

# SERMONS

BY THE

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*“Crumbs Swept Up,” “The Abominations of Modern Society,” etc.*

DELIVERED IN THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

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# S E R M O N S .



## SUNDOWN.

“ At eventime it shall be light.”—*Zechariah* xiv. 7.

WHILE “ night,” in all languages, is the symbol for gloom and suffering, it is often really cheerful, bright, and impressive. I speak not of such nights as come down with no star pouring light from above, or silvered wave tossing up light from beneath—murky, hurtling, portentous, but such as you often see when the pomp and magnificence of heaven turn out on night-parade ; and it seems as though the song which the morning stars began so long ago were chiming yet among the constellations, and the sons of God were shouting for joy. Such nights the sailor blesses from the forecandle, and the trapper on the vast prairie, and the belated traveller by the road-side, and the soldier from the tent, earthly hosts gazing upon heavenly, and shepherds guarding their flocks afield, while angel hands above them set the silver bells a ringing : “ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace ; good will toward men.”

What a solemn and glorious thing is night in the wilderness ! Night among the mountains ! Night on the ocean ! Fragrant night among tropical groves ! Flashing night amid arctic severities ! Calm night on Roman Campagna ! Awful night among the Cordilleras ! Glorious night 'mid sea after a tempest ! Thank God for the night ! The moon and the stars which rule it are light-houses on the coast, toward which I hope we are all sailing, and blind mariners are we



if, with so many beaming, burning, flaming glories to guide us, we cannot find our way into the harbour.

My text may well suggest that, as the natural evening is often luminous, so it shall be light in the evening of our sorrows—of old age—of the world's history—of the Christian life.

“At eventime it shall be light.”

I. This prophecy will be fulfilled in the evening of *Christian sorrow*. For a long time it is broad daylight. The sun rides high. Innumerable activities go ahead with a thousand feet, and work with a thousand arms, and the pickaxe struck a mine, and the battery made a discovery, and the investment yielded its twenty per cent., and the book came to its twentieth edition, and the farm quadrupled in value, and sudden fortune hoisted to high position, and children were praised, and friends without number swarmed into the family hive, and prosperity sang in the music, and stepped in the dance, and glowed in the wine, and ate at the banquet, and all the gods of music, and ease, and gratification gathered around this Jupiter holding in his hands so many thunderbolts of power. But every sun must set, and the brightest day must have its twilight. Suddenly the sky was overcast. The fountain dried up. The song hushed. The wolf broke into the family fold and carried off the best lamb. A deep howl of woe came crashing down through the joyous symphonies. At one rough twang of the hand of disaster the harpstrings all broke. Down went the strong business firm! Away went long-established credit! Up flew a flock of calumnies! The new book would not sell! A patent could not be secured for the invention. Stocks sank like lead. The insurance company exploded. “How much,” says the sheriff, “will you bid for this piano?” “How much for this library?” “How much for this family picture?” “How much? Will you let it go at less than half price? Going—*going*—GONE!” Will the grace of God hold one up in such circumstances? What have

become of the great multitude of God's children who have been pounded of the flail, and crushed under the wheel, and trampled under the hoof? Did they lie down in the dust, weeping, wailing, and gnashing their teeth? Did they, like Job, curse God, and want to die because they had boils? When the rod of fatherly chastisement struck them, did they strike back? Because they found one bitter cup on the table of God's supply, did they upset the whole table? Did they kneel down at their empty money vault and say, "All my treasures are gone?" Did they stand by the grave of their dead, saying, "There never will be a resurrection?"

Did they bemoan their thwarted plans and say, "The stocks are down—would God I were dead?" Did the night of their disaster come upon them moonless, starless, dank, and howling, smothering and choking their life out? No! No! No! At eventime it was light. The swift promises overtook them. The eternal constellations, from their circuit about God's throne, poured down an infinite lustre. Under their shining the billows of trouble took on crests, and plumes of gold, and jasper, and amethyst and flame. All the trees of life rustled in the midsummer air of God's love. The night-blooming assurances of Christ's sympathy filled all the atmosphere with heaven. The soul at every step seemed to start up from its feet bright-winged joys, warbling heavenward. "It is good that I have been afflicted," cries David. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," exclaims Job. "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," says St. Paul. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," exclaims John, in apocalyptic vision. At eventime it was light. Light from the cross! Light from the promises! Light from the throne! *Streaming, joyous, outgushing, everlasting* LIGHT!

II. The text shall find fulfilment in the *time of old age*. It is a grand thing to be young—to have the sight clear, and the hearing acute, and the step elastic, and all our pulses marching on to the drumming of a stout heart.

Mid-life and old age will be denied many of us, but youth—we all know what that is. Those wrinkles were not always on your brow. That snow was not always on your head. That brawny muscle did not always bunch your arm. You have not always worn spectacles. Grave and dignified as you now are, you once went coasting down the hill-side, or threw off your hat for the race, or sent the ball flying sky-high. But youth will not always last. It stays only long enough to give us exuberant spirits, and broad shoulders for burden-carrying, and an arm with which to battle our way through difficulties. Life's path, if you follow it long enough, will come under a frowning crag and cross trembling causeway. Blessed old age, if you let it come naturally. You cannot hide it. You may try to cover the wrinkles, but you cannot cover the wrinkles. If the time has come for you to be old, be not ashamed to be old. The grandest things in all the universe are old. Old mountains; old rivers; old seas; old stars; and an old eternity. Then do not be ashamed to be old, unless you are older than the mountains, and older than the stars.

How men and women will lie! They say they are forty, but they are sixty. They say they are twenty, but they are thirty. They say they are sixty, but they are eighty. How some people will lie!

Glorious old age, if found in the way of righteousness! How beautiful the old age of Jacob, leaning on the top of his staff; of John Quincey Adams, falling with the harness on; of Washington Irving, sitting pen in hand, amid the scenes himself had made classical; of John Angell James, to the last proclaiming the Gospel to the masses of Birmingham; of Theodore Frelinghuysen, down to feebleness and emaciation devoting his illustrious faculties to the kingdom of God! At eventime it was light!

See that you do honour to the aged. A Philosopher stood at the corner of the street day after day, saying to the passers-by, "You will be an old man; you will be an old

man." "You will be an old woman: you will be an old woman." People thought that he was crazy. I do not think that he was. Smooth the way for that mother's feet; they have not many more steps to take. Steady those tottering limbs; they will soon be at rest. Plough not up that face with any more wrinkles; trouble and care have marked it full enough. Thrust no thorn into that old heart; it will soon cease to beat. "The eye that mocketh its father, and refuseth to obey its mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." The bright morning and hot noonday of life have passed with many. It is four o'clock! five o'clock! six o'clock! The shadows fall longer and thicker, and faster. *Seven o'clock! eight o'clock!* The sun has dipped below the horizon; the warmth has gone out of the air. *Nine o'clock! ten o'clock!* The heavy dews are falling; the activities of life's day are all hushed; it is time to go to bed. *Eleven o'clock! twelve o'clock!* The patriarch sleeps the blessed sleep, the cool sleep, the long sleep. Heaven's messengers of light have kindled bonfires of victory all over the heavens. *At eventime it is light.*  
LIGHT!

III. My text shall find fulfilment in the latter day of the Church. Only a few missionaries, a few churches, a few good men, compared with the institutions leprous and putrified.

It is early yet in the history of everything good. Civilization and Christianity are just getting out of the cradle. The light of martyr-stakes, flashing all up and down the sky, is but the flaming of the morning; but when the evening of the world shall come, glory to God's conquering truth, it shall be light. War's sword clanging back in the scabbard; intemperance buried under ten thousand broken decanters; the world's impurity turning its brow heavenward for the benediction, "Blessed are the pure in spirit;" the last vestige of selfishness submerged in heaven-descending charities; all China worshipping Dr. Abeel's Saviour; all

India believing in Henry Martyn's Bible ; aboriginal superstition acknowledging David Brainard's piety ; human bondage delivered through Thomas Clarkson's Christianity ; vagrancy coming back from its pollution at the call of Elizabeth Fry's Redeemer ; the mountains coming down ; the valleys going up : " holiness " inscribed on horses bell, and silkworm's thread, and brown-thrasher's wing, and shell's tinge, and manufacturer's shuttle, and chemist's laboratory, and king's sceptre, and nation's Magna Charta. Not a hospital, for there are no wounds ; not an asylum, for there are no orphans ; not a prison, for there are no criminals ; not an almshouse, for there are no paupers ; not a tear, for there are no sorrows. The long dirge of earth's lamentation has ended in the triumphal march of redeemed empires, the forests harping it on vine-strung branches, the water chanting it among the gorges, the thunders drumming it among the hills, the ocean giving it forth with its organs, tradewinds touching the keys, and Euroclydon's foot on the pedal. I want to see John Howard when the last prisoner is reformed ; I want to see Florence Nightingale when the last sabre wound has stopped hurting ; I want to see William Penn when the last Indian has been civilized ; I want to see John Huss when the last flame of persecution has been extinguished ; I want to see John Bunyan after the last pilgrim has come to the gate of the celestial city ; above all, I want to see Jesus after the last saint has his throne, and begun to sing *Hallelujah !*

You have watched the calmness and the glory of the evening hour. The labourers have come from the field. The heavens are glowing with an indescribable effulgence, as though the sun in departing had forgotten to shut the gate after it. All the beauty of cloud and leaf swim in the lake. For a star in the sky, a star in the water ; heaven above, and heaven beneath. Not a leaf rustling, or a bee humming, or a grasshopper chirping. Silence in the meadow ; silence among the hills.

Thus bright and beautiful shall be the evening of the world. The heats of earthly conflict are cool. The glory of heaven fills all the scene with love, and joy, and peace. At eventime it is *light!* LIGHT!

IV. Finally my text shall find fulfilment at the end of the Christian's life. You know how short a winter's day is, and how little work you can do. Now, my friends, life is a short winter's day. The sun rises at eight and sets at four. The birth-angel and the death-angel fly only a little way apart. Baptism and burial are near together. With one hand the mother rocks the cradle, and with the other she touches a grave.

I went into the house of one of my parishioners on Thanksgiving day. The little child of the household was bright and glad, and with it I bounded up and down the hall. Christmas day came, and the light of that household had perished. We stood, with black book, reading over the grave, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

But I hurl away this darkness. I cannot have you weep. Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, at eventime it shall be light!

I have seen many Christians die. I never saw any of them die in darkness. What if the billows of death do rise above our girdle, who does not love to bathe? What though other lights do go out in the blast, what do we want of them when all the gates of glory swing open before us, and from a myriad voices, a myriad harps, a myriad thrones, a myriad palaces, there dash upon us "Hosannah! Hosannah!"

"Throw back the shutters and let the sun come in," said dying Scoville M'Cullum, one of my Sabbath-school boys.

You can see Paul putting on robes and wings of ascension as he exclaims, "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith."

Hugh M'Kail went to one side of the scaffold of martyrdom and cried, "Farewell sun, moon and stars! farewell all earthly delights!" Then went to the other side of the

scaffold and cried, "Welcome God and Father! Welcome, sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant! Welcome death! Welcome glory!"

A minister of Christ in Philadelphia, dying, said in his last moments, "*I move into the light!*"

They did not go down doubting, and fearing, and shivering, but their battle cry rang through all the caverns of the sepulchre, and was echoed back from all the thrones of heaven, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?" Sing, my soul, of joys to come.

I saw a beautiful being wandering up and down the earth. She touched the aged, and they become young. She touched the poor, and they became rich. I said, "Who is this beautiful being, wandering up and down the earth?" They told me that her name was Death. What a strange thrill of jöy when the palsied Christian begins to use his arm again! When the blind Christian begins to see again! When the deaf Christian begins to hear again! When the poor pilgrim puts his feet on such pavement, and joins in such company, and has a free seat in such a great temple! Hungry men no more to hunger: thirsty men no more to thirst; weeping men no more to weep; dying men no more to die. Gather up all sweet words, all jubilant expressions, all rapturous exclamations; bring them to me and I will pour them upon this stupendous theme of the soul's disen-thralment! Oh! the joy of the spirits as it shall mount up toward the throne of God, shouting *Free! FREE!* Your eye has gazed upon the garniture of earth and heaven; but the eye hath not seen it. Your ear has caught harmonies uncounted and indescribable—caught them from harp's trill, and bird's carol, and waterfall's dash, and ocean's doxology, but the ear hath not heard it. How did those blessed ones get up into the light? What hammer knocked off their chains? What loom wove their robes of light? Who gave them wings? Ah! eternity is not long enough to tell it; seraphim have not capacity enough to realise it—the marvels

of redeeming love ! Let the palms wave ; let the crowns glitter ; let the anthems ascend : let the trees of Lebanon clap their hands—they cannot tell the half of it. Archangel before the throne, thou failest !

Sing on, praise on, ye hosts of the glorified ; and if with your sceptres you cannot reach it, and with your songs you cannot express it, then let all the myriads of the saved unite in the exclamation, “ JESUS ! JESUS ! JESUS ! ”

There will be a password at the gate of heaven. A great multitude come up and knock at the gate. The gatekeeper says, “ The password.” They say, “ We have no password. We were great on earth, and now we come up to be great in heaven.” A voice from within answers, “ I never knew you.” Another group came up to the gate of heaven and knock. The gatekeeper says, “ The password.” They say, “ We have no password. We did a great many noble things on earth. We endowed colleges, and took care of the poor.” The voice from within says, “ I never knew you.” Another group come up to the gate of heaven and knock. The gatekeeper says, “ The password.” They answer, “ We were wanderers from God, and deserved to die ; but we heard the voice of JESUS—” “ Ay ! ay ! ” says the gatekeeper, “ that is the password ! Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and let these people come in.” They go in and surround the throne, jubilant for ever !

Ah ! do you wonder that the last hours of the Christian on earth are illuminated by thoughts of the coming glory ?

Light in the evening. The medicines may be bitter. The pain may be sharp. The parting may be heart-rending. Yet, light in the evening. As all the stars of this night sink their anchors of pearl in lake, and river, and sea, so the waves of Jordan shall be illuminated with the down-flashing of the glory to come.

The dying soul looks up at the constellations. “ The Lord is my light and my salvation : whom shall I fear ? ”  
“ The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead



them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Close the eyes of the departed one : earth would seem tame to its enchanted vision. Fold the hands : life's work is ended. Veil the face : it has been transfigured.

Mr. Toplady, in his dying hour, said "Light." Coming nearer the expiring moment, he exclaimed, with illuminated countenance, "Light!" In the last instant of his breathing, he lifted up his hands and cried, "*Light!* LIGHT!"

Thank God for Light in the evening!

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### FOWL OF EVERY WING.

"All fowl of every wing."—*Ezekiel* xvii, 23.

THE cedar of Lebanon is a royal tree. It stands six thousand feet above the level of the sea. A missionary counted the concentric circles, and found one tree thirty-five hundred years old—long rooted, broad branched, all the year in luxuriant foliage. The same branches that bent in the hurricane that David saw sweeping over Lebanon, rock to-day over the head of the American traveller. This monarch of the forest, with his leafy fingers, plucks the honors of a thousand years, and sprinkles them upon its own uplifted brow, as though some great hallelujah of heaven had been planted upon Lebanon, and it were rising up with all its long-armed strength to take hold of the hills whence it came. Oh! what a fine place for birds to nest in! In hot days they come hither—the eagle, the dove, the swallow, the sparrow, and the raven.

My text intimates that Christ is the cedar, and the people from all quarters are the birds that lodge among the branches. "It shall be a goodly cedar, and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing." As in Ezekiel's time, so now

—Christ is a goodly cedar, and to him are flying all kinds of people—young and old, rich and poor ; men high-soaring as the eagle, those fierce as the raven, and those gentle as the dove. “ All fowl of every wing.”

First, the young may come, Of the eighteen hundred and seventy-one years that have passed, about sixteen hundred have been wasted by the good in misdirected efforts. Until Robert Raikes came, there was no organized effort for saving the young. We spend all of our strength trying to bend old trees, when a little pressure would have been sufficient for the sapling. We let men go down to the very bottom of sin before we try to lift them up. It is a great deal easier to keep a train on the track than to get it on when it is off. The experienced reinsman checks the fiery steed at the first jump, for when he gets in full swing, the swift hoofs clicking fire from the pavement, and the bit between his teeth, his momentum is irresistible. It is said that the young must be allowed to sow their “ wild oats.” I have noticed that those who sow their wild oats seldom try to raise any other kind of crop. Heaven is in one direction, hell is in another. If you are going to heaven, you had better take the straight road, and not try to go to Boston by the way of New Orleans. What is to be the history of this multitude of young people who sit and stand around me to-night? I will take you by the hand and show you a glorious sunrise. I will not whine about this thing, nor groan about it; but come, young men and maidens, Jesus wants you. His hand is love; his voice is music; his smile is heaven. Religion will put no handcuffs on your wrist, no hobbles on your feet, no brand on your forehead.

I went through the heaviest snow-storm I have ever known to see a dying girl. Her cheek on the pillow was white as the snow on the casement. Her large round eye had not lost any of its lustre. Loved ones stood all around the bed trying to hold her back. Her mother could not give her up; her father could not give her up:

and one nearer to her than either father or mother was frantic with grief. I said, "Fanny, how do you feel?" "Oh!" she says, "happy! happy! Mr. Talmage, tell all the young folks that religion will make them happy." As I came out of the room, louder than all the sobs and wailings of grief I heard the clear, sweet, glad voice of the dying girl: "Good night; we shall meet again on the other side of the river." The next Sabbath we buried her. We brought white flowers and laid them on the coffin. There was in all that crowded church but *one* really happy and delighted face, and that was the face of Fanny. Oh! I wish that to-night my Lord Jesus would go through this audience, and take all these flowers of youth and garland them on his brow. The cedar is a fit refuge for birds of brightest plumage and swiftest wing. See, they fly! they fly! "All fowl of every wing."

Again: I remark that the *old* may come. You say, "Suppose a man has to go on crutches; suppose he is blind; suppose he is deaf; suppose that nine-tenths of his life has been wasted." Then I answer, Come with crutches; come, old men, blind and deaf, come to Jesus. If you would sweep your hand around before your blind eyes, the first thing you would touch would be the cross. It is hard for an aged man or woman to have grown old without religion. Their taste has gone. The peach and the grape have lost their flavour. They say that somehow fruit does not taste as it used to. Their hearing gets defective, and they miss a great deal that is said in their presence. Their friends have all gone, and everybody seems strange. The world seems to go away from them, and they are left all alone. They begin to feel in the way when you come into the room where they are: and they move their chair nervously, and say, "I hope I am not in the way." Alas! that father and mother should ever be in the way. When you were sick, and they sat up all night rocking you, singing to you, administering to you, did they think that you were

in the way? Are you tired of the old people? Do you snap them up quick and sharp? God will curse you to the bone for your ingratitude and unkindness.

Oh! it is hard to be old without religion—to feel this world going away, and nothing better coming. If there be any here who have gone far on without Christ, I address you deferentially. I call you my father and mother. You have found this a tough world for old people. Alas! to have aches and pains, and no Christ to soothe them. I want to give you a cane better than that you lean on. It is the cane that the Bible speaks of when it says, “Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me,” I want to give you better spectacles than those you now look through. It is the spiritual eyesight of divine grace. Christ will not think that you are in the way. Does your head tremble with the palsy of old age? Lay it on Christ’s bosom. Do you feel lonely now that your companions and children are gone? I think Christ has them. They are safe in his keeping. Very soon he will take you where they are. I take hold of your arm as any son would take hold of the arm of a father, and try to lead you to a place where you can put down all your burden. Go with me. Only a little while longer, and your sight will come again, and your hearing will come again, and with the strength of an immortal athlete you will step on the pavement of heaven. No crutches in heaven; no sleepless nights in heaven; no dim eyes in heaven; no cross looks for old people. Dwelling there for ages, no one will say, “Father, you know nothing about this; step back; you are in the way!”

Oh, how many dear old folks Jesus has put to sleep! How sweetly he has closed their eyes! How gently folded their arms! How he has put his hand on their silent hearts and said, “Rest now, tired pilgrim. It is all over. The tears will never start again. Hush! hush! So he gives his beloved sleep.” I think the most beautiful object on earth is an old Christian—the hair white, not with the frosts of

winter, but with the blossoms of the tree of life. I never feel sorry for a Christian old man. Why feel sorry for those upon whom the glories of the eternal world are about to burst. They are going to the goodly cedar. Though their wings are heavy with age, God shall renew their strength like the eagle, and they shall make their nest in the cedar. "All fowl of every wing."

Again: The very bad, the outrageously sinful, may come.

Men talk of the grace of God, as though it were so many yards long and so many yards deep. People point to the dying thief as an encouragement to the sinner. How much better it would be to point to our own case and say, "If God saved us, he can save anybody."

There may be those here who never had one earnest word said to them about their souls. Consider me as putting my hand on your shoulder and looking in your eye. God has been good to you. You ask, "How do you know that? He has been very hard on me." "Where did you come from?" "Home." "Then you have a home. Have you ever thanked God for your home? Have you children?" "Yes." "Have you ever thanked God for your children? Who keeps them safe? Were you ever sick?" "Yes." "Who made you well? Have you been fed every day? Who feeds you? Put your hand on your pulse. Who makes it throb? Listen to the respiration of your lungs. Who helps you to breathe? Have you a Bible in the house, spreading before you the future life? Who gave you that Bible?" Oh! it has been a story of goodness and mercy all the way through. You have been one of God's pet children. Who has fondled you, and caressed you, and loved you? And when you went astray, and wanted to come back, did He ever refuse? I know of a father who, after his son came back the fourth time, said, "No; I forgave you three times, but I will never forgive you again." And the son went off and died, But God takes back his children the thousandth time as cheerfully as the first. As easily as with my handkerchief I

strike the dust off this book, God will wipe out all your sins. There are hospitals for "*incurables*." When men are hopelessly sick they are sent there. Thank God! there is no hospital for spiritual incurables. Though you had the worst leprosy that ever struck a soul, your flesh shall come again like the flesh of a little child.

O this mercy of God! I am told it is an ocean. Then I place on it four swift sailing craft, with compass and charts, and choice rigging, and skilful navigators, and I tell them to launch away, and discover for me the extent of this ocean. That craft puts out in one direction, and sails to the north; this to the south; this to the east: this to the west. They crowd on all their canvas, and sail ten thousand years, and one day come up the harbour of heaven, and I shout to them from the beach, "Have you found the shore?" and they answer, "No shore to God's mercy!" Swift angels dispatched from the throne, attempt to go across it. For a million years they fly and fly, but then come back and fold their wings at the foot of the throne, and cry, "No shore! no shore to God's mercy!"

Mercy! Mercy! Mercy! I sing it. I preach it. I pray it. Here I find a man bound hand and foot to the devil, but with one stroke of the hammer of God's truth the chains fall off and he is free for ever. Mercy! Mercy! Mercy! There is no depth it can not fathom; there is no height it can not scale; there is no infinity it can not compass. I take my stand under this goodly cedar, and see the flocks flying thither. They are torn with the shot of temptation, and wounded, and sick, and scarred. Some fought with iron beak; some once feasted on carcasses; some were fierce of eye and cruel of talon, but they came, flock after flock—"all fowl of every wing."

Again: all the dying will find their nest in this goodly cedar. It is cruel to destroy a bird's nest: but death does not hesitate to destroy one. There was a beautiful nest in next street. Lovingly the parents brooded over it. There

were two or three little robins in the nest. The scarlet fever thrust its hot hands into the nest, and the birds are gone. Only those are safe who have their nests in the goodly cedar. They have over them "the feathers of the Almighty." Oh! to have those soft, wram, eternal wings stretched over us! Let the storms beat, and the branches of the cedar toss on the wind—no danger. When a storm comes, you can see the birds flying to the woods. Ere the storm of death comes down, let us fly to the goodly cedar.

Of what great varieties will heaven be made up! There come men who once were hard and cruel, and desperate in wickedness, yet now, soft and changed by grace, they come into glory: "All fowl of every wing." And here they come, the children who were reared in loving home-circles, flocking through the gates of life: "All fowl of every wing." These were white, and came from Northern homes; these were black, and ascended from Southern plantations; these were copper-coloured, and went up from Indian reservations: "All fowl of every fowl."

So God gathers them up. It is astonishing how easy it is for a good soul to enter heaven. A prominent business man in Philadelphia went home one afternoon, lay down on the lounge, and said, "It is time for me to go." He was very aged. His daughter said to him, "Are you sick?" He said, "No; but it is time for me to go. Have John put it in two of the morning papers, that my friends may know that I am gone. Good-bye;" and as quick as that, God had taken him.

It is easy to go when the time comes. There are no ropes thrown out to pull us ashore; there are no ladders let down to pull us up. Christ comes and takes us by the hand, and says, "You have had enough of this; come up higher." Do you hurt a lily when you pluck it? Is there any rudeness when Jesus touches the cheek, and the red rose of health whitens into the lily of immortal purity and gladness?

 This is the Autumnal Sabbath. In a few weeks, sharp

shrill winds will blow up, and we will have the windows closed, and the giant of the woods will smite his anvil, and the leafy sparks will fly on the autumnal gale. Then there will be thousands of birds gathering in the tree at the corner of the field, just before departing to warmer climes, and they will call and sing until the branches drop with the melody. There is a better clime for us, and by-and-by we shall migrate. We gather in the branches of the goodly cedar, in preparation for departure. You heard our voices in the opening song; you will hear them in the closing song—voices good, voices bad, voices happy, voices distressful—“All fowl of every wing.” By-and-by we shall be gone. If all this audience is saved—as I hope they will be—I see them entering into life. Some have had it hard; some have had it easy. Some were brilliant; some were dull. Some were rocked by pious parentage; others have had their infantile cheeks scalded with the tears of woe. Some crawled, as it were, into the kingdom on their hands and knees, and some seemed to enter in chariots of flaming fire. Those fell from a ship’s mast; these were crushed in the Avondale disaster. They are God’s singing birds now. No gun of huntsman shall shoot them down. They gather on the trees of life, and fold their wings on the branches; and, far away from frosts, and winds, and night, they sing until the hills are flooded with joy, and the skies drop music, and the arches of pearl send back the echoes—“ALL FOWL OF EVERY WING.”

“Behold the saints, beloved of God,  
Washed are their robes in Jesus’ blood;  
Brighter than angels, lo! they shine,  
Their glories splendid and sublime.

“Through tribulation great they came;  
They bore the cross and scorned the shame;  
Now in the loving temple blessed,  
With God they dwell; on Him they rest.



“While everlasting ages roll,  
Eternal love shall feast their soul,  
And scenes of bliss, for ever new,  
Rise in succession to their view.

“Oh ! what a grand, exalted song,  
When every tribe and every tongue,  
Redeemed by blood, with Christ appear,  
And join in one full chorus there !

“My soul anticipates the day,  
Would stretch her wings, and soar away,  
To aid the song, the palm to bear,  
And bow, the chief of sinners there.”

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### THE RECKLESS PENKNIFE.

“When Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife.”—*Jeremiah xxxvi. 23.*

WE look in upon a room in Jerusalem. Two men are there. At the table sits Baruch the scribe, with a roll of parchment and an iron pen in his hand. The other man is walking the floor, as if strangely agitated. There is an unearthly appearance about his countenance, and his whole frame quakes as if pressed upon by something unseen and supernal. It is Jeremiah, in the spirit of prophesy. Being too much excited to write with his own hand the words that the Almighty pours upon his mind about the destruction of Jerusalem, he dictates to Baruch the scribe. It is a seething, scalding, burning denunciation of Jehoiakim, the king, and a prophecy of coming disasters.

Of course, Jehoiakim the king hears of the occurrence, and he sends Jehudi to obtain the parchment and read its contents.

It is winter. Jehoiakim is sitting in his comfortable winter house by a fire that glows upon the hearth, and lights up the faces of the lords, and princes, and senators who

have gathered to hear the strange document. Silence is ordered. The royal circle bent forward to listen. Every eye is fixed. Jehudi unrolls the book gleaming with the words of God, and as he reads the king frowns; his eye kindles; his cheek burns; his foot comes down with thundering indignation. He snatches the book from Jehudi's hand, feels for his knife, crumples up the book, and goes to work cutting it up with his penknife.

Thus God's book was permanently destroyed, and the king escaped. Was it destroyed? Did he escape? In a little while King Jehoiakim's dead body is hurled forth to blacken in the sun, and the only epitaph he ever had was that which Jeremiah wrote, "*Buried with the burial of an ass!*" while to restore the book which was destroyed, Baruch again takes his seat at the table, and Jeremiah walks the floor and again dictates the terrible prophecy.

It would take more penknives than cutler ever sharpened to hew into permanent destruction the Word of God. He who shoots at this eternal rock will feel the bullet rebound into his own torn and lacerated bosom. When the Almighty goes forth armed with the thunderbolts of his power, I pity any Jehoiakim who attempts to fight him with a penknife.

That Oriental scene has vanished, but it has been often repeated. There are thousands of Jehoiakims yet alive *who cut the Word of God with their penknives, and my object in this sermon is to designate a few of them.*

The first man I shall mention as thus treating the Word of God is the one who *receives a part of the Bible, but cuts out portions of it with his penknife and rejects them.* Jehoiakim showed as much indignity toward the scroll when he cut one way as when he cut the other. You might as well behead Moses as to behead Jonah. Yes, sir, I shall take *all* of the Bible or none. Men laugh at us as if we were the most gullible people in the world for believing in the genuineness of the Scriptures; but there can be no doubt that the Bible, as we have it, is the same—no more, no less—as God wrote

it. As to the books of the New Testament, the great writers of the different centuries give complete catalogues of their contents. Polycarp, Ignatius, Clemens Romanus, in the first century, give a catalogue of the New Testament Books; Tertullian, Justin Martyr, in the second century; Cyprian and Origen in the third century; Augustine, Jerome, and Eusebius in the fourth century. Their catalogues of the different books of the New Testament silence the suggestion that any new books could have been stealthily put in. How many books are on this stand? You say three—two Bibles and a hymn-book. There are twenty men here taking a list of these books. Would it be possible for any man to come on to this platform and lay a new book on this stand and you not know it? Neither was it possible for anybody to put an additional book into this New Testament when all the Christian world was watching.

As to the books of the old Testament, Christ sanctioned them by commending them to the Jews. If any part of the Old Testament had been uninspired, Christ would have said, "Search the Scriptures, all except that book of Jonah," or "Search the Scriptures, excepting the book of Esther." When Christ commends the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures to the people, he affirms his genuineness. There never could have been any interpolations in the Bible, for the Jews were constantly watching, and there were men whose lifetime business it was to attend to the keeping of the Scripture unadulterated. Besides this the Bible has always had enemies. If there had been any attempt at interpolation, Celsus in the second century, and Pophyry in the fourth century, would have proclaimed it. Yet they never even hinted at anything like a want of genuineness, although they despised the book. Far easier would it be for a man in this day to insert a long paragraph in the Farewell Address of Washington, or an entire canto in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, than it would have been for any man at any time to insert a foreign, uninspired book in the Bible.

No, sir ; I shall take all of the Bible or none. A man dies, having made a will. The people who expect a part of the inheritance assemble to hear the will read. The attorney reads it until he comes to a certain passage of the will, when one of the heirs cries out, "I reject that passage." The attorney reads on, and some one else says, "I reject that passage, while I accept all of the rest of the will." The heirs go before the surrogate and the judge decides : "You must take this will as a whole or not at all. You cannot break a part of it, and leave the rest intact." Now I say in regard to this Will of my Father, in respect to this last Will and Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, that if we break any part of the Will we break it all, and we lose our inheritance and go beggared through eternity.

By some shaft from hell, let the sun be cleft in twain, until, with shorn locks and dimmed eyes, he stumbles his way through the heavens ; but shear not this glorious old Bible of a single lock. The same infernal explosion that sent up into fragments a single book would shock the whole system of truth. Fire one house in a solid square, and into the whole block you hurl fiery destruction. Take one star from a whirling constellation, and the wheel of fire would crush on the highway of light ; and remove one orb from this constellation of Bible-books that revolve in splendour about Jesus, the central Sun, and heaven itself would shriek at the catastrophe, amid the weeping of a God !

No, sir ; you shall not rob me of a single word, of a single verse, of a single chapter, of a single book of my Bible. When life, like an ocean, billows up with trouble, and death comes, and our bark is sea-smitten, with halyards cracked and white sails flying in shreds, like a maniac's gray locks in the wind, then we will want God's Word to steer us off the rocks, and shine like light-houses through the dark channels of death, and with hands of light beckon our storm-tossed souls into the harbour. In that last hour take from me my pillow, take away all soothing draughts, take away

the faces of family and kindred, take away every helping hand and every consoling voice ; alone let me die on the mountain, on a bed of rock, covered only by a sheet of embroidered frost, under the slap of the night wind, and breathing out my life on the bosom of the wild, wintry blast, rather than in that last hour take from me my Bible. Stand off, then, ye carping, clipping, meddling critics, with your penknives !

I can think of only one right way in which the Bible may be divided. A minister went into a house, and saw a Bible on the stand, and said, " What a pity that this Bible should be so torn ! You do not seem to take much care of it. Half the leaves are gone." Said the man, " This was my mother's Bible, and my brother John wanted it, and I wanted it, and we could not agree about the matter, and so we each took a half. My half has been blessed to my soul, and his half has been blessed to his soul." That is the only way that I can think of in which the Word of God may be rightfully cut with a penknife.

The next man that I shall mention as following Jehoiakim's example is the infidel, *whoruns his knife through the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and rejects everything.* The hostility existing that night in that winter house among those lords and senators, exists yet. The enemies of this Book have gathered themselves into clubs, and have tried to marshal on their side chemist's laboratory, and astronomer's telescope, and geologist's pry, and mineralogist's hammer, and ornithologist's gun : and they have ransacked the earth and the heavens to see if they could not find arguments with which to refute the Bible, and baulk the Church, and clip the wing of the Apocalyptic angel. With the black hulk of their pirate craft they have tried to run down this Gospel ship speeding on errands of salvation. They have tried to stab patriarch and prophet, evangelist and apostle, with Jehoiakim's penknife. They say that the Bible is a very weak book, filled with big stories and Munchausen

adventures, and has no more authority than the Shaster of the Hindoo, or the Zend-Avesta of the Persian, or the Talmud of the Hebrew, or the Confucian writings of the Chinese, or the Sibyline books of the Romans, or the Koran of the Mohammedans.

Men strike their knife through this Book because they say that *the light of nature is sufficient*. Indeed! Have the fire-worshippers of India, cutting themselves with lancets until the blood spurts at every pore, found the light of nature sufficient? Has the Bornesian cannibal, gnawing the roasted flesh from human bones, found the light of nature sufficient? Has the Chinese woman, with her foot cramped and deformed into a cow's hoof, found the light of nature sufficient? Could the ancients see heaven from the heights of Ida or Olympus? No! I call upon the pagodas of superstition, the Brahminic tortures, the infanticide of the Ganges, the bloody wheels of the Juggernaut, to prove that the light of nature is *not* sufficient. A star is beautiful, but it pours no light into the midnight of a sinful soul. The flower is sweet, but it exudes no balm for the heart's wound. All the odours that ever floated from royal conservatory, or princely hanging-gardens, give not so much sweetness as is found in one waft from this Scripture mountain of myrrh and frankincense. All the waters that ever leaped in torrent or foamed in cascade, or fell in summer shower, or hung in morning dew, gave no such coolness to the fevered soul as the smallest drop that ever flashed out from the showering fountains of this Divine Book. If you like the light of nature better than that of revelation, why do you not go and root in the ground with the Hottentot; or go ride with the Laplander behind a team of dogs; or go help the Mexican pick cochineal; or go help the Arabs lasso the wild horse; or the Turk hunt for gall-nuts and meerschaum. I bring China, and India, and Siberia, and Ethiopia, and Tartary, and New Holland, and Persia, and Hindostan, to prove, before all the hosts of hell, and the armies of heaven, and

the nations of the earth, that the light of nature is not sufficient. "*What must I do to be saved?*" Sweltering nations have knelt at the feet of the Himalayan Mountains for ages asking that question, but the mountains made no response. Not one of the old peaks stooped down to lift a single soul on its shoulder into the heavens. Still the people cry, and still the mountains are silent—" *What must I do to be saved?*" Nations, in blindness and death, have knelt on the beach of the Persian Gulf, and Bengal Bay, and Caspian Sea, moaning out that question, but there was nothing in all the tumbling surf that responded. The winds mocked, and the waves spit their spray into the face of the dying nations. And so the cry went round the world, but the desert spoke not, and the Alps were silent, and the stars were dumb, and all the caverns, and hills, and seas but echoed back the dismal cry, "*What must I do to be saved?*" The light of nature is not sufficient.

Infidels strike their penknife through this Book because they say that *it is cruel and indecent*. There are things in Ezekiel and Solomon's Songs that they don't want read in their families. Ah! if the Bible is so pernicious, just show me somebody that has been spoiled by it. A thousand dollars reward if you will show me a man who has been made cruel, or obscene, or reckless by the Bible. While you are trying in vain to pick out such an one, I will show you five hundred men in this audience who have by it been tamed out of rudeness, and lifted up out of sin, and enriched with innumerable virtues.

Again they strike their penknife through this Bible because it is so full of *unexplained mysteries*. What! will you not believe anything you cannot explain? Have you finger-nails? You say "Yes." Explain why, on the tip of your finger, there comes a nail. You cannot tell me. You believe in the law of gravitation; explain it, if you can. I can ask you a hundred questions about your eyes, about your ears, about your face, about your

feet, that you cannot answer, and yet you find fault that I cannot answer all the questions you may ask about this Bible. I would not give a farthing for the Bible if I could understand everything in it. I would know that the heights and depths of God's truth were not very great if, with my poor infinite mind, I could reach everything. A plain farmer said to a sceptic, "The mysteries of the Bible do not bother me. I read the Bible as I eat fish. In eating fish, when I come across a bone, I do not try to swallow it, but I lay it one side. When, in reading the prophecies, I come across that which is inexplicable, I say, 'There is a bone,' and I lay it one side. When I find something in a doctrine that staggers my reason, I say, 'That is a bone,' and I lay it one side." Alas ! my friends, that men should choke themselves to death with bones of mystery, when there is so much meat in this Bible on which the soul may get strong for eternity.

Again, the infidel strikes his penknife through this book, because he says, *if it were God's book, the whole world would have it.* He says that it is not to be supposed that if God had anything to say to the world, he would say it only to the small part of the human race who actually possess the Bible. To this I reply that the fact that only a part of the race receives anything is no ground for believing that God did not bestow it. Who made oranges and bananas ? You say, God. I ask, how can that be, when thousands of our race never saw an orange or a banana ? If God were going to give such things, why did he not give them to all ? The argument that the giving the Bible to a part of the race would imply a wicked partiality on the part of God, and consequently that he did not give it at all, would prove that he did not give oranges and bananas to the people of the tropics, for that would be partiality. The fact is that God has a right to do as he pleases, and he is constantly partial in a thousand things. He gives us a pleasant climate while he gives earthquakes and tornadoes to Mexico. He gives incom-



putable harvests of wheat to Sicily, but scant berries, and polar bears, and the ungainly walrus to the Arctic inhabitants. He gives one man two good eyes, and to another none. He gives you two feet, and to another man no feet at all. To you he gives perpetual health, to another man coughing consumption, or piercing pleurisy, or stinging gout, or fiery erysipelas. He does not treat us all alike. If all the human race had the same climate, the same harvests, the same health, the same advantages, then you might, by analogy, argue that if he gave a Bible at all, he would give it to the whole race at the same time. If you say to me that the fact that the Bible is now in the possession of only a small part of the human family is proof that he did not send the Bible, then I say that the fact that only a part of the world has peaches and apples proves that God never made peaches and apples; and the fact that a part of the world has a mild, sunshiny climate, proves conclusively that God does not make the climate. Indeed, I will carry on your argument until I can prove that God made nothing at all; for there is not one single physical or intellectual blessing that we possess that has not been denied some one else. No! no! Because God, in his sovereign mercy, has given us a book that some others do not possess, let us not be so ungrateful as to reject it—blowing out our own lantern because other people have not a light; rending off the splinters from our broken bone, because other people have not been able to get a bandage; dashing our own ship on a rock because other vessels have not a compass; cutting up our own Bible with a penknife because other people have not a revelation.

Again, the infidel strikes his penknife through this Book by saying, "You have no right to make the Bible so prominent because there are other books that have in them great beauty and value." There *are* grand things in books professing no more than human intelligence. The Heathen Bible of the Persians says, "The heavens are a point from the pen of God's perfection." "The world is a bud from the bower of

his beauty." "The sun is a spark from the light of his wisdom." "The sky is a bubble on the sea of his power." Beautiful! Beautiful! Confucius taught kindness to enemies; the Shaster has great affluence of imagery; the Veda of the Brahmins has ennobling sentiments; but what have you proved by all this? Simply that the Author of the Bible was as wise as all the great men that have ever lived put together; because, after you have gone through all lands, and all ages, and all literatures, and after you have heaped everything excellent together and boiled it down, you have found in all that realm of the ages but a portion of the wisdom that you find in this one book.

The fact is that all the jar of hell's battering-rams against this buttress of truth only proves the strength of the wall. All of the fleets of perdition have come sailing against this craft, managed by a few fishermen; but it has proved an iron-clad, able to sink with a few strokes the arguments of infidelity. One little Kearsarge thundering to darkness and hell a thousand flaunting Alabamas.

Let Voltaire come on with his acute philosophy; and Hume with his scholarship; and Chesterfield with his polished insinuations; and Gibbon with his one-sided historical statements; and Shaftesbury with his sarcasm; and Hobbes with his subtlety; and Blount and Bolingbroke with their armed hostility—yea, come on Platonic philosophers, and German infidels, and Boston transcendentalists, and all the helmeted sons of darkness—I charge upon you with a regiment of mountain shepherds and Galilee fishermen. Forward, ye inspired men to the strife! Steady! Take aim! Fire! Their ranks waver! They break! They fly! Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!

I want no better proof of the divinity of this Book than the fact that it has withstood this mighty and continuous attack, and come down to us without a chapter effaced, or a parable riddled, or a miracle injured, or a promise scarred. No other book could have lived an hour in such a sea; no

other force could have stood under such cross-fire. This Book to-day is foremost. In philosophy, it is honoured above the works of Descartes, Bacon, Aristotle, and Socrates. In history, it wins more respect than Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon. In poetry, it outshines the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the *Inferno*, the *Divina Commedia* and *Paradise Lost*. It has been published in more than two hundred languages. The earth quakes with the quick revolution of its printing-press. The best art has come to the illustration of its pages, to the adornment of its lids, to the setting of its type. Its scenes of glory and promise blossom on every wall, and thrill through the music of the oratorio and orchestra.

If infidelity is as successful in the next fifty years, in its war against the Bible, as it has been in the past fifty, the year 1950 will see the Bible in the possession of every man on the earth who has a hand to hold it. One wave of this Book above the throne of tyranny, and they shall fall; above the temples of superstition, and they shall crumble; above the wilderness, and it shall bloom like the garden of the Lord. Thou Prince of Books, we hail thee to thy coronation! the wheeling earth thy chariot! the bending sky thy triumphal arch! the great heavens one star-studded, cloud striped banner!

Make the application of this subject yourselves. I have preached it that I might show you that we who believe in the Bible are not so verdant as people suppose, since we have a great many stout reasons for believing in it. I have tried, by my remarks, to raise the Book higher in your estimation. Take it into your heart! Take it into your house! Take it into your shop! Take it into your store! Though you may seem to get along quite well without this Book in your days of prosperity, there will come a time to us all when our only consolation will be this blessed Gospel.

A blind girl had been in the habit of reading her Bible by means of raised letters such as are prepared for the use of the blind; but after a while, by working in a factory, the

tips of her fingers became so callous that she could no more by her hands read the precious promises. She cut off the tips of her fingers that her touch might be more sensitive ; but still she failed with her hand to read the raised letters. In her sorrow, she took the Bible and said, " Farewell my dear Bible. You have been the joy of my heart ! " Then she pressed the open page to her lips, and kissed it, and as she did so she felt with her mouth the letters, "*The Gospel according to St. Mark.*" " Thank God ! " she said ; " if I cannot read the Bible with my fingers, I can read it with my lips."

Oh ! in that last hour when the world goes away from our grasp, press this precious Gospel to our lips, that, in that dying kiss, we may taste the sweetness of that promise, " When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

" How precious is the Book divine,  
By inspiration given !  
Bright as a lamp its doctrine shine  
To guide our souls to heaven.

" This lamp through all the tedious night  
Of life shall guide our way,  
Till we behold the clearer light  
Of an eternal day."

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### AS THE LEAF.

" We all do fade as a leaf."—*Isaiah* lxiv., 6.

IT is so hard for us to understand religious truth that God constantly reiterates. As the schoolmaster takes a blackboard, and puts upon it figures and diagrams, so that the scholar may not only get his lesson through the ear, but also through the eye, so God takes all the truths of his Bible, and draws them out in diagram on the natural world. Champollion, the famous Frenchman, went down into Egypt to study the hieroglyphics on monuments and tem-

ples. After much labour he deciphered them, and announced to the learned world the result of his investigations. The wisdom, goodness, and power of God are written in hieroglyphics all over the earth and all over the heaven. God grant that we may have understanding enough to decipher them! There are scriptural passages, like my text, which need to be studied in the very presence of the natural world. Habakkuk says, "Thou makest my feet like *hind's* feet," a passage which means nothing save to the man that knows that the feet of the red deer, or hind, are peculiarly constructed, so that they can walk among slippery rocks without falling. Knowing that fact, we understand that, when Habakkuk says, "Thou makest my feet like *hind's* feet," he sets forth that the Christian can walk amid the most dangerous and slippery places without falling. In Lamentations we read that "The daughter of my people is cruel, like the *ostriches* of the wilderness;" a passage that has no meaning save to the man who knows that the ostrich leaves its eggs in the sand to be hatched out by the sun, and that the young ostrich goes forth unattended by any maternal kindness. Knowing this, the passage is significant—"The daughter of my people is cruel, like the *ostriches* of the wilderness."

Those know but little of the meaning of the natural world who have looked at it through the eyes of others, and from book or canvas taken their impression. There are some faces so mobile that photographers cannot take them; and the face of Nature had such a flush, and sparkle, and life, that no human description can gather them. No one knows the pathos of a bird's voice unless he has sat at summer even-tide at the edge of a wood, and listened to the cry of the whip-poor-will.

There is to-day more glory in one branch of sumach than a painter could put on a whole forest of maples. God hath struck into the autumnal leaf a glance that none see but those who come face to face—the mountain looking upon the man, and the man looking upon the mountain.

For several autumns I made a lecturing expedition to the Far West, and one autumn, about this time, saw that which I shall never forget. I have seen the autumnal sketches of Cropsey's and other skilful pencils, but that week I saw a pageant two thousand miles long. Let artists stand back when God stretches his canvas. A grander spectacle was never kindled before mortal eyes, Along by the rivers, and up and down the sides of the great hills, and by the banks of the lakes, there was an indescribable mingling of gold, and orange, and crimson, and saffron, now sobering into drab and maroon, now flaming up into solferino and scarlet. Here and there the trees looked as if just their tips had blossomed into fire. In the morning light the forests seemed as if they had been transfigured, and in the evening hour they looked as if the sunset had burst and dropped upon the leaves. In more sequestered spots, where the frosts had been hindered in their work, we saw the first kindling of the flames of colour in a lowly sprig; then they rushed up from branch to branch until the glory of the Lord submerged the forest. Here you would find a tree just making up its mind to change, and there one looked as if, wounded at every pore, it stood bathed in carnage. Along the banks of Lake Huron there were hills over which there seemed pouring cataracts of fire, tossed up and down, and every whither by the rocks. Through some of the ravines we saw occasionally a foaming stream as though it were rushing to put out the conflagration. If at one end of the wood a commanding tree would set up its crimson banner, the whole forest prepared to follow. If God's urn of colours were not infinite, one swamp that I saw along the Maumee would have exhausted it for ever. It seemed as if the sea of divine glory had dashed its surf to the tip top of the Alleghanies, and then it had come dripping down to the lowest leaf and deepest cavern.

Most persons preaching from this text find only in it a vein of sadness. I find that I have two strings to this

Gospel harp—a string of sadness, and a string of joy infinite.

“We all do fade as a leaf.”

*First.* Like the foliage, *we fade gradually.* The leaves which, week before last, felt the frost, have, day by day, been changing in tint, and will for many days yet cling to the bough, waiting for the fist of the wind to strike them. Suppose you that this leaf I hold in my hand took on its colour in an hour, or in a day, or in a week? No. Deeper and deeper the flush, till all the veins of its life now seem opened and bleeding away. After a while, leaf after leaf, they fall. Now those on the outer branches, then those most hidden, until the last spark of the gleaming forge shall have been quenched.

*So gradually we pass away.* From day to day we hardly see the change. But the frosts have touched us. The work of decay is going on. Now a slight cold. Now a season of over-fatigue. Now a fever. Now a stitch in the side. Now a neuralgic thrust. Now a rheumatic twinge. Now a fall. Little by little. Pain by pain. Less steady of limb. Sight not so clear. Ear not so alert. After a while we take a staff. Then, after much resistance we come to spectacles. Instead of bounding into a vehicle, we are willing to be helped in. At last the octogenarian falls. Forty years of decaying. No sudden change. No fierce cannonading of the batteries of life; but a *fading away—slowly—gradually As the leaf!* AS THE LEAF!

Again: Like the leaf we fade, *to make room for others.* Next year's forests will be as grandly foliated as this. There are other generations of oak leaves to take the place of those which this autumn perish. Next May the cradle of the wind will rock the young buds. The woods will be all a-hum with the chorus of leafy voices. If the tree in front of your house, like Elijah, takes a chariot of fire, its mantle will fall upon Elisha.

If, in the blast of these autumnal batteries, so many ranks

fall, there are reserve forces to take their places to defend the fortress of the hills. The beaters of gold leaf will have more gold leaf to beat. The crown that drops to-day from the head of the oak will be picked up and handed down for other kings to wear. Let the blasts come. They only make room for other life.

*So, when we go others take our spheres.* We do not grudge the future generations their places. We will have had our good time. Let them come on and have their good time. There is no sighing among these leaves at my feet because other leaves are to follow them. After a life-time of preaching, doctoring, selling, sewing, or digging, let us cheerfully give way for those who come on to do the preaching, doctoring, selling, sewing, and digging. God grant that their life may be brighter than ours has been! As we get older, do not let us be affronted if young men and women crowd us a little. We will have had our day, and we must let them have theirs. When our voices get cracked, let us not snarl at those who can warble. When our knees are stiffened, let us have patience with those who go fleet as the deer. Because our leaf is fading, do not let us despise the unfrosted. Autumn must not envy the Spring. Old men must be patient with boys. Dr. Guthrie, the other day, stood up in Scotland and said, "You need not think I am old because my hair is white; I never was so young as I am now." I look back to my childhood days, and remember when, in winter nights, in the sitting-room, the children played, the blythest and the gayest of all the company were father and mother. Although reaching four-score years of age, they never got old.

Do not be disturbed as you see good and great men die. People worry when some important personage passes off the stage, and say, "His place will never be taken." But neither the Church nor the State will suffer for it. There will be others to take the places. When God takes one man away, he has another right back of him. God is so rich in



resources that he could spare five thousand Summerfields and Paysons, if there were so many. There will be other leaves as green, as exquisitely veined, as gracefully etched, as well pointed. However prominent the place we fill, our death will not jar the world. One falling leaf does not shake the Adirondacks. A ship is not well-manned unless there be an extra supply of hands—some working on deck; some sound asleep in their hammocks. God has manned this world very well. There will be other seamen on deck when you and I are down in the cabin, sound asleep in the hammocks.

Again : As with the leaves, we fade and fall *amid myriads of others*. One cannot count the number of plumes which these frosts are plucking from the hills. They will strew all the streams; they will drift into the caverns; they will soften the wild beast's lair, and fill the eagle's eyrie.

All the aisles of the forest will be covered with their carpet, and the steps of the hills glow with a wealth of colour and shape that will defy the looms of Axminster. What urn could hold the ashes of all these dead leaves? Who could count the host that burn on this funeral pyre of the mountains?

So we *die in concert*. The clock that strikes the hour of our going will sound the going of many thousands. Keeping step with the feet of those who carry us out will be the tramp of hundreds doing the same errand. Between fifty and seventy people every day lie down in Greenwood. That place has one hundred and fifty-three thousand of the dead. I said to the man at the gate, "Then if there are a hundred and fifty-three thousand here, you must have the largest cemetery." He said there were two Roman Catholic cemeteries in the city, each of which had more than this. We all are dying. London and Pekin are not the great cities of the world. The grave is the great city. It hath mightier population, longer streets, brighter lights, thicker darknesses. Cæsar is there, and all his subjects. Nero is there, and all

his victims. City of kings and paupers ! It has swallowed up in its immigrations Thebes, and Tyre, and Babylon, and will swallow all our cities. Yet, City of *Silence*. No voice. No hoof. No wheel. No clash. No smiting of hammer. No clack of flying loom. No jar. No whisper. Great City of Silence ! Of all its million million hands not one of them is lifted. Of all its million million eyes, not one of them sparkles. Of all its million million hearts, not one pulsates. The living are in small minority.

If, in the movement of time, some great question between the living and the dead should be put, and God called up all the dead and the living to decide it, as we lifted our hands, and from all the resting places of the dead they lifted *their* hands, the dead would outvote us. Why, the multitude of the dying and the dead are as these autumnal leaves drifting under our feet to-day. We march on toward eternity, not by companies of a hundred, or regiments of a thousand, or battalions of ten thousands, but one thousand million abreast ! *Marching on ! MARCHING ON !*

Again : As with *variety of appearance the leaves depart, so do we*. You have noticed that some trees, at the first touch of the frost lose their beauty ; they stand withered and uncomely, and ragged, waiting for the north-east storm to drive them into the mire. The sun shining at noon-day gilds them with no beauty. Ragged leaves ! Dead leaves ! No one stands to study them. They are gathered in no vase. They are hung on no wall. So death smites many. There is no beauty in their departure. One sharp frost of sickness, or one blast of the cold waters and they are gone. No tinge of hope. No prophecy of heaven. Their *spring* was all abloom with bright prospects ; their *summer* thick foliated with opportunities ; but October came and their glory went. *Frosted !* In early autumn the frosts come, but do not seem to damage vegetation. They are light frosts. But some morning you look out of the window and say, " There was a *black* frost last night," and you know that from that day

everything will wither. So men seem to get along without religion, amid the annoyances and vexations of life that nip them slightly here and nip them there. But after a while death comes. It is a *black frost*, and all is ended.

Oh! what withering and scattering death makes among those not prepared to meet it! They leave everything pleasant behind them—their house, their families, their friends, their books, their pictures, and step out of the sunshine into the shadow. They hang their harps on the willow, and trudge away into everlasting captivity. They quit the presence of bird, and bloom, and wave, to go unbeckoned and unwelcomed. The bower in which they stood, and sang, and wove chaplets, and made themselves merry, has gone under an awful equinoctial. No funeral bell can toll one half the dolefulness of their condition. *Frosted!*

But thank God that is not the way people always die. Tell me, on what day of all the year the leaves of the woodbine are as bright as they are to-day? So Christian character is never so attractive as in the dying hour. Such go into the grave, not as a dog, with frown and harsh voice, driven into a kennel, but they pass away *calmly, brightly, sweetly, grandly!* *As the leaf!* AS THE LEAF!

Why go to the death-bed of distinguished men, when there is hardly a house on this street but from it a Christian has departed? When your baby died there were enough angels in the room to have chanted a coronation. When your father died you sat watching, and after a while felt of his wrist, and then put your hand under his arm to see if there were any warmth left, and placed the mirror to the mouth to see if there were any sign of breathing; and when all was over, you thought how grandly he slept!—a giant resting after a battle. Oh! there are many Christian death-beds. The chariots of God, come to take his children home, are speeding every whither. This one halts at the gate of the almshouse; that one at the gate of princes. The shout of captives breaking their chains comes on the morning air.

The heavens ring again and again with the coronation. The twelve gates of heaven are crowded with the ascending righteous. I see the accumulated glories of a thousand Christian death-beds—an *autumnal forest illumined by an autumnal sunset*. They died not in shame, but in triumph!  
*As the leaf!* AS THE LEAF!

Lastly: As the leaves fade and fall *only to rise, and so do we*. All this golden shower of the woods is making the ground richer, and in the juice, and sap, and life of the tree the leaves will come up again. Next May the south wind will blow the resurrection trumpet, and they will rise. So we fall in the dust only to rise again. "The hour is coming when all who are in their graves shall hear His voice, and come forth." It would be a horrible consideration to think that our bodies were always to lie in the ground. However beautiful the flowers you plant there, we do not want to make our everlasting residence in such a place.

I have with these eyes seen so many of the glories of the natural world, and the radiant faces of my friends, that I do not want to think that when I close them in death I shall never open them again. It is sad enough to have a hand or foot amputated. In a hospital, after a soldier had had his hand taken off, he said, "Good bye, dear old hand, you have done me a great deal of good service," and burst into tears. It is a more awful thing to think of having the whole body amputated from the soul for ever. I must have my body again, to see with, to hear with, to walk with. With this hand I must clasp the hand of my loved ones when I have passed clean over Jordan, and with it wave the triumphs of my King. Aha! we shall rise again—we shall rise again.  
*As the leaf!* AS THE LEAF!

Crossing the Atlantic the ship may founder, and our bodies may be eaten by sharks; but God tameth Leviathan, and we shall come again. In awful explosion of factory boiler our bodies may be shattered into a hundred fragments in the air; but God watches the disaster, and we shall come again.

He will drag the deep, and ransack the tomb, and upturn the wilderness, and torture the mountain, but He will find us, and fetch us out and up to judgment and to victory. We shall come up with perfect eye, with perfect hand, with perfect foot, and with perfect body. All our weaknesses left behind.

We fall, but we rise! We die, but we live again! We moulder away, but we come to higher unfolding! *As the leaf!* AS THE LEAF!

### THE WONDERFUL.

“His name shall be called wonderful.”—*Isaiah ix.*, 6.

THE prophet lived in a dark time. For some three thousand years the world had been getting worse. Kingdoms had arisen and perished. As the captain of a vessel in distress sees relief coming across the water, so the prophet, amid the stormy times in which he lived, put the telescope of prophecy to his eye, and saw, seven hundred and fifty years ahead, one *Jesus* advancing to the rescue.

I want to show that when Isaiah called Christ the WONDERFUL, he spoke wisely.

In most houses there is a picture of Christ. Sometimes it represents him with face effeminate; sometimes with a face despotic. I have seen West's grand sketch of the rejection of Christ; I have seen the face of Christ as cut on an emerald, said to be by command of Tiberius Cæsar; and yet I am convinced that I shall never know how Jesus looked until, on that sweet Sabbath morning, I shall wash the last sleep from my eyes in the cool river of heaven. I take up this book of divine photographs, and I look at Luke's sketch, at Mark's sketch, at John's sketch, and at Paul's sketch, and I say, with Isaiah, “Wonderful!”

I think that you are all interested in the story of Christ.

You feel that he is the only one who can help you. You have unbounded admiration for the commander who helped his passengers ashore while he himself perished, but have you no admiration for him who rescued our souls, himself falling back into the waters from which he had saved us ?

Christ was wonderful in the magnetism of his person.

After the battle of Antietam, when a general rode along the lines, although the soldiers were lying down exhausted, they rose with great enthusiasm and huzzaed. As Napoleon returned from his captivity, his first step on the wharf shook all the kingdoms, and two hundred and fifty thousand men joined his standard. It took three thousand troops to watch him in his exile. So there have been men of wonderful magnetism of person. But hear me while I tell you of a poor young man who came up from Nazareth to produce a thrill such as has never been excited by any other. Napoleon had around him the memories of Austerlitz and Jena, and Badajos ; but here was a man who had fought no battles ; who wore no epaulettes ; who brandished no sword. He is no titled man of the schools, for he never went to school. He had probably never seen a prince, or shaken hands with a nobleman. The only extraordinary person we know of as being in his company was his own mother, and she was so poor that in the most delicate and solemn hour that ever comes to a woman's soul she was obliged to lie down amid camel drivers grooming the beasts of burden.

I imagine Christ one day standing in the streets of Jerusalem. A man descended from high lineage is standing beside him, and says, " My father was a merchant prince ; he had a castle on the beach at Galilee. Who was your father ? " Christ answers, " Joseph, the carpenter." A man from Athens is standing there unrolling his parchment of graduation, and says to Christ, " Where did you go to school ? " Christ answers, " I never graduated." Aha ! the idea of such an unheralded young man attempting to command the attention of the world ! As well some little

fishing village on Long Island shore attempt to arraign New York. Yet no sooner does he set his foot in the towns or cities of Judea than everything is in commotion. The people go out on a picnic, taking only food enough for the day, yet are so fascinated with Christ that, at the risk of starving, they follow him out into the wilderness. A nobleman falls down flat before him, and says, "My daughter is dead." A beggar tries to rub the dimness from his eyes, and says, "Lord that my eyes may be opened." A poor, sick, panting woman presses through the crowd, says, "I must touch the hem of his garment." Children, who love their mother better than any one else, struggle to get into his arms, and to kiss his cheek, and to run their fingers through his hair, and for all time putting Jesus so in love with the little ones that there is hardly a nursery in Christendom from which he does not take one, saying, "I must have them; I will fill heaven with these; for every cedar that I plant in heaven I will have fifty white lilies. In the hour when I was a poor man in Judea they were not ashamed of me, and now that I have come to a throne I do not despise them. Hold it not back, oh weeping mother; lay it on my warm heart. Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

What is this coming down the road? A triumphal procession. He is seated, not in a chariot, but on an ass; and yet the people take off their coats and throw them in the way. Oh, what a time Jesus made among the children, among the beggars, among the fisherman, among the philosophers! You may boast of self-control, but if you had seen him you would have put your arms around his neck and said, "Thou art altogether lovely."

Jesus was wonderful in the opposites and seeming antagonisms of his nature. You want things logical and consistent, and you say, "How could Christ be God and man at the same time?" John says Christ was the creator: "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made." Matthew says that he was omnipresent:

“Where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Christ declares his own eternity; “I am Alpha and Omega.” How can he be a lion, under his foot crushing kingdoms, and yet a lamb licking the hand that slays him? At what point does the throne and the manger touch? If Christ was God, why flee into Egypt? Why not stand his ground? Why, instead of bearing the cross, not lift up his right hand and crush his assassins? Why stand and be spit upon? Why sleep on the mountain, when he owned the palaces of eternity? Why catch fish for his breakfast on the beach in the chill morning, when all the pomegranates are his, and all the vineyards his, and all the cattle his, and all the partridges his? Why walk when weary, and his feet stone-bruised, when he might have taken the splendours of the sunset for his equipage, and moved with horses and chariots of fire? Why beg a drink from the wayside, when out of the crystal chalices of eternity he poured the Euphrates, the Mississippi, and the Amazon, and dipping his hand in the fountains of heaven, and shaking that hand over the world, from the tips of his fingers dipped the great lakes and the oceans? Why let the Roman regiment put him to death, when he might have rode down the sky followed by all the cavalry of heaven, mounted on white horses of eternal victory?

You cannot understand. Who can? You try to confound me. I am confounded before you speak. Paul said it was unsearchable. He went climbing up from argument to argument, and from antithesis to antithesis, and from glory to glory, and then sank down in exhaustion as he saw far above him other heights of divinity unscaled, and exclaimed, “*that in all things he might have the PRE-EMINENCE.*”

Again: Christ was wonderful in his *teaching*. The people had been used to formalities and technicalities; Christ upset all their notions as to how preaching ought to be done. There was this peculiarity about his preaching: the people knew what he meant. His illustrations were taken from the



hen calling her chickens together ; from salt, from candles, from fishing-tackle, from a hard creditor collaring a debtor. How few pulpits of this day would have allowed him entrance? He would have been called undignified and familiar in his style of preaching. And yet the people went to hear him. Those old Jewish rabbis might have preached on the side of Olivet fifty years and never got an audience. The philosophers sneered at his ministrations and said, " This will never do ! " The lawyers caricatured, but the common people heard him gladly. Suppose you that there were any sleepy people in his audiences? Suppose you that any woman who ever mixed bread was ignorant of what he meant when he compared the kingdom of heaven with leaven or yeast? Suppose you that the sunburned fishermen, with the fish-scales upon their hands, were listless when he spoke of the kingdom of heaven as a net? We spend three years in college studying ancient mythology, and three years in the theological seminary learning how to make a sermon, and then we go out to save the world ; and if we cannot do it according to Claude's *Sermonizing*, or Blair's *Rhetoric*, or Kames's *Criticism*, we will let the world go to perdition. If we save nothing else, we will save Claude and Blair. We see a wreck in sight. We must go out and save the crew and passengers. We wait until we get on our fine cap and coat, and find our shining oars, and then we push out methodically and scientifically, while some plain shoresman, in rough fishing-smack, and with broken oar-lock, goes out and gets the crew and passengers, and brings them ashore in safety. We throw down our delicate oars and say, " What a ridiculous thing to save men in that way ! You ought to have done it scientifically and beautifully. " " Ah ! " says the shoresman, " if those sufferers had waited until you got out your fine boat, they would have gone to the bottom. "

The work of a religious teacher is to save men ; and though every law of grammar should be snapped in the

undertaking, and there be nothing but awkwardness and blundering in the mode, all hail to the man who saves a soul from death!

Christ, in His preaching, was plain, earnest, and wonderfully sympathetic. We cannot dragoon men into heaven. We cannot drive them in with the butt-end of a catechism. We waste our time in trying to catch flies with acids instead of the sweet honeycomb of the Gospel. We try to make crab-apples do the work of pomegranates.

Again: Jesus was wonderful in His sorrows. The sun smote him, and the cold chilled him, the rain pelted him, thirst parched him, and hunger exhausted him. Shall I compare his sorrow to the sea? No; for that is sometimes hushed into a calm. Shall I compare it with the night? No; for that sometimes gleams with Orion, or kindles with Aurora. If one thorn should be thrust through your temple you would faint. But here is a whole crown made from the *Rhamnus*, or *Spina Christi*—small, sharp, stinging thorns. The mob make a cross. They put down the long beam, and on it they fasten a shorter beam. Got him at last. Those hands, that have been doing kindnesses and wiping away tears—hear the hammer driving the spikes through them. Those feet, that have been going about on ministrations of mercy—battered against the cross. Then they lift it up. Look! look! look! Who will help him now? Come, men of Jerusalem—ye whose dead he brought to life; ye whose sick he healed; who will help him seize the weapons of the soldiers? None to help! Having carried such a cross for us, shall we refuse to take our cross for him?

“ Shall Jesus bear the cross alone,  
And all the world go free?  
No; there’s a cross for everyone,  
‘And there’s a cross for me.”

You know the process of ingrafting. You bore a hole into a tree, and put in the branch of another tree. This tree of the cross was hard and rough, but into the holes where the nails

went there have been grafted branches of the Tree of Life that now bear fruit for all nations. The original tree was bitter, but the branches ingrafted were sweet, and now all the nations pluck the fruit and live for ever.

Again : Christ was wonderful in his victories.

First—over the forces of nature. The sea is a crystal sepulchre. It swallowed the *Central America*, the *President*, and the Spanish Armada as easily as any fly that ever floated on it. The inland lakes are fully as terrible in their wrath. Recent travellers tell us that Galilee, when aroused in a storm is overwhelming ; and yet that sea crouched in his presence and licked his feet. He knew all the waves and wind. When he beckoned, they came. When he frowned, they fled. The heel of his foot made no indentation on the solidified water. Medical science has wrought great changes in rheumatic limbs and diseased blood, but when the muscles are entirely withered no human power can restore them, and when a limb is once dead, it is dead. But here is a paralytic—his hand lifeless. Christ says to him, “Stretch forth thy hand !” and he stretches it forth.

In the Eye Infirmary, how many diseases of that delicate organ have been cured ! But Jesus says to one *born* blind, “Be open !” and the light of heaven rushes through gates that have never before been opened. The frost or an axe may kill a tree, but Jesus smites one dead with a word.

Chemistry can do many wonderful things, but what chemist, at a wedding, when the refreshment gave out, could change a pail of water into a cask of wine ?

What human voice could command a school of fish ? Yet here is a voice that marshals the scaly tribes, until in the place where they had let down the net and pulled it up with no fish in it, they let it down again, and the disciples lay hold and begin to pull, when, by reason of the multitude of fish, the net brake.

Nature is his servant. The flowers—he twisted them  
his sermons ; the winds—they were his lullaby when he

slept in the boat ; the rain—it hung glittering on the thick foliage of the parables ; the star of Bethlehem—it sang a Christmas carol over his birth ; the rocks—they beat a dirge at his death.

Behold his victory over the grave ! The hinges of the family vault become very rusty because they are never opened except to take another in. There is a knob on the outside of the door of the sepulchre, but none on the inside. Here comes the Conqueror of Death. He enters that realm and says, “ Daughter of Jairus, sit up ; ” and she sat up, To Lazarus, “ Come forth ; ” and he came forth. To the widow’s son he said, “ Get up from that bier ; ” and he goes home with his mother. Then Jesus snatched up the keys of death, and hung them to his girdle, and cried until all the grave-yards of the earth heard him, “ O Death ! I will be thy plague ! O Grave ! I will be thy destruction ! ”

But Christ’s victories have only just begun. This world is his, and he must have it. What is the matter in this country ? Why all these financial troubles ? There never will be a permanent peace in this land until Christ rules it. This land was discovered for Christ, and until our cities shall be evangelised, and north, south, east, and west shall acknowledge Christ as King and Redeemer, we cannot have permanent prosperity. What is the matter with Spain ? with France ? with all of the nations ? All the congresses of the nations cannot bring quiet. All the Bismarcks and Gladstones of the world cannot permanently settle things. When governments not only theoretically, but practically acknowledge the Saviour of the world, there will be peace in the United States, peace in Spain, peace in France, peace in Germany, peace in Mexico, peace everywhere. In that day the sea will have more ships than now, but there will not be one “ *man of war*.” The foundries of the world will jar with mightier industries, but there will be no moulding of bullets. Printing-presses will fly their cylinders with greater speed, but there shall go forth no iniquitous trash. In laws, in

constitutions, on exchange, in scientific laboratory, on earth as in heaven, Christ shall be called Wonderful. Let that work of the world's regeneration begin in your heart, oh hearer! A Jesus so kind, a Jesus so good, a Jesus so loving—how can you help but love him?

It is a beautiful moment when two persons who have pledged each other, heart and hand, stand in church and have the banns of marriage proclaimed. Father and mother, brothers and sisters stand around the altar. The minister of Jesus gives the counsel; the ring is set; earth and heaven witness it; the organ sounds, and amid many congratulations they start out on the path of life together.

Oh that this might be your marriage day! Stand up, immortal soul. Thy Beloved comes to get his betrothed. Jesus stretches forth his hand and says, "I will love thee with an everlasting love," and you respond, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His." I put your hand in his; henceforth be one. No trouble shall part you—no time cool your love. Side by side on earth—side by side in heaven! Now let the blossoms of heavenly gardens fill the house with their redolence, and all the organs of God peal forth the wedding march of eternity.

Hark! "The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."

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## THE VOYAGE TO HEAVEN.

"And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship."

*Acts xxi. 6.*

PAUL was an old sailor—not from occupation, but from frequency of travel. I think he could have taken a vessel

\* The last sermon before going to Europe.

across the *Mediterranaen* as well as some of the ship-captains. The sailors never scoffed at him for being a "land-lubber." If Paul's advice had been taken, the crew would never have gone ashore at *Melita*.

When the vessel went scudding under bare poles, Paul was the only self-possessed man on board; and, turning to the excited crew and despairing passengers, he exclaims, in a voice that sounds above the thunder of the tempest and the wrath of the sea, "Be of good cheer."

The men who now go to sea with maps, charts, and modern compass, warned by buoy and lighthouse, know nothing of the perils of ancient navigation. Horace said that the man who first ventured on the sea must have had a heart bound with oak and triple brass. People then ventured only from headland to headland, and from island to island; and not until long after spread their sail for a voyage across the sea. Before starting, the weather was watched, and the vessel having been hauled up on the shore, the mariners placed their shoulders against the stern of the ship and heaved it off—they, at the last moment, leaping into it. Vessels were then chiefly ships of burden—the transit of passengers being the exception; for the world was not then migratory as in our day, when the first desire of a man in one place seems to be to get into another place.

The ship from which *Jonah* was thrown overboard, and that in which Paul was carried prisoner, went out chiefly with the idea of taking a cargo.

As now, so then, vessels were accustomed to carry a flag. In those times it was inscribed with the name of a heathen deity. A vessel bound for *Syracuse* had on it the inscription "Castor and Pollux." The ships were provided with anchors. Anchors were of two kinds; those that were dropped into the sea, and those that were thrown up on to the rocks to hold the vessel fast. This last kind was what Paul alluded to when he said, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which

entereth into that within the veil." That was what the sailors call a "hook-anchor." The rocks and sand-bars, shoals and headlands, not being mapped out, vessels carried a plumb-line. They would drop it and find the water fifty fathoms, and drop it again and find it forty fathoms, and drop it again and find it thirty fathoms, thus discovering their near approach to the shore.

In the spring, summer, and autumn, the Mediterranean Sea was white with the wings of ships, but at the first-wintery blast they hied themselves to the nearest harbour; although now the world's commerce prospers in January as well as in June, and in mid-winter all over the wide and stormy deep, there floats palaces of light, trampling the billows under foot, and showering the sparks of terrible furnaces on the wild wind; and the Christian passenger, tippeted and shawled, sits under the shelter of the smoke-stack, looking off upon the phosphorescent deep, on which is written in scrolls of flame and fire, "Thy way, O God, is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters!"

It is in those days of early navigation that I see a group of men, women, and children on the beach at Tyre. Paul is about to leave the congregation to whom he had preached, and they are come down to see him off. It is a solemn thing to part. There are so many traps that wait for a man's feet. The solid ground may break through, and the sea—how many dark mysteries it hides in its bosom! A few counsels, a hasty good-bye, a last look, and the ropes rattle, and the sails are hoisted, and the planks are hauled in, and Paul is gone! "When we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship."

After long dreaming of foreign lands, I am about to leave you to satisfy that desire. Next Wednesday, at eight o'clock, I expect to embark for Europe. The emotions of this hour are not to be described. The joy of going is almost overborne, at this hour, by the sadness of parting. You have come to see me off. I have made all my arrange-

ments for going, and yet I am not ready to go until I have uttered some counsels. Before I go I would like to see you all embark for heaven ; and I have come here to-night to see you off.

The Church is the dry-dock where souls are to be fitted out for heaven. In making a vessel for this voyage, the first need is sound timber. The floor-timbers ought to be of solid stuff. For the want of it, vessels that looked able to run their jib-booms into the eye of any tempest, when caught in a storm have been crushed like a wafer. The truths of God's Word are what I mean by floor-timbers. Away with your lighter materials. Nothing but oaks, hewn in the forest of divine truth, are staunch enough for this craft.

You must have Love for a helm, to guide and turn the craft. Neither Pride, nor Ambition, nor Avarice will do for a rudder. Love, not only in the heart, but flashing in the eye, and tingling in the hand—Love married to work, which many look upon as so homely a bride—Love, not like brooks which foam and rattle, yet do nothing, but Love like a river, that runs up the steps of mill-wheels, and works in the harness of factory bands—Love, that will not pass by on the other side, but visits the man who fell among thieves near Jericho, not merely saying, " Poor fellow ! you are dreadfully hurt," but, like the good Samaritan pours in oil and wine, and pays his board at the tavern.

There must also be a prow, arranged to cut and over-ride the billow. That is Christian perseverance. There are three mountain surges that sometimes dash against a soul in a minute—the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and that is a well-built prow that can bound over them. For lack of this, many have put back and never started again. It is the broadside wave that so often sweeps the deck and fills the hatches ; but that which strikes in front is harmless. Meet troubles courageously and you surmount them. Stand on the prow, and as you wipe off the spray of the split surge



cry out with the apostle, "None of these things move me." Let all your fears stay aft. The right must conquer. Know that Moses, in an ark of bulrushes, can run down a war-steamer.

Have a good, strong anchor. "Which hope we have as an anchor." By this strong cable and windlass, hold on to your anchor. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Do not use the anchor wrongfully. Do not always stay in the same latitude and longitude. You will never ride up the harbour of Eternal Rest if you all the way drag your anchor.

But you must have sails. Vessels are not fit for the sea until they have the flying jib, the foresail, the top-gallant, the sky-sail, the gaff-sail, and other canvas. Faith is our canvas. Hoist it, and the winds of heaven will drive you ahead. Sails made out of any other canvas than Faith will be slit to tatters by the first north-easter. Strong faith never lost a battle. It will crush foes, blast rocks, quench lightnings, thresh mountains. It is a shield to the warrior, a crank to the most ponderous wheel, a lever to pry up pyramids, a drum whose beat gives strength to the step of the heavenly soldiery, and sails to waft ships laden with priceless pearls from the harbour of earth to the harbour of heaven.

But you are not yet equipped. You must have what seamen call the *running rigging*. This comprises the ship's braces, halliards, clew-lines, and such like. Without these the yards cannot be braced, the sails lifted, nor the canvas in any wise managed. We have *prayer* for the running rigging. Unless you understand this tackling you are not spiritual seamen. By pulling on these ropes, you hoist the sails of faith and turn them every whither. The prow of courage will not cut the wave, nor the sail of faith spread and fly its wings, unless you have strong prayer for a halliard.

One more arrangement, and you will be ready for the sea.

You must have a compass—which is the Bible. Look at it every day, and always sail by it, as its needle points toward the Star of Bethlehem. Through fog and darkness, and storm, it works faithfully. Search the Scriptures. “Box the compass.”

Let me give you two or three rules for the voyage. Allow your appetites and passions only an under-deck passage. Do not allow them ever to come up on the promenade deck. Mortify your members which are upon the earth. Never allow your lower nature anything better than a steerage passage. Let watchfulness walk the deck as an armed sentinel, and shoot down with great promptness anything like a mutiny of riotous appetites.

Be sure to look out of the fore-castle for icebergs. These are cold Christians floating about in the Church. The frigid zone professors will sink you. Steer clear of icebergs.

Keep a log-book during all the voyage—an account of how many furlongs you make a-day. The merchant keeps a day-book as well as a ledger. You ought to know every night, as well as every year, how things are going. When the express train stops at the depôt, you hear a hammer sounding on all the wheels, thus testing the safety of the rail-train. Bound, as we are, with more than express speed toward a great eternity, ought we not often to try the work of self-examination?

Be sure to *keep your colours up!* You know the ships of England, Russia, France, and Spain by the ensigns they carry. Sometimes it is a lion, sometimes an eagle, sometimes a star, sometimes a crown. Let it ever be known who you are, and for what port you are bound. Let “Christian” be written on the very front, with a figure of a cross, a crown, and a dove; and from the mast-head let float the streamers of Emmanuel. Then the pirate vessels of temptation will pass you unharmed as they say, “There goes a Christian bound for the port of heaven. We will not disturb her, for she has too many guns aboard.” Run up your flag

on this pulley : “ I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation.” When driven back, or labouring under great stress of weather—now changing from starboard—tack to larboard, and then from larboard to starboard—look above the top gallants, and your heart shall beat like a war-drum as the streamers float on the wind. The sign of the cross will make you patient, and the crown will make you glad.

Before you gain port you will smell the land breezes of heaven ; and Christ, the Pilot will meet you as you come into the Narrows of Death, and fasten to you and say, “ When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.”

Are you ready for such a voyage ? I have come to see you off. This glorious opportunity is about to set sail. Make up your minds. The gong-planks are lifting. The bell rings. *All aboard for heaven !* This world is not your rest. The chaffinch is the silliest bird in all the earth for trying to make its nest on the rocking billow.

But I suppose you have come here to give me a parting salutation, and I have some things to say in that direction. My heart is bound up in the welfare of this church. While the ocean may separate us in body, there are feelings of sympathy and affection that will not be sundered. “ If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning.” A little more than a year ago I came here, not knowing what would befall me. By a long series of Church troubles that I have no heart to describe, this Church had gone into the dust. The people had fled. Some had gone to other churches ; some fell back to the world ; some had ascended to heaven, glad to get into a place where there were no Church fights. They fought, and bled, and died.

Church-fights are the worst of all fights. When good men battle, it is a Waterloo, with no Blucher coming up at night-fall to decide the contest. There is no contention like *ecclesiastical* contention. When the devil does get into a

good man's heart, he feels that his stay must be short, and he flies around terribly. And so it was in this Church. They met, and resolved, and said sharp things, and looked daggers, and turned everything upside down, until the smoke of battle filled all the place. Both sides were so thoroughly cut to pieces that none were left to tell the tale. I thank God that, if they had to fight, they kept on until there was nothing left of either side. I came here and found the field clear. The handful of people that remained were of peculiar stuff. They were fire-proof. Nothing could drive them off; nothing could surprise them; and I have to say that a better company of people I never lived among. After having chosen me as their captain, every man took his place in the ranks ready for marching orders. In solid column we have marched up to this hour, shoulder to shoulder, step to step. But nineteen-twentieths of you are new men. You have come here because you liked it. You have come from Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian, Congregationalist, Lutheran churches, and from no church at all. I mean to keep on stirring you up, and stirring you up, until I get you so thoroughly mixed that you will never again be assorted until the archangel shall sound, and some of you shall go to the right, and others to the left.

Of all kinds of churches, this is the kind I like best. If there is anything in all the world distressful to a minister, it is to get into a pulpit where things are stereotyped and fixed, and where he must stand on the look-out for long-established prejudices, and have committees waiting on him to tell him how he must comb his hair and fold his pocket-handkerchief. Rather let me be doomed to the mines of Siberia than dwell in such a place. Shall not the man who proclaims liberty to the captives himself be free? Rather give me an empty church to start with than a church full of precisionists. I have no great fondness for fossils. I see more to admire in one living horse than in fifty megatheria or Mastodons exhumed by geologists. Give me one man with

a great heart rather than a thousand men made out of plaster of Paris.

I will not go away until I have thanked you for the kindness with which you have surrounded me. I refer not more to that which has been evidenced by overt actions than to that sympathy which one may feel but cannot describe. I know that I dwell among friends; and though there are those in the world who do not understand me, I know that you do, and that in those tender hours when you go before God for a blessing you do not forget me. You are written in my heart, and the storm, and the darkness, and the sea shall hear my prayer for you.

Some of you I leave in trouble. Things are going very rough with you. You have had a hard struggle with poverty sickness, or bereavement. Light after light has gone out, and it is so dark that you can hardly see any blessing left. May that Jesus who comforted the widow of Nain, and raised the damsel to life, with his gentle hand of sympathy and compassion wipe away your tears. I cannot leave you until once more I confess my faith in the Saviour whom I have preached since I came here. He is my all in all. I owe more to the grace of God than most men. With this ardent temperament, if I had gone overboard I would have gone to the very depths. You know I can do nothing by halves.

“O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!”

I think all will be well. Do not be worried about me. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and if any fatality should befall me, I think I should go straight to Him. I have been most unworthy, and would be sorry to think that anyone in this house had been as inefficient a Christian as myself. But God has helped a great many through, and I hope he will help me through. It is a long account of shortcomings, but if he is going to rub any of it out, I think he will rub it all out.

And now give us (for I go not alone) your benediction.

When you send letters to a friend in a distant land, you say *viâ* such a city, or *viâ* such a steamer. When you send your good wishes to us, send them *viâ* the throne of God. We shall not travel out of the reach of your prayers. We go to Scotland, the land of John Knox and Hugh M'Kail, and to see Bannockburn, and the place where men bought their freedom to worship God, and paid for it by counting out in rich drops of blood the price of their soul's emancipation. We go to England to hear the whirr of her factories, and study her castles, and admire her philanthropies, and acknowledge the supremacy of that throne on which a Christian woman sits, an example of virtue for all the world. We expect to look at the land of William Tell, and to see God throned on the Alps. But by day and by night on the land and on the sea, our hearts shall run back to these pleasant associations.

“ There is a scene where spirits dwell,  
Where friend holds intercourse with friend ;  
Though sundered far, by faith we meet  
[Around one common mercy seat.”

Meanwhile, take care of the interests of this Church. In your last hours there will be no work that will yield you such high satisfaction as that which you do for God. Let there not be more strokes of the hammer or clicks of the trowel on that Tabernacle than supplications to God. A field opens for us such as is seldom granted to a Church. By a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost may we be ready to enter it. And now, may the blessing of God come down upon your bodies and upon your souls, your fathers and mothers, your companions, your children, your brothers and sisters, and your friends! May you be blessed in your business and in your pleasures, in your joys and in your sorrows, in the house and by the way! And if, during our separation, an arrow from the unseen world should strike any of us, may it only hasten on the raptures that God has prepared for those who love Him! I utter not the word

farewell ; it is too sad, too formal a word for me to speak. But, considering that I have your hand tightly clasped in both of mine, I utter a kind, an affectionate, and a cheerful GOOD-BYE !

“ And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship.”

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### THE BALANCES.

“Thou art weighed in the balance, and found wanting.”—*Dan.* v. 27.

BABYLON was the paradise of architecture. Driven out from thence, the most elaborate structures of modern times are only the evidence of her fall. After the site of Babylon had been selected, two million of men were employed for the construction of the wall and principal works. The walls of the city were sixty miles in circumference. They were surrounded by a trench, out of which had been dug the material for the construction of the city. There were twenty-five gates of solid brass on each side of the square city. Between every two gates a great watch-tower sprang up into the heavens. From each of the twenty-five gates, on either side, a street ran straight through to the gate on the other side, so that there were fifty streets, each fifteen miles long, which gave to the city an appearance of wonderful regularity. The houses did not join each other on the ground, and between them were gardens and shrubbery. From house-top to house-top bridges swung, over which the inhabitants were accustomed to pass. A branch of the Euphrates went through the city, over which a bridge of marvellous structure was thrown, and under which a tunnel ran. To keep the river from overflowing the city in times of freshet, a great lake was arranged to catch the surplus, in which the water was kept as in a reservoir until times of drought, when it was sent streaming down over the thirsty land. A palace stood at each end of the Euphrates bridge ; one

palace a mile and three quarters in compass, and the other palace seven and a half miles in circumference. The wife of Nebuchadnezzar, having been brought up among the mountains of Media, could not stand it in this flat country of Babylon, and so, to please her, Nebuchadnezzar had a mountain, four hundred feet high, built in the midst of the city. This mountain was surrounded by terraces, for the support of which great arches were lifted. On the top of these arches flat stones were laid; then a layer of reeds and bitumen; then two rows of bricks, closely cemented; then thick sheets of lead, upon which the soil was placed. The earth here deposited was so deep that the largest trees had room to anchor their roots. All the glory of the flowery tropics was spread out at that tremendous height, until it must have seemed to those below as though the clouds were all in blossom, and the very sky leaned on the shoulder of the cedar. At the top an engine was constructed, which drew the water from the Euphrates, far below, and made it spout up amid this garden of the skies. All this to please his wife. I think she must have been pleased.

In the midst of this city stood also the temple of Belus. One of its towers was one eighth of a mile high, and on the top of it an observatory, which gave the astronomers great advantage, as, being at so great a height, one could easily talk with the stars. This temple was full of cups, and statues, and censers, all of gold. One image weighed a thousand Babylonish talents, which would be equal to fifty-two million dollars. But why enlarge? This city is besieged and doomed. Though provisioned for twenty years, it shall fall to-night. See the gold and silver plate flash on the king's table. Pour out the rich wine from the tankards into the cups. Drink, my lords, to the health of the king. Drink to the glory of Babylon. Drink to the defenders of the city. Drink to a glorious future. Startle not at the splashed wine on the table as though it were blood. Turn not pale at the clash of the cups, as though it were the



clang of arms. On with the mirth! A thousand lords reel on their chairs, and quarrel and curse. The besotted king sags back on his chair, and stares vacantly on the wall. But that vacant looks takes an intensity. It is an affrighted look. As he gazes, the lords gaze. Every eye is turned to the wall. Darkness falls upon the room. The blaze of the gold plate goes out. Out of the black sleeve of the darkness a finger of fiery terror trembles through the air and comes to the wall, circling about as though it would write, and then, with sharp tip of flame, engraves on the plastering the doom of the king, "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting!"

The bang of heavy fists against the palace gates is followed by the crushing in of the doors. A thousand gleaming daggers strike through a thousand quivering hearts. And now Death is the king, and his throne a heap of corpses. An unseen balance had been set up in the festal hall. God swung it. Nebuchadnezzar's opportunities on one side of the balance, and his sins on the other. Down went his sin: up went his opportunities. Weighed, and found wanting.

There has been a great deal of cheating in this country by false weights and measures. Government appointed commissioners to stamp the weights and measures. Much of the wrong has been righted. I speak of another kind of scales. We all have been in the habit of making mistakes in our weighing of men and things. There is, indeed, only one pair of balances absolutely perfect, and that is suspended from the throne of God Almighty. Other balances get out of order. The chain breaks, or the metal is clipped, or the equipoise in some other way is broken; and a pound does not always mean a pound: and you pay for one thing and get another. But the balances of God never lose their adjustment. With them a pound is a pound, and right is right, and wrong is wrong, and a soul is a soul, and eternity is eternity. God has a bushel measure, a peck measure, and gallon measure. Whenever a merchant measures a bushel of wheat, or salt or corn, God weighs it immediately

after him. The merchant's measure may be wrong, but God's measure is just right. If a merchant measures a gallon of oil and does not give the proper quantity, God measures it and says, "So many drops too few! Recording angel, write it down." If a farmer comes to town with apples for sale and does not give full measure, the apples are immediately put into God's peck, and record is made of twenty apples too few! We may cheat ourselves and we may cheat our neighbours; but in the last day we shall find that what we learned at school, in our boyhood, is true; and that twelve ounces make a pound, and twenty hundred weight make one ton, and one hundred and twenty eight solid feet make one cord of wood. No more, no less.

But I am not now to speak of the weighing of coffees and sugars, but of the weighing of principles, of individuals, of churches, and of worlds. Many suppose that sin is imponderable; but it is heavy enough to crush a world. Yea, our earth itself is to be put on scales, with all its mountains, and valleys, and seas. You would think that the Alps, and Pyrenees, and Himalayas, and Mount Washingtons, and all the cities of the earth, on one side of the scale, would crush it. No! God will at last see what opportunities the world had, and what opportunities it neglected; and he will sit down on the white throne to see the whole world weighed, and will see it rise in the balance lighter than a feather; and he will cry out to His messengers who carry the torch, "Burn that world. Weighed, and found wanting."

God is every day estimating churches. He puts a great church into the scales. He puts the minister, and the choir, and the grand structure, that cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, on the same side. On the other side of the scales he puts the idea of spiritual life that the Church ought to possess, or brotherly love, or faith, or sympathy for the poor. Up goes the grand meeting-house, with its minister and choir. God says that a Church is of much worth only as it saves souls; and if, with all your magnificent machinery

you save but a handful of men when you might save a multitude, he will spew you out of his mouth. Weighed, and found wanting!

God is also estimating nations. He put the Spanish monarchy in the scales a few months ago, and found it insufficient, and cast it aside. He put the French monarch, with his empire, in the scales. Napoleon cried out, "See what I have done to enlarge the Boulevards! I kindled up the glories of the Champs Elysées! I enlarged the Tuilleries! I built the gilded Opera House!" Then God put on one side of the scales the Emperor, and the Boulevards, and the Champs Elysées, and the Tuilleries, and the gilded Opera House, but on the other side of the scales he put that man's abominations and the outrages he had committed against the French nation. Down went the sins; up went the emperor, with all his surroundings. "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting!"

But I want to become more personal. I have heard persons say that ministers ought to deal with things in the abstract, and not be personal. What success would a hunter have if he went out to shoot deer in the abstract? He puts the butt of the gun to his breast; lays his eye along the barrel; takes sure aim; draws the trigger, and crash go the antlers on the rocks! What if a physician, called into your house, should treat your ailments in the abstract? How long before the inflammation would heal, or the pain be assuaged? What folly to talk about sin in the abstract, when you and I have in our souls a malady that must be cured, or it will kill us, miserably and for ever!

God lifts the balances to-night. The judgment day is coming. Every day is a day of judgment. We are this moment being canvassed, inspected, weighed. But do not let us all get on the scales at once. We will take one at a time. Who will get on first? Here is a volunteer. He is a moralist—as upright a man as there is in Brooklyn. Get in, brother. What is it that you have with you in that

bundle? He says, "It is my reputation for morality, and uprightness, and integrity." Leave that behind. It is not fair that you carry a bundle with you. We just want to measure *you*. Have you slandered your neighbours? You say, "Never have I slandered them." What outrages have you committed against society? You say, "None." So far so good. Have your thoughts always been right? You answer, "No." I put down one mark against you. Have you served God as you ought? "No." Another mark against you. Have you loved the Lord Jesus Christ with all your soul? "No." Another mark against you. Come, now, be frank. Have you not, in ten thousand things, come short of your duty? "Yes." Then I put down ten thousand marks against you. Bring me a larger book, in which I may make record of your deficits and neglects. Do not jump out of the scales until I have examined them. You stand on one side, with all your kindnesses, and charities, and conciliations of behaviour. On the other side I put this one weight. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified." Down goes the weight; up go your good works, "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting?"

Who will come next? Here comes a formalist, who gets on the scales—a man whose religion is made up of genuflections, postures, and outward proprieties. Brother, what is that you have in your pocket? He says it is a *Westminster Assembly Catechism*. What is it you have in that other pocket? He says that it is the *Heidelberg Catechism*. What is that you have under your arm? He says it is a church record. What are those books that I see scattered around on your side of the scales? He says they are *Calvins Institutes*. My brother, we did not come here to weigh books, however good they may be. We want on this scale nothing but your soul. Your orthodoxy won't save you. Men have gone to hell with a catechism in each pocket. The forms of religion are only the scaffolding for putting up the

spiritual house. Alas ! if you have mistaken the scaffolding for the temple itself. "But I cross myself ever so many times," you say. That will not save you. "But I give liberally to the poor." That will not save you. "But I read a chapter every night before I go to bed." That will not save you. "But I sit at the communion table." That will not save you. "But my name is down on the Church book." That will not save you. "But I have been a professor of religion for thirty years." That will not save you. I place on your side of the balance all the edicts, all the religious counsels, all the communion-tables that were ever built, and on the opposite side of the balance I put this hundred-pound weight : "*Having the FORM of godliness but denying the power thereof. From such turn away.*" "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting !"

Here comes a worldling. You cannot mistake him. His eyes, his hands, his heart are full of business. Stocks, dividends, percentages, scrip, "buyer, ten days," "buyer, thirty days." His heaven is a successful bargain ; his eternity so many feet front by so many feet deep. He wants to go to heaven, because where there is so much gold it must be that "money is easy." The most tremendous question he ever asks himself is, "How low can I buy these goods and how high a price can I get for them ?" The day is full of rush and din, and he sleeps and sweats under a nightmare of dollars. The Sabbath is a vulgar interruption, and he hopes, on his way to church, to drum up a new customer. Day by day he has been weighing confections, weighing fruits, weighing meat, weighing ice, or weighing coal, not knowing that he all the time was being weighed. I pile up beside him, on his side of the scales, the hogsheads, and the barrels, and the money-vaults, and the store houses, and the cargoes, but all these give to the worldling no additional weight. At the very moment we were congratulating him on the fine store, and the full-blooded stock, and the princely income, God and the angels were looking upon the scene

and announced the solemn truth, "Weighed in the balance, and found wanting."

But I must go on faster and look at the last great scrutiny. We are passing on, heedless of the most astounding considerations. In a moment the ground may break through and let you fall into the grave. The pulses of life, now so regularly drumming in the march, any moment may cry *Halt!* On a hair-hung bridge we walk over bottomless chasms. When we go to bed at night we know not that we shall see the day dawn. When we go forth from our homes we know not that we shall return again. Dangers lurk about your path, and are ready to break upon you from ambush. In a moment the door of eternity may swing open, and invisible ushers conduct you in for reward or for retribution. A crown of glory is being burnished for your brow, or bolts are being forged for your prison. Angels of light are making ready to shout over your deliverance, or fiends of darkness reaching up their skeleton hands to pull you down into ruin consummate. Suddenly the Judgment will be here. The Angel, with one foot on the sea and the other on the land, will swear by Him that liveth for ever that Time shall be no longer?

Hark! I hear the jarring of the mountains. It is the setting down of the balances. Look! there is something like a flash from the cloud. It is the glitter of the shining balances. All the unforgiven souls of earth must get into the scales. They may struggle to keep out but God will put them in. Let the universe look on and see the last great weighing. The world may have weighed them and pronounced them moral. They may have weighed themselves, and given a self-gratulatory decision; but now God weighs them in unmistakable balances. On this side of the scales are placed the souls of the unpardoned—their wealth all gone, their crowns all gone, their titles all gone. Nothing remains but the naked souls of the unforgiven. On the other side of the scale are placed wasted Sabbaths, misim-

proved privileges, disregarded sermons, innumerable opportunities of pardon. Hark ! how the scales come down on this last side, loud as thunder ! God, looking at the balance, shall announce, in the presence of men and devils, and cherubim and archangel, while groaning earthquake, and crackling conflagration, and judgment trumpet, and everlasting storm shall repeat it, “ Weighed in the balance, and found wanting ! ”

“ But,” you ask, “ how, if we repent to-night and come to God, will we at last be weighed ? ” Yes ! yes ! There is no escape from the scrutiny. The wicked have been tested and driven away in their wickedness. Now let the righteous get on to the balances. “ Oh ! ” you say, “ let me off ; I cannot stand the test.” Get in, ye righteous ! “ What with all my sin ? ” No time to discuss the matter, The bell of judgment is tolling. The balances are adjusted—get in you must. All your opportunities of being better and doing more good are placed on one side of the scales, and you get in on the other. You are too light to budge the balances in your favour. On your side are spread all the kind words you ever spoke, and all the Christian deeds you ever did. *Too light yet !* On your side are put all your prayers, all your repentance, all your faith. *Too light yet !* Come and get on this side, Paul, Luther, Baxter, Payson, and Doddridge—and help the Christian bear down the scale. *Too light yet !* Get on this side all ye martyrs who went through fire and flood—Wickliffe, Ridley and Latimer. *Too light yet !* Come angels of God, and get on the scales, and see if ye cannot turn the balances in favour of the saints ; for the judgment is ending, and let not the righteous be banished with the wicked. *Too light yet !* Place on this side all the sceptres of light, and all the palm-branches of triumph, and all the thrones of glory. *Too light yet !* But at this point Jesus, the Son of God, steps up to the balances. He puts one scarred foot on the Christian’s side of the scales, and they tremble and quiver from top to bottom. He puts both feet

on, and down go the scales on the Christian's side with a stroke that sets all the bells of heaven a-chiming! This Rock of Ages is heavier than any other weight.

But oh, Christian! you may not get off so easily. I place on the opposite scale all the sins that you ever committed, and all the envies, and hates, and inconsistencies of a lifetime, but altogether they do not budge the scales. Christ, on your side has settled the balances for ever. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Go free! go free! Sins all pardoned, shackles all broken, prison doors all opened. Go free! go free! Weighed in the balance and *nothing* wanting!

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### CROSSING THE BRIDGE BEFORE YOU COME TO IT.

“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”—*Matthew vi. 34.*

THE life of every man, woman, and child, is as closely under the divine care as though such person were the only man, woman, or child. There are no accidents. As there is a law of storms in the natural world, so there is a law of trouble, a law of disaster, a law of misfortune; but the majority of the troubles of life are imaginary, and the most of those anticipated never come. At any rate, there is no cause of complaint against God. See how much He hath done to make thee happy; His sunshine filling the earth with glory, making rainbow for the storm and halo for the mountain, greenness for the moss, saffron for the cloud, and crystal for the billow, and procession of bannered flame through the opening gates of the morning, chaffinches to sing, rivers to glitter, seas to chant, and springs to blossom, and overpowering all other sounds with its song, and over-



arching all other splendour with its triumph, covering up all other beauty with its garlands, and outflashing all other thrones with its dominion—deliverance for a lost world through the Great Redeemer.

I discourse this morning of the sin of *borrowing trouble*.

First: Such a habit of mind and heart is wrong, because it puts one into a despondency that ill fits him for duty.

I planted two rose-bushes in my garden; the one thrived beautifully, the other perished. I found the dead one on the shady side of the house. Our dispositions, like our plants, need sunshine. Expectancy of repulse is the cause of many secular and religious failures. Fear of bankruptcy has upturned many a fine business, and sent the man dodging among the note-shavers. Fear of slander and abuse has often invited all the long-beaked vultures of scorn and back-biting. Many of the misfortunes of life, like hyenas, flee if you courageously meet them.

How poorly prepared for religious duty is a man who sits down under the gloom of expected misfortune! If he pray, he says, "I do not think I shall be answered." If he give, he says, "I expect they will steal the money." Helen Chalmers told me that her father, Thomas Chalmers, in the darkest hour of the history of the Free Church of Scotland, and when the woes of the land seemed to weigh upon his heart, said to his children, "Come, let us go out and play ball or fly kite," and the only difficulty in the play was that the children could not keep up with their father. The M'Cheynes and the Summerfields of the Church who did the most good cultivated sunlight. Away with the horrors! they distil poison; they dig graves; and if they could climb so high, they would drown the rejoicings of heaven with sobs and wailing.

You will have nothing but misfortune in the future if you sedulously watch for it. How shall a man catch the right kind of fish if he arranges his line, and hook, and bait to catch lizards and water-serpents? Hunt for bats and

hawks, and bats and hawks you will find. Hunt for robin-redbreasts, and you will find robin-redbreasts. One night an eagle and an owl got into fierce battle; the eagle unused to the night, was no match for an owl, which is most at home in the darkness, and the king of the air fell helpless; but the morning rose, and with it rose the eagle; and the owls, and the night-hawks, and the bats came a second time to the combat; now the eagle, in the sunlight, with a stroke of his talons and a great cry, cleared the air, and his enemies, with torn feathers and splashed with blood, tumbled into the thickets. Ye are the children of light. In the night of despondency you will have no chance against your enemies that flock up from beneath, but, trusting in God and standing in the sunshine of the promises, you shall "renew your youth like the eagle."

Again: The habit of borrowing trouble is wrong, because it has a tendency to make us overlook present blessing.

To slake man's thirst, the rock is cleft, and cool waters leap into his brimming cup. To feed his hunger, the fields bow down with bending wheat, and the cattle come down with full udders from the clover pastures to give him milk, and the orchards yellow and ripen, casting their juicy fruits into his lap. Alas! that amid such exuberance of blessing, man should growl as though he were a soldier on half rations, or a sailor on short allowance; that a man should stand neck-deep in harvests looking forward to famine; that one should feel the strong pulses of health marching with regular tread through all the avenues of life, and yet tremble at the expected assault of sickness; that a man should sit in his pleasant home, fearful that ruthless want will some day rattle the broken window-sash with tempest, and sweep the coals from the hearth, and pour hunger into the bread-tray; that a man fed by Him who owns all the harvests should expect to starve; that one whom God loves and surrounds with benediction, and attends with angelic escort, and hovers over with more than motherly fondness, should

be looking for a heritage of tears! Has God been hard with thee, that thou shouldst be foreboding? Has he stinted thy board? Has he covered thee with rags? Has he spread traps for thy feet, and galled thy cup, and rasped thy soul, and wrecked thee with storm, and thundered upon thee with a life full of calamity? If your father or brother come into your bank where gold and silver are lying about, you do not watch them, for you know they are honest; but if an entire stranger come by the safe, you keep your eye on him, for you do not know his designs. So some men treat God; not as a father, but a stranger, and act suspiciously toward Him, as though they were afraid he would steal something. It is high time you began to thank God for present blessing. Thank Him for your children, happy, buoyant, and bounding. Praise Him for your home, with its fountain of song and laughter. Adore Him for morning light and evening shadow. Praise Him for fresh, cool water, bubbling from the rock, leaping in the cascade, soaring in the mist, falling in the shower, dashing against the rock and clapping its hands in the tempest. Love Him for the grass that cushions the earth, and the clouds that curtain the sky, and the foliage that waves in the forest. Thank Him for a Bible to read, and a cross to gaze upon, and a Saviour to deliver.

Many Christians think it a bad sign to be jubilant, and their work of self-examination is a hewing down of their brighter experiences. Like a boy with a new jack-knife, hacking everything he comes across, so their self-examination is a religious cutting to pieces of the greenest things they can lay their hands on. They imagine they are doing God's service when they are going about borrowing trouble, and borrowing it at thirty per cent., which is always a sure precursor of bankruptcy.

Again: The habit of borrowing trouble is wrong, because the present is sufficiently taxed with trial. God sees that we *all need a certain amount* of trouble, and so he apportions *it for all the days and years of our life.* Alas for the policy.

of gathering it all up for one day or year! Cruel thing to put upon the back of one camel all the cargo intended for the entire caravan. I never look at my memorandum-book to see what engagements and duties are far ahead. Let every week bear its own burdens.

The shadows of to-day are thick enough, why implore the presence of other shadows? The cup is already distasteful, why halloo to disasters far distant to come, and wring out more gall into the bitterness? Are we such champions that, having won the belt in former encounters, we can go forth to challenge all the future?

Here are business men just able to manage affairs as they now are. They can pay their rent, and meet their notes, and manage affairs, as gold now is at 112; but how if it should shoot up to 120, or fall to 105? Go to-morrow and write on your day-book, on your ledger, on your money-safe, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Do not worry about notes that are far from due. Do not pile up on your counting-desk the financial anxieties of the next twenty years. The God who has taken care of your worldly occupation, guarding your store from the torch of the incendiary and the key of the burglar, will be as faithful in 1873 as in 1863. God's hand is mightier than the machinations of stock-gamblers, or the plots of political demagogues, or the red right arm of revolution, and the darkness will fly and the storm fall dead at his feet.

So there are persons in feeble health, and they are worried about the future. They make out very well now, but they are bothering themselves about future pleurisies, and rheumatisms, and neuralgias and fevers. Their eyesight is feeble, and they are worried lest they entirely lose it. Their hearing is indistinct, and they are alarmed lest they become entirely deaf. They felt chilly to-day, and are expecting an attack of typhoid. They have been troubled for weeks with some perplexing malady, and dread becoming life-long invalids. Take care of your health now, and trust

God for the future. Be not guilty of the blasphemy of asking him to take care of you while you sleep with your windows tight down, or eat chicken-salad at eleven o'clock at night, or sit down on a cake of ice to cool off. Be prudent and then be confident. Some of the sickest people have been the most useful. It was so with Payson, who died deaths daily, and Robert Hall, who used to stop in the midst of his sermon, and lay down on the pulpit sofa to rest, and then go on again. Theodore Frelinghuysen had a great horror of dying till the time came, and then went peacefully. Take care of the present, and let the future look out for itself. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Again: The habit of borrowing misfortune is wrong, because it unfits us for it when it actually does come. We cannot always have smooth sailing. Life's path will sometimes tumble among declivities, and mount a steep, and be thorn-pierced. Judas will kiss our cheek, and then sell us for thirty pieces of silver. Human scorn will try to crucify us between two thieves. We will hear the iron gate of the sepulchre creak and grind as it shuts in our kindred. But we cannot get ready for these things by forebodings. They who fight imaginary woes will come out of breath into conflict with the armed disasters of the future. Their ammunition will have been wasted long before they came under the guns of real misfortune. Boys, in attempting to jump a wall, sometimes go so far back in order to get impetus, that when they come up they are exhausted; and these long races in order to get spring enough to vault trouble bring us up at last to the dreadful reality with our strength gone.

Finally: The habit of borrowing trouble is wrong, because it is *unbelief*. God has promised to take care of us. The Bible blooms with assurances. Your hunger will be fed; your sickness will be alleviated; your sorrows will be healed. God will sandal your feet, and smooth your path, and along by frowning crag and opening grave sound the voices of

victory and good cheer. The summer clouds that seem thunder-charged really carry in their bosom harvests of wheat, and shocks of corn, and vineyards purpling for the wine-press. The wrathful wave will kiss the feet of the great Storm-walker. Our great Joshua will command, and above your soul the sun of prosperity will stand still. Bleak and wave-struck Patmos shall have apocalyptic vision, and you shall hear the cry of elders, and the sweep of wings, and trumpets of salvation, and the voice of Hallelujah unto God for ever.

Your way may wind along dangerous bridle-paths, and amid wolf's howl and the scream of the vulture, but the way still winds upward till angels guard it, and trees of life overarch it, and thrones line it, and crystalline fountains leap on it, and the pathway ends at gates that are pearl, and streets that are gold, and temples that are always open, and hills that quake with perpetual song, and a city mingling for ever Sabbath, and jubilee, and triumph and coronation.

“Let Pleasure chant her syren song,

'Tis not the song for me :

To weeping it will turn e'er long,

For this is Heaven's decree.

“But there's a song the ransomed sing,

To Jesus their exalted King,

With joyful heart and tongue,

Oh, that's the song for me !”

Courage, my brother ! The father does not give to his son at school enough money to last him several years, but, as the bills for tuition and board, and clothing, and books come in, pays them. So God will not give you grace all at once for the future, but will meet all your exigencies as they come. Through earnest prayer, trust Him. People ascribe the success of the Cunard line of steamers to business skill, and know not the fact that when the line of steamers first started, Mrs. Cunard, the wife of the proprietor, passed the

whole of each day when a steamer sailed, in prayer to God for its safety and the success of the line. Put everything in God's hand, and leave it there. Large interest money to pay will soon eat up a farm, a store, an estate, and the interest on borrowed troubles will swamp anybody. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

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### CHRISTIAN HAND-SHAKING.\*

"Give me thy hand."—2 *Kings* x. 15.

JEHU had been making an exterminating assault upon the idolatry of his day, and Jehonadab comes out to offer him congratulation. They meet half way; and one exclaims to the other, in all the ardour of friendly recognition, "*Give me thy hand!*"

The mode of salutation is different in different countries. In some lands they kneel before the visitor. In some, fall on their faces; in others they stand upright and give a slight bend to the neck. But when two persons, believing in the same thing, and working for the same object, and trusting in the same God, and hoping for the same heaven, come face to face, look each other in the eye, and cross palms with a tight grip, and shake hands, that is human equality and Christian brotherhood. I fall down before no man in obeisance; I gaze down upon no man in arrogance; but, looking into the face of friend and foe, I am ready to exclaim, in the words of Jehu to Jehonadab, "*Give me thy hand!*"

There has been too great a distance between pulpit and pew—a great gulph fixed. The heart of the preacher and the heart of the hearer have not struck each other in pulsation. We come down out of our studies, where we have had

\* Preached on return from Europe.

a grand time with Archbishop Leighton and Jeremy Taylor, and the people come up out of their stores, and shops, and homes, and we have known too little of each other. The distance has been so great that our arms are not long enough. Nothing would be more preposterous than for a preacher to stand at an elevation of five or six feet, and behind a barricade four feet through, crying, "Give me thy hand!" Daniel Webster said that one of the best evidences of the divinity of our holy religion was the fact that it had lived, notwithstanding the clumsy architecture of the pulpit.

Men use common sense in everything but in religion. The counsellor at the bar stands before the jury with his person unhid; but when the teacher of religion comes out to talk to the people on a plain platform, without any desk before him, Christians quote the Psalmist, and say, "The Lord hath no pleasure in the *legs* of a man." When one merchant wishes to talk to another merchant he does not say, "Wait until I can get behind this dry-good's box." But you wrap us in gowns, and lay us out in white cravats, and hide us behind boards, as though *we* were a separate race, and a minister were useful just in proportion as you cover him up, and as though we belonged to a different order of beings, instead of being sinners like yourselves, and beggars at the door of mercy. We have used the Gospel as though it were a "swamp-angel gun" that could shoot six miles, instead of reaching up into God's armoury and taking the two-edged sword, and with it going down among men, striking down their sins, hip and thigh, with great slaughter.

Come, now, and let us get near to each other in a plain loving, Christian talk. My brother! my sister! my child! "Give me thy hand!"

I. Let us join hands in Christian *welcome*. Three months ago we left each other at Sandy Hook. It was a bright day when we went out, but sad was the parting. To-day we meet again. The summer sun, that carried off so many of our fellow-citizens, did not smite you. The rail-train rushed



from the track, but you clambered out, unhurt, from the wreck. Some of you were sick, and nigh unto death, but God gave skill to the doctors, and healing power to the medicine. God watched you *here*, and took care of me travelling in other lands. Was there ever anyone with so kind a heart as our Father? What good care he does take of us! What pleasant sleep by night: What wholesome food by day? What decent apparel we have on! I think you have never heard your children cry for bread when there was no flour in the house. Aged man! who has watched you these seventy years, so that you can now look back and say, "I have been young, and now I am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread?" Mary, my little child, who made, preserves, and redeemed you? Young man! whom can you depend upon when all else fails? You need not answer me, for I know that there are thanksgivings now going up from all parts of this house. Gathering up the memories of what God has done for *me*, I come out to meet you; and *you*, gathering up the memories of what God has done for you, come out to meet me; and in warm, hearty, Christian welcome, we cry, each to each, "*Give me thy hand!*" Bless the Lord, O my soul! May my every thought be gratitude, and my every word thanksgiving! Living, I will praise him! Dying, I will charge my children, with the laying on of my faltering hands, never to forget the Lord, and to cover the plain slab that marks my grave with, "Oh! give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever."

II Again: Let us cross hands in *congratulation*. We all felt that we must have a new church. We threw out the Gospel net on the right side of the ship, and we found it too small to hold the fish. We wanted an architect, who, untrammelled by frigid ecclesiastical notions, could give us a building which would gather the people in a circle about the pulpit, as friends and neighbours gathering around a *fireplace*. The work is done. It suits us well. And you know

that if a man's wife is comely in his eyes, it matters not much if all others think her uncomely. Some have called the building "Talmage's Theatre." and by like gracious nomenclature. But I look upon it merely as a great net to catch souls. We have no chandelier that cost a thousand dollars: we have no windows that it took a year to paint with gorgon, or cherub like fat boy in scanty clothes; we have no upholstery that makes the rainbows ashamed of themselves; we have spent no two hundred thousand dollars in gewgaws. I wanted a place where, for the remaining years of my life, I could stand before my fellow-men, and, without any hindrance, without any conventionalities tell them the best story that was ever told—how that my Lord Jesus has such a great wide heart, he wants all the world to come and lodge in it. I have found a great many kind friends, but Jesus is the best. He understands me so well, and has such a way of putting up with my frailties, and has promised to do so much for me when all other loved ones swim away from my vision, and I can no more laugh with them over their joys or cry with them over their sorrows. And now that the building is done, and untrammelled by the pew-rental system which has cursed the Church of God for the last fifty years, we can invite all men, whatever the flushness or the emptiness of their pockets, to come in. I feel that I would like to go round in this room, and in congratulation for what God hath wrought, cry out, to young and old, to rich and poor, "*Give me thy hand!*"

A few days ago, on a mule's back, we went climbing up to see the Mer de Glace, a frozen Niagara in Switzerland. The river has been caught on its way down through the mountain gorge and turned into solid ice.

God stood in the gap one day, and cried, "Back! back!" to the waters, and they halted. It seemed as though they had looked up to the awful steep, and crouched back white with terror. Nothing but Omnipotence could have taken them by their crystal bit and hurled them back on their

haunches. Magnificent are they, but merciless ! A Russian slipped between its glaciers. He held on with the tips of his fingers, and cried for help ; he held on until his fingers were frozen, but the ice made no answer, and he perished. What did the ice care ? Oh ! the conventionalities of the Church are imposing and beautiful, but it is the magnificence of ice. The world, in its want and agony, hangs on to them and cries out for help, but no rescue comes, and they drop off and die while this ceremonial frigidity stands between the mountain of the law and the mountain of the cross—an *ecclesiastical Mer de Glace*.

III. Again : Let us join hands of *Christian sympathy*. There are some hand-shakings that you never forget. You were in trouble. A friend came into the house ; he said not a word, but there was something in the pressure of his hand that brought life, and invigoration, and strength to your soul. What did he do ? Nothing. He only shook hands. In trial we need sympathy. If six men put their shoulders under one burden, each man only has one sixth part of the burden to bear. If a group of friends come around us in times of trial, the weight of the affliction is divided among us all. Now there are men and women here to-night who have had trouble enough to kill them. While I speak there is a man yonder who has a sharp pain cutting down through his body until he can hardly keep from crying outright. There is a woman who has a home trouble preying on her soul. You wonder that, though on her wedding-day, five years ago, she was so fair, now there are so many wrinkles on her face and such black lines under her eyes. She will not tell it ; she would rather die than tell it. There is a young man who was kicked out of a store because he would not lie for his employer. Here once was a perfect home circle—father, mother, children, and grandparents. How many of them are left ? Not one ; their heart-strings have snapped. If the graves of the earth could be placed side by *side*, you could walk on them, stepping from grave-hillock to

grave-hillock all around the world. It seems as if, when trouble gets at a man, it cannot let him alone. Sorrows are like sheep—they go in flocks; like partridges—they go in covers; like deer—in herds; like fish—in shoals. Was there ever a man who had only one pain at a time? No; there were six. Or one abuse at a time? No: there were twenty slanderers. Or one less! No; there were thirty disasters.

Standing by the smoke-stack of the Cuba while there was what the sailors call a “big lump of a sea,” as the waves struck her the ship seemed stunned, as an ox is stunned by a butcher’s bludgeon, or on the cliff of a wave seemed poised, like as a brown thresher on the branch of a willow, I said to one of the officers, “What do you think ever became of the City of Boston?” He answered, “I have sailed in the same latitude where that vessel went, and I do not think the icebergs struck her; but the waves sometimes, go in *threes*; and if three waves strike a ship in quick succession, there is but little hope for the ship. I think one wave struck her and knocked in the bows, and another, that filled the hatches, and the next sunk her.”

So I have noticed that troubles sometimes go in three surges—sickness poverty, and bereavement dashing upon the soul; and then there is an awful shipwreck!

Oh! when a man has trouble, he needs friends. When a man loses property, he needs all those of his acquaintances who have lost property to come in with their sympathy. When bereavement comes to a household, it is a comfort to have others who have been bereaved come in and sympathize. Give me thy hand a minute, and let us have a good talk about our troubles. God is not going to let you go under. He will explain, after a while, so satisfactorily that it will take an eternity to express your admiration of His wisdom. You often talk about God as your Father. I know something better than that: God is a Mother. “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.” With some troubles you never think of going to your father; His hand

is too hard ; his work too rough. You go to your mother.  
 O the tenderness of divine sympathy !

In an Episcopal church in Chamouni I saw in a hymn-book these words :

“My God, my Father, while I stray  
 Far from my home, in life’s rough way,  
 Oh ! teach me from my heart to say,  
 Thy will be done !

“If thou shouldst call me to resign  
 What most I prize—it ne’er was mine—  
 I only yield thee what was thine :  
 Thy will be done !

“Renew my soul from day to day ;  
 Blend it with thine, and take away  
 All that now makes it hard to say  
 Thy will be done !

“Then, when on earth I breathe no more  
 The prayer, oft mixed with tears before,  
 I’ll sing upon the happier shore,  
 Thy will be done !”

We shall, after a while, have done chewing these bitter herbs, and will then sit down at the King’s banquet.

When a panorama is to pass before an audience, the artist darkens the room in which they sit, so that the picture may be more fully seen ; so God darkens our place on earth, puts out this light, and that light, and the other light, that then He may pass before our souls the splendours and glories of the better land. The darkness here augments the light there.

IV. Again : Let us join hands in a *bargain*. You know that when men make a contract they shake hands over it. In a pledge for more prayer and work, *give me thy hand !* We did not build this house for a dormitory in which to sleep, but as an armoury, where we are to get our weapons scoured and sharpened. Some of you Christians have been wasting *your lives* in an aimless warfare, doing more harm than good,

instead of drawing "bean" sight over a barrel that never misses the mark. I had rather go into this conflict with a company of one hundred of God's picked men than with a whole battalion of Christians who are afraid of getting their feet wet, and who are chiefly anxious about their rations.

Away, all of you drones! out of this hive! One half of our churches are stuck in the mud because of three or four professors of religion who are dead, and whose carcasses are laid in the way of all good enterprises. My way is every once in a while to preach a sermon so hot and heavy that they cannot stand it, and then they go out to bore somebody else.

Rouse up, men and women of God! There never was such inducement to work. We have enough machinery under God to do it all. What we want is more men and women to direct the machinery.

Newspaper men, wheel your presses into line! Men of science, set your batteries for the defence of the truth! Church of God, march on! march on!

What meanest thou, O coward! that thou betrayest thy Lord? See! see! The hosts of heaven and hell mingle in the fight. Up with the siege-guns! Unlimber the field-pieces! The Lord of Hosts is with us; and already methinks I here the shout, "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." In the words of Samuel Rutherford, "*O for an empty hell and a full heaven!*"

Well, my friends, it is pleasant to-night to join hands in welcome, and congratulation, and sympathy, and pledge; but oh! the grander hand-shaking when our work is all done

It was not until eleven o'clock last night that this building was completed. The workmen went home with glad hearts, thinking that the building was done, and well done. But, oh! the grander joy when the structure of our earthly work is accomplished! It is pleasant to shake hands to-day, but how grander the meeting when we meet our friends on the other bank! It is a long while since we have seen them

They went out pale and weak, and the good-bye broke our hearts; but not so certain the coming of next spring's flowers, or the dawn of to-morrow's sun, as that our loved ones in Christ shall come again. John will be there; Paul will be there; Payson will be there; fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters will be there. And hear it, all ye harps of heaven, JESUS WILL BE THERE!

What a reunion! What a *heavenly hand-shaking!* What a congratulation of patriarch with patriarch, and apostle with apostle, and martyr with martyr! And as we pass up from the darkness of earth into that blissful light, the angels of God will bend over to help us over the battlements; and the Church triumphant, with robed arm swung out, will cry to Church militant, "GIVE ME THY HAND!"

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### THE RED WORD.

"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."  
1 *John*, i.-7.

EIGHTEEN centuries ago there lived one Jesus. Publius Lentulus, in a letter to the Roman senate, describes him as "a man of stature somewhat tall; his hair the colour of a chesnut fully ripe, plain to the ears, whence downward it is more orient, curling and waving about the shoulders; in the midst of his forehead is a stream, or partition of his hair; forehead plain, and very delicate; his face without spot or wrinkle, a lovely red; his nose and mouth so forked as nothing can be represented: his beard thick, in colour like his hair—not very long; his eyes gray, quick and clear." He must die. The French Army in Italy found a brass plate on which was a copy of his death warrant, signed by John Zerobabel, Raphael Robani, Daniel Robani, and Capet.

Sometimes men on their way to the scaffold have been rescued by the mob. No such attempt was made in this.

case, for the mob were against him. From nine a.m. till three p.m. Jesus hung a-dying. It was a scene of blood. We are so constituted that nothing is so exciting as blood. It is not the child's cry in the street that so arouses you as the crimson dripping from its lip. In the dark hall, seeing the finger-marks of blood on the plastering, you cry, "What terrible deed has been done here?" Looking upon this suspended victim of the cross, we thrill with the sight of blood—blood dripping from thorn and nail, blood rushing upon his cheek, blood saturating his garments, blood gathered in a pool beneath. There is only one red word in the text that rouses up our attention and calls back that scene: "The BLOOD of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The blood of the cross was *royal* blood. Through our democratic preferences, we may in theory disregard royal pretensions; yet when we see the son of a king our liveliest interest is aroused. Let the Prince of Wales, or the Prince Imperial of France, even in his broken fortunes, go through our streets, and all the city would turn out to look. It is called an honour to have in one's veins the blood of the house of Stuart, or of the house of Hapsburg. Is it nothing when I point you to-night to the outpouring blood of the King of the Universe?

In England the name of Henry was so great that its honours were divided among different reigns. It was Henry the First, and Henry the Second, and Henry the Third, and Henry the Fourth, and Henry the Fifth. In France, the name of Louis was so favourably regarded that it was Louis the First, Louis the Second, Louis the Third, and soon. But this King of whom I speak was CHRIST THE FIRST, CHRIST THE LAST, and CHRIST THE ONLY. He reigned before the Czar mounted the throne of Russia, or the throne of Austria was lifted, "King Eternal, Immortal." Through the indulgences of the royal family, the physical life degenerates, and some of the kings have been almost imbecile, and their bodies weak and



their blood thin and watery ; but the crimson life that flowed upon Calvary had in it the health of the immortal God.

A king dying ! You remember, when the last Czar of Russia was in his fatal sickness, that bulletins were every hour despatched from the palace, saying, " The king is better," or " The king is worse," or " The king is delirious," or " The king rested easier through the night," or " The king is dying," and " The king is dead." The bells tolled it, the flags signalled it, the telegraphs flashed it. Tell it now to all the earth and to all the heavens—Jesus, our King is sick with his last sickness. Let couriers carry the swift despatch. His pains are worse ; he is breathing a last groan ; through his body quivers the last anguish ; the King is dying ; **THE KING IS DEAD !** Ye who come round about the cross, look out how you tread in what you see beneath. It is royal blood. It is said that the Unitarians make too much of the humanity of Christ. I respond that we make too little. If some Roman surgeon, standing under the cross, had caught one drop of the blood on his hand and analysed it, it would have been found to have the same plasma, the same disk, the same fibrine, the same albumen. It was unmistakably *human* blood. It is a *man* that hangs there. His bones are of the same material as ours. His nerves are sensitive like ours. If it were an angel being despoiled I would not feel it so much, for it belongs to a different order of beings. But my Saviour is *aman*, and my whole sympathy is aroused. I can imagine how the spikes felt—how hot the temples burned—what deathly sickness seized his heart—how mountain, and city, and mob swam away from his dying vision—something of the meaning of that cry for help that makes the blood of all the ages curdle with horror : " My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ? "

I go still farther, and say it was a *brother's* blood. If you saw an entire stranger maltreated, and his life oozing away on the pavement, you would feel indignant ; but if, coming *along the street*, you saw a company of villians beating out

the life of your own brother, the sight of his blood would make you mad. You would bound into the affray. At the peril of losing your own life, you would rush in, saying, "You vagabonds! this is my brother. I dare you to touch him again!" You would fight until you fell dead beside him. That is your brother, maltreated on the cross. They spat on him, and slapped him in the face. How do you feel about that? What are your emotions as you hear the falling of the blood upon the leaves beneath—drip, drip, drip? Do you not feel as though, with supernatural power, you could rush upon the mob? Do you not feel as if, standing close, with your back against him, and with one good sword in your hand, and a cry to God for help, you could hew down the desperadoes that assailed him? But you cannot help. The blood rushes from the victim, and there he hangs—your dead brother. What is worse—shall I tell it?—*you* slew him! I charge it, first upon myself, then upon all ye who hear me to-night, the awful crime of fratricide. His blood is on our hands. Bring me a laver, quick! that I may wash it off. Show me the pool where I may be cleansed of the terrible stain. Here it is. I have found it. It is the fountain for all sin; and though sin were as scarlet, it shall be as snow.

It was *substitutionary* blood. Our sins cried to heaven for vengeance. Some one must die. Shall it be us or Christ? "Let it be me," said Jesus. You were drafted for the last war, and some one took your place. You were in debt; not being able to meet the obligation, some one paid it. You can easily understand how Christ went in to fight our battles and to pay our debts. The debt is cancelled; the captives are released; the shackles are broken; the prison is opened. Blood paid the price; blood washed away the pollution; blood sealed the agreement. The blood of Paul, that soaked the dust of the guillotine; the blood of Hugh Latimer, that simmered in the fire; the blood of the high-souled martyrs that reddened the mouths of the lions in the Coliseum, have

just as much worth to your soul as the blood of Christ, unless you take this as expiatory, and feel the truth that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

Come then, and get your sins pardoned. I do not ask you to come to a private confessional, or to whisper into my ears your offences, but, sitting where you are, to accept this moment the blood-cleansing. First, for that old sin. Do you ask, "What sin do you mean?" I mean that old sin that you committed years ago. It may have been two years, ten years, or twenty years. You know when it was. I think that old sins are like other debts—they increase by having the interest added on. They are tenfold greater now, and have been multiplied by all of your opportunities of having them pardoned. Does that old sin present its dun at the door of your soul to-night? Can you not pay it? Does it threaten to carry you off to jail? Does it propose to sell you out? Better get together all your bonds and mortgages, and certificates of stocks, and United States securities. Come, let me count them!—not enough. Bring all the clever things you have ever done. Let me count them!—not enough. Bring all that you possess. You say, "I have brought everything!" Alas! that you cannot meet the obligation. You must DIE. "No! no! no!" says a voice from heaven. The blood of Jesus Christ, the royal blood, the human blood, the expiatory blood, cleanseth from all sin. "What, is that old sin gone?" Yes, I heard it topple over and splash into the depths of the sea. It sinks like lead. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

Circumstances aggravate sins. If a child does wrong, not wittingly, you excuse it; but when we do wrong, we know it. Every time a sin is committed, conscience tolls a funeral bell. We may laugh, and pretend not to hear it, but hear it we must. Our sins are against warnings and reproofs, and doubly aggravated. This man's sins are more heinous than the transgressions of that man, because he had a better *ing up*. Here is a man who, twenty years ago, kneeled

at a Methodist altar. He went a while on the road to heaven, but then got tired, and cut off in another direction. Where he has been since he began to backslide, he and his God only know. This I do know, he is wretchedly unhappy. There is no such nest of scorpions this side of hell than the heart of the backslider. He is the last man that ever returns. The publicans and the harlots come in before him. Where, oh man! is that family altar that you once lifted? Where is the closet of prayer that you once frequented? Are you as happy now as you used to be? Your common sense teaches you that the man who came to Christ, and heard the full expression of God's love, and then went away to betray the Lord, must drink the bitterest gall, and the thunders that at last drive him away will roll and crash with all the accumulated wrath of God Omnipotent; and yet to-night my text sweeps a circle of pardon around all these accumulated sins. Fire may not be able to burn them out; hoofs may not be able to trample them out; hammers may not be able to pound them out; but here is blood that will wash them out! Come! Come! I take you with my right hand, while with my left I catch the warm blood that gushes from the heart of Christ and pour it over your soul, and, lo! the blackness of your sin is gone for ever. Oh, that the red hand of Christ to-night would rub all our sins away!

But you say, "These things are not appropriate to me, for I am a moral man." How about your thoughts? You see my right hand and you see my left hand, and one just as plainly as the other. So with the sin of the heart and the sin of the life—one is just as plain in God's sight as the other. You have not been guilty of murder, you say? Are you sure about that? Have you ever hated anybody? Then you are a murderer. (1 John iii., 15): "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer." You say you have never been guilty of theft. Are you sure about that? I acknowledge you have never taken anything from your fellow man! but have you not taken days and hours that belonged to God for your own

purposes? If it is wrong to steal from a man, it is more wicked to rob God.

If I could marshal before you all the sins of the best man in this house to-night, this whole audience would shriek out with horror. Sins against God and man; sins against Sabbath and sacraments; sins against body and soul; sins against light and knowledge; sins against Sinai and Calvary; sins against the grave and the resurrection; sins against the judgment; sins against the throne of God and the mansions of glory. I blow the trumpet to-night, and call up all the sins of your past life. I wave them here from the past. I stamp them up from beneath—gather them into companies of hundreds; into regiments of thousands; into battalions of ten thousands. We have a host vaster than that of Xerxes. Let the largest of the hundred sins be captain over the company. Let the largest of the thousand iniquities be colonel over the regiment. Let the swarthiest transgression of your lifetime be general over all the host. Together let them wheel and march, and fire. How the couriers of death dash up and down the line! How the great batteries of woe belch forth the sulphurous smoke of hell, and boom with the cannonading of eternal destruction! The host of thy sins innumerable, marching on to capture thy soul. One man against a million armed iniquities. Who can go forth and meet them? We must fall back and fall down. Are there no allies to help? In all the round of God's universe, is there no one to take our part?

Arise, ye seas, and overwhelm the host! Strike, ye lightnings, and consume the foe!

But the wave strikes the beach, and falls back crying "No help in me!" The lightning sheathes itself in the black scabbard of the midnight cloud, and says "No help in me!" But yonder I see a white horse in hot haste coming this way. Make room for the courier. He swings his sword. Good news! good news! The Captain of Salvation comes to the

rescue. Fall back, my sins! fall back, my sorrows! Allies of light and love, to arms! to arms! The host of our sins scatter in defeat, and our delivered soul shouts, "Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." At the sea-shore you go down on the beach, and into the waters, hand in hand, to bathe. None but those who have tried it know the exhilaration. I would to-night that we might all join hands, and go down by scores, and by hundreds, and by thousands, to bathe in the great sea of God's forgiveness. Let us not stand on the margin and paddle the ripples with our feet, but plunge in until the waves go over our heads, and we come up again washed clean from all our sins. Cry mightily, that the blood of the Cross may avail for you. If it cleanse you not, it will plead against you; and all those gaping wounds of Christ, through an unknown eternity, will haunt your soul with the thought of what you might have been. Oh! take your feet out of your brother's blood. Go not down, condemned at last, for fratricide, and regicide, and Deicide. Better for thee that Calvary had never borne its burden, and the lips of Christ had never addressed thee in invitation, if, rejecting all, thou goest into eternal desolation, thy hands and feet bedabbled with the blood of the Son of God.

Oh, ye dying but immortal men! ye blood-bought, judgment-bound hearers! repent, and believe, and hear, and live! "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.

## THE BURNING OF CHICAGO.

“And it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.”—*Genesis* xv., 17.

WHEN the ancients wanted to take an oath they would slay an animal, divide it lengthwise, and lay the pieces opposite to each other. Then the parties would advance from opposite points, and midway between the pieces take the oath. God wished to take an oath. He ordered a heifer and some birds slain and divided, and the pieces lain opposite to each other ; then between the pieces passed first a *furnace*, typical of suffering, and then a *lamp*, emblem of deliverance.

So it is in the history of individuals, cities, and nations. First the awful furnace, then the cheerful lamp. The *furnace* of conviction, the *lamp* of pardon. The *furnace* of trial, the *lamp* of consolation. The *furnace* of want, the *lamp* of prosperity. The *furnace* of death, the *lamp* of glory. “And it came to pass that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.”

It is the duty of the minister to interpret solemn providences. Shall a ship founder, carrying down hundreds of passengers ; or a gunpowder plot be discovered ; or a revolution break forth ; or a pestilence put its leprous bandage over the white lips of an empire ; or a great city crouch down at the nation's gate, beggared, while the long tongues of the flame lick its sores, and the ministry be dumb ? No ; God's writings, by the hand of apostle or prophet, are no more divine than are the capitals of alarm and warning written by plume of fire in the ruins of the great and beautiful Chicago.

In that city the Sabbath had closed. The ministers of Christ had declared their message of peace and good-will to men. The doxologies had been sung, and the people had gone to their dwellings. Children had folded their hands in evening prayer, and all over the city the "good-night" had been given. God looked down upon a great city asleep. But destruction broke forth. At the kerosene lamp of a poor woman a torch was lighted that made the earth shudder. The two coursers of hurricane and conflagration, yoked together, drew on the chariot in which white Want, and cursing Despair, and shrieking Terror were mounted. Under the red-hot hoofs the broken hearts of one hundred and fifty thousand people were flung like a shower of cinders. Store-houses that had been the pride of the continent surrendered their bolts and bars, and iron safes, at the first touch of this irresistible burglary. Churches of God, that had gone up with a self-denial worthy of an angel's eulogy, dropped their organs, galleries, vestments, and consecrated plate into the ashes. And, worse than all, the homes took fire, and away went sacred relics, and the last pillow on which to sleep, and the last loaf of bread, and millionaire and pauper trudged down the street, the flaming sword swung at the gate of their paradise, forbidding them ever again to enter. Hark to that explosion of blocks, that fail to stop the ravages; to the shrieking of that family, gathered on the house-top, begging for help, until the wife falls, and the children faint, and the father staggers, and all die; and to the cry of those men and women who go down the street hatless, raving mad, wringing their hands and tearing their hair! This child cries, "Where is father and mother? I wonder if they are burned up?" And this man, seizing hold of another, cries, "*I wonder if this is the day of judgment?*" and another exclaims, "*This is hell!*" and an infidel, standing at the street-corner, cries out, "*Where is your God now?*" Carry out these sick children in your arms and fly! Wrap up that corpse and get it away from



this funeral pyre! Lift that sick woman, with the child just born, opening its eyes in torment! Get out this life-long invalid, and do not stop for medicines or blankets, for the stairs are crumbling away—they are gone now! Quick! leap from the window! No use in flying to the water's edge, for the army of horrors have crossed, and pulled up the bridges after them. With carts and drays, off to the prairies! The night may be cold, and the prospect hopeless, but anything is better than the sting of these cinders, and the falling of these walls, and the wailing of this dying city. But how shall they get out? To the north—*fire!* to the south—*fire!* to the west—*fire!*

Alas, for our beautiful sister! She stands looking down into the mirror of the lake at her scorched brow, and her bleeding cheek, and shivering with the horror of her own disfigurement. Oh, bitter night of October the eighth! It was a furnace—an awful furnace—a furnace which was five miles long and one mile wide—a furnace not seven times heated, but seven hundred times heated!

Yet deliverance is coming. Telegrams from London, from Edinburgh, from Vienna, from New York, from Brooklyn—from two continents, announcing help. The Cincinnati and St. Louis freight trains come with the speed of an express, bearing food and blankets; and he who, when things looked dark in the Shenandoah Valley, got into lightning stirrups, has just in time ridden into the scene to spread tents for the shelterless, to scatter rations for the hungry, and to proclaim in behalf of our national government, that a people who have barns full of corn, and tables full of bread, will not let Chicago suffer. Lift up your head, O City of the Lakes! With bread enough and to spare, you shall not perish with hunger. Thank God that while nearly everything was burned up in the city, there was enough powder and shot left to shoot down in their tracks the forty-one scoundrels who were found plundering the corpse of the dead city!

It was an awful furnace! But it has passed, and now

see a light that gets brighter and brighter as it is fed by the alms, and sympathies, and prayers of a world. It is the glowing lamp, the cheerful lamp, the glorious lamp of God's deliverance!

From all this you learn, without any preacher telling you, that we are all one. The thrill of sympathy that went through all of this country, and through all of Europe, shows that we belong to one family. No more discussion between New York and Chicago as to which has the most swift footed enterprise; no more contention between St. Louis and Chicago as to which is the most prominent city, but all the people, white, black, and copper-coloured. Protestant and Catholic, find their hearts thrilled with the impulse of one common brotherhood.

There are those who do not like this idea. They say that God made the Indian, and set him down on this side of the Atlantic, and the Spaniard on the other side, and the African, and placed him in the snaky jungles, and so on, and that then from these different representative men the human family descended. But Paul knocks down that when, standing in the presence of one of the most aristocratic audiences of the world, he proclaims, in the name of God, this democratic doctrine, "God hath made *of one blood* all the nations of men." They started from one garden, and they fell in one transgression; they are redeemed by the same Almighty grace, and are to shine for ever in the same heavenly kingdom.

This feeling of consanguinity is constantly illustrated. A mine in England falls upon the workmen, and all nations feel the suffocation. Prince Albert dies, and Victoria has the sympathy of all Christendom. A plague falls upon London, and all the cities of the world weep at her agonies. An earthquake rocks down a Mexican city, and both hemispheres feel the shock. Famine stalks through Ireland, and distant nations send their cargoes of bread.

In 1863 a fire occurred in Santiago, Chili, that wrought

worse damages than this Chicago fire, so far as the destruction of human life is considered. The Conception of the Virgin Mary was being celebrated in the Roman Catholic church at Santiago. Great preparations had been made for the occasion, and perhaps the most wonderful scene ever witnessed in any church was about to be evoked. The wealth, and pomp, and intellect of that Chilian capital poured into the cathedral, and knelt beside the poorest devotee with cross and beads. Images, statues, transparencies, swaying festoons, and twenty thousand lamps, among which swung costly gauze and delicate draperies, like mists staggering sunstruck up the mountain! A camphene lamp explodes, and the flame leaps from point to point, and in five minutes twenty-five hundred souls have passed up through the fire to meet their God. What of that? Why need we care about it? They were of a different nation and of a different religion. Ah! the groan of that dying multitude mounted the Cordilleras, and the sorrow came sobbing across the Caribbean, and all civilized nations felt a thrill of sympathy and an impulse to prayer.

I know that this idea of a common origin is distasteful to some of high pretensions; but the most lordly man's ancestry, like ours, was in Eden built out of red mud. What then? Will you bring all men down to a dead level? No. If you did, they would not stay there fifteen minutes. How then? Let every man have just what he achieves. There ought to be an aristocracy—not one built upon the accidents of wealth or celebrated ancestry, but an aristocracy of industry and of large-hearted deeds. Meanwhile, let it be understood that the sceptre and shovel are brothers. The epaulette has no right to overlay the blacksmith's apron. Brocades must not despise calicoes. With your extravagant viands you have no right to cover up my plain bread. Cathedral must not look down upon the sailor's bethel. The whole Gospel tendency is to bring together what are called *the higher* and lower classes. Christ came from a throne

to a manger to bridge the distance between the two; and this idea of the nineteenth century, which would put the rich in churches by themselves, and the poor in churches by themselves is an erroneous, unevangelical, heathenish. God-defying and damning plan, which I shall war against to my dying day.

This doctrine of universal brotherhood will not make all alike. Difference in soil and climate will make differences in men. As with plants and animals, so with men. The torrid zone will yield the yams and tamarinds, and the best culture will only make better yams and tamarinds. The wintry regions will yield the barley and berries; and culture will only make this difference, that they will produce better barley and larger berries. You will not expect to find the same vegetable products in Paraguay as in Lapland. Cloves and cherries cannot well drink the same air. Nutmegs and currants will not grow side by side. When God made one part of the earth, he said, "You yield bananas;" and to another, "You yield plums and pears:" and that portion thrives best which attempts to produce and export that which God had ordained it to raise. So, in the animal kingdom, you will not expect to find the ichneumon where you hunt for the otter and walrus. As with plants and animals, so with man. The tropical regions will make passionate natures, and arctic severities will form temperaments cold, and stolid, and sullen. In the region of the Gospel there will be the same great characteristics as now, although somewhat moderated and modified. The Frenchman will be characteristically polite; the German, persistent and plodding; the English self-reliant; the American restless and enterprising; the Italian, æsthetic; the Spaniard, quick and impulsive. Gospel triumphs will not steal the Scotchman's plaid, or break the German's pipe, or dash down the Italian's easel. Differences for ever, but no quarrel. Christ spreading his treaty of peace over all monarchies and republics, the potentates, presidents, and princes of the earth will come up and

sign it. Vessels of war will be anchored at the ship-yards, and changed into merchantmen, or swung into the navy-yard, to be kept as relics of a barbarous age, to be looked upon as in our museums we now examine scalping-knives and thumb-screws. The masterly treatises on military tactics will be sold for wrapping-paper, or kept for curious examination, as we now have in our libraries an old Koran or a Chinese Almanac. The surgical discoveries made in the treatment of gun-shot fractures will be employed in alleviating the accidents to labourer, farmer, and mechanic. The hammer of the shipwright, as it beats against the spikes in the ship's beam, will sound, "*Life!*" "*Life!*" instead of, as now, rattling "*Death!*" "*Death!*"

What! is the Gospel going to take all the spirit and pluck out of the race? Shall our mariners be impressed, and the government seek no indemnity? Shall our merchant ships be damaged on the high seas, and no reparation be demanded? Shall privateers be fitted out in foreign ports, and there be no requisition for the loss suffered? Shall nations repudiate, and there be no force of armies to compel the payment of the national debt? Shall oppressed men suffer for ever, when they might seize the sword and hew out their own deliverance? My answer to all these questions is there will be no wrong, no imposition, no outrage, and, consequently, no collision. O day of universal brotherhood, begin! It comes skipping upon the mountains, and singing through the vales. I hear its footsteps in the tread of the multitudes of the devout this day, on their way to church. I hear its voice in the billowing up of that great song of praise that this night rises from all the churches of God, illuminated for worship. I see its banner lifted upon the fallen ramparts of great iniquities, the fold of light streaming with the stars of promise and good cheer. This wave of Gospel influence dashes higher up toward full tide. This song of joy, now tremulous and faint, will burst into million-voiced acclaim. The towers that have so long been tolling

the sorrows of the world shall peal another sound—Scotch kirk, and American church, and mission chapel, and great St. Paul's chiming the clear, sweet, silvery song of the Millennium. The Church of God, no more a barrack for fighting Christians, shall become a great temple, on whose wall shall be hung olive-branches of peace. The flags of all nations, once carried in front of hostile armies, shall hang in graceful festoons above those who once were full of hate. The "Marseillaise Hymn," and "Bonny Doon," and "Hail Columbia," and "God save the Queen," shall mingle in one great song; but, touched into resurrection, it shall mount into a harmony of unimagined sweetness and power, that shall soar, and melt, and pour into the hallelujah that, like the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty thunders, comes surging up to the feet of Jesus.

Again: I learn from this Chicago disaster what a poor place the earth is to put our treasures in. Two hundred and fifty million dollars of property destroyed in a day and a night! How much toil of brain, and hand, and foot represented in that property! All the anxiety and sweat of twenty years gone in one day of destruction. We have been accustomed to think that if property were insured, all was well. But even insurance companies have gone down. Set not your affections on anything you can build, for it is perishable. Do not worship your fine reputation, or your wealthy store, or your large house, or your swift ship, but build up in your soul a temple of Christian character. Disasters cannot crush it, nor fire consume it, nor iconoclast deface its altars, nor time chisel down its walls. Yet politicians have worshipped their office, and merchants their business, and painters their pictures, and musicians their attainments, and architects their buildings, and historians their books; and how often have they seen their works perish! Audubon, after fifteen years of working in making sketches of birds, leaves the sketches in a trunk, goes off, comes back, and finds that the rats have devoured them.

Isaac Newton's dog, "Spot," tore to pieces a manuscript that represented the work of a quarter of a lifetime. A worm has sunk the ship that was the pride of its builder. A child's hand has spoiled a painting intended to be immortal. A horse's hoof dashed out the brain of a most accomplished philosopher. The marble statue that came out, under the stroke of an ingenious sculptor, drops on the sidewalk and is broken by a careless drayman. Time will break down grandest arch, and staunchest pyramid, and mightiest city. The day will come when re-constructed Chicago, and New York, and Brooklyn, and Boston, and Savannah, and Charleston, and New Orleans, and Cincinnati, and St. Louis, and San Francisco, and London, and Paris, and Vienna, and Rome, and Constantinople, and St. Petersburg, and Madras, and Canton, and Pekin will be wrapped in flame of awful conflagration. Yea, the earth itself shall perish! What a poor place to put one's treasure in! A painter, busy in making the fresco of a building, standing high up on the scaffolding, was entranced with his own work, and stepped back to admire it, and in his excitement forgot that he stood upon a high scaffolding, stepped back too far, and fell—his life dashed out, far beneath, on the marble. So men admire their worldly achievements, and in their enchantment step back to look, and step back too far, and fall—ruined for life and lost for eternity.

Again: Learn from this last week's calamity the beauty of heroism and self-denial. You have read how these firemen fought the flames until they fell dead in the fire; of how men, while their own dwellings were burning, helped the neighbours out of their dwellings. Scene after scene of self-denying heroism. How grand it is, amid the selfishness of the world, to find such generous deeds! The Moravian missionaries were told that they could not enter the lazaretto where the lepers were dying unless they staid there. "Then," they said, "we will go and stay there." They *went in to nurse the sick, and perished.* You have read the

life of pure-hearted Elizabeth Fry, toiling among the degraded. But the full biographies of the world's martyrs will never be written. The firemen in all our cities who have rescued people from blazing buildings ; the sailors who have helped the passengers off the wreck, themselves perishing ; the nurses who have waited upon the sick in yellow-fever and cholera hospitals, and sunk down to death from exhaustion ; the Christian men who, on the battle-field, have administered to the fallen amid rattling canister and bursting shell ; the Christian women who have gone down through haunts of shame on errands of mercy, defended by no human arm, but looked after by that God who, with his lightnings, would have struck to hell any one who dared to do them harm.

Christian heroism has ever been ready to face the fire, and swim the flood, and dare the storm, if good might be done. And in that day when men who sat in places of power shall go down to shame and contempt, these humble ones shall have their names written high on the pillars of heaven. Better than to have been commemorated in poetry or song will it be for them who hear the good cheer from Christ, " I was hungry, and ye fed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord ! "

Again : Learn from this disaster the importance of being prepared for the great future. Five hundred people were known to have perished ; I fear there were many more. They had no time for preparation. The poorest time for the last twenty years, in Chicago, to pray was last Sunday night. How can one pray when his children are burning or his house being consumed ? Many of you are daily exposed to perils. You walk on scaffoldings ; you drive fractious animals ; you fly over the country on swift wheels ; you work among dangerous chemicals. The voice that comes on the west wind to-night says, " Prepare to meet thy God." By the revolutions of the days and nights you are hurried on to your last hour of earth and your first hour of eternity.



Sleeping and waking, your heart beats the double quickstep of an immortal spirit. See you not, through the fogs and mists of earth, in the distance, the looming up of the heavenly shore, over which white-robed inhabitants walk, for ever free from toil and pain, and sin and tears? Hark to the cry that comes over the waters from castles of the blessed, from the lips of princes, robed and garlanded, from harps that never felt the rough twang of woe, and from trumpets that peal forth the victory of many conquerors. The trees of God bend with immortal fruitage, and under them rest the toil-worn of earth looking down toward you, ready at your coming up to shout, amid the rustle of palms and the clang of celestial towers, "Hail! hail!"

But there is an obligation growing out of the service, and that is the duty of giving prompt relief to the houseless, homeless, exhausted, and dying sufferers of Chicago. They want something besides "God bless you"—namely, tippets, and sacques, and shoes, and hats, and coats, and dresses—yea, all the articles of a winter's wardrobe. Out of the charred and smoking ruins there are stretched upon the hands of more than one hundred and fifty thousand people begging for help, and from blistered and bleeding lips they cry out, "We are hungry; give us bread! We are freezing; give us clothes! We are homeless; give us shelter; We are sick; give us cordials!" For ever blasted will be that ear that refuses to listen! For ever palsied will be that hand that refuses to help!

I plead in behalf of cripples by the flames robbed of their crutch; in behalf of toiling women, whose sewing-machines have been burned up; in behalf of the orphans whose fathers were crushed under the falling walls; in behalf of women whose hour of anguish has come, and there is no pillow, and there is no roof; in behalf of brave firemen, whose legs were shattered when the ladders broke—yea, in behalf of Him who said, "*Inasmuch as ye did it unto these my brethren, ye did it unto me.*"

You will not turn your back on this suffering. Your bed to-night will be softer if you feel that you have provided some sufferer with a mattress to lie on. Your own food will be sweeter if you make provision for the hunger-struck. Your own children will seem brighter-faced if you provide stockings for the little bare feet.

Get ready for a grand contribution of money and clothes. When the box comes around, let it seem like the wasted hand of suffering stretched out for help. Let the church officials move slowly down the aisles as they gather the alms remembering that the amount they gather will decide whether some groaning man or woman shall live or perish. As in the last day we hope to find mercy of the Lord, let us to-night show mercy to others.

O thou self-denying one of Gethsemane and the cross, drop upon us thy Spirit.

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### THE HEART ALL WRONG MADE ALL RIGHT.

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you.”—*Ezekiel xxxvi., 25, 26, 27.*

THE Presbyterian Church has recently made its report, and, according to one of the prominent journals of the denomination, there has been an average of a little more than one conversion to each Church. The most appalling statistics of the day ! There is a dearth in all denominations. Millions of dollars for ministers' salary ! millions of dollars for choirs ; millions of dollars for church buildings. Where is the return for the investment ? You say that one soul saved is worth more than all that money. True enough ;

but be frank, and confess that, considering the great outlay the religious advantage reaped has been insignificant. What is the matter? I think, *in trying to adapt the Gospel to the age, men have crippled the Gospel*. Starting with the idea that the people will not come to church, if the old-fashioned doctrines of grace are presented, they have not sufficiently insisted upon the first theory of the Gospel, namely, *the utter ruin and pollution of the natural heart*. The inference in many of our churches is, "Now, you are a very good set of fellows; not as good as you might be, and in some respects, indeed—if we must say it—quite wrong; but, then, we are hoping everything from education, refinement, the influence of the nineteenth century, and a genteel religion;" and so we have gone to tinkering the human heart with soft solder, and putting a few patches on the coat of morality, when it is all worn out. We have harped on the theory of development, and hoped that man, who, according to the scientists, began as a monkey, will go on improving until, after a while, under each arm will be felt sprouting the feathers of an angel's wing. There is nothing but a little pimple on the soul, which needs a piece of court-plaster.

My friends, depend upon it that is all wrong. It is infamous to try with human quackery to cure the cancer of the soul. The reason that more men are not saved is because we do not show their infinite need, their ruin—yea, *the rottenness of the human heart*. If I am very sick, and I call in a doctor, I do not want him to begin telling me that there is nothing special the matter with me, and that all that I need is a little panada, or gruel, or catnip tea, when I want the most radical and thorough treatment, or in a week I am a dead man.

The Bible is either a truth or a lie. If it be a lie, cast it out and shut up your churches. If it be true, listen to Paul in Ephesians, where he says, "We are by nature children of wrath;" to Jeremiah, who says, "The heart is deceitful *above all things* and desperately wicked;" to Moses, who

says, "The imagination of a man's heart is evil from his youth;" to the Psalmist, who says, "They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy."

Ah! sin is no half-and-half thing. The human heart is not in a tolerable condition. The Bible, in the most uncomplimentary manner, says that we are poor and wretched and blind and naked; and if God should send his Spirit upon us to-night, making revelation of our true state, how many quick-beating hearts! how many blanched cheeks! And some soul in this audience, no longer able to keep silence, would cry out, "What must I do? Whither shall I fly? God be merciful unto me a sinner!" It is not one screw loose, or one rivet dropped out; it is a rail-train at Revere run into by a Bangor express, telescoped and crushed, amid the shrieking horrors of death.

Pray for me to-day, that, varnishing nothing over, promising nothing, holding back nothing, I may present to you the true condition of every unregenerated heart.

First: *It is unclean.* "From your filthiness will I cleanse you." Our hands may be clean as water can wash them, and our garments as white as snow, and yet our inward nature be polluted. Sin is not like wine, that gets better by being kept; it gets worse and worse. All the impure thoughts of your life have left their mark on your soul. Though a bad thought passed through your mind thirty years ago, its vileness is there yet. If you have one thousand unclean thoughts which you would not have any one know, those one thousand thoughts are all rankling, festering, and befouling your soul, and God has been looking at them all the while. The text is not too strong when it speaks of the filthiness of the heart. Your soul is vilely, terribly unclean. It is loathsome in the sight of God. Sin is a carrion bird that has strewn its nest with foulness. I only take the Bible imagery when I say that your heart, unchanged, is a sepulchre, reeking and stenchful with corruption. Water cannot wash it off. Fire cannot burn it. Sin

has cursed you through and through. The mire has been rubbed into the soul. It is a leprosy. People who had that disease in the olden time put bandages over their mouths as they walked in the street, and cried "Unclean!" And if we could realize our moral defilement as we advance, we would cry, "Make room for the leper! room!" The Arabs have a fable that once a camel came to the door of a tent and thrust in his nose; not being resisted, he thrust in his feet; there being no hindrance, he came half way in; after a while he got all the way in; the Arab said to the camel, "This tent is too small for two." Then the camel said to the Arab, "If that be so, you had better leave." So sin comes into the heart farther and farther, until it takes full possession. Bryon and Shelley wreathed sin with garlands, but I tear off the flowers from the skeleton, and hold out before you the reeking Death's-head. Oh, how sin has trampled and scarred your soul! It is a black, a horrible, a damning thing. It is not satisfied until it has pushed the soul into an eternal prison-house, and slammed shut the door, and shoved the bolts, and turned the locks of an everlasting incarceration. A heart under such unclean sorcery, how it must appear to God's all-searching eye! He sees it through and through. The darkness cannot hide it. Years cannot erase it. He sees the horrible unwinding of the serpents as with fangs of eternal poison, they lift their heads to strike. Think of the Holy One before whom seraphic purity is sullied—the One in whose quiver are all the thunder-bolts of an Omnipotent God—watching a soul *unclean*, and *wilfully unclean*.

Again: The text represents the heart as *idolatrous*. "From all your idols will I cleanse you." Because we have here no Juggernauts, or Molochs, or Joss-houses, or heathen temples, do not conclude that there are no idols. From our very nature we must worship something. If we do not worship the God in heaven, we worship something on *earth*. This man worships pleasure; this one, applause; this

one, money, this one, his family. That to which a man gives his supreme thought and affections is his idol. Like Dagon, how often it falls down, crushing its worshipper! God will have no rivals. Amid fire and darkness, thunder and earthquake, the command went forth, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." If there is anything on earth that you think more of than you do of God, then you are an idolator.

Again: The text represents the heart as *stony* or insensible. Improve it by the fact that we do not realize the truth of what we have already said. If we had any appreciation of our unclean and idolatrous nature, could we be as unmoved as we are? Would that young man be whispering to his comrade? Would that woman be examining the style of her neighbour's hat, and criticising how poorly the colour of the ribbon suits the colour of her shawl? Would this merchant be thinking of how much he lost last week, and how much he probably will gain next week? No; this place would be like a court-house when a man is on trial for his life, and the jury rises to render the verdict. That is our position. Before God's universe we have been indicted. The law has pleaded against us. The cross has pleaded for us. This night may be announced our condemnation or our acquittal. We are insensible. I saw men walking through the Louvre Gallery in Paris half-asleep; no flash came to their eyes; no flush to their cheeks, no exclamation to their lips, amid the most thrilling triumphs of painter's pencil and sculptor's chisel. And so, until grace touches our soul, we walk through the great picture-gallery of the Gospel, and the wonders of Christ and the glories of heaven strike no thrill through the heart. Ah! there are hundreds of people here who acknowledge that their heart is hard; they carry it about like a cake of ice in their bosom; and they wish it would melt; they say, "I cannot feel; I want to, but cannot." The text true. Cold as a stone; hard as a stone; dead as a stone. A company of persons suspected of

crime were brought before a judge ; only one of them was guilty but how to find out which one was the question. The judge put his ear against the heart of each one and listened : when he came to the guilty one, he heard, in every thump of his heart, the acknowledgment of the crime. And so, although to-night, all may seem fair in our case, if we could listen at the door of own hearts, every pulsation would confess, Guilty ! Guilty !

But I will not leave you here. He would be a very mean doctor who would come and examine your case and say, " You are very badly off indeed," and then propose nothing as a cure. I have told you of the disease. Hear now of the healing process that God proposes for every one of you : " I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh."

Ah ! it is no insignificant process. This change of heart. It is a change from black to white, from down to up, from the highway to hell to the highway to heaven—the whole nature made over again.

*Scene the First :* Paul, the persecutor. He says, " Kill that man ; he loves Christ. Whip that woman ; she believes in Jesus. Open the prison doors, and get ready the sharp knives, and we will put an end to Christ's religion. Bring up my horses—fetch up a troop of horses, and let us dash down to Damascus and exterminate this religion. Mount and away ! " I hear the quick clatter of the swift hoofs as they dash off.

*Scene the Second :* Paul's back bared to the scourge, and the blood running. For whom ? For Jesus. Paul on the floor of the Mamertine prison, his feet fast, and the cold shivering through his agonized body. For whom ? For Jesus. Paul standing before the rulers, making a speech that would have thrilled another audience into tumults of approval, yet interrupted, scoffed at, coughed down, charged

with being crazy, and sentenced to die. For whom? For Jesus.

*Scene the First:* John Bunyan. Born of a low gipsy woman, himself vulgar and blasphemous, shocking the ears of those only ordinarily polluted, reproved even by an abandoned woman.

*Scene the Second:* John Bunyan, from the wicket-door of the prison looking toward the "delectable mountains," and pointing the whole world up to the gate of the Celestial City. What was this change in John? A change of heart.

But why go so far? I point them out by hundreds in this audience. Here are men who once rejected the Bible. cared not for God, talked against high heaven, but now all their hopes are hung on one strong nail—the nail of the cross. One form is to them more glorious than any other—the form of the Son of God. "I take Him," they cry, "through joy and sorrow, through fire and flood, for time and for eternity. None but Jesus! none but Jesus!" They would stick to Him though the guillotine flashed its bloody knife in their faces. They have a new heart—new in its sentiments, new in its hopes, new in its affections, new in its ambitions.

"Well," you say "how queer a man must feel to turn around like that." The change is wonderful. If now, you hate somebody with a perfect hatred, one of your first desires would be, after such a change, to go and shake hands with him. If, now, your chief aim is to gain dollars, then you would be more anxious for a fortune in the skies. Now you shudder at the thoughts of eternity; then the word would chime like wedding bells in your soul.

"Oh!" you say, "I want that religion. Let me have it now." My text tells you how you may get it. Take that stone of a heart, and dash it against the foot of the cross, and the heart would not break. Water has sometimes worn away the rocks; but if that stone of a heart were placed under the water that drops from the eternal fountain, the hardness would not wear away. God says in the text, "I



will put my spirit within you." Now I understand. God's holy, gracious, quickening, arousing, rekindling, Omnipotent Spirit only can do it. That Spirit comes to every one of your hearts to-night. There a man says, "Oh for something better!" That is a stroke of God's Spirit. Here a man says, "I wish I could be something like my old father and mother before they died." That was a stroke of God's Spirit. Here is a man who says, "I wish I could get over these perplexities about the future world." That is a stroke of God's Spirit. Yonder is a man who looks all unconcerned, but he trembles. He knows that eternity is all around him, and that one step may plunge him beyond all rescue. O eternity! eternity! eternity! How many here that feel they are not ready for it! They know that they are keeping their old nature, and that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Oh that God's Spirit would strike harder to-night, and that each one of these citadels might be captured! Forward, ye troops of light. Wheel round the thundering field-pieces of God's law. Let the arrows of conviction shower the soul. Charge! charge! Up! on the parapets with the standards of Emmanuel! Surrender, oh immortal man! Surrender, oh immortal woman! You want a new heart. Why not get it right away? Have you not postponed it long enough? I would with both hands lay hold and rattle the gates of your soul. For this night's work you and I must answer when the earth is burning, and God is coming, and the trumpet is sounding, and the song of the righteous shall rise into a perpetual anthem, and the wail of the wicked drop into the groan of unending pain.

Oh man and woman of many broken resolutions, when you were on the sea in that storm you vowed; when you had that great sickness you vowed; when that last child was born you vowed; when you stood in that wreck of a rail-train you vowed; when you were bending over the grave of some loved one you vowed; when, in some great revival, there was a stampede for heaven, you vowed. These vows have

been broken. Here you are, getting older. You have marched many a mile on toward the end of your earthly journey, and the opening of your eternal destiny. No pardon, no peace, no prospect of heaven. O Lord God, lay hold of that man! If this be his last chance, tell him so. Let him not plunge off where there are no soundings. I have no sympathy with that cowardice that dare not speak of future punishment without apology, and that thinks the word "hell" too vulgar to be used in polite assemblies.

The storm is coming; the cloud that was only a speck of darkness on the sky has become a squadron of black sails, and the port-holes of the thunder are opening for the cannonade in which all those who reject God shall go down. Canst contend with him who smote Sennacherib's host in a night, and whose arm upholds the universe, and whose voice shall announce the doom of all the dead? I tremble to offend him. Rather would I have all heaven and hell arrayed against me than to stand one moment in the darkness of His frown. Tremble, oh unforgiven soul, tremble before Him. The God in whose hands is thy breath is angry with thee. Wilt thou defy Him any longer? Wilt thou run upon the thick bosses of His buckler? Who will bail thee out of the prison-house of despair? Who will help thee ashore from an eternal shipwreck? I take the words of the prophet and cry out, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

The gate of refuge is open—it is wide open. The Spirit of God, with flying feet, will bear thee within if thou wilt. Let not the bells of eternity toll the death-knell of thy soul. Escape for thy life, lest thou be consumed.

## BY THE SKIN OF THE TEETH.

“I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.”—*Job*. xix., 20.

JOB had it hard. What with boils, and bereavements, and bankruptcy, and a fool of a wife, he wished he was dead; and I do not blame him. His flesh was gone, and his bones were dry. His teeth wasted away until nothing but the *enamel* seemed left. He cries out, “I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.”

There has been some difference of opinion about this passage. St. Jerome and Schultens, and Doctors Good, and Poole, and Barnes, have all tried their forceps on Job's teeth. You deny my interpretation, and say, “What did Job know about the *enamel* of the teeth?” He knew everything about it. Dental surgery is almost as old as the earth. The mummies of Egypt, thousands of years old, are found to-day with gold-filling in their teeth. Ovid, and Horace, and Solomon, and Moses wrote about these important factors of the body. To other provoking complaints, Job, I think, has added an exasperating toothache, and putting his hand against the inflamed face, he says, “I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.”

A very narrow escape, you say, for Job's body and soul; but there are thousands of men who make just as narrow escape for their soul. There was a time when the partition between them and ruin was no thicker than a tooth's enamel; but, as Job finally escaped, so have they. Thank God! thank God!

Paul expresses the same idea by a different figure when he says that some people are “*saved as by fire.*” A vessel at sea is in flames. You go to the stern of the vessel. The boats have shoved off. The flames advance; you can endure the heat no longer on your face. You slide down on the side

of the vessel, and hold on with your fingers, until the forked tongue of the fire begins to lick the back of your hand, and you feel that you must fall, when one of the life-boats comes back, and the passengers say they think they have room for one more. The boat swings under you—you drop into it—you are saved.

So some men are pursued by temptation until they are partially consumed, but after all get off—“*saved as by fire.*”

But I like the figure of Job a little better than that of Paul, because the pulpit has not worn it out; and I want to show you, if God will help, that some men make narrow escape for their souls, and are saved as “*with the skin of their teeth.*”

It is as easy for some people to look to the Cross as for you to look to this pulpit. Mild, gentle, tractable, loving, you expect them to become Christians. You go over to the store and say, “Grandon joined the church yesterday.” Your business comrades say, “That is just what might have been expected; he always was of that turn of mind.” In youth, this person whom I describe was always good. He never broke things. He never laughed when it was improper to laugh. At seven, he could sit an hour in church, perfectly quiet, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, but straight into the eyes of the minister, as though he understood the whole discussion about the eternal decrees. He never upset things nor lost them. He floated into the kingdom of God so gradually that it is uncertain just when the matter was decided.

Here is another one, who started in life with an uncontrollable spirit. He kept the nursery in an uproar. His mother found him walking on the edge of the house-roof to see if he could balance himself. There was no horse that he dared not ride—no tree he could not climb. His boyhood was a long series of predicaments; his manhood was reckless; his midlife very wayward. But now he is con-

verted, and you go over to the store and say, "Arkwright joined the Church yesterday." Your friends say, "It is not possible! You must be joking." You say, "No; I tell you the truth. He joined the Church." Then they reply, "There is hope for any of us if old Arkwright has become a Christian!"

In other words, we will admit that it is more difficult for some men to accept the Gospel than for others.

I may be preaching to some who have cut loose from churches, and Bibles, and Sundays, and who have come in here with no intention of becoming Christians themselves, but just to see what is going on; and yet you may find yourself escaping, before you leave this house, as "with the skin of your teeth." I do not expect to waste this hour. I have seen boats go off from Cape May or Long Branch, and drop their nets, and after a while come ashore, pulling in the nets without having caught a single fish. It was not a good day, or they had not the right kind of a net. But we expect no such excursion to-night. The water is full of fish, the wind is in the right direction, the Gospel net is strong. O Thou who didst help Simon and Andrew to fish, show us to-night how to cast the net on the right side of the ship.

Some of you, in coming to God, will have to run against sceptical notions. It is useless for people to say sharp and cutting things to those who reject the Christian religion. I cannot say such things. By what process of temptation, or trial, or betrayal, you have come to your present state, I know not. There are two gates to your nature; the gate of the head, and the gate of the heart. The gate of your head is locked with bolts and bars that an archangel could not break, but the gate of your heart swings easily on its hinges. If I assaulted your body with weapons you would meet me with weapons, and it would be sword-stroke for sword-stroke, and wound for wound, and blood for blood; but if I come and knock at the door of your house, you open it, and give **me the best seat in your parlour.** If I should come at you

to-night with an argument, you would answer me with an argument; if with sarcasm, you would answer me with sarcasm; blow for blow, stroke for stroke; but when I come and knock at the door of your heart, you open it and say, "Come in, my brother, and tell me all you know about Christ and heaven."

Listen to two or three questions: Are you as happy as you used to be when you believed in the truth of the Christian religion? Would you like to have your children travel on in the road in which you are now travelling? You had a relative who professed to be a Christian, and was thoroughly consistent, living and dying in the faith of the Gospel. Would you not like to live the same quiet life, and die the same peaceful death? I hold in my hand a letter, sent me by one who has rejected the Christian religion. It says, "I am old enough to know that the joys and pleasures of life are evanescent, and to realize the fact that it must be comfortable in old age to believe in something relative to the future, and to have a faith in some system that proposes to save. I am free to confess that I would be happier if I could exercise the simple and beautiful faith that is possessed by many whom I know. I am not willingly out of the Church or out of the faith. My state of uncertainty is one of unrest. Sometimes I doubt my immortality, and look upon the death-bed as the closing scene, after which there is nothing. What shall I do that I have not done?" Ah! scepticism is a dark and doleful land. Let me say that this Bible is either true or false. If it be false, we are as well off as you; if it be true, then which of us is safer?

Let me also ask whether your trouble has not been that you confounded Christianity with the inconsistent character of some who profess it. You are a lawyer. In your profession there are mean and dishonest men. Is that anything against the law? You are a doctor. There are unskilled and contemptible men in your profession. Is that anything against medicine? You are a merchant. There are thieves

and defrauders in your business. Is that anything against merchandise? Behold, then, the unfairness of charging upon Christianity the wickedness of its disciples. We admit some of the charges against those who profess religion. Some of the most gigantic swindles of the present day have been carried on by members of the Church. There are men standing in the front rank in the churches who would not be trusted for five dollars without good collateral security. They leave their business dishonesties in the vestibule of the church as they go in and sit at the communion. Having concluded the sacrament, they get up, wipe the wine from their lips, go out, and take up their sins where they left off. To serve the devil is their regular work; to serve God a sort of play-spell. With a Sunday sponge they expect to wipe off from their business slate all the past week's inconsistencies. You have no more right to take such a man's life as a specimen of religion than you have to take the twisted irons and split timbers that lie on the beach at Coney Island as a specimen of an American ship. It is time that we draw a line between religion and the frailties of those who profess it.

Do you not feel that the Bible, take it all in all, is about the best book that the world has ever seen? Do you know any book that has as much in it? Do you not think, upon the whole, that its influence has been beneficent? I come to you with both hands extended towards you. In one hand I have the Bible, and in the other I have nothing. This Bible in one hand I will surrender for ever just as soon as in my other hand you can put a book that is better.

To-night I invite you back into the good old-fashioned religion of your fathers—to the God whom they worshipped, to the Bible they read, to the promises on which they leaned, to the cross on which they hung their eternal expectations. You have not been happy a day since you swung off; you will not be happy a minute until you swing back.

*Again*: there may be some of you who, in the attempt

after a Christian life, will have to run against powerful passions and appetites. Perhaps it is a disposition to anger that you have to contend against; and perhaps, while in a very serious mood, you hear of something that makes you feel that you must swear or die. I know a Christian man who was once so exasperated that he said to a mean customer, "I cannot swear at you myself, for I am a member of the Church; but if you will go downstairs my partner in business will swear at you." All your good resolutions heretofore have been torn to tatters by explosion of temper. Now there is no harm in getting mad if you only get mad at sin. You need to bridle and saddle those hot-breathed passions, and with them ride down injustice and wrong. There are a thousand things in the world that we ought to be mad at. There is no harm in getting red hot if you only bring to the forge that which needs hammering. A man who has no power of righteous indignation, is an imbecile. But be sure it is a *righteous* indignation, and not a petulency that blurs, and unravels, and depletes the soul.

There is a large class of persons in mid-life who have still in them appetites that were aroused in early manhood, at a time when they prided themselves on being a "little fast," "high livers," "free and easy," "hale fellows well met." They are now paying in compound interest for troubles they collected twenty years ago. Some of you are trying to escape, and you will—yet very narrowly, "as with the skin of your teeth." God and your own soul only know what the struggle is. Omnipotent grace has pulled out many a soul that was deeper in the mire than you are. They line the beach of heaven—the multitude whom God has rescued from the thrall of suicidal habits. If you this day turn back on the wrong and start anew, God will help you. Oh, the weakness of human help! Men will sympathise for a while, and then turn you off. If you ask for their pardon, they will give it, and say they will try you again; but, falling



away again under the power of temptation, they cast you off for ever. But God forgives seventy times seven; yea, seven hundred times; yea, though this be the ten thousandth time, he is more earnest, more sympathetic, more helpful this last time than when you took your first mis-step.

If, with all the influences favourable for a right life, men make so many mistakes, how much harder it is when, for instance, some appetite thrusts its iron grapple into the roots of the tongue, and pulls a man down with hands of destruction! If, under such circumstances, he break away, there will be no sport in the undertaking, no holiday enjoyment, but a struggle in which the wrestlers move from side to side, and bend, and twist, and watch for an opportunity to get in a heavier stroke, until with one final effort, in which the muscles are distended, and the veins stand out, and the blood starts, the swarthy habit falls under the knee of the victor—escaped at last as “*with the skin of his teeth.*”

The ship “Emma,” bound from Gottenburg to Harwich, was sailing on, when the man on the look-out saw something that he pronounced a vessel bottom up. There was something on it that looked like a sea-gull, but was afterward found to be a waving handkerchief. In the small boat the crew pushed out to the wreck, and found that it was a cap-sized vessel, and that three men had been digging their way out through the bottom of the ship. When the vessel cap-sized they had no means of escape. The captain took his penknife and dug away through the planks until his knife broke. Then an old nail was found, with which they attempted to scrape their way up out of the darkness, each one working until his hand was well-nigh paralyzed, and he sank back faint and sick. After long and tedious work, the light broke through the bottom of the ship. A handkerchief was hoisted. Help came. They were taken on board the vessel and saved. Did ever men come so near a watery

grave without dropping into it? How narrowly they escaped—escaped only "*with the skin of their teeth.*"

There are men who have been capsized of evil passions and capsized mid ocean, and they are a thousand miles away from any shore of help. They have for years been trying to dig their way out. They have been digging away, and digging away, but they can never be delivered unless to-night they will hoist some signal of distress. However weak and feeble it may be, Christ will see it, and bear down upon the helpless craft, and take them on board; and it will be known in earth and in heaven how narrowly they escaped—"*escaped as with the skin of their teeth.*"

There are others who in attempting to come to God, must run between a great many business perplexities. If a man go over to business at ten o'clock in the morning, and comes away at three o'clock in the afternoon, he has some time for religion: but how shall you find time for religious contemplation when you are driven from sunrise to sunset, and have been for five years going behind in business, and are frequently dunned by creditors whom you cannot pay, and when from Monday morning until Saturday night, you are dodging bills that you cannot meet? You walk day by day in uncertainties that have kept your brain on fire for the past three years. Some with less business troubles than you have gone crazy. The clerk has heard a noise in the back counting-room, and gone in, and found the chief man of the firm a raving maniac; or the wife has heard the bang of a pistol in the back parlour, and gone in, stumbling over the dead body of her husband—a suicide. There are in this house to-night three hundred men pursued, harassed, trodden down, and scalped, of business perplexities, and which way to turn next they do not know. Now God will not be hard on you. He knows what obstacles are in the way of your being a Christian, and your first effort in the right direction He will crown with success. Do not let Satan, with cotton bales and kegs, and hogsheds, and

counters, and stocks of unsaleable goods, block up your way to heaven. Gather up all your energies. Tighten the girdle about your loins. Take an agonizing look into the face of God, and then say, "Here goes one grand effort for life eternal," and then bound away for heaven, escaping "as with the skin of your teeth."

In the last day it will be found that Hugh Latimer, and John Knox, and Huss, and Ridley were not the greatest martyrs, but Christian men who went up incorrupt from the contaminations and perplexities of Wall Street, Water Street, Pearl Street, Broad Street, State Street, and Third Street. On earth they were called brokers, or stock-jobbers, or retailers, or importers; but in heaven, *Christian heroes*. No fagots were heaped about their feet; no inquisition demanded from them recantation; no soldier aimed a pike at their heart; but they had *mental* tortures, compared with which all physical consuming is as the breath of a spring morning.

I find in the community a large class of men who have been so cheated, so lied about, so outrageously wronged, that they have lost their faith in everything. In a world where everything seems so topsy-turvey, they do not see how there can be any God. They are confounded, and frenzied, and misanthropic. Elaborate arguments to prove to them the truth of Christianity, or the truth of anything else touch them nowhere. Hear me, all such men. I preach to you no rounded periods, no ornamental discourse; but put my hand on your shoulder, and invite you into the peace of the Gospel. Here is a rock on which you may stand firm, though the waves dash against it harder than the Atlantic, pitching its surf clear above Eddystone Light-house. Do not charge upon God all these troubles of the world. As long as the world stuck to God, God stuck to the world; but the earth seceded from His government, and hence all these outrages and all these woes. God is good. For many hundreds of years He has been coaxing the world to come *back to Him*; but the more He has coaxed, the more violent

have men been in their resistance, and they have stepped back, and stepped back until they have dropped into ruin.

Try this God, ye who have had the blood-hounds after you, and who have thought that God had forgotten you. Try Him, and see if He will not help. Try Him and see if He will not pardon. Try Him and see if He will not save. The flowers of spring have no bloom so sweet as the flowering of Christ's affections. The sun hath no warmth compared with the glow of His heart. The waters have no refreshment like the fountain that will slake the thirst of thy soul. At the moment the reindeer stands with his lip and nostril thrust in the cool mountain torrent the hunter may be coming through the thicket. Without crackling a stick under his foot, he comes close by the stag, aims his gun, draws the trigger, and the poor thing rears in its death-agony and falls backwards, its antlers crashing on the rocks; but the panting hart that drinks from the water-brooks of God's promise shall never be fatally wounded, and shall never die.

This world is a poor portion for your soul, oh, business man! An Eastern king had graven on his tomb two fingers, represented as sounding upon each other with a snap, and under them the motto, "All is not worth that." Apicius Cœlius hanged himself because his steward informed him that he had only eighty thousand pounds sterling left. All of this world's riches make but a small inheritance for a soul. Robespierre attempted to win the applause of the world; but when he was dying, a woman came rushing through the crowd, crying to him, "Murderer of my kindred, descend to hell, covered with the curses of every mother in France!" Many who have expected the plaudits of the world have died under its Anathema Maranatha.

Oh, find your peace in God. Make one strong pull for heaven. No half-way work will do it. There sometimes comes a time on shipboard when everything must be sacrificed to save the passengers. The cargo is nothing, the

rigging nothing. The captain puts the trumpet to his lip and shouts, "*Cut away the mast!*" Some of you have been tossed and driven, and you have, in your effort to keep the world, well-nigh lost your soul. Until you have decided this matter, let everything else go. Overboard with all those other anxieties and burdens! You will have to drop the sails of your pride, and *cut away the mast*. With one earnest cry for help, put your cause into the hand of him who helped Paul out of the breakers of Melita, and who, above the shrill blast of the wrathiest tempest that ever blackened the sky or shook the ocean, can hear the faintest imploration for mercy.

I shall go home to-night feeling that some of you, who have considered your case as hopeless, will take heart again, and that with a blood-red earnestness, such as you have never experienced before, you will start for the good land of the Gospel—at last to look back, saying, "What a great risk I ran! Almost lost, but saved! Just got through, and no more! *Escaped by the skin of my teeth.*"

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### THANKSGIVING DAY.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."—*Psalm xxxiii*, 5.

GOOD, grand, old-fashioned Thanksgiving Day has come. Nothing could stop it. It pressed on down through the weeks and months, its way lighted by burning cities, or cleft by cavernous graves; now strewn with orange-blossoms, and then with funeral weeds; amid instruments that piped "the quickstep" and drummed "the dead march." Through the gates of this morning it came, carrying on one shoulder a sheaf of wheat, and on the other a shock of corn. Children, in holiday dress, hold up their hands to bless it, and old age goes out to bid it welcome, asking that it come in, and by

the altars of God rest awhile. Come in, oh day, fragrant with a thousand memories, and borne down under the weight of innumerable mercies, and tell to our thankful hearts how great is the goodness of God.

An aged Christian man in Massachussetts recently died. Instead of the flowers usually put upon the bier there was laid upon his coffin a sheaf of wheat fully ripe. Beautifully significant! Oh, that on the remains of this harvest year we might place, to-day, a sheaf of prayer, a sheaf of thanksgiving, a sheaf of joy fully ripe!

By a sublime egotism man has come to appropriate this world to himself, when the fact is that our race is in a small minority. The instances of human life, as compared with the instances of animal life, are not one to a million. We shall enlarge our ideas of God's goodness and come to a better understanding of the text, if, before we come to look at the cup of our blessing, we look at the goodness of God to the *irrational creation*.

Although nature is out of joint, yet even in its disruption I am surprised to find the almost universal happiness of the animal creation. On a summer day, when the air and the grass are most populous with life, you will not hear a sound of distress unless, perchance, a heartless school-boy has robbed a bird's nest, or a hunter has broken a bird's wing, or a pasture has been robbed of a lamb, and there goes up a bleating from the flocks. The whole earth is filled with animal delight—joy feathered, and scaled, and horned, and hooped. The bee hums it; the frog croaks it; the squirrel chatters it; the quail whistles it; the lark carols it; the whale spouts it. The snail, the rhinoceros, the grizzly bear, the toad, the wasp, the spider, the shell-fish, have their homely delights—joy as great to them as our joy is to us. Goat climbing the rocks; anaconda crawling through the jungle; buffalo plunging across the prairie; crocodile basking in tropical sun; seal puffing on the ice; ostrich striding across the desert, are so many bundles of joy; they do not

go moping or melancholy ; they are not only half supplied. God says *they are filled with good.*

The worm squirming through the sod upturned of ploughshare, and the ants racing up and down the hillock, are happy by day and happy by night. Take up a drop of water under the microscope, and you will find that within it there are millions of creatures that swim in a hallelujah of gladness. The sounds in nature that are repulsive to our ears are often only utterances of joy—the growl, the croak, the bark, the howl. The good God made these creatures, thinks of them ever, and will not let a ploughshare turn up a mole's nest or fisherman's hook transfix a worm, until, by eternal decree, its time has come. God's hand feeds all these broods, and shepherds all these flocks, and tends all these herds. He sweetens the clover-top for the oxen's taste ; and pours out crystalline waters, in mossed cups of rock, for the hind to drink out of on his way down the crags ; and pours nectar into the cup of the honeysuckle to refresh the humming-bird ; and spreads a banquet of a hundred fields of buckwheat, and lets the honey-bee put his mouth to any cup of all the banquet ; and tells the grasshopper to go anywhere he likes, and gives the flocks of heaven the choice of all the grain-fields. The sea anemone, half animal, half flower, clinging to the rock in mid ocean, with its tentacles spread to catch its food, has the Owner of the universe to provide for it. We are repulsed at the hideousness of the elephant, but God, for the comfort and convenience of the monster, puts forty thousand distinct muscles in his proboscis.

I go down on the barren sea-shore, and say, "No animal can live in this place of desolation ;" but all through the sands are myriads of little insects that leap with happy life. I go down by the marsh and say, "In this damp place, and in these loathsome pools of stagnant water, there will be the quietness of death ;" but, lo, I see the turtles on the rotten log sunning themselves, and hear the bogs quake with multitudinous life. When the unfledged robins are hungry, God

shows the old robin where she can get food to put into their open mouths. Winter is not allowed to come until the ants have granaried their harvest, and the squirrels have filled their cellar with nuts. God shows the hungry ichneumon where it may find the crocodile's eggs; and in arctic climes there are animals that God so lavishly clothes that they can afford to walk through snow-storms in the finest sable, and ermine, and chinchilla, and no sooner is one set of furs worn out than God gives them a new one. He helps the spider in its architecture of its gossamer bridge, and takes care of the colour of the butterfly's wing, and tinges the cochineal, and helps the moth out of the chrysalis. The animal creation also has its army and navy. The most insignificant has its means of defence; the wasp its sting; the reptile its tooth; the bear its paw; the dog its muzzle; the elephant its tusk; the fish its scale; the bird its swift wing; the reindeer its antlers; the roe its fleet foot. We are repelled at the thought of sting, and tusk, and hoof, but God's goodness provides them for the defence of the animal's rights.

Yea, God in the Bible announces his care for these orders of creation. He says that he has heaved up *fortifications* for their defence—Psalm civ., 18: “*The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and the rocks for the conies.*” He watches the bird's nest—Psalm civ., 17: “*As for the stork, the fir-trees are her house.*” He sees that the cattle have enough grass—Psalm civ., 14: “*He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle.*” He sees to it that the cows, and sheep, and horses have enough to drink—Psalm civ., 10, 11: “*He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills; they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst.*”

Amid the thunders of Sinai God uttered the rights of cattle, and said that they should have a Sabbath. “*Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy cattle.*” He declared with infinite emphasis that the ox on the threshing-floor should



have the privilege of eating some of the grain as he trod it out, and muzzling was forbidden. If young birds were taken from the nest for food, the despoiler's life depended on the mother going free. God would not let the mother bird suffer in one day the loss of her young and her own liberty. And He who regarded in olden time the conduct of man toward the brutes, to-day looks down from heaven and is interested in every minnow that swims the stream, and every rook that cleaves the air, and every herd that bleats, or neighs, or lows in the pasture.

Why did God make all these, and why make them so happy? How account for all this singing and dancing, and frisking amid the *irrational creation*? Why this heaven for the animalcule in a dew-drop? Why for the condor a throne on Chimborazo? Why the glitter of the phosphorus in the ship's wake on the sea, which is said to be only the frolic of millions of insects? Why the perpetual chanting of so many voices from the irrational creation in earth, and air, and ocean—beasts, and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, permitted to join in the praise that goes up from seraph and archangel? Only one solution, one explanation, one answer—*God is good.* “*The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*”

I take a step higher, and notice the adaptation of the world to the comfort and happiness of man. The sixth day of creation has arrived. The palace of the world was made, but there was no king to live in it. Leviathan ruled the deep; the eagle the air; the lion the field, but where was the sceptre which should rule all? A new style of being was created. Heaven and earth were represented in his nature. His body from the earth beneath; his soul from the heaven above. The one reminding him of his origin, the other speaking of his destiny—himself the connecting link between the animal creation and angelic intelligence. In him a strange commingling of the temporal and eternal, the finite, and the infinite, *dust and glory.* The earth for his floor, and

heaven for his roof; God for his Father; eternity for his lifetime.

The Christian anatomist, gazing upon the confirmation of the human body, exclaims, "Fearfully and wonderfully made." No embroidery so elaborate, no gauze so delicate, no colour so exquisite, no mechanism so graceful, no handiwork so divine. So quietly and mysteriously does the human body perform its functions, that it was not until five thousand years after the creation of the race that the circulation of the blood was discovered; and though anatomists of all countries and ages have been so long exploring this castle of life, they have only begun to understand it.

Volumes have been written of the *hand*. Wondrous instrument! With it we give friendly recognition, and grasp the sword, and climb the rock, and write, and carve and build. It constructed the Pyramids, and hoisted the Parthenon. It made the harp, and then struck out of it all the world's minstrelsy. In it the white marble of Pentelicon mines dreamed itself away into immortal sculpture. It reins in the swift engine; it holds the steamer to its path in the sea; it snatches the fire from heaven; it feels the pulse of the sick child with its delicate touch, and makes the nations quake with its stupendous achievements. What power brought down the forests, and made the marshes blossom, and burdened the earth with all the cities that thunder on with enterprise and power? Four fingers and a thumb. A hundred million dollars would not purchase for you a machine as exquisite and wonderful as your own hand. Mighty hand! In all its bones, and muscles, and joints, I learn that God is good.

Behold one eye, which, in its Daguerrean gallery, in an instant catches the mountain and the sea. This perpetual telegraphing of the nerves; these joints, that are the only hinges that do not wear out; these bones and muscles of the body, with fourteen thousand different adaptations; these one hundred thousand glands; these two hundred million pores;

this mysterious heart, contracting four thousand times every hour—two hundred and fifty pounds of blood rushing through in every sixty seconds ; this chemical process of digestion ; this laboratory, beyond the understanding of the most skilful philosophy ; this furnace, whose heat is kept up from cradle to grave ; this factory of life, whose wheels, and spindles, and bands are God-directed ; this human voice, capable, as has been estimated, of producing seventeen trillions, five hundred and ninety-two billions, one hundred and eighty-six millions, forty-four thousand four hundred and fifteen sounds. If we could realize the wonders of our physical organization, we would be hypochondriacs, fearing every moment that some part of the machine would break down. But there are men here who have lived through seventy years, and not a nerve has ceased to thrill, or a muscle to contract, or a lung to breathe, or a hand to manipulate.

I take a step higher, and look at man's mental constitution.

Behold the lavish benevolence of God in powers of *perception*, or the faculty you have of transporting this outside world into your own mind—gathering into your brain the majesty of the storm, and the splendours of the day-dawn, and lifting into your mind the ocean as easily as you might put a glass of water to your lips.

Watch the *law of association*, or the mysterious linking together of all you ever thought, or knew, or felt, and then giving you the power to take hold of the clewline, and draw through your mind the long train with indescribable velocity—one thought starting up a hundred, and this again a thousand—as the chirp of one bird sometimes wakes a whole forest of voices, or the thrum of one string will rouse an orchestra.

Watch *your memory*—that sheaf binder that goes forth to gather the harvest of the past, and bring it into the present. Your power and velocity of thought—thought of the swift *wing* and the lightning foot ; thought that outspeeds the

star, and circles through the heavens, and weighs worlds, and, from poising amid wheeling constellations, comes down to count the blossoms in a tuft of mignonette, then starts again to try the fathoming of the bottomless, and the scaling of the insurmountable, to be swallowed up in the incomprehensible, and lost in God!

In reason and understanding, man is alone. The ox surpasses him in strength, the antelope in speed, the hound in keenness of nostril, the eagle in far-reaching sight, the rabbit in quickness of hearing, the honey-bee in delicacy of tongue, the spider in fineness of touch. Man's power therefore, consisteth not in what he can lift, or how fast he can run, or how strong a wrestler he can throw—for in these respects the ox, the ostrich, and the hyena are his superior—but by his reason he comes forth to rule all: through his ingenious contrivance to outrun, outlift, outwrestle, outsee, outhear, outdo. At his all-conquering decree, the forest that had stood for ages steps aside to let him build his cabin and cultivate his farm. The sea which raved and foamed upon the race has become a crystal pathway for commerce to march on. The thunder cloud that slept lazily above the mountain is made to come down and carry mail bags. Man, dissatisfied with his slowness of advancement, shouted to the Water and the Fire, "Come and lift!" "Come and draw!" "Come and help!" And they answered, "Ay, ay, we come:" and they joined hands—the fire and the water—and the shuttles fly, and the rail-train rattles on, and the steam-ship comes coughing, panting, flaming across the deep. He elevates the telescope to the heavens, and, as easily as through the stethoscope the physician hears the movement of the lung, the astronomer catches the pulsation of distant systems of worlds throbbing with life. He takes the microscope, and discovers that there are hundreds of thousands of animalcule, living, moving, working, dying within a circle that could be covered with the point of a pin—animals to which a rain-drop would be an ocean, a rose leaf a hemisphere, and

the flash of a fire-fly lasting enough to give them light to several generations.

I take a step higher, and look at man's moral nature. Made in the image of God. Vast capacity for enjoyment; capable at first of eternal joy, and though now disordered, still, through the recuperative force of heavenly grace, able to mount up to more than its original felicity : faculties that may blossom and bear fruit inexhaustibly. Immortality written upon every capacity ! a soul destined to range in unlimited spheres of activity long after the world has put on ashes, and the solar system shall have snapped its axle, and the stars that in their courses, fought against Sisera, shall have been slain, and buried amid the tolling thunders of the last day.

You see that God has adapted everything to our comfort and advantage. Pleasant things for the palate : music for the ear ; beauty for the eye ; aroma for the nostril ; kindred for our affections ; poetry for our taste ; religion for our soul. We are put in a garden, and told that from all the trees we may eat except here and there one. He gives the sun to shine on us, and the waters to refresh us, and food to strengthen us ; and the herbs yield medicine when we are sick, and the forests lumber when we would build a house, or cross the water in a ship. The rocks are transported for our foundation ; and metals upturned for our currency ; and wild beasts must give us covering ; and the mountains must be tunneled to let us pass ; and the fish of the sea come up in our net ; and the birds of the air drop at the flash of our guns ; and the cattle on a thousand hills come down to give us meat. For us the peach-orchards bend down their fruit, and the vineyards their purple clusters. To feed and refresh our intellect, ten thousand wonders in nature and providence — wonders of mind and body, wonders of earth, and air, and deep, analogies and antitheses ; all colours and sounds ; lyrics in the air ; idyls in the field ; conflagrations in the *sunset* ; robes of mist on the mountains ; and the " *Grand March* " of God in th storm.

But for the *soul* still higher adaptation ; a fountain in which it may wash ; a ladder by which it may climb ; a song of endless triumph that it may sing ; a crown of unfading light that it may wear. Christ came to save it—came with a cross on his back ; came with spikes in his feet ; came when no one else would come, to do a work which no one else would do. See how suited to man's condition is what God has done for him ! Man is a sinner ; here is pardon. He has lost God's image ; Christ retraces it. He is helpless ; Almighty grace is proffered. He is a lost wanderer ; Jesus brings him home. He is blind ; and at one touch of Him who cured Bartimeus, eternal glories stream into his soul. Jesus, I sing thy grace ! Cure of worst disease ! Hammer to smite off heaviest chain ! Light for thickest darkness ! Grace divine ! Devils scoff at it, and men reject it, but heaven celebrates it !

But I must stop this range of thought, for our Chief Executive asks that to-day we chiefly celebrate the mercies of the past year. Now, my soul, to the altar of incense. Come, all ye people ! Great High-priest, kindle the coals ! Let the cloud fill the temple !

I wish you good cheer for the *national health*. Pestilence, that in other years has come to drive out its thousand hearses to Greenwood and Laurel Hill, has not visited our nation, or has touched only one or two of the Southern ports. It is a glorious thing to be well. How strange that we should keep our health when one breath from a marsh, or the sting of an insect, or the slipping of a foot, or the falling of a tree-branch might fatally assault our life ! Regularly the lungs work, and their motion seems to be a spirit within us panting after its immortality. Our sight fails not, though the air is so full of objects which by one touch could break out the soul's window. What ship, after a year's tossing on the sea, could come in with so little damage as ourselves, though we arrive after a year's voyage to-day ?

I wish you good cheer for the *national harvest*. Reaping machines never swathed thicker rye, the corn-husker's peg never ripped out fuller ear, and mow-poles never bent down under sweeter hay, and windmill's hopper never shook out larger wheat. Long trains of white covered wagons have brought the wealth down to the great thoroughfares. The garner's are full, the store-houses are overcrowded, the canals are blocked with freights pressing down to the markets. The cars rumble all through the darkness, and whistle up the flagmen at dead of night to let the Western harvests come down to feed the mouths of the great cities. A race of kings have taken possession of this land—King Cotton, King Corn, King Wheat, King Grass, King Coal. Our nets bring up supplies from the cod, salmon, and mackerel fisheries: the whaler's harpoon was never more skilfully flung.

I wish you good cheer for *civil and religious liberty*. No official spy watches our entrance here, nor does an armed soldier interfere with the honest utterance of truth. We stand here to-day with our arms free to work, and our tongues free to speak. This Bible—it is all unclasped. This pulpit—there is no chain about it. There is no snapping of musketry in the street. Blessed be God that to-day we are free men, with the prospect and determination of always being free. No established religion: Jew and Gentile—Arminian and Calvinist—Trinitarian and Unitarian—Protestant and Roman Catholic—on the same footing. If persecution should come against the most unpopular of all the sects, I believe that all other denominations would band together and arm themselves, and hearts would be stout, and blood would be free, and the right of men to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences would be contested at the point of the bayonet, and with blood flowing up to the bits of the horses' bridles.

I wish you good cheer for our *condition as a Church*. We stand to-day at a point of prosperity that we never expected to reach. Our experiment of a free Church has been suc-

cessful. Considering the fact that a little more than two years ago this Church was as near extinction as a Church ever goes without absolutely dying, and considering the fact that we have been in this Tabernacle only a little more than one year, we ought to offer a thanksgiving to God, long, and loud, and deep, for His wonderful works in our behalf. The American Church has rejoiced with us in the success of our experiment, and our enemies have been confounded. Let us render thanksgiving to God that He has given this Church a mission to perform, and that the thousands of people who worship with us on the Sabbath are but a handful compared with that great multitude of perhaps hundreds of thousands of souls whom, through the printing-press, we are now reaching every week in this country, and in England and Scotland. I confess that I am appalled on Sabbath days when I think of the work that, as a Church, we are called to do. Great is the responsibility, oh, men and women of God, and great the condemnation if, with such wonderful opportunity for usefulness, we prove recreant.

Let us thank God that during the year we have been permitted to inaugurate "*the Tabernacle Free College for training Christian men and women for practical work,*" an institution that has kindled the sympathies of tens of thousands of people all over this land, and which if successful will be of more value than the building of many churches. A very large number of men and women have enrolled themselves already as students. May the Lord bless and encourage all who are connected with it!

Praise ye the Lord! Let everything that have breath praise the Lord! To-day let the people come out from their store-houses and offices, from Lowell factories and off from Western prairies, and up from Pennsylvania coal mines, and out from Oregon forests, and in from the whale-ships of New London and Cape Ann, and wherever God's light shines, and God's rain descends, and God's mercy broods, let the thanksgiving arise!



## LINES OF CIRCUMVALLATION.

“ A troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.”—  
*Genesis xlix., 19.*

MY text speaks of a tribe who were often discomfited in battle, yet were at last victorious. But the words may be used as graphically descriptive of the defeat of Christ, to be followed by His successes.

When Christ's chin dropped upon His breast in death, the world shouted in triumph. Driven as He has been from the heart, from the social circle, from literature, from places of influence, the world gazes now upon what seems to be a vanquished Redeemer. But He shall yet rally His forces, and though now overcome by other troops, He shall overcome at the last.

When a city is about to be besieged, lines of circumvallation are run out; in half circles the fortifications sweep around; the first line fifteen miles out; the second, ten miles; the next, five; the next, one mile out. The attacking host first takes the outworks, then a line nearer, coming on up until the embankment nearest the city is captured.

Now, *the human heart is defending itself against Christ, and it has run out four or five lines of circumvallation, and they must one by one be taken, so that Christ may overcome at the last and the heart surrender.* You know how men fight when they contend, in battle for their wives and children. There are lightnings in their eye, and every finger is a spear, and their shout is like the voice of a whirlwind. You know how men fight when they contend for their country. The men of O'Brien, sick and wounded in the hospitals, as the battle came on, asked that they might be brought out, that

stakes might be driven in the ground, and that they might be lashed fast to the stake, so that with their one free arm they might contend for their country. And so it was done; though unable to stand alone, they were lashed fast to stakes, and fought to the death.

But the fiercest battle ever fought is between the unregenerated heart and Christ. Before I get through with the sermon, I will illustrate my meaning.

Forward, ye troops of God, and take the line of fortification farthest out, which is—*prejudice against ministers and churches*. There are men who, for various reasons, do not believe in these things, and from that outward intrenchment contend against Christ. My reply to this is, seek out a Church and a minister that you *do* like. That is the religious advantage that men have in large towns that they have nowhere else, they may have their pick—high churches and low churches, rich churches and poor churches, aristocratic churches and democratic churches, pew-renting churches and free churches, Calvinistic churches and Armenian churches, ministers white and black, learned and ignorant, fantastic and plain, old and young, manuscript-reading and extemporaneous, some wearing fine gowns and others a very poor coat, ministers argumentative or figurative, ministers statistical or poetical.

Look over the whole list of churches and clergymen, and I think that you will find one good enough for your soul. Keep, if you will, your prejudice against all other institutions, but love that one. To some of you I commend the Episcopalian liturgy as the best; to others, the informal worship of the Methodists. Some of you had better be sprinkled, and others had better go down to be dipped in the flood. To some of you I commend a church where the music is led by a precentor, and all the people join in the singing; to others, a church where four persons stand in the loft and conduct the music, and during the dull passages in prayer and sermon write sentimental notes or eat philopenas. Amid all the denominations there must be

one place where your soul will be blessed. This very church, to some of you, shall be the way to heaven, and through this one break in the long fortification of your prejudice I pass through with the battle-cry of the Cross, feeling that, though these prejudices have been *the troop that overcame Christ, he shall overcome at the last.*

Forward, ye troops of God, to the next entrenchment! It is a circumvallation of *social influences*. There are hundreds of people here to-night whose surroundings in the world are adverse to the Christian religion. The first step that yonder man makes towards heaven will call forth a volley of criticism and caricature. Many of their friends in the world would as soon be shot as be seen on their knees praying.

The whole atmosphere is as uncongenial to religion as a northern clime is to pine-apples and bananas. If that young man should become a Christian and go back to the store, they would accost him with, "John, how is your soul? come, now, give us a prayer. Suppose you will have nothing to do with such sinners as we. What is the news from heaven? What! getting red in the face? Not mad, I hope? Christians ought not to get mad. What a saint you are! I suppose you are almost ready for translation!" Sunday nights your friends play cards, drink wine, and smoke cigars, and in all the round of your associates the name of God is never used save in profanity.

The long, high, mighty breastwork of social influences—how shall grace ever take it? For which one of these ungodly friends will you send when you are dying? They could sit up with you, and pour out the medicines, and shake up your hot pillow, but could they administer any comfort for the soul? As the waves of the Jordan begin to lick your feet, will they be able to say anything to strengthen? If, in some awful spasm of physical suffering, you should ask them to pray, do you think they would know how to do it? Will they crowd the room, and keep out the *last enemy*? What single thing can they do for you when

heart and flesh shall fail? When the trumpet sounds, do you want to rise with them in *their* resurrection? Do you think they will put on the coronations of heaven? If not, do not let them hinder you now. If they do nothing for you in death, judgment, or eternity, it is high time you looked for help in some other direction. Rowland Hill, one night, on his way to church, found two men at a lamp-post talking. One said to the other, "Let us go down to-night, and hear old Rowland Hill, and we will have some fine sport." Rowland Hill took his place in the pulpit, and the two men he had heard talking on the street came into the gallery and sat quite near to the pulpit. Rowland Hill went on to describe the horrors of a sinner's death-bed, and then turned around to these men in the gallery and said, "That will be fine sport for you." He then spoke of the judgment day—the day for which all others were made—of how some would come up rejoicing, and others wailing; and then turned around to these men in the gallery and said, "That will be fine sport for you." He then spoke of the long eternity, ages on ages rolling—the eternity of the destroyed—no light, no promise, no hope; then turned to the men in the gallery and said, "That will be fine sport for you." The two had been leading each other on in sin. Where one went, the other went. If your most intimate friend goes to heaven, you will probably go to heaven; if your most intimate friend goes to hell, you probably will go to hell.

Evil companionship has destroyed innumerable men. Through this high battlement no human force can break, but, oh! that the Lord Jesus might storm it to-night. Give up your scoffing associates, or give up God and heaven. These friends may get you into perdition, but they cannot get you out. Christ never entered a man's soul who was not willing to give up unsanctified companionship. If five hundred of you are unsaved, it will be because of your wrong surroundings. The artillery of God comes thundering on: will you surrender? This second fortress must be taken.

Lord Jesus, now scale the wall ! He mounts the steep ! He who has been so often overcome *has overcome at last !*

Forward, ye troops of God, to the third line of entrenchment, namely, *the intellectual difficulties about religion*. A hundred perplexities about the parables ; a hundred questions about the ninth chapter of Romans ; passage set against passage in seeming contradiction. You pile up a battlement of Colenso on the *Pentateuch*, and Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*, and Renan's *Life of Christ* ; and some parts of the wall are so high that it would be folly to attempt to take them. But there is a hole in the wall of fortification, and through that hole in the wall I put my right hand, and take your own, and say, " My brother, do you want to be saved ? " And you say " Yes. " " Well ; Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost. Wilt thou let him in—the bruised One of the Cross ? He will take away all thy sins and all thy sorrows. In one half hour He will give thee more peace than thou hast had in all the twenty years of thy questioning and doubting ! " Let the great guns of Colenso and Renan blaze away. Christ comes not to the gate of your head, but to the door of your heart, and tapping gently against it, he says, " Behold, I stand at the door and knock. Whosoever will open to me, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me. "

Scepticism seems to do quite well in prosperity, but it fails in adversity. A celebrated infidel, on shipboard, in the sunshine, caricatured the Christian religion, and scoffed at its professors. But the sea arose, and the waves dashed across the hurricane-deck, and the man cried out, " O my God, what shall I do ? what shall I do ? " A father went down to see his dying son in a Southern hospital during the war. Finding that the boy was dying, he went to the chaplain and said, " I wish you would go and see my boy, and get him prepared for the future. " " Why, " said the chaplain, " I thought you did not believe in religion ! " " Well, " *said he*, " I don't, but his mother does ; and I would a great

deal rather the boy would follow his mother. Go and get him prepared." Scepticism does tolerably well to live by, but it is a poor thing to die by. The fortification of your soul this hour gives way; and the Christ, who seemed to have been overcome by argument, and by profound questions, and elaborate analysis, now, by the force of love, *overcomes at the last!*

Forward, ye troops of light, to the next circumvallation of the heart, namely, *pernicious habit*. I do not believe that it is necessary to be a teetotaler in order to be a Christian (although I wish all were teetotalers), but I do say that a man who is excessive in the use of strong drink cannot love Christ. He will not dispute with you the supremacy of the bottle. The appetite is to-day the mightiest barrier against God. There are men who would rather brave eternity, unpardoned, than give up their bondage. They have been throwing up this embankment of evil habit for five, ten, or twenty years, until it is very high and very great. Temperance societies, grand as they are, will not capture it. Christ, the Son of God, alone can take the fortification. This night He beats mightily against it. Some years ago, when the cholera was raging in New Orleans, a steamer near nightfall put out from the city, laden with passengers escaping from the pestilence. The steamer had been but a little while out when the engineer fell at his post with cholera. The captain, in despair, went up and down among the passengers, asking if there were any one there who could act as engineer. A man stepped out, and said that he was an engineer, and could take the position. In the night the captain was awakened by a violent motion of the steamer, and he knew that there was great peril ahead. He went up, and found that the engineer was a maniac; that he had fastened down the safety-valves; and he told the captain that he was the emissary of Satan, commissioned to drive the steamer to hell. By some strategy, the man was got down in time to save the steamer. There are men ex-

gineered by maniac passions, sworn to drive them to temporal and everlasting destruction. Every part of their nature trembles under the high pressure. Nothing but the grace of Almighty God can bring down those passions, and chain them. A little while longer in this course, and all is lost.

Whatever be the form of evil habit, Christ is able fully and finally to deliver that man. Though he be eaten up with dissipations; though he be sunk to the lowest depths of shame! though every physical, mental, and spiritual force be crippled, Christ will make him a whole man, and lift him to usefulness and respectability here, and to glory hereafter.

I have heard men spoken of as so far gone that they could not be rescued. I denounce the horrible infidelity. The Lord's arm is Omnipotent, and the worst wretch that ever crawled into the ditch would no more puzzle or confound God than the case of the most elegant and polished sinner that ever came to him.

Lay hold of that Almighty arm, oh, ye dying captives! Notwithstanding all your past misdoings, there is no need that you miss heaven; there is grace enough to save every one of you, not merely letting you escape by the skin of your teeth, but giving you an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord. The feet of God's host are already at the foot of the wall. They come on with the blood-stained flag of the cross. They mount the steep. Under their drawn sword thy evil passions go down. Where sin abounded, grace does much more abound. Victory over thy sin! Victory through the Lord Jesus Christ! Through many a long year thy appetites overcame Him, but *He has overcome at the last!*

Forward, ye troops of light, to the last and the mightiest line of fortification—the *pride and the rebellion of the natural heart*. This entrenchment must be taken, or all the rest of the contest is lost. This is the crisis of the battle.

Sometimes the besieging army, finding the intrenchments high and strong, swing around in the rear, escape the fortifications, and *flank* the city, taking it with but little resistance. So God's grace leaving all the long embankments of prejudice, and social influence, and intellectual perplexities, and bad habits, come around and falls upon the heart first, and that captured by a flank movement, all the fortifications surrender. Your *heart* taken for Christ, your bad habits fall, your mental difficulties fly, and in one struggle your entire nature is redeemed. To-night God's goes around all the other embankments, and for the present lets them stand, and with its stout fist pounds against your heart's castle. You say that the locks have been so long fast, and the bolts are so rusty, and the hinges so unused that you cannot open the door. Then stand back for a moment, while, taking the Cross for a battering-ram, we try with it to drive down the door and let Christ come in.

Oh ! yours is a *sinning* heart, and Christ alone can cleanse it. Yours is a *proud* heart, and Christ alone can humble it. Yours is a *rebellious* heart, and Christ alone can subdue it.

The Captain of our salvation calls up before your soul all his troops of mercy and grace. Hold out no longer against the forces that would take thee in the name of thy King. By thy hard-heartedness, and rebellion, and sin, thou hast ten thousand times overcome thy best Friend, but shall it not be told in heaven to-night that *He has overcome at the last ?*

Throw open every door, and ward, and closet of your heart to the conquering Jesus. Be not like Hiram, the king, who contributed toward the building of the Temple of God at Jerusalem, while at the same time he was helping to construct the temples of Hercules. Your heart swept clean of the last idol, let Christ have full possession. Charge upon this most important fortress, oh, ye troops of God ! Let the Holy Spirit push against it with heaviest warnings ! Let Sinai open its cannonade of thunders ! Beat against the



door with shouts of heaven and groans of hell ! Let all the memories of a Christian father's prayer and a pious mother's love put their shoulders against the panel. Back with the door ! It must go in ! Open, oh, long-closed heart ! It must finally surrender or fall under the ten thousand booming batteries of judgment and eternity.

But the day of thy grace is almost past. The sun is dipping below the mountains. The fiery sky fortells the storm. The chill in the air prophesies a night of blackness and darkness. What you do you had better do quickly.

A gentleman, wandering along on the beach of Scotland, where the high rocks came near the sea, was unmindful of the fact that the tide was rising, which could cut off his retreat. A man on the top of the rocks shouted "Hallo ! the tide is rising, and this is the last place through which you can make your escape ; you had better climb up on to the rocks." The man laughed at the warning and went on. After a while he thought it was time to return ; he came back and found retreat cut off. He tried to scale the rocks ; he clambered half way up—could get no farther. The wave came to his feet—came to his waist—came to his chin, and with a wild shriek for help he perished.

The tides of eternity are rising. Those only will be saved who get on to the Rock of Ages ; yet men saunter along in their sin and play in the sand. We come out and shout, "Hallo ! hallo ! the tide is rising." They laugh at our excitement, and say that there is no danger. After a while they resolve to return, but it is too late. The waters of eternal destruction gather about their feet ; they try to climb, but get no further than the foot of the rock, and, with eyes rolling in horror, and hands flung up, and a shriek of despair that rolls among the mountains of death with long-reverberating echo, they drop for ever.

Lord God, keep us from such a catastrophe !

A surgeon, wounded at Gettysburg, told me that he lay *helpless* upon the heights, looking down upon the battle.

He saw the fate of the nation wavering backward and forward—now one army seeming to conquer, now the other. The scene was grand and overwhelming.

I stand on the heights of Zion to-night, and I see your eternal destinies being decided in battle. Some of you have charged upon Christ with all the sins and prejudices of your lifetime. He is falling back and falling back; you have wounded Him in the brow; you have wounded Him in the hands; you have wounded Him in the feet; you have wounded Him in the heart. He falls in His own blood, while your iniquities stamp upon Him and cry, "We will not have this man to reign over us!" In the words of the text, you *have overcome Him*. But now I see Him rising up. In the strength of His almighty love He comes at you. Armed by memories of Bethlehem and Golgotha, He passes on toward you. With weapons of sacrifice and invitations of glory He attacks thy soul, and it falls back and falls back until, able to retreat no longer, it throws out its arms to receive Him, and all the spectators on the sky battlements clap their hands and rejoice *that Jesus, who was before overcome by a troop, HAS OVERCOME AT THE LAST!*

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### LAST THINGS.

"It is the last time."—1 John ii., 18.

JOHN is here enforcing certain truths by the consideration that the people to whom he writes have come to the closing dispensation of the world, and says, "*It is the last time.*"

I am standing in the last service of the last Sabbath of the last month of the year. Four more ringings of the city clock, and the year, with all its joys, griefs, and achievements, will be done. It is the last time, and so I shall speak to you of last things.

I. My hearers are coming nearer their *last business day*. You move in routine. You rise at seven o'clock, breakfast, start for the store, enter your counting-room, read your letters, and give consequent orders. You look at the prices current, and talk with customers. You sell and you buy. You run over to the bank or insurance company. You come back and look into the cash-drawer, and see by the book how much money your partner has drawn out. You run out to lunch. You come back. You drive out the street peddlars, who have raisers, or apples, or books to sell. At five or six o'clock you start for Fulton, Wall, or South Ferry. That order goes on day after day, and year after year. Yet a day is not far distant which may seem to be like all the others, but shall be entirely different. It will have two twilights—that of the morning and that of the evening. There will be a meridian. You will go to business—you will come back. Yet it will be in the calendar of eternity, as marked a day as though it had no twilight; as though every hour the sky rang a fire-bell; as though faces looked out from all the clouds; as though the wind had voices; as though every hour an angel shot past your store door. It will be your last business day. Unknown and unexpected by yourself, you will terminate all your business engagements. You will shut your cash-drawer, will close your portfolio, will slam shut the money safe, will take your hat and go out. Nothing that ever happens in the store can take you back again. A burglar might blow open the safe, you would not go in to examine. A fire might consume half the goods, you would not see the damage. Gold might go up to 150, or drop to 105, it would not disturb you. After ten, twenty, or thirty years being seen in business places, or the exchange, or at the broker's, you will not appear. Men will ask about you, and say, "Where is so and so?" and your friend will say, "have you not heard the news?" and will take a paper from his pocket, and point to your name on the death list. If things are wrong, they

will always stay wrong. No chance of correcting a false entry, or repairing the loss done a customer by a dishonest sample, or handing back the five dollars overpaid you by the cashier at the bank, or apologizing for the imposition you inflicted upon one of your clerks. The seal has been set to all your business life. Good-bye to the store ! Good-bye to the stock exchange ! Good-bye to all your business friends ! Good-bye to New York ! *It is the last time !*

You who have been in business for twenty-five years in New York, to-morrow, as you walk down the street to your store, see how all the signs on the store doors are changed. The names are all different from what they were when you started in business ; or, if they are the same, it is because the boys of the family have found it an advantage to keep the name of the father on the sign. Quietly, unobservedly, yet inevitably, most of your contemporaries *came to their last time.*

II. I remark that men are coming nearer to their *last sinful amusement.* A dissipated life soon stops. The machinery of life is so delicate that it will not endure much trifling. As the herdsman throws a peck of corn under the swine's snout to be crunched and devoured, so dissipation is throwing the bodies and souls of men, by the scores, into the maw of death. They think they can stand night carousal ; are as well satisfied to retire at one o'clock in the morning as at ten at night ; feel as safe in drinking wine as water ; walk without compunction with the unclean. But they will soon be through. The time comes, when, with flushed countenances they will turn back from the gaming-table, or come reeling from the midnight debauch, and, wrapping themselves about with sin as a garment, will stagger on, and, striking their foot against the corner of their own tombstone, will fall flat into hell.

Look into that door ! It is not safe to go farther. There they sit—the debauchees flinging the dice ; bloats emptying the decanters ; flaunting daughters of death whirling about

in the dance. With some of them it is the last night on earth. Twist up the gaslights full head, for eternal darkness is dropping! Fill the glass to the brim, for inextinguishable thirst is about to strike its fangs. Drink deep and long, and all the hiccupping, jeering, blaspheming crew rise up and click the rim of their glasses; and spirits lost, with fiery fingers clutching the cups, give wild huzza of death, as altogether, they break through the rotten and crackling floor into the smoking, screaming horrors of the damned; and all the demons of darkness clap their hands and shout, "Ha! ha! *It was their last time!*"

III. Again I remark that men are coming nearer to *their last Sabbath*. The week seems to me like a Red Sea, tossing, tossing; the Sabbath like a path cut through it, where we may walk dry-shod. God lifting his hand again above the waters, all our cares and annoyances are whelmed in the flood.

Where did you pass your boyhood Sabbaths? You say in a New-England village. You remember the church, and the green in front; and the cry of the swallows in the tower as the tap of the bell scattered them; and the quite graveyard beside it, some of the stones leaning over, and the moss almost covering the letters; the long line of horses at the hitching-post; the group at the church door; the minister, plain, and earnest, and affectionate; the children with whom you exchange mischievous glances, and the aged men and women, to whom you looked up with veneration, though they were sometimes asleep at the head of the pew—all of them sound asleep now in the shadow of the church that once they frequented. With some of you it was the Scotch kirk, or the English chapel, or the city church. Somehow, ever since then you loved Sunday to come. Its sunrise seems more golden; its noonday more bright; its evening more suggestive; and although you feel, before God, that many of your Sundays have been wasted, you still say "*Sweet Sabbath! Messenger of God! Pillow on which*

to put the aching head ! Day fragrant of all sweet memories ! How I love thee ! ”

If you are forty years of age, two thousand and eighty of your Sabbaths are gone. Indeed, the whole flock of them is started, and the last of them will soon spread wing. It will break from the east. The bells will ring. There will be the shuffle of young feet and old on the way to church. The baptismal waters will be shed, the sacramental wine poured, the evening service will pass, the *Amen* will finish the benediction, the lights will be lowered, the gates will jar shut, and the sexton will turn the key in the lock. Nothing peculiar in the looks of the wall that night, or in the sound of the music. But that will be the ending of your Sabbaths. Can you not have one more ? Not one more. It will come for others, but not for us. The last hymn. The last sermon. The last benediction. The last Sabbath. *The last time !* This very Sabbath may be your closing day of rest. If so, you had better take a good look at all these sacred places, and say “ Farewell, pew and pulpit, and all ye worshippers ! Farewell, song and sermon ! I make my exit ! Farewell, thou Christian Sabbath ! To all these scenes, where I have rejoiced, and prayed, and wept, farewell for ever ! *It is the last time !* ”

IV. Again, we come near the last year of our life. The world is at least six thousand years old. Sixty thousand years may yet come, and the procession may seem interminable, but our own closing earthly year is not far off. Fifteen hundred and forty-six was a memorable year, because in it Luther died. Eighteen hundred and fifty-two was a marked year, because in it Lord Wellington died. Eighteen hundred and fifty-six was a marked year, because in it Hugh Miller died. But there is a year near at hand more tremendous to us, and that is the year in which *we* will die. Seventeen hundred and seventy-five was a memorable year, because in it the battle of Lexington was fought. Eighteen hundred and fifteen was a memorable year, for in it Waterloo was

fought. Eighteen hundred and fifty-nine was a memorable year, because in it Solferino was fought. But there will be a more memorable year to us, and that will be the year in which we fight our battle with our last enemy. That year will open with the usual New Year congratulations. It will revel in the same orchard-blossoming ; it will roar with the same Fourth of July rejoicings ; it will close with the same Christmas festivals ; and yet it will be unlike all others in the fact that it will be our closing year. The spring grass may be cleft of the spade to let us down to our resting-place or, while the summer grain is falling to the sickle, we may be harvested for another world ; or, while the autumnal leaves are flying in the November gale, we may fade and fall ; or the driving sleet may cut the faces of the black-tasseled horses that pull us out in our last ride. But it will be the year in which our body and soul part ; the year in which for us time ends and eternity begins. All other years are as nothing. The year in which you were born, the year in which you were married, the year in which you began business for yourself, the year in which your father died—all of them are of less importance than this last year of your life.

During the year which expires to-night, in three hours and twenty-five minutes from this time by that clock, how many have gone into the next world ? About five million five hundred thousand souls. It was their last year. Some of them may have expected it, but the great majority of them, if foretold that this would be their closing year, would have laughed outright and said, “ Is not my arm strong ? Is not my eye clear ? Is not my lung sound ? Who can skip, or climb, or lift, or run better than I ? The doctor of the ‘ Life Insurance Company ’ pronounced me sound. All my friends congratulate me on my healthy appearance. Begone with your evil prophecy ! I shall see my threescore and ten ! ” Yet those five million five hundred thousand have gone. No more motion in their heart than if it had never *pulsated*. No more brightness in their eye than if it had

always been blind. The earth sails on—a great hearse containing thousands, millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions of the dead. But the record of the year is not yet made up. In the three hours and twenty minutes that remain, at least ten thousand nine hundred spirits will swing out of this life. The gate of eternity has opened and shut to let in six or seven souls since I began that last sentence. I beat the seconds with my hand! At every stroke a spirit flies. There goes one—another—and another. *It was the last time!*

What is that winged creature flying through the air? It is the Present Year. It is flying from eternity to eternity. I say, "Stop, oh, flying Year!" It stops not, but cries as it passes, "With my torch I kindled the mornings. From my cup I poured the blackness of the night. I strewed the marriage-altar and dug the grave. I set on fire the cities and the forest. I palsied the eloquent tongue, and spread the sick-bed, and delivered the captive, and awoke the song, and garnered the harvest. Out of my bosom flew the white dove of peace, and from my hand were flung the arrows of war. I brought message of mercy to one, and from another I took away the last chance. I pulled on the chariot of the King. Between the eternities I fly. One stroke more of my wing and I shall be at rest. The time is short. Prepare! Prepare!"

V. Again I remark that we are coming nearer the *last moment of our life*. That is often the most cheerful moment. John Howard talked of it with exhilaration, and selected his own burial place, saying to his friend, "A spot near the village of Dauphiny would suit me nicely." When John Doule was dying in the triumph of the Gospel, some one said, "Let us pray." "No," said another Christian, "let us *sing* him over the Jordan!" But it will be a dark moment if we are unfitted for it. When we get in the last two minutes of our lives, there will be no time left for anything. You might as well try to strike a match and get a light on a ship's deck in the midst of a hurricane as to prepare for



eternity when the winds of death are in full blast. It is a poor time to start to get your house insured when the flames are bursting out of all the windows, and it is a poor time to attempt to prepare for death when the realities of eternity are taking hold of us. Fortunately for those who stay behind, the remorse of those who leave the world unprepared is not usually observed. In the exhausted physical condition nothing is especially evident. But I suppose the soul flies around terribly, and tries to hold back, and flutters its wings like a captured eagle, and writhes, and turns, and tries to batter itself loose from its pursuers. If you come to a precipice, and look a thousand feet down, you get dizzy and want to hold fast. How then must the unprepared soul feel when it comes to the brink of this life and looks down—further than a stone could drop in a thousand years, and irresistible forces are pushing it to the verge, and it knows that there is nothing to clutch, nothing to brace itself against! The soul says, “The last minute has come. No time to pray, or to rehearse the past, or to cry for mercy. Everything done, and irrevocably done. Here I stand on the dividing line between two worlds. Shall I jump? Which way shall I jump? Shall I fly? Which way shall I fly?”

A California stage-driver, after having been engaged in that business for many years, was dying, and in his last moment he put his foot out of the bed and swung it back and forth. Some one said to him, “Why do you make that motion with your foot?” He replied, “I am on the down grade, and I cannot get my foot on the brake.” When our last moment comes, we cannot stop. Our going will be inevitable, and we will not be able to put our foot on the brake.

“Lo! on a narrow neck of land,  
’Twixt two unbounded seas I stand,  
Yet how insensible!  
A point of time, a moment’s space,  
Removes me to yon heavenly place,  
Or shuts me up in hell!”

I congratulate all Christian people on the fact that they have come to the last Sabbath of the last month of the year, for the reason that they are nearer the end of all their sorrows.

Among the Sierra Nevada Mountains I was walking with some of the passengers to relieve the overladen stage, and one of them gave me his history. He said, "With my wife I came to California twenty years ago. We suffered every hardship. I went to the mines, but had no luck. I afterwards worked at a trade, but had no luck. Then I went to farming, but had no luck. We suffered almost starvation. Everything seemed to go against us. While we were in complete poverty, my wife died. After her death I went again to the mines. I struck a vein of gold which yielded me forty thousand dollars. I am now on my way to San Francisco to transfer the mine, for which I am to receive one hundred thousand dollars." "Then," said I, "you are worth one hundred and forty thousand dollars." He said "Yes; but it comes too late. My wife is gone. The money is nothing to me now."

So there are those whose entire life is made up of poverty and misfortune. When success comes it comes too late, and they cannot enjoy it. But, glory to God! the path of tears has a terminus. The storm will not blow on for ever. Child of God, you are not far off from the last disappointment and the last groan. The Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall lead you to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes.

To others my subject brings arousal. In three hours and ten minutes more the volume of your year's opportunity and behaviour will be closed, clasped, sealed, and laid away on the shelf of history. No prayer can be added; no privilege inscribed; no sin erased. Just as the Book closes to-night at twelve o'clock, it will be until the archangel wrenches it open. The recording angel is this moment writing the last sentence of the tremendous volume. He either writes, "December 31st

1873," your name under it, and the words "*Accepted Christ, and all is well,*" or, in the other case, he writes "December 31st, 1873," your name under it and the words "*Would not turn. The year and the day of grace are ended. He must perish;*" and the lids of the great book come shut with a strong hand; and as the angel lays it down at the foot of the throne, I hear him say with the solemnity of the judgment day, "No more mercy for that man. It is the last time. Holy Spirit, fly away! Angels, cease to hover! Sword of truth, be sheathed! Gate of heaven, clang shut! Done! Done! *It is the last time!*"

Shall not these closing moments of the year witness your repentance? Shall not this hour record your flight from sin?

I have read that when the Declaration of Independence was being made in Philadelphia, in 1776, the people were so anxious to know the exact moment when the document was completed that they placed a man at the door of the hall where the delegates were assembled, and another man on the stairs leading to the tower, and another man with his hand on the rope of the bell; and then, when the last signer of the Declaration had affixed his name, the man at the door shouted upward, "*Ring!*" and the man on the stairs heard it, and shouted upward, "*Ring!*" and the man with his hand on the bell or the rope heard it, and sounded the tidings over the city.

If to-night, in the strength of Christ, you would make your declaration of independence from the power of sin, there would be great rejoicing on earth and in heaven. I would cry upward to the angels poising in mid-air, *Ring!* and they to those standing on the battlements of heaven, *Ring!* and those on the battlements to the dwellers in the temples and in the mansions, *Ring!* and all heaven would ring, and ring, at the news of a soul redeemed.

## NO REST HERE.

“Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest.”—*Micah* ii., 10.

THIS was the drum-beat of a prophet who wanted to arouse his people from their oppressed and sinful condition; but it may just as properly be uttered now as then. Bells, by long exposure and much ringing, lose their clearness of tone; but this rousing bell of the Gospel strikes in as clear a tone as when it first rang on the air.

As far as I can see, your great want and mine is *rest*. From the time we enter life, a great many vexations and annoyances take after us. We have our holidays and our seasons of recreation and quiet, but where is the man in this house, come to seventy years of age, who has found entire rest! The fact is that God did not make this world to rest in. A ship might as well go down off Cape Hatteras to find smooth water as a man in this world to find quiet. From the way that God has strewn the thorns, and hung the clouds, and sharpened the tusks; from the colds that distress us, and the heats that smite us, and the pleurisies that stab us, and the fevers that consume us, I know that He did not make this world as a place to loiter in. God does everything successfully; and this world would be a very different world if it were intended for us to lounge in. It does right well for a few hours. Indeed, it is magnificent! Nothing but finite wisdom and goodness could have mixed this beverage of water, or hung up these brackets of stars, or trained these voices of rill, and bird, and ocean—so that God has but to lift his hand, and the whole world breaks forth into orchestra. But after all, it is only the splendours of a king's highway, over which we are to march on to eternal conquests.

You and I have seen men who tried to rest here. They builded themselves great stores. They gathered around them the patronage of merchant princes. The voice of their bid shook the money-markets. They had stock in the most successful railroads, and in "safety deposits" great rolls of government securities. They had emblazoned carriages, high-mettled steeds, footmen, plate that confounded lords and senators who sat at their table, tapestry on which floated the richest designs of foreign looms, splendour of canvas on the wall, exquisiteness of music rising among pedestals of bronze, and dropping, soft as light, on snow of sculpture. Here let them rest. Put back the embroidered curtain, and shake up the pillow of down. Turn out the lights. It is eleven o'clock at night. Let slumber drop upon the eyelids, and the air float through the half-opened lattice drowsy with midsummer perfume. Stand back, all care, anxiety, and trouble! But no! they will not stand back. They rattle the lattice. They look under the canopy. With rough touch they startle his pulses. They cry out at twelve o'clock at night, "Awake man; how can you sleep when things are so uncertain? What about those stocks? Hark to the tap of that fire-bell: it is your district: How if you should die soon? Awake man! Think of it! Who will get your property when you are gone? What will they do with it? Wake up! Riches sometimes take wings. How if you should get poor? Wake up!" Rising on one elbow, the man of fortune looks out into the darkness of the room, and wipes the dampness from his forehead and says, "Alas! For all this scene of wealth and magnificence—no rest!"

I passed down a street of a city with a merchant. He knew all the finest houses on the street. He said, "There is something the matter in all these houses. In that one it is conjugal infelicity. In that one, a dissipated son. In that, a dissolute father. In that, an idiot child. In that, the prospect of bankruptcy." This world's wealth can give *no permanent* satisfaction. This is not your rest.

You and I have seen men try in another direction. A man says, "If I could only rise to such and such a place of renown; if I could gain that office; if I could only get the stand, and have my sentiments met with one good round of hand-clapping applause; if I could only write a book that would live, or make a speech that would thrill, or do an action that would resound!" The tide turns in his favour. His name is on ten thousand lips. He is bowed to, and sought after, and advanced. Men drink his health at great dinners. At his fiery words the multitudes huzza! From galleries of beauty they throw garlands. From house-tops, as he passes in long procession, they shake out the national standards. Here let him rest. It is eleven o'clock at night. On pillow stuffed with a nation's praise let him lie down. Hush! all disturbant voices. In his dream let there be hoisted a throne, and across it march a coronation. Hush! Hush!

"Wake up!" says a rough voice. "Political sentiment is changing. How if you should lose this place of honour! Wake up! The morning papers are to be full of denunciation. Hearken to the execrations of those who once caressed you. By to-morrow night there will be multitudes sneering at the words which last night you expected would be universally admired. How can you sleep when everything depends upon the next turn of the great tragedy? Up, man! Off of this pillow!" The man, with head yet hot from his last oration, starts up suddenly, looks out upon the night, but sees nothing except the flowers that lie on his stand, or the scroll from which he read his speech, or the books from which he quoted his authorities, and goes to his desk to finish his neglected correspondence, or to pen an indignant line to some reporter, or sketch the plan for a public defence against the assaults of the people. Happy when he got his first lawyer's brief; exultant when he triumphed over his first political rival; yet, sitting on the very top of all that this world offers of praise, he exclaims, "No rest! no rest!"

The very world that now applauds will soon hiss. That world said of the great Webster, "What a statesman! What wonderful exposition of the Constitution! A man fit for any position." That same world said, after a while, "Down with him! He is an office-seeker. He is a sot! He is a libertine. Away with him!" And there is no peace for the man until he lays down his broken heart in the grave at Marshfield. While Charles Matthews was performing in London, before immense audiences, one day a worn-out and gloomy man came into a doctor's shop, saying, "Doctor, what can you do for me?" The Doctor examined his case and said, "My advice is that you go and see Charles Matthews." "Alas! Alas!" said the man, "I myself am Charles Matthews." Jeffrey thought that if he could only be judge, that would be the making of him; got to be judge, and cursed the day in which he was born. Alexander wanted to submerge the world with his greatness; submerged it, and then drank himself to death because he could not stand the trouble. Burns thought he would give everything if he could win the favour of courts and princes; won it, and amid the shouts of a great entertainment, when poets, and orators, and duchesses were adoring his genius, wished that he could creep back into the obscurity in which he dwelt on the day when he wrote of the

"Daisy, wee modest, crimson-tipped flower."

Napoleon wanted to make all Europe tremble at his power; made it tremble, then died, his entire military achievements dwindling down to a pair of military boots which he insisted on having on his feet when dying. At Versailles I saw a picture of Napoleon in his triumphs. I went into another room and saw a bust of Napoleon as he appeared at St. Helena; but oh, what grief and anguish in the face of the latter! The first was Napoleon in triumph, the last was Napoleon with his heart broken. How they laughed and cried when silver-tongued Sheridan, in the mid-day of prosperity harangued,

the people of Britain ; and how they howled at and execrated him when, outside of the room where his corpse lay, his creditors tried to get his miserable bones and sell them !

This world for rest ? “ Aha ! ” cry the waters, “ no rest here—we plunge to the sea.” “ Aha ! ” cry the mountains, “ no rest here—we crumble to the plain.” “ Aha ! ” cry the towers, “ no rest here—we follow Babylon, and Thebes, and Nineveh into the dust.” No rest for the flowers ; they fade. No rest for the stars ; they die. No rest for man ; he must work, toil, suffer, and slave.

Now, for what have I said all this ? Just to prepare you for the text : “ Arise ye, and depart ; for this is not your rest.” I am going to make you a grand offer. Some of you remember that when gold was discovered in California, large companies were made up and started off to get their fortune. To-day I want to make up a party for the land of Gold. I hold in my hand a deed from the Proprietor of the estate, in which he offers to all who will join the company ten thousand shares of infinite value, in a city whose streets are gold, whose harps are gold, whose crowns are gold. You have read of the Crusaders—how that many thousands of them went off to conquer the Holy Sepulchre. I ask you to join a grander crusade—not for the purpose of conquering the sepulchre of a dead Christ, but for the purpose of reaching the throne of a living Jesus. When an army is to be made up, the recruiting officer examines the volunteers ; he tests their eyesight ; he sounds their lungs ; he measures their stature ; they must be just right, or they are rejected. But there shall be no partiality in making up this army of Christ. Whatever your moral or physical stature, whatever your dissipations, whatever your crimes, whatever your weaknesses, I have a commission from the Lord Almighty to make up this regiment of redeemed souls, and I cry, “ Arise ye, and depart ; for this is not your rest.” Many of you have lately joined this company, and my desire is that you all may join it. Why not ? You know in your



own hearts' experience that what I have said about this world is true—that it is no place to rest in. There are hundreds here weary—oh, how weary—wary with sin; weary with trouble; weary with bereavement. Some of you have been pierced through and through. You carry the scars of a thousand conflicts, in which you have bled at every pore; and you sigh, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest!" You have taken the cup of this world's pleasure and drunk it to the dregs, and still the thirst claws at your tongue, and the fever strikes to your brain. You have chased Pleasure through every valley, by every stream, amid every brightness, and under every shadow; but just at the moment when you were all ready to put your hand upon the rosy, laughing sylph of the wood, she turned upon you with the glare of a fiend and the eye of a satyr, her locks adders, and her breath the chill damp of a grave. Out of Jesus Christ no rest. No voice to silence the storm. No light to kindle the darkness. No dry dock to repair the split bulwark.

Thank God, I can tell you something better. If there is no rest on earth, there is rest in heaven. Oh, ye who are worn out with work, your hands calloused, your backs bent, your eyes half put out, your fingers worn with the needle, that in this world you may never lay down; ye discouraged ones, who have been waging a hand-to-hand fight for bread; ye to whom the night brings little rest and the morning more drudgery—oh, ye of the weary hand, and the weary side, and the weary foot, hear me talk about rest!

Look at that company of enthroned ones. Look at their hands; look at their feet; look at their eyes. It cannot be that those bright ones ever toiled? Yes! yes! These packed the Chinese tea-boxes, and through missionary instruction escaped into glory. These sweltered on Southern plantations, and one night, after the cotton-picking, went up as white as if they had never been black. These died of *vertigo* in the Lowell carpet factories, and these in Man-

chester mills ; those helped build the Pyramids, and these broke away from work on the day Christ was hounded out of Jerusalem. No more towers to build ; heaven is done. No more garments to weave ; the robes are finished. No more harvests to raise ; the garnerers are full. Oh, sons and daughters of toil ! arise ye and depart, for *that* is your rest.

Scovill M'Callum, a boy of my Sunday-school, while dying, said to his mother, " Don't cry, but sing, sing,

"There is rest for the weary,  
There is rest for the weary.'"

Then putting his wasted hand over his heart, said, " There is rest for me."

But there are some of you who want to hear about the land where they never have any heartbreaks, and no graves are dug. Where is your father and mother ? The most of you are orphans. I look around, and where I see one man who has parents living, I see ten who are orphans. Where are your children ? Where I see one family circle that is unbroken, I see three or four that have been desolated. One lamb gone out of this fold ; one flower plucked from that garland ; one golden link broken from that chain ; here a bright light put out, and there another, and yonder another. With such griefs, how are you to rest ? Will there ever be a power that can attune that silent voice, or kindle the lustre of that closed eye, or put spring and dance into that little foot ? When we bank up the dust over the dead, is the sod never to be broken ? Is the cemetery to hear no sound but the tire of the hearse-wheel, or the tap of the bell at the gate as the long processions come in with their awful burdens of grief ? Is the bottom of the grave gravel, and the top dust ? No ! no ! no ! The tomb is only a place where we wrap our robes about us for a pleasant nap on our way home. The swellings of Jordan will only wash off the dust of the way. From the top of the grave we catch a

glimpse of the towers glinted with the sun that never sets.

Oh, ye whose locks are wet with the dews of the night of grief; ye whose hearts are heavy, because those well-known footsteps sound no more at the doorway, yonder is your rest! There is David triumphant; but once he bemoaned Absalom. There is Abraham enthroned; but once he wept for Sarah. There is Paul exultant; but he once sat with his feet in the stocks. There is Payson radiant with immortal health; but on earth he was always sick. No toil, no tears, no partings, no strife, no agonizing cough, no night. No storm to ruffle the crystal sea. No alarm to strike from the cathedral towers. No dirge throbbing from seraphic harps. No tremor in the everlasting song; but rest—perfect rest—  
UNENDING REST.

Into that rest how many of our loved ones have gone! The past summer has been one of unusual fatality. Factory, railroad, and steam-boat casualties have multiplied. Whole families have perished through the carelessness of officials. The land is in mourning for the dead. Never in one summer of my ministry have so many of my congregation been swept off by disease. The little children have been gathered up into the bosom of Christ. One of them went out of the arms of a widowed mother, following its father who died a few weeks before. In its last moment it seemed to see the departed father, for it said, looking upward with brightened countenance, "Papa, take me up!"

Others put down the work of mid-life, feeling they could hardly be spared from the store or shop for a day, but are to be spared from it for ever. Two of our people went in old age. One came tottering on his staff, and used to sit at the foot of the pulpit, his wrinkled face radiant with the light that falls from the throne of God. Another that was nearer to me than them all: from my own circle she went up. Having lived a life of Christian consistency here, ever busy *with kindnesses* for her children, her heart full of that meek

and quiet spirit that is in the sight of God of great price, suddenly her countenance was transfigured, and the gate was opened, and she took her place amid that great cloud of witnesses that hover about the throne !

Glorious consolation ! They are not dead. You cannot make me believe they are dead. They have only *moved on*. With more love than that with which they greeted us on earth, they watch us from their high place, and their voices cheer us in our struggle for the sky. Hail, spirits blessed ! now that ye have passed the flood and won the crown. With weary feet we press up the shining way, until in everlasting reunion we shall meet again. Oh ! won't it be grand when, our conflicts done and our partings over, we shall clasp hands, and cry out, " THIS IS HEAVEN ? "

But how if we do not meet our heavenly friends ? We cannot meet them unless we travel the same path they trod.

There is an old hymn, only a part of which I can think of now :

" Oh ! there will be mourning, mourning,  
Mourning at the judgment-seat of Christ.  
Parents and children there will part,  
Parents and children there will part,  
Will part to meet no more.  
Oh ! there will be mourning, mourning,  
Mourning at the judgment-seat of Christ.

" Brothers and sisters there will part,  
Brothers and sisters there will part,  
Will part to meet no more.  
Oh ! there will be mourning, mourning,  
Mourning at the judgment-seat of Christ.  
Wives and husbands there will part,  
Wives and husbands there will part,  
Will part to meet no more."

It is sad to say farewell on earth, but how sad to say farewell in the judgment—to gaze eternally up toward the place where our loved ones dwell, but we ourselves thrown out !

Oh, the bitterness, and the agony, and the heart-break of that last parting! By the thrones of your departed kindred, by their gentle hearts, and the tenderness and love with which they now call you from the skies, I beg you start on the high-road to heaven.

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### DUE-BILLS PRESENTED.\*

“How much owest thou unto my Lord?”—*Luke xvi. 5.*

WHEN the first of next January comes, you will take an account of stock, and you will bring up in a balance-sheet all the values and all the indebtedness. Indeed, often during the year you ask yourself the questions, “What am I worth?” “How much do I owe?” You say, “There is so much that I shall have to pay for house-rent; so much for store-rent; so much to meet the interest on that mortgage, lest it be foreclosed; so much to meet that note in the bank, lest it be protested.” I suppose that to-night you could put down on a piece of paper, in five minutes, in round figures, your whole indebtedness to men. And yet how you halt and stumble when the question is put to you to-night, that was propounded by the steward to the debtors of his master, “How much owest thou unto my Lord?” The fact is that we are more bothered about the five hundred dollars that we owe to our neighbours than we are about that insolvency into which we have been plunged to an amount so far beyond the millions, and the billions, and the quadrillions, that there is not room enough on the scroll of the sky for the archangel to put the figures.

When in 1857, the banks went down, insurance companies went down, and mercantile establishments went down, there was a great panic. But how stolid our indifference when

\* Preached on the evening of Dedication day.

the great truth is announced to-night that the whole earth has suspended payment to God, and that it cannot pay one per. cent. on a million of dollars. Let us now acknowledge our obligations to God. We do not appreciate their magnitude. The traveller on the Pacific Railroad, going toward California day after day, asks, "Why, where are the Rocky Mountains?" The fact is that the train goes up so very gradually for hundreds and hundreds of miles, the traveller does not see the precipices and the rocks that he expected to see; so that when he gets to Sherman, where he is eight or nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, he cannot appreciate the fact that he is at so great an altitude. Well, my friends, we have been going on in this path of life, over the mountain of God's blessing, rising higher and higher, until we are not aware of the great altitude of benediction to which we have been lifted; yet here we stand to-night, thousands of feet above the level of that great sea of want and woe upon which millions of our fellow-men are tossed and we cannot appreciate the elevation. Oh! you need to pile Sierra Nevada and the Wahsatch on the top of the Rocky Mountains to appreciate the meaning of the Psalmist when he says, "Thy righteousness is like the *great mountains!*"

I want to put on your table to-night the book of God's account—the book of your indebtedness. Doing business for eternity, my brothers and sisters, we want to do it with our eyes open. I want you to gather together all the things you have ever done for God, and put them in one line, and add them up; and then gather together all the things that God has done for you, put them in one line, and add them up; then subtract the lesser from the greater. Don't be afraid. The settlement will be right. If God owes us, he is rich, and can pay. If we owe God, we are honest, and will try to pay.

Oh, that we might feel the pressure of the Almighty Spirit of God while we open the arithmetics of eternity, and try to calculate, "How much owest thou unto our Lord?"

You remember one of our services, when, during the sermon, a woman in the back part of the house, at the call to the unconverted, came up the aisle and flung herself at the foot of the pulpit, crying for mercy. Oh, that to-night we might have the more overwhelming scene of the whole audience bowing down at the feet of Jesus !

Now I will put on your table these bills of indebtedness. If they are wrong, don't pay them ; reject them. If they are right, say so. The first bill of indebtedness that I put upon your table to-night is the *bill for rent*. This world is the house that God built for us to live in. He lets it to us already furnished. What a carpet !—the grass interwoven with figure of flowers. What a ceiling !—the frescoed sky. What tapestried pillars !—the rocks. What a front door !—the flaming sunrise through which the day comes in. What a back door !—the sunset, through which the day goes out. What a chandelier and candelabra !—the sun and stars. What a flour-bin !—the wheat-fields. What chimneys !—Stromboli and Cotopaxi. Ah ! the Alhambra and Windsor castle are but Queenstown shanties compared with this great house that God has put up for us to live in, and the rent is due ! Are we ready to pay it ?

The next bill I find on our table of indebtedness to God is the *bill for board*. We have been sitting at God's table ten, thirty, fifty, seventy years. Put the board down low—at three dollars per week, and in forty years it is six thousand two hundred and forty dollars. From the apples you ate in the orchard when a boy, to the fruit last night upon your tea-table, it all came out of the same hand. From the horn that called you from the hay-field years ago, to the silver bell that tinkled on your table at noon to-day, you have never known the pang, the sickening horror of having nothing to eat. We pay the butcher, the baker, and the fruit-dealer, but we do not pay that God who makes the food, and who gives us the money with which to buy it. If on

Saturday night, or at the end of the month, they with whom we board present the bill, and we do not pay it, we are put out; but year after year, and for scores of years, have we been permitted to sit at God's table without paying, and the luxuries are greater now than ever before. Every one of you has consumed whole acres of corn, whole flocks of birds, whole droves of sheep, whole herds of cattle. Ah! it has been no cheap thing to feed your appetites for forty years; and do you think it is a mean, unfair, or dishonest thing, when to-night there is put upon your table a bill for board?

The next bill I find upon our table is a *bill for clothes*. There is but one manufactory of Gobelin tapestry, and that is at Paris, under the control of the government; and the fabrics are woven for royal families only. But in all the earth there are factories going day and night, weaving a more wonderful fabric than royal tapestry for us, the King's children. The cotton plantation sends us socks. The flax-field sends us linen. The sheep's wool supplies us cloaks. The sable and the ermine yields us furs. What coats, what hats, what shoes, what muffles it takes to supply you all your life! Put it down low. How much? Two hundred dollars per year? Can you clothe yourself at that rate? Two hundred dollars per year for forty years is *eight thousand dollars for clothes; sixty years, twelve thousand dollars for clothes*.

The next bill I find on our table to-night is for that which we owe God *for our families*. Where did you get your families from? "God setteth the solitary in families." Have you a companion who is kind, gentle, sympathetic, helpful—sympathetic with all your joys and sorrows? Was it good luck or the merry sleigh-ride that gave her to you? No. Proverbs xix., 14: "A good wife is from the Lord." Have you children round about your table? Have they eye-sight, when so many have been born blind? Have they hearing, when so many have been born deaf? Can they talk and sing, when so many have been born dumb? Have



they the use of leg and foot, when so many have been born cripples? Who gave you those glad, healthy, romping children? How much will you take for them? If I should offer you the Kohinoor diamond for one, Chatsworth Park for another, and ten millions of dollars for another, you would laugh me to scorn! You would not sell the eldest one, because it is the first-born; you would not sell the youngest one, because it is the youngest and the pet; nor this one, because it is the very image of its father; nor that one because it looks like its mother; nor this one, because it has always been sick, and you especially love it! nor that one because it is so healthful that you could not think of giving it up. I do not want you to give them up. I only want you, if gold and diamonds, and all the earth cannot buy them, to think of the magnitude of the question. I ask you, standing in your family group, "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" Ah! he gave them to you. During all those sick nights, when you rocked that young life, or were so anxious you could not sleep, though others watched, that you came in every little while to see how things were going, and hour after hour carried the suffering little one on a pillow, and it did not grow heavy, you found no rest until you were sure it was going to get well—He watched with you and kept your heart from breaking, and answered your prayer.

When you go home to-night you will see your little ones in the nursery—all there save those that Christ has in heaven; and they are yours just as much as they ever were; and when you go up at last, will come out at heaven's gate shouting, "*Father's come!*" "*Mother's come!*" Oh, ye who have sweet, darling children on earth and in heaven, "*How much—how much owest thou unto my Lord!*"

The next bill for indebtedness that I find upon the table is the *bill for taxes*. You have paid the city taxes, the state taxes, the United States taxes, but have you paid God for *letting you live in this beautiful city and in this glorious*

country? Think of the contrast between your own condition and that of those who heard the howling Communists rushing through the *Champs Elysées* of Paris, their shoes soaked with the blood of women and children. What is this Brooklyn that we live in? New York in its better mood, and surrounded with its family. What is this great nation? The most divinely blessed that ever existed. Washington and Jefferson never dreamed of such a land as this has got to be. The Jews were God's *ancient* people; Americans are God's *modern* people. And we have the advantage over them. They wandered forty years through the desert; we have gone for nigh a hundred years through a garden. God struck *one* rock for them, and the water came down to slake their thirst, *all* the rocks of this land are struck to supply our thirst. One flock of quails came down to the Israelites, and they ate and they died; this land is full of quails, and grosbeaks, and robins, and prairie-fowl, and the nation eats and lives. Manna came down in the dew for the Israelites, but if it was not picked right up, it became wormy; God drops the manna down on all the wheat-fields from Pennsylvania to California, and we gather it into the granaries. You may not like the President of the United States; you may not like the governor; you may not like the mayor; but, come now, men of all parties, be frank, and acknowledge that it is a glorious country to live in. You have paid the amount of earthly taxes you owe—the city tax, the state tax, the United States tax, but “how much owest thou *unto my Lord?*”

The next bill I find upon the table is a *book bill*. How much is your *Bible* worth? Scientific men are trying to show us through the newspapers and through philosophic papers, that our race is descended from the monkey. But we, who believe in God's Word, read there that God made man in His own image, and not in the image of a monkey. Get out of my way with your damnable Darwinian theories! Scientific men cannot understand the origin of this world. We

open our Bibles, and we feel like the Christian Arab, who said to the sceptic, when asked by him why he believed that there was a God, "How do I know that it was a man instead of a camel that went past my tent last night? Why, I know him by the tracks." Then looking over at the setting sun the Arab said to the sceptic, "Look there! that is not the work of a man; that is the *track* of a God." We have all these things revealed in God's Word. Dear old book! My father loved it. It trembled in my mother's hand when she was nigh fourscore years old. It has been under the pillow of three of my brothers when they died. It is a very different book from what it once was to me. I used to take it as a splendid poem and read it as I read John Milton. I took it sometimes as a treatise on law and read it as I did Blackstone. I took it as a fine history, and read it as I did Josephus. Ah! now it is not the poem; it is not the treatise of law; it is not the history. It is simply a *family album* that I open, and see right before me the face of God, my father; of Christ, my Saviour; of heaven, my eternal home.

As I take up your family Bible to-night, bright with promises, and redolent with boyhood memories, and mighty with principles that are to regenerate the world, I ask you, ye men who are descended from those who fought until they died in their tracks for the defence of this book; ye sons of the Covenanters who were hounded among the Highlands of Scotland; ye sons of men who went on ladders of fire from English soil to heaven for this grand, glorious triumphant, God-given Book, "*How much owest thou unto my Lord?*"

There is one more bill of indebtedness laid upon the table, and that is the *bill for your redemption*. I have been told that the bells in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, never toll save when the king or some member of the royal family dies. The thunders in the dome of heaven never tolled so dolefully as when they rang out to the world the news, "*King Jesus is dead!*" When a king dies, the whole land

is put in black ; they shroud the pillars ; they put the people in procession ; they march to a doleful drum-beat. What shall we do now that *our* king is dead ? Put blackness on the gates of the morning. Let the cathedral organs wail ; let the winds sob ; let all the generations of men fall in line, and beat a funeral march of woe ! woe ! woe ! as we go to the grave of our dead king.

In Philadelphia they have a habit, after the coffin is deposited in the grave, of the friends going formally up, and standing at the brink of the grave and looking in. So I take you all to-night to look into the grave of your dead King. The lines of care are gone out of his face. The wounds have stopped bleeding. Just lift up that lacerated hand. Lift it up, and then lay it down softly over that awful gash in the left side. He is dead ! He is dead !

Eight hundred years after Edward I. was buried they brought up his body, and they found that he still lay with a crown on his head. More than eighteen hundred years have passed, and I look into the grave of my dead King, and I see not only a crown, but "on his head are many crowns." And, what is more, he is rising. Yea, he has risen ! Ye who came to the grave weeping go away rejoicing. Let your dirges now change to anthems. He lives ! Take off the blackness from the gates of the morning. He lives ! Let earth and heaven keep Jubilee. He lives. *I know that my Redeemer lives.* For whom that battle and that victory ? For whom ? For you.

I was reading, a day or two ago, about a farmer who was found kneeling at a soldier's grave near Nashville. Some one came to him and said, "Why do you pay so much attention to this grave ? Was your son buried here ?" "No," he said. "During the war, my family were all sick. I knew not how to leave them. I was drafted. One of my neighbours came over and said, "I will go for you ; I have no family." He went off. He was wounded at Chickamauga. He was carried to the hospital and died. And, sir, I have

come a great many miles that I might write over his grave these words: '*He died for me.*'" Christ was our substitute. He went forth to fight our battles. He died. Oh! that we might write over his grave to-night, each one of us, "*He died for me!*"

If you were told in another place of a man who had done as much for his country as Christ has done for you and me, you would break forth in long and loud acclaim, and clap your hands, and stamp your feet, to show your enthusiasm. But, oh! how few eyes weep when I tell of that cross, where all the sorrows of the past and all the anguish of the future, and the wrath of heaven and the woes of hell, united to tear the heart of the Son of God; and I cry out to you, "*How much owest thou unto my Lord?*"

Oh! get some delicate scale that you may weigh His burdens. Get some delicate chalice that you may measure his tears. Listen to the hard breathing of this dying One, whose only crime was that he came to save the world. As I think of the cold nights that fell on him, of the tempests that struck him, of the whips that flayed him, of the insulting hands that slapped him on the cheek, of the mouths that spit upon him; and while you stand there, seeing the blood dripping down, from brow to cheek, from cheek to breast, from breast to knee, from knee to foot, from foot to the ground, I stand amid that red rain of anguish and cry out, "Oh! you blood-bought man and woman, *how much—how much owest thou unto my Lord?*" There are hundreds of men and women in this house who will respond, "*Everything I owe to him—my time, my talents, my heart—everything.*"

After the battle of Petersburg, in my church in Philadelphia, we received word, just before the service began, that there were two or three thousand men wounded, bleeding, without any kind minister of mercy to attend them. I said to my people, "I won't make any appeals. There are two or three thousand men bleeding to death in Petersburg-

Pass the plate." What a collection we got! Women took the rings from their fingers and the adornments from their necks, and put them upon the plate. How shall we respond to-night, when we hear that our Lord Jesus lies bleeding at the gate—bleeding at a hundred wounds—bleeding *for us! for us!*

I have presented to you to-night these different bills—the bill for house-rent; the bill for board; the bill for clothing; the bill for the family; the bill for taxes; the book bill, and the redemption bill. Will you pay? "Oh yes," every man says. The only question is, day by day, with this man and woman, "How much?" I cannot tell. I simply know that in the olden times, under a dispensation not near so bright as this, they gave *one tenth* to God. Is not our religion worth as much to us? That question I leave to the conscience of every man and woman in this house.

There are two ways of paying an indebtedness—to the law and to the creditor. If we owe and do not pay it, what is done? The matter is put into the hands of an attorney; a summons is sent; a declaration is filed; judgment is declared in the case; execution is issued; and the sheriff goes forth and gets on the auction-block, and he cries, "*Going! Going! Gone!*" The debt is collected by force. Then there is another way of paying a debt. We take up the bill and say, "This bill is due. Here is the money." The one payment is made *cheerfully*, the other by the *force of the law*.

God collects his bills in both ways. There are hundreds of business men, Christian men, in New York City, who have gone down, for the simple reason, as I believe, that they did not give to God that which belonged to him. They did not give him any percentage at all, or such a very small percentage that the Lord God collected his own bills by fire, by storm, or by death. Two men I knew very well, some years ago, on the streets of New York. They were talking about the matter of benevolence. One said to the other, "You give too much. I will wait until I get a large pile of

money, and then I will give." "No," said the other, "I will give as God prospers me." Hear the sequel. The former lives in New York City to-day, dollarless; the latter gathered two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I believe that the reason why many people are kept poor is because they do not give enough. If a man gives in the right spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Church, he is *insured* for time and for eternity. The Bank of England is a weak institution compared with the bank that any Christian man can draw upon. That man who stands by Christ, Christ will stand by him. Mark that: *the man who stands by Christ will find Christ standing by him.*

We have to-day rededicated this church. We have reconsecrated it to God, and to the salvation of the masses. We have more room, and so, more responsibility. God help us! One year ago, I said in the pulpit and through the press that a free church could and would be supported. Thousands doubted it. Other thousands laughed. God's blessing came. In addition to a great many who came here who could give nothing, or but little, there came many of large means and large hearts. I showed you, in my statement this morning, that the income of the Church during the past year had exceeded its outgoes. Let the mouths of derision for ever be stopped! The income exceeded the outgoes by fifteen hundred dollars, and that under very disadvantageous circumstances, considering the fact that for three months we had not our machinery fairly organized. The only thing between us and ultimate prosperity has been a floating debt accrued in the erection of the Tabernacle. This morning we cleared off three-fourths of that debt; to-night we will clear off the rest of it, if God will help the people. My brethren and sisters, one more pull, and away with this encumbrance! I have never asked you anything with so much earnestness as I ask you now to clear off that debt. My body and soul are enlisted in this matter. *I want a free church with a free Gospel.* We believe that if we give the

people an opportunity to respond in this matter, there will be no need of selling or renting the pews in order to pay the debt. If the great mass of the people of this country are ever to be brought to Christ, it will be only when the churches are thrown wide open and the *people* are invited to come in. Let those who can give a thousand dollars, or a hundred dollars, for the support of the Gospel, give it. Let those who can give but a dollar, or a penny, give that. God's blessing sometimes goes with the one penny in more tremendous power than with the ten thousand.

Away with the encumbrance! We can afford to spread the butter a little thinner on the bread, or to wear our old overcoat one winter longer, if we can get this cause to prosper. Our wives and daughters will postpone the new dress a little longer, for she who was last at the cross and first at the sepulchre will not let Jesus go a begging now.

Lift up your hands solemnly, and swear by him that liveth for ever and for ever that this Church, which attempts to preach a free Gospel—this Church which is at war with sectarianism (and you know that this morning, under Dr. Tyng's magnificent sermon, under the blast of that great trumpet, the wall of bigotry fell flat down)—a Church whose chief object is to save men for time and to save them for eternity—that such a Church shall not fail if you can help it.

Oh, that the doings of this day may bring courage into hundreds of churches in the different cities of our country, that are now watching with great anxiety the success of our experiment; and so all heaven will break forth into singing, and the gates of hell will tremble!

[At the close of this sermon the entire floating debt of \$21,000 was swept off.]



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## THE RESURRECTION.

“The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.”—*John v.*, 28, 29.

PHILOSOPHIC speculation has gone through heaven, and told us that there is no gold there; and through hell, and told us that there is no fire there; and through Christ, and told us that there is no God there; and through the grave, and told us that there is no resurrection; and has left hanging over all the future one great, thick London fog.

If I were to call on you to give the names of the world's great conquerors, you would say, Cæsar, Alexander, Philip, and the first Napoleon. You have missed the greatest. The men whose names have just been mentioned were not worthy of the name of corporal when compared with him. Herode on the black horse that crossed the fields of Waterloo and Atlanta, and his bloody hoofs have been set on the crushed hearts of the race. He has conquered every land and besieged every city; and to-day, Paris, London, St. Petersburg, New York, and Brooklyn are going down under his fierce and long-continued assault.

That conqueror is DEATH. He carries a black flag and takes no prisoners. He digs a trench across the hemispheres and fills it with carcasses. Had not God kept creating new men, the world, fifty times over, would have swung lifeless through the air; not a foot stirring in the cities, not a heart beating—a depopulated world—a ship without a helmsman at the wheel, or a captain on deck, or crew in the rigging. Herod of old slew only those of two years old and under, but this monster strikes all ages. Genghis Khan sent five *millions* into the dust; but this, hundreds of thousands of

millions. Other kings sometimes fall back and surrender territory once gained ; but this king has kept all he won, save Lazarus and Christ. The last one escaped by Omnipotent power, while Lazarus was again captured and went into the dust. What a cruel conqueror ! What a bloody king ! His palace is a huge sepulchre ; his flowers the faded garlands that lie on coffin lids ; his music the cry of desolated households ; the chalice of his banquet a skull ; his pleasure-fountains the falling tears of a world.

But that throne shall come down ; that sceptre shall break ; that palace shall fall under bombardment. " For the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall some forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

Heathen philosophers guessed at the immortality of the soul, but never dreamed that the body would get up and join it. This idea is exclusively scriptural, and beyond reasoning. Indeed all analogies fail. You say, as the wheat is put into the ground and comes up, so will our bodies. I reply, if the wheat entirely dies, as in the case of long protracted wet weather, there is no resurrection of it. So the analogy fails. You say that the caterpillar becomes the butterfly, and so our dead bodies may at last take on a splendid exaltation. I reply that their is no interregnum of life between the caterpillar and the butterfly ; and, therefore, the analogy fails. You say that there is a perfect type of the resurrection in the trees in spring-time. I reply that the tree does not die in winter. It is simply dormant ; and, therefore, the analogy fails. The body, though cut up by dissecting knives, and burned in a furnace, shall come together.

There must for ever be mysteries about this, and the mystery increases as science progresses. We find that comparatively a small part of the body is reduced to dust. There is very little earthy substance in it. It is largely composed of fluids and gases, which evaporate or separate

themselves, leaving but very little for the dust, so that the body becomes widely scattered through earth and air ; and how can it be reorganized is a question before which the chemist stands confounded.

But while there are in this theory of the resurrection many things above reasoning, there is nothing contrary to reason. The objectors say that the body is scattered to such a great distance it can never be gathered.

A man went into the Mexican War and lost a foot. He comes to New York, and by accident loses a finger. He afterwards goes as a missionary to China, and there dies. Will the foot come from Mexico, and the finger from New York, and join the body in China ? I answer, it is no harder for God to do that than to do things he has already done. Your body is already made up from all the zones of the earth—made up from the raisins of Italy, from the bananas of Florida, from the birds of the prairie, and from the sugar of the Far South ; made up from Russia, Brazil and Oregon. Fruits and plants from all these localities have become a part of our body.

The objector says, Suppose a man be eaten up by cannibals, how can his body be brought back ? I answer, there is no proof that the earthly part of the human body ever can be absorbed in another body. I suppose God has power to keep these bodies everlastingly distinct. But suppose that a part of the body was absorbed in another body—could not God make a substitute for the part that had been absorbed in another body ? The resurrected part of a good man would rather have a substituted portion of body given it than that part of the body which a cannibal had eaten and digested.

But the objectors say that a man's body entirely changes every seven or ten years, so that a man at seventy years of age has had seven distinct bodies ! At the last day, this idea would imply that the man should have seven heads, and *fourteen feet*, and other parts of the body corresponding ! But we

answer that the Bible distinctly states that it is the body that goes down into the grave that will come up again, and not those portions that for many years were being sloughed off.

But come, let us get out of this. I stood on the top of the Catskills one bright morning. On the top of the mountain was a crown of flashing gold, while all beneath was rolling, writhing, contorted cloud. But after a while the arrows of light shot from heaven, began to make the glooms of the valley strike tent. The mists went skurrying up and down like horsemen in wild retreat. The fogs were lifted, and dashed, and whirled. Then the whole valley became one grand illumination ; and there were horses of fire, and chariots of fire, and thrones of fire, and the flapping wings of angels of fire. Gradually, without sound of trumpet or roll of wheel, they moved off. The green valleys looked up. Then the long flash of the Hudson unsheathed itself, and there were the white flocks of villages lying amid the rich pastures, golden grain-fields, and the soft, radiant cradle of the valley, in which a young empire might sleep.

So there hangs over all the graves, and sepulchres, and mausoleums a darkness that no earthly lamb can lift ; but from above the Sun of Righteousness shines, and the dense fogs of scepticism having lifted, the valleys of the dead stand in the full gush of the morning of the resurrection.

Various scriptural accounts say that the work of grave-breaking will begin with the blast of trumpets and shoutings ; whence I take it that the first intimation of the day will be a sound from heaven such as has never before been heard. It may not be so loud, but it will be penetrating. There are mausoleums so deep that undisturbed silence has slept there ever since the day when the sleepers were left in them. The great noise shall strike through them. Among the corals of the sea, miles deep, where the shipwrecked rest, the sound will strike. No one will mistake it for thunder, or the blast of earthly minstrelsy. There will be heard the voice of the uncounted millions of the dead, who come rushing out of

the gates of eternity, flying toward the tomb, crying, "Make way! O grave, give us back our body! We gave it to you in corruption; surrender it now in incorruption." Thousands of spirits arising from the field of Waterloo, and from among the rocks of Gettysburg, and from among the passes of South Mountain. A hundred thousand are crowding Greenwood. On this grave three spirits meet, for there were three bodies in that tomb; over that family vault twenty spirits hover, for there were twenty bodies. From New York to Liverpool, at every few miles on the sea route, a group of hundreds of spirits coming down to the water to meet their bodies. See that multitude!—that is where the Central America sank. And yonder multitude!—that is where the Pacific went down. Found at last! That is where the City of Boston sank. And yonder the President went down. A solitary spirit alights on yonder prairie—that is where a traveller perished in the snow. The whole air is full of spirits—spirits flying north, spirits flying south, spirits flying east, spirits flying west. Crash! goes Westminster Abbey, as all its dead kings, and orators, and poets get up. Strange commingling of spirits searching among the ruins. William Wilberforce, the good; and Queen Elizabeth, the bad. Crash! go the Pyramids, and the monarchs of Egypt rise out of the heart of the desert. Snap! go the iron gates of the modern vaults. The country graveyard will look like a rough ploughed field as the mounds break open. All the kings of the earth; all the senators; all the great men; all the beggars; all the armies—victors and vanquished; all the ages—barbaric and civilized; all those who were chopped by guillotine, or simmered in the fire, or rotted in dungeons; all the infants of a day; all the octogenarians—all! all! Not one straggler left behind. All! all! And now the air is darkened with the fragments of bodies that are coming together from the opposite corners of the earth. Lost limbs finding their mate—bone to bone, *sinew to sinew*—until every joint is reconstructed, and every

arm finds its socket, and the amputated limb of the surgeon's table shall be set again at the point from which it was severed. A surgeon told me that after the battle of Bull Run he amputated limbs, throwing them out of the window, until the pile reached up to the window sill. All those fragments will have to take their places. Those who were born blind shall have eyes divinely kindled; those who were lame shall have a limb substituted. In all the hosts of the resurrected not one eye missing; not one foot clogged; not one arm palsied; not one tongue dumb; not one ear deaf.

But how will these bodies look? The bodies of the righteous, in the first place, will be GLORIOUS. The most perfectly formed body, indeed, is a mere skeleton to what it would have been had not sin come. God's model of a face, of a hand, of a foot, of a body, we know not. If, after an exquisite statue has been finished, you should take a chisel and clip it, and clip it, and set the statue in an out-of-door exposure, its beauty would nearly all be gone. Yet the human body has been clipped, and blasted, and battered for thousands of years. Physical defects have been handed down from generation to generation for six thousand years, and we have inherited all the bodily infelicities of all the past. But when God takes the righteous out of their graves, he will refashion, and improve, and adorn according to the original model, until the difference between a gymnast and the emaciated wretch in the lazaretto is not so great as that between our present bodily structures and our glorious resurrected forms. There you will see the perfected eye, out of which, by the waters of death, has been washed the last trace of tears and study. Then you will see the perfected hand—the knots on the knuckles of toil untied. No more stoop of the shoulders from burden-bearing and the weight of years; but all of us erect, elastic—the life of God in all the frame. The most striking and impressive thing on earth now is a human face. Yet it is veiled in the black veil of a thousand griefs. But when God, on the resurrection morn,

shall put aside the veil, I suppose that the face of the sun in the sky is dull and stupid compared with the outflaming glories of the countenances of the saved. I suppose that when those faces shall turn to look toward the gate or up toward the throne, it will be like the dawn of a new morning on the bosom of everlasting day.

The body will be IMMORTAL. The physical system is perpetually wasting away. It is only because we keep putting in the fuel that the furnace does not go entirely out. Blood-vessels are only canals to carry breadstuffs to the different parts. If these supplies fail, we die. Sickness and death lurk around to see if they cannot get a pry under the tenement, and at a slight push we tumble off the embankment of the grave. But the righteous, arisen, shall have an immortal body. It will be incapable of disease. You will hear no cough or groan. There will be no miasma or fever in the air. There will be no rough steep down which to fall, no fracturing a limb. People cross the sea for their health; but that voyage over the sea of death will cure the last Christian invalid. There grows an herb on that hill that will cure the last snake-bite of earthly poison. No hospital there, no dispensary, no medicines, no ambulances, no invalid chair, no crutches, no emaciation, no spectacles for poor sight, no listing of windows to keep out the cold blasts, but health immortal for the resurrected bodies of the righteous.

Again: The body will be POWERFUL. Walking ten or fifteen miles, we are weary. Lifting a few hundred pounds makes us pant. Unarmed, meeting a wild beast, we must climb, run, dodge, or somehow get out of the way. Eight hours work makes any man tired. But the resurrected body shall be mighty. God always will have great projects to carry on, and will want the righteous to help. We know not what journeys the resurrected may have to take, or what heavenly enterprises they may have to carry on. I suppose the heavenly city is more busy than any earthly

city, and that Broadway at noonday is quiet compared with the business of heaven. Yea, it is noonday all the time, and all heaven is coming and going. They rest not day nor night in the lazy sense of resting. They have so many victories to celebrate! so many songs to sing! so many high days to keep! They need no night, for their eyes are never weary. They need no sleep, for there is no need for physical renovation. If they sit down under the tree of life, it is not to rest, but with some resurrected soul of earth to talk over old times and rehearse the battles in which they fought shoulder to shoulder. Jacob wrestled with the angel, but was not thrown because the angel favoured him, but Jacob once resurrected, an angel could not throw him. There would be no such thing as wrestling down the giants of heaven. They are strong, supple, unconquerable, immortal athletes.

That kind of a body I want. There is so much work to be done that I now begrudge the hours for sleep and necessary recreation. I sometimes have such views of the glorious work of preaching the gospel that I wish that from the first day of January to the last day of December, without pausing for food, or sleep, or rest, I could tell men of Christ and heaven. Thanks be to God for the prospect of a resurrected body that shall never weary, and for a service of love and activity that shall never pause and never end.

Oh, glorious day of resurrection! Gladly will I fling into the grave this poor, sinful frame, if at thy call I may rise up with a body tireless, and pure, and glorious, and immortal! That was a blessed resurrection-hymn sung at my father's burial:

"So Jesus slept—God's dying Son;  
Passed through the grave, and bless'd the bed,  
Rest here, bless'd saint, till from his throne  
The morning break and pierce the shade."

But my text speaks of the *resurrection of damnation*. The Bible says but little about it; yet it is probable that as the wicked are, in the last day, to be opposite in character, so will they be, in many respects, opposite in body. Are the



bodies of the righteous glorious—those of the wicked will be repelling. You know how bad passions flatten the skull and disfigure the body. There he comes! up out of the graveyard—the drunkard; the blotches on his body flaming out in worse disfigurement, and his tongue bitten by an all-consuming thirst for drink—which he cannot get, for there are no dramshops in hell. There comes up the lascivious and unclean wretch, reeking with filth that made him the horror of the city hospital, now wriggling across the cemetery—the consternation of devils. Here are all the faces of the unpardoned dead. The last line of attractiveness is dashed out, and the eye is wild, malignant, fierce, infernal; the cheek a-flame; the mouth distorted with blasphemies. If the glance of the faces of the righteous was like a new morning, the glance of the faces of the lost, will be like another night falling on midnight. If, after the close of a night's debauch, a man gets up and sits on the side of the bed—sick, exhausted, and horrified with a review of his past; or rouses up in delirium tremens, and sees serpents crawling over him, or devils dancing about him—what will be the feeling of a man who gets up out of his bed on the last morning of earth, and reviews an unpardoned past, and, instead of imaginary evils crawling over him and flitting before him, finds the real frights, and pains, and woes of the resurrection of damnation?

Between these two styles of rising, choose ye. I set before you, in God's name, two resurrected bodies. The one radiant, glorious, Christ-like; the other worn, blasted, infernal. I commend you to the Lord of the resurrection. Confiding in him, Death will be to you only the black servant that opens the door, and the grave will be to you only the toilet-room where you dress for glory.

May the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do His work.

THE TABERNACLE FREE COLLEGE FOR TRAINING  
CHRISTIAN MEN AND WOMEN.

“Would God that all the people were prophets.”—*Numbers xi, 29.*

THESE is great excitement in the ancient tabernacle. Two good men, by the name of Eldad and Medad, begin to pray, and to instruct. Not having been regularly ordained to the work, the jealousy of the “regulars” in the service is aroused, and they come to Moses, asking that these unordained men be silenced. But Moses, instead of stopping them, says he wishes that all the people would go to preaching, and praying, and exhorting. “Would God that all the people were prophets!”

“Amen!” I say, with as much emphasis as you ever heard in an old-fashioned Methodist prayer meeting. We want men who have had opportunity of most thorough and elaborate culture in theological seminaries, and who have been set apart by the laying on of hands for special work which they, and only they, are competent to do. But until the right and the duty of all private Christian men and women to work for Christ, in any way they think they can serve him best, be acknowledged, the Church of God will fail to perform its mission, and the forces of sin will discomfit the forces of righteousness. God has promised victory to the Church of God, but not as long as out of five hundred troops four hundred and ninety-nine refuse to shoulder the musket and fill the canteen.

I suppose that every man has some controlling ideas in his life. Long ago, and before I saw any possibility of carrying them out, I had born of God in my soul these two

desires: First, the establishment of a free church with the home-feeling maintained; and, second, the establishment of a college in which private Christian men and women might be trained for usefulness. If God will grant me to see these two things done, and well done, I think that then I would like to go up and rest with Him who is more than all the universe to me. The first plan we have lived to see fully developed, and the second now starts under auspices and a patronage of talent and piety that must command the respect and confidence of the whole country. But the two ideas are one. First establish a free church in which to have the people saved, and then establish a college where they may be qualified for usefulness.

The need of such a college is felt to-day throughout the whole Christian world. We have many of the leading men of all denominations in our professorate. If there is anything at all in learned titles, we have the advantage of it in our college circular. The printer failed to get our circular done as soon as expected, because, as he said, he ran out of "D.'s" and had to go to a neighbouring printing-office to borrow a new supply of that letter. But what is human confirmation compared with that which comes from God through His Church, His Providence, and His Word?

*Ministers cannot do the work of the world's evangelization.*

What are the few thousand ministers in this country compared to the thirty millions of the population! We are numerically too small. You might as well have sent ten brigadier-generals without any troops to conquer the Southern Confederacy. Leaving their swords at home, they would have conquered you with their penknives. Sin, with its army of drunkenness, and lust, and crime, has not yet put out half of its strength, for it can beat us, and not half try. Who is getting the victory in our cities to-day—sobriety or intemperance? Honesty or fraud? Purity or uncleanness? Infidelity or the Gospel? Light or darkness? Heaven or hell? If you are an honest man, you confess that the latter

have gained the victory. What is the matter? Are the Gospel weapons insufficient? Is the sword of the Spirit dull? Are the great howitzers of truth at too short range to throw the bombshells into the enemy's fortress? No, no. The great want, and the only want, is *more troops!* Instead of five or ten thousand ministers, we want two million men and women, sworn that they will neither eat nor sleep until they have slain iniquity. But how if you cannot get them? Suppose, after a long war, the President should make proclamation for one hundred thousand men, and they were not to be had? But the church has not sent a thousandth part of its strength, and the troops are encamping by the still waters of Zion, when they ought to be at the front, and would be if you gave them a chance, and made them ready for the heat and terror of the contest.

Ministers are numerically too small. They do the best they can. They are the most overworked class on earth. Many of them die of dyspepsia because they cannot get the right kind of food to eat, or getting the right kind, are so hurried that they take it down in chunks. They die from consumption, coming from early and late exposure. If a novelist or a historian publishes one book a year, he is considered industrious; but every faithful pastor must originate enough thought for three or four volumes every year. Ministers receive enough calls in a year from men who have maps and medicines, and lightning rods, and pictures to sell, to exhaust their vitality. They are bored with agents of all sorts. They are set in draughts at funerals, and poisoned by the unventilated rooms of invalids, and waited upon by committees who want addresses made, until life becomes a burden to bear. It is not hard study that makes ministers look pale. It is the infinity of interruptions and botherations to which they are subjected. If I die before my time, it will be at the hand of committees that want an address or a lecture. A man just called on me to give him a lecture by which he might pay the expenses of his wedding

trip. Sometimes, after I have been working for weeks from six o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night, I have heard of some hypochondriac with a run-around or a hang-nail who threatened to leave the Church if I did not pay him more attention. If there were fifty hours in each day of the year, and I worked forty of them, I could not do the work of this one parish; and I am not behind most clergymen in disposition to toil.

Numerically too small. It is no more the work of the pulpit to convert and save the world than it is the work of the pew. If men go to ruin, there will be as much blood on your skirts as on mine.

Let us quit this grand farce of trying to save the world by a few clergymen, and let all hands lay hold of the work. Give us in all our churches two or three hundred aroused and qualified men and women to help. In most churches to-day, five or ten men are compelled to do all the work. A vast majority of churches are at their wit's end how to carry on a prayer-meeting if the minister is not there, when there ought to be enough pent-up energy and religious fire to make a meeting go on with such power that the minister would never be missed. The Church stands working the pumps of a few ministerial cisterns until the buckets are dry and choked, while there are thousands of fountains from which might be dipped up the waters of eternal life.

Now there may be ministers who may disapprove of this movement for qualifying lay workers—jealous lest their official prerogative be interfered with. But I believe the great cry of the over-taxed clergy of the American Church to-day is, "Would God that all the people were prophets!"

We need this college to make practical men and women. We, the clergy, generally go from our mothers' apron-strings to school; from school to college; from college to theological seminary; and, graduating we stand on the corner of the pulpit with our sermon in our hand, "shivering on the brink, and fear to launch away." What do *we* know of the

world? The world is on its guard in our presence, and does not appear in its true character. Before our professional look and dress, men shrink within themselves. Long ago I dropped the ministerial dress, because men seemed to feel bound to talk piously in my presence, especially if they were half drunk.

Now from this college we hope to turn upon society a company of Christian men and women who have for ten, twenty, and thirty years been down in the world, and who know all its ins and outs. Great work will be done when we send Christian merchants to carry the Gospel on 'Change, and into all the life of barter.

Religion will make headway in hat factories when you can send there, baptized by the Spirit, a Christian hatter. We want men in all the occupations in the name of God, to throttle the sins of their own trade. Religion will never conquer the plumber's shop, or the mason's wall, or the carpenter's scaffolding, or the tinner's roof, or the printer's type-room, until converted plumbers, and masons, and carpenters and printers carry it there. Some men are so profound in their education they do not seem qualified for this mission. You cannot send the Great Eastern up the Penobscot River. Profoundly educated men seem to "draw too much water" to get up such a stream. I have heard finely educated men in prayer-meeting talk in sentences of Miltonic affluence, yet their words fell dead upon the meeting; but when some poor, uneducated man arose, and said, "I suppose you fellers think that because I don't know anything I haven't no right to speak; but Christ has converted my soul, and you know I was the miserablest chap in town; and if God will pardon me, he will pardon you. Come to Jesus! Come now!"—the prayer-meeting broke down with religious emotion. It is a grand thing to be accurate in speech; but get out with your grammar if you are going to let the lack of acquaintance therewith keep a man down when God Almighty tells him to get up.

These men do not now feel prepared for Christian work. Waking up at thirty, forty, or fifty years of age, with a desire of usefulness, they are too old to begin a regular theological course. Besides that, they have families to support. It takes them eight hours every day to earn a livelihood. What knowledge they shoot down they must take on the wing, loading the rifle while the barrel is yet hot from other discharges. In their undrilled state, they rise to talk in prayer-meetings with head down and blushing cheek, as though they were talking by sufferance, instead of remembering that they have a message from the throne of the eternal God, and that, though men howl with contempt, they must utter it. Give these Christian people two winters of practical instruction on how to work for Christ, and then the city of Brooklyn, from Fulton Ferry to Gowanus, and from the East River to the chills-and-fever marshes of South Bushwick, will feel the throb of their Christian energy. If between New York and Brooklyn, at six o'clock in the evening, there were no ferryage except by one row-boat, the accommodation, as compared with the demand for transportation, would not be so small as our means of getting the race to heaven is small, when compared with the millions that ought to go there.

Last winter the Spottswood Hotel in Richmond burned. A man in the fourth story swung out of the window and held on, waiting for the firemen to hoist the ladders. A ladder was hoisted, but it did not quite reach the man's feet. He held on for a-while, and then dropped and perished. There is a splendid provision in all our churches for the salvation of men, but with the Gospel we do *not quite* reach the masses. They swing wildly for a-while, and then drop off and die.

In this college we want to teach men common sense in religious matters. While a young man was standing amid rollicking companions, full of mirth and repartee, a good *Christian man* came and asked him, "What is the first step of

wisdom?" The young man turned and said, "The first step of wisdom is for everyone to mind his own business!" A coarse answer; but it was a very abrupt question, considering the place in which it was put. There are religious pedlars who go around making a business of displaying their whole stock of wares in the most obtrusive manner. It is no time, while an accountant is puzzling his brain with a long line of figures, to ask him "how his account stands with God;" or stop the sportsman on the playground, while running between the hunks, and ask "whether, in a religious sense, he is running the race set before him." We want tact and adaptation for this work. Some Christians try to catch a whale with a fly-rod of hornbeam, and fling a harpoon at a salmon.

How few laymen dare to grapple a sharp infidel! A wily unbeliever would take many a Christian and twist him around his little finger, or hook him to death with the horns of a dilemma, or batter his life out with the ninth chapter of Romans. Can it be that our religion is such a weak, beggarly, unreasonable, pusillanimous thing, that at the first assault it should run like the Northern troops at Big Bethel?

We want private Christians to know how they may stand their ground, or go forth with the vehemence of the Bible-dwarf when he accosted the giant, saying, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thy head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the hosts of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." Let me get my sling out! Three times I swing it around my head, and down thou goest, oh giant!

The Church of God has been making "masterly retreats"



long enough ; and the Captain of our salvation cries to the armed battalions of the Church, "FORWARD, THE WHOLE LINE !"

We want this institution to qualify people to work amid the wretchedness and crime of the great cities. Is any Christian man so deluded as to think that we can overcome these evils by our present way of doing things ? Where there is one church built there are ten grog-shops established. Where one sermon on purity is preached there are five houses of shame built. The Church has not touched the great evils save with her little finger. The whole country is aroused for the trial of five or ten New York municipal scoundrels, while against the influences that make such men possible how little effort !

In this college, under the control of the most eminent philanthropists, on whose heads have come down enough blessings to make a heaven out of, the people will have an opportunity of knowing what are the desolations of our great towns ; and how the hard, cold, filthy pavement, beaten by the feet of sin and woe, may be gladdened by the feet of Him who bringeth good tidings. At the ratio at which crime and sin have increased in New York in the last ten years, in one hundred years there will not be a church left, and the city will be one great Blackwell's Island.

Before you and I have the sod pressing our eyelids we will under God, decide whether our children shall grow up amid the accursed surroundings of vice and shame, or come to an inheritance of righteousness. Long, loud, bitter will be the curse that scorches our grave if, holding within the Church to-day enough men and women to save the city, we act the coward or the drone. I wish that I could put enough moral glycerine under the conventionalities and majestic stupidities of the day to blow them to atoms, and that then, with fifty thousand men and women from all the churches knowing nothing but Christ and a desire to bring all the world to him, we might move upon the enemy's works. For

a little while heaven would not have trumpets enough to celebrate the victors !

We also want to qualify men for *street-preaching*. There are hundreds of thousands of men who will never come to church. The only kind of pulpit that will reach them is a dry-good's box or a drayman's cart at the street corner. We want hundreds of men every Sabbath to be preaching the Gospel in our great city parks. There are, in this house to-day, two hundred men that ought to be preaching. Under the control of this college they might get the courage and the facility. "What!" you ask, "would you let them preach without ordination?" I answer, if Conferences and Presbyteries will not put their hands upon your head, then I would have you ordained in another way. I would take you down into the haunts of suffering and crime within ten minutes' walk of our best churches, and there have you tell the story of Christ, until men, redeemed from their cups, and women, elevated from a life of pollution, and children, whose bare, bleeding feet are on the road to death, should be by your instrumentality saved. Then I would have these converted suffering ones put their hands of ordination on your head, setting you apart for the holy ministry in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Ah! that would be an ordination as good as the laying on of hands by Conferences and Synods—an ordination that would be most bright in the day when,

"Shrivelled like a parched scroll,  
The flaming heavens together roll."

Do you tell me Harlan Page had no right to preach when he stood in the Fourteenth Ward of New York, amid scoffs and insults, telling the passers-by what good things Christ had done for them, and bringing hundreds to God, until on his death-pillow, he cried out, "Lord Jesus, come quickly! Why wait thy chariot wheels so long?" Had General Havelock no right to preach when, in a heathen temple in

India, he placed candles in the hands of the Gods around about the room, and by that light read the New Testament, and exhorted his troops to flee to the stronghold of the Gospel? "Go PREACH MY GOSPEL," God thunders in your ears to-day; and woe is unto you if you do not preach it. "Not ready!" Then come here to this college and get ready. No excuse will be left you that will not seem a mockery in your death-hour, and a ghastly condemnation in the judgment.

To-day the Tabernacle Free College for training Christian men and women for practical work is launched upon the deep. My Christian friends, an opportunity is offered you grander than has ever been offered to the masses of the people at any time since Christ came or the world began.

In this college you may be prepared to work as Bible-readers, as tract distributors, as prayer-meeting exhorters, as street preachers, as Sabbath-school teachers, and for all the fields of Christian work. An opportunity is offered you, for the lack of which hundreds of thousands of Christians have lived uselessly, and died with their work undone. Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of the thousand Christians here to-day, many a time, have said they wished they were qualified for usefulness. Now you have the opportunity, let every one take it.

Let the aged come in and seek new qualifications, I know it is almost sundown with many of you but there are a few sheaves yet that may be gathered. God would have taken you home if your work had all been done. Let those middle-aged Christians, who have been gunning with old blunderbusses, come and get the rifle of a sharpshooter. Ye, who have been hewing away with dull axes, come here and put them on the grindstone in this college. Here have your questions answered, your doubts removed, your faculties developed, your heart fired. I wish that the membership of *this Church* and of scores of other churches would, aware of

this, the rarest opportunity ever afforded, march into the college in solid column.

Through the newspaper press, that stenographically take these words, I call upon this great cluster of cities, New York, Newark, Jersey City, and Brooklyn, and the surrounding villages, to send to this instituton their best men and women, that they may here, under some of the first teachers of the day, get qualified for glorious usefulness.

All sects of Christians, under the chief men of the different denominations, will here be taught to go shoulder to shoulder; and the Baptist will, for the time, forget his immersion, and the Episcopalian his Liturgy, and the Methodist his anxious-seat, and the Presbyterian his Westminster Assembly, while all together will lift the one battle-shout of "JESUS FOR EVER!" On His brow be all the garlands; at His feet cast down all the crowns; in His ear pour all the doxologies, Hallelujah! amen! Hallelujah! amen!

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### THE SEA-CAPTAIN'S CALL.

"So the Shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God. if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."—*Jonah* i., 6.

GOD told Jonah to go to Nineveh on an unpleasant errand. He would not go. He thought to get away from his duty by putting to sea. With pack under his arm, I find him on his way to Joppa, a sea-port. He goes down among the shipping, and says to the men lying around on the docks, "Which of these vessels sails to-day?" The sailors answer, "Yonder is a vessel going to Tarshish. I think, if you hurry, you may get on board her." Jonah steps on board the rough craft, asks how much the fare is, and pays it. Anchor is weighed, sails are hoisted, and the rigging begins to rattle in the

strong breeze of the Mediterranean. Joppa is an exposed harbour, and it does not take long for the vessel to get out on the broad sea. The sailors like what they call a "spanking breeze," and the plunge of the vessel from the crest of a tall wave is exhilarating to those at home on the deep. But the strong breeze becomes a gale, the gale a hurricane. The affrighted passengers ask the captain if he ever saw anything like this before. "Oh, yes," he says, "this is nothing." Mariners are slow to admit danger to landsmen. But, after a-while, crash goes the mast, and the vessel pitches so far "a-beams-end" there is a fear she will not be righted. The captain answers few questions, and orders the throwing out of boxes and bundles, and so much of the cargo as they can get at. The captain at last confesses there is but little hope, and tells the passengers that they had better go to praying. It is seldom that a sea-captain is an Atheist. He *knows* that there is a God, for he has seen Him at every point of latitude between Sandy Hook and Queenstown. Captain Moody, commanding the Cuba, of the Cunard line, at Sunday service, led the music, and sang like a Methodist. The captain of this Mediterranean craft, having set the passengers to praying, goes around examining the vessel at every point. He descends into the cabin to see whether, in the strong wrestling of the waves, the vessel has sprung a leak, and he finds Jonah asleep. Jonah had had a wearisome tramp, and had spent many sleepless nights about questions of duty, and he is so sound asleep that all the thunder of the storm and the screaming of the passengers does not disturb him. The captain lays hold of him, and begins to shake him out of his unconsciousness with the cry, "Don't you see that we are all going to the bottom? Wake up, and go to praying, if you have any God to go to. What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, and call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." The rest of the story I will not rehearse for you know it well. To appease the sea, *they threw Jonah overboard.*

Learn that the devil takes a man's money and then sets him down in a poor landing place. The Bible says he paid his fare to Tarshish. But see him get out. The sailors bring him to the side of the ship, lift him over "the guards," and let him drop with a loud splash into the waves. He paid his fare all the way to Tarshish, but did not get the worth of his money. Neither does any one who turns his back on his duty and does that which is not right.

There is a young man, who, during the past year, has spent a large part of his salary in carousal. What has he gained by it? A soiled reputation, a half-starved purse, a dissipated look, a petulant temper, a disturbed conscience. The manacles of one or two bad habits that are pressing tighter and tighter will keep on until they wear to the bone. You paid your fare to Tarshish, but you have been set down in the midst of a sea of diequietude and perplexity.

One hundred dollars for Sunday horse-hire!

One hundred dollars for wine-suppers!

One hundred dollars for cigars!

One hundred dollars for frolics that shall be nameless!

Making four hundred dollars for his damnation!

Instead of being in Tarshish to-night, he is in the middle of the Mediterranean.

Here is a literary man, tired of the faith of his fathers, who resolves to launch out into what is called Free-thinking. He buys Theodore Parker's works for twelve dollars; Renan's *Life of Christ* for one dollar and fifty cents; Andrew Jackson Davis's works for twenty dollars. Goes to hear infidels talk at the clubs, and to see spiritualism at the table-rapping. Talks glibly of David, the Psalmist, as an old libertine; of Paul as a wild enthusiast; and of Christ as a decent kind of a man—a little weak in some respects, but almost as good as himself. Talks smilingly of Sunday as a good day to put a little extra blacking on one's boots; and of Christians as, for the most part, hypocrites; and of eternity as "the great to be," "the everlasting now," or "the infinite what is it."

Some day he gets his feet very wet, and finds himself that night chilly. The next morning has a hot mouth, and is headachy. Sends word over to the store that he will not be there to-day. Bathes his feet, has mustard-plasters, calls the doctor. The medical man says aside, "This is going to be a bad case of congestion of the lungs." Voice fails. Children must be kept down stairs or sent to the neighbours, to keep the house quiet. You say, "Send for the minister." But no; he does not believe in ministers. You say, "Read the Bible to him." No; he does not believe in the Bible. A lawyer comes in, and, sitting by his bedside, writes a document that begins, "*In the name of God, Amen. I, being of sound mind, do make this my last will and testament.*" It is certain where the sick man's body will be in less than a week. It is quite certain who will get his property. But what will become of his soul? It will go into "the great to be," or "the everlasting now," or "the infinite what is it." His soul is in deep waters, and the wind is "blowing great guns." Deathcries, "Overboard with the unbeliever!" A splash! He goes to the bottom. He paid five dollars for his ticket to Tarshish when he bought the infidel books. *He landed in perdition!*

Every farthing you spend in sin Satan will swindle you out of. He promises you shall have thirty per cent. or a great dividend. *He lies.* He will sink all the capital. You may pay full fare to some sinful success, but you will never get to Tarshish.

*Learn how soundly men will sleep in the midst of danger.* The worst sinner on shipboard, considering the light he had, was Jonah. He was a member of the church, while they were heathen. The sailors were engaged in their lawful calling, following the sea. The merchants on board, I suppose, were going down to Tarshish to barter; but Jonah, notwithstanding his Christian profession, was flying from duty. He was sound asleep in the cabin. He has been *motionless* for hours—his arms and feet in the same posture

as when he lay down—his breast heaving with deep respiration. Oh! how could the sinner sleep! What if the ship struck a rock! what if it sprung a leak! what if the clumsy Oriental craft should capsize! What would become of Jonah?

So men sleep soundly now amid perils infinite. In almost every place, I suppose, the Mediterranean might be sounded, but no line is long enough to fathom the profound beneath every impenitent man. Plunging a thousand fathoms down, you cannot touch bottom. Eternity beneath him, before him, around him! Rocks close by, and whirlpools, and hot-breathed Levanters, yet sound asleep! We try to wake him up, but fail. The great surges of warning break over the hurricane-deck—the gong of warning sounds through the cabin—the bell in the wheel-house rings. “Awake!” cry a hundred voices; yet sound asleep in the cabin!

In the year 1775, the captain of a Greenland whaling vessel found himself at night surrounded by icebergs, and “lay to” until morning, expecting every moment to be ground to pieces. In the morning he looked about, and saw a ship near by. He hailed it. No answer. Getting into a boat with some of the crew, he pushed out for the mysterious craft. Getting near by, he saw through the porthole a man at a stand as though keeping a log-book. He hailed him. No answer. He went on board the vessel, and found the man sitting at the log-book, frozen to death. The log-book was dated 1762, showing that the vessel had been wandering for thirteen years among the ice. The sailors were found frozen among the hammocks, and others in the cabin. For thirteen years this ship had been carrying its burden of corpses.

So from this Gospel-craft to-night I descry voyagers for eternity. I cry, “Ship ahoy! ship ahoy!” No answer. They float about, tossed and ground by the ice-bergs of sin, hoisting no sail from heaven. I go on board. I find all asleep. It is a frozen sleep. O that my Lord Jesus would



come aboard, and lay hold of the wheel, and steer the craft down into the warm Gulf Stream of his mercy! Awake, thou that sleepest! Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life.

Again: Notice that men are aroused by the most unexpected means. If Jonah had been told one year before that a heathen sea-captain would ever awaken him to a sense of his danger, he would have scoffed at the idea; but here it is done. So now, men in strangest ways are aroused from spiritual stupor. A profane man is brought to conviction by the shocking blasphemy of a comrade. A man attending church, and hearing a sermon from the text, "The ox knoweth his owner," etc., goes home unimpressed; but crossing his barn yard, an ox comes up and licks his hand, and he says, "There it is now—'the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib,' but I do not know God." The careless remark of a teamster has led a man to thoughtfulness and heaven. The child's remark, "Father, they have prayers at uncle's house—why don't we have them?" has brought salvation to the dwelling.

Some man came here to-night hardly knowing why he came. He has heard that Talmage is an odd man, and has come to see whether it is true. But before this service is done that man will begin to think about his soul. He has been upon his last spree. He has made his last visit to that bad house. His children will to-morrow morning notice the change. This moment he starts heavenward; and for all eternity he will bless God for this visit to the Brooklyn Tabernacle.

By strangest way and in most unexpected manner men are awakened. The gardener of the Countess of Huntingdon was convicted of sin by hearing the Countess on the opposite side of the wall talk about Jesus. John Haroak was aroused by a dream, in which he saw the last day, and the Judge sitting, and heard his own name called with terrible emphasis: "John Haroak, come to judgment!" The Lord

as a thousand ways of waking up Jonah. Would that the messengers of mercy might this night find their way down to the sides of the ship, and that many who are unconsciously rocking in the awful tempest of their sin might hear the warning, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, and all upon thy God!"

Again: Learn that a man *may wake up too late*. If, instead of sleeping, Jonah had been on his knees confessing his sins from the time he went on board the craft, I think that God would have saved him from being thrown overboard. But he woke up too late. The tempest is in full blast, and the sea in convulsion is lashing itself, and nothing will stop it now but the overthrow of Jonah.

So men sometimes wake up too late. The last hour has come. The man has no more idea of dying than I have of tripping down this moment. The rigging is all white with the foam of death. How chill the night is! "I must die," he says, "yet not ready. I must push out upon this awful sea, but have nothing with which to pay my fare. The white caps! the darkness! the hurricane! How long have I been sleeping? Whole days, and months, and years. I am quite awake now. I see everything, but it is too late." Invisible hands take him up. He struggles to get loose. In vain. They bring his soul to the verge. They let it down over the side. The winds howl. The sea opens its frothing jaws to swallow. The lightnings hold their torches at the soul's burial. The thunders toll their bells as he drops. Eternal death catches him. He has gone for ever. And while the canvas cracked, and the yards rattled, and the ropes thumped, the sea took up the funeral dirge, playing, with open diapason of midnight storm, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

But sometimes men do not wake up even in the last hour

of life. Men often die in sickness with befogged brain, and while the friends stand weeping, the dying man looks around and wonders what it all means, or is too stupid to notice the weeping. Now the pulse of the sick man is up to 110! It gets feebler; 90, 80, 60, 50—pulse all gone! The gates of the body open, and the soul passes out, and, for the first time, wakes up. "What is this?" it cries—"these sounds, these terrors?" Wide awake now, but what is it? A voice sounds through the darkness, "This is not the Mediterranean on which thou sailest, nor the Euroclydon which has come upon thee. It is the boundless ocean of Eternity, and this battle of wind and wave is an everlasting storm. Voyagers upon this sea sail on for ever, yet get to no port. The ship that staggers in these troughs of death rises not upon the crest save to plunge to deeper depths. The needle of the compass points to no star, but wanders in the box after light, but finding only darkness. They who run up the ratlines to reef the sail are frozen fast in the rigging. He who commands this ship hath an iron face, and wrings his hands, and wishes they might founder and be at rest; and curses the night, and curses the wind, and curses the wave. His name is Despair. The boatswain's whistle is a shriek; and as the white-cheeked crew lay hold of the ropes and pull altogether, their cry is, "*Haul away, lads, the harvest is past! Haul away, lads, the summer is ended!*" No glimpse of lighthouse, or merry dance of light-ship outside of the harbour. No star in the black flag above the top-gallants. Taking their bearings, they find themselves at infinite distance from the shore of earth, and at infinite distance from the shore of heaven. The log-book tells of millions of miles past, but still voyaging. Ages on ages! Sailing on, sailing on! Eternally, eternally! No hammock in that fore-castle in which to rest; no striking of eight bells to show that the watch is out. They wake up at last—too late for ever!"

Now, lest any of you should make this mistake, I address you in the words of the Mediterranean sea-captain: "What

meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." If you have a God, you had better call upon him. Do you say, "I have no God?" Then you had better call upon your father's God. When your father was in trouble, who did he fly to? You heard him, in his old days, tell about some terrible exposure in a snow-storm, or at sea, or in battle, or among midnight garotters, and how he escaped. Perhaps twenty years before you were born, your father made sweet acquaintance with God. There is something in the worn pages of the Bible he used to read which makes you think your father had a God. In the old religious books lying around the house, there are passages marked with a lead-pencil—passages that make you think your father was not a godless man, but that, on that dark day when he lay in the back room dying, he was ready—all ready. But perhaps, your father was a bad man—prayerless, and a blasphemer, and you never think of him now without a shudder. He worshipped the world or his own appetites. Do not then, I beg of you, call upon your *father's* God, but call on your *mother's* God. I think she was good. You remember when your father came home drunk late on a cold night, how patient your mother was. You often heard her pray. She used to sit by the hour meditating, as though she were thinking of some good, warm place, where it never gets cold, and where the bread does not fail, and staggering steps never come. You remember her now, as she sat, in cap and spectacles, reading her Bible, Sundayafternoons. What good advice she used to give you! How black and terrible the hole in the ground looked to you when, with two ropes, they let her down to rest in the grave-yard! Ah! I think from your looks that I am on the right track. Awake, O sleeper, and call upon thy mother's God!

But perhaps both your father and mother were depraved. Perhaps your cradle was rocked by sin and shame, and it is a wonder that from *such* a starting you have come to

respectability. Then don't call upon the God of either of your parents, I beg of you.

But you have children. You know God kindled those bright eyes, and rounded those healthy limbs, and set beating within their breast an immortality. Perhaps in the belief that somehow it would be for the best, you have taught them to say an evening prayer, and when they kneel beside you, and fold their little hands, and look up, their face all innocence and love, you know that there is a God somewhere about in the room.

I think I am on the right track at last. Awake, O sleeper, and call upon *the God of thy children*. May he set these little ones to pulling at thy heart until they charm thee to the same God to whom to-night they have said their little prayer!

But, alas! alas! some of these men and women are unmoved by the fact that their father had a God, that their mother had a God, and their children have a God, but they have no God. All pious example to them for nothing. All the divine goodness for nothing. All warning for nothing. They are sound asleep in the side of the ship, though the sea and the sky are in mad wrestle. O my God, wake them up! Drop a thunderbolt upon their coffin-lid and wake them up!

Some years ago, a man, leaving his family in Massachusetts, sailed from Boston to China, to trade there. On the coast of China, in the midst of a night of storm, he made shipwreck. The adventurer was washed up on the beach senseless—all his money gone. He had to beg in the streets of Canton to keep from starving. For two years there was no communication between himself and family. They supposed him dead. He knew not but that his family were dead. He had gone out as a captain. He was too proud to come back as a private sailor. But after a-while he choked down his pride and sailed for Boston. Arriving *there*, he took an evening train for the centre of the state

where he had left his family. Taking the stage from the depot, and riding a score of miles, he got home. He says that, going up in front of the cottage in the bright moonlight, the place looked to him like heaven. He rapped on the window, and the affrighted servant let him in. He went to the room where his wife and child were sleeping. He did not dare to wake them for fear of the shock. Bending over to kiss his child's cheek, a tear fell upon the wife's face, and she awakened, and he said, "*Mary!*" and she knew his voice, and there was an indescribable scene of welcome, and joy, and thanksgiving to God.

To-night I know that many of you are sea-tossed, and driven by sin in a worse storm than that which came down on the coast of China, and yet I pray God that you may, like the sailor, live to get home. In the house of many mansions your friends are waiting to meet you. They are wondering why you do not come. Escaped from the shipwrecks of earth, may you at last go in! It will be a bright night—a very bright night as you put your thumb on the latch of that door. *Once in*, you will find the old family faces sweeter than when you last saw them, and there it will be found that He who was your *father's* God, and your *mother's* God, and your *children's* God, is your *own most blessed Redeemer*, to whom be glory in the Church throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

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### CHRIST IN THE HOUSE.

"This day is salvation come to this house."—*Luke* xix., 9.

ZACCHEUS was a politician and a tax-gatherer. He had an honest calling, but the opportunity for "stealing" was so large, the temptation was too much for him. The Bible says he "was a sinner"—that is in the public sense. How many fine men have been ruined by official position! It is an

awful thing for any man to seek office under government unless his principles of integrity are deeply fixed. Many a man, upright in an insignificant position, has made shipwreck in a great one. As far as I can tell, in the city of Jericho this Zaccheus belonged to what might be called the "Ring." They had things their own way, successfully avoiding exposure—if by no other way, perhaps by hiring somebody to break in and steal the vouchers. Notwithstanding his bad reputation, there were streaks of good about him, as there is about almost every man. Gold is found in quartz, and sometimes in a very small percentage.

Jesus was coming to town. The people turned out *en masse* to see him. Here he comes—the Lord of Glory—on foot, dust-covered, and road-weary, limping along the way, carrying the griefs and woes of the world. He looks to be sixty years of age when he is only about thirty. Zaccheus was a short man, and could not see over the people's heads while standing on the ground; so he got up into a sycamore tree that swung its arm clear over the road. Jesus advanced amid the wild excitement of the surging crowd. The most honourable and popular men of the city are looking on, and trying to gain his attention. Jesus, instead of regarding them, looks up at the little man in the tree, and says, "Zaccheus, come down. I am going home with you." Everybody was disgusted to think that Christ would go home with so dishonourable a man.

I see Christ entering the front door of the house of Zaccheus. The King of heaven and earth sits down; and as he looks around on the place and the family, he pronounces the benediction of the text: "This day is salvation come to this house."

Zaccheus had mounted the sycamore tree out of mere inquisitiveness. He wanted to see how this stranger looked—the colour of his eyes, the length of his hair, the contour of his features, the height of his stature. "Come down," said Christ.

And so many people, in this day, get up into the tree of curiosity or speculation to see Christ. They ask a thousand queer questions about His divinity, about God's sovereignty, and the eternal decrees. They speculate, and criticise, and hang on to the outside limb of a great sycamore. But they must come down from that if they want to be saved. We cannot be saved as philosophers, but as little children. You cannot go to heaven by way of Athens, but by way of Bethlehem. What matters it who are elected to be saved, when we know that unless we believe and repent we shall all be damned? Why be perplexed about the way sin came into the world, when the great question is how we shall get sin driven out of our hearts? How many spend their time in criticism and religious speculation! They take the Rose of Sharon, or the Lily of the Valley, pull out the anther, scatter the corolla, and say, "Is that the beautiful flower of religion that you are talking about." No flower is beautiful after you have torn it all to pieces. The path to heaven is so plain that a fool need not make any mistake about it, and yet men stop and cavil. Suppose that, going toward the Pacific slope, I had resolved that I would stop until I could kill all the grizzly bears and the panthers on either side of the way. I would never have got to the Pacific coast. When I went out to hunt the grizzly bear, the grizzly bear would have come out to hunt me. Here is a plain road to heaven. Men say they will not take a step on it until they can make game of all the theories that bark and growl at them from the thickets. They forget the fact that as they go out to hunt the theory, the theory comes out to hunt them, and so they perish. We must receive the kingdom of heaven in simplicity. William Pennington was one of the wisest men of this country—a governor of his own state, and afterward Speaker of the House of Representatives. Yet, when God called him to be a Christian, he went in and sat down among some children who were applying for Church-membership, and said to his pastor, "Talk to me just as you



do to these children, for I know nothing about it." There is no need of bothering ourselves about mysteries when there are so many things that are plain.

Dr. Ludlow, my professor in the Theological Seminary, taught me a lesson I have never forgotten. While putting a variety of questions to him that were perplexing, he turned upon me somewhat in sternness, but more in love, and said, "Mr. Talmage, you will have to let God know some things that you don't." We tear our hands on the spines of the cactus instead of feasting our eye in its tropical bloom. A great company of people to-night sit swinging themselves on the sycamore-tree of their pride, and I cry to you, "Zaccheus, come down!" Come down out of your pride, out of your inquisitiveness, out of your speculation. You cannot ride into the gate of heaven with coach and four, postilion ahead, and lackey behind. "Except you become as little children, ye can not enter into the kingdom of God." "God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty." "Zaccheus, come down! come down!"

I notice that this tax-gatherer accompanied his surrender to Christ with the restoration of property that did not belong to him. He says, "If I have taken anything by false accusation, I restore fourfold." That is, if I have taxed any man for ten thousand dollars when he had only five thousand dollars of property, and put in my pocket the tax for the last five thousand, I will restore to him fourfold. If I took from him ten dollars, I will give him forty dollars. If I took from him forty dollars, I will give him one hundred and sixty dollars.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been sent to Wash- ington during the past few years as "*conscience money*." I suppose that money was sent by men who wanted to be Christians but found they could not until they made restitution. There is no need of our trying to come to Christ as long as we keep fraudulently a dollar or a farthing in our possession that belongs to another. Suppose you have not money enough

pay your debts, and, for the sake of defrauding your creditors, you put your property in your wife's name. You might cry until the day of judgment for pardon, but you would not get it without first making restitution. In times of prosperity it is right, against a rainy day, to assign property to your wife; but if, in time of perplexity, and for the sake of defrauding your creditors, you make such assignment, you become a culprit before God, and may as well stop praying until you have made restitution. Or suppose one man loans another money on bonds and mortgage, with the understanding that the mortgage can lie quiet for several years, but as soon as the mortgage is given, commences foreclosure—the sheriff mounts the auction-block, and the property is struck down at half price, and the mortgagee buys it in. The mortgagee started to get the property at half-price, and is a thief and a robber. Until he makes restitution, there is no mercy for him. Suppose you sell goods by a sample, and then afterward send to your customer an inferior quality of goods. You have committed a fraud, and there is no mercy for you until you have made restitution. Suppose you sell a man a handkerchief for silk, telling him it is all silk, and it is part cotton. No mercy for you until you have made restitution. Suppose you sell a man a horse, saying he is sound, and he afterward turns out to be spavined and balky. No mercy for you until you have made restitution.

*Exodus xxii.* : “ If a man shall steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him, for he should make full restitution : if he have nothing then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep, he shall restore double. If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed

in another man's field, of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard shall he make restitution."

You say, "I cannot make restitution. The parties whom I swindled are gone." Then I say, "Take the money up to the American Bible Society and consecrate it to God."

Zaccheus was wise when he disgorged his unrighteous gains, and it was his first step in the right direction.

The way being clear, Christ walked into the house of Zaccheus. He becomes a different man ; his wife a different woman ; the children are different. Oh ! it makes a great change in any house when Christ comes into it. I shall not be satisfied until in every one of the houses of my congregation the Son of God takes up his permanent residence. How many beautiful homes are represented here to-day ! There are pictures on the wall ; there is music in the drawing-room ; and luxuries in the wardrobe ; and a full supply in the pantry. If you were half asleep with my sermon there is one word with which I could wake you, and thrill you through and through, and that word is "*home !*" There are also houses of suffering represented here, where there are neither pictures, nor wardrobe, nor adornment—only one room, and a plain cot, or a bunk in a corner ; yet it is the place where your loved ones dwell, and your whole nature tingles with satisfaction when you think of it and call it *home*. Though the world may scoff at us, and pursue us, and all the day we be tossed about, at eventide we sail into the harbour of *home*. Though there be no rest for us in the busy world, and we go trudging about, bearing burdens that well-nigh crush us, there is a refuge, and it hath an easy-chair in which we may sit, and a lounge where we may lie, and a serenity of peace in which we may repose, and that refuge is *home*. The English soldiers sitting on the walls around Sebastopol, one night heard a company of musicians playing "Home, sweet Home," and it said that the whole *army* broke out in sobs and wailing, so great was their

home-sickness. *God pity the poor, miserable wretch who has no home !*

Now, suppose Christ should come into your house. First the wife and the mother would feel his presence. Religion almost always begins there. It is easier for women to become Christians than for us men. They do not fight so against God. If woman tempted man originally away from holiness, now she tempts him back. She may not make any fuss about it, but, somehow, everybody in the house knows that there is a change in the wife and mother. She chides the children more gently. Her face sometimes lights up with an unearthly glow. She goes into some unoccupied room for a little while, and the husband goes not after her, nor asks her why she was there. He knows without asking that she has been praying. The husband notices that her face is brighter than on the day when, years ago, they stood at the marriage-altar, and he knows that Jesus has been putting upon her brow a wreath sweeter than the orange-blossoms. She puts the children to bed, not satisfied with the formal prayer that they once offered, but she lingers now, and tells them of Jesus who blessed little children, and of the good place where they all hope to be at last. And then she kisses them good-night with something that the child feels to be a heavenly benediction—a something that shall hold on to the boy after he has become a man forty or fifty years of age : for there is something in a good, loving Christian mother's kiss that fifty years cannot wipe off the cheek.

Now the husband is distressed and annoyed, and almost vexed. If she would only speak to him, he would "blow her up." He does not like to say anything about it, but he knows that she has a hope that he has not, and a peace that he has not ; and he knows that, dying as he now is, he cannot go to the same place. He cannot stand it any longer. Some Sunday night, as they sit in church, side by side, the floods of the soul break forth. He wants to pray, but does not know how. He hides his face, lest some of his worldly

friends see him ; but God's Spirit arouses him, melts him, overwhelms him. And they go home—husband and wife—in silence, until they get to their room, when he cries out, “ Oh, pray for me ! ” And they kneel down. They cannot speak. The words will not come. But God does not want any words. He looks down and answers sobs, and groans, and outgushing tenderness. That night they do not sleep any for talking of all the years wasted, and of that Saviour who ceased not to call. Before morning they have laid their plans for a new life. Morning comes. Father and mother descend from the bed-room. The children do not know what is the matter. They never saw father with a Bible in his hand before. He says, “ Come, children, I want you all to sit down while we read and pray.” The children look at each other, and are almost disposed to laugh ; but they see that their parents are in deep earnest. It is a short chapter that the father reads. He is a good reader at other times, but now he does not get on much. He sees so much to linger on. His voice trembles. Everything is so strangely new to him. They kneel—that is, the father and mother do ; but the children come down one by one. They do not know that they must. It is some time before they all get down. The sentences are broken. The phrases are a little ungrammatical. The prayer begins abruptly and ends abruptly ; but, as far as I can understand what they mean, it is about this : “ O Saviour help us ! We do not know how to pray. Teach us. We cannot live any longer in the way we have been living. We start to-day for heaven. Help us to take these children along with us. Forgive us for all the past—Strengthen us for all the future. And when the journey is over, take us where Jesus is, and where the little babe is that we lost. Amen ! ”

It ended very abruptly ; but the angels came out and leaned so far over to listen, they would have fallen off the battlement but for a stroke of their wings, and cried, “ Hark—hark ! Behold he prays ! ”

That night there is a rap at the bedroom door. "Who is there?" cries the father. It is the oldest child. "What is the matter? Are you sick?" "No; I want to be saved." Only a little while, and all the children are brought into the kingdom of God. And there is great joy in the house.

Years pass on. The telegraph goes *click, click!* What is the news flying over the country? "Come home. Father is dying!" The children all gather. Some come in the last train. Some, too late for the train, take a carriage across the country. They stand around the dying bed of the father. The oldest son upholds the mother, and says, "Don't cry, mother; I will take care of you." The parting blessing is given. No long admonition; for he has, through years, been saying to his children all he had to say to them. It is a plain "Good-bye," and the remark, "I know you will all be kind to your mother," and all is over.

"Life's duty done, as sinks the clay,  
Light from its load, the spirit flies;  
While heaven and earth combine to say,  
How bless'd the righteous when he dies!"

A whole family saved for ever! If the deluge come they are all in the ark—father, mother, sons, daughter. Together on earth, together in heaven. What makes it so? Explain it. Zaccheus one day took Jesus home with him. That is all. *Salvation came unto that house.*

What sound is it I hear to-night! It is Jesus knocking at the door of your house.

"Behold a stranger at the door:  
He gently knocks—has knocked before."

If you looked out of your window and saw me going up your front steps, you would not wait, but go yourself to open the door. Will you keep Jesus standing on the outside, his locks wet with the dews of the night? This day is salvation come to thy house. The great want of your house is not a new carpet, or costlier pictures, or richer furniture—it is Jesus!

Up to forty years men work for themselves ; after that for their children. Now, what do you propose to leave them. Nothing but dollars ! Alas ! what an inheritance ! It is more likely to be a curse than a blessing. Your own common sense and observation tells you that money, without the divine blessing, is a curse. You must soon leave your children. Your shoulders are not so strong as they were, and you know that they will soon have to carry their own burdens. Your eyesight is not so clear as once ; they will soon have to pick out their own way. Your arms are not so mighty as once ; they will soon have to fight their own battles. Oh ! let it not be told on judgment day that you let your family start without the only safeguard—the religion of Christ. Give yourself no rest until your children are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Your son does just as you do. He tries to walk like you, and to talk like you. The daughter imitates the mother. Alas ! if father and mother miss heaven, the children will. What an awful wreck ! A whole family going down in one terrific rush—into an undone eternity ! Crash ! Crash ! Crash !

Oh ! let Jesus come into your house. Do not bolt the hall door, or the parlour door, or the kitchen door, or the bedroom door against him. Above all do not bolt your heart.

I was in the army a little while. During the day the soldiers drilled, and at night they all went to their tents. So, to-night, I look on this august assembly as a great army. We have been drilling to-day. Now we are about to break ranks, and to go, each one to his family tent. May the Angel of the Covenant spread his wings over each one of those tents ! God bless you and your children ! Before ten o'clock to-night, build your altar. Take the family Bible lying on the parlour-table. Call together as many of your family as may be awake. Read a chapter, and then, if you can think of nothing else besides the Lord's Prayer, say that. That will do. Heaven will have begun in your house. You can

put your head on your pillow, feeling that, whether you wake up in this world or the next, all is well. In that great, ponderous Book of the Judgment, where is recorded all the important events of the earth, you will read at last the statement that *this was the day when salvation came into your house.*

Oh, Zaccheus, come down ! come down ! Jesus is passing by !

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### THE A AND THE Z.

“I am Alpha and Omega.”—*Revelation* i, 8.

ALPHA is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and OMEGA is the last ; so that Christ in this text represents himself as the A and the Z.

That is one reason why I like the Bible ; its illustrations are so easy to understand. When it represents the Gospel as a *hammer*, everybody knows it is to knock something to pieces ; or as *salt*, everybody who has put down meat in barrels knows it is to keep things from spoiling ; or as a *salve*, that is to cure the old sores of the heart. The Bible illustrations go not on stilts, but in a plain way walk straight into the understanding. When a physician in the sick room, or a philosopher in his conversation, or a minister in the pulpit begins to use big words, and to bother you with technicalities, you may make up your mind that he is trying to confound you with his learning. I do not want a man in ordinary conversation to call a dandelion a “*Taraxacum dens Leonis*,” or a wart “an enlargement of the vascular papilla.” A dandelion is a dandelion and a wart is a wart.

A woman went to hear the great Dr. Alexander preach, and came home disappointed, saying, “I do not think he is such a great man after all, for I could understand every word he said.”

When we learn to call things by their plain names, we will



be getting back to the old Bible way of teaching. Anybody who knows the *a b c's* understands that the text means that Christ is the Beginning and the End in everything good.

I. He is the A and the Z of the physical universe. By him were all things made that are made. He made Galilee as well as hushed it. He made the fig-tree as well as blasted it. He made the rock as well as rent it. No wonder He could restore the blind man, for he first made the optic nerve and the retina. No wonder that he could give hearing to the deaf man, for he first set the drum of the ear. No wonder he could cure the withered arm, for he made the bone and strung the muscle. He flung out of nothing the first material out of which the world was formed. He set spinning around the first axle, and drove the first pivot, and hung to the throne the first constellation. The eighteen millions of suns in the Milky Way are eighteen million coursers of fire, by Christ's hand held to their path as they fly up the steeps of heaven. The comet of 1811, that was one hundred and thirty-three million miles long, answered the bit of light, and by his hand was turned any whither. Jesus shepherds all the great flock of worlds. All these doves of light flew out of his bosom. Christ set one leg of the compass at the foot of the throne, and swung the other around to mark the orbits of the worlds. Standing to-night in the observatory of Mount Zion, I take a telescope mightier than that of Herschel or of Ross—namely, the Word of God—and I see impressed on nearest and farthest star, I AM THE ALPHA!

It is exciting to see a ship launched. The people gather in a temporary gallery erected for their accommodation. The spectators are breathless, waiting for the impediments to be removed, when down the ship rushes with terrific velocity, the planks smoking, the water tossing, the flags flying, the people huzzaing, bands of music playing. But my Lord Jesus saw this ship of a world launched with its furnaces of volcano, and flags of cloud, and masts of mountain, and walking-beams of thunderbolt, while the morning stars shouted, and the

orchestras of heaven played, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!"

The same hand that put up this universe will pull it down. I think the time will come when the worlds will have done their work, and must be removed, so that but two worlds will remain; the one a vast desert of suffering, swinging through immensity—the abode of the bad; the other a blooming paradise for all the good. For eternal ages will the two swing around in their orbits of light and darkness. We know not by what process any of the worlds will be taken down, save one; that will go by fire. Perhaps the most of the worlds will shatter in collision. Sirius and the North Star, Capella and Aldebaran, colliding into eternal ruin. The furnaces already on fire in the heart of the earth will burst their bounds, and the mountains kindle, and the great forests begin to crackle, and the wild beasts tumble off the crags in an avalanche of terror, and the metals melt, flowing in liquid down the gulches, and the ocean to steam and bubble, and finally to flame, and the round earth from all sides shoot out forked tongues of fire. All the universe will know who set on fire the one world, and who shattered the others, for Christ my Lord, will stand amid the roar, and crackle, and thunder, and crash of that final undoing, proclaiming, I AM THE OMEGA!

II. Christ is the A and the Z of the Bible. Here is a long lane, overshadowed by fine trees, leading up to a mansion. What is the use of the lane if there were no mansion at the end? There is no use in the Old Testament except as a grand avenue to lead us up to the Gospel Dispensation. You may go early to a concert. Before the curtain is hoisted, you hear the musicians tuning up the violins, and getting ready all the instruments. After a while the curtain is hoisted, and the concert begins. All the statements, parables, orations, and miracles of the Old Testament were merely *preparatory*, and when all was ready, in the time of Christ, the curtain hoists, and there pours forth the Oratorio of the Messiah—all nations joining in the Hallelujah chorus.

Moses, in his account of the creation, shows the platform on which Christ was to act. Prophets and apostles took subordinate parts in the tragedy. The first act was a manger and a babe; the last a cross and its victim. The Bethlehem star in the first scenery shifted for the crimson upholstery of a crucifixion. Earth, and heaven, and hell, the spectators. Angels applauding in the galleries; devils hissing in the pit.

Christ is the Beginning and the End of the Bible.

In Genesis, who was Isaac, bound amid the faggots? Type of Christ, the ALPHA. In Revelation, what was the water of life? Christ, the OMEGA. In Genesis, what was the ladder over Jacob's pillow? Christ, the ALPHA. In Revelation, who was the conqueror on the white horse? Christ, the OMEGA. In Exodus, what was the smitten rock? Christ, the ALPHA. In Revelation, who was the Lamb before the throne? Christ, the OMEGA. Take Christ out of this book, and there are other books I would rather have than the Bible. Take him out, and you have the Louvre without the pictures, you have the Tower of London without the jewels. Take him out, and man is a failure, and the world a carcass, and eternity a vast horror.

III. Christ is the A and the Z of the Christian ministry. A sermon that has no Christ in it is a dead failure. The minister who devotes his pulpit to anything but Christ is an impostor. Whatever great themes we may discuss, Christ must be the beginning and Christ the end. From his hand we get our commission at first, and to that same hand we at last surrender it. Though the colleges may give you a diploma, and Presbytery lay their hands on your head, if Christ send you not forth, you go on a fool's errand; and though the schools reject you as incompetent, if the Lord God tells you to preach, you have a right to go, and there is at least one pulpit in the land where your right to proclaim the Gospel is acknowledged. A sermon devoted to metaphysics is a stack of dry corn-stalks after the corn has been ripped out with the husking-peg. A sermon given up to

sentimental and flowery speech is as a nosegay flung to a drowning sailor. A sermon devoted to moral essay is a basket of chips to help on the great burning. What the world wants now is to be told in the most flat-footed way of Jesus Christ, who comes to save men from eternal damnation. Christ the Light, Christ the Sacrifice, Christ the Rock, Christ the Star, Christ the Balm, Christ the Guide. If a minister should live one thousand years, and preach ten sermons each day, those subjects would not be exhausted. Do you find men tempted? Tell them of Christ the shield. Or troubled? Tell them of Christ the Comfort. Or guilty? Tell them of Christ the Pardon. Or dying? Tell them of Christ the Life.

Scores of ministers, yielding to the demands of the age for elegant rhetoric, and soft speech, and flattering apostrophe, have surrendered their pulpits to the devil. "horse, foot, and dragoon." If these city exquisites won't take the old-fashioned Gospel, then let them go on the downward road where they want to go, and we will give our time to the great masses who want to hear the plain Gospel, and who are dying by the millions because they do not hear it. Be Christ the burden of our talk; Christ the inspiration of our prayers; Christ the theme of our songs; Christ now, and Christ for ever. Oh, for one consecration! After Luther was prepared to preach, he said to his professor, Dr. Staupitz, "I cannot preach. I should die in three months. Indeed, I cannot do it." "Well," said the professor, "if you must die, you must; but preach, man—preach, man—and then live or die, as it happens." In that stern hour when we feel that we shall never preach again, and we have ascended for the last time the pulpit, the gown will be nothing, the surplice will be nothing, philosophy nothing, Presbyteries nothing, Conferences nothing, General Assemblies nothing, but CHRIST EVERYTHING!

“ Let Zion’s watchmen all awake,  
 And take the alarm they give ;  
 Now let them, from the mouth of God,  
 Their awful charge receive.

“ May they that Jesus, whom they preach,  
 Their own Redeemer see ;  
 And watch thou daily o’er their souls,  
 That they may watch for thee.”

IV. Christ is the A and the Z in the world’s rescue. When the world broke loose, the only hand swung out to catch it was that of Jesus. At Long Branch, on the beach, on a summer’s day, hundreds of people are sporting ; but suddenly some one cries, “ Look there ! A man is drowning.” Out of hundreds, perhaps there is only one strong swimmer. He plunges in, and brings the man safely ashore. On the beach of heaven, one day, there sat myriads of immortals, merry with a great gladness ; but the voice of one of the immortals cried out, “ See there ! A world is drowning ? To the rescue ! Where are the wreckers ? Launch the life-boats ! Who will go ? ” Angels did not dare venture. Heaven itself stands helpless before the scene. It knows how to wave a palm or shout in a coronation, but not how to take out of the floods a drowning world. Jesus bounds from the throne. and throws His robe on one side, His crown on the other. Swift as a roe on the mountains, He comes down over the hills. The shining ones stand back as He says, “ Lo ! I come.” Amid the wrathful surges He beats His way out to the dying world ; and while, out in the deep waters, with bloody agony He wrestled with it, and it seemed for a little while uncertain whether it would take Him down or He would lift it up, those on the beach trembled, and in an hour grew ages older ; and when at last, in His great strength, He lifted it in his right hand and brought it back, there went up a hosanna from all the cloud of witnesses. He began the work, and He shall complete it. Ring all the

bells of earth and heaven to-day in honour of Christ the ALPHA and Christ the OMEGA!

V. Christ is the A and the Z in heaven. He is the most honoured personage in all that land. He is known as a World-Liberator. The first one that a soul entering heaven looks for is Jesus. The great populations of heaven seek Him out, follow him over the hills, and shout at his chariot-wheel. Passing along those streets, spirits blessed cry out to one another, "Look! that is Jesus." Methinks that if the hosts of heaven go forth in some other realm to fight, their battle-cry is "JESUS." JESUS on the banners. JESUS in the song. At his feet break the doxologies. Around his throne circle the chief glories. Where the white Lamb of heaven goes, there go all the flocks. The first tree in the heavenly paradise Jesus planted. The first fountain he struck from the rock. The first pillar of light he lifted. At heaven's beginning—CHRIST, THE ALPHA. Then travel far on down the years of eternity, and stop at the end of the remotest age, and see if the song has not taken up some other burthen, and some other throne has not become the centre of heaven's chief attractions. But no; you hear it thrummed on the harps, and poured from the trumpets, and shouted in universal acclaim, CHRIST, THE OMEGA!

Now what is this glorious One to you, my hearer? Have you seen him? Have you heard his voice? Have you walked this earth, and never seen in the bent grass where his feet had just been? Of all the stars in the midnight heavens, has not one pointed you to where he lay? Trudging on across this desert with thy burden of sins, have you ever made the camels kneel? Is this one, the First and the Last of heaven, nothing to thee? Poor wanderer, without Christ, what of thy death hour? what of the judgment day? what of eternity? If it shall be found at the last that thou hast rejected this thy only hope, in what dark hole of the universe wilt thou lay thyself down to

suffer, and gnash thy teeth, and howl for ever? *You must have Christ or die.* But one ladder out of the pit! But one life-boat from the wreck! Get in it. Lay hold of the oars with both hands, and pull, if need be, until the blood starts. The world is after you. The devil is after you. The avenger of blood is after you. But, more than all, Christ is after you, and his cry is, "O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help?"

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### THE LAST NIGHT.

"This night thy soul shall be required of thee."—*Luke xii. 20.*

MY text introduces us into a fine farm house. The occupant has been wonderfully successful. He has not made his money by business dodges. He has never "cornered" anybody in stocks. He never lent money on a mortgage with the understanding that it might lie quiet for several years, and then, as soon as the mortgage was recorded, went down to begin foreclosure. He never got up a bogus company, sold the shares, and then backed out in time to save himself, leaving the widows and orphans in the lurch, wondering why there were no dividends. As far as I can tell he was an honest, industrious, enterprising man. The crops were coming in. The mow and the granary were full, and the men and oxen tugged away at other loads. The matter was a great perplexity. After you have gone to the trouble to raise a crop, you want some place to put it. Enlargement is the word. I see him calculating, by the light of a torch, how much extension of room is needed. So many loads of corn, so many of wheat. It must be so many feet front, and so many feet deep. He says, "When I get the new building done, I shall have everything. Nothing then for me but to enjoy myself." In anticipation of the barn enlarged, he folds his arms and says, "If anybody in all the world is

prosperous and happy I am that man." But his ear is stunned with the words, "Thou fool!" "Where did the voice come from?" "Who dares say that to me, the first man in all this country?" It was the voice of God! "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee!"

What was the malady that took him immediately away—whether apoplexy, or some mysterious disease that the doctors could not account for—I know not. But that night he expired. He never built the extension. Before the remaining sheaves had been gathered he was himself reaped. They hauled in no loads of grain on the next day, but a long procession (for successful men always have big funerals) followed him out to burial. If the world expressed its sentiments in regard to him, it would put over his grave, "Here lies interred a successful man, of great enterprise and influence, and he departs mourned by the whole neighbourhood. Peace to his ashes." God wrote over his grave, and on his barn-door, an epitaph of four letters—"FOOL." That the divine epitaph was correct, I infer from the fact that this man had lived so many years and made no preparation for the future, and because he was postponing every thing until he got larger barns. Additional barn-room could not make him happy. Show me the man made happy by worldly accumulation. Who are the men who have the most anxiety, and work the hardest? The millionaires. Men work harder after they get five hundred thousand dollars than before. They work less at a hundred thousand dollars; still less at fifty thousand; still less at forty; still less at thirty; still less at five thousand dollars; and least of all when they have a salary to live on. The men who have the greatest freedom from care are those who live on their day's wages. Prosperity is like salt water; the more you drink of it the thirstier you are. "Soul, take thine ease!" Ah! did a man ever give ease to his soul by such a process. The soul is a spirit. Can material things be expected to feed it? Can the soul eat wheat, or corn, or



hardware? What if a man going to San Francisco should make preparation for his comfort from here to Hoboken, and no further. Would you not call him a fool? But this man, about starting on an everlasting journey, makes no preparation except for this life. The distance from here to the grave is smaller when compared with eternity, than the distance from here to Hobekin is small compared with the thousands of miles between here and San Francisco. This man had thought only of the three or four yards of human life, and regarded not the millions of furlongs stretching out into the infinite.

I wish to make two or three remarks about this man's exit from the world.

It was in *strong contrast with his life*. His surroundings were as bright as bright could be. We know more about his barns than his house, but I judge of the style of his house from that of his barn. Men do not take better care of their horses and cattle than of themselves. The house was full of comforts and luxuries. When the table was spread, there was everything on it to administer to his appetite. The wines were of the best—so long confined that they opened with violent hiss and explosion. The country, not overrun with hunters, sent its best game to his table. The fishermen brought him the best product of the stream, for he could give any price. If he had a family (and I suppose he had, for most thrifty men have a reason at home why they succeed), they lacked no luxury of wardrobe. When visitors came to that house, the master, no doubt, would take them out, and say, "There are twenty acres of grain; ten acres of corn; fifteen acres of grove. See those sheep down in that valley. See those cattle on that hill. All mine! Come and look at those fig-trees. There are some figs ripe. Help yourself. Plenty of them. See how those grape-vines thrive—and these pomegranates!" Abundance of everything. Plenty to eat, plenty to wear, and plenty to congratulate. Yet, amid all that, he dies! How impudent

death is! It would not seem so bold if it went into that fisherman's hut and took a life. But here it comes stumbling along, not stopping to look at the full barns, or to examine the olives, or to count the herds. It does not even knock. It goes in as though it owned the whole place, and says, "Come, you must go with me!" Death is the roughest of all constables, and makes an arrest without any explanation. The man says, "Wait until I get my new barn done." "No!" "Wait until I settle with my men." "No!" "Wait until I can sell out, and get my estate into better trim." "No!" "Wait until I make my will." "No!" "Wait until I can get prepared." "No!" Death says, "I wait for nothing. I shall touch you twice, and then you will be mine—once on the heart, and once on the lungs. There! the pulsation is quiet. There! the breath is gone." "What shall we do with him?" asks the neighbours. "I don't care what you do with him," says Death. "I have done my work, now you can do yours."

Dr. Johnson, having ridden around the park of his friend, said to him, "Ah! my friend, these are the things that make it so hard to die."

What then! Is elegance of surrounding no defence? Can not a man hide in his full barns, or in his rich wardrobe? No. They that trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches—none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him, that he should live for ever and not see corruption. Prince Albert breathes his last in Windsor Castle; and Charles Dickens falls back senseless at the dinner-table on Gad's Hill, and Albert Barnes expires in a Philadelphia parlour; and Willie Lincoln falls asleep in the White House; and the successful man of the text in the night-time has his soul required of him.

Again: The man of the text *made sudden exit*. There was no long lane leading up to this event. The only warning which he got was on the last night. It was not a gradual

wasting away, but a shock—and all was over. How startled were all the hands on his place to hear of it! The neighbours knew not what to make of it. But the most surprised one of all was the man himself. So removal from this world is always sudden. I have heard of rare cases where persons said, "Such a day of such a month will be my last," and it was so. But the man of the text was not more amazed than most people. Even the most confirmed invalids expect to get well. They expect some new effect of medicines, or a new style of doctor, or a change of climate will help them. It is while men are calculating on long days that that decisive hour comes—while they are expecting an enlargement of business accommodations, or are getting in their crops, or are trying to draught a new barn—suddenly! And why not? Hold that glass of exquisite ware, and let it drop on the pavement. How long does it take to shiver it? Wonder not that the delicate bowl of life was broken at the fountain. Our life is of such delicate mechanism, so finely poised, so hair-strung, that the least collision is fatal. The wonder is that, with such exquisite machinery, the pivots do not oftener slip, and the spring break, and all the works instantly crash. The vast majority of the race go out of this life without a physical pang. They flash away. You cannot calculate the brevity of the time between when the arrow leaves the bow and when it strikes the target.

A minister of Scotland, at breakfast, asked for something more to eat, and a child started to get it, but he cried out, "Hold! hold! my Master calleth me. I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus to-night." And as quick as that he was gone. The rail-train rushes along toward Norwalk bridge. The draw is off. Down the train plunges. In Wales, a miner, not aware of the foul air of the mine, strikes a match. Instantly two hundred souls are in eternity.

It was night when the man of the text went. So it is *ight* when most of the race depart. A vast majority of the

race die between eleven and three o'clock at night. There seems something in the atmosphere at that time to loosen the grasp of body and soul. Nearly all of my friends have gone away in the night. The most of those who die by accident die in the night, because then the impediment on the track is not seen. Then it is that the flame gets headway before it is discovered. Then the burglar and the assassin are assisted by the darkness. The first-born of Egypt perished in the night. Sennacherib's host fell in the night. Like the man of the text, the most of the race are called away in the night.

I know not what had been the character of the last day that this man of the text had lived—whether it was sunshine or rainy, interesting or dull; but I know about the night. It was a great night. It was a thrilling night. It was a tremendous night. As the text comes rushing through the darkness, he drops his pen. He forgets his big barn and his unsheltered crops. “*This night thy soul shall be required of thee.*”

But the most remarkable thing about the exit was that *he was unprepared for it*. It was not a lack of brain that kept him in unpreparedness. A man who could make money as fast as he could was not lacking in sharpness. He knew what to plant, and how to culture what he had planted. He was not one of the dead-and-alive men who make no progress. His barns were large enough before, but they are too small now, with crops all the time growing. He was what Americans would call “smart,” and what the English would call “clever.” Now a man who knows enough to do business, knows enough to save his soul. All of the idiots will be saved at last. He was not an idiot. But, alas! how many men are wise for time, and foolish for eternity! They know enough, when they sell a thing, to get the worth of it, but they barter away an immortal soul for nothing. They have everything insured but their souls. They are careful to have all their titles good except that for heaven. They

are prompt in their engagements with banks and brokers, but fail in their obligations to God. They pull down their barns and build greater, to hold the increasing crops, but have no shelter for their souls so good as a barn. If a man should come at them with a sly game, and try to cheat them out of a hundred dollars, they would say, "No, you don't! I see what you are driving at!" But they allow Satan to swindle them out of all the riches of heaven.

Neither was it lack of time that ushered the man of the text into the last hour unarmed. I suppose he was very busy. Early up and late to bed, overseeing the workmen. From the way things went on about that place, I know he looked after his own business, and had plenty to do. But might he not rather have had fifty bushels of wheat less than he caught in the last hour in such a miserable predicament? Yes, he had time enough, as ever man has, to prepare himself for the future. Men talk as though, in order to get prepared for eternity, they must have a month or a year to go and sit down, and read and pray. Why, my hearers, a prayer to God is just as acceptable while on your way to Fulton Ferry to-morrow morning as in your house on your knees. A thought about God on Wall Street is just as elevating as in Church on Sunday. Heaven is not a cloud that touches only the top of some high mountain: it touches earth all over. And that man who has time to eat, or sleep, or think, has time to be saved. Yet that man died unprepared. He fell; not as a man who trips and stumbles on a road, but as men falling from some Alpine cliff have been watched by the peasantry as they go down—a thousand feet, whirling in the air—dashed on the rocks. So this man from the tip-top of worldly prosperity, slipped and fell.

Eighteen centuries have passed since that catastrophe. The body of that rich farmer has so thoroughly gone to dust that no one suspects where it is. But his soul still lives—lives more actively than yours or mine. And he remembers, *as though* it were only an hour ago, the stupendous impres-

sion of that moment when, in desperate unpreparedness, there came crashing into his ears, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee."

If, between this and five or six o'clock to-morrow morning, the same voice should accost our souls, would it find us likewise disconcerted? No, I can say for many of you. You are not so well dressed for church as you are for heaven. That dress you have on will wear out—get out of fashion; but the robe of Christ's righteousness will never wear out, for the latest ages of heaven wear the same pattern as the earliest. I do not mean to say that you are sinless; but Christ has made it all right. He has made a transfer of your sins and pollution, so that you ought to think of leaving this world only as you think of going to a wedding. It is a wedding—the marriage of the King's Son.

How much does death hurt a good man? Not so much as the tip of his little finger. They who, in letting you down in your last resting-place, shall be scratched in the hand with a brier, shall be more damaged than you by death. The grandest place on earth to sleep, the softest pillow and coverlets, are in the Christian's grave. Jesus took his deathly-robe and folded it up. As he came out of the grave, he would have cast off his shroud and thrown it into the corner of the tomb if it were never to be used again. But he knew that you and I would want to sleep there after a-while, and so he took his death-garments and folded them up, so that the covering might be ready for us. It shall not be eagles'-down that we rest on, but something softer and warmer than that. It is what David calls the "feathers of the Almighty."

If there is any one on earth that is to be envied, it is the man who dies well. Among the eight persons who stood around my father's death-bed, not one was as well off as he. For eighty-four years he had served God as few serve him. What had he to fear? I do not think he had been so glad sixty-two years before—on his marriage day—as he was that

night, as he was about to go to rejoin her with whom he had companioned for fifty-five years. God said to him, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee," and his answer was, "I feel well—very well. All is well. Peace! Peace!"

But not that way do all men make their departure. Men ought to have their worldly affairs settled, so that the executors and administrators will not be confounded, and so that what they have honestly earned be not scattered among those who have no right to it. If the sudden announcement should be made to you to-night, what would be the state of your families? Have you done all that you can to fit them for heaven? Could you feel—"Whatever I, as father or mother, could do, I have done. They will remember how I prayed for them and talked with them; and when they look at my picture, they will say, 'That was a Christian parent.' I want to go in the same way, and gain the same heaven." The keys of this organ are twelve feet from the organ-pipes, but every time those keys are touched the pipes respond; so these parents are now exercising influences which will respond far on in the eternity of their children. If they play an anthem now, it will be an anthem then. If they play a dirge now, it will be a dirge for ever.

But, most of all, I want to know what is to become of you personally. This may be your last sermon. The concluding song of to-night may be your last song. This night may be your last night. Then "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." What then? Into what scenes would you be introduced? Would you go where your children, and kindred, and friends have gone, or where the man of the text went? They who die without Christ are so thoroughly ruined that they never get over it. The man of the text is to-night just where he was eighteen hundred years ago. Thousands of Gospel calls have been uttered since then. He has not heard one of them. He has been gathering in his *crops* ever since, but it is a harvest of everlasting wretchedness.

God called him a *fool* in his last hour, and he who dies a fool is a fool for ever.

Perhaps, like the man of the text, you are about to build larger barns. You are planning for worldly accumulation. Do not forget to project a plan for eternity. You acknowledge yourself immortal; where, then, will you be a hundred years from now? You say that perhaps, by some great exception, you might be alive a hundred years from now. Then where will you be at the end of a thousand years? Where will you be a million years from now? A billion of years? A trillion of years? A quadrillion of years? A quintillion of years? But a hundred years are nothing; a million of years are nothing; a billion of years are nothing; a trillion of years are nothing; a quadrillion of years are nothing; a quintillion of years are nothing—compared with ETERNITY.

So I ask you, Where will you spend eternity?

Oh, prepare for it. Leave it not until the last hour. Leave it not until you get sick: you may never be sick. Leave it not until you get more time: you may never get more time. Leave it not until you get old: you may never get old. Leave it not until the spirit strives more powerfully: it may never strive again. Leave it not until tomorrow. This night—*this night*, thy soul may be required of thee. And suppose, in that moment, you should say, “Wait until I can kneel down and say my prayers.” Death would respond, “No time now to say your prayers.” “Wait until I get my friends together, and bid them Good-bye.” Death would say, “You cannot stop to bid them good-bye.” “But I cannot go into eternity with all these sins about me. Give me time to repent.” Death would say, “Too late to repent! *This night* thy soul is required. Yea, *this hour!* Yea, *this minute!* Yea, *this second!*”

Oh, by the Cross of Christ, get ready. Repent. This moment, bow your head on the back of the pew in front of you, or kneel in the aisle, and say, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!”



In Christ you are safe. Out of Him, you perish. "O Israel! how shall I give thee up?"

By what argument shall I address you? By what impassionate appeal may I move you?

I can do nothing more. I leave you in the hands of that Saviour who died to redeem you. I leave you to that God before whom you must at last appear, and answer for this night's acceptance or rejection of mercy.

Lord God Almighty! I have done my best to call them in. Into thy hands I commit their immortal spirits.

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### THE RAINBOW ROUND THE THRONE.

"There was a rainbow round about the throne."—*Rev. iv. 3.*

DURING the last snow-storm I preached to you from the text in Job, "Consider the treasures of the snow." This morning when I looked out of the window and saw the storm—the rain and the snow commingling—a light thread and a dark thread in the robe of the storm—I thought I would preach to you from the passage, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth." But in a little while the storm began to abate, and the light came into the sky, and the sunbeams streamed into my room, and then I concluded I would preach to you about the breaking away of the storms of life, and the "rainbow round about the throne."

As, after a night of fearful tempest at sea, one ship, more staunch than another, rides on undamaged among the fragments of spars and hulks that float about, so old Noah's ark, at the close of the deluge, floats on over the wreck of a dead world. Looking out of the window of the ark, you see the planks of houses, and the sheaves of wheat, and the carcasses of cattle, and the corpses of men. No tower is left to toll

the burial ; no mourners to form in line of procession ; no ground in which to bury the dead. Sinking a line twenty-seven feet long, you just touch the tops of the mountains. Ghastliness and horror ! The ark, instead of walking the sea, like a modern ship, in majesty and beauty, tosses helplessly : no helm to guide ; no sail to set ; no shore to steer for. Why protect the agony of the good people in such a craft, when they might in one dash of the wave have been put out of their misery ?

But at yonder spot in the horizon we see colours gathering in the sky ; at just the opposite point in the horizon other colours are gathering. I find that they are the buttresses of an arched bridge. The yellow, the red, the orange, the blue, the indigo, the violet are mingled, and by invisible hands the whole structure is hung into the sky, and the ark has a triumphal arch to sail under. An Angel of Light swings his hand across the sky, and in the seven prismatic colours he paints with pencil of sunbeam the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature. God lifted up that great arched bridge, and set it over his own head in the heaven. John saw it, for he says, " There was a rainbow round about the throne."

I notice that none but *the people who were in the ark saw the rainbow*. It cast its shadow clear down into the water where the people were buried, and lighted up the dead faces with a strange radiance, but they could not see it. So only those who are at last found in Christ, the Ark, will see the overspanning glories of the throne. Hence you had better get into the Ark ! As you call your family out at the close of the shower to shew them the sign in heaven, so I want you all at last to see the grander rainbow about the throne. " Look there ! " says Noah to his wife, " at that bow in the clouds ; and Shem and Japhet, look ! look ! the green, the yellow, the red and the orange ! " I should not wonder if some of your own children in the Good Land should after a while cry out to you, " Look, father ! look, mother ! there is

a rainbow round about the throne!" You had better get into the Ark, with all your families, if you want to see it.

I notice also that the chief *glory of God comes after the rain*. No shower, no rainbow; no trouble, no brightness of Christian consolation.

Weavers are sometimes, by reason of their work, dusty and rough in their apparel; and so is the coarse-clad tempest, whose hand and foot swing the shuttle, that weaves the rainbow.

Many Christians are dull, and stupid, and useless because they have not had disaster enough to wake them up. The brightest scarf that heaven makes is thrown over the shoulders of the storm. You cannot make a thorough Christian life out of sunshine alone. There are some very dark hues in the ribbon of the rainbow: you must have in life the blue as well as the orange. Mingling all the colours of the former makes a white light; and it takes all the shades, and sadnesses, and vicissitudes of life to make the white lustre of a pure Christian character.

Your child asks you, "Father, what makes the rainbow?" and you say, "It is the sunlight striking through the rain-drops." Therefore I wondered how there could be a rainbow in heaven, since there are no storms there; but then I conclude that that rainbow must be formed by the striking of heaven's sunlight through the fallen tears of earthly sorrow. When we see a man overwhelmed with trouble, and his health goes, and his property goes, and his friends go, I say "Now we shall see the glory of God in this good man's deliverance." As at the Niagara Falls I saw, one day, ten rainbows spanning the awful plunge of the cataract, so over the abyss of the Christian's trial hover the rich-hued wings of all the promises.

I notice that the *most beautiful things of this world are to be preserved in heaven*. When you see the last colour fade out from the rainbow of earth, you need not feel sad, for you will see the rainbow round about the throne. That story about the

world burning up has given me many a pang. When I read that Paris was besieged, I said, "Now the pictures and statues in the Louvre and Luxembourg will be destroyed; all those faces of Rembrandt, and those bold dashes of Rubens, and those enchantments of Raphael on canvas, and those statues of Canova." But is it not a more melancholy thought that ruin is to come upon this great glory of the earth, in which the mountains are the chiselled sculptures, and upon the sky, in which the "transfiguration" of sunrise and sunset is hung with loops and tassels of fire. I was relieved when I found that the pictures had been removed from the Louvre and the Luxembourg, and I am relieved now when I think that the best parts of this earth are either to be removed or pictured in the Good Land. The trees must twist in the last fire—the oaks, and the cedars, and the maples; but in heaven there shall be the trees of life on the bank of the river, and the palm-trees from which the conquerors shall pluck their branches. The Hudson, and the St. Lawrence, and the Ohio shall boil in the last flame, but we shall have more than their beauty in the River of Life from under the throne. The daisies and the portulacas, and the roses of earth will wither in the hot sirocco of the judgment, but John tells of the garlands which the glorified shall wear; and there must be flowers or there could be no garlands.

The rainbow on our sky, which is only the pillow of the dying storm, must be removed; but then, glory be to God! "there is a rainbow round about the throne." I have but to look up to the radiant arch above the throne of God to assure myself that the most glorious things of earth are to be preserved in heaven. Then let the world burn: all that is worth saving will be snatched out of the fire.

I see the same truth set forth in the twelve foundations of the wall of heaven. St. John announces the twelve foundations of this wall to be, the first, of jasper—yellow and red; the second, of sapphire—a deep blue; the third, a chal-

cedony—of varied beauty; the fourth, emerald—a bright green colour; the fifth, sardonyx—a bluish white; the sixth, sardius—red and fiery; the seventh, chrysolite—golden-hued, the eighth, beryl—a bluish green; the ninth, topaz—a pale green mixed with yellow; the tenth, chrysoprasus—a golden bluish tint; the eleventh, jacinth—fiery as the sunset; the twelfth, amethyst. But these precious stones are only the foundation of the wall of heaven—the most inferior part of it. On the top of this foundation there rises a mighty wall of jasper—of brilliant yellow and gorgeous crimson. Stupendous cataract of colour! Throne of splendour and sublimity! You see that the beautiful colours which are the robes of glory to our earth are to be for ever preserved in this wall of heaven. Our skies of blue, which sometimes seem almost to drop with richness of colour, shall be glorified and eternalized in the deep everlasting blue of that fiery stone which forms the second foundation of the heavenly wall. The green that sleeps on the brook's bank, and rides on the sea-wave, and spreads its banner on the mountain-top, shall be eternalized in the emerald that forms the fourth foundation of the heavenly wall. The fiery gush of the morning, the conflagration of the autumnal sunset, the electricity that shoots its forked tongue out of the thunder-cloud, the flame at whose breath Moscow fell and Ætnas burn, shall be eternalized in the fiery jasper. It seems as if all earthly beauty were in one billow to be dashed up against that wall of heaven; so that the most beautiful things of earth will be kept either in the wall, on the foundation, or in the rainbow around about the throne.

I notice the *unspeakable attractiveness of heaven*. In *o* places the Bible tells us of the floor of heaven—the wall and the stones, and the fruits; but now St. John tells the roof—the frescoed arch of eternity, and the rainbow about the throne. Get a ticket, and carefully guarded, into the royal factory at Paris, where the Gobelin tapestries of the world are made, and see how for years a man

putting in and out a ball of coloured worsteds through the delicate threads, satisfied if he can in a day make so much as a finger's breadth of beauty for a king's canopy. But behold how my Lord, in one hour, with his two hands, twisted the tapestry, now swung about the throne, into a rainbow of infinite glory. Oh, what a place heaven must be! You have heretofore looked at the floor; this morning take one glance at the ceiling.

I notice what must be the feeling of *safety among the people of heaven*. Have you ever seen a cloud burst? There have been days when it rained as if it would never stop. You knew, if it kept on in that way long, all the nations would be drowned; yet you had no apprehension, for you remembered the Bow of Promise painted on the cloud in Noah's time. So the glorified have but to look to the arch around the throne of the King to be reassured that the deluge of trial is for ever past.

On earth, the *deluge of sin* covers the tops of the highest mountains. I heard an Alpine guide, amid the most stupendous evidences of God's power, swear at his mule as he stumbled in the pass. Yes, the deluge of sin dashes over the top of the highest mountain ranges. Revenge, drunkenness, impiety, falsehood, blasphemy, are but different waves of a flood that has whelmed nations. New York is drowned in it, Brooklyn is drowned in it, Boston is drowned in it, London is drowned in it, St. Petersburg is drowned in it—two great hemispheres are drowned in it. But the redeemed, looking unto the "rainbow round about the throne," see the pledge that all this is ended for them for ever. They have committed their last sin, and combated their last temptation. No suicide leaps into those bright waters; no profanity befools that pure air; no villain's torch shall fire those temples; no murderer's hand shall strike down those sons of God. They know that for them the deluge of sin is assuaged, for "there is a rainbow round about the throne." Now the world is covered with a *deluge of blood*. The

nations are all the time either using the sword or sharpening it. The factories of the world are night and day manufacturing Hotchkiss shells, needle-guns, and mitrailleuses. From Berlin to Paris, a river of blood. Russia impatient until it can throttle England. Throne against throne, empire against empire. The spirit of despotism and freedom at war in every land: despotic America against free America; despotic England against free England; despotic Germany against free Germany; despotic Austria against free Austria. The great battle of earth is being fought—the Armageddon of the nations. The song that unrolled from the sky on the first Christmas night, “peace and goodwill to men,” is drowned in the booming of the great siege-guns. Stand back, and let the long line of ambulances pass. Groan to groan. Uncover, and look upon the trenches of the dead. Blood! blood!—a deluge of blood!

But the redeemed of heaven, looking upon the glorious arch that spans the throne, shall see that the deluge is over. No buttresses are planted on those hills; no barricades blocking those streets; no hostile flag above those walls; no smoke of burning villages; no shrieks of butchered men; but peace! German and Frenchman, who fell with arms interlocked in hate on the field of death, now, through Christ in heaven, stand with arms interlocked in love. Arms stacked for ever; shields of battle hung up. The dove instead of the eagle; the lamb instead of the lion. There shall be nothing to hurt or destroy in all God’s holy mount, for there is a rainbow round about the throne.

Now the earth is covered with the *deluge of sorrow*. Trouble! trouble! The very first utterance when we come into the world is a cry. Without any teaching, we learn to weep. What has so wrinkled that man’s face? What has so prematurely whitened his hair? What calls out that sigh? What starts that tear? Trouble! trouble! I find

it in the cellar of poverty, and far up among the heights on the top of the crags; for this also hath gone over the tops of the highest mountains. No escape from it. You go into the store, and it meets you at your counting-desk; you go into the street, and it meets you at the corner; you go into the house and it meets you at the door. Tears of poverty! tears of persecution! tears of bereavement—a deluge of tears! Gathered together from all the earth, they could float an ark larger than Noah's.

But the glorified, looking up to the bow that spans the throne, shall see that the deluge is over. No shivering wretch on the palace step; no blind man at the gate of the heavenly temple, asking for alms; no grinding of the screw-driver on coffin-lid. They look up at the rainbow, and read, in lines of yellow, and red, and green, and blue, and orange, and indigo, and violet, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Thank God for the glory spanning the throne!

In our boyhood we had a superstition that at the foot of the rainbow there was a casket of buried gold; but I have to announce that at the foot of this rainbow of heaven there is a box made out of the wood of the cross. Open it, and you find all the treasures of heaven.

Oh, that our eyes may all look upon this bow of promise, lifted by Christ's own hand! We shall trace the separate lines of beauty across the firmament. In the line of red I shall see the blood of my Lord; in the blue, the bruises that coloured His cheek; in the green, the freshness of His grace; in the violet His humility; in all that curve of beauty, the bend of His right arm of love swung over all the redeemed.

But mind what I told you at the beginning, and what I tell you at the close—that none but Noah's family in the ark



saw the rainbow, and that only those who are at last in Christ shall discover it amid the glories of heaven.

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

### DOVES TO THEIR WINDOWS.\*

“Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?”  
*Isaiah lx. 8.*

THERE is to many of us a complete fascination in the structure and habits of birds. They seem not more of earth than heaven—ever vacillating between the two. No wonder that Audubon, with his gun, tramped through all of the American forests in search of new specimens. Geologists have spent years in finding the track of a bird’s claw in the new red sandstone. There is enough of God’s architecture in a snipe’s bill or a grouse’s foot to confound all the universities.

Musicians have, with clefs and bars, tried to catch the sound of the nightingale and robin. Among the first things that a child notices is a swallow at the eaves; and grandfather goes out with a handful of crumbs to feed the snow-birds. The Bible is full of ornithological allusions. The birds of the Bible are not dead and stuffed like those of the museum, but living birds, with fluttering wings and plumage. “Behold the *fowls of the air*,” says Christ. “Though thou exalt thyself as the *eagle*, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down,” exclaims Obadiah. “Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the *peacocks*?” says Job. David describes his desolation by saying, “I am like a *pelican* of the wilderness; I am like an *owl* of the desert; I watch, and am as a *sparrow* alone upon the housetop.” “Yea, the *stork* in the heaven knoweth her

\* Preached at the reception of ninety members.

appointed time; and the *turtle*, and the *crane*, and the *swallow* observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord"—so says Jeremiah. And in the text Isaiah looks ahead, and sees the gathering of many people unto Christ and the Church, and it makes him think of a flock of pigeons alighting on their coop, and all at once trying to get in at the windows of the coop, and he cries out, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the *doves to their windows?*"

This is one of the memorable days of the Brooklyn Tabernacle. On other Sundays we drop the net; to-day we haul it in. On other days we send out the invitations for a king's party; to-day we sit at the banquet. On other days we fight the battle; now we claim victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. If we needed any confirmation of this new tabernacle, we have it in the blessing of to-day. Ye who have toiled, and contributed, and prayed for the success of this institution, take unto your souls the grand satisfactions of this hour. To you, oh! men and women, is fulfilled the promise, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy," Wake up, oh, Church of God, and bring garlands and music, and let us celebrate our "*harvest home.*"

When persons apply for membership into any society, the question is asked, "Who are they, and where do they come from?" and as this multitude of people to-day present themselves for membership, it is right that we should ask "Who are these that come as doves to their windows?" They are captives whose chains have been broken; they are soldiers who have enlisted for a thirty years' war. They are heirs of heaven.

They come as doves to the windows, first, because *they fly low*. The eagle darts up, as if to strike its beak into the sun. There are birds that seem to dwell under the eaves of heaven; you see them as little specks against the sky, so far off that you cannot guess the style of their plumage or the shape of their bodies. They float so far away that if the

hunter's gun be discharged at them they do not change their course. Not so with *doves* or *pigeons*; they never take any high excursions. They fly around your roof, and alight on the fence, and seem to dislike great altitudes. So these souls, who come to Christ and to his Church to-day, *fly low*. They ask no great things; they seek an humble place at the feet of Christ. They are not ashamed to be called beggars for mercy; they are willing to get down on their knees, and to crawl under the table, and to pick up the crumbs of Gospel provision. There were days when they were proud, and punctilious, and inexorable, and puffed up; but not now. The highest throne of earth could not tempt Mary away from Jesus's feet. Stoop, oh, pardoned soul, if thou wouldst enter heaven. A high look and a proud heart God hates. *Fly low*. It is a mercy that thou canst fly at all. Remember all the years of thy sin; thy days of youthful wandering; thy days of manhood transgressions; thy sins—dark, brooding, deathful—sins against thy soul, against thy Bible, against thy God.

In one of the benevolent institutions of Europe where the destitute are provided for, the new comers have their photographs taken while in rags and before they are washed, so that they may always have in the picture a reminder of the degradation from which they were lifted; so, in this book God keeps before thee a picture of thy former destitution and raggedness of soul. *Fly low*.

It is an offended God before whom thou comest. Thou deservest his wrath. He scattered the one hundred and eighty-five thousand of Sennacherib's host in a night. He abhors sin. He will judge the nations. "Holy, holy is the Lord, God Almighty." *Fly low*.

A thousand years ago an emperor planted a rose-bush from which roses are plucked to-day. At the foot of the cross, nearly nineteen centuries ago, a rose was planted which blooms to-day; stoop down, if thou wouldst pluck it. Oh, for more of the childlike spirit! I rejoice in the belief

that those who come to Christ to-day, come aware of their sins and their want, and have learned how to fly low.

Again : These persons who come to-day are like doves on their way to the dove-cot, because *they fly for shelter*. The albatross makes a throne of the tempest ; the seagulls find their grandest frolic in the storm—their merriest hour seems to be that in which the surf of the sea piles most high. Not so with doves ; at the first blow of a north-easter they fly to the coop. Eagle contends with eagle in mid air, and vulture fights vulture in the bosom of the carcass, but doves, at the first dash of the bird of prey, speed for shelter from fiery eye, and iron-beak, and loathsome talon. So to-day these souls come here for shelter. Every one has a besetting sin ; that sin is always after you. The robber watches you when you come out of the bank, sees in what pocket you put the money, follows you down the street, notices where you go to dine, and where you sleep and what kind of a lock you have on your door ; so there is some sin ever on a man's track. It goes with him to the store, it sits on the money-safe, it looks over his shoulder while he makes out the bill of lading, it goes out with him to dine, it walks home with him at night. As to some dog that you do not want to follow you, but persists, you say to it, "Back ; home with you !" You stone it away, and start on. After a while, casually turning your eye, you find it close after you, with a sneaking look. Wherever you go, sin goes : where you stay, sin stays. You have watched the hawk above the barn-yard ; it sails around and around over the brood of chickens—around and around, now almost down to the flock, then back again, until at last it drops and seizes its prey. There is a hawk ready to pounce on every dove, and that is the reason that these doves come to-day to the windows—they want shelter in the grace of God and in Christian associations. They say, "If there is any power in your prayers, let me have them ; if there be any virtue in good counsels, give them to me ; if there be anything elevating in Christian associations, let me feel their

influence." "Where thou dwellest, I will dwell. Thy people shall be my people, thy God my God." Open your doors, oh, Church of God, and let them come in "as doves to their windows."

Christ is the only shelter of the soul in trouble. What can you do without Him when sorrow comes? Perhaps at first you take valerian to quiet your nerves, or alcohol to revive your spirits; but have you found anything in the medicines or physical stimulants sufficient? Perhaps in the excitement of the money-market, or in the merry-making of the club-room, you have sought relief. This world has no balsam for a wounded soul, no shelter for a bruised spirit. The dove, in the time of the deluge, flew north, and it was all water; and south, and east, and west, and it was all water, in which were tossed the carcasses of the dead world; and the first solid thing the dove's feet touched was the window of the ark. So the soul in trouble goes out in one direction, and finds nothing substantial to rest upon; and in another direction, and every whither, but there is no rest for the dove save the ark.

"Substantial comfort will not grow  
 In Nature's barren soil:  
 All we can boast, till Christ we know,  
 Is vanity and toil.  
 But where the Lord has planted grace,  
 And made His glories known,  
 There fruits of heavenly joy are found,  
 And there alone."

You lost a parent; some one said that it was in the regular course of nature that your father should expire. Did that comfort you? You lost a child; somebody said if that child had lived it might have turned out badly. Did that comfort you? You lost your property; they told you that riches were very uncertain. You knew that before. You were sick; they explained to you that the difficulty was

in the secretions, or in the sciatic nerve. Did that soothe you! O the despicable quackery of earthly comfort! But when Christ comes to the soul, and says, "I took your estate because I wanted to give you more valuable treasures, I made you sick in body that your soul might be brought up to eternal health; I took your loved ones away because I have a better and a brighter place for them in my own presence," then the wound heals—then the tears dry off the face—then God has become the everlasting portion of the soul. Oh! the air is full of black wings and ravens' beaks. They join their wings of darkness until they shut out the light of the sun. They have fattened on the carcasses of men. Their clangour is horrible to the ear. Trouble, and Disease, and Death coming down on the wind. No wonder these souls have come for shelter, "as doves to their windows." What do the pigeons in the coop care for the hawk in the sky?

Safe in Christ, safe for ever. The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but Thy loving kindness never shall fail.

Again: These souls, like doves, *fly home*. Most of the winged denizens have no home; now they are at the north, and now at the south, as the climate indicates. This year a nest in one tree! next year a nest in another tree. The golden oriole remains but three months of the year in Germany, and is then gone. The linnnet of Norway crosses the ocean to find rest away from the winter's blast. The heron, the goldfinch, and the grossbeak are migratory. The cranes call each other together several days before going, choose their leader, arrange themselves in two lines, forming an angle, and are gone. But the pigeons, alluded to in the text, summer, and winter, and always, have a *home in the dove-cot*. And so Christ is the home of those who come to Him. He is a warm home; they rest under the "feathers of the Almighty." Christ tells us that chickens find not a warmer place under the wing of the hen than we in Him.

He is a safe home ; our fortunes may go down ten degrees below zero, the snows of trouble may fall, the winds of persecution may howl, the jackals of death may stalk forth—all is well, for “great peace have they who trust in God.” From this home we shall never be driven out. The sheriff may sell us out of our earthly house, or the fires may burn it down, or the winds carry it away, but that home shall always be ours.

Men talk as though starting for God were putting out on a trackless moor, or wandering through the sands of a great Sahara. No, no ; it is coming to the warmest and the best of homes, as “doves to the windows.”

Again : These souls to-day, gathering for membership, are like doves, because *they come in flocks*. The buzzard, with dripping beak, fluttering up from the carrion, is alone. You occasionally look up against the wintry sky, and see a solitary bird winging past. But doves or pigeons are in flocks ; by scores and hundreds do they fly. You hear the loud whirr of their wings as they pass. So to-day we see a great flock coming into the kingdom. It is not a straggler, trying to catch up with his regiment ; it is a solid phalanx, taking the kingdom. It is not a drop on your hand or cheek, that leaves you in doubt whether it rains or not, but the rush of an unmistakeable shower. It is not the raking up of the gleanings, but the tossing up of the full sheaves into the mow—“as doves to their windows.” There are all ages in this flock. Some of them are young, and the very first use they make of their wings is to fly into the kingdom ; some of them are old, and their wings have been torn with shot and ruffled with the tempest, and they had almost dropped into the sea. Some of them have been making a very crooked course. They dipped their wings in fountains of sin—they wandered near the gulf of perdition ; but they saw their danger—they changed their course. They have come, at last, “as doves to the windows.”

. I thank God that I have lived to see this day ; to my

dying hour I shall not cease to praise Him for this manifestation of His grace. Praise Him, sun, and moon, and stars ! Praise Him, Church militant on earth ! Praise Him, Church triumphant in heaven ! Let the Church beneath raise up its right hand of gratulation, and the Church above reach down its right hand of joy, and, while the two are clasped, let the elders of the Church put to our lips the wine of earthly celebration, and the cup-bearers of heaven bring up out of the vaults of eternity the oldest wine, prepared by Him who " trod the wine press alone," and so let two worlds at once keep jubilee !

But while a great flock this day comes to the dove-cot of mercy, the largest flock are going the other way. It is a very easy thing to tame doves. Go out with a handful of corn to feed the pigeons, and they will fly on your shoulders and your hands, so tame are they. God has fed those who are before me with " the finest of the wheat," and yet you have flown from Him all your lives long. You have taken your clothes out of His wardrobe, and your bread out of His hands. God's Spirit will not always strive. In the morning, after a severe night, you have gone out and seen the birds dead on the snow ; so, after a-while, God's mercy will cease, and the earth will be covered with the bodies of those who perished in the storm. That storm is coming. It will shiver the mast of pride—it will drive into the white reefs of death every cargo of sin. The cedars of the mountain will split in the hurricane, and the islands shall be moved out of their places, and the continents shall be rent asunder, and the hemispheres shall whirl like a top in the fury of that day. The mountains will be blasted, and the beasts, in affright, be pitched from the cliffs in an avalanche of terror. The dead shall rush forth from the sepulchres to see what is the matter, and all those who despise God shall horribly perish.

Now, do you suppose that I can stand here and know that that day is coming without telling you about it ? My last



resting-place will probably be near yours. What if, when I get up in the resurrection day, I should see you rushing at me across the lots of the cemetery, and hear you cry, "Why did you not tell me of this? If it had not been for your neglect, I should have been on the way to glory." I cannot prepare myself for such a consternation.

"Can you tell me how far it is to hell?" said a young man, as, on Sunday, on horseback, he dashed past a good Christian deacon. At the next turn in the road the horse threw the scoffing rider, and he was dead. He wanted to know how far it was to hell, and found out without the deacon's telling him.

So thou art mounted on a swift steed, whose hoofs strike fire from the pavement as he dashes past, and you cry out, "How far is it to ruin?" I answer, "*Near—very near!*"

"Perhaps this very day  
Thy last accepted time may be ;  
Oh ! shouldst thou grieve Him now away,  
Then hope may never beam on thee."

Oh, that my Lord God would bring you now to see your sin, and to fly from it ; and your duty, and help you to do it ; so that when the last great terror of earth shall spread its two black wings, and clutch with its bloody talons for thy soul, it cannot hurt thee, for that thou art safe in the *warm dove-cot of a Saviour's mercy.*

"Come in ! come in !  
Eternal glory shalt thou win."

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## THE DOOM OF THE DEFRAUDER, LIBERTINE, AND ASSASSIN.

“ He shall be buried with the burial of an ass.”—*Jeremiah* xxii. 19.

JEHOIAKIM sat for ten years on a throne. Plenty of gold—plenty of sycophants—plenty of chariots. When he rode, I think he rode with four horses; and when he wore diamonds, I think he wore them as big as a walnut. If there had been a railroad so early in the history of the world, he would have stolen it. He wallowed in sin until a sudden change in public affairs, and then he died in shame, and was kicked out of public contempt: “Buried with the burial of an ass.”

After a life of private or public iniquity, a man's death is not deplored. The obsequies may be pretentious—there may be flags, and wreathes, and catafalques, and military processions; but the world feels that a nuisance has been abated; he is cast forth by reason of the scorn and contempt of men; and *figuratively*, if not literally, he is “buried with the burial of an ass.”

Urged by recent events, I address young men to-night upon the romance of crime, and I want to show them that though crime may be gilded and fascinating, the end is ruin here and damnation hereafter.

I. There is the romance of *fraud*. The *heroes* of this country are fast getting to be those who have most skill in swallowing “trust-funds,” banks, stocks, and moneyed institutions. Our young men are dazzled by the quick success, and say, “That is the way to do it. He was a country pedlar a few years ago, now see what a gorgeous turn-out!” Theft on Wall Street is measured by a different standard from that which takes its spoils through Rat Alley.

He who steals a vest from a second-hand clothing-store gets a ride in the city van without the opportunity of looking out of the window, but he who swallows a moneyed institution astonishes Central Park with his equipage.

By a kind of irresistible instruction, our young men learn that the poorest way to get money is to earn it. "What!" says the young man of flaunting cravat to the young man of humble apparel, "you only get eight hundred dollars a year! Why, that would hardly keep me in pin money! I spend five thousand dollars a year." "Where do you get it?" "Oh, stocks, enterprises, and all that kind of thing, you know." The plain young man has hard work to pay his board-bill; has to wear a coat after it is out of fashion; denies himself all luxuries. After a-while he gets tired, and goes to flaunting cravat, and says, "Tell us how to get into these enterprises." The plain young man soon learns. Although he has quitted the store or shop where he used to work, and seems to be mostly idle, yet he soon dresses better, trades off his old silver watch for a gold one with a splendid chain, sets his hat a little farther over on one side of his head, and smokes better cigars, and more of them. *He has his hand in.* And if for three or four years he can escape the penitentiary, he is not far off being introduced to the Tweeds and the Carnochans, or has something to do with the docks, or harbours, or pavements, or the inspection of the public buildings. And, after he has got as far as that, he is safe—for perdition. A man has to travel some distance up before he gets into the romance of crime. The man who is caught and incarcerated is in the prosaic period. If the sheriffs and constables had given him a chance to learn the business, he would have stolen as well as anybody. If he could not have stolen a railroad, he could, at least, have mastered a load of pig iron.

I thank God when fortunes thus gathered go to smash. They are plague-struck, and blast a nation. I like to have **them go to pieces in such a wreck that they can never again**

be gathered up. I like to have them made loathsome and an insufferable stench, so that honest young men may take warning.

If God should put suddenly into money, or its representative, the power to return to its rightful owner, there is not a bank or safety deposit that would not have its sides blown out ; and parchments would rip, and gold would shoot, and mortgages would rend, and beggars would get horses, and stock-gamblers would go to the almshouse. How much dishonesty in the making of invoices, and in oaths at the Custom-House, and in plastering of labels, and in the filching of customers of rival houses, and in false samples, and in the making and breaking of contracts ! Hundreds of young men are being indoctrinated in the idea that money must be had quickly, and that the larger the scale on which they take it, the more admirable the smartness and legerdemain. A young man of New York stood behind the counter selling silks to a lady. After the sale had been made, he said to the customer, "I see a slight flaw in that silk." The lady recognized it, and did not conclude the purchase. The head man of the firm saw the transaction, and wrote to the father of the young man in the country, saying, "Come down and take your boy home ; he will never make a merchant." The father came down in excitement to see what his boy had been doing. The employer said, "Your son actually stood at the counter the other day and pointed out a flaw in one of our silks, so that we lost the sale of the goods." The father said, "If that is all my boy has done, I am proud of him, and I would not have him stay five minutes more under your bad influence." John take your hat and come home : " and away they started.

The pressure on our young men in town to-day is awful. Hundreds of them are going down under it for time and for eternity. Others are nobly enduring the pressure. May God help them !

The public mind is utterly poisoned and diseased on the

subject of money-making, and no wonder that God spoke in thunder last week, not only to New York, but to all the cities of the world, saying, "Look out how you get your money. By the hand of death or judgment it shall be wrenched from your grasp. If you get riches by fraud, you will leave them in the midst of your days, and at the end you shall be a fool."

What shall be the eternal destiny of such a man? I leave you to guess. I make you the jury to say what shall be the doom of that Wall Street defrauder who, after the most gigantic dishonesties that were ever practised on this planet, died without one seeming word of repentance or of prayer—in his will giving away the spoils of the most unprecedented thefts without saying in that will, "These are the moneys I got by crime, and are the plea for my eternal condemnation." One minute after a man goes up to judgment, how many steamboats does he own? How many shares of stock in Erie Railway? How many opera-houses? None! The poor boy with a penny in his pocket, who stands on the street-corner as the funeral pageant of the dead cheat passes along, has more money in his pocket than the man who, a few days before, boasted that all the country was afraid of him.

II. Next, I speak of the romance of *libertinism*. Society has severest retribution for the impurity that lurks about the cellars and alleys of the city. It cries out against it. It hurls the indignation of the law at it. But society becomes more lenient as impurity rises towards affluence and high social position, until, finally, it is silent, or disposed to palliate. Where is the judge, or the sheriff, or the police, who dare arraign for indecency the wealthy villain? May he not walk the streets, and ride the parks, and sail the steamers, flaunting his vices in the eyes of the pure? Does not the vile hag of uncleanness look out from tapestried window, and walk richest carpet, and rustle finest silk, and roll in most sumptuous carriage? but where is the law

to take these brazen wretches of "high life" and put their faces in the iron frame of the State Prison window?

It seems as if modern society were hastening back toward the days of Herculaneum and Pompeii, which sculptured their vileness on pillar and temple wall, until nothing but the lava of a burning mountain could hide the immensity of the crime.

At what time the Lord God shall begin to purge our cities I know not, nor whether it shall be by flood, or by fire, or by hurricane; but I do not believe the holy God will stand it much longer. I think that the thunderbolts of His indignation are hissing hot, and that when He rises up to scourge these crimes, against which he hath uttered more bitter curses than against any other, the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah will be found to have been more tolerable than that of our modern cities, which knew better, but showed disposition to do worse.

Would God that the romance which flings its fascinations over the bestialities of high life might be gone! Let it be known that uncleanness on Madison Square is as damnable in the sight of God as the uncleanness of the Five Points. Whether it has canopied couch of eider-down, or sleep amid the putridity of the low tenement-houses, four families in a room, God's consuming vengeance is after it. "All adulterers and whoremongers shall have their place in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." It is hell on earth. It is hell in eternity.

Ever and anon we stand aghast at some exposure of splendid libertinism, as God hurls it upon the public gaze. Such a life ends either in violence or murder, and we hear in the hotel-hall or boarding-house parlour the crack of a pistol—a libertine shot by a libertine—or the crime puts its victim into the lazar-house, and lets him horribly die there. "He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the corrections of the stocks, until

the dart strikes through his liver." "As a bird hasteneth to a snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life." "She hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her."

III. Next, I speak of the romance of *assassination*. God gives life, and He only has a right to take it away; and that man who assumes this divine prerogative has touched the last depths of crime. Society is alert for certain forms of murder. If a citizen, on his way home at night, is waylaid and slain of a robber, we are all anxious for his arraignment and execution. For garotting, or the beating out of life with a club, or axe, or slung-shot, the law has a quick spring and a heavy stroke. But let a man come to wealth or social pretension, and then attempt to avenge his wrongs by aiming a pistol at the head or heart of another, and immediately there are sympathies aroused; and the lawyers plead, and the ladies weep, and the juries are bribed, and the judge halts; a new trial is granted, and the case is postponed for witnesses that never come; and after a number of months in prison, the door is open and the murderer is out. I call this the romance of assassination.

If capital punishment be right, then let the life of the polished murderer go with the life of the ignorant and vulgar assassin. Let there be no partiality of hemp, no aristocracy of the gallows. We are, in our cities, on the march back toward that state of barbarism where every man is judge, jury, and executive officer—a state of society in which that man has the supremacy who has the sharpest knife, and strongest arm, and stealthiest revenge, and quickest spring.

He who wilfully and in hate takes the life of another is a murderer, I care not what the provocation or what the circumstances. A jury may clear him amid the plaudits of the court-room; or the President may send him as an ambassador to Spain; or modern literature may gild the crime *until it* looks like courage and heroism; nevertheless, in

God's eye, murder is murder, and the judgment day will so pronounce it.

My advice to all young men is to sell their pistols, and take the knife out of the top of their cane, and depend on God and their own stout arm for defence. A man who does not feel himself safe without deadly weapons is in the wrong kind of association and companionship, and you had better get out of it ; for the probability is that either they will kill you or you will kill them—which latter thing, for your soul in eternity, will be the greatest disaster of the two ; for “ *no murderer hath eternal life ;* ” and in the future life there is no romance of assassination.

To the young men of this country there comes a stout warning from recent events. Within the past few days, as never before within our remembrance, the old Bible words ring out on the ear : “ Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.” “ The bloody and deceitful man shall not live out half his days.”

What an unclean nest it was over there in New York ! Both of the chief actors were defrauders and adulterers. Many of the sympathizers were partners with them in crime. All the circumstances were appalling, horrid, and overwhelming. The comedy and the farce at which the nation laughed, became the tragedy that made the nation shudder.

Oh, young man, take not the manners, and customs, and habits of what is wrongly called “ high life ” for your example. Do not think sin is less to be hated because it is epauletted and adorned. The brown-stone front can no more keep back the judgments of God than can the cellar door. Behold how God blows up the magnificent wickedness of high places !

There may be some here who are venturing out into sin. The marks of pollution are already upon them. At Long Branch or Cape May, some summer day, you may have stood on the beach, and seen a man go down into the breakers to bathe. He went out farther and farther, until you became



anxious about him. You wondered if he could swim. You shouted to him, as he advanced into the water, "Come back! come back! You will be lost! you will be lost!" He turned around, waved his hand, and shouted "No danger," and still went on, until, after a-while, a wave, with great under-tow, swept him out—his corpse the next day washed up on the beach. So I see young men going down into the waves of sin—deeper and deeper, farther from God, and farther; and I stand on the beach to-night, and cry the warning: "Come back! come back! You will be lost! you will be lost!" Some, not heeding the warning, will jeer at the alarm and go ahead, till, after awhile, the wave of God's indignation will sweep them off, and sweep them down for ever.

There may be some here who have ventured into sinful courses who would like to return. You came in here to-night discouraged, and feel that there is but little hope. I will tell you of a daughter who went from home into the paths of sin. After many months of wandering she resolved one night to go home to her mother's house. It was after midnight when she arrived at the house. She supposed that the door would be locked; but, putting her hand on the latch, the door opened. She asked her mother why it was that the door, after midnight, was unlocked. Said the mother, "That door has never been locked since you went away. I have given orders that, by day and night, it should be unfastened, for I was sure that you would come back, and when you came I did not want you to be hindered a minute." So I have to tell you that the door of God's mercy is ever unlocked. By day and by night it stands open for your coming. Though your sins were as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they were red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Though you may be polluted with all crimes, and smitten of all leprosies, and fired by the most depraved passions and have not heard the Gospel invitation for twenty years, you may have set upon your brow, hot with infamous practices

and besweated with exhaustive indulgences, the flashing coronet of a Saviour's forgiveness.

Who is it that cometh yonder? Methinks I know his steps. Methinks before this I have seen the rags. Look, all ye people of God! Out of all the windows of heaven let the angels watch! A prodigal returning! Let us go out and meet him. Welcome back again to thy long-forsaken home and to thy long-forsaken God. The dead is alive again! The lost is found!

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“Pleased with the news, the saints below  
In songs their tongues employ;  
Beyond the sky the tidings go,  
And heaven is filled with joy.”

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### LAZARUS AND DIVES.

“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”—*Luke* xvi. 19-25.

WE stand in one of the finest private houses of olden time. Every room is luxurious. The floor, made of stones, gypsum, coal and chalk, pounded together, is hard and beautiful. From the roof, surrounded by a balustrade, you take in all the beauty of the landscape. The porch is cool and refreshing, where sit the people who have come in to look at the building, and are waiting for the usher. In this

place you hear the crystal splash of the fountains. The windows, reaching to the floor, and adorned, are quiet places to lounge in, and we sit here listening to the stamp of the blanketed horses in the princely stables. Venison and partridge, delicate morsels of fatted calf, and honey, and figs, and dates, and pomegranates, and fish that only two hours ago glided in the lake, and bowls of sherbet from Egypt, make up the feast, accompanied with riddles, and jests that evoke roaring laughter, with occasional outbursts of music, in which harps thrum, and cymbals clap, and shepherd's pipe whistles. What a place to sit in.

The lord of the place, in dress that changes with every whim, lies on a lounge, stupid from stuffed digestion. His linen is so fine, I wonder who washed it and who ironed it. His jewels the brightest, his purple the rarest. Let him lie perfectly quiet a moment until we take his photograph. Here we have it : " A certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day." How accurate the picture ! You can see every pleat in the linen and every wrinkle in the shirt. What more could that man have ? My lord, be happy ! After a-while he leans over the balustrade, and says to a friend in shining apparel, " Look at that fellow lying down at my gate. I wonder why the porter allows him to lie there. How disgusting ! But our dogs will be let out of the kennel very soon, and will clear him out." Yes, they bound towards him. " Take hold of him ! " cries the rich man from the balustrade ! The dogs go at the beggar with terrible bark ; then take lower growling ; then stop to yawn ; and at the coaxing tone of the poor wretch, they frisk about him, and put their soft, healing tongues to his ulcers, driving off the flies, and relieving the insufferable itch and sting of wounds which could not afford salve or bandage. Lazarus has friends at last. They will for a-while keep off the insults of the street, and defend their patient. That man is far from friendless *who has a good dog to stand by him.* Dogs are often not so

mean as their masters. They will not be allowed to enter heaven, but may they not be allowed to lie down at the gate? for John says of the door of heaven, "Without are dogs." But what is the matter with that beggar? He lies over now with his face exposed to the sun. Lazarus, get up! He responds not. Poor fellow, he is dead. Two men appointed of the town come to carry him out to the fields. They dig a hole, drop him in, and cover him up. The people say, "One more nuisance got rid of!" Aha! that is not Lazarus that they buried. It was only his sores. Yonder goes Lazarus, an angel on his right hand, an angel on the left, carrying him up the steep of heaven—talking, praising, rejoicing. Good old Abraham stands at the gate, and throws his arms around the new-comer. Now Lazarus has his own fine house, and his own robes, and his own banquet, and his own chariot, and that poor, sickly carcass of his that the overseers of the town dumped in the potter's field will come up at the call of the archangel, straight, and pure, and healthy, corruption having become incorruption.

Now we will go back a minute to the fine Oriental house that we spoke of. The lord of the place has been receiving visitors to-day as the door-keeper introduced them. After a while there is a visitor who waits not for the porter to open the gate, or for the gate-keeper to introduce him. Who is it coming? Stop him there at the door! How dare he come in unheralded! He walks into the room, and the lord cries, with terror-struck face "*This is Death. Away with him!*" There is a hard thump on the floor. Is it a pitcher which has fallen, or an ottoman which has upset? No. Dives has fallen. Dives is dead!

The excitement in town is great. The grooms rush from the barn to see. All the great folks of the neighbourhood who used to sit at his dinners come in. The grocer from whom he got his spices, the butcher from whom he got the meat, and the clothier from whom he got the garments, come to find out all about it.

The day of burial has arrived. He is carried down out of his splendid room, and through the porch into the street. The undertaker will make a big job of it, for there is plenty to pay. There will be high eulogies of him pronounced, although the text represents him as chiefly distinguished for his enormous appetite and his fine shirt.

The long procession moves on, amid the accustomed weeping and howling of Oriental obsequies. The sepulchre is reached. Six persons carrying the body go carefully down the steps leading to the door of the dead. The weight of the body on those ahead is heavy, and they hold back. The relics are left in the sepulchre, and the people return. But Dives is not buried there. That which is buried is only the shell in which he lived. Dives is down yonder in a deeper grave. He who had all the wine he could drink asks for a plainer beverage. He wants water. He does not ask for a cupful, or a teaspoonful, but "just one drop," and he cannot get it. He looks up and sees Lazarus, the very man whom he set his dogs on, and wants him to put his finger in water and let him lick it off. Once Lazarus wanted just the crumbs from Dives feast; now Dives wants just one drop from Lazarus's banquet. Poor as poor can be. He has eaten the last quail's wing. He has broken the rind of the last pomegranate. Dives the lord has become Dives the pauper. The dogs of remorse and despair come not with healing tongue to lick, but with relentless muzzle to tear. Now Dives sits at the gate in everlasting beggary, while Lazarus, amid the festivities of heaven, fares sumptuously every day. You see that this parable takes in the distant future, and speaks as though the resurrection were passed, and the body of Lazarus had already joined his spirit, and so I treat it.

Well, you see a man *may be beggared for this life, but be a prince in eternity*. A cluster of old rags was the entire property of Lazarus. His bare feet and ulcered legs were an invitation to the brutes—his food the broken victuals that were pitched out by the housekeeper, half-chewed crusts,

rinds, peelings, bones, gristle—about the last creature out of which to make a prince, yet for eighteen hundred years he has been one of the millionaires of heaven. No more waiting for crumbs. He sits at the same table with the kings of eternity, himself one of them. What were the forty years of his poverty compared with the long ages of his royalty?

Let all the Christian poor be comforted. Your good days will be after a-while. Stand it a little longer, and you will be all right. God has a place for you among the principalities. Do not be afraid of the dogs of distress: they will not bite—they will help to heal. Your poverty may sometimes have led you to doubt whether you will have a decent funeral. You shall have grander obsequies than many a man who is carried out by a procession of governors and senators. The pall bearers will be the angels that carried Lazarus into Abraham's bosom. The surveyors have been busy. Your eternal possessions have been already laid out by God's surveyors, and the stake that bounds the property on this side is driven into the top of your grave, and all beyond is yours. You can afford to wear poor clothes now, when for you in the upper wardrobes is folded up the royal purple. You can afford to have coarse food here, when your bread is to be made from the finest wheat of the eternal harvests. Cheer up! Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

See, also, that a man may have every *comfort and luxury here, and yet come to a wretched future*. It is no sin to be rich. It is a sin not to be rich, if we can be honestly. I wish I had five hundred thousand dollars—I suppose I might as well make it a million—I see so much suffering and trial every day that I say again and again, I wish I had the money to relieve it. But alas for the man who has nothing but money! Dives house had a front door and a back door, and they both opened into eternity. Sixty seconds after Dives was gone, of what use his horses? he could not

ride them ; of what use his rich viands ; he could not open his clenched teeth to eat them ; of what use his fine linen shirts, when he could not wear them ? The poorest man who stood along the road watching the funeral procession of Dives owned more of this world than the dead gormandizer. The future world was all the darker because of the brightness of this. That wife of a drunken husband, if she does wrong, and loses her soul, will not find it so intolerable in hell as others, for she has been in hell ever since she was married, and is partially used to it. But this man of the text had *everything* once, now *nothing*. He had the best wine ; now he cannot get water. He had, like other affluent persons of the East, slaves to fan him when he was hot ; now he is being consumed. He can afford no covering so good as the old patches that once fluttered about Lazarus as he walked in the wind. Who will here take Dives's fine house, and costly plate, and dazzling equipage, and kennel of blooded dogs, if his eternity must be thrown in with it ?

Men ! men ! who have nothing but worldly success as your goal, consider. After you get your elegant house, or your influential business firm, will you be fitted out for eternity ? Breakfasting at half-past seven in the morning, and dying at ten, where will you dine ? Taking tea at six o'clock and dying at eleven, where will you sleep ? The Indian, who for a string of beads sells as much territory as will make a state, is wise compared with a man who for the trinkets of earth barter heaven. "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?"

See farther in the text the *extreme suffering of the finally exiled*. It has been a wonder to me why Universalists come to my Church, not merely temporarily, but that they hold sittings here, and come to all our services, and they are among my best friends. I hold in my hand a letter which makes it plain. The writer of it evidently believes there is *no future place of punishment*. He says in his letter : "I

don't believe that which you preach, but I am certain you believe it. I prefer to hear you expound the Bible, because you do not ignore hell ; for if the foundation of your faith is true, hell is just as certain as Paradise, and has just as much of a locality." Now I understand it. Men want us to be frank in the declaration of our beliefs. All the world knows that the leading denominations in this day believe that there is a hell as certainly as there is a heaven. Why, then slur over the fact, or try to hide it, or declare it only with slight emphasis ? I am an old fogey in my interpretation of the Bible. I have not so much intellect as those men who know how to make an eternity of their own, spinning it out of their own brain. Not having intellect enough to fashion an eternity of my own, I must take the theory of the Bible. I believe there is a hell. If I had not been afraid of hell, I do not think that I should have started for heaven. You say, "I will not be scared in that way. I will not be affrighted by any future punishment." You are quite mistaken. I can frighten you half to death in five minutes. As you are walking along the streets, let me pull down the house-scaffolding, weighing two or three tons, about your head, and you will look as white as a sheet, while your heart will thump like a trip hammer. Now, if it is not ignoble to be affrighted about a falling scaffold, is it ignoble to be affrighted by a threat from the Omnipotent God, who with one stroke of His right hand could crush the universe ? You ask how God, being a father, could let us suffer in the future world ? I answer your question by asking how God, being a father, can let suffering be in this world ? Tell me why He allowed that woman to whom I administered the holy sacrament this afternoon to have a cancer ; tell me why children suffer such pains in teething, the lancet striking such torture in the swollen gums. You fail to explain to me suffering in the present time ; be not surprised if I fail to explain to you suffering in the future. On the way to reject the doctrine of future punishment, men begin by rejecting the idea of



*material fire.* In a few years, while they admit future punishment, they deny that it is *eternal*. A few years after that they cast out the whole idea of future punishment, and let all the thieves, pickpockets, and debauchees of the universe go into glory. As far as I can understand the modern popular theory of future punishment, it is that a man goes down and sits on a hard-bottomed chair for a little while, and after he gets tired of roughing it, goes up to sit on cushions in glory. I will give you my idea of future suffering. I do not ask you to take my theory. I am not your pope; I am your pastor. I believe that there is an *eternal hell*, and I believe that there is *literal fire*. And this is my evidence:

*Matthew* xiii., 50—"And shall cast them into the furnace of fire."

*Revelation* xiv., 10—"He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone."

*Revelation* xix., 20—"These were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

*Isaiah* lxvi., 24—"Neither shall their fire be quenched."

*Matthew* xv., 41—"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."

*Revelation* xxi., 8—"All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

*Mark* ix., 45—"Better than having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched."

The words in my text—"I am tormented in this flame."

Would not a common-sense man not prejudiced in the case take this to be fire? literal fire? an all-sweeping fire? an eternal fire? Lest you should dispute it, it tells what the fire is to be kept in. It is a *furnace* of fire. Lest you should say that it is a different kind of fire from that which we know about, it says, "Its *smoke* ascendeth up for ever." Ah! your father and mother who adopted this literalism, were not such big fools as you make out. They *studied* their Bibles more than we do, and read less of the

human criticisms that have slopped over on the pure page. All the engines of the nineteenth century have turned their hose toward putting out this fire. But still it has burned on, and will burn for ever. It is a great, stubborn, overwhelming fact, that all the ingenuity of men and devils may war against, but cannot destroy. There is not so much evidence that there was a raging fire a few weeks ago in Chicago as that there is to-night a fire in hell : for the one information we have on human authority, the other by the mouths of evangelists and of prophets, and of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God. We have silenced this mighty battery of future punishment, and given to the villians of the world the idea that they shall at last go free ; and under your beautiful teachings, Tweed, and Sweeney, and Hall, and Connolly expect to go right up when they die, and sit in the laps of patriarchs and apostles.

God deals with this world in two ways—by treaty and by cannonade : by treaty, in which for the sake of Jesus Christ, and by the surrender of our hearts to Him, He will be at peace with us, or by the opening of the smoking batteries of hell fire, by which He will hurl upon His enemies a horrible tempest ; and he who will not be drawn by love shall be crushed under his wrath.

See also, from this subject, that heaven is not a myth or an abstraction, but a place of *warm personal intercourse*. Lazarus was carried up to the bosom of Abraham, one of the glorious old patriarchs. I suppose Abraham happened to meet him at the gate. And so, after death, we will be greeted into glory. Our departed friends will be at the door. They have been waiting for our coming. Count up their number if you can. Your father is there. Your mother is there. Your children are there. Your old neighbours are there. Many of the friends with whom you used to attend church, or do business, are there. They have been dead these five, ten, or twenty years, and have been waiting within the veil. There is no clock in heaven, because it is an ever-

lasting day ; yet they keep an account of the passing years, because they are all the time hearing from our world. The angels flying through heaven report how many times the earth has turned on its axis, and in that way the angels can keep a diary ; and they say it is almost time now for father to come up, or for mother to come up. Some day they see a cohort leaving heaven, and they say, "Whither bound ?" and the answer is, "To bring up a soul from earth ;" and the question is asked, "What soul ?" And a family circle in heaven find that it is one of their own number that is to be brought up, and they come out to watch, as on the beach we now watch for the sail of a ship that is to bring our friends home. After a-while, the cohort will heave in sight, flying nearer and nearer, until with a great clang the gates hoist, and with an embrace, wild with the ecstasy of heaven, old friends meet again.

Away with your stiff, formal heaven ! I want none of it. Give me a place of infinite and eternal sociality. My feet free from the clods of earth, I shall bound the hills with gladness, and break forth in a laugh of triumph. Aha ! aha ! We weep now, but then we shall laugh. "Abraham's bosom," in the text, means that heaven has open arms to take us in. Now we fold our arms over our heart, and tell the world to stand back, as though our bosom were a two-barred gate to keep the world out. Heaven stands not with folded arms, but with heart open. It is "Abraham's bosom."

I see a mother and her child meeting at the foot of the throne after some years absence. The child died twenty years ago, but it is a child yet. I think the little ones who die will remain children through all eternity. It would be no heaven without the little darlings. I do not want those that are in heaven to grow up. We need their infant voices in the great song. And when we walk out in the fields of light, we want them to run ahead, and clap their hands, and *pick out* the brightest of the field flowers. Yes, here is a

child and its mother meeting. The child long in glory, the mother just arrived. "How changed you are, my darling!" says the mother. "Yes," says the child, "this is such a happy place; and Jesus has taken such care of me, and heaven is so kind, I got right over the fever with which I died. The skies are so fair, mother! The flowers are so sweet, mother! The temple is so beautiful, mother! Come, take me up in your arms as you used to."

Oh, I do not know how we shall stand the first day in heaven. Do you not think we will break down in the song from over-delight? I once gave out in church the hymn,

"There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign,"

and an aged man standing in front of the pulpit sang heartily the first verse, and then he sat down weeping. I said to him afterward, "Father Linton, what made you cry over that hymn?" He said, "I could not stand it—the joys that are coming." When heaven rises for the doxology, I cannot see how we can rise with it if all these waves of everlasting delight come upon the soul, billow of joy after billow of joy. Methinks Jesus would be enough for the first day in heaven, but here He approaches with all heaven at his back.

Thus I have set before you light and darkness; joy and sorrow, victory and defeat, the rewards of Lazarus, and the overthrow of Dives.

Choose ye between the angelic escort and the parched tongue, between the fountains of God and the waterless desert, between a glorious heaven and a burning hell.

In the name of my God, and with reference to my last account, I have set before you two worlds. CHOOSE YE!

## A STARTLING ANNOUNCEMENT.

“This year thou shalt die.”—*Jeremiah xxviii. 16.*

JEREMIAH, accustomed to saying bold things, addresses Hananiah in these words. They prove true. In sixty days Hananiah was a dead man.

This is the first Sabbath of the year. It is a time for review and for anticipation. A man must be a genius at stupidity who does not think now. The old year died in giving birth to the new, as the life of Jane Seymour, the English Queen, departed when that of her son Edward VI., dawned. The old year was a queen. The new shall be a king. The grave of the one and the cradle of the other are side by side. We can hardly guess what the child will be. It is only seven days old, but I prophecy for it an eventful future. Year of mirth and madness! Year of pageant and conflagration! It will laugh; it will sing; it will groan; it will die.

Is it not a time for earnest thought? The congratulations have been given. The Christmas-trees have been taken down, or have well-nigh cast their fruit. The vacation ended, the children are at school. The friends who came for the holidays are gone in the rail-train. While we are looking forward to another twelve months of intense activities, the text breaks upon us like a bursting thunderhead: “This year thou shalt die!”

May God help us in this service. I know not why you have come. On the coast of England, three men entered a house of worship with stones in their pockets, intending to interrupt the services and assault the preacher. As the preacher began, one of the men said, “Let us throw.” The

others said, "Let us wait until he had made out this point." At the close of that, the first said, "Now let us throw." The third suggested, "I think we had better not throw these stones at all, but listen." The first two, in disgust, left the building, and were afterward executed for great crimes. The third remained, and accepted the truth of the Gospel, and afterwards proclaimed it to many thousands. You may have come here to-night, some of you, merely to pelt me with your criticisms; but I think you had better drop your weapons. It makes but little difference to *me* what you think of me, as it makes but little difference to *you* what I think of you. But what think ye of Christ? Of death? Of the judgment? Of heaven? Of hell?

The text will probably prove true of some of us: "This year thou shalt die." The probability is augmented by the fact that all of us who are over thirty years of age have gone *beyond the average of human life*. The note is more than due. It is only by sufferance that it is not collected. We are like a debtor who is taking the "three days' grace" of the banks. Our race started with nine hundred years for a lifetime. We read of but one antediluvian youth whose early death disappointed the hopes of his parents by his dying at seven-hundred and seventy-seven years of age. The world then may have been a-head of what it is now, for men had so long a time in which to study, and invent, and plan. If an artist or a philosopher has forty years for work, he makes great achievements; but what must the artists and philosophers have done who had nine hundred years before them? In the nearly two thousand years before the flood, considering the longevity of the inhabitants, there may have been nearly as many people as there are now. The flood was not a freshet, that washed a few people off a plank, but a disaster that may have swept away a thousand million. If the Atlantic Ocean, by a lurch of the earth to-night, should drown this hemisphere, and the Pacific Ocean, by a sudden lurch of the earth, should drown the other hemisphere,

leaving about as many beings as could be got in one or two Cunard steamers, it would give you an idea of what the ancient flood was.

At that time God started the race with a shorter allowance of life. The nine hundred years were hewn down, until, in the time of Vespasian, a census was taken, and only one hundred and twenty-four persons were found one hundred years old, and three or four persons one hundred and forty years old. Now a man who has come to one hundred years of age is a curiosity, and we go miles to see him. The vast majority of the race pass off before twenty years. To every apple there are five blossoms that never get to be apples. In the country church the sexton rings the bell rapidly until almost through, and then tolls it. For a while the bell of our life rings right merrily; but with some of you the bell has begun to toll, and the adaptedness of the text to you is more and more probable "*This year thou shalt die.*"

The *character of our occupations* adds to the probability. Those who are in the professions are undergoing a sapping of the brain and nerve foundations. Literary men in this country are driven with whip and spur to their topmost speed. Not one brain-worker out of a hundred observes any moderation. There is something so stimulating in our climate that, if John Brown, the essayist of Edinburgh, had lived here, he would have broken down at thirty-five instead of fifty-five, and Charles Dickens would have dropped at forty.

There is something in all our occupations which pre-disposes to disease. If we be stout, to disorders ranging from fevers to apoplexy. If we be frail, to diseases ranging from consumption to paralysis. Printers rarely reach fifty years. Watchmakers, in marking the time for others, shorten their own. Chemists breathe death in their laboratories, and potters absorb paralysis. Painters fall under *their own* brush. Foundrymen take death in with the *filings*. Shoemakers pound away their own lives on the last.

Over-driven merchants measure off their own lives with the yard-stick. Millers grind their own lives with the grist. Masons dig their graves with the trowel. And in all our occupations and professions there are the elements of peril.

*Rapid climatic changes* threaten our lives. By reason of the violent fits of the thermometer, within two days we live both in the Arctic and the Tropic. The warm south wind finds us with our furs on. The wintry blast cuts through our thin apparel. The hoof, the wheel, the fire-arms, the assassin, await their chance to put upon us their quietus.

I announce it as an impossibility that three hundred and sixty-five days should pass and leave us all as we now are. In what direction to shoot the arrow I know not, and so I shoot it at a venture, "*This year thou shalt die.*"

In view of this, I advise that you have your temporal matters adjusted. Do not leave your worldly affairs at the mercy of administrators. Have your receipts properly pasted, and your letters filed, and your books balanced. If you have "trust-funds," see that they are rightly deposited and accounted for. Let no widow or orphan scratch on your tombstone, "This man robbed me of my inheritance." Many a man has died, leaving a competency, whose property has, through his own carelessness, afterward been divided between the administrators, the surrogate, the lawyers, and the sheriffs. I charge you, before many days have gone, as far as possible, have all your worldly matters made straight, "*for this year thou shalt die.*"

I advise also that you be busy in Christian work. How many Sabbaths in the year? Fifty-two. If the text be true of you, it does not say at what time you may go, and therefore it is unsafe to count on all of the fifty-two Sundays. As you are likely to go in the first half of the year as in the last half, I think we had better divide the fifty-two into halves, and calculate only twenty-six Sabbaths. Come, Christian men, Christian women, what can you do in *twenty-six Sabbaths? Divide the three hundred and sixty-five days*



into two parts ; what can you do in one hundred and eighty-two days ? What, by the way of saving your family, the Church, and the world ? You will not, through all the ages of eternity in heaven, get over the dishonour and the outrage of going into glory, and having helped none up to the same place. It will be found that many a Sabbath-school teacher has taken into heaven her whole class ; that Daniel Baker, the evangelist, took hundreds into heaven ; that Doddridge took in many thousands ; that Paul took in a hundred million. How many will you take in ? If you get into heaven, and find none there that you sent, and that there are none to come through your instrumentality, I beg of you to crawl under some seat in the back corner, and never come out, lest the redeemed get their eyes on you, and some one cry out, " That is the man who never lifted hand or voice for the redemption of his fellows ! Look at him, all heaven ! " Better be busy. Better pick the gunlock, and bite the cartridge, and be sure the caps are good. Better put the plough in deep. Better say what you have to say quickly. Better cry the alarm. Better fall on your knees. Better lay hold with both hands. What you now leave undone for Christ will for ever be left undone. "*This year thou shalt die !*"

In view of the probabilities mentioned, I advise all the men and women not ready for eternity to get ready. If the text be true, you have no time to talk about non-essentials, asking why God let sin come into the world ; or whether the book of Jonah is inspired ; or who Melchisedec was ; or what about the eternal decrees. If you are as near eternity as some of you seem to be, there is no time for anything but the question, " How shall I escape wrath and win heaven ? " The drowning man, when a plank is thrown him, stops not to ask what saw-mill made it, or whether it is oak or cedar, or who threw it. The moment it is thrown, he clutches it. If this year you are to die, there is no time for anything, but immediately laying hold on God.

It is high time to get out of your sins. You say, " I have

committed no great transgressions." But are you not aware that your life has been sinful? The snow comes down on the Alps flake by flake, and it is so light that you may hold it on the tip of your finger without feeling any weight; but the flakes gather; they compact, until some day a traveller's foot starts the slide, and it goes down in an avalanche, crushing to death the villagers. So the sins of your youth, and the sins of your manhood, and the sins of your womanhood may have seemed only slight inaccuracies or trifling divergencies from the right—so slight that they are hardly worth mentioning, but they have been piling up and piling up, packing together, and packing together, until they make a mountain of sin, and one more step of your foot in the wrong direction may slide down upon you an avalanche of ruin and condemnation.

A man crossing a desolate and lonely plateau, a hungry wolf took after him. He brought his gun to his shoulder, and took aim, and the wolf howled with pain, and the cry woke up a pack of wolves, and they came ravening out of the forest from all sides, and horribly devoured him. Thou art the man. Some one sin of your life summoning on all the rest, they surround thy soul, and make the night of thy sin terrible with the assault of their bloody muzzles. Oh, the unpardoned, clamouring, ravening, all-devouring sins of thy lifetime! Repent of them, or perish!

A maniac was found pacing along the road with a torch in one hand and a pail of water in the other, and some one asked him what he meant to do with them. He answered, "With this torch I mean to burn down heaven, and with this water I mean to put out the fires of hell." He was a maniac. He could do the one thing just as well as he could do the other. There is no such thing as putting out the sorrows of the self-destroyed. They burn on for ever. Fly for your life, while flight is possible. No time to lose if you want to escape your sins, for "*this year thou shalt die.*"

Let me announce that Christ, the Lord, stands ready to

save any man who wants to be saved. He waited for you all last year, and all the year before, and all your life. He has waited for you with blood on his brow, and tears in his eye, and two outstretched, mangled hands of love.

You come from your store, and find that your house has been on fire, and that your neighbour put it out. You thank him. You say, "I shall never forget this. When you want anything, come to me." But my Lord makes an attempt to put out the eternal consuming of your soul, and you give Him no thanks, and wish Him off the premises. You come home some night and find the mark of muddy feet on your front steps. You hasten in, and find an excited group around your child. He fell into a pond, and had it not been for a brave lad, who plunged in and brought him out, and carried him home to be resuscitated, you would have been childless. You feel that you cannot do enough for the rescuer. You throw your arms around him. You offer him any compensation. You say to him, "Anything that you want shall be yours. I will never cease to be grateful." But my Lord Jesus sees your soul drowning in wrathful waves of death, and attempts to bring it ashore, and you not only refuse him thanks, but stand on the beach and say, "Drop that soul! If I want it saved, I will save it myself."

I wish you might know what a job Jesus undertook when he carried your case to Calvary. They crowded Him to the wall. They struck Him. They spit on Him. They kicked Him. They cuffed Him. They scoffed at Him. They scourged Him. They murdered Him. Blood! blood! As he stoops down to lift you up, the crimson drops upon you from His brow, from His side, from His hands. Do you not feel the warm current on your face? Oh, dying sinner, for thee the hunger, the thirst, the thorn-sting, the suffocation, the darkness, the groan, the sweat, the struggle, the death!

A great plague came in Marseilles. The doctors held a *consultation*, and decided that a corpse must be dissected, or

they would never know how to stop the plague. A Dr. Guyon said, "To-morrow morning I will proceed to a dissection." He made his will; prepared for death; went into the hospital; dissected a body; wrote out the results of the dissection, and died in twelve hours. Beautiful self-sacrifice, you say. Our Lord Jesus looked out from heaven, and saw a plague-stricken race. Sin must be dissected. He made His will, giving everything to His people. He comes down into the reeking hospital of the earth. He lays His hand to the work. Under our plague, He dies—the healthy for the sick, the pure for the polluted, the innocent for the guilty. Behold the love! Behold the sacrifice! Behold the rescue!

Decide, on this first Sabbath of the year, whether or not you will have Jesus. He will not stand for ever begging for your love. With some here His plea ends right speedily. "*This year thou shalt die.*"

This great salvation of the Gospel I now offer to every man, woman, and child. You cannot buy it. You cannot earn it. A Scotch writer says that a poor woman, one cold winter's day, looked through the window of a king's conservatory, and saw a bunch of grapes hanging against the glass. She said, "Oh, if I only had that bunch of grapes for my sick child at home!" At her spinning-wheel she earned a few shillings, and went to buy the grapes. The king's gardener thrust her out very roughly, and said he had no grapes to sell. She went off and sold a blanket, and got some more shillings, and came back and tried to buy the grapes. But the gardener roughly assaulted her, and told her to be off. The king's daughter was walking in the garden at the time, and she heard the excitement, and, seeing the poor woman, said to her, "My father is not a merchant to *sell*, but he is a king, and *gives*." Then she reached up and plucked the grapes, and dropped them into the poor woman's apron. So Christ is a king, and all the fruits of His *pardon He freely gives*. They may not be bought. Without

money and without price, take this sweet cluster from the vineyards of God.

I am coming to the close of my sermon. I sought for a text appropriate for the occasion. I thought of taking one in Job: "My days fly as a weaver's shuttle;" of a text in the Psalms: "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom;" of the prayer of the vine-dresser: "Lord, let it alone this year also;" but pressed upon my attention, first of all, and last of all, and above all, were the words, "*This year thou shalt die.*"

Perhaps it may mean *me*. Though in perfect health now, it does not take God one week to bring down the strongest physical constitution. I do not want to die this year. We have plans and projects on foot that I want to see completed; but God knows best, and He has a thousand better men than I to do the work of the Tabernacle and of the Free College; and if He takes me, it will be well with both these institutions. I have a hope that, notwithstanding all my sins and wanderings, I shall, through the infinite mercy of my Saviour, come out at the right place. I have nothing to brag of by way of Christian experience; but two things I have learned—my utter helplessness before God, and the all-abounding grace of the Lord Jesus.

If the text means some of you, my hearers, I do not want you to be caught unprepared. I would like to have you, either through money you have laid up, or a "life insurance," be able to leave the world feeling that your family need not become paupers. I would like to have your soul fitted out for eternity, so that if, any morning, or noon, or evening, or night of these three hundred and sixty-five days, death should look in and ask, "Are you ready?" you might, with an outburst of Christian triumph, answer, "Ay, ay! all ready."

I know not what our last words may be. Lord Chesterfield prided himself on his politeness, and said, in his last moment, "Give Dayroles a chair." Dr. Adam, a dying

schoolmaster, said, "It grows dark. The boys may dismiss." Lord Tenterden, supposing himself on the bench of a courtroom, said, in his last moment, "Gentlemen of the jury, you will now consider your verdict." A dying play-actor said, "Drop the curtain. The farce is played out." I would rather have, for my dying words, those of one greater than Chesterfield, or Dr. Adam, or Lord Tenterden: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me."

This is the last January to some who are present. You have entered the year, but you will not close it. Within these twelve months your eyes will shut for the last sleep. Other hands will plant the Christmas-tree, and give the New Year's congratulations. As a proclamation of joy to some, and as a matter of alarm to others, I leave in your ears these five short words of one syllable each, "THIS YEAR THOU SHALT DIE!"

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## THE TWO BIRDS.

"And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel, over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water; and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field."—

*Leviticus xiv. 5-7.*

THE Old Testament, to very many people, is a great slaughter-house strewn with the blood and bones, and horns, and hoofs of butchered animals. It offends their sight; it disgusts their taste; it actually nauseates the stomach. But to the

intelligent Christian the Old Testament is a magnificent corridor through which Jesus advances. As He appears at the other end of the corridor, we can only see the outlines of His character; coming nearer, we can descry the features. But when, at last, He steps upon the platform of the New Testament, amid the torches of evangelists and apostles, the orchestras of heaven announce Him with a blast of minstrelsy that wakes up Bethlehem at midnight.

There were a great many cages of birds brought down to Jerusalem for sacrifice—sparrows, and pigeons, and turtle-doves. I can hear them now, whistling, caroling, and singing all around about the Temple. When a leper was to be cured of his leprosy, in order to his cleansing two of these birds were taken; one of them was slain over an earthen vessel of running water—that is, clear, fresh water, and then the bird was killed. Another bird was then taken, tied to a hyssop-branch, and plunged by the priest into the blood of the first bird; and then, with this hyssop-branch, bird-tipped, the priest would sprinkle the leper seven times, then untie the bird from the hyssop-branch, and it would go soaring into the heavens.

Now, open your eyes wide, my dear brethren and sisters, and see that that first bird meant Jesus, and that that second bird means your own soul.

There is nothing more suggestive than a caged bird. In the down of its breast you can see the glow of southern climes; in the sparkle of its eye you can see the flash of distant seas; in its voice you can hear the song it learned in the wild wood. It is a child of the sky in captivity. Now the dead bird of my text, captured from the air, suggests the *Lord Jesus, who came down from the realms of light and glory*. He once stood in the sunlight of heaven. He was the favourite of the land. He was the King's son. Whenever a victory was gained, or a throne set up, He was the first to *hear it*. He could not walk *incognito* along the streets, for **all heaven knew Him**. For eternal ages He had dwelt amid

the mighty populations of heaven. No holiday had ever dawned on the city when He was absent. He was not like an earthly prince, occasionally issuing from a palace heralded by a troop of clanking horse-guards. No ; He was greeted everywhere as a brother, and all heaven was perfectly at home with Him.

But one day there came word to the palace that an insignificant island was in rebellion, and was cutting itself to pieces with anarchy. I hear an angel say, "Let it perish. The King's realm is vast enough without the island. The tributes to the King are large enough without that. We can spare it." "Not so," said the prince, the King's son ; and I see Him push out one day, under the protest of a great company. He starts straight for the rebellious island. He lands amid the execrations of the inhabitants, that grow in violence until the malice of earth has smitten Him, and the spirits of the lost world put their black wings over his dying head, and shut the sun out. The hawks and vultures swooped upon this dove of the text, until head, and breast, and feet ran blood—until, under the flocks and beaks of darkness, the poor thing perished. No wonder it was a bird that was taken and slain over an earthen vessel of running water. It was a child of the skies. It typified Him who came down from heaven in agony and blood to save our souls. Blessed be His glorious name for ever !

I notice also, in my text, that the bird that was slain was a *clean* bird. The text demanded that it should be. The raven was never sacrificed, nor the cormorant, nor the vulture. It must be a clean bird, says the text ; and it suggests the pure Jesus—the holy Jesus. Although He spent His boyhood in the worst village on earth, although blasphemies were poured into His ear enough to have poisoned any one else, He stands before the world a perfect Christ. Herod was cruel, Henry VIII. was unclean, William III. was treacherous ; but point out a fault of our King. *Answer me, ye boys who knew Him on the streets of*



Nazareth. Answer me, ye miscreants who saw Him die. The sceptical tailors have tried for eighteen hundred years to find out one hole in this seamless garment, but they have not found it. The most ingenious and eloquent infidel of this day, in the last line of his book, all of which denounces Christ, says, "All ages must proclaim that among the sons of *men* there is none greater than Jesus." So let this bird of the text be clean—its feet fragrant with the dew that it pressed, its beak carrying sprig of thyme and frankincense, its feathers washed in summer showers. O thou spotless Son of God, impress us with thy innocence!

"Thou lovely source of true delight,  
Whom I, unseen, adore,  
Unveil thy beauties to my sight,  
That I may love thee more."

I remark, also, in regard to this first bird, mentioned in the text, that it was a *defenceless* bird. When the eagle is assaulted, with its iron beak it strikes like a bolt against its adversary. This was a dove or a sparrow, we do not know just which. Take the dove or pigeon, in your hand, and the pecking of its beak on your hand makes you laugh at the feebleness of its assault. The reindeer, after it is down, may fell you with its antlers. The ox, after you think it is dead, may break your leg in its death-struggle. The harpooned whale, in its last agony, may crush you in the coil of the unwinding rope. But this was a dove or a sparrow—perfectly harmless, perfectly defenceless—type of Him who said, "I have trod the wine-press alone, and there was none to help." None to help! The murderers have it all their own way. Where was the soldier in the Roman regiment who swung his sword in the defence of the Divine Martyr? Did they put one drop of oil on his gashed feet? Was there one, in all that crowd, manly and generous enough to stand up for Him? Were the miscreants at the cross any more interfered with in their work of spiking Him fast than

the carpenter in his shop driving a nail through a pine board? The women cried, but there was no balm in their tears. None to help! none to help! O my Lord Jesus, none to help! The wave of anguish came up to the arch of His feet—came up to His knee—floated to His waist—rose to His chin—swept to His temples, yet none to help! Ten thousand times ten thousand angels in the sky, ready at command to plunge into the bloody affray, and strike back the hosts of darkness, yet none to help! none to help!

Oh, this dove of the text, in its last moment, clutched not with angry talons. It plunged not a savage beak. It was a dove—helpless, defenceless. None to help! none to help!

As, after a severe storm in the morning, you go out, and find birds dead on the snow, so this dead bird of the text makes me think of that awful storm that swept the earth on Crucifixion day, when the wrath of God, and the malice of man, and the fury of devils wrestled beneath the three crosses. As we sang just now,

“ Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in,  
When Christ, the mighty Maker, died  
For man, the creature's sin.”

But I come now to speak of this *second* bird of the text. We must not let that fly away until we have examined it. The priest took the second bird, tied it to the hyssop-branch, and then plunged it into the blood of the first bird. Ah! that is my soul, plunged for cleansing in the Saviour's blood. There is not enough water in the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans to wash away our smallest sin. Sin is such an outrage on God's universe that nothing but blood can atone for it. You know the life is in the blood, and as the life had been forfeited, nothing could buy it back but blood. What was it that was sprinkled on the door-posts when the destroying angel went through the land? Blood. What was it that

went streaming from the altar of ancient sacrifice? Blood. What was it that the priest carried into the holy of holies, making intercession for the people? Blood! What was it that Jesus sweat in the garden of Gethsemane? Great drops of blood. What does the wine in the sacramental cup signify? Blood. What makes the robes of the righteous in heaven so fair? They are washed in the blood of the Lamb. What is it that cleanses all our pollution? The blood of Jesus Christ, that cleanseth from all sin.

I hear somebody saying, "I do not like such a *sanguinary* religion as that." Do you think it is very wise for the patient to tell the doctor, "I don't like the medicine you have given me?" If he wants to be cured, he had better take the medicine. My Lord God has offered us a balm and it is very foolish for us to say, "I don't like that balm." We had better take it and be saved. But you do not oppose the shedding of blood in other directions and for other ends. If a hundred thousand men go out to battle for their country, and have to lay down their lives for free institutions, is there anything ignoble about that? No, you say, "glorious sacrifice rather." And is there anything ignoble in the idea that the Lord Jesus Christ, by the shedding of his blood, delivered not only one land, but all lands and all ages, from bondage, introducing men by millions and millions into the liberty of the sons of God! Is there anything ignoble about that?

As the second bird of the text was plunged in the blood of the first bird, so we must be washed in the blood of Christ, or go polluted for ever.

"Let the water and the blood,  
From thy side a healing flood,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Save from earth and make me pure."

*I notice now that as soon as this second bird was dipped in the blood of the first bird, the priest unloosened it and it*

was free—free of wing and free of foot. It could whet its beak on any tree-branch it chose. It could peck the grapes of any vineyard it chose. It was free: a type of our souls after we have washed in the blood of the Lamb. We can go where we will. We can do what we will. You say, "Had you not better qualify that?" No; for I remember that in conversion the *will* is changed, and the man will not *will* that which is wrong. There is no straight jacket in our religion. A state of sin is a state of slavery. A state of pardon is a state of emancipation. The hammer of God's grace knocks the hobbles from the feet, knocks the handcuffs from the wrist, opens the door into a landscape all ashimmer with fountains and abloom with gardens. It is freedom.

If a man has become a Christian he is no more afraid of Sinai. The thunders of Sinai do not frighten him. You have, on some August day, seen two thunder-showers meet. One cloud from this mountain, and another cloud from that mountain, coming nearer and nearer together, and responding to each other, crash to crash, thunder to thunder, boom! boom! And then the clouds break and the torrents pour, and they are emptied perhaps into the very same stream that comes down so red at your feet, that it seems as if all the carnage of the storm-battle has been emptied into it. So in this Bible I see two storms gather, one above Sinai, the other above Calvary, and they respond one to the other—flash to flash, thunder to thunder, boom! boom! Sinai thunders, "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die;*" Calvary responds, "*Save them from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom.*" Sinai says, "*Woe! woe!*" Calvary answers, "*Mercy! mercy!*" and then the clouds burst, and empty their treasures into one torrent, and it comes flowing to our feet, red with the carnage of our Lord—in which, if thy soul be plunged, like the bird in the text, it shall go forth **FREE—FREE!** Oh, I wish my people to understand this: *that when a man becomes a Christian he does not become a*

slave, but that he becomes a free man : that he has larger liberty after he becomes a child of God than before he became a child of God. General Fisk says that he once stood at a slave-block where an old Christian minister was being sold. The auctioneer said of him, "What bid do I hear for this man? He is a very good kind of a man; he is a minister." Somebody said, "twenty dollars" (he was very old and not worth much); somebody else "twenty-five"—"thirty"—"thirty-five"—"forty." The aged Christian minister began to tremble; he had expected to be able to buy his own freedom, and he had just seventy dollars, and expected with the seventy dollars to get free. As the bids ran up the old man trembled more and more. "Forty"—"forty-five"—"fifty"—"fifty-five"—"sixty"—"sixty-five." The old man cried out "*seventy*." He was afraid they would outbid him. The men around were transfixed. Nobody dared bid; and the auctioneer struck him down to himself—done—done!

But by reason of sin we are poorer than that African. We cannot buy our own deliverance. The voices of death are bidding for us, and they bid us in, and they bid us down. But the Lord Jesus Christ comes and says, "I will buy that man; I bid for him my Bethlehem manger; I bid for him my hunger on the mountain; I bid for him my aching head; I bid for him my fainting heart; I bid for him all my wounds." A voice from the throne of God says, "It is enough! Jesus has bought him." Bought with a price. The purchase complete. It is done.

"The great transaction's done;  
I am my Lord's, and He is mine.  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Charmed to confess the voice divine."

Why is not a man free when he gets rid of his sins? The *sins of the tongue* gone; the *sins of action* gone; the *sins of the mind* gone. All the transgressions of thirty, forty, fifty,

seventy years gone—no more in the soul than the malaria that floated in the atmosphere a thousand years ago; for, when my Lord Jesus pardons a man He pardons him, and there is no half-way work about it.

Here I see a beggar going along the turnpike road. He is worn out with disease. He is stiff in the joints. He is ulcered all over. He has rheum in his eyes. He is sick and wasted. He is in rags. Every time he puts down his swollen feet, he cries, "Oh! the pain!" He sees a fountain by the roadside under a tree, and he crawls up to that fountain and says, "I must wash. Here I may cool my ulcers. Here I may get rested." He stoops down, and scoops up in the palm of his hands enough water to slake his thirst; and that is all gone. Then he stoops down, and begins to wash his eyes; and the rheum is all gone. Then he puts in his swollen feet, and the swelling is gone. Then, willing no longer, to be only half cured, he plunges in, and his whole body is laved in the stream, and he gets upon the bank well. Meantime the owner of the mansion up yonder comes down, walking through the ravine with his only son, and he sees the bundle of rags, and asks, "Whose rags are these?" A voice from the fountain says, "Those are my rags." Then says the master to his son, "Go up to the house and get the best new suit you can find, and bring it down." And he brings down the clothes, and the beggar is clothed in them, and he looks around and says, "I was filthy, but now I am clean. I was ragged, but now I am robed. I was blind, but now I see. Glory be to the owner of that mansion; and glory be to that son who brought me that new suit of clothes; and glory be to this fountain where I have washed, and where all who will may wash and be clean!"

Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound. The bird has been dipped, now let it fly away.

The next thing I notice about this bird, when it was loosened (and *this is the main idea*), is, that it flew away. *Which way did it go? When you let a bird loose from your*

grasp, which way does it fly? Up. What are wings for? To fly with. Is there anything in the suggestion of the direction taken by that bird to indicate which way we ought to go?

“Rise my soul and stretch thy wings,  
Thy better portion trace;  
Rise from transitory things  
To heaven, thy native place.”

We should be going heavenward. That is the suggestion. But I know that we have a great many draw-backs. You had them this morning, perhaps. You had them yesterday, or the day before; and although you want to be going heavenward, you are constantly discouraged. But I suppose when that bird went out of the priest's hands it went by inflections—sometimes stooping. A bird does not shoot directly up, but *this* is the motion of a bird. So the soul soars toward God, rising up in love, and sometimes depressed by trial. It does not always go in the direction it would like to go. But the main course is right. There is one passage in the Bible which I quote oftener to myself than any other: “He knoweth our frame, and He remembereth that we are dust.”

There is a legend in Iceland which says that when Jesus was a boy, playing with his comrades one Sabbath day, he made birds of clay; and as these birds of clay were standing upon the ground, an old Sadducee came along, and he was disgusted at the sport, and dashed the birds to pieces; but the legend says that Jesus waved his hand above the broken birds, and they took wing, and went singing heavenward. Of course that is a fable among the Icelanders; but it is not a fable that we are dust, and that the hand of divine grace waved over us once, we go singing towards the skies.

I wish, my friends, that we could live in a higher atmosphere. If a man's whole life-object is to make dollars, he *will* be running against those who are making dollars. If *his* whole object is to get applause, he *will* be running against

those who are seeking applause. But if he rises higher than that, he will not be interrupted in his flight heavenward. Why does that flock of birds, floating up against the blue sky so high that you can hardly see them, not change its course for spire or tower? They are *above* all obstructions. So we would not have so often to change our Christian course if we lived in a higher atmosphere, nearer Christ, nearer the throne of God.

Oh, ye who have been washed in the blood of Christ—ye who have been loosed from the hyssop-branch—start heavenward. It may be to some of you a long flight. Temptations may dispute your way; storms of bereavement and trouble may strike your soul; but God will see you through. Build not on the earth. Set your affections on things in heaven, not on things on earth. This is a perishing world. Its flowers fade. Its fountains dry up. Its promises cheat. Set your affections upon Christ and heaven. I rejoice, my dear brethren and sisters in Christ, that the flight, will after a-while be ended. Not always beaten of the storm. Not always going on weary wings. There is a warm dovecot of eternal rest where we shall find a place of comfort, to the everlasting joy of our souls. Oh, they are going up all the time—going up from this church—going up from all the families and from all the churches of the land—the weary doves seeking rest in a dovecot.

During the last week I sat by the death-bed of my sister Mary. Her soul has for many days been struggling to get loose. Oh, that now, while I speak, the chain might break! There is only one thing that can cure her. All the doctors have failed. Oh, that Jesus would take the case in His hands, and with the quick salve of death cure the cancer in the breast. Mary and I were born only two years apart. Our childhood was one. Was there anything in all the round of childish games that we *did not play*? When she threw off her bonnet, and I threw off my hat for the race, how we sped down the lane! I shut



my eyes, for it seems a dream. How we made the haymows and the meadows ring with the racket! She was sunshine. She was always sunshine. She is on her way to everlasting sunshine. As, two or three days ago, I sat on her bedside, she said, "Oh, De Witt, no doubts, no fears! What a mistake I would have made if I had waited to get ready until now! Why, with this hard lump in my breast, I could not have got ready." Lord Jesus, is it not enough? Come! I beckon thee to her bedside. Put an end to her anguish. Why does the chariot wait so long? Let the charioteer take his seat, and the wheels whirl; and the King halt at the gate of the country parsonage. No one can touch her without hurting her, but, Lord Jesus, thou canst. Lift her in, and then away; and may God have pity upon the motherless little ones left behind.

Oh, that in that good land we may all meet when our trials are over! I beseech you, by the God of your sister (for who has not a sister in heaven?)—by the God of your sister, I beseech you to turn and live. We cannot get into their blessed presence, who are in glory, unless we have been cleansed in the same blood that washed their sins away. I know this is true of all who have gone in, that they were plunged in the blood, that they were unloosened from the hyssop-branch. Then they went singing into glory. See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh, for if they escaped not who refuse Him that spake on earth, how much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven?

## AS THE STARS FOR EVER.

“They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.”—*Daniel* xii. 3.

VERY man has a thousand roots and a thousand branches. His roots reach down through all the earth; his branches spread through all the heavens. He speaks with voice, with eye, with hand, with foot. His silence often is thunder, and his life is an anthem or a doxology. There is no such thing as a negative influence. We are all positive in the place we occupy, making the world better or making it worse, on the Lord's side or on the devil's, making up reasons for our condemnation or banishment; and we have already done a mighty work in peopling heaven or hell. I hear people tell what they are going to do. A man who has burned down a city might as well talk of some evil that he expects to do, a man who has saved an empire might as well talk of some good that he expects to do. By the force of your evil influence you have already consumed infinite values, or you have, by the power of a right influence, won whole kingdoms for God.

About the future sorrow of those who have wrought famously, I speak not now; but of the reward of those who turn many to righteousness I will speak, if God will help me.

It would be absurd for me to stand here, and, by elaborate argument, prove that the world is off the track. You might as well stand at the foot of an embankment, amid the wreck of a capsized rail-train, proving by elaborate argument that something is out of order. Adam tumbled over the embankment sixty centuries ago, and the whole race, in one

long train, has gone on tumbling in the same direction. Crash ! crash ! The only question now is, by what leverage can the crushed thing be lifted ? By what hammer may the fragments be reconstructed ?

I want to show you how we may turn many to righteousness, and what will be our future pay for so doing.

First : We may turn them by the charm of a *right example*. A child, coming from a filthy home, was taught at school to wash its face. It went home so much improved in appearance that its mother washed *her* face. And when the father of the household came home, and saw the improvement in domestic appearance, he washed *his* face. The neighbours happening in, saw the change, and tried the same experiment until all that street was purified, and the next street copied its example, and the whole city felt the result of one school-boy washing his face. That is a fable, by which we set forth that the best way to get the world washed of its sins and pollution is to have our own heart and life cleansed and purified. A man with grace in his heart, and Christian cheerfulness in his face, and holy consistency in his behaviour, is a perpetual sermon ; and the sermon differs from others in that it has but one head, and the longer it runs, the better. There are *honest* men who walk down Wall Street, making the teeth of iniquity chatter. There are *happy* men who go into a sick-room, and, by a look, help the broken bone to knit, and the excited nerves drop to calm beating. They are *pure* men whose presence silences the tongue of uncleanness. The mightiest agent of good on earth is a consistent Christian. I like the Bible folded between lids of cloth, of calfskin, or of morocco, but I like it better when, in the shape of a man, it goes out into the world—a Bible illustrated. Courage is beautiful to read about ; but rather would I see a man with all the world against him confident as though all the world were for him. Patience is beautiful to read about ; but rather would I see a buffeted soul calmly waiting for the *time of deliverance*. Faith is beautiful to read about ; but

rather would I find a man in the midnight walking straight on as though he saw everything. Oh, how many souls have been turned to God by the charm of a bright example !

When, in the Mexican war, the troops were wavering, a general rose in his stirrups and dashed into the enemy's lines, shouting, "*Men, follow !*" They, seeing his courage and disposition, dashed on after him, and gained the victory. What men want to rally them for God is an example to lead them. All your commands to others to advance amount to nothing so long as you stay behind. To affect them aright, you need to start for heaven yourself, looking back only to give the stirring cry of, MEN, FOLLOW !

Again : We may turn many to righteousness by *prayer*. There is no such *detective* as prayer, for no one can hide away from it. It puts its hand on the shoulder of a man ten thousand miles off. It alights on a ship mid-Atlantic. The little child cannot understand the law of electricity, or how the telegraphic operator, by touching the instrument here, may dart a message under the sea to another continent ; nor can we, with our small intellect, understand how the touch of a Christian's prayer shall instantly strike a soul on the other side of the earth. You take ship and go to some other country, and get there at eleven o'clock in the morning. You telegraph to New York, and the message gets here at six o'clock in the same morning. In other words, it seems to arrive here five hours before it started. Like that is prayer. God says, "*Before they call, I will hear.*" To overtake a loved one on the road, you may spur up a lathered steed until he shall outrace the one that brought the news to Ghent ; but a prayer shall catch it at one gallop. A boy running away from home may take the midnight train from the country village, and reach the sea-port in time to gain the ship that sails on the morrow ; but a mother's prayer will be on the deck to meet him, and in the hammock before he swings into it, and at the capstan before he winds the rope around it, and *on the sea, against the sky, as the vessel ploughs on toward*

it. There is a mightiness in prayer. George Muller prayed a company of poor boys together, and then he prayed up an asylum in which they might be sheltered. He turned his face toward Edinburgh and prayed, and there came a thousand pounds. He turned his face toward London and prayed, and there came a thousand pounds. He turned his face toward Dublin and prayed, and there came a thousand pounds. The breath of Elijah's prayer blew all the clouds off the sky, and it was dry weather. The breath of Elijah's prayer blew all the clouds together, and it was wet weather. Prayer, in Daniel's time, walked the cave as a lion-tamer. It reached up, and took the sun by its golden bit, and stopped it. We have all yet to try the full power of prayer. The time will come when the American Church will pray with its face toward the west, and all the prairies and inland cities will surrender to God; and will pray with face toward the sea, and all the islands and ships will become Christian. Parents who have wayward sons will get down on their knees and say, "Lord, send my boy home," and the boy in Canton shall get right up from the gaming table, and go down to the wharf to find out which ship starts first for America.

Not one of us yet knows how to pray. All we have done as yet has only been pottering, and guessing, and experimenting. A boy gets hold of his father's saw and hammer, and tries to make something, but it is a poor affair that he makes. The father comes and takes the same saw and hammer, and builds the house or the ship. In the childhood of our Christian faith, we make but poor work with these weapons of prayer, but when we come to the stature of men in Christ Jesus, then, under these implements, the temple of God will rise, and the world's redemption will be launched. God cares not for the length of our prayers, or the number of our prayers, or the beauty of our prayers, or the place of our prayers; but it is the *faith* in them that tells. Believing *prayer soars higher than the lark ever sang; plunges deeper than diving-bell ever sank; darts quicker than lightning ever*

lashed. Though we have used only the back of this weapon instead of the edge, what marvels have been wrought! If saved we are all the captives of some earnest prayer. Would God that, in desire for the rescue of souls, we might in prayer lay hold of the resources of the Lord omnipotent.

We may turn many to righteousness by Christian admonition. Do not wait until you can make a formal speech. Address the one next to you. You will not go home alone to-night. Between the Tabernacle and your own house you may decide the eternal destiny of an immortal spirit. Just one sentence may do the work. Just one question. Just one look. The formal talk that begins with a sigh, and ends with a canting snuffle is not what is wanted, but the heart-throb of a man in dead earnest. There is not a soul on earth that you may not bring to God if you rightly go at it. They said Gibraltar could not be taken. It is a rock, sixteen hundred feet high and three miles long. But the English and Dutch did take it. Artillery, and sappers, and miners, and fleets pouring out volleys of death, and thousands of men, reckless of danger, can do anything. The stoutest heart of sin, though it be rock, and surrounded by an ocean of transgression, under Christian bombardment may be made to hoist the flag of redemption.

But is all this admonition, and prayer, and Christian work for nothing? My text promises to all the faithful eternal lustre. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever.

As stars, the redeemed have a *borrowed light*. What makes Mars, and Venus, and Jupiter so luminous? When the sun throws down his torch in the heavens, the stars pick up the scattered brands, and hold them in procession as the queen of the night advances; so all Christian workers, standing around the throne, will shine in the light borrowed from the Sun of Righteousness, Jesus in their faces, Jesus in their songs, Jesus in their triumph. Christ left heaven once for a *tour of redemption on earth*, yet the glorified ones knew

he would come back again. But let Him abdicate His throne, and go away to stay for ever, the music would stop ; the congregation disperse ; the temples of God be darkened ; the rivers of light stagnate ; and every chariot would become a hearse, and every bell would toll, and there would not be room on the hill sides to bury the dead of the great metropolis, for there would be pestilence in heaven. But Jesus lives, and so all the redeemed live with Him. He shall recognize them as His comrades in earthly toil, and remember what they did for the honour of His name, and for the spread of His kingdom. All their prayers, and tears, and work will rise before Him as He looks into their faces, and He will divide His kingdom with them ; His peace—their peace ; His holiness—their holiness ; His joy—their joy. The glory of the central throne reflected from the surrounding thrones, the last spot of sin struck from the Christian orb, and the entire nature a tremble and a flash with light, they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Again : Christian workers shall be like the stars in the fact that they have a *light independent of each other*. Look up at the night, and see each world show its distinct glory. It is not like the conflagration, in which you cannot tell where one flame stops and another begins. Neptune, Herschel, and Mercury are as distinct as if each one of them were the only star ; so our individualism will not be lost in heaven. A great multitude—yet each one as observable, as distinctly recognized, as greatly celebrated, as if in all the space, from gate to gate, and from hill to hill, he were the only inhabitant ; no mixing up—no mob—no indiscriminate rush ; each Christian worker standing out illustrious—all the story of earthly achievement adhering to each one ; his self-denials, and pains, and services, and victories published. Before men went out to the last war, the orators told them that they would all be remembered by their country, and their names *be commemorated* in poetry and in song : but go to the grave **■** *ward* in Richmond, and you will find there six thousand

ves, overeach one of which is the inscription, "*Unknown.*"  
 e world does *not* remember its heroes ; but there will be  
 unrecognized Christian worker in heaven. Each one  
 own by all ; grandly known ; known by acclamation : all  
 past story of work for God gleaming in cheek, and brow,  
 d foot, and palm. They shall shine with distinct light, as  
 stars, for ever and ever.

Again : Christian workers shall shine like the stars *in*  
*stars*. In looking up, you find the worlds in family circles.  
 others and sisters—they take hold of each other's hands  
 d dance in groups. Orion in a group. The Pleiades in a  
 up. The solar system is only a company of children,  
 th bright faces, gathered around one great fireplace. The  
 rlds do not straggle off. They go in squadrons and fleets,  
 ling through immensity.

So Christian workers in heaven will dwell in neighbour-  
 ods and clusters. I am sure that some people I will like  
 heaven a great deal better than others. Yonder is a  
 constellation of stately Christians. They lived on earth by  
 id rule. They never laughed. They walked every  
 ur, anxious lest they should lose their dignity. But  
 y loved God ; and yonder they shine in brilliant con-  
 ellation. Yet I shall not long to get into that particular  
 up. Yonder is a constellation of small-hearted Chris-  
 ns—asteroids, in the eternal astronomy. While some  
 ils go up from Christian battle, and blaze like Mars,  
 ese asteroids dart a feeble ray like Vesta. Yonder is a  
 nstellation of martyrs, of apostles, of patriarchs. Our  
 uls, as they go up to heaven, will seek out the most con-  
 nial society. Yonder is a constellation almost merry with  
 e play of light. On earth they were full of sympathies,  
 d songs, and tears, and raptures, and congratulations.  
 hen they prayed their words took fire ; when they sang,  
 e tune could not hold them ; when they wept over a world's  
 oes, they sobbed as if heart-broken ; when they worked for  
 rist, they flamed with enthusiasm. Yonder they are—circle



of light ! constellation of joy ! galaxy of fire ! Oh, that you and I, by that grace which can transform the worst into the best, might at last sail in the wake of that fleet, and wheel in that glorious group, as the stars, for ever and ever !

Again : Christian workers will shine like the stars in *swiftness of motion*. The worlds do not stop to shine. There are no fixed stars save as to relative position. The star most thoroughly fixed flies thousands of miles a minute. The astronomer, using his telescope for an Alpine stock, leaps from world-crag to world-crag, and finds no star standing still. The chamois hunter has to fly to catch his prey, but not so swift is his game as that which the scientist tries to shoot through the tower of the observatory. Like petrels mid-Atlantic, that seem to come from no shore, and be bound to no landing-place—flying, flying—so these great flocks of worlds rest not as they go—wing and wing—age after age—for ever and ever. The eagle hastes to its prey, but we shall in speed beat the eagles. You have noticed the velocity of the swift horse under whose feet the miles slip like a smooth ribbon, and as he passes, the four hoofs strike the earth in such quick beat your pulses take the same vibration. But all these things are not swift in comparison with the motion of which I speak. The moon moves fifty-four thousand miles in a day. Yonder, Neptune flashes on eleven thousand miles in an hour. Yonder, Mercury goes one hundred and nine thousand miles in an hour. So, like the stars, the Christian worker shall shine in swiftness of motion. You hear now of father, or mother, or child sick one thousand miles away, and it takes you two days to get to them. You hear of some case of suffering that demands your immediate attention, but it takes you an hour to get there. Oh, the joy when you shall, in fulfilment of the text, take starry speed, and be equal to one hundred thousand miles an hour. Having on earth got used to Christian work, you will not quit when death strikes you. You will only take on more velocity. There is a dying child in London, and its

it must be taken up to God : you are there in an instant to it. There is a young man in New York to be arrested going into that gate of sin : you are there in an instant to arrest him. Whether with spring of foot, or stroke of leg, or by the force of some new law, that shall hurl you to the spot where you would go, I know not ; but my text suggests velocity. All space open before you, with nothing under you in mission of light, and love, and joy, you will shine in swiftness of motion as the stars for ever and  
r.

Again : Christian workers like the stars, shall shine *in magnitude*. The most illiterate man knows that these things in the sky, looking like gilt buttons, are great masses of matter. To weigh them, one would think that it would require scales with a pillar hundreds of thousands of miles high, and chains hundreds of thousands of miles long, and at the bottom of the chains basins on either side hundreds of thousands of miles wide, and that then Omnipotence alone could put the mountains into the scales and the hills into the balance. But puny man has been equal to the undertaking, and has set a little balance on his geometry, and weighed world against world. Yea, he has pulled out a measuring-line, and announced that Herschel is thirty-thousand miles in diameter, Saturn seventy-nine thousand miles in diameter, and Jupiter eighty-nine thousand miles in diameter, and that the smallest pearl on the beach of heaven is immense beyond all imagination. So all they who are toiled for Christ on earth shall rise up to a magnitude of privilege, and a magnitude of strength, and a magnitude of holiness, and a magnitude of joy ; and the weakest saint in glory become greater than all that we can now imagine of an archangel.

Brethren, it doth not yet appear what we shall be. Wisdom that shall know everything ; wealth that shall possess everything ; strength that shall do everything ; glory that shall *transcribe everything* ! We shall not be like a taper, set

in a sick man's window, or a bundle of sticks kindled on the beach to warm a shivering crew ; but you must take the diameter and the circumference of the world if you would get any idea of the greatness of our estate when we shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Lastly, and coming to this point my mind almost breaks down under the contemplation—like the stars, all Christian workers shall shine *in duration*. The same stars that look down upon us looked down upon the Chaldæan shepherds. The meteor that I saw flashing across the sky the other night, I wonder if it was not the same one that pointed down to where Jesus lay in the manger, and if, having pointed out His birthplace, it has ever since been wandering through the heavens, watching to see how the world would treat Him. When Adam awoke in the garden in the cool of the day, he saw coming out through the dusk of the evening the same worlds that greeted us on our way to church to-night.

In Independence Hall is an old cracked bell that sounded the signature of the Declaration of Independence. You cannot ring it now ; but this great chime of silver bells that strike in the dome of night ring out with as sweet a tone as when God swung them at the creation. Look up to-night, and know what the white lilies that bloom in all the hanging gardens of our King are century plants—not blooming once in a hundred years, but through all the centuries.

The star at which the mariner looks to-night was the light by which the ships of Tarshish were guided across the Mediterranean, and the Venetian flotilla found its way into Lepanto. Their armour is as bright to-night as when, in ancient battle, the stars in their course fought against Sisera. To the ancients the stars were symbols of eternity. But here the figure of my text breaks down—not in defeat, but in the majesties of the judgment. The stars shall not shine for ever. The Bible says they shall fall like autumnal leaves. It is almost impossible for a man to take in a *courser* going a mile in three minutes ; but God shall take

in the worlds, flying a hundred thousand miles an hour, by one pull of his little finger. As, when the factory band slips at nightfall from the main-wheel, all the smaller wheels slacken their speed, and with slower and slower motion they turn until they come to a full stop, so this great machinery of the universe, wheel within wheel, making revolution of appalling speed, shall by the touch of God's hand, slip the band of present law, and slacken, and stop. That is what will be the matter with the mountains. The chariots in which they ride shall halt so suddenly that the kings shall be thrown out. Star after star shall be carried out to burial amid funeral torches of burning worlds. Constellations shall throw ashes on their head, and all up and down the highways of space there shall be mourning, mourning, mourning, because the worlds are dead. But the Christian workers shall never quit their thrones—they shall reign for ever and ever. If, by some invasion from hell, the attempt were made to carry them off into captivity from heaven, the souls they have saved would rally for their defence, and all the angels of God would strike with their sceptres, and the redeemed, on white horses of victory would ride down the foe, and all the steep of the sky would resound with the crash of the overwhelmed cohorts tumbled headlong out of heaven.

Safe for ever—all Christian workers. No toil shall fatigue them; no hostility overcome them; no pain pierce them; no night shadow them. For ever the river of joy flows on; for ever the jubilee progresses. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

But none of these things for the idlers, the drones, the stumbling-blocks. They who have, by prayer, and example, and Christian work, turned many to righteousness, and *only they*, "shall shine as the stars for ever."

## GOD OUR MOTHER.

“As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.”—  
*Isaiah lxi. 33.*

THE Bible is a warm letter of affection from a parent to a child, and yet there are many who see chiefly the severer passages. As there may be fifty or sixty nights of gentle dew in one summer, that will not cause as much remark as one hail-storm of half an hour, so there are those who are more struck by those passages of the Bible that announce the indignation of God than by these that announce His affection. There may come to a household twenty or fifty letters of affection during the year, and they will not make as much excitement in that home as one sheriff's writ; and so there are people who are more attentive to those passages which announce the wrath of God, than to those which announce His mercy and His favour. God is a Lion, John says in the Book of Revelation. God is a Breaker, Micah announces in his prophecy. God is a Rock. God is a King. But hear also that God is Love. A father and his child are walking out in the fields on a summer's day, and there comes up a thunder-storm, and there is a flash of lightning that startles the child, and the father says, “My dear, that is God's *eye*.” There comes a peal of thunder, and the father says, “My dear, that is God's *voice*.” But the clouds go off the sky, and the storm is gone, and light floods the heavens and floods the landscape, and the father forgets to say, “That is God's *smile*.”

The text of this morning bends with great gentleness and love over all who are prostrate in sin and trouble. It lights up with compassion. It melts with tenderness. It breathes

upon us the hush of an eternal lullaby, for it announces that God is our Mother. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I remark, in the first place, that God has a *mother's simplicity of instruction*. A father does not know how to teach a child the A, B, C. Men are not skilful in the primary department; but a mother has so much patience that she will tell a child for the hundredth time the difference between F and G, and between I and J. Sometimes it is by blocks; sometimes by worsted work; sometimes by the slate; sometimes by the book. She thus teaches the child, and has no awkwardness of condescension in so doing. So God our Mother, stoops down to our infantile minds. Though we are told a thing a thousand times, and we do not understand it, our heavenly Mother goes on, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. God has been teaching some of us thirty years, and some of us sixty years, one word of one syllable, and we do not know it yet—*f-a-t-h*, *faith*. When we come to that word we stumble, we halt, we lose our place, we pronounce it wrong. Still, God's patience is not exhausted. God, our Mother, puts us in the school of prosperity, and the letters are in sunshine, and we cannot spell them. God puts us in the school of adversity, and the letters are black, and we cannot spell them. If God were merely a king, He would punish us; if He were simply a father, He would whip us; but God is a mother, and so we are borne with and helped all the way through.

A mother teaches her child chiefly by pictures. If she wants to set forth to her child the hideousness of a quarrelsome spirit, instead of giving a lecture upon that subject, she turns over a leaf and shows the child two boys in a wrangle, and says, "Does not that look horrible?" If she wants to teach her child the awfulness of war, she turns over the picture-book and shows the war-charger, the headless trunks of butchered men, the wild, agonizing, bloodshot eye of battle rolling under lids of flame, and she says, "That is

war!" The child understands it. In a great many books the best part are the pictures. The style may be insipid, the type poor, but a picture attracts a child's attention. Now God, our Mother, teaches us almost everything by pictures. Is the divine goodness to be set forth? How does God, our Mother, teach us? By an autumnal picture. The barns are full. The wheat-stacks are rounded. The cattle are chewing the cud lazily in the sun. The orchards are dropping the ripe pippins into the lap of the farmer. The natural world, that has been busy all summer, seems now to be resting in great abundance. We look at the picture and say, "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness." Our family comes around the breakfast table. It has been a very cold night, but the children are all bright, because they slept under thick coverlids, and they are now in the warm blast of the open register, and their appetites make luxuries out of the plainest fare, and we look at the picture and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

God wishes to set forth the fact that in the judgment the good will be divided from the wicked. How is it done? By a picture; by a parable—a fishing scene. A group of hardy men, long-bearded, geared far standing to the waist in water; sleeves rolled up. Long oar, sungilt; boat battered as though it had been a playmate of the storm. A full net, thumping about with the fish, which have just discovered their captivity, the worthless moss-bunkers and the useful flounders all in the same net. The fisherman puts his hand down amid the squirming fins, takes out the moss-bunkers and throws them into the water, and gathers the good fish into the pail. So, says Christ, it shall be at the end of the world. The bad He will cast away, and the good He will keep. Another picture.


God, our Mother, wanted to set forth the duty of neighbourly love, and it is done by a picture. A heap of wounds *on the road to Jericho*. A traveller has been fighting a *robber*. The robber stabbed him and knocked him down.

Two ministers come along. They look at the poor fellow, but do not help him. A traveller comes along—a Samaritan. He says "Whoa" to the beast he is riding, and dismounts. He examines the wounds; he takes out some wine, and with it washes the wounds, and then he takes some oil, and puts that in to make the wounds stop smarting; and then he tears off a piece of his own garment for a bandage. Then he helps the wounded man upon the beast, and walks by the side, holding him on until they come to a tavern. He says to the landlord, "Here is money to pay the man's board for two days; take care of him; if it costs anything more, charge it to me, and I will pay it." Picture—*The Good Samaritan, or Who is your Neighbour?*

Does God, our Mother, want to set forth what a foolish thing it is to go away from the right, and how glad Divine Mercy is to take back the wanderer? How is it done? By a picture. A good father. Large farm, with fat sheep and oxen. Fine house, with exquisite wardrobe. Discontented boy. Goes away. Sharpers fleece him. Feeds hogs. Gets homesick. Starts back. Sees an old man running. It is father! The hand, torn of the husks, gets a ring. The foot, inflamed and bleeding, gets a sandal. The bare shoulder, showing through the tatters, gets a robe. The stomach, gnawing itself with hunger, gets a full platter smoking with meat. The father cannot eat for looking at the returned adventurer. Tears running down the face until they come to a smile—the night dew melting into the morning. No work on the farm that day; for when a bad boy repents, and comes back, promising to do better, God knows that it is enough for one day. "And they began to be merry." Picture—*Prodigal Son returned from the wilderness*. So God our Mother, teaches us everything by pictures. The sinner is a lost sheep. Jesus is the Bridegroom. The useless man a barren fig-tree. The Gospel is a great supper. Satan, a sower of tares. Truth, a mustard-seed. That which we could not have understood in the abstract statement, God,



our Mother, presents to us in this Bible-album of pictures, God engraved. "Is not the divine Maternity ever thus teaching us?"

I remark again, that God has a *mother's favouritism*. A father sometimes shows a sort of favouritism. Here is a boy strong, well, of high forehead and quick intellect. The father says, "I will take that boy into my firm yet;" or, "I will give him the very best possible education." There are instances where, for the culture of the one boy, all the others have been robbed. A sad favouritism; but that is not the mother's favourite. I will tell you her favourite. There is a child who at two years of age had a fall. He has never got over it. The scarlet fever muffled his hearing. He is not what he once was. That child has caused the mother more anxious nights than all the other children. If he coughs in the night, she springs out of a sound sleep and goes to him. The last thing she does when going out of the house is to give a charge in regard to him. The first thing on coming in is to ask in regard to him. Why, the children of the family all know that he is the favourite, and say "Mother, you let him do just as he pleases, and you give him a great many things which you do not give us. He is your favourite." The mother smiles; she knows it is so. So he ought to be; for if there is any one in the world who needs sympathy more than another, it is an invalid child, weary on the first mile of life's journey; carrying an aching head, a weak side, an irritated lung. So the mother ought to make him a favourite. God, our Mother, has favourites. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." That is, one whom He *especially* loves He chasteneth. God loves us all; but there is one weak, and sick, and sore, and wounded, and suffering, and faint? That is the one who lies nearest and more perpetually on the great, loving heart of God. Why *it never* coughs but our Mother, God, hears it. It *never stirs a weary limb* in the bed but our Mother, God, knows of  There is not such a watcher as God. The best nurse

may be overborne by fatigue, and fall asleep in the chair ; but God, our mother, after being up a year of nights with a suffering child, never slumbers nor sleeps.

“ Oh ! ” says one, “ I cannot understand all that about affliction.” A refiner of silver once explained it to a Christian lady, “ I put the silver in the fire, and I keep refining it and trying it till I can see my face in it, and I then take it out.” Just so it is that God keeps His dear children in the furnace till the divine image may be seen in them ; then they are taken out of the fire. “ Well,” says some one, “ if that is the way that God treats His favourites, I do not want to be a favourite.” There is a barren field on an autumn day just wanting to be let alone. There is a bang at the bars, and a rattle of whiffle-trees and clevices. The field says, “ What is the farmer going to do with me now ? ” The farmer puts the plough in the ground, shouts to the horses, the coulter goes tearing through the sod, and the furrow reaches from fence to fence. Next day there is a bang at the bars, and a rattle of whiffle-trees again. The field says, “ I wonder what the farmer is going to do now ? ” The farmer hitches the horses to the harrow, and it goes bounding and tearing across the field. Next day there is a rattle at the bars again, and the field says, “ What is the farmer going to do now ? ” He walks heavily across the field, scattering seed as he walks. After a while a cloud comes. The field says, “ What, more trouble ! ” It begins to rain. After a while the wind changes to the north-east, and it begins to snow. Says the field, “ Is it not enough that I have been torn, and trampled upon, and drowned ? Must I now be snowed under ? ” After a while, Spring comes out of the gates of the South, and warmth and gladness come with it. A green scarf bandages the gash of the wheat-field, and the July morning drops a crown of gold on the head of the grain. “ Oh ! ” says the field, “ now I know the use of the plough, of the harrow, of the heavy foot, of the shower and of the snow-storm. It is well enough to be trodden, and

trampled, and drowned, and snowed under, if in the end I can yield such a glorious harvest." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

When I see God especially busy in troubling and trying a Christian, I know that out of that Christian's character there is to come some special good. A quarryman goes down into the excavation, and with strong-handed machinery bores into the rock. The rock says, "What do you do that for?" He puts powder in; he lights a fuse. There is a thundering crash. The rock says, "Why, the whole mountain is going to pieces." The crowbar is plunged; the rock is dragged out. After a-while it is taken into the artist's studio. It says, "Well, now I have got to a good, warm, comfortable place at last." But the sculptor takes the chisel and mallet, and he digs for the eyes, and he cuts for the mouth, and he bores for the ear, and he rubs it with sand-paper, until the rock says, "When will this torture be ended?" A sheet is thrown over it. It stands in darkness. After a-while it is taken out. The covering is removed. It stands in the sunlight, in the presence of ten thousand applauding people, as they greet the statue of the poet, or the prince, or the conqueror. "Ah!" says the stone, "now I understand it. I am a great deal better off now standing as a statue of a conqueror than I would have been down in the quarry." So God finds a man down in the quarry of ignorance and sin. How to get him up? He must be bored, and blasted, and chiselled, and scoured, and stand sometimes in the darkness. But after a-while the mantle of affliction will fall off, and his soul will be greeted by the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and the thousand of thousands, as more than conqueror. Oh, my friends, God, our Mother, is just as kind in our afflictions as in our prosperities. God *never* touches us but for our good. If a field clean and *cultured* is better off than a barren field, and if a stone that *has* become a statue is better off than the marble in the

quarry, then that soul that God chastens may be His favourite. Oh, the rocking of the soul is not the rocking of an earthquake, but the rocking of God's cradle. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." I have been told that the pearl in an oyster is merely the result of a wound, or a sickness inflicted upon it, and I do not know but that the brightest gems of heaven will be found to have been the wounds of earth kindled into the jewelled brightness of eternal glory.

I remark that God has a mother's capacity for *attending to little hurts*. The father is shocked at the broken bone of the child, or at the sickness that sets the cradle on fire with fever, but it takes the mother to sympathise with all the little ailments and little bruises of the child. If the child have a splinter in its hand, it wants the mother to take it out, and not the father. The father says, "Oh, that is nothing," but the mother knows it *is* something, and that a little hurt sometimes is a very great hurt. So with God, our Mother: all our annoyances are important enough to look at and sympathize with. Nothing with God is something. There are no ciphers in God's arithmetic. And if we were only good enough of sight, we could see as much through a microscope as through a telescope. Those things that may be impalpable and infinitesimal to us, may be pronounced and infinite to God. A mathematical point is defined as having no parts, no magnitude. It is so small you cannot imagine it, and yet a mathematical point may be a starting-point for a great eternity. God's surveyors carry a very long chain. A scale must be very delicate that can weigh a grain, but God's scale is so delicate that He can weigh with it that which is so small that a grain is a million times heavier. When John Kitto, a poor boy on a back street of Plymouth, cut his foot with a piece of glass, God bound it up so successfully that he became the great Christian geographer, and a commentator known among all nations. *So every wound of the soul, however insignificant, God is*

willing to bind up. As at the first cry of the child the mother rushes to kiss the wound, so God, our Mother, takes the smallest wound of the heart, and presses it to the lips of divine sympathy. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I remark farther that God has a mother's *patience for the erring*. If one does wrong, first his associates in life cast him off; if he goes on in the wrong way, his business partner cuts him off; if he goes on, his best friends cast him off—his father casts him off. But after all others have cast him off, where does he go? Who holds no grudge, and forgives the last time as well as the first? Who sits by the murderer's counsel all through the long trial? Who tarries the longest at the windows of a culprit's cell? Who, when all others think ill of a man, keeps on thinking well of him? It is his mother. God bless her gray hairs, if she be still alive; and bless her grave, if she be gone! And bless the rocking-chair in which she used to sit, and bless the cradle that she used to rock, and bless the Bible she used to read! So God, our Mother, has patience for all the erring. After everybody else has cast a man off, God, our Mother, comes to the rescue. God leaps to take charge of a bad case. After all the other doctors have got through, the heavenly Physician comes in. Human sympathy at such a time does not amount to much. Even the sympathy of the Church, I am sorry to say, often does not amount to much. I have seen the most harsh and bitter treatment on the part of those who professed faith in Christ toward those who were wavering and erring. They tried on the wanderer sarcasm, and Billingsgate, and caricature, and they tried tittle-tattle. There was one thing they did not try, and that was forgiveness. A soldier in England was brought by a sergeant to the colonel. "What," says the colonel, "bringing the man here again. We have tried everything with him." "Oh, no," says the sergeant, "there is one thing you have not tried. I would like you to try that." "What is that?"

said the colonel. Said the man, "*Forgiveness.*" The case had not gone so far but that it might take that turn, and so the colonel said, "Well, young man, you have done so and so. What is your excuse?" "I have no excuse, but I am very sorry," said the man. "We have made up our minds to forgive you," said the colonel. The tears started. He had never been accosted in that way before. His life was reformed, and that was the starting-point for a positively Christian life. Oh, Church of God, quit your sarcasm when a man falls! Quit your irony, quit your tittle-tattle, and try forgiveness. God, your Mother, tries it all the time. A man's sin may be like a continent, but God's forgiveness is like the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, bounding it on both sides.

The Bible often talks about God's *hand*. I wonder how it looks. You remember distinctly how your mother's hand looked, though thirty years ago it withered away. It was different from your father's hand. When you were to be chastised, you had rather have mother punish you than father. It did not hurt so much. And father's hand was different from mother's, partly because it had out-door toil, and partly because God intended it to be different. The knuckles were more firmly set, and the palm was calloused. But mother's hand was more delicate. There were blue veins running through the back of it. Though the fingers, some of them, were pricked with a needle, the palm of it was soft! Oh! it was very soft. Was there ever any poultice like that to take pain out of a wound? So God's hand is a mother's *hand*. What it touches it heals. If it smite you, it does not hurt as if it were another hand. Oh you poor wandering soul in sin, it is not a bailiff's hand that seizes you to-day. It is not a hard hand. It is not an unsympathetic hand. It is not a cold hand. It is not an enemy's hand. No. It is a gentle hand, a loving hand, a sympathetic hand, a soft hand, a mother's hand. "As one whom *his mother comforteth*, so will I comfort you."

I want to say, finally, that God has a *mother's way of putting a child to sleep*. You know there is no cradle-song like a mother's. After the excitement of the evening it is almost impossible to get the child to sleep. If the rocking-chair stop a moment, the eyes are wide open; but the mother's patience and the mother's soothing manner keep on until, after a-while, the angel of slumber puts his wing over the pillow. Well, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the time will come when we will be wanting to be put to sleep. The day of our life will be done, and the shadows of the night of death will be gathering around us. Then we want God to soothe us, to hush us to sleep. Let the music at our going not be the dirge of the organ, or the knell of the church-tower, or the drumming of a "dead march," but let it be the hush of a mother's lullaby. Oh! the cradle of the grave will be soft with the pillow of all the promises. When we are being rocked into that last slumber, I want this to be the cradle-song: "As one whom a mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

"Asleep in Jesus! Far from thee  
Thy kindred and their graves may be;  
But thine is still a blessed sleep,  
From which none ever wake to weep."

A Christian man was dying in Scotland. His daughter Nellie sat by the bedside. It was Sunday evening, and the bell of the Scotch kirk was ringing, calling the people to church. The good old man, in his dying dream, thought that he was on the way to church, as he used to be when he went in the sleigh across the river; and as the evening bell struck up, in his dying dream he thought it was the call to church. He said, "Hark, children, the bells are ringing; we shall be late; we must make the mare step out quick!" He *shivered*, and then said, "Pull the buffalo robe up closer, my *lass!* It is cold crossing the river, but we will soon be there,

Nellie, we will soon be there!" And he smiled and said, "Just there now." No wonder he smiled. The good old man had got to church. Not the old Scotch kirk, but the temple in the skies. *Just across the river.*

How comfortably did God hush that old man to sleep! As one whom his mother comforteth, so God comforted him.

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### THE ALMOND TREE IN BLOSSOM.\*

"The almond tree shall flourish."—*Ecclesiastes* xii. 5.

IN January, Palestine is adorned with the blossoming of the almond-tree. It breathes its life into that winter month as a promise of God sometimes lightens up and sweetens the coldness and desolation of a sorrowing spirit. It was not a useless tree, made just to bloom and die, or, like the willow, by the water-courses to stand weeping into the stream, but it disputed with terebinth and cassia for a high place in the commerce of the world. Its wealth bore down the dromedaries of the desert, and in ships of Tarshish struggled with the sea. Its rugged trunk parted into gracefulness of branch and burst into a lavishness of bloom, till the Temple imitated it in the golden candlestick, and Jeremiah beheld its branches shaking in his dream. The pomegranate had more pretentious colour, and rung out its fragrance with red blossoming bells, but the almond-tree stood in simple white, as if, while born of earth, it aspired to take on the apparel of those who dwell in "raiment exceeding white," so as no fuller on earth can white them. When the almond-tree was in full bloom, it must have looked like some tree before our window on a winter's morning, after a nightfall of snow, when its brightness is almost insufferable, every stem a white

\* Commemorative of David T. Talmage, Esq.



and feathery plume. A row of almond-trees in full bloom must have roused up all the soul's sense of purity ; and when they began to scatter their blossoms, as one by one they fell, it must have seemed like the first straggling flakes of a chill day, coming thicker and faster, until the herbage, still deeply tinged with autumnal colouring, is covered, and the mountains that were as scarlet, become as white as snow.

Now you are ready to see the meaning of the text. Solomon was giving a full-length portrait of an aged man. By striking figures of speech, he sets forth his trembling and decrepitude, and then comes to describe the whiteness of his locks by the blossoming of the almond tree. It is the master-touch of the picture, for I see in that one sentence not only the appearance of the hair, but an announcement of the beauty of old age. The white locks of a bad man are but the gathered frosts of the second death, but "a hoary head is a crown of glory" if it be found in the way of righteousness. There may be no colour in the cheek, no lustre in the eye, no spring in the step, no firmness in the voice, and yet around the head of every old man whose life has been upright and Christian there hovers a glory brighter than ever shook in the white tops of the almond-tree. If the voice quiver, it is because God is changing into a tone fit for the celestial choral. If the back stoop, it is only because the body is just about to lie down in peaceful sleep. If the hand tremble, it is because God is unloosing it from worldly disappointments to clasp it on ringing harp and waving palm. If the hair has turned, it is only the gray light of heaven's dawn streaming through the scant locks. If the brow, once adorned by a luxuriance of auburn or raven, is smitten with baldness, it is only because God is preparing a place to set the everlasting crown. The falling of this aged Christian's staff will be the signal for the heavenly gate to swing open. The scattering of the almond blossoms will only discover the setting of the fruit. Elijah's flaming equipage were too tame for this ascending spirit.

The arms of Jesus are grander than bounding horses of fire!

I have stood for the last few days as under the power of an enchantment. Last Friday a week, at eighty-three years of age, my father exchanged earth for heaven. The wheat was ripe, and it has been harvested. No painter's pencil or poet's rhythm could describe that magnificent sunset. It was no hurricane blast let loose, but a gale from heaven, that drove into the dust the blossoms of that almond-tree.

There are lessons for me to learn, and also for you, for many of you knew him. The child of his old age, I come to-night to pay a humble tribute to him who, in the hour of my birth, took me into his watchful care, and whose parental faithfulness, combined with that of my mother was the means of bringing my erring feet to the cross, and kindling in my soul anticipation of immortal blessedness. If I failed to speak, methinks the old family Bible, that I brought home with me, would rebuke my silence, and the very walls of my youthful home would tell the story of my ingratitude. I must speak, though it be with broken utterance, and in terms which may seem too strong for those who never had an opportunity of gathering the fruit of this luxuriant almond-tree.

1st. In my father's old age was to be seen the beauty of a *cheerful spirit*.

I never remember to have heard him make a gloomy expression. This was not because he had no perception of the pollutions of society. He abhorred anything like impurity, or fraud, or double-dealing. He never failed to lift up his voice against sin, when he saw it. He was terrible in his indignation against wrong, and had an iron grip for the throat of him who trampled on the helpless. Better meet a lion robbed of her whelps than him, if you had been stealing the bread from the mouth of the fatherless. It required all the placidity of my mother's voice to calm him when once the *mountain storm of his righteous wrath* was in full blast;

while as for himself, he would submit to more imposition, and say nothing, than any man I ever knew.

But, while sensitive to the evils of society, he felt confident that all will be righted. When he prayed, you could hear in the very tones of his voice the expectation that Jesus Christ would utterly demolish all iniquity, and fill the earth with His glory. This Christian man was not a misanthrope, did not think that everything was going to ruin, considered the world a very good place to live in. He never sat moping or despondent, but took things as they were, knowing that God could and would make them better. When the heaviest surge of calamity came upon him, he met it with as cheerful a countenance as ever a bather at the beach met the incoming Atlantic, rising up on the other side the wave stronger than when it smote him. Without ever being charged with frivolity, he sang, and whistled, and laughed. He knew about all the cheerful tunes that were ever printed in old "New Brunswick Collection," and the "Shumway," and the sweetest melodies that Thomas Hastings ever composed. I think that every pillar in the Somerville and Boundbrook churches knew his happy voice. He took the pitch of sacred song on Sabbath morning, and lost it not through all the week. I have heard him ploughing amid the aggravations of a "new ground," serving writs, examining deeds, going to arrest criminals, in the house and by the way, at the barn and in the street. When the church choir would break down, everybody looked around to see if he were not ready with "Woodstock," "Mount Pisgah," or "Uxbridge." And when all his familiar tunes failed to express the joy of his soul, he would take up his own pen, draw five long lines across the sheet, put in the notes, and then to the tune that he called "Boundbrook" begin to sing,

"As when the weary traveller gains  
The height of some o'erlooking hill,  
His heart revives if, 'cross the plains,  
He eyes his home, though distant still.

“ Thus, when the distant pilgrim views,  
By faith, his mansion in the skies,  
The sight his fainting strength renews,  
And wings his speed to reach the prize.

“ ’Tis there, he says, I am to dwell  
With Jesus in the realms of day :  
There I shall bid my cares farewell,  
And He will wipe my tears away.”

But few families fall heir to so large a pile of well-studied note-books. He was ready at proper times for all kinds of innocent amusement. He often felt a merriment that not only touched the lips, but played upon every fibre of the body, and rolled down into the very depths of his soul with long reverberations. No one that I ever knew understood more fully the science of a good laugh. He was not only quick to recognize hilarity when created by others, but was always ready to do his share toward making it. Before extreme old age, he could outrun and outleap any of his children. He did not hide his satisfaction at having outwalked some one who boasted of his pedestrianism, or at having been able to swing the scythe after all the rest of the harvesters had dropped from exhaustion, or at having, in legislative hall, tripped up some villainous scheme for robbing the public treasury. We never had our ears boxed, as some children I wot of, for the sin of being happy. In long winter nights, it was hard to tell who enjoyed sportfulness the better, the children who romped the floor, or the parents who with lighted countenance, looked at them. Great indulgence and leniency characterized his family rule but the remembrance of at least one correction more emphatic than pleasing proves that he was not like Eli of old, who had wayward sons and restrained them not. In the multitude of his witticisms there were no flings at religion, no caricatures of good men, no trifling with the things of eternity. His laughter was not the “ crackling of thorns under a pot,” but the merry heart that doeth good like a

medicine. For this all the children in the community knew him ; and to the last day of his walking out, when they saw him coming down the lane, shouted, " Here comes grand-father ! " No gall, no acerbity, no hypercriticism. If there was a bright side to anything, he always saw it ; and his name, in all the places where he dwelt, will long be a synonyme for exhilaration of spirit.

But whence this cheerfulness ? Some might ascribe it all to natural disposition. No doubt there is such a thing as sunshine of temperament. God gives more brightness to the almond-tree than to the cypress. While the pool putrifies under the summer sun, God slips the rill off the rocks with a frolicsomeness that fills the mountain with echo. No doubt constitutional structure had much to do with this cheerfulness. He had, by a life of sobriety, preserved his freshness and vigour. You know that good habits are better than speaking tubes to the ear ; better than a staff to the hand ; better than lozenges to the throat ; better than warm baths to the feet ; better than bitters for the stomach. His lips had not been polluted nor his brain befogged by the fumes of the noxious weed that has sapped the life of whole generations, sending even ministers of the Gospel to untimely graves, over which the tombstone declared, " Sacrificed by overwork in the Lord's vineyard," when, if the marble had not lied, it would have said, " Killed by villainous tobacco." He abhorred anything that could intoxicate, being among the first in this country to join the crusade against alcoholic beverage. When urged, during a severe sickness to take some stimulus, he said, " No ; if I am to die, let me die sober ! " The swill of the brewery had never been poured around the roots of this thrifty almond. To the last week of his life his ear could catch a child's whisper, and at fourscore years his eyes refused *spectacles*, although he would sometimes have to hold *the book* off on the other side of the light, as *octogenarians* are wont to do. No trembling of the hands, no *rheum*

in the eyes, no knocking together of the knees, no hobbling on crutches with what polite society terms rheumatism in the feet, but what everybody knows is nothing but gout. Death came, not to fell the gnarled trunk of a tree worm-eaten and lightning blasted, but to hew down a Lebanon cedar, whose fall made the mountains tremble and the heavens ring.

But physical health could not account for half of this sunshine. Sixty-four years ago a coal from the heavenly altar had kindled a light that shone brighter and brighter to the perfect day. Let Almighty grace for nearly three quarters of a century triumph in a man's soul, and do you wonder that he is happy? For twice the length of your life and mine he had sat in the bower of the promises, plucking the round ripe clusters of Eshcol. While others bit their tongue for thirst, he stood at the wells of salvation, and put his lips to the bucket that came up dripping with the fresh, cool, sparkling waters of eternal life. This joy was not that which breaks in the bursting bubble of the Champagne-glass, or that which is thrown out with the orange-peelings of a midnight bacchanalia, but the joy which, planted by a Saviour's pardoning grace, mounts up higher and higher, till it rolls forth in the acclaim of the hundred and forty and four thousand who have broken their last chain and wept their last sorrow. Oh, mighty God, how deep, how wide, how high the joy thou kindest in the heart of the believer!

Again: We beheld in our father the beauty of a *Christian faith*.

Let not the account of his cheerfulness give you the idea that he never had any trouble. But few men have so serious and overwhelming a life-struggle. He went out into the world without means, and with no educational opportunity save that which was afforded him in the winter months, in an old, dilapidated school-house, from instructors whose chief work was to collect their own salary. Instead of *post-poning the marriage relation*, as modern society compels a

young man to postpone it, until he can earn a fortune, and be able, at commencement of the conjugal relation, to keep a companion like the lilies of the field, that toil not nor spin, though Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these, he chose an early alliance with one who would not only be able to enjoy the success of life, but who would with her own willing hands help achieve it. And so, while father ploughed the fields, and threshed the wheat, and broke the flax, and husked the corn, my mother stood for Solomon's portraiture when he said, "She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." So that the limited estate of the New Jersey farmer never foundered on millinery establishments and confectionary shops; and though we were some years of age before we heard the trill of a piano, we knew well all about the song of "The Spinning Wheel." There were no lords, or baronets, or princes in our ancestral line. None wore stars, cockades, or crest. There was once a family coat-of-arms, but we were none of us wise enough to tell its meaning. Do our best. we cannot find anything about our forerunners except that they behaved well, came over from Wales or Holland a good while ago, and died when their time came. Some of them may have had fine equipage and caparisoned postilion, but the most of them were sure only of footmen. My father started in life belonging to the aristocracy of hard knuckles and homespun, but had this high honour that no one could despise: he was the son of a father who loved God and kept His commandments. What is House of Hapsburg, or Stuarts, compared with the honour of being a son of the Lord God Almighty? Two eyes, two hands, and two feet were the capital my father started with. For fifteen years

an invalid, he had a fearful struggle to support his large family. Nothing but faith in God upheld him. His recital of help afforded and deliverance wrought was more like a romance than a reality. He walked through many a desert, but every morning had its manna, and every night its pillar of fire, and every hard rock a rod that could shatter it into crystal fountains at his feet. More than once he came to his last dollar, but right behind that last dollar he found Him who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and out of the palm of whose hand all the fowls of heaven peck their food, and who hath given to each one of His disciples a warrantee deed for the whole universe in the words, "ALL ARE YOURS."

The path that led him through financial straits prepared him also for sore bereavements. The infant of days was smitten, and he laid it into the river of death with as much confidence as infant Moses was laid into the ark of the Nile, knowing that soon from the royal palace a shining One would come to fetch it.

In an island of the sea, among strangers, almost unattended, death came to a beloved son; and although I remember the darkness that dropped on the household when the black-sealed letter was opened, I remember also the utterances of Christian submission.

Another, bearing his own name, just on the threshold of manhood, his heart beating high with hope, falls into the dust; but above the cries of early widowhood and the desolation of that dark day I hear the patriarch's prayer commending children and children's children to the Divine sympathy.

But a deeper shadow fell across the old homestead. The "golden wedding" had been celebrated nine years before. My mother looked up, pushed back her spectacles, and said, "Just think of it, father—we have been together fifty-nine years!" The twain stood together like two trees of the forest with interlocked branches. Their affections had taken deep root together in many a kindred grave. Side by side in



life's great battle they had fought the good fight and won the day. But death comes to unjoint this alliance. God will not any longer let her suffer mortal ailments. The reward of righteousness is ready, and it must be paid. But what tearing apart! What rending up! What will the aged man do without this other to lean on? Who can so well understand how to sympathize and counsel? What voice so cheering as hers to conduct him down the steep of old age? "Oh," she said, in her last moments, "father if you and I could only go together, how pleasant it would be!" But the hush of earth came down one autumnal afternoon, and for the first time in all my life, on my arrival home, I received no maternal greeting, no answer of the lips, no pressure of the hand. God had taken her.

In this overwhelming shock the patriarch stood confident, reciting the promises and testing the divine goodness. Oh, sirs, that was faith! *faith!* FAITH! "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory!"

Finally, I notice that in my father's old age was to be seen the beauty of *Christian activity*.

He had not retired from the field. He had been busy so long, you could not expect him idle now. The faith I have described was not an idle expectation that sits with its hands in its pocket idly waiting, but a feeling which gathers up all the resources of the soul, and hurls them upon one grand design. He was among the first who toiled in Sabbath-schools, and never failed to speak the praise of these institutions. No storm or darkness ever kept him away from prayer-meeting. In the neighbourhood where he lived, for years he held a devotional meeting. Oftentimes the only praying-man present before a handful of attendants, he would give out the hymn, read the lines, conduct the music, and *pray*. Then read the Scriptures and pray again. Then lead forth in the *Doxology* with an enthusiasm as if there were a thousand people present, and all the Church members had been doing *their duty*. He went forth visiting the sick, burying the

dead, collecting alms for the poor, inviting the ministers of religion to his household, in which there was, as in the house of Shunem, a little room over the wall, with bed and candlestick for any passing Elisha. He never shuddered at the sight of a subscription-paper, and not a single great cause of benevolence has arisen within the last half-century which he did not bless with his beneficence. Oh! this was not a barren almond-tree that blossomed. His charity was not like the bursting of the bud of a famous tree in the South, that fills the whole forest with its racket, nor was it a clumsy thing, like the fruit in some tropical clime, that crashes down, almost knocking the life out of those who gather it, for in his case the right hand knew not what the left hand did. The churches of God, in whose service he toiled, have arisen as one man to declare his faithfulness and to mourn their loss. He stood in the front of the holy war, and the courage which never trembled or winced in the presence of temporal danger induced him to dare all things for God. In church matters he was not afraid to be shot at. Ordained, not by the laying on of human hands, but by the imposition of a Saviour's love, he preached by his life, in official position, and legislative hall, and commercial circles, a practical Christianity. He showed that there was such a thing as honesty in politics. He slandered no party, stuffed no ballot-box, forged no naturalization papers, intoxicated no voters, told no lies, surrendered no principle, countenanced no demagoguism. He called things by their right names; and what others styled prevarication, exaggeration, misstatement, or hyperbole, he called a *lie*. Though he was far from being undecided in his views, and never professed neutrality, or had any consort with those miserable men who boast how well they can walk on both sides of a dividing-line and be on neither, yet even in the excitements of election canvass, when his name was hotly discussed in public journals, I do not think his integrity was ever assaulted. Started every morning with a chapter of the Bible, and his whole family around

him on their knees, he forgot not, in the excitement of the world, that he had a God to serve and a heaven to win. The *morning* prayer came up on one side of the day, and the *evening* prayer on the other side, and joined each other in an arch above his head, under the shadow of which he walked all the day. The Sabbath worship extended into Monday's conversation, and Tuesday's bargain, and Wednesday's mirthfulness, and Thursday's controversy, and Friday's sociality, and Saturday's calculation.

Through how many thrilling scenes he had passed ! He stood, at Morristown, in the choir that chanted when George Washington was buried ; talked with young men whose grandfathers he had held on his knee ; watched the progress of John Adam's administration ; denounced, at the time, Aaron Burr's infamy ; heard the guns that celebrated the New Orleans's victory ; voted against Jackson, but lived long enough to wish we had one just like him ; remembered when the first steamer struck the North River with its wheel buckets ; flushed with excitement in the time of National Banks and Sub-Treasury ; was startled at the birth of telegraphy ; saw the United States grow from a speck on the world's map, till all nations dip their flag at our passing merchantmen, and our " national airs " have been heard on the steeps of the Himalayas ; was born while the revolutionary cannon were coming home from Yorktown, and lived to hear the tramp of troops returning from the war of the great Rebellion ; lived to speak the names of eighty children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Nearly all his contemporaries gone ! Aged Wilberforce said that sailors drink to " friends astern " until half way over sea, and then drink to " friends ahead." With him it had for a long time been " friends ahead." So also with my father. Long and varied pilgrimage ! Nothing but sovereign grace could have kept him true, earnest, useful and Christian through so many exciting scenes.

*He worked unweariedly from the sunrise of youth to the sunset of old age, and then in the sweet nightfall of death,*

lighted by the starry promises, went home, taking his sheaves with him. Mounting from earthly to heavenly service, I doubt not there were a great multitude that thronged heaven's gate to hail him into the skies—those whose sorrows he has appeased, whose burdens he had lifted, whose guilty souls he had pointed to a pardoning God, whose dying moments he had cheered, whose ascending spirits he had helped up on the wings of sacred music. I should like to have heard that long, loud, triumphant shout of heaven's welcome. I think that the harps throbbed with another thrill, and the hills quaked with a mightier hallelujah. Hail, ransomed soul! thy race run—thy toil ended. Hail to the coronation!

Now, after such a life, what sort of death would you have expected? Will God conduct a voyager through so many storms, and then let him get shipwrecked coming up the harbour? Not such an One is my God and Saviour. The telegraph thrilled with tidings north, south, east, west, that brought in the rushing rail-train, his kindred together. The hour for which this aged servant of God had waited patiently had come, and he rejoiced with a joy at which the tongue faltered. There was no turning from side to side on the pillow, as if looking for escape from grim pursuers, but a gazing up and around, as if looking out for the chariot of King Jesus. The prayer which the older sons had heard him make forty years ago, asking that at last he might have "nothing to do but to die," was literally answered. All his children, save that one which he sent forth with his blessing a few months ago, in the good ship "Surprise," to proclaim the glories of the Messiah on the other side of the earth, were present—some to pray, some to hold his hand, some to bathe his brow; all to watch, and wait, and weep, and rejoice. He asked about our children—asked about you. Talked about the past. Expressed his anticipations of the future. Slept sweetly as a child ever slept in the arms of *its mother*. Then broke forth with the utterance, "Goodness

and mercy have followed me all the days of my life!" The Bible that he had studied for so many years now cast its light far on into the valley, until the very gate of heaven flashed upon this vision. Some one quoted the passage, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "Of whom I am the chief," responded the dying Christian. We said, "To live is Christ." He answered, "To die is gain; and, lest we did not understand him, he repeated, "To die is gain!" And as if the vision grew more enrapturing, he continued to say, "To die is gain!" Ministers of the Gospel came in, and after the usual greeting, he said, "Pray! pray!"

We sang some of his favourite hymns, such as,

"Jesus can make a dying bed  
 Feel soft as downy pillows are,  
 While on His breast I lean my head,  
 And breathe my life out sweetly there."

He would seem almost to stop breathing in order to listen, and then, at the close, would signify that he remembered the old tune right well. He said, "I shall be gone soon, but not too soon." Some one quoted, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." And he replied, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." "Can you testify of God's faithfulness?" said another. He answered, "Yes, I have been young, and now, I am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." He said, "I have it good; I could not have it any better; I feel well; all is well." Again, and again, and again he repeated, "All is well!" Then, lifting his hand, exclaimed, "PEACE, PEACE!"

On the morning of the 27th of October, just three years from the day when the soul of his companion sped into the heavens, it was evident that the last moment had come. Softly the news came to all the sleepers in the house, and the quick glance of lights from room to room signalled the

coming of the death angel. We took out our watches, and said, "*Four o'clock and fifteen minutes!*" The pulse fluttered as a tree-branch lifts and falls at the motion of a bird's wing about to cleave its way into the heavens. No quick start of pain; no glassy stare; but eyelid lightly closed, and calm lip, and white blossoms of the almond-tree. From the stand we turned over the old timepiece that he had carried so long and which he thought always went right, and announced, "*Just four o'clock and twenty minutes!*" The tides of the cold river rising. Felt of the wrist, but no pulse; of the temples, but no stir; of the heart, but no action. We listened, but heard nothing. Still! still! The gates of the earthly prison-house silently open wider and wider. FREE! Clear the way for the conquering spirit! Shout upwards the tidings!

*Four o'clock and thirty minutes.* Without a groan or a sigh, he had passed upward into the light. "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

The day for burial came. An autumnal Sabbath was let down clear from heaven. At the first gush of the dawn, we said, "This is just the day in which for a Christian to be buried!" Fading leaf indeed under foot told of the decaying body, but streaming sunshine spoke of resurrection joy. They came tottering on their staff—old comrades who, in eighteen hundred and twelve, had marched beside him, drilling in the field ready for heroic strife. They came—the poor whose rent he had paid to keep the children from the blast of winter. They came—the erring men whom he had bailed out of prison. They came—the children who had watched his step, and played with his cane, and had often wondered what new attraction grandfather would unfold from his deep pockets. They came—the ministers of religion who had sat with him in church courts, and planned for the advancement of religion.

Passing along the roads where he had often gone, and by the birthplace of most of his children, we laid him down to rest, just as the sun was setting in the country grave-yard, close beside her with whom for more than half a century he had walked, and prayed, and sung, and counselled. It seemed as if she must speak a greeting. But no voice broke the sod, no whisper ran through the grass, no word of recognition was uttered. Side by side Jacob and Rachel were buried. Let one willow over-arch their graves. Instead of two marble slabs, as though these of whom we speak were twain, let there be but a single shaft for they were one. Monument not pretentious, but plain, for they were old-fashioned people. On one side the marble set the date of their coming and going. On this side the name of David, the husband and father. On that third side the name of Catherine, the wife and mother. Then there will be but one side unchiseled. How shall we mark it? With story of Christian zeal and self-sacrifice for God? No! Father and mother would shake their heads if they were awake to read it. This rather let it be: "THE MORNING COMETH."—Isaiah xxi. 12.

Henceforward we shall be orphans. Sad thing, even at manhood, to become fatherless and motherless. No one but God can make up for the loss of a father's counsel and a mother's tenderness. *Hope thou in God!* Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Quaint John Bunyan caught a glimpse of the glorious ending of all earthly trial when he said, "Just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the city shone like the sun; the streets were also paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, and golden harps to sing praises withal. And after that they shut up the gates, *which when I had seen I wished myself among them.*"

## THE AVERAGE THEATRE.

“For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit.”—*Luke vi. 43.*

THERE is an easy way of discovering whether any institution is good or bad. Abstract discussions will throw only a little light. Gather together a number of men who have been under the influence of any institution for a number of years, and you may learn from their character whether the institution which has influenced them is good or bad. There are two ways of finding out about an evil: one is to go to the Tract House, or to the Sunday-school Union, or to *The Christian Almanac*, and find a discussion upon the subject; the other way is to go out into the community and watch practical results. Just as there are two ways of finding out the difference between harvest apples and choke pears. You may either take a pomological journal, and read about the difference, or you may take a club and go out and knock down some of the harvest apples, and some of the choke pears. The latter way will be the most positive and effective.

I have received several letters asking me about the influence of the *theatre*. There are certain principles to be laid down which will help every man to decide these questions for himself. We must all come to a decision upon this subject. Every father, every mother, every young man, and every young woman must meet it. The theatre is a tremendous engine for good or for evil. If it be good, we want to help it, and take our families to enjoy its advantages.



If it be bad, let there be no lack of emphasis in denunciation.

The histrionic art arose in Greece. It was invented in the attempt to make great occasions of entertainment and idolatry more entertaining and impressive. Although Sophocles, and Euripides, and other Greek writers, dramatized in elegant and pure style, yet the chief theatrical spectacles of those days were scenes of the most disgusting impurities. As the nations plunged into excesses, theatres flourished, and dramatists were honoured. The proud days of Grecian strength and courage suggested by Salamis and Marathon had gone, and the land that had produced a great army of orators, dramatists, artists, and architects, despised the restraints of Solon, and Draco, and went into the shadow of death.

In the days of Roman prosperity, the theatre was prohibited, and not until the seven hundredth year of the great capital did this institution get a foothold. But once established, it ran a mighty career of cruelty and licentiousness, from the record of which common decency veils its face. The theatre of Marcus Æmilius Scaurus would hold eighty thousand people. At Nero's command, the theatres were covered with gold. Some of the buildings were so large that they enclosed trees and statues and fountains; and in order to cool and refresh the multitudes of people assembled in the play, a mixture of water, wine, and Sicilian saffron was prepared, and this was led through pipes to the highest seats, and from thence it distilled in fine rain that purified and cooled the air throughout the theatre.

The drama came on down through the ages, supported by the pens and the genius of some of the greatest writers and actors that the world has ever known. Dramatic exhibitions were first made in France, by the pilgrims who had come back from the Holy Land. Here were recited the scenes through which they had passed. Scriptural scenes were afterwards enacted in a building in which were three

scaffoldings above each other. The highest scaffolding was arranged so as to represent Heaven, the next the World, and the lowest to depict Hell. Although this was called a religious ceremony, the debauchery connected therewith caused Parliament to forbid it by a special enactment. But the drama arose in other garb, and won the sanction of the Government. In 1832 the French Chamber of Deputies voted one million three hundred thousand francs for the support of theatres, and to-day the most brilliant assemblages gathered in Paris are in theatres.

In England, the first exhibitions of this art were planned and conducted by the clergy, and were the Miracle Plays, or scenes in the life of the apostles, or the burning of the martyrs. The blasphemy of the thing arose to such a height that God was represented as acting on the stage; and, lest the play should be too serious, Satan and his imps were introduced to excite the mirthfulness of the audience. When England could no longer endure these outrages, the moralities were enacted in a series of plays in which the virtues were allegorized. Faith, Hope, Charity, and Prudence, came upon the boards. At one of these plays enacted before the king, the actors became intoxicated, and Hope, Faith, Charity, and Peace staggered across the stage and fell, and were carried behind the scenes dead drunk. These scenes were sanctioned by the king and by many of the clergy. A book containing an account of the various sports of the people was ordered to be read in the churches.

But the time in English history has come when the drama is to be extended to other shores. The manager of Goodman's Fields is to be sold out; but having displayed thorough honesty in all his dealings, his creditors allow him enough of a theatrical outfit to start again. With a troop of adventurers, he puts out for the wilds of America in 1752. The quarter-deck of the vessel was used as a stage for frequent rehearsals. After a six weeks' voyage, they landed at Yorktown, Virginia; and in Williamsburg, then the capital of

Virginia, they hired an old store, and transformed it into the first American theatre. So wild was the surrounding region that, standing at the back door of the building, the proprietor shot game flying past. Before the best people of that ancient town the dramatic entertainment was spread. One man with his harpsichord composed the orchestra; and amid rapt attention, the *Merchant of Venice* was played. From thence to Annapolis and New York these adventurers went. The whole country heard of their fame, and praised and condemned. In 1754, Philadelphia first saw the drama. The Quakers petitioned the authorities against its admission, but Governor Hamilton finally gave permission that twenty-four plays might be offered, provided nothing indecent or immoral should appear, and the manager should give security for the debts contracted by the company. On the first alley above Pine Street the first theatre of Philadelphi was opened to a great audience that rushed in, gathered by the novelties of the scene and the great excitement that had been raised. Since then, many theatres have arisen in honour of the drama; and the foot of every great actor in our day has trod the Philadelphia and New York stage.

At this hour the drama wields a tremendous influence in this country; and although it comes down to us unexhausted by the march of many hundred years, and wearing garlands, that many hands in all ages have entwined, we are not presumptuous when to-night we arraign it for trial, and, in the name of God, read the indictment, and demand of it, *guilty or not guilty?*

You say that the dramatic writings of the world contain some of the best poetry, the finest sentiment, the most elevated morality, and Titanic strength of style, and the piling up by the giants of mountain on top of mountain, until on them they have scaled the heavens. I admit it. You say that the theatre has marshalled in its service some of the best poetry, music, eloquence, and painting. I admit it. You say that some of the purest of men have catered

for the dramatic tastes of the world. I admit it. Witness Milton, and Dr. Young, and Hannah More, and Addison, and Walter Scott. You say that some of the dramatic writings of the world have had decidedly a religious tendency. I admit it. You say that some of the most astonishing talent that the world has ever seen has made its chief exhibition in the play-house. I admit it. Witness Conway, and Hackett, and Siddons, and Malibran, and Kean, and Foote, and Garrick. You say that theatres have done many noble charities. I know it. Witness the hospitals that have been founded, the destitute families that have received their benefits, and the wonderful charities that flowed from them just after the Chicago fire. You say that some people have gone frequently to the theatre without suffering any depreciation of morals. No doubt of it. You say that vast multitudes of people, have, through the theatre, become acquainted with literature that otherwise they would never have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with. I admit it. Witness the plays of Shakespeare, that are in the mouths of people who can neither read nor write. You ask, would not a theatre with virtuous actors, and an audience of perfect correctness in behaviour, and where everything was conducted in a Christian manner, be highly beneficial to a Christian community? No doubt of it. Such an institution would be an auxiliary to the Church. You say that you know theatres which answer exactly this description. Then I exclude such from anything that I shall say to-night, for I come not for wholesale denunciation, but to do justice. A lie told against a theatre or a gambling-house is just as bad as any other lie. You say that some theatres are much more degraded than anything I describe. Probably so. But I take all the theatres of this country, of whatever character and strike the average. I have but one object in this sermon, and from that I shall not swerve. It is the discussion of the question, —should a Christian man favour the theatre as it now is? *I say not.*

First, because of its *deleterious effects upon the retainers and employes of the stage*. There have been connected with theatres high-minded and pure-hearted men, and I have no doubt that from this employment men have gone at last to heaven. But that the majority of the people employed in our theatres are of a most undesirable character, will be, in general, admitted. How many of you would like to have your sons and daughters grow up and launch out in the association of play-actors? Would it be an agreeable prospect if you thought that your daughter would become one of the ballet-dancers who revolve so gracefully, and manage their feet in such a modest and unobtrusive manner? W. B. Wood, the actor, in a book written in defence of the stage, speaking of his association with people of his profession, says, "How different is a theatre from our preconceived notions of one. A few weeks have shown me the vileness of envy and jealousy, and the pangs of disappointed hope and ambition. No one do I see of either sex even moderately contented. The greater proportion, particularly the comic department, are positively miserable." So much for the testimony of a man who knows all about it. Indeed, how could you expect a man who is, night after night, impersonating a miser, a highwayman, a libertine, a knave, or a murderer, to remain content, or pure, or honest? The man who so often assumes a bad character, after a-while becomes that which he represents. The associations of the green-room are blasting. It is a terrific ordeal, through which but few can pass unsinged. The whole land ever and anon rings with some outcry of shame or cruelty that shows that many of the theatrical troupe are not strangers to the dram-shop and the brothel. The most prominent actors in the country have not suffered or lost their popularity by the discovery of their licentiousness. The crimes which wither other men seem to excite no astonishment when performed by these so-called "educators of public taste." Rousseau, who was never charged with any love for Puritanic notions,

or Christian sobriety, writes : " I observe in general that the situation of an actor is a state of licentiousness and bad morals ; that the men are abandoned to low practices ! that the women lead a scandalous life." Why is it that in England, and America, and Italy, and France, and Spain, and throughout the whole civilized world this profession excites suspicion ? No unfounded prejudice could excite such universal disapprobation. Why does such a suspicion exist everywhere ? Let parents, watchful of their children's associations, and sisters, proud of their brothers, and men, intelligent, reputable, and Christian, answer.

Again, a Christian man should discountenance the theatre as it is because of its *adjuncts of evil*. Find a theatre, and not many steps off you find the haunts of drunkenness and impurity. In the same building is a place where you may take a drink ; and all around and about the place are solicitations to lust and wine. In almost every case, when a theatre is constructed, the property all around about it depreciates. The popularity and prosperity of the theatre cannot be kept up in ordinary cases without these adjuncts of evil. Two of the largest theatres in London resolved to have no bar where intoxicating liquors could be purchased, and the abandoned were to be kept out as much as possible. The theatres went down, so that one was turned into a menagerie and the other into a juggler's entertainment. The managers of the old Tremont Theatre in Boston took out no license for the sale of intoxicating liquors, and passed a regulation that every female not accompanied by a gentleman should be prohibited entrance. The consequence was that the theatre went down—the manager in his report stating that the theatre would not have an audience under such regulations, even though the admission were free. Aye, the theatre would have died long ago but for the surrounding evils that keep adding fuel to these wasting fires of hell.

Again, a Christian man cannot countenance the theatre *as it now is*, because of the character of the majority of the

*people who regularly attend it.* There are many persons every night at these entertainments who are of spotless virtue. Some of them go because they want to see for themselves. Some go as critics. Some go as ardent admirers of tragedy. Some have an unbounded appreciation of the ludicrous, and they go to see the farce. Some, judging from the fact that they themselves have been uninjured, take their families. The splendid acting draws forth their applause, and they are unabashed by the indecencies that shine through the play or throw up their heels in the dance. But are the great audiences of the theatres made up chiefly of this sort? No, no. Husbands who have lost all love for home go there. Horse-jockeys go there. Thieves go there. The lecherous go there. Spendthrifts go there. Drunkards go there. Lost women go there. The offscourings of society go there by scores and by hundreds. They block up the doorway. They hang over the gallery, and ogle, and smirk, and shout aloud in the applause that greets a brilliant passage, or one that caricatures religion, or sneers at virtue as prudery or over-niceness, or hints at indecency, and make the pure-hearted wife or mother turn away her head and say: "God forgive us for ever coming to such a place as this." An institution that nightly draws together from the lowest haunts of vice so many of the leprous, and unwashed, and abandoned, must have in it a moral taint. Walking forth in the fields I see in the distance flocks of crows and buzzards sweeping at a corner of the field. I cannot see anything there, but I know what is there—a *carcass*, else the crows and the buzzards would not be so multitudinous in that quarter. So when, in the community, I see the unclean and the reprobate in great multitudes swarming around an institution, I say, "There is a carcass there; there is death there." You are a merchant—you want a confidential clerk. You go to the theatre to get him. *Jack Sheppard* is being acted. You find a young man right before you, in a low theatre, entirely absorbed in the play. He evidently

appreciates and approves. I think I see you, merchant, leaning over and touching him on the shoulder, and saying, "Young man, I want a confidential clerk, and you are just the man I have been looking for." I do not deny that in every audience ever assembled in a theatre, there may be the good, the honourable, the pure, the useful, the humane, the conscientious, the true, the amiable. But are not the great mass of people that pour in and out of our theatres a different class? Woe to the man who sits, night after night, and week after week, in the hot, fetid, blasted, indecent companionship of the average American theatre! Good influences will retire from his soul. Gathering round him, with joined hands, will come ruin, debauchery, and wretchedness, to hail him into their brotherhood; and at last, having rent out his heart at a stroke, they will pour his blood into the cups of their carnival, shouting, "Drink! Here is to woe! and darkness! and death! and fire!" Dumas, the famous French novelist, who has written many plays for the theatre, says, in answer to one of his critics: "You would not take your daughter to see my play? You are right. But let me say, once for all, that you must not take your daughter to the theatre. It is not merely the work that is immoral—it is the play. Whenever we paint man, there must be a grossness that cannot be placed before the eyes, and wherever the theatre is elevated and loyal, it can live only by using all the colours of truth. The theatre being the picture or the satire of social manners, it must ever be immoral, the passions and social manners being themselves immoral." Surely *that* man ought to know whether it is safe to take your families to the theatre!

Again, a Christian will discountenance the theatre because it *has been the acknowledged avenue to destruction for great multitudes*. How often has a condemned man on the scaffold, in his dying speech, said: "*The Theatre ruined me!*" The Bishop of Carlisle examined the records of a penitentiary, and found that the majority of the inmates were first seduced



from rectitude by theatres and races. Almshouses, insane asylums, and state prisons have gathered the corrupt fruit of this corrupt tree. A young man comes from the country. He has heard a great deal about the theatre. He goes to what is called a first-class theatre for one night. The play is *The Merchant of Venice*. It does not startle him at all. But the next night, on the way home from the store, he sees a placard on the wall, announcing a different style of play, of most attractive cast, and the announcement that it is positively the last night. (When theatres are going to have a play for seven or ten nights in succession, they always put on bills: "This is the last night.") The young man goes to his boarding-house. Everything is dull. Something says, "You had better not go to the theatre; your father and your mother would not like it." But he must get into the open air. He starts along the street—his conscience bids him halt; but he goes up to the ticket-office of the theatre, pays the admission, and enters. At first he sits far back, with his hat on and his coat-collar up, fearful that somebody there may know him. Several nights pass on. He takes off his hat earlier, and puts his coat-collar down. The blush that first came into his cheek, when anything indecent was enacted on the stage, comes no more to his cheek. Farewell, young man! You have probably started on the long road which ends in consummate destruction. The stars of hope will go out one by one until you will be left in utter darkness. Hear you not the rush of the maelstrom, in whose outer circle your boat now dances, making merry with the whirling waters? But you are being drawn in, and the gentle motion will become terrific agitation. You cry for help. In vain. You pull at the oar to put back, but the struggle will not avail! You will be tossed, and dashed, and shipwrecked, and swallowed in the whirlpool that has already crushed in his wrath ten thousand hulks.

*But I must leave until next Sabbath several important arguments against the average American theatre. Some of*

you will take no warning from what I say ; but there are many here who will listen. The last time I spoke on this place I said : “ If there is a young man here who has in his pocket tickets to the theatre, he had better, before he goes out of the building, tear them up, lest they prove to him a ticket to perdition.” At the close of the service a young man took from his pocket two theatrical tickets and tore them to pieces, and the sexton afterward picked them up, and told me of the circumstance. So may God send the truth home—not to one heart, but to a thousand hearts.

I stood one morning in an empty theatre in New York. I went in to satisfy my curiosity, and to look behind the scenes. Having examined the trap-doors and the side-rooms, I came and stood alone on the stage. While standing there, there came rolling up out of the silence into my fancy the scene which, the night before, might have been enacted. Pit, and boxes, and galleries seemed filled with a motley crowd. The stamp of a thousand feet announced the impatience of the audience. Suddenly the chandelier begins to blaze, and jets of fire leap along the ceiling, and the foot-lights kindle their splendour amid the gorgeous scenery. A faint thrum of instruments arouses the orchestra, and lips to the brazen trumpet, bow to the viol, and fingers to the harp, and, with one magnificent burst of harmony, the audience are carried captive within the golden gates of sound. The play moves on. Princes stalk forth, and courtesans, not over-much attired, come forth from palaces, and windows are hoisted from which gay ladies elope, and the heavy scenes are interspersed with the marvellous evolutions of the dancers, and pure sentiment and splendid oration are mingled with indecent allusion. In that seat is an artist who has come to see the rendering of some famous passage, and through his eye-glass he watches every change of countenance in the actors. In this box are a father and mother, with their sons and daughters—the parents watching the play, the sons looking *out on the galleries!* Happy family! They have come to

cultivate their taste, and to become better acquainted with human nature. Back yonder is a young man all caught up in the greatest enthusiasm. He laughs and cries, and chides himself that he has not before been to the theatre. He will not soon be absent again. He has started on the downward course, and what if he does go to ruin? It will be to the sound of the viol and the step of the dance, and the enchantment of the drama. In that top gallery see them—the hard-visaged, the ill-behaved, the boisterous, the indecent. That poor soul was born in a mountain cottage. She helped her father watch the sheep on the hill. She used to bring up the cattle at night-fall, and well her foot knew the path to the spring in the rock. She wandered away. God pity that lost soul. No friend, no home, no hope. Fain would I breathe again, with light heart, the mountain air, and help her father tend the sheep, and go down and take a drink at the spring in the rock.

But the scene changes. Standing on that stage, the foot-lights seem to lower, and a mist arises before my eyes, until I can hardly hear or see the assembled audience. The theatre seems widening, and, at the same time, growing more dim. The pillars, from their dingy colour, turn white, and the galleries look like a floating cloud, and the spectators that I saw grow into vaster multitude—yea, ten thousand times ten thousand—and the air is stirred with many wings. The ceiling rises higher and higher, and changes as into a canopy of cloud, intershot with arrows of fire, and there is before me an amphitheatre, of height and depth, and length, and breadth, and splendour, and power such as I cannot describe; and instead of the faces that were filled with mirth, and lightness, and gaiety, I see an array of countenances filled with such earnestness as men exhibit who are on trial for their lives. In the midst of this great audience, which are like the leaves and stars for numbers, there begins to arise *something* that at first looks like a great cloud, then like a *huge pillar*; and afterwards it grows brighter and flames out

in glory; and running my eye up and down the tremendous elevation, I find it it is a *throne—a stupendous throne—a great white throne*. And there is an awful hush, and I see that the faces around are changing into deeper earnestness. Some kindle with highest rapture, and some grow pale with fear; and something says: “These are the generations of men assembled to give an account of all their deeds! and these are the parents who were faithful to their children; and these are they who corrupted their families; and these are they who plunged into earthly crimes and called them sports; and these are they who committed soul-suicide; and these are they who served their God, and found their greatest pleasure in loving Him; and this—and *this is the throne—the great white throne—*THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT.”

“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened.”

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### THE AVERAGE THEATRE.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”—*Matt.* vi. 13

NO man has a right unnecessarily to trust himself in the presence of temptations. It should be the prayer of every one, day and night, “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

I am asked about the influence of the theatre. The usual mode of discoursing upon this subject is to represent all play-actors as debauched, and the entire audience gathered in a theatre as abandoned and reprobate. Now, what good can a man expect by such a positive misrepresentation? Nine-tenths of this audience have at some time in their life been in a theatre. You do not think yourselves abandoned and depraved. Do you not suppose that every night in some of our theatres there are men who go there for the same reason that took you? At this point, I wish to *disclaim any sympathy* with those who charge upon dramatic

literature the crimes of the theatre. Any dialogue is a drama. Solomon's song is a drama. The Book of Job is a drama. Some of the parables of Christ are dramas. The piece in the Old New England spelling-book, which represents a youth, Christ, and Satan in conversation, is a drama. You have no right to put upon the works of Shakespeare, Addison, and Walter Scott the fooleries and outrages of the clog-dancers of the theatre. Blot out from sacred and profane literature the drama, and you have destroyed whole constellations of beauty and purity. I love the drama, while I deplore many of the scenes into which it has been dragged. The drama is like the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves: it has been stripped and left half dead.

In my last discourse, I gave you five or six reasons why a Christian man ought not to favour the theatre. I said then that I did not speak of the best theatres or the worst theatres, but placing them all beside each other, I struck the average. I add to-night that my objections to the theatre are confirmed by the united *evidence of the good and wise in all ages*. Greece and Rome, in the days of their strength, forbade it. The vast majority of the Christian people of Europe, and America, and of the whole world, have condemned it. The American congress, in the time of the Revolution, condemned it. Josiah Quincey, in 1775, says, "The stage is the nursery of vice, and disseminates the seeds far and wide, with an amazing and baneful effect." Washington and Franklin, among statesmen, Socrates, Plato, and Seneca, among philosophers, have deplored its influence. Almost the entire testimony of the philosophic and religious world have been arrayed against it. But you say, "What do I care for Socrates and Plato?" Then I ask, what is the evidence of your own Christian father and mother upon the *subject*? They could have had no motive in advising you *against* this institution, if it were not a good motive. You *say that the theatre never had a chance to vindicate itself—*

so many people have been against it. I answer that it has had every possible opportunity to vindicate itself. It has had thrown around it all the fascinations of genius, all the arts, of poetry, and painting, and eloquence. Notwithstanding all this opportunity of gaining the affections of the good, it stands up to-day for trial; and the noblest piety, and the noblest philanthropy, and the best morality of the land sworn as jurors in the case, rise to render their verdict. Prisoner, look upon the jury. Jury, look upon the prisoner. Is it guilty or not guilty? "Guilty," is the response, and so they say all.

Again: I discountenance the theatre because it is the polluter of public taste. The advocates of this amusement often recommend it as an educator of public taste. But look at the character of the plays. Is *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, or *King Lear* a type of that which most frequently appears? No; stop on the way home to-night, and look at the placards upon the wall, and you will find a very different programme. If *Richard III.* were being enacted in one theatre, and the *Black Crook* in another, which would have the largest audience? While there are tragedies of unexceptionable caste, rendered with overwhelming power, a reference to the advertisements for nine-tenths of the theatres of this country will prove the depravity of the public taste upon this subject. You have not ink in your inkstand black enough to write down the names of scores of plays that are enacted night after night in the presence of approving gentlemen and ladies. By what law is an indecent thing any the less indecent by being on the stage? That which is improper before one person in the parlour, in a theatrical audience of fifteen hundred people is fifteen hundred times more improper. How would you like to have at a party at your house a score of men and women apparelled as you have seen them in the last three years, trooping forth on the American stage? Great scantiness of fig-leaves. One student of the play in modern days gives

as a statistic that he counted seventy thousand immoralities. I do not doubt the statistician ; but I think he was engaged in a sorry business. I should as soon think of going out upon the commons, and devoting myself to taking census of the number of dead cats and dogs. Who can compute the numbers of the herd of vulgarisms, profanities, and indecencies that have, with filthy hoof, trampled across the stage? Educator of good taste. If there were nothing upon the boards of our theatres but good morals and pure sentiments, and honest behaviour, the upright might go there ; but do you suppose that there would be such crowds of the reprobate in attendance on the average American theatre, or that there would come down such thunders of applause from the gallery? The elegant sentiment, the exquisite imagery raises up a few delicate hands, but the applause is quite feeble. But the inuendo, the word that looks two ways, the emphasis that has in it the quaver of unchastity—how all the feet come down, and the hands clap, the sounds dying away, only to come up with more boisterous and overwhelming outbreak. The pure men who go to such plays are disgusted. But they are in a small minority. If you should gather together in one audience all the theatre goers in this country and in Europe, and put to vote in that great audience whether all the impure illusions of the play should be dropped out, a few hundred people would say “*Aye!*” But by hundreds of thousands of majority, the audience will cry out, “*No! no!*” Educator of popular taste. Many of the refined and elevated, and moral people have got along without its help. I think that there are enough innocent and ennobling amusements in this, as in all other cities, to culture good taste in the people, without the necessity of a resort to these very suspicious schools of refinement. Where the theatre has cultured one *taste* up to a higher standard, it has sunk a hundred lower. *Educator* of taste. A mighty missionary work is yet before *it*, for it must begin with the “green-room,” and work up

through parquet and boxes to the top gallery; and this last will keep it busy in Evangelical labours until the dawn of the millennium. Oh, benign and gracious institution! Show me one father or mother, brother or sister, son or daughter, that it has made a better man or a better woman. A few years ago the most popular play on the stage of New York was *The Drunkard*. It was said to be highly moral and reformatory in its influence. But what a commentary on the whole affair, that the chief actor of that play died in delirium tremens.

Again: the Christian man will discountenance the theatre, because it gives a *distorted view of life*. People defend it by saying that it gives one a knowledge of human nature. Put a young man in a dry goods' store, or in a lawyer's office, and he will learn more of human nature in six months than in a life-time of theatre-going. Beside that, it is chiefly the worst side of human nature that the average play-house sets forth. Heroic *Portia*, and honest *Gonzalo*, and gentle *Miranda* are not types of the characters presented in most of the modern plays. What advantage is it for any one to sit down in an audience, and look upon the impersonation of knavery, of libertinism, of unrelenting revenge, that looks out from behind the curtain upon sleeping innocence, and the knife that the murderer lifts, all dripping with the blood of the victim? If you want to see knavery, go look at it in prison chains. If you want to see uncleanness, go to the hospital, and look at the pile of agony and putrefaction. Do you want to see revenge? Before you get through with life, some one will take after you, abusing you, slandering you, persecuting you, even unto death, and you will find out fully what revenge is. If men want to study these things, let them not go where they are surrounded by fascination of scenery, and palatial residence, and the crime is half excused by the skilful dramatist; but let them take a police officer and go down through the dens of the metropolis, and see *at midnight, vice, and loathsome bestiality and festering*



abomination, and breathe the sickening stench that comes up from the cellar where humanity wriggles in filth, and rots alive, and rends out its heart in torture, and blasphemes God, and dies. By the time you get through life, you will know more about human nature than you want to. There are multitudes of people who understand the world, its passions, its ambitions, its trickeries, its sources of power, its misfortunes, and who can touch the key of any emotion, and at will play the high notes of gladness, or the deep tones of woe, without ever having gone to this questionable school. But remember that hundreds of men are ruined by city exploration. They go to see for themselves. A man hears that lions are very dangerous. He says, "Is that so?" He opens the cage; and the monster with one stroke fells him, and with one crunch grinds up his skull. The lion never imagined that the man had come in to study natural history. Oh! the devil is mean. He says, "Come in and see." The man goes in to look for himself; the roaring lion grabs him, and he is gone. He learns *human* nature dearly who learns it at the risk of his *immortal* nature.

Again, I charge upon the average American theatre *much of the unhealth of this country*. The man who sits night after night, until ten or eleven o'clock, in the theatre, and then takes his oysters and his ale, and crawls into his bed at twelve or one o'clock, will be a sick man. No physical constitution can endure it. The nerve shattered, the imagination excited, the strength exhausted, he will be eaten up by disease, and pitch into an early grave. The American theatre has filled the land with an army of invalids. We see them dying with dyspepsia, with neuralgia, with liver complaints, and consumptions, and there is congratulation in hell that the theatre killed them. It is death to a man to be busy all day in a store, the air poisoned and corrupt, and then, as a usual thing, to spend three hours at night in a theatre, the atmosphere of which is made up of ten parts

of cologne, fifty parts of tobacco, one part of oxygen, and three hundred and seventy parts of poor whiskey. Oh ! I have seen the average American theatre throw upon society a great many weak, inane, and corrupt men unfit either for living or dying. I knew a man in this city who was once foremost in the Church, who came under the fascinations of the American theatre. He gave up the Sabbath. He gave up the Bible. He gave up God. He came to deny even his own existence, adopting the absurd theory that everything is imaginary. He went thirty nights in succession to see *Macbeth* in the old Broadway Theatre. It blasted him body and soul.

Again : I charge upon the average theatre the fact that it is *the enemy of domestic life*. There are many places in this country where there are father and mother, and children, but no home. The children are handed over to irresponsible employers, while father and mother are out at the theatre. Wherever it offers its fascinations children are a great nuisance. If the measles come to the little ones the week that Mrs. Drew plays, Mrs. Drew triumphs, and the measles go under. This institution has run its red-hot ploughshares through hundreds of domestic circles. The average theatre is the sworn, bitter, everlasting foe of the home-circle. What will that mother say when she goes up to God, and God asks : " Where are your children ? " She will say : " One of them turned out to be a defrauder, and another went off from home, and was never heard from again. I did all I could for them ; that is, I gave three dollars a week to a good Irish nurse, and it was her business to take care of them."

And now I have some remarks of a more general nature. You must have noticed last Sabbath night, and this, that I have no sympathy with ecclesiastical strait-jackets, or with that wholesale denunciation of amusements to which many churches are pledged. A book just issued says that a Christian man has a right to some amusements ; for instance, if *he comes home at night weary from his work, and feeling*

the need of recreation, puts on his slippers, and goes into his garret, and walks lively round the floor several times, there can be no harm in it. I believe the Church of God has made a tremendous mistake in trying to suppress the sportfulness of youth, and drive out from men their love of amusement. If God ever implanted anything in us, He implanted this desire. But instead of providing for this demand of our nature, the Church of God has, for the main part, ignored it. As in a riot, the mayor plants a battery at the end of the street, and has it fired off, so that everything is cut down that happens to stand in the range, the good as well as the bad, so there are men in the Church who plant their batteries of condemnation, and fire away indiscriminately. Everything is condemned. There are a great many who denounce ball-playing. They hate puzzles. They despise charades. They abhor tableaux. They say: "Away with all parlour games!" They talk as if they would like to have our youth dressed in blue uniform, like the children of an orphan asylum, and march down the path of life to the tune of the "Dead march in Saul." They hate a blue sash or a rosebud in the hair, or tasselled gaiter, and think a man almost ready for Sing Sing who utters a conundrum. What do they prescribe for our young people in the way of recreation? *Prayer meetings!* Now, a young man, busy in the store from seven in the morning until six at night, sometimes wants something beside prayer-meetings. We have a physical as well as a spiritual nature, that asks for recreation. Young Men's Christian Associations of the country are doing a glorious work. They have fine reading rooms, and all of the influences are of the best kind. I believe the time is coming when these associations will also supply physical recreations; when, added to their reading-rooms and to their prayer-meetings, there will be gymnasiums and bowling-alleys, where without any evil surroundings, our young men may get physical as well as spiritual improvement. We are dwindling away to a narrow-chested, weak

armed, feeble-voiced race, when God calls us to a work in which He wants physical as well as spiritual athletes. I would to God that the time might soon come when in all our colleges and theological seminaries, as at Princeton, a gymnasium shall be established. We spend seven years of hard study in preparation for the ministry, and come out with bronchitis, dyspepsia, and liver complaint, and then crawl up into the pulpit, and the people say, "Don't he look heavenly!" because he looks sickly. Let the Church of God direct, rather than attempt to suppress the desire for amusement. The best men that the world ever knew have had their sports. William Wilberforce trundled hoop with his children. Martin Luther helped dress the Christmas-tree. Ministers have pitched quoits. Philanthropists have gone a-skating. Prime Ministers have played ball.

This church to-night is filled with men and women who have in their souls unmeasured resources of sportfulness and frolic. Show me a man who never lights up with sportfulness, and has no sympathy with the recreations of others, and I will show you a man who is a stumbling-block in the way to the kingdom of God. Such men are caricatures of religion. They lead young people to think that a man is good in proportion as he groans and frowns, and looks sallow, and that the height of a man's Christian stature is in proportion to the length of his face. I would trade off five hundred such men for one bright-faced, radiant Christian on whose face are the words, "Rejoice! evermore." Between here and Fulton Ferry, every morning by his cheerful face he preaches fifty sermons. I will go further, and say that I have no confidence in a man who makes a religion of his gloomy looks. That kind of a man always turns out badly. I would not want him for the treasurer of an orphan asylum. The orphans would suffer. Among forty people whom I received into the church at one communion, there was only one applicant of whose piety I was suspicious. *He had the longest story to tell; had seen the most visions,*

and gave an experience so rapturous and profound that all the other applicants were discouraged. I was not surprised, in a year after, to learn that he had run off with the funds of the bank with which he was connected. Who is this black angel that you call *Religion*—wings black, feet black, feathers black? Our religion is a bright angel—feet bright, eyes bright, wings bright. Taking her place in the soul, she pulls a rope that reaches to the skies, and sets all the bells of heaven a-chiming. There are some persons who, when talking to a minister, always feel it politic to look lugubrious.

Go forth, O people! to your lawful amusements. God means you to be happy. But when there are so many sources of innocent pleasure, why tamper with anything that is dangerous and polluting? Why stop our ears to a heaven full of songsters to listen to the hiss of a dragon. Why turn back from the mountain side, all abloom with wild flowers, and adash with the nimble torrents, and with blistered feet attempt to climb the hot sides of fire-belching Cotopaxi?

The day comes when the men who have exerted evil influence upon their fellows will be brought to judgment. *Scene*: the Last Day. *Stage*: the Rocking Earth. *Enter*: Dukes, Lords, Kings, Beggars, Clowns. No sword. No tinsel. No crown. No foot-lights; the kindling flames of a world. For orchestra: the trumpets that wake the dead. For gallery: the clouds filled with angel spectators. For applause: the clapping floods of the sea. For curtain: the heavens rolled together as a scroll. For tragedy: the doom of the Destroyed. For the last scene of the fifth act: the tramp of nations across the stage—some to the right, others to the the left.

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but these into life eternal.”

### THREE YEARS.

“Remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”—*Acts xx.*, 31.

PAUL was here reviewing his ministry in Ephesus. Three years of hard work. Three years of prayer. Three years of the most positive and exhilarant enjoyment ; for I see everywhere in the writings of the apostles something that suggests to me that he had thorough satisfaction in the work to which God called him ; and although he had many hardships and privations, yet he had that peace, and that comfort, and that joy which come from the preaching of the Gospel—a joy that no man knows anything about unless he has tried it. The apostle, making a review of these three years, says : “ Remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

My hap was to light upon that passage just as I was thinking of the fact that now it is three years since I became pastor of this church. As I stand here this morning I feel emotions of gratitude, and joy, and thanksgiving, and sorrow, all clambering to the top ; and yet I think the feeling of gratitude is really at this moment the most dominant. These three years that we have spent in each other’s company have been eventful to me, and they have been eventful to you. When I came to the old church I found a small band of Christian disciples, who, from various causes, had become less and less, until they stood upon the very verge of extinction as a church ; and the question was being agitated from time to time whether it would be possible to maintain a church life *longer*. Indeed, had not those men and women *been consecrated and earnest*, they would have surrendered

to the adverse circumstances. They marshalled a congregational meeting, and gathering up all the forces possible, they cast *nineteen* votes for a pastor, all of which I am happy to have received. It was not through any spirit of personal courage or reckless adventure that led me from one of the warmest and most congenial pastorates in Philadelphia that a man ever enjoyed, to this then most uninviting field; but it was the feeling that God had called me to the work, and I was sure He would see me through. The blessing of God came upon us. The time came for the forsaking of the old building. The board of trustees resolved to build this free tabernacle; and here we are to-day, at the point of temporal and spiritual prosperity that we have never before reached.

I have thought that it might be profitable to us in this anniversary sermon to state briefly what kind of a church we have been trying here to build.

In the first place, I remark that we have been trying to build here a *Christian* church—distinctly such; in other words, a church where we should preach the Lord Jesus Christ and Him crucified. My theology is all gone into five letters—JESUS. Jesus the pardon of all offences. Jesus the foundation for all structures. Jesus, the balm for all wounds, Jesus, the eye-salve for all blindness. Jesus, the guide through all perplexities. Jesus, the hope through all discouragements. Jesus, the reform for all wrongs. I have faith to believe that there is more power in one drop of the blood of Jesus Christ to cure the woes of the world than in an ocean full of human quackery. Jesus is the grandest note in any minstrelsy. He is the brightest gem in any crown. Height overtopping all height. The centre of every circumference. The circumference to every centre. The pacifier of all turbulence. The umpire of all disputes. *Jesus!* JESUS! At His table all nations are to sit. Around His throne all worlds are to revolve. He is to be the irradiation of the universe.

*Jesus!* JESUS! It is that truth that we have tried to preach

in this Tabernacle. Do you ask more minutely what we believe? I can tell you. We have no dry, withered, juiceless theology. We believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, the Deliverer of the distressed, the Home for the homeless, the Friend for the friendless. We believe in Jesus Christ, able to save to the uttermost, pardoning the guilty, imputing His righteousness to the believer. We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Sanctifier, cheering up the heart in life's ills, and kindling bright lights in every dark landing-place. We believe that the whole race is so sunken in sin that nothing but the omnipotent arm of God can ever lift it out. We believe in grace—free grace, sovereign grace, triumphant grace, eternal grace. We believe in a Bible—authentic in its statements, immaculate in its teachings, glorious in its promises. We believe in heaven, the abode of the righteous; and in hell, the residence of those who are soul-suicides—of their own free choice refusing the Divine mercy. We believe in the salvation of all men who accept Christ by faith, be they sprinkled or immersed, worship they in cathedral or in log-cabin, believe they in Presbyterianism or Episcopacy, dwell they under Italian skies or in Siberian snow-storms, be they Ethiopian or American. All one in Christ. And so we wrote, some time ago, our Creed on the wall of this church,

“ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM,”

on the way to

“ONE HEAVEN.”

We built this Tabernacle for the purpose of setting forth these great theories of the Gospel of the Son of God. Would that we had been more faithful in the pulpit! Would that we had been more faithful in the pew!

I remark further that we have tried here to build a church distinctively *unconventional*. Instead of asking, as some people are disposed to do, how other people do it, we have asked the question *how people don't do it*. Imperious custom has *decided that churches shall be angular, cheerless, gloomy*.



unsympathetic, forgetting the fact that what men call a pious gloom is impious, and that that church has the best architecture where the people are the most comfortable, and that that is the most efficient Christian service where the people are made most sick of sin, and most anxious after Christ and heaven. And so we called the architects together, and said, "Give us an amphitheatre"—that is, a large family circle, gathered round a fireplace. For many years we had felt that an amphitheatre was the only proper shape for an audience-room. The prominent architects of the country said: "It cannot be done. You need a *churchly* building." And so we had plan after plan of *churchly* buildings presented; but in due time God sent a man who grasped our idea and executed it. So far from being a failure, it satisfies our want; while there are three churches being built on the same plan in the city, and scores of them all over the land; so that I believe that the idea came from God, and that he has helped in the execution of it. And, my brethren and sisters, we fail in our work just in proportion as we try to be like other churches. We believe that God intended every church, like every man, to be individual, gathering up all its peculiarities and idiosyncrasies, and hurling them toward some good and grand object. In other words, no two churches ought ever to be just alike. Here is a church, for instance, whose object it is to prepare philosophers, and artists, and critics for heaven. God speed them in the difficult work! Here is a church, on the other hand, that proposes to bring only the poor into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, looking not after the rich. God speed such a church in its undertaking. But there is a larger idea that a church may take—bringing in the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the high and the low; so that kneeling beside each other shall be the man faring *sumptuously* every day and the man who could not get his *breakfast*; and the woman who kneels down under a shawl *that cost five hundred dollars*, while right beside her shall

be the poor girl pinning a thin and faded shawl over a heart broken with want. God speed such a church! Oh! my friends, we need to break away from slavery to ecclesiastical custom. We dare not sing if anybody hears us. We dare not preach unless we have rounded off our sentences to suit the criticism of the world. We dare not dress for church until we have examined the fashion-plates, and would rather stay at home than appear with a coat and hat not sanctioned by custom. When will the day of deliverance come to the Church of God, when, instead of a dead religion, laid out in state of a catafalque of pomp and insincerity, we shall have a living, bounding, sympathetic, glowing Christianity?

Further: we have tried here to build and to conduct a cheerful Church. While, as you know, we have not held back the terrors of the law, and the sterner doctrines of the Gospel, we have tried in this house to present to this people the idea that the gladdest, brightest, happiest thing in all the universe is the Christian religion. There is so much trouble in the world; business men have so many anxieties; orphans have so many desolations—for God's sake, if there be any bright place on earth, show it to them. Let the Church of Jesus Christ be the most cheerful spot on earth. Let me say that I do not want anybody to come whining around me about the Christian religion. I have no faith in a religion made up of equal parts of wormwood, vinegar, and red pepper. If the religion that is presented to us be a depression, we will get along better without it. If it be a joy, let it shine out from your face, and from your conversation. If a man comes to my house to talk of religion with lugubrious countenance, and manner full of snuffle and dolorousness, I feel like saying to my wife, "You had better lock up the silver before they steal something." I have found it an invariable rule that men who profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, priding themselves at the same time on their sanctimoniousness, always turn out badly. I never *knew an exception*. While those who are the most consistent,

the most useful, and the most consecrated, have perfume in their conversation, and heaven in their faces. The happiest Christians that I have ever known have been persons from sixty to eighty years of age. By that time people get over the shams and pretences of society, and have no longer any patience with anything like imposture in religion. O Christian! how dare you be gloomy? Is not God your Father? Is not Jesus Christ your Saviour? Has not your path all through life been strewn with mercies? Are you insensible to the fact that there are glories awaiting you in the better land?—doxologies of celestial worship, eternal chorals, tearless eyes, songs that resound under arches of strength, and hosannahs that clap their hands at the foot of the throne? Is it nothing to you that all the hills of heaven are radiant with the faces of those who have gone up from you, and who are waiting for your coming, ready to keep with you eternal holiday? Is there nothing in songs that never cease, in hearts that never ache, in splendours that never die, to make you glad? Then take no more mercy at the hand of thy God. Give back the marriage-ring of love that Jesus put on your hand in the day of your espousal. Plant no more of the flowers of heaven where there ought to be nothing but nettles and nightshade.

We try to make this Church a cheerful Church. A man on Saturday afternoon in New York, stands in his store, and says, "How shall I meet these obligations? How shall I endure this new disaster that is coming upon me?" He goes home. Sabbath morning finds him in the house of God. Through the song, through the sermon, through the prayer, the Lord Jesus Christ says to that man, "O man, I have watched thee; I have seen all thy struggles. It is enough; I will see thee through; I will stand between thee and thy creditors. I will make up in heavenly treasures what you have lost in earthly treasures. Courage, man, courage. Angels of God, I command you to clear the track for that man; put your wings over his head; with you

golden sceptres strike for his defence ; throw around him all the defences of eternity !” What is the consequence ? That business man is strengthened. He goes to the store next day, feeling that God is with him, and ready to deliver.

That same Sunday there is a poor woman in the church hearing the Gospel. Oh ! how shrunken she is. She wears the same dress she wore twenty years ago. How faded it is, and how out of date. She sits and listens as well as she can. Her eyes are so dim she cannot see half way across the church. Her ear is so imperfect that she can only catch occasionally a note of the psalm, or a word of the preacher. Some one sitting next to her gives her a book and finds the place for her. She says, “ Thank you, Miss, thank you.” She holds the book close up to her eyes, and, with a voice full of tremor, sings :

“ Jesus lover of my soul,  
Let me to Thy bosom fly,  
While the billows near me roll,  
While the tempest still is high ;  
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past,  
Safe into the haven guide—  
Oh ! receive my soul at last.”

And Jesus says to her, “ Mother, are you weary ?” And she says, “ Yes, Jesus, I am very tired.” Jesus says, “ Mother, are you poor ?” And she says, “ Yes, I am very poor. I cannot sew any more ; I cannot knit any more. I am very poor.” Jesus says to her, “ Mother, would you like to rest ?” She says, “ Yes, Lord, that is what I want—*rest.*” “ Courage, mother,” says Jesus, “ I will see thee through.” She goes home. The next morning, in the tenement-house, some one dwelling on another floor comes to her room and knocks. No answer. The door is opened. She is dead. The night before, the chariots of God halted *at that pillow of straw*, and Jesus kept His promise. He

said that He would give her rest, and He has given her rest. Glory be to God for the height, the depth, the length and the breadth of such Christian comfort. Oh, that we might have such joy as that which inspired the men at the battle of Leuthen. They were singing a Christian song as they went into battle. A general said to the king, "Shall I stop those people singing?" "No," said the king. "Men that can sing like that can fight." I would that we had a singing Church, a joyful Church, a jubilant Church, a comforting Church, for then we would have a triumphant Church.

I remark, further, that we have here tried to build a church *abreast of the times*. It is all folly for us to try to do things the way they did fifty or a hundred years ago. We might as well be ploughing with Elijah's crooked stick, or go into battle with Saul's armour, or prefer a canal-boat to an express-train, as to be clinging to old things. What we most need now is a wide-awake church. People who are out in the world all the week, jostling against this lightning-footed century, come into the Sabbath, and go right to sleep, unless they have a spirited service. Men engaged in literary callings all the week, reading pungent, sharp writings, cannot be expected to come and hear our ecclesiastical humdrum. If a man stays at home on Sunday and reads the newspapers, it is because the newspapers are more interesting. We need, my brethren, to rouse up, and stop hunting with blank cartridges. The Church of God ought to be the leader, the interpreter, the inspirer of the age. It is all folly for us to be discussing old issues—arraigning Nero, hanging Absalom, striking the Philistines with Shamgar's ox-goad—when all around about us are iniquities to be slain—a corrupt legislature, a rotten judiciary, and a whiskey ring! Did I say that the Church ought to be *abreast of the times*? I take that back. The Church of God ought to be *ahead of the times*—as far in advance as *the cross of Christ* is ahead of all human invention. Paul was a thousand years ahead of the day in which he lived

The swift-footed years that have passed since Luther died have not yet come up to Luther's grave. Give iniquity four thousand years the start, and the feet of Christianity are so nimble that if you will but give it full swing, it will catch up and pass it at two bounds. The Church of God ought to be ahead of the times.

I remark, further, that we have tried here, in the love and fear of God, to build a church that would be characterized by *conversions*. I heard of very good people who could preach on for fifteen or twenty years, and see no conversions, but yet have faith. It takes a very good man to do that. I do not know how a man can keep his faith up if souls are not brought to the Lord Jesus Christ. That church that does not bring men and women to the feet of the Saviour is a failure. I care not how fine the building, or how sweet the music, or how elegant the preaching, or how elegant the surroundings—it is a failure. The Church of God was made for just one thing—to get men out of the world into the kingdom of heaven. The tendency in churches at this day is to spend their time in giving fine touches to Christians already polished. We keep our religion too much indoor and under shelter, when it ought to be climbing the rocks, or hewing in the forests. Then it would be a stalwart religion, a robust religion, a religion able to digest the strongest meat of the word, instead of being kept on the pap and gruel of spiritual invalidism. It is high time that we threw off the Sunday clothes of sickly sentimentality, and put on the work-day dress of an active, earnest Christianity. Here is Brooklyn; here is New York; here are the United States; here is the whole world, to be converted. It is eighteen hundred and seventy-four years since Christ came, and yet Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America are still unevangelized. More people born every year into the world than are born into the kingdom of God. At that rate, I ask any one who can do a simple sum in *arithmetic to calculate* when this world will be brought to

Jesus! At that ratio, never! never! never. And yet we know that it is to be brought to Christ. But the Church will have to change its tack, and take a wider sweep with the Gospel net than any it has yet taken. I believe that the great masses of the people are now ready to receive the Gospel, if we give them a chance. A boy goes along the street at night, and sees a fine house beautifully lighted up, and hears music, and he says, "I wish I was in there, but I have not been invited;" and so he passes on. Here is the church of God, lighted up with festivity and holy mirth, and the world passes along outside, hears the music, and sometimes wishes it was inside, but says that it was not invited. Oh! invite the world to come in! Go out into the highways and hedges. Send a ticket of invitation, printed in these words, "Come, for all things are now ready." Some years ago two hundred men were buried in the Hartley colliery of England. The Queen of England, from her throne, telegraphed: "Is there any hope for the men?" After a-while the answer came over the wires, "*No hope, they are dead.*" Here is a whole race buried in sin, and darkness, and woe. The question that thrills up to the throne of God to-day is, "*Is there any hope for the men?*" Answering intelligence comes back from the throne of God, thrilling through the world's darkness, thrilling through the world's woe: "*Yes, hope for one! hope for all! Whosoever will, let him come. And the Spirit and the Bride say—Come. And let him that is athirst come.*"

These are some of the characteristics that we have tried to develope in this church. If we have partially succeeded, to God be all the praise!

And now the pastoral year is closed. The elders of the Church desire me to make one or two satisfactory announcements in regard to the enterprise. During this year we have raised by voluntary contribution for home and foreign objects 40,500 dollars. During the three years of my ministry we have raised for home and foreign objects 98,800 dollars.

We have received many souls into the membership at every communion. The Free-Church plan has worked admirably. We expected it to do well. It has done better than we anticipated. We like it so well that we are going to keep on with it. We do not believe now, any more than we did three years ago, in making the Church of God a banking institution, or in applying to the immortal interests of men the tests of the Stock Exchange, and putting the soul into the same scale with Michigan Southern and New York Central. We say, let men have the Gospel of Jesus Christ without any regard to worldly circumstances. If they can pay, let them pay. If they can pay nothing, let them pay nothing. We have carried out that principle. I know that some people have lied about us ; but that is the principle we have adhered to. The father dies, and the mother dies (I speak now of a case that immediately occurs to my mind) ; where shall the children go ? No money to pay. Go out. Go home. The old style of conducting church finances would have said that. The board of trustees have said in that case, as they have said in all similar cases : "Keep the seat just as though father and mother were living. It is yours ; it is yours always." A man largely prospered in business gave largely to this Tabernacle in its very beginning. Fortunes failed. Gives nothing. No ban put upon him. Just as welcome now as when he gave largely. We like the principle. We mean to stand by it. God has helped us in the past, and we expect His blessing in the future. Our prayer-meetings have become too large for the place where they are held. God's Spirit is constantly there. Our Sabbath-school is six times the size now that it was three years ago ; and there is a great work being done there by the teachers. It will take all the ages of eternity to estimate how much. Our altars from time to time have been thronged with those who came right out from the world, confessing sin, and professing their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ; and they are *living consistent lives, and are on their way to heaven.*



During the past year we have been permitted to enlarge and improve the Tabernacle. During the year we have, by the help of God, been enabled to establish the "Tabernacle Free College for Training Christian Men and Women for Practical Work;" having nearly five hundred students; having now twenty-four preaching stations, all manned and conducted by members of that College. The whole Christian world is in sympathy with it. That institution puts its hand to-day practically upon the great work of city evangelization. We have had conventions all over the country discussing the subject: "How shall the great masses of destitute men be brought to Christ?" They have passed splendid resolutions at the close of the meeting—a long list of eight, ten, or fifteen have been read, and then the presiding officer has said: "All those in favour of the resolutions for the conversion of the world, purifying the cities, and redeeming the masses, and making everything all right, say, 'Aye.'" "Aye! Aye!" a thousand voices. "All opposed—'No.' The ayes have it." There! the world is converted! Ah! we do not seem to get along by such a process. Now let us try through this institution to act directly upon the destitution, suffering, and want of the world. The attempt has been made. Souls are being brought to Christ. At one meeting, thirteen people stood up for prayer. This very Sabbath afternoon, these men, set apart in that college, ordained not by presbytery or conference, but by the laying on of the hands of the Lord Almighty, will go forth to compel men to come in to the gospel feast. If this world is ever to be brought to God, it will not be by the handful of ministers we have in this country. It will be by the great masses of Christian men and women discharging their duty. If the private church membership of this country would but put on their armour, and go forth, I believe that in fifteen years this whole land would be redeemed for Christ. Would to God that all the people were prophets! I am never afraid to hear a man say

hat he is going to preach. If he cannot preach, people will not go to hear him. If he can, he has a message from the Almighty; and I would have him deliver it. Look out how you interfere with him.

During the year, nine of our members have been promoted to the glories of heaven. They died sweetly, calmly, as only Christians can die. They have put down the staff of their pilgrimage; they have taken up the palm of the victor. The Lord Jesus has swung His arm through this church a good many times. He has been up and down all these aisles. He has taken the little children—the dear little children. He came down into the garden to gather the lilies, and the aged as well. One who sat right here, so that when I used to preach I could almost put my hand on his head, when I came back from my summer vacation was gone! Oh! how the glories of heaven shone around that old man's face, as he sat here Sabbath after Sabbath! Gone now. Happy spirit! Happy with all those who have passed the flood!

“One army of the living God—  
To His commands they bow,  
Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now.”

I thank you for all your kindness, for all your sympathy, for all your prayers for me as a pastor. My pastorate becomes happier and happier every year. It is a sorrow to me that I cannot be more in your households. You have wondered often why I do not come. Simply because I cannot come. I have worked to the full extent of physical, mental, and spiritual endurance for this church. I can do no more and live. I shall be helped in this work by Professor Chapman, who to-day begins his engagement with us; and he will with me try more thoroughly to carry out this idea of family visitation. *He will assist me in that department. I now commend him to your hearts and homes, as a brother in*

Christ, eminent for usefulness, and one whom you can sincerely love.

Now we start out on another year. How many of us will close it here, I know not. But, living or dying, let us cling to Christ. Oh! that all the people would love Him! I wish that I could take this audience, this morning, and wreath it around the heart of my Lord Jesus Christ. Oh! He is such a dear Saviour! He is such a loving Jesus! He is so precious! He is all the world to me! He is heaven to me. He washed away my sins. He comforted me in days of darkness and trouble. He is mine. Oh! blessed Jesus! Sweetest sound I ever heard, or ever expect to hear, is Thy name!

My closing prayer this morning is that God will have mercy on the dying populations of our great cities, and that the whole earth will put on bridal array for the coming of her Lord. Ride on, King Jesus! Ride on! Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen! and amen!

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### A CHIME OF BELLS.

“And beneath upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, round about the hem thereof, and bells of gold between them round about.”—*Exodus xxviii. 33.*

WHEN Mary, Queen of England, ascended her throne, on the day of her coronation she wore a crown of jewels so heavy she could hardly bear up under it. Xerxes moved around his palace in a robe embroidered with representations of hawks contending with each other. An official in one of the cathedrals in Paris, pulls open a drawer, and shows you a robe encrusted with diamonds, worn by Napoleon on the day of the christening of the Prince Imperial. All this

imperial array may have been more costly, but it could not have been more brilliant than the robe of the High Priest in the ancient temple. I see him moving around in the temple with robe of scarlet and purple, the shoulders adorned with chalcedony, ribbons of deep blue, embroideries of exquisite flowers, chains of gold, a plate hung over the heart, on which you might see a blood-red sardonyx, a topaz, a carbuncle, an emerald, a pellucid sapphire, a diamond, a transparent ligure, an agate, a violettèd amethyst, a beryl, an onyx, a striped jasper, within a space of ten inches square, mingling the blue of the sky, the green of the foliage, the sparkle of the water, and the deep glow of the fire. But mark the hem of that high priest's garment—curiously woven with representations of pomegranates, the favourite fruit of that clime; while between these pomegranates there were golden bells that clashed and chimed as the high priest moved about in the ceremonies. Was it mere silliness and child's play that hung *those bells* to the hem of the high priest's garment? Was it useless display? Was it meaningless adornment? No. It was profoundly, gloriously, significant. The bells not only called people outside and inside the temple to worship, *but they rang out and they rang in joy of the great Gospel dispensation.*

I am glad that the first use of bells was a religious use; and hereafter the Gospel of God to me shall be a chime of bells; and whether I hear them in the garments of the high priest, or in the cathedral tower, they shall suggest to me the gladness, the warning, and the triumph of the Gospel.

These Gospel bells, like those that adorned the high priest's robe, are *golden bells*. Other bells are made of coarser materials—zinc, and lead, and tin, and copper; but these Gospel bells, are bells of gold. There is one bell in Europe that cost three hundred thousand dollars. It was at vast expense that metallic voices were given to the towers of York, and Vienna, and Oxford. But all the wealth of heaven *was thrown into this Gospel bell*. No angel can count its

value. Eternity cannot demonstrate its cost. When the bell of the Russian Kremlin was being fused, the lords came and threw their gold into the molten mass ; but when this Gospel bell was to be constructed, the kings of heaven, the hierarchs of eternity, threw into it their crowns and their sceptres. It is a *golden* bell. Do you believe it ? Hear it ring ! “ God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “ Him had God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”

Glorious Gospel ! It is the sweetest sound that a sinner ever heard. It is the grandest consolation that mourner ever felt. It is the mightiest hope that mourner ever experienced.

I tarried two or three days near the tower of Antwerp. Every fifteen minutes the bells of that tower chime so sweetly that it seems as if the angels of God, flying past, had alighted in the tower. But when the full hour comes, then the clock with heavy tongue strikes the hour, adding impressiveness and solemnity to the chime of bells.

So this great Gospel tower chimes every fifteen minutes—nay, every moment. Tones of mercy. Tones of love. Tones of compassion. Tones of pardon. And occasionally, to let you know that the weights are running down, and that the time is going past, the heavy tongue of this bell comes down with an emphasis, saying, “ How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ! ” “ Now is the accepted time ; now is the day of salvation.” Weary of sin, the world said to me, you are not as bad as you might be. Poor comfort ! Standing with both my feet in the wet gravel of the grave, human philosophy took my arm, and mumbled in my ear its inanities. But religion spoke to me, and my sins perished like tow in the flame ; and the grave became only *the ploughed ground for an eternal harvest. World without end, let God be praised for such a Gospel. It is fit to live*

for ; and if days of persecution should ever again come, shall we not be willing to die for it? I do not think that Hawkes, the martyr, was foolish, when, having said to his friends that he would give them some signal in his last hour as to whether the fires of martyrdom were tolerable, in the dying moment, with his hands on fire, he lifted them above his head and clapped them once in great joy, clapped them twice, and clapped them three times—that the world might know what a joyful thing it is to die for Jesus.

I remark, further, that these gospel bells, like those around the high-priest's garment, are bells of *invitation*. When the Jews heard the clash of those bells in the hem of the priest's robe they knew it was an invitation to worship. That is the meaning of every church tower from San Francisco to New York, and from London to St. Petersburg. It is, "Come—come." Aye, that is the most familiar word in the Bible. It seems to be a favourite word. The word "Come" occurs six hundred and forty-two times in the Bible. It is "Come to the supper;" "Come to the Waters;" "The Spirit and the Bride say, come." Through all sorrows, through all trials, through all nights of darkness, through all calamities, through all temptations, it rings out, "Come—come—COME." I remember when I was a boy in the country, of being envious of the old sexton who used to lay hold of the bell-rope, and start the bell that shook the meeting house, calling the people for miles around to prayer. The poorest man, trudging along the turnpike road, knew that the bell called him just as much as it called the rich farmer, riding behind his prancing and capering pair. And so this Gospel bell calls to palaces and to huts, to robes and to rags, saying "Whosoever will, let him come." When the sexton had struck one stroke, why did he not wind up the rope and stop? The people had all heard it. But no, he kept on ringing, until, besweated, and exhausted, he sat down. When he began to ring there were none present. When he concluded ringing, the roads were full of waggons, and the church

door was thronged with people who had come to worship God. And so we must keep on ringing this Gospel bell. Though, perhaps, few may now come, we will keep on ringing, until, after awhile, men shall come as clouds, and as "doves to their windows." Come to Jesus, old man! Come to Jesus, my little child! Come to Jesus, ye wanderer. If the prodigal should this night start for his father's house. the father would say, "There is no need of fattening that calf any longer; kill it; roast it—bring forth the smoking meat to my starving boy." And there would be joy in heaven over his return. When Henry II. had his son crowned, the king took off his robes, and put on a servant's apron, and served at the feast. Oh, what condescension! Historians record it. But hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, that the King of the Universe comes to this banquet in the form of a servant, answering your beck and mine. Glorious banquet! Glorious provision! Come to it. Is there any one in this house to-night who is so discouraged he cannot start? Let me encourage him. A fireman was going up a ladder to rescue a child from a burning building. The flames struck him, singed him, scorched him—and he was about to drop; but a man in the crowd shouted, "Let's cheer that brave fellow in his effort to save the child. Three cheers!" The shout went up. The fireman was inspirited. He plunged in the burning building, brought down the child, and placed it upon the ground in safety. Are there not some here to-night who feel the fires of death kindling around about them, and who will give up the effort to rescue their souls unless some cheering word be uttered to-night? Therefore, in the name of my God, I utter this jubilant cheer; "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow. Though they be red, like crimson, they shall be as wool."

I remark, further, that the Gospel bells, like those on the high priest's robe, are bells of *warning*. When the Jews *heard* the clash and ring of these bells, it was a warning for *them* to worship, lest their God be offended. On Bell Rock,

in the German Ocean, there is a lighthouse, and there are two bells, that every half minute ring out through the fog, through the darkness, through the storm, and over the sea. *Beware! Beware!* The helmsman on the ship, hearing the warning, turns the wheel and steers off. It is a startling thing, at midnight, to hear the heavy clang of a fire-bell, if you live in the third ward, and the tongue of the bell strike *one, two, three!* If a city is besieged, and the flash of the musketry is seen on the hill-tops, and the cavalry horses are dashing up and down, and the batteries are being unlimbered, all the bells of the city call, *to arms! to arms!* So, my friends, this Gospel bell is a bell of alarm. I account it as infinite cowardice and hypocrisy for a man who believes in the Bible to hide from the people the fact that there are appalling disasters coming to those who finally reject God. We can plaster the matter over; we can philosophise about it; we can explain it away, but the Bible states it, reiterates, makes it as plain as that two and two make four, that there is utter discomfiture for the finally unregenerate. That Bible says, "God is angry with the wicked every day," and that He "will turn into hell all the nations that forget God." And yet, with those passages before them, and hundreds of others just as plain, men will speak of an eternity of lavender and rose-water for every man, regardless of his character and of his heart. You know that a white flag along a rail track means safety, and that a red flag means danger. Now, here is coming the Cincinnati express. Here is a bridge swept down by the freshet. A man goes out with a red flag to stop the approaching train. I go out with a white flag, and wave it. The engineer takes my signal, and not that of the other man. The engine rushes on. In another moment a hundred and fifty souls are in eternity. Who is responsible? A man standing by my side says, "You are. What did you wave that white flag for?" In the *Great Day* of eternity it will be found who of us, *standing in the pulpits*, were the kindest and wisest flag-



men. He will be responsible who lets men go on down toward death without giving the warning—waving the white flag of safety when he ought to have shaken the red flag of peril. I have tried for fifteen years to figure eternal punishment out of that Bible. I have not succeeded. I shall never try it again. It is there. If ever you find me standing here philosophizing about unimportant things, or befogging the people with metaphysics, or giving moral essays when I ought to be sounding the invitations and warnings of the Gospel, accost me on the spot, and charge me with betraying my mission. There is in Moscow a bell that has never been rung. It cost a great deal. It is very large. Perhaps it is the largest bell in the world. They never could get any machinery large enough to hoist it. People come and look at it, admire its size, and admire the composition of the metal, but no one has ever heard the ringing of that bell. It was never rung. We are getting into the Church of God metaphysical bells, and philosophical bells, and transcendental bells, and a great many bells that are very admirable to look at. They are immense; but I had rather be a smaller bell, and of a poorer metal, if God will only let me ring out warning and invitation to the people. I had rather be a door-bell, helping to call people into the opening gate of God's mercy and forgiveness; or I had rather be a dinner bell, inviting them to a banquet of a Saviour's mercy, crying, "Eat, O friends! drink, O beloved!" Eternal peril has come down upon thee, O unforgiven soul. The flames of the lost world have been kindled, and to night I ring the fire-bell of an eternal burning, crying, "Escape for thy life! Tarry not in all the plain! Look not behind thee, lest thou be consumed!"

I remark, further, that the bells on the high priest's robe were bells of *joy*. When the Jews heard the chiming of those bells on the priest's robe, it announced to them the possibility of pardon for their sins, and of deliverance. Behold! I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be

to all people. There have been bells rung on days of victory. The bells of London rang after Waterloo. The bells in many of our cities rang after the settlement of our national strife. The great bells of York, and Oxford, and Vienna, at some time, have sounded the victory.

These Gospel bells, of which I speak, are bells of triumph. Calvary was the dreadful Bunker Hill of the church, up and down whose sides the forces of darkness and light rallied and fell back. Now one force triumphed; now the other. But the conflict at last was decided. Satan dethroned! The white marble castle of the sepulchre captured! The whole world is to be won for God. Ring all the bells of eternity at the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now it sometimes seems as if everything was against us; heathenism against us; the formalities of the church against us; false philosophies against us; all the crimes of the world against us; the hosts of darkness, with drawn swords, and thundering ammunition-waggons of hell, captained and generated by Apollyon, the King of Terrors, are all against us. But wait a little. Joshua's men fell back, but only in stratagem before they took the city of Ai. So the falling back of the forces of God in the earth is only a Divine stratagem by which God will make our triumph the more conspicuous, and the overthrow of sin the more terrific and tremendous. The higher an eagle carries a tortoise the more complete its demolition when it dashes on the rock. God is only lifting up sin higher and higher that He may more ruinously cast it down. The day of deliverance comes. The Moors demanded one hundred virgins every year from the nation of the Castilians. The king refused the tribute, and he went out in battle to put down the infamous demand, but he was defeated. The night after the first defeat, he dreamed—so the legend says; and in his dream he heard a voice from heaven saying, "To-morrow you shall get the victory." So he rallied his troops; and, as he went into the battle, he saw a milk-white palfrey, and a supernatural being

riding upon it, waving a white standard. His army triumphed; and when the day was ended, sixty thousand Moors lay dead upon the plain. So, my friends, we may sometimes be driven back. Our enemies may say, "Aha! God hath forsaken thee. Persecute and take them, for there is none to deliver." But in Apocalyptic vision I see the white horse and his rider. His eyes are as a flame of fire. On his head are many crowns. He goes forth from conquest to conquest; and from sea to sea, and from shore to shore, shall yet ring out the bells of a universal victory. Aye! they are ringing now: "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." "And He shall reign for ever and for ever!" The Bishop of Malta, in superstition, had all the bells of the city rung, in the hope that the storm that was raging in the city might be quieted. That was superstition: but I think it is faith in God that leads us to believe that the ringing of these Gospel bells will yet silence all the storms of this world's sin, and all the storms of this world's trouble.

Oh! when Jes us, our Great High priest, in full robes shall enter into His glory, the bells on the hem of His garments will ring with the music of an eternal merriment,

But, my dear brethren and sisters, we shall have no share in that joy unless now we listen to the Gospel tidings. There is a bell on the other side of the waters, weighing two hundred and eight thousand pounds; and it takes twenty-four men to ring it. But to bring out all the sweetness of this Gospel bell would take all the consecrated spirits of earth—seraphim and archangel. Who in this august assembly will listen? Who will listen *now*? In New England they have what they call a *passing* bell; that is, when some one dies in a village, word is sent to the sexton, and he sounds the bell just as often as the man lived years: and when the sound is in the tower, the people are solemn, and they say, "Some one is dead—who is it?" For us the passing bell will soon sound. Gone from the family. Gone from the church. Gone from the last opportunity of salvation.

The day is far spent. What thy hand findeth to do, do it. Hours, once dead, can never be resuscitated. Among all the drops of dew that fall on thy grave there will not be one tear of repentance. Slipping off the embankment of eternity, we can never clamber back. William the Conqueror established the ringing of *curfew* bells. The meaning of that curfew bell, sounded at eventime, was, that all the fires should be put out or covered with ashes, all the lights should be extinguished, and the people should go to bed. Soon for us the curfew will sound. The fires of our life will be banked up in ashes, and we shall go into the sleep, the long sleep, the cool sleep, I hope the blessed sleep. But there is no gloom in that if we are ready. The safest thing that a Christian can do is to die. An Italian made a chime of bells for his native village. So sweet was the chime that he took up his abode near it. After a-while, war came. The Italian was taken into exile. The bells were captured, and were also taken away. Years passed on. One day the Italian exile, in a row-boat is being rowed up the river Shannon, toward the city of Limerick, Ireland. As he comes near the wharf the cathedral tower strikes the chime; and lo, it was the same old chime of bells that had so, in other days, enchanted him. He recognized them in a moment. His emotions were too great for human endurance. He folded his arms and lay back in the boat. The rowers put down their oars and tried to resuscitate him. His face was toward the tower. But he was gone. His soul had gone out in the raptures of that hour. His life fell under the stroke of the chime of Limerick Cathedral. So may it be with us when going up from this earthly exile into the harbour of our God. May we fold our arms in peace and listen; and, while the rowers are taking us to anchorage, from turret, and dome, and palace-gate, and arch of eternal victory, may there come rippling upon our soul the music of the bells of heaven.

## THE ROYAL HOUSE OF JESUS.

“Each one resembled the children of a king.”—*Judges* viii. 18.

ZEBAH and Zalmunna had been off to battle, and when they came back they were asked what kind of people they had seen. They answered that the people had a royal appearance: “each one resembled the children of a king.” I stand to-day before many who have this appearance. Indeed, they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Though now in exile, they shall yet come to their thrones.

There are family names that stand for wealth, or patriotism, or intelligence. The name of Washington means patriotism, although some of the blood of that race has become very thin in the last generation. The family of the Medici stood as the representative of letters. The family of the Rothschilds is significant of wealth, the loss of forty million of dollars in 1848 putting them to no inconvenience; and within a few years they have loaned Russia twelve millions of dollars, Naples twenty-five millions, Austria forty millions, and England two hundred millions; and the stroke of their pen on the counting-house desk shakes everything from the Irish Sea to the Danube. They open their hand, and there is war; they shut it, and there is peace. The House of Hapsburgh in Austria, the House of Stuarts in England, the House of Bourbon in France, were families of imperial authority.

But I come to preach of a family more potential, more rich, and more extensive—the *Royal House of Jesus*, of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named. We are blood relations by the relationship of the cross, all of us are *the children of the King*.

*First, I speak of our family name. When we see a descen-*

dant of some one greatly celebrated in the last century, we look at him with profound interest. To have conquerors, kings, or princes in the ancestral line gives lustre to the family name. In our line was a king and a Conqueror. The Star in the East with baton of light woke up the eternal orchestra that made music at His birth. From thence He started forth to conquer all nations, not by trampling them down, but by lifting them up. St. John saw Him on a white horse. When He returns He will not bring the captives chained to His wheel, or in iron cages; but I hear the stroke of the hoofs of the snow-white cavalcade that bring them to the gates in triumph.

Our family name takes lustre from the star that heralded Him, and the spear that pierced Him, and the crown that was given Him. It gathers fragrance from the frankincense brought to his cradle, and the lillies that flung their sweetness into His sermons, and the box of alabaster that broke at His feet. The Comforter at Bethany, The Resurrector at Nain. The supernatural Oculist at Bethsaida. The Saviour of one world, and the chief joy of another. The storm His frown. The sunlight His smile. The spring morning His breath. The earthquake the stamp of His foot, The thunder the whisper of His voice. The Ocean a drop on the tip of His finger. Heaven a sparkle on the bosom of His love. Eternity the twinkling of His eye. The universe the flying dust of His chariot wheels. Able to heal a heart-break, or hush a tempest, or drown a world, or flood immensity with His glory. What other family name could ever boast of such an illustrious personage?

Henceforth, swing out the coat of arms! Great families wear their coat-of-arms on the dress, or on the door of the coach, or on the helmet when they go out to battle, or on the flags and ensigns. The heraldic sign is sometimes a lion or a dragon, or an eagle; our coat-of-arms, worn right over a heart, hereafter shall be a cross, a lamb standing under it, and a dove flying over it. Grandest of all escut-

cheons ! Most magnificent of all family "Coat-of-arms." In every battle I must have it blazing on my flag : the dove, the cross, the lamb ; and when I fall, wrap me in that good old Christian flag, so that the family coat-of-arms shall be right over my breast, that all the world may see that I looked to the Dove of the Spirit, and clung to the Cross, and depended upon the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

" Ashamed of Jesus !—that dear Friend,  
On whom my hopes of heaven depend.  
No ! when I blush be this my shame—  
That I no more revere His Name."

Next, I speak of the family *sorrows*. If trouble come to one member of the family, all feel it. In Philadelphia, and the region around, it is the custom after the body is lowered into the grave, for all the relatives to come to the verge of the grave and look down into it. First those nearest to the departed come ; then those next of kin, until they have all looked into the grave. So, when trouble and grief goes down through the heart of one member of the family, it goes down through them all. The sadness of one is the sadness of all. A company of persons join hands around an electric battery ; the two persons at the ends of the line touch the battery, and all the circle feels the shock. So, by reason of the filial, maternal and paternal relations of life, we stand so close together that, when trouble sets its battery, all feel the thrill of distress. So, in the great Christian family, the sorrow of one ought to be the sorrow of all. Is one persecuted ? All are persecuted. Does one suffer loss ? We all suffer loss. Is one bereaved ? We are all bereaved.

" Their streaming eyes together flow  
For human guilt and mortal woe."

If you rejoice at another's misfortune you are not one of the sheep, but one of the goats ; and the vulture of sin hath alighted on your soul, and not the Dove of the Spirit.

Next, I notice the family *property*. After a man of large estate dies, the relations assemble to hear the will read. So much of the property is willed to his sons, and so much to his daughters, and so much to benevolent societies. Our Lord Jesus hath died ; and we are assembled to-day to hear the will read. He says, " My peace I give unto you." Through the apostle he says : " All are yours." What ! everything ? Yes ; everything ! This world and the next. In distinguished families there are old pictures hanging on the walls. They are called the " heir-loom " of the estate. They are very old, and have come down from generation to generation. So I look upon all the beauties of the natural world as the heir-loom of our royal family. The morning breaks from the East. The mists travel up hill, above hill, mountain above mountain, until sky-lost. The forests are full of chirp, and buss, and song. Tree's leaf and bird's wing flutter with gladness. Honey makers in the log, and beak against the bark ; and squirrels chattering on the rail ; and the call of the hawk out of a clear sky, make you feel glad. The sun, which kindles conflagrations among all the castles of cloud, and sets minaret and dome aflame, stoops to paint the lily white, and the butter-cup yellow, and the forget-me-not blue. What can resist the sun. Light for the voyager over the deep ! Light for the shepherd guarding the flocks afield ! Light for the poor who have no lamps to burn ! Light for the downcast and the lowly ! Light for aching eyes, and burning brain, and wasted captive ! Light for the smooth brow of childhood, and for the dim vision of the octogenarian. Light for queen's coronet, and for sewing-girl's needle. Let there be light ! Whose morning is this ? My morning. Your morning. Our Father gave us the picture and hung it on the sky in loops of fire. It is the heir-loom of our family. And so the night. It is full-moon. The mists from shore to shore gleam like shattered mirrors ; and the ocean under her glance, comes up with great tides, panting upon the beach, mingling, as it were, foam and fire.



The poor man blesses God for throwing such a cheap light through the broken window-pane into his cabin ; and to the sick it seems a light from the other shore which bounds this great deep of human pain and woe. If the sun seems like a song, full, and poured from brazen instruments that fill heaven and earth with great harmonies, the moon is plaintive and mild, standing beneath the throne of God, sending up her soft, sweet voice of praise, while the stars listen, and the sea. No mother ever more sweetly guarded the sick cradle, than all night long this pale watcher of the sky bends over the weary, heart-sick, slumbering earth. Whose is this black-framed, black-tasselled picture of the night ? It is the heir-loom of our family. Ours, the grandeur of the spring, the crystals of the snow, the coral of the beach, the odours of the garden, the harmonies of the air. You cannot see a large estate in one morning. You must take several walks around it. The property of this royal house of Jesus is so great, that we must take several walks to get any idea of its extent. Let the first walk be around the earth. All these valleys, and the harvests that wave in them, and the cattle that pasture in them ; all these mountains, and these precious things hidden beneath them, and the crown of glacier they cast at the feet of the Alpine hurricane ; all these lakes, these islands, these continents—are ours. In the second walk go among the street lamps of heaven, and see stretching off on every side, a wilderness of worlds. For us they shine. For us they sang at our Saviour's nativity. For us they will wheel into line, and with their flaming torches add to the splendour of our triumph on the day for which all other days were made. In the third walk, go around the Eternal City. As we come near it, hark to the rush of its chariots, and the wedding-peal of its great towers. The bell of heaven has struck twelve. It is high noon. We look off upon the chaplets which never *fade*, the eyes that never weep, the temples that never close, *the* loved ones that never part, the procession that never *halts*, the trees that never wither, the walls that never can

be captured, the sun that never sets,—until we can no longer gaze, and we hide our eyes, and exclaim: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man; the things that God hath prepared for those that love Him!” As these tides of glory rise, we have to retreat, and hold fast, lest we be swept off and drowned in the emotions of gladness and thanksgiving and triumph.

What think you of the family property? It is considered an honour to marry into a family where there is great wealth. The Lord, the bridegroom of earth and heaven, offers you His heart and His hand, saying in the words of the Canticles, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away,” and once having put on your hand the signet ring of His love you will be endowed with all the wealth of earth and all the honours of heaven.

Next I speak of the family *mansion*. I might have included this under the last head, but did not choose to do so. It is now so near the 1st of May that it is a great question with many of you where you shall live; you may have to move into a house that will not suit you, upon a street you do not like. But do not worry, and I will tell you something that will cheer you up; we shall have a mansion by-and-bye from which we shall never be removed.

Almost every family looks back to a homestead—some country place where you grew up. You sat on the door-sill. You heard the footstep of the rain on the garret roof. You swung on the gate. You ransacked the barn. You waded into the brook. You threshed the orchard for apples, and the neighbouring woods for nuts; and everything around the old homestead is of interest to you. I tell you of the old homestead of eternity. In my father’s house are many mansions. When we talk of mansions we think of Chatsworth, and its park, nine miles in circumference, and its conservatory, that astonishes the world; its galleries of art, that contain the triumph of Chantrey, Canova, and Thor-walsden; of the kings and queens who have walked its

stately halls, or, flying over the heather, have hunted the grouse. But all the dwelling-places of dukes, and princes, and queens, are as nothing to the family mansion that is already awaiting our arrival. The hand of my Lord Jesus lifted the pillars and swung the doors, and planted the parks. Angels walk there, and the good of all ages. The poorest man in that house is a millionaire, and the lowliest a king, and the tamest word he speaks is an anthem, and the shortest life is an eternity. It took a Paxton to build for Chatsworth a covering for the wonderful flower, *Victoria Regia*, five feet in diameter. But our Lily of the Valley shall need no shelter from the blast, and in open gardens of God shall put forth its full bloom, and all heaven shall come to look at it, and its aroma shall be as though the cherubim had swung before the throne a thousand censers. I have not seen it yet. I am in a foreign land. But my Father is waiting for me to come home. I have brothers and sisters there. In the Bible I have letters from there, telling me what a fine place it is. It matters not much to me whether I am sick or poor, or whether the world hates me or loves me, or whether I go by land or by sea, if only I may lift my eyes at last on the family mansion. It is not a frail house, built in a month, soon to crumble, but an old mansion which is as firm as the day it was built. Its walls are grown with the ivy of ages, and the urns at the gateway are abloom with the century plants of eternity. The Queen of Sheba hath walked its halls, and Esther, and Maria Antoinette, and Lady Huntingdon, and Wilberforce, and Cecil, and Jeremy Taylor, and Samuel Rutherford, and John Milton, and the widow who gave two mites, and the poor man from the hospital. These two last, perhaps, outshining all the kings and queens of eternity.

A family mansion means *reunions*. Some of your families are very much scattered. The children married, and went off to St. Louis, or Chicago, or Charleston : but, perhaps, once a year you come together at the old place. How you wake up the old piano that has been silent for years. (Father and

mother do not play on it.) How you bring out the old relics, and rummage the garret, and open old scrap-books, and shout, and laugh, and cry, and talk over old times, and, though you may be forty-five years of age, act as though you were sixteen. Yet soon it is good-bye at the car-window, and good-bye at the steam-boat wharf. But how will we act at the *reunion* in the old family mansion of heaven? It is a good while since you parted at the door of the grave. There will be Grace, and Mary, and Martha, and Charlie, and Lizzie, and all the darlings of your household, not pale and sick, and gasping for breath, as when you saw them last, but their eye bright with the lustre of heaven, and their cheek roseate with the flush of celestial summer.

What clasping of hands. What embracings. What coming together of lip to lip. What tears of joy. You say, "I thought there were no tears in heaven." There must be, for the Bible says, "God shall wipe them away;" and if there were no tears there, how could He wipe them away? They cannot be tears of grief, or tears of disappointment. They must be tears of gladness. Christ will come and say, "What child of heaven, is it too much for thee? Dost thou break down under the gladness of this *reunion*? Then I will help thee." And, with His one arm around us and the other arm around our loved ones, He shall hold us up in the eternal jubilee.

While I speak, some of you with broken hearts can hardly hold your peace. You feel as if you must speak out and say, "Oh, blessed day, speed on. Toward thee I press with blistered feet over the desert way." My eyes fail for their weeping. I faint from listening for feet that will not come, and the sound of voices that will not speak. Speed on, oh, day of *reunions*. And then, Lord Jesus, be not angry with me if, after I have just once kissed Thy blessed feet, I turn around to gather up the long-lost treasures of my heart. Oh, be not angry with me. One look at Thee were heaven. But all these *reunions* will be heaven encircling heaven, overtopping heaven, heaven commingling with heaven.

I was at Mount Vernon, and went into the dining-room in which our first president entertained the prominent men of this and other lands. It was a very interesting spot. But, oh ! the banqueting-hall of the family mansion of which I speak. Spread the table, spread it wide ; for a great multitude are to sit at it. From the Tree by the River, gather the twelve manner of fruits for that table. Take the clusters from the heavenly vineyards, and press them into the golden tankards for that table. On baskets, carry in the bread of which, if a man eats, he shall never hunger. Take all the shot-torn flags of earthly conquest and entwine them among the arches. Let David come with his harp, and Gabriel with his trumpet, and Miriam with the timbrel ; for the prodigals are at home, and the captives are free, and the Father hath invited the mighty of heaven and the redeemed of earth to come and dine.

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### METHODISM AS IT APPEARS TO AN OUTSIDER.\*

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature.”  
*Mark xvi. 15,*

WHAT is the Gospel ? It is a warm-hearted invitation from the throne of God to all the world to come and be saved. It is the heart of God's affection flowering out into immortal bloom. It is to save the earth.

The reclaiming of this world for God is no small job. If a machinist go into a factory and find that there is a screw loose, or a cog broke, or a burr off, he can very easily fix that up, But suppose that there has been an explosion, and all the machinery has gone to ruin : then there is a great deal of

\* Preached during the meeting of General Conference in Brooklyn.

work before him. Now, this world, that swung a silver pendulum in the great clock of God's universe, has, by the rough hand of sin, been utterly shattered. It is a broken-down world. There are earthquakes under its mountains. There are hurricanes on its seas. There are pestilences in its atmosphere. Its great populations have gone down under the bludgeon-stroke of infinite calamities. To fix up such a wreck is no holiday work. It will not be a campaign of thirty days. It will require ten million consecrated hearts, ten million active brains, ten million busy hands.

Into this great field of Christian works all kinds of religionists have gone. The Trinitarians, and the Sabellians, and the Arians, and the Hutchinsonians, and the Campbellites, and the Antinomians, and the Moravians, and the Baptists, and the Pedobaptists, and the Episcopalians, and the Arminians, and the Calvinists, and scores of denominations of all phases of religious belief. Each one of those denominations of Christians has a truth or part of a truth; but no denomination has all the truth. You go into a watch factory, and you see a great many men busy. They are all making watches; and yet they are all busy with different parts of the watch. These men are stirring the blaze; these men are binding the rivets; these are fashioning the wheels, or the springs, or the case, or the key. But when these twenty, thirty, or forty hands have each completed what they had to do, and the watch is wound up, it is the time-piece that forgets not to mark the hours while we work and sleep.

Now, the re-construction of this world for Christ is to be at the hand of all denominations of Christians, each one doing their particular work.

It is the business of the Armenians to stir the blaze. It is the business of the Calvinists to hammer the rivets. It is the business of the Episcopalians to make the exquisite case. It is the business of the Baptists to wash off the works, until, after a-while, this world, which was disordered,

will become a perfect time-piece, ticking away the minutes and hours of one long day of millennial brightness and joy.

Circumstances make this subject especially appropriate this morning. Within the past few days the Methodists have captured this city. They have taken our homes, and our churches, and our opera-house; and if there were no higher motive to induce us, the question of prudence and safety ought to lead us to ask this morning what kind of people they are, and what have they done?

In 1739, Christianity seemed to be in decay. The ministers of the Gospel went drunk into the pulpit. The river of life seemed to be frozen over. The indecencies of Dean Swift and of Sterne did not seem to shock their congregations at all. There were a few men among them—the Wesleys, the Grimshaws, the Rowlands, and the Whitefields—who got tired of this state of things, and they blew the trumpet, and aroused an excitement that shook the known world.

The world never saw a more wonderful man than John Wesley. Grave historians say that at the time he entered the ministry there were supernatural appearances and sounds; and that Wesley, to test these appearances and sounds, demanded that Satan come into his study and say what he had to say, instead of frightening the family and friends of Wesley. But whatever may have been the source of these depredations and insults, they were introductory to one long scene of outrage and scorn heaped upon Methodism. Its disciples were mobbed; they were spit upon; they came from the preaching of the glorious gospel bleeding with wounds. While one of them was preaching, a ruffian stepped up and thrust mud into his mouth. Some of them were half-starved while they were preaching. John Wesley, dismounting from his horse, says, "Oh! how good God is to give us these berries by the roadside; for if it were not *for these berries we should almost starve.*" John Downs *dies of exhaustion and starvation while he is preaching.*

These men of God were arraigned for the most trivial causes. Whitefield was brought into court, and a man charged him with having converted his wife. He said, "My wife was a lion before, but now she is a lamb." The judge said, "Let the preacher go free. I would that he might convert all the scolds in England." Good John Shirley was arraigned for wearing white stockings. The prelate said, "Does he wear white stockings over his shoes? "Oh, no!" "Well," said the prelate, "when you find him wearing white stockings over his shoes, inform me, and I will punish him severely." While Whitefield was preaching on the commons, they threw dead cats at him, but he shouted, "Throw more dead cats; they will only enrich the soil upon which we mean to raise great harvests for our God."

But although these men were so maltreated they made the earth tremble. Constables turned pale, and sheriffs and turnkeys cried for mercy. One of them shouted out: "I came to break his head, but he has broken my heart." These people went on praying, and preaching, and singing, and performing wonderful works, until their leader after he had preached forty thousand sermons, and travelled two hundred and eighty thousand miles, said: "I am now eighty-two years of age, and yet for eleven years I have not felt any fatigue." They seemed to have almost supernatural support. Wesley died, leaving one hundred and fifty thousand followers. He made his will, saying: "I adjure my executors that I be carried to my grave by six poor men, and that I be buried in nothing but woollen; and let this be my epitaph: 'Here lyeth the body of John Wesley, a brand plucked from the burning, who died of consumption, leaving, after his funeral expenses were paid, not ten pounds.;" The enthusiasm of that man's followers leaped the Atlantic, and more than a century ago began their work in the wilds of America. The story of the Ashburys and of the Wrights is familiar to the whole Christian world. Writing in those *early times from the then West*, a man said: "Send us a



minister who can swim." The question was asked—what was meant by such a request as that. The reply came: "The last man we had, in order to keep an appointment, had to cross a fierce, rushing stream, and he was drowned in the attempt. Send us a man who can swim. They swam streams; they slept with unsheltered heads; they preached Christ until they conquered all obstacles, and to-day stand the strongest denomination in all Christendom. They are the flying artillery of God's host; and if there be any of them in this house this morning, I bid them welcome to Brooklyn, and welcome to our homes, and welcome to our hearts. That denomination might learn something from *us*, but our business this morning is to see what we can learn from *them*.

1. The first lesson that I learn is that the Church of Jesus Christ ought to adapt itself to circumstances. Methodism in England preaches in a gown; in our Eastern cities, in ordinary broadcloth: at the West in shirt-sleeves, if the season be appropriate—preaching in the house or in the fields—anywhere—it makes no difference where—preaching just as well in one place as in another. It takes the express train and goes across the continent, or a horse and rides with saddle-bags across the prairie. It is at home in magnificent *St. Paul's*, New York, and is not at all inconvenienced in a log cabin. Its ministers range all the way from the polished Bishop Simpson to the homespun Peter Cartwright. Methodism always adapts itself to the circumstances in which it is placed. I say that all denominations of Christians need to learn from it that lesson. Our churches need to unlimber. We are putting too much stress upon questions of taste. We are depending too much upon non-essentials. In some churches we act as though we had rather hear a Pharisee pray than a publican, because his grammar is better. Now, my friends, the saving of this world is rough work, and men cannot do it in a splendid way. Here is a man fallen down into the ditch of sin and crime. How we

we going to get him out? We come up, elegantly appparelled, and we look at him and we say: "What a pity it is to see a man so deep in the mud! We wish we could get him out. Is it not awful to see that man suffering there? Get a pry, somebody, and help now! I wish I had on my other clothes!" While we stand there, looking at the poor man, the Methodist comes along, and says, "Brother, give me your hand;" pulls him up, and sets him on the Rock of Ages. It is high time that we stopped trying to be so poetic about our religion. There is no poetry in saving this world. Away with your blank verse and dithyrambics. Sin is filth; Satan is an arch-villain: death is rottenness; and if you are going to try to help save this world, you had better put aside your "Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs," and "Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy," and lay hold of the work, forgetting everything but the Judgment Day. Ah; my friends, it is high time that we stopped putting so much stress on little things, and standing on the proprieties. If we cannot save the world in one way, then let us save it in another. Here is a city to be besieged. An army comes up. It demands surrender. No surrender is made. It sits down there for months, and starves out the town, or, by a very slow besiegment, overcomes it. Now, my friends, if this world is ever to be saved for God it will not be in that way. It will not be taken by siege. It will not be taken by storm. All the time that we have been delaying in this matter the forces of darkness have been strengthening. We cannot cut off their supplies. They are stronger now than they were ten years ago. They are stronger now than they were one year ago. You cannot starve them out. I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will, after a-while, come as a mighty Leader, and He will say: "Stop this slow besiegment. There are the fortresses; take them, and have done with it!" And with every spur in the flanks, and every sword flashing in the down-stroke, and the hosts of God leaping on the *parapets of sin*, the legions of darkness will hear the

command of their leader "*Fall back!*" and the bugles of hell will sound a retreat, and the torn and shattered banner of the Church will be lifted with a shout: "*Huzza, huzza! We have won the day!*" When the Scotch Covenanters were at one time in battle their ammunition gave out, and they were waiting for bullets. They expected a barrel of bullets. A barrel came down, but it was the wrong one, sent by mistake. It was a barrel of raisins. They knocked out the head of the barrel, and sat down in defeat. Oh! sirs, in the Church of God at this day we want less confectionery, and more of the strength, and the thrust, and the power of the omnipotent Gospel. Away with the raisins! Give us bullets. I think that our churches are dying of great sermons and splendid rhetoric. I think that we have a lesson to learn from the Methodist Church in the fact that it has carried the Gospel in its simplest form to the people. You never hear any fine essays read in that Church, nor exquisite descriptions of heaven as the place where the "hierophantic soul will sail down the picturesque vista of protoplasm to the shore of the anagogies." In that Church, heaven is heaven, and hell is hell, and Christ is God.

II. Again: I learn from the Methodist Church that, without passing through theological seminaries, men may have great success in presenting the Gospel. I believe in theological seminaries, but they are to the Church just what West Point is to the State. What would you have done in the last war if you had had no soldiers except those who had been at West Point? The men who came from that institution controlled and marshalled the troops all over the land. The use of a theological seminary in this or in any other country is to send out men more thoroughly drilled, who are able to organize and marshal the great mass of Christian soldiery. Let Paul go up to Athens and preach, and send plain *Matthew* down among the fishing-boats. Paul knew more in one hour than did Peter in his whole lifetime; but I think *that Peter* preached a more appropriate sermon on the day of

Pentecost than Paul could have preached. Have you been so long under the delusion, and are you now under the delusion, that the few men who are ministers of the Gospel are going to take this world for Christ? That the ten or fifteen men who every year come out of New Brunswick Seminary, or the twenty or thirty that every year come out of Princeton, or Andover, or Yale, will do all the work? No! no! You might as well have expected a few quartermasters in the Northern army to conquer the Southern confederacy.

You go into a factory, and you say, "What is the matter here? The factory is almost silent. There are only three wheels going, while you have five hundred wheels." "Oh," says the owner of the factory, "we are short of hands. We ought to have five hundred men here, but we have only three men at present." That is just the state of things in the Church of God this day. We have grand and abundant machinery, but we have not men enough to run it. Now, in the Methodist Church, it has been the policy to set many to preaching without long delay. Though it has learned theological seminaries doing an important work, it has not depended upon a few men who have been secluded for seven or eight years in learned institutions, but has sent hundreds and thousands of men from the workshops, and factories, and stores, to preach Jesus Christ; and the very moment they began to study they began to preach. I wish it were so in all the Churches. I wish it were now so in that Church as much as once it was. We who are standing in the pulpits of this country begin to feel now like the English did at Lucknow before the Highlanders came up: we must either have recruits or surrender.

Go to preaching this Gospel. How shall you learn to preach? Just as the carpenter learns how to be a carpenter. Does he sit down and study books about tools, about hammers and axes? Oh! no. He goes to boring with the bit, and *smoothing* with the plane, and *smiting* with the hammer, and *striking* with the adze; and in this way he gets

to be a carpenter. So the way to learn how to preach this Gospel is to preach it.

Yonder is a man who ought to be preaching the Gospel. He has not been ordained, and never will be. He could not be, perhaps. It may be that he has not brains enough, or time enough, or money enough. But he is ordained of God. Let him preach. Here is another. He may not, perhaps, be able to round his sentences, or make elegant allusions, or fine quotations; and yet he may be able to save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. Oh, for five thousand Moodys to come out from Chicago; and five thousand George H. Stuarts to come out from Philadelphia; and five thousand Henry F. Durants to come out from Boston, and preach this glorious Gospel, waiting for no other ordination except that which comes from the hand of the Lord Almighty. The most eminent Christian layman in the city of New York said to me two weeks ago, "Mr. Talmage, if the masses of Christians do not go to work, and we continue to depend on the regular ministry in New York, we must go under."

We want lay colleges established; lay colleges in which men can study three minutes, if they can study no longer, or three months, or one year, or three years, gathering up just such preparation as they can, and going forth to preach Jesus Christ to the people. Give us in this land one thousand lay colleges, and I believe that in ten years the United States would see the salvation of God, and that in twenty years the whole earth would be the Lord's. Hasten, O Lord, that day. I want to live to see it.

III. There is another lesson we may well learn from that Church: *the worth of a Christian revival*. Where did their great host come from? Did they just dribble into the Church? No: they came in by fifties, and by hundreds, and by thousands. That has given them the majority in this land and in England. They came in under great outpourings of the Holy Ghost. "Oh!" but some say, "they

get some people in that ought not to be there." I suppose that they do. I know that they do. But suppose that you went out to fish, and you swung the net around, and, when pulling it into the boat, you found that there were a few lamper-eels, and a few snapping turtles, while the great bulk of the draught that you had made were first-rate shad, would you throw everything overboard? No, you would not. You would throw the bad away, and you would keep the good. And yet I hear men talking as though because there were some coming into the Church of God during revivals who are not fit to be members, they would for this reason throw over the million of souls that have come in who have been faithful to the last, and hundreds of thousands of whom are already before the throne of God, shouting the praises of Jesus Christ. I have more faith (put this down in your memorandum book)—I have more faith in men who are brought to God during revivals than during a frigid state of the Church. I have had close observation in these things. Stand two men side by side. Let them have equal endowments. You tell me that *this* man was brought in when the Church was very cold, and that the other was brought in when the Church was very warm in revival. I will say, "Give me the last one; I had rather have him than five of the other kind."

How are you going to get this world saved? There are three books on this stand. Now, suppose I take one book off, and you then put three on; and then I take another off, and you put four on. How long would it be before I would get the books off that table? That is just the process we are going through now in trying to save the world. Look at the number of children born in the United States in the last year. Then look at the number of souls that, during the same time, have connected themselves with churches. At least four to one! Four born into the world where there is one born *into the Church of God*, When are we going to *get the world converted*? Add it up! Subtract it! And

yet we know that the nations are to be saved. How? By the people, in solid column, marching into the kingdom of God. Not by tens, but by fifties, by hundreds. Aye, I expect to live to see the time when, in this very audience, one thousand men shall cry out: "What shall I do to be saved?" It would not scare me at all. Oh, that the Lord would upturn this church with holy revivals! Oh, that such days might come as Richard Baxter saw in Kidderminster, as Jonathan Edwards saw in Northampton, as McCheyne saw in Dundee! O Lord, revive Thy work! In the midst of the years make known! In wrath remember mercy!

IV. There is one more lesson that I want to learn from that Church, and that is the *force of hearty singing*. What David was to Israel, what Isaac Watts has been to Presbyterianism, that Charles Wesley has been to the Methodist Church. He composed six thousand songs. Some of them were for national rejoicing, some for fast-days, some for weddings, some for funerals, some sad, some winged with gladness. In some, in the reading of every line, you can hear the snap of heart-strings. All Christendom has adopted his hymns. Handel, the great composer, took some of the hymns of Charles Wesley, and set them to his finest music. A great characteristic of the Methodist Church in this country has been that it has been a singing church—more so in other days than now. Their throats are either different, or their hearts are different. They sang their way all over England, and the howling of persecution could not silence them. They sang their way across the Atlantic, and the ocean hurricane could not beat down the song. They sang all the way across this land—for they have got to San Francisco—and the moaning of the wind in the wild wood could not overpower their melody. I know that a good many of their churches, in this day, are falling away from grace in this respect, and that they are surrendering to choirs this part of the worship in the house of God. Alas for it! But they will go back again. They will! God speed that day! My

friends, we need to learn a lesson from the Methodist Church in this respect. There is nothing that can withstand the power of a Christian song. You talk to a man about religion, and he will answer you. He may beat you perhaps in argument; but sing to him a Christian song that he heard at his mother's knee, thirty or forty years ago, and how he trembles! The Sultan of Turkey took thirty thousand Persian prisoners in battle; and the Sultan decreed that those thirty thousand prisoners must die, for they had fought against him. Before the day of execution came, one of those Persians, who was a musician, came out and played sweetly upon the flute; and the Sultan heard him, and said, "Play that again;" and he played it again. And after a-while the Sultan's heart was melted, and he said: "Let that man go free! Let them *all* go free—the thirty thousand! Put not one of them to death." But, oh! the harp of Gospel song has delivered, not thirty thousand, but a hundred thousand men, who were condemned to eternal death! It was through that agency that they were brought to the Lord Jesus Christ. I was told by an Englishman that when the English army lay around Sebastopol, one evening the bands of music, seated on the battlements, played "*Home, sweet home*;" and he said that there was a great sob went all through the army. They were homesick. How many have been made homesick for heaven by some such song as this:—

"Jerusalem, my happy home!  
Name ever dear to me!  
When shall my labours have an end,  
In joy and peace in thee."

People have been trying to write the histories of the tunes and of the hymns. They cannot do it. The history of *Ariel*, of *Colchester*, of *Dundee*, of *Duke-street*, of *Coronation*—why, it would be the history of the Church of God, with *all its joys, and sorrows, and triumphs!* They have been the



rounds of the ladder on which souls have been mounted into heaven. They have been the chariots which halted not until they stopped at the eternal King! 'Oh! how often it has been that the hand of heavenly song and the hand of earthly song have joined each other, and on the two hands immortal souls have been lifted into glory!

I do not know what they sing in heaven; but two or three times the gates got opened, and snatches of the tunes I have heard. I think, when we stand around the throne of God on high, with joined hands, we will think of how, on earth, we sang *Loving Kindness*; and I think that when all the crowns of glory come down at the feet of Christ, we will recall *Coronation*; and some soul, just come into heaven, not having yet learned the tune, will sing the old tune—the old hymn it learned on earth—it will do very well for heaven:—

“All hail the power of Jesu’s name?  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all.”

Do you think that your father, who has now been some years in heaven, has forgotten *Dundee*? Do you think your mother in glory has forgotten the old Portuguese hymn? Do you think that Martyn and David Abeel have forgotten “the missionary chant?” Martin Luther, don’t you know *Old Hundred*? When Cromwell’s host went into battle, what do you think they sang? Instead of the sound of musical instruments as they rushed upon the battlements, they sang:—

“Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him, above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

**Oh! that the Church of God, in all its battling for the**

truth, might march to songs of Christain praise! It would march to victory:

God grant that we may all sing His praise on earth, and that we may all sing it in heaven. Will we? Let me look upon the audience. Is there one who will not join with us in song in the heavenly kingdom? I cannot believe it. Lord Jesus, forbid it. Put around that one soul Thy arm of love, and bring it to Thyself, this moment. Ah! my friends, we will have to leave almost everything when we go into heaven. We wont have any preaching in heaven, nor any praying; for we shall have everything we want! What would we pray for? No Bibles in heaven. We will not want to read about Jesus when we can see Him, and throw our arms around His neck in everlasting embrace and jubilee. There will be no baptisms in heaven. But there will be *music*. There will be harps there. There will be trumpets there. There will be doxologies there. Hark to that solo of a redeemed spirit, recitative of earthly grief and triumph! Hark to that trill, commemorative of earthly deliverance! Hark to that throng of martyrs singing the fire psalm! And then when all these separate songs get through, methinks all the voices will come into one great chorus, like the voice "of many waters, and like the voice of mighty thunders." Chorus! chorus! "Blessing, and Honour, and Glory and Power be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb." And the white-robed victors will wave their palms and cry *Amen!* and the thrones of glory with uplifted sceptre, will respond **AMEN!** and all the hills of God will send back echo after echo, **AMEN! AMEN!** And what with shining angel, and choiring cherubim, and the stroke of the silver bells, it will be such a joy that I hope you and I will be there to see it.

Among the mountains of Switzerland they have a very beautiful custom. At eventide, when the fathers and the brothers and the sons are coming home from the fields, *having completed the day's work*, the wives and mothers and

daughters come out upon the opposite hill, and hail them with song ; and the women sing on one hill-top, and the men sing on the other hill-top, responding to each other.

Oh ! may God grant that when the eventime of our life has come, we may hear such a song greeting us into the better country. Ah ! we will not wait until then. Let us have it in our closing hymn this morning. Let that song be like an echo of the song of heaven—voices from earthly hill-top answering voices from heavenly hill-top, until you cannot tell where earth ends and heaven begins.

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### RECKLESS DRIVERS.

“The driving is like the driving of Jehu, the Son of Nimshi ; for he driveth furiously.”—2 Kings ix. 20.

JORAM, wounded in battle, lies in a hospital at Jezreel. The watchman, standing in the tower, looks off and sees against the sky horsemen and chariots. A messenger is sent out to find who is coming, but does not return. Another messenger is sent, but with the same fate. The watchman, standing in the tower, looks off upon the advancing troop, and gets more and more excited, wondering who are coming. But long before the cavalcade comes up the matter is decided. The watchman cannot descry the features of the approaching man but exclaims, “I have found out who it is ; the driving is like the driving of *Jehu*, the son of Nimshi ; for he driveth furiously,”

By the flash of that one sentence we discover Jehu's character. He came with such speed, not merely because he had an errand to do, but because he was urged on by a head-long disposition, which had won him the name of a reckless driver, even among the watchmen. The chariot plunges until

you almost expect the wheels to crash under it, or some of the princely party to be thrown out, or the horses to become utterly unmanageable. But he always goes so: and he becomes a type of that class of persons to be found in all the communities, who in worldly and in religious affairs may be styled *reckless drivers*.

To this class belong all those who conduct their worldly affairs in a headlong way, without any regard to prudence or righteousness.

You have no right to shut the door of your office or store against the principles of our holy religion. That minister of Christ does not do his whole duty who does not plainly and unmistakably bring the Gospel face to face with every style of business transaction. Many a man sits in his pew on Sunday night, and sings *Rock of Ages*, and rolls up his eyes very piously, who on coming out at close of the service shuts the pew-door, and says, "Good-bye, religion: I will be back next Sunday." A religion that does not work all the week, as well as on Sunday, is no religion at all.

We have a right in a Christian manner, to point out those who year by year, are jeopardizing not only their welfare, but the interests of others, in reckless driving. As a hackman, having lost control of a flying span, is apt to crash into other vehicles, until the property and lives of a whole street are endangered, so a man driving his worldly calling with such loose reins, that, after a-while, it will not answer his voice or hand, puts in peril the commercial interests of scores or hundreds. There are to-day in our midst many of our best citizens who have come from affluence into straightened circumstances, because there was a partner in their firm, or a cashier in their bank, or an agent representing their house, or one of their largest creditors, who, like Jehu, the son of Nimshi, was a furious driver.

Against all this it is high time that the Church of God wakes up. *Who else will expose the wrongs? Not the law. Almost any man can escape that, if he has money enough.*

Sheriffs, aldermen, and police officers have for their work to see that no defrauder of means gets too badly hurt. Once in a-while, a swindler is arrested, and if the case be too notoriously flagrant, the culprit is condemned; but the officials having him in charge must take the express train, and get to Sing Sing in the briefest time, or the governor's pardon gets there before him. We have feet of lightning when we get on the track of a woman who has stolen a paper of pins, or a freezing man who has abstracted a scuttle of coal; but when we go out in pursuit of some man who has struck down the interests of a hundred, and goes up along the Hudson to build his mansion, the whole city hangs on our skirts, crying, "Don't you hurt him."

It is, therefore, left to the Church of God to make these things odious and penal. Everybody knows that there stand in the membership of our churches men who devour widow's houses, and digest them, and for a pretence make long prayers. There are stock gamblers who are trustees of churches; in the eldership, those who grind the faces of the poor; and while the Church will expel from its membership the drunkard or the libertine, which of our churches has risen up to the courageous point of saying that a defrauder, be he great or little, president of a bank or keeper of a cigar shop, worth a million or a bankrupt, shall not come unchallenged to our holy communion? The Church of God wants nothing so much to-day as to be swept out. But an ordinary sweeping will not do the work. It needs to be scrubbed. The time will soon come when the Church will see that this great load of obloquy will break her down. If a teamster, passing down the street, dashes heedlessly along, and runs down a child, the authorities catch him; but for the reckless commercial drivers, who stop not for the rights of others, and who dash on to make their fortunes over the heads of innocence, virtue, and religion—no chastisements.

Some time ago, in the city of New York, a young man in a jeweller's store stood behind the counter, offering gold rings

to a customer. He said, "Those rings are fourteen carats." The lady replied "I want a ring of sixteen carats;" and not getting what she wanted, went away. The head man of the firm came and said to the clerk, "Why did you not tell her that these rings were sixteen carats?" He replied, "I cannot deceive anybody." The head man of the firm severely reprimanded him, and said, "You never can get along in this way. It is lawful in business to make these little misrepresentations." Who was the young man! a hero! Who was the gentleman representing the firm? A deacon in a Brooklyn church. Not this church, bless the Lord.

Meanwhile, this class of defrauders increases—more during the war than before it; more now than in war-times. In those days of large contracts, and convulsions in the gold-market, and sutlerships in the army, multitudes of men got so in the habit of cheating that they cannot stop. In those days they bought a very splendid house and their roan span, and formed acquaintanceship with the high family on the best square; and means must somehow be obtained to continue in the same style, for keep house they ought, and drive that roan span they will, and walk the beach at the watering-place with the Astors they must. Clear the track for these reckless drivers.

Firms not worth a dollar dazzling a whole city with their splendour of equipment! Officials having in charge public funds, invest them in private speculations. Debts repudiated! property surreptitiously put out of one's hands! Members of our State Legislature with small salaries helped into great extravagances by railroad monopolies! Three-fourths of the country in debt to the other fourth! Fortunes made in three weeks. Honest men derided as imbecile, and as not living up to their privileges! New York common-councilmen, with no salaries, getting rich! All the cities falling into the same line. All our streets, alleys, and courts, filled with the thundering wheels of reckless drivers!

When I see in the community, men with large incomes, but larger out-goes, rushing into wildest undertakings, their pockets filled with circulars about gold in Canada, and lead in Missouri, and fortunes everywhere, launching out in expenditures to be met by the thousands they *expect* to make, with derision dashing across the path of sober men depending upon their industry and honour for success, I say, "*Here he comes, the son of Nimshi, driving furiously.*"

When I see a young man, not content gradually to come to a competency, careless as to how often he goes upon credit, spending in one night's carousal a month's salary, taking the few hundred dollars given him for starting in the purchase of a regal wardrobe, ashamed to work, anxious only for display, regardless of his father's counsel, and the example of the thousands who, in a short while, have wrecked body, and mind, and soul, in scheming or dissipation, I say, "*Here he comes, the son of Nimshi, driving furiously.*"

I would that on the desk of every counting-house, and on the bench of every artizan, there were a Bible; and that by its instruction all business men were regulated, and that they would see that godliness is profitable for the life that now is, as well as for that which is to come; and that business dishonour is a spiritual disaster; and that a man may be the leader of a Methodist class, or the trustee of a Baptist church, or an "example" in a Quaker meeting-house, or a vestryman in an Episcopal parish, or an elder in a Presbyterian church, and yet go to perdition.

Thus far my discourse may not have touched your case, and I consider that sermon a failure which does not strike every one somewhere. I have no desire to escape personal preaching. What is the use of going to church if not to be made better? I never feel satisfied when I sit in church unless the preacher strikes some of my sins, and arouses me out of some of my stupidities. Now, you may, in worldly affairs, be cautious, true, honourable, and exemplary; but *am I not right* when I say that all those who are speeding

toward eternity without preparation—flying with the years, and the months, and the weeks, and the days, and the moments, and the seconds, toward an unalterable destiny, yet uncertain as to where they speed, are *reckless drivers*? What would you think of a stage-driver with six horses and twenty passengers, in the midnight, when it is so dark that you cannot see your hand before your face, dashing at full run over bridges and along by dangerous precipices? Such a man is prudent compared with one who, amid the perils of this life, dashes on toward an unknown eternity, not knowing where he goes. If, in driving, you come to the forks of a road, and one goes to the right, and the other to the left, you stop and make enquiry as to which road you ought to take. To-night you have come to the forks of a road. One leads to heaven, and the other to hell. Which road will you take? The road to the right is a little rough—yea, you may find it very rough. It has been much cut up with the hoof-marks of the cavalry of temptation. There are a great many steep hills. You will see where torrents of tribulation have washed the road away. The bones of the martyrs are scattered along the road. I will not deceive you—some have found it a very rough way; but I tell every hearer to-night that it is the *right* way. It comes out at the right place. There is a great house at the end of it built for you. As you come up, you will see Christ ready to greet you. At the gate you will find enough of the waters of the Jordan to wash the sweat from your cheek, and the aching from your brow, and the dust from your feet. Talk about castles of marble and granite! This one is cleft of amethyst, and chalcedony, and pearl. Talk of banqueting! The spoils of the universe are gathered at this table, and all who sit at it are kings and queens.

But notwithstanding the brilliant terminus of the road, you halt at the forks, because the left-hand road is a great deal *smoother*; and so some of you will drive in that way. I see multitudes of people who do not even stop at the forks



to make inquiry. The coursers behind which they go are panting with the speed, nostrils distended, foam dropping from the bit and whitening the flanks, but still urged on with lash, and shout, and laughter ; the reins undrawn ; the embankments unwatched ; the speed unnoticed. Alas, for the reckless drivers ! They may, after a-while, see the peril and seize the reins, and lay back with all their might, and put on the brakes, and cry for help until their hands are numb, and their eyes start from their sockets, and the breath stops, and the heart chills, as over the rocks they plunge, courser and chariot, and horseman, tumbling, in long-resounding crash of ruin.

Some are drawn along by sinful pleasure—a wild team that ran away with all who have persisted in riding behind them. Once fully under way, no sawing of the bit can stop them. They start at every sudden sight or sound ; and where it needs a slow step and great care, they go with bound terrific. Their eyes are aflame with terrors, and their hoofs red with the blood of men whose life they have dashed out ; and what is worse, the drivers scourge them into more furious speed. We come out and tell them of dangers ahead, but with jeers they pass on. The wild team smoke with the speed, and their flying feet strike fire ; and the rumbling of swift wheels over rotten bridges that span awful chasms is answered by the rumbling of the heavens : “ Because I called and ye refused, and stretched out My hands and no man regarded, therefore I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.”

When this world gets full power over a man, he might as well be dead. He is head ! When Sisera came into the house of Jael she gave him something to drink, and got him asleep on the floor. Then she took a peg from the side of her tent, and a mallet, and drove the peg through the brain of Jael into the floor. So the world feeds a man, and flatters a man, and when it has him sound asleep strikes his life

The trouble is that most reckless drivers do not see their peril until it is too late to stop. Young man, go to the almshouse hospital, and see the festering, disgusting end of those who have surrendered themselves to sensualities. There is no new place on their body for disease to place another mark. Their nails dropping loose; their limbs rotting off; their nostrils eaten away; their eyes quenched; their breath the odour of a charnel-house—they writhe in the consuming tortures of a libertine's death-bed. Do they like it? Oh, no! If they had the value of the whole universe in one coin, they would cheerfully give it up if they could buy but an hours release from the horrors which this moment shriek over the couch, where the tears of their anguish mingle with the bloody ichor that exudes from their ulcers.

Young man, before you mount the chariot of sin, go and see the end of those reckless drivers. They once had as fair a cheek as you, and as manly a brow as you, and as stout a heart. They stepped very gradually aside. They read French novels. They looked at bad pictures. They went into contaminating associations. Out of curiosity, and just to see for themselves, they entered the house of sin. They were caught in snares that had captured stronger men than they. Farewell now to all hope of return! Farewell to peace! Farewell to heaven!

Perhaps there are some here who say, "Would God I could stop my bad practices! But I cannot stop! I know that I am on the wrong road, and that I have been a reckless driver; but I try to rein in my swift appetites, yet they will not heed." I tell such that there is an Almighty hand which can pull back these wild racers. He at whose beck the stars answer, and at whose mandate the chariots of heaven come and go, is more than a master for these temptations. Helpless yourself, and unable to guide these wild coursers, give Jesus Christ the reins! Mighty to save unto the uttermost!

*Better stop now.* Some years ago, near Princeton, New

Jersey, some young men were skating on a pond around an "air-hole," and the ice began to break in. Some of them stopped; but a young man said, "*I am not afraid! Give us one round more!*" He swung nearly round, when the ice broke, and not until next day was his lifeless body found. So men go on in sin. They are warned. They expect soon to stop. But they cry, "*Give us one round more!*" They start, but with wild crash break through into bottomless perdition. Do not risk it any longer. Stop now. God save us from the foolhardiness of the one round more!

I thank God that I have met you to-night, and been permitted to tell you which is the right road and which the wrong road. You must take one or the other. I leave you at the forks; choose for yourselves!

*And may God have mercy upon all reckless drivers!*

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## THE SPECTATORS.

"I have fought with beasts at Ephesus."—1 Cor. xv. 32.

"Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses."—*Heb. xii. 1.*

CROSSING the Alps by the Mount Cenis pass, or through the Mount Cenis tunnel, you are in a few hours set down at Verona, Italy, and in a few minutes begin examining one of the grandest ruins of the world—the Amphitheatre. The whole building sweeps around you in a circle. You stand in the arena where the battle was once fought, or the race run, and on all sides the seats rise, tier above tier, until you count forty elevations, or galleries, as I shall see fit to call them, in which sat the senators, the kings, and the twenty-five thousand excited spectators. At the sides of the arena, and under the galleries, are the cages in which the lions and

tigers are kept without food, until, frenzied with hunger and thirst, they are led out upon some poor victim, who, with his sword and alone, is condemned to meet them. I think that Paul himself once stood in such a place, and that it was not only figuratively, but literally, that he had "fought with beasts at Ephesus."

The gala-day has come. From all the world the people are pouring into Verona. Men, women, and children, orators and senators, great men and small, thousands upon thousands come, until the first gallery is full, and the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth—all the way up to the twentieth, all the way up to the thirtieth, all the way up to the fortieth. Every place is filled. Immensity of audience sweeping the great circle! Silence! The time for the contest has come. A Roman official leads forth the victim into the arena. Let him get his sword, with firm grip, into his right hand. The twenty-five thousand sit breathlessly watching. I hear the door at the side of the arena gate open. Out plunges [the half-starved lion, his tongue athirst for blood, and with a roar that brings all the galleries to their feet, he rushes against the sword of the combatant. Do you know how strong a stroke a man will strike when his life depends upon the first thrust of his blade? The wild beast, lame and bleeding, slinks back toward the side of the arena; then, rallying his waning strength, he comes up with fiercer eyes and more terrible roar than ever, only to be driven back with a fatal wound, while the combatant comes in with stroke after stroke, until the monster is dead at his feet, and the twenty-five thousand people clap their hands, and utter a shout that makes the city tremble.

Sometimes the audience came to see a race; sometimes to see gladiators fight each other, until the audience compassionate for the falling, turned their thumbs down as an appeal that the vanquished be spared; and sometimes the combat was with wild beasts.

*To one of the Roman amphitheatrical audiences of one*

hundred thousand people Paul refers when he says : " We are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses." The direct reference in the last passage is made to a race ; but elsewhere, having discussed that, I take now Paul's favourite idea of the Christian life *as a combat*.

The fact is that every Christian man has a lion to fight. Yours is a bad temper. The gates of the arena have been opened, and this tiger has come out to destroy your soul. It has lacerated you with many a wound. You have been thrown by it time and again, but in the strength of God you have arisen to drive it back. I verily believe you will conquer. I think that the temptation is getting weaker and weaker. You have given it so many wounds that the prospect is that it will die, and you shall be victor, through Christ. Courage, brother ! Do not let the sands of the arena drink the blood of your soul !

Your lion is the passion for strong drink. You may have contended against it twenty years ; but it is strong of body and thirsty of tongue. You have tried to fight it back with broken bottle or empty wine-ask. Nay ! that is not the weapon. With one horrible roar he will seize thee by the throat and rend thee limb from limb. Take *this* weapon, sharp and keen—reach up and get it from God's armoury : the Sword of the Spirit. With that thou mayest drive him back and conquer !

But why specify, when every man and woman has a lion to fight. If there be any here who have no besetting sin, let him speak out, for him have I offended. If you have not fought, the lion, it is because you have let the lion eat you up. This very moment the contest goes on. The Trajan celebrations, where ten thousand gladiators fought and eleven thousand wild beasts were slain, was not so terrific a struggle as that which at this moment goes on in many a *soul*. That combat was for the life of the body ; this is for *the life of the soul*. That was with wild beasts from the *jungles* ; this is with the roaring lion of hell.

Men think, when they contend against an evil habit, that they have to fight it all alone. No! They stand in the centre of an immense circle of sympathy. Paul had been reciting the names of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Joseph, Gideon, and Barak, and then says; "Being compassed by so great a cloud of witnesses."

Before I get through, I will show you that you fight in the arena, around which circle in galleries above each other all the kindling eyes and all the sympathetic hearts of the ages; and at every victory gained there comes down the thundering applause of a great multitude that no man can number. "*Being compassed by so great a cloud of witnesses.*"

On the first elevation of the ancient amphitheatre, on the day of a celebration, sat Tiberius, or Augustas, or the reigning king. So, in that great arena of spectators that watch our struggle, and in the first DIVINE GALLERY, as I shall call it, sits *our King, one Jesus*. On His head are many crowns! The Roman emperor got his place by cold-blooded conquests; but our King hath come to His place by the broken hearts healed, and the tears wiped away, and the souls redeemed. The Roman emperor sat, with folded arms, indifferent as to whether the swordsman or the lion beat; but our King's sympathies are all with us. Nay, unheard of condescension, I see Him come down from the gallery into the arena to help us in the fight, shouting, until all up and down His voice is heard: "Fear not! I will help thee! I will strengthen thee by the right hand of My power."

Once in the ancient amphitheatre, a lion with one paw caught the combatant's sword, and with his other paw caught his shield. The man took his knife from his girdle and slew the beast. The king, sitting in the Gallery, said: "That was not fair, the lion must be slain by a sword." Other lions were turned out and the poor victim fell. You cry, "Shame! shame!" at such meanness. But the King, in this case, is our brother, and He will see that we have *fair play*. He will forbid the rushing out of more lions than

we can meet. He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. Thank God! The King is in the gallery! His eyes are on us. His heart is with us. His hand will deliver us. "Blessed are all they who put their trust in Him!"

I look again, and I see the *angelic gallery*. There they are: the cherubim that swung the sword at the gate of Eden, the same that Ezeiel saw upholding the throne of God, and from which I look away, for the splendour is insufferable. Here are the guardian angels. That one watched a patriarch; this one protected a child. That one has been pulling a soul out of temptation! All these are messengers of light! Those drove the Spanish Armada on the rocks. This turned Sennacherib's living hosts into a heap of one hundred and eighty-five thousand corpses. Those, yonder, chanted the christmas carol over Bethlehem until the chant awoke the shepherds. These, at creation, stood in the balcony of heaven, and serenaded the new-born world wrapped in swaddling clothes of light. And there holier and mightier than all, is Michael the Archangel.

Now, bring on your lions! Who can fear? All the spectators in the angelic gallery are our friends. "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet."

Though the arena be crowded with temptations, we shall, with the angelic help, strike them down in the name of our God, and leap on their fallen carcasses! O bending throng of bright angelic faces, and swift wings, and lightning foot! I hail you, to-day, from the dust and struggle of the arena!

I Look again and I see the *gallery of the prophets and apostles*. Who are those mighty ones up yonder? Hosea, and Jeremiah, and Daniel, and Issaiah,, and Paul and Peter and John and James. Glorious spirits! Ye were howled

at; ye were stoned; ye were spit upon! They have been in this fight themselves; and they were all with us. Daniel knows all about lions. Paul fought with beasts at Ephesus.

In the ancient Amphitheatre, the people got so excited that they would shout from the galleries to the men in the arena: "At it again!" "Forward!" "One more stroke!" "Look out!" "Fall back!" "Huzza! huzza!" So in that gallery, prophetic and apostolic, they cannot keep their peace. Daniel cries out: "Thy God will deliver thee from the mouth of the lions!" David exclaims: "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved!" Isaiah calls out: "Fear not! I am with thee! Be not dismayed!" Paul exclaims: "Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;"

I look again, and I see the *gallery of the martyrs*. The great throng of the martyrs! They had hot lead poured down their throats, horses were fastened to their hands, and other horses to their feet, and thus they were pulled apart; they had their tongues pulled out by red-hot pincers; they were sewed up in the skins of animals and then thrown to the dogs; they were daubed with combustibles and set on fire! And now they sit yonder in the martyr's gallery. For them, the fires of persecution have gone out. The swords are sheathed, and the mob hushed. Now they watch us with an all-absorbing sympathy. They know all the pain, all the hardship, all the anguish, all the injustice, all the privation. They cannot keep still. They cry, "Courage! The fire will not consume. The floods cannot drown. The lions cannot devour. Courage! down there in the arena!"

What, are they all looking? This night we answer back the salutation they give, and cry, "*Hail! sons and daughters of the fire.*"

I look again, and I see another gallery, that of *eminent Christians*. What strikes me strangely is the mixing in companionship of those who on earth could not agree. There I see Martin Luther and beside him a Roman Catholic who looked beyond the superstitions of his Church, and is saved



There is Albert Barnes, and around him the Presbytery who tried him for heterodoxy. Yonder is Lyman Beecher, and the church court that denounced him! Stranger than all, there is John Calvin and James Arminius! Who would have thought that they would sit so lovingly together? There is George Whitefield, and the bishops who would not let him come into their pulpits because they thought him a fanatic. There are the sweet singers—Toplady, Montgomery, Charles Wesley, Isaac Watts, and Mrs. Sigourney. If heaven had had no music before they went up, they would have started the singing. And there, the band of missionaries—David Abeel, talking of China redeemed; and John Scudder, of India saved; and David Brainard, of the aborigines evangelized; and Mrs. Adoniram Judson, whose prayers for Burmah took heaven by violence! All these Christians are looking into the arena. Our struggle is nothing to theirs! Do we, in Christ's cause, suffer from the cold? They walked Greenland's icy mountains. Do we suffer from the heat? They sweltered in the tropics. Do we get fatigued? They fainted, with none to care for them but cannibals. Are we persecuted? They were anathematized. And as they look from their gallery and see us falter in the presence of the lions, I seem to hear Isaac Watts addressing us in his old hymn, only a little changed:—

“Must *you* be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize,  
Or sailed through bloody seas?”

Toplady shouts in his old hymn:—

“Your harps, ye trembling saints,  
Down from the willows take:  
Loud to the praise of love Divine,  
Bid every string awake.”

While Charles Wesley, the Methodist, breaks forth in his favourite words, a little varied:—

“A charge to keep *you* have,  
A God to glorify ;  
A never-dying soul to save,  
And fit it for the sky.”

I look again, and I see the *gallery of our departed friends*. Many of those in the other galleries we have heard of ; but these we knew. Oh ! how familiar their faces. They sat at our tables, and we walked to the house of God in company. Have they forgotten us ? Those fathers and mothers started us on the road of life. Are they careless as to what becomes of us ? And those children : do they look on with stolid indifference as to whether we win or lose this battle for eternity ? Nay : I see that child running its hand over your brow, and saying, “ Father, do not fret ; ” “ Mother, do not worry.” They remember the day they left us. They remember the agony of the last farewell. Though years in heaven, they know our faces. They remember our sorrows. They speak our names. They watch this fight for heaven.

But here I pause, overwhelmed with the majesty and joy of the scene. Gallery of the king. Gallery of angels. Gallery of prophets and apostles. Gallery of martyrs. Gallery of saints. Gallery of friends and kindred. O majestic circles of light and love. Throngs ! Throngs ! Throngs ! How shall we stand the gaze of the universe ? Myriads of eyes beaming on us. Myriads of hearts beating in sympathy for us. How shall we ever dare to sin again ? How shall we ever become discouraged again ? How shall we ever feel lonely again ? With God for us, and angels for us, and prophets and apostles for us, and the great souls of the ages for us, and our glorified kindred for us—shall we give up the fight and die ? No ! Son of God, who didst die to save us. No ! ye angels, whose wings are spread forth to shelter us. No ! ye prophets and apostles, whose warnings startle us. No ! ye loved ones, whose arms are outstretched to receive us. No ! we will never surrender !

My hearers ! shall we die in the arena or rise to join our friends in the gallery ? Through Christ, we may come off more than conquerors. A soldier dying in the hospital rose up in bed the last moment and cried : “ *Here ! Here !* ” His attendants put him back on his pillow, and asked him why he shouted “ *Here !* ” “ *Oh ! I heard the roll-call of heaven, and I was only answering to my name !* ” I wonder whether after this battle of life is over, our names will be called in the muster-roll of the pardoned and glorified, and, with the joy of heaven breaking upon our souls, we shall cry “ *Here ! HERE !* ”

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### THE GREAT SALVATION.

“ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.”—*Hebrews ii. 3.*

I STAND before you to-night borne down with two great and all-absorbing desires ; one, to get to heaven myself ; the other, to take all these people along with me. Who knows but God may hear my prayer, and that all swept by the circle of these walls shall within one hour be enclosed in the arms of a pardoning Jesus ? It is no time for argument, for you mentally accept all these truths. It is no time for philosophy, for it is your hearts we want, and not your heads. It is no time for poetry, for tulips and daffodils will not satisfy those who are famishing for bread. The oft-repeated prayer of Rowland Hill, in the midst of his sermon, is my prayer at the beginning, “ *Master, help !* ” While I stand here, the audience vanishes from my vision, and it is the world’s great trial-day, and the books are opened. O my Saviour ! if I do not speak as I ought, what will become of me ? If these people do not hear as they ought, what will become of them ? “ How shall we escape, if we neglect so *great salvation ?* ”

Paul was right when he called it *great*. The most stupendous undertaking, since God existed, was the hoisting of this world out of ruin. It had made shipwreck—going down with all hands on board. From none of the surrounding worlds did a life-boat push out. The Lord God Almighty rose up, and bringing into action all the Omniscience, and Omnipotence, and majesty, and lovingkindness of His nature, He set about the redemption of the world. John Frederick Oberlin put off all earthly comfort to redeem a barren district of France from poverty and ignorance, with his own pickaxe beginning the building of a high road from Ban de la Roche up to the city of Strasburg. But here was a highway to be constructed from the squalor of earth to the heights of heaven. Clarkson pleaded before the English Parliament, and the Russian Emperor, against the slave trade. But here was the question of deliverance for a hundred thousand millions of bondmen. Aye! it was the pounding off of an iron chain from the neck of a captive world. I think it was the greatest and most absorbing thought of God's lifetime. I do not think that there was anything in all the ages of the past, or that there will be in all the ages of the future, anything to equal it. The master-piece of eternity! There were so many difficulties to be overcome! There were such infinite consequences to be considered! There were such gulfs to bridge, and such heights to scale, and such immensities to compass! If God had been less than Omnipotent, He would not have been strong enough; or less than Omniscient, I do not think He would have been wise enough; or less loving, would have been sympathetic enough. There might have been a God strong enough to create a universe, and yet too weak to do this. To create the worlds, only a word was necessary; but to do this work required more than a word. It required more than ordinary effort of a God. It required the dying anguish of an Only Son. Oh! is not that which took all the height, and depth, and length, and immensity, and

eternity of His nature to achieve worthy of being called a *great* salvation ?

Paul was right when he called this salvation great, because it was founded upon a great sacrifice. When Elizabeth Fry went into Newgate Prison, to redeem the abandoned, she was told to lay off her purse and watch lest they be stolen, but refused, saying that confidence in the criminals would be one way of touching them. When Christ came into the prison of this world's sin, he brought with him all the jewels of heavenly affection upon Him. Heaven could not afford to spare Him. If a host of angels had been hurled off the battlement, they would not so much have been missed. It is an exciting time around an old homestead, the morning the son leaves home to go away; for they know not what will happen, or whether he will ever return. What a morning it must have been in heaven when Jesus left! I think all heaven hung around Him—some asking Him not to go; some speaking to Him of the perils by the way; some standing in silent grief at His departure; and when the cavalcade for Bethlehem dashed up to the golden gate, and the cry was "All ready!" there was a warm *good-bye*, and a rain of tears, and last words, and a scene that the oldest inhabitants of heaven remember now as though it were but yesterday. It times of war, fleets go away, and none but the king and the admiral know where they are bound. During our last war, squadrons went out, and we knew nothing of them, until they were reported off shore, and landing amid fiery assault of battle. I do not think that Heaven knew for what shore Jesus and His cohorts were bound; and when one Christmas night they were seen off the shores of earth, and word got back to glory that the crusading fleet were landing amidst storms of persecution, there must have been a cry of amazement in heaven. If the expedition had steered into the sun, that would have been a more brilliant landing-place, or if it had sailed into *Mercury*, that would have been a mightier world. But no

they choose one of the smallest worlds in God's astronomy—a little world, a proud world, an unclean world, a defiant world, a cruel world, a dying world, a dead world. Was not this salvation great in its humiliation ?

So also was this redemption great in its sufferings. It is fortunate that we cannot foresee our trials. If that man who last week lost his property could have known for ten years that he was going to become bankrupt, all those ten years would have been shadowed with trouble. If that parent who last year lost his child had known for ten years previously that he would lose it, for ten years that parent would have been overshadowed. Christ's sufferings were augmented by the fact that He foresaw them. For thirty-three years He was dying. The last horror hung over Him at the sea-side, at the wedding and everywhere. He knew that every pulse's beating took him nearer to the last throb of anguish. He saw the walls shutting in around Him, the circle of fire contracting, the vice screwing up. When He flew away from Herod He knew that at last He would be captured. He went into Court knowing that the verdict would be against Him. There was an upright piece of wood and a transverse piece of wood that hung over Him by day and by night; the shadow of a cross.

The final year came. It was His birthday. It was Christmas. He was thirty-two years old. I hear Him saying : "This is my last year. What a thirty-two years ! Trouble all the way ! Betrayed ! Cast out ! Poor ! Full of pain ! But a few more months, and I go up to my death-hour. The tree is growing up on which I shall be spiked. The hammers are forged that will some day smite me fast. The military are drilled for my execution." My hearers, if Christ's death had been a sudden surprise, it would not have been so awful. But it was a long expected anguish.

The last hour of Christ was the focus to which the woes of time and of eternity converged. Heaven frowned from above. Hell rode up from beneath. I hear the click of the hoofs of

the cavalry troop as they ride out toward the fatal hill. I hear the buzz, and hum, and roar, and blasphemy of a great mob. They have cornered Him at last! Put those women out of the way. It is no place for women. Do not let His mother see this. Take her away. This spectacle would kill her. Put out all the candles of the sky. The spears are sharp, and they plunge them. The heavens are burdened with woe, and they thunder. Unlifted darkness—save as a flash of lightning reveals the eye of God, peering through the gloom to see what they are doing with His well-beloved Son. Methinks the thrones of heaven shiver at the deed. He has been hanging there five hours and fifty minutes. What next? Whom will the Omnipotent Sufferer first consume with His curse? Will He not take His right hand from the nail and hurl everlasting fury upon His crucifiers? Wait a moment. Listen! I am sure He will speak! Yes; He speaks: "*Father, forgive them. They know not what they do.*"

This was death at the stake; but the fires kindled around it were the flames of the world's hatred enwrapped with the fiercer fires of eternal woe—wreathing feet, hands, eyes, brain, soul, in the worst horror that ever shuddered through God's universe. Was not this salvation great in its *suffering*?

This redemption was also great in its *pardon*. It takes all the sins of a life, and cuts them off with one stroke, so that all the crimes the worst man ever committed, as soon as he takes hold of this salvation, are gone, at once, utterly and for ever. Gone, so that you cannot find them. Gone, so that the light of the judgment-day cannot discover them. Says some one: "Do you mean to say that I could have that done for me?" I answer, "Yes!" "When?" *Now*. Though you had committed fifty murders, though your life were rotten with debauchery, though you had gone through *the whole catalogue of crimes*, I announce full pardon for all *your sins* the moment you take hold of this salvation.

*This redemption is great in its final deliverance. There is*

a hell. Rationalism rules it out; but there is where our modern essayists and the Bible differ. People say there ought not to be a hell; but there is where modern theologians and the Lord God Almighty differ. I am one of those few benighted mortals in this day who take the whole Bible. "What! you do not believe everything in it?" Everything! Absolutely everything! "What! that about the serpent in Eden? and the sun standing still? and the whale swallowing Jonah?" Everything! I believe it all as much as I do in my own existence. "Well, then, you cannot have read the arguments on the other side." Yes, I have; read them day and night; read them by the year; read every word that Tom Paine, or Theodore Parker, or Renan ever wrote on the subject; read them from the title-page to the last word of the last line, of the last page, of the last book: read them until it is only through the mercy of God that I did not kill my soul through the sin of reading them: read them until I found out that the land of scepticism is a desert, where the sands are red-hot coals, swept by the smothering simoon of all-consuming wretchedness; read them until I have found that there are *two* hells instead of *one*—the hell of scepticism, and the hell spoken of in the Bible; and I believe in the last because it is the more tolerable. Come to my house some time, at six o'clock in the evening, and I will show you fifty-four passages in the Bible, all positively asserting that there is such a place, and as many more implying it. If I do not believe God when He tells me a thing ten times, certainly I will when He tells it to me twenty times. If I do not believe what He has asserted twenty times, I will when He has told it to me forty times. But if I doubt Him the fortieth time, certainly when He announces a thing to me the fifty-fourth time I had better accept. Paul says: "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." Luke says, "*There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the*



prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourself thrust out." Christ, who ought to know, says, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." It is not more certain that there is a city called Constantinople or Moscow, than that there is a great metropolis of suffering; that Satan rules over it; that there are fires that cannot be put out, and tears that ever fall, and groans that are for ever uttered. When a man gets into that place, he never gets out!

There may be a difference of opinion about the exact nature of that suffering. You may if you like, discard the old-fashioned notion of fire, but the Bible in many places, says that the suffering is *like* fire; and if it is *like* fire, it is as severe as fire; and if it is as severe as fire, it might as well be fire. You say that it is *mental* torture, and not physical. But you know that mental torture is worse than physical. So the style of suffering that you believe in is far more intolerable than the style of suffering your fathers and mothers used to believe in. A dying man of large means said, "I would give thirty thousand pounds to have it proved to me satisfactorily that there is no hell." Such proof cannot be presented. But suppose you throw overboard most of the testimony on this subject—is there not some slight possibility that there may be such a place? If there should be, and you have no preparation to escape it, what then? A young woman, dying, said to her father: "Father, why did you not tell me there was such a place?" "What place?" "*A hell!*" He said, "Jenny, there is no such place. God is merciful. There will be no future suffering!" She said, "I know better! I feel it now! I know there is such a place. My feet are slipping into it this moment! I am lost! Why did you not tell me there was such a place?" It is the awful, stupendous, consuming, incontrovertible fact of the universe.

Now, is not a salvation that keeps down the hatches, so *that* these flames cannot scorch us, and that muzzles these

lions so that their teeth cannot touch us, worthy of being called a great salvation? Every one may escape it. God never puts a man in perdition? He puts himself there. If you have a great fire on your farm in which you are consuming a large amount of rubbish, and I deliberately rush into it, and get burned, who is to blame? Myself. God has told us there is a place of burning. He makes for us every possibility of escaping it. If, deliberately, and of our own choice, we dash in, upon whom comes the responsibility? Answer! Your conscience has answered!

This salvation is great in its *consummations*. It does not leave a man shivering and half-starved on the outskirts of a fine city, but gives him citizenship in the great capital of the Almighty. The Bible says that one day an angel went out and measured heaven. He took a golden rod. I see that rod flashing in the light of the sun that never sets. With it the angel measures all along by the gates, all along by the towers, and all along by the foundations—a hundred miles, five hundred miles, a thousand miles, fifteen hundred miles around—so the Bible intimates. What a city! London and New York are villages compared with it. Though the account be figurative, what a heaven God has ready for us? But that heaven, spoken of in the Bible, was heaven before the improvements. It is a grander place now; for the great and good souls of the last eighteen hundred years have gone in since then. Excepting Jesus, the best part of our heaven has been made up within the last thirty years since our friends have been going in. In the great park of the universe we may walk, and we shall want not one thing for all eternity. No sickness will pale the cheek. No discord will strike the ear. No shadow will darken the path, save under the palm-trees, through which sifts the golden light of eternal summer. Jesus will be there; and all the good will be there. O land of light, and love, and joy! A land where the redeemed of the Lord come with songs upon their head. A land where—I fail! I break down under the thought! I cannot

express it. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for those who love Him." Is not a salvation that opens such a gate, and rouses such an anthem, and consummates such a friendship, a *great* salvation ?

Now, are you ready for the Apostle's question ? Are you all ready ? In the light of this salvation—so great in its Author, so great in its humiliations, so great in its sacrifices, so great in its pardon, so great in its final deliverance, so great in its consummations—the question bursts, crackles, and thunders upon our ears: *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?*

No escape at all. For the man who neglects it there is no possibility of excuse or rescue. Everything will plead against him. The water will hiss from the fountains, and say, "We told him of the living stream where he might wash all his sins away, but he would not come. *Escape he must not.*" The rocks will say, "We told him of a shelter and defence to which he might run and be saved ; but he would not come. *Escape he must not.*" The sun in the sky will say, "We told him of the light of the world and of the day-spring from on high ; and he shut his eyes to the glory. *Escape he must not.*" The star will say, "I pointed to his only hope—the Jesus of Bethlehem ; but he would not look and be saved. *Escape he must not.*" The Bible will say, "I called him by a thousand invitations, and warned him by a thousand alarms ; but he would not heed, he would not listen. *Escape he must not.*" The tree of Calvary will say, "On my bloody branch I bore the fruit that might have fed his starving soul ; but he would not pluck it. *Escape he must not.*" The angels of God will say, "We flew to him on errands of mercy, and would have charmed him into life ; but he beat us back in our ministry. *Escape he must not.*" The throne of judgment will say, "I have but two sentences to give—that to the friends of God, and that to His rejectors ; *Escape he must not.*" All the voices of the destroyed will

speaking out and say, "We neglected it no more than he. Why should he go free when we are banished? *Escape he must not.*" Jesus will say, "I called him for many years, but he turned his back on all these wounds; and by all those despised tears, and by that rejected blood. *Escape he must not.*" Then God will speak, and answer the waters, and the rocks, and the sun, and the stars, and the Bible, and the bloody tree, and the angels, and the thrones of judgment, and the voice of the destroyed, and the plea of a rejected Christ; and with a voice that shall ring all through the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of His universe, say, "ESCAPE HE SHALL NOT."

May the Lord God Almighty, for Jesus' sake, avert such a catastrophe. Hark! The city clock strikes *nine*. Thank God it is not the clock of our destiny striking *twelve*! The day of mercy has not fully passed. But it is the eleventh hour, and it may be our last chance. If I never say another word to you, let this go forth as my last and dying utterance:

COME TO JESUS! COME NOW!

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## THE GRAND REVIEW.

"And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses."—*Revelation xix. 14.*

WE cannot, in this age, understand the beauty and glory of the ancient horse. This animal comes to us through centuries of oppression and hard treatment, which have taken the gracefulness from his limbs, and the flame from his eye, and the arch of pomp from his neck. The finest horse that is now to be found prancing in the parks, an ancient king would not have been seen riding. Of old, the ox and the ass tilled the ground and carried the burdens; but the horse was used

for coronations and triumphant processions, kings and chieftains sitting upon him. Job describes a war-horse until I can almost hear the champing of his bit, and the clatter of his hoofs among the fallen shields. "Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? the glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength. He goeth forth to meet the armed men. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage. He saith among the trumpets, Ha ! Ha ! and he smelleth the battle afar off ; the thunder of the captains and the shouting."

When my text, in figure, represents the armies of the glorified as riding upon white horses, it sets forth the *strength*, the *fleetness*, the *victory*, and the *innocence*, of the redeemed. The horse has always been an emblem of strength. When startled by sudden sight or sound, how he plunges along the highway ! The hand of the strong driver on the reins is like the grasp of a child. His hoofs strike fire, the harness is snapped, and the vehicle hurled over the rocks. With nostril panting and foam flying in flakes, his head tossed on either side in wild triumph, he stopped not for the missiles hurled at him, nor the loud whoa ! whoa ! of the multitude. Away he flies irresistibly !

Therefore, when the redeemed are represented as riding on white horses, their *strength* is set forth. The days of their invalidism and decrepitude are past. Never shall they be sick again or tired again. Take the strength of ten of the giants of earth, and the weakest inhabitant of heaven could master him. Oh, the day when having put off the last physical impediment, you shall come to the mightiness of heavenly vigour ! There will be hardly anything you cannot lift, or crush, or conquer.

The horse used in the text is also the emblem of *fleetness*. The wild horses on the plain, at the appearance of the hunter, make the miles slip under them, as with a snort they bound away, and the dust rises in whirlwinds from their

flying feet, until far away, they halt with their faces to their pursuer, and neigh in gladness at their escape. More swift than they shall be the redeemed in heaven. O the exhilaration of feeling that you can take worlds at a bound, vast distances instantly overcome—no difference between here and there! Heaven is said to be the centre of the universe. If so, how swift must a messenger spirit fly, in order to reach us in any crisis of peril! Light flies one hundred and ninety-five thousand miles a second, and yet there are worlds that have been created for ages, whose light has just reached us. If light, flying one hundred and ninety-five thousand miles a second, has taken ages to come from worlds this side of heaven, how swift must a messenger spirit fly from heaven in order to administer unto us? Swifter than fleetest horse under lash or spur; swifter than eagles, or wings, or light, are the redeemed.

The horse in the text is also a symbol of *victory*. He was not used on ordinary occasions; but the conqueror mounted him, and rode on among the acclamations of the rejoicing multitudes. So all the redeemed of heaven are victors. Yea, they are more than conquerors through Him that loved them.

My text places us on one of the many avenues of the Celestial City. The soldiers of God have come up from earthly battle and are on the parade. We shall not have time to see all the great hosts of the redeemed; but John, in my text, points out a few of the battalions: "*And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses.*"

You have sometimes stood in a street waiting for hours for a procession to come up. Then you saw a great excitement in the street, and heard unusual shouting, and you knew that the procession was near. I hear the sound of the heavenly host advancing. The shout of the redeemed from the mansions and palaces of heaven seems nearer. The procession is in sight, the marshals of heaven clear the way, and the great Commander rides past at the head of the host.

The Roman victor, having slain at least five thousand men in battle, rode into the ancient city with a robe gold-embroidered; in one hand a laurel, in the other a sceptre; the captives going before, the army coming after; the whole population in holiday dress cheering along the line. But in my text, the heavenly Commander rides with the sword of universal triumph, and on His head are many crowns. All the city turns out to greet Him—the Conqueror of earth, and heaven, and hell. Strew flowers along the shining way! Wave all the banners of light! Ring all the bells of heaven! “Hosannah! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosannah in the highest!”

Now, come on the *battalions of the saved*. Here passes the regiment of Christian *martyrs*. They endured all things for Christ; they were hounded; they were sawn asunder; they were hurled out of life. Here come the eighteen thousand Scotch Covenanters who perished in one persecution. Escaped from the clutches of Claverhouse, and bloody McKenzie, and the horrors of the Grass Market, they ride in the great battalion of Scotch Martyrs, Hugh McKail, and James Renwick, and John Knox, and others whose words are a battle-shout for the Church militant—men of high cheek-bones, and strong arms, and consecrated spirits. Grayfriars Churchyard took some of their bodies, but heaven took all their souls. They went on weary feet through the glens of Scotland in times of persecution, and crawled up the crags on their hands and knees; but now they follow the Christ for whom they fought and bled on white horses of triumph. Ride on, ye conquerors! Victors of Dunottar Castle, and Bass Rock, and Rutherglen! Ride on!

Here comes the regiment of *English martyrs*. Queen Mary against King Jesus made an uneven fight. The twenty thousand chariots of God coming down the steep of heaven will ride over any foe. Queen Mary thought that by sword and fire she had driven Protestants down, but she only drove them up. Here they pass. Bishop Hooper, and Rogers,

Prebendary of St. Paul's; and Archbishop Cranmer, who got his courage back in time to save his soul; and Ann Askew, who at twenty-five years of age, rather than forsake her God, submitted first to the rack without a groan, and then went with bones so dislocated she must be carried on a chair to the stake, her last words rising through flames being a prayer for her murderers. Oh, cavalcade of men and women, whom God snatched up from the iron fingers of torture into eternal life! Ride on, thou glorious regiment of English martyrs!

Look at this advancing host of a hundred thousand. Who are they? Look upon the flag, and upon their uniform, and tell us. They are the Protestants who fell on St. Bartholomew's Day in Paris, in Lyons, in Orleans, in Bordeaux, while the king looked out of the window and cried, "Kill! kill!" Oh! what a night followed by what a day! Who would think that these on white horses were tossed out of windows, and manacled and torn, and dragged, and slain, until it seemed that the cause of God had perished, and cities were illuminated with infernal joy, and the cannon of St. Angelo thundered the triumph of hell! Their gashed and bespattered bodies were thrown into the Seine, but their souls went up out of a nation's shriek into the light of God; and now they pass along the boulevards of heaven.

"Soldier of God well done!  
Rest be thy loved employ;  
And while eternal ages run,  
Rest in thy Master's joy."

Ride on, ye mounted troops of St. Bartholomew's Day!

Here comes up another host of the redeemed; the regiment of Christian *philantrophists*. They went down into the battle-fields to take care of the wounded; they plunged into the damp and moulded prisons, and pleaded before God and human governors on behalf of the incarcerated; they preached Christ among the besotted populations of the city:



they carried Bibles and bread into the garrets of pain ; but in the sweet river of death they washed off the filth and the loathsomeness of those to whom they had administered.

Now they pass through the streets of heaven in glorious review. There is John Howard, who circumnavigated the globe in the name of Him who said, "I was sick, and ye visited me." What to him were the thanks of the House of Commons, or the recognition of all the governments on earth, compared with the joy of this day on which he rides on, followed by multitudes of those whom he found in dungeons of darkness and lazarettes of pain ! Here go the Moravian missionaries, who were told that they could not go on a Christian errand to a hospital where the plague was raging unless they would consent to go in and never come out—deliberately made all arrangements and went in, and took care of the sick, and then lay down beside the dying, themselves to die. Here goes Elliot, who once toiled for Christ among savages, travelling on foot through the wilds, saying, " My feet are always wet, but I pull off my boots and wring my stockings, and put them on again and go forward, trying to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ ; " defying the savages, who made him stop preaching or die, by saying to them, " I am about the work of the great God. Touch me if you dare ! "

The maid of Saragossa, the angel of the Spanish battlefields, passes by. Elizabeth Fry, followed by those whom she showed the way from Newgate prison to heaven. Grace Darling, of the strong oar and the sea-bird's wing, with which she once swooped to the drowning from Alnwick Castle. The good Samaritan who put the wounded man on his horse while he himself walked, now riding more firmly for that charitable dismounting. Thousands of men and women who served God, and grandly did their duty—whole companies, regiments, and battalions. Pass on great troop of God ! It seems as if there were no end to it. Forward, ye army of Christian workers ! Ride on, while the sufferers

whom you healed, and the ignorant whom you instructed, and the abandoned whom you reclaimed, come out on the streets of heaven to greet you! Ride on! Ride on!

Here comes a great column of the Christian *poor*. They always walked on earth. The only ride they ever had was in the hearse that took them to the Potter's Field. They went day by day poorly clad, and meanly fed, and insufficiently sheltered. They were jostled out of houses whose rent they could not pay, and out of churches where their presence was an offence. Considering the insignificant way many of these went out of the world, the poor doctoring, and the coarse shroud, and the haste of the obsequies, you might have expected from them a tame reception on the other side: but a shining retinue was waiting beyond the river for their departing spirits, and as they passed a celestial escort confronted them, and snow-white chargers of heaven are brought in, and the conquerors mounted! and here they pass in the throng of the victors—poor-house exchanged for palace, rags for imperial attire, weary walking for seats on the white horses from the King's stable. Ride on, ye victors!

Another retinue: that of the Christian *invalids*. These who pass now languished for many a year on their couches, From the firmness, and the strength, and the exhilaration with which they ride, you would not have supposed that they had been bent double with ailments, and had crouched with pains immedicable, and writhed in sufferings that were ghastly to the beholder. But after twenty years of useless prescription, and all surgery had failed, in one moment they recovered. The black groom named *Death* came out and put their foot in the stirrup, and gave them one lift, by which, in a moment, they sprang upon white horses to ride forth—conquerors for ever.

I heard Thomas Stockton, in the midst of his sermon about the Good Land, stop and cough for two or three minutes, until it seemed as if he never would get his breath, and then go on again; but, recovering his strength, he put

his hand upon his lungs, and said, "Thank God, there is no coughing in heaven." He is well now. Eloquent Thomas Stockton! Glorious Thomas Stockton. I had a friend who preached the Gospel in the West. He was seized by a disease which must prove fatal unless he submitted to a surgical operation. The prospect was that he would die in the hands of the surgeon, but there was a faint hope of recovery, and so he felt his duty to submit. One Sabbath morning he stood in his pulpit, supporting himself by a chair, and said to his congregation, "My dear people, tomorrow morning I start for New York, to submit to a surgical operation, which will probably take my life, but there is a faint hope that it may restore me; and that faint hope leads me to go, but it is probable I shall never see you again. I shall now proceed to preach to you my farewell sermon." And then, with a face all illumined with joy and triumph, he said, "You will find my text in the fourth chapter of second Timothy, at the sixth verse. '*I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day.*'" The next Thursday morning he was well; *he was all well*. In that land they never say "I am sick." Ride on, ye great host of recovered invalids, in the triumphal possession of heaven.

Henry VIII. brought Anne Boleyn to his palace. The river Thames was the scene of her triumphal entry. Fifty barges followed the Lord Mayor. Officials dressed in scarlet. Choirs chanting along the banks of the river. Flags adorned with bells that rang as the breeze stirred them. Anne Boleyn, in cloth of gold, and wearing a circlet of precious stones, stepped into the barge amid the sound of trumpets and the shout of a kingdom. Then entering the street, seated on a richly caparisoned palfrey, they sometime walked on cloth of gold and velvet; led between houses adorned with scarlet

and crimson, and defended by guards in coats of beaten gold; and along by fountains that were made on that day to pour out Rhenish wine for the people, until she at last, kneeling in Westminster Abbey, took the crown. But alas, for the career of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn! They lived in sin and died in shame, and their splendid career went out in darkness. Not so with those whom our king shall call to the honours of heaven. Along the river of Death their barge shall glide amid the shadows until it comes to the light of the City; and then, on streets of gold, and amid palaces of gold, and greeted by harps of gold, they shall join the armies of the King, following on white horses.

But I cannot count the interminable troops of God as they pass, the redeemed of all ages, and lands, and conditions. One hundred and forty-four generations of people have lived since the world was made; and consequently about twenty-nine thousand millions of people have died—figures of which we can have no appreciation. A great proportion of these must have gone into glory, so that nothing but an archangel for a mathematician, with an arithmetic of eternity, could give any idea of the number who shall make up the throng that follow on white horses. Every hour the line is lengthening. They are going up by scores, and by hundreds and thousands. At the beginning of this discourse, we took our position on the street of heaven to watch, but the first regiment has not passed yet; and I hear the clatter of the hosts still coming. Yea, stand at this point and watch until the century has gone, and the word has perished, and time is wound up, and myriads of ages have gone their slow round, still you will not have seen half of the first Division who follow upon white horses. Go up on the highest tower of heaven; look to the north, and look to the south; can you see the end? No! No! Coming! Coming! For ever and for ever they pass on! “*The armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses.*”

It has been to me the most anxious question of the evening.

will you and I join the great procession? Not unless on earth we belonged to the Lord's army, and followed after the King. You must know that the cavalry of heaven that you see passing fought with the cavalry of hell; and that the archdemon has had his victories, and that those whom he conquers he carries away in chains, to be reserved in darkness until the Great Day. Which side are you on? Those who do not follow Christ on earth shall not triumph with Him in heaven. If you are on the wrong side, you had better cross over. If you belong to the black cavalry instead of the white cavalry, you had better head the other way. Plunge the spurs into the flanks, and dash up under the standard of the Cross!

I suppose, of course, that what the text says about the white horses of heaven is figurative; and yet I know not but in some sense it may be literal. It has seemed to me inscrutable that horses should be maltreated, and whipped, and killed by the cruelty of their owners, and have no other state of being by way of compensation. My little child of six years of age was overheard telling her brother of four years that there would be a heaven for the birds and another heaven for the horses. I had not the courage to correct her defective theology. If I wake up at last in heaven, and find real white horses for the redeemed to ride upon, I shall not be sorry, but for the present, I must take my text figuratively, and learn from it the fleetness, and the victory, and the strength of the redeemed. Rejoice, O ye righteous, in the glorious prospect!

When the last war was ended, and the returning army passed in review at Washington, among the most impressive sights were the horses on which the generals rode. But those horses had not been in battle. They had been picked up at the close of the war; they had carried no burdens; they had seen no hardships, but came prancing along the line with arched necks, and rounded limb, and princely trappings, and *gliding* feet, and flaming eye. As they rounded to the roll of

the drum and the trumpet-blast, their drivers bowed on either side to the almost interminable *huzzah!*

Oh! when Christ our King shall return to heaven with all the armies of the saved nations, and kingdoms, and ages in the line, may you and I, through the infinite mercy of the King, be among those who shall follow Him in the great cavalry troop of the redeemed. *That will be the Grand Review of heaven.*

“When shall these eyes thy heaven-built walls  
And pearly gates behold—  
Thy bulwarks with salvation strong,  
And streets of shining gold!”

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### RATIONALISM.

“To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned, answered the man of God and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And so it fell out unto him; for the people trode upon him in the gate and he died.”

2 Kings vii. 1, 2-20.

AROUND Samaria is drawn the fiery girth of Assyrian vindictiveness. Siege is laid to the city, and soon famine, most ghastly and horrible, appears. In the modern bombardment of a city, there is a grandeur mingled with the terror. The toss and burst of a bomb-shell kindles the eye of the artist, while the citizens perish. But there is no imagining the desolation of a city approached by an old-time siege, through years of starvation. The judgment-day only can reveal the anguish endured when Hamilca besieged Utica, and Titus Jerusalem. When Hannibal sought to

capture Casiline, so great was the hunger and destitution that a mouse was sold for two hundred pence. In one of the ancient sieges, the soldiers gnawed their left arm in hunger, while with the right arm they fought. Alas, for Samaria! What a crowd of hollow-eyed and staggering wretches filled the streets, crying for bread. So great was the scarcity of food that an ass's head was sold for twenty-five dollars. Mothers cooked their children and fought for the disgusting fragments. And still hunger pinched and drank up the life of the great city and lifted its wolfish howl in the market-place, and shovelled its victims into the grave. And still the Assyrian host held the town within its fold, tightening its embrace of death and banqueting on the agonies of a wasting city.

In the midst of all this, Elisha, in the name of God, said, "To-morrow the famine will be gone, and you will get a peck of flour for five shillings." A nobleman, who was the confidential friend of the king, stood by and laughed at the idea. He said, "If a window shutter could be opened in the sky, and a lot of corn pitched out, you might expect it. Ha! Ha! you silly prophet; you cannot fool me!" The prophet replied to the taunt by saying, "Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof."

There are four lepers at the gate of the city. They say, "What shall we do? If we stay here we will die of the leprosy. If we go into the city we will die of the famine. If we go out toward the besieging Assyrians, the probability is that they will cut us to pieces. But the best thing that we can do is to throw ourselves upon our enemies." As night begins to come down over the hills, casting funeral shadows upon the dying city and in the surrounding country, adding darkness to desolation, the four lepers start for the Assyrian camp. Coming up to where the Assyrians had been, the lepers find nothing but a forsaken encampment. At what they supposed the sound of chariots, and of horses, and of marching hosts, the Assyrians had

fled, scattering canteens and blankets along the highways. The horses and asses of the enemy are still tied. The tents are standing. Walk in, hungry lepers, and partake of the feast that the Assyrian noblemen prepared for themselves ! Help yourselves to all these luxuries ! Eat the fruits ! Pour the wine ! Gather up the Gold, and silver, and costly garments ! Word is sent to Samaria that the siege is lifted. Like a voice from God, the news went through the city. The gates were opened and out rushed the famine-struck people. Thousands of dying wretches lifted up their heads from the street, and gave a ghastly smile, as it was told them that bread was coming, and that prices had gone down, until a peck of fine flour was sold for five-shillings. There was one word caught up and flung over city and country. It came from poor man's cot and rich man's palace, from city gate and temple tower. It was sounded by the clapping hands of childhood, and by the tremulous accents of old age. It went up in shout, and song, and laughter, and thanksgiving. A plain word, but it thrilled through fainting hearts, and flushed the pale cheeks, and lighted the glazed eyes, and bounded from the white lips, and filled all the air with light and gladness ; and that word was—*Bread!*

All that vast population got the advantage in the fall in price, save one man, and that was the nobleman who had scoffed at Elisha. In the wild rush of the people out of the gate of the city, the scoffing nobleman was run over and trampled to death ; and so Elisha's word proved true : "Behold thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof !"

Before we come to the more cheerful phase of the subject, let us attend the funeral of that scoffer who was trod on in the gates. The obsequies shall be brief, for we have not much respect for him. I knew him well. You all knew him. *He was an out-and-out Rationalist.* Give me time, and I will show you fifty thousand people just like him in



Brooklyn ; and a hundred thousand just like him in New York—men, who believe no more about God, and the Bible and eternity, than they can reason out with their little, intellects. Elisha, at God's command, had prophesied plenty of fine flour on the morrow. "Preposterous !" said the sceptical nobleman. "Where is it to come from ? Why, every hole and corner of the city has been ransacked for flour. We have eaten up the horses. Aye, we are cannibals, and have eaten children and men. There is no prospect that the Assyrians will lift the siege ; and yet, Elisha, you insult my common sense, and my reason, by telling me that to-morrow the market will be glutted with bread supplies. Away, with your nonsense !" Yet, notwithstanding it seemed unreasonable, the fine flour came ; and, because of his unbelief, the Rationalist of Samaria perished.

Men and women of God. At this point the great battle of Christianity is to be fought. It is not Romanism that is so much to be feared. Wounded in its head, in Italy, its limbs are everywhere shivering with dissolution, and the death-rattle is already in the throat of that old "mother of harlots." But the great foe of Christianity to-day is *Rationalism*, that comes out from our schools, and universities, and magazines, and newspapers, to scoff at Bible truth, and caricature the old religion of Jesus. It says, "Jesus is not God, for it is impossible to explain how He can be Divine and Human at the same time. The Bible is not inspired, for there are in it things that they don't like. Regeneration is a farce ; there is good enough in us, and the only thing is to bring it out. *Development* is the word—*development*. The Garden of Eden is a fairy story, and no more to be believed than the Arabian Nights, or Gulliver's Travels, or Robinson Crusoe. We all started as baboons, and are blood relations to that monkey, squirming about on the top of that hand organ. There is no hell ; and all the Bible passages announcing that there is must be twisted to suit our own preferences ; and so that terrible place, toward

which they are all bound, unless they repent, is made to point more jokes in New York to-day than all other things combined. Lazarus was not dead when Christ pretended to raise him; he was only playing dead. The water was not changed into wine at the wedding; but Christ brought in some wine that He had found elsewhere, to make up for the deficiency. Christ did not walk on the sea, but on the shore, so near, that it seemed as if He really were on the water."

What is still more alarming, is that Christian men dare not meet this ridicule. There is not one Christian man in five that can, unblanched, stand in the presence of all this raillery, saying, "I believe in the whole Bible, and in every single statement that it makes." Christian men try to soften the Bible down to suit the sceptics. The sceptics sneer at the dividing of the Red Sea, and the Christian goes to explaining that the wind blew a hurricane from one direction a good while, until all the water piled up; and, besides that, it was low water, anyhow, and so the Israelites went through without any trouble. Why not be frank, and say, "I believe the Lord God Almighty came to the brink of the Red Sea, and with His right arm swung back the billows on the right side, and with His left arm swung back the billows on the left side; and the abashed water stood up hundreds of feet high, while through their glassy wall the sea-monsters gazed with affrighted eyes on the passing Israelites?" "Oh," you say, "these Rationalists would laugh at me." Then let them laugh. The Samaritan sceptic laughed at Elisha; but when, under the rush of the people to get their bread, the unbeliever was trampled to death, whose turn was it to laugh then? The Rationalist comes to you, saying, How about Jonah and the whale? Do you really believe that fish story? There never were so many Nantucket fishermen after one whale as there have been Rationalists flinging harpoons at this Mediterranean sea-monster; and from that one whale they have got enough

oil to light ten thousand souls to perdition. A sceptic tells you that Jonah would have been killed in the process of swallowing, and that he could not, anyhow, have lived three days in such close quarters, but would have been smothered by the poor ventilation. How the good Christians immediately go to work, and try to explain the whole thing by natural laws, so as to please the Rationalists, and say that the whale is an air-breathing fish; that every little while it comes to the surface; and that the whale that swallowed Jonah did the same thing, and thus got a supply for itself and for the prophet. Why not rather say that God can do *anything*—and HE could take Jonah through the whale's throat, although the throat would not have been half large enough ordinarily to let him pass, and could have kept him alive in the whale five years without any air, if He had chosen to. Who made the whale? God. Who made Jonah? God. Then He could do everything he pleased with either of them?

The moment you begin to explain away the miraculous and supernatural, you surrender the Bible. Take the supernatural out of the Bible, and you make it a collection of lies and humbugs, in preference to which I choose Æsop's fables. *They* are what they pretend to be—fables. But if, after all that, the Bible declares Jesus is not God, and Lazarus was not raised from the dead, and the water was not turned into wine, and the Red Sea was not divided—then the Bible is the worst fraud ever perpetrated in God's universe.

My object to-day is not to argue the truthfulness of the Bible, but to make you who believe in it willing to be laughed at. Surrender nothing! Compromise nothing! Trim off nothing to please the sceptics. If you cannot stand the jeer of your business friends you are not worthy to be one of Christ's disciples. You can afford to wait. The tide will turn. God's Word will be vindicated; and though it may seem to be against the laws of nature and the rules of reason, to-morrow a measure of fine flour will be sold for a shekel; and

then, as the people rush out of the gates to get the bread, alas, for the Rationalist! he will be trodden under foot, and will go down to shame and everlasting contempt. "Stop!" you say. "Suppose he graduated at Harvard. Suppose he graduated at Princeton. Suppose he is at the head of the German Universities." I cannot help that. God makes no special regulation for the graduates of Harvard or Princeton rejecting the Bible. They will go down to be companions with the most abandoned wretches of the universe, and more miserable than they, because of the superior intelligence given. One rule for all—for great brain and little brain, for high-foreheaded Greek professor and for flat-skulled Esquimaux—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." By this announcement of God's Word I stand or fall. Come scorn, or criticism, or anathema! *An infallible Bible! A supernatural religion! A Divine Saviour in whom men must believe or be lost!* In behalf of God's Word, and the old-fashioned religion of our fathers, and the cross of Christ, on which I have hung my hopes for eternity, I proclaim everlasting war against Rationalism. Know all men in America and Europe to whom these words shall come, where we stand! *An infallible Bible! A supernatural religion! A Divine Saviour in whom men must believe or be lost.*

Further, I learn from the scene in Samaria how God provided bread to stop a famine. If God had opened the gate that morning, and but a few loaves of bread had come in, it would have been a mercy. But lo! the flour pours in. Every possible vehicle is employed in bringing it. What is in that pail? *Flour*. What is in that sack? *Flour*. What is piled up in the markets? *Flour*. So common that it is cheap. A peck for five shillings.

You know that all the nations are famine struck by sin. They are dying for bread. Here comes through the gates a precious supply—not one loaf, but an abundance for all; pardon for all, strength for all, sympathy for all, comfort for

all! Will you have this bread that came down from heaven and which, if a man eat, he shall never hunger?

Word came to a superintendent of a Sabbath-school in New York that he was wanted in a garret in one of the lowest streets. He went there and found a boy dying in the straw. He said, "Why have you sent for me?" The boy said, "I attended your Sunday School!" The superintendent asked, "Why do you look so happy?" The boy answered, "I heard you one Sunday say that whensoever a fellow cometh to God, He will in no wise cast him out, and I believed it, and Christ has pardoned my sins, and I am on the way to heaven, and I want to bid you good bye." Glorious Gospel! So wide in its provisions. *Whosoever! Whosoever!*

Mark you that God stopped Samaria's famine, not with coarse meal, but, the text says, with *fine flour*. So the Bread of Life, with which God would appease our hunger, is made of the best material. It is not the ground up corn-cobs of morality, mingled with a little grace; but it is a fine Gospel—an unadulterated Gospel—a pure Gospel. Jesus was fine in His life, fine in His sympathies, fine in His promises. It means no coarse supply when Jesus offers Himself to the people saying, "*I am the Bread of Life.*"—"Fine flour for a shekel."

That day when the gates of Samaria were opened, why did they make such excitement about the flour? Why did they not bring in some figs, or pastry, or fragrant bouquets instead? The people would have run down the bouquets, and thrown away the figs, and trampled upon the pastry in the rush for bread.

Effort has been made to feed those spiritually dying with the poesies or rhetoric, and the sugar-plums of ritualism, and the confectionery of sentimentalism. Our theology has been sweetened and sweetened until it is as sweet as ipecacuanha, and as nauseating to the regenerated soul. What the people need is *bread*, just as God mixes it—unsweetened *plain*, homely, unpretending, yet life-sustaining bread. The

you must have, O dying soul. Better the smallest crumb of this, that ever fell from the Master's table, than anything the world can give you. Bread on Calvary, kneaded by knuckles of earthly torture, and baked in the fires of the Cross!

What fine flour was that day to Samaria, Jesus Christ is to all who will take Him in. Dear Jesus! Loving Jesus! Faithful Jesus? No wonder the little child, having been told that her playmate was dying, asked to be lifted up to see her. They lifted her up, and she kissed her dying playmate, and said, "Clara! Give my love to Jesus!" If Christ were fully known, the whole world would throw its arm around His neck. Ye, who shall first get into glory; ye who shall beat us into that good land, take with you messages of affection to our dear ones there! and especially *give our love to Jesus!* Without Him heaven would be a dungeon. With Him, the great Sahara Desert would be a Paradise. You may have all the throne of heaven to sit on; give me Jesus! Take all the harps that thrill with joy, and all the trumpets that peal for the victory! give me Jesus! You may have all the thrones, and all the sceptres, and all the crowns; give me Jesus. He washed away my sins. He comforted my sorrows. He conquered my temptations.

One of the old writers wished he could have seen three things: Rome in its prosperity; Paul preaching; Christ in the body. I have three wishes: *First*—To see Christ in glory, surrounded by His redeemed. *Second*—To see Christ in glory, surrounded by His redeemed. *Third*—To see Christ in glory surrounded by His redeemed.

"When on my new fledged wings I rise,  
To tread those shores beyond the skies,  
I'll run through every golden street,  
And ask each blissful soul I meet—  
Where is the God whose praise ye sing?  
O! lead me stranger to your King."

Are you ready to-day to accept Him? Instead of floun-

dering about in darkness, trying this, that, and the other thing—now taking the gospel of Theodore Parker, and now the gospel of Darwin, and now the gospel of Hubert Spencer, and now the gospel of Comte, and now the gospel of Huxley, take the gospel of the two old people who had more religious peace and happiness in one hour than all these scientists have in a lifetime—the two old people who sat at either end of the table in your childhood. I mean the old people by whose side you would like to be buried when your work is done. I place the religion of your father's house against the dreaming of all the universities in the world. Come out of that cold fog of Rationalism, that has been chilling you to the bone, and stand on the rock Christ Jesus. Not many wise, not many noble, are called, but God hath chosen the weak things to confound the mighty.

No elaborate thinking is necessary to understand our religion. You have only to put two ideas together! the one is the saddest idea in the universe, and the other is the gladdest—*I am a sinner, but Jesus died to save me.*

The God of M. Comte was what he defined as “the continuous resolutant of the forces capable of voluntarily concurring in the universal perfecting of the world.”

That is not my God. I do not know him. I don't want to know him. My God is Jesus Christ, who came to pardon and to save a world. And if I have never done it before this moment, I cast myself at His feet, crying for His mercy, upon my soul, and for the salvation of this people.

O, ye famine-struck souls; The siege is lifted! Bread for all the starving! A measure of fine flour five shillings? No! No! *Without money and without price!*

Beware, lest because there are some things about this religion you cannot understand, therefore you disbelieve, and the fate of the Samaritan Rationalist be yours.

“Behold, thou shalt see with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.”

## GOD'S BOTTLE.

“Put thou my tears into thy bottle.”—*Psalms lvi. 8.*

**THIS** prayer was pressed out of David's soul by innumerable calamities; but it is just as appropriate for the distressed of all ages.

Within the past century, travellers and antiquarians have explored the ruins of many of the ancient cities, and from the very heart of those buried splendours of other days have been brought up evidences of customs that long ago vanished from the world. From among tombs of those ages have been brought up lachrymatories, or lachrymals, which are vials made of earthenware. It was the custom for the ancients to catch the tears that they wept over their dead in a bottle, and to place that bottle in the graves of the departed; and we have many specimens of the ancient lachrymatories, or tear-bottle, in our museums.

The text intimates that God has an intimate acquaintance and perpetual remembrance of all our griefs, and a vial, or lachrymatory, or bottle, in which He catches and saves our tears; and I bring to you the condolence of this Christian sentiment. But why talk of human griefs when we have but to look out and behold the largest prosperity—a great harvest soon to be gathered in all the land. Multitudes of men, with no cares save how they may safely invest their large accumulations. Joy in the city mansions and mountain cabin. Joy among the lumbermen of Maine, as they shove their rafts into the water. Joy among the emigrants, far out upon the vast prairie. Joy, Joy! Why talk about grief? Alas! the world has its pangs, and now, while I speak, there are before me thick darknesses of soul that need



to be lifted. I stand in the presence of some who are about to break under the assault of temptation, and perchance, if no words appropriate to their case be uttered to-day, they perish for ever. I come on no fool's errand. Put upon your wounds no salve compounded by human quackery, but, pressing straight to the mark, I hail you as a vessel mid-sea cries to a passing craft, "Ship ahoy!" and invite you on board a vessel which has Faith for a rudder, and Prayer for sails, and Christ for Captain, and Heaven for an eternal harbour. Catherine Rheinfeldt, a Prussian, keeps a boat with which she rescues the drowning. When a storm comes on the coast, and other people go to their beds to rest, she puts out in her boat for the relief of the distressed, and hundreds of the drowning has she brought safely to the beach. In this life-boat of the Gospel I put out to-day, hoping, by God's help, to bring ashore at least one soul that may now be sinking in the billows of temptation and trouble. The tears that were once caught in the lachrymatories brought up from Herculaneum and Pompeii are all gone, and the bottle is as dry as the scoria of the volcano that submerged them! but not so with the bottle in which God gathers all our tears.

First, I remark that God keeps perpetually the *tears of repentance*. Many a man has awakened in the morning so wretched from the night's debauch that he has sobbed and wept. Pains in the head, aching in the eyes, sick at heart, and unfit to step into the light. He grieves, not about his misdoing, but only about its consequences. God makes no record of such weeping. Of all the million tears that have gushed as the result of such misdemeanour, not one ever got into God's bottle. They dried on the fevered cheek, or were dashed down by the bloated hand, or fell into the red wine cup as it came again to the lips, foaming with still worse indication. But when a man is sorry for his past and tries to do better—when he mourns his wasted advantages and bemoans his rejection of God's mercy, and cries amid the

lacerations of an aroused conscience for help out of his terrible predicament, then God listens; then heaven bows down; then sceptres of pardon are extended from the throne; then his crying rends the heart of heavenly compassion; then his tears are caught in God's bottle.

You know the story of Paradise and the Peri. I think it might be put to higher adaptation. An angel starts from the throne of God to find what thing it can on the earth worthy of being carried back to heaven. It goes down through the gold and silver mines of earth, but finds nothing worthy of transportation to the Celestial City. It goes down through the depths of the sea, where the pearls lie, and finds nothing worthy of taking back to heaven. But coming to the foot of a mountain it sees a wanderer weeping over his evil ways. The tears of the prodigal start, but do not fall to the ground, for the angel's wing catches them, and with that treasure speeds back to heaven. God sees the angel coming, and says, "Behold the brightest gem of earth, and the brightest jewel of heaven—the tear of a sinner's repentance."

Oh! when I see the Heavenly Shepherd bringing a lamb from the wilderness; when I hear the quick tread of the prodigal hastening home to find his Father; when I see a sailor-boy coming on the wharf, and hurrying away to beg his mother's pardon for long neglect and unkindness; when I see the houseless coming to God for shelter, and the wretched and the vile, and the sin-burned, and the passion-blasted appealing for mercy to a compassionate God, I exclaim in ecstasy and triumph: "*More tears for God's bottle!*"

Again, God keeps a tender remembrance of all your *sicknesses*. How many of you are thoroughly sound in body? Not one out of ten! I do not exaggerate. The vast majority of the race are constant subjects of ailments. There is some one form of disease that you are particularly subject to. You have a weak side, or back, or are subject to head-

aches, or faintnesses, or lungs easily distressed. It would not take a very strong blow to shiver the golden bowl of life, or break the pitcher at the fountain. Many of you have kept on in life through sheer force of will. You think no one can understand your distresses. Perhaps you look strong, and it is supposed that you are a hypochondriac. They say you are nervous—as if that were nothing! God have mercy upon any man or woman that is nervous! At times you sit alone in your room. Friends do not come. You feel an indescribable loneliness in your sufferings: but God knows; God feels; God compassionates. He counts the sleepless nights; He regards the acuteness of the pain; He estimates the hardness of the breathing. While you pour out the medicine from the bottle, and count the drops, God counts all your falling tears. As you look at the vials, filled with nauseous draughts, and at the bottles of distasteful tonic that stand on the shelf, remember that there is a larger bottle than these, which is filled with no mixture by earthly apothecaries, but it is *God's bottle*, in which He hath gathered all our tears.

Again: God remembers all the *sorrows of poverty*. There is much want that never comes to inspection. The deacons of the church never see it. The comptrollers of almshouses never report it. It comes not to church, for it has no appropriate apparel. It makes no appeal for help, but chooses rather to suffer than expose its bitterness. Fathers who fail to gain a livelihood, so that they and their children submit to constant privation; sewing-women, who cannot ply the needle quick enough to earn them shelter and bread. But whether reported or uncomplaining, whether in seemingly comfortable parlour, or in damp cellar, or in hot garret, God's angels of mercy are on the watch. This moment those griefs are being collected. Down on the back streets, on all the alleys, amid shanties and log-cabins, the work goes on. Tears of want—seething in summer's heat, or freezing in winter's cold—they fall not unheeded. They

are jewels for heaven's casket. They are pledges of Divine sympathy. They are *tears for God's bottle!*

Again: the Lord preserves the remembrance of all *paternal anxieties*. You see a man from the most infamous surroundings step out into the kingdom of God. He has heard no sermon. He has received no startling providential warning. What brought him to this new mind? This is the secret: God looked over the bottle in which He gathers the tears of His people, and He saw a parental tear in that bottle which has been for forty years unanswered. He said "Go to, now; and let me answer that tear!" and forthwith the wanderer is brought home to God. Oh, this work of training children for God! It is a tremendous work. Some people think it easy. They have never tried it. A child is placed in the arms of the young parent. It is a beautiful plaything. You look into the laughing eyes. You examine the dimples in the feet. You wonder at its exquisite organism. Beautiful plaything! But on some nightfall, as you sit rocking that little one, a voice seems to fall straight from the throne of God, saying, "*That child is immortal!*" The stars shall die, but that is an *immortal!* Suns shall grow old with age and perish, but that is an *immortal!*"

Now, I know that with many of you this is the chief anxiety. You earnestly wish your children to grow up rightly, but you find it hard work to make them do as you wish. You check their temper. You correct their waywardness: in the midnight your pillow is wet with weeping. You have wrestled with God in agony for the salvation of your children. You ask me if all that anxiety has been ineffectual. I answer. *No.* God understands your heart. He understands how hard you have tried to make that daughter do right, though she is so very petulant and reckless; and what pains you have bestowed in teaching that son to walk in the paths of uprightness, though he has such strong proclivities for dissipation. I speak a cheering word. God heard every counsel you ever offered him. God has known all the sleep-

less nights you have ever passed. God has seen every sinking of your distressed spirit. God remembers your prayers. He keeps eternal record of your anxieties; and in His lachrymatory, not such as stood in ancient tomb, but in one that glows and glitters beside the throne of God; he holds all those exhausting tears. The grass may be rank upon your graves, and the letters upon your tombstone defaced with the elements before the Divine response will come; but He who hath declared, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee," will not forget; and some day, in heaven, while you are ranging the fields of light, the gates of pearl will swing back, and garlanded with glory, that long wayward one will rush into your outstretched arms of welcome and triumph. The hills may depart and the earth may burn, and the stars fall and time perish, but God will never break His oath and trample upon His promises—*never!* NEVER!

Again, God keeps a perpetual remembrance of all *bereavements*. These are the trials that cleave the soul, and throw the red hearts of men to be crushed in the wine-press. Troubles at the store you may leave at the store. Misrepresentation and abuse of the world you may leave on the street where you found them. The law-suit that would swallow your honest accumulations may be left in the courtroom. But bereavements are *home* troubles, and there is no escape from them. You will see that vacant chair. Your eye will catch at the suggestive picture. You cannot fly the presence of such ills. You go to Switzerland to get clear of them, but more sure-footed than the mule that takes you up the Alps, your troubles climb to the tip-top, and sit shivering on the glaciers. You may cross the seas, but they can outsail the clipper or merchantman. You may take caravan, and put out across the Arabian desert, but they follow you like a simoon, armed with suffocation. You *plunge* into the Mammoth Cave, but they hang like stalactites from the roof of the great cavern. They stand behind with skeleton fingers to push you ahead. They stand before you

to throw you back. They run upon you like reckless horsemen. They charge upon you with gleaming spear. They seem to come hap-hazard, scattering shots from the gun of a careless sportsman. But not so. It is good aim that sends them just right; for God is the archer. This summer many of you will especially feel your grief as you go to places where once you were accompanied by those who are gone now. Your troubles will follow you to the seashore, and will keep up with the lightning express in which you speed away. Or, tarrying at home, they will sit beside you by day, and whisper over your pillow night after night. I want to assure you that you are not left alone; and that your weeping is heard in heaven. You will wander among the hills and say, "Up this hill, last year, our boy climbed with great glee, and waved his cap from the top;" or, "This is the place where our little girl put flowers in her hair, and looked up in her mother's face," until every drop of blood in the heart tingled with gladness, and you thanked God with a thrill of rapture; and you look around as much as to say: "Who dashed out that light? Who filled this cup with gall? What blast froze up these fountains of the heart?" Some of you have lost your parents within the last twelve months. Their prayers for you are ended. You take up their picture, and try to call back the kindness that once looked out from those old, wrinkled faces, and spoke in such a tremulous voice; and you say it is a good picture, but all the while you feel that, after all, it does not do justice; and you would give almost anything—you would cross the sea, you would walk the earth over—to hear just one word from those lips that a few months ago used to call you by your first name, though so long you yourself have been a parent. Now, you have done your best to hide your grief. You smile when you do not feel like it. But though you may deceive the world, God knows. He looks down upon the empty cradle, upon the *desolated* nursery, upon the stricken home, and upon the broken heart, and says: "This is the way I thresh

the wheat; this is the way I scour my jewels! Cast thy burden on my arm, and I will sustain you. All those tears I have gathered in my bottle!"

But what is the use of having so many tears in God's lachrymatory? In that great casket or vase, why does God preserve all your troubles? Through all the ages of eternity, what use of a great collection of tears? I do not know that they will be kept there for ever. I do not know but that in some distant age of heaven an angel of God may look into the bottle and find it as empty of tears as the lachrymals of earthenware dug up from the ancient city. Where have the tears gone to? What sprite of hell hath been invading God's palace, and hath robbed the lachrymatories? None. These were sanctified sorrows, and those tears were changed into pearls that are now set in the crowns and robes of the ransomed. I walk up to examine this heavenly coronet, gleaming brighter than the sun, and cry, "From what river-depths of heaven were those gems gathered?" and a thousand voices reply "These are *transmuted tears from God's bottle.*" I see sceptres of light stretched down from the throne, those who on earth were trod on of men; and in every sceptre-point, and inlaid in every ivory stair of golden throne, I behold an indescribable richness and lustre, and cry, "From whence this streaming light—these flashing pearls?" and the voices of the elders before the throne, and of the martyrs under the altar, and of the hundred and forty and four thousand radiant on the glassy sea, exclaim, "*Transmuted tears from God's bottle.*"

Let the ages of heaven roll on—the story of earth's pomp and pride long ago ended; the Koh-i-noor diamonds that make kings proud, the precious stones that adorned Persian tiara and flamed in the robes of Babylonian processions, forgotten; the Golconda mines charred in the last conflagration; but firm as the everlasting hills, and pure as the light that streams from the throne, and bright as the river that flows from the eternal rock, shall gleam, shall sparkle, shall flame for ever these transmuted tears of God's bottle.

Meanwhile, let the empty lachrymatory of heaven stand for ever. Let no hand touch it. Let no wing strike it. Let no collision crack it. Purer than beryl or chrysopterus. Let it stand on the step of Jehovah's throne and under the arch of the unfading rainbow. Passing down the corridors of the palace, the redeemed of earth shall glance at it, and think of all the earthly troubles from which they were delivered, and say, each to each, "That is what we heard of on earth." "That is what the Psalmist spoke of." "There once were put our tears." "*That is God's bottle.*" And while standing there inspecting this richest inlaid vase of heaven, the towers of the palace dome strike up this silvery chime:—

"*God hath wiped away all tears from all faces.* Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

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### THE DAYBREAK.

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him. And he said 'Let me go, for the day breaketh.' And he said, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'"—*Genesis xxxii. 24, 25, 26.*

THE dust arose from a travelling herd of cattle, and sheep, and goats, and camels. They are the present that Jacob sends to gain the good-will of his offended brother. That night Jacob halts by the brook Jabbock. But there is no rest for the weary man. No shining ladder to let the angels down into his dream; but a fierce combat, that lasts until morning, with an unknown visitor. They each try to throw the other. The unknown visitor, to reveal his superior power, by a touch wrenches Jacob's thigh bone from its



socket, perhaps maiming him for life. As on the morning sky the clusters of purple cloud begin to ripen, Jacob sees it is an angel with whom he has been contending, and not one of his brother's coadjutors. "Let me go," cries the angel, lifting himself up into increasing light, "*the day breaketh.*"

You see, in the first place, that God allows good people sometimes to get into a terrible struggle. Jacob was a good man; but here he is left alone in the midnight to wrestle with a tremendous influence by the brook Jabbock. For Joseph, a pit; for Daniel, a wild beast den; for David, dethronement and exile; for John the Baptist, a wilderness diet and the executioner's axe; for Peter, a prison; for Paul shipwreck; for John, desolate Patmos; for Vashti, most insulting cruelty; for Josephine, banishment; for Mrs. Sigourney, the agony of a drunkard's wife; for John Wesley, stones hurled by an infuriated mob; for Catherine, the Scotch girl, the drowning surges of the sea; for Mr. Burns, the buffeting of the Montreal populace; for John Brown of Edinburgh, the pistol-shot of Lord Claverhouse; for Hugh McKail, the scaffold; for Latimer, the stake: for CHRIST, the Cross. For whom the rocks, the gibbets, the guillotines, the thumb-screws? For the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. Some one said to a Christian reformer, "The world is against you." "Then," he replied "I am against the world."

I will go further, and say that every Christian has his struggle. This man had his combat in Wall-street; this one on Broad-street; this one on Fulton-street; this one on Chesnut-street; this one on State-street. With financial misfortune you have had the midnight wrestle. Red-hot disasters have dropped into your store from loft to cellar. What you bought you could not sell. Whom you trusted fled. The help you expected would not come. Some giant panic, with long arms, and grip like death, took hold of you in an awful wrestle, from which you have not yet escaped, and it is uncertain whether it will throw you, or you will

throw it. Here is another soul, in struggle with some bad appetite. He knew not how stealthily it was growing upon him. One hour he woke up. He said, "For the sake of my soul, of my family, and of my children, and of my God, I must stop this!" And behold he found himself alone, by the brook Jabbock; and it was midnight. That evil appetite seized upon him, and he seized upon it; and Oh, the horror of the conflict! When once a bad habit hath roused itself up to destroy a man, and the man has sworn that, by the help of the eternal God, he will destroy it, all heaven draws itself out in a long line of light, to look from above, and hell stretches itself in myrmidons of spite to look up from beneath. I have seen men rally themselves for such a struggle; and they have bitten their lip, and clenched their fists, and cried with a blood red earnestness, and a rain of scalding tears, "God help me!"

From a wrestle with habit, I have seen men fall back defeated. Calling for no help, but relying on their own resolutions, they have come into the struggle; and for a time it seemed as if they were getting the upper hand of their habit; but that habit rallied again its infernal power, and lifted its soul from its standing, and with a force borrowed from the pit, hurled it into outer darkness. First, I saw the auctioneer's mallet fall on the pictures, and musical instruments, and the rich upholstery of his family parlour. After a-while I saw him fall into the ditch. Then, in the midnight, when the children were dreaming their sweetest dreams, and Christian households are silent with slumber, angel-watched, I heard him give the sharp shriek that followed the stab of his own poinard. He fell from an honoured social position; he fell from a family circle of which once he was the grandest attraction; he fell from the house of God, at whose altars he had been consecrated; he fell—for ever! But, thank God, I have often seen a better termination than that. I have seen men prepare themselves for such a wrestling. They laid hold of God's help as they

went into combat. The giant habit, regaled by the cup of many temptations, came out strong and defiant. They clenched. There were the writhings and distortions of a fearful struggle. But the old giant began to waver; and at last, in the midnight, alone, with none but God to witness, by the brook Jabbock, the giant fell; and the triumphant wrestler broke the darkness with the cry, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a widow's heart, that first was desolated by bereavement, and since, by the anxieties and trials that came in the support of a family. It is a sad thing to see a *man* contending for a livelihood under disadvantages: but to see a delicate *woman*, with helpless little ones at her back, fighting the giants of poverty and sorrow, is more affecting. It was a humble home, and passers by knew not that within those four walls were displays of courage more admirable than that of Hannibal crossing the Alps, or in the Pass of Thermopylæ, or at Balaklava, where, "into the jaws of death, rode the six hundred." These heroes had the whole world to cheer them on; but there were none to applaud the struggle in the humble home. She fought for bread, for clothing, for fire, for shelter, with aching head and weak side, and exhausted strength, through the long night by the brook Jabbock. Could it be that none would give her help? Had God forgotten to be gracious? No! contending soul. The midnight air is full of wings, coming to the rescue. She hears it now, in the sough of the night wind, in the ripple of the brook Jabbock,—the promise made so long ago, ringing down the sky: "Thy fatherless children I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in Me!" some one said to a very poor woman, "How is it that in such distress you keep cheerful?" She said, "I do it by what I call cross prayers. When I had my rent to pay, and nothing to pay it with, and bread to buy and nothing to buy it with, I used to sit down and cry. But now I do not get discouraged. If I go along the street when I come to a

corner of the street, I say, 'The Lord help me!' I then go on until I come to another crossing of the street, and again I say, 'The Lord help me!' And so I utter a prayer at every crossing; and since I have got into the habit of saying these 'cross prayers,' I have been able to keep up my courage."

Learn again from this subject, that people sometimes are surprised to find out that what they have been struggling with in the darkness, is really an "angel of blessing." Jacob found in the morning, that this strange personage was not an enemy, but a God-despatched messenger to promise prosperity for him and for his children. And so, many a man, at the close of his trial, has found out that he has been trying to throw down his own blessing. If you are a Christian man, I will go back in your history and find that the grandest things that have ever happened to you, have been your trials. Nothing short of scourging, imprisonment, and shipwreck, could have made Paul what he was. When David was fleeing through the wilderness, pursued by his own son, he was being prepared to become the sweet singer of Israel. The pit and the dungeon were the best schools at which Joseph ever graduated. The hurricane that upset the tent, and killed Job's children, prepared the man of Uz to write the magnificent poem that has astounded the ages. There is no way to get the wheat out of the straw but to thresh it. There is no way to purify the gold but to burn it. Look at the people who have always had it their own way. They are proud, discontented, useless, and unhappy. If you want to find cheerful folks, go among those who have been purified by the fire. After Rossini had rendered *William Tell* the five hundredth time, a company of musicians come under his window in Paris, and serenaded him. They put upon his brow a golden crown of laurel leaves! But, amid all the applause and enthusiasm Rossini turned to a friend and said, "I would give all this brilliant scene for a few days of youth and love." Contrast the melancholy feeling

of Rossini, who had everything that this world could give him, to the joyful experience of Isaac Watts, whose misfortunes were innumerable, when he says :

“The Hill of Zion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets,  
Before we reach the heavenly land,  
Or walk the golden streets.

“Then let our songs abound,  
And every tear be dry :  
We are marching toward Immanuel’s ground,  
To fairer worlds on high.”

It is prosperity that kills, and trouble that saves. While the Israelites were on the march, amid great privations and hardships, they behaved well. After a-while they prayed for meat ; and the sky darkened with a great flock of quails ; and these quails fell in great multitudes all about them ; and the Israelites ate and ate, and stuffed themselves until they died. Oh, my friends, it is not hardship, or trial, or starvation that injures the soul, but abundant supply. It is not the vulture of trouble that eats up the Christian’s life ; it is the quails ! it is the quails ! You will yet find out that your midnight wrestle by the brook Jabbock is with an angel of God, come down to bless and to save.

Learn again that, while our wrestling with trouble may be triumphant, we must expect that it will leave its mark upon us. Jacob prevailed, but the angel touched him and his thigh-bone sprang from its socket, and the good man went limping on his way. We must carry through this world the mark of the combat. What ploughed those premature wrinkles in your face ? What whitened your hair before it was time for frost ? What silenced for ever so much of the hilarity of your household ? Ah ! it is because the angel of trouble hath touched you that you go limping on your way.

need not be surprised that those who have passed

through the fire do not feel as gay as once they did. Do not be out of patience with those who come not out of their despondency. They may triumph over their loss, and yet their gait shall tell you that they have been trouble-touched. Are we Stoics, that we can, unmoved, see our cradle rifled of the bright eyes and the sweet lips? Can we stand unmoved and see our gardens of earthly delight uprooted? Will Jesus, who wept Himself, be angry with us if we pour our tears into the graves that open to swallow down what we love best? Was Lazarus more dear to Him than our beloved dead to us? No. We have a right to weep. Our tears must come. You shall not drive them back to scald the heart. They fall into God's bottle. Afflicted ones have died because they could not weep. Thank God for the sweet, the mysterious relief that comes to us in tears! Under this gentle rain the flowers of corn put forth their bloom. God pity that dry, withered, parched, all-consuming grief that wrings its hands, and grinds its teeth, and bites its nails unto the quick, but cannot weep! We may have found the comfort of the Cross, and yet ever after show that in the dark night, and by the brook Jabbock, we were trouble-touched.

Again: we may take the idea of the text, and announce the approach of the day-dawn. No one was ever more glad to see the morning than was Jacob after that night of struggle. It is appropriate for philanthropists and Christians to cry out with this angel of the text, "The day breaketh." The world's prospects are brightening. Popery has had its strongest props knocked out. The tyrants of the earth are falling flat in the dust. The Church of Christ is rising up in its strength to go forth, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army of banners." Clap your hands, all ye people, *the day breaketh*. The bigotries of the earth are perishing. The time was when we were told that if we wanted to get to heaven, we must be immersed or sprinkled; or we must believe in the perseverance of the saints, or in *falling away from grace*, or a liturgy, or no liturgy; or they

must be Calvinists, or Arminians, in order to reach heaven. We have all come to confess now that these are non-essentials in religion.

During my vacation, one summer, I was in a Presbyterian audience, and it was sacramental day, and with grateful heart I received the Holy Communion. On the next Sabbath I was in a Methodist church, and sat at a love-feast. On the following Sabbath I was in an Episcopalian church, and knelt at the altar and received the consecrated bread. I do not know which service I enjoyed the most. "*I believe in the communion of saints and in the life everlasting.*" "*The day breaketh.*"

As I look upon this audience, I see many who have passed through waves of trouble that came up higher than their girdle. In God's name I proclaim cessation of hostilities. You shall not go always saddened and heart-broken. God *will* lift your burden. God *will* bring your dead to life. God *will* staunch the heart's bleeding. I know He will. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pities you. The pains of earth will end. The tomb will burst. The dead will rise. The morning star trembles on a brightening sky. The gates of the east begin to swing open. *The day breaketh.*

Luther and Melancthon were talking together gloomily about the prospects of the Church. They could see no hope of deliverance. After a-while, Luther got up and said to Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm of David: 'God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.'"

Death to many, nay to all is a struggle and a wrestle. We have many friends that it will be hard to leave. I care *not* how bright our future hope is. It is a bitter thing to

look upon this fair world, and know that we shall never again see its blossoming spring, its falling fruits, its sparkling streams, and to say farewell to those with whom we played in childhood, or counselled in manhood. In that night, like Jacob, we may have to wrestle, but God will not leave us unblest. It shall not be told in heaven that a dying soul cried unto God for help, but was not delivered. The lattice may be turned to keep out the sun, or a book set to dim the light of the midnight taper ; or the room may be filled with the cries of orphanage and widowhood ; or the Church of Christ may mourn over our going ; but if Jesus calls, all is well. The strong wrestling by the brook will cease ; the hour of death's night will pass along : one o'clock in the morning ; two o'clock in the morning ; four o'clock in the morning ; *the day breaketh.*

So I would have it when I die. I am in no haste to be gone. I have no grudge against this world. The only fault I have to find with the world is, that it treats me too well. But when the time comes to go, I trust to be ready, my worldly affairs all settled. If I have wronged others, I want then, to be sure of their forgiveness. In that last wrestling my arm enfeebled with sickness, and my head faint, I want Jesus beside me. If there be hands on this side of the flood stretched out to hold me back, I want the heavenly hands stretched out to draw me forward. Then, O Jesus, help me on and help me up. Unfearing, undoubting, may I step right out into the light, and be able to look back to my kindred and friends, who would detain me here, exclaiming *Let me go—let me go !* THE DAY BREAKETH.



## THE GREAT SHIP.

“Come thou and all thy house into the ark.”—*Genesis* vii. 1.

WE do not need the Bible to prove the deluge. The geologist's hammer announces it. Sea shells and marine formations, on the top of some of the highest mountains of the earth, prove that at some time the waters dashed over the top of the Alps and the Andes. In what way the catastrophe came we know not; whether by the stroke of a comet, or by flashes of lightning changing the air into water, or by a stroke of the hand of God, like the stroke of the axe between the horns of the ox, the earth to be staggered. To meet the catastrophe God ordered a great ship built. It was to be without prow, for it was to sail to no shore. It was to be without helm, for no human hand should guide it. It was a vast structure, probably as large as two or three Cunard steamers. The ship is done. The door is open. The lizards crawl in. The cattle walk in. The grasshopper hops in. The birds fly in. The invitation goes forth to Noah—“Come thou and all thy house into the ark.” Just one human family embark on the strange voyage, and I hear the door slam shut. A great storm sweeps along the hills, and bends the cedars until all the branches snap in the gale. There is a moan in the wind like unto the moan of a dying world. The blackness of the heavens is shattered by the flare of the lightnings that look down into the waters and throw a ghastliness on the face of the mountain. How strange it looks! How suffocating the air seems. The big drops of rain begin to plash upon the upturned faces of those who are watching the tempest. Crash go the rocks in convulsions! Boom go the bursting heavens! The inhabitants of earth, instead of flying to house-top

and mountain-top, as men have fancied, sit down in dumb-white horror to die. For when God grinds mountains to pieces, and lets the ocean slip its cable, there is no place for men to fly to. See the ark pitch and tumble in the surf! while from its windows the passengers look out upon the shipwreck of a race, and the carcasses of a dead world. Woe to the mountains! Woe to the sea!

I am no alarmist. When on the 20th of September, after the wind has for three days been blowing from the north-east, you prophecy that the Equinoctial storm is coming, you simply state a fact not to be disputed. Neither am I an alarmist when I say that a storm is coming, compared with which Noah's deluge was but an April shower; and that it is wisest and safest for you and for me to get safely housed for eternity. The invitation that went forth to Noah sounds in our ears—"Come thou and all thy house into the ark."

Well, how did Noah and his family come into the ark? Did they climb in at the window or come down the roof? No, they went through the door. And just so, if we get into the ark of God's mercy, it will be through Christ the door. The entrance to the ark of old must have been a very large entrance. We know that it was from the fact that there were monster animals in the earlier ages; and in order to get them into the ark two and two, according to the Bible statement, the door must have been very wide and very high. So the door into the mercy of God is a *large* door. We go in, not two and two, but by hundreds, and by thousands, and by millions. Yea, all the nations of the earth may go in ten millions abreast.

The door of the ancient ark was in the side. So now it is through the side of Christ—the pierced side, the wide open side, the heart side, that we enter. Aha! the Roman soldier, thrusting his spear into the Saviour's side, expected only to let the blood out, but he opened the way to let all the world in. *Oh, what a broad gospel to preach! If a man is about*

to give an entertainment, he issues one or two hundred invitations, carefully put up and directed to the particular persons whom he wishes to entertain. But God, our Father, makes a banquet, and goes out to the front door of Heaven, and stretches out His hands over land and sea, and with a voice that penetrates the Hindoo jungle, and the Greenland ice castle, and Brazilian grove, and English factory, and American home, cries out, "Come, for all things are now ready." It is a wide door! The old Cross has been taken apart, and its two pieces are stood up for the door-posts, so far apart that all the world can come in. Kings scatter treasures on days of great rejoicing. So Christ, our King, comes and scatters the jewels of heaven. Rowland Hill said that he hoped to get into heaven through the crevices of the door. But he was not obliged thus to go in. After having preached the Gospel in Surrey Chapel, going up toward heaven, the gate-keeper cried, "Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and let this man come in." The dying thief went in. Richard Baxter and Robert Newton went in. Europe, Asia, and Africa, North and South America may yet go through this wide door without crowding. Ho! every one, all conditions, all ranks, all people. Luther said, that this truth was worth carrying on one's knees from Rome to Jerusalem; but I think it worth carrying all around the globe and all around the heavens—that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Whosoever will—let him come through the large door. Archimedes wanted a fulcrum on which to place his lever, and then he said that he could move the world. Calvary is the fulcrum, and the Cross of Christ is the lever! and by that power all nations shall yet be lifted.

Further, it is a door that *swings both ways*. I do not know whether the door of the ancient ark was lifted, or rolled on hinges; but this door of Christ opens both ways. It swings out toward all our woes; it swings in toward the raptures of

heaven. It swings in to let us in ; it swings out to let our ministering ones come out. All are one in Christ—Christians on earth, and saints in heaven.

“One army of the living God,  
At His command we bow ;  
Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now.”

Swing in, O blessed door, until all the earth shall go in and live. Swing out, until all the heavens come forth to celebrate the victory.

But further, it is a door with *fastenings*. The Bible says of Noah, “The Lord *shut* him in.” A vessel without bulwarks or doors would not be a safe vessel to go in. When Noah and his family heard the fastenings of the door of the ark they were very glad. Without those doors were fastened the first heavy surge of the sea would have whelmed them ; and they might as well have perished outside the ark as inside the ark. “*The Lord shut him in.*” Oh, the perfect safety of the ark. The surf of the sea and the lightnings of the sky may be twisted into a garland of snow and fire—deep to deep, storm to storm, darkness to darkness ; but once in the ark all is well. “God shut him in !” There comes upon the good man a deluge of financial trouble. He had his thousands to lend ; now he cannot borrow a dollar. He once owned a store in New York, and had branch houses in Boston, Philadelphia, and New Orleans. He owned four horses, and employed a man to keep the dust off his coach, phaeton, carriage, and cabriole ; now he has hard work to get shoes in which to walk. The great deep of commercial disaster was broken up, and fore, and aft, and across the hurricane deck, the waves struck him. But he was safely sheltered from the storm. “*The Lord shut him in.*” A flood of domestic troubles fell on him. Sickness and bereavement came. The rain pelted ; the winds blew ; the

heavens are aflame ; all the gardens of earthly delight are washed away. The mountains of joy are buried fifteen cubits deep. But standing by the empty crib, and in the desolated nursery, and in the doleful hall once a-ring with merry voices, now silent for ever, he cried, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord." "*The Lord shut him in.*"

All the sins of a life-time clamoured for his overthrow. The broken vows, the dishonoured Sabbaths, the outrageous profanities, the misdemeanours of twenty years, reached up their hands to the door of the ark to pull him out. The boundless ocean of his sin surrounded his soul, howling like a simoon, raving like an Euroclydon. But looking out of the window he saw his sins sink like lead into the depths of the sea. The dove of heaven brought an olive-branch to the ark. The wrath of the billow only pushed him toward heaven. "*The Lord shut him in.*"

The same door-fastenings that kept Noah in keep the world out. I am glad to know that when a man reaches heaven all earthly troubles are done with him. Here he may have had it hard to get bread for his family ; there he will never hunger any more. Here he may have wept bitterly ; there "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne will lead him to living fountains of waters ; and God will wipe away all tears from his eyes." Here he may have hard work to get a house ; but in "My Father's house are many mansions," and rent-day never comes. Here there are death-beds, and coffins, and graves ; there no sickness ; no weary watching, no choking cough, no consuming fever, no chattering chill, no tolling bell, no grave. The sorrows of life shall come up and knock at the door, but *no admittance*. The perplexities of life shall come up and knock on the door, but *no admittance*. Safe for ever ! All the agony of earth in one wave, dashing against the bulwarks of celestial light shall not break them down. Howl on, ye winds, and rage, ye seas. "The Lord shut him in !"

Oh, what a grand old door ! So wide, so easily swung both ways, and with such sure fastenings. No burglar's key can pick that lock. No swarthy arm of hell can shove back that bolt. I rejoice that I do not ask you to come aboard a crazy craft with leaking hulk, and broken helm, and unfastened door ; but an ark fifty cubits wide and three hundred cubits long, and a door so large that the round earth without grazing the posts might be bowled in !

Now if the ark of Christ is so grand a place in which to live, and die, and triumph, come into the ark. Know well that the door that shut Noah in shut the world out ; and though when the pitiless storm came pelting on their heads, they beat upon the door, saying, " Let me in ! Let me in ! " the door did not open. For one hundred and twenty years they were invited ; they expected to come in ; but the antediluvians said, " We must cultivate these fields ; we must be worth more flocks of sheep and herds of cattle ; we will wait until we get a little older ; we will enjoy our old farm a little longer." But meanwhile the storm was brewing. The fountains of heaven were filling up. The pry was being placed beneath the foundations of the great deep. The last year had come, the last month, the last week, the last day, the last hour, the last moment. In an awful dash an ocean dropped from the sky, and another rolled up from beneath ; and God rolled the earth and sky into one wave of universal destruction. So men now put off going into the ark. They say they will wait twenty years first. They will have a little time with their worldly associates. They will wait until they get older. They say, " You cannot expect a man of my attainments and of my position to surrender myself just now. But before the storm comes I will go in—yes, I will ; I know what I am about. Trust me ! " After a-while, one night, about twelve o'clock, going home he passes a scaffolding, as a gust of wind strikes it, and a plank falls. Dead ! and outside the ark. Or, riding in Prospect-park, a reckless vehicle

crashes into him, and his horse becomes unmanageable, and he shouts "Whoa!" "Whoa!" and then takes and twists in the reins, and plants his feet against the dashboard, and falls back. But no use. It is not so much down Flatbush Avenue that he flies, as on the way to eternity. Out of the wreck of the crash his body is drawn, but his soul is not picked up. It fled behind a swifter courser into the great future. *Dead! and outside the ark!* Or, some night he wakes up with a distress that momentarily increases, until he shrieks out with pain. The doctors come in, and they give him twenty drops, but no relief—forty drops, fifty drops, sixty drops, but no relief. No time for prayer. No time to read one of the promises. No time to get a single sin pardoned. The whole house is aroused in alarm. The children scream. The wife faints. The pulses fail. The heart stops. The soul flies. Oh, my God! *Dead! and outside the ark!*

I have no doubt that derision kept many people out of the ark. The world laughed to see a man go in, and said, "Here is a man starting for the ark. Why, there will be no deluge. If there is one, that miserable ship will not weather it. Aha! going into the ark! Well, that is too good to keep! Here, fellows, have you heard the news? The man is going into the ark!" Under this artillery of scorn the man's good resolution perished.

And so there are hundreds kept out by the fear of derision. The young man asks himself, "What would they say at the store to-morrow morning, if I should become a Christian? When I go down to the club-house they would shout, 'Here comes that new Christian! Suppose you won't have anything to do with us now? Get down on your knees, and let us hear you pray. Come, now, give us a touch? Won't do it, eh? Pretty Christian you are!'" Is it not the *fear of being laughed at that keeps you out of the kingdom of God? When you lie down on a dying pillow, which of them will be there? In the day of eternity will they bail*

you out? Ah, they can keep you out of heaven, but can they keep you out of hell?

My friends and neighbours, come in right away. Come in through Christ, the wide door—the door that swings out toward you. Come in and be saved. Come and be happy. “The Spirit and the Bride say, Come.” Room in the ark! Room in the ark!

But do not come alone. The text invites you to bring your family. “Come, then, and all thy house.” That means your wife and your children. You cannot drive them in. If Noah had tried to drive the pigeons and the doves into the ark, he would only have scattered them. Some parents are not wise about these things. They make iron rules about Sabbaths, and they force the catechism down the throat as they would hold the child’s nose and force down a dose of rhubarb and calomel. You cannot drive your children into the ark. You can draw your children to Christ, but you cannot coerce them. The cross was lifted, not to drive but to draw. “If I be lifted up, I will *draw* all men unto me.” As the sun draws up the drops of morning dew, so the Sun of Righteousness inhales the tears of repentance.

Come thou and all thy house into the ark. Be sure that you bring your husband and wife with you. How would Noah have felt, if, when he heard the rain pattering on the roof of the ark, he knew that his wife was outside in the storm? No; she went with him. And yet some of you are on the ship “outward bound” for heaven, but your companion is unsheltered. You remember the day when the marriage-ring was set. Nothing has yet been able to break it. Sickness came, and the finger shrank, but the ring stayed on. The twain stood alone above a child’s grave, and the dark mouth of the tomb swallowed up a thousand hopes; but the ring dropped not into the open grave. Days of poverty came and the hand did many a hard day’s work, but the *rubbing* of the work against the ring only made it *shine brighter*. Shall that ring ever be lost? Will the iron



clang of sepulchre gate crush it for ever? I pray God that you who have been married on earth may be together in heaven. Oh, by the quiet bliss of your earthly home; by the baby's cradle; by all the vows of that day when you started life together, I beg you to see to it that you both get into the ark.

Come in and bring wife or your husband with you—not by fretting about religion, or ding-donging them about religion, but by a consistent life, and by a compelling prayer that shall bring the throne of God down into your bedroom. Better live in the smallest house in Brooklyn, and get into heaven, than live fifty years in the finest house on Madison Square, and wake up at last and find that one of you for all eternity is outside the ark. Go home to-night; lock the door of your room; take up the Bible and read it together, and then kneel down and commend your souls to Him who has watched you all these years; and before you rise there will be a fluttering of wings over your head, angel crying to angel, "Behold, they pray!"

But this does not include all your family. Bring the children, too. God bless the dear children! What would our homes be without them! We may have done much for them. They have done more for us. What a salve for a wounded heart there is in the soft palm of a child's hand. Did harp or flute ever have such music as there is in a child's "good night." From a coarse, rough life, the angels of God are often driven back; but who comes into the nursery without feeling that angels are hovering around. They who die in infancy go into glory; but you are expecting your children to grow up in this world. Is it not a question, then, that rings through all the corridors, and windings, and heights, and depths of your soul, what is to become of your sons and daughters for time and eternity?—"Oh," you say, "I mean to see that they have good manners!" Very well. "I mean to dress them well if I ~~myself~~ myself to go shabby." Very good. "I shall give

them an education, and I shall leave them a fortune." Very well. But is that all? Don't you mean to take them into the ark? Don't you know that the storm is coming; and that out of Christ there is no safety, no pardon, no hope, no heaven?

How to get them in? *Go in yourself!* If Noah had stayed out, do you not suppose that his sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet would have stayed out? Your sons and daughters will be apt to do just as you do. Reject Christ yourself, and the probability is that your children will reject Him.

An account was taken of the religious condition of the families in a certain district. In the families of pious parents, two-thirds of the children were Christians. In the families where the parents were ungodly, only one-twelfth of the children were Christians. Responsible as you are for their temporal existence, you are also responsible for their eternity. Which way will you take them? Out into the deluge, or into the ark? Have you ever made one earnest prayer for their immortal souls? What will you say in the Judgment, when God asks, "Where is George, or Henry, or Frank, or Mary, or Anna? Where are those precious souls, whose interests I have committed into your hands?"

A dying son said to his father, "Father, you gave me an education, and good manners, and everything that the world could do for me; but, father, you never told me how to die; and now my soul is going out in the darkness."

Oh, ye who have taught your children how to live, have you also taught them how to die? Life here is not so important as the great hereafter. It is not so much the few furlongs this side the grave, as it is the unending leagues beyond. O eternity! eternity! Thy locks white with the ages! Thy voice announcing stupendous destiny! Thy arms reaching across all the past and all the future. Thy heart beating with raptures that never die, and agonies that *never cease!* O eternity! eternity!

In St. Paul's, London, there is a whispering gallery. A voice uttered most freely at one side of the gallery, is heard distinctly at the opposite side, a great distance off. So, every word of earnest prayer goes all around the earth, and makes heaven a whispering-gallery. Go into the ark, not to sit down, but to stand in the door and call, until all the family come in. Aged Noah! where is Japhet? David! where is Absalom? Hannah! where is Samuel? Bring them in through Christ—the door. Won't it be pleasant to spend eternity with our families! Gladder than Christmas or Thanksgiving festival will be the reunion, if we get all our family into the ark. Which of them can we spare out of heaven?

On one of the Lake steamers there was a father and two daughters journeying. They seemed extremely poor. A benevolent gentleman stepped up to the poor man to proffer some form of relief, and said, "You seem to be very poor, sir." "Poor, sir!" replied the man; "if there's a poorer man than me a troublin' the world, God pity both of us!" "I will take one of your children, and adopt it, if you say so. I think it would be a great relief to you." "A *what?*" said the poor man. "A relief!" "Would it be relief to have the hands chopped off from the body, or the heart torn from the breast? A relief, indeed! God be good to us! What do you mean, sir?"

Go home to-night and erect a family altar. You may break down in your prayer; but never mind, God will take what you mean, whether you express it intelligibly or not. Bring all your house into the ark. Is there one son whom you have given up? Is he so dissipated that you have stopped counselling and praying? Give him up? How dare you give him up? How dare you give him up? While thou hast a single articulation of speech left, cease not to pray for the return of that prodigal. **He** may now be standing on the beach at Hong Kong, or

Madras, meditating a return to his father's house. Give him up? Never give him up! Has God promised to hear thy prayer only to mock thee? It is not too late.

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### THE BOOKS OPENED.

“And the books were opened.”—*Revelation* xx. 12.

IF you walk among the forests, you will find the first touches of autumnal decay. On here and there a leaf God has written the death-warrant for all the forests; and soon the chill night winds will whisper dismally among the mountains, as watchers in the night, in low voices, talk about the pillow of dying. The years go quickly by; and on hickory leaf and briar bush, and hawthorn hedge, and evening sky, and flaming Aurora, I read, “*passing away.*” Could we interpret bird's whistle, and insects' hum, and brooks' dash, or cry of finch, oriole, or grossbeak, we should hear the same warning uttered—“*Passing away.*” Nay more; I have heard of a time when the earth itself shall perish. Almighty hands will break down the columns of this great temple. The foundations of the mountain-ranges will upheave, and unconsumable flames will leap on the ruins of earthly aggrandizement, and all the five oceans poured upon the conflagrations shall not be able to put the fire out. These islands, these cities, these continents, these hemispheres—Oh, how they will burn, and burn. John foresaw this, and a great white throne, and the uprising dead standing before it—and “*the books were opened.*” You go into the old libraries, and you see many books musty, and worn, and worm-eaten. There are men who find their joy in such literature; yet to us, it is very sleepy. But those old books which God shall open on

judgment-day will produce no inattention or slumbering. As they open, the old universe will start, and angel, and seraphim, and archangel, and all the nations of the righteous and of the wicked shall cry, "*Hear, HEAR.*"

I know not how many books there shall be, nor how ponderous, nor all their titles : but I remark, first, that there will be a *book of tears*. Have you ever thought, ye afflicted ones, that God is keeping a record of all your woe. Suppose you the tears that fell upon your pillow at midnight were unobserved in heaven ? As each one trickled down, God said to His recording angel, "Write down another tear." That sigh of penitence or bereavement that you breathed ten years ago unknown to others, and forgotten by yourself, hath immortal remembrance ; for above your agitated heart, Jesus stood, and commanded the scribes of heaven, "Write down another sigh." Suppose you that stranger, in a far land, groaning in Parisian or Alexandrian hospital, is unheeded or unpitied ? No ! though the cry of suffering ascended from lazaretto, dungeon, or wayside, God puts the seal of His remembrance upon it, and says. "Penman of heaven, write down another groan." There have been grains of corn found in ancient sepulchres, three thousand years old, but they have been brought out, and recently planted, and have come up luxuriantly. So the sorrows of earth have in them enough vitality to produce an eternal fruitage. "They that sow in years, shall reap in joy." Lachrymatories have been found among ancient ruins, in which the people were supposed to have gathered up the tears of those who wept for the dead. These lachrymals are dry, and pealed, and broken ; but not so with the bottle in which David intimates that God puts all our tears.

Under God's scrutiny passes all the world's suffering. He sees Rizpah weeping among the rocks, and Naomi mourning for Elimelech, and Jeremiah for Jerusalem, and John Oldcastle in London Tower, and Elliot among the savages, and artz among the Hindoos, and Cranmer in the fire. Jesus

of the manger stands by every poor man's home. Jesus of the wayside defends the footsore pilgrim. Jesus of Pilate's Hall acquits the innocent prisoner. Jesus of the Cross pities all the suffering; Jesus of the tomb watches over every sepulchre. Not alone, thou child of poverty, goest thou to thy distant toil, or sittest in the lonely cabin. Christ will go with thee all along the road to Emmaus. Not alone, sick one, dost thou endure the pang, the suffocation, the heart ache. He whose hands were riven, and whose brow was pierced, holds thee in His infinite sympathy. Not alone, victim of persecution, dost thou endure the scoff and the buffeting. Not alone, stricken heart, must thou bear thy sore bereavement—for, tell me, thou tomb of Lazarus, did not Jesus weep? Not alone, dying Christian, shalt thou go through the valley. The Shepherd gently leads His flock, and with His staff they shall be comforted. Oh, how this sweetens the bitter cup, and lightens the darkest night, and smooths the roughest road, and calms the stormiest sea, and smooths the bitterest anguish, and soothes the pang of earthly disaster and despair with the glorious announcement, "I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee." Then, if God thinks best, come poverty—Jesus was poor. Come sickness—Jesus was sick. Come slander—Jesus was abused. Come death—Jesus died. Come the grave—Jesus was buried. The record was kept on high. Oh, how the throng before the judgment-seat will thrill, when, before the universe, the book of tears is opened.

What a stupendous rehearsal, when God shall read the sorrows of all ages, and of all kingdoms, and of all lands! Under the head of temporal loss, the defalcation of Syrian merchants, and Venetian exchanges, and Russian fur-dealers, and London bankers, and American traders, and the story of mercantile disasters that shook thrones, and thundered down the gates of cities, and made the whole earth quake with terror. Under the head of sickness, the story of *all the couches of suffering*, of hospitals, of prisons, of laza-

rettos, of plagues that drove nations into the graves, of battle-fields lifting their ten thousand hands of blood, of Austerlitz, and Ostend, and Chalons. Under the head of bereavements, the story of a myriad of orphans, friendless, houseless, homeless, wandering about in desolation, wondering why God placed them in the darkness with no father's hand to lead them, and no mother's voice to cheer them; of innumerable parents whose darlings were snatched away, some of them buried under Italian skies, or in Arabian sands, or in English abbey, or in the Scotch kirk, or in American cemetery; of companions in life, sharers of joy, and sorrow, and work, sundered, never more to meet in the home on earth, consecrated by all-absorbing affections. Yea, all the woes that ever afflicted the earth will seem to rise from their graves and stand amid the great multitudes, when Jesus, the Judge, shall open and read, amid hosannah and wailing, the book of tears!

Again, I remark that there will be a book of *unforgiven sins*. The iniquities of the righteous will all have been pardoned, and so will not be mentioned. But the sins of the unpardoned will on that day be announced. *Sins of the heart*: the pride that would not bow to Divine authority, the foolish choice of this world to the next, the impure thought, the unholy imaginations. *Sins of the tongue*: tattling, base inuendoes, backbiting, profanity, hypercriticism of the conduct of others, *Sins of the hands, of the eyes, of the feet*: from the smallest omission to the most diabolical commission, all of which shall be recorded on the book from which the Judge shall read. Oh, when it is opened, what covering! what shame! what hate! what woe! what despair! as all the past in a vision of horror stalks before the soul; and there gathers a power of indignation on the countenance of angels, and the air seems darkening with the wrath to come, **and the Judge prepares to utter sentence against the culprits, and the soul cries out—“Whither shall I fly? Rocks and mountains fall on us!”**

What a rehearsal, when from the book of sin shall be read all the crimes of all ages and of all lands ! The bridewells, and the sing-sings, and the penitentiaries, and the torquemados of all the world will come to judgment. Babylon, and Hebes, and Nineveh, and Sodom, will hear the roll of their most damnable iniquities. All the thrones of despotism must make answer. Nero and Henry VIII., and Bloody Mary, and Robespierre, and Jeffrey, will shiver with terror in the light of that Great White Throne, and will find all their sins recorded in the ponderous book of sin. *War* shall give answer for the swords that it sharpened, for the ammunition waggons it made, for the arsenals it constructed, for the cities it destroyed, for the trenches it dug, for the harvests it devastated, for the families it bereaved, for the souls that it blasted ; and louder than the combined sound of all the batteries that ever boomed on ten thousand fields of blood, shall sound the condemnation of the horrid butchery. Drunkenness will answer for all the property it wasted, for the manly natures it imbruted, for the diseases which it inflicted, for the domestic circles it cursed, for the millions it pitched off, first into a drunkard's grave, but threw them so hard that it broke through into the darkest hell ; and louder than all the shrieks that ever came up from the myriads it has destroyed, will be the ten thousand thunders of its condemnation, when once the books are opened.

Again, I remark there will be a book of *privileges*. On that day shall be announced to my soul all the sermons I have ever heard, though they may have come in weakness, and been sorry specimens of rhetoric, and could not stand the laws of logic or criticism, and may have been preached with broken voice, and in an awkward manner. There we shall meet the sermon we heard in the country village ten, twenty, or fifty years ago, perhaps from the high pulpit, and from under a sounding board, when you were a child, and your old father and mother sat at the ends of the pew. H H



you have lived twenty years, you have had more than one thousand Sabbaths. If you have lived more than fifty years you have had more than two thousand Sabbaths. What will be our sensation when those one, two, or three thousand Sabbaths confront us at the judgment? From that book of privilege God will read so many strivings of the Spirit, so many sicknesses when we vowed return, so many sacraments, so many death-beds, so many accidents, so many escapes, so many warnings, so many glorious invitations of a crucified Jesus. He will turn over leaf after leaf, all filled with the record of glorious opportunities; page after page, column after column, line upon line, precept upon precept, condemnation upon condemnation, day after day, month after month, year after year, until, in all the round of the infinite mercy and goodness of God, there seemed not one blessing un-enjoyed. All the ranks of angels will stand alarmed at the recital; and sweet memories will rush through the spirits of the righteous, and feelings of remorse through the souls of the unpardoned, at the opening of the tremendous book of privilege!

Again, there will be a book of *good deeds*. Then shall we hear of the cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple; the food left at the wayside cabin, the smile of approval, the word of encouragement, the good deed of which made no record, blazing out among the names of those who endowed universities, and civilized nations, and broke shackles, and disenthralled empires, and inspired generations. Oh, for more of the spirit that sends men down through the dark lanes, and into the squalid cellars, and among the pestiferous fumes, to prophecy in God's name over the mangled and decaying carcasses of the morally dead; that will send books and clothing to the colporteur at the West, and with its prayers help fill the sails of the clipper that carries American missionaries to Japan; that will rejoice over a blind girl taught to read in the asylum; and the throwing open of Chinese ports to the Gospel; that will teach the black boy

in the Sabbath-school his *a b c's*, and pray that Ethiopia may soon stretch forth her hands to God; that will light a taper in a sick man's room, and, by its prayers, help roll up the sun of righteousness. When from that book Jesus shall read the story of the modest charities and unobtrusive work. He will turn toward some of you who do not imagine that you will be especially recognized on that day, and will say, "I was hungry, and ye fed Me; I was sick and in prison, and ye visited Me. Inasmuch as ye did it to them, ye did it to Me."

Again, there will be a book of *Death*. When it is opened, all the evil-doers of earth will tremble for their fate. What a long catalogue of liars, drunkards, thieves, murderers, adulterers, vagabonds, tricksters, oppressors, defrauders, infidels, blasphemers! The whole universe will shudder at the recital; and the mention of every additional name in the roll will increase the lamentation that rises—loud, fierce, tremendous, eternal. I am startled and overwhelmed at the thought of that great Book of Death.

Finally, I remark that there will be a *Book of Life*. Open, O thou book of sunlight, a-gleam with gladness and victory! How we will listen for the announcement of our names! And when Jesus, amid that great throng, shall call us His children, I think we will not be able to keep silence, but will break forth in the utterance, "Glory to the grace that ransomed the chief of sinners!"

Oh! to have our names in the same book with Paul, and John, and Isaiah, and David, and Payson, and Nettleton, and Summerfield; names written with Christ's hand, in Christ's book, and read with Christ's voice! Praise Him! Praise Him! If recorded there, let the earth rend, and the heavens fly away, and the throne of the ages burn with all the splendours of eternity. We will not fear; we will not trouble; we will not blanch. All is well! All is well! *Earth's baubles have burst. Earth's thrones have fallen.*

Earth's sorrows have ended. Book of life! Day of judgment! Throne of Jesus!

“*And the books were opened.*”

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### THE KING'S BUSINESS.

AS the depths of the sea are said to correspond with the heights of the mountains, so the depths of David's fault's seemed to be as great as the height of his excellencies. However, our business with David this morning is not to criticise him, but catch from his lips a profitable suggestion. He appears before Abimelech without sword, or food, or usual attendants, and gives as his reason for this unseemly appearance, that he was on urgent imperial business, and had no time to properly accoutre or equip himself. “*The king's business required haste.*”

My friends, we are all entrusted with some part of the King's business; and our great need is to have our speed accelerated. *God* seems to be a Being of infinite leisure. He sometimes takes twenty-five hundred years to do one thing. Though in six days he put on the world the final touches that made it inhabitable for man, geologists tell us—and I believe them—that uncounted ages passed between the laying of the corner stone of the earth and its final completion. *God* took this imaginable reach of time for work that He could have done in three minutes. He has plenty of time for carrying out His vast designs, but we are limited, and hence, what work we have to do must be done quickly. “*The king's business requires haste.*”

Christ is our King. King of glory, King of Zion, King of *aints*, King over all the earth, King over heaven. He is a

king that shall never die. Where is Louis XIV. ? Dead ! Where is Richard III. ? Dead ! Where is Ferdinand ? Dead ! Where is Peter the Great ? Dead ! At the door of the grave lies a whole sheaf of sceptres. Death sits in the palace of the sepulchre, and the potentates of earth are his cupbearers ; and as the old blind monarch staggers around his palace ever and anon, he trips on some new fallen coronet. They set up Charlemagne in his grave, and put a crown on his pulseless temple, and a sceptre in his lifeless hand ; yet that could not bring back his kingdom. But our Emperor lives. He existed before the world was made. He shall continue after it is burned up. *King immortal !* The French Government thought itself rich in having so many palaces—St. Cloud, and the Tuilleries, and the Versailles, and the Palace Royal, and the Luxembourg ; but our King has the whole earth for His palace—the mountains its picture gallery ; the ocean its fountain : the sun its chandelier ; the midnight heavens its candelabra ; illimitable forests its park ; the glories of the sunrise and sunset the tapestry about the windows ; the lightning hooped coursers dashing up and down the heavens ; all the glories of the land, and sea, and sky His wardrobe ; all the flowers of the field His conservatory ; all the fish of the sea His aquarium ; all the birds of the spring morning His orchestra. But better than all these, the hearts of His people on earth, and of His saints in heaven, are the palaces in which He delights to reign. *King universal !* Like other kings He has His army and navy. Fighting on His side are the hurricanes of the great deep, as in the breaking up of the Spanish Armada ; the volcanoes of the earth, as in the burial of infamous Herculaneum ; the fire, as when Sodom was deluged with conflagration ; the rocks, as when they crashed their terrors about the crucifixion. The Psalmist counted the flaming artillery of heaven, as it came rushing down the sky, and cried, “*The chariots of God are twenty thousand.*” *Elijah's servants caught a glimpse of them among the mountains—a cavalier*

of flame ; and the horses had necks of fire, and eyes of fire, and nostrils of fire, and feet of fire, and they were driven by reins of fire, by horsemen of fire. The cherubim on His side : the seraphim on His side ; the archangel on His side. *King Omnipotent !*

Our king is wrapped up in the welfare of His subjects. The Sultan of Turkey had a rule that when riding out on horseback, any of his subjects might approach him, and state their wrongs and sufferings ; and the people pressed so close up to the stirrups that it was sometimes impossible for the Sultan to proceed. But we have a more merciful King. We do not have to wait for public occasions. Any hour of the day or night, without introduction, we press into His palace, tell our wants, and secure His help. Going before other kings, we must have a court dress, rightly cut, and rightly adorned ; but beggars may come before this king in their rags—and the prodigal, filthy from the swine's herd, is immediately ushered in. A pardoning King ! A condescending King ; A merciful King ! *O Jesus, live for ever !*

It is on the business of such a King that we are all sent. It is the business of bringing the world to God. Compared with it, all other business is a holiday and a sport. If a man go into some financial operation by which he loses a hundred thousand dollars, and his house and estate drop out of his possession, and his failure upset the next man, and his the next, until the whole land quails under the panic, disaster is insignificant compared with the ruin of that man who loses his own soul, and, by example, takes down another, and another, and another, until heaven, and earth, and hell, feel the effects of the eternal defalcation. William the Conqueror pulled down forty-six of the churches of God, in order that he might enlarge his park for game. So men sweep away spiritual things that they may advance their amusements and worldly gains. But the great day of eternity will reveal the fact, that the most important of all business on *earth* or in heaven, is the *King's business*.

The King's business is not only important, but immediate. If we do not attend to it quickly, we will never attend to it at all. Here is a Christian man expecting some day to be consecrated. After a-while he will become diligent in searching the Scriptures and in prayer. Meanwhile, the day of grace is going. It will soon be gone. Out with your Bibles and begin to read. Down on your knees and begin to pray. For the business of the store, of the shop, and of the field, you are neglecting God's business. Your soul is losing its best—perhaps its last chance. Up, man! *The King's business requires haste.*

In the day of the world's doom what will become of that man who had a thousand Sabbaths, and ten thousand opportunities for usefulness, and a million chances of being made better, but comes to the gate of eternity, a pauper in Christian experience, and without one sheaf, though all his life he was walking in golden harvest-fields. You have postponed your higher life until God tells me you will not come to it if you postpone it any longer. *The King's business requires haste.*

There is a great work of comfort to be done. If it is not done speedily it will never be done. Yonder is a heart breaking; now is the time to say the healing word. Go next week with your balsam, and it will not touch the case. A man yonder came under your influence, and you might have captured him for God. You will never have another chance at him. To-morrow another man will be under your influence. You will have but one opportunity of saving him. It may be at ten o'clock, at twelve o'clock, or at three o'clock; miss that, and you miss it for ever. He will be lost, when you might have saved him. Do not say, "Wait until the next time;" next time will never come. Be prompt and immediate. *The King's business requires haste.*

In the city of Basle, Switzerland, it was the custom to have all the clocks of the city an hour ahead of time for the following reason. Once an enemy was moving upon the city,

and their stratagem was to take the city at twelve o'clock at noon; but the cathedral clock by mistake struck one instead of twelve; and so the enemy thought that they were too late to carry out the stratagem, and gave up the assault; and the city was saved; and it was arranged for many years that the clock struck one when it was twelve, and twelve when it was eleven.

O man and woman of God, engage in Christian work—*set your clocks on*, if you want to save the city! Better get to your work too early than come too late. *The King's business requires haste.*

We are exercising a fatal deliberation. We sit calmly in church meditating about how to save the world. Meanwhile, six million of people will die this year. You might start the Millennium next year; but it would do them no good. What you do for them you will have to do within a twelvemonth. What you do for some of them you will have to do this month—aye, this week!—aye, this day! Have you never heard that a neighbour was sick, and said to yourself, "I must go and talk with him about his soul, for I know he is not prepared to leave the world;" but that day you were busy; and the next you were busy; and the third day you went to see him. You pulled his door-bell; a servant came out, and you said, "How is he to-day?" The answer was, "*He is dead!*" You say, "it cannot be possible! How long has he been dead?" She answers, "Five minutes."

God have mercy upon that Christian man who comes to do his work five minutes too late. *The King's business requires haste.*

I pray God that my text may be brought home with special power to those in this audience who have never yet sought Christ. As many of the causes that come up in court are adjourned, sometimes because the witnesses are not ready, and sometimes because the plaintiff is not ready, and sometimes because the defendant is not ready, and sometimes

because the judge is not ready, until the bill of cost is ruinous and hard to pay—so there are men and women who have adjourned the cause of the soul's salvation from youth to middle life; adjourned it from health to sickness; and adjourned it from prosperity to adversity, until *death eternal will be the bill of costs to pay*. O procrastinating, deliberating, halting soul; let me tell you that *the King's business requires haste*. Before you attend to it your mental faculties may fail. Your intellect works admirably now. Something in the climate urges men on to such extremes, and the pressure on active men is so great, that before they are aware of it, the brain softens, or, more suddenly, the mind drops dead from its throne. Pythagoras, studying philosophy, was so anxious to keep awake and improve all his time, that, with a string, he tied the hair of his head, to a beam above, so that the very moment he nodded in sleep the pain would wake him. So, there are men now, who have such morbid and unhealthy notions about how much work it is necessary to do, that they never take any rest. They cannot stand the stress. The most brilliant are in the most peril. What if the mind that God has given you for high and holy uses should perish before you have found Christ! A heavy fall, an accidental stroke on the head, a sudden affliction, for which you are not ready, may kill your intellect, and so your last chances for heaven pass away, though you should live on for many a year. In the great populations that occupy the asylums of the country, or carefully guarded in private dwellings, are hundreds of men and women who expected some day to be Christians. They had abundance of time they thought; but mental disorders dropped upon them before they had decided the matter; and although now they are irresponsible, and shall not be brought to account for anything they do under this mental eclipse, yet they shall at last be called into judgment for the long years of mental health when they neglected the Gospel. What will become of them I leave you to judge. While your reason acts put



it to the grandest use—that of weighing time against eternity, and heaven against hell. While your will acts, put it to its highest use—in coming to God. While your imagination acts, bring before you the realities of another world. Look out how you carry the magnificent touch of your intellect, lest God put it out in darkness for ever. *The King's business requires haste.*

I would have you regard the text, because you may have come near to the end of God's patience. There can be no doubt that some men in youth, or middle life, or old age, so aggravatingly reject the Gospel that God lets them alone. They slam the door of their soul in God's face and tell Him to be gone; then, when they call after Him to come back, He will not come. Eternal affront has been given; and in that book where no erasures are made, the man's name is put down among the doomed. Cross the line that divides God's mercy from His wrath—step but one inch over, and you are as badly off as if you went ten thousand furlongs. Before the iron bolt fastens the door against you, you had better go in. Before the last boat sails for heaven, you had better get on board. Haste thee out of thy sin into the pardon of God. *The King's business requires haste.*

At Kenesaw, during the battle, those who approached a certain tree were almost sure to get shot. Eight men had fallen at that place. A sign was put up, "*Beware!*" A man, in a braggadocio spirit, said, "I am not afraid to stand there. There is no reason why a man should be shot there any more than anywhere else." He stepped up to the tree, and instantly fell—fatally wounded. Just the place you occupy to-day. O sinner, it is a fatal place. Hundreds, at just your point of procrastination, have perished. Look out that your turn does not come next. *Beware! Beware!*

Have regard to the suggestion of the text, because your life may unexpectedly terminate. We are trading on borrowed capital of years that may in a moment be called in.

There is no map of the great future into which we are travelling. No explorer has been ahead, and come back to tell us how it is. Each one feels his way along the path ; not knowing what moment a devouring lion may come from the jungle. There are so many ways of getting out of life ; by fall, by slip, by assassination, by malaria, by over exertion, by insidious disease, by misplaced railroad switch, by rotten bridge, by fractious horse, by falling wall. No man goes when he expected, nor as he expected. Suddenly the pulses stop drumming the life march. Suddenly the curtain falls, and the lights are put out. We change worlds quicker than I can drop this handkerchief from one hand into the other. At one tick of the watch we are in time ; the next we are in eternity. What, if with all our sins unforgiven, we rush into the presence of the Omnipotent God, before whom sin is utterly loathsome ! Can you imagine the chill of that moment, or the horror of that undoing ? What ! twenty, thirty, forty years to repent in, and yet not have attended to it ! Beyond the dead line there is no rectification of blunders. In the grave there is no place to pray. Those who founder here, founder for ever. I do not want you to fear death ! I want you to be prepared for it. The Rider on the Pale Horse spurs on his steed ; and in a moment he may be pounding at the gate for admittance. What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. Do it now. *The King's business requires haste !*

An artist wished a queen to let him take her picture in his gallery. The time was appointed. The queen, prompt to the minute, was at the place. The artist did not come until ten minutes after. The queen had gone. It was the man's last chance for making his fortune. The King comes out to meet thee to-day ; you may now have His image impressed upon your soul. It may be your last chance. Meet Him promptly with your heart's confidence and love ; or you may come too late, and when He has gone.

*I stand here with the feeling that if some of you do not*

start for heaven this morning, you will not start at all. Oh, that God would arouse you. Sin has benumbed your soul. The insensibility that you feel is like the drowsiness that comes over the Swiss traveller before he freezes to death. Awake, before you die ! There is a sea-flower called the " Ophelet," which spreads abroad its petal beautifully, but it is very poisonous ; and the little fish that touches it struggles but a moment, and then dies, and other petals of the same flower, floating in the water, wrap around the fish, and pull it down into the deadly bosom of the flower. That is what is the matter with some of you. Sin is an attractive flower, and it glows and waves beautifully before the soul ; but no sooner do you touch it than you are poisoned, and must be swallowed up, unless we may sweep you away, and sweep you up in this net of the Gospel.

Don't you see that the tides of worldliness are setting against you ? Don't you see that there are influences at work to destroy you for ever ? Haste ye to Jesus, the only refuge. The next moment may be worth to thee an eternity. *The King's business requires haste !*

Hear this music that drops straight from heaven : " Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

" Art thou weary ? Art thou languid ? Art thou sore distressed ?  
 Come to me, saith One, and coming be at rest.  
 If I ask him to receive me, will He say me *no* ?  
 Not till earth, and not till heaven pass away.  
 Finding, following, keeping, struggling, is He sure to bless ?  
 Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs, answer *yes* ! "

## THE OWL, VULTURE, BAT, CHAMELEON, AND SNAIL.

“And these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls: the fowl, the vulture, and the bat; these also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth: the chameleon and the snail.”—*Leviticus* xi, 13, 29.

WE never choose a peculiar subject simply because it is peculiar. But the preacher of the gospel, coming so many hundreds of times before the same people, must seek a variety of subjects, or lose their attention; and for this reason the Bible offers every possible variety of theme, of argument, and of illustration. We care not much in what kind of a pitcher the water of life is brought, if it is only the clear, pure water.

God gave the Jews a list of the animals that they might eat. And a list of the animals that they might not eat. These Jews lived in a hot climate, and certain forms of animal food corrupted their blood, and disposed them to scrofulous disorders, depraved their appetites, and bemeaned their souls. A man's food when he has the means and opportunity of selecting it, suggests his moral nature. The reason the wild Indian is as cruel as the lion is because he has food that gives him the blood of the lion. A missionary among the Indians says that, by changing his style of food to correspond with theirs, his temperament was entirely changed. There are certain forms of food that have a tendency to affect the moral nature. Many a Christian is trying to do by prayer that which cannot be done except through corrected diet. For instance, he who uses swine's *flesh for constant diet* will be diseased in body and polluted

of soul—all his liturgies and catechisms notwithstanding. The Gadarene swine were possessed of the devil, and ran down a steep place into the sea, and all the swine ever since seem to have been similarly possessed. In Leviticus, God struck this meat off the table of the Jew, and placed before him a bill of fare at once healthful, nutritious, and generous.

But, higher than this physical reason, there was a spiritual reason why God chose certain forms of food for the Jews. God gave a peculiar diet to His people, not only because he wanted them to be distinguished from the surrounding nations, but because certain birds and animals, by reason of their habits, have always been suggestive of moral qualities. By the list of things from which they were to abstain, God wished to prejudice their minds against certain evils; and in the list of lawful things given, He wished to suggest certain forms of good. When God solemnly forbade His people to eat the owl, the vulture, the bat, the chameleon, and the snail, He meant to drive out of His people all the sins that were thus emblemized.

Take the suggestion of the text and say that one of the first unclean things the Christian needs to drive out of his soul is the *owl*. The owl is the melancholy bird of night. It hatches out whole broods of superstition. It is doleful and hideous. When it sings, it sings through its nose. It loves the gloom of night better than the brightness of the day. Who hast not slept in the cabin near the woods, and been awakened in the night by the dismal "too hoo" of the owl. Melancholy is the owl that is perched in many a Christian soul. It is an unclean bird and needs to be driven away. A man whose sins are pardoned, and who is on the road to heaven, has no right to be gloomy. He says, "I have so many doubts." That is because "you are lazy." Go actively to work in Christ's cause, and your doubts will vanish. You say, "I have lost my property," but I reply, you have infinite treasures laid up in heaven. You say, "I am weak and sickly, and going to die." Then be con-

gratulated that you are so near eternal health and perpetual gladness. Catch a few morning larks for your soul, and stone this owl off your premises.

As a little child was eating, the sun dashed upon her spoon; and she cried, "Oh! mamma! I have swallowed a spoonful of sunshine!" Would God that we might all indulge in the same beverage. Cheerfulness! it makes the homely face handsome; it makes the hardest mattress soft; it runs the loom that weaves buttercups, and rainbows, and auroras. God made the grass black? No, that would be too sombre. God made the grass red? No, that would be too gaudy. God made the grass green? That by this parable all the world might be led to a subdued cheerfulness. Read your Bible in the sunshine. Remember that your physical health is closely allied to your spiritual. The heart and the liver are only a few inches apart, and what affects one affects the other. A historian records that by the sound of great laughter in Rome, Hannibal's assaulting army was frightened away in retreat. And there is in the great outbursting of joy of a Christian soul, that which can drive back any infernal besiegement. Rats love dark closets, and Satan loves to burrow in a gloomy soul. "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous! and again I say rejoice!"

Hoist the window of thy soul in this the twelve o'clock of thy spiritual night. Put the gun to your shoulder, and aim at the black jungle from which the hooting comes, pull the trigger, and drop that croaking, loathsome, hideous owl of religious melancholy into the bushes.

Again: taking the suggestion of the text, drive out the vulture from your soul. God would not allow the Jews to eat it. It lives on carcasses; it fattens among the dead; with leaden wing it circles about battle-fields. Wilson, the American Ornithologist, counted 237 vultures around one carcass. If crossing the desert when there is no sign of wing in the air, a camel perish out of the caravan, *immediately the air begins to darken with vultures. There are*

many professed Christians who have a vulture in their soul. They prey upon the character and feelings of others. A doubtful reputation is a banquet for them. Some rival in trade or profession falls, and the vulture puts out its head. These people revel in the details of a man's ruin. They say "I told you so." They rush into some store and say, "have you heard the news? Just as I expected! Our neighbour has gone all to pieces! Ha! ha!"

That professedly Christian woman, having heard of the wrong doing of some sister in the church, instead of hiding the sin with a mantle of charity, peddles it all along the streets. She takes that afternoon to make her long-neglected calls. She tells the story ten times before sundown, and every time tells it larger. She rushes into the parlours to tell it, and into the nursery to tell it, and into the kitchens to tell it. She says, "Would you have thought it? Well, I always said there was something wrong about her. Why, I should not speak to her if I see her in the street. Is it not horrible? But better not say anything about it, because there may be some mistake. I do not want my name involved in the matter. I guess I will just go over and ask them at No. 863 whether they have heard it. Guess it must be so, for Mary Ann says that her husband saw a man who heard from his business partner, that his blind old grandmother had seen something that looked very suspicious." The most loathsome, miserable, God-forsaken wretch on earth is a gossiping woman. I can tell her on the street, though I have never seen her before. She walks fast, and has her bonnet strings loose, for she has not had time to tie them since she heard that last scandal. She looks both ways as she passes, hoping to see new evidences of depravity in the windows. I think that when Satan has a job so infinitely mean that in all the pit he cannot find a devil mean enough to do it, and all bribes and threats have failed to get one willing for the infernal crusade, he says to one of his *“ergeants*, "Go up to Brooklyn, and in such a street, on such

a corner, get that gossiping woman, and she will be glad to do it," And sure enough like a hungry fish, she takes the hook in her mouth, and Satan slackens the line, and lets her run out further and further, until, after a-while, he says, "It is time to haul in the line," and with a few strong pulls he brings her to the beach of fire. What do you say? That she was a member of the church? I cannot help that. When Satan goes a-fishing, he does not care what school the fish belongs to, whether it is a Presbyterian mackerel or an Episcopalian salmon. Amid the thunder-crash of Sinai, God said, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." And in Leviticus, he says, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale bearer!" Take not into your ear that scum of hell that people call *tittle-tattle*. Whoever willingly listens to a slander is equally guilty with the one who tells it, and an old writer says they ought both to be hung, the one by the tongue the other by the ear. Do not smile upon such a spaniel, lest, like a pleased dog he put his dirty paw upon you.

Throw back the shutter of your soul, O Christian men and women, and see if there be within you a vulture with filthy talons and cruel beak. Let not this unclean thing roost in your soul, for my text says, "Ye shall hold in abomination among the fowls, *the vulture*."

Again, taking the suggestion of the text, drive out the bat from your soul. No wonder God set this bird among the unclean. It is an offence to every one. Let it fly into the window of a summer night, and all the hands, young and old, are against it. It is half bird and half mouse. It seems made partly to walk and partly to fly, and does neither well, and becomes an emblem of those Christians who try to cling to earth and heaven at the same time. They want to walk on earth in worldliness, and yet fly towards heaven in spirituality; and their soul between feet and wings is constantly perplexed. Oh, my brethren, be one thing or the other! Choose the world if you prefer it; and see how



many dollars you can win, and how much applause you can gain, and how large a business you can establish, and how grand a house you can build, and how fast a span of horses you can drive. You may be prospered until you can fail for five hundred thousand dollars, instead of having the disgrace of failing for only ten thousand as some unenterprising people do. It is quite a reward to be able for ten or twenty years to be called one of the solid men of Brooklyn or Boston, and then to make your fortune last as long as possible, we will give you a splendid funeral, and you shall have twenty-five carriages following you with somebody in the most of them, and your coffin shall have silver handles on the sides, and we will mourn for you in splendid pocket-handkerchiefs bound with crape, and with bombazine twenty full yards long trailing half across the parlour, so that all the company may stand upon it, and we will write our letters for the next six months on paper edged with black. But, my friends, your worldly fortunes will not last. I will buy out now all that you will be worth in worldly estate seventy-five years from now. I have the money in my pocket with which to do it. Here it is! Two cents! It is a large sum to offer for all you will possess at the close of seventy-five years. Choose the world if you want to; but, if not, then choose heaven. That estate lies partly on this side of the river but mostly on the other. It is ever accumulating. The prospect of it makes one independent of earthly misfortunes; so that Rogers, the martyr, slept so soundly the night before his burning that they violently shook him in order to get him awake in time for the execution; and Paul exults at the thought of the "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Oh, choose earth or heaven! Make up your mind whether you will walk in earthly joys, or fly with heavenly expectations. Be not a bat fit neither to walk nor fly, having just enough of heaven to spoil the world, and so much of the world as to spoil heaven. Christ says that your present condition nauseates him to positive sickness: "Because

thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth ! ”

In the ruins of Pompeii there was found a petrified woman, who, instead of trying to fly from the destroyed city, had spent her time in gathering up her jewels. She saved neither her life nor her jewels. There are multitudes making the same mistake. In trying to get earth *and* heaven they lose both. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” Be one thing or the other. Tread the earth like a lion, or mount the air like the eagle ; for my text says, “Ye shall have in abomination among the fowls, the bat.”

Again, taking the suggestion of the text, drive out the chameleon from your soul. There is some difference among good men as to the name of this creeping thing which God pronounced unclean ; but I shall take the opinion which seems best suited to my purpose. The chameleon is a reptile chiefly known by its changeableness of colour, taking the colour of the thing next to it, sometimes brown, sometimes red, and sometimes grey, but always the colour of its surroundings, a type of that class of Christians who are now one thing in religious faith, and now another, just to suit circumstances, always taking their colour of religious belief from the man they are talking to. They go to Boston, and are first-rate Unitarians. “Jesus was a good man, but nothing more.” They go to Princeton, and they are Trinitarians, almost willing to die for the divinity of Jesus. Among the Universalists, they refuse the idea of future punishment, and going among those of opposite belief, announce that there is a hell with a gusto that makes you think they are glad of it. Drive out that unclean chameleon from your soul. Do not be ever changing the colour of your faith.

My friends—Liberal Christianity, falsely so-called, believes in nothing. God is anything you want to make Him. *The Bible to be believed in so far as you like it. Heaven a grand mixing up of Neros and Pauls, of Paysons and Jim Fisks.*

The man who dies by suicide in his right mind in 1872, beating into glory by ten years the Christian man who dies a Christian death in 1882, the suicide proving himself wiser than the Christian. Oh, my friends, let us try to believe in *something*. An infidel was called to the bedside of his daughter. The daughter said: "Father, which shall I believe, you or mother. Mother took the religion of Christ and died in its embrace. You say that religion is a humbug. Now I am going to die, I am very much perplexed; shall I believe you or take the belief of my mother?" The father said: "Choose for yourself." She said: "No; I am too weak to choose for myself; I want you to choose for me." "Well," said the father, after much hesitation and embarrassment, "Mary, I think you had better take the religion of your mother." The time will come when we shall have to believe something. We cannot afford to be on the fence in religion. Truth and error are set opposite to each other. The one is infinitely right, and the other infinitely wrong. In the judgment day we must give an account of what we believed as well as for what we acted. The difference between believing truth and believing error is the difference between paradise and perdition. I beg you, in the light of the Bible, and on your knees before God, to form your religious opinion and then stick to it, though business companions scoff, and wits caricature, and the air crackles with the fires of martyrdom. Surely truths in behalf of which Christ died, and angels of God trooped forth, and the whole universe is marshalled are worth dying for. Amid the most unclean things is this ever-changing chameleon of religious theory. Away with the reptile! God abhors it with an all-consuming abhorrence.

Once more take the suggestion of the text and drive out the *snail* from your soul. God has declared it unclean. It is an animal to be found everywhere between the coldest north and the hottest south. There are fifteen hundred species of the snail. They have no backbone, and they are so slow that their movement is almost imperceptible. You

see a snail in one place to-day ; go to-morrow and you will find it has advanced only a few inches. It becomes an emblem of that large class of Christian people who go to work with a slowness and sluggishness that is wonderful. They are stopped by every little obstacle because, like the snail, they have no backbone. Others mount up on eagle's wings, but they go at a snail's pace.

O child of God, arouse. We have apotheosized Prudence and Caution long enough. Prudence is a beautiful grace, but of all the family of Christian graces I like her the least, for she has been married so often to Laziness, Sloth and Stupidity. We have a million idlers in the Lord's vineyard who pride themselves on their prudence. "Be prudent," said the disciples to Christ, "and stay away from Jerusalem," but He went. "Be prudent," said Paul's friends, "and look out for what you say to Felix," but he thundered away until the ruler's knees knocked together. In the eyes of the world the most imprudent men that ever lived were Martin Luther, and John Oldecastle, and Bunyan, and Wesley, and Knox. My opinion is that the most imprudent and reckless thing is to stand still. It is well to hear our Commander's voice when He says, "halt!" but quite as important to hear it when He says, "forward!" This gospel ship, made to plough the sea at fifteen knots an hour, is not making three. Sometimes it is most prudent to ride your horse slowly and pick out the way for his feet, and not strike him with the spurs, but when a band of Shoshone Indians are after you in full tilt, the most prudent thing for you to do is to plunge in the rowels and put your horse to a full run, shouting "go long," until the Rocky Mountains echo it. The foes of God are pursuing us. The world, the flesh, and the devil are after us: and our wisest course is to go ahead at swiftest speed. When the Church of God gets to advancing too fast it will be time enough to use caution. No need of putting on the brakes while going up hill. Do not let us sit down waiting for something "to turn up," but go ahead, in the name of

God, and *turn it up*. The great danger to the church now is not sensation, but stagnation. Oh, that the Lord God would send a host of aroused and consecrated men to set the church on fire, and to turn the world upside down. Let us go to work and catch the last snail in our souls. With divine vehemence let us stamp its life out; for my text declares "these also shall be unclean to you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth: the chameleon and the snail."

I have thus tried to prejudice the Christian men and women against gloominess, and slander, and half and half experiences, and changeableness, and sloth. Our opportunities for getting better are being rapidly swallowed up in the remorseless past. This golden Sabbath is about to drop out of the calendar. This moment may we drive out all the unclean things from our souls—the vulture, and the bat, and the owl, and the chameleon, and the snail; and in place thereof bring in the Lamb of God, and the dove of the Spirit. The case is urgent. Arouse! before it be eternally too late! "Whatsoever the hand findeth to do, do IT!"

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