

spot and tore the traveller to pieces. One sin will call up all the sins of your life, till they can make the night of death horrible with the assaults of their bloody muzzles. A man met a maniac with a torch and a pail of water. "What are you doing?" "I am going to burn down heaven and quench the fire of hell." He could do one as well as the other; that fire will never be put out. If you do not escape speedily you never can escape. Christ is ready to save anybody that wants to be saved. He has waited with blood on His brow, tears in His eyes, year after year; He has waited with those outspread, mangled hands of love, for you! Suppose you go home and find a neighbour has put out a fire in your own house. You say, "I can't express my thanks to you." Yet the Lord Jesus has come to put out the fire of sin in your soul, and you have no thanks for Him. You go home and find traces of muddy feet at your door; your child has fallen into the pond; a boy pulled him out. You say to him, "I never can forget you, if you ever want anything, come to me." Yet, when the Lord Jesus plunges into our iniquity to save us we say, "Drop that soul; if we want it saved, we'll save it ourselves!" What a work He undertook! He was spit upon, insulted, murdered; a crimson stream of blood is flowing from His side as He plunges over to pick up your soul. For you that hunger, the thorns, suffocation, sweat and thirst, death.

It was the time of a plague. There was no remedy except what might be found by examining the body of one who had died of the disease. It was death to do it. Dr. Guyon said, "I will attempt it. In the name of humanity and religion, I will examine this body." He did so, took the plague, and died. He put on paper his observations, put them in a vase of vinegar to prevent contagion, and in twelve hours he was gone. A grand sacrifice! Yet the Lord Jesus looked on a plague-smitten world, made a will giving all to His people, came to this plague-hospital, the pure for the impure—behold love, sacrifice, rescue!! Says some one, "I would like that Christ, but how am I to get Him?" Get Him as a free gift, or not at all. A poor woman, passing the king's conservatory, saw in it flowers, fruits, and grapes. "Oh, if I could only get that bunch of grapes for my sick child." She went home, and by her spinning earned half-a-crown; then went to the gardener and said, "Can I have that bunch of grapes? Here's a half-crown for them." "No; that won't buy them," said the gardener. She thought, "I must get it." She sold a blanket she could spare, and went again, saying, "Here's all this money; will not this buy that bunch of grapes?" "No—they are the king's; we don't sell them." He took her roughly by the arm to put her out. The king's daughter went to see what was the matter. She heard the poor woman's story. She said, "My father is not a merchant. We don't sell grapes; we give"; and she dropped the grapes in the poor woman's apron. My Lord Jesus is not a merchant to sell this pardon. He is a King—"gives without money and without price."

Whom does my text mean? It may mean me. Though now in perfect health, we are taught how

easy it is for death to take down the strongest constitution. I don't want to die this year, when we have projects on foot we want to see completed; yet the Lord has a thousand men to take my place. If it is for me, it shall be well with these institutions and well with me, through the mercy of Christ to my soul. Two things I know—my own helplessness and the all-abounding grace of the Lord Jesus. If never before, I now say, "Take me, O Saviour, to Thy love soul, I and power—in body, mind, and would be thine." It may be the text means some of you, my readers, and if so, I would like to have you ready.

Last words are not always significant to me. Lord Chesterfield said on his last night, "Give Dayrolles a chair." Dr. Adam (the schoolmaster) said, "The night is gathering; dismiss the boys." Lord Tenterden seemed to think he was on a judge's bench in the court-room; his last words were, "Gentlemen of the jury, now consider the verdict." A celebrated play-actor, in his last moments, said, "Drop the curtain; the piece is played out." A friend of mine in Philadelphia said (thinking himself in a prayer-meeting), "And now I exhort you to flee to Christ." But better than these are the words of the man who said, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord shall give me at that day."

Some of you are spending your last January. You have entered the year, but you will not end it. Somewhere you will shut your eyes in the sleep that knows no waking. Other hands shall plant the Christmas-tree and shake the New Year's greeting. It will be joy to some, sorrow to others. I would leave in your ear five short words of one syllable each—"This year thou shalt die."—*From "The Christian Age," Vol. I.*

Oh, man and woman of many broken resolutions, when you were on the sea in that storm you vowed; when you had that great sickness you vowed; when that last child was born you vowed; when you stood in that wreck of a rail-train you vowed; when you were bending over the grave of some loved one you vowed; when, in some great revival, there was a stampede for heaven, you vowed. These vows have been broken. Here you are, getting older. You have marched many a mile on toward the end of your earthly journey, and the opening of your eternal destiny. No pardon, no peace, no prospect of heaven. O Lord, God, lay hold of that man! If this be his last chance, tell him so. Let him not plunge off where there are no soundings. I have no sympathy with that cowardice that dare not speak of future punishment without apology, and that thinks the word "hell" too vulgar to be used in polite assemblies.

Through Christ, we may come off more than conquerors. A soldier dying in the hospital rose up in bed the last moment and cried, "Here! Here!" His attendants put him back on his pillow, and asked him why he shouted, "Here!" "Oh! I heard the roll-call of heaven, and I was only answering to my name!" I wonder whether, after this battle of life is over, our names will be called in the muster-roll of the pardoned and glorified, and, with the joy of heaven breaking upon our souls, we shall cry "Here! Here!"

*Dr. Talmage, in "Life Thoughts."*