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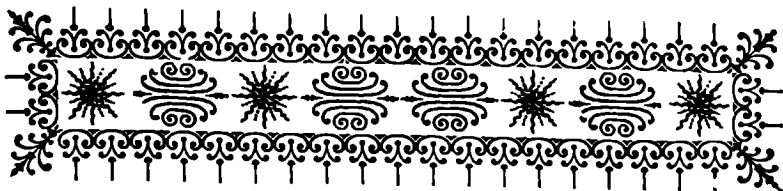
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THE

Sword and the Trowel.

MARCH, 1896.

An Eternal Distinction.

AN UNPUBLISHED SERMON BY C. H. SPURGEON,
DELIVERED, 40 YEARS AGO, AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.
FORWARDED BY PASTOR T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment : but the righteous into life eternal."— Matthew xxv. 46.

THESE solemn words I read as an introduction to my subject, which is, THE ETERNAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE RIGHTEOUS AND UNRIGHTEOUS. From the beginning, there has been the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent ; and here at the end, we have the sheep and the goats, the blessed of the Father and the cursed ; those who "go away into everlasting punishment," and those who "go away into life eternal."

Men who study the human race with regard to the physical conformation of the body, divide mankind into several distinct classes. Though they can clearly perceive that all men have sprung from one parentage, yet they divide them into various families, according to differences in the colour of their skin, in the conformation of their head, and of other members of the body. Spiritual men divide the human race into *only two classes*. Though they know that all have sprung from one pair, yet they hold and teach that there are now on the face of the earth two families as distinct and separate from one another as night from day. Not only do they say there are two such families now, but they affirm that it is a doctrine of Holy Scripture that these two families have always existed ever since Adam

The only remaining business was the reading of the accounts of the Pastors' College, and the passing of the usual resolution pledging support for the ensuing year. This was manifestly the one portion of the proceedings that met with the least signs of enthusiasm during the evening, but those who see cause for complaint in the present management of the College are evidently content to wait until the Lord, in His own time and way, makes any alteration that may be needful in that part of the Church's work. The meeting was appropriately closed with prayer by the Pastor, and with the Doxology and Benediction.

Dr. Churcher in Tunisia.

THE villages round Sousse are, from a missionary point of view, almost more important than the town itself; collectively, they contain many more souls. No less than thirty different places are found in this immediate neighbourhood. So, recently, when a former and now a grateful patient offered to bring a carriage if I would only visit his village, I jumped at the opportunity and into the carriage, and away we went. An hour's ride through beautiful country, and passing picturesque villages on either hand, brought us to MSAKEN, my friend's home. A few minutes' more jolting up and down through the narrow village lanes, and we stop at length in what seems to be the centre of the place. Here leaving the conveyance, I follow my guide to his house across an open space, which proves to be an ancient grave-yard, a grave-yard once *outside* the village, he tells me, though now near its centre.

In the native house, so comfortless to European eyes, I found the sick one I had been brought to see, lying upon the floor, and in anything but comfort. Other patients soon found me out; indeed, almost everyone I met seemed to develop some pain or other at the sight of me, and we had a busy time. Happily, a lady-missionary had come with me, and she was able to preach while I dispensed the medicines. It was with difficulty that I made my way at last back to the carriage, and escaped from the ever-fresh applicants for my services,—cups of coffee, a number of eggs, and three live fowls preceded or followed me, testifying at once to the villagers' gratitude, and also to the opening which exists here for such missionary itineration. As far as I know, *this was the first time that this village of some eight thousand souls had been entered by a Protestant missionary.*

During January, I paid a visit to KAIRWAN. I had long planned it, but always had to postpone it till, on January 7, a ride of about five hours, in a well-horsed tramway car, put me down within a few yards of the famous town.

Kairwan dates back to the seventh century; and it is counted a very holy spot. When the French took possession of the country, it was one of the few places which offered them a stout resistance,—so stout, indeed, that, to mark their displeasure, the victors imposed, as a special condition of surrender, that Christians should have free access to the mosques and shrines of the city,—this not being allowed in any other town in Tunisia.

It was an impressive experience for me, to wander in the dull light, over the mat-covered floor, among the five hundred marble pillars of the great mosque,—dusty and irregular as they were,—and to meditate on the fact that most of them had an origin and a history other than Mohammedan. Many, perhaps, were chiselled by Christian hands, and for Christian purposes, though now they help in supporting a Moslem temple.

"These are the Za-bee-bee," (raisin-coloured) said my companion, pointing to two specially fine, single-block pillars of red marble. "They came from France, long ago. A Moslem, who was a physician, brought them; he

there cured a patient, who was a king's daughter, and the grateful monarch asked him, 'How can I reward you?' 'Give me,' answered the modest doctor, 'those two red pillars.' 'They support the building,' said the king, 'must I pull down my palace for you?' The Moslem was obdurate, and would have no other fee, so the palace was demolished and the pillars removed to the sea-shore; then rolling them gently into the water, the 'believer' tied one to each side of his waistband, and thus supported (!) paddled away for Sousse, where, by the favour of God, he arrived in safety, and *here they are*," concluded my friend, patting one of them gently, as if it were the crowning proof of the truth of his story!

On ascending the lofty, yet plain and simple tower of the mosque, I was struck by the fact that several of the steps were slabs of beautifully-carved marble. Thus Islam treads beneath her feet the relics of a Christian past. Again, when going along a muddy lane, I noticed that a man had done some rough paving outside his door, and finished the corner off with—what do you think? An exquisitely-carved capital from some tall column stood, upside down, half buried in the black mud,—apt figure, thought I, of the rough treatment which my Lord's truth receives at their misguided hands.

Many street corners have one of these ancient pillars clumsily set in among the rough masonry. A small mosque, I remarked, had no less than three of its angles thus protected by columns of different heights. I asked my friend the reason, and he replied, "To save the building from being damaged by the traffic." Thus, too, Mohammedanism and its bible, the Koran, have had built into their theological walls many pieces of Christian doctrine and practice, which serve to support their false belief, and so are a source of danger instead of safety, because being strong in their inherent truth they yet sustain a fabric of error.

I passed the night in Kairwan, in a native house where I was hospitably entertained. Some of the family had been my patients in Sousse, and this secured for myself a welcome, and for my message a respectful, and I would fain hope, a receptive hearing. I preached and prescribed in shops and home, but I was grieved to find much hard drinking among the Mohammedans here. One Moslem had lately died, who was reported to have consumed no less than forty glasses of absinthe every day. Truly, civilization, without the gospel, too often makes a man worse instead of better.

Early in January, the need of rain was deeply felt here, and various expedients were tried in the hope of securing the desired boon. Thus, a piece of wool was placed in the hand of each person who died, in order that the Angel of Death might see how dry it was, and remind God of the people's need! An extra number of men followed the funerals, all shouting, "*Yesfah ya rasool Allah! Yesfah ya habeeb Allah!*" (Intercede for us, Prophet of God! Intercede for us, Beloved of God!) But, as a convert once said to me, "Calling to Mohammed is like a drowning man in a river calling to a *dead* man on the bank to help him." Does not this people's sad state of ignorance and sin plead with us, to spare *no* effort to bring to them the Word of Life?

During January, 388 visits have been paid me, and 266 *new* patients seen. This is much fewer than some months ago, and is due, I am told, to the weather. Many patients come one or more days' journey; and early in the month the weather was stormy, and now is very wet.

I feel that the Lord would have me mention that there is an opportunity, just now, if any of our friends feel led, to help the *medical* expenses of the work. These are necessarily heavy; our patients are mostly poor folk, living in tents or villages, yet during the last four months they have paid over £32 for medicines; but this amount does not nearly cover expenses, as medicines are so dear out here. Some patients can pay nothing, and to these we give the same treatment as to the rest; other cases, again, involve considerable outlay, as for example a poor man, suffering from dysentery,

who is staying with me now. It seems essential to his recovery that he should have milk, but in his village no milk is to be had. I hesitated whether I ought to keep him, with an almost empty purse. At such times, we look up for guidance, wondering if we should send them away; perhaps Jesus is saying to you and to me, as He said to His disciples, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat."

Sousse, Tunisia, North Africa.

T. G. CHURCHER.

Notices of Books.

Any Book reviewed or advertised in this Magazine will be forwarded by Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster on receipt of Postal Order for the published price.

The Exiled God. By F. C. SPURR.
Marshall Brothers.

THERE is nothing remarkable about this shilling booklet except its title and the "larger hope" teaching near its close. If anything could surprise us in "this present evil age", we should wonder at Messrs. Marshall Brothers publishing false doctrine in "The Upward Life Series"; yet Mr. Spurgeon often had to call attention to the fact that a profession of superior sanctity to that attained by ordinary mortals is usually accompanied by looseness of doctrine, or a lower code of morals than Christians in general seek to obey.

With his Romanizing tendencies, acquired by intercourse with his friend Father Ignatius, and his "Down-grade" teaching in this book, Mr. Spurr is the last man we should select to "do the work of an evangelist." We do not see how he can honourably remain an associate of the Pastors' College Evangelical Association, for one of its articles of belief asserts that "the notion of probation after death, and the ultimate restitution of condemned spirits, is so unscriptural, and unprotestant, and so unknown to all Baptist Confessions of Faith, and draws with it such consequences, that we are bound to condemn it, and to regard it as one with which we can hold no fellowship," and every man who departs from this faith is pledged "honestly and without bitterness to inform the brotherhood thereof, and quietly resign his connection with the Pastors' College Evangelical Association."

Browning and the Christian Faith. By EDWARD BERDOE, M.R.C.S.E.
George Allen, 156, Charing Cross Road, London.

THE author tells us that, through reading the works of Agnostic teachers, he ceased to believe in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. His experience should, therefore, be a warning to all who think it their duty to read anything and everything written against the old faith. Dr. Berdoe also says that, by a careful study of the works of Robert Browning, he has, by slow and painful steps, been led back to the faith he had forsaken. In this result, we unfeignedly rejoice, although he says that he has had his "doubts resolved, not by theological arguments," but by the reasoning suggested by Browning as "solving for me all questions in the earth and out of it."

We suggest, however, that it is hardly fair to his master's teaching for Dr. Berdoe thus to quote him, since the poet's words are, "I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ, accepted by thy reason, solves for thee all questions in the earth and out of it." Moreover, in a book that, from cover to cover, deals with the great truths of the Christian faith, it ill becomes the author to seek to deride Creeds and Confessions of Faith; nor should he speak disparagingly of theological arguments, since by Mr. Browning's he has found his way back to the true faith. We are pleased to be able to add that, despite the unfavourable impression produced by the preface, we have enjoyed reading the book.