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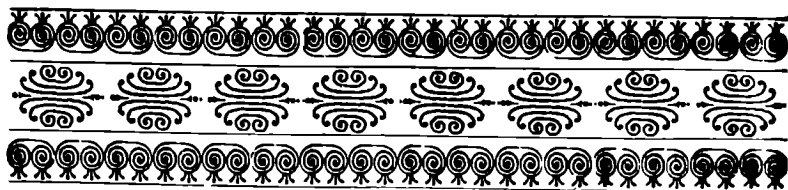
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THE

Sword and the Trowel.

DECEMBER, 1896.

An Unpublished Exposition.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

REPORTED AND FORWARDED BY PASTOR T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

2 CORINTHIANS IV. 7—18, AND V. 1—9.

(The Sermon that followed this Exposition is No. 1,719 in the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, and is entitled, "The Tent Dissolved and the Mansion Entered.")



CHAPTER iv. Verse 7. "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*"

God might have put the treasure of the gospel into such golden vessels as cherubim and seraphim; as preachers of the Word, He might have sent angels who would never stutter, and never err, and never sin; but, instead of doing so, He has chosen to send the gospel to men by commonplace beings like ourselves, who are but "earthen vessels." This redoundeth much to His glory; and remember, dear friends, that God's great object in sending this gospel into the world, when we get to the bottom of it, was His own glory. He would manifest His mercy to men that His mercy might thereby be glorified. It is not worthy of God to have any lower aim than His own glory; and, to secure this, He has given us the gospel; and still further to attain to it, He has committed the gospel, not to the trust of angels or even of perfect men, but to poor, feeble, fallible creatures such as we are: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels."

to the captives, plead with sinners to go free. How the Heavenly watchers must rejoice, and strike their harps afresh, as one after another those who have been rebels approach the throne, and realize that a *real Jubilee* has come to them! Then are they "*free indeed.*" There was no claim to mercy, no right to liberty, urged by any of the prisoners that day; and only implicit faith in the Queen's proclamation required to be exercised. It was *her word* that set them free, even though it was uttered thousands of miles away from her royal palace by one of her appointed representatives. So is it to-day with the gospel of salvation. Its proclamation of pardon is only restricted to those who believe in Christ, "for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

ROBERT SPURGEON.

Pity the Poor Moslems.

THE religion of Mohammed speaks of God, and spiritual things; but it is like an incorrect index to a book, which is more misleading than none at all. A man came to our Medical Mission, not long ago, and offered what appeared to be a gold piece, and asked for change. I looked at it and then at him. It was a gilded farthing (2 centime piece) which he offered me: he seemed to really believe that it was good, and his face was a sad study when I said, "This is not gold." So these poor people are deluded with the gilded farthing of Mohammedanism, and it is we alone who have the true gold who can show them something better.

Moslems often assume beautiful names, such as "the slave of God," "the slave of the Merciful One;" such names are common, while those who bear them are generally the slaves of the grossest sins. As I walk among the whited graves which shine so purely in the strong light of our African sun, and then return to deal with the moral corruptions of the people, our Lord's striking figure about the Pharisees (Matthew xxiii. 27.) often comes to my mind.

Meanwhile, these Mohammedans are deeply sunk in superstition. A friend of mine was knocking a doorway between two rooms in his house when the landlord became very excited, and begged him to stop till a fowl was secured, and its blood sprinkled upon the doorway. Seldom does a patient, very ill, come to consult me but she is adorned with various charms:—pieces of coral or bone, a porcupine's claw perhaps, or texts from the Koran, in little bags, or even a miniature copy of the Koran itself may be hanging from her neck. They put great confidence in such useless things, and they are their favourite remedies.

When preaching, a few mornings ago, to a lot of men who had come from a great distance, I said to them, "Why have you come so far? You have come because you have more faith in the Christian's medicine than in your own. That is well, and very wise of you; but my *medicine for the soul* is also much better than yours, will you not try that, too?" We rejoice in the opportunities given to sow the seed, and we believe that He who has already given the early rain, which has made the ploughing and sowing possible, may well be trusted to give the latter rains also, and the harvest in due season.

We had the pleasure of having with us, for a day or two lately, a young Moslem, who we believe is truly converted. In his village home his friends had noticed the change, and were displeased. They asked him whether he fasted in Ramadan, and when he answered, "No," they cried

out, "Stone him! Stone him!" When he was with us, he did not wear his turban in the house. Someone told him to put it on, and said that it was wrong for him to be without it. S— replied, "It is wrong to lie or to steal, but it is not wrong to leave off your turban." This lad, like most others here, is unable to read; and it is well for us to remember that merely sending Scriptures is not enough to do for the people of these lands. How can they hear without a preacher, when so few of them can read at all, and those few who can, are often the very ones whose learning makes them too proud and bigoted to seek the truth of God? As for us, let us not wish to be above our Master, who preached the gospel to the poor, and let us remember that God can, even of these Mohammedans, raise up children unto Himself. At the services in the *baraka*, during the month, I have several times had fifteen to twenty attentive listeners, and yet not one of them able to read. I would ask my friends to pray for me that at such times special teaching power may be given me. I believe two men did accept the Saviour at one of these services; their joy and praise to God, for His great salvation, were a refreshment to my soul. At a Mothers' Meeting started this month, three several women put the same question during one afternoon, and it was this, "Why did not these Books come to Sousse before? We never heard of them till the Doctor came." Ah! dear friends, why did they not, and why are they not going to many another dark town? Is it God's fault? Dear reader, will *you* think and pray about this matter, and help as you are able?

Statistics for October,—visits paid, 356; new patients, 247; nights' lodging in *baraka*, 368.

Sousse, Tunisia.

T. GILLARD 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.

A *Carillon of Bells, to Ring Out the Old Truths of "Free Grace and Dying Love."* By Mrs. C. H. SPURGEON. Passmore & Alabaster. Price 1s. 6d.

EVERYTHING that Mrs. Spurgeon writes is highly prized by her readers, but her "Personal Notes on a Text" have been the means of greater blessing than any other product of her Spirit-guided pen. Hence, we anticipate a wide welcome and great usefulness for this daintily-bound volume of gracious meditations upon some well-known passages of Scripture and other less-familiar texts. On page 636 of the present Magazine will be found Mrs. Spurgeon's own reference to her new little book, so we only need to say, "Be sure to buy the *Carillon of Bells* for your own heart and home, and then see that this 'Free

Grace' music is heard by all your friends and neighbours this Christmas and New Year."

The Sword and the Trowel. Volume XXXII. Passmore and Alabaster. Price 5s.

FIVE volumes completed since dear Mr. Spurgeon wrote at Mentone the pathetic Preface for 1891,—almost his swan song! In those five years, how many new magazines have been started, and how many have also ended their brief career! Amid the keen competition of the period, we are thankful to continue our "record of combat with sin, and of labour for the Lord;" and it is with devout gratitude to God that we finish the volume for 1896, and commence the new one for 1897. All who desire to