

band it. The neglect of life is a sin; it is an insult to God; it is tampering with the most precious trust He bestows. The care of life is a religious duty. A great deal of your happiness depends on it, and I can tell you, my Christian brother, a great deal of your spiritual growth and capacity for usefulness depends on the manner in which you treat this marvelous mechanism of the body. Your *religious life* is affected by the condition of the body in which the spirit tabernacles. It is not only lying lips, it is "the wilful dyspeptic, that is an abomination to the Lord." Any one that recklessly impairs, imperils and weakens bodily powers by bad hours, unwholesome diet, poisonous stimulants or sensualities, is a suicide; and there are some men, I am afraid, in this congregation that yield themselves such unpitied bond-slaves to the claims of business, that they are shortening life by years and impairing its powers every day. Thousands of suicides are committed every year in Brooklyn by a defiance of the simplest laws of self-preservation and health. What shall we say of him who opens a haunt of temptation, sets out his snares and deliberately deals out death by the dram? So many pieces of silver for so many ounces of blood, and an immortal soul tossed into the balance! If I could let one ray of eternity shine into every dram-shop, methinks I could frighten the poison seller back from making his living at the mouth of the pit.

2. Again, in this view of the value of life, what a stupendous crime wanton war becomes—offensive war, such war as multitudes have dashed into from the lust of conquest, or the greed of gold. When war is to be welcomed, rather than a nation should commit suicide and the hopes of men perish, then with prayers and self-consecration may the patriot go out to the battle and the sacrifice; but *offensive* war is a monster of hell. With all our admiration for Napoleon's brilliant and unsurpassed genius, there are passages in his life that makes my blood sometimes tingle to the finger ends, and start the

involuntary hiss at the very thought of such a gigantic butcher of his fellow creatures. If that man knew that a battery could be carried only at the cost of a legion of men, he never hesitated to order their sacrifice as lightly as he would the life of a gnat. I read that, after what is called his splendid victory of Austerlitz was over and the triumph was won and the iron crown of empire was fixed on his brow, as he stood on the high ground he saw a portion of the defeated Russians making a slow, painful retreat over a frozen lake. They were in his power; he rode up to a battery, and said, "Men, you are losing time! fire on those masses; they must be swallowed up! fire on that ice!" The order was executed. Shells were thrown, and went crashing through the brittle bridge of ice, and amid awful shrieks hundreds upon hundreds of poor wretches were buried in the frozen waters of that lake. I believe the dying shrieks of his fellow creatures will haunt the eternity of a man who prostituted the most magnificent powers the Creator fashioned in this our century of time to the awful work of shortening life, tormenting his fellow creatures and sending a million unbidden before God.

3. Once more I emphasize upon you, my beloved people, life, its preciousness and power, its rewards and its retributions. And yet, what a vapor, what a flight of an arrow, what a tale that is told! Short, yet infinite in its reach and its retribution! When life is represented as an arrow flight and a vapor, it is not that it may be underrated in its infinite importance, but only that we may be pushed up to the right sense of its brevity. Everything in God's word ennobles humanity, and exhibits life as earnest, solemn, decisive, momentous. The highest ends are proposed to it while it exists, the most magnificent rewards are held out at the termination of its consecrated vitalities. At the end of it is the great white throne, and the decisions of the judgment. Some of you, turning from this discourse this morning, may say it was nothing but sacred poetry, because your