

Sunday Reading.

It is just possible the following stanzas have been in the *Messenger* before a good while ago. Yet they are so good that, even if that should be the case, it will do the reader's heart good to read them over again:

How, When, Where, Why?

You ask me how I gave my heart to Christ?
I do not know,
There came a yearning for him in my soul
So long ago;
I found earth's flow'ers would fade and die,
I wept for something that could satisfy;
And then—then—somehow I seemed to dare
To lift my broken heart to him in prayer.
I do not know—
I cannot tell you how;
I only know
He is my Saviour now.

You ask me when I gave my heart to Christ?
I cannot tell,
The day, or just the hour, I do not now
Remember well.
It must have been when I was all alone,
The light of his forgiving Spirit shone
Into my heart, so clouded o'er with sin:
I think—think 'twas when I let him in.
I do not know—
I cannot tell you when;
I only know
He is so dear since then.

You ask me where I gave my heart to Christ?
I cannot say,
That sacred place has faded from my sight,
As yesterday;
Perhaps he thought it better I should not
Remember where. How I should love that
spot!
I think I could not tear myself away,
For I should want forever there to stay,
I do not know,
I cannot tell you where;
I only know
He came and blessed me there.

You ask me why I gave my heart to Christ?
I can reply:
It is a wondrous story—listen, while
I tell you why
My heart was drawn at length to seek his
face,
I was alone; I had no resting place;
I heard of how he loved me, with a love
Of depth so great—of height so far above
All human ken,
I longed such love to share;
And sought it then,
Upon my knees in prayer.

—F. G. Brown.

Honeywood Park;

OR, A TALE OF MY GRANDFATHER,

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

The recurrence of the name of a village, a house, or a spot in one's family annals, interwoven with its most important events, is curious to observe. The superstitious imagine that a strange influence upon human destiny may be connected with peculiar places; we reject their theory, but all the more wonder at the facts upon which it is based. There is a spot in Essex, the name of which is as much associated with the life of my grandfather, now in heaven, as if providence had rooted him to it, and constrained him to live and die within its bounds. What I am about to write is, as nearly as my recollection serves me, the story as I had it from himself. I had been preaching within twenty miles of Stambourne, where the good old man proclaimed the Gospel for about sixty years; and I received a pressing letter from him, saying, that as he was now eighty-eight years of age, if I did not drive across the country to see him, we might never meet again in this world. Little did the grandson need urging to so pleasant a duty. Starting early I reached the village at eight in the morning, and found the venerable man on the look-out for his boy. He was remarkably cheerful and communicative, talking of his tutor at Hackney College, of his early life, his trials and his deliverances, the good men who had gone before him, and the occasions upon which he had met them. He then touched on what was evidently a favorite topic, and remarked that there was formerly a wood in what I think he called Honeywood Park, which was a very memorable place to him. In that wood he had groaned and wept before the Lord while under the burden of sin, and under a tree, an oak, then only a sapling, he had received the grace of faith, and entered upon the enjoyment of peace with God. It was a lonely spot, but henceforth it was to him "none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven." Often he resorted thither and praised the name of the Lord.

Some time after this happy event, having to go from Coggeshall to Hales, his route was over the hallowed spot. On the night previously he dreamed very vividly that the devil appeared to him, and threatened to tear him in pieces if he dared to go along that footpath and pray under the oak as he had been wont to do. The evil one reminded him that there was another way through the farmyard, and that if he took the farmyard path all would go well with him. When my grandfather awoke the impression on his mind was overpowering, and he reasoned thus with himself: Whether it be a dream or really a temptation from Satan I cannot tell, but anyhow I will not yield to it, but will show the devil that I will not do his bidding in anything, but will defy him to his face. This was the good man all over. Like Luther, he had a vivid impression of the reality and personality of the great enemy, and was accustomed to make short work with his suggestions. One day when in the pulpit it came into his head that the place where the sand was kept for sanding the brick floor of his manse ought to be boarded in. His next thought was, What business had the devil to make me think about the sand closet on a Sunday, and in the pulpit too? It shall not be boarded in at all. I will let Satan see that he shall not have his way with me. But to return to the story. My grandfather, then a young man, went on cheerily enough till he came to the stile where the two paths diverged, then a horrible fear came upon him, and he felt his heart beat fast. Suppose he really should meet this archfiend, and should find him too strong for him, what then? Better take the farmyard path. No, that would be yielding to Satan, and he would not do that for ten thousand worlds. He plucked up courage and tremblingly pressed on. The stile was leaped, the narrow track through the wood was trodden with resolution mingled with forebodings. The oak was in sight, the sweat was on his face, his pace quickened, a dash was made, and the tree was grasped, but there was no Satan there. Taking breath a moment, the young man uttered aloud the exclamation, "Ah, cowardly devil; you threatened to tear me in pieces, and now you do not dare show your face." Then followed a fervent prayer and a song of praise, and the young man was about to go on his way when his eye was caught by something shining on the ground. It was a ring, a very large ring, he told me nearly as large as a curtain ring, and it was solid gold; how it came there it would be hard to guess. Inquiries were made, but no claimant ever appeared, and my grandfather had it made into my grandmother's wedding ring, in memory of the spot so dear to him. Year by year he continued to visit the oak tree on the day of his conversion to pour out his soul before the Lord. The sapling had spread abroad its branches, and the man had become the parent of a numerous family, but the song of gratitude was not forgotten, nor the prayer that he and his offspring might forever be the Lord's; The angels of God, we doubt not, watched those consecrated seasons with delightful interest. The prayers offered there have been answered for sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons, who are now preaching the Gospel which the old man loved so well.

To add to the solemnity of the secluded wood, his father, while passing by the spot, was touched by the hand of God and suddenly fell dead. He could then feel even more deeply, "How dreadful is this place!" This made the annual visitations to the tree more deeply impressive, and we believe beneficial. They would have been continued till my grandfather's last year, were it not that the hand of modern improvement ruthlessly swept away tree and wood and almost every relic of the past. His last prayer upon the dear spot was most ludicrously interrupted—as the wood was almost all felled, he judged by the pathway as nearly as possible where the long-remembered oak had stood; the place was covered with growing wheat, but he knelt down in it and began to bless the name of the Lord, when suddenly he heard a rough voice from over the hedge crying out, "Maister, there be a crazy man a-saying his prayers down in the wheat over

they're." This startled the suppliant and made him beat a hasty retreat. Jacob must wrestle somewhere else, for Jabbok was gone. The man of God looked at the spot and went his way, but in spirit he still raised an altar in that Bethel, and praised the God of his salvation. He has gone to his rest after having fought a good fight, but the prayers of Honeywood Park are blessing his children's children to the third generation, and, through them, many thousands more. To them and all the world his testimony is, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," and equally does he instruct us to "Bless the Lord, and forget not all His benefits." It were well if all of us were as decided to overcome temptation, let it come whence it may. To indulge in that which may even seem to be sin is evil; to strive against its very appearance is safety. Forgive, gentle reader, the egotism which made me think this old story might have an interest beyond my own family circle; it is no small pleasure to remember such a grandsire, and to recall an incident in his life as pardonable.

Scepticism—No very great Achievement.

It has been well said, "Nothing is easier than to doubt. A man of moderate ability or learning can doubt more than the wisest men believe." Faith demands knowledge, for it is an intelligent grace, able and anxious to justify itself; but infidelity is not required to give reason for the doubt that is in it; a defiant mein and a blustering tone answer its purpose quite as well as argument. In fact, the present acme of unbelief is to know nothing; and what is this but the apotheosis of ignorance? Great is the glory of knowing nothing!

A man may glide into Agnosticism insensibly, and remain in it languidly; but to believe is to be alive—alive to conflict and watchfulness. Those who think faith to be a childish business will have to make considerable advances toward manliness before they are able to test their own theory.

Shall we prefer doubt because it is so ready to our hand, or shall we become truth-seekers even if we have to dive like pearl-fishers? That depends upon the mind which is in us. We shall elect our life rule according to the spirit within. A brave soul will not tamely follow the ignoble way of the many, but will aspire to the higher paths even if they be more difficult.—*The Clew of the Maze.*

No Soul.

A certain preacher had wrought his best to benefit his audience; but one of them came to him, and somewhat rudely remarked, "Your preaching is of no use to me. I do not believe that I have a soul; I don't want to be talked to about an imaginary hereafter; I shall die like a dog." The minister calmly replied, "Sir, I have evidently failed through misapprehension. I did my best for the good of all my hearers; but I prepared the entertainment under the notion that I was catering for men with souls. Had I known that there were creatures present who had no souls, and would die like dogs, I would have provided a good supply of bones for them." "Banter," says one. *Common-sense*, says we. What more gentle dealing than playful sarcasm can be expected by men who hold such degrading views of themselves? Assuredly no soul need be worried by them. They confess their own inability to help us, and tacitly admit that we are not bound to let them hinder us. "There is no such thing as light," cries one, "for I have no eyes wherewith to enjoy it." Is there any argument in this? No, the blind gentleman is to be pitied, but his opinion upon color and optics can have no weight. Soulless beings may hold what philosophies they please; their opinions may be interesting as curiosities, but they cannot influence men with souls in the least degree.—*Id.*

M. Shapira, who recently offered for sale a forged manuscript, purporting to be an ancient portion of the Old Testament, has shot himself through the head with a revolver in an hotel at Rotterdam.

How a Minister lost his Church.

When the Rev. Jonas Inert was called to settle at Littleton, the place was thought to be too small for him, but they forced him into it almost against his will. However, it turned out very well for a time, for he had his followers, and they had theirs, and so there was quite an accession to the church.

But still some of his friends thought it a pity that he should busy himself in that out-of-the-way place; there was not room enough for the exercise of his talents.

There was no help for it, however; it seemed to be his destiny, at any rate, for the present. He must make the best of it. He consoled himself with the thought that it would not be long; he could rest there for a while; he would not have to study any; he could make use of his old sermons; some more important opening would be made, and then he would pull up stakes and be off. Or, as Charles Reade says of another man, "He would be like sunshine to the dark place, and when he had lighted and warmed it a bit, heaven, that sent him there, would have him go and shine elsewhere.

He was very busy, very happy in his new and easy position. When the Sabbath morning came round it brought to him none of that trepidation which the consciously unprepared minister feels; he was ready for it; all he had to do was to go to his treasured pile, take out a sermon and enter his desk.

Thus weeks and months went by. The ink dried out of his inkstand on his study-table. The books on his library shelves were covered with dust; and the study itself was the most solitary room in the parsonage. He was gradually expending his resource; but he was benefiting his people. The food which he gave them, though old, was good and nourishing. It was not old to them; to him it was a twice told tale. While they were enjoying his old sermons, he was suffering in secret, with the mean feeling that he was serving them with that which cost him nothing.

While, therefore, his people were flourishing under his ministrations, he was getting lean and, what added no little to his discomfort, he imagined they began to see it, or would very soon if they did not now.

He went on this way for several years giving them, as was very natural, "the best first, and the best all the time," but his best became, after a while, his second or third best, for there are good, better, best in every minister's pile.

He had settled among them with his barrel full, the increase of years. When he turned the faucet the first stream that rushed forth was the best, strong, active, sparkling and bright, indicating a good, rich supply; put a stream always running out and none running in will in time exhaust the largest fountain. He turned the faucet week after week, as occasion demanded, while he enjoyed his elegant leisure until there began to be signs of approaching exhaustion.

The people began to notice these things. A want of interest began to show itself among them. They felt that there was some lack somewhere, they could not tell where. An almost imperceptible change was going on in their minds with regard to their pastor. Somehow, he did not seem so great a man as he did when he came among them.

Then he filled their pulpit; filled the church; was talked about, admired, loved and praised for his great talents. They flattered themselves that he would be "a long and lasting blessing to them." But now they had their fears.

Mount Washington, at first, seemed a stupendous pile to those who settled at its foot; but after they had lived forty years in its shadow, and become familiar with its towering heights, and seen it always the same, not growing higher or more majestic, they were not so much impressed with its dimensions, and came almost to feel that it was losing its grandeur. Mountains do not grow, but no human mind can stand still, however great or powerful it may be; it must either advance or recede.

Rev. Mr. Inert did not consider this. He seemed to feel that he was so far in advance of his people that they could

never overtake him; he made no special effort to maintain his superior mental status; forgot that he was living in an age of progress, and that it will not do for a pastor at the head of a live congregation to stand still. Vesuvius itself would lose its glory if it did not sometimes show signs of life and activity. Growth and development are the things of interest in all living bodies. The mother would lose her interest in her babe if it did not develop its powers; the gardener would root out his choicest plants and cast them away if they failed to produce flowers and fruit; and the active church will not long bear with a pastor who is stationary in this active age.

Is it strange that Littleton, after a while, reversed their first opinion of the Rev. Jonas Inert, and came to the conclusion that he was not big enough for them!—*N. Y. Observer.*

The joy of Decision.

"Do you dance?" we asked a young miss.

"I do not dance now," she said. For a long time I danced. My conscience opposed it. My mother disapproved it. Becoming a Christian I found that I could not conscientiously longer engage in it.

In a later conversation on the same subject, when the decision of some other ladies to dance no more was reported at the family circle, the same young lady remarked:

"I am glad to hear that. There is such pleasure in a fixed decision. I enjoy the right so much more when I have finally and positively decided in favor of it."

In wavering is utter unrest. Indecision is a thorn in the pillow. When the will does not assert itself as intellect and conscience direct, clouds gather over the soul and sorrow smites.

He is the happiest who makes up his mind, puts his foot firmly down, dismisses forever the possibility of ever going back to his old practice, and walks forward with the self-respect which always comes from the consciousness of decisive action.—*Sunday-School Journal.*

Cremation of Chunder Sen.

At about 10:30 a. m. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen expired at his residence at Lily Cottage, and immediately after his remains were laid out on a new sandalwood bedstead, which was covered with marigolds, jessamine, and roses. The corpse was dressed in white silk *dhuti*, and at intervals some of the disciples of the Brahmo leader sprinkled rose-water on it, and placed garlands of flowers all over. At noon the bier was removed to the new chapel, adjoining Lily Cottage, which was being erected for Babu the late Keshub Chunder Sen's private devotions, and at 3:30 p. m. a photographer came and photographed the remains, which were then lying an object of touching regard to hundreds of the Brahmo leaders, disciples, friends and admirers. Shortly after this the male mourners and visitors were requested to leave the chapel to allow of the entrance of a number of the female relatives and followers of the deceased, who then entered and gave vent to their feelings of grief and sorrow at the death of their beloved leader. The bier, with the remains were then carried in procession along the roads from the chapel to Nimtollah Ghaut, followed by thousands and thousands of natives of all castes and creeds and by a very numerous gathering of leading European gentlemen in Calcutta. At Nimtollah Ghaut, the body was, with Brahmo rites, placed on the funeral pyre, which was composed entirely of sandalwood. After cremation the ashes were collected and placed in an urn which will be deposited in the deceased Minister's private chapel. The procession was headed by a disciple, who bore in his hands a banner, bearing on it the words: "New Dispensation." As the procession reached the old Brahmo Mandir in Colootallah, the body was put down, and a hymn chanted: "Glory be to the man who has got a pure heart," and the same ceremony was repeated when the procession passed the Sadhyaram Somaj Mandir, the obant being repeated at intervals till the burning ghaut was reached. No better proof

could be found of the respect and esteem in which the late Brahmo leader was held than in the thousands who followed his remains to witness the cremation ceremony and in the thousands who visited Lily Cottage, in Circular road, to see the last of the remains of the great Brahmo leader, among them was his son-in-law, the Maharajah of Kuch Behar, and other most prominent natives in Calcutta.

Among the many gods of the Chinese is the kitchen god. They put up a new one every New Year's day, when they burn the old one. They think that this god takes care of everything in the kitchen; and if the fire does not burn, or the bread is baking too fast, or there is any trouble, they scold and beat the god. When he is burned they think he goes to heaven and tells all that has happened in their kitchen for a year; so sometimes they daub molasses on his mouth before they burn him, and think then he cannot tell. What ideas these people have of God and of providence!

"Revive Thy work, O Lord!" Well, the Lord is ready. Are you? "Revive thy work, O Christian!" Your work and the Lord's are identical. The Lord's set time in which to favor Zion, is when her children take pleasure in her. The best possible evidence of the Christian's pleasure in Zion is given in the work he does for her. Sing, if you will, "I love Thy kingdom, Lord!" but do the works of love. The churches throughout the land have been praying during the last week. Now, let them all arise, and put forth work in the direction of their prayers and the desired answer shall come. Work now.

We often do more good by our sympathy than by our labours.—*Canon Farrar.*

I never knew a man to escape failure, in either body or mind, who worked seven days a week.—*Sir Robert Peel.*

When we are most ready to perish, then is God most ready to help us.—*Luther.*

Religion is a necessary, an indispensable element, in any great human character. There is no living without it. It is the tie that connects man with his Creator, and holds him to His throne.—*Daniel Webster.*

The love of Christ is like the blue sky into which you may see clearly, but the real vastness of which you cannot measure. It is like the sea into whose bosom you can look a little way, but its depths are unfathomable.—*M'Cheyne.*

We picture death as coming to destroy; let us rather picture Christ as coming to save. We think of death as ending; let us rather think of life as beginning, and that more abundantly. We think of losing; let us think of gaining. We think of parting; let us think of meeting. We think of going away; let us think of arriving. And as the voice of death whispers, "You must go from earth," let us hear the voice of Christ saying, "You are but coming to Me!"—*Norman M'Leod.*

A pair of knitted socks 2000 years old, has been discovered in an Egyptian tomb. They are made of fine sheep's wool, and are rather loosely knit. Instead of ending in one piece, like our articles of that kind, they are finished off in two portions, something like glove-fingers. This is to allow the strap of the sandal to pass between, and fasten on the middle of the foot. Altogether, they seem to show that the Egyptian ladies were good knitters.

Royal Tenderness.

A memorial sketch of the late Princess Alice, Grand Duchess of Hesse, containing many of her letters to Queen Victoria (her mother), has appeared in Germany, and throws a touching light upon the character of the Princess, upon her relations with her father and mother, and upon the circle in which she was brought up. It enables us to realize with new vividness what has become a familiar fact wherever the name of Queen Victoria is known—that the Royal household, presided over by the Queen and Prince Albert, was as much the scene of simple, home-bred, heartfelt affection