

Our Pattern.

BY PHOEBE CARY.

A weaver sat one day at his loom, Among the colors bright, With the pattern for his copying Hung fair and plain in sight. But the weaver's thoughts were wander- ing Away on a distant track, As he threw the shuttle in his hand Wearily forward and back. And he turned his dim eyes to the ground, And tears fell on the woof; For his thoughts, alas! were not with his home, Nor the wife beneath his roof. When her voice recalled him suddenly To himself, as she sadly said: "Ah, woe is me! for your work is spoiled, And what will we do for bread?" And, then, the weaver looked, and saw His work must be undone; For the threads were wrong, and the colors dimmed, Where the bitter tears had run. "Alack, alack!" said the weaver, "And this had all been right, If I had not looked at my work, but kept The pattern in my sight!" Ah! sad it was for the weaver, And sad for his luckless wife; And sad will it be for us, if we say, At the end of our task of life: "The colors that we had to weave Were bright in our early years; But we wove the tissue wrong, and stain- ed The woof with bitter tears. "We wove a web of doubt and fear, Not faith and hope and love, Because we looked at our work, and not At our Pattern up above."

Visitor Pulpit.

THE DEVIL'S LAST THROW.

A Sermon by Rev. C. H. Spurgeon.

And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him.—Luke 9: 42. The poor young man of whom we are going to talk to-night was brought into a most horrible condition through the influence of a Satanic spirit. He was a lunatic, reason had been de- throned. He was an epileptic, so that if left alone, he would fall into the fire or into the water. You have yourself seen persons in fits of epi- lepsy, and you know how dreadful would be their danger if they were taken in a fit in the middle of a street, or by the side of a river. In this youth's case the epilepsy was only the means by which the demon exer- cised his power, and this made his condition seven fold worse than if it had been simply a disease. This afflicted one had become deaf and dumb besides, and very violent, so that he was capable of doing a great deal of mischief. In all the Holy Land there was only one who could do anything for him! There was one name by which he could be cured, and only one. It was the name of Jesus. The Lord Jesus had disciples who had wrought miracles in his name, but they were baffled by this extraordinary case. They tried what they could do, but they were utterly defeated, and gave up the task in despair; and now there remained only one person beneath the canopy of heaven that could touch this child's case and drive out the devil. Only one person could now answer the poor father's prayers; every other hope was dead. That is just the state in which we are: there is but one name under heaven whereby we must be saved. Many are the pretended salvations, but only one is real. "There is a name high over all, In hell, and earth, and sky, Angels and men before it fall, And devils fear and fly." I. So, then, my first point shall be, that "our hopes are all awakened." Here is a poor youth, but bad as he is, terribly possessed as he is, he is coming to Christ! Prayer has been offered for him by his father, and Jesus is near. All looks well! We will take the case of a sinner who is in a similar condition; prayer has been offered for him, and that prayer has, in some measure, been heard. We have in this congregation, I trust, some who are coming to Christ, and I am right glad of it. Coming to Christ is not the best possible condi- tion, for the best condition is to have already come to him. For a hungry man to be coming to a dinner is not enough; he must actually reach the table and eat. For a sick man to be coming to an eminent physician is

hopeful, but it is not enough; he must get to that physician, take his medi- cine, and be restored. That is the point. To be coming to Christ is not enough; you must actually come to him, and really receive him; for to such only does he give power to be- come the sons of God. II. And now I will read the text again,—“As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him.” By this our fears are aroused. What a sight it must have been! Here is the poor father bringing his lunatic son, and friends are helping him; they are getting him near the Saviour, and he is just coming to him who can cure him, when, on a sudden, he is taken in a fearful fit, worse than he had ever suffered before. He is cast down, thrown about, dashed to and fro; he wallows on the ground; he seems to be flung up and down as by an unseen hand, we fear that he will be torn to pieces. See! he falls down like a dead man, and there he lies. As the crowd gathers around him, people cry, “He is dead.” Does it not seem a dreadful thing that when hope was at its brightest all should be dashed aside? I have observed this thing scores of times: I might say, I think without exaggeration, hundreds of times. I have seen men, just when they were beginning to hear and beginning to think, taken on a sudden with such violence of sin, and so fearfully car- ried away by it, that if I had not seen the same thing before I should have despaired of them; but having often seen it, I know what it means, and I am not so dismayed as a raw observer might be; though I must confess that it half breaks my heart when it hap- pens to some hopeful convert whom I hoped to receive into the church, and to rejoice over. We mourn when we hear that the man who was somewhat impressed has become worse than aforesaid, and has gone back to the very vice from which he had rescued him. The case runs on the same lines as our text—“As he was a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him.” How does the devil do this? Well, we have seen it done in this way:—When the man had almost believed in Christ, but not quite, Satan seemed to multiply his temptations around him, and to bring his whole force to bear upon him. There is a wicked man in the shop, and the devil says to him, “Your mate is beginning to be serious; ridicule him. Tempt him all you can. Treat him to strong drink. Get him away to the theatre, the music-hall, or the brothel.” I have known in addition to all this that Satan has stirred up the anxious one's bad passions. Passions that lay asleep have suddenly been aroused. Moreover, the man has become thoughtful, and from that very fact doubts which he never knew before have come upon him. He begins to mend, and now he finds a difficulty in getting his needle through where the rent was made. Do not be astonished—you are try- ing to bring men to Christ—if it should often happen that these lunatics break loose—that these epileptics have a worse fit just before Christ cures them than ever you knew them to have had before. I will describe the usual way in which the devil throws men down and tears them. I frequently meet with persons who are tempted with blasphemous thoughts. They have not yet laid hold on Christ, but they are trying to do so; and at this stage of their ex- perience most horrible thoughts pass through their minds. They cannot prevent it; they hate the thoughts, and yet they come, till they are ready to lose their reason. I will tell you what happened to me. I was engaged in prayer alone in a quiet place one day when I had just found the Saviour, and while I was in prayer a most horrible stream of blasphemies came into my mind, till I clapped my hand to my mouth for fear that I should utter any one of them. I was so brought up that I do not remem- ber ever hearing a man swear while I was a child; yet at that moment I seemed to know all the swearing and blasphemy that was in hell itself; and I wondered at myself. I could not understand whence this foul stream proceeded. I wrote to my venerable grandfather who was for sixty years

a minister of the gospel and he said to me “Do not trouble about it. These are not thoughts of yours, they are injected into your mind by Satan. The thoughts of men follow one an- other like the links of a chain, one link draws on another: but when a man is in prayer the next natural thought to prayer is not blasphemy; it is not therefore, a natural suc- cession of our own thoughts. An evil spirit cast those thoughts into the mind.” When this does not answer, I have known Satan to throw the coming sinner down and tare him in another way. “There,” says he, “did you not hear the preacher speaking about election? You are not one of the elect.” “Perhaps I am not,” says one. Perhaps you are, say I, and I think that whether you are one of the elect or not, you had better come, on the ground that Jesus says—“Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” If you come, he will not cast you out, and then you will find that you are one of the elect. You need not trouble about predestination: you will see that clearly enough very soon. If any man had a ticket to go to a meeting, and he said, “I do not know whether I am ordained to get in or not,” I should think it very probable that he was not ordained to enter if he sat at home in the chimney-corner and did not make the attempt to go; but if, having his ticket, he walked to the place and went in, I should feel sure that he was ordained to go in. You will know your election when you have obeyed your calling. Go you to Christ because you are commanded and invited, and leave the deeper question to be answered by the facts. Satan will throw men down and tare them in another way. “Ah!” says he, “you are too big a sinner.” I make short work of that. No man is too big a sinner. “All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.” “Oh but,” says Satan, “it is too late.” Another lie of his. It is never too late so long as we are in this world, and come to Jesus for pardon. Generally in the case of young people he puts the clock back, and says “It is too soon”; and then when they get old he puts the clock on, and says “It is too late.” It is never too late as long as Jesus lives, and the sinner re- pent. If a sinner were as old as Methuselah, if he came to Christ and trusted him he would be saved. “Oh but,” the devil says, “it is no use your trying at all. The gospel is not true.” Ay, but it is true, for some of us have proved it. I could bring before you to-night, if it were necessary, men and women who lived in sin and wallowed in it, and yet the Lord Christ has saved them by his precious blood. They would rejoice to tell you how they have been de- livered from the reign of sin by faith in Jesus, though they could never have delivered themselves. And then the devil will come with this—“It is of no use. Give it up; give it up.” Many and many a man who has been on the brink of eternal life, has been thrown down and torn with this, “It is of no use; give it up.” But oh, in God's name let me implore you do not turn from it, for you are on the brink of the grand discovery. Another turf turned, and there is the golden treasure. After all your striv- ing—your long striving—never give up the search until you have found your Saviour; for your Saviour is to be found. Trust in him this night; and he is yours for ever. III. I shall not detain you much longer. But as our hopes have been awakened and our fears have been aroused, let us look on the scene till our wonder is excited. Did you notice when I was reading in the ninth chapter of Mark, how Jesus healed this poor child? He did heal him, he healed him of all that complication, healed him of the devil's domination, healed him of the epilepsy, healed him of being deaf and dumb, healed him of being a lunatic, healed him of pining away; and in a moment that young man was completely saved from all his ills. He could speak; he could hear; he was cured of his epi- lepsy, and was no more a lunatic, but a happy rational being. The whole thing was done at once. Wonder, and never leave off wondering!

“Can a man be changed all at once? It must take a long time,” says one. I admit there are certain qualities which come only by education and patient watchfulness. There are cer- tain parts of the christian character that come of culture, and must be watered with tears and prayer. But let me assure you, not as a matter of theory, but as a matter which I have seen for thirty years, that a man's character may be totally changed in less time than it takes me to tell you of it. There is such power in the name of Christ that, if that name be preached and the Spirit of God ap- plies it, men can be turned right round. There can be a total reversal of all their conduct, and what is more than that, of all their inclina- tions, and desires and wishes, and de- lights and hates; for God can take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh. The child of darkness can be translated into the kingdom of light. The dead heart can be quick- ened into a spiritual existence, and that in a single moment, by faith in Jesus Christ. This cure was perfected at once, and it remained with the youth. The most charming point about it was that the Lord Jesus said, “Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.” Enter no more into him—there is the glory of it! Though the epi- leptic fit was ended, yet the young man would not have been cured if the devil had returned to take possession of him again. The Saviour's cures endure the test of years. “Enter no more into him” preserved the young man by a life-long word of power. I never dare to preach to anybody a temporary salvation. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved,” not for to-night merely, but for ever. When God saves a man he is saved: not for weeks and years, but eternally. If Christ turns the devil out of him he shall enter into that man no more for ever. Now, this is a salvation that is worth your having, and worth my preaching. A temporary, I had almost said, a trumpety salvation, that saves a man for a few months and then lets him perish, is not worth preaching or having; but that which so makes a man new as to put into him “a well of water springing up into everlasting life”—that is worth worlds. I will tell you a story of Christmas Evans which I like to tell on this point. Christmas Evans was once describing the prodigal's coming back to his father's house, and he said that when the prodigal sat at the father's table his father put upon his plate all the daintiest bits of meat that he could find; but the son sat there and did not eat, and every now and then the tears began to flow. His father turned to him and said, “My dear son, why are you unhappy? You spoil the feasting. Do you not know that I love you? Have I not joyfully received you?” “Yes,” he said, “dear father, you are very kind, but have you really forgiven me? Have you forgiven me altogether, so that you will never be angry with me for all I have done?” His father looked on him with ineffable love, and said, “I have blotted out thy sins and thy iniquities, and will remember them no more for ever. Eat, my dear son.” The father turned round and waited on the guests, but by-and-by his eyes were on his boy, they could not long be removed. There was the son weeping again, but not eating. “Come, dear child,” said his father, “come, why are you still mourning? What is it that you want? Bursting into a flood of tears a second time, the son said, “Father, am I always to stop here? Will you never turn me out of doors? The father replied, “No, my child, thou shalt go no more out for ever, for a son abides for ever.” Still the son did not en- joy the banquet; there was still something rankling within, and again he wept. Then his father said, “Now, tell me, tell me, my dear son, all that is in thy heart. What do you desire more?” The son answer- ed, “Father,” will you make me to stop here? Father, I am afraid lest, if I were left to myself, I might play prodigal again. Oh, constrain me to stay here for ever!” The father said, “I will put my fear in thy heart, and thou shalt not depart from me.”

“Ah! then,” the son replied, “it is enough,” and merrily he feasted with the rest. So I preach to you just this—that the great Father when he takes you to himself will never let you go away from him again.” Whatever your condition, if you trust your soul to Jesus, you shall be saved, and saved for ever. “Once in Christ, in Christ forever: Nothing from his love can sever.” “But what if we fall into great sin?” says one. You shall not abide in great sin. You shall be kept and preserved by that same power which has begun the good work, for it will surely carry it on even to the end. There is no pleasing people. Oh that they would look to Jesus whether or no! After I was preach- ing Jesus Christ from this platform once, there came a man into the vestry who said to me, “Blessed be God that I entered this Tabernacle. I come from Canada, sir. My father, before he found true religion had to be locked up in a lunatic asylum, and I always thought that I must under- go a similar terror before I could be saved.” I said, “No, no, my dear friend, you are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and if you do that, despond or not despond, you are a saved man.” This gospel I preach to you. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Trust him quietly, humbly, simply, immediately. Trust him to make you a holy man—to deliver you from the power of the devil and the power of sin, and he will do it: I will be bound for him that he will keep his word. Jesus is truth itself, and never breaks his word. He never boasts that he can do what he cannot do. He has gone into heaven and he is therefore “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Only trust him. Trust him to overcome the evil you have to fight with. You will conquer it, man, if you will only trust Jesus. Woman, there is hope for you if you will trust the wounded, bleeding, dying, risen, living, Saviour. He will battle for you, and you shall get the victory. God bless you, every one, and may we all meet in heaven to praise the Son of God for ever and ever. Edward Linlef, of St. Peters, C. B., writes:—“that his Horse was badly torn by a pitchfork. One bottle of “Minard's Liniment” cured him.”

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