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THE
Sword and the Trowel.

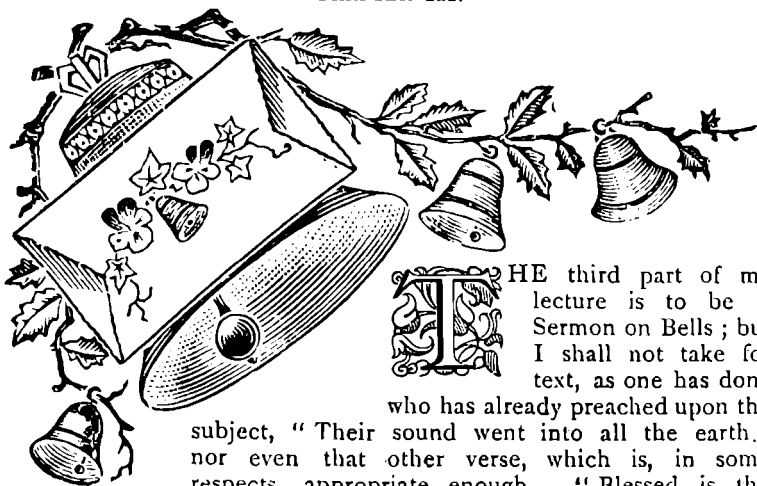
MARCH, 1904.

Bells and Bell-ringing.

A LECTURE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

CHAPTER III.



THE third part of my lecture is to be a Sermon on Bells; but I shall not take for text, as one has done who has already preached upon the subject, "Their sound went into all the earth." nor even that other verse, which is, in some respects, appropriate enough. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." Our text, like that of the famous sermon on Malt, will consist of a single word. "Bells" is our text and theme combined. We have a lofty subject, and it should be handled in an elevated style, connected, as it is, with life and death, and heard, as it must be, far and wide. It is the tongue of time, the voice of death, the music of life.

We shall divide our text into three heads,—acrostic fashion. The

that child to Christ? The godly wife, who makes her daily life attractive to her husband, has a right to ask God for the conversion of that husband. She is co-operating with the Holy Spirit, and prepaying her heart's request. God never defaults; but He requires that we prove our faith by our works, and that we never ask for a blessing that we are not willing to labour for, and to make any sacrifice to secure that longed-for blessing.

(4) Another essential of prevailing prayer is that it be the prayer of faith, and be offered in the name of Jesus Christ. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." The chief "wrestling" that we have to do is not with any reluctance on God's part, but with the obstacles which sin and unbelief put in our pathway. What Providence orders, we must submit to uncomplainingly; but we must never submit to what God can better. Never submit to be blocked in any pious purpose or benevolent undertaking if, with the Divine help, you can roll the blocks out of your path. The faith that works while it prays commonly conquers; for such faith creates such a condition of things that our Heavenly Father can wisely hear us and help us.

The firmament of Bible history blazes with answers to effectual prayer, from the days when Elijah unlocked the heavens on to the days when petitions in the house of John Mark unlocked the dungeon, and brought the liberated Peter into their presence! The early Church was born in a prayer-meeting held in that "upper room" at Jerusalem. During my own pastoral experience, the most powerful revivals in my church showed the first indications of the Holy Spirit's presence when we were "gathered with one accord" in our devotional meeting. The prayer-room is the place to hang the church thermometer. That thermometer "below zero" indicates both the cause and the effect of a terrible spiritual declension. When a pastor and even a few dead-earnest members of his church begin to feel a tremendous responsibility for souls, and an insatiate hunger for a descent of the Spirit, then there will be effectual praying, and the church will be under the baptism of fire from on high.

"Other Fell into Good Ground."

EASTERN fields differ from Western; stony places, and huge patches of thorns, sometimes abound, and might well discourage any sower; but our Lord, while true to nature as to difficulties, finished His parable with encouragement, saying, "and other fell into good ground."

Since we re-opened in October, more than 2,000 consultations have been given at the Sousse Medical Mission. In this opportunity to preach the Gospel, we rejoice, for "where the word of a king is, there is power." We wish *all* who come to us were saved, as we wish them all healed; but if this may not be, yet we rejoice that it is still true that some seed "fell into good ground."



To the right of the photograph is a man shading his eyes; he was an educated man, but probably his fear of the camera overcame him, for the evil eye, jins, and evil spirits, are very real terrors to Mohammedans. He came to us with an ulcerated leg, which vividly brought to mind the last days of Herod Agrippa. He stayed, however, in our *baraka*; we fed and taught him, and the good seed entered his heart. One morning, he bore testimony to Jesus, and His death for sinners, before a number of Moslem patients, receiving scorn for his pains. Soon after this, still brightly trusting, he went his way; and if we do not meet again here, I hope to see him in Heaven.

The old lady in front, in the white blanket, is another for whom we give thanks. She never tires of hearing about and confessing her faith in Jesus as her Saviour, and her old face has quite changed since she came. She is very poor, and also dirty, being afraid to put on a clean garment lest it should be spoilt by the rest of her clothes!

The middle man, smiling, is one who stayed in our *baraka* about six weeks, he and his friends providing their own food, and hearing the Gospel regularly. He had met with an accident through discharging his gun through his own right hand; it was in a terrible state, and would have been amputated, I feel sure, in Great Britain. This, however, he flatly refused, so we had to do our next best for him; and, by God's blessing, the broken pieces of bone finally came away, and gradually it

almost completely healed. - As he got better, he listened well, and seemed to accept Christ. When, in our reading concerning the death and resurrection of our Lord, it came out that HE, too, had holes through His hands, the man was deeply interested. He, and his friends who stayed with him, were very grateful for the help he received while with us ; and now he has gone back to his distant home, to witness to what he has heard, and we hope to bear fruit a hundred fold for Jesus.

Another old patient drew up close to Mrs. Churcher, when she was speaking, the other day, supported her words of Gospel truth, and, producing from a clean cotton bag a copy of the Gospel, he said, "I put it at night under my pillow, by day I wear it here, near my heart. I cannot read it myself, but others read it to me, and the words bring peace and rest to my heart." This poor man has been coming to us for more than a year, and is, I fear, slowly passing away, suffering from internal cancer ; yet he is very bright, and thankful for the little surgical help we can give him. Such spiritual fruit seems to us as the Master's voice still softly saying, "Other fell into good ground ;" so, while very grateful to you, dear friends at home, for still supporting us, we gladly thank God, and take courage.

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.

Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster are publishing another volume uniform with "The Parables of our Lord," "The Miracles of our Lord," "Christ in the Old Testament," "The Messiah," etc. It is the series of Sermons, by C. H. SPURGEON, on *Our Lord's Passion and Death*, which he intended, if he had been spared, to collect into a volume. There are, altogether, sixty-three discourses on the scenes immediately associated with the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are likely not only to be very helpful to preachers and teachers, but also as aids to private meditation upon the central truth of the Christian faith, "that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." Each of the volumes in this series is published at seven shillings.

Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall, and Co. have published, at 1s. net, in art linen, a new edition of the volume

that Dr. Parker rightly called, "a book with a purpose",—*In the Valley of Decision*, by ARCHIBALD G. BROWN. The sermons contained in it were blessed to those who heard them, and afterwards to those who read them when they were printed separately. In this handy form, they would make a choice present to those who are already in the valley of decision, or who may be brought there through reading them.

Mr. Arthur H. Stockwell has issued the second edition of *What Nonconformists Stand For*, by Rev. J. HIRST HOLLOWELL (1s. 6d. net). It is a proof of the timeliness and value of the little volume that another edition is so soon required ; we wish all Nonconformists would master its contents, for it would make some of them "stand for" the right more firmly than they do at present. In referring to the differ-