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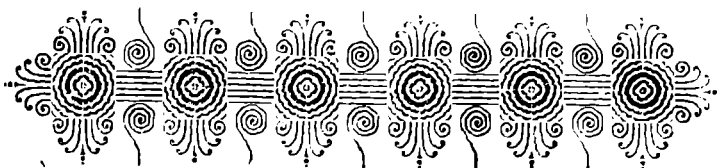
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A table of contents for *The Sword and the Trowel* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_sword-and-the-trowel_01.php



THE
Sword and the Trowel.

NOVEMBER, 1898.

Comfort in Trouble.

A SERMON, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE PIECE HALL,
HALIFAX, ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 7TH, 1858.*

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

"My soul is full of troubles : and my life draweth nigh unto the grave."—
Psalm lxxxviii. 3.



RELYING upon the promised help of the Holy Spirit, I shall endeavour to address myself, this afternoon, principally to those who are sad at heart, and sorrowful in spirit, and who therefore have need of comfort.

You know, when Bunyan's pilgrims reached the Delectable Mountains, the Shepherds "had them to the palace door, and then said unto them, Come in, Mr. Feeble-mind ; come in, Mr. Ready-to-halt ; come in, Mr. Despondency, and Mrs. Much-afraid, his daughter. These, Mr. Great-heart, said the Shepherds to the guide, we call in by name, for that they are most subject to draw back ; but as for you, and the rest that are strong, we leave you to your wonted liberty." I would act, this afternoon, in the same way as those Shepherds acted, and while I know that those who are "strong in faith, giving glory to God," will be able to take for themselves comfort from God's most Holy Word, I would turn specially to those

* In our March number, Mr. Medhurst kindly reported the discourse delivered by Mr. SPURGEON at Halifax in the evening of April 7th, 1858 ; and, in doing so, he mentioned the providential escape of the congregation from what might have been an awful calamity. The incident is fully recorded in Vol. II. of *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography*, in the chapter on "The Great Catastrophe at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall." In the afternoon Sermon, here published, it will be seen that Mr. SPURGEON related the remarkable story of the conversion, at the Music Hall, of a shoemaker, who had been in the habit of keeping his shop open on Sundays. The extraordinary circumstances which led to the man's decision for Christ are also narrated in the *Autobiography*, Vol. II., chapter li.—*Ed.*

among the hills! Hidden away from the storms, we thought of the "peaceable habitation", the "sure dwellings", and "quiet resting-places", and of the city that should be "low in a low place." We recalled Matthew Henry's comment on the heart-soothing passage in Isaiah:—"Even when it shall hail, and there shall be a violent battering storm coming down on the forest that lies bleak, then shall Jerusalem be a quiet resting-place, for the city shall be low in a low place, under the wind; not exposed, but sheltered by the mountains."

We lingered in this lovely sunny valley a long time. The sky was clear blue overhead. Far above the white houses, the green hills rose. The dwellings were festooned with roses, wistaria, clematis, and jasmine, and the front gardens teemed with flowers. A glorious hedge of shining evergreen rose between the churchyard and the road. Over the church porch, a climbing pink rose blossomed. Among the graves, and round the edifice, familiar wild flowers grew in plots and borders, while other "quiet resting-places" were planted with the choicer products of careful cultivation;—a sweet spot full of the signs of such sentiment as comes of refined regard. The squat tower of the church was capped with a quaint roof of tiles. Just below this roof, in a sort of dormer structure, an ancient clock proclaimed the time of day, with the added emphasis of a warning from the Holy Book: "Watch, for ye know not the hour."

We wandered about among the memorials of the dead. We came across one whose epitaph declared that he had "fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith." Even so; he was faithful in the village, as *he*, who rests at Norwood, was faithful in the city. We thought of a sermon, by Paxton Hood, on the "quiet resting-places." He describes the burial of an aged saint in a village churchyard among the mountains:—"The hurrying crowd of fashion might drive by, but they could not break that rest; thunders might roll among the crags, but they could not disturb the sleeper;—the water roar from a hundred torrents, all in vain. Still,—

"The storm that wrecks our wintry sky;
No more disturbs his deep repose,
Than summer evening's latest sigh,
That shuts the rose."

And thus in life also the soul may dwell shut in by the sheltering heights of covenant mercies, overshadowed by the Rock of Ages; and, in the quiet resting-place of redeeming love, know "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

What Moslems Say concerning Omdurman.

THE late beloved President, one long-ago Friday afternoon at College, made a remark something like this:—"A brother said to me, 'I don't see what's the good of belonging to such-and-such an Association; I don't see what good I get out of it.' But," observed the large-hearted President, "I was looking at the matter in another way; I did not join for what I could get out of it; I joined for what I could put into it."

Is not this the true Christ-spirit? And if, for instance, we look *thus* at the people in the streets of Sousse or Kairouan, how much there is in them

to interest us ! *They* can give us but a market for our cotton goods ; but *we* may be the means, in God's good hands, of giving *them*—what ? Health alike of body and soul, and light and love and life eternal.

"Islam," says one, "has taken, and must perish by the sword." Its political power may do so, but not Islam itself ; spiritual power needs *spiritual* conquest, "for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." Hell might even swell the rejoicings over the tens of thousands of Moslems slain on Omdurman's field of blood, for thereby not one soul has been brought nearer to its God ; and, as the news echoes abroad, what do their compatriots say ? "*The Christians had better guns than we had ; that's all ;*" and hatred still holds her sway in their hearts.

"You will never overcome Mohammedanism," said one to me, "for, unlike us, you have no *saints* to show." Then he told me how, in Kairouan, there dwelt a "saint" who, in the drought last year, had prayed to God for rain ; then, striking with his elbow on the ground, a stream of water had gushed forth, and mighty rains and waving harvests followed. Such a lie gains wide belief ; yet thus saith the Lord, "He that believeth on *Me*, as the Scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

It is we who are "called to be *saints*." As for these poor Moslem saints, they are a sorry spectacle. I have met several ; in Tangier, I saw one, with face painted like a harlot's, his body hung with gaudy clothes and ornaments, and girded with a sword. He smilingly waylaid the passers-by, informed them of his saintship, and "asked an alms." In Fez, I saw another, who was so holy (!) that he wore no clothes, but went about as naked as he was born, and was admired of all, and kissed continually (though not by us). A third "saint" I knew,—the husband of more than twenty women, and a direct descendant of Mohammed,—whose drinking habits were so notorious that his faithful followers had to explain that the alcohol turned to milk inside his holy mouth, and therefore harmed him not !

When *these* are saints, 'tis little wonder that all are sinners. Brothers, sisters, *we* who believe in Jesus are all "called to be *saints*," and to be His witnesses ; and men are perishing for lack of the knowledge which we have, by His grace, received.

T. G. CHURCHER.

Sousse, Tunisia, North Africa.

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.

Shortly after the present number of the Magazine is in the hands of our readers, they will be able to obtain *Spurgeon's Illustrated Almanack* and *John Ploughman's Almanack*, for 1899, of Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster, or all booksellers, at one penny each.

For the *Book Almanack* Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon has again selected the Texts of Scripture for meditation for every day in the year, and for the members of the Text Union to repeat to one another when they meet. She has also written her usual annual letter, and another of her choice little parables from the garden at "Westwood," the illustration for which was

photographed specially for the *Almanack*. The ever-beloved C. H. Spurgeon is represented by no less than six short articles, so he is still the chief contributor, while four of "our own men" have furnished the rest of the material for the little book, and the wife of another of our brethren has supplied the drawing for one of the illustrations. Altogether, we trust that the *forty-third* annual issue of the *Book Almanack* will prove as acceptable and useful as either of its predecessors, and have as large a circulation as any of them.

The *Sheet Almanack* contains, according to the promise made last year,