

in old age they lie shrunk and gaping upon the dry gravel.—*Beecher*.

2. Verse 2. The gospel is a plant which is not affected by earthly changes. It is the same in the temperate as in the torrid zone, and as in the frigid. It does not seem to be scorched by heat, or benumbed by cold. Age does not diminish the freshness of its bloom; soil does not affect its nature; climate does not modify its peculiar properties. Among the frost-bound latitudes of North America, and the burning sands of Africa, or the fertile plains of India, we find it still shooting up the same plant of renown, the same vine of the Lord's right-hand planting, the same "tree of life," raised up from the beginning of time, "whose leaves were for the healing of the nations," and under which all kindreds and tribes and tongues and people shall one day rejoice, when privileged to take shelter under its all-covering shade, and draw nourishment from its perennial fruits.—*Duff*.

3. Every act done in Christ receives its exact and appropriate reward. They that are meek shall inherit the earth. They that are pure shall see God. They that suffer shall reign with him. They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever. . . . You reap what you sow—not something else, but that. An act of love makes the soul more loving. A deed of humbleness deepens humbleness. The thing reaped is the very thing sown, multiplied a hundredfold. You have sown a seed of life, you reap a life everlasting.—*Robertson*.

4. Verse 3. "A victor at the Olympic games was asked, 'Spartan, what will you get by this victory?' He answered, 'I shall have the honor to fight foremost in the ranks of my prince.' Hard service brings promotion, danger, responsibility, and requires increased effort."

5. Verse 4. Never yet hath the eye seen the truths of God—but then never shall it see them. In heaven this shall be as true as now. Shape and color give them not. God will never be visible—nor will his blessedness. He has no form. The pure in heart will see him, but never with the eye; only in the same way, but in a different degree, that they see him now. In the anticipated vision of the Eternal, what do you expect to see? A shape? Hues? You will never behold God. Eye hath not seen, and never shall see in infinite form the Infinite One, nor the Infinite of feeling or of Truth.—*Robertson*.

6. Verse 5.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.

—*Wordsworth*.

7. Verse 9. I know of no pleasure so rich, none so pure, none so hallowing in their influences, and constant in their supply, as those which result from the true and spiritual worship of God. Pleasant as the cool water-brooks are to a thirsty hart, so pleasant will it be to us to approach unto the living God.—*Watson*.

8. So long as a man is living for himself and honoring himself, there is an association, however remote it may be, with all the lowest forms of selfishness in which men have lived; but the moment a man begins to live in genuine adoration of the absolute good, and worship God, he parts company from all these lower orders of human life and enters into the richest and best society that earth possesses or ever has possessed.—*Phillips Brooks*.

9.

Lord! who art merciful as well as just,
Incline thine ear to me, a child of dust,
Not what I would, O Lord! I offer thee,

Alas! but what I can.

Father Almighty! who hast made me man,
And bade me look to heaven, for thou art there,
Accept my sacrifice and humble prayer.

Four things, which are not in thy treasury,
I lay before thee, Lord, with this petition:

My nothingness, my wants,

My sins, and my contrition.

—*Southey*.

10. Verse 11. We are spinning our own fates, good or evil, and never to be undone. Every smallest stroke of virtue or of vice leaves its never so little scar. The drunken Rip Van Winkle, in Jefferson's play, excuses himself for every fresh dereliction by saying, "I won't count this time!" Well! he may not count it, and a kind Heaven may not count it; but it is being counted none the less. Down among his nerve-cells and fibers the molecules are counting it, registering and storing it up to be used against him when the next temptation comes. Nothing we ever do is, in strict scientific literalness, wiped out. Of course, this has its good side as well as its bad one. As we become permanent drunkards by so many drinks, so we become saints in the moral, and authorities and experts in the practical and scientific, spheres, by so many separate acts and hours of work.—*Professor William James*.

11. The hour of death may be fitly likened to that celebrated picture in the National Gallery of Perseus holding up the head of Medusa. That head turned all persons into stone who looked upon it. There is a warrior represented with a dart in his hand; he stands stiffened, turned into stone, with the javelin even in his fist. There is another with a poniard beneath his robe, about to stab; he is now the statue of an assassin, motionless and cold. Another is creeping along stealthily, like a man in ambuscade, and there he stands a consolidated rock; he has looked only upon that head, and he is