

For the Home

"WHY STAND YE HERE ALL THE DAY IDLE?"

Lo, in the fields the yellow harvest drooping
As lilies in the rain,
Where are the reapers that they come not trooping
To gather in the grain?

Some in the festive hall disporting gaily,
On slothful pillow some,
Some in delays most blameful, and yet daily
Exclaiming, "Lo, I come!"

While some, infatuate, with the aliens scoffing,
Quarrel about their toil,
As wreckers when ships founder in the offing,
Grow murderous over spoil.

Meanwhile, the harvest waiteth for the reaping,
God's patience hath not tired,
Ye cannot say, extenuate of your sleeping,
"We wait, for none hath hired!"

Through the hushed noontide hour the Master calleth,
Ye cannot choose but hear,
Still sounding while the length'ning shadow falleth,
"Why stand ye idle here?"

Up! for awhile the pitying glory lingers,
Work while 'tis called to-day,
Then rest, the Sabbath rest, where angel singers
Make melody for aye!

HOW SPURGEON FOUND CHRIST.

I had been about five years in the most fearful distress of mind, as a lad. If any human being felt more of the terror of God's law, I can indeed pity and sympathize with him. Bunyan's "Grace Abounding" contains, in the main, my history. Some abysses he went into I never trod; but some into which I plunged he seems to have never known.

I thought the sun was blotted out of my sky—that I had so sinned against God that there was no hope for me. I prayed—the Lord knoweth how I prayed—but I never had a glimpse of an answer that I knew of. I searched the Word of God: the promises were more alarming than the threatenings. I read the privileges of the people of God, but with the fullest persuasion that they were not for me. The secret of my distress was this: I did not know the gospel. I was in a Christian land; I had Christian parents; but I did not fully understand the freeness and simplicity of the gospel.

I attended all the places of worship in the town where I lived, but I honestly believe I did not hear the gospel fully preached. I do not blame the men, however. One man preached the Divine sovereignty. I could hear him with pleasure; but what was that to a poor sinner who wished to know what he should do to be saved? There was another admirable man who always preached about the law; but what was the use of ploughing up ground that wanted to be sown? Another was a great practical preacher. I heard him, but it was very much like a commanding officer teaching the manœuvres of war to a set of men without feet. What could I do? All his exhortations were lost on me. I knew it was said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" but I did not know what it was to believe in Christ.

I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair now, had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snow-storm one morning, when I was going to a place of worship. When I could go no further, I turned down a court and came to a little Primitive Methodist chapel. The Primitive Methodists are a very useful body—taking the poorest of the poor and lifting them

up from the dust-heap to sit among princes. In that chapel there might be a dozen or fifteen people. The minister did not come that morning; snowed up, I suppose. A poor man—a shoemaker, a tailor, or something of that sort—went up into the pulpit to preach.

Now, it is well that ministers should be instructed; but this man was really stupid, as you would say. If a man could have spoiled a sermon, he would have done it. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had nothing else to say. The text was, "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter.

There was, I thought, a glimpse of hope for me in the text. He began thus: "My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, 'Look.' Now that does not take a deal of effort. It ain't lifting your foot or your finger; it is just 'look.' Well, a man need not go to college to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man need not be worth a thousand a year to look. Any one can look; a child can look. But this is what the text says. Then it says, 'Look unto Me.' Ay," said he, in broad Essex, "many on ye are looking to yourselves. No use looking there. You'll never find comfort in yourselves. Some look to God the Father. No; look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, 'Look unto Me.' Some of you say, 'I must wait the Spirit's working.' You have no business with that just now. Look to Christ. It runs, 'Look unto Me.'"

Then the good man followed up his text in this way: "Look unto Me; I am sweating great drops of blood. Look unto me; I am hanging on the cross. Look; I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend; I am sitting at the Father's right hand. Oh, look to Me! look to Me!" When he had got about that length and managed to spin out ten minutes or so, he was at the length of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I dare say, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. He then said: "Young man, you look very miserable." Well, I did; but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made on my personal appearance from the pulpit before. However, it was a good blow struck. He continued: "And you will always be miserable—miserable in life and miserable in death—if you do not obey my text. But if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved."

Then he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist can: "Young man, look to Jesus Christ; look now." He made me start in my seat; but I did look to Jesus Christ, there and then. The cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen and sung with the most enthusiastic of them of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me that before. Trust Christ, and you shall be saved! It was, no doubt, wisely ordered, and I must ever say:

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy wounds supplied for me,
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall forever be."

Unbelief follows, fearfully, the beaten pathway of custom, but faith breaks off into new ways, dares to venture in order that God's cause may not suffer loss. Unbelief must have a synagogue and a pulpit, and often a manuscript before it can deliver its message. Faith makes a pulpit anywhere and at any time, and has a burning message written in the heart. Faith looks out upon the multitudes. Faith is a ruler of men. Faith prevails with God and with men. Faith marks out a path of its own. It follows or leads with equal happiness or success.

Multitudes of people gathered unto Jesus. They will gather unto Him to-day. He who stands in Christ's stead beseeching men to be reconciled to God will draw the multitudes to Christ.

Temperance

AND OTHER TOPICS. Selected

CHRISTIANITY'S SHAME.

I never shall forget what one Chinese statesman said to me, and I believe he was one of the greatest men with whom I have ever spoken. This great Chinese statesman said to me, "Do not talk to an intelligent Chinaman about Christianity. You have sent your Christianity to our country, and what has it done? Why," he said, "it has turned this great empire into a living, seething hell of opium smoke, until one million of the people of China are dying every month of the year because of opium smoke." I talked on with the statesman, but he said: "Go to one of our great opium dens." So I went into this place—an opium palace, and I saw men in hundreds, and I saw that under that one roof there were two thousand smoking at a time. He said that these object lessons around us were unknown until they saw the white face, and he said: "Do you expect we can have any faith in Christianity?"

I went to India and I thought I would see what the opium traffic was like.

When I was speaking on this opium question, a high-class Brahmin arose in the audience and said, "I should like to have you answer me one question." He said, "Here in India the poppy is cultivated; opium is manufactured by the government; every ball of opium that goes out from the factories bears the stamp and seal of the British crown. When I was in England I went to a chemist and said to him, 'I want some opium.' He said, 'Where is your prescription?' 'I have no prescription.' 'You must get it; you must go to a physician and get a prescription before we can sell you any opium.' I went to a physician and the prescription was written out and the opium was placed in my hands and it was marked poison. "Now," he said, "can you tell me why it is that to England's white-skinned subjects it is sold as poison, and to its dark-skinned subjects it is sold as food? I could go out to the nearest opium den and buy opium enough to poison a hundred men. Can you explain this to me?"

The day I sailed from Melbourne, Australia, one of the principal and most influential Chinamen of Australasia tendered me a farewell. He was a wealthy merchant of the city, and we had gathered there many men of wealth and influence, and as we were talking, this Chinaman rose and he said, "I want to say something in behalf of the white people of Australia, for opium smoking is spreading, until I know at least one hundred and fifty women who smoke opium in this city alone." And so this Chinaman drew up a petition—he doesn't belong to any church, he does not call himself a Christian—but he drew up a petition, and the petition was addressed to the W. C. T. U., about to be assembled in Chicago, and he passed it around and asked every influential man and woman in that gallery to sign it. And what do you suppose that petition was? It said, "We entreat the women of this great moral force of the nineteenth century to add to their many departments of world's work, a department that shall be known as the suppression of opium smoking throughout the world," and that is how we come to add this department.—Miss Fessie A. Ackerman's address at World's W. C. T. U., Chicago, Ill.

DON'T LET THE DEVIL GET YOUR GUN.

"Resist the devil and he will flee from you."—James iv. 7.

It is a strange but important fact that resistance causes any animal, from the elephant to the ant, to turn and resist again.

This may be illustrated by watching a basket of newly caught crabs. If you think they are in sport, place your hands upon them a moment, and you will find that the more you try to hold them, the more scars you have, and the more pieces of flesh will be taken out by their ferocious claws.

They look like the devil, perhaps, but they are not; they are only crabs, and quite different in their methods, for the devil never resists. He insinuates, he argues, he seduces. He is full of methods. In this respect the devil is a methodist—not a Methodist Episcopal nor a Free Methodist, but just a methodist.

Resist Jim Corbett, Bob Fitzsimmons or John L. Sullivan, and see how quickly they will "put you to sleep," but it is not so with the devil. If you resist him, he will flee from you, and then, perhaps, send an agent to interrupt you in your religious work or thoughts, and to do, indirectly, under the guise of an angel, what he was afraid to do to your face.

When I was in the army at Pine Bluff, Tenn., with the rebels almost all around us—across the river—and above us—and below us—leaving only an open space to Fort Donaldson, to which we hoped to escape, or receive support, their spies were so audacious that they would sometimes come to our guards and try to seduce them.

Of course, they did not come as rebel soldiers, but as peaceful citizens, with quinine and whiskey, and they would try to interest the outer pickets and thus procure information, and in one instance, a noted rebel scout so interested one of the guards that he became friendly, and, complying with the scout's request, handed him his gun to examine for a moment, and what did the scout do but change his nature immediately, showing that he was a rebel of the very worst kind, and, jumping backward, cocked the rifle and marched Mr. Guard away across the lines into the rebel camp as a prisoner.

So it is with Satan. We may be converted, saved from drunkenness, or love for the world, or other sins of different natures; and so long as we are aggressive, there is no danger of our losing our religion. But when the devil comes in the garb of a friend, and says: "Don't be a crank, everybody will hate you if you are so aggressive," and we listen to his arguments and reasoning, in other words, we let him take our gun, then he turns upon us, captures us, and hell is our portion, at any rate, a long, weary term of disgrace, though possibly we might be saved "by the skin of our teeth," but see what we have lost. No longer a soldier, guarding the souls of others in the camp of Christ, but a captive, disgraced, crushed, disarmed and wounded in the camp of the devil.

A few nights after this incident, when I was Officer of the Day (which meant the day and night too) the darkness was dense, and about two o'clock at night, I thought it would be a good plan to test the outer guards, and so I went alone, that I might creep through the bushes and walk carefully upon the wet leaves, if possible, coming upon the guard unawares, and testing his fidelity and alertness.

It was a long, dangerous trip to me, but I knew that I was charged

with the safety of the "post," and the recent capture of the guard above referred to was upon my mind, and, as it happened, upon the mind of the guard who was standing in his place, for as I came noiselessly as possible toward him, in the inky blackness of the night, a little twig broke. Almost instantly I heard the cocking of his gun as it ticked in the silence of the night. I immediately took a step to the right, behind what appeared in the darkness to be a big tree, when *flash! bang! whack!* and the guard's bullet had struck the very tree behind which I was.

I then made myself known. And what do you suppose was done with that guard for so nearly killing the Officer of the Day? He was promoted to be Sergeant of the Guard, and afterwards became Second Lieutenant, and when the war was over, was made Captain by brevet.

He did not wait to challenge in the usual way, and to do things regularly, but he realized that he was in the presence of what he supposed was the enemy, who was not coming regularly to him, so he became aggressive in the extreme, and did what appeared to him to be right.

So when the devil steals upon us, even in the form of a friend, or a friend comes in a way which the devil usually does come, let's take no chances, but fire away, raising the standard of Christ, as we shout, crying, "Hallelujah! I haven't let the devil get my gun."—Col. H. H. Hadley.

THE PRAYER TEST.

Hudson Taylor, who has led out hundreds of missionaries into the depths of inland China, and never asked any one on earth for a farthing of money, first went out to that land in an ordinary sailing vessel. At one time the ship was slowly drifting upon the shores of a cannibal island, being becalmed. The vessel was unable to tack and drew closer and closer to the dreadful crowd of savages upon the shore, who were now gloating upon the prospect of a great feast.

The captain implored Mr. Taylor to pray to God to interpose for their deliverance. He replied, "I will pray to God to help, provided you will set your sails to catch the breeze." The captain refused to make a fool of himself by ordering the sails unfurled in a dead calm. The missionary would not pray unless the sails were prepared, and the ship was being washed steadily to shore. Finally the captain consented and gave the orders to set the sails, and Mr. Taylor went to his state room to pray. While thus engaged he heard a knock at the door, and asked, "Who is there?" The captain responded, "Are you still praying for wind?" "Yes." Well," said the captain, "you'd better stop. We have now more wind than we can well manage." When no more than three hundred feet from shore a strong wind struck the ship, shifting her course and saving her whole company from the cannibals.

A pure heart is not to be had by any process of cultivation, not by a series of good works, not by keeping good company, but only through the blood of Christ applied by the Holy Spirit.

Religion is not a reverie. It is not a sentiment, not a dream. It is not the joy springing from favorable surroundings. Religion is a pure heart and the joy, peace and righteousness springing from that.

There is as much difference between reading the Bible and reading about it as there is between eating dinner and reading the bill of fare.