



SUNDAY READING

SERMON.

Our Brother's Keeper.
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"Am I my brother's keeper?" Gen. 4: 9.

To what a shameful pitch of presumptuous impudence had Cain arrived when he could thus insult the Lord's God! If it had not been on record in the page of inspiration, we might almost have doubted whether man could speak so impudently when actually conscious that God himself was addressing him. Men blaspheme frightfully, but it is usually because they forget God, and ignore his presence; but Cain was conscious that God was speaking to him. The cool impudence of Cain is an indication of the state of his heart which led up to his murdering his brother; and it was also a part of the result of his having committed that crime. Having committed murder, the

Hardening Influence of Sin

upon Cain's mind must have been intense, and so at last he was able to speak out to God's face what he felt within his heart, and to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" This goes a long way to explain what has puzzled some persons, namely, the wonderful calmness with which great criminals will appear in the dock. I remember to have heard it said of one who had undoubtedly committed a very foul murder, that he looked like an innocent man. He stood up before his accusers as calmly and quietly, they said, as an innocent man could do. I remember feeling at the time that an innocent man would probably not have been calm. The distress of mind occasioned to an innocent man by being under such a charge would have prevented his having the coolness which was displayed by the guilty individual. Instead of its being any evidence of innocence that a man wears

A Brazen Front

when charged with a crime, it should by wise men be considered to be evidence against him. Well may he seem dispassionate and unmoved who has already been so unfeeling as to dip his hand in blood. If he was so hardened as to do the deed, it is not likely he will display much softness when the deed is brought home to him. Oh, dear friends, let us shun sin, if it were only for the evil effect which it has upon our minds.

Now, let us note here that while we are thus heavily censuring Cain we must mind that we are not guilty ourselves; because, if we look at it without prejudice, every kind of excuse that we make to God is a very high piece of presumption. When we are charged with any form of guilt, if we begin denying or extenuating, we are guilty of the sin of Cain as to impudence before God; and when there is any duty to be performed, and we begin to shrink it, or to try to make an apology for disobedience, are we not forgetting in whose presence we stand? Now let us look quietly at what Cain said.

1. First it is to be noted that man is in some senses. For instance, every man must bear his own responsibility for his own acts before Almighty God. It is not possible for a man to shift from his shoulders to those of another his obligations to the law of God must be personally rendered, or a man becomes guilty. No matter how holy his father, or how righteous his mother, he himself will have to stand upon his own feet and answer for himself before the judgment-seat of God. Each man who hears the gospel is responsible for the hearing of it. No one else can believe the gospel for him, or repent for him, or be born again for him, or become a Christian for him. He must himself personally repent of sin, personally believe in Jesus Christ, personally be converted, and personally live to the service and glory of God. Every tub must stand on its own bottom. There have been idle attempts

To Shift the Responsibility.

to a certain order of men who are called priests, or clergymen, or ministers, according as the case may be; but it cannot be done. Each man must seek the Lord himself—himself lay his load of sin at the foot of the cross, and himself accept a personal Saviour for himself.

And again, no one can positively secure the salvation of another, nay, he cannot even have a hope of the salvation of his friend, so long as that other remains unbelieving. Unconverted people, we can pray for you, we can ask the Lord to renew you by his spirit, but we can do nothing with you ourselves, neither will our prayers be answered until you yourselves make a confession of your sin, and fly to Christ for salvation. It is, no doubt, a very great blessing to have friends who bear your names upon their hearts before God, oh, do not have any confidence in

Other People's Prayers

while you are prayerless yourselves. Now, since we cannot convert other people, we are not responsible to do what we cannot do, and hence we are not our brother's keeper so fully as to be responsible for his acceptance or rejection of Jesus.

It is proper here to say that the most earnest minister of Christ must not so push the idea of his own responsibility to such an extreme as to make himself unfit for his work through a morbid view of his position. If he has faithfully preached the gospel, and his message is rejected, let him preserve in hope and not condemn himself. I remember years ago, when I labored to feel the responsibility of men's souls upon me, I became very depressed in spirit, and the temptation arose out of it to give up the work in despair. I believe that responsibility should be duly felt, neither do I wish to say a word to excuse any who are unfaithful; but in my own case I saw that I could harp on one chord of my nature till I destroyed my power to

do good, for I became so unhappy that the elasticity of my spirit departed from me. Then I recollected that if I had

Put the Gospel Faithfully

before you all and pressed it upon you, if you refused it I had nothing more to do with the matter except to pray over it; if I earnestly entreated the Lord to send a blessing, and tried again and again to plead and urge with your consciences that you would be reconciled to God, and if still I failed, I remembered that I should not be held responsible for not doing what I could not do, namely, turn hearts of stone to flesh and quicken dead sinners into life.

There is, however, a sense in which we are our brother's keeper, and of that I am now going to speak. You will bear my caveat in mind, and it will not weaken the force of what I say, but it will increase its weight, because you will feel that I looked at the subject all around.

II. So now, secondly, in a high degree we are, each one of us, our brother's keeper. We ought to regard ourselves in that light, and it is

A Cainish Spirit

which prompts us to think otherwise and to wrap ourselves up in hardness of heart and say, "It is no concern of mine how others fare. Am I my brother's keeper?" Far from that spirit let us be. For, common feelings of humanity should lead every Christian man to feel an interest in the soul of every unsaved man. I say, "common humanity," for we use the word "humanity" to signify kindness. Such a man, we say, has no human feeling. I am not quite certain whether human feeling is always so human as the words would seem to imply. Yet still I trust among us the expression may be used that common humanity leads us to desire the salvation of others. Will you let souls perish for lack of the bread of life without pitying and helping them? When a person is in jeopardy through accident, we rush anywhere and use every exertion if by any means we may rescue him; and yet this life is trivial compared with life eternal, and for us to be indifferent when men are perishing is to act as if all brotherly compassion had fled our bosoms. Christians, I charge you, even upon so low a motive as this, because you are men, and men are all your brothers, born of the same stock, and dwelling beneath the arched roof of the one eternal Father, therefore care for the souls of others and be, each one of you, his brother's keeper.

Power Involves Responsibility.

A second argument is drawn from the fact that we have all of us, especially those of us who are Christians, the power to do good to others. We have not all the same ability, for we have not all the same gifts, or the same position, but as the little maid that waited on Naaman's wife had opportunity to tell of the prophet who could heal her master, so there is not a young Christian here but what has some power to do good to others. Now, take it as an axiom that power to do good involves the duty of doing good. Wherever you are placed, if you can bless a man, you are bound to do it. To have the power and not to use it is a sin. In withholding your hand from that which you are able to do for the good of your fellow-man you have broken the law of love. All your knowledge, all your experience, all that you possess that grace has given you, demands a return in the form of service rendered to others. Do think of this—that the power to do good involves the responsibility to do it wherever that power exists; and so, as far as you have any ability, you are by that very fact your brother's keeper.

Followers of Christ.

Once more. To the Christian man perhaps the most forcible reason will be that the whole example of Jesus Christ, whom we call Master and Lord, lies in the direction of our being the keeper of our brother; for what was Jesus' life but entire unselfishness? What was said of him at his death but that "he saved others: himself he could not save?" The very fact that there is a Christ at all means that there was one who cared for others, and that our Lord became a man means that he loved his enemies and came here to rescue those that rebelled against his authority. If we are selfish—if we make our own going to heaven to be the one end of life, we are not Christians. We may call whom we please Master, but we are not following Jesus.

Let the thought next rise in our minds that we are certainly ordained to the office of brother-keeper because we shall be called to account about it. Cain was called to account. "Where is Abel thy brother?" I would to God, dear friends, that you could now hear the Lord speaking to you and saying, "Where is Abel thy brother?"

Take first those who are united to us by the ties of the flesh, who come under term "brethren," because they are born of the same parents, or are near of kin. Where is John? Where is Thomas? Where is Henry thy brother? Unsaved? Without God? What have you ever done for him? How much have you prayed for him? How often have you spoken to him seriously about his state? What means have you used for his instruction, persuasion, conviction? Dear sisters, I must not let you off.

Where is Your Brother?

You my dear sisters have a great power over brothers, more power than brothers have. Where, dear mother—let me put the question very tenderly to you—where is your child, your son, your daughter? Not all that you could wish, you say. But can you say if your dear child were to perish that you are clear of his blood? Father, the boy grieves you; are you quite clear that you did not help to sow in him the sins which are now your trial? Come, have you done all that should be done? For my part, I deprecate the spirit which takes a Christian mother from her children to be doing good everywhere except at home. I dread the zeal of those who can run to many services but whose households are not cared for; yet sometimes such is the case. I have known people very interested in the seven trumpets and the seven seals who have not been quite so

particular about the seven dear children that God has entrusted to them. Such things ought not to be. Where is Abel thy brother? Thy son? Where is thy daughter, thy sister, thy father, thy cousin? See to this, that you begin at once seeking the salvation of relatives.

But, beloved, we must never end there, because brotherhood

Extends to all Ranks.

and conditions; and according to each man's ability he will be held responsible about the souls of others whom he never saw. Where is Abel thy brother? Down in a back street in London. He is just going into the saloon. He is half drunk already. Have you done anything, friend, toward the reclaiming of the drunkard? Where is your sister? Your sister who frequents the midnight streets? You shrink back and say, "She is no sister of mine." Ay, but God may require her blood at your hands, if you thus leave her to perish. Have you ever done anything towards reclaiming her? She has a tender heart despite her sin. Alas, many a Christian woman, many a Christian man who comes across the path of such will draw themselves up with a kind of Pharisaism, shake the dust off their feet, and feel as if they were contaminated by their very presence. Yet Christian sought to love the erring and the sinful, and if we do not we shall be called to account for it. If we have an opportunity of doing good, even to the vilest, and do not use it, we shall not be guiltless.

Some of you who get rich in London go and live out in the suburbs directly, and I cannot blame you. Why should you not? But if you leave the heart of London, where

The Working People

are without any means of grace—if you are content to hear the gospel yourselves and withdraw your wealth from churches among the poor, God will one day say to you, "Where is thy brother?"

One thing more upon this calling to account. The more needy, the more destitute people are, the greater is their claim upon us; for according to the account book—need I turn to the chapter? I think you recollect it—they are the persons for whom we shall have mainly to give an account: "I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not; naked, and ye clothed me not." These objects of charity were the most destitute and poor of all, and the great question at the last day is about what was done for them. So if there be a nation more ignorant than another, our call is there first; and if there be a people more sunken and degraded than others, it is concerning them that we shall have to give account.

Keeper or Murderer.

Last of all, it may turn out—that it may turn out—that if we are not our brother's keeper we may be our brother's murderer. Have any of us been so already? When were you converted? Will you kindly look back to your sins before conversion? He must be a very happy man who did not before conversion commit sins which injured others; and there are some persons whose lives before they turned to Christ were frightfully blended with the career of others whom they have left in the gall of bitterness to perish. I have seen bitter tears shed by men who have been of ill lives when they have recollected others with whom they sinned. "I am forgiven: I am saved," one has said to me. "But what about that poor girl? Ah me! Ah me!" One man has been an infidel and he has led other into infidelity, and he has been saved but he cannot bring those back again whom he tutored in atheism. Before conversion you may have committed many a soul-murder. Ought not this to stir you up to seek now, if possible as much as lies in you, to bring those to Christ whom once you led away, and to teach the living word since once you taught the deadly word which

Keen Souls?

But what shall be said of our conduct since we have been converted? May we not have helped to murder souls since then? I tell you a cold-hearted Christian makes worldlings think that Christianity is a lie. Inconsistent Christians—and there are such—woe, woe, that it should be so!—bad-tempered, covetous people, cross-grained, sardonic, snarling persons, who we hope may be the Lord's people, what shall we say of these? How little they are like their Master, they are the propagators of death. Perhaps some of you have backslidden since your conversion and you have committed acts which have made the enemy to blaspheme the name of Christ. I charge you by the love of God repent of this iniquity. Look at what you have done. Look at how you have led others astray.

And do you not think that we may have been seriously injurious to others by denying them the gospel? If you want to murder a man, you need not stab him; starve him. If you want to destroy a man you need not teach him to drink or swear; keep back the gospel from him. Be in his company and never say a word for Christ. Be where

You Ought to Speak

and be silently silent, and who knows how much blood will be laid at your door. Do you not think that to deny a cup of cold water to a man and let him die of thirst is a murder? To deny the gospel, to have no word to say for Jesus—is not this soul-murder? God accounts it so. "Well, say some, 'I could not speak or preach.' No, but do you pray for the conversion of others? Some people also have money entrusted to them; they cannot go to India or China, but many other men are ready to go, and they ought to assist in sending them. I have men in the college ready to go. Is there no crime in all this? Does not the voice of your brother's blood cry unto God from the ground? I believe it does. You are not to do what you cannot do, but what you can do.

If some shall be stirred by these words, my heart will greatly rejoice; but it you are aroused do not promise to make an effort in your own strength, but pray to God about it. Commit yourself to God, and ask the divine Spirit to lead you into ways of usefulness, that ere you go hence you may have brought some souls to Jesus; and to his name shall be the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Catarth is not a local but a constitutional disease, and requires a constitutional remedy like Hood's Sarsaparilla to effect a cure.

FRAGMENTS OF THOUGHT.

Silence is as deep as eternity; speech is as shallow as time.—Carlyle.

He that hath light thoughts of sin never had great thoughts of God.—Dr. Owen.

Be sure, my son, and remember that the best men always make themselves.—Patrick Henry.

The great secret of success in life is for a man to be ready when his opportunity comes.—Disraeli.

He lives long that lives well; and time mispent is not lived, but lost. Besides, God is better than His promise if He takes from him a long lease and gives him a freehold of better value.—Fuller.

Our daily life should be sanctified by doing common things in a religious way. There is no action so slight or so humble but it may be done to a great purpose and ennobled thereby.—George MacDonald.

Obedience must be the struggle and desire of our life; obedience, not hard and forced, but ready, loving, and spontaneous; the doing of duty, not merely that the duty may be done, but that the soul in doing it, may become capable of receiving and uttering God.—Phillip Brooks.

Human happiness has no perfect security but freedom; freedom none but virtue, virtue none but knowledge; and neither freedom, nor virtue, nor knowledge, has any vigor or immortal hope, except in the principles of the Christian faith, and in the sanctions of the Christian religion.—Joshua Quincy.

Be, not try to be, but be, Christians. What we want to be is not to look Christians, or to pretend Christians, or to profess Christians. Take an anagram; read it from the right or from the left, or from the top or from the bottom; it reads the same thing. Take a Christian; look at him at one angle, or look at him from another angle; look at him in any light or in any direction, and he is a Christian still.—Cumming.

Notice of Dissolution

THE undersigned hereby give notice and certify that a certain limited Partnership under the laws of the Province of New Brunswick, conducted under the firm name of "W. C. PITFIELD & Co.," for the buying and selling at wholesale of dry goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale dry goods and general jobbing and commission business, which by the certificate of Limited Partnership registered in the office of the Registrar of Deeds of the City and County of Saint John in the said Province, was to commence the Twenty-eighth day of December, A. D. 1889, and terminate the First day of January, A. D. 1892, did terminate and is and was dissolved the said First day of January, A. D. 1892.

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD.
S. HAYWARD.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAINT JOHN, to wit: Be it remembered that WARD C. PITFIELD and SAMUEL HAYWARD, parties to and the signers of the annexed notice and certificate, personally came and appeared at the City of Saint John, in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, J. E. BARNES, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in and for the said City and County of Saint John, and acknowledged the said WARD C. PITFIELD that he signed the said notice and certificate, and the said SAMUEL HAYWARD that he signed the same.

Given under my hand at the said City of Saint John this Twenty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) J. E. BARNES,
J. P. City and County of Saint John.

Partnership Notice.

THE undersigned, desirous of forming a Limited Partnership under the Laws of the Province of New Brunswick, hereby certify:

1. That the name of the firm under which such partnership is to be conducted is "W. C. PITFIELD & Co."
2. That the general nature of the business intended to be transacted by such partnership is the buying and selling at wholesale of dry goods and other merchandise, and generally a wholesale dry goods and general jobbing and commission business.
3. That the names of all the general and special partners interested in said partnership are as follows:

WARD C. PITFIELD, who resides at the City of Saint John in the City and County of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, is the general partner, and SAMUEL HAYWARD, who resides at the Parish of Hampton in the County of Kings and Province aforesaid, is the special partner.

4. That the said SAMUEL HAYWARD has contributed the sum of forty thousand dollars as capital to common stock.

5. That the period at which the said partnership is to commence is the Second day of January, A. D. 1892, and the period at which the said partnership is to terminate is the Second day of January, A. D. 1892.

Dated this Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891

(Signed) WARD C. PITFIELD.
S. HAYWARD.

PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAINT JOHN, SS. Be it remembered that on this Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891, at the City of Saint John and Province of New Brunswick, before me, JAMES A. BELVEA, a Notary Public in and for the said Province, by lawful authority duly commissioned and sworn, residing and practising in the said City of Saint John, personally came and appeared, WARD C. PITFIELD and SAMUEL HAYWARD, parties to and the signers of the annexed certificate, and in the said certificate mentioned and severally acknowledged, the said WARD C. PITFIELD that he signed the said certificate, and the said SAMUEL HAYWARD that he signed the said certificate.

In witness whereof, I the said Notary have hereunto set my hand and Notarial Seal at the said City and County of Saint John, the said Thirty-first day of December, A. D. 1891.

(Signed) JAMES A. BELVEA,
Notary Public.

(L. S.)

Notice.

DANIEL & BOYD—(LIMITED) having purchased the Stock and good will of the business of DANIEL & BOYD, the future business will be conducted at the old stand, Market Square, under the name and style of DANIEL & BOYD—(LIMITED).

THOS. W. DANIEL, President.
JOHN BOYD, Vice-President.
FREDK. W. DANIEL, Managing Director.
THOS. H. SOMMERVILLE, Secretary.
St. John, N. B., Dec. 21, 1891. Jan. 16.

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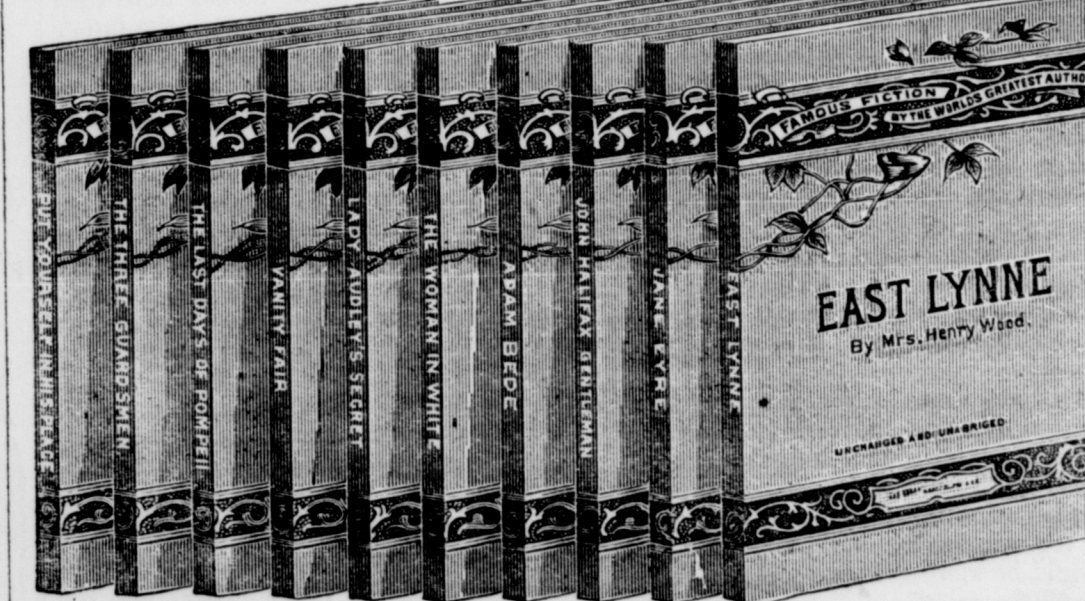
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