

The Unrest.

The world, like man, is never at rest. The old myth of the Wandering Jew is more than realized in the human race without God, possessed by the demon, going up and down, walking through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. Wars and rumors of wars, pestilence, famine, earthquakes and ocean tempests, want and woe, tyranny and distress of nations, human crimes and blunders, and divine judgments, keep mankind in perpetual disquiet.

In religious circles also there is the same spirit of unrest, taking many forms, but essentially one, and stretching through all ranks, from the dullest of the masses to the sternest of theological creeds. "The foundations are out of course." Nothing seems settled. Doubt is glorified, controversy rages along the whole line of the Christian defenses, and the most destructive criticism and the most negative beliefs receive the applause of thousands who have no sure foundation of faith or hope or love.

Whence and why this unrest? Is it only from natural feebleness and love of change for the sake of change? Is it but a "sign of the times" in a disturbed age? Does it spring from that lack of seriousness which betokens a frivolous people and a worthless land? These superficial reasons do not touch the root of the matter. Partly we may trace it to the influence of a changeful age upon the sensitiveness of human nature. But the radical evil lies lower down in the natural depravity and habitual sinfulness of human nature.

True, there are some palliating features in this general unrest. It speaks of the activities of modern life which prevent stagnation. It indicates dissatisfactions and aspirations and struggles to conquer difficulties, and hopes and longings upon which to base the appeals of reason and to urge the claims of faith. And so the sweet gospel of Jesus Christ finds its way into many hearts which can get no other rest within or without.

Laughter.

What a capital, kindly, honest, jolly, glorious good thing is a laugh! What a tonic! What a digester! What a frigate! What an exorciser of evil spirits! A hearty laugh, which is ever in order, stirs up the physical man from the centre to the circumference, and tends to improve the physical and spiritual being. It promotes animal health and spirits, and is to the man what the tides are to the ocean; it stirs up the sluggish depths, prevents stagnation, and keeps the whole system fresh and wholesome.

Like as if a sheep stray from its fellows, the shepherd sees his dog after it, not devour it, but to bring it back again; even so our heavenly Shepherd; if any of his sheep disobey him, he sets his dog of affliction after us to bring us home to a consideration of our duty towards him. His dogs are poverty, sickness, death, war, loss of goods or friends, etc.

Burning Bones, Books, and Men.

The Rev. Dr. Punshon, in his eloquent address before the British and Foreign Bible Society, spoke of the persecutions which the friends of the Bible had endured, and said:

"The first experiments of burning that were made in a certain locality were made upon bones—a very harmless sort of thing, though, and Wycliffe suffered posthumous martyrdom—the most pleasant sort of martyrdom, I should fancy, inasmuch as there was not much personal feeling about it. But you know what has been said, that the ashes were taken from the Swift to the Avon, and from the Avon to the Severn, and from the Severn to the sea, and were scattered all over the world."

"Well, then, by-and-by came Erasmus, and he entered upon the same work too, under the same disadvantages. Henry VIII., who, with all his contradictions of character, knew a strong man when he saw one, and had rather a respect for strength, was disposed to be his patron. There was a monk, or rather a bishop, who was, *pro pudor!* ignorant enough to say that Paul's epistles were written in Hebrew, who did not like Erasmus at all, and who waxed very wroth both with him and his book; upon which King Henry VIII. whispered in his ear one day:—'It is not quite safe for a bee to attack an eagle.' That was a wise saying; and, if we may quote royal authority for it, there are a good many people in our day who would be none the worse for listening to that savory comparison. It is not safe yet for a beetle to attack an eagle. Well, then, Erasmus did his work of translation for the cultivated. Then there was wanted one to do it for the vulgar. Who was to do that? Why, Tyndale was raised up of God just at the proper time, and he went to Oxford, and he met with Wycliffe's Bible there, and it inspired him to do what Wycliffe had done for the cultivated on behalf of the common people. And so he printed and published his edition of the Bible—what he thought a very incorrect one; and Tunstall, who was the Romish bishop at that time, bought up every copy that he could find of Tyndale's Bible. 'Gentle Mr. Puckington,' he says to the merchant, 'do your diligence, I pray you, to get them. I will pay you whatsoever they cost you. The books are naughty books, and I intend to get them and burn them all at Paul's Cross.'

"There is the second experiment of burning, you see. They began with bones, and then they went on to books. That was the next step. There was the burning of bones, and then the burning of books. That is the comparative degree. Well, Tyndale's reply is quaint, almost arch. He says:—'I shall get money of him for these books to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world shall cry out at the burning of God's Word, and the surplus of the money that shall remain shall make me more studious to correct, and newly to imprint the same.' And so, out of the burning of books, just as the devil and all his emissaries are accustomed to outwit themselves in their craftiness, there came the new and correct edition of God's Holy Word. And that sort of thing is continued yet. I hold in my hand here a report of the Canadian Bible Society. That is not three years old, and in this there is the veritable statement that one of the colporteurs has distributed thirteen copies of the Holy Scriptures in the district just between Lake Huron and Lake Superior, and that, by the connivance, or at the instigation of the Romish priests, twelve of those copies were publicly burnt—within the last three years publicly burnt. And yet there is a change. Everybody is getting liberal, and tolerant, and merciful now-a-days; and they did not believe in the burning of the books. But it is continued still where there is a chance of doing it without an outrage upon public feeling, because the principles of the hostility are the same.

"Then, you know, by-and-by the great witness himself was arrested and imprisoned, and multitudes were burnt with the libel or little book around their necks, and suffered for the truth of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ; and there came the superlative degree—the burning of bones, the burning of books, the burning of men. And yet what has come out of all this? Why, wherever there has been a determined opposition, wherever the forces of evil have gathered to a head, and concentrated force and effort for a decisive struggle, God has brought good out of evil; just, for instance, as when Rome sent forth the merciless Alva, or lit the fire of Lollard martyrs, or whetted her sword for a St. Bartholomew massacre, or gilt the prow of the invincible Armada."

Buying Elephants

It is stated that the Baptist ministers of New York city are making efforts to raise sufficient money to buy an elephant for the use of their missionaries in India. That is a commendable enterprise. The fortunate elephant that gets the honors of missionary service will do more good than the poor stolen beasts that trudge through our land in the itinerant circus shows. Elephants can do service, too.

But we have known cases of investment in a certain kind of unwieldy elephants that did not pay. There are individuals, and corporations, and families, and congregations who have elephants on their hands, and know not what to do with them.

The vain and ambitious congregation that drove off a plain and faithful pastor, and "bought" a dashing, brilliant, sky rocket preacher, to tickle the ears of the world and to "draw," are waking up to the fact that they have an elephant on their hands, and are not able to feed or house the animal.

The "leading men" of the small church, who are determined to have as fine a place to worship in as their aristocratic and wealthy neighbors, and who now sit in cushioned pews, under a lofty roof covered with a fifty-thousand debt, which they are not so able to bear, find that they have an elephant on their hands that proves extremely inconvenient and troublesome. Big church, and nobody to fill it. Big debt and nobody to pay it. Big conceit, and nothing to feed it. Elephant!

It is fashionable to have a costly piano in the parlor. A shoddy aristocrat buys

one. There the big awkward thing stands, as if hesitating whether to go or stay. It is kept nicely covered from sight. It is dusted and cleaned regularly. But nobody knows what to do with it. Nobody can play on its stuning keys. It is a huge—elephant.

A young man whose idea of life has been formed from milk-and-water novels, thinks it is time to marry. He must find an elegant lady of leisure. He finds one,—for they are very plenty! He soon makes the discovery that he got more ribbons and silks and jewelry, and sentimentalism, than anything else. His wife can't keep house, and he can't hire help. She doesn't know how to manage, and he has nothing to manage except his own conceit. Elephant! Don't buy elephants except for missionary work or a menagerie!—Evangelical Messenger.

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