

Sunday Reading.

The Work of the Spirit.

BY D. L. MOODY.

The Holy Spirit is a Person, not a mere essence. Christ always spoke of Him as a Person. "I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth."

The first thing the Spirit does when He comes into the heart is to impart love: see Romans v. 5. The first impulse of a young convert is to love. The greatest Hottentot in the world could love those that loved him, but to love our enemies as Jesus did when He prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," requires a different spirit, and that is what men receive when they are born of God. All the nine graces mentioned in Galatians v. can be summed up in the one word "love." Joy is love exulting, peace love in repose, long-suffering love in endurance, gentleness love in society, goodness love in action, faith love on the battle-field, meekness love at school, temperance love in training.

Another work of the Spirit is to produce hope. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Romans xv. 13). There will always be hope in a church if the Spirit is there. God does not bless a minister who has lost hope. When Elijah was under the juniper tree God could not use him, he had lost hope and was out of tune. When Joshua went round the walls of Jericho God told him several times to "be of good courage," and not to lose hope. A man who is filled with the Spirit would be full of hope.

Another thing the Spirit does will be found in 2 Cor. iii. 17, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Before a great work can be done in many places the people will have to bury their spirit of lukewarmness. They are like Lazarus when Jesus told him to come forth out of the sepulchre bound hand and foot. They have no liberty to speak for Christ, but are always hampered.

Another work of the Spirit is to testify of Jesus Christ—John xv. 26. God sent Christ into the world to teach men, but the world will not have Him as a teacher, but put Him out of the way. Yet see how kind and good He was. "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter," and "He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you." What a wonderful Teacher He is. There is not a truth a child of God needs to know, but what the Holy Spirit would guide him to it. Many, however, get into bondage and gloom by looking for some special revelation outside the Word. The Holy Spirit will not guide them apart from the Bible.

Another work the Holy Spirit does is to convince the world of sin. "And when He is come He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin," not because men blasphemed or got drunk, but "of sin, because they believe not on Me." That is the sin of sins. There would be no drunkards or harlots walking the streets of London if it were not for this sin. It is the damning sin of to-day. None but the Spirit can do this. If Gabriel were to come to the earth with every hair of his head illumined with the light of heaven, and preach with all his might, there would not be a soul converted without the Spirit's power.

Where the Spirit dwells—"Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost," Paul said. He not only visits men, but abides with them, and they ought to be filled with the Holy Spirit. If the thousands of Christians who gather in the tabernacle Sabbath after Sabbath were all full of the Holy Ghost, London and the whole world would feel their influence. Many of God's people are satisfied with the work Christ did for them on the Cross, but forget the work of the Spirit. They get life, but have not power to go forth and testify. When men are filled with the Spirit it will flow out in streams. No man is fit for God's service till he gets an overflow of the Spirit. If a man cannot rule his temper or manage his business he is not fit to work for God.

We find that after Christ rose from the dead, He lifted His bruised, wounded hands over His disciples, and breathed on them the Holy Spirit. Yet He told them to tarry at Jerusalem till they received power from on high. They might have said "Lord, we have received it. You breathed it upon us;" but He wanted them to have it more abundantly. Suppose the disciples had preached before the power came, they would probably have laid down their lives like Stephen, and their testimony would not have been received. If we would tarry more for the power, and not be satisfied until the power came, our work would amount to a hundred-fold more than it does. Many a man wore out his life when he had not got the power resting upon him, and so was not successful. The disciples tarried at Jerusalem, and when the power came they were altogether different men. Peter, who had denied to a servant-maid that he knew Christ, did not then fear any man. He had received power from on high.

Winter is coming on, a grand time in London to work for God—perhaps not a better field in the wide world than here. A mighty work of grace in London would go to the end of the world. It would take all eternity to tell the results.

The Intercession of the Spirit.

PROF. AUSTIN PHELPS.

The Christian consciousness confirms the fact, which all prayer assumes, of direct communion between the human mind and the mind of God. Varying in degree of vividness this witness of spirit to spirit is perhaps the most uniform experience of real prayer. The believer is conscious of exercises which he cannot attribute to any other cause than the real and personal agency of God.

Thoughts are often suggested which the believer feels that he did not originate. Preachers have told us of such mental illumination in prayer by which obscure texts of Scripture have been lighted up; difficult plans of sermons have been opened to them with an affluence of material and a suddenness of development which impress them irresistibly with the conviction—"This is the work of God; this is the teaching of the Holy Ghost; this is the fulfilment of the promise, 'It shall be given you what ye shall say.'" Dr. Finney more than once cast aside the elaborate sermon which he had brought to the pulpit to make room for another on a new text and a different theme, which seemed to him to be revealed to him in the preceding prayer.

Emotions often fill the praying soul which we cannot otherwise as rationally account for as by the simple fact that the infinite One is present, drawing the suppliant to communion with himself. "The Lord is in this place," said the awe-struck patriarch. That feeling in the believer's soul often has the vividness of vision. A voice proclaiming the fact from the heavens would not be more convincing.

Revolutions of feeling often occur in prayer of which the most probable explanation is that they are the work of God. Hope takes the place of despondency. Love displaces fear. Rest follows self-conflict. Trust lifts forebodings. Assurance of pardon lifts off suddenly the leaden weight of guilt. Remorse transformed to penitent faith is one of the most revolutionary changes of which the human spirit is susceptible. Poetry and romance discover nothing else like it in the history of human passions. Yet this is one of the most common experiences of believing prayer.

Power of speech is often marvellously quickened in prayer. Emotions which the soul has struggled with long and painfully, find sudden outlet in language of which the praying one never conceived before. Some men can habitually speak in prayer as nowhere else. An unlettered Christian was once summoned into court, in a trial in which he had much at stake. He was called upon to tell his own story. He was flustered, he stammered, he repeated and contradicted himself, and was in danger of losing his case for want of power of utterance. He knew himself, and knew that there was one act in which he could talk. He begged of the judge liberty to pray. It was granted. He knelt

down, and with flowing tears poured out his case before the Lord in language clear, coherent, fluent, and convincing to the jury. This story illustrates a fact well known to believers in the reality of prayer. A man is known to me who, in common life, is an incorrigible stammerer. He cannot say a word without making it three. He is the butt of mimics; but in prayer his utterance is Ciceronian. Few men can mimic him in that. One prayer, offered by the late Professor Stuart more than forty years ago, is still remembered, and fragments of it rehearsed as a most thrilling approach to apostolic inspiration.

"The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." How often does the promise come home to the struggling suppliant as a fact revealed! Apostles had no monopoly of it. Leaders in public worship, to whom the service is a cross and a terror, do you know nothing of this unsealing of the dumb lips, this inspiration of the silent tongue? Has it not sometimes been to you like the bursting of sunlight on a wintry sea? Has not the outbreak of triumphant song in the hymn that followed, been your own irrepressible offering of thanksgiving? Youthful preachers know, or will know, what I mean.

But cannot these phenomena result from the unaided working of the human mind? Oh, yes, they can. Sometimes, perhaps, they do. We can afford large concessions. But the point to which the Christian consciousness bears witness is that commonly they are more naturally explained by the hypothesis of the real presence and the direct agency of God.—Exchange.

The Palm-Tree Christians.

Some Christians seem to be always and constantly growing in grace from the time they are regenerated. They are always enjoying soul prosperity, and are fitly represented by the palm-tree.

"The righteous shall flourish like a palm-tree." One of the most prominent features of the palm-tree is usefulness. A certain writer informs us that the natives of the palm-tree region celebrate, either in prose or verse, the three hundred and sixty uses to which the trunk, the branches or long leaf-stalks, the leaves, fibres, and fruit of the palm-tree are skillfully applied. So, likewise, Christian reader, if you would be like a palm-tree in usefulness and growth, you must consecrate wood, bark, fruit and leaves—all—to the service of your Master. If you are safe, planted on the Rock of Ages, have you been the means of helping some other perishing, struggling one to the same place of safety? Have you stretched down the arm of prayer, liberality, advice, and influence, to help up some other one to that rock of safety? Of two Christians, the one intensely endeavoring to save others, the other on his knees thanking God for his own escape—the former, in our opinion, is the sublimer sight, and comes nearer the fulfilling of God's will. The one is but the expression of gratitude; the other is the embodiment of gratitude itself in effort—flourishing and useful as the palm-tree. Take away some professing Christians, and you would not miss them, so far as their usefulness is concerned. Who has sat under their shade and been refreshed? Who has partaken of their food, and been gladdened by their freshness and beauty? Who has been piloted by them to the well-springs of living water in the arid desert of life? Who has from sight of them, and contact with them, thanked God and taken courage? Where is their fruit, their good fruit, in the sight of God or man? If at this hour God was to cut down these cumberers of the ground, we fear that they would look back upon a wasted, barren life, and as eternity and the judgment would loom up before them, their bitter, unavailing cry would be, "Leaves—nothing but leaves!"

Rev. Dr. Thomas, who was recently deposed from the Methodist ministry, has resumed preaching in Chicago. By continuing to preach he forfeits his chance to appeal to the General Conference. Probably he feels certain that the action of the Conference that expelled him would be sustained. He will, doubtless, organize an independent church.

A Beautiful Incident.

A man blind from his birth, a man of much intellectual vigor, and with many engaging social qualities, found a woman, who, appreciating his worth, was willing to cast in her lot with him, and become his wife. Several bright, beautiful children became theirs, who tenderly and equally loved their parents. An eminent French surgeon while in this country called upon them, and examining the blind man with much interest and care, said to him, "Your blindness is wholly artificial; your eyes are naturally good, and could I have operated upon them twenty years ago, I think I could have given you sight. It is barely possible that I can do it now, though it will cause you much pain." "I can bear that," was the reply, "so you but enable me to see." The surgeon operated upon him, and was gradually successful; first there were faint glimmerings of light, then more distinct vision. The blind father was handed a rose; he had smelt one before, but had never seen one; then he looked upon the face of his wife, who had been so true and faithful to him; and then the children were brought, whom he had so often fondled, and whose charming prattle had so frequently fallen upon his ears. He then exclaimed, "Oh, why have I seen all these before inquiring for the man by whose skill I have been enabled to behold them? Show me the doctor." And when he was pointed out to him, he embraced him with tears of gratitude and joy. So, when we reach heaven, and with unclouded eyes look upon its glories, we shall not be content with a view of these. No, we shall say, "Where is Christ? He to whom I am indebted for what heaven is; show Him, that with all my soul I may adore and praise Him through endless ages"—Christian at Work.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Religious Reading for the Family.

Some of your readers may remember a remark made by Dr. Cramp a few years ago, though whether at a public meeting, or in conversation, I cannot say,—to the effect, that the pastors of our churches should endeavor to make use of the religious newspapers, to furnish profitable reading for the families of our denomination. He made the remark, in connection with the fact, that he, and the men of his generation would soon cease from toil, and the young men coming up around them, must take their places.

The remark made a deep impression on my mind at the time; and I am from time to time, reminded of it, in various ways. For sometimes, I am requested by a Christian father, to recommend a good religious newspaper, that will furnish "real good reading" for his family. Such reading is highly prized in the family circle. Papers that furnish the weekly sermon, together with short articles on practical religion, are eagerly read by many. Some of the secular papers, secure the publication of a sermon occasionally, and sometimes furnish news from different religious denominations, for the purpose of meeting the demands of their readers and of increasing their circulation.

In view of these facts it might seem unnecessary to say anything of the field of usefulness open to the religious newspaper. But it is not so needless to call the attention of such of your readers as can furnish religious reading of an attractive kind, to the opportunity for doing good open to them. Men and women who are anxious to serve their generation, and possess ability, and have time to give, have ample scope for the improvement of the talent God has given to them, in this department of Christian work.

In some of the religious Magazines of the day, is found instructive and devotional reading of almost every description—suited to all ages, from the child to the man of grey hairs—and in variety to meet all the different circumstances of family life. It is interesting to observe, the list of the names of the men and women who contribute such a wealth of religious instruction and of consolation to the homes and hearts of the people of our day.

The list is adorned with the names of men and women of genius, and of rich endowment of mind and heart, and of ripe scholarship. But this is not the most observable feature of the case. The writers of these articles are people of busy lives—men and women filling

other positions of great usefulness, bearing responsibilities, that might well excuse them from any effort—outside their particular calling. But in the spirit of true consecration, any service that can be rendered to Christ, is cheerfully undertaken by them. No one can doubt but that they receive their reward.

Now it is not too much to say, that there are many among us, men as devout in spirit, as fully consecrated to the service of Christ, and as fully able to furnish such religious reading in our denominational newspapers, as those referred to above. The families our papers visit, would appreciate efforts made in their behalf. The reminiscences of aged pastors, the strong stirring appeals of our young men—the devotional emotions enjoyed in seasons of special prayer, pithy, brief expositions of the plain old texts of the Bible—all these prepared with the view of instructing and edifying the readers—of leading Christians into a more devout and useful life—and of awakening interest in the hearts of the young to the affairs of the soul—would prove eminently entertaining and useful. This would aid materially the growth of the piety, and peace of the denomination, would give influence to our papers—would secure for us acceptance in the eyes of all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ. It cannot be that brethren, though sincerely Christian, and honest in their convictions, should always see alike. This will not be expected by any reasonable person, and yet, it should not be supposed, that religious newspapers are intended merely for ventilating the differences among brethren. A far higher mission, a nobler aim belongs by right, to the religious family newspaper. Its work should be to bind the families of the denomination together; to promote the good fellowship of all—the spiritual and eternal welfare of every separate reader.

Canard, January 9th, 1882.

For the Christian Messenger.

"She hath done what she could."—Mark xiv. 8. While Jesus sat in Simon's house, Enjoying a refreshing hour, There came a maid of humble faith, For whom He had displayed His power.

She had not riches to bestow, To crown her Lord with earthly praise; But one kind act was there declared, Immortalized thro' endless days.

She brake the-box of ointment rare, And gently poured it on His head, Its fragrance thus prepared Him for His burying-place among the dead.

Yes, "what she could," the Saviour said, This faithful woman now has done; And wheresoe'er this gospel's preached These tidings bear to every one.

This lesson of sweet gratitude Is left for those who toil and pray; Our Saviour kindly notes each deed,— And gives reward for every day.

Dear reader, let your life be filled With deeds of kindness for your Lord, Just what you can, and nothing more, According to the Master's word.

HAWTHORN.

For the Christian Messenger.

Wolville Baptist Sabbath School.

Mr. Editor,—

I was present at the meeting of the above School yesterday, and heard a report of its labours during the past year. The Superintendent, (J. W. Bars, Esq.), said the average attendance for 1881 was 109, a few less than the year before, which he accounted for by the circumstance of some scholars removing from the place.

The contributions were reported as amounting to \$98 for Missions. This includes weekly offerings from scholars and teachers, including a donation from the Superintendent, and made an average of 90 cents from each scholar in the School. There being a sum on hand from the previous year added to the above, made \$134, which by vote of the School,—after several good missionary speeches from teachers,—is to be equally divided between the Foreign and Home Missionary Boards. This has no reference to the Convention Scheme, which the church is working out independently of the Sabbath School.

I thought, when listening to the report and the remarks following, how

much could be done in raising funds by a little system. The children and teachers seemed to be encouraged by the past, and hope to do more in the present year.

I learned that the School raised about \$70 during the past year by other means, for their library, but the weekly contributions are held solely for missionary purposes.

I send this to the MESSENGER, that it may be an encouragement for other Sabbath Schools that are labouring in the same direction. W. Wolville, Jan. 9, 1882.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letter from Germany.

BERLIN, Dec. 19, 1881.

Prince Bismarck appears to be somewhat harassed by his enemies in the German Parliament, and he boldly declares that he would rather make a friend of the Pope than of some German parties who hold out their hands to him. There has been a struggle between Prussia and the Vatican for these nine years, and, as frequently happens, the Clericals have really got the best of it. Prince Bismarck could not be "pumped" as to the exact line of policy he meant to adopt in his dealings with Rome for the future, but it seems pretty clear that the Imperial Chancellor, like all prominent political leaders, whether they be Mr. Gladstone in England, M. Gambetta in France, or Prince Bismarck in Germany, could not get along comfortably without a "majority." Now, the method of increasing the majority was to conciliate the Catholics, who are still strong in Germany, and stronger still in the German Parliament, for they number about one hundred members, and what is more, they are controlled from Rome. All who understand the system of the Vatican are aware that obedience is the first law, and the authority of Rome is very rarely questioned. Consequently these clerical members have frequently, in popular phrase, "made it warm" for the Imperial Chancellor, who now, with the assistance of these new friends, intends to strike a blow at the Progressists. "I will hit them," says the Prince, "as long as I have strength left to strike a blow." The Chancellor is generally as good as his word, and sometimes better. Therefore, we may expect some lively scenes in the German Parliament, and there will be but slight occasion for sneers at the "animation" of French politicians. No doubt the Chancellor was influenced to some extent in his policy by the fact of the large Catholic population of Austria; but Protestant feeling in Germany will be bitterly opposed to the compact Prince Bismarck has made with the Vatican.

The rupture between Austria and Roumania has caused some stir on the Continent. Not because there is any fear for Austria, because the big Power can easily settle the question of the navigation of the Danube, which it is not likely Austria would allow to be interfered with. It would be a worse blunder for Austria to sacrifice any portion of her influence on the Danube than for England to yield Gibraltar to Spain. Beyond the loss of prestige England would not greatly suffer, but the command of the Danube is vital to Austria.

Several applications have been made to both the Austrian and Hungarian Governments for the concession and subvention of various steamship lines, the one from Trieste to New York being urged with much earnestness and no small amount of logic. Why are there no American capitalists on the list of applicants for the privilege? Native capital, if there is any at all to spare for a plucky enterprise, won't trust itself on the Atlantic, not even if prospective dividends appear ever so inviting. However, English enterprise will probably not be slow in obtaining control of such concession as may be granted, and English capital will follow as a matter of course, to lend its power to a speedy and practical development of those schemes. Besides Trieste-New York, a direct line Trieste-Great Britain and a line Trieste-South America, with steamers calling at Sicilian, African and Spanish ports, are recommended for subvention to Government.

AUGUST.