

Don't be whining, like David when he was in low spirits, "I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul." He never did anything of the kind.

Is it not written, "God is able to make you stand?" Did you ever read the life of that remarkable trophy of divine grace, Colonel Gardner? What illustrations it gives of the power of God's spirit in a man to vanquish the fiercest lusts! Passions of which, before his change, the Colonel had profanely said, that "God Almighty could not subdue them, without destroying that body and giving him another," became calmed and governable; and he was able now to "keep his body under, and bring it into subjection." God can do as much for every one of you!

III. Now for the last point. "He will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." This I take to point to an alternative case. Suppose you were at any time to find yourselves in presence of a temptation too strong for you, a way of egress will be provided.

Some temptations we are to go manfully up to, and vanquish, but as regards another class, we are instantly to take to our heels. You are not to parley with them, nor linger a moment in their presence. Here your safety is not in resistance, but in flight. The Bible injunction in such cases is not confront, nor withstand, nor fight, but "flee!" When the Apostle speaks of "many youthful and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition," he adds, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things." Again, "flee youthful lusts."

But, if you are to flee, this implies that there will be "a way to escape"; and God guarantees that this there shall always be. To you it may not be easy to see how it can be; but, as St. Peter says, "the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." The thought has often occasioned much distress to an earnest soul. If such and such a temptation were thrown in my way, I could not stand. How then can I be a Christian when this is possible? But God does not promise to give you in the meantime grace and strength for all possible and conceivable circumstances of trial in which you may be placed. He engages that his grace will be "sufficient for you." If an extraordinary temptation should come, extraordinary grace will be supplied, and a way of escape will be opened.

Some young men tell me they are at times troubled with the most awful blasphemous thoughts. It seems as if the devil were injecting every imaginable form of iniquity into their minds. There is not an idea too hideous or horrible but it takes possession of them.

These temptations of the mind they find even harder to withstand than those of the body. It is verily as though your inmost soul were being turned into "a cage of every unclean bird."

How can you be a child of God, and yet have such wicked imaginings?

I suppose these are what the Scripture calls *the depths of Satan*, "the depths of Satan."

My brother, if these thoughts were your own production, your heart would be delighted with its own issue. They are the device of the enemy of souls.

Satan does not use such weapons except against those whom he is in fear of losing. Do not be over-much disquieted. Give him no quarter. Resist the devil, and in time he will flee from you.

Then some of you are perplexed about certain actions which you try to believe are not wrong, but which you never commit without sharp twinges of conscience. "What's the harm?" you say, and yet the inward monitor will not be still. Take care lest you drug your conscience with pleas which will not stand in the day of judgment. The principle which the Apostle lays down, that he had doubted, is condemned in the act ("for whatsoever is not of faith is sin") is of general application. Abstain from everything you do not know to be lawful and right.

Be sure you do not underrate the power of Satan, or in your own strength you are no match for him. Be sure you do not overrate his power, for he is no match for the Spirit of God.

Some of you are in the thick of the conflict just now. You are at the very point in life when temptations are most fierce and numerous. In a little while it will be different; you will not be so beset and troubled.

But it will be either the calm of defeat—your enemy having the mastery over you—or the calm of victory—your foot upon his neck for ever. Which shall it be?

Napoleon once observed that there was a crisis in

every battle, when ten or fifteen minutes determined the issue on the one side or the other.

Such a crucial point there is sometimes in the history of a soul. Who can tell but with some of you that crisis is to-night? Amen.

### A SABBATH IN BELGIUM

The following paper which appeared in the *United Presbyterian Magazine*, is from the pen of the Rev. J. C. Baxter, D.D., Kirkcaldy, formerly of Stanley Street Church, Montreal.

On my way, last summer, to Nessonvaux, near Liege, where the Belgian Synod met, I visited several of the congregations. M. Kennedy Anet, the denominational secretary, had asked that this Church inspection should begin at Gohysart-Jumet, the centre of his own pastorate. The arrangement was gladly accepted, and after a most cordial welcome in the manse from members of his family, Sabbath, the 25th of July, found me prepared for work. "That Sabbath was an high day" with surrounding Romanists. They were then to keep their festival of Mary Magdalene, and whatever honour to her memory Papists elsewhere pay, those about Jumet link the anniversary with more than common *acut*. Local legend explains why the yearly return has special significance in their eyes. Ages ago, so rumour runs, the place was fever-stricken. Medical skill failed to cure or check the fierce disease. Sufferers having "spent their all on many physicians, were nothing bettered, but rather grew worse." The neighbourhood, black in aspects of collieries or iron-foundries, became doubly grimed with the blackness of despair. Parish priests resorted to an untried remedy. An image of the *Madeleine* was brought from behind the altar of the sanctuary. Fixed on a platform, it was borne over streets and fields of the afflicted area—it haply its very shadow failing on the wounded might stay the plague. Suddenly the statue showed strange movements—leaping, whirling, giving varied tokens of peculiar joy. These were taken for heaven's response to the prayers of the patron-saint. Tradition says that malady left the district, and the fame of their reputed deliverer is celebrated by descendants of rescued ancestors as often as the feast season returns.

Such a season dawned with my first morning in the Province of Hainault. At sunrise sounds were heard from afar-off, groups converging toward a rallying spot within the village square. Gathered there, some on horseback, more afoot, all decked after holiday style, the procession paraded a chosen circuit with every evidence that diversion, not devotion, swayed the throng, and soon as the hours of united march had gone, scattered bands spent the evening in dancing or drinking revels, winding up their sacred occasion amidst carnival that drove all real rest from body and soul.

Quite a contrast to these noisy, giddy votaries were the groups of quiet, solemn worshippers who mustered under the modest roof of the Protestant "Temple." The latter were not deterred from service by fascinations or foultries which the former could offer. A sturdy resolve to attend where principle led them a purpose to witness for Christ in view of scornful foes as well as to share fellowship with Christ in the face of trusted friends—these motives seemed to guide faithful frequenters of their simple, yet valued Bethel, and the fact thus marked may wake inquiry among ourselves whether it should not, like a picture, win the lambs of the flock to their wonted fold, or like a pattern, shape the steps of maturer disciples to habitual reverence for their recognized Zion's stated ordinances. Sunday school started at half past nine. Teachers and pupils were punctual. An air of earnest liveliness pervaded the classes. Singing, reading, questioning, answering, went much as at home—and novel to my ear as the diction was, I knew enough of the language to feel that the subject-lessons were subject to the truth in Jesus. More than one case of good results attracted notice. There, at the end of a form, sat a lad older than most of his fellow scholars. The story of his attendance is worth repeating. His youngest brother was pressed by a playmate to come. The boy consented. Ere long, with a heart touched by Bible truth, he begged relatives to join him. They yielded to the request. At intervals they were seen in the church, till ultimately the household renounced Catholicism; and none of the circle stands firmer in Gospel paths than the senior son, who owes his changed profession to a mere mite

of a missionary. Fine comment on the prophetic text: "A little child shall lead them."

Again: in front of his pupils stood a teacher. Every feature of the man bore an impress of devout decision. I inquired concerning him. The replies assured me of his consistency and courage. By trade he is a glass blower. For five days of the week, toiling through common time, he works over hours on the last, that the Sabbath may be free for spiritual labour. This liberty was bravely bought, because when ordered by a manum loving master to do otherwise, he said, "I am your servant, sir, industriously enough during the week, but on the Lord's Day I belong to God alone." This is the stuff out of which strong Sabbath school agents are wrought. Would that all were clothed in like garb, and that, seated at the Saviour's feet, we were ready to receive from His lips the law of a new life, alike glad some to ourselves and useful everywhere as opportunity occurs.

The forenoon that followed was occupied with the Lord's supper. The mode observed differs slightly from the form practised by Scottish Presbyterians. Instead of communicants getting sacramental symbols in their pews, they advance in rows of about twenty to take them from the presiding minister, and as bread or wine is handed by him he conveys some word of comfort suited to each disciple. The "action" sermon, as we call it, was given by me. The obstacle of preaching in a foreign tongue was levelled through the kind skill of a competent interpreter. He translated the discourse part by part; and if the light that shone on the faces of the audience could reflect what inner emotions were, or if the sense of joy that thrilled my own frame could warrant any hope of benefit, then despite divergent dialect, all of us had oneness of mind within the hallowed guest-chamber. Confusion of speech did not break communion of soul. The mutual bond was the common faith, and no verbal barrier could impair the privilege of actual brotherhood. Another item struck me at the close; the number of intimations for work through the week. Almost every night had its proper allotment. Cottage meetings here, evangelistic operations there, tract distribution everywhere. No room for idlers was left. More than camp followers they meant to be—for having vowed atreth to wage a noble warfare, these soldiers of the Cross would sally forth with quickened boldness.

Shortly afterwards a small detachment of us set out for Courcelles, a station also in charge of the Jumet ministry. On the road we skirted the ground where alleged rioters had sharp conflict with royal regiments during recent trade troubles. Regarding the aims or claims of the so called insurgent mob, I am neither able nor disposed to venture an opinion. One fact, however, merits mention. Not a single Protestant was slain or seized among the law-breakers; and even secular rulers are forced to admit the peaceful habits of the evangelical adherents. Let an instance be cited in proof of this statement, for which a reliable informant vouches. When the labour turmoil was wildest, and crafty spite hinted that the sect of the Reformed was secretly disloyal, pickets of police patrolled suspected quarters by night. On such an errand some officers approached a lonely hut whence the subdued sound of voices issued. Halting his men at convenient distance, the captain crept noiselessly to the door, and lingered till the accents of the company were hushed. He had been looking on a family at worship. Having listened to the music of their psalms or the tenor of their prayers, he courteously saluted the father of the home with the declaration, "Were all folks like you there might be no need for our rounds of vigilance. The *commune* should sleep tranquilly."

Passing solitary, sanctified abodes like that—pacing narrow paths which span busy canals or cut harvest acres or flank dusty pit-mouths—we reached Courcelles after an hour's walk. The chapel—a better one than the Jumet structure—was hitherto; and the congregation awaited with obvious zest what a forerunner had to tell. Having told them how British Churches fare and how organizations are directed, I was asked by the audience if they might put questions to me. There could be no objection to the proposed catechising. Liberty was granted on condition that inquiries tallied with my mission. Question first came stunningly. "What view do you take of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill for Ireland?" Question second echoed like a similar surprise: "Why is it