

THE WORRIED
HOUSEKEEPER



THE
WORRIED HOUSEKEEPER,

AND OTHER SERMONS.

BY

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“Lord, dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me.”—*St. Luke ix. 40.*

AFTER preaching ten sermons of this series to men, I preach a sermon to women. You say, “Why this disproportion?” I reply, It is because women are better than men. I do not say this in compliment, or in the spirit of soft gallantry, for when women are bad they are dreadful, but as a statistical fact which cannot be controverted. They have fewer temptations to outbreaching sin; are naturally more reverential and loving; it is easier for them to become Christians. They are in the majority in the church on earth, and I suppose that if you should count the women and children of heaven you would count three-fourths of its population. It is because men are in more need of being preached to that I have given them the majority of these services.

But I see yonder a beautiful village homestead. The man of the house is dead, and his widow is taking charge of the premises. Come, let me introduce you. This is the widow Martha of Bethany. Yes, I will introduce you also to the pet of the household. This is Mary, the younger sister, with

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a book under her arm, and her face having no appearance of anxiety or perturbation. Company has come. Christ stands outside the door, and of course there is a good deal of excitement inside the door. The disarranged furniture is hastily put aside, and the hair is brushed back, and the dresses are adjusted as well as in so short a time Mary and Martha can attend to these matters. They did not keep Christ standing at the door until they were newly apparelled, or until they had elaborately arranged their tresses, then coming out with affected surprise, as though they had not heard the two or three previous knockings, saying, "Why, is that you?" No; they were ladies, and were always presentable, although they may not have always had on their best; for none of us always have on our best. If we did, our best would not be worth having on. They throw open the door and greet Christ. He did not come alone; He had a group of friends with Him, and such an influx of city visitors would throw any country home into perturbation. I suppose, also, the walk from the city had been a good appetiser. The kitchen department that day was a very important department, and I suppose that Martha had no sooner greeted the guests than she fled to that room. Mary had no anxiety about household affairs. She had full confidence that Martha could get up the best dinner in Bethany. She seems to say, "Now let us have a division of labour. Martha, you cook, and I'll sit down and be good." So you have often seen a great difference between two sisters. There is

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Martha, hardworking, painstaking, a good manager, ever inventive of some new pastry, or discovering something in the art of cookery and housekeeping. There is Mary, also, fond of conversation, literary, so engaged in deep questions of ethics that she has no time to attend to the questions of household welfare.

It is noon. Mary is in the parlour with Christ. Martha is in the kitchen. It would have been better if they had divided the work, and then they could have divided the opportunity of listening to Jesus. But Mary monopolises Christ, while Martha swelters at the fire. It was a very important thing that they have a good dinner that day. Christ was hungry, and He did not often have a luxurious entertainment. Ah me! if the duty had devolved upon Mary, what a repast that would have been! But something went wrong in the kitchen. Perhaps the fire would not burn, or the bread would not bake, or Martha scalded her hand, or something was burned black that ought only to have been made brown, and Martha lost her patience, and, forgetting the proprieties of the occasion, with besweated brow and perhaps with pitcher in one hand, she rushes out of the kitchen into the presence of Christ, saying, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" Christ scolded not a word. If it were scolding, I should rather have His scolding than anybody else's blessing. There was nothing acerb. He knew Martha had almost worked herself to death to get Him something to eat, and so He

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throws a world of tenderness into His intonation as He seems to say, "My dear woman, do not worry. Let the dinner go. Sit down on this ottoman beside Mary, your younger sister. 'Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful.'" As Martha throws open that kitchen door I look in and I see a great many household perplexities and anxieties.

First, there is the trial of non-appreciation. That is what made Martha so vexed with Mary. The younger sister had no estimate of her older sister's fatigues. As now, men bothered with the anxieties of the store and office and shop, or coming from the stock exchange, they say when they get home, "Oh, you ought to be over in Wall Street in these days; you ought to be in our factory a little while; you ought to have to manage eight or ten or twenty subordinates, and then you would know what trouble and anxiety are!" Oh, sir, the wife and the mother has to conduct at the same time a university, a clothing establishment, a restaurant, a laundry, a library, while she is health officer, police, and president of her realm! She must do a thousand things, and do them well, in order to keep things going smoothly, and so her brain and her nerves are taxed to the utmost. I know there are housekeepers who are so fortunate that they can sit in an arm-chair in the library, or lie on the belated pillow, and throw off all the care upon subordinates who, having large wages and great experience, can attend to all the affairs of the household. Those are the exception.

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I am speaking this morning of the great mass of housekeepers—the women to whom life is a struggle, and who at thirty years of age look as though they were forty, and at forty look as though they were fifty, and at fifty look as though they were sixty. The fallen at Chalons and Austerlitz, at Gettysburgh and Waterloo, are a small number compared with the slain in the great Armageddon of the kitchen. You go out to the cemetery and you will see that the tombstones all read beautifully poetic; but if those tombstones would speak the truth, thousands of them would say, “Here lies a woman killed by too much mending and sewing and baking and scrubbing and scouring. The weapon with which she was slain was a broom, or a sewing-machine, or a ladle.” You think, O man of the world, that you have all the cares and anxieties. If the cares and anxieties of the household should come upon you for one week, you would be a fit candidate for Bloomingdale Insane Asylum. The half-rested housekeeper arises in the morning. She must have the morning repast prepared at an inexorable hour. What if the fire will not light; what if the marketing did not come; what if the clock has stopped?—no matter, she must have the morning repast at an inexorable hour. Then the children must be got off to school. What if their garments are torn; what if they do not know their lessons; what if they have lost a hat or a sash?—they must be ready. Then you have all the diet of the day, and perhaps of several days, to plan; but what if the butcher has sent meat unmas-

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ticable, or the grocer has sent articles of food adulterated; and what if some piece of silver be gone, or some favourite chalice be cracked, or the roof leak, or the plumbing fail, or any one of a thousand things occur?—you must be ready. Spring weather comes, and there must be a revolution in the family wardrobe, or autumn comes, and you must shut out the northern blast. But what if the moth has preceded you to the chest? What if during the year the children have outgrown the apparel of last year? What if the fashions have changed?

Your house must be an apothecary's shop, it must be a dispensary; there must be medicines for all sorts of ailments—something to loosen the croup, something to cool the burn, something to poultice the inflammation, something to silence the jumping tooth, something to soothe the earache. You must be in half a dozen places at the same time, or you must attempt to be. If under all this wear and tear of life Martha makes an impatient rush upon the library or drawing-room, be patient, be lenient. O woman, though I may fail to stir up an appreciation in the souls of others in regard to your household toils, let me assure you, from the kindness with which Jesus Christ met Martha, that He appreciates all your work from garret to cellar, and that the God of Deborah, and Hannah, and Abigail, and grandmother Lois, and Elizabeth Fry, and Hannah Moore, is the God of the housekeeper. Jesus was never married that He might be the especial friend and *confidante* of a whole world of troubled woman-

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hood. I blunder: Christ was married. The Bible says that the Church is the Lamb's wife, and that makes me know that all Christian women have a right to go to Christ and tell Him all their annoyances and troubles, since by His oath of conjugal fidelity He is sworn to sympathise. George Herbert, the Christian poet, wrote two or three verses on this subject.

- "A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine."

Again: There is the trial of severe economy. Nine hundred and ninty-nine households out of the thousand are subjected to it, some under more and some under less stress of circumstances. Especially if a man smokes very expensive cigars and takes very costly dinners at the restaurants, he will be severe in demanding domestic economies. This is what kills tens of thousands of women—attempting to make five dollars do the work of seven. How the bills come in! The woman is the banker of the household—she is the president, the cashier, the teller, the discount clerk—and there is a panic every few weeks. This thirty years' war against high prices, this perpetual study of economies, this lifelong attempt to keep the outgoes less than the income, exhausts millions of housekeepers. O my sister, this is a part of the Divine discipline. If it were best for you, all you would have to do would be to open the front windows and the ravens would fly in with food; and after you

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had baked fifty times from the barrel in the pantry, the barrel, like the one of Zarephath, would be full, and the shoes of the children would last as long as the shoes of the Israelites in the wilderness—forty years. Beside that, this is going to make heaven the more attractive in the contrast. They never hunger there, and consequently there will be none of the nuisances of catering for appetite. And in the land of the white robe they never have to mend anything, and the air in that hill country makes everybody well. There are no rents to pay; every man owns his own house, and a mansion at that. It will not be so great a change for you to have a chariot in heaven if you have been in the habit of riding in this world. It will not be so great a change for you to sit down on the banks of the River of Life if in this world you had a country seat. But if you have walked with tired feet in this world, what a glorious change to mount a celestial equipage! and if your life on earth was domestic martyrdom, oh the joy of an eternity in which you shall have nothing to do except what you choose to do! Martha has had no drudgery for eighteen centuries! I quarrel with the theologians who want to distribute all the thrones of heaven among the John Knoxes and the Hugh Latimers and the Theban Legion. Some of the brightest thrones in heaven will be kept for Christian housekeepers. Oh, what a change from here to there—from the time when they put down the rolling-pin to when they take up the sceptre! If Chatsworth Park and Stewart's mansion on Fifth Avenue were to be

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lifted into the celestial city, they would be considered uninhabitable rookeries, and glorified Lazarus would be ashamed to be seen going in and out of either of them.

There are many housekeepers who could get along with their toils if it were not for sickness and trouble. The fact is, one-half of the women of the land are more or less invalids. The mountain lass who has never had an ache or pain may consider household toil inconsiderable, and toward evening she may skip away miles to the fields and drive home the cattle, and she may until ten o'clock at night fill the house with laughing racket. But oh! to do the work of life with worn-out constitutions, when the whooping-cough has been raging for six weeks in the household, making the night as sleepless as the day, is not so easy. Perhaps this comes after the nerves have been shattered by some bereavement that has left desolation in every room of the house, and set the crib in the garret because the occupant has been hushed into a slumber which needs no mother's lullaby. Oh! she could provide for the whole group a great deal better than she can for a part of the group, now the rest are gone. Though you may tell her God is taking care of those who are gone, it is motherlike to brood both flocks; and one wing she puts over the flock in the house, the other wing she puts over the flock in the grave.

There is nothing but the old-fashioned religion of Jesus Christ that will take a woman through the trials of home life. At first there may be a romance or a novelty that will do for a substitute. The mar-

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riage hour has just passed, and the perplexities of the household are more than atoned for by the joy of being together, and by the fact that when it is late they do not have to discuss the question as to whether it is time to go. The mishaps of the household, instead of being a matter for anxiety and reprehension, are a matter of merriment; the loaf of bread turned into a geological specimen, the slushy custard, the jaundiced biscuits. It is a very bright sunlight that falls on the cutlery and the mantel ornaments of a new home. But after a while the romance is all gone, and then there is something to be prepared for the table that the book called "Cookery Taught in Twelve Lessons" will not teach. The recipe for making it is not a handful of this, a cup of that, and a spoonful of something else. It is not something sweetened with ordinary condiments, or flavoured with ordinary flavours, or baked in ordinary ovens. It is the loaf of domestic happiness, and all the ingredients come down from heaven, and the fruits are plucked from the Tree of Life, and it is sweetened with the new wine of the kingdom, and it is baked in the oven of home trial. Solomon wrote out of his own experience. He had a wretched home. A man cannot be happy with two wives, much less with six hundred; and he says, writing out of his own experience, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith."

How great are the responsibilities of housekeepers! Sometimes an indigestible article of food, by its effect

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upon a commander or king, has defeated an army or overthrown an empire. Housekeepers, by the food they provide, by the couches they spread, by the books they introduce, by the influences they bring around their home, are deciding the physical, intellectual, moral, eternal destiny of the race. You say your life is one of sacrifice. I know it. But, my sister, that is the only life worth living. That was Florence Nightingale's life. That was Payson's life. That was Christ's life. We admire it in others, but how very hard it is for us to cultivate it ourselves. When, this last week, young Dr. Hutchison, having spent a whole night in a sick room for the relief of a patient with diphtheria, became saturated with the poison and died, we all felt as if we would like to put garlands on his grave. Everybody appreciates that. When, this last week, in the burning hotel at St. Louis, a young man on the fifth storey broke open the door of the room where his mother was sleeping, and plunged in amid smoke and fire, crying, "Mother, where are you?" and never came out, our hearts applauded that young man. But how few of us have the Christlike spirit, a willingness to suffer for others! A rough teacher in a school called up a poor, half-starved lad who had violated the laws of the school, and said, "Take off your coat, sir!" The boy refused to take it off. The teacher said again, "Take off your coat," as he swung the whip through the air. The boy refused. It was not because he was afraid of the lash—he was used to that at home—but it was from shame; he had no under-garment.

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And as at the third command he pulled slowly off his coat, there went a sob all through the school. They saw then why he did not want to remove his coat, and they saw the shoulder-blades had almost cut through the skin; and a stout, healthy boy rose up and went to the teacher of the school and said, "O sir, please don't hurt this poor fellow; whip me. He's nothing but a poor chap. Don't you hurt him; he's poor. Whip me." "Well," said the teacher, "it's going to be a severe whipping; I am willing to take you as a substitute." "Well," said the boy, "I don't care. You may whip me if you will let this poor fellow go." The stout, healthy boy took the scourging without an outcry. "Bravo!" says every man. "Bravo!" How many of us are willing to take the scourging, and the suffering, and the toil, and the anxiety, for other people? Beautiful thing to admire, but how little we have of that spirit. God gave us that self-denying spirit, so that whether we are in humble spheres or in conspicuous spheres, we may perform our whole duty, for this struggle will soon be over.

One of the most affecting reminiscences of my mother is my remembrance of her as a Christian housekeeper. She worked very hard, and when we would come in from summer play and sit down at the table at noon, I remember how she used to come in with beads of perspiration along the line of grey hair, and how sometimes she would sit down at the table and put her head against her wrinkled hand, and say, "Well, the fact is I'm too tired to eat."

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Long after she might have delegated this duty to others she would not be satisfied unless she attended to the matter herself. In fact, we all preferred to have her do so, for somehow things tasted better when she prepared them. Three or four nights ago, in an express train, I shot past that old homestead. I looked out of the window and tried to peer through the darkness. While I was doing so one of my old schoolmates whom I had not seen for many years tapped me on the shoulder and said, "De Witt, I see you are looking out at the scenes of your boyhood." "Oh, yes," I replied, "I was looking out at the old place where my mother lived and died." That night in the cars the whole scene came back to me. There was the country home. There was the noon-day table. There were the children on either side of the table—most of them gone, never to come back. At one end of the table was my father, with a smile that never left his countenance, even when he lay in his coffin. It was an eighty-six years' smile—not the smile of inanition, but of Christian courage and of Christian hope. At the other end of the table was a beautiful, benignant, hard-working, aged Christian housekeeper—my mother. She was very tired. I am glad she has so good a place to rest in. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord: they rest from their labours and their works do follow them."

A SATISFIED SPIRIT.

“Be content with such things as ye have.”—*Heb. xiii. 5.*

IF I should ask some one, “Where is Brooklyn to-day?” he would say, “At Shelter Island.” “Where is New York to-day?” “At Long Branch.” “Where Philadelphia?” “Cape May.” “Where is Boston?” “At Martha’s Vineyard.” “Where is Virginia?” “At the Sulphur Springs.” “Where are the great multitude from all parts of the land?” “At Saratoga,” the modern Bethesda, where the angel of health is ever stirring the waters. But, my friend, the largest multitude are at home, detained by business or circumstances. Among them, all newspaper men, the hardest worked and the least compensated; city railroad employers, and ferry masters, and the police, and the tens of thousands of clerks and merchants waiting for their turn of business, and households with an invalid who cannot be moved, and other multitudes by the stringency of the times hindered from further expenditure, and the great multitude of well-to-do people who stay at home because they like home better than any other place, refusing to go away simply because it is the fashion to go. When the express wagon, with its

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mountain of trunks directed to the Catskills or Niagara, goes through the streets, we stand at our window, envious and impatient, and wonder why we cannot go as well as others. Fools that we are! as though one could not be as happy at home as anywhere else. Our grandfathers and grandmothers had as good a time as we have, long before the first spring was bored at Saratoga, or the first deer shot in the Adirondacks. They made their wedding tour to the next farmhouse; or, living in the city, they celebrated the event by an extra walk on the New York "Battery." Now, the genuine American is not happy until he is going somewhere, and the passion is so great that there are Christian people with their families detained in the city, who come not to the house of God, trying to give people the idea that they are out of town; leaving the door-plate unscoured for the same reason, and for two months keeping the front shutters closed while they sit in the back part of the house, the thermometer at ninety! My friends, if it is best for us to go, let us go and be happy. If it is best for us to stay home, let us stay home and be happy. There is a great deal of good common sense in Paul's advice to the Hebrews: "Be content with such things as ye have." To be content is to be in good humour with our circumstances, not picking a quarrel with our obscurity, or our poverty, or our social position. There are four or five grand reasons why we should be content with such things as we have.

The first reason that I mention as leading to this

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spirit advised in the text is the consideration that the poorest of us have all that is indispensable in life. We make a great ado about our hardships, but how little we talk of our blessings. Health of body, which is given in largest quantity to those who have never been petted and fondled and spoiled of fortune, we take as a matter of course. Rather have this luxury and have it alone than, without it, look out of a palace window upon parks of deer stalking between fountains and statuary. These people sleep sounder on a straw mattress than fashionable invalids on a couch of ivory and eagle's down. The dinner of herbs tastes better to the appetite sharpened on a woodman's axe or a reaper's scythe than wealthy indigestion experiences seated at a table covered with partridge and venison and pine-apple. The grandest luxury God ever gave a man is health. He who trades that off for all the palaces of the earth is infinitely cheated. We look back at the glory of the last Napoleon, but who would have taken his Versailles and his Tuilleries if with them we had been obliged to take his gout? "Oh," says some one, "it isn't the grosser pleasures I covet, but it is the gratification of an artistic and intellectual taste." Why, my brother, you have the original from which these pictures are copied. What is a sunset on a wall, compared with a sunset hung in loops of fire on the heavens? What is a cascade silent on a canvas, compared with a cascade that makes the mountain tremble, its spray ascending like the departed spirit of the water slain on the rocks? Oh,

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there is a great deal of hollow affectation about a fondness for pictures on the part of those who never appreciate the original from which the pictures are taken. As though a parent should have no regard for his child, but go into ecstasies at the daguerreotype. Bless God to-day, O man, O woman, that though you may be shut out from the works of a Church, and a Bierstadt, and a Rubens, and a Raphael, you still have free access to a gallery grander than the Louvre or the Luxembourg or the Vatican—the royal gallery of the noonday heavens, the King's gallery of the midnight sky.

Another consideration leading us to a spirit of contentment is the fact that our happiness is not dependent upon outward circumstances. You see people happy and miserable under all circumstances. In a family where the last loaf is on the table and the last stick of wood on the fire, you sometimes find a cheerful confidence in God, while in a very fine place you will see and hear Discord sounding her war-whoop and Hospitality freezing to death in a cheerless parlour. I stopped one day on Broadway at the head of Wall Street, at the foot of Trinity Church, to see who seemed the happiest people passing. I judged from their looks the happiest people were not those who went down into Wall Street, for they had on their brow the anxiety of the dollar they expected to make; nor the people who came out of Wall Street, for they had on their brow the anxiety of the dollar they had lost; nor the people who swept by in splendid equipage, for they met a carriage that

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was finer than theirs. The happiest person in all that crowd, judging from the countenance, was the woman who sat at the apple-stand a-knitting. I believe real happiness oftener looks out of the window of a humble home than through the opera-glass of the gilded box of a theatre. I find Nero growling on a throne. I find Paul singing in a dungeon. I find King Ahab going to bed at noon, through melancholy, while near by is Naboth contented in the possession of a vineyard. Haman, prime minister of Persia, frets himself almost to death because a poor Jew will not tip his hat, and Ahithophel, one of the great lawyers of Bible times, through fear of dying, hangs himself. The wealthiest man forty years ago, in New York, when congratulated over his large estate, replied, "Ah! you don't know how much trouble I have in taking care of it." Byron declared in his last hours that he had never seen more than twelve happy days in all his life. I do not believe he had seen twelve minutes of thorough satisfaction. Napoleon I. said, "I turn with disgust from the cowardice and selfishness of man. I hold life a horror; death is repose. What I have suffered the last twenty days is beyond human comprehension." While on the other hand, to show how one may be happy amid the most disadvantageous circumstances, just after the *Ocean Monarch* had been wrecked in the English Channel, a steamer was cruising along in the darkness, when the captain heard a song, a sweet song, coming over the water, and he bore down toward that voice, and he found it was a

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Christian woman on a plank of the wrecked steamer,
singing to the tune of St. Martins—

“ Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,
While the billows near me roll,
While the tempest still is high.”

The heart right toward God and man, we are happy. The heart wrong toward God and man, we are unhappy.

Another reason why we should come to this spirit inculcated in the text is the fact that all the differences of our earthly condition are transitory. The houses you build, the lands you culture, the places in which you barter, are soon to go into other hands. However hard you may have it now, if you are a Christian the scene will soon end. Pain, trial, persecution, never knock at the door of the grave. A coffin made out of pine boards is just as good a resting place as one made out of silver-mounted mahogany or rosewood. Go down among the resting-places of the dead, and you will find that though people there had a great difference of worldly circumstances, now they are all alike unconscious. The hand that greeted the senator and the president and the king is still as the hand that hardened on the mechanic's hammer or the manufacturer's wheel. It does not make any difference now whether there is a plain stone above them from which the traveller pulls aside the weeds to read the name, or a tall shaft springing into the heavens as though to tell their virtues to the skies. In that silent land there

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are no titles for great men, and there are no rumblings of chariot-wheels, and there is never heard there the foot of the dance. The Egyptian guano which is thrown on the field in the East for the enrichment of the soil, is the dust raked out from the sepulchres of the kings and lords and mighty men. Oh the chagrin of those mighty men if they had ever known that in the after ages of the world they would have been called Egyptian guano!

Another reason why we should culture this spirit of cheerfulness is the fact that God knows what is best for His creatures. You know what is best for your child. He thinks you are not as liberal with him as you ought to be. He criticises your discipline, but you look over the whole field, and you, loving that child, do what in your deliberate judgment is best for him. Now, God is the best of fathers. Sometimes His children think that He is hard on them, and that He is not as liberal with them as He might be. But children do not know as much as a father. I can tell you why you are not largely affluent, and why you have not been grandly successful. It is because you cannot stand the temptation. If your path had been smooth, you would have depended upon your own sure-footedness; but God roughened that path, so you have to take hold of His hand. If the weather had been mild, you would have loitered along the water-courses, but at the first howl of the storm you quickened your pace heavenward, and wrapped around you the warm robe of a Saviour's righteous-

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ness. "What have I done," says the wieldsheaf to the farmer, "what have I done that you beat me so hard with your flail?" The farmer makes no answer, but the rake takes off the straw, and the mill blows the chaff to the winds, and the golden grain falls down at the foot of the windmill. After a while, the straw, looking down from the mow upon the golden grain banked up on either side the floor, understands why the farmer beat the wieldsheaf with the flail. Who are these before the throne? The answer comes: "These are they who out of great threshing had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." Would God that we could understand that our trials are the very best things for us. If we had an appreciation of that truth, then we would know why it was that John Noyes, the martyr, in the very midst of the flames reached down and picked up one of the faggots that was consuming him and kissed it, and said, "Blessed be God for the time when I was born to this preferment!" "They who suffer with Him on earth shall be glorified with Him in heaven." "Be content, then, with such things as you have."

Another consideration leading us to the spirit of the text is the assurance that the Lord will provide somehow. Will He who holds the waters in the hollow of His hand allow His children to die of thirst? Will He who owns the cattle on a thousand hills and all the earth's luxuriance of grain and fruit, allow His children to starve? Go out to-morrow morning at five o'clock into the woods and hear the

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birds chant. They have had no breakfast, they know not where they will dine, they have no idea where they will sup; but here the birds chant at five o'clock in the morning. "Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them; are ye not much better than they?" Seven thousand people in Christ's time went into the desert. They were the most improvident people I ever heard of. They deserved to starve. They might have taken food enough with them to last them until they got back. Nothing did they take. A lad who had more wit than all of them put together asked his mother that morning for some loaves of bread and some fishes. They were put into his satchel. He went out into the desert. From this provision the seven thousand were fed, and the more they ate the larger the loaves grew, until the provision that the boy brought in one satchel was multiplied so he could not have carried the fragments home in six satchels. "Oh!" you say, "times have changed, and the day of miracles has gone." I reply that what God did then by miracle He does now in some other way and by natural laws. "I have been young," said David, "but now am I old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." It is high time that you people who are fretting about worldly circumstances, and who are fearing you are coming to want, understood that the oath of the eternal God is involved in the fact that you are to have enough to eat and to wear.

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Again : I remark that the religion of Jesus Christ is the grandest influence to make a man contented. Indemnity against all financial and spiritual harm. It calms the spirit, dwindles the earth into insignificance, and swallows up the soul with the thought of heaven. Oh, ye who have been going about from place to place expecting to find in change of circumstances something to give solace to the spirit! I commend you this morning to the warm-hearted, earnest, practical, common-sense religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no peace, saith my Lord, for the wicked, and as long as you continue in your sin you will be miserable. Come to God. Make Him your portion, and start for heaven, and you will be a happy man—you will be a happy woman.

Yet, my friends, notwithstanding all these inducements to a spirit of contentment, I have to tell you this morning the human race is divided into two classes—those who scold and those who get scolded. The carpenter wants to be anything but a carpenter, and the mason anything but a mason, and the banker anything but a banker, and the lawyer anything but a lawyer, and the minister anything but a minister; and everybody would be happy if he were only somebody else. The anemone wants to be a sunflower, and the apple orchards throw down their blossoms because they are not tall cedars, and the scow wants to be a schooner, and the sloop would like to be a seventy-four pounder, and parents have the worst children that ever were, and everybody

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has the greatest misfortune, and everything is upside-down, or going to be. Ah, my friends! you never make any advance through such a spirit as that. You cannot fret yourself up; you may fret yourself down. Amid all this grating of tones I strike this string of the gospel harp: "Godliness with contentment is great gain." "We brought nothing into the world, and it is very certain we can carry nothing out; and having food and raiment, let us be therewith content."

Let us all remember, if we are Christians, that we are going, after a while, whatever be our circumstances now, to come to a glorious vacation. As in summer we put off our garments and go down into the cool sea to bathe, so we will put off these garments of flesh, and we will step into the cool Jordan. We will look around for some place to lay down our weariness, and the trees of the grove will say, "Come and rest under our shadow"; and the earth will say, "Come and sleep in my bosom"; and the winds will say, "Hush! while I sing thee a cradle hymn"; and while six strong men carry us out to our last resting-place, and ashes come to ashes and dust to dust, we will see two scarred feet standing amid the broken sod, and a lacerated brow bending over the open earth, while a voice tender with all affection and mighty with omnipotence will declare, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Comfort one another with these words.

THE BATTLE FOR BREAD.

“ And the ravens brought bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening.”—1 *Kings* xvii. 6.

THE ornithology of the Bible is a very interesting study. The stork which knoweth her appointed time ; the sparrows teaching the lesson of God's providence ; the ostriches of the desert, by careless incubation, illustrating the recklessness of parents who do not take enough pains with their children ; the eagle, symbolising riches which take wings and fly away : the pelican, emblemising solitude ; the bat, a flake of the darkness ; the night-hawk, the ossifrage, the cuckoo, the lapwing, the osprey, by the command of God in *Leviticus*, flung out of the world's bill of fare. I should have liked to go with Audubon through the woods, with gun and pencil, bringing down and sketching the fowls of heaven, his unfolded portfolio thrilling all Christendom. What wonderful creatures of God the birds are ! Some of them this morning, like the songs of heaven let loose, bursting through the gates of heaven. Consider their feathers, which are clothing and conveyance at the same time—the nine vertebræ of the neck—the three eyelids to each eye, the third eyelid an extra curtain for graduating the light of the sun. Some of these birds are sca-

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vengers and some of them orchestra. Thank God for quail's whistle and lark's carol and the twitter of the wren, called by the ancients the king of birds, because when the fowls of the heaven went into a contest as to which could fly the highest, and the eagle swung nearest the sun, a wren on the back of the eagle, after the eagle was exhausted, sprang up a mile higher, and so was called by the ancients the king of birds. Consider those of them that have golden crowns and crests, showing them to be feathered imperials. And listen to the humming-bird's serenade in the ear of the honeysuckle. Look at the belted kingfisher, striking like a dart from sky to water. Listen to the voice of the owl, giving the keynote to all croakers. And behold the condor among the Andes, battling with the reindeer. I do not know whether an aquarium or an aviary is the best altar from which to worship God.

There is an incident in my text that baffles all the ornithological wonders of the world. The grain crop had been cut off. Famine was in the land. In a cave by the brook Cherith sat a minister of God, Elijah, waiting for something to eat. Why did he not go to the neighbours? There were no neighbours; it was a wilderness. Why did he not pick some of the berries? There were none. If there had been they would have been dried up. Seated one morning at the mouth of his cave, the prophet looks into the dry and pitiless heavens, and he sees a flock of birds approaching. Oh, if they were only partridges, or if he only had an arrow with which to

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bring them down! But as they come nearer he finds they are not comestible, but unclean, and the eating of them would be spiritual death. The strength of their beak, the length of their wings, the blackness of their colour, their loud, harsh "Cruck! cruck!" prove them to be ravens. They whirl around about the prophet's head, and then they come on fluttering wing and pause on the level of his lips, and one of the ravens brings bread and another raven brings meat; and after they have discharged their tiny cargo they wheel past and others come, until after a while the prophet has enough, and these black servants of the wilderness table are gone. For six months, and some say a whole year, morning and evening, the breakfast and the supper bell sounded as these ravens rang out on the air their "Cruck! cruck!" Where did they get the food? The old Rabbins say they got it from the kitchen of King Ahab. Others say that the ravens got the food from pious Obadiah, who was in the habit of feeding the persecuted. Some say that the ravens brought the food to their young in the trees, and that Elijah had only to climb up and get it. Some say that the whole story is improbable, for these were carnivorous birds, and the food they carried was the torn flesh of living beasts, and that ceremonially unclean; or it was carrion, and it would not have been fit for the prophet. Some say they were not ravens at all, but that the word translated "ravens" in my text ought to have been translated "Arabs"; so it would have read, "The Arabs brought bread and flesh in the morning, and

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bread and flesh in the evening." Anything but admit the Bible to be true. Hew away this miracle until all the miracle is gone. Go on with the depleting process ; but know, my brother, that you are robbing only one man, and that is yourself, of one of the most comforting, beautiful, pathetic, and triumphant lessons in all the ages. I can tell you who these purveyors were ; they were ravens. I can tell you who freighted them with provisions. God. I can tell you who launched them. God. I can tell you who taught them which way to fly. God. I can tell you who told them to what cave to swoop. God. I can tell you who introduced raven to prophet, and prophet to raven. God. There is one passage I will whisper in your ear, for I would not want to utter it aloud, lest some one should drop down under its power: "If any man shall take away from the words of the prophecy of this book, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life and out of the Holy City." While, then, this morning we watch the ravens feeding Elijah, let the swift dove of God's Spirit sweep down the sky with Divine food, and on outspread wing pause at the lip of every soul hungering for comfort.

If I should ask you where is the seat of war to-day, you would say on the Danube. No. That is comparatively a small conflict, even if all Europe should plunge into it. The great conflict to-day is on the Thames, on the Hudson, on the Mississippi, on the Rhine, on the Nile, on the Ganges, on the Hoang-Ho. It is a battle that has been going on for six thousand

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years. The troops engaged in it are twelve hundred millions, and those who have fallen are vaster in numbers than those who march. It is a battle for bread. Sentimentalists sit in a cushioned chair in their pictured study, with slippered feet on a damask ottoman, and say that this world is a great scene of avarice and greed. It does not seem so to me. If it were not for the absolute necessities of the case, nine-tenths of the stores, factories, shops, banking houses of the land would be closed to-morrow. Who is that man delving in the Black Hills, or toiling in a New England factory, or going through a roll of bills in the bank, or measuring a fabric on a counter? He is a champion set forth in behalf of some home circle that has to be cared for; in behalf of some Church of God that has to be supported; in behalf of some asylum of mercy that has to be sustained. Who is that woman bending over the sewing machine, or carrying the bundle, or sweeping the room, or mending the garment, or sweltering at the wash-tub? That is Deborah, one of the Lord's heroines, battling against Amalekitish want which comes down with iron chariot to crush her and hers. The great question with the vast majority of people to-day is not whether the Turkish Sultan or the Russian Czar ought to be helped in this conflict; but it is, "How shall I support my family? How shall I meet my notes? How shall I pay my rent? How shall I give food, clothing, and education to those who are dependent upon me?" Oh, if God would help me to-day to assist you in the solution of

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of that problem, the happiest man in this house would be your preacher. I have gone out on a cold morning with expert sportsmen to hunt for pigeons ; I have gone out on the meadows to hunt for quail ; I have gone out on the marsh to hunt for reed birds ; but this morning I am out for ravens.

Notice, in the first place, in the story of my text, that these winged caterers came to Elijah directly from God. "I have commanded the ravens that they feed thee," we find God saying in an adjoining passage. They did not come out of some other cave. They did not just happen to alight there. God freighted them, God launched them, and God told them by what cave to swoop. That is the same God that is going to supply you. He is your Father. You would have to make an elaborate calculation before you could tell me how many pounds of food and many yards of clothing would be necessary for you and your family ; but God knows without any calculation. You have a plate at His table and you are going to be waited upon, unless you act like a naughty child, and pick and scramble and pound saucily the plate, and try to upset things. God has a vast family, and everything is methodised, and you are going to be served, if you will only wait your turn. God has already ordered all the suits of clothes you will ever need, down to the last suit in which you shall be laid out. God has already ordered all the food you will ever eat, down to the last crumb that will be put in your mouth in the dying sacrament. It may not be just the kind of food or apparel you

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would prefer. The sensible parent depends on his own judgment as to what ought to be the apparel and the food of his child. The child would say, "Give me sugars and confections." "Oh no," says the parent, "you must have something plainer first." The child would say, "Oh, give me these great blotches of colour in the garment." "No," says the parent, "that wouldn't be suitable." Now, God is our Father and we are His children, and He is going to clothe us and feed us, although He may not always yield to our infantile wish for sweets and glitter. These ravens of the text did not bring pomegranates from the glittering platter of King Ahab. They brought bread and meat. God had all the heavens and the earth before Him and under Him, and yet he sends this plain food, because it was best for Elijah to have it. Oh, be strong, my hearer, in the fact that the same God is going to supply you. It is never "hard times" with Him. His ships never break on the rocks. His bank never fails. He has the supply for you, and He has the means for sending it. He has not only the cargo, but the ship. If it were necessary He would swing out from the heavens a flock of ravens reaching from His gate to yours, until the food would be flung down the sky from beak to beak and from talon to talon.

Notice again in this story of the text, that the ravens did not allow Elijah to hoard up a surplus. They did not bring enough on Monday to last all the week. They did not bring enough one morning to last until the next morning. They came twice a

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day and brought just enough for one time. You know as well as I that the great fret of the world is that we want a surplus—we want the ravens to bring enough for fifty years. You have more confidence in the Long Island Bank than you have in the royal bank of heaven. You say, "All that is very poetic; but you may have the black ravens—give me the gold." We had better be content with just enough. If in the morning your family eat up all the food there is in the house, do not sit down and cry, and say, "I don't know where the next meal is coming from." About five, six, or seven o'clock in the evening just look up, and you will see two black spots on the sky, and you will hear the flapping of wings, and you will find Elijah's two ravens, or the two ravens of the Lord, the one bringing bread and the other bringing meat—plumed butcher and baker.

God is infinite in resource. When the city of Rochelle was besieged, and the inhabitants were dying of the famine, the tides washed up on the beach, as never before and as never since, enough shell-fish to feed the whole city. God is good. There is no mistake about that. History tells us that in 1555, in England, there was a great drought. The crops failed; but in Essex, on the rocks, in a place where they had neither sown nor cultivated, a great crop of peas grew until they filled a hundred measures, and there were blossoming vines enough promising as much more. But why go so far? I can give you a family incident. I will tell you a secret that has never been told. Some generations back there was

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a great drought in Connecticut. The water disappeared from the hills, and the farmers living on the hills drove their cattle down towards the valleys and had them supplied at the wells and fountains of the neighbours. But these after a while began to fail, and the neighbours said to Mr. Birdseye, of whom I shall speak, "You must not send your flocks and herds down here any more; our wells are giving out." Mr. Birdseye, the old Christian man, gathered his family at the altar, and with them the slaves of the household—for bondage was then in vogue in Connecticut—and on their knees before God they cried for water; and the family story is that there was great weeping and sobbing at that altar, that the family might not perish for lack of water, and that the herds might not perish. They rose from their knees. Mr. Birdseye, the old man, took his staff and walked out over the hill, and in a place where he had been scores of times without noticing anything particular, he saw the ground was very dark, and he took his staff and turned up the ground, and the water started. And he beckoned to his servants, and they came, and they brought pails and buckets, until all the family and all the flocks and herds were cared for; and then they made troughs reaching from that place down to the house and barn, and the water flowed, and it is a living fountain to-day! Now, I call that old man Elijah, and I call that brook that began to roll then, and is rolling still, the brook Cherith; and the lesson to me and all who hear it is: When you are in great stress

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of circumstances, pray and dig, dig and pray, and pray and dig. How does that passage go? "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My loving-kindness shall not fail." If your merchandise, if your mechanism, if your husbandry fail, look out for ravens. If you have in your despondency put God on trial and condemned Him as guilty of cruelty, I move this morning for a new trial. If the biography of your life is ever written, I will tell you what the first chapter, and the middle, and the last will be about if it [is written accurately. The first about mercy, the middle about mercy, the last about mercy—the mercy that hovered over your cradle; the mercy that will hover over your grave; the mercy that will cover all between.

Again: This story of the text impresses me that relief came to this prophet with the most unexpected and with seemingly impossible conveyance. If it had been a robin redbreast, or a musical meadow lark, or a meek turtle-dove, or a sublime albatross that had brought the food to Elijah, it would not have been so surprising. But no! It was a bird so fierce that we have fashioned one of our most forceful and repulsive words out of it—ravenous. That bird has a passion for picking out the eyes of men and animals; it loves to maul the sick and the dying; it swallows with vulturous gurgle everything it can put its beak on; and yet all the food Elijah gets for six months or a year is from the ravens. So your supply is going to come from an unexpected source. You think some great-hearted, generous man will come

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along and give you his name on the back of your note, or he will go security for you in some great enterprise. No, he will not. God will open the heart of some Shylock toward you. Your relief will come from the most unexpected quarter. The providence that seemed ominous will be to you more than that which seemed auspicious. It will not be a chaffinch, with breast and wing marked with white and brown and chesnut; it will be a black raven.

Here is where we all make our mistake, and that is in regard to the colour of God's providence. A white providence comes to us, and we say, "Oh, it is mercy!" Then a black providence comes toward us, and we say, "Oh, that is a disaster!" The white providence comes to you, and you have great business success, and you have fifty thousand dollars, and you get proud, and you get independent of God, and you begin to feel that the prayer, "Give me this day my daily bread," is inappropriate for you, for you have made provision for a hundred years. Then a black providence comes, and it sweeps everything away, and you begin to pray, and you begin to feel your dependence, and begin to be humble before God, and you cry out for treasures in heaven. The black providence brought you salvation. The white providence brought you ruin. That which seemed to be harsh and fierce and dissonant was your greatest mercy. It was a raven.

There was a child born in your house. All your friends congratulated you. The other children of the

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family and of the neighbourhood stood amazed looking at the new comer. That little one stood with its two feet in the very centre of your sanctuary of affection, and with its two hands it took hold of the altar of your soul. But one day there came one of the three scourges of children—scarlet fever, or croup, or diphtheria—and all that bright scene vanished. The chattering, the strange questions, the pulling at the dress as you crossed the floor—all ceased. As the great Friend of children stooped down and leaned towards that cradle, and took the little one in His arms, and walked away with it into the bower of eternal summer, your eye began to follow Him, and you followed the treasure He carried, and you have been following them ever since; and instead of thinking of heaven only once a week, as formerly, you are thinking of it all the time, and you are more pure and tender-hearted than you used to be, and you are patiently waiting for the daybreak. It is not self-righteousness in you to acknowledge that you are a better woman than you used to be. You are a better woman than you used to be. What was it that brought you the sanctifying blessing? Oh, it was the dark shadow on the nursery; it was the dark shadow on the short grave; it was the dark shadow on your broken heart; it was the brooding of a great black trouble—it was a raven. Dear Lord, teach this people that white providences do not always mean advancement, and that black providences do not do not always mean retrogression.

Children of God, get up out of your despondency.

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The Lord never had so many ravens as He has this morning. Fling your fret and worry to the winds. Sometimes under the vexations of life you feel like my little girl of four years last week, who said, under some childish vexation, "Oh, I wish I could go to heaven and see God and pick flowers!" He will let you go when the right time comes to pick flowers. Until then, whatever you want, pray for. I suppose Elijah prayed pretty much all the time. Tremendous work behind him; tremendous work before him. God has no spare ravens for idlers or for people who are prayerless. I put it in the boldest shape possible, and I am willing to risk my eternity on it: ask God in the right way for what you want, and you shall have it, if it is best for you. Mrs. Jane Pithey, of Chicago, a well-known Christian woman, was left by her husband a widow, with one half-dollar and a cottage. She was palsied, and had a mother ninety years of age to support. The widowed soul every day asked God for all that was needed in the household, and the servant even was astonished at the precision with which God answered the prayers of that woman, item by item. One day, rising from the family altar, the servant said, "You have not asked for coal, and the coal is out." Then they stood and prayed for the coal. One hour after that the servant threw open the door and said, "The coal has come." A generous man, whose name I could give you, had sent—as never before and never since—a supply of coal. You cannot understand it. I do. Ravens! Ravens!

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My friend, you have a right to argue from precedent that God is going to take care of you. Has He not done it two or three times every day? That is most marvellous. I look back and I wonder that God has given me food three times a day regularly all my lifetime, never missing but once, and then I was lost in the mountains; but that very morning and that very night I met the ravens.

Oh, the Lord is so good that I wish all this people would trust Him with the two lives—the life you are now living, and that which every tick of the watch and every stroke of the clock informs you is approaching. Bread for your immortal soul comes to-day. See! They alight on the platform. They alight on the backs of all the pews. They swing among the arches. Ravens! Ravens! “Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled.” To all the sinning and the sorrowing and the tempted, deliverance comes this hour. Look down, and you see nothing but your spiritual deformities. Look back, and you see nothing but wasted opportunity. Cast your eye forward, and you have a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary. But look up, and you behold an interceding Christ, and the face of a pardoning God, and the irradiation of an opening heaven. I hear the whirr of their wings. Do you not feel the rush of the air on your cheek? Ravens! Ravens!

There is only one question I want to ask: “How many of this audience are willing to trust God for the

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supply of their bodies, and trust the Lord Jesus Christ for the redemption of their immortal souls? Amid the clatter of the hoofs and the clang of the wheels of the judgment chariot, the whole matter will be demonstrated.

A CALL TO ACTION.

“So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil.”—*Isa. xli. 7.*

THERE had been war made upon idolatry, and its friends gathered to the scene. The carpenter went to work and cut out idols to take the place of those that had been destroyed, and the blacksmith fashioned parts of the idol on the anvil, and the goldsmith adorned what the other two mechanics had made. “The carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil.” When I read that passage I wondered why it was that in the kingdom of God we could not be just as well banded together—why, since there is work for every Christian man to do, we could not all be encouraging each other; I encouraging you by the way I do my work, and you me by the way in which you do your work, and so, in a spiritual and Christian sense, “the carpenter encouraging the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil.”

I propose in the first place to address myself to those who profess the faith of Christ, and in the next place to address myself to those who profess

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not to be Christians; for, my dear friends, you all profess one thing or the other in regard to the religion of Jesus Christ. I want, before I get through, to point all these Christian men and women to some style of work. I don't believe that a man can be a child of God and have no anxiety about the redemption of the people. I often hear people while they have their arms folded singing :

“ 'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought—
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His or am I not ? ”

Why, it is very easy to have that question decided. If you have no anxiety about the salvation of others you are not a Christian, and you might as well understand it now as ever. Many of you have sworn before high heaven that you will be the Lord's; and before I get through speaking to-night the Holy Spirit will tell you something you ought to do, and it will be at the infinite peril of your immortal soul if you refuse to do it. In the first place, here are the *elders of the church*. It is very plain what their work is. It is your work to help me in watching this great flock. Sickness will come to one of these church members; be there and pray for him. Death will come into some of the households of this congregation; before they have time to put crape on the door-bell, I want you to be there to talk of Jesus who is “the resurrection and the life.” Here is a young man who wants to become a Christian, but he does not know how to start. His father cannot tell him;

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his mother cannot tell him. Take him by the arm, walk with him down the street, and before you leave him be sure his feet are on the road to heaven. You are not called to be a king over a nation; you are not called to be admiral of a navy; you are not called to be general in an army; but God has given you the highest honour—He has put into your hands the keys of the kingdom. Be thou faithful unto death, and Christ will give thee a Crown.

Here are the *deacons of the church*. They ought to be familiar with the dark lanes, and rotten stairs, and the damp cellars of these cities. There are hundreds of sufferers, stretching out their hands for bread. Give it to them. Do you hear the cry of that freezing woman? God give speed to your feet while you buy her coal, and pay her rent, and tell her of that land where they never freeze and never starve. Oh, what a beautiful work that is! A Russian soldier was standing sentinel one cold night; he was almost perishing. A labourer passing along took his coat off and said, "Wear this coat; you will freeze before morning if you don't; I am going home, and will be comfortable." The next morning the Russian soldier was found frozen to death. A few months afterwards the labourer who had given him his coat was dying. In his dream he thought that Jesus came into the room, and he looked around and said, "Jesus, is that you? You have my coat on." "Yes," said Jesus, "It is the coat you gave the Russian soldier that night he froze to death. 'I was naked and ye clothed me.'" Oh the reward of those who

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are faithful to the outcast, and the suffering, and the poor !

Then here are the *trustees of the church*. Let them look after the church finances as well as they look after their own business. Let them know that God backs them up in the work, and that what they do for the church they do for God. In the name of Him who will judge the quick and the dead, I bid you rouse up to that work, the importance of which you will not appreciate until the last day comes, and the books are open.

Then there is the *Sunday-school* field. It is an immense congregation in itself. Oh the work it is doing ! It is waiting for some of you to help. Hark, I hear in the tramp of those little feet the marching of coming generations, and in the hosanna that this afternoon rang in the temple I hear another pæan in the hallelujahs of heaven. Oh, when you close your eyes in the last sleep, do you not want your influence felt in the Church and State ? The lambs on the cold mountains are waiting for you to shepherd them. Do you say they are nothing but little children, and of no great account ? Does it seem a stooping for you to go there ? That child has covered up in the ashes of his body a spark of immortality which will blaze on with untold splendour long after the sun has died of old age and all the countless worlds that glitter at night shall be swept off by the Almighty's breath as the small dust of the threshing-floor. That soul at death will speed quicker than the eagle, swifter than lightning, swifter than thought,

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for ever and for ever upward until lost in God, or plunge down into endless night. You are deciding whether it shall go upward or downward.

Then there is *the praying circle*. Every Friday night you can go there and pluck clusters of life for your own soul and the souls of others. Has any one ever heard you pray? Is it because you are ashamed of your poor grammar or ashamed of Jesus that you have not been heard there? Is it because illiterate men sometimes take part and your taste is offended? Oh, when the long roll of judgment thunders shall wake, the dead and empires of the departed shall rise from the dust, and "Come, ye blessed," and "Depart, ye cursed," shall rend the air, do you think such an excuse as that will stand? Oh, have you been living all these years in this world of trouble, and has no one ever heard you pray? Here is a map of the destitution in our own city. Do you know anything about it? Do we walk through the streets in the morning going to business, and at night returning from business, without any idea of the wretchedness in this city of Brooklyn? Who will enter on this work of city evangelisation? Not those whose nostrils are easily offended with bad odours. Not those whose chief work is to look after a refined taste. Not those who are more fearful of having their patent leathers soiled than that five hundred thousand souls will die. I hear coming up through all the streets of the city a cry of bereavement uncomforted, of drunkenness unpitied, of uncleanness that knows no way of reformation. Behold the gambling hells! Behold

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the grogshops ! Behold the brothels ! Oh, where are the Christian men and women in the strength of Christ to go out and invite the lost, the abandoned, and the debauched back to the heart of an all-forgiving God ? Where are the John Howards to carry light into the dungeons ? Where are the Elizabeth Frys to take the message of heaven to the abandoned ? Where are the Harlan Pages to preach Christ at the street corners ? O Lord Jesus, didst Thou weep over the city, and shall we stand stolidly looking at all this wreck of broken families and broken fortunes and broken hearts ? Weep, O Church of God ! Weep for the children of the street born in the straw, nurtured in infamy, and schooled in shame ! Weep for the victims of evil habits over whom the Juggernaut hath gone grinding into crimson mortar their blood and bones ! Weep for the filth and the squalor and the living sepulchres of metropolitan crime ! What is it I hear ? Hark ! it is the shriek of the dying populations of Brooklyn and New York. They want bread, they want medicine, they want clothes, they want the Bible, they want Christ ! they want heaven. They have no comfort for this life ; they have no hope for the life to come. Wake up ! Wake up ! Why stand ye here all the day idle ? If you can't save a multitude of them, can't you save one ? Is there any soul in this house that cannot go out and during the winter save one ? Remember that he that converteth one sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins. Have not you found your field of work

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yet? Then go down on your knees to-night and refuse to get up until the prayer is answered, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

There must be a field somewhere. Sea captains are generally sympathetic, and when they are going over the water and see a signal of distress hoisted, they bear down upon the ship and take her passengers from the wreck. But there have been cases where these men have been hard-hearted, and seen a signal of distress but paid no attention to it and come into port. How they have been execrated by the sailors and the people of the country! What do you think will be said of us in eternity if it shall be found out that we voyaged on through life only careful about our own comfort, while all around us there were signals of distress lifted, but we cared not for the suffering, and were not moved by the cry of the eternally shipwrecked! Ah, is there no work for you to do? Join some of the regiments; belong to the artillery or the cavalry or the infantry of the church. Do you know that God will have no mercy upon you in your death-hour, and no compassion in eternity, if, while professing to be a Christian, you sit idly and let the people perish? You shall not dwell among the Christian workers. Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion!

I am glad to know that so many of these people are coming up to the work of the Lord—that so many are enlisted, hundreds more this year than last year—and yet I shall not be satisfied until I see every man and woman belonging to this church thoroughly en-

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listed for the Lord. Come, my friends, do what you can. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and knowing that in judgment you and I must give an account before God, I charge you to gather up all your energies of body and mind and soul, and unite them in one direction in behalf of Christ's kingdom, Oh, it is a great service. I want you to understand, you Christians, who are drones in the hive, doing nothing, that you are missing your chief satisfaction. Look at the life of a man who serves God and of one who serves the world. Look at Albert Barnes and Lord Byron—the former enjoying the service of Christ so much that his cheerfulness was everywhere known; the latter miserable all his days, becoming more miserable to the last, and then his soul going out into darkness for ever. You will have to do it quickly, if you do anything¹ for Jesus. Some of you will be dead before this year is ended. “What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no knowledge, nor wisdom, nor device in the grave whither we are all hastening.”

But now the rest of my remarks are to those who profess not to be Christians. I do not want to sweep the gospel net through this audience to-night and catch two or three souls, but to catch a thousand. I want to ask you why it is that you have not become Christians? There is a man who says, “Because I am waiting for a revival before I come to Christ.” What do you call this? During the past few years we have had a perpetual revival. The constant cry among the people has been, “Which is the way to

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heaven?" Why is it that the silence in our assemblages makes it seem as if the audience were listening for the footsteps of Christ on the church aisle? Oh! if you have been waiting for a revival, it has come, not by earthquake, or storm, but by a still small voice, and a deep surging to and fro of heartfelt emotion. The tide sets in towards the beach, and all you have to do is to let yourselves float in on the billow. God to-night shakes at the door of your soul. Whether you listen to me or not, whatever may have been the motive that brought you here to-night, whether you like my preaching or not, the Lord God Almighty this moment rattles at the door of your soul. Hear Him, feel Him, know Him, the Lord God merciful and gracious; the Lord infinite and omnipotent; the Lord of the Pentecost; the Lord of the judgment day; the Lord that came down on Northampton when Jonathan Edwards was there; the Lord that came down on Monmouth when William Tennent preached there; the Lord who was at Baskingridge when Dr. Finlay dwelt there. Old prejudices are going away, and lips that never prayed before begin to move in supplication. Oh that, instead of hiding your feelings and holding yourselves back, there might be an outbreak of religious sensibility that would sweep all before it! Would to God that prayers that have been offered for some of your souls by those gone to glory might this night be answered! O dying soul, fly to Jesus.

There are some of you who say you are kept back by your worldly engagements. You say, "I have

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so much to do." Oh, my dear brethren, will you let your store, your office, your shop stand between you and heaven? What will Wall Street, or Broadway, or Fulton Street, or Atlantic Street, or any street in Brooklyn or New York, be to you in a little while, except as a pathway on which to go out to the cemetery? Among the thousands who rush through the gates at Fulton Ferry, South Ferry, Catharine Ferry, and Grand Street Ferry, your face will not be seen. You will leave behind your bonds, your mortgages, your bills of sale, your government securities, and with two empty hands you will go out of this life into the great eternity. O my God! show that man the folly of letting anything stand between him and heaven! Think of a man leaving this life, where he has had everything comfortable, saying, "I had an elegant home, beautiful surroundings, large storehouses, extensive business engagements—I had everything that heart could wish; and now I come up to the verge of the eternal world and I must go down. Look at me, all ye friends who mingled with me in worldly associations; look at me, all ye business men who stood with me in the marts; look at me as now I leap out from a world of comfort into a world of darkness—one, two, three! and I am gone for ever." There is somebody in the audience who says, "I am afraid some one will laugh at me if I become a Christian." Would you want to let anybody know you wept over sin? Wouldn't it be infinite mortification if anybody should find you on your knees? Will you allow your

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soul to be caught in such a thin trap as human scorn? Can these people who laugh at your seriousness insure you for the future? Can they bridge the chasm between this world and the next, and open for you the gate into the skies? If so, let this religion of Christ go down under a volley of merriment. But they can't help you, and you know they can't. When the earth crackles in the last fire, and the mountains crash into ruin, and the throne of judgment shall be set, white, flaming, omnipotent, what will be all this laughing and jeering of your associates? I beg you break away from this thralldom of evil companionship. Say to them, "Let me go. You may do as you please, but I must save my own soul. This night I start for heaven. Farewell, thou lying, deceitful world. Welcome, Jesus! welcome, heaven!"

There may be in this audience some young people who say, "We are too young yet. Wait a little while till after we have enjoyed the world more, and then we will become Christians." I ask any young man if that is fair, to sit down at a banquet all your life long, and have everything you want, and then at the close, when you are utterly exhausted, say, "Lord Jesus, there are dregs in that cup; you may drink them. Lord Jesus, there are crumbs under the table; you may take them up"? Is that fair to the best Friend you ever had? Why not rather join the noble company of young people in this church who have started for heaven? Did you not hear them sing to-night? Don't you know there is no shadow upon their brows, that they can laugh as

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loudly as you can? Since they became Christians they have quadrupled their joy. They bound on the way to heaven, their hearts glad, their prospects bright, their plans noble. Won't you join them in that race? Give the strength of your arm, the exuberance of your soul, the energy of your whole nature, to Him who was Himself once a young man and knows a young man's joys, and a young man's temptations. Jesus was never anything but a young man on earth, and He knows all about you. O young man, trust yourself in His company.

I hear Jesus saying to that young man, "Son, give Me thy heart;" and I hear Him calling to some young woman as to the maiden in the Scripture, "Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise." Oh that it might be like the crowning of a May Queen, as the garlands of God come down upon the brows of these dear young people!

I hear some one say, "I am too old." Alas! how old art thou? Seventy? Eighty? That is not too old. If thou canst not do any more than tremble towards the Cross, if thou art too weak to-night to hold thy staff, if all thy soul seems to be bound down with sorrow, just stumble thy way and put thy withered arms around that Cross, and life, and joy, and pardon, and peace, and salvation will come to you. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. No, you are not too old. I hear some one say, "Give me more time to think of this." What is time? We wrote compositions upon it in school; but what is time?

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It is a very swift wheel, and it goes round sixty times in a minute, and every time it turns it hurls souls into eternity. Oh, what an uncertain thing life is ! Where we will be by to-morrow at just this hour, I know not. Would I give up my hope in Christ till six o'clock to-morrow morning ? If I should, what if between now and six o'clock my soul should be carried into eternity—whither would I go ? Life uncertain ? Why, it is more certain which way a wave will break, or a cloud float, or a bird fly than it is certain when our last change will come. Are we ready for it ? I have often read of persons who floated off in a life-boat after a wreck, and for three or four days had nothing to eat, and then through complete exhaustion would fall asleep and dream about cool fountains and shady groves full of ripe apples, and about sitting around a luxuriant banquet ; and then waking up from the dream to find nothing but the boat and the hunger and the thirst. O ye who are voyaging on in life, dreaming of heaven, of the fruits, of the tree of life, of heavenly supplies, will you ever get them ? Or will any of you wake up at the last as from a dream to find nothing but darkness and hunger and thirst and woe ? I wish I could batter down to-night the last obstacle in the way of your coming to God. “As I live,” saith the Lord, “I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth.” Turn ye ! why will ye die ? You read in this Bible that the Israelites were all surrounded ; there was the Red Sea before them and mountains on either side, and Pharaoh's host right after them. You are

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as thoroughly surrounded—eternity before you, eternity behind you, eternity on the right hand, and eternity on the left hand, eternity above you, eternity beneath you. O eternity! What glory and despair! What hallelujahs and wailing! What glittering of crowns and rattling of chains! Eternity! Where will we spend it? Who will be our companions? What will be our occupation? Eternity! Eternity! O shoreless sea! O interminable procession! O unending years! Eternity! Who can count thy joys? Who can tell thy tears?

Standing here to-night I am overwhelmed utterly with the thought that in a very little while we will all be gone into that other existence. Some one else will stand here to speak and others will sit there to hear, and the thought comes over me overwhelmingly. There is an old hymn I heard sung when I was seven years of age, in a country prayer-meeting. I never had a hymn produce such an effect on my mind as that. There are hymns more jubilant and some more rousing, and there may be hymns that have more rhythm, but I never heard any hymn that so touched my soul as that one. I think I can recollect two or three verses :

“Eternity! stupendous theme!
Compared herewith our life's a dream.
Eternity! oh, awful sound!
A deep where all our thoughts are drowned.

“But an eternity there is
Of dreadful woe or joyful bliss;
And, swift as time fulfils its round,
We to eternity are bound.


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**“What countless millions of mankind
Have left this fleeting world behind!
They're gone—but where? Ah! pause and see;
Gone to a long eternity.**

**“Ye gracious souls, with joy look up;
In Christ rejoice, your glorious hope.
This everlasting bliss secures,
God and eternity are yours.”**

THE MINISTRY OF TEARS.

“ God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”—*Rev.* vii. 17.

 FEW days ago, riding across a Western prairie, wildflowers up to the hub of the carriage wheel, and while a long distance from any shelter, there came a sudden shower, and while the rain was falling in torrents the sun was shining as brightly as ever. I saw it shine, and I thought, “What a beautiful spectacle this is!” So the tears of the Bible are not midnight storm, but rain on panned prairies in God’s sweet and golden sunlight. You remember that bottle which David labelled as containing tears, and Mary’s tears, and Paul’s tears, and Christ’s tears, and the harvest of joy that is to spring from the sowing of tears. God mixes them. God rounds them. God shows them where to fall. God exhales them. A census is taken of them, and there is a record as to the moment when they are born and as to the place of their grave. Tears of bad men are not kept. Alexander in his sorrow had the hair clipped from his horses and mules, and made a great ado about his grief; but in the vases of heaven there is not one of Alexander’s tears. I speak of the tears of the good. Alas! they are

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falling all the time. In summer you sometimes hear the growling thunder, and you see there is a storm miles away, but you know from the drift of the cloud that it will not come anywhere near you. So, though it may be all bright around about us, there is a shower of trouble somewhere all the time. You think it is the cannonading that you hear along the banks of the Danube. No. It is the thunder of clouds of trouble over the groaning hospitals and over the desolated Russian and Turkish homes. Tears! Tears!

What is the use of them, anyhow? Why not substitute laughter? Why not make this a world where all the people are well, and eternal strangers to pains and aches? What is the use of an Eastern storm when we might have a perpetual nor'wester? When a family is put together, why not have them all stay, or if they must be transplanted to make other homes, then have them all live, the family record telling a story of marriages and births, but of no deaths? Why not have the harvests chase each other without fatiguing toil, and all our homes afflicted? Why the hard pillow, the hard crust, the hard struggle? It is easy enough to explain a smile, or a success, or a congratulation; but come, now, and bring all your dictionaries, and all your philosophies, and all your religions, and help me this morning to explain a tear. A chemist will tell you that it is made up of salt and lime, and other component parts; but he misses the chief ingredients—the acid of a soured life, the viperan sting of a bitter memory,

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the fragments of a broken heart. I will tell you what a tear is. It is agony in solution.

Hear me, then, this morning while I discourse to you of the ministry of tears, and of the ending of that ministry, when God shall wipe them all away.

First, it is the ministry of tears *to keep this world from being too attractive*. Something must be done to make us willing to quit this existence. If it were not for trouble, this world would be a good enough heaven for me. You and I would be willing to take a lease of this life for a hundred million years if there were no trouble. The earth cushioned and upholstered and pillared and chandeliered with such an expanse, no story of other worlds could enchant us. We would say, "Let well enough alone. If you want to die, and have your body disintegrated in the dust, and your soul go out on a celestial adventure, then you can go; but this world is good enough for me." You might as well go to a man who has just entered the Louvre, at Paris, and tell him to hasten off to the picture galleries of Venice or Florence. "Why?" he would say; "what is the use of my going there? There are Rembrandts and Rubens and Raphaels here that I haven't looked at yet." No man wants to go out of this world, or out of any house until he has a better house. To cure this inordinate wish to stay here, God must somehow create a disgust for our surroundings. How shall He do it? He cannot afford to deface His horizon, or to tear off a fiery panel from the sunset, or to subtract an anther from the water-lily, or to banish the pungent aroma from

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the mignonette, or to drag the robes of the morning in the mire. You cannot expect a Christopher Wren to mar his own St. Paul's Cathedral, or a Michael Angelo to dash out his own "Last Judgment," or a Handel to discard his "Israel in Egypt," and you cannot expect God to spoil the architecture and music of His own world. How, then, are we to be made willing to leave? Here is where trouble comes in. After a man has had a good deal of trouble he says, "Well, I am ready to go. If there is a house somewhere whose roof doesn't leak, I would like to live there. If there is an atmosphere somewhere that doesn't distress the lungs, I would like to breathe it. If there is a society somewhere where there is no tittle-tattle, I would like to live there. If there is a home circle somewhere where I can find my lost friends, I would like to go there." He used to read the first part of the Bible chiefly; now he reads the last part of the Bible chiefly. Why has he changed Genesis for Revelation? Ah! he used to be anxious chiefly to know how this world was made, and all about its geological construction. Now he is chiefly anxious to know how the next world was made, and how it looks, and who live there, and how they dress. He reads Revelation ten times now where he reads Genesis once. The old story, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," does not thrill him half so much as the other story, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." The old man's hand trembles as he turns over this apocalyptic leaf, and he has to take out his handkerchief to wipe his

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spectacles. That book of revelation is a prospectus now of the country into which he is soon to immigrate—the country in which he has lots already laid out, and avenues opened, and trees planted, and mansions built. The thought of that blessed place this morning comes over me mightily, and I declare that if this tabernacle were a great ship, and you all were passengers on board it, and one hand could launch that ship into the glories of heaven, I should be tempted to take the responsibility and launch you all into glory with one stroke, holding on to the side of the boat until I could get in myself! And yet there are people here this morning to whom this world is brighter than heaven. Well, dear souls, I do not blame you. It is natural. But after a while you will be ready to trade. It was not until Job had been worn out with bereavements, and carbuncles, and a pest of a wife, that he wanted to see God. It was not until the prodigal got tired of living among the hogs that he wanted to go to his father's house. It is the ministry of trouble to make this world worth less and heaven worth more.

Again: It is the ministry of trouble *to make us feel our complete dependence upon God.* King Alphonso said that if he had been present at the Creation, he could have made a better world than this. What a pity he was not present! I do not know what God will do when some men die. Men think they can do anything, until God shows them that they can do nothing at all. We lay out our great plans and we like to execute them; it looks big. God comes

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and takes us down. As Prometheus was assaulted by his enemy, when the lance struck him it opened a great swelling that had threatened his death, and he got well. So it is the arrow of trouble that lets out great swellings of pride. We never feel our dependence upon God until we get trouble. I was riding with my little child along a road, and she asked if she might drive. I said, "Certainly." I handed over the reins to her, and I had to admire the glee with which she drove. But after a while we met a team, and we had to turn out. The road was narrow and it was sheer down on both sides. She handed the reins over to me and said, "I think you had better take charge of the horse." So we are all children, and on this road of life we like to drive. It gives one such an appearance of superiority and power. It looks big. But after a while we meet some obstacle and have to turn out, and the road is narrow and it is sheer down on both sides, and then we are willing that God should take the reins and drive. Ah, my friends! we get upset so often because we do not hand over the reins soon enough. Can you not tell when you hear a man pray whether he has ever had any trouble? I can. The cadence, the phraseology indicate it. Why do women pray better than men? Because they have had more trouble. Before a man has had any trouble his prayers are poetic, and he begins away up among the sun, moon, and stars, and gives the Lord a deal of astronomical information that must be highly gratifying. He then comes down gradually over beautiful table-lands of

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“for ever and ever, Amen.” But after a man has had trouble, prayer is with him a taking hold of the arm of God and crying out for help.

I have heard earnest prayers on two or three occasions that I remember. Once on the Cincinnati express train, going at forty miles the hour, the train jumped the track, and we were near a chasm eighty feet deep, and the men who a few minutes before had been swearing and blaspheming God, began to pull and jerk at the bell-rope, and got up on the backs of the seats, and cried out, “O God, save us!” There was another time, about eight hundred miles out at sea on a foundering steamer, after the last lifeboat had been split finer than kindling wood. They prayed then. Why is it you so often hear people in reciting the last experience of some friend say, “He made the most beautiful prayer I ever heard”? What makes it beautiful? It is the earnestness of it. Oh! I tell you a man is in earnest when his stripped and naked soul wades out in the boundless, shoreless, bottomless ocean of eternity. It is trouble, my friends, that makes us feel our dependence upon God. We do not know our own weakness or God’s strength until the last plank breaks. It is contemptible in us, when there is nothing else to take hold of, that we catch hold of God only. A man is unfortunate in business. He has to raise a great deal of money and raise it quickly. He borrows on word and note all he can borrow. After a while he puts a mortgage on his house. After a while he puts a second mortgage on his house. Then he puts a lien

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on his furniture. Then he makes over his life insurance. Then he assigns all property. Then he goes to his father-in-law and asks for help! Well, having failed everywhere, completely failed, he gets down on his knees, and says, "O Lord, I have tried everybody and everything—now help me out of this financial trouble!" He makes God the last resort instead of the first resort. These are men who have paid ten cents on a dollar, who could have paid a hundred cents on a dollar if they had gone to God in time. Why, you do not know who the Lord is. He is not an autocrat, seated far up in a palace, from which He emerges once a year, preceded by heralds swinging swords to clear the way. No; but a Father, willing at our call to stand by us in every crisis and predicament of life. I tell you what some of you business men make me think of. A young man goes off from home to earn his fortune. He goes with his mother's consent and benediction. She has large wealth, but he wants to make his own fortune. He goes far away, falls sick, gets out of money. He sends to the hotel-keeper where he is staying, asking for lenience, and the answer he gets is, "If you don't pay up Saturday night, you will be removed to the hospital." The young man sends to a comrade in the same building. No help. He writes to a banker who was a friend of his deceased father. No relief. He writes to an old schoolmate, but gets no help. Saturday night comes, and he is moved to the hospital. Getting there, he is frenzied with grief, and he borrows a sheet of paper and a

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postage stamp, and he sits down and he writes home, saying, "Dear mother, I am sick unto death. Come!" It is ten minutes to ten when she gets the letter. At ten o'clock the train starts. She is five minutes from the depôt. She gets there in time to have five minutes to spare. She wonders why a train that can go thirty miles per hour cannot go sixty miles per hour. She rushes into the hospital. She says, "My son, what does all this mean? Why didn't you send for me? You sent for everybody but for me. You knew I could help you. Is this the reward I get for my kindness to you always?" She bundles him up, takes him home, and gets him well very soon.

Now, some of you treat God just as that young man treated his mother. When you get in financial perplexity, you call on the banker, you call on the broker, you call on your creditors, you call on your lawyer for legal counsel, you call upon everybody; and when you cannot get any help, then you go to God. You say, "O Lord, I come to Thee. Help me now out of my perplexity!" and the Lord comes, though it is the eleventh hour. He says, "Why did you not send for Me before? As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." It is to throw us back upon an all-comforting God that we have this ministry of tears.

Again: It is the ministry of tears to *capacitate us for the office of sympathy*. The priests, under the old dispensation, were set apart by having water sprinkled on their hands, feet, and heads; and by the sprinkling

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of tears people are now set apart to the office of sympathy. When we are in prosperity, we like to have a great many young people around us, and we laugh when they laugh, and we romp when they romp, and we sing when they sing; but when we have trouble we like plenty of old folks around. Why? They know how to talk. Take an aged mother, seventy years of age, and she is almost omnipotent in comfort. Why? She has been through it all. At seven o'clock in the morning she goes over to a young mother who has just lost her babe. Grandmother knows all about that trouble. Fifty years ago she felt it. At twelve o'clock of that day she goes over to comfort a widowed soul. She knows all about that. She has been walking in that dark valley twenty years. At four o'clock in the afternoon some one knocks at the door wanting bread. She knows all about that. Two or three times in her life she came to her last loaf. At ten o'clock that night she goes over to sit up with some one severely sick. She knows all about it. She knows all about fevers, and pleurisies, and broken bones. She has been doctoring all her life—spreading plasters and pouring out bitter drops, and shaking up hot pillows and contriving things to tempt a poor appetite. Drs. Abernethy, and Rush, and Hosack, and Harvey were great doctors; but the greatest doctor the world ever saw is an old Christian woman. Dear me! do we not remember her about the room when we were sick in our boyhood? Was there any one who could ever so touch a sore without hurting it? And when

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she raised her spectacles against her wrinkled forehead, so she could look closer at the wound, it was three-fourths healed. And when the Lord took her home, although you may have been men and women thirty, forty, fifty years of age, you lay on the coffin lid and sobbed as though you were only five or ten years of age. O man! praise God if, instead of looking back to one of these berouged and bespangled old people, fixed up of the devil to look young, you have in your memory the picture of an honest, sympathetic, kind, self-sacrificing, Christlike mother. Oh, it takes these people who have had trouble to comfort others in trouble. Where did Paul get the ink with which to write his comforting epistle? Where did David get the ink to write his comforting Psalms? Where did John get the ink to write his comforting Revelation? They got it out of their own tears. When a man has gone through the curriculum, and has taken a course of dungeons and imprisonments and shipwrecks, he is qualified for the work of sympathy.

When I began to preach, I used to write out all my sermons, and I sometimes have great curiosity to look at the sermons I used to preach on trouble. They were nearly all poetic and in semiblank verse; but God knocked the blank verse out of me long ago, and I have found out that I cannot comfort people except as I myself have been troubled. God make me the son of consolation to the people! I would rather be the means of soothing one perturbed spirit to-day, than to play a tune that would set all the

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sons of mirth reeling in the dance. I am an herb doctor. I put in the caldron the root out of dry ground without form or comeliness. Then I put in the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley. Then I put into the caldron some of the leaves from the Tree of Life, and the branch that was thrown into the wilderness Marah. Then I pour in the tears of Bethany and Golgotha, then I stir them up. Then I kindle under the caldron a fire made out of the wood of the Cross; and one drop of that potion will cure the worst sickness that ever afflicted a human soul. Mary and Martha shall receive their Lazarus from the tomb. The damsel *shall* rise. And on the darkness shall break the morning, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes. You know on a well-spread table the food becomes more delicate to the last. I have fed you this morning with the bread of consolation. Let the table now be cleared, and let us set on the chalices of heaven. "Oh!" says some wise critic in the audience, "the Bible contradicts itself. It intimates again and again that there are to be no tears in heaven; and if there be no tears in heaven, how is it possible that God will wipe any away?" I answer, Have you never seen a child crying one moment and laughing the next, and while she was laughing you saw the tears still on her face? And perhaps you stopped her in the very midst of her resumed glee and wiped off those delayed tears. So I think, after the heavenly raptures have come upon us, there may be the mark of some earthly grief; and while those tears are glittering in the light

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of the jasper sea, God will wipe them away. How well He can do that! Jesus had enough trial to make Him sympathetic with all trial. The shortest verse in the Bible tells the story—"Jesus wept." The scar on the back of either hand, the scar on the arch of either foot, the row of scars along the line of the hair, will keep all heaven thinking. I do not know but some day Christ may throw off His robe and lay it over the side of the throne, and point to the laceration on His shoulders, showing where the ploughers ploughed upon His back and made long their furrows. Oh! that great weeper is just the one to silence all earthly trouble and wipe out all stains of earthly grief. Gentle! Why, His step is softer than the step of the dew. It will not be a tyrant bidding an incarcerated wretch hush up his howling. It will be a Father who will take you on His left arm, His face gleaming into your face, while with the soft tips of the fingers of the right hand He shall wipe away all tears from your eyes. I have noticed when the children get hurt and their mother is away from home, they always come to me for comfort and sympathy; but I have noticed when the children get hurt and their mother is at home, they go right past me and to her; I am of no account. So when the soul comes up into heaven out of the wounds of this life, it will not stop to look for Paul, or Moses, or David, or John. These did very well once, but now the soul shall rush past, crying, "Where is Jesus? Where is Jesus?" Dear Lord, what a magnificent thing to die, if Thou shalt thus

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wipe away our tears! Methinks it will take us some time to get used to heaven. The fruits of God without one speck. The fresh pastures without one nettle. The orchestra without one snapped string. The river of gladness without one torn bank. The solferinos and the saffron of sunrise and sunset swallowed up in the eternal day that beams from God's countenance!

“Why should I wish to linger in the wild,
When Thou art wailing, Father, to receive Thy child?”

Sirs, if we could get any appreciation of what God has in reserve for us, it would make us so homesick we would be unfit for our every-day work. A few days ago, Professor Leonard, in Iowa University, put in my hands a meteoric stone—a stone thrown off from some other world to this. How suggestive it was to me! And I have to tell you the best representations we have of heaven are only aërolites flung off from that world which rolls on bearing the multitudes of the redeemed. We analyse these aërolites and find them crystallisations of tears. No wonder flung off from heaven. “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Have you any appreciation this morning of the good and glorious times your friends are having in heaven? How different it is when they get news there of a Christian's death from what it is here! It is the difference between embarkation and coming into port. Everything depends upon which side of the river you stand when you hear of a Christian's

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death. If you stand on this side of the river, you mourn that they go. If we stand on the other side of the river, you rejoice that they come. Oh the difference between a funeral on earth and a jubilee in heaven—between *requiem* here and triumphal march there—parting here and re-union there. Together! Have you thought of it? They are together. Not one of your departed friends in one land and another in another land; but together in different rooms of the same house—the house of many mansions. Together! I never appreciated that thought so much as the day before yesterday, when we laid away in her last slumber my sister Sarah. Standing there in the village cemetery, I looked around and said, “There is father, there is mother, there is grandfather, there is grandmother, here are whole circles of kindred;” and I thought to myself, “together in the grave—together in glory.” I am so impressed with the thought, that I do not think it is any fanaticism, when some one is going from this world to the next, if you make them the bearer of despatches to your friends who are gone, saying, “Give my love to my parents—give my love to my children—give my love to my old comrades who are in glory, and tell them I am trying to fight the good fight of faith, and I will join them after awhile.” I believe the message will be delivered, and I believe it will increase the gladness of those who are before the throne. Together are they, all their tears gone. No trouble getting good society for them. All kings, queens, princes, and princesses. In 1751 there was

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a bill offered in the English Parliament proposing to change the almanack so that the first of March should come immediately after the eighteenth of February. But oh, what a glorious change in the calendar when all the years of your earthly existence are swallowed up in the eternal year of God!

My friends, take this good cheer home with you. Those tears of bereavement that course your cheek, and of persecution, and of trial are not always to be there. The motherly hand of God will wipe them all away. What is the use, on the way to such a consummation—what is the use of fretting about anything? Oh, what an exhilaration it ought to be in Christian work!

See you the pinnacles against the sky? It is the city of our God, and we are approaching it. Oh, let us be busy in the few days that shall remain for us. The Saxons and the Britons went out to battle. The Saxons were all around, the Britons had no weapons at all, and yet history tells us the Britons got the victory. Why? They went into battle shouting three times "hallelujah!" And at the third shout of "hallelujah" their enemies fled panic-struck, and so the Britons got the victory. And, my friends, if we could only appreciate the glories that are to come, we would be so filled with enthusiasm that no power of earth or hell could stand before us; and at our first shout the opposing forces would begin to tremble, and at our second shout they would begin to fall back, and at our third shout they would be routed for ever. There is no power on earth or in

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hell that could stand before three such volleys of hallelujah.

I put this balsam on the recent wounds in my congregation. Death has swung a sharp, keen sword through this church since I have been gone. I was not here to comfort you then. I try to comfort you to-day. Rejoice at the thought of what your departed friends have got rid of, and that you have a prospect of so soon making your own escape. Bear cheerfully the ministry of tears, and exult at the thought that soon it is to be ended.

“There we shall march up the heavenly street,
And ground our arms at Jesus' feet.”

THE VISIT OF THE QUEEN.

“ Behold the half was not told me.”—1 *Kings* xi. 7.

SOLOMON had resolved that Jerusalem should be the centre of all sacred, regal, and commercial magnificence. He set himself to work and monopolised the Syrian desert as a highway for his caravans. He built the city of Palmyra around one of the principal wells of the East, so that all the long trains of merchandise from the East were obliged to stop there, pay toll, and leave a part of their wealth in the hands of Solomon's merchants. He named the fortress Thapsacus, at the chief ford of the Euphrates, and put under guard everything that that passed there. The three great products of Palestine—wine, pressed from the richest clusters, and celebrated all the world over; oil, which in that hot country was the entire substitute for butter and lard, and was pressed from the olive branches until every rock in the country became an oil well; and honey, which was the entire substitute for sugar—these three great products of the country Solomon exported, and received in return fruits, precious woods, and the metals and the animals of every clime. He went down to Ezion-geber, ordered a

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fleet of ships to be constructed, oversaw the workmen, watched the launching of the flotilla which was to go out on more than a year's voyage to bring the wealth of the then known world. He heard that the Egyptian horses were large, and swift, and long-maned, and round-limbed, and he resolved to purchase them, giving eighty-five dollars a piece for them, putting the best of these horses in his own stalls, and selling the surplus to foreign potentates at a great profit. He heard that there was the best of lumber on Mount Lebanon, and he sent out a hundred and eighty thousand men to hew down the forest, drag the lumber through the mountain gorges, construct it into rafts to be floated to Joppa, and from thence drawn by ox-teams twenty-five miles across the land to Jerusalem. He heard that there were beautiful flowers in other lands. He sent for them, planted them in his own gardens, and to this very day there are flowers found in the ruins of that city such as are to be found in no other part of Palestine, the lineal descendants of the very flowers that Solomon planted. He heard that in foreign groves there were birds of richest voice and most luxuriant wing. He sent out people to catch them and bring them there, and he put them into his cages.

Stand back, now, and see this long train of camels coming up to the king's gate, and the ox-trains from Joppa—gold and silver and precious stones, and beasts of every hoof, and bird of every wing, and fish of every scale. See the peacocks strut under the cedars, and the horsemen run, and the chariots

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wheel. Hark to the orchestra. Gaze upon the dance. Not stopping to look into the wonders of the temple, step right on to the causeway and pass up to Solomon's palace. Here we find ourselves amid a collection of buildings on which the king had lavished the wealth of many empires. The genius of Hiram, the architect, and of the other artists, is here seen in the long line of corridors and the suspending gallery and the porch and the throne. Traceried window opposite traceried window; bronzed adornments bursting into lotus and lily pomegranate; chapiters surrounded by network of leaves in which imitation fruits seemed suspended as in hanging baskets; tree branches—so Josephus tells us—tree branches sculptured on the marble so thin and subtle that even the leaves seemed to quiver; a laver capable of holding five hundred barrels of water resting on six hundred brazen ox-heads which gushed with water and filled the whole place with coolness and crystalline brightness and musical splash. Ten tables chased with chariot-wheel and lion and cherubim. Solomon sat on a throne of ivory. At the sitting-place of the throne imitation of hands came out to receive the king. There were six steps that mounted to the throne, on each end of each of the steps a brazen lion. Why, my friends, in that palace they trimmed their candles with snuffers of gold, and they cut their fruits with knives of gold, and they washed their faces in basins of gold, and they scooped out the ashes with shovels of gold, and they stirred the altar fires with tongs of gold. Gold reflected in the water;

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gold flashed from the apparel; gold blazing in the crown—gold! gold! gold! Of course the news of the affluence of that place went out everywhere, by every caravan and by the wing of every ship, until the streets of Jerusalem are crowded with curiosity-seekers. What is that long procession approaching Jerusalem? I think from the pomp of it there must be royalty in the train. I smell the breath of the spices which are brought as presents, and I hear the shout of drivers, and I see the dust-covered caravan, showing that they have come from far away. Cry the news up to the palace. The Queen of Sheba advances. Let all the people come out to see. Let the mighty men of the land come out on the palace corridors. Let Solomon himself come down the stairs of the palace before the Queen has alighted. Shake out the cinnamon, and the saffron, and the calamus, and the frankincense, and pass it into the treasure-house. Take up the diamonds until they glitter in the sun. The Queen of Sheba alights. She enters the palace. She washes at the bath. She sits down at the banquet. The cup-bearers bow. The meats smoke. The music trembles along the hall and through the corridors until it mingles in the dash of the water from the molten seas. Then she rises from the banquet, and she walks through the conservatories, and she gazes on the architecture, and she asks Solomon many strange questions, and she learns about the religion of the Hebrews, and she then and there becomes a servant of the Lord God. She is overwhelmed. She begins to think that all

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the spices she brought, and all the talmug trees which were intended to be turned into harps and psalteries and into railings for the causeway between the temple and the palace, and the one hundred and eighty thousand dollars in money—she begins to think that all these presents amount to nothing in such a place, and she is almost ashamed that she has brought them, and she says within herself, “I heard a great deal about this place and about this wonderful religion of the Hebrews, but I find it is far beyond my highest anticipations. It exceeds everything that I could have expected; the half, the half was not told me.”

Learn first from this subject what a beautiful thing it is when *social position and wealth surrender themselves* to God. When religion comes to a neighbourhood, the first to receive it are the women. Austere men say it is because they are weak-minded. I say it is because they have quicker perception of what is right, more ardent affection, and capacity for sublimer emotion. After the women have received the gospel, then all the distressed and the poor of both sexes—those who have no friends—accept Jesus. Last of all come the people of affluence and high social position. Alas that it is so! If there are those here to-night who have been favoured of fortune, or, as I might better put it, favoured of God, surrender all you have and all you expect to be to the Lord who blessed this Queen of Sheba. Certainly you are not ashamed to be found in this queen's company. I am glad that Christ has had His imperial friends in all ages. Elizabeth

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Christina, Queen of Prussia; Marie Federovna, Queen of Russia; Marie Lackinska, Empress of France; Helena, the imperial mother of Constantine; Arcadia from her great fortunes building public baths in Constantinople, and toiling for the elevation of the masses; Queen Clotilda, leading her husband and three thousand of his armed warriors to Christian baptism; Elizabeth of Burgundy giving her jewelled glove to a beggar, and scattering great fortunes among the distressed; Prince Albert singing "Rock of Ages" in Windsor Castle; and Queen Victoria, *incognito*, reading the Scriptures to a dying pauper. I bless God that the day is coming when royalty will bring all its thrones, and music all its harmonies, and painting all its pictures, and sculpture all its statuary, and architecture all its pillars, and conquest all its sceptres, and the queens of the earth in long line of advance, frankincense filling the air, and the camels laden down with gold shall approach Jerusalem, and the gates shall be opened, and the great burden of splendour shall be lifted into the palace of this greater than Solomon.

Again: My subject teaches me *what is earnestness in the search of truth*. Do you know where Sheba was? It was in Abyssinia, or some say in the southern part of Arabia Felix. In either case it was a great way off from Jerusalem. To get from there to Jerusalem you have to cross a country infested with bandits, and go across blistering deserts. Why did not the Queen of Sheba stay at home, and send a committee to inquire about this new religion, and have

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the delegates' report in regard to that religion and the wealth of King Solomon? She wanted to see for herself and hear for herself. She could not do this work by committee. She felt she had a soul worth ten thousand kingdoms like Sheba, and she wanted a robe richer than any woven by Oriental shuttles, and she wanted a crown set with the jewels of eternity. Bring out the camels. Put on the the spices. Gather up the jewels of the throne and put them on the caravan. Start now. No time to be lost. Goad on the camels. When I see that caravan, dust-covered, weary, and exhausted, trudging on, up across the desert and among the bandits until it reaches Jerusalem, I say, "There, there is an earnest seeker after the truth."

But a great many of you, my friends, do not do that way. You all want to get the truth, but you want the truth to come to you; you do not want to go to it. There are people who fold their arms and say, "I am ready to become a Christian at any time; if I am to be saved, I will be saved, if I am to be lost, I will be lost. A man who says that and keeps on saying it will be lost. Jerusalem will never come to you; you must go to Jerusalem. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ will not come to you; you must go and get religion. Bring out the camels; put on all the sweet spices—all the treasures of the heart's affection; start for the throne; go in and hear the waters of salvation dashing in fountains all around about that throne; sit down at the banquet—the wine pressed from the grapes of the heavenly

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Eshcol—the angels of God the cup-bearers. Goad on the camels. Jerusalem will never come to you ; you must go to Jerusalem. The Bible declares it. “The Queen of the South”—that is this very woman I am speaking of—“the Queen of the South shall rise up in judgment of this generation and condemn it, for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and, lo ! a greater than Solomon is here.” God help me to break up the infatuation of those people who are sitting down in idleness expecting to be saved. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened to you.” Take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Urge on the camels.

Again : My subject impresses me with the fact that *religion is a surprise to anybody that gets it*. This story of the new religion in Jerusalem and of the glory of King Solomon—who was a type of Christ—that story rolls on and rolls on, and is told by every traveller coming back from Jerusalem. The news goes on the wing of every ship and with every caravan, and you know a story enlarges as it is retold ; and by the time that story got down into the southern part of Arabia Felix and the Queen of Sheba hears it, it must be a tremendous story. And yet this queen declares in regard to it, although she had heard so much, and had her anticipations raised so high, the half, the half was not told her. So religion is always a surprise to any one that gets it. The story of grace is an old story. Apostles

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preached it with rattle of chain, martyrs declared it with arm of fire; deathbeds have affirmed it with visions of glory; and ministers of religion have sounded it through the lanes and the highways and the chapels and the cathedrals. It has been cut into stone with chisel, and spread on the canvas with pencil, and it has been recited in the doxology of great congregations. And yet when a man first comes to look upon the palace of God's mercy and to see the royalty of Christ, and the wealth of His banquet, and the luxuriance of His attendants, and the loveliness of His face, and the joy of His service, he exclaims, with prayers, with tears, with songs, with triumph, "The half, the half was not told me." I appeal to those people in this house to-night who are Christians. Compare the idea you had of the joy of the Christian life before you became a Christian with the appreciation of that joy you have now since you have become Christians, and you are willing to attest before angels and men that you never in the days of your spiritual bondage had any appreciation of what was to come. You are ready to-night to answer; and if I gave you an opportunity, in the midst of this assemblage, you would speak out and say in regard to the discoveries you have made of the mercy and the grace and the goodness of God, "The half, the half was not told me." Well, we hear a great deal about the good time that is coming to this world, when it is girdled with salvation. Holiness on the bells of the horses. The lion's mane patted by the hand of the babe. Ships of Tarshish bringing

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cargoes for Jesus; and the hard, dry, barren, wasted, bleached, storm-scared, thunder-split rock breaking into floods of bright water. Deserts into which the dromedaries thrust their nostrils because they were afraid of the simoom—those deserts blooming into carnations, roses, and silver-tipped lilies. It is the old story. Everybody tells it. Isaiah told it, John told it, Paul told it, Ezekiel told it, William Cowper told it, Dr. Young told it, John Milton told it, everybody tells it. And yet when the midnight shall fly the hills and Christ shall marshal His great army; and China, dashing her idols into the dust, shall hear the voice of God and wheel into line; and India, destroying her Juggernaut and snatching up her little children from the Ganges, shall hear the voice of God and wheel into line; and vine-covered Italy, and wheat-crowned Russia, and all the nations of the earth shall hear the voice of God and fall into line—then the church, which has been toiling and struggling through the centuries robed and garlanded like a bride adorned for her husband, shall put aside the veil and look up into the face of her Lord the King, and say, “The half, the half was not told me.” Well, there is coming a greater surprise to every Christian—a greater surprise than anything I have depicted. Heaven is an old story. Everybody talks about it. There is hardly a hymn in the hymn-book that does not refer to it. Children read about it in their Sabbath-school book. Aged men put on their spectacles to study it. We say it is a harbour from the storm. We

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call it our home. We say it is the house of many mansions. We weave together all sweet, beautiful, delicate, exhilarant words — we weave them into letters and then we spell it out in rose and lily and amaranth.

And yet that place is going to be a surprise to the most intelligent Christian. Like the Queen of Sheba, report has come to us from the far country, and many of us have started. It is a desert march, but we urge on the camels. What though our feet be blistered with the way, we are hastening to the palace. We take all our loves and hopes and Christian ambitions as frankincense and myrrh and cassia to the great King. We must not rest. We must not halt. The night is coming on and it is not safe out here in the desert. Urge on the camels. I see the domes against the sky, and the houses of Lebanon, and the temples, and the gardens. See the fountains dance in the sun, and the gates flash as they open to let in the poor pilgrims. Send the word up to the palace that we are coming, and that we are weary of the march of the desert. The King will come out and say, "Welcome to the palace! bathe in these fountains, recline on these banks. Take this cinnamon, and frankincense and myrrh and put it upon a censer and swing it before the altar." And yet, my friends, when heaven bursts upon us, it will be a greater surprise than that. Oh, what a thrilling rapture! Jesus on the throne, and we made like Him! All our Christian friends surrounding us in glory; all sorrows and tears and sins gone by for

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ever. The thousands of thousands, the one hundred and forty and four thousand, the great multitudes that no man can number, will cry world without end, "The half, the half was not told me."

THE VACANT CHAIR.

“Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.”—
1 *Sam.* xx. 18.

SET on the table the cutlery and the chased silver ware of the palace, for King Saul will give a state dinner to-day. A distinguished place is kept at the table for his son-in-law, a celebrated warrior, David by name. The guests, jewelled and plumed, come in and take their places. When people are invited to a king's banquet, they are very apt to go. But before the covers are lifted from the feast, Saul looks around and finds a vacant seat at the table. He says within himself, or perhaps audibly, “What does this mean? Where is my son-in-law? Where is David, the great warrior? I invited him; I expected him. What! a vacant chair at a king's banquet!” The fact was, that David, the warrior, had been seated for the last time at his father-in-law's table. The day before, Jonathan had coaxed David to go and occupy that place at the table, saying to David, in the words of my text, “Thou wilt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.” The prediction was fulfilled. David was missed. His seat was empty. That one vacant chair

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spoke louder than all the occupied chairs at the banquet.

In almost every house the articles of furniture take a living personality. In that picture a stranger would not see anything remarkable, either in its design or execution, but it is more to you than all the pictures of the Louvre and the Luxembourg. You remember who bought it and who admired it. And that hymn-book—you remember who sang out of it; and that cradle—you remember who rocked it; and that Bible—you remember who read out of it; and that bed—you remember who slept in it; and that room—you remember who died in it. But there is nothing in all your house so eloquent and so mighty-voiced as the vacant chair. I suppose that before Saul and his guests got up from this banquet there was a great clatter of wine pitchers; but all that racket was drowned out by the voice that came up from the vacant chair at the table. Millions gazed and wept at John Quincy Adams's vacant chair in the House of Representatives, and at Henry Clay's vacant chair in the American Senate, and at Prince Albert's vacant chair in Windsor Castle, and at Thiers' vacant chair in the councils of the French nation; but all these chairs are unimportant to you as compared with the vacant chairs in your household. Have those chairs any lessons for us to learn? Are we any better men and women than when they first addressed us?

First, I point out to you the father's vacant chair. Old men always like to sit in the same place and the

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same chair. They somehow feel more at home, and sometimes, when you are in their place and they come into the room, you jump up suddenly and say, "Here, father, here's your chair." The probability is it is an arm-chair, for he is not so strong as he once was, and he needs a little upholding. The hair a little frosty; the gums a little depressed, for in his early days there was not much dentistry; perhaps a cane and old-fashioned apparel, for though you may have suggested some improvement, father does not want any of your nonsense. Grandfather never had much admiration for new-fangled notions. I sat at the table of one of my parishioners in a former congregation. An aged man was at the table, and his son was presiding, and the father somewhat abruptly addressed the son, and said, "My son, don't now try to show off because the minister is here!" Your father never liked any new customs or manners. He preferred the old way of doing things, and he never looked so happy as when, with his eyes closed, he sat in the arm-chair in the corner. From wrinkled brow to the tip of the slippers, what placidity! The wave of the past years of his life broke at the foot of that chair. Perhaps sometimes he was a little impatient, and sometimes told the same story twice, but over that old chair how many blessed memories hover. I hope you did not crowd that old chair, and that it did not get very much in the way. Sometimes the old man's chair gets very much in the way, especially if he has been so unwise as to make over all his property to his children, with the understanding that

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they are to take care of him. I have seen in such cases children crowd the old man's chair to the door, and then crowd it clear into the street, and then crowd it into the poor-house, and keep on crowding it until the old man fell out of it into his grave. But your father's chair was a sacred place. The children used to climb up on the rungs of it for a good-night kiss, and the longer he stayed, the better you liked it. But that chair has been vacant now for some time. The furniture dealer would not give you fifty cents for it; but it is a throne of influence in your domestic circle. I saw in the French palace and in the throne-room the chair that Napoleon used to occupy. It was a beautiful chair; but the most significant part of it was the letter "N" embroidered on its back in purple and gold. And your father's old chair sits in the throne-room of your heart, and your affections have embroidered into the back of that chair in purple and gold the letter "F." Have all the prayers of that old chair been answered? Have all the counsels of that old chair been practised? Speak out, old arm-chair! History tells of an old man whose three sons were victors in the Olympic games, and when they came back, these three sons, with their garlands, and put them on the father's brow, the old man was so rejoiced at the victories of his three children that he fell dead in their arms. And are you, O man, going to bring a wreath of joy and Christian usefulness, and put it on your father's brow, or on the vacant chair, or on the memory of the one departed? Speak out, old arm-chair! With

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reference to your father, the words of my text have been fulfilled: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

I go a little farther on in your house and I find the mother's chair. It is very apt to be a rocking-chair. She had so many cares and troubles to soothe that it must have rockers. I remember it well. It was an old chair and the rockers were almost worn out, for I was the youngest, and the chair had rocked the whole family. It made a creaking noise as it moved; but there was music in the sound. It was just high enough to allow us children to put our heads into her lap. That was the bank where we deposited all our hurts and worries. Ah, what a chair that was! It was different from the father's chair; it was entirely different. You ask me how? I cannot tell; but we all felt it was different. Perhaps there was about this chair more gentleness, more tenderness, more grief when we had done wrong. When we were wayward, father scolded, but mother cried. It was a very wakeful chair. In the sick day of children, other chairs could not keep awake; that chair always kept awake—kept easily awake. That chair knew all the old lullabies and all those wordless songs, which mothers sing to their sick children—songs in which all pity and compassion and sympathetic influences are combined. That old chair has stopped rocking for many years. It may be set up in the loft or the garret, but it holds a queenly power yet. When at midnight you went into that grogshop to get the intoxicating draught, did you not hear a

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voice that said, "My son, why go in there?" and, louder than the boisterous *encore* of the theatre, a voice saying, "My son, what do you here?" And when you went into the house of sin, a voice saying, "What would your mother do if she knew you were here?" and you were provoked at yourself, and you charged yourself with superstition and fanaticism, and your head got hot with your own thoughts, and you went home, and you went to bed, and no sooner had you touched the bed than a voice said, "What a prayerless pillow!" Man, what is the matter? This. You are too near your mother's rocking-chair. "Oh, pshaw!" you say, "there's nothing in that. I'm five hundred miles off from where I was born—I'm three thousand miles off from the Scotch kirk whose bell was the first music I ever heard." I cannot help that; you are too near your mother's rocking-chair. "Oh!" you say, "there can't be anything in that; that chair has been vacant a great while." I cannot help that; it is all the mightier for that. It is omnipotent, that vacant mother's chair. It whispers, it speaks, it weeps, it carols, it mourns, it prays, it warns, it thunders. A young man went off and broke his mother's heart, and while he was away from home his mother died; and the telegraph brought the son, and he came into the room where she lay, and looked upon her face, and he cried out, "Oh, mother, mother, what your life could not do, your death shall effect! This moment I give my heart to God." And he kept his promise. Another victory for the vacant chair. With reference to your mother,

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the words of my text were fulfilled : "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

I go on a little farther and I come to the invalid's chair. What! How long have you been sick? "Oh, I have been sick ten, twenty, thirty years." Is it possible? What a story of endurance! There are in many of the families of my congregation these invalid chairs. The occupants of them think they are doing no good in the world; but that invalid's chair is the mighty pulpit from which they have been preaching, all these years, trust in God. One day last July, on an island just off from Sandusky, Ohio, I preached, and there was a great throng of people there; but the throng did not impress me so much as the spectacle of just one face—the face of an old invalid who was wheeled in on her chair. I said to her afterwards, "Madam, how long have you been prostrated?" for she was lying flat in the chair. "Oh," she replied, "I have been this way for fifteen years." I said, "Do you suffer much?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I suffer very much; I suffer all the time; part of the time I was blind. I always suffer." "Well," I said, "can you keep your courage up?" "Oh, yes," she said, "I am happy, very happy indeed." Her face showed it. She looked the happiest of any one on the ground. Oh, what a means of grace to the world, these invalid chairs! On that field of human suffering the grace of God gets its victory. Edward Payson the invalid, and Richard Baxter the invalid, and Robert Hall the invalid, and the ten thousand of whom the world has

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never heard, but of whom all heaven is cognisant. The most conspicuous thing on earth for God's eye and the eye of angels to rest on is not a throne of earthly power, but it is the invalid's chair. Oh, these men and women who are always suffering, but never complaining—these victims of spinal disease and neuralgic torture and rheumatic excruciation, will answer to the roll-call of the martyrs, and rise to the martyr's throne, and will wave the martyr's palm. But when one of these invalids' chairs become vacant, how suggestive it is! No more of bolstering up of the weary head. No more changing from side to side to get an easy position. No more use of the bandage and the cataplasm and the prescription. That invalid's chair may be folded up, or taken apart, or set away, but it will never lose its queenly power; it will always preach of trust in God and cheerful submission. Suffering all ended now. With respect to that invalid the words of my text have been fulfilled: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

I pass on and I find one more vacant chair. It is a high chair. It is the child's chair. If that chair be occupied, I think it is the most potent chair in all the household. All the chairs wait on it, all the chairs are turned toward it. It means more than David's chair at Saul's banquet. At any rate it makes more racket. That is a strange house that can be dull with a child in it. How that child breaks up the hard worldliness of the place and keeps you young to sixty, seventy, and eighty years

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of age ! If you have no child of your own, adopt one. It will open heaven to your soul. It will pay its way. Its crowing in the morning will give the day a cheerful starting, and its glee will give the day a cheerful close. You do not like children ? Then you had better stay out of heaven, for there are so many there they would fairly make you crazy ! Only about five hundred millions of them ! The old crusty Pharisees told the mothers to keep the children away from Christ. " You bother Him," they said ; " you trouble the Master." Trouble Him ! He has filled heaven with that kind of trouble. A pioneer in California says that for the first year or two after his residence in Sierra Nevada County, there was not a single child in all the reach of a hundred miles. But the fourth of July came, and the miners were gathered together, and they were celebrating the fourth with oration and poem and a boisterous brass band. And while the band was playing, an infant's voice was heard crying, and all the miners were startled, and the swarthy men began to think of their homes on the Eastern coast, and of their wives and children far away, and their hearts were thrilled with home-sickness as they heard the babe cry. But the music went on, and the child cried louder and louder, and the brass band played louder and louder, trying to drown out the infantile interruption ; when a swarthy miner, with tears rolling down his face, got up and shook his fist and said, " Stop that infernal band and give the baby a chance." Oh, there was pathos in it as well as good cheer.

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There is nothing to arouse and melt and subdue the soul like a child's voice. But when it goes away from you, the high chair becomes a higher chair, and there is desolation all around about you. I cannot speak from experience, thank God; but in three-fourths of the homes of my congregation there is a vacant high chair. Somehow, you never got over it. There is no one to put to bed at night, no one to ask strange questions about God and heaven. Oh, what is the use of that high chair? It is to call you higher. What a drawing upward it must be to have children in heaven! And then it is such a preventive against sin. If a father is going away into sin, he leaves his living children with their mother; but if a father is going away into sin, what is he going to do with his dead children floating about him and hovering over his every wayward step? Oh, speak out, vacant high chairs, and say, "Father, come back from sin! Mother, come back from worldliness! I am watching you; I am waiting for you." With respect to your child, the words of my text have been fulfilled: "Thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty."

My hearers, I have gathered up the voices of your departed friends this morning and tried to intone them into an invitation upward. I set in array all the vacant chairs of your homes and of your social circle, and I bid them cry out this morning, "Time is short. Eternity is near. Take my Saviour. Be at peace with my God. Come up where I am. We lived together on earth; come, let us live together

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in heaven." We answer that invitation: "We come. Keep a seat for us as Saul kept a seat for David; but that seat shall not be empty."

I have been very earnest this morning, because I realise the fact that the day will come when the pastor's chair will be empty. From this point how often I have looked off into your friendly faces! I have seen a great many beautiful and thrilling sights, but never anything to equal what I have witnessed when, in this chair, I have looked off and seen you rise for the doxology. Seated in this chair, sometimes I have greatly rejoiced at seeing multitudes come to God; and then again I have trembled for fear men would reject the gospel. I wonder what this chair will testify when I have left it for the last time? Will it tell of a useful life, of an earnest ministry, of a pure gospel? God grant it. The most powerful sermon that is ever preached is by the vacant chair of a pastor the Sabbath after he has been carried away from it. And oh, when we are all through with this world, and we have shaken hands all around for the last time, and all our chairs in the home circle and in the outside world shall be vacant, may we be worshipping God in that place from which we shall go out no more for ever. Thank God, there will be no vacant chairs in heaven!

THE HORNET'S MISSION.

“The Lord thy God will send the hornet.”—*Deut.* vii. 20.

IT seems as if the insectile world were determined to extirpate the human race. It is bombarding the grain-fields, and orchards, and vineyards. The Colorado beetle, the Nebraska grasshopper, the New Jersey locust, the universal potato-bug, seem to carry on the work which was begun ages ago when the insects buzzed and droned out of Noah's ark as the door was opened.

In my text, the hornet flies out on its mission. It is a species of wasp, swift in its motion and violent in its sting. Its touch is torture to man or beast. We have all seen the cattle run bellowing under the cut of its lancet. In boyhood we used to stand cautiously looking at the globular nest hung from the tree branch; and while we were looking at the wonderful pasteboard covering we were struck with something that sent us shrieking away. The hornet goes in swarms. It has captains over hundreds, and twenty of them alighting on one man will produce certain death. The Persians attempted to conquer a Christian city, but the elephants and the beasts on which the Persians rood were assaulted by the hornet, so that the whole army was broken up, and

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the besieged city was rescued. This burning and noxious insect stung out the Hittites and the Canaanites from their country. What gleaming sword and chariot of war could not accomplish was done by the puncture of an insect. The Lord sent the hornet.

My friends, when we are assaulted by great Behemoths of trouble, we become chivalric, and we assault them; we get on the high-mettled steed of our courage, and we make a cavalry charge at them, and, if God be with us, we come out stronger and better than when we went in. But alas! for these insectile annoyances of life—these foes too small to shoot—these things without any avoirdupois weight—the gnats, and the midges, and the flies, and the wasps, and the hornets. In other words, it is the small stinging annoyances of our life which drive us out and use us up. In the best conditioned life, for some grand and glorious purpose, God has sent the hornet.

I remark in the first place that these small stinging annoyances may come in the shape of a sensitive nervous organisation. People who are prostrated under typhoid fevers or with broken bones get plenty of sympathy, but who pities anybody that is nervous? The doctors say, and the family say, and everybody says, "Oh! she's only a little nervous; that's all." The sound of a heavy foot, the harsh clearing of a throat, a discord in music, an inharmony between the shawl and the glove on the same person, a curt answer, a passing slight, the

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wind from the east, any one of ten thousand annoyances, opens the door for the hornet. The fact is, that the vast majority of the people in this country are overworked, and their nerves are the first to give out. A great multitude are under the strain of Leyden, who, when he was told by his physician that if he did not stop working while he was in such poor physical health he would die, responded, "Doctor, whether I live or die, the wheel must keep going round; and though I may be disappointed in it, if before I die I don't surpass Sir William Jones in profound Oriental literature, may no tear of grief for me ever profane a borderer!" These sensitive persons of whom I speak have bleeding sensitiveness. The flies love to light on anything raw, and these people are like the Canaanites spoken of in the text, or in the context—they have a very thin covering and are vulnerable at all points. "And the Lord sent the hornet."

Again: These small insect annoyances may come to us in the shape of friends and acquaintances who are always saying disagreeable things. There are some people you cannot be with for half an hour but you feel cheered and comforted. Then there are other people you cannot be with five minutes before you feel miserable. They do not mean to disturb you, but they sting you to the bone. They gather up all the yarn which the gossips spin, and peddle it. They gather up all the adverse criticisms about your person, about your business, about your home, about your church, and they make your ear the funnel into

which they pour it. They laugh heartily when they tell you, as though it were a good joke, and you laugh too—outside. These people are brought to our attention in the Bible, in the book of Ruth. Naomi went forth beautiful and with the finest of worldly prospects, and into another land; but after a while she came back widowed, and sick, and poor. What did her friends do when she came to the city? They all went out, and, instead of giving her common-sense consolation, what did they do? Read the book of Ruth and find out. They threw up their hands and said, "Is this Naomi?" as much as to say, "How awful bad you do look!" When I entered the ministry I looked very pale for years, and every year for four or five years, a hundred times a year, I was asked if I had not the consumption. And passing through the room, I would sometimes hear people sigh and say, "Aha! not long for this world!" I resolved in those times that I never, in any conversation, would say anything depressing; and by the help of God I have kept the resolution. These people of whom I speak, reap and bind in the great harvest-field of discouragement. Some days you greet them with a hilarious "good-morning," and they come buzzing at you with some depressing information. "The Lord sent the hornet." It is astonishing how some people prefer to write and to say disagreeable things. That was the case when, four or five years ago, Henry M. Stanley returned after his magnificent exploit of finding Dr. David Livingstone; and when Mr. Stanley stood before the

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savants of Europe, and many of the small critics of the day, under pretence of getting geographical information, put to him most insolent questions, he folded his arms and refused to answer. At the very time when you would suppose all decent men would have applauded the heroism of the man, there were those to hiss. "The Lord sent the hornet." And now at this time, when that man sits down on the western coast of Africa, sick and worn out with perhaps the grandest achievement of the age in the way of geographical discovery, there are small critics all over the world to buzz, and buzz, and caricature, and deride him; and after a while he will get the London papers, and as he opens them, out will fly the hornet. When I see that there are so many people in the world who like to say disagreeable things, and write disagreeable things, I come in my almost weaker moments to believe what a man said to me in Philadelphia one Monday morning. I went to get the horse at the livery, and the ostler, a plain man, said to me, "Mr. Talmage, I saw that you preached to the young men yesterday." I said, "Yes." He said, "No use, no use; man's a failure."

Perhaps these small insect annoyances will come in the shape of domestic irritation. The parlour and the kitchen do not always harmonise. To get good service and to keep it is one of the great questions of the country. Sometimes it may be the arrogancy and inconsiderateness of employers; but whatever be the fact, we will admit there are these insect annoyances winging their way out from the

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culinary department. If the grace of God be not in the heart of the housekeeper, she cannot maintain her equilibrium. The men come home at night and hear the story of these annoyances, and say, "Oh! these home troubles are very little things." They are small, small as wasps, but they sting.

These small insect disturbances may also come in the shape of business irritations. There are men here who went through 1857 and the 24th of September, 1869, without losing their balance, who are every day unhorsed by little annoyances—a clerk's ill-manners, or a blot of ink on a bill of lading, or the extravagance of a partner who overdraws his accounts, or the underselling by a business rival, or the whispering of store confidences in the street, or the making of some little bad debt which was against your judgment, just to please somebody else. It is not the panics that kill the merchants. Panics come only once in ten or twenty years. It is the constant din of these every-day annoyances which is sending so many of our best merchants into nervous dyspepsia and paralysis and the grave. When our national commerce fell flat on its face, these men stood up and felt almost defiant; but their life is going away now under the swarm of these pestiferous annoyances. "The Lord sent the hornet."

I have noticed in the history of some of my congregation that their annoyances are multiplying, and that they have a hundred where they used to have ten. The naturalist tells us that a wasp sometimes has a family of twenty thousand wasps, and it does

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seem as if every annoyance of your life brooded a million. By the help of God to-day, I want to set in a counter current. The hornet is of no use? Oh yes! The naturalists tell us they are very important in the world's economy; they kill spiders and they clear the atmosphere; and I really believe God sends the annoyances of our life upon us to kill the spiders of the soul and to clear the atmosphere into the skies. These annoyances are sent on us, I think, to wake us up from our lethargy. There is nothing that makes a man so lively as a nest of "yellow jackets," and I think that these annoyances are intended to persuade us of the fact that this is not a world for us to stop in. If we had a bed of everything that was attractive, and soft, and easy, what would we want of heaven? We think that the hollow tree sends the hornet. You think the devil sends the hornet. I want to correct your theology. "The Lord sent the hornet."

Then I think these annoyances come on us to culture our patience. In the gymnasium you find upright parallel bars—upright bars with holes over each other for pegs to be put in. Then the gymnast takes a peg in each hand and he begins to climb, one inch at a time beginning, or two or three inches, and getting his strength cultured, reaches after a while the ceiling. And it seems to me that these annoyances in life are a moral gymnasium, each worriment a peg with which we are to climb higher and higher in Christian attainment. We all love to see patience, but it cannot be cultured in fair weather. It is a

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child of the storm. If you had everything desirable and there was nothing more to get, what would you want with patience? The only time to culture it is when you are lied about, and cheated, and sick, and half dead. It takes just so much trouble to fit us for usefulness and heaven. The only question is, whether we shall take it in the bulk, or pulverised and granulated. Here is one man who takes it in the bulk. His back is broken, or his eyesight put out, or some other awful calamity befalls him; while the vast majority of people take this thing piecemeal. Which way would you rather have it? Of course in piecemeal. Better have five aching teeth than one broken jaw. In this matter of trouble, I like homœopathic doses—small pellets of annoyance rather than some knockdown dose of calamity. In the village of Hamelin, tradition says, there was an invasion of rats, and these small creatures almost devoured the town and threatened the lives of the population; and the story is that a piper came out one day and played a very sweet tune, and all the vermin followed him—followed him to the banks of the Weser, and then he blew a blast and they dropped in and disappeared for ever. Of course this is a fable; but I wish I could, on the sweet flute of the gospel, draw forth all the nibbling and burrowing annoyances of your life, and play them down into the depths for ever. How many touches did Mr. Church give to his picture of "Cotopaxi," or his "Heart of the Andes"? I suppose about fifty thousand touches. I hear the canvas saying, "Why do you keep me

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trembling with that pencil so long? Why don't you put it on in one dash?" "No," says Mr. Church; "I know how to make a painting; it will take fifty thousand of these touches." And I want you, my friends, to understand that it is these ten thousand annoyances which, under God, are making up the picture of your life, to be hung at last in the galleries of heaven, fit for the angels to look at. God knows how to make a picture.

My friends, I shall not have preached this morning in vain if I have shown you that the annoyances of life, the small annoyances of life, may be subservient to your present and your eternal advantages. Polycarp was condemned to be burned at the stake. The stake was planted. He was fastened to it, the wood was planted around about the stake, it was kindled; but, by some strange current of the atmosphere, history tells us, the flames bent outward like the sails of a ship under a strong breeze, and then far above they came together, making a canopy; so that instead of being destroyed by the flames, there he stood in a flam-buoyant bower planted by his persecutors. They had to take his life in another way, and by the point of the poignard. And I have to tell you this morning that God can make all the flames of your trial a wall of defence and a canopy for the soul. God is just as willing to fulfil to you as he was to Polycarp the promise, "When thou passest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned." In heaven you will acknowledge the fact that you never had one annoyance too many, and through all

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eternity you will be grateful that in this world the Lord did send the hornet. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "All things work together for good to them that love God." The Lord sent the sunshine. "The Lord sent the hornet."

THE VOICES OF THE STREET.

“Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets.”—*Prov. i. 20.*

WE are all ready to listen to the voices of Nature—the voices of the mountain, the voices of the sea, the voices of the storm, the voices of the stars. As in some of the cathedrals in Europe, there is an organ at either end of the building, and the one instrument responds musically to the other, so in the great cathedral of Nature, day responds to day, and night to night, and flower to flower, and star to star in the great harmonies of the universe. The springtime is an evangelist in blossoms, preaching of God's love, and the winter is a prophet, white-bearded, denouncing woe against our sins. We are all ready to listen to the voices of Nature, but how few of us learn anything from the voices of the noisy and the dusty street. You go to your mechanism, and to your work, and to your merchandise, and you come back again, and often with how indifferent a heart you pass through these streets. Are there no things for us to learn from these pavements over which we pass? Are there no tufts of truth growing up between these cobblestones beaten with the feet of toil and pain and pleasure,

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the slow tread of age and the quick step of childhood? Ay, there are great harvests to be reaped, and this morning I thrust in the sickle because the harvest is ripe. "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets."

In the first place, the street impresses me with the fact that this life is a scene of toil and struggle. By ten o'clock of every day the city is jarring with wheels, and shuffling with feet, and humming with voices, and covered with the breath of smoke-stacks, and a-rush with traffickers. Once in a while you find a man going along with folded arms and with leisurely step as though he had nothing to do; but for the most part as you find men going down these streets on the way to business, there is anxiety in their faces as though they had some errand which must be executed at the first possible moment. You are jostled by those who have bargains to make and notes to sell. Up this ladder with a hod of bricks, out of this bank with a roll of bills, on this dray with a load of goods, digging a cellar, or shingling a roof, or shoeing a horse, or building a wall, or mending a watch, or binding a book, Industry, with her thousand arms and thousand eyes and thousand feet, goes on singing her song of "Work! Work! Work!" while the mills drum it and the steam-whistles fife it. All this is not because men love toil. Some one remarked, "Every man is as lazy as he can afford to be." But it is because necessity with stern brow and with uplifted whip, stands over you, ready, whenever you relax your toil, to make your shoulders

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sting with the lash. Can it be that, passing up and down these streets on your way to work and business, you do not learn anything of the world's toil and anxiety and struggle? Oh, how many drooping hearts, how many eyes on the watch, how many miles travelled, how many burdens carried, how many losses suffered, how many battles fought, how many victories gained, how many defeats suffered, how many exasperations endured; what losses, what hunger, what wretchedness, what pallor, what disease, what agony, what despair! Sometimes I have stopped at the corner of the street as the multitudes went hither and yon, and it has seemed to be a great pantomime, and as I looked upon it my heart broke. This great tide of human life that goes down the street is a rapids tossed and turned aside and dashed ahead and driven back—beautiful in its confusion and confused in its beauty. In the carpeted aisles of the forest, in the woods from which the eternal shadow is never lifted, on the shore of the sea over whose iron coast tosses the tangled foam sprinkling the cracked cliffs with a baptism of whirlwind and tempest, is the best place to study God; but in the rushing, swarming, raving street is the best place to study man. Going down to your place of business and coming home again, I charge you look about; see these signs of poverty, of wretchedness, of hunger, of sin, of bereavement; and as you go through the streets, gather up in the arms of your prayers all the sorrows, all the losses, all the sufferings, all the bereavements of those whom you pass,

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and present them in prayer before an all-sympathetic God. In the great day of eternity there will be thousands of persons with whom you in this world never exchanged one word, who will rise up and call you blessed, and there will be a thousand fingers pointed at you in heaven, saying, "That is the man, that is the woman, who helped me when I was hungry and sick, and wandering and lost, and heart-broken—that is the man, that is the woman!" and the blessing will come down upon you as Christ shall say, "I was hungry and ye fed Me, I was naked and ye clothed Me, I was sick and in prison and ye visited Me. Inasmuch as ye did it to these poor waifs of the streets of Brooklyn and New York, ye did it to Me."

Again: The street impresses me with the fact that all classes and conditions of society must commingle. We sometimes cultivate a wicked exclusiveness. Intellect despises ignorance. Refinement will have nothing to do with boorishness. Gloves hate the sunburnt hand; the high forehead despises the flat head; the trim hedgerow will have nothing to do with the wild copsewood; and Athens hates Nazareth. This ought not so to be. The astronomer must come down from his starry revelry and help us in our navigation. The surgeon must come away from his study of the human organism and set our broken bones. The chemist must come away from his laboratory where he has been studying analysis and synthesis, and help us to understand the nature of the soils. I bless God that all classes of people are compelled to meet on the street. The glittering

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coach-wheel clashes against the scavenger's cart ; fine robes run against the peddler's pack ; robust health meets wan sickness ; honesty confronts fraud ; every class of people meets every other class, impudence and modesty, pride and humility, purity and beastliness, frankness and hypocrisy, meeting on the same block in the same street in the same city. Oh ! that is what Solomon meant when he said, "The rich and the poor meet together ; the Lord is the Maker of them all." I like this democratic principle of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which recognises the fact that we stand before God on one and the same platform. Do not take on any airs, whatever position you have gained in society. You are nothing but a man, born of the same parent, regenerated by the same Spirit, cleansed in the same blood, to lie down in the same dust, to get up in the same resurrection. It is high time that we all acknowledged not only the Fatherhood of God but the brotherhood of man.

Again : The street impresses me with the fact that it is a very hard thing for a man to keep his heart right, and to get to heaven. Infinite temptations spring upon us from these places of public concourse. Amid so much affluence, how much temptation to covetousness and to be discontented with our humble lot. Amid so many opportunities for overreaching, what temptation to extortion. Amid so much display, what temptation to vanity. Amid so many saloons of strong drink, what allurements to dissipation. In the maelstroms and hell gates of the street, how many make quick and eternal shipwreck.

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If a man-of-war comes back from a battle and is towed into the navy-yard, we go down to look at the splintered spars, and count the bullet-holes, and look with patriotic admiration on the flag that floated in victory from the masthead. But that man is more of a curiosity who has gone through thirty years of the sharp-shooting of business life, and yet sails on victor over the temptations of the street. Oh, how many have gone down under the pressure, leaving not so much as the patch of a canvas to tell where they perished! They never had any peace. Their dishonesties kept tolling in their ears. If I had an axe and could split open the beams of that fine house, perhaps I would find in the very heart of it a skeleton. In his very best wine there is a smack of poor man's sweat. Oh, is it strange that when a man has devoured widows' houses, he is disturbed with indigestion? All the forces of Nature are against him. The floods are ready to drown him, and the earthquakes to swallow him, and the fires to consume him, and the lightnings to smite him. Ay, all the armies of God are on the street; and in the day when the crowns of heaven are distributed, some of the brightest of them will be given to those men who were faithful to God and faithful to the souls of others amid the marts of business, proving themselves the heroes of the street. Mighty were their temptations, mighty was their deliverance, and mighty shall be their triumph.

Again: The street impresses me with the fact that life is full of pretension and sham. What subterfuge,

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what double-dealing, what two-facedness! Do all people who wish you "Good-morning" really hope for you a happy day? Do all the people who shake hands love each other? Are all those anxious about your health who inquire concerning it. Do all want to see you who ask you to call? Does all the world know half as much as it pretends to know? Is there not many a wretched stock of goods with a brilliant show-window? Passing up and down these streets to your business and your work, are you not impressed with the fact that society is hollow, and that there are subterfuges and pretensions? Oh, how many there are who swagger and strut, and how few people who are natural and walk. While fops simper, and fools chuckle, and simpletons giggle, how few people are natural and laugh. The courtesan and the libertine go down the street in beautiful apparel, while within the heart there are volcanoes of passion consuming their life away. I say these things not to create in you incredulity or misanthropy, nor do I forget there are thousands of people a great deal better than they seem; but I do not think any man is prepared for the conflict of this life until he knows this particular peril. Ehud comes pretending to pay his tax to King Eglon, and while he stands in front of the king stabs him through with a dagger until the haft went in after the blade. Gorgei betrayed Hungary. Judas kissed Christ.

Again: The street impresses me with the fact that it is a great field for Christian charity. There are hunger and suffering and want and wretchedness in

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the country; but these evils chiefly congregate in our great cities. On every street crime prowls, and drunkenness staggers, and shame winks, and pauperism thrusts out its hand, asking for alms. Here want is most squalid and hunger is most lean. A Christian man going along a street in New York, saw a poor lad, and he stopped and said, "My boy, do you know how to read and write?" The boy made no answer. The man asked the question twice and thrice, "Can you read and write?" and then the boy answered, with a tear plashing on the back of his hand, "No, sir; I can't read nor write neither. God, sir, don't want me to read and write. Didn't He take away my father so long ago I never remember to have seen him? and haven't I had to go along the streets to get things to fetch home for the folks to eat? and didn't I, as soon as I could carry a basket, have to go out and pick up cinders, and never had no schooling, sir? God don't want me to read, sir. I can't read nor write neither." Oh, these poor wanderers! They have no chance. Born in degradation, as they get up from their hands and knees to walk, they take their first step on the road to despair. Oh, let us go forth in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to rescue them. Let us ministers not be afraid of soiling our black clothes while we go down on that mission. While we are tying an elaborate knot in our cravat, or while we are in the study rounding off some period rhetorically, we might be saving a soul from death and hiding a multitude of sins. O Christian layman, go out on this work.

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If you are not willing to go forth yourself, then give of your means ; and if you are too lazy to go, and if you are too stingy to help, then get out of the way and hide yourself in the dens and caves of the earth, lest, when Christ's chariot comes along, the horses, hoofs trample you into the mire. Beware lest the thousands of the destitute of your city, in the last great day, rise up and curse your stupidity and your neglect.

Down to work ! Lift them up ! One cold winter's day, as a Christian man was going along the Battery, New York, he saw a little girl seated at the gate shivering in the cold. He said to her, " My child, what do you sit there for this cold day ? " " Oh," she replied, " I am waiting—I am waiting for somebody to come and take care of me." " Why," said the man, " what makes you think that anybody will come and take care of you ? " " Oh," she said, " my mother died last week ; and I was crying very much, and she said, ' Don't cry ; though I am gone and your father is gone, the Lord will send somebody to take care of you.' My mother never told a lie. She said some one would come and take care of me, and I am waiting for them to come." Oh, yes, they are waiting for you. Men who have dollars, men who have influence, men of churches, men of great hearts, gather them in, gather them in. It is not the will of your Heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish.

Lastly : The street impresses me with the fact that all the people are looking forward. I see expectancy

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written on almost every face I meet between here and Fulton Ferry, or walking the whole length of Broadway. Where you find a thousand people walking straight on, you only find one man stopping and looking back. The fact is, God made us all to look ahead because we are immortal. In this tramp of the multitude on the streets, I hear the tramp of a great host marching and marching for eternity. Beyond the office, the store, the shop, the street, there is a world populous and tremendous. Through God's grace, may you reach that blessed place. A great throng fills those boulevards, and the streets are a-rush with the chariots of conquerors. The inhabitants go up and down, but they never weep and they never toil. A river flows through that city, with rounded and luxuriant banks, and trees of life laden with everlasting fruitage bend their branches to dip the crystal. No plumed hearse rattles over that pavement, for they are never sick. With immortal health glowing in every vein, they know not how to die. Those towers of strength, those palaces of beauty, gleam in the light of a sun that never sets. O heaven, beautiful heaven! Heaven, where our friends are! They take no census in that city, for it is inhabited by "a multitude which no man can number." Rank above rank; host above host; gallery above gallery; sweeping all around the heavens. Thousands of thousands; millions of millions; quadrillions of quadrillions; quintillions of quintillions. Blessed are they who enter in through the gate into that city. Oh, start for it this morning.

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Through the blood of the great sacrifice of the Son of God, take up your march for heaven. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." Join this great throng who this morning for the first time espouse their faith in Christ. All the doors of invitation are open. "And I saw twelve gates, and they were twelve pearls."

A HARVEST SERMON.

“ My Father is the husbandman.”—*John xv. i.*

WILL it not be appropriate if I preach a harvest sermon? This summer, having gone in different directions over between five and six thousand miles of harvest-field, I can hardly open my Bible without smelling the breath of new-mown hay and seeing the golden light of the wheat-fields; and when I open my Bible to take my text, the Scripture leaf rustles like the tassels of the corn. We were nearly all of us born in the country. We dropped corn in the hill, four grains to the hill; and went on Saturday to the mill, tying the grist in the centre of the sacks, so that the contents on either side the horse balanced each other, and drove the cattle a-field, our bare feet wet with the dew; and rode the horses with the halter to the brook until we fell off; and hunted the mow for nests until the feathered occupants went cackling away. We were nearly all of us born in the country, and would have stayed there had not some adventurous lad on his vacation come back with better clothes and softer hand, and set the whole village on fire with ambition for city life. So we all understand rustic allusions. The Bible is full of it. In Christ's ser-

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mon on the mount you see the full-blown lilies, and the glossy black of the crow's wing as it flits over Mount Olivet. David and John and Paul and Isaiah find in country life a source of frequent illustration; while Christ in the text takes the responsibility of calling God a farmer, declaring, "My Father is the husbandman." Noah was the first farmer. We say nothing about Cain, the tiller of the soil. Adam was a gardener on a large scale, but to Noah was given all the acres of the earth. Elisha was an agriculturist, not cultivating a ten-acre lot, for we find him ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. In Bible times the land was so plenty and the inhabitants so few, that Noah was right when he gave to every inhabitant a certain portion of land, that land, if cultivated, ever after to be his own possession. Just as now in Nebraska, the Government, on the payment of sixteen dollars, will give pre-emption right to one hundred and sixty acres to any man who will settle there and cultivate the soil. All classes of people were expected to cultivate ground except ministers of religion. It was supposed that they would have their time entirely occupied with their own profession; although sometimes ministers do deal in stocks, I am told, and they are superior judges of horses, and make one think sometimes of what Thomas Fuller said in regard to a man in his day who preached very well but lived very ill: "When he is out of the pulpit, it is a pity he should ever go into it; and when he is in the pulpit, it is a pity he should ever come out of it."

They were not small crops raised in those times;

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for, though the arts were rude, the plough turned up very rich soil, and barley and flax and all kinds of grain came up at the call of the harvesters. Pliny tells of one stalk of grain that had on it between three and four hundred ears. The rivers and the brooks, through artificial channels, were brought down to the roots of the corn, and to this habit of the farmer of turning a river wherever he wanted it, Solomon refers when he says, "The king's heart is in the hands of the Lord, and He turneth it as the rivers of water are turned, whithersoever He will." The wild beasts were caught, and then a hook was put into their nose, and then they were led over the fields; and to that God refers when He says to wicked Sennacherib, "I will put a hook in thy nose, and I will bring thee back by the way by which thou camest;" and God has put a hook in every bad man's nose—whether it be Nebuchadnezzar, or Ahab, or Herod. He may think himself very independent, but sometime in his life, or in the hour of his death, he will find that the Lord Almighty has a hook in his nose.

This was the rule in regard to the culture of the ground: "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together;" illustrating the folly of ever putting intelligent and useful and pliable men in association with the stubborn and the unwieldy. The vast majority of trouble in the churches and in the reformatory institutions comes from the disregard of this command of the Lord: "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together." There

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were large amounts of property invested in cattle. The Moabites paid one hundred thousand sheep as an annual tax. Job had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen. The time of vintage was ushered in with mirth and music. The clusters of the vine were put into the wine-press, and then five men would get into the press and trample out the juice from the grape until their garments were saturated with the wine, and they became the emblems of slaughter; Christ Himself, wounded until covered with the blood of crucifixion, making use of this allusion. When the question was asked, "Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like one who treadeth the winevat?" He responded, "I have trodden the wine-press alone."

In all ages there has been great honour paid to agriculture. Seven-eighths of the people in every country are disciples of the plough. A government is strong in proportion as it is supported by an athletic and industrious yeomanry. So long ago as before the fall of Carthage, Nago wrote twenty-eight books on agriculture. Hesiod wrote a poem on the same subject—"The Weeks and Days." Cato was prouder of his work on husbandry than of all his military conquests. So far back as the reign of Claudius, Collumbella wrote a book on the subject of agriculture. But I must not be tempted to a discussion of agricultural conquests. Standing amid the harvests and orchards and vineyards of the Bible, and standing among the harvests and orchards and

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vineyards of our own country—larger harvests than have ever before been gathered, I want to run out the analogy between the production of crops and the growth of grace in the soul—all these sacred writers making use of that analogy.

In the first place, I remark, in grace as in the fields there must be a ploughing. That which theologians call conviction is only the ploughshare turning up the sins that have been rooted and matted in the soul. A farmer said to his indolent son, "There are a hundred dollars buried deep in that field." The son went to work and ploughed the field from fence to fence, and he ploughed it very deep, and then complained that he had not found the money; but when the crop had been gathered and sold for a hundred dollars more than any previous year, then the young man took the hint as to what his father meant when he said there were a hundred dollars buried down in that field. Deep ploughing for a crop. Deep ploughing for a soul. He who makes light of sin will never amount to anything in the church or in the world. If a man speaks of sin as though it were an inaccuracy or a mistake instead of the loathsome, abominable, consuming, and damning thing that God hates, that man will never yield a harvest of usefulness. When I was a boy, I ploughed a field with a team of fleet horses. I ploughed it very quickly. Once in a while I passed over some of the sod without turning it, but I did not jerk back the plough with its rattling devices. I thought it made no dif-

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ference. After a while my father came along and said, "Why, this will never do ; this isn't ploughed deep enough. There, you have missed this, and you have missed that," and he ploughed it over. The difficulty with a great many people is that they are only scratched with conviction, when the subsoil plough of God's truth ought to be put in up to the beam. My word is to all Sabbath-school teachers, to all parents, to all Christian workers, Plough deep ! Plough deep ! And if in your own personal experience you are apt to take a lenient view of the sinful side of your nature, put down beside your soul the Ten Commandments which boomed from the artilleried mount, and study the holiness of God, and before you get through, the team, with flaming nostrils will be harnessed to the sharpened and glittering coulter that will turn up your soul to the deepest depths. If a man preaches to you that you are only a little out of order by reason of sin, and that you need only a little firing up, he lies ! You have suffered an appalling catastrophe by reason of sin. There are quick poisons and slow poisons, but the druggist could give you one drop that would kill the body, and sin is like that drug ; so virulent, so poisonous, so deathful, that one drop is enough to kill the soul. Deep ploughing for a soul. Broken heart, or no religion. Broken soul, or no harvest. Why was it that David, and the gaoler, and the publican, and Martin Luther made such ado about their sins ? Had they lost their senses ? No. The ploughshare struck them. Conviction turns up a great

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many things that were forgotten. As a farmer ploughing sometimes turns up the skeleton of a man, or the anatomy of a monster long ago buried, so the ploughshare of conviction turns up the ghostly skeletons of sins long ago entombed. Geologist never brought up from the depths of the mountain mightier ichthyosaurus or megatherium. But what means all this crooked ploughing—these crooked furrows—the repentance that amounts to nothing—the repentance that ends in nothing? Men groan over their sins, but get no better. They weep, but their sins are not counted. They get convicted, but not converted. What is the reason? I remember that on the farm we set a standard with a red flag at the other end of the field. We kept our eye on that. We aimed at that. We ploughed up to that. Losing sight of that, we made a crooked furrow; keeping our eye on that, we made a straight furrow. Now, in this matter of conviction, we must have some standard to guide us. It is a red standard that God has set at the other end of the field. It is the Cross. Keeping your eye on that, you make a straight furrow; losing sight of it, we make a crooked furrow. Plough up to the Cross. Aim not at either end of the horizontal piece of the Cross, but at the upright piece, at the centre of it—the heart of the Son of God who bore your sins and made satisfaction. Crying and weeping will not bring you through. “Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance.” Oh, plough up to the Cross!

Again I remark: In grace as in the field there

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must be a sowing. In the autumnal weather you find the farmer going across the field at a stride of about twenty-three inches, and at every stride he puts his hand in the sack of grain, and he sprinkles it over the field. It looks silly to a man who does not know what he is doing. He is doing a very important work. He is scattering the winter grain, and the snow may come, but the next year there will be a great crop. Now, that is what we are doing, when we are preaching the gospel, when we are scattering the seed. It is the foolishness of preaching, but it is the winter grain, and though the snows of worldliness may come down upon it, it will yield a glorious harvest. Let us be sure we sow the right kind of seed. Sow mullein stalk, and mullein stalk will come up. Sow Canada thistles, and Canada thistles will come up. Sow wheat, and wheat will come up. Let us distinguish between truth and error. Let us know the difference between wheat and hellebore and henbane and colocintida. The largest denomination in this country is the denomination of Nothingarians. Their religion is a system of negations. You say to one of them, "What do you believe?" "I don't believe in the doctrine of election." "What *do* you believe?" "Well, I don't believe in infant baptism." "What *do* you believe?" "Well, I don't believe in the perseverance of the saints." "Well, now, tell us what you *do* believe?" "Well, I don't believe in the eternal punishment of the wicked." So their religion is a row of ciphers. Believe something and teach it, or, to resume the

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figure of my text, scatter abroad the right kind of gospel seed. A minister in New York, the other day, preached a sermon calculated to set the denominations of Christians quarrelling. He was sowing nettles. A minister in Boston, the other day, advertised that he would preach a sermon on the "Superiority of Transcendental and Organised Forces to Intranscendental and Inorganised Forces." He was sowing artichokes! The Lord Jesus Christ, nineteen centuries ago, planted one red seed of doctrine. It sprang up. On one side of the stalk are all the churches of Christendom; on the other side of the stalk are all the free governments of the earth; and on the top there shall be a flowering millenium after a while. All from one red seed of doctrine. Every word that parent, or Sabbath-school teacher, or city missionary, or Christian worker speaks for Christ, comes up. Yea, it comes up with compound interest. You, saving one soul, that one saving ten, the ten a hundred, the hundred a thousand, the thousand ten thousand, the ten thousand a hundred thousand—on, on for ever. It seems very insignificant to see a mother teaching her child, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

What is the use of it? That child does not know what he is saying. He has his head in his mother's lap, and he is squirming about, and he is breathing hard, and he is playing with his feet, and he says "Amen" two or three times before it is the right place to say it. Why is not that mother reading Bulwer's "Last Days of Pompeii," or Hawthorn's

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“House of the Seven Gables” ? I will tell you a story of “Now I lay me down to sleep.” At the inauguration of President Hayes in Washington, last March, two men went over from Baltimore, worldly men. At night the rooms of the hotels were all crowded, and these two worldly men were introduced into a room where there were seven or eight men lying down trying to sleep. As these two worldly men from Baltimore went into the room, one of them said to his comrade, “I can’t sleep here ; I am always accustomed to saying a little prayer which my mother taught me, and I can’t sleep until I have said it.” “Well,” said the other worldly man from Baltimore, “that’s the way with me ; I can’t sleep until I have said my prayers.” So they retired from the room ; but finding no accommodation they came back to the same room, passed in, and one of these men from Baltimore said to the people who were lying on the floor still awake, “Gentlemen, I am accustomed to say a little prayer before I go to sleep ; I can’t sleep until I do say it ; if you will excuse me, I will just say it now, and I always say it aloud.” They all said, “Of course, we’ll excuse you.” He knelt down and his comrade with him, and all the men in that room got up on their knees, and audibly they all recited :

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.”

To make a long story short, those two men from Baltimore, through their own fidelity, were convicted of sin and converted to God ; and all those other men,

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so far as they have been heard from, by that one exercise that night were ushered into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The two men went back to Baltimore, and, under the ministry of Thomas Harrison, a young man who graduated from our Lay College year before last, these two men telling the story of their own conversion at Washington, sixteen hundred souls in seven months were brought into the kingdom of God. When I saw Thomas Harrison this summer, and found that he was the Thomas Harrison who came out of our institution, the story thrilled me beyond almost anything I have heard. So you see that a mother (whose name I don't know) forty or fifty years ago taught her child the infant prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep." The first harvest of it is the conversion of her own son, and then of sixteen hundred souls in Baltimore—tide of influence rolling on for ever and for ever. O Sabbath-school teacher, O mother, O Christian worker, you shall reap, if you faint not.

We have with us this morning some of the men of the sea. They came in the vessel *Cape of Good Hope*, from Calcutta, after a long voyage. I greet them to this House of God. They sit right before me. Many of them, I am told, are from Scotland—glorious land of Thomas Chalmers and John Knox. I never speak the name of that country without emotion. I felt as if I had seen all the world, and wanted to come back. O men, far away in your childhood days was the gospel seed planted in your souls, and it is coming up to-day. Many of you, I

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hear, are children of God, and I congratulate you ; and in the hearts of others of you the good Word will spring up to-day, and the memory of that land of Bibles and of Sabbaths—good, old, glorious Scotland—the memory of that time when you knelt at your mother's knee and said your evening prayer, comes over your soul to-day ; and who knows but that coming in here this morning may be the matter of your eternal redemption ?

Again I remark : In grace as in the farm there must be a harrowing. I refer now not to a harrow that goes over the field in order to prepare the ground for the seed, but a harrow which goes over after the seed is sown lest the robins pick up the seed, sinking it down into the earth so it can take root. You know a harrow. It has pieces of wood nailed across each other, and has sharp teeth, and when the horses are hitched to it, it goes tearing and leaping across the field, driving the seed down into the earth until it springs up in the harvest. Bereavement, sorrow, persecution, are the Lord's harrows to sink the gospel truth into the heart. There were truths that you read thirty years ago that have not affected you until recently. Some great trouble came over you, and the truth was harrowed in, and it has come up. What did God mean in this country in 1857 ? For a century there was gospel preached, but a great deal of it produced no result. Then God harnessed a wild panic to a harrow of commercial disaster, and that harrow went down Wall Street and up Wall Street, down Third Street and up Third

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Street, down State Street and up State Street, until the whole land was torn to pieces as never before. What followed the harrow? A great awakening, in which there were 500,000 souls brought into the kingdom of our Lord. No harrow, no crops.

Again I remark: In grace as in the farm there must be a reaping. Many Christians speak of religion as though it were a matter of economies or of insurance. They expect to reap in the next world. Oh, no! now is the time to reap. Gather up the joy of the Christian religion this morning, this afternoon, this night. If you have not as much grace as you would like to have, thank God for what you have, and pray for more. You are no worse enslaved than was Joseph, or worse troubled than was David, or worse tempted than was Daniel, or worse scourged than was Paul. Yet amid the rattling of fetters, and amid the gloom of dungeons, and amid the horror of shipwreck, they triumphed in the grace of God. The weakest man here this morning has five hundred acres of spiritual joy all ripe. Why do you not go and reap it? You have been groaning over your infirmities for thirty years. Now give one round shout over your emancipation. You say you have it so hard. You might have it worse. You wonder why this great cold trouble keeps revolving through your soul like a grindstone, turning and turning with black hand on the crank. Ah! that trouble is the grindstone on which you are to sharpen your sickle. To the fields! wake up! Take off your green spectacles, your blue spectacles, your black spectacles. Pull up the corners

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of your mouth as far as you pull them down. To the fields! Reap! Reap!

Again I remark: In grace as in farming there is a time for threshing. I tell you bluntly, that is death. Just as the farmer with a flail beats the wheat out of the straw, so death beats the soul out of the body. Every sickness is a stroke of the flail, and the sick bed is the threshing-floor. What, say you, is death to a good man only taking the wheat out of the straw? That is all. An aged man has fallen asleep. Only yesterday you saw him on the sunny porch playing with his grandchildren. Calmly he receives the message to leave this world. He bids a pleasant "Good-bye" to his old friends. The telegraph carries the tidings, and on swift rail-trains the kindred come, wanting to look once more on the face of dear old grandfather. Brush back the grey hairs from his brow; it will never ache again. Put him away in the slumber of the tomb. He will not be afraid of that night. Grandfather was never afraid of anything. He will rise in the morning of the resurrection. Grandfather was always the first to rise. His voice has already mingled in the doxology of heaven. Grandfather always did sing in church. Anything ghastly about that? No. The threshing of the wheat out of the straw—that is all.

The Saviour folds a lamb in His bosom. The little child filled all the house with her music, and her toys are scattered all up and down the stairs just as she left them. What if the hand that plucked four-o'clocks out of the garden is still? It will wave in

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the eternal triumph. What if the voice that made music in the home is still? She will sing the eternal hosanna. Put a white rose in one hand, and a red rose in the other hand, and a wreath of orange blossoms on the brow—the white flower for the victory, the red flower for the Saviour's sacrifice, the orange blossom for her marriage day. Anything ghastly about that? Oh, no. The sun went down and the flower shut. The wheat threshed out of the straw. "Dear Lord, give me sleep," said the dying boy, the son of one of my elders. "Dear Lord, give me sleep," and he closed his eyes and awoke in glory. Henry Longfellow, writing a letter of condolence to those parents, says, "Those last words were beautifully poetic," and Mr. Longfellow knows what is poetic. "Dear Lord, give me sleep."

"'Twas not in cruelty, not in wrath,
That the reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel that visited the earth,
And took the flower away."

So may it be with us when our work is all done, and our trials are all ended. "Dear Lord, give us sleep."

I have one more thought to present. I have spoken of the ploughing, of the sowing, of the harrowing, of the reaping, of the threshing. I must now speak a moment of the garnering. Where is the garner? Need I tell you? Oh no! so many have gone out from your own circle—yea, from your own family—that you have had your eye on that garner for many a year. What a hard time some of them

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had. In Gethsemanes of suffering they sweat great drops of blood. They took the trembling cup and put it to their hot lips, and they cried, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Pursued and hounded and crushed, with tongues of burning agony, they cried, "O Lord, deliver my soul." But they got over it. They all got over it. Garnered! Their tears wiped away. Their battles all ended. Their burdens lifted. Garnered! The Lord of the harvest will not allow those sheaves to perish in the equinox. Garnered! Some of us remember on the farm that the sheaves were put on the top of the rack which surmounted the wagon, and these sheaves were piled higher and higher, and after a while the horses started for the barn, and these sheaves swayed to and fro in the wind, and the old wagon creaked, and the horses gave a struggle and pulled so hard the harness came up in loops of leather on their back; and then when the front wheel struck the elevated floor of the barn, it seemed as if the load would go no farther, until the workmen gave a great shout, and then, with one last tremendous strain, the horses pulled in the load. Then they were unharnessed, and forkful after forkful of grain fell into the mow. Oh, my friends! our getting to heaven may be a pull, a very hard pull, but these sheaves are bound to go in. The Lord of the harvest has promised it. I see the load at last coming to the door of the heavenly garner. The sheaves of the Christian soul sway to and fro in the wind of death, and the whole body creaks under the load; and as the

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load strikes the floor of the celestial garner it seems as if it can go no farther. It is the last struggle until the voices of angels and the voices of our departed kindred, and the welcoming voice of God shall give a shout that shall send in the harvest rolling into the eternal triumph, while all up and down the sky the cry is heard, "Harvest home! Harvest home!"

LONGEVITY.

“With long life will I satisfy him.”—*Ps. xci. 16.*

THROUGH the mistake of its friends, religion has been chiefly associated with sick beds and graveyards. This whole subject to many people is odorous with chlorine and carbolic acid. There are people who cannot pronounce the word “religion” without hearing in it the clipping chisel of the tombstone cutter. It is high time that this thing were changed, and that religion, instead of being represented as a hearse to carry out the dead, should be represented as a chariot in which the living are to triumph. Religion, so far from subtracting from one’s vitality, is a glorious addition. It is sanative, curative, hygienic. It is good for the eyes, good for the ears, good for the spleen, good for the digestion, good for the nerves, good for the muscles, and other things being equal—I say other things being equal, a man will lift more pounds, walk more miles, and live more years with religion than without it. When David, in another part of the Psalms, prays that religion may be dominant, he does not speak of it as a mild sickness, or an emaciation, or an attack of moral and spiritual cramps; he speaks of it as “the saving health of all nations”;

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while God, in the text, promises longevity to the pious, saying, "With long life will I satisfy him."

The fact is that men and women die too soon. It is high time that religion joined the hand of medical science in attempting to improve the world's longevity. Adam lived 930 years. Methuselah lived 969 years. As late in the history of the world as Vespasian, there were at one time in his empire forty-five people 135 years old. So far down as the sixteenth century, Peter Zartan died at 185 years of age. I do not say that religion will ever take the race back to antediluvian longevity, but I do say the length of human life will be greatly improved, and a person will be called a child at 100 years of age. Proof! Isaiah lxx. 20: "The child shall die a hundred years old." Now, if according to the Scripture, the child is to be a hundred years old, may not the men and women reach to three hundred and four hundred, and five hundred? The fact is that we are mere dwarfs and skeletons compared with some of the generations that are to come. Religion has just touched our world. Give it full swing for a few centuries, and who can tell what will be the strength of man and the beauty of woman, and the longevity of all?

My design this morning is to show to you that practical religion is the friend of longevity; and I prove it, first, from the fact that it makes the care of our physical health a positive Christian duty. Whether we shall keep early or late hours, whether we shall take food digestible or indigestible, whether there shall be thorough or incomplete mastication,

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are questions very often deferred to the realm of whimsicality ; but the Christian man lifts this whole problem of health into the accountable and the divine. He says, " God has given me this body, and He has called it the temple of the Holy Ghost, and to deface its altars, or to mar its walls, or crumble its pillars, is a God-defying sacrilege." He sees God's caligraphy in every page—anatomical and physiological. He says, " God has given me a wonderful body for noble purposes." That arm with thirty-six curious bones, wielded by forty-six curious muscles, and all under the brain's telegraphy—three hundred and fifty pounds of blood rushing through the heart every hour—the heart in twenty-four hours beating one hundred thousand times—during the twenty-four hours overcoming resistances amounting to 225,000,000 pounds weight—during the same time the lungs taking in fifty-seven hogsheads of air ; and all this mechanism not more mighty than delicate, and easily unhooked and demolished ! The Christian man says to himself, " If I hurt my nerves, if I hurt my brain, if I hurt any of my physical faculties, I insult God and I call for dire retribution." Why did Paul write for his cloak at Troas ? Why should such a great man as Paul be anxious about a thing so insignificant as an overcoat ? It was because he knew that Paul with pneumonia and rheumatism would not be worth half as much to God and the church as Paul with respiration easy and foot free. An intelligent Christian man would consider it an absurdity to kneel down at night and

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say his prayers and ask God's protection, while at the same time he kept the windows of his bedroom tight shut against fresh air. He would just as soon think of going out on the bridge between New York and Brooklyn, leaping off, and then praying to God to keep him from getting wet. Just as long as you defer this whole subject of physical health to the realm of whimsicality, or to the pastrycook, or to the butcher, or the baker, or the apothecary, or the clothier, you are no Christian. The care of all your physical forces—nervous, muscular, bone, brain, cellular tissues—for all this you must be brought into requisition when the world is on fire. Smoking your nervous system into fidgets; burning out the coating of your stomach with wine logwooded and strychnined; walking through snow-banks with thin shoes to make your feet look delicate; pinched at the waist until you are nigh cut in two, and neither part worth anything; groaning about sick headache and palpitations of the heart, which you think come from God when they come from the devil! You are no Christian. What right has any man or any woman to deface the temple of the Holy Ghost? What is the ear? Why, it is the whispering gallery of the human soul. What is the eye? It is the observatory God constructed, its telescope sweeping the heavens. What is the hand? An instrument so wonderful that when the Earl of Bridgewater bequeathed in his will \$40,000 for treatises to be written on the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, and Dr. Chalmers found his subject in the adaptation

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of eternal nature to the moral and intellectual constitution of man, and the learned Dr. Whewell found his subject in astronomy, Sir Charles Bell, the great English anatomist and surgeon, found his greatest illustration of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in the construction of the human hand, writing his whole book on that subject. So wonderful is the body that God names his own attributes after different parts of it. His omniscience—it is God's eye. His omnipresence—it is God's ear. His omnipotence—it is God's arm. The upholstery of the midnight heavens—it is the work of God's fingers. His life-giving power—it is the breath of the Almighty. His dominion—the government shall be upon his shoulder. A body so divinely honoured and so divinely constructed, let us be careful not to abuse it. When it becomes a Christian duty to take care of our health, is not the whole tendency toward longevity? If I toss my watch about recklessly, and drop it on the pavement, and wind it up any time of day or night I happen to think of it, and often let it run down, while you are careful with your watch, and you never abuse it, and you wind it up at just the same hour every night, and then put it away in a place where it will not suffer from the violent changes of atmosphere, which watch will last the longer? Common sense answers. Now, the human body is God's watch. You see the hands of the watch, you see the face of the watch; but the beating of the heart is the ticking of the watch. Oh! be careful and not let it run down.

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Again I remark : That practical religion is a friend of longevity, in the fact that it is a protest against all the dissipations which injure and destroy the health. Bad men and women live a very short life. Their sin kills them. I know hundreds of good old men, but I do not know half a dozen bad old men. Why? They do not get old. Oh! how many people we have known who have not lived out half their days because of their dissipations and indulgences. Now, practical religion is a protest against all dissipation of any kind. "But," you say, "all professors of religion have fallen, professors of religion have got drunk, professors of religion have misappropriated trust-funds, professors of religion have absconded." Yes, yes, but they threw away their religion before they did their morality. If a man on a White Star Line steamer, bound for Liverpool, in mid-Atlantic jumps overboard and is drowned, is that anything against the White Star Line's capacity to take the man across the ocean? And if a man jumps over the gunwales of his religion and goes down never to rise, is that any reason for your believing that religion has no capacity to take the man clear through? In the one case, if he had stuck to the steamer his body would have been saved; in the other case, if he had stuck to his religion his morals would have been saved. There are aged people in this house to-day who would have been dead twenty-five years ago but for the defences and the equipoise of religion. You have no more natural resistance than hundreds of people who lie in Greenwood and Mount Auburn and

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Laurel Hill to-day, slain by their own vices. The doctors made their case as kind and pleasant as they could, and it was called congestion of the brain ; but the snakes and the blue-flies that crawled over the pillow in the sight of the delirious patient showed what was the matter with him. You, the aged Christian man, walked right along by that unfortunate until you came to the golden pillar of a Christian life. You went to the right, he went to the left. That is all the difference between you. Oh ! if this religion is a protest against all forms of dissipation, then it is an illustrious friend of longevity. My text right again : “ With long life will I satisfy thee.”

Again : Religion is a friend of longevity in the fact that it takes the worry out of our temporalities. It is not work that kills men ; it is worry. When a man becomes a genuine Christian, he makes over to God not only his affections, but his family, his business, his reputation, his body, his mind, his soul—everything. Industrious he will be, but never worrying, because God is managing his affairs. How can he worry about business when, in answer to his prayers, God tells him when to buy and when to sell ? and if he gain, that is best ; and if he lose, that is best. Suppose you had a supernatural neighbour who came in and said, “ Sir, I want you to call on me in every exigency ; I am your fast friend ; I could fall back on \$20,000,000 ; I can foresee a panic ten years ; I hold the controlling stock in thirty of the best monetary institutions of New York ; whenever you are in any trouble, call on me, and I

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will help you ; you can have my money, and you can have my influence ; here is my hand in pledge for it." How much would you worry about business ? Why, you would say, "I'll do the best I can, and then I'll depend upon my friend's generosity for the rest." Now, more than that is promised to every Christian business man. God says to him, "I own New York and London, and St. Petersburg and Peking, and Australia and California are Mine ; I can foresee a panic a million years ; I have all the resources of the universe, and I am your fast Friend ; when you get in business trouble, or any other trouble, call on Me, and I will hear, and I will help ; here is My hand in pledge of Omnipotent deliverance." How much is that man going to worry ? Not much. "Oh !" you say, "here is a man who asked God for a blessing upon a certain enterprise, and he has lost \$5,000 in it. Explain that." I will. Yonder is a factory, and one wheel is going north and the other wheel is going south, and one wheel plays laterally and the other plays vertically. I go to the manufacturer, and I say, "O manufacturer ! your machinery is a contradiction. Why do you not make all the wheels go one way ?" "Well," he says, "I made them to go in opposite directions on purpose, and they produce the right result. You go down stairs and examine the carpets we are turning out in this establishment and you will see." I go down on the other floor and I see the carpets, and I am obliged to confess that, though the wheels in that factory go in opposite directions, they turn out a

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beautiful result ; and while I am standing there looking at the exquisite fabric, an old Scripture passage comes through my mind : “ All things work together for good to those who love God.” Is there not rest in that ? Is there not longevity in that ? Suppose a man is all the time worried about his reputation ? One man says he lies, another man says he is stupid, another man says he is dishonest, and half a dozen printing establishments get the man under Hoe’s cylinder and flatten him out, and he is in a great state of excitement, and worry, and fume, and cannot sleep nights : but religion comes to him and says, “ Man, God is on your side ; He will take care of your reputation ; if God be for you, who can be against you ? ” How much is that man going to worry about his reputation ? Not much. If that broker, who a few years ago in Wall Street, after he had lost money, sat down and wrote a farewell letter to his wife before he blew his brains out—if, instead of taking out of his pocket a pistol, he had taken out a well-read New Testament, there would have been one less suicide. O nervous and feverish people of the world ! try this Almighty sedative ; you will live twenty-five years longer under its soothing power. It is not chloral that you want, or morphine that you want ; it is the gospel of longevity. “ With long life will I satisfy thee.”

Again : Practical religion is a friend of longevity in the fact that it removes all corroding care about a future existence. Every man wants to know what is to become of him. If you get on board a rail

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train, you want to know at what depot it is going to stop; if you get on board a ship, you want to know into what harbour it is going to run, and if you should tell me you have no interest in what is to be your future destiny, I would, in as polite a way as I know how, tell you I did not believe you. Before I had this matter settled with reference to my future existence, the question almost worried me into invalidism. The anxieties you have had upon this subject, put together, would make a martyrdom. This is a state of awful unhealth. There are people who fret themselves to death for fear of dying. I want, this morning, to take the strain off your nerves and the depression off your soul, and I make two or three experiments. Experiment the first: When you go out of this world, it does not make any difference whether in this world you have been good or bad, or whether you believed right or wrong—you will go straight to glory. "Impossible!" you say. "My common sense as well as my religion teaches that the bad and the good cannot live together for ever; you give me no comfort in that experiment." Experiment the second: When you leave this world, you will go into an intermediate state where you can get fixed up and prepared for heaven. "Impossible!" you say. "As the tree falleth, so it must lie, and I cannot postpone to an intermediate state that reformation which ought to have been effected in this state." Experiment the third: There is no future world; when a man dies, that is the last of him. Do not worry about what you are to do in another

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state of being; you will not do anything. "Impossible!" you say. "There is something that tells me that death is not the appendix, but the preface; there is something that tells me that on this side of the grave I only get started, and I will go on for ever—my power to think says, 'For ever;' my affections say, 'For ever;' my capacity to enjoy or suffer, 'For ever.'" Well, you defeat me in my three experiments. I have only one more to make, and if you defeat me in that, I am exhausted. A mighty One, on a knoll back of Jerusalem, one day, the skies filled with forked lightnings, and the earth shaking with volcanic disturbances, turned His pale and agonized face towards the heavens and said, "I take the sins and the sorrows of the ages into My own heart. I am the expiation. Witness, earth, and heaven, and hell—I am the expiation."

Accept that sacrifice and quit worrying. Take the tonic, the inspiration, the longevity of this thought. Religion is sunshine; that is healthy. Religion is fresh air and pure water; they are healthy. Religion is warmth; that is healthy. Ask all the doctors, and they will tell you that a quiet conscience and pleasant anticipations are hygienic. I offer you perfect peace now, everything hereafter which can fillip the blow and irradiate the disposition. You have been accustomed to open the door on this side the sepulchre. This morning I open the door on the other side the sepulchre. You have been accustomed to walking in the wet grass on the top of the grave. I show you the under side of the grave; the bottom

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has fallen out, and the long ropes with which the pallbearers let down your dead, let them clear through into heaven. Glory be to God for this robust, rubicund religion! It will have a tendency to make you live long in this world, and in the world to come you will have eternal longevity. "With long life will I satisfy thee."

LAME ON BOTH FEET.

“Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake? So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king’s table; and was lame on both his feet.”—2 *Sam.* ii. 13.

WAS there anything ever more romantic and chivalrous than the affiliation of David and Jonathan? At one time Jonathan was up and David was down. Now, David is up and Jonathan’s family is down. As you have often heard of two soldiers before going into battle making a covenant that if one is shot the survivor will take charge of the body, the watch, the mementoes, and perhaps of the bereft family of the one that dies; so David and Jonathan had made a covenant, and now that Jonathan is dead, David is inquiring about his family, that he may show kindness unto them for their father Jonathan’s sake. Careful search is made, and a son of Jonathan by the dreadfully homely name of Mephibosheth is found. His nurse, in his infancy, dropped him until both his ankles were out of place, and they had never been set. This decrepit, poor man was brought into the palace of King David. David looks upon him with melting tenderness, no doubt seeing in his face a resemblance to his old friend, the deceased Jonathan. The whole bearing of King David

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toward him seems to say, "How glad I am to see you, Mephibosheth. How you remind me of your father, my old friend and benefactor. I made a bargain with your father a good many years ago, and I am going to keep it with you. What can I do for you Mephibosheth? I am resolved what to do: I will make you a rich man; I will restore to you the confiscated property of your grandfather Saul, and you shall be a guest of mine as long as you live, and you shall be seated at my table among the princes." It was too much for Mephibosheth, and he cries out against it, calling himself a dead dog. "Be still," says David. "I don't do this on your account; I do this for your father Jonathan's sake. I can never forget his kindness. How I remember when I was hounded from place to place, he befriended me. Can I ever forget how he stripped himself of his courtier apparel and gave it to me instead of my shepherd's coat, and how he took off his own sword and belt and gave them to me instead of my sling? Oh! I can never forget him. I feel as if I couldn't do enough for you, his son. I don't do it for your sake, I do it for your father Jonathan's sake." "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem; for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet."

There is so much gospel in this quaint incident that I am embarrassed as to know where to begin. Whom do Mephibosheth and David and Jonathan make you think of? Mephibosheth, in the first place, stands for the disabled human soul. Lord Byron describes sin as a charming recklessness, as

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a gallantry, as a Don Juan ; George Sand describes sin as triumphant in many intricate plots ; Gavarni, with his engraver's knife, always shows sin as a great jocularly ; but the Bible presents it as a Mephibosheth, lame on both feet. Sin, like the nurse in the context, attempted to carry us, and let us fall, and we have been disabled, and in our whole moral nature we are decrepit. Sometimes theologians higggle about a technicality. They put up the words "total depravity," and some people believe in the doctrine, and some people reject the doctrine. What do you mean by total depravity ? Do you mean that every man is as bad as he can be ? Then I do not believe it, either. But do you mean that sin has let us fall, that it has scarified and disabled and crippled our entire moral nature, until we cannot walk straight, and are lame in both feet ? Then I admit your proposition. I do not care what the sentimentalist or the poets say in regard to sin ; in the name of God I declare to you to-day that sin is disorganisation, disintegration, ghastly disfiguration, hobbling deformity. Your modern theologian tells you that man is a little out of sorts ; he sometimes thinks wrong ; he sometimes does wrong ; indeed, his nature needs a little moral surgery, an outside splint, a slight compress, a little rectification. Religion is a good thing to have ; it might some day come into use. Man is partially wrong, not all wrong. He is lame in one foot. Bring on the salve of Divine grace, and the ointment, and the pain extractor, and we will have his one foot cured. Man is only half wrong,

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not altogether wrong. In what is man's nature right? In his will—his affections—his judgment? No. There is an old book in my house that says, "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint." Mephibosheth lame in both feet.

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Again: Mephibosheth in the text stands for the disabled human soul humbled and restored. When this invalid of my text got a command to come to King David's palace, he trembled. The fact was that the grandfather of Mephibosheth had treated David most shockingly, and now Mephibosheth says to himself, "What does the king want of me? Isn't it enough that I am lame? Is he going to destroy my life? Is he going to wreak on me the vengeance which he holds toward my grandfather Saul? It's too bad." But go to the palace Mephibosheth must, since the king has commanded it. With cane and crutches, and helped by his friends, I see Mephibosheth going up the stairs of the palace. I hear his cane and crutches rattling on the tessellated floor of the throne-room. No sooner have these two persons confronted each other—Mephibosheth and David the king—than Mephibosheth throws himself flat on his face before the king, and styles himself a dead dog. In the East, when a man styles himself a dog, he utters the utmost term of self-abnegation. It is not a term so strong in this country, where, if a dog has a fair chance, he sometimes shows more nobility of character than some human specimens that we know of; but the mangy curs of the Oriental

cities, I am told by travellers, are utterly detestable. Mephibosheth gives the utmost term of self-loathing when he compares himself to a dog, and dead at that. Run out the analogy. When the command is given from the palace to the human soul to come, the soul begins to tremble. It says, "What is God going to do with me now? Is He going to destroy me? Is He going to wreak His vengeance upon me?" There is more than one Mephibosheth trembling in this house to-day, because God has summoned him to the palace of Divine grace! What are you trembling about? God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner. He does not send for you to hurt you. He sends for you to do you good. A Scotch preacher had the following circumstances come under his observation:—There was a poor woman in the parish who was about to be turned out because she could not pay her rent. One night she heard a loud knocking at the door, and she made no answer, and hid herself. The rapping continued louder, louder, louder, but she made no answer, and continued to hide herself. She was frightened almost unto death. She said, "That's the officer of the law come to throw me out of my home." A few days after a Christian philanthropist met her in the street, and said, "My poor woman, where were you the other night? I came around to your house to pay your rent. Why didn't you let me in? Were you at home?" "Why," she replied, "was that you?" "Yes, that was I; I came to pay your rent." "Why," she said, "if I had had any idea it was you, I would have

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let you in. I thought it was an officer come to cast me out of my home." O soul! that loud knocking at thy gate to-day is not the sheriff come to put you in gaol; it is the best friend you ever had come to go your security. You shiver with terror because you think it is wrath. It is mercy. Why, then, tremble because the King of heaven and earth calls you to His palace? Stop trembling and start right away. "Oh!" you say, "I can't start. I have been so lamed by sin, and so lamed by evil habit, I can't start. I am lame in both feet." My friend, we come out with our prayers and sympathies to help you up to the palace. They call Him the Holy Ghost. If you want to get to the palace, you may get there. Start now. All you have to do is just to throw yourself on your face at the feet of the King, as Mephibosheth did.

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And again: Mephibosheth in my text stands for the disabled human soul saved for the sake of another. Mephibosheth would never have got into the palace on his own account. He had been provided for by a wealthy gentleman in Lodebar; but he would always have been a mendicant. He had no health to earn his own livelihood. Why did David ransack the realm to find that poor man, and then bestow upon him a great fortune, and command a farmer by the name of Ziba to cultivate the estate and give to this invalid Mephibosheth half the proceeds every year? Why did King David make such a mighty stir about a poor fellow who could never

be of any use to the throne of Israel? It was for Jonathan's sake. It was what Robert Burns calls for "auld lang syne." David could not forget what Jonathan had done for him in other days. He could not forget the time when Jonathan stripped off his courtier apparel and gave it to him, and took off his sword and belt and gave them to him. Three times this chapter has it that all this kindness on the part of David to Mephibosheth was for his father Jonathan's sake. Sometimes a person has applied to you for help, and you have refused him; but when you found he was the son or brother of some one who had been your benefactor in former days, and by a glance you saw the resemblance of your old friend in the face of the applicant, you relented, and you said, "O sir, I will do this for your father's sake."

You know by your experience what my text means. Now, my friends, it is on that principle that you and I are to get into the King's palace. The most important part of every prayer is the last three or four words of it—"For Christ's sake." Do not rattle off those words as though they were merely the finishing stroke of the prayer. They are the most important part of the prayer. When in earnestness you go before God and say, "for Christ's sake," it rolls in, as it were, upon God's mind all the memories of Bethlehem and Gennesaret and Golgotha. When you say before God, "for Christ's sake," you hold before God's mind every groan, every tear, every crimson drop of His only-begotten Son. If there is

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anything in all the universe that will move God to an act of royal benefaction, it is to say, "for Christ's sake." God is omnipotent, but He is not strong enough to resist that cry, "for Christ's sake." If a little child should kneel behind God's throne and should say, "for Christ's sake," the great Jehovah would turn clear around on His throne to look at her and listen. No prayer ever gets to heaven but for Christ's sake. No soul is ever comforted but for Christ's sake. The world will never be redeemed but for Christ's sake. Our name, however illustrious it may be among men, before God stands only for inconsistency and sin ; but there is a name—a potent name, a blessed name, a glorious name, an everlasting name—that we may put upon our lips as a sacrament and upon our forehead as a crown, and that is the name of Jesus, our Divine Jonathan, who stripped Himself of His robe and put on our rags, and gave us His sword and took our broken reed, so that now, whether we are well or sick, whether we are living or dying, if we speak that name it moves heaven to the centre, and God says, "Let the poor soul come in. Carry him up into the throne-room of the palace. Though he may have been an exile, though sin may have crippled him on this side, and sorrow may have crippled him on the other side, and he is lame in both his feet, bring him into the palace, for I want to show to him everlasting kindness for Jonathan's sake."

Again : Mephibosheth in my text stands for the disabled human soul lifted to the King's table. It

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was more difficult in those times even than it is now for common men to get into a royal dining-room. The subjects might have come around the rail of the palace and might have seen the lights kindled, and might have heard the clash of the knives and the rattle of the golden goblets, but not get in. Stout men with stout feet could not get in once in all their life to one banquet, yet poor Mephibosheth goes in, lives there, and is every day at the table. Oh, what a getting up in the world it was for poor Mephibosheth! Well, well, my friends, though you and I may be wofully lamed with sin, for our Divine Jonathan's sake, I hope we will all get in to dine with the King. Before dining we must be introduced. If you are invited to a company of persons where there are distinguished people present, you are introduced: "This is the Senator," "This is the Governor," "This is the President." Before we sit down at the King's table in heaven, I think we will want to be introduced. Oh, what a time that will be, when you and I, by the grace of God, get into heaven, and we are introduced to the mighty spirits there, and some one will say, "This is Joshua." "This is Paul." "This is Moses." "This is John Knox." "This is Hannah More." "This is Florence Nightingale." "This is John Milton." "This is Martin Luther." "This is George Whitefield." Oh! will we have any strength left after such a round of celestial introduction? Yea! We will be potentates ourselves. Then we will sit down at the King's table with the sons and the daughters of God, and

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one will whisper across the table to us, and say, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God!" And some one at the table will say, "When will this break up? When will this scene be gone? How long will it last? All other banquets at which I sat ended. How long will this last?" And Paul will answer, "For ever!" and Joshua will say, "For ever," and John Knox will say, "For ever!" and George Whitefield, with the hand with which he gesticulated over the commons, when, with one gesticulation, he shook twenty thousand people, will put his hand down on the banquet table and say, "For ever." And the wine at that banquet will be old wine; it will be the oldest wine of heaven; it will be the wine that was trodden out from the red clusters on the day when Jesus trod the wine-press alone—wine already more than eighteen centuries old. And no one will deride us as to what we were in this world. No one will bring up our imperfections here, our sins here. All our earthly imperfections completely covered up and hidden. Mephibosheth's feet clear under the table; kingly fare; kingly vesture; kingly companionship. We shall reign for ever and ever. I think that banquet will mean more to those who had it hard in this world than to those who had it easy. That banquet in David's palace meant more to Mephibosheth than to any one else, because he had been poor and crippled, and despised and rejected. And that man who in this world is blind will better appreciate the light

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of heaven than we who in this world had good eyesight. And that man who in this world was deaf will better appreciate the music of heaven than we who in this world had good hearing. And those will have a higher appreciation of the easy locomotion of that land who in this world were Mephibosheths.

O my soul, what a magnificent gospel! It takes a man so low down and raises him so high! What a gospel! Come, now, who wants to be banqueted and empalaced? As when Wilberforce was trying to get the "Emancipation Bill" through the British Parliament, and all the British Isles were anxious to hear of the passage of that "Emancipation Bill;" when a vessel was coming into port, the captain of the vessel knew that the people were so anxious to get the tidings, and he stepped out on the prow of the ship and shouted to the people, long before he got up to the dock, "Free!" and they cried it, and they shouted it, and they sang it all through the land, "Free! Free!" So to-day I would like to sound the news of your present and your eternal emancipation until the angels of God hovering in the air, and watchmen on the battlements, and bellmen in the town, cry it, shout it, sing it, ring it, "Free! Free!" I come out now as the messenger of the palace to invite Mephibosheth to come up. I am here to-day to tell you that God has a wealth of kindness to bestow upon you for His Son's sake. The doors of the palace are open to receive you. The cup-bearers have already put the

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chalices on the table, and the great, loving, tender, sympathetic heart of God bends over you this moment, saying, "Is there any that is yet left of the house of Saul, that I may show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

IS THERE A HELL?

“Thus saith the Lord.”—*Exod.* iv. 23. “Thus saith the Lord.”—*Exod.* ix. 17. “Thus saith the Lord.”—*1 Sam.* i. 27. “Thus saith the Lord.”—*Josh.* vii. 13. “Thus saith the Lord.”—*Josh.* xxiv. 2. “Thus saith the Lord.”—*Judg.* vi. 8. “Thus saith the Lord.”—*1 Chron.* xvii. 7. “Thus saith the Lord.”—*Jer.* vi. 9.

EIGHT texts, and all of them the same. The strangest thing in the history of American and European journalism is that during the past few months it has been discussing the question of eternal punishment. The question of Turko-Russian contest, the question of silver currency, the question as to President Hayes's policy with the South—all submerged with the question, “Is there a hell?” It makes but very little difference what De Witt Talmage thinks about this, for it is only a little while ago he began to breathe, and in a little while he will stop breathing. It makes but little difference what Dean Stanley, or Canon Farrar, or Mr. Frothingham think about this, for they have never been into the eternal world, and can give no personal experience. The Roman Catholic Church in all its dioceses and through all its bishoprics has declared its belief in a place of future retribution, but that does not settle it for me. The Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian churches have

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adopted this theory in their creeds, but that does not settle it for me. This morning I cast aside all human authority and all human opinion. There is only one Being who can tell me now whether there is a hell. That Being is God. I reject every opinion except that on which is written, "Thus saith the Lord." I put one "Thus saith the Lord" against all the sermons, all the disquisitions, all the books of all the ages. "Thus saith the Lord." "Thus saith the Lord." You see, my friends, I start in the assumption that the Bible is true. If you deny it is true, some other Sabbath I will argue that matter, but not this morning.

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I must turn now to those who believe the Bible to be true. Eternal Spirit of Almighty God, fall upon us now, while with fingers of dust we turn the sacred leaves, and with lips of ashes recite the most stupendous truths that ever shook the human soul. If we are honest men we will come to this subject as you would in the midst of a great freshet if at midnight you were on the Erie express train and you said to the conductor, "Conductor, do you think any of the bridges are down to-night?"—with something of the feeling I had after our last lifeboat had been crushed to pieces in the midst of the ocean cyclone, when I said to the officer, "Officer, do you think we will ever get to New York?" He shook his head, as much as to say, "Don't ask me." I have no sympathy with the flippant discussion of this truth, nor with that manner on the part of a preacher which

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seems to say, "You impenitent people will be lost, and good for you!" I feel that I am a sinner, and because of the million transgressions of my heart and life, I must perish unless some one can show me a way out from under the condemnation. The platform on which I stand may be two or three feet higher than the pew in which you sit; but I realise that I am not raised the thousandth part of an inch above the level on which we must all stand in judgment before God. I do not know how people can joke about this subject, and yet it is the subject of more puns, more caricatures, more jokes in your stores and offices and shops than any other subject. Why do they not joke about the broken bridge at Ashtabula; or the *Atlantic* steamer going down off Mars Head with five hundred passengers; or about the earthquake that crushed Lisbon; or about the London plague? There is more fun in all those subjects than in this. Let us come to this subject not as critics, not as cavillers, not in a polemic spirit. Let us come to it as a question of personal safety. Let us empty ourselves of all previous impressions, and without any disposition to twist things, or explain them away, find out what is the announcement of the only authority on this subject that is worth so much as a pin.

In the first place, I group together all those passages which represent the suffering of the lost by fire. In Matthew it is said, "At the end of the world the angels shall come forth and separate the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them

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into the furnace of fire." Can you not explain it away? Oh yes! I could make these angels fairies; I could represent this fire as only something looking like fire; I could represent this furnace as a casket with a crimson lining; but what is the use of explaining away a furnace of fire when God says there is one? What is the use of a criminal trying to explain away the existence of such a place as Sing-Sing? But you say, "Isn't there some mistake about it?" If there is, then the Almighty Christ made the mistake, for the passage I quoted is part of His sermon. I appeal to Paul on this subject. He was no coward. Instead of his trembling before governments, governments trembled before him. A small invalid, but the most magnificent man of the ages. What does he say? He says to the Thessalonians, "The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be revealed from heaven with mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God." I appeal to St. John, the inspired. In one place he says of the lost, "They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone." And in another place he says, "The adulterers, the sorcerers, and all liars shall have their place in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." And in another place he says, "They shall both be cast alive into the lake of fire." The last book of the Bible closes with a dark scroll on the sky. What is it? Smoke. Where there is no fire there is no smoke. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever." "But," you say, "were not these men who wrote this?" Yes,

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but they were inspired men. If you do not want to take even inspired men, then I go back to Christ again, and as my first quotation on this subject was from Christ, so my last quotation under this head shall be from Christ, as He says, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." "But," you say, "isn't this figurative?" I am not opposed to saying it may be figurative, but I know very well that if it is not fire it is something as severe as fire. Christ and His Apostles were not lacking in illustrative power, and when they say a thing is morning, I know it is as bright as it can be; and when they say anything is a prison, I know it is a galling thralldom; and when they say anything is fire, I know it is torment unmitigated. I often hear people explain these fiery representations of Scripture as metaphor, and as soon as they make metaphor out of them they seem to think they have soothed the whole subject. No; if there be a mental state as sharp and severe as fire, it might as well be fire. Christ and His Apostles use the figure of fire, and I know from that there is nothing more painful or more agonizing. But if you want some other figure, take it. Say it is a penitentiary, iron-bolted, iron-barred, iron-locked, the doors opening in and not out. I will not dispute with you. If you will, say it is a maelstrom which dashes and breaks to pieces and swallows down all those that come within the sweep of its foaming circles. I will not dispute with you. If you prefer those human similes, take them. I pre-

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fer God's comparison because I know God is right, and human comparisons may be wrong.

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The next thing I have to do is to group all those passages which show the indignation of God against sin and the sinner, and hence the possibility of such a place as I have spoken of. Out of a hundred sermons, ninety-eight of them are on the love of God, the mercy of God, the kindness of God; and if we preach two sermons out of the one hundred, in regard to the indignation of God, we are styled "sulphuric." Our American preaching needs to be reconstructed on this doctrine of God's indignation. So recreant are we, the American clergy on this subject, that the vast majority of you people here to-day do not know that the Bible more frequently speaks of the wrath of God than it does of the love of God. Not because God has more wrath than mercy, but because He knew the world would be slow to believe it. We have not enough backbone of moral courage to preach the whole Bible. So we go on preaching a one-sided God, with a character we would despise in ourselves! Do you ever get angry? Suppose a ruffian should knock your little girl into the gutter—would you smile about it? would you reward him for it? Suppose, passing down the street, you saw three or four masons, with hods of brick on their shoulders going up a long ladder, and some one should come to the foot of the ladder and hurl it away, and the three or four masons should dash down and lose their lives—would

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you smile about it? would you reward him for it? No. There are a hundred things in your life that excite your indignation, and if you are never aroused in that way it is because you are imbecile. Yet, what do they say of God? Why, the whole race can go on defying Him, breaking His laws, murdering His only-begotten Son, striking in the face the Lord Almighty, and He will smile on them through all eternity. Bible-holders, I want you to recognise the fact that God in the Bible more often speaks of His indignation than He does of His mercy. Twenty-eight times does the Bible speak of the love of God. Sixty-one times does it speak of His wrath and His indignation.

Oh! can we preach the whole Bible without preaching the indignation of God as well as the love of God? I will recite to you some of the passages which show the Lord's indignation, and hence the possibility of such a place as I am speaking of. In Thessalonians: "Taking vengeance on them that know not God." In Revelation: "They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of Almighty God, poured without mixture into the cup of His indignation." The figure, you see, is a pitcher and a bowl. Into the pitcher are compressed the clusters that have grown under the hot sun of indignation; and then the wine, seething, bubbling, is poured out from the pitcher into the bowl, and the lost soul, putting trembling hands to that bowl, presses it to the lips, and drinks the draught until all the contents are drained. You do not like the figure? It is not mine.

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“Thus saith the Lord. They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of Almighty God, poured without mixture into the cup of His indignation.” In another place the Bible says, “The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.” In other words, the darkness of the Mamartine dungeon, the darkness of Egypt. All the darknesses of the earth are not thick enough to symbolise it, and so the Bible seeks for something beyond all these darknesses. “The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into *outer* darkness,” and over that abyss we are all suspended, unless we escape on one condition to be mentioned at a later point. It is too early to mention it. What does a man want to know of a life-raft when he is sure of no shipwreck? Not persuaded yet? Revelation: “The wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” Not yet persuaded that there is a wrath side as well as a love side to the Almighty? Isaiah xxxiii. 12—and this passage perhaps you have never heard quoted: “And the people shall be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire. Hear, ye that are afar off, what I have done, and ye that are near acknowledge My might.” Not yet persuaded? I quote once more Isaiah, sixty-third chapter: “I will tread them in My wrath and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment.” Does that quotation irritate you with me? I did not say it. “Thus saith the Lord.” Not persuaded with what Samuel says, and Micah says, and Daniel says, and Jeremiah

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says, and Ezekiel says, and Paul says, and Christ says, and Jehovah says? Not persuaded? Then I shall have to leave you to be persuaded by your own experiences amid the torments of the damned, when the truths of God's burnished throne shall flame on you. The fact is that all the Bible-holders in this audience by this time, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, are persuaded that there is a hell. How long shall it last? I will answer that question to-morrow night. How do you accord this with the love and mercy of God? I will answer that question to-morrow night.

What do you think of the theories of Canon Farrar, and Dean Stanley, and Mr. Frothingham? I will answer that question to-morrow night. This morning I have nothing to do with objections. I will simply state to you that God fifty-six times, in the plainest, most unmistakable, stupendous, and overwhelming way, declares that there is a hell. Yea, I will go further, and say there is a possibility, ay, there is a probability, that there are some in this house to-day who will spend eternity in the lost world. Nothing but the hand of an outraged, defied, insulted, long-suffering, indignant, omnipotent God keeps this whole audience this moment from sliding like one avalanche into it. O God, what a crisis! Has not the time come for me to tell this people that there is no need that any of them go there? I am going to announce to you that five or ten may escape—yea, a hundred,—yea, a thousand—yea, all. You say, "Tell me now." Oh! I do not want to break on you the glad

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tidings too suddenly. I want to tell you that there is no more need that you go to that world than that you should leap into the geysers of California, or the crater of Cotopaxi.

I turn to the same old book and I find out that the son of Mary, who was the Son of God, the darling of heaven, the champion of the ages, by some called Lord, by some called Jesus, by others called Christ, but this morning by us called by the three blessed titles, Lord Jesus Christ, by one magnificent stroke made it possible for us all to be saved. He not only told us that there was a hell, but He went into it. He walked down the fiery steeps. He stepped off the bottom rung of the long ladder of despair. He descended into hell. He explored the darkest den of eternal midnight, and then He came forth lacerated and scarified, and bleeding, and mauled by the hands of infernal excruciation, to cry out to all the ages, "I have paid the price for all those who would make Me their substitute. By My piled-up groans, by My Omnipotent agony, I demand the rescue of all those who will give up sin and trust in Me." Mercy! mercy! mercy! But how am I to get it? Cheap. It will not cost you as much as a loaf of bread. Only a penny? No, no. Escape from hell, and all the harps and mansions and thrones and sunlit fields of heaven besides into the bargain, "without money and without price."

Now, I ask you as common-sense men and women, if one has a choice between heaven and hell, and he may escape the one and he may win the other, and

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he refuses to do so—I ask you, as men and women of common sense, if he does not deserve to be lost? He does. You know he does. Oh! by the free salvation of Christ, by the voices of the eternal groan which we have heard this morning, I beg all this audience to flee the wrath to come. Do not, my friend, make it a controversy between you and me; it is controversy between you and God. Do not go away talking of what I said; go away talking of what God said. My dear brother, my dear sister, you may shuffle this whole subject off your attention, but that does not change the fact. Your impenitent course is as certainly leading you to that lost world as Fulton Street leads to Fulton Ferry, as certainly as Montague Street leads to Wall Street Ferry, as certainly as Atlantic Street leads to South Ferry. You are on the road to hell! Turn around, and start on the road to heaven. Oh! it seems as if my pulse never beat so swiftly as it does this minute, and it is in emotion lest some of you be lost. My heart, it seems as if it would break. God knows that I have never prayed over any sermon as I have over this, and yet how powerless I am to make you see things as you will see them on your dying bed, as you will see them when the front gate of eternity swings open upon your amazed spirit. With one more quotation I will leave this whole subject between you and God's arousing, convicting, converting Spirit. Isaiah xxiii. 14: "Who of us can dwell with devouring fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?" Who? Who?

POETRY.

(BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.)

THE FACE OF THE LORD.

COME unto me, O Lord.

Come as Thou wilt, but show Thy face to me !
For the reproof and chastening of Thy hand
Is better than the emptiness of earth—
The blankness of the sky—that covers one
Who feels himself forsaken.

I have sinned.

I know it now, I have forgotten Thee,
And walked self-pleasing in unbidden ways ;
And as a little child, alone and far,
And suddenly o'ertaken by the night,
Turns round to seek for a familiar form
And finds but darkness, so am I o'erwhelmed.

I cannot live without Thee, O my God !
I have been used, Thou knowest, in distress
To run to Thee for comfort and for aid,
As to a loving parent comes the child ;
And still I have no other place to look,
Although Thy face is hidden.

Come to me !

For I am helpless in my utter need.
My heart lies coldly shadowed by my sin,

Poetry.

So heavy that I cannot lift it up
To seek the blessed sunlight of Thy face,
Where I might feel my guilt, and so repent.
Thou art my only hope—I cry to Thee!

“ My Lord, my God ! ” I stand as Mary stood,
When in the garden one low voice, one word,
Turned all her sorrow into deepest joy.
'Tis the same love that wraps me in its flood,
And sweeps the trembling words from off my lips,
As the poor wanderer's whisper—“ I have sinned ”—
Was broken by the Father's glad embrace,
And hushed to silence by the pardoning kiss.

Has this love been around me all the way—
Such love neglected, wounded, and ignored ?
The tears run fast adown my lifted face,
For so we only truly know our sin
And can repent, when we have been forgiven.

I have no words to tell Thee, O my Lord !
The love and joy and grief that fill my heart,
But thou dost hold it in thy piercèd hands,
The sunlight of thy smile doth fill it so ;
And Thou dost know, and I know it is Thine,
For evermore. I have no need of words.

REPENTANCE.

O THOU, whose ever wakeful eye
This checkered life surveys,
Who knows the little good I do,
And marks my erring ways ;

Poetry.

Low in the dust I turn to Thee,
(As oft, alas, before !)
And pray a portion of Thy grace,
That I may sin no more.

Thou knowest how frail and weak I am,
Without Thy strengthening power,
How much I need Thy guiding hand
To lead me every hour ;
Each tempting wile, each weak resolve,
Life's faults—a dreary store—
Repentant, Lord, I bring to Thee,
That I may sin no more.

Back o'er the past sad memory roves—
How oft I've gone astray !
How little prized the fostering care
About me every day !
As here, bowed down with grief and shame,
I count Thy mercies o'er,
Grant me a pure and thankful heart, `
That I may sin no more.

The luring pleasures I have sought
This moment I resign ;
Fame's siren voice no longer charms
This willing voice of mine.
Be my ambition to be taught,
In heaven's exhaustless lore,
Learned in the volume of Thy love,
That I may sin no more !

Poetry.

And when I've counted all my years,
And life grows near its close,
Oh, may I hail that guiding star
Which o'er my childhood rose.
And when at last the goal is reached,
With weary feet and sore,
Dear Saviour, take me to Thyself,
That I may sin no more.

CHRISTIAN LIFE.

(2 Kings xix. 14.)

LEAVE God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him, whate'er betide ;
Thou'lt find Him in the evil days
Thy all-sufficient strength and guide.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love,
Builds on the rock that naught can move.
What can these anxious cares avail—
These never-ceasing moans and sighs ?
What can it help us to bewail
Each painful moment as it flies ?
Our cross and trials do but press
The heavier for our bitterness.
Only thy restless heart keep still,
And wait in cheerful hope, content
To take whate'er His gracious will,
His all-discerning love, hath sent.
Doubt not our inmost wants are known
To Him who chose us for His own.

Poetry.

He knows where joyful hours are best,
He sends them as He sees it meet ;
When thou hast borne the fiery test,
And art made free from all deceit,
He comes to thee all unaware,
And makes thee own His loving care.

Nor in the heat of pain and strife,
Think God hath cast thee off unheard,
And that the man, whose prosperous life
Thou enviest, is of Him preferred.
Time passes, and much change doth bring,
And sets a bound to everything.

All are alike before His face ;
'Tis easy to our God most High
To make the rich man poor and base,
To give the poor man wealth and joy.
True, wonders still by Him are wrought,
Who setteth up, and brings to naught.

Sing, pray, and swerve not from His ways,
But do thine own part faithfully ;
Trust His rich promises of grace,
So shall they be fulfilled in thee.
God never yet forsook at need
The soul that trusted Him indeed.

