

C.H. Spurgeon:

WHETHER we smite with the Sword, or build with the Trowel,

LET THE LORD'S NAME BE MAGNIFIED.

Our service may often change, but our spirit should remain full of adoration and praise. The century grows old, but the glory of Jehovah is ever new. The twilight of another age is upon us; but come what will, the Lord is to be extolled from generation to generation, even till eternity has swallowed up the last of years.

During another year the Lord has been exceedingly gracious to the various institutions of which this magazine is the representative and right hand. Our practical protest against error has lost us many a friend; or, rather, has winnowed away much of the chaff from the heap of our acquaintances. Naturally, it might have been expected that this would tell upon the funds of the Orphanage, College, Colportage, Evangelists' Society, or some other of our agencies; but our resources are beyond the reach of human power, seeing we have all along drawn our supplies direct from the Fountain-head. We have received, not less, but more of pecuniary supplies, since certain great ones threatened to dry up the springs. They cannot stay so much as a drop of heaven's rain from the plant of the Lord's right hand planting. For this, with a deep, adoring reverence, we say emphatically, "The Lord be magnified."

But what of it all? Will any result follow from taking up a position of stern protest? We think so. We believe that already a drag has been put upon the "Down-Grade" wheel, and that inquiry has been aroused which will more effectually hinder the deplorable advance to ruin. But if not, what of that? Suppose a man should speak the truth in the name of the Lord, and no one should believe him; suppose that good as well as bad should judge him to be perverse and pragmatical; suppose he should be forsaken by those who were once his adherents and friends; and suppose that he should even die with the ill repute of being one who needlessly and in vain troubled Israel—what then? If in that which he had spoken he was true to his conscience, and to his God, what would he have lost by receiving no recognition from men? Lost! He would have been immeasurably the gainer, inasmuch as he would not have received his reward, but his crown would be laid up in heaven "against that day." At any rate, he would have glorified his Lord by having been enabled to say, "Although ministers should not proclaim the gospel, nor professors confess the faith; the constancy of the faithful shall fail, and even the most godly abide in cowardly silence; courage shall fail from the brave, and decision from the instructed; yet will I rejoice in the Lord and his eternal truth, yea, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

For practical purposes, in this cloudy and dark day, we call upon our brethren to be much in prayer for the revival and enlightenment of the church of God, and for the creation of religious interest among the great multitude. Everywhere there is apathy. Nobody cares whether that which is preached is true or false. A sermon is a sermon whatever the subject; only, the shorter it is the better. A free delivery, with a little pretentiousness, will make a great deal go down as gospel which the slightest gracious discrimination would utterly reject. Let us pray that religious life may be deepened and increased, so that men may instinctively discern between the precious and the vile.

Now also is the season for a clearer and more distinct enunciation of the foundation truths of the gospel. Preachers and teachers should go over again with distinctness and emphasis those glorious doctrines which are assuredly received among us. The preaching of the true is the best refutation of the false. The more the mind of God is made known among the people the less will they be swayed by the inventions of the mind of man. A diligent rehearsal of the main points of our heavenly charter will be wise and timely at this present.

For this magazine we ask the favorable remembrance of our readers, How could the protesting voice have been heard if it had not been for these pages? As a rule, the religious papers have united in a conspiracy of silence; or else they have culled from their correspondence letters unfavorable to the truth, and have printed them, while those which were on the right side have been excluded. It is of vital importance that every mouth which bears testimony for truth should be preserved. This much-sneered-at Sword and Trowel will carry on its twofold mission so long as its Editor has breath remaining; but it could do far more if its circulation were increased. The next year will be its twenty-fifth, and it ought to have a kind of Jubilee. To increase the circulation may seem a small matter to speak of, and yet it is not so. What is the use of a man speaking or writing if he has no audience? If an audience is desirable, is it not desirable that it should be increased? If his listeners and readers can be multiplied, is not the man thus enabled to do good on a wider scale? What is worth doing for a few is still more worth doing for many. We therefore invite our readers' help to enlarge our constituency. We will do our best to produce the magazine, and to speak boldly for the cause and kingdom of our Lord Jesus; and we ask on the part of our subscribers that they will provide for us open doors by introducing our monthly magazine to their friends and neighbors.

To most of our readers we are bound for ever by ties of gratitude for kindness rendered in many ways. Perhaps no man ever had such a host of constant and earnest friends as the Editor of this paper. To them all we send

## 1888 Sword and Trowel Preface

hearty greetings. God bless them all! May the eternal God be their refuge and their reward! In a short time we shall meet where Sword and Trowel shall be exchanged for harp and palm. So speedily will that day arrive that we joyously anticipate it, and would begin at once the heavenly fellowship which will express itself in the perfect harmony of the celestial song. As we said in the beginning, so say we at the close of this preface to the volume for 1888—

**THE LORD BE MAGNIFIED.**

The Lord liveth and reigneth: there is no defeat with him. No rage of the enemy can dim the luster of his truth, or hinder the going forth of his power.

**HALLELUJAH!**