

written and formally read, seems to be the favorite Anglican ideal of that address or speech which concludes Divine service.— Even the more vigorous clergyman who would preach in a popular style is almost constrained to read his sermon, and is looked upon with suspicion by the more refined portion of the audience. If he gives free play to his powers in the pulpit, he is called a vulgarly low Churchman or a ranting Methodist. A Hugh M'Neile, a Hugh Stowell, and clergymen of a like stamp, certainly not a numerous body, are hardly considered in average church circles to be good Churchmen. Thus it happens that the great Church of England decidedly fails to make any impression on vast multitudes of the people, which it is her interest as well as her duty to persuade of the truth of the gospel. The Church of England has produced not a few great writers of sermons, but lamentably few great pulpit orators. This glaring want of high oratoric talent is her shame and loss. Why might there not be Wesleys, Whitfields, Chalmerses, Binneys, Halls, and Spurgeons within as well as without the pale of that vast Establishment?—*Weekly Review.*

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THE HANDCUFFS OR THE DESERTER.

I was walking along the Birmingham platform for a few minutes before the train started for Bristol, when my attention was drawn to a deserter, handcuffed, and seated between a private and a sergeant. His features betrayed distress of mind. The thought suddenly occurred to me, if my Master were here, he would take his seat by the side of this man. Yes, blessed Jesus, thy heart was too full of compassion ever to pass by a distressed sufferer. These thoughts led me to take my seat opposite the poor man. I sat some time in silence, thinking on the mercy of God in delivering me from sergeant Satan and the handcuffs of sin. Reader, if you are delirious, thank God; if not, then sit down with me a little, and listen attentively. The poor deserter appeared to be about forty years of age. He had been a deserter many years, but had become so exceedingly miserable, that he had given himself up to the authorities. Having been thus severed from those most dear to him on earth, that probably for ever, I found his heart was too full of sorrow to bear much conversation; but the following, as nearly as I can remember, took place with the sergeant. “You seem to have brought your captive some distance?” “Oh yes, sir, from beyond Glasgow.” “Indeed! It must be very painful to have had the hands in that bound position so far.” “Oh yes, sir.” The man’s heart seemed nearly as hard as the bayonet by his side. “Well sergeant,” said I, “have you got your handcuffs off yet? Or are you still led captive by the devil? He knows that sin will

handcuff a man, and drag him along to judgment and to hell. It’s sore work, sergeant, to be dragged like that, eh?” “Well sir, I’ll tell you, I think a soldier will have less to answer for than anybody. He is not tempted to rob and cheat, like the commercial man; and, indeed, he’s a good-hearted fellow, only he gets a little sup too much grog sometimes.” “Ah, there you may be mistaken. I think I can shew a greater sin than taking the drink. I will suppose this prisoner first to have been led to enlist through the influence of drink. Granted, then, that drink has made him what he is. He may cast a look far behind him and say, My sin in drinking has broken the heart of my poor wife, has dragged me from my crying children;” (here the tears began to run down the face of the poor deserter.) “Well now, sergeant, if an officer from the horse-guards were to meet you on your way, say at Cheltenham, with the good news for our friend here, that a great ransom *had been paid*; that the Queen had sent down his discharge; now, sergeant, which would be the greater sin—the drunkenness that has brought all this misery on himself and his poor family, or the hard-hearted, cruel sin of refusing to trust to the ransom purchased at so great a price? Oh, let me tell you, sin has brought us into bondage, misery, and death. Satan has thus handcuffed man to himself. This man might sleep, and dream there was no sergeant here, and no handcuffs; but when he wakes up he finds it only a dream. You are still there. And men my dream there is no devil, to whom they are bound by sin, and dragged by lust; but, when they truly awake, they find this bondage a terrible reality. But ah! if you knew the love of God to us poor handcuffed sinners! Even whilst we were yet sinners, God gave a great price for our ransom. Yes, ‘whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’ The ransom price is *paid*; God has accepted it, even the precious blood of Christ; for God hath raised him from the dead, and sends a *free discharge* to every sinner that believeth. And now, sergeant, how long would it take you to unfasten the handcuffs of this poor man?” (here the sergeant took out a little key, and showed me how it could be done.) “That little key is like faith. Yes, even so soon, the soul that believes God’s testimony, that on the Cross the ransom has been *paid*; that through Jesus is preached forgiveness of sins; that by Him all that believe are *justified*; yes, even so soon, that soul is free. The chains of sin and condemnation are broken for ever. Now, sergeant, which is the worst sin?—that which brought the guilt and condemnation, and which is hurrying man to judgment and to everlasting destruction; or, that cruel sin of rejecting and despising the wondrous love of God, in giving his only begotten Son? Yes, rejecting the *only ransom*, even, the blood of the Son of God?” The sergeant