Faith.

BY REV. JAMES UPHAM, D. D.

I saw a poor man in my path—
His day was densest night;
He stumbled not, nor missed his way,
But went as if by sight.

He leaned upon the arm of friend,
Loving, and strong, and true,
Whose piercing eyes were eyes to him,
In all his journey through.

No care was his, nor troubled thought,
Nor fear of threat'ning harm;
Joyous he walked by simple faith
In that strong heart and arm.

That friend could guard as well as guide,
And every want supply—
Ever supply, and guide and guard,
Till called to realms on high.

O Christ, thou art that loving friend—
The mighty friend I need;
Thine is the arm on which I lean;
Thou art the Friend indeed.

My faith in thee is more than sight—
The basis of my hope,
The proof and pledge of future bliss
While in this world I grope.

Yea, it shall bind my heart to thee
In true, transforming love,
And fit me, in this world of sin,
For the pure world above.

—*Watchman.*

Visitor Pulpit.

A Ringing Call to Idlers.

BY REV. DWIGHT SPENCER.

"Go work to-day in my vineyard."—Matt. xxi. 28.

How often we hear the euphony of the Greek language praised! And others speak of the richness of the Latin, and the elegance of the French; but for grip and force none of them equal the Anglo-Saxon. "*Go work to-day in my vineyard.*" How could more be crowded into one short sentence? Every word is a text, every letter emphatic.

"GO."

The gospel is a gospel of motion. It is, "Go and see," "Go and tell," "Go and do," "Go and preach." And Christ illustrated his teaching by his life. Hear him say to his disciples, "Let us *go* into the next town," "Let us *go* into Judea again," "I *go* unto my Father," "I *go* to prepare a place for you." Christ was ever going; going to-day to heal some sick one, or to comfort some sorrowing heart; going to-morrow to feed a hungry multitude, or to restore to a widowed mother her only son; going all day, and then at night going to some mountain summit to pray. How few Christ-ians! How few Christ's men! The church teaches self-sacrifice and practices self indulgence; it teaches cross-bearing and carefully shuns the crosses.

"WORK."

It is not the gospel of indolence. In chemistry there are neutral salts, in politics neutral men, but there is no place for neutrals in the church. Work is the divine order. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." Men have pictured God sitting idly upon a throne, but the Christ presents him in quite a different light. Christ said, "I am the life," and life means activity. Indolence produces death. The Germans have a proverb: "The key rusts when it rests." When the tree stops growing it begins to die. Stagnant water becomes offensive. Near New York are two or three places where circus-riders and acrobats spend their winters in practice. These men understand that they lose ground if they miss a day. Rubenstein practices a certain number of hours every day. Adam Bede says: "I cant's abide to see men throw away their tools the moment the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure in their work, and were afraid of doing a stroke too much. I hate to see a man's arm drop down as if he was shot before the clock's fairly struck, just as if he had never a bit of pride and delight in his work. The very grindstone will go on turning a bit after you loose it." O how the church suffers for want of workers! President Anderson truly says: "Our religion has often been ably defended, when in any legitimate sense it was neither preached nor practised. In such times scepticism never flourishes."

"TO-DAY."

This is God's time. He knows no to-morrow. That is a word adapted to our finite minds. With God there is neither yesterday nor to-morrow. It is always "to-day." The more like God we become the less we should count upon to-morrow." "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day." Even Christ could not make his day any longer, nor can we. Upon one occasion our Saviour, wearied with his journey, sat down by a well to rest. But there was no rest for the Christ. A poor woman came to the well to draw water and he must preach to her. His disciples reprove him: "Master, spare thyself; it is time for the daily meal; have a little care for thy health." But he answers: "I have no time to eat. Look out upon the fields! The ripening grain will be lost! I must work. The night comes." How solemn the words! O that the Christ might come to each of you; so near you that his Spirit would set your hearts on fire. See the work to be done! How the forces of evil array themselves! Ho! worker in Christ's vineyard, what work done! "The night cometh!" The brow is getting wrinkled, the eye losing its lustre, and the step its firmness. What work done!

"IN MY VINEYARD."

In a vineyard every variety of talent can be employed. For brain there is planning, and for brawn executing. The man of wealth can buy material, and pay the workmen who build the arbors and fences. For women's hands there is training of vines, and the children can gather the purple clusters of grapes. A gifted authoress wrote a book which brought her ten thousand dollars, and with the money she built a missionary college in the island of New Zealand. A little Sunday-school girl in Philadelphia took from under her dying pillow her toy bank containing four dollars—the savings of her child-life—and giving it to her pastor, made it her dying request that he build a church for the poor. The pastor took the offering to his people, told them the story, and built a church costing forty thousand dollars. A little boy said to his father: "Papa, go with me to Sunday-school." "I can't read," was the reply. "My teacher will teach you," still urged the little worker. The man went, was converted, and lived to establish five hundred Sunday schools. O, what opportunities for working! And why is the Lord's work not done?

WORKERS—(1) FRETFUL WORKERS.

Looking at some of the Lord's workmen we shall find the answer. And first, there are the Fretful Workers.

Work don't agree with them, and if, by chance, they are pressed into it, they begin to fret and foam. They like to take the lead and let others do the work. If a committee to look after neglectors of public worship is to be appointed, they want to stand at the head, and then they will say to Bro. A., "Go you into the highways; and do you, Bro. B., beat up the hedges." They want work done in this way, and if it is not they settle back in the harness and refuse to pull a pound. No plan is good for anything that has not originated in their fertile brain. They are on intimate terms with the Lord, and know his mind perfectly, and hence, if the brethren do not enter heartily into their plans, they "curse" them because they do not "come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Then they become fractious, and in their floundering strain themselves and wound and lacerate their brethren. They have an exalted opinion both of their talent and piety, and wonder that others do not see it in the same light. When they have done any little task, if the other workmen do not at once throw down their tools and admire the job, like Ahab they fall into the sulks and refuse to take their food. Like Jehu they want all the church to ride in their chariot and admire their zeal.

(2) HEARTLESS WORKERS.

Then there are the Heartless Workers. They go to their work

"Like the quarry slave scourged to his dungeon."

They never have a bit of joy in their work. They pray expecting no answer, and get just what they expect. If they talk in the prayer-meeting it is in such desponding tones that every one feels a chill, and a rousing hymn is required to restore the meeting to its normal condition.

My father once hired a set of carpenters to build a barn, and another set to put up an addition to his house. Those building the barn worked by the day, while those putting up the addition worked by the job; and it was interesting to notice how differently they worked. Those working on the barn, whether they used hammer, mallet, or saw, said by their slow motion, "By the day, by the day;" while the men building the addition, by their nimble step, by their whizzing saws, and by their rattling mallets and hammers, said, "By the job-job-job-job."

These heartless workers, how they try the pastor and weary their brethren! God rejected the prayer of the Pharisee because it was only a jingle of words, while the Publican, crying out heartily "God be merciful to me a sinner," gained the ear of heaven, and went down to his house rejoicing in an answered prayer.

(3) FASTIDIOUS WORKERS.

Then there are the Fastidious Workers.

These persons are precise as to the "mint and cumin." With them the externals of religion are everything. They read their texts from gilt-edged Bibles which they hold in hands encased in choicest kid. They have heard that there were sinners away off somewhere, but nothing would induce them to go near them. It might soil their clothes. They would take a class in Sunday school if it could be made up of scholars with clean faces and angelic dispositions.

While I was engaged in the Christian Commission service at City Point, there came down a delegate from one of the New England cities, who gave much attention to dress; what Carlyle would call "a clothes-wearing man." He was laden with knapsack and haversack, valise and hat-box. There were combs and brushes, and toilet soaps; gloves, neck-ties, buttons, and studs; fancy slippers, dressing-gown and smoking cap; there was a slouch hat for rainy weather, a panama for sunshine, and a glossy silk for dress occasions. But he never did anything. The hospitals were fall of sick and wounded soldiers, but he never went near them. He gave "supreme attention to the wearing of clothes." The last time I saw him was during an engagement, when the fate of the nation seemed trembling in the scales. Troops were being hurried to the front, and ambulances were busy bringing the wounded to the rear. The road was thronged with teams, with soldiers returning from furloughs, and with stragglers anxious only to keep out of the way of shot and shell. And there he stood by the roadside, with eye-glasses nicely adjusted, and with whitest cambric in his neatly gloved hand, trying to keep the dust off his nicely fitting suit.

So it is with many of the Lord's workers, while Prince Immanuel is marshalling his forces to beat back the powers of darkness, while gallant soldiers are falling in the fight, and an occasional yell of triumph rises from the enemy's ranks; they find time to prink and prim, to study fashion-plates, and read little stories of love-sick boys and puling girls!

(4) THE NO-WORKERS.

And finally, there are the No-workers. These excuse themselves in various ways. Some complain that their talents have never been properly recognized, and that they have been kept piling up stones in the vineyard while they ought to have been given the more artistic work of building arbors and trellises for the vines. Others excuse themselves because they are not members of the church. They seem to think that the command is: "Church-members go work to-day in my vineyard." As if one could escape responsibility by standing aloof from the church! Then others excuse themselves because they have no talent for work. They think that, because they cannot preach or go on a mission, they can do nothing. They forget that some of the Lord's most successful workers are very humble workers. Mr. Murphy, the great temperance reformer, was saved by a few kind words spoken to him in the station house by one of those humble workers. The command is not, "Go you man of talent and work in my vineyard," but "Go you"—one and all—"and work." Think not to put God off with foolish excuses. A grand cause is at stake, and victory can come only as the result of earnest work. God has no place for drones. Ho, idlers, see the work be done! How the forces of evil array themselves! Look at our fair territory. How the demon intemperance rears his head! How boldly impurity stalks abroad! Think of the children in your mining camps, and out upon your cattle ranches, growing up as ignorant of every religious duty as the heathen! See how Mormonism is intrenching itself in your fertile valleys! How are these powers to be overcome? By armed forces and hostile squadrons? No, my brethren, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual." And because they are spiritual they are "mighty."

For ages the sunken rocks in "Hell-Gate" had lifted their jagged points against the prows of passing vessels, and many a goodly ship had been scuttled and sent to the bottom. Then came the skilful engineer, and then the workmen. Beneath the land, beneath the sea, they mined their way. Noiselessly they worked, the ring of their steel drills muffled by the beating waves. But they worked right on. The storm gathered and they minded it not; the angry waters seethed and foamed above them, but they worked on whether the mild current of summer whirled through the narrow passage, or whether fields of ice went grinding and crashing among the rocks, it mattered not; they worked right on. Then when all was ready the touch of a child's tiny fingers sent the rocks of "Hell-Gate" flying in every direction, and the stately ships sailed on smooth and quiet waters.

So it must be here. The pulpit and the press; the Sunday-school and day school; these are God's steel drills, and we are his workmen. My brethren, be it ours to keep the drills working. When the sun beats hottest upon us, and when winter's cold makes our mountain peaks glisten like polished glass, let us work right on. Unmindful alike of the "strife of tongue," and the tumult of warring factions, let us work right on; and when the "set time has come," the Spirit of God, as by the touch of tiny fingers, will ignite the mine, and priestcraft with its attendant vices, and intemperance and impurity shall be hurled from their lofty position, and righteousness and truth be enthroned in their stead.

Religious and Secular Notes.

The *Central Baptist* says: "It is said that a Baptist church in Texas has excluded a member for failure to support his family. If we knew the name of that church we would honor it with public mention, as having taken a stand and peformed a duty which calls for admiration. The man who is too lazy to support his family should have no place in the Baptist church."

Wyclif was born in the North of Yorkshire, on the banks of the Tees, about the year 1324, in the reign of Edward II. He was therefore born one hundred years before the invention of printing, and died about one hundred years before the German reformer, Martin Luther, was born. For three hundred years before the birth of Wyclif, England was buried under a mass of ignorance, superstition and immorality.

Dr. Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool says: "I believe the pretended sacredotalism of the present day is one of the most mischievous errors that ever plagued Christendom. Partly from a hankering after a revival of the old Mosaic dispensation (which passed away when Christ died) partly from the love of dignity—which is as natural to ministers as to laymen,—partly from the disposition of unconverted people, who would rather acknowledge one on earth and visible than one in heaven whom they cannot see, and partly from the general ignorance that existed before the Bible was circulated, there has been a tendency during eighteen centuries to regard ministers as intermediaries between God and man. Now against this Wyclif testified, and testified practically by sending forth his preachers.

Mr. Spurgeon, in the September number of the *Sword and Trowel*, says that no identification between our nation and Israel which has ever yet been set forth is worth thought. "With such arguments we could prove cats to be angels. This foolish dream has engendered a number of other silly dotings, and has supplied fuel for the Jingo flame. In any case fleshly descent is not a thing to be gloried in or depended upon. The blessings of the covenant are not to the seed according to the flesh but to the children by promise, born of the spirit by faith. Even if we were really the natural seed of Abraham it would avail us nothing. Now in Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, and the attempt to restore the distinction is alike ridiculous and pernicious, or a good deal of both. We know that these remarks will bring a hornet's nest about our ears; but as we are already overdone with wasps it will be a change."—*Ex.*

Rev. W. L. Lang writes:—"The Church of La Fere, Aisne, France, recently celebrated the ordinance of believers' baptism. There were five candidates who had taken the bold step of abandoning the religion of their fathers, which is always considered to be a most serious matter by the Romanist. The oldest of these believers was seventy-one years of age; he has been converted some time, and now earnestly sought to fulfil the Lord's command. Upon coming up out of the water after his baptism he exclaimed, with his face radiant with joy; 'This is the happiest day in my life.' The next candidate was seventy years of age. He had hesitated to be baptized lest he should prove unsteadfast. But he wished before his death to confess that he had renounced the religion of his family for the religion of Christ. The youngest candidate was forty-nine years of age. He had heard the proclamation of the Gospel for the first time last Christmas. He clearly saw that the announcement which had been made for the first time in his village was the truth, and accepted it. So real was his apprehension of it that, on announcing this fact to the person who had lent his house for preaching, he declared what he afterwards carried out, that he would resign his office of churchwarden which his family had held from father to son. He has met with much opposition, he being the first convert in his village, but he has stood firm, exhibiting much courage." It may be added that after waiting eleven months, M. Cadot, Baptist pastor of Chauny, has received official authorisation to hold Protestant meetings in Noyon, Calvin's birthplace.—*The Baptist.*

At the Bowdoin Commencement, Senator Frye spoke forcibly on the necessity of hard and persistent work as the prime condition of professional or of any other success in life. This he said for the particular benefit of the young men present, especially the graduating class. Mr. Frye urged that "it is generally considered by the college student that the four years spent in college are the pleasantest years of his life. This is all a mistake. The years spent in colleges have law connected with them, and it is not till one goes out into the world and enjoys its freedom that he can speak of happiness. Aristotle once asked, What is the use of learning? It is for use in adversity—nay, more than that—it is capital. Its rewards are certain as life itself. You are now going out into the world, but don't go out thinking that it owes you anything, for up to this time you have been debtors to everybody. Thank God, there is not one person who will take you by the throat and ask you to pay that debt, but instead, all will take you by the hand and bid you Godspeed. This world never takes advantage of the bankrupt law or the insolvent act. It will pay you every cent you earn, whether it be fame or money. It will pay it with exact and certain justice, and not one cent over. This distinguished gentleman at my left has just received the nomination for the Presidency at the hands of the Republican party. The world did not give him that, for the world never makes presents. For thirty years he labored and toiled, in comparison with which your work in college has been mere child's play. Go into the world and work. If you work not, you will not receive. Be honest and just and charitable, and God will esteem you and the world will honor you."—*The Watchman.*

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