

THE NERVOUS TEMPERAMENT AND ITS REMEDY.

A SERMON PREACHED AT ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, MURRUMBURRAH, ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27th, BY THE REV. H. E. THOMPSON—(Slightly abbreviated.)

Psalm lx. 12.—"Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up."

Psalm lv. 5.—"Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me."

We are not all constituted alike. The instrumentalities by which the great soul within us does its work are diverse in quality. In a material sense we are but dust, yet the dust has more steel in it with some than with others. Some have iron nerves and hereditary health which makes them strangers to the trepidations of others. They never walk those caves of terrible gloom in which others are often doomed to wander, nor have they felt that sensitiveness which often turns the experience of life into torture. I do not think that I have ever before spoken to you on the subject—so little known to some, but so keenly felt by others—of the nervous temperament. I wish to speak of the relation which the Gospel occupies towards it. I know that there are many anodynes of comfort and consolation, physical and mental, but my argument will be that the religion of Jesus Christ stands in a special relationship of solace and succour to those who feel with the Psalmist, "I am feeble and sore broken because of the disquietness of my heart."

We cannot help being in one sense what we were born. The sensitiveness of a highly-wrought system is born with many, and, do what they will, they must carry it with them to the grave. Often misunderstood, often misrepresented, often verging on despair, they are bowed down greatly and go mourning all the day long. Much depends of course on the law of association and on relationships of persons and things: much depends on religious ideas. There is for instance a form of piety, sincere enough in itself, which feels ever tremulous and uncertain concerning its own state. How different this is from the rest which comes from entire trust in Christ. How devoid it is of the consolation which God would have us partake of when He says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and say unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received at the Lord's hands double for all her sins."

Then again there are human relationships which, instead of being ministrants of consolation, strain the heart and irritate the nerves. Oh, the depression that must come, the anxiety which will do its wear and tear, that it derived from alliance with unthankful and foreboding hearts, from fellowship with those who if they do not know the science of disengagement are at all events well up in its practice. When Moses spoke to Israel in the wilderness, he had in his thoughts the carping spirit of those whose criticism suggests difficulty and danger too great to be overcome. Some people always see lions in the way, always prophecy difficulties. Thus he spoke of some who said, "Whither shall we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying the people are greater and taller than we: the cities are great and walled up to heaven." What an example this gives of those whose imaginations are constantly picturing giants.

Now I do not say that the words of my texts are spoken by a nervous temperament. They simply represent special occasions of depression in the Psalmist's life: but I do say that they are suitable for the subject in hand.

The true philosophy of life is life in Christ: not in self, not in society, but in Christ. We have to go out of ourselves, dear friends, out of our moods and feelings; that we may look unto Christ and be saved. I am speaking of those who are nervously anxious and sensitive. Christ is a perfect brother as well as a perfect Saviour. Redemption is His. Yes, and our common home life also is His. The great realm of Providence is under His sceptre, all things are given into His hands, and He is Lord of all. I want you to meditate well on this subject when you are tempted to be morbid analysts of your own spiritual state, when you are inclined to use the scales of weights and measurement for the depth of your love and the height of your faith. There can be no escape from alarms so long as we are applying *aguias fortis* to the gold of our affections, so long as we are microscopically surveying the minutiae of our neglected duties and our multitudinous sins. We must ponder the consolatory words, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

And this argument applies as much to the ordinary life of every day. Do things "happen" to us, or are our times in God's hands? Our dread of fatalism, with its results of inertia and indifference, has sometimes hindered that quiet trust in the divine providence for us all, which is the secret of all true strength of heart, all real rest in God. Events are in His hands: you cannot alter things: you cannot add one cubit to your stature. You will become worn and weary with retrospective fears. And what power have you over the dark deep waves of coming trouble?

"Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me." We, none of us know how frail we are till trouble comes. A few years ago the light-hearted maiden little thought that

care would so soon write itself upon her forehead, and that the silver would so early be scattered in her hair. Yet so it is. A mother now, she has to endure the anxieties of home, the care of children, perhaps the pangs of bereavement.

There are some constitutions that can bear almost anything, brave anything. They can keep hale and well, with the pulse even, and the eye bright, amid difficulties that would overwhelm others. Let them thank God for the perfection of their physical frame. But there are some that only seem robust and bright, and when tribulation comes their strength gives way rapidly. The physician says, "The vascular system is excellent, the muscles strong, the frame perfect, but the nervous system is fragility itself." Surely for such at such times it is heart-ree to know the "Brother born for adversity," surely then is the hour to feel the warm radiance of the love of Christ. To a nervous temperament doubt means misery and darkness. And in such a world as this, where we never know what a day may bring forth, it is surely wise to obey the counsel concerning God, "Acquaint thyself with Him, and be at peace."

Quite a different cause of weariness and nervousness is to be found in the burden of earnest thought and noble endeavour. How few but those who have been for years engaged in mental work can understand the depression that sometimes arises from it. Professional men understand it, and it is this that breaks them down, too often. It is a common disease of the excited life which many good people seem called to pursue, in which the imagination and sensibilities are constantly in exercise. Preachers, philanthropists, strenuous labourers in every good cause, exhaust their energies in ministering to others' needs, and after exhibiting pictures of cheerfulness and animation in public, sink when alone into occasional collapse.

In the finest minds there is not seldom a fretfulness and dissatisfaction with the results of life. There is a querulousness, an instinct for fault-finding, to which our weakness tempts us, and which we seem to imagine we are entitled to indulge as a personal luxury. . . . Listen to one of England's greatest poets:—

"When I consider life 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit,
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay:
To-morrow's false as to-day."

Another poet, while still young, says:—

"I could lie down like a tired child
And weep away this life of care,
Which I have borne and still must bear."

It is thus that some minds fix their eyes on the darkness which is caused by self intercepting the rays of an ideal light.

There are ministrations for the nervous—ministrations that are human as well as divine. We can perform miracles of healing. Not in the old sense, yet wonders of a restorative nature are within our reach. Is it a child that is nervous and sensitive? See that you early discern the difference between that little trembling spirit and the stronger brother. Is it a life companion? See that you do not treat this sensitiveness as a mere weakness to be cured by physical agencies alone. The best curative will be a cheerful mind. Settled melancholy is terrible. Try and avert it by ministries of hope and comfort and cheer. It is said of Wilberforce that he brought a ray of sunshine over every threshold which he crossed.

We often talk of courage without fully understanding its philosophy. It is altogether a relative thing. It is easy for some who are born strong, to be physically brave: it is easy for some to be determined and defiant. It does not spoil their rest at night to fight battles for themselves or others. But with the nervous to act out all the truth that is in them is a costly affair. It seems to tear their strength to pieces. To bear the slight of neglect or the wound of insult is to them like a crown of thorns on the head.

Yes, and with them happiness, like the life of a plant, has its nerve-centres in other hearts. The best medicine for such is to be understood and to be appreciated. You cannot talk down or laugh down nervousness: you cannot argue down sensitiveness: you cannot even do all you desire to do: but you can do much. And the evening of life will bring you no sweeter reward than for your Lord's sake to have fulfilled the Scriptural command, "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ."

We have to teach the Cross in its spirit as well as in its doctrine—in its beautiful revelation that Christ, the highest and strongest of all, suffered for us, that He was despised and rejected of men for us, that He gave Himself for us. Remember that you stand in Christian relation to the timorous, the sensitive and the nervous; and ever seek to manifest the spirit of Him who would not break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax.

There must be a study of the disease in order to understand the remedies. That is why I asked you to meditate on the nervous temperament itself. How unreal are its images. How it trembles at the idea of solitude: how it fears the morrow: how it bows in gloom before the advent of disease or death. You cannot see the delicate network of the nerves, you cannot understand the mysterious activities and functions of the brain. And how easily nervousness is promoted by self-indulgence and sloth, by morbid books, by companionships with those who take foreboding views of life, and by dominant fixed ideas, so difficult to shake off. It is not in medicine to cure this: it may alleviate, but it cannot recreate. And all cannot afford change of scene and

change of climate. Earthly appliances are right in their own way, but, if I am right, the Gospel of Christ is the only relieving power: that alone brings out fully the blessed revelation of the Fatherhood of God. . . . Christ alone can interpret life in all its meaning. He knows how sad hopelessness is. He came not to save the hale, the strong, the righteous alone. He came also to "take the lambs in His arms and carry them in His bosom." . . . As there is a Cross for every one of us there is also a Gethsemane. And if we would bear the Cross with fortitude we can gain the power only as we follow the Master to the Garden. Let us watch with Him there, pray with Him there, and there shall be given us that peace which the world cannot give, and which neither tumult nor pain nor death can ever take from us.

O brethren, there can be no dread, rightly, about the path of those whose guide be God. There may be dread in the wilderness if the guide be forsaken. The way may lead through unutterable gloom and terror if in the moment of peril, the warm touch of the hand of the Guiding Angel escapes our grasp. This is a drear world to be out in alone. But by the act of God, *no soul is alone*. The fact that God is our Leader tells us nothing about the way and its terrors. He has nowhere said that it is along sunny slopes and beside purring streams, that He has said—and to this He has pledged His name—that there is a spell cast on every terror, that there is a star gleaming in the depth of every gloom. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods they shall not overflow thee." Let us pray, "Lord increase our faith," and we shall be not only kept in quietness and hope ourselves, but shall be made channels through which divine blessings come to others.

WAS IT A GHOST THEY SAW?

Mrs. H. H. JENNINGS lives at No. 211, Main Street, Bridgeport, and Miss Minnie Parrot boards with her. The house is an old one, but in good order. One night early in December (1891) the two women looked all the doors and went to the theatre, leaving not a soul in the house. They left the gas burning, however, in the front parlour. At about half-past eleven they returned, and entered the house laughing and talking. But as they went into the parlour the merry humour died out of them in a second. Right in the middle of the room stood a dark man of gigantic stature. The upper part of his face was concealed by a mask, his eyes gleaming through the eyeholes in it. His shirt-sleeves were rolled up, and in one hand he carried a long old-fashioned pistol. The women fled screaming from the room and when Mr. Jennings came in five minutes later he found no one in the parlour and all the doors and windows securely locked. What was it the women saw?

"During a recent period of ill-health," writes an American friend, "I had slept badly for several successive nights. On the fourth of these nights about two o'clock, I was suddenly aroused from a doze by what seemed like the calling of my name; and at the foot of the bed stood the image of my mother just as she looked five years before, as she was leaving home to go on a journey, on which journey she was killed in a railway disaster. I screamed and shouted. I was foolish enough to tell of it, and the local old women gossips said it was a summons and I would never get well. Yet I did, and am in perfect health now. I believe that vision came of my weak nerves, for I've never seen it since, and it's more than three years ago now."

No doubt it was the nerves. Why, there's no end to the tricks the nerves will play off on you when your system is out of condition. In March, 1880, it was, that Mrs. Jane Foster, of Darroott Road, Pikesdown, Hants, wrote as follows:—

"I was so dreadfully nervous I could not bear anyone in the room with me, yet I did not wish them far away in case I should call out for help. This was in June, 1889. I slept very badly, and in the morning felt little the better for having gone to bed. There was often a severe pain in my head and over my eyes, and I was sick most of the time. My skin was dry and yellow, and the stomach and bowels felt cold and dead. By-and-by I had to lie helpless in bed. The doctor said he did not know what my complaint was. I took nothing but liquid food, and could not retain even that on my stomach. By this time I was nothing but skin and bone. My memory completely failed. My head ached so dreadfully I thought I should lose my senses, and my friends agreed that I would never get better."

"I had given up all hope, when one day Mrs. West, of Bournemouth, called and asked what I was taking. She told me she was herself once just as badly off, and was cured by Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. As she seemed to have so much faith in the medicine, I tried it, and in three days I was able to walk across the room, and by the end of the week I went downstairs. Now I am as well as ever. I can eat and digest my food, and all my nervousness has left me."

The malady Mrs. Foster suffered from was indigestion and dyspepsia and nervous prostration. The original cause was grief and shock at the violent death of her husband, by accident, and the system rallied only when the Syrup had given new vigour to the digestion and thus fed and toned the nerves.

Whatever may be your opinion of the Bridgeport ghost, it remains true that most uncanny visions and sounds mean nothing more or less than a set of nerves all upset by indigestion and dyspepsia. Ghosts come from the inside of the person who sees them, and when Mother Seigel's Syrup does its work the eyes and ears entertain only what is natural and wholesome.

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The Australian Record.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Personalia. The Rev. CHAS. KINGSLEY COLE of Newport (Diocese of Melbourne) has accepted (subject to the approval of the PRIMATE) the Curacy of All Saint's Mission Church, Petersham. We regret that the Rev. E. S. MOBERLY, of Waleha, is still very weak, and not likely to take duty for some time. The Rev. J. B. BANKS has been appointed to the Incumbency of Taruagalla, in the Diocese of Melbourne. The Rev. J. H. GREGORY has been presented with a cheque and an illuminated address on his retirement from the Incumbency of All Saint's, St. Hilda, after holding that office 38 years. Dr. GOODE has resigned his position as Churchwarden of Holy Trinity, Orange.

Ourselves. In consequence of Thursday next being a public holiday (Prince of Wales' Birthday), we desire to apprise our correspondents and friends that we shall be compelled to go to press a day earlier than usual. It will help us very much if our friends will send "copy" early in the week. To ensure insertion, correspondence should reach us on Tuesday morning.

Tercentenary of the Reformation in Sweden. The ARCHBISHOP OF CANTEBURY has addressed a letter of congratulation to the ARCHBISHOP OF UPPSALA, Primate of the Swedish Church, on the recent Festival of the Tercentenary of the Reformation in Sweden.

A Disappointed Ritualist. We extract the following letter from the *Church Review*:—"We hear a good deal

nowadays of how the Catholic party has 'triumphed all along the line,' and how 'we have now got all we want,' etc. No doubt there has in the last sixty years been an increase in mere aestheticism, in the prettiness so to speak, of Divine worship; but it is as well to see occasionally where we really are, and not to go on living in a fool's paradise, and congratulating ourselves on having won, when the fight has really little more than begun. I look, for instance, in the last edition of the *Tourist's Church Guide*, where I find a list of 5,042 churches having a weekly Celebration. Deducting 1,000 which are not in England, we have in round numbers 4000 churches with a weekly Celebration. But there are in England 13,000 parish and district churches. It follows, therefore, that there are still 9,000 churches without even weekly Communion. And of the 4,000 which have a weekly Celebration, one-fourth do not appear to have even the Eastward Position. Nearly 1,700, or about one-eighth, are credited with using lights, but of these many only do so at early services—often, that is, only twice a month. With regard to vestments, they all appear to be used in 790 Churches or one in sixteen, and of these about half only use linen vestments, which are not, such as were in use in this Church of England in the second year of Edward VI., as ordered by the Rubric. Incense fares still worse, and is apparently in one out of a hundred. "In every place incense shall be offered to My Name," etc. The Daily Sacrifice has been restored in one church out of fifty. On the other hand, the Protestant heresy of Evening Communion grows apace and is not, like the Scriptural use of incense, frowned upon and stamped out by our Fathers in God. I cannot help noticing, too, how, that the fast days are more and more neglected by so-called Catholics, and also that in many churches which boast a more or less correct ritual no word is ever breathed as to confession. I myself attend a church which is supposed to be Catholic, and when away from home I always do my best to find one; but it is a fact that more than two years have elapsed since I heard confession so much as hinted at from the pulpit. Surely, then, in the face of all this (and I would add much more, but refrain, from consideration of your space) we need rather gird ourselves for the fight than sit down and persuade ourselves that we have won it."

The Pope and Socialists. The Pope is preparing another encyclical on the social question, which will contain rules for the Clergy to follow in dealing with Socialists. It is said that he has especially consulted the Bishops in Germany and France, where the Socialists have obtained the greatest ascendancy.

Rome's Claims. CANON POTTER demolishes Rome's claim of universal supremacy in the following vigorous words:—"What is the foundation of this preposterous claim to universal supremacy? First of all, the assumption that St. Peter was Bishop of Rome. Now, that assumption is not capable of historic proof. It is nothing better than a more or less probable tradition. But let us admit for the sake of argument that St. Peter was, as the tradition says, Bishop of Rome for twenty-five years. What follows? St. Peter is treated in Scripture as first of the Apostles in order, first among equals, but never as possessed with authority over them. We know that St. Paul resisted him to the face because he stood condemned. Imagine a Bishop of the Roman obedience saying that of the Pope nowadays! I am afraid if he did that he'd very soon find himself, as they say, in Queer Street. Again St. Peter once attended a Council of the Church in Jerusalem, as we read in Acts xv. Did he preside at it as being supreme over all the Apostles? Not he! St. James, who was President of the Church there, presided, and St. Peter took his place among the other Apostles. Imagine the Pope attending a Council of Bishops in Jerusalem, or in Canterbury, and taking his place among the other Bishops while the Bishop of Jerusalem presided in Jerusalem and the Archbishop of Canterbury in Canterbury! Yet, why shouldn't he? What was good enough for St. Peter ought to be good enough for any of his successors."

Marriage of Precentor. We offer our sincere congratulations to the Precentor and his Bride on the occasion of their marriage, a notice of which will be found in another column.

How was the Church of Rome founded. CANON POTTER's contribution respecting the origin of the Church of England is not only valuable but most humorous. He treats ARCHBISHOP CARR's contention that the early British Churches were Roman as "a very notable historical joke," and the Archbishop will find something to ponder over in the following:—"But there is one Church which is undoubtedly of direct Eastern origin, and that is the Church of Rome herself. She was founded by Greek-speaking Missionaries from Palestine and Syria. Her liturgy for hundreds of years was Greek; her early Bishops, if we are to accept her own tradition, were Greeks by language and Eastern men by race. Does the Church of Rome, therefore, submit herself to the Churches of Antioch and Jerusalem, and take her laws and her Government from them? Not she. She not only refuses allegiance to them, but she claims their allegiance. She is the daughter of the Eastern Churches, and yet she claims to be their mother and mistress. It was quite fair that she should claim the right to govern herself, but not to govern her mother in the bargain. Of course her mother declines to submit, and gets herself denounced for schism by her daughter. And then the daughter turns to her own daughter, and demands of her the submission that she herself refuses to her mother. But we say No; if the Roman Church is our mother, certainly the Eastern Church is our grandmother, and we prefer to govern ourselves without assistance, until our mother and grandmother have settled their little differences. Then we'll see."

A New Campaign. It is reported in the American Catholic papers that the Paulist Fathers are planning a new aggressive campaign for the purpose of converting protestants to Roman Catholicism. They say that hitherto the chief effort of the Church has been to make Catholics more Catholic. Now they must go direct to Protestants and put before them the claims of the Church and the need of membership in it.

Why do people sleep in Church. JOSIAH OLDFIELD propounds a novel theory in the *Vegetarian*. The people are hypnotised through the ear. The subdued light, the hush of silence, the concentration of attention on a single figure, present conditions very similar to those enforced at spiritualistic seances. Where Priesthood most prevails the hypnotism is greatest. It is least in dissenting Churches, because there the voice is more broken up, and the attention consequently distracted. We had thought that dulness had a good deal to do with Church sleepiness.

Drink and Divorce. The *Union Signal* states that in the State of New York last year 1400 men secured divorces from their wives on the ground of drunkenness, and during the same year over 12000 wives secured divorces for the same cause.

The Poets and Theology. The poets have had most to do with the broadening of theology during the present century—this is the thesis Dr. STOPFORD A. BROOKE maintains in his new booklet, 'The Development of Theology as Illustrated in English Poetry from 1780 to 1830.' He passes in review the theological ideas of WILLIAM BLAKE, COWPER, BURNS, COLERIDGE, WORDSWORTH, BYRON, and SHELLEY, and contends that by the ideas they inculcated they led to the revolt against the Calvinist views of God's character and human destiny, and popularised the ideas of Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood. Some of the poets, as COWPER and WORDSWORTH, were more liberal in their poetry than in their private theology. 'SHELLEY, more than any other poet, far more than TENNYSON or BROWNING, has kept before our eyes, and ennobled into amazing beauty, that doctrine of our new theology which looks forward to the full generation of mankind; to all men equal in love, and, therefore, equal in happiness, freed from love because established in the love which fulfils the law, and enjoying a new heaven and a new earth.' The publisher is Mr. PHILIP GREEN, Essex-street, Strand.

Unclaimed Images. According to Russian Law Images and other objects of worship when shipped by railroad or boat and not claimed cannot be sold like other goods. The Government has decided that in the future such objects shall be presented to the nearest Church or Chapel.

A Roman Procession in East London. In accordance with annual custom, there was a procession on a recent Sunday through the streets of the Tower-Hill district in connection with the Roman Church of the English Martyrs in Great Prescott-street. The function was announced as being "in honour of our Blessed Lady." There was a large concourse of spectators throughout the route, which comprised Leman-street, Dock-street, Upper East Smithfield, Trinity Square, Tower-street, Crutched-friars, and Swan-street. The Guards of the League of the Cross encompassed the cavalcade, and encountered no difficulties. At the head of the procession was a crossbearer, with an acolyte on each side of him. Then came the Tower-hill brass and drum and life bands, followed by men Ransomers, the Banner of our Lady of Ransom, women Ransomers, Confraternity of Holy Family (women), Blue Cross Banner, Wapping Brass band, choir, Red Cross banner, boys of the school, Children of Mary, with banner, twelve little children veiled and wreathed in white, a statue of "Our Lady," borne in Sedan-chair fashion by four veiled young women, a guard of honour of twelve men with staves, children in white with bannerettes, the Peckham brass band, the Tower-Hill choir, altar-boys, the White Cross banner, priests, etc. During the progress of the procession several hymns, litanies, etc., were sung with great fervency. Here are extracts, the last of which is deserving of more than passing notice:—

"Faith of our fathers! Mary's prayers
Shall win our country back to thee;
And through the truth that comes from God
England shall then indeed be free."

"Oh! When we gaze on
Her glory restored;
Oh! when will poor England
Return to her Lord?"

"Behold in St. Paul's
The sweet Mother replaced,
And Westminster now with
Her image is graced."

The Special Articles in the AUSTRALIAN RECORD this week include:—

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