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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

One Gospel for all Ages.

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No doubt we live in a wonderful age. Yet it may be well for us to remember, that this wondrous age springs not out of itself; but is rather the product of the ages which have gone before it. Macaulay, somewhere, illustrates this thought by the figure of a little boy standing upon his grandfather's shoulders, and exclaiming, in an extasy of conceit, "Oh! how much farther I see than grandpa!" Such is our age. Beyond all question, a wonderfully advanced age. But let us think of Macaulay's little fellow perched on his grandfather's shoulders, and learn to be humble.

Another point in regard to this age, and a graver one. It is a sadly dictatorial age. While it is prone to forget its own origin, it is also apt to usurp functions which do not belong to it. It seeks, for instance, to adapt every thing to itself. It is a fast age, and must have its own short-hand methods for every thing. It abounds in appliances for ease and comfort, and must have everything made easy and comfortable. It is especially an exceedingly enlightened age. It has emerged from the darkness of the past. It must needs, therefore, walk in the glare of its own splendours, and must by no means be governed by the dim and twilight perceptions of former ages. Now it imports its notions of this kind into sacred regions. The religion of the past is not suited to this wonderful age. It must form its own religion, suited to its own peculiarities, and its own tastes. That religion must be summary in its announcements, to suit the amazing speed of the age. It must be lenient in its prescriptions to suit its love for the charming and pleasant. Above all, it must do homage to the enlightenment of the age, and by no means suffer the darkness of the past to project its gloom and shadows into the brilliant day-light of the present. And, alas! there are men who pander to these longings of an age; and preach and inculcate, not what the Word of God enjoins, but what may be agreeable to the sickly fancies of the times. "Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits!" Such is the demand of the age; and many there are who, like the courtly prophets of Ahab and Jezebel, are swift to fulfil its behest.

We beg now to protest against all this. In our own name, and in the name of the many, who, happily, are not carried away by the exactions of the age, we enter our protest.

This protest we enter on behalf of the PURE AND ANCIENT GOSPEL—the Gospel which tells of man's ruin as a sinner—his redemption by the Saviour—and his regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The Gospel as taught by Paul—as revived at the Reformation—and as now proclaimed, with no uncertain sound, from the pulpit of our own Spurgeon.

In entering this protest we would devoutly mention the name of the God of this Gospel. We would especially recall the weighty fact that this Gospel is everywhere represented in Scripture as the highest product of the wisdom of Heaven. Nay, the Bible speaks as if here deity had, in some sort, exhausted and poured out all its resources. Hence Paul writes of "the riches of his grace," wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. David looks up, and exclaims, "Thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy name." It is Christ himself, who, in the person of Wisdom, addresses us so largely in the Book of Proverbs; and says, among other things, "I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions—counsel is mine, and sound wisdom. I am understanding; I have strength." As "the Word" and "the Wisdom of God," he is revealed to us in the Gospels and Epistles. And then in the Apocalypse, we hear the hosts of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing." Thus, if anywhere

in God's way of saving sinners, we obtain our deepest insight into the mind of our God, and behold the wisdom of Jehovah in its loftiest manifestations. And is it for man to dictate to this wisdom? Is it for any to let down that Wisdom to the level of his own depravity and folly? Yet such should seem to be the vain and unworthy imagination of all who would adapt the Gospel of heaven to the varying fancies and tastes of the varying ages of the children of earth.

We farther protest against such a course because of the danger which attends it. For what is the whole history of heresy, but the record of the results which have arisen from those attempts at accommodation of which we here speak? So it was in Paul's day—"Christ crucified" was then "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." Ere long, to gratify the Jew, as we see in Acts xv. 1, the doctrine of salvation by the cross mixed up with the heresy of salvation by circumcision. This was the ancient ritualism. Out of it, and out of some kindred elements, there sprang at length the full-blown ritualism of Popery. Then, farther, to gratify the Greek, this same doctrine of the cross was adulterated by the dreams of a false philosophy; from which at length resulted all the doctrinal corruptions which so soon began to creep over the Eastern churches, and which have so long and so sadly hidden Christ, and salvation by Christ from the view of men. At some of these, as having begun to develop themselves in his day, Paul points in Col. ii. 18-23. Alas! these tamperings with "the truth as it is in Jesus!" It is dreadful to think of them. Woe! woe! for the "antichrists" which have thus risen up to darken and to curse the world! They began with the betrayal of truth to the corrupt fancies of men. They have ended in the blotting out of that truth, and the ruin of countless souls.

For, it is important to notice, by way of farther enforcing our present protest, that the Bible everywhere insists upon the exclusive claims of the pure and ancient Gospel. From the beginning, he who would be saved must come to God with his sacrifice, his confession, his humble, penitent, contrite, and believing heart. To reject these terms was to kindle the anger of God, and to perish. Hence the doom of Cain in the Old Testament, and of the proud, unbending Pharisees, filled with the spirit of Cain, in the New. Thus it is that the threat of a broken law rolls and roars over the head of him who seeks to be justified thereby. On the other hand, in regard to the Gospel, we have this explicit statement,—"Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved."—Nay, what says Paul, here?—"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed!"—And if, by the aid of the Apocalypse, we glance towards heaven, we there behold the martyred hosts, standing before the throne of God, "having washed their robes, and made them white," not in their own blood, but "in the blood of the Lamb." It were easy to add more to the same effect. We might dwell for instance upon the case of the apostle Paul, as detailed by himself in that famous passage Phil. iii. 4-11. Which reference may recall the story of a certain other Gospel minister on his dying bed. He was asked by a friend "Well brother, and what are you doing now?" "Doing" was his reply "I am gathering together all my experiences, and prayers, and sermons, and labours, and sorrows, and usefulness; that I may throw them all overboard and myself after them, and then float to heaven on the plank of free grace." We add another illustration to the same effect. It occurs in a letter which reached us the other day from Dr. Godwin, classical tutor at Bradford, Yorkshire, England, when we studied there long years ago. The doctor is a very good and able man, and in his day has done something for God and his cause. He is now about eighty years of age. And thus he writes, standing as he does on the borders of two worlds. "The nearer I get to the end of my journey, the more precious I feel to be the old, old Gospel. I hope and trust through His grace, which is all-sufficient, to go into eternity with the sentiment thrilling through my heart,—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and MY ALL."

Such are the claims of the Gospel itself; and in this way have good men been wont to interpret those claims. And is it for us, in our blindness and temerity, to refuse to admit them; as they do who hang their poor fading garlands around the cross as though they would hide its "offence;" forgetful meanwhile of Him who hath said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me."

The present aspect of the world, in its relation to our immediate object must not here be overlooked. We turn our eyes towards Britain, Germany and the United States. We see there much to be deplored. But amid all we see an open Bible, widely scattered abroad, while the Gospel, distinctively so called, is freely proclaimed, and extensively received. And these are the peoples now in the ascendancy in the affairs of the world. Our old Gospel, it may safely be affirmed, has made them, after every possible allowance and deduction, great and happy at home, and influential abroad.

And where do the multitudes gather, time after time, to listen, and to be impressed?—It is where the old Gospel is proclaimed, if not in its old forms, yet in its ancient spirit and simplicity. A Spurgeon would not be what he is, with all his peculiar endowments, if it were not that this old Gospel is the unvarying staple of his administrations. So it is in less striking instances. Even ungodly men will not, as a general rule, flock around the teachers of heresy. There is within them a consciousness, that if anything is to do their souls good, it must be no modern invention, but the ancient, old-fashioned Gospel—the Gospel of Paul, and Augustine, and Luther, and of the revived administrations of these later days.

(Conclusion in our next.)

Christ in the Warehouse.

It is often the complaint of those who speak of great cities—"There is so much crime there." Others give it another form—"There are splendid churches and pastors, but I fear the religious life of the city is not of a very high order." No doubt there is crime there as well as elsewhere. No doubt there is a style of religious life in our cities as defective as that which is sometimes found elsewhere. But we have met with instances of singular probity, and instances of a singular piety. Of one of these I should like to tell you.

On one of the most busy streets down town there stands a large warehouse. Men are moving about with orderly rapidity. The proprietor is at the desk, overlooking purchases and sales; and his eye and manner of movement indicate energy of character. If in a cynical mood, you will look in and say, "What zeal to serve Mammon!" The clock will strike twelve in a moment. Let us enter. Give a hint that you would like to witness the somewhat singular custom of the place and hour. You will be welcome, although the custom is hardly dreamed of beyond the immediate parties. You go upstairs to a room as quiet as the locality admits, and are seated. A hymn is sung; a chapter is read, with a few remarks; a prayer is offered; and the company disperses to lunch or to business. It does not take long, but it gives evidence that, amid all the stir of that warehouse, it is not Mammon but God who is sought and served. Of other results we cannot speak; but we heard, not long since, of one result, over which you cannot but rejoice. One of the persons employed was a man who had grown old in irreligion, and his friends had almost given him up as hopeless. But that nowadays recognition of God, in the upper room of this warehouse, had been to him a means of grace. It led him to reflection. As he "came to himself" he sought other means of grace; and now, with a light heart and a tongue which speaks praise, and not hard oaths, he bears witness to the loving kindness and tender mercy of God. To that one influence he attributes, under God, the salvation of his soul. Will not the great day reveal many such instances of piety and fidelity where we look

for them as little as here? Let us, then, gather a cheerful hope, and instead of brooding over dark aspects, think more of the almighty grace of God. If we are, indeed, faithful and truly the friends of Christ, we are not alone. There are men of kindred spirit in yonder factory, in that great ship, and in the busy haunts of commerce and exchange, as in Apostolic days, there were some who "loved Christ even in Caesar's household."—*New York Observer.*

Pleasant Thoughts of Heaven.

"The pathway between earth and heaven is bridged over to me now," said one who had buried sons and daughters in rapid succession until but one remained. "Heaven used to seem a long way off, but now it is so near." And though in the prime of manhood and health, and reaping the golden harvest of early and successful toil, the father grew joyful as he imagined himself already crossing to the other shore.

"I like to name over to myself, in the stillness of the long night-watches," said an invalid, "those I expect to meet in heaven; and it is so pleasant to call them one by one, and think of all I have enjoyed with them here."

"It is a glorious thing to die," was the testimony of Hannah More on her death-bed, though her life had been sown thick with rarest friendships, and age had not so weakened her memory as to cause her to forget those little hamlets among the cliffs of the Mendip hills, or the mission-schools she had with such wonderful perseverance established and where she would be sadly missed.

A youthful bride took passage with her husband on the steamer "Melville," with bright anticipations of a happy Southern home. When it was found that the vessel must go down, she took from her pocket her little Testament, and with the calmness of the Christian faith strove to direct the minds of her terrified fellow-passengers to One who dwelt "beyond the swelling floods," and who would receive them even at the latest hour. Her father a pastor of one of our New England churches, in writing of her, says: "She went down amid the roar of wintry winds to slumber in the ocean depths. We can find no garland to lay on her grave; but when I think of her, I am joyous rather than sad. It seems to me that this earth is a great packing-place, and while we are busily engaged in getting ready to move, some friend comes in and offers to take one child to our future home. It is a relief that one is already safely there, away from the bustle and confusion, while we remain to finish the work."

Seventy Years ago.

To appreciate what has been done by the applied sciences operating through their dependent and associate arts, we have only to go back a little more than two thirds of a century, to the times of Franklin and Washington, and in many cases to those of our own immediate fathers. In those days of small things, men were compelled to pass their lives in a sort of destitution, which in this age of scientific luxury would be considered a state of semi-barbarism. The means of domestic convenience, personal neatness, easy locomotion, rapid intelligence, agreeable warmth, abundant light, physical as well as intellectual, were things wished and waited for but not yet found.

To us, their effeminate descendants, it might be painfully interesting to witness the efforts of those hardy and much-enduring people to procure warmth in their dwellings by the scorching and freezing of their alternate sides under the blast that swept from many apertures toward the current of a vast open chimney! and this state of things was hardly bettered by the established zero-temperature of an unwarmed church, or the irrespirable atmosphere of a stove heated school-room or country court-house. Our recent progenitors read their dusky and infrequent newspaper by the light of a tallow-candle, and groped their way through dark and unpaved streets under the guidance of a peripatetic lantern. If in summer they desired a draught of cold water there, was no ice; and, if in winter they wished for dry feet, there was no India-rubber.