

Sunday Reading.

Without Me.

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

I have before me a vision—a vision of failure, "Without me ye can do nothing." So it comes to this—if once the people of God—the church of God—get dissociated from Christ, without him they will do nothing—nothing; and the world is perishing, yet they do nothing. Building churches, building chapels, practising gorgeous ceremonies, singing hymns, playing organs, and doing nothing. No progress of the kingdom of Christ. Eloquent preaching and doing nothing. Ah me! what a miserable result from all our organizations, and agencies, and attempts, and boastings, that after all, if we get away from Christ, we shall just do nothing at all. And do churches ever get away from Christ? I fear they do, I am afraid some do as to matters of doctrine. I would not like to bring a loose charge against any, but I would say there are some churches that have gone aside from Christ. Some time ago a foreigner in England wanted to attend a place of worship; he strayed out and entered a certain place of worship, and when he came back after morning service he said to his friend, "I do not know what sort of a place it was that I went to, but I did not hear Jesus Christ mentioned all the time." So he said perhaps they were Mohammedans. Well, they were not Mohammedans—I shall not say what they were. But I do know some places where it might be a problem whether the sermon might not as properly have been preached in a mosque as in a Christian place of worship. Very pretty it may be. I am told it is advanced thought. In my mind it is advancing backward very rapidly, and that is all the advancement there is in it. But somehow or other Jesus Christ is eliminated. "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him." What if Jesus Christ is brought in? There are sermons that have very little about the atonement in them; and if you leave out the atonement what Christianity have you got to preach? Let a baker advertise that he has discovered the art of making bread without flour; let him put it in all the papers, and placard it on all the walls. I do really think it will break his business. I believe that somebody who does not know half as much—in fact, who does not know about this new bread-making art—will get all his business and run away with all his customers. So you shall see wherever Christ is left out of the preaching what happens. When Christ goes out of the pulpit the people generally go out of the pew. A Christless gospel is an admirable thing for the growth and cultivation of spiders; they are pretty sure to multiply in all corners of the place of worship under such a condition of things, for there is a curious prejudice about. I am not going to account for it. Somehow or other people like bread made of flour, and when they hear the gospel they like to have Christ in the gospel. It is odd that they should, but they do; and you shall not find—look where you may—that, long together, even the simple matter of attracting is gained when Jesus Christ is left out. I will put that as low down as ever you like, but still it is somewhat important to get the people to hear. If they do not hear how shall they believe, and if they do not believe how shall they be blessed? But even on the lowest ground, leave Christ out of the doctrine, and how true it is, "Without me ye can do nothing." Small by degrees and beautifully less the congregation grows; and for my part I am exceedingly glad of it; and when I hear them say that there is not enough to support the minister, and that they will have to shut up the place, I feel some such kind of joy about it as teetotaler does when a public house shuts up. I say to myself, "Yes, they sell deleterious drugs, and the fewer of such shops the better," and thank God they do get fewer and fewer. If Jesus Christ, and the atonement sacrifice, and the doctrine of salvation by faith, be once put into the background, farewell success. Without me ye can do nothing.

Great truths are often said in the fewest words.

A little Girl's life in 1782.

One hundred years ago a little girl named Mary Butt was living with her parents at the pretty rectory of Stamford-on-the-Terne, in England. She was a bright and beautiful child, and when she grew up she became Mrs. Sherwood, the writer of a great many charming stories for young people.

But nothing that she wrote is so entertaining as the story of her childhood, which, when she was an old lady, she told to please her grandchildren. I wonder how the girls who read this paper would endure the discipline which little Mary submitted to so patiently in 1782.

From the time she was six until she was thirteen she wore every day an iron collar around her neck, and a back-board strapped tightly over her shoulders. This was to make her perfectly straight. Perhaps you may have seen here and there a very stately old lady who never was known to lean back in her chair, but who always held herself as erect as a soldier on duty. If so, she was taught, you may be sure, to carry herself in that way when she was a little girl.

Poor Mary's iron collar was put on in the morning, and was not taken off until dark, and worse than that, she says: "I generally did all my lessons standing in stocks, with the collar around my neck. I never sat on a chair in my mother's presence."

Her brother and herself were great readers, but you can count on the fingers of one hand all the books they had to read. Robinson Crusoe, two sets of Fairy Tales, The Little Female Academy, and Esop's Fables formed the entire juvenile library. They used to take Robinson Crusoe, and seat themselves at the bottom of the wide staircase, the two heads bent over the page together. Whenever they turned a leaf, they ascended a step, until they reached the top, and then they began to go down again.

Little Marten was not very persevering with his Latin, so, although it was not then the fashion for girls, Mary's mother decided that she should begin the study in order to encourage him. The sister soon distanced the brother, and before she was twelve her regular task of a morning was fifty lines of Virgil, translated as she stood in the stocks.

You will ask what sort of dress this little girl was allowed to wear one hundred years ago. In summer she had cambric, and in winter lincey-woolsey or stuff gowns, with a simple white muslin for best. Her mother always insisted on a pinafore, which was a great loose apron worn over everything else, and enveloping her from head to foot.

It is quite refreshing to find that neither the backboard nor the Latin took from the child a love of play and of dolls. Her special pet was a huge wooden doll, which she carried to the woods with her, tied by a string to her waist, after the grown people had decided that she was too big to care for dolls. A friend one day presented her with a fine gauze cap, and this was the only ornament she ever possessed as a child.

I think the little girls who compare 1882 with 1782 must be thankful they were not born in the last century. I know that I am. Yet little Mary Butt was a very happy child, spending, when permitted, hours of great delight in the woods and groves, and listening eagerly to the talk of the learned and travelled visitors who came to Stamford Rectory. —Harper's Young People.

Lights and Shadows of New York.

BY A NIGHT WATCHMAN.

I have, for some time past, taken a deep interest in the various methods of Christian work in this great city as I pass along on my nightly rounds, and given the subject much careful investigation. I have not only watched others at work, but I have been trying, in a very plain, practical way, as time and opportunity afforded, to do something myself to "rescue the perishing and care for the dying," by going to the homes of those who attend no place of worship and asking them to come and hear the Word of God.

For the past two years my beat has

been between 23rd and 59th streets and 7th and 10th avenues, and it is astonishing to know what a mass of people live in these densely crowded tenement houses, and the great majority of these people are of the working classes. Where do they go to worship God? Who is interested in sending them the Gospel? How many missionaries are working daily from home to home, from tenement house to tenement house? Who sympathizes with that poor heart-broken woman who is struggling with a young family and a drunken husband, her little ones not in the Sabbath-school but on the street, and her husband spending his Sabbath afternoons in the rum store on the corner?

I shudder to answer these questions. What misery I have witnessed! What sorrows, what heart-rending sights, with no human eye to see, no kind heart to sympathize, no Christian word of hope for the disconsolate one, no one to point the shipwrecked voyager to the Day Star from on high? Hear the history of some sad wife, look at her as she plies away in her wash-tub, and wrings her hands to wipe away the hot scalding tear from her pale, careworn cheek, as you tell her "the Old, Old Story of Jesus and His Love." Hear her say, "Oh, yes, mother's prayers seem to give me strength." She is trying to earn a little to give bread to her offspring, for the man who swore to love her has, through drink and bad habits, forsaken her. These of the more independent class, that don't attend any church, tell you that the church folks don't want them. They have been living in that house so many years, and no one ever called to see them. "Now, if they wanted us they would call to see us," they say, and finally conclude they are just as well off at home, and generally wind up by saying: "I guess we are as good as church folks are, anyhow." Others tell you they belonged to churches down town, but since they moved up town years ago, they waited and waited, and finally never think of going anywhere. I find among the young married people who are beginning to raise families, a terrible hatred against going to church, because they can't dress now as well as when they were single, when their fathers paid pew rent and they sang in the church choir. So, week after week, they get more and more careless, until the Sabbath day is spent in lounging indifference. The churches tell you that they will welcome those people if they go, but what has been done to reach them, to invite them lovingly to attend worship?

It is time for our churches to wake up and ask, Have our methods of city mission work proved a failure?

Has the church left the masses, or have this portion of the community only left the churches? What they want is evangelistic work done systematically by earnest, faithful, soul-seeking men and women, and plain, comfortable houses provided for the masses to worship God in.—Word, Work, and World.

Wonderful Symbol.

I have somewhere read that the mortar which cements the stones of the great mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople still retains the fragrance of the musk that was mingled with it when Justinian built the edifice in the sixth century as a temple of the Lord. The infidel Turk has captured and spoiled it; the worship of Christ has given place to the religion of Mahomet; the Cross has been humbled, and the Crescent seems to utter over it from year to year a silent but symbolic boast of growth and conquest; yet still a keen sense can discern exhaling from the very substance of the structure the imperishable aroma of that early devotion that counted the costliest perfumes none too precious to enrich and sanctify the house of God. My friends, the ordinance of baptism is like the church Justinian built—the fragrant spices of Jesus' burial are wrought into its very structure, and yield their perfume from age to age. Through all the vicissitudes of Christian history, its due administration is a visible witness and memorial of the death of Christ, a proof even to the senses of that matchless love that endured the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, and that went down into darkness of

the sepulchre that it might "open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers." Wonderful symbol! combining in one picture all the essential truths of the Christian scheme, expressing not only the fact of death to sin, and resurrection to righteousness, but also the method of that salvation through the union of our souls with a dying and risen Saviour. Let this ordinance in which the believer follows His Majesty's example of consecration be forever sacred to us. Let us preserve it in its integrity as the Lord has delivered it to us. Witnessing it, may we ever find it an encouragement to duty. And as the life and death of Jesus answered to the consecration which he made on the banks of Jordan, so let our lives witness that at our baptism, we truly died to sin and rose to newness of life.—A. H. Strong, D. D.

Withheld Statistics.

How it would startle some of our congregations to have the pastor follow the reading of the annual report of his church with a few of the withheld statistics, somewhat after this sort: "Of the thirty-two who have joined our church the past year, I find that five of those who came in on profession have unmistakably fallen into former evil ways, while of those who were received by letter, three were certainly lacking in good character in the churches they left, although by the record they were in 'good and regular standing.' One of our elders is popularly reported to have swindled a neighbor outrageously in a notorious business transaction. We have lost one of our more prominent members by his transfer to the county jail on conviction of crime. A careful examination of our record has convinced me that fully one-third of our members can be counted on the 'dead-head' list. They do nothing in the line of Christian activity. As to their example, they are not bad enough to be a warning to the outside world, nor good enough to be taken as an example by anybody—in or out. Our benevolent contributions look pretty well for our numbers, but I learn that nearly one-third of their full amount has been given by four persons; and that of the other members of the church more than one-half gave less to religious causes than they pay toward public amusements, while there are not a few families which gave more for peanuts during the year than they put in the contribution box. A fair estimate of the tobacco bills of the congregation is twice and three-eighths the amount given by the church to home and foreign missions combined." Such a supplement as this, in kind and in degree according to the particular community, could be made in many a church where the annual report last presented is spoken of as "every way encouraging."—S. S. Times.

The Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer takes up all the relations in which we stand to God. The Christian prays as— I. A child from home—"Our Father which art in heaven." II. A worshipper—"Hallowed be thy name." III. A subject—"Thy kingdom come." IV. A servant—"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." V. A beggar—"Give us this day our daily bread." VI. A sinner—"And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." VII. A sinner amid temptation and evil—"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Three reasons are added— 1. Do this Lord, for it will help on thy kingdom—"For thine is the kingdom." 2. Do it Lord, for thou art able—"For thine is the power." 3. Do it, Lord, for it shall be thy glory—"For thine is the glory, forever, Amen."—Bible Echoes.

The conditions of success are these: First, work; second, concentration; third, fitness. Labour is the genius which changes the ugliness of the world into beauty; that turns the greatest curse into blessing.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger. Varia from England.

MUSKOKA—CANADA

Must be a very dark place, notwithstanding the existence of "trained educated Christians," who themselves according to an English Church Priest are "becoming worse than the vilest of the heathen," and "living like those whom St. Paul mentions as saying, 'Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die.'" The Priest then in glowing language exclaims "Oh, for the pen or the tongue of Chrysostom, that I might shew to our friends in England the danger," &c., and gloomily predicts the time when in all probability "evil will ride rampant over every good thing; might will become right. Nihilism will be the only creed practised." After a further description of the terrible darkness, he says "It is in the hope of doing somewhat to stem this evil that I do all I can to induce my friends to send the truth into the midst of my people."

Now what do you suppose is the remedy for this state of things which this Priest says is brought about by infidel literature? which, judging from the publication in which I find his communication\* must mean non-church literature, as he earnestly appeals for "sound church literature."

Well then let him speak for himself: "I want money, surplises, altar vessels &c." So the remedy for infidelity, heathenism and Nihilism is "money, surplises, and altar vessels." Not a word about bible or men, notwithstanding he seems to have charge of sixteen churches! He rejoices over the fact that at one meeting many Dissenters were present. These then be thy gods O ye benighted people of Muskoka! These, O ye renegade Dissenters are the means whereby ye are to be won back to your holy mother Church. Money has won some in other places and other lands and it may do the same in Muskoka. And surely if the tender entreaties, and kindly admonitions, and loving counsels of this shepherd fail to win you then ye must be well nigh beyond hope if this three-fold cord of money, surplises and altar vessels fail.

Writes a priest from dark Muskoka, Where men live in heathen darkness, Christians too, far worse than heathen; And strange creatures called Dissenters, Non-molluscous—vestibralis. Who have wandered, wildly wandered From their dear and holy mother, Have their dwelling, Long and loud across the ocean, Clear across the broad Atlantic, Louder than the roaring tempest, Higher than the highest billows; Comes a wail, a cry for succour, As when one with strength gigantic, Sinking in the mighty waters, Cries aloud for help to save him: Cries the priest of dark Muskoka:—"Here are heathen, and Dissenters, Who have wandered, wildly wandered From their dear and holy mother. We must woo them, we must win them, Save them from their sad condition; From the future that awaits them, These deluded dark Dissenters, With the other Christian heathen; Save them from the sure destruction Which will surely come on all men Who forsake their holy mother. O the ruin! But my heart, how it rejoices, As I see how I may save them So I'll cry aloud to England:—"I want money, send me money, Money, money, money, Money, surplises, money, surplises and altar vessels." This will do it, this will save them. Do you ask me for examples Of the course I'm now pursuing? Turn you to the first Corinthians, Turn you to the sixteenth chapter, First verse of the sixteenth chapter, And you'll find that Paul himself says Now concerning the collection; There you have it clear as daylight. Did not Peter the Apostle When he went up to the Temple: In the hearing of the people Say that he was short of money? Am I not then Apostolic? Am I not his true successor, When I say that I want money? 'How about the surplise?' ask you? 'Yes,' Well I can quickly give you Precedent quite apostolic: 'Bring the cloak I left at Troas, And that cloak, sir, was a surplise, Yes sir nothing but a surplise. Paul with all his gifts and graces Could not preach without his surplise. There it is then clear as daylight, Altar vessels, there must needs be. I'm a priest and have an altar. And must needs have altar vessels: As the priests did in the Temple. There you have it clear as daylight. Send them on these all good people; All who care for heathen nations, Who have wandered, wildly wandered From their dear and holy mother Send me money, send me money Surplises and altar vessels. This will do it, this will save them, But the money—don't forget it: Don't forget it."

\*Our Work, Sept., 1881. Found in the waiting room at Melksham Railway Station.

BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

If the question were asked "What kind of boots should our Episcopal clergyman wear, laced or elastic-sided?" the following story will provide an answer. The Spectator is responsible for it:

"It is refreshing to hear of a genuine conversion, if it be from darkness to light, especially when it is speedy and complete. A few years ago, a friend of mine—there is no harm now in telling this story, as the superstition referred to in it is exploded, if not everywhere, certainly among your readers—was taking a country walk with a friend, a clergyman, when the latter suddenly wheeled round, his face towards home, with the remark, 'Let us go back, I'm tired; was called up in the middle of the night to baptize a child that was dying.' 'Were you in time?' asked my friend. 'Just,' was the reply; 'another half-minute, and I should have been too late.' 'And if you had been, what then?' 'Why, then, I suppose, the poor little thing would have been lost.' 'Eternally?' 'Well, yes, according to our belief.' 'May I ask what sort of boots you wear?' said my friend. 'Boots? Elastic-sided, always.' 'Now, suppose you wore laced, and they had taken two minutes to put on, the child would have been dead, and—lost eternally, say?' 'That's a peculiar view of the question; I must think over my position.' Two days after, the clergyman met my friend, and said, 'I have thought that matter over, and must alter my views. The boots did it!'"

TEXT AND OUTLINE.

Here is a good text and outline for any brother who has undertaken to build a meeting house, or get up a bazaar. I found it in an old Baptist Messenger of twenty years ago. One of our best monthlies. Text, Nehemiah iv. 6. "The people had a mind to work."

- I. Notice their circumstances: 1. They were poor, very poor. 2. They were greatly harassed by their enemies. II. Notice their disposition: 1. They had not a mind to rest. 2. They had not a mind to look on. 3. They had not a mind to talk. 4. They had not a mind to plan and advise. 5. They had not a mind to find fault. 6. But they had a mind to work. III. Notice the result: 1. Their work was done. 2. It was well done. Application:—"Go and do thou likewise."

A TRAFALGAR VETERAN.

Last Saturday was committed to the grave at the age of 99 an old veteran who fought under Nelson at Trafalgar. Calling to see him some time since, though very deaf and feeble, it was interesting to see how the old man stirred up his little strength when I mentioned the name of Nelson and Trafalgar, and when I told him that I saw the "Victory" at Portsmouth a few months ago, his eyes seemed to sparkle at the mention of her name. What a host of recollections and associations the mention of the names of Nelson, Trafalgar, and victory must have called up before the old warrior. Nothing delighted the old man more than to discourse about Nelson, Trafalgar, and the engagements he had taken part in under him. The application or moral I leave to the reader. It is not far to seek. Faithfully, J. B. Melksham, G. B.

Premature Ordinations.

No. II. If ordained ministers are representatives of the denomination to which they belong, premature ordinations affect the denomination as well as the ministry. When the Christian character of the candidate is not known prior to the ordination, there is great danger of havoc in the churches and shipwreck of the ministry. If he has "a good report of them which are without," and is a living epistle of Christ known and read of all men, but is deficient in the educational qualifications of the ministry, "pew," labelled A. B., exalteth itself above "pulpit." The prematurely ordained should take heed to the apostolic charge,—"study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," and "the ignorance of foolish men would be put to silence," and less would be heard about "premature ordinations," "labelled and unlabelled pulpits" &c. The teacher must be able to teach the pupils. The preacher must keep