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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### Through Death to Life.

Have you heard the tale of the Aloe plant,  
Away in the sunny clime?  
By humble growth of an hundred years  
It reaches its blooming time:  
And then a wondrous bud at its crown  
Breaks into a thousand flowers;  
This floral queen, in its blooming seen,  
Is the pride of the tropical bowers,  
But the plant to the flower is a sacrifice,  
For it blooms but once, and in blooming dies.

Have you further heard of this Aloe plant,  
That grows in the sunny clime,  
How every one of its thousand flowers,  
As they drop in the blooming time,  
Is an infant plant that fastens its roots  
In the place where it falls on the ground;  
And fast as they drop from the dying stem,  
Grow lively and lovely around?  
By dying it liveth a thousand-fold (old)  
In the young that spring from the death of the

Have you heard the tale of the Pelican,  
The Arabs' Gimel el Bahr,  
That lives in the African solitudes,  
Where the birds that live lonely are?  
Have you heard how it loves its tender young,  
And cares and toils for their good?  
It brings them water from fountains afar,  
And fishes the seas for their food.  
In famine it feeds them—what love can devise!  
The blood of its bosom, and feeding them dies.

Have you heard the tale they tell of the swan,  
The snow-white bird of the lake?  
It noiselessly floats on the silvery wave,  
It silently sits in the brake;  
For it saves its song till the end of life,  
And then, in the soft still even,  
Mid the golden light of the setting sun,  
It sings as it soars into heaven!  
And the blessed notes fall back from the skies:  
Tis its only song, for in singing it dies.

You have heard these tales: shall I tell you one,  
A greater and better than all?  
Have you heard of Him whom the heavens adore,  
Before whom the hosts of them fall?  
How He left the choirs and anthems above,  
For earth in its wallings and woes,  
To suffer the shame and the pain of the cross,  
And die for the life of His foes?  
O Prince of the noble! O Sufferer divine!  
What sorrow and sacrifice equal to Thine!

Have you heard of this tale—the best of them all—  
The tale of the Holy and True;  
He dies, but His life, in untold souls,  
Lives on in the world anew.  
His seed prevails, and is filling the earth  
As the stars fill the skies above;  
He taught us to yield up the love of life,  
For the sake of the life of love.  
His death is our life, His loss is our gain,  
The joy for the tear, the peace for the pain.

Now hear these tales, ye weary and worn,  
Who for others do give up your all;  
Our Saviour hath told you the seed that would  
Into earth's dark bosom must fall—  
Must pass from the view and die away,  
And then will the fruit appear:  
The grain that seems lost in the earth below  
Will return many fold in the ear.  
By death comes life, by loss comes gain,  
The joy for the tear, the peace for the pain.

HENRY HARRAUGH.

## Selections.

### The Sluggard's Reproof.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold: therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing. —PROVERBS XX. 4.

(Concluded.)

But now we see, Mr. Sluggard, this life is the time of ploughing and sowing. It is winter-time with us; wait awhile, the spring-time shall come, and after that the harvest. There are some of us here who are longing for that time when we shall reap the golden harvest, the harvest given us by grace, but yet a harvest which we have sown; for Hosea beautifully puts it: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness; reap in mercy." We sow in righteousness, but the harvest is not given us as the effect of righteousness; it is given us by mercy! Reap in mercy! What a joyous day will that be when God's true sowers shall reap their harvests! The angels shall be with

us. They shall cry harvest home with us; and men and angels hand in hand shall enter the gates of Paradise, bringing their sheaves with them.

Where's our friend the sluggard? Oh, there he is, there he is. Is he cold now? No; how altered he looks! He looked to me quite a smart gentleman, when he was sitting by the fire last winter-time, and began rubbing his hands, saying that he would not plough. What does he look like now? What is his disembodied spirit like? Alas! poor wretch, he is *begging*. The saints are shouting; he is moaning. They are rejoicing; he is sorrowful. They are taken into heaven and housed in the Lord's garner; but he is himself a houseless wander, begging. Look at him; he has just gone up to the great golden gate, and he has lifted that knocker of pearl—bark at the noise,—and he cries, "Lord, Lord, I have eaten and I have drunk in thy presence"—just like you, Mr. Sluggard; you are all for eating and drinking—and thou hast taught in our streets:—very likely, sir; you are just the man to be taught; but you never did anything. Do you hear the words "Depart from me. I never knew you; depart from me, you worker of iniquity!" The golden gate does not open to him. He is begging, but the answer comes, "Your time of sowing you neglected, and now your time of reaping must be a time of beggary for ever." And now he goes up to yonder angel, and he cries, "Bright spirit, introduce me to the courts of heaven. It is true I wasted my time on earth, but oh, how bitterly do I repent it now! Oh, if I could have back my wasted hours, what would I not do? If I could but hear the Gospel preached again, I would hear it with both my ears. I am sure I would receive it and be obedient to it." But the angel saith, "I have no power to let you in. Besides, if I could, I would not. You had your day, and it is gone, and now you have your night. You had your lamp, but you did not trim it. You took no care to have oil in your vessel for your lamp, and now your lamp is gone out, and the bridegroom's door is shut, and you cannot enter." And now I see him—for he is very sad indeed—I see him begging of a saint that is just come up, and saying to him, "Give me of your oil, for my lamp is gone out." But the other replies, "Not so, for there is not enough for me and for you. God has given me grace for myself; I have none to spare." What a miserable beggar he is! I remember a mother's dream—a mother who once, after having exhorted her children, and talked, and prayed, and wrestled with them, retired to rest, and she dreamt that on the day of judgment herself and her children arose from the family tomb. The trumpet was reading the air with its terrific blast, and there was she "saved," but her children unregenerate. She dreamt that they clasped her round the waist, they clung to her garments, and they cried, "Mother, save us! take us into heaven with you." But she dreamt that a spirit came—some bright angel—dashed them from her, and wafted her aloft to heaven, while they were left. And she remembered, too, in that dream that she had then no care for them, no thought for them; her spirit was so swallowed up with the one thought that God was dealing justly with them—and they had had their day for sowing, and they had not sowed, and now must not expect a harvest. The justice of God had so filled her breast, that she could not weep even for them when she was taken from them. Ah, sluggard, you will be begging in another world, man; and though you will not be thinking of your soul's concerns now, you will be thinking of them then. There is a place where there is a dreadful prayer-meeting every day, and every hour in the day; a prayer-meeting where all the attendants pray—not one, but all; and they pray, too, with sighs, and groans, and tears, and yet they are never heard. That prayer-meeting is in hell. There is a begging meeting there, indeed. Oh, that half the prayer there were on earth! Oh, that the tears shed in eternity had but been shed in time! Oh, that the agony that they now feel had but been felt beforehand—that they had repented ere their life was ended! Oh, that their hearts had been made tender before the terrible fire of judgment had melted them! And the sluggard shall beg in harvest.

But now notice, though the sluggard begs

in harvest, he gets nothing. Now, in harvest time, when everything is plentiful, every man is generous. If a man sees a beggar in the streets in harvest time, he will refuse him nothing. He may go and glean in the field, for there is enough for all and to spare. It is a season of abundance; no man grudges his poor fellow-man then. But here's the terrible point. In that last harvest, when the slothful man shall beg for bread, no man will give him anything. He will beg, but none will give. I see him standing at the gate of heaven, and he looks in. There they are feasting, and he says, "Give me a crumb—a crumb, 'tis all I ask; let me have what the dogs have that feed under their master's table." But it is denied him. Then he is in the flames of hell, and he cries, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue," but it is refused him. He begs in harvest and he has nothing. The beggary becomes all the more terrible because its results are so disappointing. "And to think that others should have so much, and yet I myself should have nothing; others blessed, but myself cursed." I do think that one of the stings of hell will be for the sinner to see some of his own relatives and friends in heaven, and himself shut out. Think, my dear hearer, what if you should see your wife in paradise, and yourself eternally expelled! Mother, what if you should see those babes of yours, those precious infants, who took an early flight to heaven—if you should see them above, but between you and them a great gulf fixed so that you can never reach them, but you are shut out and they are glorified! Turn that thought over, I beseech you, and may God grant grace to every one of you, that by the love of Christ you may be constrained to escape from hell and fly to heaven; for thus saith the Lord unto your souls, "Escape, flee for your life, look not behind you, stay not in all the plain, but flee to the mountain of Christ Jesus—lest thou be consumed." Be wise to day, O sinner; tomorrow may never come. Now, now, bethink thee, now cast thy soul on Christ, now give up thy sins, now may the Spirit help thee to begin a new life, and to be in earnest about salvation; for remember, though you laughed when I described the sluggard just now, it will be no laughing matter if you are found in his hot shoes at the day of judgment; if his rags shall be on you, and his beggary shall be your everlasting portion. God grant that you may have done with your idle excuses; may you look truly at the matter as light of the day of judgment; and God grant you so to act, that from this time you may be found among the most diligent, the most fervent, and the most anxious of the followers of Christ, ploughing every day with a plough drawn by a superior power, but a plough which shall enter into the world and leave some furrow of usefulness behind it, so that in the day of harvest you may have your portion, and not, like the sluggard, beg and have nothing.

II. Well, now, having thus addressed the sluggard, I have a few minutes to spare to the people of God; and, knowing you to be by far the larger portion of those whom I address, I am sorry that I have so little time for you, but can only make just these few remarks.

My dear brothers and sisters, the Lord has, by his sovereign grace, set our hand to the plough. We once, like our poor fellow-sinners, hated this plough, and we never should have come to it unless sovereign grace had brought us. Now we have shaken off that old sloth of ours, and we are in earnest about the matter of salvation; but do we not at times feel this old sluggishness creeping on us? When we are asked to do something for the cause of Christ, do we not make excuses? There is one brother yonder; he ought to join the Church, but he doesn't, and his excuse is a very stupid one; I will not tell you what it is. There is another brother over yonder—never mind who it is—the man the cap fits let him wear it till it is worn out, and may it be worn out soon—he ought to teach in the Sabbath-school; but he lives quite conveniently—moreover, he thinks he does not like the school. There is another brother, he ought to be doing something or other; but really his position is, just now, such, that he does not see that he can. The

fact is, it is cold, my brethren, and you don't want to plough. Now, recollect, those are always coldest that don't plough, for those that plough get warm. I have always noticed that the people in a church, that quarrel, are the idle ones. Those that do nothing always grumble. They say, "Ah, there is no love in the Church"—because you haven't got any! "Ah," say you, "but they don't speak to one another,"—you mean you don't speak to them. "No," says one, "but they are not active." You mean you are not active, for that which you think they are, depend upon it you are yourselves, for we mostly see ourselves in other people, and the idea we get of others is close upon the heels of the idea we ought to have of ourselves, except when it is a good notion, and then the less we indulge the thought as being a picture of ourselves, the better.

But whenever this sluggishness creeps upon you, I want you to think of one whom you love, who will be an example to you. Now, who do you suppose it is to whom I am about to direct your eye, if you begin to be weary and faint in your minds? Ah, it is not to a deacon of the Church or to a minister; it is not to some renowned preacher of the olden time—Yes, it is—I have made a mistake there; it is to a renowned preacher of the olden time—one whom you love. Whenever you feel faint and weary, will you think of one who ploughed more than you ever can plough, and deeper furrows too, and ploughed more terrible ploughing, on a harder rock and a more terrible soil than you have to plough upon? Whenever you are weary and faint in your minds, consider Him. "And who is that?" say you. Why, you know. It is your Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. Whenever sloth creeps on you, you begin to lean on the plough handles, and the devil whispers, "Look back!" Don't look back: look up, and see Him—the Crucified One—and you won't be weary, I am sure. Myconias, the friend of Luther, had made up his mind that he would not help Luther, but that he would keep in a monastery, quiet and alone. The first night he went there, he had a dream to this effect:—He dreamed that the Crucified One appeared to him, with the nail-prints still in his hands, and that he led him away to a fountain, into which he plunged him—a fountain of blood. He beheld himself washed completely clean, and being very rejoiced thereat, he was willing to sit down; but the Crucified One said, "Follow me." He took him to the top of a hill, and down beneath there was a wide-spreading harvest. He put a sickle into his hand, and he said, "Go and reap." He looked round him and he replied, "But the fields are so vast, I cannot reap them." The finger of the Crucified One pointed to a spot where there was one reaper at work, and that one reaper seemed to be mowing whole acres at once. He seemed to be a very giant, taking enormous strides. It was Martin Luther. "Stand by his side," said the Crucified One, "and work!" He did so, and they reaped all day. The sweat stood upon his brow, and he rested for a moment. He was about to lie down, when the Crucified One came to him and said, "For the love of souls and for my sake, go on." He snatched the sickle again, and on he worked, and at last he grew weary once more. Then the Crucified One came to him again, and said, "For the love of souls and for my sake, go on." And he went on. But once he dared to pause and say, "But, master, the winter is coming, and much of this good wheat will be spoiled." "No," said he, "reap on; it will all be gathered in before the winter comes—every sheaf. I will send more labourers into the harvest, only thou do thy best." So now, methinks, the Crucified One takes me to the brow of that hill, and with me yourselves, and shows us this great London, and says, "See this great London! The great field is ripe to the harvest." He says, "Take your sickle, and reap it." You say, "Lord, I cannot." "Nay," says he, "but for the love of souls and for the sake of the Crucified One, go on and reap."

Ah, brethren, I beseech you cease not from your labour. Be more diligent than ever you have been. Think more of Christ; and that will nerve you to duty, and remove all sense of weariness; this will make you strong to run the heavenly race, like giants refreshed with new wine.