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Poetry.

Life's Answer.

I know not if the dark or bright
Shall be my lot;
If that wherein my hopes delight
Be best or not.

It may be mine to drag for years
Till's heavy chain;
Or day and night my meat be tears,
On bed of pain.

Dear faces may surround my hearth
With smiles and gloe;
Or I may dwell alone, and mirth
Be strange to me.

My bark is wafted to the strand
By breath Divine;
And on the helm there rests a hand
Other than mine.

One who has known in storms to sail,
I have on board;
Above the raving of the gale,
I hear my Lord.

He holds me when the billows smite—
I shall not fall,
If sharp, 'tis short; if long, 'tis light;
He tempers all.

Safe to the land, safe to the land—
The end is this;
And then with him go hand in hand,
Far into bliss.

—Macmillan's Magazine.

Religious.

A SPEECH

made by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon at the recent Anniversary of the London Religious Tract Society:—

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, who was greeted with much applause on rising to second the resolution, said he had been requested to express satisfaction that the Tract Society had circulated pure literature and the simple truth as it is in Jesus, and to urge upon his hearers the necessity for insisting in these days that our religious literature should contain nothing but the doctrine of the Gospel—man's ruin, man's redemption, and man's regeneration. Read your tract before you give it away was one of the first directions that should be given to a tract distributor; read it and endeavour to fully understand it yourself, and then pray over it that you may be directed where to give it. This done, a blessing might be surely expected. They did not believe in witchcraft and charms, and, consequently, had no idea of there being any virtue in pieces of paper with holy words upon them. Truth, to be of any value, must be received into the mind. Men could not be carried to heaven in an impossible state. It was necessary first and foremost to possess the truth. Every tract should have in it the great unwritten word of Evangelical Christendom, which was all the more firmly held for not having been embodied in a form of words. Despite all that was said about the divisions of the Christian Church, depend upon it they were mere lines upon the surface, not fissures in the rock, and that in their hearts all Christians were one. (Cheers.) The day had happily gone by already when it was thought necessary to talk much about Christian union, because it had been realized. It used to be thought something like the "Happy Family" on Waterloo Bridge to see ministers of different denominations met together on the same platform. They had now learned to see this to be their duty, and to feel that when they had done all in this matter they were unprofitable servants, that they ought to have loved each other long ago, and even now far better than they did. (Cheers.) There was still "one holy Catholic and Apostolic church"—(cheers)—and that church was not loose in its creed. It had a creed as firm as if it were of cast-iron, and could no more be removed than the granite foundations of the globe; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, seem most plainly by us around the cross where the bleeding Saviour offers Himself a sacrifice for sin. These truths constituted the warp and the woof of the Chris-

tian's creed; they felt that they could not disbelieve them, could not be Christians if they did not hold them fast, especially those truths about Jesus, of whom they could always say, "We cannot be right in the rest unless we think rightly of Him." (Cheers.) But there were some rising up who objected to doctrinal preaching. It was not necessary, they said, in these days; practice, and perhaps a little experience, but not doctrine. But really, if you take away the doctrine you have taken away the backbone of the manhood of Christianity—its sinew, muscle, strength, and glory. (Cheers.) Those men reminded him of Philip when he wished to enslave the men of Athens, and would have them to give up their orators. Demosthenes replied, "So said the wolves; they desired to have peace with the shepherds, but the dogs must be first given up—those pugnacious dogs—that provoked quarrels. The wolves would lie down peaceably with the lambs, and delight themselves with the sheep if only those bad-tempered dogs were hanged." (A laugh.) So perfect peace was promised among the sects if doctrines were given up; but depend upon it there were after all the preservation of the Church, which without them would soon cease to be. (Cheers.) These men said they loved the house; they would not touch the furniture in it, not they; they loved the doors thereof, and the floor thereof, and especially the table thereof and the cupboard thereof. (Laughter and cheers.) They would by no means touch those things—they only wished to remove certain stones that projected a little above the floor; they would be quite content to get rid of the foundations, to have them torn up and sold for old bricks. (Laughter.) His reply was, "We don't see it, gentlemen; we cannot agree to the terms." (Cheers.) The men and their communications were known, and the school in which they had studied; and we were not ignorant of his devices who is the master and head of the school. "Burn the charts; what's the use of the charts? What we want is a powerful engine, a good copper-bottomed ship, an experienced captain, and strong able-bodied mariners. Charts! ridiculous nonsense—antiquated things; we want no charts; destroy every one of them. Our fathers used to navigate the sea by them; but we are wiser than they were. We have pilots who know every sand and sunken rock, who can smell them beneath the water—(laughter)—or by some means find them out. Men know what's o'clock nowadays; we don't want chronometers." So they put to sea without the charts; and, looking across the waters, we may expect to witness the shipwreck of those who thought themselves so wise, and fear sometimes lest we should hear their last gasp as they sink and perish. Supposing themselves to be wise, they become fools. (Cheers.) The clap-trap cry of those who would put down doctrine was "Liberty!"—liberty to think as you like and to do as you will, to believe or not believe. No man in these days would say a word against liberty of conscience; and for himself he cared very little for all the Acts of Parliament in the world by which men were to be made religious, except so far as the moral point went, believing it to be only the unwrought work of the Spirit that could make any man right before God. (Hear, hear.) But there were some who said it was necessary there should be teachers in the Church to instruct their hearers that black is white, along side of those who held by the old truth. The claim for such liberty reminded him of an occurrence some years ago in Ratcliffe-highway. A man had a menagerie of wild beasts; and the elephant, tumbling about with his trunk one night, got hold of the peg which fastened up his den. So he got out, and, being a member of the Liberation Society—(laughter)—he begged Mr. Hall's pardon—the Emancipation Society—(renewed laughter)—he proceeded to let out the lions, and the wolves, and the jackals. There was soon a terrible noise in the back yard; and the master, waking up, rushed in among the animals with his whip, and soon had them back to their respective quarters. But for his promptness there might have been great mischief done to the people of London. The teachers of false doctrine were playing the part of the elephant, and the lies which they were letting loose upon society must be hunted back to their dens. (Cheers.) There must be no liberty to

pull up the buoys and to destroy the light-houses of the Christian Church. It was an entire mistake to suppose that the people did not want doctrine; for the unlettered folks were just those who would receive it best and love it most. An illustration of this happened to himself last week. Staying at the house of a lady in Holland he was requested to speak to the three female servants, who had been interested in the reading of his sermons. He asked them in the course of the conversation which sermons they had liked best. One mentioned a discourse on the doctrine of election, the second one on justification, and the third one on imputed righteousness—all devotional sermons. Depend upon it, if rich people did not want doctrine, the poor did. And observe, the Reformation had never succeeded in any country where its principles had only taken root in the minds of the higher classes. There were several nobles among the martyrs during the Reformation in Spain, but it was short-lived, because the people were not with it. When the sun shines only upon the mountain-tops the day has not fully dawned; but when the lowest valleys were flooded with its light, then the day had fully risen. (Cheers.) So when all classes in Spain should have received the truth, then the day of Reformation would be fully come. If we would diffuse Gospel light throughout England, we must begin low down. And just in proportion as the people were instructed in the truth, would the assaults of its enemies fall powerless. Let the publications of this society, therefore, be instructive and interesting, so that they would be read to edification. He had seen tracts that he likened to chips in porridge. They were dreadfully dry—so stupefying in their effect that by attempting to read them you might be sure of a sound sleep. (A laugh.) There was no reason why truth should not be made interesting, or why Sunday reading should be intolerably dull. But he found that the portions for Sundays of "Kitto's Daily Reading" were far less interesting than all the rest. He saw no reason why the highest truth should always be done up dry. (Cheers.) A stroke of humor even in a sermon was not always out of place, but, like a flash of lightning on a dark night, added to the general impressiveness and the effect upon the mind. Let truth be presented to the people in an interesting way, and so the best antidote would be administered to the errors contained in these books of which far too much was said. No impression could be made upon the darkness except by the exhibition of light. When the measure was full of wheat, there was no room for the chaff; and so when the mind and the soul were filled with truth, error could not enter. Let them shoot at the man of straw in the cherry tree if they would, but assuredly the best controversy in the world was the preaching of truth. When the old philosopher said that man did not live, his opponent in the controversy walked about, and that was the best retaliation that could be given; and if we went about doing good to men we should give the best reply in all the world to those who rejected Christianity. But suppose this Tract Society should become inoculated with the evil virus. That would be a calamity indeed; if, instead of bread it should give a stone; instead of a fish, a serpent; instead of an egg, a scorpion. There were those among us who had so perverted the truth, and he impeached before the bar of God and the elect angels, before the universal assembly of quick and dead at the great judgment, the men who dared to wear the garb of Christian ministers, and who replaced the truth on which our hopes alone could be safely reposed by some figment, some theory, some whim of their own. (Loud cheers.) Revivals not based on solid doctrine did not last long. Those only were the sure builders whose material was substantial truth. He rejoiced in the labours of his brother, Mr. D'nam Smith, because he did not hesitate to bring out in his revival addresses even the higher doctrines of the Gospel. The more doctrines were taught, the more Christian love and unity would be promoted. In conclusion he would say, let us all become tract distributors; scatter them on every side, and seek to bring men to Jesus. Don't be afraid to speak to people about their best interests, but approach them gently; enter not their houses rudely, but sometimes tap at the door, and say, "May I come in?" God bless the Tract

Society. Might those who directed its operations have their own hearts imbued with truth, and then be made the instruments of imparting spiritual life to multitudes of others. (Cheers.)

The Prayer-meeting.

The way to kill a prayer-meeting is to make it conventional; and the chief secret of conducting it so that it shall minister to edification is to force people out of conventional ways; to break up hereditary and stereotyped forms of prayer; to charm men into forgetfulness of the machinery of the meeting; so that they shall pray artlessly, naturally, and sensibly.

But above all, let all pretence, all mock solemnity and devotion be put away. Let no man suffer himself to appear to his brethren to be what he is not; for this is part of the injunction, "Let every man speak truth with his neighbor." If this rule be not observed, and the frequent tendencies to violate it be not corrected, the prayer-meeting will degenerate, and people will lose first all profit, and then all interest in them. For, what if people should go to an evening party, not in their natural character, but one striving to be brilliant, another to be witty, another to be instructive, another to be profound? Who could endure the sham? There is need in prayer-meetings of men who are willing to stand simply and only on what they are and what they have.

The speaking in prayer-meetings should be conversational, and so, natural. The words spoken should flow naturally from the heart's experience, or else it were better to be silent. Usually, however, when a man has nothing to say, he gets up and exhorts sinners to repent; or another, whose heart is empty, informs the church that they are very cold, and live far beneath their privileges. Such prayers or exhortations may be very glib and fluent, but they are as dry of sap or juice as last year's corn-husks. They are not only profitless, but damaging. On the contrary, there are oftentimes prayers, humble, timid, half inaudible, the utterances of uncultivated lips, that may out a poor figure as literature, that are nevertheless, not to be scornfully disdained. If a child may not talk at all till he can speak fluent English he will never learn. There should be a process going on continually of education, by which all the members of the church should be able to contribute of their experiences and gifts; and, in such a course of development, the first hesitating, ungrammatical prayer of a confused Christian may be worth more to the Church than the best prayer of the most eloquent pastor. The prayer may be but little; but it is not a little thing that a church has one more man who is beginning to pray than it had before.

The conductor of a prayer-meeting should have a distinct conception of what such a meeting is to be and to do; and as it is a mutual instruction class, a place for religious feeling to take the social element, his chief duty should be to draw out the timid, to check the obtrusive, to encourage simple and true speaking, and to apply religious truths to those wants, and struggles, and experiences which are freely mentioned there.—Aids to Prayer.

"Thy servant, the deceased."

A few years ago, in the town of —, Ct., a neighbor suddenly died, whose character as an openly wicked man was well known. The Universalist preacher of the place officiated at the funeral. The Scripture read was that generally used on such occasions by those of his views, the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians, selected from the fact that the word "all" is in it, which, for a theory so hard pushed for proof-texts, is no light consideration, even though the connection and parallel passages are fatal to Universalism. Prayer followed, in which occurred a frequent repetition of the words, "Thy servant the deceased." Knowing what the life of the poor man had been, and that no one pretended that he had met with a change of heart before his death, the language struck me as most inappropriate. Nor was I alone in this; for as I was returning home after the services, I overheard some boys talking together.