

THE SCORN OF CHRIST.

Instead of writing anything this week, I shall give you an extract from a wonderful book, written by Dean Slattery, called "The Master of the World." This book was published in 1906, and is well worth reading. I have not room for the whole of the chapter on "His Scorn," but will place part of it before you, trusting that you may some day have an opportunity of reading the whole book, which describes our Lord's graciousness, gladness, beauty, vitality, etc. HOPE.

Because Christ was the tender physician in the presence of all degraded people who admitted the sickness of their souls, because He was patient and forgiving with many of the worst types of humanity there has come to be a feeling that He was always tenderness, and that the Lamb was the only symbol of His character. To this end many passages in the records of His Life are softened, or altogether explained away. Such violence to the documents is not only unscientific, it is irreverent. We must face the facts as history records them. He was not always gentle: He was often fierce as lightning.

It is quite certain that He had no personal anger; that is, He did not resent insults or wrongs done to Him as an individual man. But in so far as opposition to Him kept men from the happy life to which He tried to lead His people, He did resent men's opposition. The resentment was official. Moreover, as we shall see, the resentment was often against those whom He loved; and so, though it was, in a real sense, anger, anger is perhaps not the best word to describe His attitude. It was never that slow, sullen rage, which often is suggested by the word "anger"; but was always a quick, fiery intensity, by its very brilliance and heat calculated to burn the sin to ashes. For these reasons, the best word available is "scorn."

In the attempt to disclaim for Christ any wrath against persons, it has sometimes been argued that this scorn was for the sin rather than for the sinner. The sophistry of such a distinction was as far as possible from our Lord's spirit. If sin were disowned by its victim, Christ counted it separated; but if the sin were cherished, tolerated, Christ counted it identical with the sinner. His resentment, His contempt, His anger, His scorn, were for the concrete, personal sinners of His day, not merely for abstract qualities which hung about their lives.

People who think that they follow Christ, sometimes become insensible to sin through an exaggerated tenderness for bad people. They reach the depth described by the Psalmist, "Neither do they abhor anything that is evil." Because bad men are tolerated, excused, their villainous influence spreads. Christ was a surgeon, cutting evil men out of the great organism of humanity, to check the progress of Death. Because His pity was not soft, but strong, He was pitiless to the man who barred the progress of Life to the whole human system. It is possible so to emasculate Christianity that its neglect to destroy sin is more than its power to build up righteousness. The writer who did most to reform English life in the nineteenth century was not Thomas Carlyle, who wrote violently of sins, but was Charles Dickens, who wrote vividly of living, concrete sinners. The schoolmaster Squeers, the nurse Mrs. Gamp, the employer Mr. Pecksniff, the ruffian Sikes, and a host of other evil persons were held up for hatred; people came to a sense of the blackness of the crimes which made human nature bestial, and public opinion rose to a great reform. Into his open grave in the Abbey the poor threw flowers continuously for one whole day; because he had forced men to hate and depose the sinners who had been allowed to make miserable the weak and defenceless. Nor, in such a connection, can we forget that superb force of righteousness, Thomas Arnold. It was said that many an Englishman buried back temptation in the thick of public life because he remembered how as a boy he had seen the face of Dr. Arnold flash disgust and scorn in the presence of any person who had done a mean or low act. The tempted man's imagination

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brought to mind how Dr. Arnold would look upon him, his once loved pupil now identified with such sin—he saw again the indignant gaze, the anger, and the contempt—and so, with that memory, he dropped the temptation, he kept himself unspotted. Surely we need to remember that the most gracious Saviour, who had only pity for Zaccheus and the Magdalen, had the most burning scorn for certain types of sinful persons,—the persons who drag down humanity, and, so far as they can, blot out the kingdom of heaven. We need not try to explain away or even tone down the invectives and the curses: they are part of His redeeming love for humanity, and must be studied just as they stand in the narrative.

I. AGAINST TEMPTERS.

Christ had very evident scorn for those who consciously or unconsciously tempted men from the right. He expressed this scorn not only when people tried to turn Him from His Messianic duty, but also when He saw that His earnest followers were being beguiled from "the way."

The purity and splendor of such indignation we feel when we see the face of a mother who has discovered that to her boy, hitherto unspotted from the world, some villain is holding out the temptation to depart from righteousness.



A SHADY COUNTRY ROAD.

There are men who take a fiendish pleasure in watching the unspoiled life make its first timid plunge into gross sin. They are the tempters of innocence. The mother who discovers that such a malign personality is approaching her beloved has the right of a tigress to spring upon this murderer of her child's soul. Tenderness has its limit: there comes a time for scorn, for hatred. When the youth sees the horror on his mother's face, he will know at last how loathsome is his tempter—and he will be saved. "It must needs be," said Christ, "that occasions of stumbling come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh! Better for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea."

II. AGAINST HYPOCRITES.

Christ was especially vigorous in His denunciation of hypocrites. On these people the Saviour poured out the vials of His wrath. He called them "fools and blind," "blind guides," "unclean," "whited sepulchres," "serpents," "generation of vipers." He exposed them to biting sarcasm as he pictured them standing up and offering to remove motes from other people's eyes—when in their own eyes there were beams. And the "woe," "woe," "woe," of His invective falls with the force and regularity of a bludgeon. If ever people were cursed, Christ cursed the hypocrites. The cursing of the promising but fruitless fig-tree removes the last doubt, if any could exist, upon our

Lord's estimate of the hypocrite. He said quite definitely to such men, "How shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"

A large share of the disgust roused by the recent investigations of the great Insurance Companies comes from the fact that these trustees of enormous funds, who have been using them for their own crooked and selfish ends, have been appealing piously to the thrifty wage-earners of the country so to deposit their savings that should death overtake them their widows and their orphans might be provided for. "Deny yourselves in the present," is the pathetic cry of the insurance tract, "to make safe the future of your families." Very proper language this, had these officers of insurance companies really cared for working men, widows and orphans; but hideous and contemptible jargon, if these pleaders turned from their tracts, with an amused twinkle at their own astuteness, to vote themselves outrageously high salaries, to pension the members of their own families, to buy up legislators, and otherwise to contribute to their own wealth and power. The mere villainy is bad enough—but it is all intensified with the rankling remembrance of the philanthropic pamphlets sent out by these would-be benefactors of mankind. A villain who is a hypocrite is an arch-villain. If a man is a plain, straight-forward murderer, the

hopelessly bad boy and sends him away from his privileges, lest, remaining in the school, he drag others down to his own infamy, so the merciful Christ rejected the tempter, the hypocrite, the hard-hearted, the worldly, from His kingdom.

Some men feeling the heat of His scorn must have come to a sense of their condition. For the scorn of a perpetual blusterer does not hurt; what does hurt is the scorn of the gentle, the kind, the loving. . . . We can be candid with ourselves and measure exactly the attitude which Christ will have for any of those qualities in us which once He faced on earth with terrible scorn. He was fierce as only the Gentlest can be fierce. There is no paradox between His forgiveness and His anger; only completeness, in love. —From "The Master of the World."

OUR FUNNY LANGUAGE.

You take a swim,
You say you've swum;
Your nails you trim,
But they're not trum;
And milk you skim
Is never skum.

When the words you speak,
Those words are spoken.
If a nose you tweak,
It's never twoken;
Nor can you seek
And say you've soken.

If a top you spin,
The top is spun;
A hare you skin,
Yet 'tis not skum.
Nor can a grin
Be ever grun.

If we forget
Then we've forgotten;
Yet if we bet,
We haven't botten.
No house we let
Is ever lotten.
What we upset
Is not upsotten.
Now, don't you think
Our language rotten?
—New York World.

Editor (to stranger)—We have all the manuscript we can find use for during the next six years, every page of which is furnished by the leading thinkers, essayists, historians, philosophers, journal—

Stranger—But this is a page advertisement for mother-of-pearl soap.

Editor—Ah, I see. Take a seat on the sofa, sir. We will try and find room for your copy by killing an essay or two.

"You don't mean to tell me you called Jim Jefferies a liar?"
"That's exactly what I did."
"What did he say?"
"I don't know. He was in San Francisco at the time. I was in Chicago." —Cleveland Press.

Charles F. Raymond, in *Raymond's Record*, Oakville:—They tell me that you are thinking of leaving the farm this spring. Don't do it; keep close to the soil. You are tired feeding the cattle, the sheep and the pigs, tired of chopping the wood, tired of cleaning the stable out, tired of the store on the corner—tired of it all. You have visited the city, and its roar has fascinated you. Everyone seemed well dressed and happy, and the laughter and conversation of the passers-by were music to your ear. Stay with the farm, for it is a healthy spot to live on where you get a complexion from nature's brush, and an arm made strong in God's gymnasium, where you need no medicine to make you eat. Stay with the farm, where life is natural and friendships more real where you can wear what you want when you want, and there is none who will criticize. Stay with the farm, with its spirit of trust and friendliness from the collie who follows up and down the line to the swallow who builds in the barn.