggle to assume his ancient throne. His Parthian arrow was driven forward with intense force, and left its mark in ruin and death.

Just at the moment when landsmen were terrified by the threatening storm, her Majesty's training ship "Eurydice," which had returned from a cruise to the West Indies, was rounding Dunnose headland, off the Isle of Wight, with all plain sails and also her studding sails set. Those on board were all naturally anxious to reach their homes, and haying only to round the coast and to anchor off Spithead, they were making the best of the wind. The noble frigate was plainly seen from the lovely village of Shanklin; but one who was watching the fine vessel suddenly missed it and wondered why. She was hastening along with all sails set except her royals, and her ports open, when in a moment the fierce wind pounced upon her. It was in vain that the captain ordered sail to be shortened; the ship lurched till her keel was visible, and, in less time than it takes us to write it, the ship capsized, and more than three hundred brave seamen perished. Well might her Majesty's telegram speak of "the terrible calamity of the Eurydice." What mourning and lamentation had that one cruel blast scattered over the land! How swift is the swoop of death! How stealthy its step! How terrible its leap! In the midst of life we are on the verge of the sepulchre. This lesson is preached to us by those three hundred men who lie enshrouded in the all-devouring sea, with a gallant ship as their mausoleum.

"Toll for the brave! The brave that are no more!

All sunk beneath the wave, Fast by their native shore!"

Great is the peril of the ocean, but there are also dangers on the land, and at any moment we also may be summoned to appear before our God. Since this cannot be questioned, let each prudent man foresee the evil and prepare himself for it.

Another lesson which lies upon the surface of this sad event is this—never feel perfectly safe till you are in port. Many awakened souls are almost within the haven of peace, and are at this time rounding the headland of thoughtfulness, with the sails of earnest enquiry all displayed to the breeze. Their condition is very hopeful, but it is not satisfactory to those who are anxious about

their eternal welfare, nor should it be satisfactory to themselves. They are 'steering for the harbour, they enjoy favouring winds, they have all sails set, but still they have not quite believed in Jesus, nor surrendered themselves to his grace. We who watch them can see that their ports are open, and we dread lest they should be overtaken by a sudden temptation and should suddenly be overturned at the very moment when our hopes are at their best. Is the reader in such case? Then let us beseech him not to be content till he has found Christ, and so by faith has anchored in the harbour of "eternal salvation." Do not be happy, dear friend, till you are moored to the Rock of Ages, under the lee of the everlasting hills of divine mercy, through the atoning blood. It seems very wonderful that a ship which had been to sea so many times and had just completed a long winter's cruise in safety should at last go down just off the coast in a place where danger seemed out of the question. It is doubly sad that so many men should be within sight of a shore upon which they must never set their foot. To perish in mid ocean seems not so hard a lot as to die with the white cliffs of Albion so near: to die with the gospel ringing in our ears is still more sad. Never reckon the ship safe till it floats in the haven: never reckon a soul safe till it is actually "in Christ." The "almost persuaded" are often the last to be fully persuaded. Aroused, impressed, and moved to good resolutions, to tears, and even to prayers, yet men postpone decision, and by the force of Satan's arts are lost—lost when we all hoped to see them saved. O that seekers were wise enough to be distressed until they are thoroughly renewed. Any position short of regeneration is perilous in the extreme. The manslayer would have been cut down by the avenger had he lingered outside the walls of the refuge-city; it would have been all in vain for him to have touched its stones or sheltered near its towers: he must be within the gates or die. Seekers after salvation, you are not safe till you actually close in with Jesus, place all your confidence in him and become for ever his. Shall it be so now, or will you abide in death? Rest not an hour. Trifle not for another moment; for death may seize you, or a spiritual lethargy may come over your soul from which you may never again be aroused. Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till your anchor has entered into that within the veil and you are saved in Christ Jesus. A further lesson should be gleaned from the scant wreckage which as yet has floated up from the sunken vessel. Let us all take warning, and remember that we cannot tell when fierce temptations may assail us.

"Be watchful, be vigilant, danger may be At an hour when all seemeth securest to thee." As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh, our want of foresight keeps us in constant jeopardy, and should therefore induce unceasing watchfulness. The gale may burst upon us either from the north or from the south, and if we make ready for an easterly breeze we may be assailed from the westward instead. He who has sailed upon the sea never trusts it; he who has been at the mercy of the wind never depends upon it. Beloved believer, you have had a long stretch of fair sailing; let a brother whisper in your ear," Keep a good lookout." Those who are familiar with spiritual navigation know that there is never more likelihood of storm than when the barometer stands at "set fair."

"Whene'er becalm'd I lie, And storms forbear to toss; Be thou, dear Lord, still nigh, Lest I should suffer loss:

Far more the treacherous calm I dread Than tempests bursting o'er my head."

The danger of a foreseen tempest is comparatively little, for your ship with close-reefed sails, and bare poles, is ready for whatever comes; but the perils of the calm lie in the temptation to security,

and the liability that sudden temptation may find us unprepared. "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch": for if the good captain of the ship had known at what hour the storm would come he would have lowered all his sails, and have weathered the gale. He did all that a brave man could do, but all was little enough, for the huge ship was tossed over and sucked down, and but two remained to tell the tale. Be ye always ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the danger will be upon you.

One other warning let us collect from the wreck while yet it lies beneath the wave. Always be most afraid of sudden temptation when all sails are filled with a fair wind. Personal experience teaches some of us that our gladdest times attract perils to us. The temper of the placid may readily be ruffled when they have newly come from solitary communion with God: the rude shock of the world's rough speech tells most upon a mind which has been bathed in heaven. Even the love of Jesus may lead us in the heat of our spirit to wish that we could invoke fire from heaven on his foes. Great power in prayer, unless we guard ourselves well, may be followed by a fit of depression, even as Elijah fled from Jezebel very soon after his wrestlings upon Carmel. High and rapt enjoyment may be followed by fierce temptation, for the enemy watches for loaded vessels when he allows the empty bark to escape. Even our Lord found but a short interval between the testimony from heaven at his baptism and the temptation from hell which beset him in the wilderness. Our full sails tempt the prince of the power of the air to rage with more than his usual malignity. It is right that all sail should be set when the wind is favourable. Why should we not avail ourselves of everything which may speed us on our way? Still, let us never forget to watch unto prayer, or our happiness may be our danger. Brother, mark well your steps in coming down from the mount of communion, for at the foot of it you may meet mocking Pharisees, dispirited disciples, and perhaps one possessed of an evil spirit of the kind which goeth not out save with prayer and fasting.

Let the self-exalting professor specially beware; but remember, dear brother, that you may soon become such a character. When your sails are big with the wind, and you are flying over the waves, clap your hands if you please, and hope soon to have perfected your voyage; but take care to have all hands ready for an emergency. Perhaps one of the best things that could happen to you would be that when you are sailing along so bravely, confident and at ease, your topsails of pride should be carried away; you would be all the better for losing such lofty gear. Plenty of ballast must be stowed away, or our royals may be our ruin. Better have our glory rent to ribbons by the gusts than for the ship itself to be blown over. Mark this. Are you prospering in business? Keep your eye on the weather, and expect a change. Is all going well with your family? Be grateful, but rejoice with trembling. Is every desire gratified? Thank God, but do not suffer the watch to go below. Are you progressing in the spiritual life? Doubtless Satan has told you that you are somebody now, strong in faith, exceedingly earnest, wonderfully busy, and quite an example to others! Do you not see that the storm-fiend is near you? "What a wind he can raise! He slew Job's children by a wind which smote all the four corners of the house, and he reserves those four-cornered hurricanes for men in high estate as Job was; therefore beware. Brother, reef sail, for the weather is dirty, and cannot be relied on for five minutes. As you dread shipwreck, cultivate holy jealousy, maintain godly fear, and evermore look to him that keepeth Israel. He never slumbers, for he knows that his children always need his watchful eye.

2. Calling Out The Reserves

Calling Out the Reserves "Reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war."—Job 38:23.

"Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong."—Joel 3:9-10. On the evening of April 1st, the Lord Chancellor read a message from the Queen, stating that

"Her Majesty has thought it right to communicate to the House of Lords that her Majesty is about to cause her Reserve Force and her Militia Reserve Force, or such part thereof as her Majesty shall think necessary, to be forthwith called out for permanent service." Might not some such message from the King, who is in the midst of Zion, be just now very seasonable, if the Holy Spirit should convey it to all the churches? There should be no reserves in the hosts of the Lord; but alas, through the lukewarm condition of many, these reserves form a numerous part of our membership, and need a great many calls from their officers before they will obey. Perhaps if they felt that the King himself ordered that they should be "forthwith called out for permanent service," the love of Christ would constrain them, and we should see them marching forth to war. "I pray thee have me excused" has been upon their lips for a long time, or else they have said, "I go, sir. but they have not gone. The word of Moses to the children of Gad and Reuben is exceedingly needed by many at this time:" Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit still?" The reserved forces are so terribly numerous as compared with the active army of our great King that our holy war is sadly hindered and the Canaanites are not subdued. Among these inactive professors there are many who are commonly known as "very reserved people." These must no longer sit at ease, but must summon up courage enough to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, lest the curse of Meroz fall upon them. Others are idle, and allow their armour and their weapons to rust. Many are busy here and there about inferior things, but forget their allegiance to their Lord. Very much time, talent, and opportunity is held in reserve for various reasons, and ought at once to be brought forth and consecrated actively to the Lord. What meanest thou, O sleeper? What aileth thee, O sluggard? There is much to be done; why doest thou not thy part? Every man has a place appointed him in the battle; what excuse can be accepted for those who are at ease in Zion, and stir not a hand for their Master and his cause? Nor is it in men alone that a sinful reserve is made, but great treasures of gold and silver belonging to Christians are laid by to canker, while the Lord hath need of them. Men talk of loving Jesus so as to give him all, and in their hymns they say that if they might make some reserve, and duty did not call, their zeal would lead them to a total sacrifice, and yet the financial reserve of the church of God is probably a hundred times as great as that which is expended in the Lord's service. Your own judgments will confirm this statement. The funds actually in the hands of professed believers are immense, for many Christians are enormously rich, and yet we hear daily appeals for money, till one might conclude that all professors of the Christian faith were as poor as Lazarus, and that nowadays no holy women were able to minister to the Lord of their substance, and such persons as Joseph of Arimathæa were no

longer disciples of Jesus.

There is a great deal of reserve time, and reserve talent, and reserve energy and fire, and we would in the name of Jesus call it out. Why, some men when engaged in the service of God seem to be only the tenth part of men compared with their zeal in their business pursuits. It would take nine of some church members to make one veal praying man, and twice that number of some preachers to make a downright earnest minister of the gospel. Is this judgment too severe? Are not some men mere apologies for workers, even when they do pretend to be up and at it? Verily it is so. Oh, if they would but be aroused; if all their manhood, all their heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, were truly engaged, how differently they would act; and if they sought strength from on high, what grand results would follow! I long to see the Holy Spirit filling us all with ardour, and causing every man and woman among us to yield himself or herself fully unto the Lord. When the reserves are called out, matters look very serious, and we expect to see war. Every lover of peace shuddered as he read the Queen's message, for he felt that at last war was really threatened. God grant it may not be so. But with regard to the church of Christ, when the reserves are called out, the world believes that it really means war for Christ. At present the world despises many a church for its inactivity; but when all Christians come forth it will know that we are in earnest. While the regular workers are marching to and fro like a standing army, going through its regular drill, very little is done beyond mere defence, but when the reserves are called out, it means defiance, and the gauntlet is thrown to the foe. Our Lord would have us fight the good fight of faith, and go forth in his name conquering and to conquer; but the elect host is hampered and hindered by the sutlers and camp-followers who hang about us and work us serious ill. If all this mixed multitude could be drilled into warriors, what a band would the Son of David lead to the war! Once get the reserved members of the church praying, working, teaching, giving, and the enemy would soon know that there is a God in Israel. There is too much playing at religion nowadays, and too little of intense, unanimous, enthusiastic hard work. A part of the church is all alive, but a far larger portion is as a body of death, by which the life of the church is held in bondage. Once find the whole body tingling with life from head to foot, from heart to finger, and then you shall have power over the adversary and prevalence with God. "When all the people shout for joy and long for the battle, the Philistines will be afraid, and cry out, saying," God has come into the camp." O that my eyes could once perceive the signal! Zion travailing is the sign by which those who know the times will be able to prophecy concerning Zion triumphant. O for the universal agony, the inward throes of deep compassion and consuming zeal; for when these are felt by the whole body, the joyous hour is come. The Queen's message reminds me of a great and comforting truth. God himself, blessed be His name, has forces in reserve which he will call forth in due time. Remember the Lord's own language in the book of Job: "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?" He represents himself in the language of his servant Joel, as calling out innumerable locusts as a part of his host: "The Lord shall utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great." The hiding of his power we cannot estimate, but we know that nothing is impossible to him. Whatever the church may have seen and experienced of divine power, there is yet more in reserve, and when the fit moment shall come all restraint shall be withdrawn, and the eternal forces shall be let loose to rout every foeman, and secure an easy victory. For the moment, our great Captain puts his hand into his bosom and allows the enemy to exult; but he is not defeated, nor is he in the least disquieted.

"He shall not fail, nor be discouraged." His time is not yet, but when the time comes he will be found to have his reward with him and his work before him. Let us never be daunted by the apparent failures of the cause of God and truth, for these are but the trial of patience, the test of valour, and the means to a grander victory. Pharaoh defies Jehovah while he sees only two Hebrews and a rod, but he will be of another mind when the Lord's reserves shall set themselves in battle array and discharge plague upon plague against him. Even the doubling of the tale of bricks, and the wanton cruelty of the tyrant, all wrought towards the divine end, and were no real hindrances to the grand design; nay, they were reserved forces by which the Lord made his people willing to leave Goshen and the fleshpots.

To-day, also, the immediate present is dark, and there is room for sad forebodings; but if we look a little further, and by faith behold the brilliant future which will arise out of the gloom, we shall be of good cheer. My eye rests at this moment somewhat sorrowfully upon the battle-field of religious opinion; truly, there is much to rivet my gaze. It is a perilous moment. The prince of darkness is bringing up his reserves. The soldiers of the devil's old guard, on whom he places his chief reliance, are now rushing like a whirlwind upon our ranks. They threaten to carry everything before them, deceiving the very elect, if it be possible. Never were foes more cunning and daring. They spare nothing, however sacred, but assail the Lord himself: his book they criticise, his gospel they mutilate, his wrath they deny, his truth they abhor. Of confused noise and vapour of smoke there is more than enough; but it will blow over in due time, and when it is all gone we shall see that the Lord reigneth, and his enemies are broken in pieces.

Let us watch for the coming of recruits divinely prepared. Let us be eager to see the reserves as they come from the unlikeliest quarters. There may be sitting even now by some cottage fireside, all unknown, the man who shall make the world ring again with the gospel, preaching it with apostolic power. The orthodox advocate, born to cope with subtle minds and unravel all their sophistries, may even now be receiving his training in yonder parish school; yea, and even in the infidel camp, like Moses in the palace of Pharaoh, there may dwell the youth who shall act the iconoclast towards every form of scepticism. Jabin and Sisera may reign, but there shall come a Deborah from mount Ephraim, and a Barak from Kedesh-naphtali. Let the Midianites tremble, for Gideon who threshes wheat in the winepress will yet beat them small. The Ammonites shall be smitten by Jephtha, and the Philistines by Samson: for every enemy there shall be a champion, and the Lord's people shall do great exploits. I for one believe in Omnipotence. All other power is weakness; in God alone is there strength. Men are vanity, and their thoughts shall perish; but God is everlasting and everliving, and the truth which hangs upon his arm, like a golden shield, shall endure to all eternity. Hither come we, then, and bow before the face of the Eternal, who reserveth wrath for his enemies and mercy for them that seek him; and as we lie at his feet we look up right hopefully, and watch for the moment when all his reserves of grace, and love, and glory shall be revealed to the adoring eyes of his chosen people world without end.

3. Ladies' Dress

Ladies' Dress

"Be clothed with humility."—1 Peter 5:5.

"I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety."—1 Timothy 2:8-9.

On the 11th of April, in the course of an action brought by the well-known modiste, "Madame Rosalie," against a gentleman of property to compel him to pay a debt contracted by his wife, it was stated in evidence that from £500 to £2,000 a-year might be considered a reasonable sum for a lady moving in good society to expend on dress. The gentleman's wife, in the witness-box, repudiated with lofty scorn the idea that the former amount was sufficient. The lady is an invalid, has never been presented at court, and is not called into company, and yet was indebted for millinery to a very large amount. Is it, then, a fact that so large a sum is considered needful for the clothing of one human form? Surely the luxury of the old Roman Empire is infecting our beloved country: may God grant that it may not, in our case, also be a sign of the decay of the nation. Women should be too considerate of the needs of the sick and suffering to spend their money so wastefully. A blanket placed on the bed of a poor old woman would be a better ornament to a lady's character than all the lace a dukedom could purchase. Yet so it is, but tell it not in Gath, a lady cannot be dressed under £2,000 a-year! Are we wrong if we place side by side with this modern fact, a description of the follies of women of the olden times? "Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scud the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headlands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods and the veils."---Isaiah 3:16-23.

What a contrast is the teaching of the apostle Peter, in his First Epistle, at the third chapter. "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands." Peter sends the ladies to a wardrobe better than any which the frivolous possess, and to a jewel-case richer than ever belonged to the vain and showy; but, alas, the mass of women do not care to adorn themselves in this right royal fashion. Pride of dress is so childish that one wonders to see it in grown-up people. The old proverb speaks of being twice children; but fops and dandies of either sex are always children. Archbishop Leighton has well

said:—" It is strange upon how poor things men and women will be vain, and think themselves somebody; not only upon some comeliness in their face or feature, which, though poor, is yet a part of themselves, but of things merely without them; that they are well lodged, or well mounted, or well appalled, either richly, or well in fashion. Light, empty minds are like bladders, blown up with any thing." The only excuse we can think of for some dressy women is that they think themselves very ugly. What deformity must exist if it needstwo thousand a-year to cover it. If these persons accurately gauge their lack of personal charms, they must be suffering under a fearful measure of uncomeliness. Why, ten or twenty families could be reared in comparative comfort upon the amount thus expended in wastefulness; and as matters go with the agricultural labourers in many of the shires, forty of the families owned by Hodge and his companions, including all the father Hodges and their wives, could be decently provided for upon two thousand a year. It will not bear thinking of 1 Yet many women professing godliness are shockingly extravagant, and can never be happy till their heads are tricked out with strange gear and their bodies with fashionable millinery. They little think how much they degrade themselves and grieve the Spirit of God. A forgiven sinner decked out in the flaunting garments of a worldling, casts suspicion upon her own pardon; if she had ever been renewed in heart, would she, could she, adorn herself after the manner of a Jezebel? It is hard to think of a disciple of the Lord wasting her substance upon personal decoration. Does the lowly Jesus keep company with persons who spend hours at the glass, adorning, if not adoring, their own flesh? Can extravagance and fashionableness be pleasing to the Lord? "No. Assuredly not.

We are not judging that " neat handsomeness" which George Herbert says: "doth bear the sway," but we are sorrowful when we see those who set themselves up as examples, and move in a position where no outward show is required, going beyond ordinary worldly women in extravagance. It is the bane of society, and the disgrace of religion "We wonder how much of the extravagance of female dress could be traced to the man-millinery of Anglican priests. Church congresses have been edified by exhibitions of ecclesiastical finery, in which were seen robes and vestments of the costliest material and the gaudiest colours. We have read of altar frontals which have taken years to finish, and are valued at more than £500. All this to deck out a table; no wonder that it costs so much to dress a woman. When men, and even ministers, take to resplendent trappings, who can wonder that the weaker sex exercise a larger liberty? For shame, ye so-called priests, put away your baby garments and quit yourselves like men.

4. The Deceiver and the Victim

The Deceiver and the Victim

"Though thou rentest thy face with painting, in rain shalt thou make thyself fair."—Jeremiah 4:30.

"Behold ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit."—Jeremiah 7:8.

"After I had used the wash for some time an eruption came on my face. I think it was in December, 1877, that this occurred. At this time I had paid the defendant altogether about £20, and when I found the rash come out on my face I went to the defendant, and she said that I was in a terrible state, all the pores of my skin were opened, and that unless I let her finish me at once I should be disfigured for life."

These are reported as the words used in evidence concerning a certain Madame who pretends to make ladies "beautiful for ever." The date was about the same with the last incident. Willing dupes ask for her famous cosmetics, washes, and drugs, and beg to be enamelled that their charms may conquer all who gaze upon them, and before long they find themselves in the deceiver's toils, their hopes all disappointed, and themselves compelled to pay continually, lest some worse thing should happen unto them. Now this is an admirable parable, and full of detail which a wise man may work out to edification. We will only use it as a caution. Before we commit ourselves into the hands of any of the fair-speaking generation we had better look about us. Loan-offices profess to help the needy with great generosity and then devour them with unsparing ferocity. Companies inveigle unwary shareholders, and then strip them of every feather. Beware! is a warning much needed on all hands. In spiritual matters we have many flattering deceivers concerning whom we have need to be on our guard. Peter speaking of false teachers says, "Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you "; and Paul says, "Of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women" These are the people whom the apostle calls "grievous wolves," Woe unto any unsuspecting sheep if they come in their way; for nothing but almighty grace can rescue them from their jaws.

Yet these flattering teachers who are to do such wonders for their dupes are deceivers all. As the aged pretender, mentioned in the newspaper, was not herself preserved in beauty by her own oriental balms, and yet boasted of her power to conserve the radiance of youth in others, so Peter says again, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption" Still, though the fraud is transparent, custom begets a facility in deception, and there are ungodly men and women of whom again the apostle says that "they cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children"

Satan is an arch-deceiver in the line of the pretended beautifier. He told our mother Eve that if she would follow his directions she should be as God, and when instead thereof she found herself covered with shame, he knew that he had her in his power. Young men are flattered by the promise of pleasure until they follow after the strange woman to the ruin of both body and soul, and to their own bitter disappointment as to the very pleasure which sin had promised them." With

her much fair speech she caused him to yield "; but shall he win the bliss which she has promised? Ah, no! "A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away."

Self-righteousness also commends itself to men as a choice beautifier, and they spend their money to be enamelled therewith; but ere long it covers them with the purple rash of shame, and their comeliness is turned into corruption. Trust no deceitful word, but seek unto him who is truth itself, who can make us comely with the true comeliness which he alone can put upon us.

5. Floods In The Streets

Floods In The Streets

"Rivers of waters in the streets."—Proverbs 5:16.

"Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."—Amos 5:24,

Thursday morning, April 11th, when we reached the Tabernacle, at eleven o'clock, we found the rooms of the basement covered with water, so that they could not be occupied. Our Conference was unable to meet for dinner in the schoolroom, and was obliged to adjourn to another building. The papers, among many accounts of the flooded districts, thus speak of our near neighbours in the somewhat aristocratic region of Brixton: "The easterly gale which had been blowing since Sunday morning subsided on Wednesday night, and was followed by such a downpour of rain as seldom occurs in this latitude except in connection with summer thunderstorms. It was very heavy all through the night, and continued yesterday without much abatement through the early hours of the forenoon, until more rain had fallen in a few hours than the average rainfall for a month. At Brixton there was a serious flood, caused by the inability of the Effra river, which is nothing better than a covered sewer, to carry off all the water. It burst forth at all openings, and even forced itself upward in jets which are compared to the spoutings of a whale. The water rising with much rapidity, the inhabitants, who in most cases were sitting down to or preparing for breakfast, had barely time to escape from their breakfast-rooms, when the water was upon them. Snatching up what came first to hand, they made the best of their way upstairs, and finding all efforts to save their property futile, gave up the attempt in despair. In Brixton-road, not alone the carriage-way, but the footpaths were submerged, and in some places the flow of water was so great that the roadway and pavement were broken up by the rushing waters seeking to find an outlet, and in some instances the pavements were actually washed away. The main road itself was like a quickly-flowing river, and many of the side roads were also flooded. The water was in most places upwards of a foot in depth, and in many nearly two feet. Locomotion was exceedingly difficult, vehicles of all descriptions having to be drawn through the flood, with the horses nearly up to their knees in water, while with the tram-cars the water reached up to the steps, and an extra horse was necessary to draw the car." When the Lord is pleased to open the windows of heaven and refresh the thirsty earth with plentiful showers, man in his boasted wisdom has so arranged the cities where he dwells that there is no room for the divine bounty, and a benison becomes a danger. His careful preparations in blotting out rippling brooks and watercourses begirt with willows, and burying in the earth beneath arches of brick the once silvery streams, are all sources of peril to him; peril, too, from that which should have been his greatest blessing. The rain is good, but we have not room enough to receive it; we have space for our own filthiness if the heavenly rains will let us alone, but for "showers of blessings" our arrangements have left no receptacle, and they must drown us out, and stop our traffic, to gain even a temporary lodging-place. Time was when the Effra river would have carried the water down to the Thames without any greater inconvenience than a flooded meadow, or a garden swamped for an hour or two. Some living

persons remember the Effra as a pretty brook with a charming walk by its side and overhanging trees. We have seen some pretty bits of scenery which an artist copied from this rural streamlet of days gone by. There were little rustic bridges here and there, and many a nook where lovers of quiet could sit down and meditate; but now there is no sign of the brook until you pass into Dulwich; almost throughout its entire length our modern civilization has transformed it into a covered drain. Confined within a dark arch of brick, the stream forgets its sunny days, and, like a prisoner urged along the corridor of an underground dungeon, pursues its dreary way. Alas, that man should have made human life to be so much after the same manner. Of green fields and fresh breezes how little do the multitudes of our toilers ever see or feel; of cheerfulness and content how little do many of our merchants and traders understand; and of sacred joy and consecrated delight the bulk of men know nothing whatever. Life comes to us, but too often we will not allow it to flow freely in holy content and joy, where the trees are flourishing and the birds singing among the branches, but we compel it to grovel underground in anxiety and unbelief.

Yet heavenly life cannot always be made to abide among the dead, just as the Effra when fed by showers from heaven would no longer brook its prison. It burst forth wherever a vent existed, and forced ways of escape for itself where there were none before. Every now and then this happens in spiritual affairs, and men behold the phenomenon with wonder and even with alarm. It was so in the age of Whitefield and Wesley, when the Lord opened the windows of heaven upon our land. What an outbreak there was! What a commotion and upheaval! The old pavements of conventionality were torn away, and the floods burst up through them. Attempts were made to stop the stream, persecution was tried against the Methodists, they were denounced from the pulpit, threatened by mobs, and ridiculed as modern enthusiasts and madmen, and regarded as the offscouring of all things; but all this availed nothing, omnipotence was at work, and malice could not hinder. The sacred flood would not be denied a channel, but found free course, and God was glorified. Of course it stirred the mud and raised the foulness of the community to most offensive rage; but it cleansed as it rushed forward, and swept away the accumulated vices of dreary years. May the like happen again in our times; indeed, we are not altogether strangers to such burstings forth of the living waters even now.

It were well if in individuals there were such floodings of the soul with the grace of God, that the divine life would break forth everywhere,—in the parlour, the workshop, the counting-house, the market, and in the streets. We are far too ready to confine it to the channel of Sunday services and religious meetings; it deserves a broader floodway, and must have it if we are to see gladder times. It must burst out upon men who do not care for it, and invade chambers where it will be regarded as an intrusion; it must be seen by wayfaring men streaming down the places of traffic and concourse, hindering the progress of sinful trades, and surrounding all, whether they will or no. We want another universal deluge, not of destruction, but of salvation, so that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Would to God that religion were more vital and forceful among us, so as to create a powerful public opinion in behalf of truth, justice and holiness. It will be a blessed day when all the streets of our land shall be flooded with grace. Amos, in the text which we have quoted, bids us aim at this, in the name of the Lord. The formalities of religion are of little worth compared with this; for the Lord says, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies." Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take

thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." He would have us exhibit a life "which would purify the age, and sweep before it every obstacle; a life to be seen even in the streets, where men care least to have it. It is much to be desired that the Christian church may yet have more power and influence all over the world for righteousness and peace. Something of it is felt even now, but not enough. The Church of Christ in England has more power to-day than it ever had before. Our country would have been plunged into war months ago (May, 1878), if it had not been for Christian men who have been the backbone of the opposition to the war party. Peace would not have been kept unbroken so long as it has been had it not been earnestly promoted by the prayers and labours of those who worship the Prince of Peace. In other matters, also, of social reform, and moral progress, the influence of true religion is felt, and it will be yet far more mighty. May the day come when the Spirit of righteousness shall have complete control over those who govern and direct our affairs, then shall "judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." All will not go pleasantly even then, for many will be greatly vexed by such prevalence of right principles: their craft will be in danger, they will be greatly inconvenienced in their sins, they will be upon their knees in an element which they do not relish, and they will rave against it; but, for all that, it will be a blessing if God sends us such showers of grace as to become an irresistible flood. Come, mighty stream. Send it, we beseech thee, O Lord: and let us live to see Ezekiel's vision fulfilled. "Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh,"

6. The Race And It's Spectators

The Race And Its Spectators

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"—Hebrews 12:1.<http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+12:1>

In an article upon the University Boat-race of April 13th, the "Times" alludes to the dense throngs upon the bank of the river, and to the interest which everybody seemed to feel in the struggle, and it then very truthfully adds—"Nor do the competitors themselves fail to gain much from the sight of the vast crowds which attest the strength of the popular interest. The rivalry would hardly be so keen if the race were to be rowed amid the comparative privacy of a provincial stream or lake. Some years ago this was kept out of sight in a high and mighty way by the suggestion that, to prevent the contest from being vulgarized, or for some other reason, it ought to be held at some quieter place than the neighbourhood of London. Loch Maree, in the wilds of Rossshire, would afford charming tranquillity and a few scores of cool spectators. But the stimulus of a great public competition would be gone, and, if we may venture to assume that undergraduates are made of the same stuff as other human beings, that stimulus is essential to such muscular exertion as we see at Oxford and Cambridge." This excellently illustrates the meaning of the apostle when he represents believers as running for a prize, with saints, apostles, and martyrs looking on. The stimulus communicated by spectators is his prominent idea. No doubt the young oarsmen find a stimulus in every eye that gazes upon them, and if the crowd were thinned they would take less interest in their task. The crowds which line the Thames may well be compared to clouds, so completely do they darken the banks from end to end of the course; and much more may those who gaze upon the Christian's life be thus spoken of. Myriads lean from heaven, or look from earth, or peer upwards from the pit. Holy men of all ages, now with God, join with a great host still abiding here below. Angels, and principalities, and powers, unite as one vast-army and observe us intently; and frowning demons of the pit in their dread array all gaze with interest upon the Christian's work and way. Should not every glance animate us to do our utmost? And what eyes there are amongst those who observe us. Had the Queen been present, we could imagine the young athletes straining themselves even more than they had done, for the glance of royalty quickens energy to the utmost. In our case, the King of kings looks down upon us, and the Prince of Life with tender sympathy watches our progress: what manner of race should ours be under the Lord's own eye? Competitors of former years were at the boat-race to see whether the new-comers would maintain the honour of their University. Even so the worthies of ancient times, who counted not their lives dear unto them, take pleasure in the efforts of those who to-day are wrestling for victory, as they themselves did in ages past. The approving glances of prophets and apostles may well stir our souls. Dear ones who have gone before also mark our behaviour in the race: a mother in heaven takes delight in the ardour of her son; brothers "gone over to the majority" are serenely glad as they see their brothers pushing forward in the noble cause. Our leaders in the faith, oarsmen who taught us how to fly over the waves, regard us with anxious

interest and joy in our successes. These things should quicken us, and lend us arguments for unabated energy. Of course the apostle was not alluding to a boat-race, but to the Olympian games. Those games furnish a suggestive figure which we leave the reader to work out at leisure when we have given him a glimpse at the race from the window of good Dr. John Brown.

"At Olympia, a town of Elis, games were celebrated in honour of Jupiter once every five years. An almost incredible multitude from all the states of Greece and from the surrounding countries attended these games as spectators. The noblest of the Grecian youths appeared as competitors. In this race a course was marked out for the candidates for public fame, and a tribunal erected at the end of the course, on which sat the judges,—men who had themselves in former years been successful competitors for Olympic honours. The victors in the morning contests did not receive their prizes till the evening; but after their exertions they joined the band of spectators, and looked on while others prosecuted the same arduous labours which they had brought to an honourable termination."

It is a fine thought that those honourable men in the church of God who have themselves behaved worthily, take the deepest interest in the young men who have newly set out upon the race: let the youngsters so behave themselves that the veterans may never fear for the cause of God. We know that a great deal of anxiety is felt just now, for the rising race shows signs of being unstable, and superficial; but we hope for better things, and even trust that the men of the coming age will outstrip their predecessors, and draw forth the approving shouts of the encompassing cloud of witnesses.

7. Double-Minded

Double-Minded

"They feared the Lord, and served their own gods."—2 Kings 17:33.

"Them that worship and that swear by the Lord, and that swear by Malcham"—Zephaniah 1:5.

"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing."—James 3:10.

The New York "Examiner and Chronicle" of April 13, says:—" Luke, Mr. Tweed's attendant, states that the first thing he did on rising in the morning was to read the Bible; then he had breakfast, and after that read the papers and settled down to write. He spent his time thus until dinner was ready, and after eating, read the Bible again, and a third time before going to rest at night. If anything went wrong with him, or any annoying circumstance occurred at any time, he always had recourse to the Book. His temper was cheerful and even, as a rule; but he did not conquer his old habit of swearing, and would, upon provocation, look up from the pages of the Bible and swear at his servant in good set terms. It was, however, but an evanescent irascibility, and in a moment he was good-natured again."

Whether this statement is true or false, it may serve as a somewhat exaggerated picture of the condition of many men. They have enough religion to observe its outward forms, but not enough even to improve their language, much less their hearts. Like the Pharisees of old, they are attentive to the exterior rites of religion, and yet such is their enmity to Christ that they are ready to cry, "Crucify him, crucify him," when that voice will serve their turn. Their piety is a thin coat of whitewash daubed over a leprous wall: they are mere players, with religion as the farce in which they act,—a farce which will turn to a tragedy before they have done with it. To unite Bible-reading and swearing is rather too clear an inconsistency for most men; but very many go in the like direction, and try both to hold with the hare and run with the hounds. They love the wages of unrighteousness and yet maintain a form of godliness. Such men make religion ridiculous in the eyes of their more honest companions; and if they take to Bible-reading, they cause the Word of God to become contemptible; whereas the ridicule is deserved by their own meanness, and the contempt should be poured upon their base hypocrisy. We would say to every man who makes the slightest claim to honesty, "Be one thing or another; if Jehovah be God, serve him; if Baal be God, serve him." Don't try to cheat the devil by shamming to serve God. No possible advantage can accrue to the double-minded man by his pretence of godliness; it can only serve to increase his condemnation. Of all sons of perdition Judas is the worst, for he betrayed the Lord and yet kissed him.

8. A Fox In The Pulpit

A Fox in the Pulpit "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines."—Song of Solomon 2:15.

"O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts"—Ezekiel 13:4. A short letter which appeared in "The Rock," April 18th, is well worth preserving in connection with the above texts. It is to be feared that the writer might have pointed to not a few Nonconformist pulpits and might have made the same remark concerning their occupants, "Duty requires that they should be taken out and kept out"—"A Fox in the Pulpit.—Sir, a singular circumstance took place at Hever, in Kent, on Saturday last. A fox, hard pressed by the huntsmen, leaped the churchyard wall and disappeared. The hounds and huntsmen were searching and wondering, when an old woman came out from a back door of the church which happened to be open, with the exclamation, 'Here he is, in the pulpit'; and, sure enough, poor Reynard had slipped in at the open door and sought sanctuary, curled up in a corner of the pulpit. Of course, he was soon ejected. To my friend, who had witnessed the scene and described it very vividly, I observed that it reminded one of certain sly foxes in the Church of England, who get into our pulpits and think they are safe there. Duty requires that they should be taken out and kept out.—I am, &c, W. J. B." This is written by a Church of England man, and published in a sound Church paper, and so it is no violation of charity to repeat it, especially as we quite agree with every word of it. We wish that all the Popish foxes could be ejected from the National Establishment, for they do more mischief than tongue can tell.

The fox that steals the lamb so tender,
Can never be the fold's defender,
He's but a base and sly pretender.

The difficulty seems to be to get these foxes out and keep them out. Once in the pulpit, they know how to hold their position; you may dig out a fox, but you cannot dislodge a Romanizing priest. Acts of Parliament altogether fail, because such things are meant for men, and foxes dexterously evade them. Reynard's imitators have many knavish tricks, and know how to twist and turn, and so they escape statutes and laws, and still pursue their evil business. In the reforming times a popular caricature represented a priest as a fox preaching to an assembly of geese from the text, "How earnestly I long for you all in my bowels." The drawing would not be out of date if it were published to-day. How silly must the geese be who yield themselves heart and soul to such foxes! Yet there are flocks of them.

9. The Evil Wrought By One Man

The Evil Wrought By One Man "One sinner destroyeth much good.—Ecclesiastes 9:18.

"That man perished not alone in his iniquity."—Joshua 22:20.

American paper contains the following paragraph:—" An oil train of forty oil-tanks ran into a heavy freight train near Slatington, Pa. The engineer of the latter train had been compelled to stop to cool off a hot 'journal,' but the conductor had sent no one back to warn following trains of danger. Several persons were killed and about forty injured—the result of one man's carelessness." Amid the blaze of the oil, the screams of burning men and women, and the charred remains of the unhappy victims, we see how great a calamity may arise out of a little neglect, and how much the destiny of others may hang upon the acts of one man. Have we a due sense of our own personal responsibility? Have we ever reflected that our own conduct may influence others for good or evil throughout eternity? We may have no wicked intent, and yet our carelessness and in-difference may be as fatal to immortal souls as if we had been profane or profligate. Moral virtues apart from religion may suggest to our children that godliness is needless; was not their father an excellent man, and yet he was unconverted? Thus may generation after generation be kept in spiritual death by an argument fetched from the irreligion of one who was in other respects a model character. "Who among us would desire this?

Even if we hope that we are ourselves saved, it should cause us grave question if we are not bringing others to Jesus. A destroyer of souls will have an awful doom at the last, and he who failed to do his best to save his fellows will not be held guiltless before the Lord.

10. Sympathy Created By Kindred Experience

Sympathy Created By Kindred Experience "I am as ye are"—Galatians 4:12.

"Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity,"—Hebrews 5:2. The present week (the close of April, 1878), witnesses an extensive strike among the Lancashire operatives, who strongly resist a reduction of wages, which the masters declare to be absolutely necessary. There appears to be a hope that the dispute may be speedily ended, and the "Daily Telegraph" mentions one element of the question which is exceedingly encouraging. It says:—" There is one characteristic which distinguishes the present from all previous strikes in the same trade. Lancashire artizans are in some cases now able to look at the difficulty from exactly the same point of view as the masters, being, in fact, masters themselves. In the many co-operative spinning concerns, the shareholders are nearly all artizans and small tradesmen. The managers are all practical men, and every economy or improvement is carefully utilized. Hence, if the business can be made to pay at all, these mills should leave a profit. It happened, however, that all last year the results of the working of joint-stock companies became more and more unfavourable; and the first quarter of the present year was worse still. The decline has been gradual, but constant. Of nearly thirty such undertakings within a given radius, fully half were found to return a loss at the beginning of this month, and none of the remainder showed what could fairly be called a working profit. It is not, therefore, a mere accident that the Amalgamated Association of Operative Cotton Spinners and Weavers of Lancashire and the adjoining counties has, after a long discussion, recommended the men to accept the ten per cent reduction for the present. Being to a certain extent employers and capitalists themselves, they understand the crisis with a clearness enlightened by self-interest. This advice cannot fail to have a great effect on many wavering operatives." No one understands another so as to enter into his case unless he has been himself in a like position. Even our Lord could not become perfect as the Captain of our salvation without enduring hardness as all his followers must do. He must needs be found in fashion as a man, and be tempted in all points like as we are ere he could be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. To us it must ever be a source of abounding joy that our Lord Jesus wears our nature and intensely sympathizes in our experience. This is one reason why the Lord's ministers have such a fight of outward afflictions and inward temptations. How else could they enter into the experience of the tried people of God? Luther placed affliction among the three essential things for a good minister; but we would enlarge the area of expression, and say that experience of all kinds must be the preacher's school. He must know how to be full and to be empty, how to abound and how to suffer loss. Like the psalmist David, the preacher must be a man of ups and downs, rising till he reaches in excelsis, and sinking till his note is de profundis. All their varied moods are meant to qualify men of God to sympathize with the afflicted. "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." Our own personal obligation to sympathize with others and have patience with them arises out of our being in the same nature and partakers in the like perils. We are to weep with those that weep, and to rejoice with those that do rejoice, because we are followers of the

same Saviour, and carry the same cross. It is not always true that "a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," but it ought to be so. The apostle says, "Remember them that are in bonds, as being bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body," and again he writes, "Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Yet this argument is often slighted till it is brought home to us in actual life. The workman cannot feel for the employer till he becomes a master himself, and the child does not appreciate a father's love till he is himself a parent. A master would probably be all the more considerate for his men if he took a turn at their labour, and shared their domestic trials; and hearers would treat their ministers differently if they were themselves occasionally called upon to preach. This is no doubt the reason why some Christians have to pass through so chequered a career—they are to learn how to see out of other men's eyes, and judge matters from other men's points of view. The lesson is worth learning, cost what it may. Should the operatives prove to have learned nothing by their own experience, the fact will be in opposition to the old proverb, *experientia docet* (experience teaches), and it will not be the only time in which we have seen that to learn by experience a man must be wise to begin with, and that is not the case with all.

11. The Morning Drummer and the Preacher

The Morning Drummer and the Preacher "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."—Psalms 19:4.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."—Matthew 24:14. In the "Daily Telegraph" of May 1, we read:—"The real essence of Exeter-Hall-ism just now is missionary zeal. The British Empire is wide, and we often quote the orator who spoke of the morning drum of the British army making the circuit of the world as our earth lifts up each section of its surface in turn to be bathed in the light of the sun. But something British besides a drummer is seen and heard in succession as daybreak follows daybreak round the globe. A most unsuccessfully attired Englishman, with clothes that, as a rule, are neither fashionable, well-made, suitable, nor picturesque, is heard and seen with an open Bible in his hands reading or expounding it. 'There is no land where their voice is not heard'; there is hardly a known tongue that has not its version of a Book which owes more of its circulation to English money and agency than to any other international means." This is not exactly worded as one might desire. Perhaps a suppressed sneer is perceptible; but yet, taking it from whence it comes, it is a valuable testimony; indeed, all the more valuable because the witness is not biased in favour of the fact which he asserts. We only wish that it were still more evidently true, and that worldlings were oftener compelled to admit its power, even if they did so in an almost scornful manner. The duty of the church is to keep her herald side by side with that drummer who is said to wake the morning all round the globe. The fashionableness of his clothes is too small a matter to be worthy of notice; but the best of books in his hand must always be his noticeable mark and sign; thank God that in any measure it is so.

Encouraged by some measure of success in sounding forth the word of God, let all who love our Lord Jesus arouse themselves to do the work yet more thoroughly. When a certain chaplain asked the Duke of Wellington whether he thought it was worth while to teach the gospel to the Hindoos, the man of discipline is reported to have replied, "What are your marching orders?" These are clear enough, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"; what remains but to obey? Once the sneer was directed against consecrated cobblers, but now the lack of fashionable tailors appears to be the point of remark. What matters it? Let the men be sent, and if they be "clad with zeal as with a cloke" they will be fashionable in heaven. May the Holy Spirit rest upon them, and they will be a power in the earth to whom even the most worldly shall yield a silent homage.

"Nor shall the spreading gospel rest, Till round the earth its course has run, Till Christ has all the nations blest, That see the light or feel the sun."

12. Have To Have More

Have to Have More "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath'."—Matthew 13:12.

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels"—Proverbs 1:5.

The "Times" May 8th, speaking of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy says, "No doubt people ought to bring to a collection of pictures, or other works of art, as much knowledge as possible, according to the old saying that if we expect to bring back the wealth of the Indies, we must take the wealth of the Indies out with us. Learning and progress are continual accretions." This witness is true. He who studies the works of art in an exhibition of paintings, being himself already educated in such matters, adds greatly to his knowledge, and derives the utmost pleasure from the genius displayed. On the other hand, he who knows nothing at all about the matter, and yet pretends to be a critic, simply exhibits his own ignorance and self-conceit, and misses that measure of enjoyment which an entirely unsophisticated and unpretending spectator would have received. We must bring taste and information to art, or she will not deign to reveal her choicest charms.

It is so with all the higher forms of knowledge. We were once in the fine museum of geology and mineralogy in Paris, and we noticed two or three enthusiastic gentlemen in perfect rapture over the specimens preserved in the cases; they paused lovingly here and there, used their glasses and discoursed with delighted gesticulations concerning the various objects of interest; they were evidently increasing their stores of information. They had, and to them more was given. Money makes money, and knowledge increases knowledge. A few minutes after, we noticed one of our own countrymen, who appeared to be a man of more wealth than education. He looked around him for a minute or two, walked along a line of cases, and then expressed the utmost disgust with the whole concern: "There was nothing there," he said, "except a lot of old bones and stones, and bits of marble." He was persuaded to look a little further, at a fine collection of fossil fishes, but the total result was a fuller manifestation of his ignorance upon the subjects so abundantly illustrated, and a declaration of his desire to remain in ignorance, for he remarked that "He did not care a rap for such rubbish, and would not give three half-crowns for a wagon-load of it." Truly, in the matter of knowledge, "Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." The same principle holds good in matters of religion: he who has love to Christ, and a spiritual appetite, enjoys the word of God, and finds it to be marrow and fatness; but he who has no spiritual perception turns away from the most instructive doctrine, rejecting it, even as the full soul loatheth the honeycomb. Such a hearer is no gainer by the gospel, and though it may seem to be a contradiction that he who had nothing should have something taken away from him, yet so it is: the unspiritual man is frequently a loser by the gospel which he hears, he loses that curiosity which at first induced him to listen, that

measure of interest which in some degree aroused his attention, and that slender sense of ignorance which remained in him so long as he did not even know what the gospel was. Henceforth he has heard all that the preacher has to say, he thinks he knows all that the Bible can teach him, and any little hope that there may have been for him is greatly diminished. There must be life in us, or we cannot feed on the food around us; there must be an eye in the body, or light will be in vain; there must be some grace within the soul, or else all the grace in means and ordinances cannot enrich us. When the soil is made good the good seed yields a harvest; but often the barren soil devours all that the husbandman can put into it and is none the better. We ought to go to public worship with an earnest desire to obtain a blessing, a willing heart to receive it, and a sense of our need of it, and then we shall not hear in vain. If, beyond this, our soul is in actual fellowship with our Lord already, we shall find that his paths drop fatness. "To him that hath shall be given."

Remember, too, that a religious profession requires grace to sustain it. A company which begins business without cash will soon lose even its nominal capital, will in fact lose what it never had; thus thoroughly illustrating the words of our Lord, and, as in a parable, setting before us the result of pretending to be Christians if we have no grace. If we have no oil in our vessels with our lamps, the lamps themselves will go out and leave us in total darkness. On the other hand, where there is grace already more grace will be given. As riches make riches, and knowledge acquires knowledge, so doth spiritual life grow, and add to itself gifts and virtue by which it is greatly enriched.

13. Conscientious Separation

Conscientious Separation "A conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."—Acts 24:16.

"If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him."—1 Kings 18:21. The "Daily News" of May 8th, in an article on Lord Carnarvon's resignation, says:—"Mr. Carlyle, wearied with much eighteenth century talk about virtue, somewhere requests the talker, with a strong adjuration, to 'be virtuous and have done with it.' Too much praise of what is after all but the carrying into statesmanship of the laudable but not marvellous practice of common honesty might lead the hearer to express a similarly petulant prayer. It is not at all desirable that a politician should be perpetually interrogating his conscience to see what its opinion may be as to this tax on tobacco and that alteration in the bankruptcy laws. Such a practice could only lead to very considerable public inconvenience, and in the case of the individual practising it, to something not very different from hypocrisy. But occasions may and do arise when a policy or an individual measure commends itself to the majority of a Ministry which seems morally wrong or politically unadvisable to some member thereof. When this is the case, ought he to put his convictions in his pocket, and salve his conscience with the theory of party allegiance, or ought he to go out from those respecting whom he feels that he is not of them? No one will in words profess the former doctrine, but many will act upon it. Lord Carnarvon has acted upon the latter doctrine, which everybody professes, but many set aside in practice. Of course it is important that the conscience appealed to should be a healthy conscience, not given to unnecessary questioning and quibbling." Not only do we admire the consistency of Lord Carnarvon, but we wish we saw a little more of it among professing Christians. We know some ministers who do not believe the doctrines of the church to which they belong, and yet for reasons best known to themselves they remain in that community, and undermine the very foundations of the faith which they profess to preach. How this can be made to be in accordance with morality we know not. Surely it would be more like common honesty if they would at once show their colours, and no longer pretend to be what they are not. Some Christians, too, who never enter a pulpit, are equally guilty, for they are recognised as members of churches against whose teaching they frequently protest. They support evil systems and know them to be evil. They dissent in their hearts, but yet consent by their actions: for fear of giving offence to men, they are constantly offending God and their own consciences. Whatever their excuses may be, are they not resolvable into doing evil that good may come? Of course it is not to be desired that men should be perpetually vexed with scruples upon minor points, and ready to quarrel about anything or nothing, because their conscience is morbidly sensitive; but surely it cannot be right for a truthful man to be a member of a church from whose confession he widely disagrees; his position is a protest against his own convictions, and his convictions make his profession a falsehood. We ought to be intensely anxious to be so clear in the whole of our religious standing that under the light of the day of judgment no glaring contradictions shall be discovered in our lives; otherwise we may not only be guilty of "something not very different from hypocrisy," but we may fall into hypocrisy itself. A little tampering with conscience is a very

dangerous thing, it is very like the dropping of a stitch which may lead to the unravelling of all the work. We used to say in our childhood—

"He who steals a pin, Will live to steal a bigger thing."

The rhyme was bad, but the doctrine was true. If we violate conscience, even upon the smallest matter, we may come at last to have no conscience at all.

Mr. Carlyle's advice is thoroughly sound, and his adjuration is none too strong, "Be virtuous and have done with it:" speak the truth and stand to it, profess the faith which is revealed in the Scriptures, and neither by word of mouth, nor by act, nor by association, nor even in thought, contradict the eternal verities of God. We have had too much of concession in order to win a hollow peace from philosophic nationalists on the one hand, and superstitious Romizers on the other. The thing will not work, and if it would, it is wrong, and ought not to be attempted. Who gave us the right to yield an atom of truth? Are the doctrines of (God's word yours or mine to do as we like with, to give up this and modify that? Nay, verily: we are put in trust with the gospel, and it is at our peril that we dream of compromising the least of its teachings. A straightforward, decided line of testimony is the best, is most consistent with true charity, and in the end will most promote peace. The trimming, hesitating policy of many reminds us of Luther's words to Erasmus: "You desire to walk upon eggs without crushing them, and among glasses without breaking them!" This is a difficult game to play at, and one which is more suitable for a clown at a theatre than a servant of Christ. "When you are attempting a compromise, you have to look around you and move as cautiously as a tight-rope dancer, for fear of offending on one side or the other. A little too much this way or that and over you go. A cat on hot cinders is in an enviable position. No true-hearted man will ever bear such wretched constraint for any length of time, or indeed at all. Think of being able to go no further than the aforementioned timorous, time-serving Erasmus, who said, "I will not be unfaithful to the cause of Christ; at least, so far as the age will permit me." Out upon such cowardice: life is too dear when bought at such a price.

"I cannot tell what you and other men Think of this life; but for my single self, I had as lief not be, as live to be In awe of such a thing as I myself."

14. Exposing Others To Peril

On Exposing Others to Peril

"When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.■—Deuteronomy 22:8.

"Thou shalt not kill."—Exodus 20:13.

The morning papers of May 9 have the following humiliating paragraph:—"An acrobat, named Gilfort, was performing at the Dublin Exhibition Palace, at a height of no less than forty feet from the ground. He was going through the 'acts' usually done by Blondin—lying-down on the rope, sitting astride it, pretending to slip from it, balancing himself on it in a chair, and so forth. Suddenly one of the supports by which the fabric was steadied gave way, and the rope jerked violently towards the left, throwing Gilfort off his equilibrium. The unfortunate man made a desperate effort to save himself, clutching at his perch with both arms and legs. The attempt failed, and he fell a sheer distance of forty feet, with his balancing-pole still in his hand. The pole was splintered into fragments by the violence of the fall. Gilfort himself struck the ground heavily, rebounded from it, and was picked up severely crushed and bruised. Immediate assistance was, of course, rendered to him, and at first it seemed hardly possible that he could survive his injuries. He lay delirious, unconscious of what had happened, and terribly maimed."

Even if the unfortunate acrobat had not fallen, we conceive that attendance at such a performance was in itself an immoral act. The pleasure derived by the spectators arose in a great measure from the extreme danger to the individual. His skill might equally well have been exhibited upon a rope near the ground, or at some small distance above the spectators' heads; but this would have been unattractive; the forty feet, and the danger of a fall, gave a horrible interest to the exhibition, and collected the multitude. This, we say, is immoral and degrading: the commandment which forbids us to kill practically prohibits our placing another where his life is in danger, and forbids our doing anything which would lead to his exposing himself by attempting a perilous feat without justifiable cause. When dangerous deeds must be done, we are bound to provide every possible safeguard; but to induce a man unnecessarily to risk life and limb, and to omit precautions, is essentially murder, and every person who by his subscription assisted, or by his presence encouraged, such a risking of life, was guilty of the violation of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." If we are bound to guard against common accidents such as the fall of a person from a roof, by placing a battlement that none might step over unawares, we are equally bound to keep people out of danger as much as we can. We ought not to need a law to prohibit these horrible exhibitions; there ought to be enough of humanity in the world to lead every human being to denounce the proposal that a fellow creature should run the risk of falling from a terrible height to be dashed in pieces merely to gratify a vulgar curiosity.

Yet may we not all have been more or less guilty of such conduct in a moral and spiritual sense? May we not by smiling at the wit of a doubtful story have encouraged the teller to repeat the wicked

jest? May we not have introduced others into doubtful questions which have proved too high for them, and have led to their faith staggering, and their minds falling into unbelief. Some writers and preachers greatly encourage tight-rope speculations upon mysterious subjects, and cause no end of mischief. A sceptical remark repeated in the pulpit has placed many a youth upon a dizzy height, and caused his ruin; the man who uttered it had no idea of doing harm, but he ought to have remembered that positions which are safe for practised judgments may be deadly to the inexperienced. May we not, by our lukewarmness in matters of religion, have tempted others to remain careless and indifferent while their souls are in jeopardy? Do not many professors tempt sinners to delay by their own dilatoriness in divine things? Is it not very possible that some strong minds may, by their example, induce the weaker sort to do that which is eminently hazardous to them? Who among us can plead entire innocence? For the future let us be careful not to lead the feeble-minded into slippery places by going there ourselves.

Another phase of the same subject deserves a passing word. If at any time we join in the popular admiration of men because they are successful and raised to high positions, although their characters are evil, and their conduct more than questionable, are we not acting like those who lift up their shouts of applause when the acrobat is pacing along a slender line at a giddy height? It is the part of a Christian to applaud nothing but virtue. Let the world give its acclamations to its heroes as they move aloft, and salute its conquerors with peans as they look down upon them; as for us, let humble piety and quiet excellence engross the whole of our admiration. We have something else to do besides encouraging men in walking in a way which is contrary to the mind of God. They may be very clever, and display wonderful skill; but that is nothing to us if they are doing that which tends to the destruction of their souls. We foresee the awful fall which must end the scene, and we feel more like weeping than shouting.

15. Tale-Bearing

Tale-Bearing

"Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness"—Exodus 23:1 "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people."—Leviticus 19:16 "Keep thee far from a false matter."—Exodus 23:7 The "Boston Weekly Advertiser," May 9th, says:—"We have often heard the conundrum, 'Which is the mother of the chickens, the hen that lays the eggs or the hen that hatches them?' and now it is gratifying to have a legal decision of this vexed question of agricultural equity. A resident of "West Stratford, Conn., owned a hen of a fancy breed that strayed upon a neighbour's premises and laid a nest full of eggs. Another hen belonging to the owner of the land took possession of the nest and hatched the eggs. Then the two neighbours got into a wrangle about the chickens. They were sold by No. 2 to a third party, whereupon "No. 1 got out a writ of replevin, and the case was tried a few days ago with able counsel and many witnesses. The court decided that the hen that hatched the eggs was the legal mother, and dismissed the replevin suit."

It may be regarded as equally settled by the court of common sense that a person who repeats a slanderous tale is as much the parent of it as the first inventor—the hatcher is as bad as the layer, if not worse.

He who first forges the lie is assuredly guilty; but little or no harm would come of his deed if there were not persons willing to hear and to believe the calumny; and even then the mischief would be slight unless there were ready tongues to convey the story from place to place and so spread the evil. If it is true that the receiver is as bad as the thief, he who believes a lie is guilty as well as the man who utters it; how much more then is he an accomplice in the crime who repeats the falsehood, and finds it currency. Yet this is done very thoughtlessly, and when the slander is refuted, men seldom repent of having repeated it, though it is a sin for which they will have to answer before the Judge of all.

If I did not make the dagger, yet if I stab a man with it I am guilty of murder; if I did not concoct the accusation, yet if I injure my neighbour's character by repeating it, I am a partaker in the crime. To save ourselves from falling into this evil the safest course will be to be extremely incredulous of all libellous reports, and never under any circumstances to become tale-bearers. There are dogs whose delight it is to fetch and carry, and there can be no need that we should degrade ourselves by undertaking such an errand.

Plautus would have tale-bearers and tale-hearers alike punished by hanging, the one by the tongue and the other by the ears: we should soon be short of timber for gibbets if this witty sentence were carried out, but there is no need that any one of us should earn the right to swing among the company. If telephones and microphones are carried much further we shall have enough of hearing and over-hearing, and it will be wise for us to cultivate deafness when others are chattering. There would be very little lost if we were all to turn our vowels into mutes, and

conclude our table-talk with a full stop. The next time the black hen lays an egg let her sit upon it herself and bring out her own chicks. No sensible being would wish to stand step-father to a lie, or to be a cat's-paw to the devil when he chooses to roast good men in the fire of slander. The town-crier of the City of London has an honourable office, but to be common crier for the town of Falsehood is not desirable; the work ranks next to that of common informer.

16. Tempting Temptation

Tempting Temptation

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."—Psalms 1:1.

"Lead us not into temptation."—Matthew 6:13. The "Rock" of May 10, speaks of foxhunting parsons, and remarks:—"To come down to modern times, the late Rev. Joseph Berington, Roman Catholic chaplain at Buckland, Berks, and a writer on history, was fond of a run with the hounds. When visiting his patron's family, the Throckmortons, of Weston Underwood, Bucks, he was in the neighbourhood of two packs, and did not neglect the opportunity. He did not actually go 'to cover,' but rode out in the direction the hounds might take, and thus fell in with the hunt, and got half-a-day's sport without appearing to seek it. This was playing the politician to gratify his inclination. This anecdote was learned at a table where he has often dined, from personal friends of his own."

Why could not the man have hunted openly or not at all? If he felt ashamed of it, why did he do it? Thoroughbred fox-hunters must have despised him. The policy of the Rev. Joseph is followed by a great many in daily life; they complain of being tempted, and yet they carefully put themselves in the way of temptation; they profess to have been grievously misled by evil company, and yet they continue to stand in the way of sinners, and to delight themselves with their evil conversation. They express the greatest grief if they fall into drunkenness, and say that they have been "overtaken"; but notwithstanding this they carefully ride along the road which drunkenness is known to pursue, and, under the name of moderation, drink themselves fully up to the boundary line. They do not actually go "to cover," but they ride out in the direction which the hounds always take. They profess to be averse to frivolous amusements, to feasting, rioting, and the like, but they are pretty careful to call upon their friends when such things are going on, and so get half-a-day's sport without appearing to seek it. They are averse to infidelity, and yet peruse sceptical reviews; they dislike licentiousness, and yet spend hours over doubtful novels. They tempt the devil to tempt them, and go into dark lanes in order to be beset by their favourite sins.

Thus to excuse sin as many do is mere nonsense, or worse; such fooling may amuse conscience, and prevent its plainly speaking the truth; but it is altogether unworthy of an honest man. Excuses which hold no water are caught up under the notion that a bad excuse is better than none; the fact being that a bad excuse is worse than none, for it proves that the man has not the courage to defend what he has the audacity to do, nor the common honesty to take the responsibility of his own act and deed. Let us follow the advice of Solomon: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." We pity a man who catches an infectious disease, but we should cease to do so if we heard that he purposely went down to the fever hospital or wilfully rode in the small-pox carriage. If you go to live with a sweep you ought not to blame him if your linen loses its whiteness, or, if you do so, every one will

see through your inconsistency. If it be true that when you go to Rome you must do as Rome does, then do not go to Rome at all, and no such necessity will arise.

It is wonderful how circumstances appear to help a man when he wants to do wrong, and some there are who even dare to quote the fact as a reason why they ought not to be blamed. "They happened to be on the spot or they would never have thought of it"; thus they are profane enough to hint that providence itself misled them. This is only a repetition of Adam's plea, "The woman whom thou gavest me, she tempted me, and I did eat." Alas, the vile attempt to father sin upon the Lord himself is often made, but it is none the less horrible. Let us abandon such blasphemous endeavours to shift the responsibility of our actions, and give our consciences a fair chance of being heard.

17. Review At Aldershot

Review at Aldershot

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."—Psalms 60:4.

"Terrible as an army with banners"—Song of Solomon 6:4. The "Daily News" of May 14, in its report of the Review at Aldershot before the Queen, mentions—"The 49th, whose colour-party bore the tattered green flag that floated on the heights of Alma and over the trenches in front of Sebastopol, and served as a rallying point amid the mists of Inkernian; and the gallant 52nd, whose history has been untarnished from the first campaign in Hindostan, through all the Peninsular wars, beginning at Yimiera and ending at Waterloo, down to the conquest of Delhi." Soldiers appear to have an almost religious attachment to the colours of the regiment, and the more tattered they become the more they value them; and well they may, for they are in fact the materialised history of the host. They tell of the cruel rain of shot and shell, the dust and smoke of the conflict, and the battle, "with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood,"—terrible records truly, but as long as there are warriors, and courage in fight is valued, banners and standards must always be prized. The sacramental host of God's elect bears the standard of the truth, and has borne it these thousands of years, and the truth has become endeared to every soldier of the cross by all the conflicts through which we have borne it. Heresies and scepticisms have raged around the banner, but from the first campaign even until now it has gone on from victory to victory. The very thought of it stirs enthusiasm in the hearts of the warriors of Christ. Shall we ever desert it? Shall we suffer it to be trailed in the mire? God forbid. We will uplift it, and display it in the face of the enemy until the last great battle shall be fought, and we shall hear the triumphant shout, "Hallelujah! hallelujah! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

It has of late been proposed that the army of Christ should march without its banner, or that all the banners of philosophic sceptics should be stitched together and uplifted in its place. To this we solemnly demur. We will march under the old ensign; of the new ones we know nothing, except that they will lead us to defeat. Faith has won all her victories under the standard of revelation, and she expects to win all her future glory under the same unaltered and unalterable flag. Let others do as they will; as for us, the old, old gospel shall be our rallying point amid the mists of modern thought, and we hope to bear it from land to land throughout the whole campaign of this dispensation, till we shall see it borne; aloft at the coronation festival of our triumphant Lord.

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Ye soldiers of the cross;

Lift high his royal banner, It must not suffer loss. From victory unto victory His army shall he lead,
Till every foe is vanquish'd, And Christ is Lord indeed."

18. "Quis Separabit?"

"Quis Separabit?"

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" -Romans 8:35.

Another incident of the Review before the Queen, at Aldershot, is thus described by the "Daily News":—"The 86th (County Down) Regiment, with Lieutenant-Colonel Adams at its head, went by with a firm, elastic tread, never wavering as they passed the saluting point, but preserving the touch as if the old motto, 'Quis separabit?' had been instilled into every man."

We can scarcely credit that their motto, which is in somewhat questionable taste, can have any influence upon the 86th, but we are quite sure that it ought to operate very strongly upon those to whom it properly belongs. The question, "Who shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" should bind us first of all to the great Captain of our salvation. If he himself by inspiration forbids the fear of separation from himself, let us not act as if such a division were possible, but cling to him with all the tenacity of vital union. Shall the member be cut away from the body? the thought is too painful. Shall the branch be torn from the vine? the result would be deadly. Shall the stone be rent from the foundation? the overthrow would be terrible. Shall the bride be divorced from her husband? the consequences would be dishonour, poverty, destruction. No force of persecution shall ever drive us from our Lord through fear, and no fascination of pleasure shall tempt us from him through selfish hope. Closer and closer let us cling to him who is our one and only hope for time and for eternity. Defying things present and things to come, and the great master power of evil, let us cry "Quis separabit?" and march on our way to the marriage supper of the Lamb, through all the opposing hosts of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Equally influential should this motto be with regard to our union with our fellow-Christians. The church is one and indivisible: imperfections and infirmities are frequent causes of discord; but where charity rules, they cannot create disunion: the existence of the old man is a dividing power, but the new man is ever one, and draws and attracts to itself all life of the same kind. "We will not leave our brethren because we cannot agree with them in sentiment in all respects, but we will endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. We will not forsake our brethren because they are in poverty or disgrace, but we will regard them as suffering members of the one body. We will not even believe that death can separate, but our faith and love shall follow to the skies the members of the general assembly and church of the first-born who have taken wings for the seats above. Our hearts are gladdened while we sing—

"One family we dwell in him, One church above, beneath;

Though now divided by the stream, The narrow stream of death."

Our love takes a sweep which, in its circle, includes all who are one in Christ, whether in heaven or in earth. It shall be ours throughout life to promote the visible union of the people of God, and never will we lend a hand to tear the seamless vesture of our Lord. Sinking selfishness, and

cultivating ever the mind which was in Christ Jesus, we will labour to carry out the spirit of our great Master's prayer, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." So will we challenge the dispersing influences of sin and the world with the grand question, "Quis separabit?" never wavering as we pass the saluting point, but preserving the touch as if the old motto had been instilled into every man.

Reader, are you a peace-maker or are you a divider? Search your heart and see; for it is an important enquiry. The divider of churches will have hard work to prove himself a Christian, since it is written, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." More love would enable us to work in harmony with those who are now the victims of our dislike. Unity in error and in sin is increase of evil; but unity in the truth and in good works is so desirable that woe is unto that man by whom the offence cometh.

"Quis separabit" it seems is the motto of an order of knighthood, that of St. Patrick. The nationality indicated does not suggest the most united and peaceable of the human race, but the question suggests such a determined unity that we would urge each Christian church to write it upon its walls. When will true brotherhood become so strong among us that nothing can rend our churches, but all men shall exclaim, "See how these Christians love one another"?

19. Life Versus Machinery

Life versus Machinery "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—John 4:24. The "Daily News" describing the "Dreadnought" says:—"The system of auxiliary engines, "which is met with at every turn, engines for pumping, ventilating, feeding, starting, steering, &c, has been finished and tested, but their maintenance in a serviceable condition will be obviously one of the chief cares of the engineers on board. In a word, the Dreadnought is an example of the most modern battle-ship in which cranks and pistons, valves and cylinders, take the place of the bone and muscle of our blue jackets. "Whether it is wise thus to dispense entirely with human energy and substitute for it pulseless mechanism is, of course, a moot point, for if machinery cannot be wounded, it is obvious that a gunner is more easily replaceable in action than a broken chain or leaky valve. Fortunate it is for us that we do not rely alone upon clockwork ships, like those of the Dreadnought and Thunderer class."

Assuredly there is sound common sense in this, and it is applicable to other matters besides ships of war. There is in human nature a tendency to permit religion itself to become mechanical: priests, temples, sacraments, the performing of services, organs, choirs, all go towards the making up of a machine which may do our worship for us, and leave us all our time to think about bread and cheese and the latest fashions. As cranks, pistons, valves, and cylinders take the place of bone and muscle on board ship, so millinery, bellows and ritual take the place of hearts and spirits in the place of worship. Certain outward appliances may be well enough in their place, but they too easily become substitutes for real heart-work and spiritual devotion, and then they are mischievous to the last degree. The preacher may use notes if he needs them, but his manuscript may steal from him that which is the very essence and soul of preaching, and yet his elaborate paper and his elegant reading may conceal from him the nakedness of the land. Praise may be rendered with musical instruments, if you will; but the danger is lest the grateful adoration should evaporate, and nothing should remain but the sweet sounds. The organ can do no more than help us in noise - making, and it is a mere idol, if we imagine that it increases the acceptance of our praises before the Lord. Outward ordinances may be very properly used, and two of them at least are solemnly enjoined; but human nature is apt to forget the substance in the shadow, and in such a case the good is turned into evil, the road is regarded as the end, and the symbol is made to rival the truth which it sets forth. It were almost better for us to be placed where outward signs were out of reach, provided that the inner fellowship were more valued and more directly sought from the Holy Spirit. The Lord never intended that religion should be a performance to be done for us, or a business to be carried out by mechanical actions; it is an inward matter and requires the life of love, the vigour of consecration, and the intense energy of zeal. In the service of the Lord everything should be hearty and voluntary, and nothing should be mechanical and perfunctory. Hireling worship is never worth that which is paid for it. Religion provided by authority and carried on without the choice of the people is a mockery. When the ark was put upon a new cart, we read that "the oxen shook it," and very soon the entire proceedings were marred and stopped by the breach which the Lord made upon Uzzah. The primary fault lay in using bullocks which needed to be driven: the divine

ordinance was that the ark should be carried upon the willing shoulders of faithful men, whose honour and privilege it was thus to wait upon the Lord. It was not a service which brute force could properly perform: it needed that chosen bearers should reverently carry the sacred token of Jehovah's presence, praying and praising while they bore along their sacred load. No church can possibly prosper unless its work is carried on by holy, devout, willing men, full of divine life, moving cheerfully in their work because they love it with their whole hearts. The labourer is worthy of his hire, and ought to have it, but he must not labour for his hire, but for love of his Master, or else his work will be an abomination in the sight of God. Nothing will ever compensate for personal enthusiasm: this we must have, or the work of the Lord among us will flag. Those who preach or teach as a matter of course, much in the same way as a piston moves, or a valve opens, or a wheel revolves, are not acceptable in the sight of God." God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Are we not all in danger of trusting to religious machinery, and leaving the work of the Lord to be done by secretaries, committees, missionaries, and so forth, whom we half regard as substitutes for ourselves? No doubt they will do the work, and do it tolerably well, as the engines do on board the "Dreadnought"; but if anything is to be accomplished which will last in the day of trial, we must, every one of us, be ready to take our part in the great battle of the Lord. At present the most of professors suppose that a good work is going on, but they do not seem to know how or when; they leave God's work to anybody or nobody, It will be an evil day when the servants of Christ cease to take a personal interest in the work of winning souls: societies may come to grief, broken chains and leaky valves will occur in such machinery, and what then? We shall censure our substitutes, but the burden of blame will not thus be shifted. We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and every man must bear his own burden before the Lord.

Fortunate is it for the true church of God that she does not rely upon clockwork service, but through divine grace has at her command faith, love, courage, heroism, and consecration: above all, the Spirit of God dwells in her, and furnishes her with life, wisdom, and strength, so that in the day of battle she will utterly defeat her foes. We see this life and force breaking out in many places in new works for the Lord Jesus, and frequently it takes very irregular forms, greatly to the distress of spiritual Tories, who must have all things cut and dried after the most ancient fashion. We confess that we, also, are somewhat perplexed at certain of the more outrageous forms of religious energy, and we are sorry to see so manifest a tendency to work apart from recognised organisations. We should rejoice to see intense zeal in continuous exercise, in fine order for immediate service, but working daily in the regular service of the church of God. The blue-jackets are just as much under command as the pistons and valves, and so should the living and earnest among us learn discipline, and act in harmony with the churches to which they belong. We want more of those men of Zebulon who were expert in war, and could keep rank. But even if there should be occasional irregularity it is better than the monotony of mere mechanism. No doubt the eccentricities of life are sometimes troublesome, but they are nobler than the regularities of dead formality: give us life under law to Christ, and there can be no doubt about it, we shall then have found the noblest form of force—that manifestation of power by which the Holy Spirit delights to work.

20. Home Sickness

Home-Sickness "When shall I come and appear before God?"—Psalms 42:2.

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion"—Psalms 137:1. The "Globe" has a paragraph upon homesickness worth preserving, and, as the Puritans would say, improving.

"Among minor maladies of the sentimental order is one from which probably a good many of our army-reserve men are Buffering more or less severely just now. 'Home-sickness' is usually regarded as something altogether peculiar to schoolboys. According to Dr. H. Rey, who calls it nostalgia, and who has just written an interesting article on the subject, this is by no means the case. He considers it a form of insanity from which grown men often suffer severely, and of which they sometimes die. He gives particulars of his observations among the French soldiery, where it is of very frequent occurrence, more particularly among the infantry. The cavalry man, he thinks, is less liable to suffer in this way, probably because he has less leisure time on his hands. It is the young foot soldier who is most prone to pine for his native place, and this is pre-eminently the case with the men of Bretagne, among whom he has observed more instances than in those from all parts of France together. The young conscript, he says, becomes gloomy and taciturn, loses his appetite, is fond of solitude, and often gives way to tears. Then follow evident effects of this upon his general health. He suffers from incessant headache, and is unable to sleep, and after a while, unless he can be aroused and interested in his surroundings and distracted from his dreams of home and friends, gradually becomes the victim of general prostration, followed by delirium, and sometimes by death. Dr. Rey believes that children do not often suffer in this way, nor do very old persons; and women, he has observed, are less liable to it than men, especially men who have been transported from quiet country scenes, town men for the most part forming new associations far more readily than the natives of a country place."

If these men, the most of whom were born in some poor village, by. no means remarkable either for architecture or for scenery, pine for their homes, how much more may those who have a mansion above, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Born from above, our native country is heaven itself and sometimes the longing to be there steals over us. It is no insanity, but it is a panting which the ungodly cannot comprehend. We grow weary of the temptations, the disquietudes, and the failures of earth, and sigh for the fair city within whose gates there shall never enter anything that defileth: our heart goes out towards the Lord Jesus, who is altogether lovely, and then we pant for the day when we shall see the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off. The more we love, the more we long to be with the object of our affection. It is not that we are miserable here below, for godliness hath the promise of the life which now is, and we have foretastes of glory even now; but still the Father's house is very dear to the loving child, and the sight of the heavenly Bridegroom is longed for by his expectant spouse. "When shall the marriage supper be set, and the guests be invited? It seems a long and weary time since he went up to prepare a place for us. Has he not finished that work ere this, and will he

not soon come according to his promise to receive us unto himself, that where he is there we may be also? It is no marvel if a believer has to describe himself as Samuel Rutherford did, as "a man often borne down and hungry, and waiting for the marriage supper of the Lamb." Very naturally do saintly souls sing—

"With hope deferred, oft sick and faint, 'Why tarries he?' I cry:

Let not the Saviour chide my haste, For then would I reply:

'May not an exile, Lord, desire His own sweet land to see? May not a captive seek release, A prisoner to be free?

'A child, when far away, may long For home and kindred dear; And she that waits her absent lord May sigh till he appear.

'Ah, leave me not in this base world, A stranger still to roam;

Come, Lord, and take me to thyself, Come, Jesus, quickly come! '"

Do my readers confess that such a feeling never affects them? Does that homesickness never come over you at all? Let the fact cause you great searchings of heart, for surely something is amiss. Have you a home above? Are you quite sure? If so, if you never sigh to enter it, are you not rooting yourself too closely to the world? "Ah," said one, when he looked upon a friend's house and gardens, "these are the things that make us loth to die!" Wealth, or even moderate comfort, will often act like birdlime and hold the birds of Paradise prisoners to carnal joys. When the nest is well lined men do not wish to quit it; they dread the very thought of dying, and have no desire to depart and to be with Christ. It should not be so: if this world of vanity seems better to you than the realm of glory, your judgment is diseased, and the carnal nature is sadly hindering the aspirations of the divine life.

Still, we may not allow homesickness to unfit us for present duty, or cause us in any way to desert our colours. It is wrong to pine to be in heaven because we are growing idle, A labourer who is always longing for Saturday night, or watching for the time to leave off work, is a sorry specimen of the British workman. A gardener was overheard to say that the days were not long enough for him, for so much needed doing. This was more like the true spirit; but there are not many of his stamp. Many do as little as ever they can, and would welcome any sort of excuse for seceding from the busy throng, and living for ever with Lord Do-no-more. Of the service of our great Master it is wicked to grow weary. Because we are not successful in preaching, or because we cannot win every child in our Sunday-school class to Jesus, shall we become sluggards, and sigh for the wings of a dove that we might fly away and be at rest? While there are souls to be won for Jesus here below by our means we are not wanted in heaven, nor should we be welcome there if we could go. We should evidently be out of sympathy with the heavenly host, who never indulge the thought of escaping from their Master's service.. Shall heaven be a rendezvous for runaways, a shelter for idle heads? Is it not written that the glorified serve the Lord day and night in his temple? How would this suit the deserter? He dreams of flowery mounts and seas of heavenly rest, but there are no such things in heaven or earth for those who are unfaithful to their Lord. Did Jonah find rest when he fled from the presence of the Lord to go unto Tarshish? Did he not many a time wish himself at Nineveh rather than in the depths of the sea? As long as there are poor people to

be comforted, ignorant children to be instructed, desponding spirits to be lifted up, so long as God has any work for us to do, let us stand to our guns and never dream of going home.

Neither may we whine out a desire to go to heaven because we are in a spiritual pet. There are some who do this; they become sulky and disagreeable with everybody and everything. Nothing suits them; the church, which appears to others warmhearted, they denounce as having neither love nor life in it; and the service, in which others find pleasure, has grown flat, stale, and unprofitable to them. The world is a howling wilderness to them, and they take care to keep up the howling themselves; the church is cold and lifeless, and they seem anxious to be in their own souls fair samples of it, and then they cry, "Woe is me," and wring their hands and wish to be gone. They prognosticate terrible calamities, and to save their own skins they pray it may not be in their days, but that they may be taken from the evil to come. "Worse than this, they even quarrel with their Lord. They have served him these many years, and yet he has never given them a kid that they may make merry with their friends'; they rebel against their afflictions, and, by kicking against the pricks, they drive the goad further into their flesh, and then sigh to be gone from this weary world. Like naughty little children, who will not play any more because they cannot have everything their own way, they want to leave the engagements of life and go they scarce know whither. If we are homesick for this reason, we may depend upon it that we shall not at present go home to heaven, for we are not in a fit state for that holy region. They do not want rebellious spirits and sulky souls up yonder, for there the will of the Lord is the joy of all his servants. When faith and love and hope produce the feeling, it is well to be in a strait betwixt two, willing to depart, but yet feeling that to abide in the flesh is more needful for the good of some whom we would benefit, for Christ's sake. It is the sign of a right state of heart when this homesickness comes upon us, not because we are tired, nor because we are angry, but simply because we long to be rid of infirmity and imperfection, because we desire to escape from temptation and from the filthy conversation of the wicked, that we may see the face of our Lord, and bow before his glorious majesty. In such a spirit we may cry with Rutherford—"O when will we meet? Glorious Lord Jesus take wide steps! O, my Lord, come over the mountains with a stride! O, fairest among the sons of men, why stayest thou so long away? O heavens, move fast! O time, run, run, and hasten the marriage day!"

21. Religious Sluggards

Religious Sluggards "Their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord"—Nehemiah 3:5.

"Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep."—Proverbs 19:15.

"Let us not sleep, as do others"—1 Thessalonians 5:6. An American paper has the following in its corner of wit and anecdote:—"A Sunday-school boy at Maysville, Ky., was asked by the superintendent the other day if his father was a Christian. 'Yes, sir,' he replied, 'but he is not working at it much.'" In too many cases the same statement might be made, for multitudes have a name to live and are dead, and the love of many has waxed cold. Religion is a profession with them, but it is not accompanied by practice. Now, of all pursuits in the world the Christian profession requires the most energetic action, and it utterly fails where diligence and zeal are absent. What can a man do as a farmer, a merchant, a carpenter, or even as a beggar unless he follows up his calling with activity and perseverance? A sluggard desireth and hath nothing, whatever his trade may be. What then can he hope to win who calls himself a Christian and neither learns of Christ as his teacher, nor follows him as his Master, nor serves him as his Prince? Salvation is not by works, but it is salvation from idleness; we are not saved because we are earnest; but he who is not earnest has great reason to question whether he is saved. Do you know a Christian who never attends week-day services, and only comes to public worship once on the Sunday?" He is not working at it much." Do you know a professor who is not engaged in the Sabbath School, the Visiting Society, the Tract Association, or in any other form of usefulness? "He is not working at it much." Do you know a man who gives little or nothing to the work of the Lord, neglects family prayer, never says a word for Jesus, and never intercedes for perishing souls? "He is not working at it much." Perhaps he is the best judge of his religion and does not think it worth being diligent about. We heard of one who said his religion did not cost him a shilling a year, and a friend observed that he thought it was more than it was worth; and in the present case we may conclude that a man's religion is a very poor affair when "he does not work at it much." Our Lord does not set before us the Christian life as a dainty repose, but as a warfare and a struggle. He bids us "strive to enter in at the strait gate," and never suggests to us that we can enter into his rest if we are not willing to wear his yoke. Faith saves us, but it is the faith which worketh by love; all our salvation is wrought in us by the Lord both as to willing and doing, but yet we are to work it out with fear and trembling; which also by his grace we will henceforth do.

"Sure I must fight if I would reign;

Increase my courage, Lord!

I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, Supported by thy word."

22. The Withering of Unbelief

The Withering of Unbelief

"Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.

Let them be as the grass upon the housetops, which withereth afore it groweth up:

wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom."—Psalms 129:5-7.

"Notwithstanding the humidity of the season, the grass crop on Wandsworth Bridge will not be submitted to tender this year." This witty paragraph, taken from the "South London Press" an interesting local paper, of May 25, refers to a bridge upon which there is little traffic. Of course the grass will not be mown, for it has no depth of earth to grow upon, and is of no value. The text which we have quoted here finds an illustration. It is true a bridge is not a housetop, but in scantiness of soil it is much the same. The opponents of the gospel are very numerous, but they never come to anything; they are always confounded before they can well establish their theories. Various orders of infidels have sprung up suddenly, and have almost as suddenly disappeared, and even those which have endured for a longer season have ultimately passed away, leaving scarcely any memorial behind them. Unbelief is an unhealthy and unsatisfactory plant; there is nothing in it; it yields neither seed for the sower nor bread for the eater; it is not even good enough to fodder the cattle with; the very lowest of mankind find it unsatisfactory meat. Rationalists should never be too confident of their favourite scheme, for it is only one of a long series of shortlived weeds, and will be sure to wither before long and to be denounced by some other order of advanced thinkers. Infidelity like Canaan of old under the Hivites and the Jebusites, is a land which eateth up the inhabitants thereof. Scepticism derives most of its life from opposition, it has no natural stamina, and is rather a negative than a real existence. Little cause can there be for the citizens of Zion to be afraid of such adversaries; instead of dismay we may even breathe defiance." The virgin daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee." It were well if this sacred confidence were more common among us; for it is to be deplored that, as each crop of the housetop grass of unbelief springs up, much unjustifiable alarm is manifested, and this does most of the mischief. There is really no cause to fear things so essentially feeble and self-destructive as systems of unbelief. The wooden guns of the Chinese are not more ridiculous than the philosophies of infidels.

"Ashamed they fly, they start aloof, Each foe of Sion flies;

They are as grass upon the roof, That ere th' uprooting dies; Where no glad store may reaper find To fill his gathering hand, Nor high their bosom heap, who bind The sheaves in wreathed band. Where never traveller as he past, Did prayer or greeting frame, Or say 'God's blessing o'er thee last We bless you in God's name."

23. Sympathy

Sympathy "Touched with the feeling of our infirmities.."—Hebrews 4:15.

"The king also himself passed over the brook Kidron."—2 Samuel 15:23.

"The Queen and Mr. Bright.—Yesterday Her Majesty the Queen sent from Windsor Castle a telegraphic message to Rochdale, expressing her deep sympathy with Mr. John Bright in the irreparable bereavement he is now sustaining. Mr. Bright acknowledged Her Majesty's kind consideration."—Daily News, May 15.

It is thought to be a great honour to receive royal sympathy; how much greater to enjoy continually the sympathy of the King of kings! Our Lord whose diadem was made of thorns has secret ways of communing with his tried servants, and assuring them that in all their afflictions he is afflicted. A mysterious telegraph works between the courts above and the mourner here below, and the message is quietly sent—"When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee." No doubt the fact that the Queen herself has experienced a never-to-be-forgotten bereavement has made her heart tender towards those who suffer in like manner; she understands the sadness of a lonely heart through having lost the well-beloved partner of her life. We all of us learn sympathy by being made familiar with suffering. The same truth holds good in the higher sphere of the perfect human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was in this respect made perfect through suffering, and consequently he hastens to send by his Spirit assurances of sympathy to all his afflicted people, assurances which shall be a sacred balm for their sorrows, and cause them to find a honeyed sweetness in their cups of gall.

"There is no heart like the heart of Jesus, Filled with a tender lore: Not a throb or throe our hearts can know, But he suffered before."

How greatly these kindly deeds of her Majesty tend to secure the loyalty of her subjects and to set her on high in the estimation of her people. Thoughtful people are not fascinated by the pomp of royalty, they look to the character of the monarch, and are far more charmed by generous acts than by diamonds and gold. Our own Lord and King above is exceeding glorious, but his conquering glory lies in his superlative love and matchless tenderness. He hath remembered our souls in adversity, and therefore is he very glorious in our eyes; we praise him without ceasing because he abounds towards us in lovingkindness, and his mercy endureth for ever.

"Let his dear love our hearts inflame, That perfect love which faileth never; And sweet Hosannas to His name Through Heaven's vast dome go up for ever!

24. Benefit of Trial

Benefit of Trial "Patience worketh experience, and experience, hope."—Romans 5:4.

"Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear;

and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them"—1 Samuel 17:36. The "Times" May 23rd, says:—"Experiments are to be resumed at Shoeburyness for the purpose of gaining information as to the penetrative power of steel and wrought-iron projectiles and the resistance of specially prepared targets. Some of the results already obtained have produced most unexpected and surprising experiences, the most remarkable being found during a trial of a composite steel and iron target. When fired against the steel face of the target, the projectiles broke up badly, but when the target was reversed the shot not only penetrated the softer wrought iron, but went clean through the steel as well. This is theoretically accounted for by the supposition that in passing through the wrought iron the metal of the projectile gets set up in a more compact body, and is therefore better able to endure the shock of the heavier impact." If this theory be correct, it is clear that passing through one form of opposition prepares the projectile to pass through a yet sterner one; and here we have an illustration of the beneficial influence of affliction upon the child of God. He is materially strengthened by the trials through which he passes; he is braced up, consolidated, and, in a right sense, hardened by what he undergoes. If the believer had to meet at first the severest of his troubles, like the shot striking upon the Steel face of the target, he might be unequal to the task; but those trials which he has already undergone, like the shot's passage through the iron, are so arranged by providence that they harden him for those which are to follow. We should naturally have thought that the shot would lose its force in passing through the wrought iron, and so we might have imagined that believers would lose their strength and patience while enduring a series of troubles; but instead thereof, as the projectile by its passage through the iron is prepared to pass through the steel, so the earlier trials of the believer render him capable of enduring those which are yet more terrible. Sanctified trials are not our destruction but our instruction, not our breaking but our making.

There are great wonders in the material world, and there are equal marvels in the spiritual world. Only by experiment do the gunners at Shoeburyness come to understand the results of their science, and only by experience can believers understand the influence of trials when God sanctifies them by his grace. Often are the engineers surprised by their discoveries, and even more often is this the case with experimental Christians. It would seem possible to drive a shot through anything whether it be iron or steel, and so all things are possible to him that believeth; yet the projectile can do most when it has become most compact, and so can the believer when he is most consolidated by trial. A hard target can be penetrated by a still harder shot, and when we meet with great difficulties we must pray for a great heart; firm opposition must be overcome by a firm will, and hard trials by a harder resolve. Perhaps we shall never reach this state of compacted manhood except by stern adversity: we shall not be able to face the Philistine until we have first slain both the lion and the bear. Weapons intended for stern battles must be annealed in the fire;

guns must go to the proof-house before they are trusted in action, and vessels which are to ride Atlantic billows must bear many a thousand blows from the hammer before they are launched. In all our trials, when truly sanctified, growth is the result, and by bearing we learn to bear more. Through affliction patience must have her perfect work, that we may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

25. Watching

Watching "We made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night."—Nehemiah 4:9.

"I will stand upon my watch."—Habakkuk 2:1.

"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.- Revelation 16:15. The "Daily News," May 27, in speaking of the border countries, says:" Every parish and township in old times had its watchers of the forts and passes. In the 'Leges Marchiarum,' compiled by William Nicholson, Bishop of Carlisle, we can read the names of the fords and the appointed sentinels. ' First, the watch along the water of Warn, from Warn-mouth to Doxford Burn, William Maners to set one watchman between his house and the Blake dyke,' and so forth. The statesman had to keep a keen eye on the beacon where the fire shone out, when the Scots or Armstrongs crossed the march. 'And whosoever bydes from the fray, or turns again while the beaken burns, shall be holden as partaker to the enemies,' Thea there was quick mounting on horse, tufts of lighted straw were fastened on the spearheads, and the slot dogs were set on the trail." In this manner alone could the inhabitants of the border hold their lands or even their lives, and their condition is a striking picture of the spiritual position of every child of God while yet he sojourns here below. We are in an enemy's country, and that enemy may at any moment pounce upon us to kill and to despoil. We never know at what hour temptation may come, hence we must sleep in armour, and never neglect the watch for a single hour. Each man must watch his own heart, and keep the door of his lips, for it is written," What I say unto you 1 say unto all, Watch."

United watchfulness for the protection of the church, as to its purity, its doctrines, its prosperity, should never be neglected, although it is to be feared that it is seldom thought of. Few seem to keep their eyes open to the general good of the church, but most men leave it to the ministers. It should not be so, but each man should himself be the "watchman between his house and the Blake dyke," pacing to and fro upon his beat, with sleepless vigilance, ready to sound an alarm at any moment. When the enemy draws near, believers should never "byde" from the fray, but each one should take his part in the struggle, like a good soldier of Jesus Christ: and so long as the controversy lasts he must not shun the field, or turn again" while the beacon burns," lest he be "holden as partaker with the enemies." This is a time in which sentinels are peculiarly necessary, and in which sleeping at the post is a seven-fold treachery." Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." The love of peace throws many off their guard. They close their eyes to the errors and sins which are invading the church, and so secure a name for being charitable, but surely it is ill to receive praise for negligence, and obtain favour by compromising truth. If damage be done by our fear of being charged with bigotry, our Lord will call us to account, and it will be a poor consolation to be able to remember that we thereby earned the praises of men. It is no recommendation to a warrior when the king's enemies are enraptured with him, and in our own case here is double reason to watch our ways when the world speaks well of us. Watch your friends as well as your enemies, for our worst foes dwell at home.

"Watch, for the lime is short;
Watch, while 'tis called to-day;
Watch, lest temptation overcome;
Watch, Christian, watch and pray!
Watch, for the flesh is weak;
Watch, for the foe is strong;
Watch, lest the Bridegroom knock in vain;
Watch, though He tarry long!
Chase slumber from thine eyes;
Chase doubting from thy breast;
Thine is the promised prize Of heaven's eternal rest.
Watch, Christian, watch and pray;
Thy Saviour watched for thee, Till from His brow the blood-sweat poured Great drops of agony."

26. Moore's Remonstrance

Moore's Remonstrance "Should such a man as I flee?"—Nehemiah 6:11.

"He that endureth to the end shall be saved."-Matthew 10:22. On Tuesday, May 28th, Earl Russell died. In biographical notices given by most of the papers allusion is made to the proposition of Lord John Russell to retire from public life while yet a young man in consequence of some serious discouragement which he had received. It is stated that he was deterred from so doing by the expostulations of Thomas Moore, and quotations are made from the "Remonstrance" which that sparkling poet addressed to him. On reading the poem it struck us at once that many of the remarks would apply in other and higher senses to any Christian who should be tempted to withdraw himself from the service of his Lord. The first three verses of the poem we will quote at length:—

"What thou, with thy genius, thy youth, and thy name—Thou, born of a Russell—whose instinct to run
The accusom'd career of thy sires, is the same
As the eaglet's to soar with his eyes on the sun!
Whose nobility comes to thee, stamp'd with a seal
Far, far more ennobling than monarch e'er set,
With the blood of thy race, offer'd up for the weal
Of a nation, that swears by that martyrdom yet!

Shalt thou be faint-hearted and turn from the strife,
From the mighty arena where all that is grand
And devoted, and pure, and adorning in life, 'Tis for high-thoughted spirits like thine to command?"

Born from above, and bearing the name of Christian, shall the child of God cease to battle for that which is good? Conscious of a sacred instinct which impels him onward and upward, shall he sit down in despair or retire into inglorious ease? Serving a Lord who spared not his heart's blood for man's redemption, and following in the track of thousands of martyrs who counted not their lives dear unto them, shall we selfishly shun self-denial and avoid reproach? No, by God's grace, let us never dream of timorous silence, nor think for an instant that our light can be spared from the darkening horizon of our times. We may have neither eloquence nor genius, but such as we have we will consecrate to the last moment of our lives to him who hath bought us by his precious blood. We may address to every timorous heart the closing verse of Tom Moore, altered to suit the case.

Thus ransomed, thou never canst sleep in the sbade; If the stirrings of impulse, the terror of fame,
And the charms of thy cause have not power to persuade, Yet think how to Jesus thou'rt pledged
by thy name.

He who wears the name of Christian is sworn to sustain the cause of God and truth with the last drop that warms his veins.

27. H.C. Wants Money

H. C. Wants Money "He began to be in want.—Luke 15:14.

"The Lord is my Shepherd; 1 shall not want."-Psalms 23:1. The "Times" of May 29, has the following advertisement:—" H. C. wants money." So do a great many more, but everybody does not publish the fact, for it would not alter it to make it known. We suppose that H. C. has some person in his eye who will read the advertisement, and send on the ready cash; and if so, it is very wise on his part to make his need known. There is a secret understanding between H. C. and some unknown friend, and these few words will be understood by the person to whom they are addressed. It is a happy circumstance for all believers that they also can make known their requests with certainty that there is One who will supply their needs." Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Our petitions will be understood by our Father who seeth in secret, for he has appointed prayer to be the means of communicating with himself. H. C. would be very foolish not to advertise if by so doing his poverty can be supplied: is it not the height of folly to restrain prayer before God? Who would not ask, when it is written—"Ask and ye shall receive "?

"H. G. wants money." Of this he seems to be well aware; but there is another deeper and more pressing want which belongs to all men, and yet very few persons appear to be conscious of it. The great want of the soul is Christ: to obtain an interest in Jesus and his salvation is the one thing needful, but men let this go and put a very secondary matter into its place: hence H. C. wants money, and all the other letters of the alphabet want this also. Money is called by many" the needful," and the getting of it is styled "minding the main chance." Many men will continue to want money to the end of the chapter; but he who wants grace may have it for the asking.

Happy are we that in spiritual things our wants are already supplied in Christ Jesus, and no man need long advertise that he wants grace. It would, however, be a happy sign if we could hear that H. C. and millions more were earnest in declaring that they want mercy.

"H. C. wants money." How comes he to want it? Has he been spending too freely, or is he out of a situation, or does he lie sick? If he wants money, and is in good health, why does he not earn it himself? "Why does he degrade himself by begging? A host of questions arise, which it would not be easy to answer. When we are in want of necessary temporal things we should ask ourselves the reason why; for often we may be helped to shape our course by the answer which truth compels us to give. God has usually some design when he allows us to suffer poverty. Birds and beasts are tamed and trained by hunger, and men are instructed by their wants. May H. C. become a wiser and a better man through being in present need, and whenever we are in a like case may our want of money make us rich.

"H. C. wants money" Possibly his desires need cutting down, and if he could be contented with what he has his wants would vanish. We know many whose means are very slender, whose property might all be tied up in a handkerchief, and yet they do not want, for they live upon the

perpetual supplies of the Great Lord of providence, and they hear him saying, "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." True riches belong to those who have God for their portion. Between the words God and Gold there is but little difference in letters, but an infinite difference in sense. Gold in millions can never fill the heart of man, but God is able to make the heart supremely blessed even when no outward possessions are within reach. Reader, do not be a gold worshipper," for the love of money is the root of all evil"; be a worshipper of God, for the love of God is the source of all good. A word in the ear of those who want to make their fortunes. The Bible tells you how your fortune can be made. It will do you good to look out the passage for yourself, especially if you follow its golden advice. See Matthew 6:33.

28. Striking of the Ironclad

Sinking of the Ironclad "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished."—2 Samuel 1:27.

"Ye see my casting down and are afraid."—Job 6:21. The newspapers, of June 1st, contained paragraphs similar to the following:—"Three ironclad ships—the Grosser Kurfurst, Koenig Wilhelin, and Preussen, left Wilhelmshafen for Plymouth, on Wednesday night, and were reported off Dover, at 8 a.m. on Friday morning, May 31st. The weather was calm and a slight wind blowing, when about five miles due south of Sandgate Castle, the Koenig Wilhelm ran into the Grosser Kurfurst and sank her. The ship went down in a few seconds with the larger part of her crew."

We mourn over this sudden wreck and the dreadful loss of life, and then we take breath and moralize. Peace has its dangers as well as war. No enemy had ever fired a shot at the huge ironclad, but it perished by a friend, and that not by treachery but by pure mischance. There was scarcely a ripple upon the waters, but the smoothness of the sea did not secure the proud vessel from sinking into the deep; the air was clear, the accident was not occasioned by a fog, but no result came from this circumstance except that the destruction was the more visible to the astonished spectators. Thus too have men who seemed capable of great deeds perished before our eyes by the hand of one of their own comrades, and that not by wicked intent but by an unwise movement never meant to involve such ruin. A hasty word has been spoken, evil feelings have been aroused, and the injured man has no longer been numbered with the professing people of God. We never dreamed that such a result could happen, and yet it has occurred when all has been apparently going well: there has been no persecution, no heresy, no schism, but the man has been offended, and has passed away. It seemed as if none could injure the ironclad professor, and yet in an instant he has ceased to be a member of the squadron. We have looked on awe-stricken as we have seen the apparently sound professor suddenly sink in the deep waters of sin never to be heard of again. Keep us, O Lord, yea, keep us every moment, lest we come to an untimely end. Even in the company of our own brethren we are in danger unless thou thyself shalt be on board our vessel and preserve it from itself.

There is another aspect of this occurrence which has somewhat impressed us. This was the "German Squadron of Evolution;" fit name, and fit country to remind us of the school of modern-thought who proudly float upon our seas at this time and threaten the peace of our churches, These philosophers are all ironclads, and cannot be touched by the heaviest guns of those poor simple souls who believe in the Bible and its plenary inspiration. Nevertheless we need not fear them, for happily they destroy one another, and that very readily, as if they were created on purpose for this and nothing else. A little change in the steering and they ram each other to the bottom. As it was of old so is it now, "the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another." One school of unbelief effectually sweeps away another. So let it be. In perfect peace the true believer may, "stand still and see the

salvation of God." Already over scores of ironclad infidelities we may sing," the depths have covered them, they sank into the bottom like a stone." The fishing boats in the neighbourhood of the huge monitors did admirable service by rescuing many of the drowning sailors, and so may true-hearted men hover around the huge infidelities of the period, and snatch here and there a sinking doubter from destruction. It would be idle for smacks and luggers to attack an ironclad; they can far better distinguish themselves by coming to the rescue in the hour of distress; and in the same way simple-minded believers, who know nothing of controversy, can do a vast amount of service by bringing salvation to those who are ready to perish. Let us not argue, but let us love. We will not confront the sceptical with reasoning, but, by God's Spirit, we will save them by the gospel and by believing prayer.

29. Tests For Diamonds

Tests for Diamonds "The Lord trieth the righteous"—Psalms 11:5.

"Try my reins and my heart."—Psalms 26:2. The following letter suggests thought:—"to the editor of the times.

"Sir,—Already a panic seems to have been created by the report in The 'Times' of to-day of frauds in connection with imitation jewelry and diamonds known as the 'Waterkloof.' It may allay much misapprehension if those of your readers who have recently purchased diamonds of which they have any doubt would submit them to a very simple test—viz., the file. By drawing across the surface of any imitation diamond a small steel file, an effect is produced as highly detrimental to the spurious as it is satisfactory to the genuine article. To the uninitiated no better test presents itself. Your obedient servant,

F. W. Streeter.

New Bond-street,

June 6."

True faith in God is a gem more precious than the diamond, but alas! among his many inventions, man has found out how to imitate faith, and he has done it so well that to the external observer it is difficult to tell the spurious article from the faith of God's elect? It can however be known by trial, and the great owner of all the true faith in the world is very careful to apply fitting tests in due time. So sure is he to put all grace to the proof that experienced men have made bold to say that untried faith is not faith at all.

Sometimes the small steel file which the Lord uses is the preaching of the word. Searching doctrines unpalatable to the unrenewed mind are brought forward, and the mere pretender is offended. Our Lord on one occasion uttered certain hard sayings, and the file operated so effectually that many went back and walked no more with him: but his true disciples did not go away, for they said "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." The preaching of a faithful minister will act as a file discerning between the true and the false, as it is written, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth."

False doctrine acts in an opposite way, but with the same result. The superficial professor, whose knowledge is altogether- of the head is carried away with plausible arguments and bewitching words, while the man who is taught of God rejects falsehood with prompt decision. The evil teachers of the age would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect, and as this is not possible, the elect remain in their steadfastness, and the mere pretenders are driven hither and thither. The file of persecution, which was more largely used in ages past, is still in its measure employed by the great discerner of spirits. Under biting sarcasms and cutting jests, base-born professors soon show that they are made of yielding stuff; their piety is scratched and defaced, and they cease to be numbered among the jewels of the Lord: on the other hand, true faith

"endureth all things," and even derives benefit from that which is so detrimental to the hypocrite. The more the genuine child of God is reproached and despised the more does he shine with the brightness of the terrible crystal, and the more fully is he recognised by the eyes of the watchers, and the holy ones, as being precious in the sight of the Lord. The common temptations of life are another file, and in the hand of God serve valuable purposes as tests. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the passions of the flesh, and the suggestions of Satan, soon detect the paste gem, while none of these things operate to the destruction of the real diamond of God. He is of a nature which through divine grace defies the file; he cannot sin, because he is born of God; the evil one toucheth him not. An inward loathing of iniquity, a fear of himself, and a watchfulness wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, enable the Christian to resist the assaults of temptation, and to come off more than conqueror." This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." The ordinary trials of daily life suffice to detect the counterfeit faith of some men. So far from "resisting unto blood striving against sin," they are not able to endure losses and crosses of the most ordinary kind; but the rebellion of their heart is displayed, and they cast off their pretended allegiance to God because they think that he deals hardly with them. Not so the true believer; he endureth trial, for "many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all"; and his beauty is not marred by his adversities, but he comes from under the file altogether unscathed.

Death will operate terribly upon all the imitation jewelry of false religion, utterly destroying its lustre and discovering its worthlessness. The nearness of eternity to the ungodly turns his doubt into despair; apprehension of judgment causes the faith of the hypocrite to give way, and his hope is crushed and utterly ruined; and yet this self-same ordeal only serves to perfect the adamantine solidity of the faith of God's truly regenerate ones. Some of the brightest flashes of the Lord's jewels are seen in the darkest hour, and their reality and infinite worth are proven in the presence of the solemnities of eternity. Then doth the Lord discern between him that feareth him and him that feareth him not. Exulting songs of triumph stand out in solemn contrast to the trembling and alarm of the detected formalist. Do any of our readers question their salvation? Do they desire that their apprehensions may be allayed? Let them apply the file of self-examination. Taking the word of God in their hand, and observing carefully the marks and evidences of the child of God, let them see if their spot is the spot of God's children. Let them enquire whether their faith is resting alone upon the blood and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ; whether it is simple and undivided, having no lingering or hankering after legal hope and carnal confidence. Let them examine whether their faith works by love and purifies the soul; whether it leads them to desire communion with God, and likeness to him, and whether it enables them to seek the glory of the Most High rather than their own selfish ends and aims. Such questions as these will be like the use of the file, and will soon discover the stuff which we are made of." Examine yourselves," says the apostle, "whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" No man should hesitate to apply this file with solemn earnestness; if he dreads the test, his hesitation may suggest a solemn suspicion to his heart. Are you afraid to try yourselves? It is more than probable that you have grave cause for the fear. But are you willing to be tested, and, lest; your own test should be insufficient, do you cry "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"? Then the very desire to be searched by the omniscient God may foster the comfortable conviction that you are sincere in heart. Blessed is he who in answer to his

Master's question, " Lovest thou me?" can answer with Simon, son of Jonas, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

30. A Path Strewn With Blessings

A Path Strewn with Blessings

"I will save you, and ye shall be a blessing."—Zechariah 8:13.

"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me,

it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him"—Job 29:11-12.

The "Sussex Daily News" of June 6th, has the following quotation and remark:—" The path of a Pope must be strewn "with blessings.' Such is the neat and appropriate sentiment attributed to Leo XIII." So far as the history of a Pope has come under our own observation it has rather been strewn with curses than with blessings. Pio Nono at any rate appeared to be exceedingly voluble when delivering a tirade, and could fulminate an anathema as neatly and appropriately as any other dealer in strong language. Happily we have reason to believe that his denunciations were not much more effectual than his benedictions. If either the one or the other had any effect at all it would appear to have operated by the rule of contrary: for those whom he cursed most prospered best, and those whom he blessed had cause to cry "save us from our friend." We believe that as a matter of fact his fulminations were so barren of all results that we may apply to them the lines of " Ingoldsby Legends," which describe the cardinal in his great red hat when he had lost his costly turquoise ring:

"The Cardinal rose with a dignified look, He call'd for his candle, his bell, and his book! In holy anger and pious grief, He solemnly cursed the rascally thief!

He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed; From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head;

He cursed him in sleeping, that every night He should dream of the devil, and wake in a fright; He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in drinking, He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in winking; He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying;

He cursed him in walking, in riding, in flying, He cursed him in living, he cursed him in dying!

Never was heard such a terrible curse! ! But what gave rise To no little surprise, Nobody seem'd one penny the worse! "

True, there was a certain thievish jackdaw which began to pine and lose its feathers, but we do not believe that Pio Nono ever managed to injure even a sparrow or a spider with his bulls and excommunications.

Let us hope that Leo XIII. intends to abound in benisons, but even if he does so we suspect that nobody will seem one penny the better. However it will be all the better for Leo himself if he will learn to lie down with the lamb.

If from the quotation we take out the word "Pope," and write "Christian," the sentiment will be more neat and appropriate than ever—"The path of a Christian must be strewn with blessings." God has blessed him unspeakably in Christ Jesus, and he should therefore bless God with all his heart and soul. The promise is "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing," and every child of believing Abraham should endeavour to be a blessing to all those that are round about him, according to that ancient covenant promise. Like David, the believer should bless his household; nay, more, like the high priest of old he should bless all the people. His words should impart the blessing of instruction and his life should confer the blessing of holy example. His private prayers should bring down innumerable blessings from heaven, and his public acts abounding with pity and love should bless the poor and needy of earth. The sick, the afflicted, and the desponding should hail his presence, and find in him a tender friend. He should go about doing good. As there is a promise that his path like the shining light shall increase in splendour so also should he increase in the warmth and light of love and kindness, bearing life and joy and healing to the sons of men. May the blessed God reveal himself in his blessed people, that in them and in their seed all the nations of the earth may be blessed.

31. The Fickleness of Mankind

The Fickleness of Mankind "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel."—Genesis 49:4.

"Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie."—Psalms 62:9. The "Times" June 10, has the following from its correspondent at St. Petersburg on public opinion in Russia:—"A well-known Russian journalist, who has had abundant opportunities of observing and studying the consecutive changes of public opinion among the educated classes of his countrymen during the last two years, has just published the following results of his observations:—' July, 1876.—Wild enthusiasm. Complete enchantment with the Servians. Desire for war.

' October, 1876.—Despondency. Disenchantment with regard to the Servians; hostility towards them, and regret for what has been done for them.

' November, 1876.—Enthusiasm for a war in the interest of the Bulgarians. Pity for and sympathy with them.

'April, 1877.—Complete ecstasy. Brotherly love for the Bulgarians. Dissatisfaction with the Servians.

' August and September, 1877.—Despondency in consequence of failures (before Plevna and elsewhere). Silent irritation against the Bulgarians. Readiness to abandon the whole thing if only a way could be found out of it.

'December, 1877.—Intoxication from success. Desire to carry the thing out to the end. Bad feeling towards the Bulgarians.

' February, 1878.—Wild delight at the peace and the yielding disposition of Turkey. Sympathy with Turkey and corresponding coolness towards the Bulgarians. Passionate determination to insist on the acquisition of Batoum. Consciousness of the necessity Of this acquisition. Indifference to the question of England and Austria.

'May, 1878.—Complete disenchantment on the score of the Bulgarians. Suspicions of insincerity on the part of the Turks. Talk about Batoum not being so necessary for us as it had formerly seemed. Something like disgust with the Eastern Question. Talk about getting the thing finished anyhow.' This curious laconic register, though far from complete, is pretty correct so far as it goes."

We insert this as a curious instance of the fickleness of the popular mind. He who lives to win the approbation of the public, even should he gain it, should set but small store by it, for it is as changeful as the wind and altogether as unsubstantial. The multitude one day cried, concerning our Saviour, "Hosanna, Hosanna," and ere the week was ended they as lustily shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him." The apostles at Lystra found themselves at one moment in danger of being worshipped as gods, but the mistake did not last long, for the people stoned them before the sun had set. The many-headed cry first this thing, and then another: "unstable as water," they rush to

extremes. The war upon which they enter with enthusiasm will either close with curses at the bloodshed it has entailed, or else it will end with illuminations intended to welcome the return of peace which they broke with so light a heart.

Let those who pride themselves upon the applause of the multitude see the worthlessness of the mere vapour for which they spend themselves. Blessed is he whose life is ruled by the will of God, and whose highest ambition is acceptance with the Most High through Jesus Christ his Son. His is an immortal and immutable inheritance, a crown of life which fadeth not away. Is the reader living wholly unto God? Then he shall not know the disappointment of those who put their trust in the sons of men, in whom is no strength. But hunters after popularity and aspirants for fame will do well to consider whether the mirage is worth their notice, or the will-o'-the-wisp worthy of their pursuit.

32. Pearls

Pearls "No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies."—Job 28:18.

"Who, when he had found one pearl of great price went and sold all that he had, and bought it."—Matthew 13:46. The Paris correspondent of the "Daily News" of June 11, writes: "The French have grown so clever at imitating pearls, that a jeweller in this Exhibition shows a necklace which purports to be a mixture of true pearls and false, and he challenges his customers to single out the real ones if they can. Nobody had yet succeeded when I myself made an ineffectual attempt." The art of pearl-making is by no means a new discovery; by various methods imitation pearls have been manufactured in divers countries for many years. The French have, however, proved themselves superior to all competitors. Specimens of their artificial productions exhibited at the Exposition of 1867 could neither in their lustre nor colour be distinguished from oriental pearls, even when the genuine and the sham were laid side by side. We are told that there is only one way by which they can be detected, and that is by their specific weight, they are much lighter than the real pearls.

There is "one pearl of great price" about whose genuineness there can never be a question, but all the goodly pearls which this world can yield need to be weighed before we may conclude them to be of any great value; indeed, the choicest pearls of earth are insignificant in price compared with him who is more precious than rubies, and of whom it is written, that "all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto him." Even real pearls, the best of them, fit to adorn an emperor's crown, and to heighten the beauty of the fairest of maidens, have been known to sicken and die and vanish in a day. Every now and then we hear of magnificent ancestral pearls, the pride of noble families, turning of a sickly colour and crumbling into dust. Not long ago the crown-jeweller of France solemnly applied to the Academy of Science for the means of preventing the decay and corruption of the precious gems in the royal crown. No satisfactory answer was given, and many highly-prized jewels have since then passed away. "Behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." In a work entitled "The Wonders of the Deep," M. Schele de Vere tells us the following story, of which we leave our readers to draw the moral for themselves: "A dusky fisherman in the far-off seas of India once found a pearl in an oyster. He had heard of such costly gems, and sold it to an Arab for a gold coin which maintained him for a whole year in luxury and idleness. The Arab exchanged it for powder and shot furnished him by a Russian merchant on board a trading vessel, who even yet did not recognise the dirty, dust-covered little ball as a precious jewel. He brought it home as a present for his children on the banks of the Neva, where a brother merchant saw it and bought it for a trifle. The pearl had at last found one who could appreciate its priceless value, The great man—for it was a merchant of the first class, the owner of a great fortune—rejoiced at the silent fraud by which he had obtained the one pearl of great price, without selling all and buying it fairly, and cherished it as the pride of his heart. Visitors came from all parts of the world to see the wonder. He received them in his merchant's costume in a palace plain without but resplendent inside with all that human art can do to embellish a dwelling, and led

them silently through room after room, filled with rare collections and dazzling by the splendour of their ornaments. At last he opened with his own key the carved folding-doors of an inner room which surprised the visitor by its apparent simplicity. The floor, to be sure, was inlaid with malachite and costly marble, the ceiling carved in rare woods, and the walls hung with silk tapestry; but there was no furniture, no gilding, nothing but a round table of dark Egyptian marble in the centre. Under it stood a strong box of apparently wonderful ingenuity, for even the cautious owner had to go through various readings of alphabets, and to unlock one door after another, before he reached an inner cavity, in which a plain square box of Russia leather was standing alone. With an air akin to reverence, the happy merchant would take the box and press it for a moment to his bosom, then devoutly crossing himself and murmuring an invocation to some saint, he would draw a tiny gold key, which he wore next his person, from his bosom, unlock the casket, and hold up his precious pet to the light that fell from a large grated window above.

"It was a glorious sight for the lover of such things. A pearl as large as a small egg, of unsurpassed beauty and marvellous lustre. The sphere was perfect, the play of colours, as he would let it reluctantly roll from his hands over his long white fingers down on the dark table, was only equalled by the flaming opal, and yet there was a soft, subdued light about the lifeless thing which endowed it with an almost irresistible charm. It was not only the pleasure its perfect form and matchless beauty gave to the eye, nor the overwhelming thought of the fact that the little ball was worth any thing an emperor or a millionaire might choose to give for it—there was a magic in its playful everchanging sheen as it rolled to-and-fro—a contagion in the rapt fervor with which the grim old merchant watched its every flash and flare, which left few hearts cold as they saw the marvel of St. Petersburg. For such it was, and the Emperor himself, who loved pearls dearly, had in vain offered rank and titles and honours for the priceless gem.

"A few years afterwards a conspiracy was discovered, and several great men were arrested. Among the suspected was the merchant. Taking his one great treasure with him, he fled to Paris. Jewellers and amateurs, Frenchmen and foreigners, flocked around him, for the fame of his jewel had long since reached France. He refused to show it for a time. At last he appointed a day when his great rival in pearls, the famous Dutch banker, the Duke of Brunswick, and other men well known for their love of precious stones and pearls, were to behold the wonder. He drew forth the golden key, he opened the casket, but his face turned deadly pale, his eyes started from their sockets, his whole frame began to tremble, and his palsied hand let the casket drop. The pearl was discoloured! A sickly blue colour had spread over it, and dimmed its matchless lustre. His gem was diseased. In a short time it turned into a white powder, and the rich merchant of St. Petersburg, the owner of the finest pearl known to the world was a pauper! The pearl had avenged the poor Indian of the East, the Arab, and the poor traveller, and administered silent justice to the purchaser who paid not its price.

33. Safe-Not Saved

Safe-Not Saved "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick"—Mark 2:17.

"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;

and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind,

and naked."—Revelation 3:17. The morning papers of June 13th, contained an account of the suicide of a French nobleman, the Count Aubriet de Pèvy, who drowned himself in the Thames. A letter was found in his clothes on the bank, headed "Last Impressions of Count Aubriet." He had resolved to die, the world was but a kind of experimental hell, he hoped for a better world, in which, immediately after, he should appear in an ethereal body. He had great respect for Jesus of Nazareth, but this was the only resurrection. He had a firm belief that he was safe—"saved," was ridiculous.

Count de Pèvy has only a little more plainly than usual expressed the sentiment of multitudes. They are so good, so amiable, so religious, that to speak of their being lost appears to them to be a ridiculous misuse of terms; and salvation for them is an insulting superfluity. They are "safe" and need not to be "saved." They thus shut themselves out of all the benefit of the mission of the Saviour, since he came to save, and his work has to do with the lost and no others. It is pitiful to see a sinner so proud that he bars the door of mercy against himself by his own deliberate act and deed in order to maintain a fictitious claim to personal excellence. Here is a poor soul about to commit the horrible crime of self-murder and yet he calls himself "safe," and ventures to insult the Christ of God by offering him his "respect"—the respect of a suicide. Think of a criminal honouring his judge with a declaration that he respects him! A patient expressing his respect for a physician whose skill he rejects with ridicule! He who feels his guilt and his need of salvation is not content with cold respect, but loves and adores his Saviour. O that this poor child of Adam had but seen his real state and had sought after the salvation which he despised. Let him serve as a warning to many who are wrapt in the same deadly-day-dream. May God arouse them from it, or it will be their ruin. Many are the mighty ones who have fallen down, slain by self-righteousness:—

"Though various foes against the Truth combine, Pride above all opposes her design;

Pride, of a growth superior to the rest, The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest, Swells at the thought, and kindling into rage, Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage."

34. Diplomacy and Duplicity

Diplomacy and Duplicity "Not doubletongued."—1 Timothy 3:8.

"Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour."—Ephesians 4:25. The "Daily News" June 15th, commenting on the reply of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to a question concerning the Berlin Congress, says:—"We seem, in fact, to be gliding into the use of two tongues, one for the ordinary business of life, and one for diplomacy."

Surely this gentleman has forgotten the well-worn description of an ambassador, as a gentleman who is sent abroad to tell lies for the good of his country. Diplomacy from time immemorial has used words rather to conceal its meaning than to express it. In the high quarters where state-craft is carried on, the dictum of George Herbert is utterly rejected—"Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie." Lies seem to be about the most necessary stock-in-trade of the managers of foreign politics. Our book of synonyms has a very suggestive list—"finesse, trick, dodge, ruse, diplomacy."

It is earnestly to be hoped that the contagion of political example will not spread through other classes of the community, and yet there is great fear that it has already done so. Among the clergy there has been no little talk of words used in a natural and non-natural sense, and many laboured treatises have been compiled to explain away the self-evident meaning of language. In polite society it used to be customary to deny one's self, and "not at home" was a fashionable mode of lying. This habit has we trust come to an end, but many of the compliments still exacted by etiquette may come under the same censure. Men who hate each other are full of "My dear Sir," and call themselves "the obedient servants" of persons whom they regard with supreme contempt. These are mere straws, but they show how the wind blows.

However much falsehood may be tolerated by society, it is none the less loathsome to every pure-minded man; and it is not one whit the less abominable in the sight of God because men combine to keep it in countenance. Its most horrible form is seen when professing Christians become doubletongued and have one voice in religion and another voice in common conversation. Who is not disgusted with lips candied with affected love, and yet bitter with malicious hate? It is dreadful to speak like a saint at one time and like a devil at another. We have known persons who have talked so unctiously of divine things in religious meetings that they have won a high repute for godliness out of doors, while at home, under the little provocations of common life, they have habitually stormed and raved, and led their children and servants a sorry life. This thing deserves no quarter. Occasionally we hear of fictitious experience, and listen to wonderful narratives of events which never occurred: this also is execrable.

Actions have as plain a voice as words, and there is a duplicity of life which is quite as evil as verbal falsehood. Many characters are doubletongued. Spence said of Lady Wortley Montague that she was a shining character, "but like a camel she is all irregularity, and always wandering." "He calls her the most wise, most imprudent, loveliest, most disagreeable, best natured, cruelest woman in the world." Other forms of practical contradiction are common; some are intolerantly

liberal, others are ferocious advocates of peace, or intemperate upon intemperance. We have known persons who were rashly slow, and imprudently wise. Hot and cold in five minutes. You would think the man to be two persons till you revised your opinion and reckoned him to be nobody at all because one side of his character neutralized the other. Nothing is more sad than to see that things do not tally in a man's character. We have known great pleaders for generosity who were themselves miserably stingy. We have heard of persons who have been wonderful sticklers for "the truth," meaning thereby a certain form of doctrine, and yet they have not regarded the truth in matters of buying and selling, or with regard to the reputations of their neighbours, or the incidents of domestic life. "These things ought not so to be." If by speaking the truth we shame the devil, we must be consistent in it as long as we live, or surely the devil will shame us.

35. Labor In Vain

Labour In Vain "The people shall weary themselves for very vanity."—Habakkuk 2:13.

"By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."—Galatians 2:16. The "Daily News" June 18th, has the following:—"The man in the old legend set out to sail to the happy islands. He encountered many storms, lost many companions, and was worn and weak before he landed, and then he found that he had only come back to his starting-point, the island where his home was. He had sailed round the world for that. He was not praised as a navigator or a philosopher." This legendary personage accurately symbolizes those who start upon the adventurous voyage of salvation-by-self. They are lured onward by a vain imagination, and they enter upon an enterprise which will utterly exhaust them, and bring them no desirable result. In their laborious efforts to discover a righteousness of their own they will see many companions wrecked at their side, and if they themselves are fortunate enough to sail onward along the track of morality, bearing aloft the flag of respectability, they will nevertheless find little comfort therein. If at all enlightened by divine grace they will remain as dissatisfied as ever after all their doings and feelings, worshippings and pleadings and almsgivings; despite their self-reliant diligence they will have made no progress towards the desired haven. Like Vander-decken in his endless sailings they are doomed to a fruitless toil. It must be so. Beaten back after all his efforts the moralist makes no headway.

Why is this? Let Scripture answer—Because they seek it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. Paul in his day bore witness of many self-righteous persons that they had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Successors to these persons are still among us, rolling up-hill the stone of Sisyphus with no more success than he. The most earnest self-savers will come back to their starting-point disappointed and despairing. What a pity it is that they should be so infatuated as to go far to seek after that which lies so near at hand! The Holy Spirit says," The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart." What can be possibly nearer than that which is absolutely in the mouth? Let no man be so set on mischief, so desperately resolved to destroy his own soul, as to reject that heavenly bread which almighty grace puts into his mouth. Wherefore attempt to climb to heaven or to descend into the deep? Why practise penance or pursue a weary round of ceremonies? Why despond and look within, and argue and despair? Is not the gospel message clear enough?" Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"Hard lot of man—to toil for the reward He that would win the race must guide his horse Obedient to the customs of the course;

Else, though unequal'd to the goal he flies, A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.

Grace leads the right way, if you choose the wrong.

Take it and perish, but restrain your tongue;

Charge not, with light sufficient and left free, Your wilful suicide on God's decree."

36. Chaotic Theology

Chaotic Theology

"Desiring to be teacher's of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.'—1 Timothy 1:7.

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines.

For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.■—Hebrews 13:9. A correspondent of the Hew York "Examiner and Chronicle" June 20, writing from West Virginia, says:—" Of course, things here are in a measure in a formative state—even the capital itself is not regarded as fully and finally located. It is now said to be 'on a steamboat somewhere between Wheeling and Charlestown.' The last vote of the legislature on it decided the latter place to be the location hereafter." In much the same condition are the minds of many who claim to be preachers of the gospel of" the advanced school." There is no telling what they say nor whereof they affirm. They believe nothing and therefore they speak. Their creed is in" a formative state,"—nebulous, cloudy. They know not what they believe: it is a question whether they believe anything at all. One of them informed us that he held his mind in a receptive condition, and revised his creed every week at the least—a human jelly-fish, or something more gelatinous still. We fear that even the main and fundamental points of the atonement of Christ, and his divine person, are unsettled with some of the Broad School. Their capital is on a steamboat somewhere between Unitarianism and Pantheism. The sooner they fix its location the better. It would probably be less injurious to those around them, if they were to become downright atheists than that they should remain in their present loose and sceptic-making condition. Their manifest indecision for truth is a clear gain to the side of unbelief. These rolling stones in the road cause many to stumble who else would have held on their way. With their cloudy speculations they throw an air of uncertainty over the most settled truths. They cause faith to dwindle into mere opinion and throw thousands into a condition of miserable suspense. Elijah would long ago have said to them," How long halt ye between two opinions? If the God of Israel be the Lord, serve him;" and if" cultured thought" is to manufacture a god of its own, finish the article and let us know what it is like. One would think from the talk of some men that the promises of the gospel were made to doubt and not to faith. Their sympathies are all with the infidel, whose doubt is decorated as "honest" and" thoughtful." Their anathemas are reserved for the orthodox, who are always prejudiced, narrow-minded, and stunted. Their charity pours its oil upon all except those horrid beings who adhere to the creed of the Puritans: as for those fellows, they despise them with all the Cavalier's contempt for psalm-singing Roundheads. Nevertheless, we pray for all true brethren, that the God of all grace may stablish and settle them, and we desire to be numbered with those who can say, "We believed, therefore have we spoken." "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

37. Want of Stamina

Want of Stamina "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?"—Galatians 5:7.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.■—Proverbs 24:10.

Out of the lion Samson took an abundance of honey, and we also may learn something from an evil business. The "Daily News" June 21st, in an article upon horse-racing, says:—" It is in regard to stamina that the French racehorses distinguish themselves the most. While the English thoroughbreds can nearly always hold their own against the French over short courses, they are year by year less able to maintain their former supremacy over long distances." And this is exactly the point where many men fail in the race of life. There is no stay in them, they make a rush of it at the first, but they cannot maintain the pace or persevere to the end; and all because they lack stamina. Hence the great importance of maintaining the inward strength: he who would run well must first have the strength to run with. Vital godliness is the chief consideration, because out of it must come all practical godliness. It is clear that nothing can come out of a 'man which is not in him; if therefore grace be at a low ebb his life will be shallow, but if the life of God in his soul be deep and vigorous, his action will be correspondingly forcible and energetic. Stimulants are of doubtful value at best, but in religion stimulants have too often been resorted to, and spiritual intoxication has been mistaken for heavenly strength. Attempts have been made at making men strong by setting them strong men's work, but common sense tells us that you cannot turn a dwarf into a giant by dropping him into the big man's boot.

What is needed to render men capable of great deeds is a great nature. The heart must be full or the streams of life will be shallow. The matter of stamina is too often overlooked, but we are obliged to observe it when we come to the actual work of the Christian life, and to the long stretch of it which opens up before us as life is lengthened. We must have stamina or we shall be poor workers. No man would think of going to Brompton Hospital, selecting a company of consumptives who could scarcely walk across the room, and sending them forth to excavate a tunnel, or to heap up an embankment. These pining patients have no stamina, and therefore they must be excused from the sterner toils of life, for they cannot rightly discharge them. If they are driven to engage in heavy labour they will disappoint their employers. A contractor selects fine robust sons of toil, with broad chests and brawny arms, and giving them the mattock and spade and barrow, he sees the mountains fly before them, and the valleys quickly disappear.

While so many Christians are weak and sickly among us it is but little wonder that the Lord's cause is hindered. The pining sickness is upon many, and they can do nothing. Worse still, the lean kine eat up the fat kine, and so the strength of the church is devoured. When we shall ourselves and all our fellow Christians become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, then we shall do marvels by the aid of his divine Spirit, but till then the work of the Lord will languish.

Continuance in holy service is the test of spiritual energy; many run well for a time, and it is not the pace which kills them, but the length of the course draws upon their slender store of energy, and

by and by they drop from the front, and are found far back in the rear, utterly beaten. Well did the Saviour say to his disciples, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Nothing but the unfailing power of God himself can enable the believer to keep up the pace from the beginning to the end of his Christian life. Happy is he who is enabled to do this, yea, blessed is he who shall at the last be able to exclaim with Paul, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." To obtain stamina we must be more real and intense to begin with, we must resort more continually to the source of strength, we must feed more eagerly upon the soul-sustaining word, and we must be much more abundant in prayer. No time will be lost which shall be spent in obtaining more inward power. Tarrying at Jerusalem till the Spirit is given is no loss of time, but true diligence. It will be the most economical thing in the long run if we sit with Mary at the Master's feet awhile, even though Martha should be pressingly urging us to help her at the table. We must see to the condition of our souls. If the fire burns low the engine will lose its propelling power, if the secret fountain dries the stream will dwindle, if spiritual stamina declines the evil result will be seen somewhere or other, and specially in the want of power to hold on and hold out to the end.

38. Blasting Prohibited

Blasting Prohibited "Ye strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel."-Matthew 23:24 The "Times" June 22nd, reports a speech of Mr. Burt in the House of Commons, which contains the following:—" He thought that in certain parts of the country it might be desirable to abolish blasting in coal-mines altogether, and, as a general rule, blasting should be entirely prohibited wherever it was absolutely necessary that the safety-lamp should be used. It was absurd to hedge about a small flame of less than one inch and to deal recklessly with a flame which might be hundreds of times as great."

"We are entirely of Mr. Burt's opinion; there cannot be a second judgment upon it. We would carry the same thought into morals and religion, for there are persons who think a great deal of trifling offences against the rules of society, and are quite indifferent concerning the alienation of the heart from God: an unimportant violation of propriety in religious worship shocks them, but they can sin against the Most High at a sad rate, and yet their conscience is by no means affected. They are punctilious concerning the ritual of outward ceremonies, but indifferent to the evils of the heart. They tithe mint and anise and cummin, and neglect the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and truth. There is a story told of a Spanish bandit who had killed many persons without compunction, but was struck with alarm because a little of the blood of one of his victims had spurted upon his lips on a Friday, and thus he had been guilty of tasting animal food on a fast day. Not long ago our police made great efforts to put down the sin of gambling as it displayed itself in a few boys playing pitch and toss with halfpence, but it never occurred to the authorities to interfere with Tattersall's and the almost universal gambling connected with Epsom and Newmarket. Should a poacher steal a goose from a common, he would be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law, but lords of the manor have stolen the common from the goose, and no law has been able to reach them. We still strain at gnats and swallow camels.

Conscience, which some cry up as God's vicegerent in the heart of man seems to be a very imperfect monitor in the case of many persons; it lays on its strokes heavily concerning a minor offence, and flogs with a feather when the transgression is really great in the sight of God. The fact is that when conscience is unenlightened its judgment is misleading, and it will make more of a mote than of a beam. A little of Mr. Burt's common sense would be invaluable both to moralists and religionists. They look to outward actions, and neglect the heart. Yet acts are but as the flame of one inch in the miner's Davy, and the depravity of the heart is a flame a thousand times more dangerous. What is the filth upon the outside of the cup and platter compared with that which lies within? The interior to any one who uses the cup is vastly the more important. So, too, an ill word which grates upon a single ear is instantly condemned, but a false doctrine which may slay a thousand souls is allowed to spread, and to protest against it is accounted bigotry. We have heard of ministers whose speculations in theology are no better than so many firings of shots in dangerous mines; their blasts are ruinous to multitudes of young men, and yet they are tolerated and even esteemed. If these divines were heard to swear a profane oath, or known to pick a pocket, they would be scouted from society, but they are doing worse, and yet retain their position. Little do they consider what harm their vagaries cause among the younger and weaker part of their

hearers. O that the grace of God would make them wise enough to desist from such perilous operations. At any rate their churches should look to it, and deal with them honestly if they will persist in their murderous romancings. If a man will play with powder and shot he must be kept out of the way. for we cannot afford to risk hundreds of lives for the amusement of a so-called "thoughtful man." Let him play off his gunpowder " thinkings" and his dynamite" culture" in some other sphere, but not among subjects which concern eternity, immortality, glory, and perdition.

39. Deserters

Deserters "Will ye also go away?"—John 6:67.

"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."—2 Timothy 4:10. The "Daily News" of June 22nd, in an article upon the character of the men in the British army, says:—"One great cause of misconduct is that few men enlist deliberately, but rather take the shilling as a means of escaping temporary trouble of some sort. Either a man is temporarily out of work, or he has a quarrel with his sweetheart, or he wishes for a while to keep out of the way of the police. Comparatively rarely does he become a soldier from a conviction that it is an honourable mode of earning a living, and that there are some extremely good prizes to be won. Hence speedy repentance, and if he is unable to purchase his discharge he will frequently in desperation steal, so openly that he must be discovered, some, to him, useless article, such as a broom or one boot."

It seems then that very much depends upon the manner of the enlistment of soldiers, and we are quite sure that with young converts everything depends upon the reason for their enrolment in the army of Christ. If they merely come to Christ because they are under some temporary alarm of soul, and not because they are heartily convinced of the error of their ways, they will probably desert from the standard of the cross as soon as the temporary pressure of natural conviction is removed. The awakening sermon is forgotten, the alarming providence is over, the eloquent revivalist has gone to another town, and the superficial converts regret that they ever made a profession of religion, and under one pretext or another they slide away. How well it is that our young friends should count the cost and understand what they are doing, and then should deliberately and heartily cast in their lot with the people of God. They must be convinced that to be a Christian is right, and honourable, and for their own eternal good, they must also be assured that the cause is one of truth and righteousness, and that in it lies all their hope of eternal salvation: they must in a word be renewed in the spirit of their minds, or they will soon be the prey of temptation, and the church will be filled with alarm at the large number of deserters. Our Lord was always anxious that men should be saved, but he was never in a hurry to gather nominal disciples. When the scribe said to him "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," he did not reply, as many of us would have done, with a pressing invitation, and an enthusiastic welcome, but he was far more wise in his procedure, for he replied, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but I, the Son of man, have not where to lay my head." He put before him the poverty of the Captain and the hard fare of the soldier. When the multitude thronged around him, he did not commence taking their names, enrolling them as his converts, and counting heads in order to publish astounding statistics, but on the contrary he sifted them with words like these: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." The recruiting sergeants of her majesty's army are so anxious to get hold of the men that they are not scrupulous as to the arguments they use; drink is freely given, the soldier's condition is set forth in rosy colours, and the young man is cajoled and seduced into a way of life which he would not have thoughtfully chosen: but it must not be so among us. We may not repel any man who wishes to join our ranks, but we may not persuade men and women to

make a hasty profession, and take the name of Christian upon them to please their friends. The door must not be closed with lock and key, but there must be a porter to open it in order that the sheep, and not the goats, may go in and out and find pasture. Since the porter himself may be readily deceived, it is every man's personal responsibility to see that he enters with his heart and soul into the church of God, if he does enter at all; and it is at his own peril that he dares to intrude unworthily or insincerely into the fold of Christ. A profession carelessly made will soon be dishonourably abandoned. We know Who it was that said: "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." He who wrote these words was of a loving nature, and never formed a harsh judgment, and therefore from his verdict we conclude that the backslidings and apostasies which weaken the visible church of Christ are caused by a want of reality at the commencement of the religious life. There was no root, and therefore the plant withered when the sun was risen with burning heat. There was no call to the soldier's life, or the reputed warrior of the cross would not have so shamefully deserted the colours. Hence the stern necessity of our being careful in examining all candidates, and honest in warning them of their responsibilities.

"Have ye counted the cost? Have ye counted the cost, Ye warriors of the Cross? Are ye fixed in heart, for your Master's sake, To suffer all earthly loss? Can ye bear the scoff of the worldly-wise, As ye pass by pleasure's bower, To watch with your Lord on the mountain-top, Through the weary midnight hour? Do ye answer, 'We can,' Do ye answer, 'We can,'

Thro' his love's constraining power? But do ye remember, the flesh is weak, And shrinks in the trial-hour?

Yet yield to his hand, who around you now, The cords of a man would cast! The bands of his love, who was smitten for you, To the altar binding you fast. In the power of his might! In the power of his might! Who was made through weakness strong, Ye shall overcome in the fearful fight! And sing his victory song! But count ye the cost; yea, count ye the cost— The forsaking all ye have!

Then take up your cross and follow your Lord, Not thinking your life to save!"

40. Blame The Scale-Maker

Blame the Scale-Maker "The woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."—Genesis 3:13.

"Every man shall bear his own burden."—Galatians 6:5. The "South London Press" June 22nd, reports the following, among a number of other cases of unjust weights and measures:—" A.B., cheesemonger. One machine. Defendant said he paid a scalemaker 10s. 6d. to attend to it, and the neglect was his. The chairman said one of the first things defendant should have attended to was the correctness of his scales and weights. Fined £1. Defendant thought the scalemaker ought to pay the fine. The Clerk: We look to you; we have nothing to do with the scalemaker." National law is based upon the principle of personal responsibility, and it will not allow a transgressor to escape by pleading that he has shifted the burden of duty upon another. If in any cases responsibility could be transferred, it surely should be under the circumstances before us; but the law knows nothing of scale-makers, it deals with traders, and if anything be wrong with scales or weights it does not hold the shopkeeper guiltless, but visits the wrong upon him, even though he may have employed a person to keep his weights in order. This course appears to be severe, but it is both just and necessary; there would be no security for the purchaser, nor indeed for government itself, if the essential principle of personal responsibility could be departed from. Every man must bear his own burden.

Yet this truth is too often put into the background. In religion men have often acted as if they had altogether forgotten that it must of necessity be strictly personal. We hear of sponsors promising and vowing no end of things, and of priests performing service and doing the devotions of others. Proxies however in such matters are a sheer delusion, all true religion is a personal thing; men sin personally, and they must personally repent of that sin, or personally bear the guilt of it. No man can receive the new "birth on behalf of another, nor can another man's faith excuse us from believing in Jesus. Sanctification is not a boon to be vicariously received, any more than heaven can be vicariously enjoyed. A man may fancy that he pays a priest or a minister to do his religion for him, just as the tradesman paid the scalemaker, but the law does not recognise the transaction, it deals with principals only. We cannot leave our heavenly business in the hands of a clergyman as we place our secular concerns in the hands of a lawyer, we must believe in Jesus Christ on our own account or judgment will go against us. It is true that in the matter of our justification before God we have been redeemed by the blood of our Substitute and are accepted in his imputed righteousness, but in the practical application of the blessings thus procured everything must be direct and personal. Another may procure us food, but he cannot eat or digest it for us: Jesus has become our bread from heaven, but we must individually partake of him if we would live for ever. Another may bring us a candle, but we cannot see the light except with our own vision, nay more, even the Sun of Righteousness makes no man to see except by his own eyes.

Never then let us leave our doctrinal views to be settled for us by the church, but let us search the Scriptures for ourselves; let us not derive our peace and confidence from the good opinion of our

pastor and the deacons, but aim at attaining a full assurance of our calling and election by the seal of the Spirit upon our own hearts; neither let us leave the work of the Lord to be discharged by others, but honestly render our fair share of the service. We must ask for grace to see to our own scales, and cease to leave to the scalesmaker a matter which is altogether our own concern.

41. Spurious Imitations

Spurious Imitations "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God."—1 John 4:1.

"Be not deceived"—Galatians 6:7.

Several papers contain an advertisement commencing as follows:—"Beware of Spurious Imitations." This is very useful and necessary advice, and we cannot do better than urge people of all ranks and ages to follow it.

Beware of spurious imitations of the gospel. There are several of them now on sale. One especially is much in vogue in these days, and secures a vast amount of patronage: it is the ritualistic gospel, in which Christ is displaced by the priest, and the work of the Spirit by sacramental efficacy. Instead of faith in the atoning blood we are taught confidence in the parish priest, and instead of regeneration by the Holy Ghost we are told of a new birth through the operation of water applied by a clergyman. In order to sell this article it is done up in tasteful mediæval wrappers, and warranted to be the old original primitive mixture; but it is a base cheat. With half an eye you can see that it is not fine flour, but Roman cement, the old Popish mixture which has ruined such multitudes and will certainly destroy all who place their confidence in it. Of all cheats it is one of the most impudent, but the pretty wrappers entice buyers by the thousand.

Beware of spurious wisdom, for there is much abroad in the world of "science falsely so called." Hypotheses are invented, and facts are manufactured, or at least coloured, to sustain them, and then for a season the learned world goes mad upon its new theory, and we are solemnly warned that we must not oppose ourselves to the spirit of the age, to scientific development, and to the astonishing results of modern culture. However, in a short time, a fresh hypothesis shoves the former one from its perch, and the wisdom of yesterday is turned into foolishness, to be used as a foil for the infallible wisdom of to-day, which also in its due time will be exploded, and go into the limbo of the ten thousand equally absurd infallibilities which have preceded it. We are ready to accept all that science teaches us when it has made up its mind what it is. We never despise knowledge, but on the contrary seek after it as for hidden treasure; but we do not want to be duped by conjectures and fooled by speculations. We are glad to receive all that the observation of intelligent minds can discover for us concerning the wonderful works of the Lord, but we must beware of spurious imitations. There are learned men,—and learned men. One class of savans mistakes assertion for proof, and sneering for logic; from such we turn away. It is written of certain persons, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," and we know the family is not extinct; therefore we would look before we leap.

Beware also of spurious holiness: a holiness which has ceased from conflict with sin, which knows nothing of inward corruption, has no transgressions to confess, and has no need of watchfulness and holy anxiety. It is very easy to amass a great fortune in Russia just now if you will accept paper roubles, and reckon them at their nominal value, and it is equally easy to be eminent in the

higher life if you take your emotions to be facts and your conceits to be realities. Grow in grace, strive after holiness, watch unto prayer, humble yourselves before the Lord, and seek to be perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, but beware of spurious imitations.

Beware of spurious imitations of the Christian graces, for they are very easily concocted, and are exceedingly plentiful. There is a faith which is not the faith of God's elect, for it is rather grounded upon fancy than upon the Word of God. It rests upon impressions and not upon the testimony of the Most High, it puffs up with presumption, but does not build up with the solid work of the Spirit of God. The faith which looks to God alone as he manifests himself in Christ Jesus is the only faith which will save the soul. Dreams, excitements, visions, and groundless assurances, are all to be avoided as spurious imitations. Hope may be counterfeited, for there is a false hope; and love may be mimicked, for there is such a thing as attachment to Christ for the sake of the loaves and fishes which he distributes to the multitude. Courage may be counterfeited by rashness, and patience by sullenness. We have known impudence to be mistaken for fidelity, and mere cant for holy unction. We fear that the solid silver plate of true grace is going out of fashion, and everything is German silver nowadays; a very thin deposit being quite sufficient to electro-plate the basest substance into the likeness of the genuine metal. We have lately read in the newspapers of violet powder which has poisoned little children by the arsenic mingled with it, and the parallel of this is to be met with every day. Who could have suspected death in the puff-box? It is where we least look for it that the greatest deception will be found. Therefore prove the spirits whether they be of God, and beware of spurious imitations.

It is almost necessary to say, beware of spurious revelations, for nowadays there is much talk of spiritual manifestations, and strange doctrines are foisted upon the world as the utterances of beings from the mysterious land of the departed. It is forbidden to all the followers of Jehovah to have dealings with necromancers, yet some religious professors must needs pry into the devil's den of deceit. Hath not the Lord said unto his people, "There shall not be found among you a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." To believe what is declared to be said by spirits will be to accept the imitation of a revelation. It is a thorough imposture, and not even what it pretends to be. If men were not such idiots as to doubt God, they would never sink so low as to believe in spiritualism. To close, let us beware of everything deceptive in religion. Let us not be among those who have the form of religion but deny the power thereof, from these we are bidden to turn away. Let us not offer spurious worship like those of old, of whom the Lord wrote through Isaiah, "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." Let us beware of spurious hearing, lest we be as those in Ezekiel's day, of whom the Lord complained, "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." There are such things as spurious prayers, like those of the Pharisee, who praised himself under pretence of praying to God. We have need to be on our watch against spurious revivalists, of whom Paul would have said, "They zealously affect you, but not well," and against spurious "missions," to whose agents may be applied the language of the Saviour, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Nothing but truth will be

acceptable with the Most High, nothing but sterling grace will bear even the test of time, much less the trying fires of the coming judgment. Wood, hay, and stubble are now made up into forms which liken them to solid stones fit for the builder's use, and for this reason we must the more carefully avoid all spurious imitations, lest we suffer loss in the day of Christ's appearing. Oh, for the abiding teaching of the Holy Spirit that we may always be able to discern at once between the true and the false! To many, life is all deception; they walk as in a vain show. They dwell as if in an elfin palace, where everything is the fabric of a vision, and yet seemeth to be substantial. The walls are of such stuff as dreams are made of, yet they account them to be builded of hewn stone; they are hung with tapestries and arras, so the inhabitants dream, yet are they of the spider's spinning, and are cobwebs all. A breath would lay the card-house low, and annihilate its mimic splendours. The joy of these poor dupes, who live for this present life alone, is a mere Venice glass, soon to be dashed to shivers, or as the frozen drops which diamond the brow of winter, speedily to melt and to disappear for ever. O that men were wise enough to have done with the world and its enchantments, for they must soon be taken from them! Why will they clutch imaginary treasure, and spend their souls to gather that which lasts for so short a space? Will they never seek true happiness? If they will, there is One who serenely looks upon them and beckons them to look on him, for saith he, "I am THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE."

42. Watch-Tower

The Watch-Tower "Looking diligently.... lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you."—Hebrews 12:15.

"Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"—James 3:5. The "Sussex Daily News" describing the new chief fire brigade station of London, says:—"A prominent and important feature in the building is the watchtower, which is about 70ft. high, upon the top of which a man is to be on duty day and night, and is to be provided with a speaking-tube communicating with the engine-room, so that the reflection of a sudden outburst of fire within sight will at once be reported, that when the call is received the horses and men may all be in readiness." This is an admirable emblem of the watch which should be maintained by every Christian pastor, and indeed by every instructed believer. We should watch day and night lest the fire of sin should break out in the midst of the community, and on its first appearing we should be ready at once to quench it with the water of life. Our eye should carefully mark the first uprising of the fires of strife, lest anger and ill-will should mar the union of the church of Christ, and thereby many should be offended. It may not be our house which burns, nor may the flames be apparent in our quarter of the sky, but anything which concerns any part of the church concerns us all. Knowing how great a matter a little fire kindleth, we should all be eager in the spirit of love to quench the tiniest spark, which may become the mother of a flame. There are many ways in which the fire of evil may break out besides that of strife, such as doctrinal error, fanaticism, worldliness, or sin; but if the evil be speedily detected the outburst may be kept within limits, and stopped before it leads to a general conflagration. Since we never know when evil may come we must always watch unto prayer. The horses must stand ready harnessed to the fire-engine, to dash to the scene of danger at an instant's notice. Before the cry is heard, "Fire! Fire!" must be already on the road to it.

Alas! too many seem to be of a very different mind, for they are amusing themselves with spiritual-dreaming and worldliness while the fires are raging all around them, and men are perishing in them. Like Nero they sit fiddling on the top of the tower while the city is burning; they are indifferent to the mischief which ought to arouse all their zeal. Woe unto them when HE cometh who hath said, "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, the wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand." O believer, stand upon thy watchtower, and weary not in doing-sentry's duty. Blessed is the servant who shall be found watching when the Master cometh.

We had come to the end of this passage when our mind persisted in an odd association. We recollected some who watch with all diligence to keep out of the way of anything like hard work. They climb the tower, like the firemen of London, but it is to observe carefully where a fire may be that they may travel in another direction. If there is any honour to be had they are to the front, but if labour must be expended and money given, where are they? The brave Mr. C. during the old French war, when the militia papers were left at his house, regularly inserted in the column of exemptions, "old, lame, and a coward," and returned it to the proper officer within an hour of his

having seen it. Some of our friends without being able to say that they are old or lame, might, without the slightest untruthfulness, claim to be cowards, and so excuse themselves from fire or fray. Some of them we doubt not are looking out even now; they are valiantly upon their guard against certain of those "many calls" which break their hearts, but which will never break their banks. As the New England goose always went into the woods at Michaelmas, so are they sure to be absent when they might be called upon for any sort of self-sacrifice. Theirs is a saving faith, for if it does not save their souls it saves their coppers. When anything is to be done or given these brethren beat a hasty retreat. Well, we must let them go; perhaps they would do more mischief if they stayed.

43. Battered Scripture

Battered Scripture "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully."—Jeremiah 23:28.

"Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you,

neither shall ye diminish ought from it."—Deuteronomy 4:2. The London correspondent of the "Deal Telegram," June 29, calls attention to the mutilation of the inscriptions on the wall of the Beauchamp Tower, which, he says, is being carried on so rapidly that, if the present practice continues, the touching memorials of illustrious prisoners will be completely obliterated in less than a year. He specially points out that it is not the visitors to the Tower of London who are guilty of the "barbarity;" it is the huge Beefeaters who are the vandals. In going their rounds to point out the chief objects of interest, they are provided with short sticks, and with these they rap, tap, strike, and poke the time-honoured inscriptions as they explain their meaning, and the correspondent says that fresh marks, showing where the stone has been bruised by this shameful maltreatment, are to be seen on the very inscriptions themselves.

We do not know how far the unfortunate Beefeaters deserve this censure, but if they be indeed guilty, it is a great pity that valued inscriptions should be destroyed by their guardians during the process of exhibition. This singular piece of mischief has its precise parallel, and therefore may serve as a warning. Texts of Scripture are rapped and tapped, poked and smitten by preachers who are endeavouring to call attention to them and are at the same time misrepresenting them. How often is a text explained away, or expounded into confusion, or spiritualized into nonsense! Scripture probably suffers more from the hands of its friends than its foes. Great bruises remain upon some passages of scripture, and these will never be effaced, for the shameful maltreatment has not only fixed itself upon the memory, but affected the judgment of the hearer. Parson Pound-text is by no means a fictitious personage.

True reverence for the inspired word should lead a man to guard carefully the most delicate shades of meaning; the mind of the Spirit should be carefully ascertained, and then as carefully declared to the people. There should be no forcing of meanings, no twisting of words, no concealment of evident teachings. The word was written by God and not by man, and therefore it deserves to be protected even at the cost of life if need be; never under any circumstances should it be made the martyr of prejudice, or the victim of learned wrestings, or the slave of ignorant misrepresentation. When atheists and infidels batter the word of God we can very well understand their object, but it is grievous when a man of God in order to call attention to a passage darkens its meaning, and in order to show his esteem for every letter smites it with an exaggerated emphasis which utterly mars it. When we visited the Golden House of Nero at Borne, the custodian showed us the frescoes upon the ceiling of the corridor by means of candles raised aloft upon a long rod. The colours were fresh after all these hundreds of years, and so far as the wear and tear of weather were concerned were quite uninjured; but we noticed, with regret, that the smoke of the candles was sadly disfiguring them and even coating them with soot. It will be a sad thing for us if, while we are endeavouring to exhibit divine truth, we at the same time destroy or becloud its

loveliest tints with our ignorance or prejudice. Our candles had better be put out rather than they should do permanent damage to the glorious doctrines of grace, which are the masterpiece of Infinite Wisdom.

44. The True Wrestler

The True Wrestler "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air,,"—1 Corinthians 9:26.

"Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."—Luke 12:1.

"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead"—Revelation 3:1. A local newspaper complains of the modern circus. We scarcely know so much about it as Paul did concerning the Olympic games, but we will take it for granted that the gentleman is correct in his descriptions:—"Everything, with the exception of simply dangerous feats, is so strangely artificial. It is all sham. Our old friends 'the riders' are dexterous and graceful enough, going through their conventional business more or less satisfactorily; but there is no dash, no daring, nothing desperate or manly about it. The spangled youth, with the scarlet fillet about his carefully-oiled locks, who trips in with the dancing-school bow, and springs gracefully upon the back of the Wild Horse of the Pampas, which 'urges on its mad career' at the rate of a couple of miles an hour, might, for any peril he encounters, be taking a ride in a sedan chair. There is nothing of the skill which can 'catch the wild goat by the hair,' which can 'leap the rainbows of the brooks,' or of the daring which snatches triumph from peril. As to the gymnasts, they simply fail to satisfy any of the conditions of the gymnasium. They are all show, and posture, and grimace. The acrobat is the substitute for the gymnast. We ask for muscle, and they give us attitude. We look for the highest training of the schools, and they offer us tricks and contortions. We are sick of somersaults, and human pyramids, and sham gladiators, and pseudo-Roman brothers. It is quite time that all this trumpery were swept aside—or reserved for the delectation of the youngsters—and that we had a circus suited to a day of popular gymnastic and athletic training."

We fear that many of these criticisms will apply to the arena of spiritual conflict. Sham is abundant there. Many sermons are "dexterous and graceful," but they do not boldly rebuke sin, nor aim at the human heart. Many public prayers are far removed from the wrestlings of prevailing Israel. Much of professed piety is more careful of show and posture than of heart-work and vital godliness." We ask for muscle, and they give us attitude." Power from on high is lacking, but the magicians work their feats with their enchantments as in the days of Moses. There is little striving against sin, and decided battling with iniquity. Evil is talked against rather than lived down; worldliness is condemned and practised; the higher life is mimicked, but not practically exhibited; outward worship consists too much of fine music and elaborate singing, too little of deep devotion and praying in the Holy Ghost. Church-membership is frequently a mere name, and discipline a farce. The form of godliness is everywhere, but where is the power? What the world really needs is the old-fashioned Christian, who "wrestled not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,"

45. The Best Preparation For The Second Advent

The Best Preparation for the Second Advent

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye

yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord"—Luke 12:35-36. The "Daily Telegraph" has a leading-article commencing as follows:—" There is a well-known story in New England which relates that, about a century ago, a day of remarkable gloom and darkness overspread the States of Massachusetts and Connecticut—a day still spoken of in local histories as 'the dark day,' when the light of the sun was slowly extinguished as if by an eclipse. The Legislature of Connecticut happened at that moment to be in session, and, to quote an American writer 'As its members saw the unexpected and unaccountable darkness coming on, they shared in the general awe and terror.

It was supposed by many that the Last Day—the Day of Judgment—had come, and, in the consternation of the hour, some member moved the adjournment of the House. Then straightway there arose an old Puritan legislator, Davenport of Stamford, and said that if the Last Day had come, he desired to be found in his place and doing his duty; for which reasons he moved that candles should be brought, so that the House might proceed with its debate." This Davenport of Stamford was a wise man. What could the other senators have suggested which would be equally suitable for the occasion? If it had been the Last Day, would they have been more ready for it if they had gone to their homes, and waited there in idleness? Would it have been more seemly to have rushed into the street, and to have stood there with gaping mouths looking upward to the sky? What was better than being ready for whatever might happen, and waiting at the post of duty? We believe firmly in the second advent of Christ, and in the grand fact that he may come at such an hour as we think not, but what of that? What is the practical use of the revelation? Are we to forego matters of immediate concern in order to pry into the impenetrable darkness of the future? Are we to make ourselves into mere star-gazers and prognosticators? Are we to spend our time in idle wonder, concluding that every time we hear of wars and rumours of wars, and read of earthquakes in divers places, it is an infallible token that the end of the world is near? Why, there have been wars and rumours of wars and all the other signs a score of times, and yet the world wags on at its usual rate. No, rather let us give ourselves up more entirely to the pressing demands of our Lord's household, let us bring out of his storehouse things new and old, continue to feed our fellow-servants and welcome home the wanderers, and then, whether the Master come at cockcrow or at midnight, it will signify little enough to us. We shall welcome him whenever he comes, and he will meet us with joy, for" Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Master Davenport of Stamford doubtless had a solid confidence in the Lord Jesus, his faith had fixed itself upon his first advent, and received the salvation which Jesus came to bring, and therefore, delivered from all trepidation and alarm, he did not share in the general terror, nor draw inferences of alarm from the unexpected and unaccountable darkness. The heavens might fall, but he dwelt above the heavens, and in quietness and assurance was his

strength. Moreover, the good man possessed a faith which manifested itself by works; his business was his religion, and religion was his business. He believed he was called of God to sit in the legislature of Connecticut, and therefore there he sat; he only wanted candles that he might see what he was at. He was doing what was right, he was there to vote for justice and truth, and if his Master had come, he would have risen from his seat and said, "Here I am, in the place thou wouldst have me to occupy." We remember once calling upon one of our members, a sister who managed her household with discretion. She was in humble circumstances, and when we stopped opposite her house she was whitening the front steps. She rose from her pail, and apologized for being found with her sleeves up; but we begged her to make no excuse, for she was doing her duty, and we earnestly hoped that when our Lord should come he would find us in the same condition. If she had known we were coming, it is just possible she would have put on her best gown, and have been waiting in the little parlour, but we should not have been one half as charmed with her prepared appearance as with the exhibition of her every-day industry. The most fitting condition for death and for judgment is to be diligent in the Master's business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The times are very dark, bring in the candles, and let the house proceed with the present business.

Thus we bring our little book to a conclusion, only wishing our readers to remember the words of him who so shortly shall appear—"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
 - 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net