

Anne had seen her laid in the grave—stood beside there, and Anne said that but for her time being fully taken up with nursing, and for the thought that she would come back humbly to her old home with loving trust in her heavenly Father to set matters right for her, she should have written. She knew naught of Anne's new trial; but oh, she brought back a sweet sunshine of love in herself—love which she had caught and treasured in Lilly's home. Martha felt her own weariness depart as she gazed upon her sister's tender countenance, for Anne was almost beautiful in her new life—the life that God, the gracious Giver of all good things, would have His children love and enjoy.

It was not a dream—Martha knew it all to be a sweet reality—as she led the way to the sick-room, the room which henceforth would never be so lonely again. Anne knelt before the feeble old man, and it was almost as the joy of heaven to those simple, loving women, when a smile, such as they had seldom before seen upon his face, stole quivering around his pale lips. He laid his hand, too, upon Anne's head, the while he smiled upon Martha, his gentle nurse; and then the past was past for ever. To the world their lives would still be grey and dull, but for the future they would both give and take of the pure sunshine of heaven; and the old man too, in whose heart warmer feelings had arisen, would never be hard and bitter again. Old age would come to the sisters, but they looked not for great things in life now affliction had narrowed the career of John Caxton, but his soul had grown broad and gentle as a little child's. Anne and Martha were satisfied with sweetness as they fondled Lilly's child in the old drawing-room before Anne took her away for the night—henceforth, as it were, “A little child should lead them.”

## THE CHRISTIAN ARTISAN.

**WORKING MEN** are often constant neglecters of the Sabbath as an institution.

Do you know that this day is a necessity? Its very foundation is laid in the nature of your being. One day in seven for rest—change—is not a mere conventional arrangement. It is of God, and comes as much under general law as heat or light. When France, in the days of her atheism, abolished the Sabbath, converted the cathedral of Paris into a temple of Liberty, and worshipped its goddess in the person of a prostitute, the Almighty was angry with the nation, and sent blood and distress upon them. But the common people of the interior instinctively returned to the observance of “one day in seven,” for they said their cattle needed it not less than themselves. Neither man nor beast can work incessantly without recreation, without change. But how is it with many of our working men? They look upon this day as one for sleep, or for carousal and hilarity; while often some of the worst crimes known to the laws of either God or man are committed on this day.

And what we have said of the Sabbath may be equally affirmed of the preaching. Some people look upon the pulpit as a mere sectarian institution, and upon all sermons as mere dogmatism. This is not the case. Preaching is one of God's methods of evangelising the world. The Saviour said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” “The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the wisdom of God and the power of God.”

The pulpit is, as a whole, pre-eminently instructive. When intelligent and virtuous men discourse constantly on topics of interest which all may hear, it is easily to be seen that it will influence the minds of those who attend. Hence, it may be regarded as true that the most intelligent of every community are those who attend upon the preaching of the Gospel with regularity.

Many men vindicate and justify themselves in their neglect of the house of God, on the plea that wealth and aristocracy shut them out. In a few instances, this may have been the case; but it is in no sense general. The voice of the Church is, “Come,” and they who remain away do so without excuse. If you cannot dress as well as others, still come just as you are. If you cannot obtain a seat as conspicuous as that of the rich man, do not let this deprive you of the blessings of holy worship. The Church welcomes the labourer—it welcomes the poor.

But stay away from the house of God; give no heed to the claims of the Gospel; spend the Sabbath in riding for pleasure, in walking the streets, frequenting places of amusement,

reading a literature which the best judgment of mankind pronounces pernicious—and you will run into positive infidelity; you will become deniers of the written Word; you will adopt philosophies at war with the “truth as it is in Jesus”; you will bring upon your souls leanness and barrenness; you will kill your consciences, blunt your intellects, and harden your hearts.

Religion is a blessing to every man, to every nation. The virtues which the Bible inculcates—such as economy, industry, and benevolence—elevate men. How does England, an island with less than thirty millions of people, hold, as in a grip of steel, all India, with more than a hundred and fifty millions of inhabitants? The explanation is in the fact that one is Christian, the other heathen. Christianity quickens the intellect, works out the best manhood, and is the only system in the universe which makes man truly great.

A grain of wheat has no power to expand itself. Shut it up in a sealed vase, bury it in a tomb, and it will lie there for ages—a little particle of matter, inert and forceless. But bring it forth, plant it, give it rain and sunshine, and it will germinate and produce a hundred grains of wheat, as perfect and beautiful as itself. So the human mind needs to be acted upon by the Spirit of God, in order to grow up into its real beauty. If men deny the Spirit, grieve it, and shut themselves up in darkness, the result will be intellectual and moral death.

If India were a Christian land, England could have no such control over her. The heathen world is sluggish; not so the Christian. Do you wish to see energy, power, skill? go to the lands where the Gospel is proclaimed.

The same is true of home. The best homes in all the world are those of Christian families. Moreover, you will find there more thrift, more development of the graces of life, and more health, in the aggregate. If you wish to clothe society in rags, abolish the pulpit; if you wish to turn men back to savages, annul the law of the Sabbath; if you wish to stop all inventions, burn up your Bibles; and the end will be gained.

Infidelity casts a shadow on the life of man. The heart that receives no light from God is in a sad state. If you deny the authority of God's holy Word, and attempt to walk by the light of nature, you will surely stumble and fall. In sickness, what will you have to comfort you? in death, what voice to console you? at the grave, what hope for the future? Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” But you do not believe it. You deny it because there is mystery in it. You say the Gospel is a fable, though millions of men, as intelligent as any in the world are, and as sincere, have testified to its power. And with such a creed you go down to death, cheerless and cold. What will be your fate?

Death swallows you up; but that is not all. There is a future, an unseen world, in which judgment awaits all men. On the other hand, Christianity is full of life, light, and peace. Is the cloud dark? it fringes it with gold. Is the storm fearful? Christ walks on the waters of a troubled world, saying, “Peace, be still.” Does sickness come? He will “make your bed in sickness.” Are you poor in this world's goods? He promises you the riches of heaven. Is all the world arrayed against you? “I have overcome the world,” said Jesus.

Working men, go to this best Fountain of Light; its “leaves are for the healing of the nations.” It is God's gift to you. Receive the proffered aid, and your heart will rejoice. Reject it, and you will shed tears of bitter regret.

“To live in darkness, in despair to die,

Is this, indeed, the boon to mortals given?

Is there no port, no rock of refuge nigh?

There is to those who fix their anchor, hope, in heaven.

“Turn, then, O man, and cast all else aside;

Direct thy wandering thoughts to things above.

Low at the cross bow down, in that confide,

Till doubt be lost in faith, and bliss secured in love.”

**SPEAK OUT.**—Though you preach like an angel you will not say anything more important than that letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, or that Psalm of David which you have just now read to the backs of heads of the congregation. Laymen and ministers, speak out! The opening exercises were not instituted to clear your voice but to save souls. If need be, squeeze a lemon and eat “Brown's troches” for the sake of your voice, before you go to church; but once there, make your first sentence resonant and mighty for God. An hour and a half is short time anyhow to get five hundred or five thousand people ready for heaven.