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Religious.

The Religion of Business.

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We are born in society; and, from the cradle to the grave, are dependent on the presence and the ministries of others. Without society we could not exist; and, despite those nobler capacities with which we have been endowed, we should be reduced to a species of wild animals—the prey of other animals which it would be easy for them to seize, or their victim, which it would be as easy for them to destroy. The society which surrounds us at the same moment protects us. It averts from us unaccounted evils, and makes us strong in the great conflict of life, since it leaves us not alone in the struggle.

Not only are we born, but we exist in society. It is the source of those affinities, and fellowships, and affections, which bind us the one to the other. Isolation is alien to man's nature, and implies conditions in which it would be impossible for him to live. The infant does not cling to his nurse more readily than the boy hastens to meet his playmates, and man to communicate his thoughts to man. We have a social nature, and the voice of that social nature is an irresistible appeal to the sympathies and the succours of universal humanity. It is enough that we bear the name of man to establish our relation to every individual of the species, and on which to found our claim to his interest and support. But for this mutual interest in each other's well-being, the race must long since have ceased to exist.

Out of the relations which we thus sustain to every member of the great human family spring certain duties and obligations from which no power can release us. To get free of our responsibility we must dissolve the relations in which we stand; but these relations are the result of an infinitely wise arrangement, and He who has established them can dissolve them only by an act of annihilation. We must cease to be before we can cease to sustain the relation which we now do to universal man; and, so long as the relation exists, so long are the duties arising out of it immutable and imperative. We have been sent into the world to mingle with our fellow-men, to take our proper share in the activities of life, to recognise the claims and the interests of those by whom we are surrounded, to fulfil the obligations imposed upon us in virtue of our social nature, and thus ensure one of the great ends of our existence on earth. Whatever be the circle in which we move, or the sphere which we have to fill, the law is ever binding upon us; to do to others as we would that they should do to us. If we cannot isolate ourselves from those around us, and if to love our neighbour as ourselves be a principle of universal application, then whatever involves the interest and the happiness of our fellow-man ought to be sacred in our estimation; nor should we shrink from any service or any sacrifice to promote his well-being. This is a duty which we owe to each other, and from which there is no exemption. The royal law is in force in all places and through all time; and whoever conforms his actions most closely to its grand requirements, adds most to the public good.

Every one having his sphere assigned to him by Infallible Wisdom, with its responsibilities and obligations, nothing must be allowed to come between him and the full and faithful discharge of his duties. The claims of every-day life, especially in this intensely busy and enterprising age, are loud and imperative, and with these requirements not even the highest exercises of piety must be allowed to interfere. The angel's voice may be heard as distinctly as of old—"Let me go, for the day breaketh." It was of no moment to that mysterious One whether the day broke or the day closed, but it was imperative on the patriarch that he should go forth and do the day's work within the limits of the day's light. There are twelve hours in the day in whose light we are called to walk and to work. Nor must anything, under the pretext of religious feeling, divert us from the path of duty. We are not to be in our closet when we ought to be in our counting-house; nor at our

Bible when we should be at our ledger; nor in church when we ought to be on "Change." There is no piety in neglecting the duties of our profession, or the claims of business, or the arrangements and provisions of domestic life, on the ground that we may have more time to devote to religion and its solemn interests. This is to reverse the Divine order, and to disobey the Divine command. We are to be diligent in business as well as fervent in spirit; and we are disposed to more than question the reality of the religious feeling, where the pursuits and the industries of every-day life are neglected. In herself, Religion is ever bright and ever beautiful; but to set up this spirit of rebellion in her sacred name, is not only to rob her of her distinctive glory, but to trample under foot the laws and the ordinances of Infinite Love.

The danger is not likely to arise out of an excess of piety. We have to fear not so much that the interests of religion will set aside the claims of business, as that the claims of business will set aside the interests of religion. This is an age of fierce and fiery enterprise, in which men are making haste to be rich. Their thoughts are absorbed and their time is consumed in the eager pursuits and restless activities of daily life; and the moments are but few which they can devote to the higher concerns of the soul and the world to come. We are far from denying that men are justified in making the best even of this world; nor have we one word to say against the most intense application to business; but while we would not suffer the highest and the holiest services of religion, whether private or public, to interfere with the claims and the duties of our secular calling, we would as earnestly protest against the activities of time being allowed to exclude from our more serious thoughts the realities of eternity. As the patriarch detained the angel, and would not let him go until he blessed him; so no man is qualified for the duties, and the difficulties, the temptations and the benefits of a single day, till he has asked and obtained supernatural strength and influence. Religion is not a creed, but a life. It is not like a Sunday dress, to be put on and off at pleasure; nor something for certain times, or places, or circles, but belongs to the man everywhere and on all occasions. We have no faith in mere show and semblance; we denounce all pretensions and all hypocrisies. A man should be, and not seem to be; his character should be transparent; his conduct above suspicion, and his life the embodiment of those principles which teach him to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world.

It is not at all needful that the Christian should parade his religion before men, and thus subject himself to the charge of cant and cunning. If we live not in words, but in deeds, then in deeds, and not in words, should our religion reveal itself. Let us take for granted that we are in contact with a Christian man who never intrudes religion into any circle, and who, in the daily walks of life and business, seldom, if ever, opens his lips on religious subjects, but, in whose conduct and conversation are embodied whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, and would not these virtues commend themselves even to those who are disposed to call in question the reality of the Christian faith, and give intense force to the character? There is power in quietude. The life may be silent, but the life will speak. If the Christian is not to be lost in the mists of business, neither is the man of business to be lost and absorbed in the Christian. We are to buy, and sell, and get gain, and carry on all our commercial transactions in the spirit of that Christianity which includes within the sphere of its influence the minutest details and the most complex arrangements of human life. In its solitude of the interests and the happiness of man it has omitted nothing. There is no conceivable duty which it has not enjoined, there is no amiable or generous sentiment which it does not encourage; all those passions—selfishness with its sordid calculations, envy with its secret projects, revenge with its perfidious outrages—which harden and consume the hearts of men, and stain the earth with blood and tears, it wholly subduces.

It proclaims charity as its fundamental law, and fosters every mild and active virtue. If the principles of this Christianity governed men in all the relations and business of life, we should meet with nothing in the walks of commerce but what is true and good, what leads greatness to action and excellence to character.

It is to be feared that a great deal is done under the cloak of religion which would not bear the light. There are those who bring religion into business, not to sanctify their commerce, but to impose on those with whom they are dealing, and to effect objects and ends which the voice of universal integrity and fairness would condemn. Nor this only. Is not the commerce of our country carried on to a large extent by means of fictitious capital? Are there not houses of business, to be numbered by hundreds, if not by thousands, which are neither solvent nor sound? Is not the spirit of speculation being carried to that point and pitch which is sure to be followed by corresponding loss and panic? Is not the competition of the age such as to lead to expedients and devices which in themselves are morally wrong? Are the dealings between man and man exempt from intrigue and chicanery? Is there no puffing which amounts to lying? Are there no false weights or divers measures? Are there no transactions which covet secrecy—no deeds which shun the light? Would that those who bear the Christian name could be held blameless in these things? Still, Christianity is not to be blamed for the sins and the shortcomings of its disciples. It is not Christianity, but the want of it, which gives birth to these inconsistencies; and Christianity pronounces upon them a severer condemnation than could all from the lips of even the most avowed enemy. The perfection of merely human character is not to be looked for; but the principles of religion may be so carried into all the relations and concerns of time as to bear along with them the force of a moral demonstration. It is this argument—the argument derived from Christian consistency—which the sceptic or the unbeliever now demands, and for which he waits. Though he rejects the Book and its contents, he knows full well that the Bible requires of its professed believers; and by the very Book from whose discoveries and claims he himself turns away, he tests and condemns the conduct of those who receive it as the basis of their faith and the rule of their life. Nor can it be denied that, however culpable he may be for his own unbelief, he is right in taking the Bible as the standard of Christian character. The principles of Christianity are all influential, practical principles, and unless they are embodied in the life, and affect the whole course of our actions, it is but a natural inference that they have no existence in the heart. If the Christian virtues are not seen in our daily walk and conversation, our religion is nothing more than the merest hypocrisy; and our hypocrisy becomes a plea in the mouth of others for their continued unbelief. The man who professes to be a Christian on Sunday, and in certain religious circles, must be a Christian on every other day, and in every scene and circumstance of life. Nor is there anything within the entire compass of Christian morality which he is not bound to do. The integrity or completeness of Christian character is what is loudly called for in this age of religious doubt and commercial immorality. The sceptic and the infidel demand it, the man of truth and the man of error alike demand it, the Church and the world both demand it, time and eternity alike demand it. Consistency requires it, the Gospel enjoins it, God commands it.

STARTLING FACTS.—There are in New York city 15,000 tenant-houses, containing 486,000 persons; there is one grog-shop for every hundred inhabitants; there is one church to three thousand people. Seventy men, women, and children die every day. The city taxes are \$46,000 a day, or \$17,000,000 a year. The money spent in public amusements is \$24,000 a day; \$7,000,000 a year. For the support of the police, \$2,000,000 a year is required. Seventeen thousand immigrants per month land at Castle Garden.

Signs of Better Days for Baptist Churches in England.

With unmingled pleasure the Editor of "The Sword and the Trowel," took part in the general assembly of the Baptist Churches at Bradford. A holy, heavenly spirit was poured out upon the brethren; there seemed to be one undivided vehement longing for more manifest unity, and each man appeared to be closing towards his fellow. This has been the daily prayer of some among us, and the answer is now at our doors. Our body, shattered and divided, rent with differences, and torn with jealousies, is now, through God's grace, likely to be united, happy, and consequently powerful. The days of solemn meeting held among our generous Yorkshire brethren will be the date from which to mark the commencement of a blessed era if we all remained true to the spirit which ruled the hour. Suspicious and mistrust are now given to the winds, and we look each other in the face with mutual confidence. Our own heart was brimming with love to all the brethren, we took the most public opportunity of expressing it, and we feel constrained again to say that if we have in any measure been an impediment to the forming of our churches into a compact phalanx, it has not been our intention, and it shall not be the case in the future. Without pledging ourselves to any line of action, without laying aside any peculiarity or point of difference, nay, even testifying that there is much to be amended and something to be destroyed, we do most cordially cast in our soul and strength into the movement for heartier union, believing it to be the work of the Lord, for the good not only of our churches, but for the common cause, and for the world's best interests. In these times of Popish aggression and Puseyite progress, the sturdy lover of the good old way must make a closer league with all who are like-minded, for now is not the time to quarrel and divide upon unimportant matters. Our dear friends, W. Brook and W. Landels, have cheerfully joined with us in the formation of an Association of our churches in London; a meeting will speedily be called, and progress will be reported in our next number. November 10th is the day selected for the meeting to discuss the matter. The pastors will meet in the morning for conversation, and having dined together, will then meet the deacons and elders for prayer, and after tea a great united prayer-meeting will be held. The Metropolitan Tabernacle, as the largest of our buildings, will be the place of meeting. Tickets for the prayer-meeting may be had if early application be made. O for the dew of Hermon to rest upon the brethren dwelling together in unity! There may the Lord command the blessing, even life for evermore.—*Mr. Spurgeon, in "The Sword and the Trowel."*

Coming of the Son of Man.

Jesus Christ will come again. 1. He came into the world when he took on him our nature, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Then he came to seek and to save the lost. 2. He came in judgment to destroy Jerusalem for its sins. 3. He came to call his people away by death. 4. He will come at the last day to judge the world. 5. When he comes, whenever and however it is, he takes care of his people. 1. When he came first, it was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. 2. When he came to destroy Jerusalem, he so ordered it in his providence that none of his people perished in that wicked city. 3. When he comes to call his people away by death, he takes them to the mansion he has gone to prepare for them. 4. When he comes to judge the world, he will not overlook any of his people—none of them shall be lost. He will say, "Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you!" 5. We should expect his coming and be ready for it—always ready for our death, neither the day nor the hour. To us death is the page at the end of the world—it closes our probation and fixes our destiny—and it becomes us to be ever ready for the coming of the Son of Man.—*Observe.*