Peter's House.

BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

How came Peter to have a house at Capernaum? Poor fishermen do not often have two houses. May not the conjecture be highly probable that, finding the Lord Jesus Christ was frequently at Capernaum, Peter thought it best to have a dwelling there, that he might always be present when the Master was preaching, and that he might do his best to entertain him between whiles? I like to think that the servant changed his place of abode for his Master's sake. Would it not be well if many Christian people had some little consideration when they are choosing a house, as to whether it will be convenient for the hearing of the Word? Do you not thing that a great many professors look chiefly for every other kind of advantage, and, when they have virtually made their choice, they afterwards enquire into the very secondary item of their nearness to a place where they may worship God, enjoy Christian fellowship, and be useful? There are some in this congregation who have moved to this part of the town to become members of an earnest, prayerful church. Such believers feel that the first consideration in life must be the health of their souls, the benefiting of their children, and their usefulness in promoting the cause of Christ. When they have made the selection of a house in that way and for that reason, they have found a blessing resting upon them, according to the promise, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Some who have forgotten this rule, and, like Lot, chosen the well-watered plains of Sodom, have lived to rue their choice. Although the house may be commodious, and the position convenient, these advantages will not make up for losing the means of grace and missing opportunities of holy service. When Mephibosheth lived at Lodebar, the place of no pasture, David fetched him up to Jerusalem, where himself delighted to dwell. It would be well for many a limping brother if he made a like change. Thus, before we actually cross the threshold of Peter's house we learn a lesson.

Our Lord Jesus Christ had been having a heavy day: He had been to the synagogue, and he had preached and had wrought miracles; he had moved in the midst of a great throng, and now the Sabbath was drawing to a close he needed refreshment, and it was most convenient that Peter had a house into which the Lord could go. I do not suppose it was a stately mansion, probably it was little better than a hut; for Peter was only a fisherman; but the Lord Jesus made it honorable enough by entering it. Where the king is, there the palace is.

Though our Lord went to Peter's house to rest he did not find it free from trouble. It was a hospital before he made it a palace. Peter's wife's mother was on her bed prostrate with a "great fever." Yet Jesus came where the fever polluted the air. If the disease had come, the great Physician had come also. We are not alarmed at the cross, if Christ comes with it.

Notice with regard to our Lord's entering the house of Peter, that he came there with his three most favored disciples. If you read the statement given by Mark in his first chapter you may be somewhat surprised to discover Peter, James, and John there. We read—"When they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Whether Andrew was there or not I cannot tell; he was joint proprietor of the house, but he is not mentioned as being there. Whenever you see Peter, James, and John present with the Lord, you may look for special wonders. These are the men who beheld the Lord's exceeding glory on the Mount; these were nearest to the agony of Gethsemane: these were admitted to behold the raising from the dead of this young maiden when the Lord put forth all the gathered company. To this most select triumvirate did Jesus display himself as he did not to the rest of the apostles, and much less to the world. Did not the Saviour thus give us notice that the healing of Peter's wife's mother was a choice manifestation of his power and grace, and was intended to convey a lesson to the choicer spirits among his followers? I think so, and therefore I shall so use the incident. To you who love Jesus much, and live in special nearness to Him, there is a voice from the bed of her who rose from the fever to minister to her Lord. You also are called from your weakness that you may pay personal service to him who heals all your diseases.

Yet, though Jesus and Peter and James and John were there, nothing is before you but a family group, a scene in a house. True religio displayes its great marvels around the domestic hearth. A fisherman's mother in law becomes an historic personage through the Lord's touching her. What glory Jesus casts upon common things! With what grandeur he invests a room in a poor man's house! A fisherman's hut becomes the head quarters of the Captain of our salvation. He heals a woman within it doors, and before long "all the city was gathered together at the door." O, that we may see the like: our own dear ones saved, and then the whole city roused to to seek Divine healing.

Heroic Christian Efforts.

How small and in the world's eye how contemptible was the beginning of modern missions, and yet to what a power has it now grown! At the commencement of this century there were not much more than 200 missionaries, of whom by far the most were from the little Moravian church; at the end of 1884 the number reached 3,000, and, if you add the women, married and unmarried, over 6,000! What an amount of self-denial and heroism, of love for Christ and for man, of faith and patience, of labor and toil for the kingdom of God, is implied in this number! We are to remove the whole into its parts, and consider the individual men and women who make up this number so as to see the history, the labor and the endurance, of each. I will not affirm that every one of them was competent to his high calling, or might be deemed a pattern of discipleship; but I know that the life of many has glorified God. When Livingston visited England after his great exploring tour, he was much praised for his sacrifices. It was true he had labored much, lacked much, suffered much, but what did he reply to this exaggerated praise? "People talk of the sacrifices I made in spending so large a portion of my life in Africa. Can you call that a sacrifice which is only a small payment on that great debt to God which can never be fully discharged? Say, rather, that it is a privilege; I have never made a sacrifice." He was indeed a chief among missionaries, but many who are far less known thought and acted in the same way. At a solitary station on the East African coast stood for twenty years in great privation and toilsome work our countryman Rebmann, whose name is known to few. When he came back blind and utterly broken in health, and men extolled his patient endurance, he said, "What have I done? I have simply, like a soldier, held my post till the relief came." How many missionary men, women, and children yearly succumb to the climate, and still the field is not forsaken, and always the gaps are filled up. For example, the North German Society labors on the west coast of Africa, a real land of death. Of the 54 laborers sent out since 1847, 27 up to 1881 had fallen by the fever, and of 33 women, 13 sank into an early grave. Still other deaths have occurred since. Yet how edifying is it to read the letters of the remaining men and women, who themselves are not far off from the grave. "Ah, what are we who carry on the Lord's work? Clay in the potter's hand, dust and ashes enduring but for a day. Yet we are so esteemed that for us the blessed Saviour gave his life. And we would be in our measure saviors for this people, and not cease to risk our lives for the brethren, according to his command." Thus, on the death of a colleague, wrote one who not long afterwards fell himself and when dying urged the rest, "Brethren, be earnest in the work of the Lord. The combatants fall, but the work goes on because it is the Lord's." The Moravian church since 1735 have sent to Surinam 426 men and women, of whom 176 fell victims to the climate, besides the children not counted. Such figures tell the story of Christian heroism and self-sacrifice. "Had I a thousand lives," said one of the old Sierra Leone missionaries who died early, "I would gladly give them all to save only one poor African." The same is to be said of the parents who surrender their children to this work. A German father wrote in his son's album, "My gift to missions is my only son." An American mother wept because she had no second child to send to the savages who had slain and eaten her only son. A pastor at Basle, when he heard of the death of three of his children on the field in swift succession, still said with tearful eyes but in a firm voice, "We do not go back." A young Canadian went to Eromanga to take the place of a brother who had been slain by the men he was seeking to save. These are a few out of hundreds of cases that show that the heroism of Christianity has not yet died out. No; figures are not dry. They preach loudly of the deeds of faith and love.—*Dr. G. Warrick.*

Church-Going.

BY REV. W. WIGNALL.

"What's the use of going to church?" asked Charley Brooks with a bored, impatient tose of his head, and in a tone of voice which seemed to imply that the question was unanswerable. Charley had arrived at that period of life when a young person is liable to feel and think that he is sufficient for all things; when he imagines he can drive the horse a little better than father, or any one else.

To say that the household of the Brooks were astonished at such a question, would convey but a faint idea of the state of the individual minds of the different members; and all seemed to find relief in the exclamatory interrogative of Mother Brooks, who broke the silence with several "whys" until she caught breath to ask, "What kind of a question do you call that for you to be asking?" Mr. and Mrs. Brooks were good Christians, and had always trained their children in church-going; perhaps they had never thought that in this age of change and fastness, when the racers in life rush blindly in the direction of drifts of thought which come and go so mysteriously, their children would be effected by such influences; hence the question of their oldest son was a revelation, and also an admonition.

Mr. Brooks did not speak for some time, but sat looking intently at Charley, as if he was trying to solve a puzzle, or to read a badly-written manuscript, until finally he said, "My son, I see that your question is not the result of mere thoughtlessness, but that the subject of church-going has been by some means brought to your attention, and that your question is a continuation of your unexpressed thoughts; so I think we would better take the present occasion to speak together, and before the other members of the family, upon this subject. I will answer your question by saying, 'Much, every way.'"

"I have been thinking," said Charley, "that some who go to church are not any better than, nor as good as, some people who do not go. There is Mrs. Gad who goes almost every Sunday, yet I don't see that it does her much good; she goes round all the week making mischief, and talking and gossiping. And there is Mr. Jones, who goes to church regularly, and I am sure that he does things that some who never go to church wouldn't do. He'll cheat and deceive in trade, and he has an awful temper—never has a pleasant word for anybody. Now there is Mr. Benson; he rarely, if ever, goes to church, yet he is a kind and generous neighbor, a good father and husband, and he is honest and truthful in all his dealing. I think going to church ought to make people better in this world, but sometimes I think it don't."

Mr. Brooks heard Charley through, and replied by asking, 'Do you think that Mrs. Gad and Mr. Jones were made what they are by going to church, or that Mr. Benson was made what you represent him to be, by staying away from church? I do not," he continued, "say anything about the possibility of your judgment being erroneous respecting the character of these people. We will admit that what you say is all true; yet if your illustration is to be admitted as an argument against going to church, you must show that the attendance upon the worship of God on the Sabbath makes, or helps to make, men and women dishonest, slanderers, and such like, and that remaining at home on Sundays has the effect of making people kind and morally excellent."

Charley thought, scratched his head, looked surprised, and then smilingly said, "I see where my mistake is. I suppose that Mrs. Gad and Mr. Jones would be what they are, and perhaps much worse, if they did not go to church, and Mr. Benson would be what he is, and possibly better, if he went to church."

"That is true, Charley, and your illustration is one of Satan's devices by which many are led away from the house of God, and into the ways of sin and death. There is much good done by going to church, and there are many reasons, which might be given, showing the benefits which result from going to church, but I will give an instance which will illustrate the good that came out of a young man's attending church.

"The instance I am about to relate is true, and the person and the particulars were made known to me by personal observation. The young man's name was Thomas S——, but he was more generally called Tom. He was a young man about eighteen years of age when I first knew him; he had been brought up in a home where the name of God was scarcely ever uttered except in blasphemy. The family was large, and not a single member had ever been to school of any kind. The father entered upon a life of crime, and finally died in prison, leaving his widow to bring up the children as best she could. It was a hard struggle. It need hardly be said that the children were ignorant and wild, and the poor mother often wept because of their disobedience and unkindness. Tom was one of the older children, and was employed as a mill operative. On Sundays he would, with a number of other young people of the same age as himself, go out into the fields and lanes and hunt, fish, rob orchards, and commit various kinds of depredations. He was fast going the downward road that leads to a life of sin and crime.

"In the neighborhood where Tom lived, there was a small Methodist chapel, and a few earnest Christians met from time to time when they had some one to preach for them. At length a local preacher moved into the town, and a meeting was held every Sabbath and on Thursday evening. The blessing of God attended the faithful labors of His people, and a number were converted. One Thursday evening, Tom was induced to go; he thought it would be sport, so he went, and while the people of God were praying and singing, and the preacher exhorting, the Spirit of God was moving powerfully upon Tom's heart. He did not wait to be asked to become a Christian, for so deep were his convictions of sin, that he cried aloud for God's mercy. Of all the prayers I ever heard, I never heard such a one as that he offered that night. It was strangely powerful. Not a heart was unmoved, and every eye was wet with tears. It was a terrible cry of a lost soul for mercy, and yet ignorant of the way to obtain it. I need not dwell upon the particulars of his conversion; he was truly saved, and henceforth his life was one of righteousness. Now what were the results following his going to the house of God? There was, first, his own transformation in personal character; second, he was inspired with a thirst for knowledge, which led him to learn to read and study; third, there were the beneficial influences flowing from his godly life, and which still flow on. The home through his efforts was transformed, and a number of its members were saved through Christ, some of whom have entered upon the rest for the people of God in heaven. Supposing those godly men, in the dark days of trial, had said, 'What's the use of going to church?' and had closed the doors of the little chapel, who could measure the possible evil that might have come to Tom and his home?

"Children," said Mr. Brooks, "we live not for ourselves alone, and we must keep the beacon-light of the church burning brightly, so that the tempest-tossed and wearied mariner may enter the port of safety and rest. Now it is time to get ready for church, and as many as desire to go, will manifest it by raising their hands."

Charley's hand went up, as did every hand, and a new light was in his eye, kindled there by a noble resolve.

GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA during the last three decades:—

India.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	India, Burma, and Ceylon. 1881.
Missionaries	358	479	488	586	658
Native Pastors	21	97	225	461	674
" Lay Preachers	493	1,266	1,205	2,488	2,988
Native Christians	91,092	138,731	224,258	417,373	528,590
Communicants	14,661	24,976	53,816	113,325	154,097

There are two points of special interest connected with the above statistics. First, the fact that the ratio of advance of the native Christians increases with each decade. From 1851 to 1861 the increase was 52 per cent.; from 1861 to 1871, 61 per cent.; from 1871 to 1881, 86 per cent. At this rate there will be more than one million Protestant Christians in India, Burma, and Ceylon before the close of the century. There are more Christians in India than there were in the Roman Empire at the close of the first century. Two hundred and seventy years after the death of Christ, heathenism was so strong in the Roman Empire as to carry a bitter persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. If it took three hundred years for the Christianity of the early Church to overcome the wan g paganism of Europe, are we to be discouraged because in less than one hundred years a greater paganism than Greece and Rome ever saw has not been entirely overthrown? Another fact worthy of note is that while the foreign missionaries in thirty years have increased only from 339 to 586, or 73 per cent, the native ordained pastors have advanced from 21 to 461, or more than 2,000 per cent; while the number of native lay preachers, which in 1851 was 493, in 1881 had increased to 2,488, showing that the native Christians are gradually taking the work into their own hands.—*Rev. John H. Wyckoff, in the Christian at Work.*

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An American Heathen.

The *Christian Herald* gives the following interesting incident in the life of a city missionary. He was one day climbing the broken staircase which led to a garret in a great tenement-house, when his attention was arrested by a man of peculiarly ferocious and repulsive countenance, who was loafing about in a state of semi-intoxication.

There was something about the man's appearance so brutal and degraded, and a look of savage passion in his eyes, which made the visitor shudder, and his first impulse was to go back. But the man had already noticed him, and in a gruff voice demanded what he was doing there. "I came," said the missionary, "to see if there was any one in need of me. I have a message for the sick and the troubled that is good to hear. It is good for the healthy and merry people, too," he added, with a smile. "In fact, as it is God's Word, it's good for everybody."

The ruffian shook him off as if he had been a viper, and bade him begone with his nonsense, or he would kick him downstairs. While the missionary was endeavoring, with gentleness and patience, to soothe the frenzied man, he was startled by hearing a feeble voice, which appeared to come from behind one of the rickety doors which opened upon the landing, saying: "Who is that? If it's a preacher send him here." There was evidently some one in the house needing his ministration, and the missionary became more eager than before to disarm the suspicion and dislike of the half-tipsy loafer, who still menaced him and fiercely pointed to the stairs as the road he must take to avoid bodily harm.

"Bill, Bill," cried the voice, clearly that of a woman, "do you hear? I want the parson. Let him come in, I say." The man muttered an oath, but stood aside, and said gruffly: "You can go in, as she wants you."

The visitor pushed open the door and entered the room. It was a wretched place, wholly destitute of furniture except a three-legged stool and a bundle of straw in a corner, upon which were stretched the wasted limbs of an aged woman. When the visitor entered, she raised herself upon one elbow, fixed her eyes eagerly upon him, and said, "Are you a preacher?" The missionary nodded. "Then can you tell me about the blood which cleanseth from all sin."

He sat down upon the stool beside her, and inquired: "My poor friend, what do you want to know of the blood which cleanseth from all sin?"

There was something fearful in the energy of her voice and manner as she replied: "What do I want to know of it? Man, I am dying! I am going to hell—I know I am; I deserve to go, if ever anybody did. I've been a wicked woman all my life. It's hard to be anything else for such as us, but I might ha' been better. My old man wanted me to go to church, and he'd ha' been a better man if I had ha' let him, but I used to make fun of him and laugh him out of it. He made me go once, though, and I heard the preacher say as there was blood which cleanseth from all sin. I did not remember anything else, and I'd ha' forgotten that only my old man kept a-talking about it, and when he was dying I fetched a preacher as told him more, and he wanted to teach me, only I wouldn't listen. But the old man seemed he could never hear enough, and he said it made him happy. He's dead now, and I never thought no more about it till I was took bad, and then I wanted my son Bill to fetch a preacher but he wouldn't. It was lucky you happened to come up here, for you can tell me now all about it."

Years before that city missionary had been anxious to preach the Gospel in China, and had grieved over the disappointment when Providence closed that path of usefulness to him. But as he listened to the old woman's story he realized that he need not go abroad to find heathens. Right here, in the very center of American civilization, was a soul as dark and ignorant as any soul in far-off China.

A sense of responsibility went like a knife thrust to his heart as he opened his Bible and read the first chapter of the First Epistle of St. John. The poor creature seemed to devour the words, and when he paused she exclaimed, "Read more, read more!"

He read the second chapter—a slight noise made him look round; the savage ruffin had followed him into his mother's room, and, though his face was partly turned away the visitor could perceive that he was listening. The visitor read the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, answering her questions as he went along, and trying to show her clearly the way of salvation through Christ. He closed the book, and kneeling down, prayed earnestly for that woman's soul, and for that of her degraded son, who still stood, leaning against the wall, and sullenly listening.

As he rose from his knees he met the poor woman's eager, questioning gaze, and interpreting the request she seemed too agitated to utter, he said: "I will come again early to morrow. You must pray for yourself. Now I want you to ask God to teach you. While you are lying here and thinking, say to him, 'Lord, teach me; open my eyes to see the truth.' God will hear you."

The poor woman lived nearly two weeks, and the missionary was able to do much for her bodily comfort and to alleviate her physical suffering; but it was to her soul that God enabled him to render the greatest service. Holding firmly to the one idea that she had at first of the cleansing blood, she pressed forward, learning slowly and dimly, but surely, of Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and of God's infinite love. She died at last with a smile of rreful peace on her face, confident in the efficacy of the precious blood.

Her reprobate son was generally present during the missionary's visits, being, as he afterward learned, fearful lest his mother should disclose the secret of his life. He was a burglar, and he dreaded lest the missionary should learn the fact and betray him to the police. But on the day of his mother's death he confessed it himself, voluntarily, and begged the missionary to help him to start on an honest life. He, too, removed from his evil surroundings, became a reformed character, and was eventually won for Christ—a brand plucked from the burning.

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Some Anecdotes of Stonewall Jackson.

In the October *Century* is a collection of "Personal Reminiscences of Stonewall Jackson," from which we quote as follows: "Talking with him once about some subject of casuistry or prevarication, I put the question direct to him, 'Did you never tell a lie?' Pausing, as was his invariable manner before giving a categorical answer, as if for an introspective review of his consciousness, he said:

'Yes; but only once, so far as I can remember. I was leading my men through a rank chaparral, infested by Mexican guerrillas. The ball was flying incessantly, and the broad leaves of the tropical plants were being riddled through and through. They became panic-stricken, and notwithstanding my repeated order for advance they hung back. Stepping some distance in front of them, into a narrow pass, where the bullets were whizzing round my head, and the foliage was being cut to ribbons, I called out:

'Follow me, men! Don't you see there is no danger?'"

He never posted a letter without calculating whether it would have to travel on Sunday to reach its place of destination, and if so, he would not mail it till Monday morning. Still further did he carry his Puritanical observance. Unnumbered times have I known him to receive important letters so late on Saturday night that he would not break his fixed resolution never to use his eyes, which were very delicate, by artificial light; he would carry the letters in his pocket till Monday morning, then rise with the sun to read them.

In the winter of '61–'62, while Jackson's forces were at Winchester, he sent a brigade to destroy the canal leading to Washington. The expedition proved a failure; and he attributed it in some measure to the fact that Sunday had been needlessly trespassed upon. So when a second expedition had been planned he determined that there should be no Sabbath breaking connected with it that he could prevent. The advance was to be made early on Monday morning. On Saturday he ordered my husband (Col. Preston, at that time on his staff) to see that the necessary powder was in readiness. The quartermaster could not find a sufficient quantity in Winchester on Saturday, but during Sunday it was procured. On Sunday evening the fact in some way got to Jackson's ears. At a very early hour on Monday he dispatched an officer to Shepherstown for other powder, which was brought. Then summoning Col. Preston, he said very decisively:

'Colonel, I desire that you will see that the powder that is used for this expedition is not the powder that was procured on Sunday.'"

"Help me! Do something for me! Relieve my ears! Give me hope! Take off this burden from my soul! Put me into relations of intercourse and harmony with God! Let me be at peace with him, and oh! let him not make me the object of his just and holy anger! Give me a Saviour through whom all my sins may be forgiven! God be merciful to me a sinner!" The substance of this prayer has existed in millions of hearts, and been uttered by millions of lips. It is the natural prayer of a sinner writhing under the self-accusing consciousness of sin, and filled with alarm in respect to his own safety. That man wants help, and he knows it and feels it. The publican, standing afar off, smiting upon his breast and saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" is the picture which Jesus himself drew of such a man. The Jews, on the day of Pentecost, when they saw that "with wicked hands" they had "crucified and slain" Jesus Christ, "were pricked in their hearts," and cried out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The Philippian jailer, suddenly smitten with a deep and overwhelming sense of sin, in an instant said to Paul and Silas: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" David, being convicted of the double guilt of adultery and murder, exclaimed: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions!" The distressing thoughts of which sinners are conscious when they came to themselves and see themselves as they are in the sight of God, are not the peculiarity of any particular class of minds. They mark all men when the sense of sin comes home to the soul as a felt reality. "Help me!" is the prayer of the race in the presence of this sense. Men naturally know too much not to make the prayer in such circumstances, and not enough to solve the problem which sin raises, especially when they add thereto the questions that death forces upon them.—*Independent.*

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