

Sunday Reading.

For the Christian Messenger.

What the Bible does not say.

The Bible is a book with a single purpose; and that purpose is to reveal the sinfulness of the human family, and a method of salvation from that sinfulness. And of course a book that has only one end in view, must necessarily be silent with reference to a thousand other subjects. Two years ago a man was galloping on horseback, as if he had seen a spectre, down the bank of a New England river in the dead of night. His mission was to inform the sleeping dwellers in a number of manufacturing towns further down the stream, that the great dam further up the river was about to burst its barriers. The horseman, as he sped along, trampled myriads of flowers under foot, but he had nothing to say of botany. He rushed by hundreds of projecting rocks, rich in stories of pre-historic ages, but he had nothing to say on the subject of geology. Over his head the starry hosts were marshalled as they had been since the foundation of the world, but he had nothing to say on the subject of astronomy. He had just one mission—to inform the sleeping toilers of their danger, and how they might escape it, and he had no time to devote to the consideration of any other subject, however important, or however fascinating to other minds. So it is with God's Word. Its single object is to tell us of sin and its cure. On this subject it is full, and explicit, and infallible.

A Simple Faith.

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

"The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body is full of light: but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness."—LUKE XI. 34, 35.

A quaint minister once said, if sinners went to Heaven of their own works and their own will, they would throw up their caps and say, "Glory be unto myself;" men would take the honour, and certainly the praise, if they contributed any part to their own salvation. The song would not be, "Unto Him that loved us," but "Unto Him and myself;" or "With my works and my merits." Think you, sirs, that Christ died to win divided homage and share a divided throne? Did He come from Heaven's highest glories and stoop to the cross of deepest woe, that His name might be sung in conjunction with your poor name? Oh, no! God forbid that we should indulge in so profane a thought. He must be all; He must have all the crown, and every jewel in it shall be His own. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name be all the honour, and glory and majesty, for ever and ever."

Every syllable of every song, every shout of every angel, every cry of every redeemed one, must bear the same sacred burden, and must rise up to the same divine throne; and we ought, we must go, bow, and ascribe to Him, and Him only, "Glory, honour, and majesty and power, and dominion and might, for ever and ever. Amen."

WE MUST HAVE A SIMPLE FAITH IN CHRIST

if we would possess and enjoy Christ's salvation.

It is a singular fact that to obey and to believe is in the sacred language very much the same, so that truly to believe Christ is to give security for a willing obedience. As soon as ever we believe Him we obey Him. In fact Christ does not promise to save us if we disobey His laws. But His promise is this—if we trust Him He will save us; but then He has His way of saving us; and He will only save us in His own way, and if we really trust Him we shall yield to His ways and be willing to be obedient to His commands.

1. The eye of obedience, however, sometimes in the Christian is not single—I mean in the professed Christian. Really that word has been so dishonoured that I often use it without meaning the true child of God thereby; and said that I should be compelled too often to apply the term "Christian" to those that are not of Christ, and who have

never learned His love nor known His name. There are many professors whose eye of obedience is not single. They live in this world; they say "for Christ," but really no one can believe them. If you can judge them by their fruits they seem to live for almost any other object than Christ. At any rate if they do give Jesus their allegiance, they seem to give Him but half their heart, and serve Him with a love that is neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm. Sometimes they are zealous for Jesus, and at other times just as eager after the things of this world.

2. Nay, I must confess that even true Christians do not always keep the eye single; the mote gets into it, it is not the beam; and there are times when even God's minister has to bow his knee, and with bitter weeping to confess that he cannot keep his motives always single. I have often to mourn over this myself. I can say from my inmost heart that I love my Master's cause, but I have to ask myself this, "Dost not thou love to see thy Master's cause prosper by thee better than by another?" Oh, that wicked thought, that ever it should cross our hearts! And yet what minister of Christ that has not to confess it, if he but examine himself?

I do feel that when we are in our right state we would as soon our souls were saved by anybody else as ourselves, and just as lief that God should bless another as us. For it can make no difference to us, if we really love the Master, who it is by whom He honours Himself. Our honour, our standing, ought to be less than nothing—yet it will creep up. One serves Christ at times very earnestly, but then the fly gets into the sweet pot of ointment—the wishing to serve Christ that sell may share in the pleasure of doing good. We must be content to do good and have no self-gratulations to indulge; content to serve Christ and know no reward; content to serve our generation, though our names should be cast out; content, though we should only hope to hear the "Well done," when we shall be in our Master's presence.

Well, now, let me say a few things about having a Christian's simple faith. Professors, I speak to you at large, whether you be Christians or no. Get rid of that double eye which looks askant and crossway, looking one way at the world and the other way at the cross, not straight forward at any object, but is turned here, and there, and everywhere.

3. Remember this is the worldling's eye. The worldling thinks he can serve God and Mammon, and will then think the same, thou professed follower of Christ? Wilt thou try to serve two masters who are at deadly enmity to one another? I tell thee, man, when God will say to thee, "Take no thought for the morrow, be careful for nothing," Mammon will say to thee, "Look ahead, be careful for everything;" and when God saith to thee, "Give of thy substance to the poor," Mammon will say, Hold it tight, it is that giving that spoils everything;" and when God will say unto thee, "Set not thy affections on the things of earth," Mammon will say, "Get money, get money, get it anyhow;" and when God saith, "Be upright," Mammon will say, "Cheat thy own father if thou canst win by it." Mammon and God are at such extreme ends of the earth, and so desperately opposed, that I trust, Christian, thou art not such a fool, such an arrant fool, as to attempt to serve them both. If thou dost, thou hast the worldling's eye, and thou art a worldling thyself.

4. Remember, too, if thou tryest to do this we may suspect thee of having the hypocrite's eye. As Matthew Henry says, "The hypocrite is like the waterman; he pulls this way, but he looks that. He pretends to look to Heaven, but he pulls towards his own interest. He says, 'he looks to Christ,' but he is always pulling towards his own private advantage. The true Christian, however, is like a traveller; he looks to the goal, and then he walks right straight on to it; he goes the way he is looking." Be you then not like the hypocrite, who hath this double eye, looking one way and going the other. An old Puritan said, "A hypocrite is like the hawk; the hawk flies upward, but he always keeps his eye down on the prey; let him get up as high as he will, he is always looking on the ground.

Whereas the Christian is like the lark; he turns his eye up to Heaven, and as he mounts and sings he looks upward and he mounts upward." Be you one of God's own larks. Be an honest lark, looking and going in the same direction with a single purpose, for your double purpose will make the world suspect you of hypocrisy.

5. Yet further remember, Christian, unless you have a simple faith your usefulness will be entirely ruined. This has been the spiritual death of many a man who bade fair to do good in the world, but who did not live with one object. I have known ministers preach a sermon in which they wished to profit all, but the sermon fell dead to the ground. We have known men, too, anxious to win sinners, but at the same time they were equally anxious that they should be thought well of in their oratory, so that they should not say a coarse, rough word, for fear of degrading their standing among the eloquent of the age. It is all over with the usefulness of such. A Christian minister, above every man, must have no object in life but to glorify his God, and whether it be fair weather or foul weather it should be nothing to him. He should be a man who looks for fights and expects storms; and in proportion to his faithfulness he will be sure to meet with both. He must be one who girds up his loins and makes ready for the battle; let him understand it is to be battle, and make no preparation for the flesh.

And, Christian, if you would do good in this world, you must live for that simple object, and not live for anything else. If you run after two objects, you will not come upon either; or rather the world will get the mastery over you. When Christians have two aims they are like two rivers which flow near the city of Geneva, the Arve and the Rhone. The Rhone comes flowing along a beautiful blue—a blue which painters give to Italian skies and to the rivers of Switzerland. It is no exaggeration; they are as blue as they are painted. The Arve comes down from the glaciers a chalky, dirty white. I stood some time ago at the place where these two rivers join. It was not long before the Arve had quenched the Rhone; all that beautiful blue had fled away, and nothing but the chalky white was seen. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

If your life is made up of two streams, worldliness running in like the Arve, and you hope to have spirituality running in like the blue Rhone, you will soon be mistaken. Your spirituality, if there be such a thing, will become a stalking-horse to your worldliness; your religion will be swallowed up, for you cannot serve two masters; cannot serve either of them well, and you cannot serve Christ at all if you are divided in your aims.

6. And then, further than this, Christian, do you not know that if you have divided aims you will be an object of contempt to the world? The world comes to despise the Church at this very period, because she perceives that the Church is not chaste to her husband, Christ. Ah, I love not to say what I am going to say, but really when I have looked on some professing Christians, a thought I do not like to indulge has crossed my mind. I have seen them so worldly, so sharp in their business, so mingled with the world, that you could not tell which was worldling and which was Christian, and I have thought, did Christ shed His blood to make such a thing as this? Is the only thing that Christ's redemption can produce, a thing no better than nature can bring forth? For I have seen worldly men better than such Christians, in many virtues excelling them.

Now, judge ye whether I be not warranted in such thoughts; and if they cross my mind, think how often such thoughts must flit across the mind of the worldling. "Oh," says he, "this is your religion, is it? Well, it is no such mighty thing after all. I bought such goods at such a shop, and I was fairly taken in. This is your Christianity, is it?" "I worked for such a master," says another; "he is a deacon, he is a skindint, too. This is your Christianity!" "Ah," says a labourer, "I am employed by So-and-so, and he is just as proud and domineering in his behaviour to his work-

men as if he were a Pharaoh, and not a follower of Christ. This is your Christianity, is it?"

A consistent church is a terrible church; an honest, upright church would shake the world. The tramp of godly men is the tramp of heroes; these are the thundering legions that sweep everything before them. The men that are what they profess to be hate the semblance of a lie, whatsoever shape it wears, and would sooner die than do that which is dishonest, or that which would be degrading to the glory of a heaven-born race, and to the honour of Him by whose name they have been called. Oh, Christians! you will be the world's contempt, you will be their despising and hissing, unless you live for one object. I know the world will put you on the back and flatter you, but it will despise you all the while. When I am abused, I know what it means. I look at it in the right spirit, and say, "Be it so; it is the highest compliment the world can pay me."

If I am serving my God, I must not expect to be honoured of men; but if I am not serving my God I know I shall be despised of men. So will it be with you. Get a single solitary thought in your mind, and that thought the precious love of Jesus, and go and live it out, and come what may; you will be respected, though abused. They may say you are an enthusiast, a fanatic, a fool, but those names from the world are titles of praise and glory. The world does not take the trouble to nickname a man unless he is worth it. It will not give you any censure unless it trembles at you. The moment they begin to turn at bay, it is because they feel they have a man to do with. So it will be with you. Be men, each one of you; stand up for Christ and the word you believe, and the world will respect you yet.

Tread the world under your feet, and serve God with all your heart, for you may never expect to have peace in your conscience until you have turned all the idols out of your soul. Live for Christ alone, for where your consecration ends, there your peace ends too. Christian, you can never hope to stand accepted before God while you only serve Him with half your heart; you can never hope to enter into Heaven triumphantly when you have only used part of your manhood in the service of your Redeemer.

I speak vehemently when I come to this point. I do pray you, my dear hearers, by your hope of Heaven, by your hope to be delivered from the devouring fire, and to enter into glory and bliss, either serve God or Mammon. Whichever you do, do it with all your heart, but do not try to do both, because you cannot. Oh, if ye be Christians live with all your might for Christ. Keep not back part of the price, like Ananias and Sapphira, but give Jesus all—

"All your goods, and all your hours, All your time, and all your powers, All you have, and all you are"—and you will be a happy, blessed, useful man.

Divide your allegiance and you shall be a hissing reproach to sinners; you shall be a pain to yourself, you shall be a dishonour here, and you shall be held up to shame and everlasting contempt when Christ shall appear in the glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him. Charge, Christians, in the name of Christ, charge against the embattled ranks of sin! But do it with one heart. Break not your rank; hold not out the flag of truce to the world with one hand, and draw the sword with the other. Throw away the scabbard. Be the sworn enemies for ever of everything that is selfish and sinful, and trusting in the precious blood of Christ, and wearing the cross in your hearts, go forward conquering and to conquer, making mention of your Master's name, preaching His word and triumphing in His grace alone. God grant, if we must have two eyes, that they may be both clear ones, one the eye of faith wholly fixed on Christ, the other the eye of obedience equally and wholly fixed on the same object.

Poor sinners, trust Jesus Christ now. Just as you are, come to Him now. Bring nothing with you; come empty-handed. Robe not yourself; come naked. Wash not yourself; come

filthy. Seek not to stiffen your heart; come with it hard as it is. Try not to get a little comfort; come despairingly. Thou canst come no how else. But come now to His cross. He was naked when He bought thee, and thou must be naked when He wins thee. He was in shame when He served for thee, and thou must be ashamed when He shows His love to thee. He drank the wormwood when He redeemed thee, and if the wormwood of despair be in thy mouth, yet come thou to Him now, and say to Him now, "Heal my backslidings, receive me graciously, and love me freely;" and when thou hast said it, "venture on Him, venture wholly;" throw thy arms about His cross; and be this the spirit of thy faith—sink or swim, here I must abide. I know I perish if I withdraw; I cannot perish here. Jesus let Thy pitying eye look down on me. I do believe, I will believe that Thou hast power to save even me. I trust Thee with my all for ever.

If thou canst say that, sinner, then you are saved, your sins are forgiven you; go in peace. Take up your bed and walk, thou palsied man. "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth I bid thee stretch out thy hand, thou with the withered arm." Awake ye, arise and live. He that believeth is justified from all things. Your sins are gone; your soul is accepted. You are saved and you shall see His face, and sing His love in glory everlasting.

Little Baptism.

A German had been a Lutheran, and, of course, was baptized in infancy. When asked the question, "Have you been baptized?" he answered curtly, "Vell, now, shust a leetle!"

We conceive the "leetle" fails to answer the end of baptism, for it is neither the sign which the Saviour ordained, nor does it set forth the truth which baptism was intended to embody. Between sprinkling and immersion there is a radical difference, and if either of the two be right the other must be wrong. The two ceremonies cannot be optional and equally right, for by no measure of straining can they be made to be emblems of the same thing. We have no right to supplant Christ's "much water" by man's "leetle," and he who does so must answer for it to his Lord.—Sword and Trowel.

The Christian Index thus comments on the decline of infant baptism in the "Fatherland":—"The law of Germany no longer compels parents to have their children 'baptized.' Last year, in Berlin, the percentage of 'baptized' children was seventy-four only. The Lutheran Standard gravely remarks: 'One fourth of the children in the city so proud of its culture grow up as heathens.' How does this sound in view of the fact that when the progenitors of the inhabitants of Berlin were heathens the custom of sprinkling infants prevailed among them? Are the children heathen for the lack of a ceremony which was heathen in its origin and is still often heathen in its spirit and effect?"

A Russian newspaper, speaking of Dissenters from the Greek Church in that country, says:—"The Baptists, who have quite recently transplanted themselves here, cause more agitation and disquietude to the Russian clergy than any of the rest. Strong by their sincere devotion to religious principles, and leading an exemplary life, they are, indeed, a thorn in the side of the orthodox ecclesiastics." The authorities have countenanced their preaching and their books, which they sell at a very low rate; and in public discussions they have repeatedly vanquished the priests. The people favour them on account of their morality, and Baptist doctrines are spreading rapidly."

The following is from the Southern Baptist, published in Meridian, Mississippi, Feb. 22:—"The ordinance of baptism was administered by Dr. Bozeman, at the brick church, Wednesday night last, a nephew of Judge Hancock, being the candidate. John has been a type and has set up many a column of our paper. We rejoice to see him make the good confession."

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Ministerial and Lay Conference at Jordan River.

Agreeably to notice, the Shelburne Co. Ministerial and Lay Conference met at this place, on March 1st. A large number of delegates were present. The same allowance is to be made for this statement as for John's hyperbole in the last chapter of his Gospel, and at the last verse. Doubtless more would have been present had the meeting been more important, the travelling better, and the brethren interested felt the obligation to attend more obligatory upon them. The Pastor with all the delegates from Jordan River were present. This was somewhat remarkable considering the difficulties in the way. The afternoon private session was somewhat irregularly spent, not at the meeting-house as contemplated; but at the house of Bro. Byron Hayden, close by, in discussing the question of the hour: "What is the relation between snowdrifts, bare ground, horses and vehicles and ministers and delegates?" A great amount of anxiety was expressed for a practical solution of the problem in the appearance of these delinquent brethren. No essays were read, but some present essayed to explain the non-attendance of the brethren expected. The question was left in the dark, and until dark, and after dark, without any solution whatever. No "skeletons" were presented for commendation or criticism, because most of the friends present were clothed upon with flesh, and therefore raised above comment, at least on this score; but a number of faces grew ghastly, and one skeleton did tremble a little as the evening came on apace, for fear that some of the promised skeletons with other things equal should not put in an appearance.

At the hour appointed we entered the meeting house to find a large congregation waiting for the "feast of fat things" promised them, but congregations should know that human nature is fallible, and that David said in his haste—. The evening service was conducted as pre-arranged; except that Bro. Foster appointed to preach on the occasion could not; reason:—so distant from his congregation no one could hear him. I could not myself. Moral:—ministers should get near to their people if they would not disappoint them, and if they would make them hear. This was unfortunate, as a number came out who seldom attend, to hear our worthy brother, and others too, who true to nature like, once in a while, a change: Query. Are not Ministerial Conferences a necessity as human nature is constituted? The Pastor was therefore compelled to surmise and offer an excuse for the absence "in the flesh" of our Brother and his associates, as also to supply, as far as possible, the want of the hour in preaching a sermon on "Christian Beneficence."

It was decided that the next Conference should be held in the moon. Arguments for this somewhat strange and seemingly "ultra mundane" arrangement, are such as:—"That this long neglected field of missionary labor might be reached and brought under the influence of the Gospel:—That this august body might be able to bring some influence to bear upon the inhabitants of that orb in the way of modifying the weather, and avoiding that phase of lunacy—that prevents attendance at our Conferences: That some action may be taken on that occasion, and in that place toward the removal of the hindrance, in the way of the universal adoption and perfect working of the "Convention Scheme," as it is feared that the moon may rule Christians' pockets, as well as the weather. That we should likely have a larger attendance of both ministers and delegates as the travelling must be excellent—no snow-drifts, no bare ground; nor hills to climb. No time was fixed—except it was thought it had better be held in the full moon, for reasons already discussed and disposed of—as we thought the brethren and delegates would have time enough to start AFTER arrangements were made, with the lunar authorities respecting manner of transit and return-tickets who were