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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### BESIDE THE RAILWAY TRACK.

On its straight iron pathway the long train was pushing,  
With its noise, and its smoke, and its great human load;  
And I saw where a wild rose in beauty was blushing,  
Fresh and sweet, by the side of the hot, dusty road.

Untrained were its branches, untended it flourished,  
No eye watched its opening or mourned its decay,  
But its leaves by the soft dews of heaven were nourished,  
And it opened its buds in the warm light of day.

I asked why it grew there, where none prized its beauty,  
For of thousands who passed none had leisure to stay;  
And the answer came, sweetly "I do but my duty,  
I was told to grow here by the side of the way."

There are those on life's pathway whose spirit are willing  
To dwell where the busy crowd passes them by;  
But the dew from above on their leaves is distilling,  
And they bloom neath the smile of the All-seeing Eye.

They are loved by the few—like the rose, they remind us  
When tempted from duty's safe pathway to stray,  
We too have a place and a mission assigned us,  
Though it be but to grow by the side of the way.

## Religious.

### BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

(Concluded.)

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."—Mark 16: 15, 16.

Here let me bring in another point. It is a most fearful fact, that in no age since the Reformation has Popery made such fearful strides in England as during the last few years. I had comfortably believed that Popery was only feeding itself upon foreign subscriptions, upon a few titled perverts, and imported monks and nuns. I dreamed that its progress was not real. In fact, I have often smiled at the alarm of many of my brethren at the progress of Popery. But my dear friends, we have been mistaken, grievously mistaken. If you will read a valuable paper in the magazine called "Christian Work," those of you who are not acquainted with it will be perfectly startled at its revelations. This great city is now covered with a network of monks and priests, and sisters of mercy, and the conversions made are not by ones or twos, but by scores, till England is being regarded as the most hopeful spot for Romish missionary enterprise in the whole world; and at the present moment there is not a mission which is succeeding to anything like the extent which the English mission is. I covet not their money, I despise their sophistries, but I marvel at the way in which they gain their funds for the erection of their ecclesiastical buildings. It really is an alarming matter to see so many of our countrymen going off to that superstition which as a nation we once rejected, and which it was supposed we should never again receive. Popery is making advances such as you would never believe, though a spectator should tell it to you. Close to your very doors, perhaps even in your own houses, you may have evidence ere long of what a march Romanism is making. And to what is it to be ascribed? I say, with every ground of probability that there is no marvel that Popery should increase when you have two things to make it grow; first of all, the falsehood of those who profess a faith which they do not believe, which is quite contrary to the honesty of the Romanist, who does through evil report and good report hold its faith; and then you have, secondly, this form of error known as baptismal regeneration, and commonly called Puseyism, which is not only Puseyism, but Church-of-Englandism, because it is in the Prayer Book, as plainly as words can express it—you have this baptismal regeneration preparing stepping-stones to make it easy for men to go to Rome. I have but to open my eyes a little to foresee Romanism rampant everywhere in the future, since its germs are spreading everywhere in the present. In one

of our courts of legislature but last Tuesday, the Lord Chief Justice showed his superstition, by speaking of "the risk of the calamity of children dying unbaptized!" Among Dissenters you see a veneration for structures, a modified belief in the sacredness of places, which is all idolatry; for to believe in the sacredness of anything but of God and of his own Word, is to idolize, whether it is to believe in the sacredness of the men, the priests, or in the sacredness of the bricks and mortar, or of the fine linen, or what not, which you may use in the worship of God. I see this coming up everywhere—a belief in ceremony, a veneration for altars, fountains, and churches—a veneration so profound that we must not venture upon a remark, or straightway of sinners we are chief. Here is the essence and soul of Popery, peeping under the garb of a decent respect for sacred things. It is impossible but that the church of Rome must spread, when we who are the watch-dogs of the fold are silent, and others are gently and smoothly turning the road, and making it soft and smooth as possible, that converts may travel down to the nethermost hall of Popery. We want John Knox back again. Do not talk to me of mild and gentlemanly, of soft manners and squeamish words, we want the fiery Knox, and even though his vehemence should "ding our pulpits into blades," it were well if he did but rouse our hearts to action. We want Luther to tell men the truth unmistakably, in homely phrase. The velvet has got into our ministers' mouths of late, but we must unrobe ourselves of soft raiment, and truth must be spoken, and nothing but truth; for of all lies which have dragged millions down to hell, I look upon this as being one of the most atrocious—that in a Protestant church there should be found those who swear that baptism saves the soul. Call a man a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, or a Dissenter, or a Churchman, that is nothing to me—if he says that baptism saves the soul, out upon him, out upon him, he states what God never taught, what the Bible never laid down and what ought never to be maintained by men who profess that the Bible, and the whole Bible, is the religion of Protestants.

I have spoken thus much, and there will be some who will say—spoken thus much bitterly. Very well, be it so. Physic is often bitter, but it shall work well, and the physician is not bitter because his medicine is so; or if he be accounted so, it will not matter, so long as the patient is cured—at all events, it is no business of the patient whether the physician is bitter or not, his business is with his own soul's health. There is the truth, and I have told it to you; and if there should be one among you, or if there should be one among the readers of this sermon when it is printed, who is resting on baptism, or resting upon ceremonies of any sort, I do beseech you, shake off this venomous faith into the fire as Paul did the viper which fastened on his hand. I pray you do not rest on baptism.

"No outward forms can make you clean,  
The leprosy lies deep within."

I do beseech you to remember that you must have a new heart and a right spirit, and baptism cannot give you these. You must turn from your sins and follow after Christ; you must have such a faith as shall make your life holy and your speech devout, or else you have not the faith of God's elect, and into God's kingdom you shall never come. I pray you never rest upon this wretched and rotten foundation, this deceitful invention of Antichrist. O, may God save you from it, and bring you to seek the true rock of refuge for weary souls.

THE BAPTISM IN THE TEXT IS ONE EVIDENTLY CONNECTED WITH FAITH. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." It strikes me, there is no supposition here, that anybody would be baptized who did not believe; or, if there be such a supposition, it is very clearly laid down that his baptism will be of no use to him, for he will be damned, baptized or not, unless he believes. The baptism of the text seems to me—my brethren, if you differ from me I am sorry for it, but I must hold my opinion and out with it—it seems to me that baptism is connected with, nay, directly follows, belief. A man who knows that he is saved by believing in Christ does not, when he is baptized, lift his baptism into a saving ordinance. In fact, he is the best pro-

tester against that mistake, because he holds that he has no right to be baptized until he is saved. He bears a testimony against baptismal regeneration in his being baptized as professedly an already regenerate person. Brethren, the baptism here meant is a baptism connected with faith, and to this baptism I will admit there is very much ascribed in Scripture. Into that question I am not going; but I do find some very remarkable passages in which baptism is spoken of very strongly. I find this—"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." I find as much as this elsewhere; I know that believer's baptism itself does not wash away sin, yet it is so, the outward sign and emblem of it to the believer, that the thing visible may be described as the thing signified. Just as our Saviour said—"This is my body," when it was not his body, but bread, yet, inasmuch as it represented his body, it was fair and right according to the usage of language to say, "Take, eat, this is my body." And so, inasmuch as baptism to the believer representeth the washing of sin—not that it is so, but that it is so saved souls the outward symbol and representation of what is done by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the man who believes in Christ.

What connection has this baptism with faith? I think it has just this, baptism is the avowal of faith; the man was Christ's soldier, but now in baptism he puts on his regimentals. The man believed in Christ, but his faith remained between God and his own soul. In baptism he says to the baptizer, "I believe in Jesus Christ;" he says to the church, "I unite with you as a believer in the common truths of christianity;" he saith to the onlooker, "Whatever you may do, as for me, I will serve the Lord." It is the avowal of his faith.

Next, we think baptism is also to the believer a testimony of his faith; he does in baptism tell the world what he believes. "I am about," saith he, "to be buried in water. I believe that the Son of God was metaphorically baptized in suffering; I believe he was literally dead and buried." To rise again out of the water sets forth to all men that he believes in the resurrection of Christ. There is a showing forth in the Lord's Supper of Christ's death, and there is a showing forth in baptism of Christ's burial and resurrection. It is a type, a sign, a symbol, a mirror to the world; a looking-glass in which religion is as it were reflected. We say to the onlooker, when he asks what is the meaning of this ordinance, "We mean to set forth our faith that Christ was buried, and that he rose again from the dead, and we avow this death and resurrection to be the ground of our trust."

Again, baptism is also Faith's taking her proper place. It is, or should be, one of her first acts of obedience. Reason looks at baptism, and says, "Perhaps there is nothing in it; it cannot do me any good." "True," says Faith, "and therefore will I observe it. If it did me some good, my selfishness would make me do it but inasmuch as to my sense there is no good in it, since I am blinded by my Lord thus to fulfil all righteousness, it is my first public declaration that a thing which looks to be unreasonable and seems to be unprofitable, being commanded by God, is law to me. If my Master had told me to pick up six stones and lay them in a row I would do it, without demanding of him, "What good will it do?" *Cui dono?* is no fit question for soldiers of Jesus. The very simplicity and apparent uselessness of the ordinance should make the believer say, "Therefore I do it because it becomes the better test to me of my obedience to my Master." When you tell your servant to do something, and he cannot comprehend it, if he turns around and says, "Please, sir, what for?" you are quite clear that he hardly understands the relation between master and servant. So when God tells me to do a thing, if I say, "What for?" I cannot have taken the place which faith ought to occupy, which is that of simple obedience to whatever the Lord hath said. Baptism is commanded, and Faith obeys because it is commanded, and thus takes her proper place.

Once more, baptism is a refreshment to Faith. While we are made up of body and soul as we are, we shall need some means by

which the body shall sometimes be stirred up to co-work with the soul. In the Lord's Supper my faith is assisted by the outward and visible sign. In the bread and in the wine I see no superstitious mystery, I see nothing but bread and wine, but in that bread and wine I do see to my faith an assistant. Through the sign my faith sees the thing signified. So in baptism there is no mysterious efficacy in the baptistry or in the water. We attach no reverence to the one or to the other, but we do see in the water and in the baptism such an assistance as brings home to our faith most manifestly our being buried with Christ, and our rising again in newness of life with him. Explain baptism thus, dear friends, and there is no fear of Popery rising out of it. Explain it thus, and we cannot suppose any soul will be led to trust to it; but it takes its proper place among the ordinances of God's house. To lift it up in the other way, and say men are saved by it—ah! my friends, how much of mischief that one falsehood has done and may do, eternity alone will disclose. Would to God another George Fox would spring up in all his quaint simplicity and rude honesty to rebuke the idol worship of this age; to rattle at their holy bricks and mortar, holy lecterns, holy altars, holy surplices, right reverend fathers, and I know not what. These things are not holy. God is holy; his truth is holy; holiness belongs not to the carnal and the material, but to the spiritual. O that a trumpet tongue would cry out against the superstition of the age. I cannot, as George Fox did, give up baptism and the Lord's Supper, but I would infinitely sooner do it, counting it the smaller mistake of the two, than perpetrate and assist in perpetrating the uplifting of baptism and the Lord's Supper out of their proper place. O my beloved friends, the comrades of my struggles and witnessings, cling to the salvation of faith, and abhor the salvation of priests. If I am not mistaken, the day will come when we shall have to fight for a simple spiritual religion far more than we do now. We have been cultivating friendship with those who are either unscriptural in creed or else dishonest, who either believe baptismal regeneration, or profess that they do, and swear before God that they do when they do not. The time is come when there shall be no more truce or parley between God's servants and time-servers. The time is come when those who follow God must follow God, and those who try to trim and dress themselves and find out a way which is pleasing to the flesh and gentle to carnal desires, must go their way. A great winnowing time is coming to God's saints, and we shall be clearer one of these days than we now are from union with those who are upholding Popery, under the pretence of teaching Protestantism. We shall be clear, I say, of those who teach salvation by baptism instead of salvation by the blood of our blessed Master, Jesus Christ. O may the Lord gird up your loins. Believe me it is no trifle. It may be that on this ground Armageddon shall be fought. Here shall come the great battle between Christ and his saints on the one hand, and the world, and forms, and ceremonies, on the other. If we are overcome here, there may be years of blood and persecution, and tossing to and fro between darkness and light; but if we are brave and bold, and flinch not here but stand to God's truth, the future of England may be bright and glorious. O for a truly reformed church in England, and a godly race to maintain it. The world's future depends on it under God, for in proportion as truth is marred at home, truth is marred abroad. Out of any system which teaches salvation by baptism must spring infidelity, an infidelity which the false church already seems willing to nourish, and foster beneath her wing. God save this favored land from the brood of her own established religion. Brethren, stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not afraid of any sudden fear nor calamity when it cometh, for he who trusteth to the Lord, mercy shall compass him about, and he who is faithful to God and Christ shall hear it said at the last, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." May the Lord bless this word for Christ's sake!

To live and not to learn is to loiter, and not to live.