

make a better division than this,—those who are drawing nearer and nearer to God, and those who have their backs turned upon Him. As I look at this congregation to-night, I see every man and woman belonging to one of these. Your faces are lifted to God, and you are yielding to the blessed influences of the Holy Ghost, or you have come under the influences of another spirit, whose object is to destroy body and soul in everlasting ruin. You are certainly under one or the other of the seat this moment. And as certainly as you are under one or the other of these will your life be lived, and in one or other of those goals, heaven or hell, will your life end.

Both heaven and hell are only the continuance of the life on earth. "As the tree falleth, so it lies." It is but a prolongation of our course here on earth. The path of the just is a continual approach towards perfection, so that even those around us have clear vision of whither we are going. When we have passed within the veil, a blessed eternity will be spent in continually approaching nearer to Him. And as the ages roll on, we shall see more and more of His beauty, and be more and more conformed to His image, and be always approaching that centre of inconceivable love, and be lifted to the height of the indescribable glory which belongs to Him. As this is true of the one end of human life, it is also true of the other, that the life of the man of the world is a continual wandering from God, and receding further and further from Him. He is on the wrong line; and every month and every year will take him further away.

O men and women who have your backs turned on God, you may be seen in your pew in church week by week, and year by year, and yet your heart is only getting further and further from God, and while sitting in your pew you are by a centrifugal force being sent into a region of darkness and unbelief, you are being cast away from His presence. The chains of hell are being wound around you—chains forged by yourselves, and under this influence you are going further and further from God, deeper and deeper into sin, and you are being prepared for the prolongation of the same condition of life hereafter. And when the sentence goes forth,—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still," and the voice of the Judge pronounces the doom, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," from that moment forward you will be throughout eternity wandering further and further from the true centre of your being, "a wandering star, for whom is reserved the blackness for ever."

Now, let us proceed to ask *what it was that made these men turn back upon Christ.* How

was it they came so near, and then were lost? Rather let us say, *How is it that so many in our own day come so near, are brought under such blessed influences, and yet are lost?* I do not know anything more mournful than this! It is a mournful thing, indeed, to look upon the self-destroyed sinner,—upon the man, for example, who spends his day in the public-house, who desecrates his home and ruins his family; but even this is not so tragical a spectacle as that of the man who comes so near Christ and then

SINKS INTO A DARK, GODLESS HELL!

To be so near, and yet banished so far! To have been "almost persuaded," yet to be lost! To be brought to the very door of heaven, and then cast down to hell! This is a terrible thing, is it not? Do such things happen? Would, to God I could impress on those who are living respectable lives, but are not Christians, that they are on the road to be lost! Do you think that by coming to church, you have your passport to glory? To say this, we must subvert the whole revelation of God. The religion of God is a spiritual thing; it is not a thing of fashion. It is that which we must possess. There is no escape from it. Respectable men and women, people who have their Gospel privileges, like the Jews of old, come within a step of Christ, then turn their backs and wander further and further, until eternity finds them in the outer darkness, amid the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

How was it, we ask again? How was it that they did not value the gift which Christ offered them? What was the gift? St. Peter can tell us. Peter, when asked, "Will ye also go away?" answered, "Lord, to whom can we go but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of everlasting life." Peter made a great discovery; it was that Christ had the words of everlasting life. He had left his home, and turned his back upon his country; he had found something better—"the words of everlasting life." He had found these. The present world might be good enough for his brother-men, but communion with the Mysterious Being he followed had brought him to a grand discovery. He had found at last everlasting life! It was a reality; and when Jesus hinted at the possibility of his going back like the rest, he retorted the idea of it, because he had had from Jesus that which all the wide world could not have given him—eternal life. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of everlasting life."

Now, I ask, Have you been true to the wants of your own nature? Have you done justice to the wants of your own soul? As the multitude gathered round Jesus, He told them that He was "the bread of life." He said, too, that if they drank of Him they should never thirst. It was a glorious revelation, and a necessary