

uated, was informed that the authorities could dis-train and collect the tithes from certain of the tenants, or from *any one* of the number, (and they pitched upon the Dissenting minister as that one!) and *he* could have his recourse to the other tenants, and collect their share from them annually, at his own leisure. The amount in this case was £7. All these make it very difficult sometimes to get along with the Church.

Some months ago I was asked to preach a sermon to working-men, in a "Church," on social purity; and the only condition a leading member made who had the arrangements in charge, was that I would be pleased *not* to stand *in* the pulpit, but on the platform close beside. So, of course, I did not stand in the pulpit; but preached the sermon in the "church." I mention this as an instance of a growing liberality. There was lately a destructive fire in one of our Midland villages; and the clergyman went to the Dissenting minister, and offered to him the use of the church school-room till the Congregationalists could rebuild their chapel.

Mr. Spurgeon has lately said a good deal of "Down grade" among the Baptists and Congregationalists. I don't know it of myself; but 29 years ago, when I began my ministry, there was a great deal more said about "heresy"—it was Negative Theology then—than there is said about Down Grade to-day! It may be that some of our younger brethren have not yet got over the way of doing their thinking in public, and are only yet trying to make up their minds on many points—yet I believe there is as great loyalty to evangelical truth, as ever there was. Take it as a whole, I believe our ministers are sound in faith, and as ready as ever to uphold the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our ideas of "worldliness" change. When I was a lad, goodly people considered it very wrong to have a game of chess on Saturday night. Things that were formerly considered utterly improper are now—and may be—done "as unto the Lord." It depends upon the heart and the motive—rather than upon the *form* of the entertainment or the recreation.

I desire to say something of Mansfield College, Oxford. The old Springhill College aimed at giving a far higher education than any other Congregational College. But it had run down; and become a mere helper and follower of the Welsh Colleges—took in the overflow of those colleges—and, as you may suppose, did not fall heir to the brightest of their men; had become, indeed, little more than a place to teach Welshmen *English*. So the College was removed to Oxford; and we have reverted to our original status and aim, as a College for the highest education and training. Mansfield was opened last October. We were fortunate

in getting Dr. Fairbairn, as principal. It is beginning, already, to do an admirable work. We have already sent out a couple of missionaries abroad, from Mansfield; as well as some laboring at home. This is the most significant event of late years, in our circles, the establishment of Mansfield College.

As to the working-men. We used to say, "Come if you will; our chapels and prayer meetings are open to you; you are welcome!" But of late years, we *go after* the working-men. We carry the gospel to them, and the influence of this has told greatly upon the attitude of working-men toward churches, and toward Christians. Deep down in the heart, even of *objectors*, is often found a conviction of the truth of Christianity, and a sympathy towards it. I do not say that the working classes have been all converted, and won to the churches; but I do say that their attitude is much more favorable. They are all now willing to hear and to consider. In Birmingham, you will find, every Sunday morning, 20,000 men and lads, in Bible classes; taught by Christian men and women: many of these women of position and refinement, who turn out on dark and wintry mornings, to be on hand at half past seven. The work was begun by the Quakers, and was at first, to teach the men to *read*; but as the School Boards have got to work for these past years, there is less need now of this elementary teaching, and the men's classes are just what we are in the habit of calling "Adult Bible classes."

As to political life—our ministers, as a whole, once thought it was very wrong to take any part in political matters. Mr. Spurgeon once voted at a political contest. A Plymouth brother met him, and feeling scandalized at the "worldliness" of the great preacher, told him so. "My dear brother," said he, apologetically, "I have an *old man* within me, and he sometimes pleads hard to be indulged a little."

The brother was still more scandalized, and said, "But you shouldn't indulge him, you should mortify the *old man*, with all his affections and lusts."

"Well," said Mr. Spurgeon, "My *old man* is *Tory*, and I have been spiting him, by casting a *Liberal* vote."

I trust the churches will always lift up their voice in favor of political purity, and against everything wrong. For it is better a thousand times, to be *right* than to be *successful*.

Mr. Caine, late M. P., paid a three months' visit to India; and came home, and lashed the missionaries and the missionary societies. And Canon Taylor helped him; and thought that Mohammedanism was more suited to Central Africa than Christianity. The "church" societies were not affected by these men, or these strictures. But