

# CHRISTIAN HERALD

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“I AM WITH THE WOUNDED.”—Clara Barton’s Cable Message from Havana to “The Christian Herald.”

“I am with the wounded,” flashed along the wire  
From the isle of Cuba, swept with sword and fire.  
Angel sweet of mercy, may your cross of red  
Cheer the wounded living; bless the wounded dead.

“I am with the starving,” let the message run  
From the stricken island, when this task is done;  
Food and money plenty wait at your command.  
Give in generous measure; fill each outstretched hand.

“I am with the happy,” this we long to hear  
From the isle of Cuba, trembling now in fear.  
May the great disaster touch the hearts of men,  
And, in God’s great mercy, bring back peace again.  
—JAMES CLARENCE HARVEY.

THE METROPOLITAN PULPIT



Splendors to be Unrolled.

A Sermon by Rev. I. DeWitt Talmage, D.D., } For now we see through a glass,  
on the Text: I. Cor. 13: 12, . . . } darkly; but then face to face.

**T**HE BIBLE is the most forceful and pungent of books. While it has the sweetness of a mother's hush for human trouble, it has all the keenness of a scimeter, and the crushing power of a lightning-bolt. It portrays with more than a painter's power, at one stroke picturing a heavenly throne and a judgment conflagration. The strings of this great harp are fingered by all the splendors of the future, now sounding with the crackle of consuming worlds, now thrilling with the joy of the everlasting emancipated. It tells how one forbidden tree in the garden blasted the earth with sickness and death; and how another tree, though leafless and bare, yet, planted on Calvary, shall yield a fruit which shall more than antidote the poison of the other. It tells how the red-ripe clusters of God's wrath were brought to the wine-press, and Jesus trod them out; and how, at last, all the golden chalices of heaven shall glow with the wine of that awful vintage. It dazzles the eye with an Ezekiel's vision of wheel, and wing, and fire, and whirlwind; and stoops down so low that it can put its lips to the ear of a dying child, and say, "come up higher."

And yet Paul, in my text, takes the responsibility of saying that it is only an indistinct mirror, and that its mission shall be suspended. I think there may be one Bible in heaven, fastened to the throne. Just as now, in a museum, we have a lamp exhumed from Herculaneum or Nineveh, and we look at it with great interest and say, "How poor a light it must have given compared with our modern lamps!" So I think that this Bible, which was a lamp to our feet in this world, may lie near the throne of God, exciting our interest to all eternity by the contrast between its comparatively feeble light and the illumination of heaven. The Bible, now, is the scaffolding to the rising temple, but when the building is done, there will be no use for the scaffolding.

The idea I shall develop to-day is, that in this world our knowledge is comparatively dim and unsatisfactory, but nevertheless is introductory to grander and more complete vision. This is eminently true in regard to our view of God. We hear so much about God that we conclude that we understand him. He is represented as having the tenderness of a father, the firmness of a judge, the majesty of a king, and the love of a mother. We hear about him, talk about him, write about him. We lip his name in infancy, and it trembles on the tongue of the dying octogenarian. We think that we know very much about him. Take the attribute of mercy. Do we understand it? The Bible blossoms all over with that word—mercy. It speaks again and again of the tender mercies of God; of the sure mercies; of the great mercies; of the mercy that endureth forever; of the multitude of his mercies. And yet I know that the views we have of this great being are most indefinite, one-sided and incomplete. When, at death, the gates shall fly open, and we shall look directly upon him, how new and surprising! We see upon canvas a picture of the morning. We study the cloud in the sky, the dew upon the grass, and the husbandman on the way to the field. Beautiful picture of the morning! But we rise at day break and go up on a hill to see for ourselves that which was represented to us. While we look the mountains are transfigured. The barred gates of heaven swing open a path to let pass a host of splendors. The clouds are all blown and hang pendent from arbors of silver and amber. The waters make pathway of the pearl for the light to walk upon, and there is morning on the sea. The crabs scower their scarred visage; and there is morning among the mountains. Now you go home, and how tame your picture of the

morning seems in contrast! Greater than that shall be the contrast between this Scriptural view of God and that which we shall have when standing face to face. This is a picture of the morning, that will be the morning itself.

Again: my text is true of the Saviour's excellency. By image, and sweet rhythm of expression, and startling antithesis, Christ is set forth—his love, his compassion, his work, his life, his death, his resurrection. We are challenged to measure it, to compute it, to weigh it. In the hour of our broken enrapturement, we mount up into high experience of his love, and shout until the countenance glows, and the blood bounds, and the whole nature is exhilarated, "I have found him!" And yet it is through a glass, darkly. We see not half of that compassionate face. We feel not half the warmth of that loving heart. We wait for death to let us rush into his outspread arms. Then we shall be face to face. Not shadow then, but substance. Not hope then, but the fulfilling of all prefigurement. That will be a magnificent unfolding. The rushing out in view of all hidden excellency, the coming again of a long-absent Jesus, to meet us—not in rags, and in penury, and death, but amidst a light, and pomp, and outbursting joy such as none but a glorified intelligence could experience. Oh! to gaze full upon the brow that was lacerated, upon the side that was pierced, upon the feet that were nailed; to stand close up in the presence of him who prayed for us on the mountain, and thought of us by the sea, and agonized for us in the garden, and died for us in horrible crucifixion; to feel of him, to embrace him, to take his hand, to kiss his feet, to run our fingers along the scars of ancient suffering; to say, "This is my Jesus! He gave himself for me. I shall never leave his presence. I shall forever behold his glory. I shall eternally hear his voice. Lord Jesus, now I see thee! I beheld where the blood started, where the tears coursed, where the face was distorted. I have waited for this hour. I shall never turn my back on thee. No more looking through imperfect glasses. No more studying thee in the darkness. But, as long as this throne stands, and this everlasting river flows, and those garlands bloom, and these arches of victory remain to greet home heaven's conquerors, so long I shall see thee Jesus of my choice; Jesus of my song; Jesus of my triumph—forever and forever—face to face!"

The idea of the text is just as true when applied to God's providence. Who has not come to some pass in life thoroughly inexplicable? You say, "What does this mean? What is God going to do with me now? He tells me that all things work together for good. This does not look like it." You continue to study the dispensation, and after awhile guess about what God means. "He means to teach me this. I think he means to teach me that. Perhaps it is to humble my pride. Perhaps it is to make me feel more dependent. Perhaps to teach me the uncertainty of life." But after all, it is only a guess—a looking through the glass, darkly. The Bible assures us there shall be a satisfactory unfolding. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." You will know why God took to himself that only child. Next door there was a household of seven children. Why not take one from that group, instead of your only one? Why single out the dwelling in which there was only one heart beating responsive to yours? Why did God give you a child at all, if he meant to take it away? Why till the cup of your gladness brimming, if he meant to dash it down? Why allow all the tendrils of your heart to wind around that object, and then, when every fibre of your own life seemed to be interlocked with the child's life, with strong hand to tear you apart, until you fall,

bleeding and crushed, your dwelling desolate, your hopes blasted, your heart broken? Do you suppose that God will explain that? Yea. He will make it plainer than any mathematical problem—as plain as that two and two make four. In the light of the throne you will see that it was right—all right. "Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints!"

Here is a man who cannot get on in the world. He always seems to buy at the wrong time and to sell at the worst disadvantage. He tries this enterprise, and fails; that business, and is disappointed. The man next door to him has a lucrative trade, but he lacks customers. A new prospect opens. His income is increased. But that year his family are sick; and the profits are expended in trying to cure the ailments. He gets a discouraged look. Becomes faithless as to success. Begins to expect disasters. Others wait for something to turn up; he waits for it to turn down. Others, with only half as much education and character, get on twice as well. He sometimes guesses as to what it all means. He says, "Perhaps riches would spoil me. Perhaps poverty is necessary to keep me humble. Perhaps I might, if things were otherwise, be tempted into dissipations." But there is no complete solution of the mystery. He sees through a glass darkly, and must wait for a higher unfolding. Will there be an explanation? Yes; God will take that man in the light of the throne, and say, "Child immortal, hear the explanation! You remember the failing of that great enterprise—your misfortune in 1857; your disaster in 1867. This is the explanation." And you answer, "It is all right."

I see, every day, profound mysteries of providence. There is no question we ask oftener than Why? There are hundreds of graves in Oak Hill and Greenwood and Laurel Hill that need to be explained. Hospitals for the blind and lame, asylums for the idiotic and insane, alms-houses for the destitute, and a world of pain and misfortune that demand more than human solution. Ah! God will clear it all up. In the light that pours from the throne, no dark mystery can live. Things now utterly inscrutable will be illumined as plainly as though the answer were written on the jasper wall, or sounded in the temple anthem. Bartimeus will thank God that he was blind; and Lazarus that he was covered with sores; and Joseph that he was cast into the pit; and Daniel that he was humped; and David that he was driven from Jerusalem; and that sewing-woman that she could get only a few pence for making a garment; and that invalid that for twenty years he could not lift his head from the pillow; and that widow that she had such hard work to earn bread for her children. You know that in a song different voices carry different parts. The sweet and overwhelming part of the hallelujah of heaven will not be carried by those who rode in high places, and gave sumptuous entertainments; but pauper children will sing it, beggars will sing it, redeemed hod-carriers will sing it, those who were once the off-scouring of earth will sing it. The hallelujah will be all the grander for earth's weeping eyes, and aching heads, and exhausted hands, and scourged backs, and martyred agonies.

Again: the thought of the text is just when applied to the enjoyments of the righteous in heaven. I think we have but little idea of the number of the righteous in heaven. Infidels say, "Your heaven will be a very small place compared with the world of the lost; for, according to your teaching, the majority of men will be destroyed." I deny the charge. I suppose that the multitude of the finally lost, as compared with the multitude of the finally saved, will be a handful. I suppose that the few sick people in the hospital to-day, as compared with the hundreds of thousands of well people in the city, would not be smaller than the number of those who shall be cast out in suffering, compared with those who shall have upon them the health of heaven. For we are to remember that we are living in comparatively the beginning of the Christian dispensation, and that this world is to be populated and redeemed, and that ages of light and love are to flow on. If this be so, the saved will be in vast majority.

Take all the congregations that have to-day assembled for worship. Put them together and they would make but a small audience compared with the thousands

and tens of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, and the hundred and forty and four thousand that shall stand around the throne. Those flashed up heaven in martyr-fires; those tossed many years upon the invalid-couch; those fought in the armies of liberty, and rose they fell; those tumbled from high sc foldings, or slipped from the mast, were washed off into the sea. They came up from Corinth, from Laodicea, from the Red Sea bank and Gennesaret's war from Egyptian brick-yards, and Gideon threshing-floor. Those, thousands of years ago, slept the last sleep; and these, at this moment having their eyes closed, their limbs stretched out for the sepulchre.

A general expecting an attack from an enemy stands on a hill and looks through a field-glass, and sees, in the great distance, multitudes approaching, but has no idea of their numbers. He says: "I cannot tell anything about them. I merely know that there are a great number." A soldier, without attempting to count, says: "A great multitude that no man can number."

We are told that heaven is a place of happiness; but what do we know about happiness? Happiness in this world is only a half-fledged thing; a flowery path with a serpent hissing across it; a brook pitcher, from which the water has dropped before we could drink it; a thrill of hilarity, followed by disastrous reversions. To help us understand the joy of heaven, the Bible takes us to a river. We stand on the grassy bank. We see waters flow on with ceaseless wave. In the filth of the cities are emptied into and the banks are torn; and unhealthful exhalations spring up from it; and fail to get an idea of the River of Life heaven.

We get very imperfect ideas of the joys of heaven. We think of some festival day on earth, when father and mother were yet living, and the children came home. A good time that! But had this drawback—all were not there. That brother went off to sea, and never heard from. That sister—did we not see her away in the freshness of her youth, never more in this world to look upon her? Ah! there was a skeleton at the feast; and tears mingled with our laughter on that Christmas day. Not so with heaven's reunions. It will be an uninterrupted gladness. Many a Christian parent will look around and find all his children there. "Ah!" he says, "can it be possible that we are all here—life's path over? The Jordan passed, and not a wanting? Why, even the prodigal himself almost gave him up. How long he despised my counsels! but grace hath triumphed. All here! all here! Tell me the mighty joy through the city. Let the bells ring, and the angels mention it in their song. Wave it from the top of the world. All here!"

No more breaking of heart-strings, no face to face. The orphans that were so poor, and in a merciless world, kicked and cuffed of many hardships, shall join their parents, over whose graves they so long wept, and gaze into their glorified countenances forever, face to face. We try to come up from different parts of the world, one from the land and another from the depths of the sea; from the affluent and prosperous, or from scenes of ragged distress; but we shall all meet in rapture and jubilee, face to face.

Many of our friends have entered upon that joy. A few days ago they sat with us studying these Gospel themes; but they only saw through a glass, darkly—no revelation hath come. Your time will also come. God will not leave you floundering in the darkness. You stand wonder-struck and amazed. You feel as if the loveliness of life were dashed. You stand gazing into the open chasm of the grave. Wait a little. In the presence of your departed, and of him who calls them in his bosom, you shall soon stand face to face. Oh, that our last hour be kindle up with this promised joy! We are able to say, like the Christian long ago, departing: "Though a pilgrim, walking through the valley, the mountain tops are gleaming from peaks!" or, like my dear friend and brother Alfred Cookman, who took his flight to the throne of God, saying in his last moment that which has already gone to Christian classics: "I am sweeping through the pearly gate, washed in the blood of the Lamb!"