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THE
SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

FEBRUARY, 1891.

The Witness and his Position.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

O bear witness to the truth is the duty of the servant of the Lord. "Truth is mighty, and it will prevail;" but it needs earnest advocacy, or otherwise its voice may for a season be hushed by the clamours of error. The immediate work of each lover of the gospel of God is to maintain it, at all costs, against all opponents. He cannot do this unless he is inwardly persuaded that what he has received into his heart is, in very deed, the eternal verity of the Most High. About this he must have no question; for how shall he speak with power to others if he is in doubt himself?

This conviction, at the outset, lays him open to charges of egotism, dogmatism, bigotry, intolerance, and other dreadful things. Yet it is clear to any candid mind that, if a man is not assured that what he believes is true, he ought not to believe it, and at bottom he does not even now believe it. The faith which has brought life and comfort to a man's soul, and has been confirmed to him by long years of experience, is not a matter about which he can have an equal amount of doubt and confidence. If any person be, in reference to great doctrines of religion, in a state of equilibrium, so as to be easily turned one way or the other, he can hardly be called a believer at all, and he will derive little comfort or strength from his faith—if, indeed, he has any faith at all. Of what use can he be to his country, or to his age, if he has no convictions worth defending, no principles worth suffering for? To be fully persuaded in one's own mind is certainly necessary for a confessor, or a leader; yet this fixity of faith is called dogmatism! The one quality which is most needed in this age is also that which this

Our Medical Missionary in Morocco.

DR. CHURCHER writes to us from Tangier, and we think the letter so important that we give it an early place in our best type. Oh, that friends would help us to do more for the North Africa Mission ! They will, if they think over this letter.

“ Dear Pastor,—Our travelling experiences here differ much from journeys taken at home. Here, as we have no main roads, and consequently no conveyances, the horse, mule, and camel replace the tram, 'bus, and railway ; then, too, the country is so sparsely populated that the traveller jogs along for hours, sometimes even for days, meeting very few passengers upon the road, though the landscape may be dotted

with circular villages of ‘black but comely’ tents, or the sides and tops of the hills may be adorned with permanent villages of huts, apparently thus placed in order to secure protection, or to escape the malaria of the lower lands.

“ It took me twenty-one days to do a distance which an express train in England would accomplish comfortably in as many hours.

“ The principal towns which I passed through were, first, *El Kasar*. This is one of the dirtiest towns on the earth. It is situated in a plain, at a crossing of caravan routes, and is, no doubt, of considerable antiquity. Though really unhealthy, yet, as the traveller approaches it, he is charmed with its appearance ; the towers of many mosques, and the pure white roofs of the town buildings generally, peep out from a deep circle of surrounding



DR. CHURCHER IN MOORISH COSTUME.

gardens, beautiful with every variety of verdure, from the solemn shade of the olive to the bright tint of the pomegranate, and the gold and green of the orange groves. Yet, like Mohammedanism, the beauty is all outside ; and as you get near to either, the illusion is soon dispelled. In entering the town, the path passes between huge dust-heaps, and over a stream of black sewage-mud, which emits a fetid smell, while these odours are varied by that coming from the bodies

of dead animals thrown out, and left unburied, to fester in the sun, or be torn by wandering dogs. Many of the houses are in ruins, and the streets dirty. With such surroundings, it is not wonderful that the people are unhealthy; and it is a saying among them, that if a man is not suffering from ophthalmia he is not a true citizen of El Kasar.

"Yet here are some 30,000 souls, within a week of London, without one ray of gospel light—no missionary, no doctor, no witness for Christ in all the place, nor has there been for many centuries.

"But we must pass on now; for our mules are hired, and stopping means extra expense. Four days more, and we have reached the northern capital of the empire—*Fez*. This 'city of cities,' as the natives think her, is mostly built on the sides of a valley, in a basin-like hollow. The houses are lofty, and crowded together; and, in a very confined space, between 100,000 and 200,000 people are living without God, and almost without the gospel. Three brave ladies of the North Africa Mission are residing here, witnessing for Jesus, and healing the sick. In this we rejoice, and will rejoice; but oh, the ignorance, the oppression, the sin and the slavery, make the heart turn sick to think of them; and this ray of gospel light seems only sufficient to reveal and accentuate the utter darkness in which the whole place is immersed!

"A ride of rather more than one day brought me to another city—*Mechenez*, containing between 60,000 and 100,000 souls. Here I stayed a couple of nights, to see what opening there was for missionaries. I was probably the only European in all the place while I was there, and now again it is left without a solitary soul to speak a word for Jesus among all those thousands. The day I was there I went about, and made friends with the people. Among other places I visited was one of the prisons, in which many hundreds of men are confined, often on the most trivial pretext. The prisoners are herded together in a crowd, without any sanitation or conveniences of life, and almost without food. I looked through the iron grating at the little crowd of upturned faces which struggled to get nearest to it, and was particularly arrested by one oft-repeated cry, which seemed half-wail half-shriek, as it called on some name to come and release the speaker. I found it was a prisoner whose reason had given way; and all day long he stands there crying out to one who hears him not, for deliverance which probably will never come. Sad picture this; but sadder still to think of all the nation in the prison of sin crying to dead Mohammed to deliver them.

"On my return journey, I spent the Sunday at a place called *Habbassée*; and here I had a good time. From early morning till late at night, my tent was hardly ever free from visitors; and several were very interesting cases spiritually.

"It is told of one of the Moorish Sultans that he had a black slave whom he loved, and from time to time this slave was advanced to positions of honour and wealth. One day the Sultan was paying him a visit, and said to him, 'Now, show me all your wealth.' The other bowed, and said, 'Sire, if you will allow your servant to conduct you to that other door, in a few minutes I will show you everything.' The Sultan went, and when he entered, found the favoured servant dressed in beggar's garb—one dirty, tattered garment—and busy sweeping up the stable refuse. The Sultan stood astonished. 'Sire,' said the other,

'I am thy slave. I have nothing. All I have is through thy favour ; all I am and have is thine alone.'

"If we realized our true standing before the Lord, I think the towns I have mentioned would soon have witnesses for Jesus.

"Believe me, dear Pastor,

"Yours respectfully and affectionately,

"T. GILLARD CHURCHER."

"The Work of an Evangelist."

BY THOMAS SPURGEON.

NO. V.—NELSON, RICHMOND, WANGANUI.

SPECIAL interest attaches to our "cause" at Nelson, in that it is the eldest of all the New Zealand Baptist sisterhood. As far back as 1850, when the colony itself was still in swaddling bands, some Baptists of the back-bone sort wrote to their friends in England intimating their desire to form a church, and to have a minister. In response to this announcement, the Rev. Dolamore, of Bedale, Yorkshire, set sail for the Antipodes ; and after a safe arrival, became "passing rich" (?) on fifty pounds a year. This was all that the church of a dozen members was able to promise him. Of these twelve disciples, some have fallen asleep ; but five continue unto this present, though only two remain in membership. Said one of these old identities to me, as we stood chatting in the street, "Do you see yonder tree ? Well, that is about the spot where the first Baptist gathering was held forty years ago. The cottage has been demolished, and the tree has been planted since, as if to mark the spot." And as she spake these words, she looked towards the tree with grateful pride, as to the birthplace of the denomination (in the colony), to which she has been loyal all these years. But there was yet another interesting reminiscence to be told of. "Do you see that school-building ?" she added. "Yes." "In that place was offered one of the first (if not the very first) public prayers in Australasia for your father. I received," she continued, "very early news of his first appearance as a preacher, and I was so impressed with the conviction that he was a God-sent man, that there and then I asked the friends to pray for him ; and I have been praying ever since." Who can say how much the Lord's mighty ones owe to the prayers of the Lord's "hidden ones" ? Long may this good soul live to continue her loving intercessions !

But to return to the church's history. For a while, meetings were held in a borrowed school-room ; but within a year the foundation-stone of a sanctuary was laid. In due course the chapel was completed ; and the friends have, at different stages, re-roofed it, added class-rooms, modernized its front, and erected alongside a very comfortable minister's residence. No less than eight pastors have come and gone since 1851, and there have been some long intervals wherein the flock was without a shepherd. The Rev. T. Bray is number nine. He has only fifty-four members to work with ; but this is twelve more than when he began.