

only of such unscrupulous ambition as leads to murder. What saith the wise King about the ruby cup? "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; AT THE LAST it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder." AT THE LAST! O, that men would learn to forecast the future in this way, and to think of what must be "AT THE LAST." Remember the day is coming when you must look back on all you have done and enjoyed. But what a retrospect is that of the man of pleasure! Is there on this earth a sadder sight than that of the man who has lived a life of sinful indulgence looking back upon the guilty past and saying: "It had been good for me that I had never been born?" And yet that is what the pleasures of sin come to even on earth—at the last. And what beyond? Even in that lowest deep there is a lower deep still opening to devour him; but I will not attempt to portray that. In the powerful picture of NOEL PATON, which he has styled the "Dance of Pleasure," you see a motley multitude of young and old, and rich and poor, and men and women, rushing madly after the queen. They care not for each other. In the fury of their selfishness they strike against each other and trample each other down; yet still they follow on, and she is decoying them to the brink of an awful abyss, over which each at length must fall. But the painter shows only its dark and rugged edge, leaving suggestion to preach the warning. So I would only lead you to the border of the unseen state, and leave conscience to testify to the dreadful perdition which is the end of sin.

How different from all this is the experience of the Christianly good man. His happiness will bear reflection. It will stand cross-examination. His yesterdays look backward with a smile, and do not, Parthian-like, wound him as they fly. He has had his struggle and conflict. Yet, in the happiness which he has enjoyed, there has been nothing to give him pain. He had pleasure in the experience at the time, and he has even more now as he looks back. I do not know if there be on earth a more beautiful thing than the old age of a Christian who in youth dedicated himself to God, and has spent his life in keeping that holy resolution.

His conscience is peaceful, his heart happy, his future is glorious. Whichever way he looks there is beauty. Behind him his whole life seems gilded with the purple splendor of his setting sun; around him his children are clustering in holy affection; before him Christ is preparing him a welcome in His Father's house, above him there is a crown, incorruptible, reserved for him to wear. The traveller in Switzerland sees few more lovely sights than that which is associated with the descent of the great St. Nidect through Rosenlauri to Meyringen. The pathway runs now through wickets, and now through green pasture land, enclosed by forest and enlivened by chalets and herds of cattle. As you move downward you see little or no splendor, and are hemmed in on every side with perpendicular walls of rugged rock; yet ever as you turn to look behind, you are transported with the scene that meets your view. In the forefront the pine forest, swayed by the breeze, seems bowing its head in lowly reverence to the great Monarch of all; while in the background rise the snowy peaks of the Wellhorn and the Wetterhorn, tinted with the blush of sunset, and forming a battlement of mountain grandeur scarcely surpassed by the range even of Mount Blanc. Such a valley, I think, is the life of the Christian on the earth. As he descends with years, the way seems commonplace enough. The yodel of the herdsman and the lowing of the cattle are in his ears, and he sees nothing that is remarkable; but when he looks behind, the retrospect is full of grandeur, and the grandest thing about it is that its gilded summits point him to the higher glories of the heaven that is awaiting him. Which, then, will you choose? You cannot altogether escape pain on earth; but in the case of sinful pleasures, the joy is for the moment, the pain is permanent; in the case of holiness, the pain is for a time, while the happiness is everlasting. I speak as unto wise men. Judge, therefore, whether you should not, from this hour, forswear the pleasures of sin.

III. In the third place, take note that the pleasures of sin are such that the oftener they are enjoyed there is the less enjoyment in them. There is a wonderful harmony between God's moral law