

reckoned slaves, after carts and horses, in the schedule of the property of his orphanage in Georgia. John Newton said that he had never had such heavenly hours as when he was a slave-driver in Cuba. Scripture was regarded as a stronghold of the defence of slavery, so that a man could only be an infidel if he disapproved of it. By one of those grotesque misapplications of ignorance which still pass current on the interpretation of Scripture, God was supposed to have ordained slavery because Ham behaved wickedly to his drunken father. Had Christianity condemned slavery? Had not St. Paul sent back a runaway slave? Thus, as he has done in every age and as he does very largely in this age, "the devil quoted Scripture for his purpose." Thus:

"What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?"

What was there in England to meet all these combined forces of wealth, of custom, of power, of vested interests, of the perverted opinion of good men, of Scripture argument and Scripture precedent? There was nothing but the unclouded moral sense of a few brave men; the moral indignation, which in some minds no ashes of custom could quench; the moral insight, which was not to be obfuscated by sophistries, or blinded by gross perversions of the sacred letter to purposes which violate the conscience of mankind. In 1785 a Cambridge undergraduate, named Clarkson, had gained a prize by an essay on what was then regarded as an open question: "Is it lawful to enslave people against their will?" As he rode back from Cambridge to London, the subject haunted his mind. If it was wrong, why was it done? He got off his horse to think, and his thoughts ended in this conclusion: If the slave trade is wrong, it must be put down. He devoted his life to the task. In 1807, twenty-two years afterward, the slave trade was abolished. In 1833, forty-eight years afterward, emancipation was carried. The struggle is deeply worthy of your study. If you are to obey the command of St. Paul in this text, and to play the part of citizens worthily of the Gospel of Christ, you can find no event so full of instruction. It will furnish you with an immortal model for the true lines of Christian statesmanship. It will furnish you with a glorious incentive to courage in the battle for righteousness. It will inspire you to seek only that applause which, though it may take the form of bitter obloquy for a time, always in the long run awaits on the pursuit of noble ends by noble means. It will teach you that eternal principles need only a few true champions to insure their triumph over national apostacies.

My brethren, in this Abbey, where the very stones should cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber could answer it in the cause of charity and righteousness, read these lessons on the tombs of those who took part in that great struggle. Read on the tomb of Zachary Macaulay, by the western door, how through a protracted life, "with an intense but quiet perseverance which no success could relax, no reverse subdue, no toil or persecution or reproach could daunt, he devoted his time, talents, fortune, and all the energies of his mind and body to the service of the most helpless of mankind." Read on the tomb of Granville Sharpe, in the south transept, how he aimed "to rescue his native country from the guilt of employing the arm of freedom to rivet the fetters of bondage," and was "one of the honourable band associated to deliver Africa from the rapacity of Europe." You see "guilt" is the term applied to the slave trade, as Livingstone, on his tomb at your feet, called it "the open sore of the world." Yet only half a century before the slave trade had been accepted as a pious and scriptural institution! And Wilberforce, as you are told by the inscription upon his statue, in the north aisle, in fighting against it, had been called on to face great obloquy and great opposition. Whence this change of feeling and language? Simply because nations, too, like men, have conscience, and by a few brave, good men that conscience was aroused. Poetry raised her voice against the slave trade in the songs of Cowper. Art denounced it, as in Turner's great sermon of the "Slave Ship" flinging her miserable cargo to the sharks in the encrimsoned sea. The greatest oratory denounced it. For the loss of political distinction Wilberforce gained the reward of an immortal name. Fox was for years a leading statesman, yet the nation could think of no fitter memorial of his greatness than to sculpture the liberated slave, whose cause he had pleaded, kneeling in immortal marble at his tomb.

Pitt was the strongest Prime Minister which England has ever seen, and he was a Prime Minister at the age of twenty-one, and in many a grand speech, "with his haughty head thrown back and his arm outstretched in a commanding gesture, he poured forth the language of dauntless courage and inextinguishable hope;" yet the one speech of his which is and always will be remembered most is that in which he tore to pieces sophism after sophism urged in defence of this miserable cause. And what was the result? It was that England, in 1833, paid £20,000,000 of compensation, and emancipated 800,000 slaves. Times were bad. Taxes were heavy. It was a prodigious increase of our burdens. Yet, without a murmur, the conscience of the nation made this immense sacrifice to the cause of righteousness, as almost the first act in which a reformed Parliament enabled it to speak with its true voice; and "there is not to be found in the whole history of the world a more striking instance of national virtue than that of a great people, uninfluenced by any meaner motive, unrepiningly consenting to so heavy a burden in the sole interests of justice and compassion." My brethren, do you think that England lost by that one of the three or four perfectly virtuous acts recorded in the history of the world? I believe that she never rose so high; that she never shewed herself so great; that she never more fully gained that blessing of God which maketh rich; that she postponed, perhaps for centuries, the hour of a thousand perils; that she set an example memorably glorious to us, her children, and to all the nations of the world. And I believe all this because I believe from my very heart that "Righteousness exalteth a nation and sin is the reproach of any people."—*Canon Farrar.*

INFLUENCE OF THE SABBATH.

It was a grand testimony to the power of the influence which the observance of the Sabbath exerts over the people, when Count Montalembert, one of the most eminent of French statesmen, said:—"Men are surprised sometimes by the ease with which the immense city of London is kept in order by a garrison of three small battalions and two squadrons, while to control the capital of France, which is half the size, 40,000 troops of the line and 60,000 National Guards are necessary. But the stranger who arrives in London on a Sunday morning, when he sees everything suspended in that gigantic capital in obedience to God—when, in the centre of that colossal business, he finds silence and repose scarcely interrupted by the bells which call to prayer, and by the immense crowds on their way to church—then his astonishment ceases. He understands there is another curb for a Christian people besides that made by bayonets, and that when the law of God is fulfilled with such a solemn submissiveness, God Himself, if I dare use the words, charges Himself with the police arrangements."

THE TENDERNESS OF CHRIST.

Here is another! He is the most bruised and broken of all; one who had imagined himself strong in faith, giving glory to God—but who had ignominiously bent before the blast of temptation and had denied his Divine Master with oaths and curses. Can there be aught of tenderness manifested towards the renegade apostle? Surely he has placed himself, by his heinous guilt and craven cowardice, beyond the pale of forgiveness. No; when we might have thought the heart he had ungenerously wounded was alienated from him forever, there was first a "look" of infinite love—a melting glance, which sent him forth to weep bitter tears over foul ingratitude; and subsequently a message, entrusted to the angel-guardian of the sepulchre and conveyed by him to the three women. "Go your way, tell His disciples and Peter." Mark xvi. 7. "Go, tell the most faithless of My followers that even for him there is still a place in My tender regard. Go, tell this wandering bird, with drooping wings and soiled plumage, that even for him there is a place of shelter still open in the clefts of the Rock." Nay, more; when Jesus met him subsequently on the shores of Gennesaret, instead of dragging afresh to light painful memories of abused kindness and broken vows, all now too deeply felt to need being recalled, no severer utterance for unworthy apostacy was pronounced than the gentle rebuke conveyed in the thrice-repeated challenge, "Lovest thou Me?"

Indeed, when pronouncing some of His most impressive woes and threatenings Christ appears, at times, as if He dreaded lest any broken-hearted one

might misinterpret His sayings, and construe His wrath against sin and hypocrisy as indicating a want of consideration to the penitent. Take as an example the occasion when He had been proclaiming stern words regarding the contemporary "sinful generation;" more especially rebuking them for their blind unbelief in the midst of light and privilege, declaring that for those cities which had scorned His message (Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum,) it would be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah than for them. He seemed suddenly to pause. The storm has exhausted itself. Possibly amid the crowd who had just listened to these vocables of wrath, His omniscient eye discerned some trembling outcast some brittle reed or sapling bending beneath the hurricane. He will not suffer it to be broken. He will not permit the wind and earthquake and fire to pass, without being followed by a "still small voice"—and then it is that the words (unparalleled in their tenderness and beauty among all He ever spake) come like a gleam after the tempest, or like a rainbow encircling with its lovely hues the angry skies, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—*Clefts of the Rock.*

WOMAN'S STRENGTH.

The strength of women lies in their heart. It shews itself in their strong love and instinctive perception of right and wrong. Intellectual courage is rarely one of their virtues. As a rule, they are inclined to be restless and excitable, allowing their judgments and actions to be swayed by quick emotions of all kinds, but, above all, it is in their hopefulness and their endurance that they find their chief power. Who is the last person to give up hope in the case of a member of the family who has apparently gone altogether to the bad? What mother or sister with deep and ardent love for such will ever cease to cherish hope or endure suffering on their account? The patience of women is proverbial, and their whole lives are bound up in their affections. Few people will deny that love in one form or another makes up the beauty of life to woman. It enters into all she does. Any work outside her immediate circle is undertaken most often from pure desire to help some one else to know something of the mysterious happiness of love. Unlike men, women chiefly look for personal intercourse with those for whom they are working. If their interest lies among the poor, they are desirous of sympathetic personal acquaintance with them; and very little good work of a lasting kind has been done by women without their own influence of love being brought to bear on the individual case.—*Nineteenth Century.*

THOUGH deep humility is always the best clothing for the Lord's people, yet, there is a sense in which they can depreciate the work of the Spirit within them, and think lightly of what He has done.

MR. SPURGEON said recently—you can almost hear his clarion voice proclaiming it to his five thousand assemblage: "Make the bridge from the cradle to manhood just as long as you can. Let your child be a child, and not a little ape of a man running about the town." Good advice.

PRAYER is the rustling of the wings of the angels that are on their way bringing us the boons of heaven. Even as a cloud foreshadoweth rain, so prayer foreshadoweth the blessing; even as the green blade is the beginning of the harvest, so is prayer the prophecy of the blessing that is about to come.—*Spurgeon.*

THE following emphatic expression of opinion concerning a "Sunday excursion" is *not* from a religious journal:—"There is no rest or recreation in rising up in a hurry, rushing to a pier or station, roasting with a crowd in a boat or train, fighting for scanty meals hurriedly prepared, guzzling cheap drinks, strolling about aimlessly, and reaching home more wearied than after a hard day's work."

LET none of you hold his prayer cheap; He to whom we pray holdeth it not cheap. Ere it is gone forth out of our mouth, He has it written in His book. One of two things we may without doubt hope, that He will either give us what we ask, or what He knoweth to be more useful to us. For we know not what to ask for as we ought, but He hath pity on our ignorance. He graciously receiveth prayer, but He giveth not, either what is not altogether good for us, or what need not be given us yet. But the prayer will not be without fruit.—*S. Bernard.*