

Oh let not such a curse be mine; let it not be yours! Let us sow ourselves. Thus may the story of the wheat-grain teach us, inspire us: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Amen.

'HE'S COMING TO-MORROW!'

"The night is far spent; the day is at hand."

BY MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

My soul vibrated for a moment like a harp. Was it true? The night, the long night of the world's groping agony and blind desire—is it almost over? Is the day at hand?

Again: "They shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory? And when these things begin to come to pass, then lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh."

Will this really ever happen? Will this solid, commonplace earth see it? Will these skies brighten and flash? and will upturned faces in this city be watching to see Him coming?

So our minister preached, and for moments I felt a thrill of reality in hearing. But, as the well-dressed crowd passed down the aisle, my neighbor, Mr. Stockton, whispered to me not to forget the meeting of bank directors on Monday evening, and Mrs. Goldthwaith poured into my wife's ear a charge not to forget her party on Thursday; and my wife, as she came out, asked me if I had observed the extravagant toilet of Mrs. Pennyman.

"So absurd," she said, "when her income cannot be half what ours is, and I never think of sending to Paris for my things; I should look on it as morally wrong."

I spoke of the sermon. "Yes," said my wife, "what a sermon—so solemn! so solemn. What could be more powerful than such discourses? My dear, by-the-by, don't forget to change Mary's opal ring for a diamond one. Dear me! the Christmas presents were all so on my mind, and I was thinking of them every now and then in church; and that was so wrong of me!"

"My dear," said I, "sometimes it seems to me as if our life were unreal. We go to church, and the things that we hear there are either true or false. If they are true, what things they are! For instance, these Advent sermons. If we are looking for that coming, we ought to feel and live differently from what we do! Do we really believe what we hear in church? Or is it a dream?"

"I do believe," said my wife, earnestly (she is a good woman, my wife), "yes I do believe, but it is just as you say. O dear! I feel as if I am very worldly—I have so much to think of!" and she sighed.

So did I; for I knew that I, too, was very worldly. After a pause I said, "Suppose Christ should really come this Christmas, and it should be authoritatively announced that He would be here to-morrow?"

"I think," said my wife, "there would be some embarrassment on the part of our great men, legislators, and chief councillors, in anticipation of a personal interview. Fancy a meeting of the city Council to arrange a reception for the Lord Jesus Christ!"

"Perhaps," said I, "He would refuse all offers of the rich and great. Perhaps our fashionable churches would plead for his presence in vain. He would not be in palaces."

"O!" said my wife earnestly, "If I thought our money separated us from Him, I would give it all—yes, all—might I only see Him."

She spoke from the bottom of her heart, and for a moment her face was glorified.

"You will see Him some day," said I, "and the money that we are willing to give up at a word from Him will not keep Him from us."

II.

That evening the thoughts of my waking hours mirrored themselves in a dream.

I seemed to be out-walking in the streets, and to be conscious of a strange, vague sense of something just declared, of which all were speaking with an air of mystery.

There was a whispering stillness around. Groups of men standing at the corners of the streets, and discussing an impending something with suppressed voices.

I heard one say to another, "Really coming? What? to-morrow?" And the others said, "Yes, to-morrow: on Christmas Day He will be here."

It was night. The stars were glittering down with a keen and frosty light; the shops glistened in their Christmas array; but the same sense of hushed expectancy pervaded everything. There seemed to be nothing doing; and each person looked wistfully on his neighbor as if to say, "Have you heard?"

Suddenly as I walked an angel form was with me, gliding softly by my side. The face was solemn, serene, and calm. Above the forehead was a pale, tremulous, phosphoric radiance of light, purer than any on earth—light of a quality so different from that of the street lamps, that my celestial attendant seemed to move in a sphere alone.

Yet, though I felt awe, I felt a sort of confiding love as I said, "Tell me, is it really true? Is Christ coming?"

"He is," said the angel. "To-morrow He will be here!"

"What joy!" I cried.