

TRUSTING.

I do not ask that God will always make My pathway light. I only pray that he will hold my hand Throughout the night. I do not hope to have the thorns removed That pierce my feet; I only ask to find his blessed arms My safe retreat.

Whispers of Peace

Visitor Pulpit.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AND HER MISSION.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

"And upon this came his disciples and marvelled that he talked with the woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or why talkest thou with her? The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? Then they went into the city and came unto him."—John 4: 27-30.

Behold our Lord and Master with divinely skillful art seeking after a single soul!

I would fain go, if I were young, for thirty years to learn how to talk as He did, if his own Spirit would teach me the lesson. Souls have to be brought to salvation by a gentleness and wisdom such as the Saviour used when he fascinated the Samaritan woman into eternal life, and encoined her to the truth; so only can I describe that wondrous power which he exercised over her in a few short but blessed sentences with which He addressed her.

WOMAN'S GOSPEL PLACE.

Now turn a moment from that glorious One, that perfect man, and yet infinite God, whom we would lovingly adore before we look away from Him. Here come his disciples! They have been into the city to buy food—an errand most needful—that they and their Teacher might live. But see! When they perceive Him talking with a woman, they marvel, each in his own way. For these disciples of Jesus were steeped in the customary antipathies of the age. First, it was sufficiently offensive that the person with whom Jesus was conversing was a woman. My beloved sisters, you owe much to the gospel, for it is only by its agency that you are raised to your proper place. For what said the rabbis? "Rather burn the sayings of the law than teach them to women;" and again, "Let no man prolong conversation with a woman; let no one converse with a woman in the streets, not even with his own wife." Women were thought to be unfit for profound religious instruction, and altogether inferior beings.

This poor woman also had the misfortune to be a Samaritan, and above all things Jews hated Samaritans, as aliens and heretics, who dared to call Jacob their father, and to believe themselves orthodox. Jews and Samaritans were much alike, and you know the sects that approach nearest to each other usually reserve their bitterest

HATRED FOR THEIR NEXT OF KIN.

They will tolerate those who are far removed from them, because they are altogether in the darkness of error, and so are somewhat excusable. But those who have so much light they detest for not seeing eye to eye with themselves. We pity a dumb man, for he can not speak at all, but we are indignant that one who can say "Shibboleth" will not take a little more trouble and pronounce it "Shibboleth," as we do. Surely he might go that other inch and be quite right. This woman was one of those Samaritan heretics who had dared to set up an opposition temple to the one at Jerusalem, and say that they also were the people of God; so the disciples shrank from her, and marvelled that Jesus did not do the same. How could so good a man mix Himself up with such people?

See, as the result of this conduct of the disciples, one of the sweetest confessions that was ever held was broken up, and brought to a close at

its very climax. Just when Jesus had said, "I that speak unto thee am He," then it must en, for here they come, these cold, unsympathetic ones. Yet they were disciples, were they not? Oh, yes, and true disciples, too; but, alas, no breakers of communion are more blamable or more frequent in the offense than Christ's own disciples when they are out of sympathy with their Master. You see, they are

THINKING ABOUT THE MEAT.

and about the Saviour's need of it; and these thoughts were most proper; but not very elevated or spiritual; and they come wondering that Jesus speaks with a woman, and so the holy conference ends, and the woman must go. O, when any of you draw near to Christ, and He is just lifting the silver veil from His dear face, and your eyes are beginning to behold Him, mind that you keep your door shut. "O, but it is a good man at the door." Yes, but he will be just as likely to mar your fellowship as anybody else.

Observe that the woman now becomes a messenger for Christ. She has to quit conferring with Him to go and testify about Him. She did not go unbidden though, for she recollected that the Lord had said at an early period of the conversation, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." So she goes to call her husband.

THE WOMAN LEAVES HER WATERPOT.

She left her waterpot, first, for speed. Perhaps you have got it into your head that it was an ordinary English waterpot, such as you water the garden with: possibly you see a picture of it, rose and all. Nothing of the sort: it was a big jar, or large pitcher of earthenware, she had to carry on her head or her shoulder, quite a load for her, and so she left it that she might run the more quickly. She was a wise woman to leave her waterpot when she wanted to move rapidly.

Others think she did so because she was so taken up with her errand that she forgot her pitcher. It is blessed forgetfulness which comes of absorption in a holy design. When the King's business requireth haste it is wise to leave behind everything that would hinder. Sometimes you will have to leave your shop to win a soul. You will cast up a row of figures wrongly, and wonder why: and the reason will be that before your mind there fluttered the soul of a sweaver or the figure of a drunkard, or the image of a fallen woman, and your heart was filled with the longing to find the lost sheep. Never mind. I dare say the woman had her waterpot again, and you will get back to business again, and rectify your blunder, and attend to the shop, and set all matters right: and if a soul is saved you will have made a profit by any loss you have sustained.

HER MODE OF ADDRESS.

She said to the men, "Come, see a man, that told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" Observe first, when she did go back to the men she had but one aim, and that was to bring them to Jesus. She cries, "Come, see." She did not tell anything about their sin at the time, nor try to reform their habits; she called them at once to Him who could set them right. She knew that if she could bring them to Christ all things would come right inevitably. It is good for you to shoot only at one target. Choose your design and aim at it, and not at two objects. Drive away at the souls of men in the name of God to get them to Christ, and nothing short of Him. Labor for this; be willing to live for this, and to die for this, that men may be saved by Immanuel's love, and blood, and Spirit.

Note how short she was. Ralph Erskine calls her

THE FEMALE PREACHER.

I am not so sure of the correctness of the title. If women preached just as long as she did, and no longer, no one could find fault with them; her testimony is all in one verse, and is just an invitation and a question. There needed no more words; no, not another half a word. She said exactly enough; for she was successful in leading the men to Jesus, who could do the preaching far better than she could. I can not call her words a sermon; at any rate, you

would not care for me to preach so briefly. However, brevity is a great virtue. Do not crave to be fluent, only ask to be earnest.

Then, it was so sensible. There is a dispute about the exact force of what the woman said, but most of those who give us precise translations differ from our common version. It is what she meant and believed, but not exactly what she said. She probably said, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: Can this be the Christ?"—or, "This is not the Christ, is He?" She did not say He was, but she suggested it with great modesty for the men to examine. This led them to come, if it was only to set the woman right.

Possibly they thought her a poor, mistaken body; but in their superior wisdom they would look into the matter, and so the thing she desired was granted her. O, to have our wits about us for Jesus! Observe the force of her reasoning. His power to read her heart, and manifest her to herself, was conclusive evidence to her that a special anointing was upon Him.

THE INVITATION.

It is a clever as well as a genuine and hearty invitation. She says, "Come, see." This was putting it most fairly, and men like a fair proposal, and the Holy Spirit works by means which suits the mind. She does not say, "You must and shall believe what I say." No, no; she is too sensible: she says, "Come and see for yourselves;" and that is exactly what I want to say to every unconverted person here this morning. In fact, this is Christ's own word to the first disciples, "Come and see;" and they used it when pleading with others, saying to them, "Come and see."

Moreover, this woman's invitation throws the responsibility upon them. She says, "Come and see." Thus would I say to you—if you do not come and see, I can not help it, and I can not help you either. I can not stand sponsor for you; use your own judgments and clear your own consciences. Come and see on your own account. If you do not, then the blame must rest with you. If you do, then your personal investigation will be sure to end in a blessing. O dear hearers, I may preach the gospel to you, but I can not go to Christ in your stead. You must come, you must repent, you must believe; you must lay hold on eternal life for yourselves. Nothing but personal religion can possibly save you. The woman's call was a good exhortation in that respect.

Why you try to win a soul do not try

THE "GO" SYSTEM.

but use the "come" system. When man cries, "I can not go to Christ," or "I will not go to Christ, look at him through your tears and cry out, "Friend, I am a sinner like yourself, and have no hope but in the precious blood of Jesus. Come, let me pray with you; let us go to Jesus together." A sister's heart spoke out in that word "Come."

Again, what a blessed vanishing of the speaker there is. I have heard of brethren whose preaching is spoilt because they are so self-conscious. The man wishes you to feel that he is speaking in a first-rate style, and is an eminent divine. When he has finished the common exclamation is, "I never heard such a clever man." But he was not so wise as he might have been or should have been, for he who preaches rightly, makes you forget himself; in fact, the observation about him, if it comes out at all, is in this fashion,—"I did not detect any eloquence; anybody might have talked like that, but somehow I have felt as I never felt before." The fish knew little about the angler, but he knows when he has swallowed a hook. When the truth has gone right home to the hearer's heart the form of speech is of little consequence.

THE ARGUMENT.

An argument lies concealed here, and if you look at the text a minute or two you will discover it. She conceals it because she is persuaded that they have already agreed to it. It is this: "If Jesus be the Christ, the Anointed, then it is fit that you should come with me and see Him." She

does not argue that point, because every Samaritan agrees to it. If Jesus be the Christ, then we ought to go and listen to Him, look at Him and become His followers. Alas my dear hearers, I am obliged to urge that argument with many of you, because you are not so practical as these Samaritans. You believe that Jesus is the Christ. I suppose every man and woman of you does that; why then, do you not believe in Him as your Saviour? You never had a doubt about his God-head; why is He not your God? "If I tell you the truth," says Christ, "why do you not believe me?" If this be the Anointed One whom God had sent to take away the sins of men, why have you not sought Him that he may rid you of your sins? There is no reason in your course of action; it is illogical and irrational. This woman did not argue the point, because it did not need arguing.

But what she did argue was this: "This man who was just now sitting on the well, is He not the Christ?" "He must be Christ, because He has revealed to me myself; He has told me all things that ever I did." The words are wide. Stop, dear woman; surely He has not revealed all your life, certainly not in words. He has revealed your unchastity, but nothing else. But she was right. Were you ever out in a black and murky night when a single lightning-flash has come. It has only smitten one oak in the field, but in so doing it has revealed all the landscape. It struck one object, but all around you was light as day for the moment. So, when the Lord Jesus Christ revealed this woman's lustfulness, she saw clearly the whole of her life at a single view, and the Lord had indeed told her all things that ever she did. Do you wonder that she said, "Is not this the Christ?"

Beloved, no one proves himself to be truly anointed unless he begins by showing you your sins. If any teacher leads you to hope that, without repentance, or any sense of sin, you may be saved, he is not of Christ. I charge you fling away any hope which is not consistent with your own entire hopelessness apart from Jesus. If you have not known yourself a sinner you cannot know Christ as a Saviour. Some are preaching up now-a-days a dry-eyed faith, and men seem to

JUMP INTO ASSURANCE

as if there were no new birth, no conviction of sin, and no repentance. But it is not so: "Ye must be born again." That birth is not without pang. Trust in Christ brings a hatred of sin and a mourning because of it. A man cannot hate what he does not know; but this woman was made to see her sin, and that sight proved that the Messiah was dealing with her.

The non-repentance prophets cry, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace; they film the sore, but Jesus puts the lancet into it, lays it wide open, and makes the patient see the gangrene of the wound, and then He closes it up, and with his heavenly ointment makes a sure cure of it. There is no binding up the heart that was never broken; there is no comforting a man who has always been comfortable; there is no making a man righteous who always was righteous; there is no washing a man who has no filthiness. No, and this is what the Messiah does; he lays bare the disease, and this is a proof that He is sent of God, because he does not adopt the flimsy, flattering mode of deceivers, but goes straight to the truth. Her argument is—He must be the Messiah, for He revealed me to myself.

Secondly, He must be the Messiah, for He has revealed Himself to me. Jesus has revealed Himself, and now she says, "I see that He knows me, and knows all about me." Wonderful it is how the gospel robe exactly fits a man; when he gets it and puts it on he feels that He who made this garment knew his form. Perhaps you have some special weakness or singular deformity; but you soon perceive that Jesus knew all about it for His salvation exactly meets the lack. There is a bath; ah, He knew I was filthy. There is a robe; ah, He knew I was naked. There is eye-

salve; He knew that I was blind. Here is a ring for my finger; He knew I wanted a forget-me-not to keep me in memory of mercy received. Every want is forestalled, and this proves the omniscience of my Saviour. Then she seemed to say to them too, "This is more to me a great deal than it can be to you; for He has dealt personally with me; therefore I abide in my assurance that He is the Christ; but go and learn the same arguments for yourselves." When conviction comes personally home, and the discovery is all about your own state and character, it has a special power over your heart and mind to make you say, "This is the Christ."

I wish I knew how to say something that would make you unconverted ones hurry to Christ, but if anything ought to do so it is this. Suppose you never do come to Christ in this life, and die without Him? God grant you may not die without having listened to Him and received Him: but if you do, you will be wakened up at the last day from your grave with the blast of a terrible trumpet, and with the cry of "Come to judgment! come to judgment! Come away!" Whether you will or not, you will have to come, and see a man sitting upon the great white throne, judging the nations; and do you know

WHAT HE WILL DO WITH YOU THEN? He will tell you all things that ever you did, and as the scenes pass before your mind's eye, and as your own words go ringing again through your ear, you will be sore distressed.

It will be your hell for Jesus to tell you all things that ever you did, and you then will see the argument: "Is not this the Christ?" But, alas, He will be no Saviour to you, for you refused Him. He will then tell you, "I called, but you refused; I stretched out my hands, but no man regarded." Still shall proceed that awful tale of all things that ever you did, concluding with this—you received mercy, you rejected Jesus, you turned away from salvation, you would not have this man to save you, and therefore have you come to have your past made the fuel for your everlasting burning. God grant that no one here may ever come to that.

ABOVE THE WORLD.—"There is no greater mistake," said Dr. Bushnell, "than to suppose that Christians can impress the world by agreeing with it. No; it is not conformity that we want; it is not being able to beat the world in its own way; but it is to stand apart and above it, to produce the impression of a holy and separate life—this only can give us a true Christian power."

Two monks came one day to William Rufus, King of England, to buy an abbot's place; and each tried to outdo the other in the sums they offered.

The King turned to a third monk who stood by: "And what wilt thou give?"

"Not a penny: it is against my conscience."

"Then thou of the three deserve it best."—Etc.

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