

Once there was a poor woman standing before the window of a royal conservatory which looked into the public street. It was the dead of winter, and no flowers were in the garden, and no leaves upon the trees. But in the hot-house a splendid bunch of grapes hung from the glass ceiling, lasking in the bright winter sun, and the poor woman gazed on them until the water came into her mouth, and she sighed: "O, I wish I could take it to my sick darling!" She went home and sat down to her spinning wheel, and wrought until she had earned half a crown. She then went to the king's gardener, and offered that sum for a bunch of grapes: but the gardener received her unkindly, and told her not to come again. She returned home, and looked around her little cottage to see whether there was anything she could dispense with. It was a severe winter, yet she thought she could do without a blanket for a week or two; so she pawned it for half a crown, and went to the king's gardener, and now offered him ten shillings. But the gardener scolded her, and took her by the arm rather roughly and thrust her out. It just happened, however, that the king's daughter was near at hand; and when she heard the angry words of the gardener and the crying of the woman, she came up and inquired into the matter. When the poor woman had told her story, the noble princess said, with a kind smile, "My dear woman, you are mistaken; my father is not a merchant, but a king; his business is not to sell, but to give;" whereupon she plucked the bunch from the vine, and gently dropped it into the old woman's apron. So the woman obtained as a free gift that which the labour of many days and nights had been unable to procure.

The salvation of the soul is the greatest thing you can desire. But you cannot buy it with all the riches of the world, with all the prayers you can pray, with all the alms you can give, with all the useful works you could perform during a life as long as that of Methuselah. The fact is, your soul's salvation is in the hands of a King and not of a merchant. If you receive it at all, it must be as a gift; for you never can buy it.—*Selected.*

RESIST THE DEVIL.

How do you account for the fact that there are so many old men in Sing-Sing and Auburn and the other penitentiaries, serving out their protracted sentences for frauds committed in mid-life or advanced ages, although their early life had been good, and nothing had been suspected of them until at fifty or sixty years of age the whole land was struck dumb at their forgery or embezzlement? The clock in the steeple of old Trinity Church striking the hours did not remind the recreant Wall-streeter of the passage of time that would soon bring exposure to him and doom. The explanation

is that Mephistopheles, Apollyon, Satan got in his work at that time. The man was not naturally bad. He was as good as any of you are, but Satan with whole battalions of infernals swooped upon him unawares. Look out for the wiles of the devil, not only those of you who are young, but the middle-aged and the old. Outside of God you are not safe a moment. But yield not to disheartenment. If we put our trust in God, our best days are yet to come—days of victory, days of song, days of Heaven, and the best days of the cause of righteousness in all the earth are yet to come. As the ten thousand men of Xenophon's army when they came to the top of Mount Theches and saw the waters on which they were to sail to their homes, the soldiers with clapping hands and waving banners all together shouted: "The sea; the sea!" So we to-day in our march toward our heavenly home come up to the top of the mountain of holy anticipation and look off upon oceans of light and oceans of glory and oceans of joy; and thrilled as we have never been thrilled before, we clap our hands and wave our Gospel ensigns and cry one to another and shout up to the responding and re-echoing heavens: "The sea; the sea!" —*Talmage.*

CONQUESTS OF MISSIONS.

A writer on foreign missions says: "First came India, the land of the Vedas, now consolidated under the British rule, and numbering with its dependencies, 240,000,000 people. Then followed China, whose goings forth in ancient times were from the land of Shinar itself, with its 400,000,000. And next Japan, youngest and sprightliest of them all, with 35,000,000. And finally Congo. Livingstone went in to explore, and he invested his life for a regenerated Africa. When he was gone, God, who had girded Cyrus of old, raised up another to complete his work. Into the heart of the dark continent plunged Stanley 'Africanus.' When he came out it was to declare the fact that 40,000,000 more were to confront the Christian Church. And now what do missions propose to do? Nothing less than the conquests of all these great people for Christ. The aim of the work is to dethrone the powerful systems of heathenism, and exalt Christianity instead; to put an end to the supremacy of Confucianism and Buddhism and Brahminism and Shintoism and Taoism, so that Christ alone shall be exalted in that day."

In praying for the salvation of a single soul, we pray for more than the whole world and its glories, more than all possible inanimate creations. For we pray for one on whom the good pleasure of the Holy Trinity rests; for one whom the Father wills to be saved, for whom the Son was incarnate, with whom the Holy Ghost has pleaded and will plead.—*Dr. Pusey.*