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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

The Believer's Echo.

Believer—True faith, producing love to God and man,
Says, "Is not this the Gospel plan?"
Echo—"The Gospel plan."

Bel.—Must I my faith in Jesus constant show,
By doing good to both friend and foe?
Echo—"Both friend and foe."

Bel.—But if a brother hate and treat me ill,
Must I return him good, and love him still?
Echo—"And love him still."

Bel.—If he my faults watches to reveal,
Must I his faults as carefully conceal?
Echo—"As carefully conceal."

Bel.—But if my name and character he tears,
And cruel malice too, too plain appears,
And when I sorrow and affliction know
Heaven to add unto my cup of woe;
In this uncommon, this peculiar case,
Sweet Echo, say, must I still love and bless?
Echo—"Still love and bless."

Bel.—Whatever usage ill I may receive
Must I still patient be, and still forgive?
Echo—"Still patient be, and still forgive."

Bel.—Why, Echo, how is this? Thou art, sure, a dove;
Thy voice will teach me nothing else but love.
Echo—"Nothing else but love."

Bel.—Amen, with all my heart, then be it so!
Be all delightful, just and good I know,
And now to practice I'll directly go.
Echo—"Directly go."

Bel.—Things being thus, then let who will reject,
My graces, God me surely will protect.
Echo—"Surely will protect."

Bel.—Henceforth on Him I'll roll my every care,
And both my friend and foe embrace in prayer.
Echo—"Embrace in prayer."

Bel.—But, after all these duties, when they're done,
Must I, in point of merit, them disown,
And trust in Jesus' blood alone?
Echo—"In Jesus' blood alone."

Bel.—Echo, enough! Thy counsel to my ear
Is sweeter than the dewdrop tear;
Thy wise, instructive lessons please me well;
Till next we meet again, Farewell! Farewell!
Echo—"Farewell! Farewell!"

Miscellaneous.

[From the London Baptist Magazine.]

A Sabbath in Paris.

BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

Wherever we may wander, during other days, our heart flies home on the Sabbath. That Queen of days is never so truly an epitome of heaven as when we spend it among our own people in the house of the Lord. We have seen Paris in all seasons—in the height of its festivity, and in the depth of winter; and its streets of palaces, its splendid boulevards, and gorgeous spectacles, always charm us into fairy land; but we have never lost our preference for foggy, smoky, slushy London, because one day in the week we have always pinned to return. A Sunday in Paris is a sad day to a believer in Christ. There is no sign of sacred respite from earth, or of hallowed a piratage to heaven. The shops are open as usual, labourers are engaged in their ordinary work, the traffic as at other times rolls along the street, and the day of rest is all unhonoured and despoiled. "England, with all thy faults, I love the still." With all the flagrant offences of St. Giles', New Cut, and such like centres of Sunday trade, the Lord's-day is regarded among us as a rule; and no foreigner can fail to observe the difference in our streets. Our soul has longed and thirsted after the assemblies of the saints, when constrained to sojourn in the gay capital. The verse of Dr. Watts has been sung with unusual emphasis, and with deeper meaning:—

"Might I enjoy the meanest place
Within thy house, O God of grace,
Not tents of ease, nor thrones of power,
Should tempt my feet to leave thy door."

The last Sabbath of the last year saw us anxiously inquiring for the French Baptist congregation in Paris. We asked information in vain; till the thought struck us that perhaps in the English Independent Chapel we should hear some tidings. Trudging along the weary length of the interminable Faubourg St. Honore, we entered the congrega-

tional room some time after service commenced, but we regret to say quite soon enough for our liking, for a more profitless service it was never our misery to witness. It that cause does not come to ruin it will be a miracle, if such be the usual preaching in the room. However, our patient listening to a sermon as destitute of matter as the vacuum of an air-pump sharpened our appetites, and made us the more anxious to find out our next kinsmen. Like the Irish jury, who sat in inquest upon a hat and coat found by the side of a river, we returned the verdict "Found empty," and went on to try again elsewhere. We gained from a Christian friend the information that the Baptists met somewhere near the Romish Church of St. Roch's. By searching the directory we found that there was a school-room in one of the streets near the church; and rightly guessing that this would be the appointed spot, away we hastened. No board or placard gave us assistance; we entered a little yard, and followed a couple who were going upstairs. The upper room in Jerusalem flashed before our eyes. We mounted, saw a little notice on a door, entered, and found ourselves in the humble room. A brother at the other end was instructing a few lads; a few poor people were sitting upon chairs waiting for service. We took our seats, and thought of many things, wondering most of all if the Lord would bless our souls in that strange place of prayer. We were soon recognised. A friend, standing by the stove, came over and whispered our name, and asked if we were the actual person. Even so, we replied; and then with joyful haste he fetched the pastor, with the news that an English Baptist minister had sought them out diligently. The pastor gave us both his hands, and we saluted each other in the name of the Lord. Meanwhile the congregation gathered, until about eighty or one hundred occupied the chairs. They were a company in which most classes were represented—the well-attired French lady, the tradesman, soldier, and workman. To our great joy we soon perceived that the working class preponderated. The solid, substantial stuff out of which earnest churches are made was manifestly before us. No religious movement which has begun among the rich, and gained the countenance of the noble, has ever been permanent; the flame burns most surely when the fire comes from below. The fishermen are, after all, under God, the movers of the world.

"The despised names which shew that the truth has taken deep root in the heart of the labouring poor, are worth more to a country than the most glorious titles, which only shew that it has reached the learned and exalted. It is beautiful to see the high mountain peaks golden and racy in the dawn; but when the light shines on the village, in the plains and hollows, it is day."

The pastor requested us to speak a word to the people. We did so, and a Canadian brother, equally versed in English and French, translated for us. As this is an age of improvements, and all nations are advancing, we would recommend our brethren to learn that noble language which we speak on this side the Channel, so as to get rid of this troublesome process of interpretation. We took for our text the words, "The brethren which are with me salute you," and took occasion to convey the sympathies of the baptized in Britain to the little flock in France. Wandering from our theme, we charged them to maintain and preach the full Gospel of the grace of God, to extol and love the person of the Lord Jesus, and to look for the abiding power of the Holy Ghost. Despite the disadvantage of uttering sentence by sentence, we felt much pleasure in the task, while the eyes of the audience gave flash—evidence that the truth was delightful to their hearts. When we had finished, the minister addressed the unconverted in such a style as to indicate that the Revival spirit was burning in his heart. He preached pardon to the vilest of the vile, and bade all the hearers remember that the blessings and mercies of the covenant could only be possessed by those who had passed from death unto life. Then followed the prayer-meeting, at which all remained. Here the right sort of prayer was offered, such as might serve as a model for our long-winded orators at home. So sweetly familiar, so intensely fervent, so full of love, so fragrant with reverence. The French seem to feel more in-

tensely the sweetness of the Divine relationship than we do. They plead as children with a dear Father, and urge the name of Jesus as that of a loving and compassionate brother. It has been said that the devotion of Roman Catholicism is totally distinct in its essence from that of Protestantism. The devotion of Protestants is Scriptural, and reasonable, and often distant; that of sincere Romanists, poetical, affectionate, and passionate. It seems to us that the Romanist adds to all the excellences of our own methods of utterance the richness and sweetness of a tenderness and familiarity which in excess may be a fault, but in proper measure a pre-eminent virtue. At any rate we have never more truly kissed the Saviour's feet or leaned on his bosom than when we have drank in the spirit of French devotion.

The praying men in this little church will be her strength, for they shall see a fulfilment of the things which they have asked of the Lord. We think we saw in that stone-paved, whitewashed school-room the battle-axe and weapons of war with which God shall do great exploits.

We shook hands, we think, with every person in the room, and never did we meet a more warm-hearted, loving company in our lives. No stiffness, formal politeness, and freezing distance; all was true, fervent affection. It was good to be there; it provoked us to love and to good works, and sent us on our way hopeful for the future of France.

In these pages earnest words have been spoken for the baptized churches across the Channel; but lest our appeal should be forgotten, we took this opportunity of paying a personal visit, in order that we might urge with confidence upon British Christians the needs of the rising Baptist church in France. Left by America when the young cause most of all required a fostering hand, our dear friends have only the bank of Providence to depend upon; that, however, is a rich treasury to men strong in faith, who know how to draw upon it largely. The work in Paris is no mere surface or imitation effort. All the members of the church, with one exception, were Romanists before their conversion—the pastor himself having found the truth while endeavouring to reclaim a relative who had gone over to what he then thought the heretical Anabaptists. The colporteurs in connection with the church go from house to house teaching the word. They report 150 Romanists hopefully converted; that is to say, they are in different stages of inquiry—from the condition of unprejudiced as to decided. In most cases it takes two years or even more before a person brought up in the superstitions of Rome will go the length of openly avowing Baptist views. How often the missionaries and pastor of the church anxiously visit each convert, and what labour and travail such a work entails, they only know who are engaged therein. This is plucking brands out of the fire in very deed. All care about pecuniary matters should be removed from men who have the care of souls in such a place, and hearts in such a condition. A young lady in our own country has for some time supported one of the colporteurs of the church by subscriptions which she obtained from her friends; it were a noble deed if some of our fair readers would do the same. Individual effort will do more than mere society co-operation. We will furnish any lady with full particulars, and we do not think the amount would be burdensome. We hope that with great ease five or six ladies might be found who would diligently and prayerfully gather up the gifts of their friends, and thus maintain so many good servants of the Cross.

We left our own contribution with cheerfulness, only regretting that we could not give a hundred times as much; and we beg the baptized throughout the empire to assist this struggling, devoted, prospering people in their hour of desertion.

Crooked things in our Churches.

I have spoken of crooked things in general, and showed that some of them were valuable, and the more valuable because they were crooked. But what I have said was only introductory to what I have to say.

Crooked things in our churches. By that I mean, of course, Baptist churches. These, I

am sorry to say, have been troubled by such things. Straight as they are in theory, so of them, at least, have, at times, been very crooked in practice. And this has been owing to certain crooked things which have crept into them, or rather which have been admitted into them. Some have been cursed by crooked ministers. Yes, it is even so. The shepherds in whom the people confided, to whom they looked for guidance, and whose business it was to lead their flocks safely into green pastures and beside the still waters, have proved false to the trust reposed in them. Instead of carrying the shepherd's crook to assist the weak and guide the wandering, they have themselves become crooked, and made sad havoc with the cause of Christ. Some of them have been crooked in disposition and temper; some crooked in the doctrines which they taught; some crooked in their views of discipline; and some crooked in their daily walk and conversation. They were so crooked that no church could follow their teachings and examples and be consistent or prosperous. I shall not say but that they were sincere, they may have been, for persons may be sincerely wrong as well as sincerely right, sincerely crooked as well as sincerely straight. No, I shall not raise a question as to their sincerity. But sincere or not, they certainly were crooked. It was a day or two ago that a good man speaking of the church with which he was connected, said it was weak now. I asked what was the matter, and said, "I thought you were strong." He replied that once they were strong, but a certain minister who labored with them broke the church all to pieces. And the cases of this kind are so numerous that no man could guess to which one that good brother referred. I suppose every intelligent reader knows at least one such case, and some of our older and more observing brethren could tell of fifty. Now I scarcely know a thing more sad than this. A minister with some natural or artificial crook, breaking up a church in trying to induce it to conform to his views, and make his members as crooked as himself! O, it is sad indeed! Nevertheless it is not uncommon. But why should a church break under such circumstances? Why not bend and thus conform to all the crooks of the crooked minister? Because there are some men and women in every church that will not bend and conform to error either in doctrine or in practice. They will break rather than bend.

You may make baskets and cradles of the willow, and hoops and ox-bows of hickory, but there is many a tree in every forest that you cannot use for any such purposes. In trying to bend, you will break them. So in every true church. There may be some material which is easily bent, but there is other material that cannot be bent so as to conform to the crooks of a crooked minister. He may preach error and lead some, but not all; he may insist upon some wrong and unscriptural practice, and some may follow him, but not all. And then comes the break. We all know how it is. The history of many churches, if fully written out, would show that at some period, perhaps at several periods, they have been distracted and broken by some perverseness in the ministry. Even those whom all regarded as being devoted and good men, have embraced some new and strange theories respecting truth, or bewildered and divided the congregation by attempting to establish some unscriptural, and therefore unwarranted practice, and our churches have been weakened in this way. The position which a minister holds gives him an influence, which no other position could. Therefore when he is crooked, the result must necessarily be disastrous. The instruction of Paul was, "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." I suppose he intended that for ministers as well as for others, perhaps more than for others, because if their paths are crooked others will be turned out of the way.

Now I am not very old, nor very wise, yet I have seen several things in connection with our churches, that seemed to me a hindrance to their prosperity—crooked things, but among them all, there is nothing that makes me feel so sad, as to see a crooked minister. His influence is so lasting in its effects that often a whole generation must pass away before matters can be straightened again. In the meantime the church suffers materially,