

## Lecture Delivered in Tremont Temple, Boston, February 28.

BY JOHN C. WOOLEY, THE FAMOUS TEMPERANCE ORATOR.

After quoting the greater part of the ninth chapter of John in a manner that held the rapt attention of his vast audience, Mr. Wooley said:

I am going to preach to you a little bit of a sermon. Some of you smile, because many of you know that I am not a preacher.

I suppose there is nobody on this planet to-day, who feels under any obligation whatever to vouch for me except one woman and three boys. I was, as my brother (Mr. Harris) says, an outcast from my own home and from the society in which I was reared and which I love. But I was no more and scarcely as much of an outcast in the old dark days, than I find myself to-day from the politest circles of Jesus Christ. Why? Because I want nothing and I fear nothing and I speak the truth. My wife, the one woman who vouches for me, wrote me a letter which I received this morning, in which the opening sentence was, "John, be gentle with the people," and my brother, Harris, whom I love with all my heart, came very near apologizing for me, when he introduced me to you.

But I want to preach to you about Jesus. Not about his divinity, that we will let go. Nor yet about his humanity in any doctrinal or technical sense, but just about Jesus himself as he appears in this most beautiful incident in the New Testament.

I suppose there is nobody who would accuse me of indulging in flattery of people. I suppose that while I have been accused of nearly everything else, there is not anybody who would say that I am toadying to people or to places or conditions. I should like to say before I proceed with this sermon, that I attended worship in this place this morning, joined with all my heart in all the service, and I want to say that for splendor of diction and for compactness of argument upon the premises and for the magnificence of the conception of it all, I have never heard a greater sermon than I heard this morning in Tremont Temple. And what rejoiced my heart especially was that as I listened I remembered that since I spoke last in this church, the pastor of the church from whose lips the sermon came, had announced from the pulpit and by the newspapers to all the world that from this time on, he will never cast his ballot for any man or party that does not stand out and out against the liquor traffic. I deem it an honor to publish him, to point the young men of Boston to him and such as he, and say "Follow such men," and it is for them to destroy the liquor traffic by the hands of the young Christians, and wherever the Christian pulpit stands true to Jesus Christ in this path, as this pulpit does to-day, we will close the saloons within this century, and make this people to be a nation whose God is the Lord.

I am to preach to you about Jesus. It was a Sabbath morning in Jerusalem, and the sacred city was lying bathed in the peace and sweet life of all the beauty of that eastern climate. The solemn hush of the Sabbath day and the solemn litany of the old Jewish religion floating through and under the archways of the splendid temple, almost made one forget the weekday din and clang of the warriors of Rome in whose possession the sacred city lay.

Around it were the Judean hills. I love to think of them clapping their hands, as the sun like a splendid blazing highpriest came down and enveloped them everywhere with his golden light, and the hilltops were glowing with the inexpressible wealth of that absolute, and with the glory of the daybreak.

And there crouched a beggar by that city wall. For him no sun nor any Sabbath rest, but just the dead level of poverty and misery and pain. And he crept into a nook of the wall, so that he might be out of the way of the people and not be trampled on, or perhaps, poor soul, with a view to worship in the only way that seemed possible to him, by ceasing for that one day to cry out and thrust his poverty and wretchedness into the eyes of people. And there he lay alone in a city full of fellow-men, companionless as though he had been the sole possessor of the world, just so much of flesh and blood. A poor outcast sitting out of the trend of human life with all its comforts. So much jetsam and flotsam, as a marine would say, cast adrift upon the sea of life, while the great ship of human life filled her white sails and sped away upon her course. There he sat and the city was crowded with people, and there was about him all that makes life endurable and delightful, but he had none of this. And there he lay and all Jerusalem was before him.

Perhaps it was a bright day like this after some dreary days of rain and storm. You know how these bright sunny days bring out the people into the parks. How they make visits, who have not been visiting for months. How the children come home on the bright days, and how the parents go away to visit their loved ones in the

first bright days of the springtime. And perhaps it was just such a day and nearly all the people of the city were out on the highways, and there was no lack of kindness, I tell you, and no lack of a disposition to help people. Perhaps you might have stood at one of the corners of those busy streets and watched all the day long without finding a single thing that had not some bit of cheer in it. If you had had the power to look into the hearts of those men, you would not have found one heart that was too hard to help a beggar, who was blind and hungry and ragged. But nobody saw him, and that was the trouble. Not many real blind people walking about. They were blind people who had eyes, and deaf people, who had ears, and gave no help because they didn't see him. I suppose many of them were on their way to church. The banker was on the street with money in his pocket, and he was thinking of stocks and bonds and all the rest, and he would gladly have helped the man, but he was carrying his bank with him to church. He had his investments in one stock or another in his mind, and he was going to the temple to worship. He would have helped but he didn't see. And if someone had said to him afterwards, "There was a beggar by the roadside that you could have helped, he would have said "Why didn't he speak to me? Why didn't he make himself known?" Ah, friends, don't wait for people to call upon you. I think it happens most often that the most deserving of the hungry and the needy in this world don't call out or make any sign at all, and the reason why the charities of the land fail for the most part of that beneficence that they ought to carry with them, is because we wait until the boldest of the beggars appeal to us for help. Oh, if you will only look up your own cases and surprise somebody by the gift. If you will be alert to see the need and to meet it before they ask, you will get a lesson full of blessing above that which you can ever get out of any scientific benevolence or charitable organization in the world. I am not saying anything against them.

And the banker kept his gold and his heart was kind too, and the beggar got no help. And I suppose the merchant was in the crowd and he had money in his pocket and a kind heart in his bosom, a "rough and ready man" perhaps, but always ready to help anyone, but he didn't see the beggar for he had his store with him and was carrying it along to the temple. He had a sharp eye for money in his head. He was to have a handkerchief sale perhaps on Monday, and had advertised the day before, and he was watching the signs along the way, and if there had been one of his advertisements over the beggar, and if one dot had been left out, he would have seen that, you can depend upon it. Sharp eye for signs, but not so sharp for beggary, and the beggar got no breakfast. The priest was there too, and he was another kind of a man, severe perhaps in his demeanor, but glad to help the poor. He was on his way to the temple to watch the chance to preach, had a sermon in his mind, and he was thinking of his manuscript or his books or his nice knotty points of doctrine, and while he would have gladly helped his fallen brother, he did not do it, because the beggar uttered no sound. Perhaps a man came by who did see him, didn't mean to, perhaps, but his eye fell on him and he could not help but see him, and he stopped a minute, felt in his pocket and then looked blank and said, "I have forgotten my pocketbook, I haven't a cent," and hurried on. So many people and good people too, who think they cannot help because they have no money. Money is the meanest thing in the way of charity. Do what you can and do it well, that is the lesson I want to impress upon you to-day. And I suppose there were women in the crowd, sweet-faced, kind-hearted, gentle-handed women, who wouldn't have let a worm suffer, if they could have helped it. They had other things in their minds, a husband away, a son ill; one thought possibly of her clothing, or more likely of somebody's else clothing, and these women would have helped too, but they didn't because they didn't see the need.

What a pity that nobody saw the man, who was ready to be helped and how strangely those Jews acted in those days! Such selfish, blind-eyed people, they were to be sure! Oh, my friends, that quality of human nature didn't break down with the fall of Jerusalem, I can tell you. Who of you fixes his eye upon misery unless he has to? Not many of you. If the ministers of the gospel knew what the mission workers know by actual contact, by actually taking the need into the heart by the eye, they would be better preachers and better men than they are. If you, who put money into the basket, who don't see the trouble of the city, if you should go and with your own eyes see these places, if you could take into your heart the meaning of it all, you would be better Christians, better servants of your Lord than you are. They didn't see it, you don't see it. It is easy enough to drop some money into the collection basket, but we decline to go and see the misery with our own eyes. Easy enough to put the penny into the cup of the poor blind woman, if she will not compel us to stop and take the truth of it all in. We are willing enough to give a sandwich to the beggar, if he will not insist upon our looking into the cancerous sore upon his bosom and explain how he came to be a tramp and a beggar. Willing

to go, to preach, to save somebody, but not willing to look at the wretchedness in the face. No, no, Sorrow, I regret you, of course. No, no, Drunkenness, I regret you to be sure, but I can do nothing for you. Send for Murphy or Moody or Wooley or somebody else. No, no, Saloon. No, no, Liquor Traffic, I think you ought to die, but I can't kill you. Excuse me, I must see about the gold standard, the tariff or the money question in some form. Everybody feeling that the right ought to be done, almost nobody doing the right, because they don't open their eyes and see what is going on in the world, that is the matter. While the beggar gets no help for all their kind hearts.

I was riding in the train yesterday on my way here. The train ran over a little boy. Crushed and mangled his little body lay opposite the window of the car in which I was riding, and I exclaimed when I saw the bleeding body, "Why, we have run over a boy!" Two women were sitting behind. One covered her face with her hands and cried, "Oh, mercy! don't tell me, I don't want to hear about it. I wouldn't look at him for the world." The other woman, with white lips and pallid face, touched me gently on the shoulder and said to me, "Would you please find out if there is anything that I can do?" One was a woman who pitied the boy, to be sure, but by the impulse of humankind covered her eyes and wouldn't look at him for the world. She would have been glad to have done some kind act; perhaps she would have liked to have had her carriage take the body away, but she drew the line at looking at the wounds and taking the meaning of it all into her heart. The other, as cultured, as well dressed, as beautiful—a thousand times more beautiful to me, she is now—thought first of all to look into the whole wretchedness of the affair and to offer her body to be sacrificed for the help of the wounded boy. That is the spirit of Jesus Christ, I take it.

Not long ago I was riding with a woman in her own carriage behind a fine horse. She was an excellent horse-woman, and as we were hurrying through the town, a little boy came near being run over by our team. And what did she do? I know her well, and I believe she is as tender-hearted a woman as you will find in a year's search, and what did she do? She hit the horse with the whip and shut her eyes. She was going to keep from seeing it all. Oh, so unwilling to see the wretchedness in this world.

I was in a railroad wreck not long ago on Sunday, for I have to travel sometimes on Sunday, when I believe that the necessities of men and the work of the Lord demand it. The train in which I was wrecked, a carload of young men on an excursion, and many were killed and wounded. The dead were covered up and put in ranks along the ground, their faces covered with a bit of canvas. People were there looking for their friends. Presently I saw a man and his wife, who had lost two children—for some were looking for children—and the mother sickened at the sight,—and that was no wonder for we men were sickened by what we saw—and she sat down at a little distance, while her husband searched. He went from one dead body to another and looked into the face of the dead and covered it again after he saw that the face was not the one he was searching for, but after a little while he dropped upon his knees beside a ghastly mangled form, killed by the bursting of the boiler, and it was horrible to look upon, the eyes starting from the sockets, the lips burned to the bone. The father kissed the ghastly face, the open eyes of the dead, and calling to me said, "Tell my wife, here is Albert, come." And she came and dropped down upon her knees on the other side and wound her arms about the stiffened form, tried to drag it up to her bosom, talking to the ghastly corpse of the boy.

Could you have done that? No, no, but it was her boy, you know, her own child, she could take it all in, and she could touch with her own bare hands and lips the wounds of her dead. Oh! get that lesson. As Jesus Christ has healed you, given Himself for you, so do you get the fine eyesight that He has. Go your way watching for opportunities to do a kind act. There is many a man going to hell with set teeth and clenched hands, who might be saved if some good man would go to him, without any undue excitement whatever, and, touching him on the shoulder like a man, say, "Don't you want to be the man you used to be? Rise up and let me help you, I count it a privilege to do it." But not many are saved, because you are depending upon Francis Murphy to do the saving, or the preachers or the missionaries. There are too many drunkards and not enough missionaries of the right sort. And the drunkards will not be saved until you, by the help of the touch of the hand, are doing your own religious, charitable, benevolent work, are going out into the highways of the city and the country and helping these men and women in the name of your Lord.

But the beggar got no help and the crowd sped on its way, but Jesus Christ was on the street that day. Ah! Jesus would not miss seeing him, not by a long chalk. And I want to say to any wretched, troubled and tempted man, who may be here to-day, don't blame the church because it is not as active as it ought to be. Don't make your heart the sorer by complaining of the man who ought to be a help to you, but who isn't, but remember that God has an eye on you and He will send His Son or one of His sons to smile upon you and to cheer you by a word, to help you by medicine of some kind, to set you going, walking and leaping and praising God, if you are willing to be saved. Jesus Christ was on the street and He saw the beggar. Jesus Christ saw the man. That He was able to help him doesn't matter so much to me. The love of God is far more wonderful than His power to my mind. But that He had time to stop and had eyes to see the trouble and with His bare fingers to feel the blind eyes of the man, that He spoke to him gently, that is the lesson I would bring to you. And the moment He saw the beggar He stopped, and the crowd stopped too, and they looked at the man and one of them said, "Oh, he is a ragbag, a miserable beggar," and Jesus looked on him and said, "This is no ragbag, this is a man." So many

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