

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE POWERFUL TRUTH OF GOD.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

C. H. SPURGEON,

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"Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."—Acts xix. 19, 20.

It should be very encouraging to us to hear of the triumphs of the gospel in the olden times. It is not only a matter of interest as to history, but it is a matter of practical consolation for the present day, for the gospel is just the same to-day as it was eighteen hundred years ago. If we preach the gospel at all, it is the very same gospel which Paul delivered. We may not have all Paul's gifts, or all Apollos' eloquence, but for all practical matters the same preaching is with us that was with Paul; we may, therefore, expect to see the same results. It may be imagined, however, that perhaps the population may have changed in character, but, believe me, it is not so. The gospel of Jesus Christ was not intended for one century or two, but for all time. After all, men's hearts have not altered. The population of London is not at all unlike that of

Ephesus. They may dress very differently, and their language is not the same, and their customs may outwardly differ, but as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man. One man's heart is like another man's, and the sinners of eighteen hundred years ago are very like the sinners of to-day. If a man should come into London with the same gospel with which Paul went into Ephesus, he has a gospel adapted to London as assuredly as the gospel was adapted to Ephesus. More than that, we have the same spirit resting upon the gospel now as then. The power which rendered the gospel saving in the olden times was not Paul's logic, or Apollo's eloquence; the saving power lay in the Holy Spirit accompanying the divine truth. Now the Spirit of God is not straitened; he is divine; his arm is not shortened that he cannot save. He is just as able to make the Word of God the power of God unto salvation to-day as he was then; ay, and, I bless his name, he is doing it. He has been doing it lately in Madagascar, as an instance in far-off lands, and we have seen him do it in our very midst. We have known and conversed with multitudes who have been turned from darkness to light, from the slavery of Satan into the liberty of Christ, by the power of the gospel which Paul preached, which we also preach. When Paul and his two or three companions came into Ephesus, they were not one whit different from two or three Christians going into any city in the world with the view of evangelising it. Of course, they had the gift of miracles, but we have other appliances which they had not. We have books which we can scatter far and wide, and an amount of religious liberty in almost every place which they did not possess. I do not think they stood on any vantage-ground beyond ourselves, or, if they did, we can reach that same vantage-ground too; and we may expect that the God of Paul will work in London and elsewhere as he worked at Ephesus, if we know how to be as obedient to his divine will, and as earnest in our service to him, as was that mighty apostle of the Gentiles.

Our text suggests to me to speak to you upon three matters. The first is: it is said the Word of God grew; so we will begin by noticing that in Ephesus *the Word of God was planted*. It could not have grown if it had not been planted. Secondly, *the Word of God grew*; we will watch it. There was *the Word of God prevailing over sin*, for it made men burn their foolish books of magic. To begin then:—

I. THE WORD OF GOD WAS PLANTED.

It is interesting to notice how it was planted in Ephesus. I read to you all about it, and you noticed that when Paul first came there, there were a few persons that received him gladly. I suppose the Apostle went down into the Jews' quarter, for in all these cities there was a Jews' quarter, and he began to enquire a little and look about him, and he soon found there were some John the Baptistites there—

about twelve. So he began with them. They were prepared ground, well ploughed, ready for the seed; so he instructed them a little further in the faith, and they believed in the Lord Jesus, and were baptized, and became the nucleus, the first twelve with which to form a Christian church. Go, servant of Christ, go where God sends thee. There are some prepared of God to receive thee. In the most barren country there are some pieces of soil that, like oases, are abundantly fertile. In any company of the most depraved of men there are some hearts made willing of God who will receive the gospel at once. We must never think, if God sends us upon what looks hard ground, that it is so hard as it looks. It is our unbelief that is hard. If we conquer that, we shall be surprised to find that God has cleared the way for us, and perhaps where we looked to find no friend there shall be a chosen twelve who will be glad to receive us. I speak to you who go about serving Christ; I beseech you to be of good courage, for your Lord has prepared some, and made them ready for you. I feel to-night, when I preach the gospel, that there are some who will hear it and say, "Ah! that suits me; I am guilty; I want a Saviour." They have heard the Baptist preach of repentance, but they do not know yet what simple faith in Jesus is, and I am hoping that, when to-night they hear that there is life in one look at the crucified Saviour, and that whoever trusts in Jesus will be saved, they will accept the good news with great gladness, and will soon be numbered among the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. God grant it may be so.

But the Apostle found that *there was a great deal of stony ground* at Ephesus. The people did not all receive him, though twelve men did, and I suppose some women with them. Generally, we find more women receiving the gospel than men; so I suppose he gathered at least four and twenty who had known John the Baptist and his preachers. But the rest of the people were not after this fashion. Well, brethren, why should they be? Is the servant of Christ to expect to find all men willing to receive him? They rejected Christ; shall they receive us? If the work which our Master sent us upon were all easy, where were the honour of it? He gives easy work to those who are weak, but if he endows us with his own power, of course he will give us difficulties to overcome. We must not, therefore, flinch because we are rejected by many, but just buckle on our harness and ask fresh strength from God, and give ourselves to the work. Paul went down to the synagogue, and the Jews allowed him to speak too. After he had spoken, they began to dispute. He answered their questions; he persuaded them; and it appears that a great number of them, after hearing his answers to their difficulties, and listening to his solemn persuasive appeals, were led to believe that Jesus was the Christ, and trust in him, and so were saved. Well, blessed be God, when we go to plant the gospel anywhere we may expect to find some whose difficulties will speedily yield to further light, who, though

at present they are prejudiced, will give up their prejudices, when they understand more completely the gospel. They may be, probably there are, some here to-night who do not quite know what the gospel is, about which we say so much, and when they understand that it is just this, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man and suffered in the stead of all who trust him, in order that they might not suffer for their sins—when they understand that truth, it may be they will say, “Well, that is just what I want—someone to stand in my stead, someone to be a Saviour to me; I believe in the Son of God,” the preacher shall be right happy if he meets with such. Even though he should have to meet many of their objections and answer them one by one, if at last they shall be led to believe in Jesus by the power of his Spirit, happy shall the preacher be.

But it appears that there was a third class among those to whom Paul ministered, who, after all that he could say, were hardened. He gave them clear proof that Jesus was the Christ, and he urged them to repent of sin. He persuaded them to believe in Jesus, but they were hardened the more by it, and they proved their hardness by this, that they spake evil concerning this way. Mostly when men will not submit to Christ, they try to find some fault. Perhaps they will slander the preacher, or the people of God, or they will misrepresent the gospel, or they will catch up certain phrases and words, and twist them, misrepresent them. Common enough, we grieve to say, is this among graceless hearers. What they will not receive themselves they rail at. They are like the dog in the manger; they cannot eat the hay, but they lie there and bark. They won't enter the kingdom of heaven, and those who would enter they hinder them if they possibly can. Even when they see the power of the gospel upon others, they will turn it to ridicule. They wonder at the change that is wrought, but they are filled with wrath against it, and will not submit to Christ. However, brethren, though there will always be such as these, we are not to be cast down about it, for if we are ever able to say, as Paul was, “I am pure from the blood of all men,” it will be no small thing to be able to say it, even if great numbers should reject the teaching which we present to them. I have often prayed that I might be able to say what George Fox, the first Quaker, said when he came to die. He said, “I am clear, I am clear, I am clear of the blood of all men.” Oh! if we can only get to that, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall Christ be glorious in his Father's eyes, and Christ's servants shall be accepted in him too. We must always reckon that after the most diligent ministry some will believe the gospel, and some will not believe it at all. However, the Apostle Paul, though he was beset by those who despised him and lay in wait for his life, did not hesitate to preach the gospel to all men, for we are told that it was known to all in Asia, both Jews and Greeks. He went on scattering his seed, whether it fell on stony ground or among the thistles and thorns. That was no

business of his. It was his to scatter the seed ; it was God's business to make it fall in the right place. He that sows is responsible for the sowing, not for the reaping. If he does what his Master bids him, it is his Master's work to take care of the precious seed, and make it spring up, and not the servant's.

I would exhort all here who love the Lord Jesus Christ to try to do what the Apostle did, viz., *try to break up fresh ground and get fresh hearers.* The gospel succeeded all the better in Ephesus because it was a new thing there. I believe I should have a better hope of conversions to-night if I were speaking to people who had never heard the gospel before ; but after long hearing the gospel men get accustomed to it ; the most startling warnings do not alarm, and the most wooing invitations do not attract. I should not have such attention as you are kind enough to give me, but perhaps here and there, where attention was given, the barbed arrows of divine truth would stick fast in true hearts, whereas in some now present it is almost hopeless work to speak, for it is not to know the gospel that is wanted with them, it is to have a heart to yield to it, a soul to give it due attention and a reverent, believing reception. May God grant that you may yet be saved. But my hope lies in my brethren in Christ breaking up fresh ground. Open little rooms, dear friends, wherever you can, in every part of London. I have a great belief in cottage-meetings to get to the poor. We ought to have—if we are a truly living Church, we shall have—a little preaching room in every court and alley ; and if men can't come here, or won't come here—and really I see not how they can, for I do not perceive that there is room for any more—we must go and take the gospel to them. And if I must tarry here with the thousands, go, my brethren, to the tens, and twelves, and twenties, and the people of London shall hear the gospel somehow, and we shall each be able to say, "I am clear of the blood of all men." We want more of the work of the Apostle in breaking up fresh ground. God stir us up to it, and send us success in it. Thus I have spoken of the planting. Now to our second point:—

II. THE WORD OF GOD GREW.

A man drops an acorn into the ground, and goes his way and forgets it. When he comes back twenty years afterwards he finds a very respectable tree, and if he could live to come back in a century he might find a tree that seemed to cover acres with its outspread branches—all from a single acorn. We never know what will come of an attempt to do good. Paul steps into Ephesus with a friend or two, and finds twelve that come at his call ; but ere he has left Ephesus, what a stir the man has made ! There was never such a shake given to a city as Paul gave to it. By the grace of God, the gospel grew. Let us just notice how it grew.

First, *there was a church formed in Ephesus, which appears to*

have been a strong church. You notice that the elders of the church came to Miletus to Paul. There were many elders, and I suppose the elders were in proportion to the people, so that there was a very large church gathered there. This is delightful fruit, to find men made believers—willing to be baptized on profession of their faith, and then formed into Christian churches. Paul had not laboured in vain, for he had lit such a lamp in Ephesus as should not soon be put out. In addition, however, to the church, a great many people in Ephesus had been impressed—perhaps not savingly, but they had been impressed, for they became the friends of Paul. At your leisure, will you read the rest of the chapter? and you will find that a great mob gathered in the theatre on one occasion, excited to great wrath against Paul; and Paul, like the little hero that he was, wanted to go right into the great amphitheatre to address them, but some of his friends said, “No, no; you mustn’t do that! They’ll tear you to pieces.” Our brave little man felt that he should like to go and preach to them. He wanted to get a chance if he could of speaking the Word of God. There they were, all on stone seats, tier on tier—a great mass—much, I suppose, like the Coliseum at Rome, and he thought he must go in and talk to them. But it is said that “certain of the chief of Asia which were his friends” prevented his going in. The disciples would not, perhaps, have had influence with him, but these were men of rank and ability, who said, “We are not Christians, but we respect you, and we don’t want to see you torn to pieces by that wild rabble. Don’t go in”; and Paul did not go in. Now where souls are saved, if the gospel be truly preached, it will always have a great many friends, and these will, perhaps, serve a great turn at a pinch and in times of difficulty; and I am not sure but what these “chief of Asia” may, after all, some of them have become Christians, for if a man does not want to be a Christian it is a very dangerous thing to be friendly to Christ, when you come to mix up with God’s people, and help them, and befriend them. It often happens that the Lord, in return for a cup of cold water that is given to a prophet in the name of the Lord, gives the promised reward; and he that was but a friend becomes at last kith and kin with us and joins us. I am thankful to know there are those in this place that love the gospel in a way, and would stand up for it, and defend it, and delight to hear it preached; and though they are not yet saved, the gospel is growing, for it has some effect on them, and they shall have our earnest prayers that they may not be outside buttresses of the Church, but may be built into the walls of it.

We love some of you because you are always ready to help and defend the faith after your way. Cast in your lot wholly with us, I pray you. Take for yourselves the precious privileges of the gospel. May the Lord enable you. When we think of you, we feel like the Saviour when he looked at the young man that had great possessions; it is said he loved him. But alas! the Saviour also sorrowed for him when he went away. May we not have

reason to sorrow for you who are so near to God, but lack the one thing needful? May you find it, and may you yet be brought in. That it grew, there was another proof, for even *the vilest and wickedest people in Ephesus knew about Jesus Christ*. How do I know that? Why, there were certain tramping vagabonds who came into Ephesus trying to deceive the people, and pretending to heal by magic, and they knew about the gospel. How? I am sure they did, because they said, "This name of Jesus is a very great name, and seems to have great power; we will try and conjure by it." This was a villainous thing to do, yet it showed that the gospel had got at them and reached them. I like to hear little children in the street singing delightful hymns about Jesus Christ, for it shows me this, that the gospel has got at the very lowest strata of society, for those little children don't hold their tongues when they are at home, depend upon it. It is very hard to make them hold their tongues anywhere. They have made father hear about "Jesus meek and mild," and I should not wonder if the consciences of some of the ungodly men of London were touched by the words of their little children. I heard Lord Shaftesbury say a very good thing the other day, and I agreed with it. He said that the little children of London were very weighty ones, and where a missionary could not go the little children could go, and, clambering on their father's knee, could sing the gospel, and thus in many a house where there is a man who scorns to go to a church or chapel to hear the gospel a little child, who has just given his father a kiss, is singing to him:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God! I come."

Lord, bless the little preacher, and save the father's soul! Who knows how many may be brought to Jesus so? It shows that the gospel spreads when even the worst of men know something about Christ. Even though they use the word to swear by, yet I am glad they know it. Though they put it to such a use as to try to be the devil's servants, with Christ's name on their lips, yet am I glad that the kingdom of heaven has come nigh unto them.

One other proof that the gospel had come to Ephesus was this, that *it affected their trade*. A thing is pretty powerful when it begins to affect the trade of a town. Now in Ephesus there was a goddess called Diana. I have seen the thing at Rome. It is ugly enough, certainly, for anybody to worship. It is a female figure with a countless number of breasts, intended to signify the bounties of nature which she supplies to multitudes of men and beasts. Ugly and ill-formed, it was greatly worshipped at Ephesus. It was set in a niche in a temple, and generally covered with a curtain. This was drawn aside for worshippers, and on particular festival days people came to Ephesus from all parts of the world, and very seldom did one of them go home without taking with him a small image of

Diana. Some of them were made of wood for the poorer sort, but many were made of metal—copper, brass, silver, and gold. Well, when Paul was preaching there during the third year there was a time when the great festivals were held. Ephesus was not anything like so full as it had been—it might have been almost as full, but there were not so many at the temple, and somehow the shops hadn't sold the shrines so readily—had not sold anything like the usual quantity; and one great man had a factory and made many shrines, and he called his workpeople together and said, "Do you know, this year we have not sold as much as we did last year by 50 per cent.? The fact is, you'll all be out of work. I can't keep you on full time. I can't sell the goods. Our trade is going to the dogs, and it is all through that fellow Paul. He has been here three years now, and he has turned the people to worship the invisible God, and they won't worship Diana." Well, these workpeople did not consider whether it was right or wrong, but it touched their pockets, and that is often a very powerful place in which to touch a man. They thought they might not have such good wages by-and-bye, so they rushed home and told other workmen that belonged to kindred trades, and then Demetrius came in and told them that Diana was being put aside by this Paul, who preached and turned away much people, and there was a great row, and they rushed to the theatre, but the Recorder of the city addressed them very wisely, and they dispersed. This showed the power of the gospel; it began to affect trade. I wish the gospel would affect the trade of London; I wish it might. There are some trades that need affecting, need to be cut a little shorter. Oh! that God would so influence men that they were not given to bestial drunkenness as they are; that the money, which ought to go to their wives and children, might no longer be squandered in evil spirits, that make them evil spirits. Would God that the New Cut would become a place where men might walk on a Sunday. Not by Act of Parliament! Let Acts of Parliament leave us alone. We can fight that battle alone. But may it come to an end by the spread of the gospel. We do not wish to see any break the gospel Sabbath; it is a day of rest and worship, and we love to have it so. I have no faith in any reformation that does not come through men's hearts being changed. You may make them hypocrites, but you cannot make them right except by the gospel coming into their very souls, and taking possession of them. Plant it everywhere all over London, north and south, east and west, in every court, and street, and lane, and, by the grace of God, yet shall souls be saved and churches formed; the wicked instructed, and even trade itself will have to take its shape—a better shape than it now has—under the moulding hand of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But now I must go on to another point, and that is this. While the Word of God thus spreads, we ought to consider how it was. This great spread of the gospel *was due to the work of the Holy Spirit*. Yes, that is quite correct. Let me say something else. This great

spread of the gospel *was due to the work of the Apostle Paul*. I know the Holy Spirit works, but when he works he makes us work. Find me one instance in Scripture where the Holy Ghost ever moved a city like Ephesus by a lazy, idle minister that read other people's sermons on a Sunday, and did not care about the conversion of souls. I would like to meet with something of that kind, but I know I never shall. Where God works, he works with men that work. Notice those churches where the preacher says, "It is the Holy Ghost's work to seek souls, and God will have his own elect." Very true doctrine! But mark those places where there is nothing on a Sunday but four or five doctrines ground out as on a barrel-organ, and the preacher does not care whether the people are lost or saved. Notice the people who seem to be fatalists, asleep in the belief that things are to be—where there is no Sunday School, no street preaching, no doing anything, no seeing whether God brings multitudes of souls to him, and whether he does make the population in their district tremble before their power. They get to be a miserable few, and they get some little Rehoboth (which they call Rehoboth), that is to say, a room—and it is a very little room indeed—and they gradually decay and die out; and so it must be. We cannot save a soul, and are powerless apart from the Spirit of God, yet wherever the Spirit of God is, he fills men with energy; he makes them earnest and intensely earnest. I read to you about Paul. There was that dear good man working all the week, making tents, in order that nobody might say he preached for what he could get. There he was making tents, and he says yet every day he preached from house to house, and in the big schoolroom of one Tyrannus, and everywhere else night and day, and he wept over them, he says, "night and day with tears," and he prayed over them, and would not give them any rest unless they came to Christ. The man was always at it—he threw his whole soul into it—and a big soul it was too. Oh! beloved, if we are ever to see the Word blessed, and this great city saved, it will be by everyone of us being thoroughly awake in our Master's service. Oh! that the Lord would stir up all the ministers in London! Methinks that we have got enough in number, if we had God's power resting upon all. Oh! for God's Jonah, who would from end to end proclaim a warning through the city! Oh! for one John the Baptist, who would preach "Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What if I said, Oh! for one Martin Luther, whose thundering voice should make men hear! Oh! for one George Whitefield, who, with uplifted hands, would cry, "The life to come! The life to come!" and make masses gather to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ! Pray for it, dear friends. God won't save the world without men; he will use instruments until Christ comes. And while you pray for it, pray for yourselves, that each one of you may be in earnest, for, other things being equal, God will bless that people most who work most for him, pray most to him, give most to him, sacrifice most, and are most obedient to his commands. God make us such.

Now the last point is this. The gospel not only grew, but we are told in the text:—

III. THE WORD OF GOD PREVAILED OVER SIN.

We have an instance given of how it prevailed, to which I call your particular attention. Paul, in his preaching, it appears, was not at all like some who think they are very faithful when they abuse people. I daresay Paul, in his preaching, made the remark that God was not like unto images of silver and gold of man's making, but Paul never abused Diana. How do I know that? He never did, for the Town Clerk in the theatre said, "These men are not robbers of churches, neither are they blasphemers of your goddess." Paul had just uttered the general doctrine that idolatry was a great sin; he had not poured out a great torrent of abuse on Diana and all the rest. In the course of his preaching I daresay he had remarked that magic and sorcery were abominations, but Ephesus was very much given to sorcery. There were certain things called Ephesian letters, supposed to possess great magical power, sold at Ephesus. There are many stories which every reader of classic history knows, such as that of a wrestler who always used to win the day because he wore round his neck one of these charms—all lying stories, but they were freely believed. Most of the Ephesians believed that the letters written round the base of Diana possessed potent charms. Now Paul, though he was not preaching about this, was preaching the gospel; yet the gospel found out this particular sin, and hit the nail on the head, and God worked with the gospel, for when the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, tried to practice magic and used the name of Christ, the evil spirit leaped on them and overcame them, and would have slain them, and they were held up to ridicule. Now there is one thing about the gospel in every place: it finds out the particular sin of that place, and it is quite sure to expose it. I have frequently in this congregation made remarks without knowing anything about the persons present, and they have come and asked me who told me about them. It has happened scores of times that the Word has so minutely described the case of a hearer that he has felt convinced that the preacher must have been instructed about his case, and told what to say, though in truth the preacher knew nothing about it, only the preacher's Master made his tongue to speak the Word so as to fit the case. Now by Paul's preaching, and through the providence of God, the people at Ephesus began to be convinced that the use of magic was a wicked and disgraceful thing, and many of them came forward and confessed that they had been guilty of it. They confessed it to the preacher; they confessed it to the Church; they confessed it to the hearers; and when they had done this they proved the honesty of their confession, for they brought out all their charms and magic books, and made a great fire of them all. Why did not they sell them to somebody? They were worth so

much money. Yes, but if they had sold them they would have done mischief to somebody else, and the best thing was to destroy these vipers by burning them in the fire. Moreover, they showed their hatred of sin by burning the books, as they could not have done in any other way. And yet again, the burning of these books was a mighty sermon to everybody who saw it. "What is this you are burning? Why, that book is worth fifty pounds!" "Oh! it is a magic book, and we have done with it. The child of God has nothing to do with such things, so we have burnt them." That was a better sermon than even Paul himself could have preached upon this subject. Look at the loss the people sustained. I dare say many of them were poor. Two thousand pounds in those days was a much larger sum than it is now, but they lost it all cheerfully to get rid of the obnoxious books, which once they had treasured in their houses. This is a triumph of the gospel when men give up what they prize, and when men are willing to suffer great loss in order to get rid of great sin.

Now I want the gospel to prevail like that in this congregation and all around. I don't suppose you are, any of you, so silly and foolish—I don't imagine there is anybody here so insane as to believe in any magic or fortune-telling, or anything of that sort. If you did, I might speak upon the subject, and show how detestable such a superstition is; but I do not suppose there is any such person here. But perhaps you have got something else. Mark you, if you have got anything wrong, if the gospel saves your soul, you will give it up. I recollect a good woman, who heard her minister preach a gospel sermon in which he was showing how the gospel made men give up their sin. When he saw her a week after, he said, "Well, I saw you at the sermon. What did you remember of it?" She said, "I had got a bushel at home that was not of fair size, and I recollected to burn it when I got home." The best thing she could recollect! And under William Dawson's sermon, a certain travelling pedlar heard about being "weighed in the balances and found wanting," and he took his yard stick and snapped it, and said, "I have done with it." Oh! that everybody in trade might do that, and burn the unjust thing, and have done with it. But have you been accustomed to the lascivious song, or those three-volumed beastlinesses that come out every now and then—I cannot call them by any other name—which some people delight to read? Have done with them; put them away. What have you to do with them? You will have enough of temptation in your own mind without going after these things. Is there any habit, any practice, that you have got that defiles your soul? If Christ loves you, and you come and trust in him, you will make short work of it. Have done with it, and have done with it for ever. Perhaps it is some bad practice by which you get your living. Is it the Sunday morning trade? Then, sir, if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and hope to be saved by him, let those shutters never come down on another Sabbath day. Say you, as those Ephesians did, "Cost

us what it may, we will have nothing that grieves God. We will have nothing, however precious in money-worth, that would endamage our soul," for "what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" I have often looked at that question, and I have thought it might be cut down a good deal. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world? Why, you won't gain that! What would it profit you if you did, and lost your soul? But there are some people who gain only eighteen-pence on a Sunday! What shall it profit them if they gain eighteen-pence, and lose their soul? It is miserable to think how cheap souls are. The devil buys souls in the gross, and can pay for them in coppers—men are so miserably ruined by small gains and small pleasures. Time was when he had to bait his trap with the world; now he can bait it with the smallest things. A smile from some eyes will make men sell their souls, and a flattering word from some lips will make men cast away eternal blessedness. I pray God that you may be led to trust in Jesus Christ alone and find him a Saviour; and if you do, the next thing you will do will be to take a great besom and sweep out of your house all the obnoxious things that God hates, and you will say:—

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from its throne,
And worship only thee."

You will say; "I am a Christian, and I will have done with these things." God grant it may be so with many; nay, with all of us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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