

# Pastor and People.

## THE CARCASE AND THE EAGLES.

Take that story that people stumble over in the early parts of the Old Testament revelation, the sweeping away of those hideous immoralities of those Canaanitish nations who had turned the Holy Land into a perfect sty of abominations. There they had been, and God's Spirit, which strives with men ever and always, had been striving with them, we know not how long, and when the time came when, according to the grim metaphor of the Old Testament, "the measure of their iniquity was full," then He hurled upon them the fierce hosts out of the desert, and in a whirlwind of fire and sword swept them off the face of the earth.

Take another illustration. These people who had been the executioners of divine judgment, settled in the land, fell into the snare—and you know the story. The captivities of Israel and Judah were other illustrations of the same thing. The fall of Jerusalem, to which our Lord pointed in the solemn context of these words, was another. For millenniums God had been pleading with them, sending His prophets, rising early and sending, saying, "Oh! do not do this abominable thing which I hate!" "And last of all He sent His Son." That rejected, He had shot His last bolt; He had no more that He could do. That refused, the nation's doom was fixed and sealed, and down came the eagles of Rome, again God's scavengers, to sweep away the people on which had once been expended the divine love, but which had now come to be a rotting abomination, and to this day remains a living death, a miraculously preserved monument of God's judgments. Take another illustration how, once more, the executors in turn became the victims of law. That power which crushed the feeble resources of Judah as a giant might crush a mosquito in his grasp in its turn became honeycombed with abominations and immoralities; and then down from the frozen North came the fierce Gothic tribes over the Roman territory. One of them called himself the "Scourge of God," and he was right. Another swooping down of the vultures comes from the blue heavens, and the carrion is torn to fragments by their strong beaks.

Take one more illustration—that French Revolution at the end of the last century. The fathers sowed the wind, and the children reaped the whirlwind. Generations of heartless luxury, selfishness, carelessness to the cry of the poor, immoral separation of class from class, and all the sins which a ruling class could commit against the subject class, had prepared for the convulsion. Then, in a whirlwind and deluges of fire and sulphur, the rotten thing was swept off the face of the earth, and the world breathed more freely for its breaking up.

Take another illustration, through which many of us have lived. The bitter legacy that England gave to her giant son across the Atlantic, of negro slavery, which blasted and sucked the strength out of that great republic, went down amidst universal execration. It took centuries for the corpse to be ready, but when the vultures came they made quick work of it.

And so, as I say, all over the world, and from the beginning of time, with delays according to the possibilities of restoration and recovery that the divine eye discerns, this law is working. Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. "The wheels of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small." "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

And has the law exhausted its force? Are there going to be no more applications of it? Are there no European societies at this day that in their godlessness and social iniquities are hurrying fast to the condition of carrion? Look around us—drunkenness, sensual immorality, commercial dishonesty, senseless luxury amongst the rich, heartless separation from the necessities of the poor, godlessness over all classes and ranks of the community. Surely, surely, if the body politic be not dead it is sick nigh unto death. And I, for my part, have little hesitation in saying that as far as one can see, European society is driving as fast as it can, with its godlessness and immorality, to such another day of the Lord as these words of my text suggest. Let us see to it that we do our little part to be the salt of the earth which shall keep it from rotting, and so drive away the vultures of judgment.

## HOW CHRIST SAVES.

I am reminded of a story told by one of our missionaries from China. It seems that some disciple had penetrated the interior, far beyond where any of the missionaries had ever gone, and there preaching the Gospel had gathered a considerable church together. The missionary having heard that there was a native church in that distant interior, determined to visit it, and, if possible, strengthen and encourage the brethren, as the early disciples did who went from Jerusalem down to Antioch. As he drew near to the village, he was attracted by a crowd of natives gathered about one of their own countrymen who was addressing them. The missionary approached, and discovered

that it was the disciple of whom he had heard. The substance of his address was as follows.

"My dear countrymen,—Sin has dug a deep and horrible pit, and we are fallen into it. Now there are many schemes proposed as to how we are to get out of this pit of sin. First, Confucius, our great philosopher and religious teacher, comes along, and, seeing the poor Chinaman in the pit, stands on the edge, and looking down upon him, says, 'Ah! I am very sorry for you. But if you had lived up to my teaching you would not have fallen into that pit. If ever you get out of it, I advise you to be more careful in the future.' This was very good advice, but there was no help in it. Confucius does very well to tell how to keep out of the pit; but he has no hand to help people out when once they are in; and, alas for us, we are all in! Then comes along Zoroaster; and seeing the Chinaman in the pit, he preaches to him a very beautiful sermon on the duty of worshipping God and doing righteousness. It was a very good sermon; its teachings were very lofty and strong; but it afforded no help to get the poor man out of the pit.

"By and by Buddha came along. He was greatly stirred with pity and compassion when he saw the poor man in the pit. His eyes ran down with tears. He knelt down by the edge of the deep, dark pit, and told the poor man how he loved him, and how deeply he pitied him, and how anxious he was to help him out. Finally, reaching down his hands, he told the poor man, 'If you will get up to where I can reach you, I will help you out.' But, alas! how was the poor man to get up to where Buddha was? He was far out of his reach. Presently came along the Lord Jesus, and, seeing the wretched man in the pit, every moment sinking deeper and deeper in the miry clay, with a cry of love and pity He leaped into the pit, and, taking hold of the lost soul, lifted him with a strong hand and mighty arm out of the pit. He washed him, and made him clean, and set him on a solid rock."

Ah, friends! this is what our God does for us. He loves us, and has come down to where we are, and, laying hold on us, He saves us.—George F. Pentecost, D.D.

## DIVINE COMPASSION.

Long since, a dream of heaven I had,  
And still the vision haunts me oft;  
I see the saints in white robes clad,  
The martyrs with their palms aloft;  
But hearing still in middle song  
The ceaseless dissonance of wrong,  
And shrinking, with hid faces, from the strain  
Of sad, beseeching eyes, full of remorse and pain.

The glad song falters to a wail;  
The harping sinks to low lament;  
Before the still uplifted veil  
I see the crowned foreheads bent,  
Making more sweet the heavenly air  
With breathings of unselfish prayer;  
And a Voice saith; "O, Pity which is pain,  
O Love that weeps, fill up My sufferings which remain!"

"Shall souls redeemed by Me refuse  
To share My sorrow in their turn?  
Or, sin-forgiven, My gift abuse,  
Or peace with selfish unconcern?  
Has saintly ease no pitying care?  
Has faith no work and love no prayer?  
While sin remains and souls in darkness dwell,  
Can heaven be heaven itself and look unmoved on hell?"

Then through the Gates of Pain, I dream,  
A wind of Heaven blows coolly in;  
Fainter the awful discords seem;  
The smoke of torment grows more thin,  
Tears quench the burning soul, and thence  
Spring sweet, pale flowers of penitence:  
And through the dreary realm of men's despair,  
Star-crowned, an angel walks, and lo! God's hope is there!

Is it a dream? Is Heaven so high  
That pity cannot breathe its air?  
Its happy eyes forever dry,  
Its holy lips without a prayer?  
My God! my God! If thither led  
By Thy free grace unmerited,  
No crown nor palm be mine, but let me keep  
A heart that still can feel, and eyes that still can weep.

—John Greenleaf Whittier.

## IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE.

Friends, do you ever go to the weekly prayer-meeting, and come away impressed with the feeling that "it is good to be there?" And do those words, spoken so long ago on the Mount of Transfiguration, tremble on your lips? It is indeed for Christians to meet together in the prayer-meeting, where God has promised to be with and bless them, if gathered in His name.

We speak of culture and refinement in matters of mental training and of social life, and we often lay great stress on them, forgetting that the highest culture is not that of the head, or of the outward appearance—the external, but of the heart and soul—the eternal.

How many of us remember the prayer-meeting, and how many of us are always there as surely as the night comes round, unless prevented by circumstances beyond our control! How much we miss when we stay away! And how glad we always are when we do go, for there is so much of rest and comfort in this gathering together to hear the "old, old story of Jesus and his love."

Friends, if any of you are staying away from those meetings, just "turn over a new leaf," and go next Wednesday evening (if that be the time), and if you are one of Christ's own, you will surely receive a blessing, while if you are not, you may hear the voice of the dear Saviour, who loves you so much that He died for you, calling you to Him with such persuasive sweetness that you will resolve to live a new life, "hid with Christ in God."—Golden Rule.

## THE EFFECT OF GOODNESS.

In the old persecuting times there lived in Cheapside one who feared God and attended the secret meetings of the saints; and near him there dwelt a poor cobbler, whose wants were often relieved by the merchant, but the poor man was a cross-grained being, and most ungratefully, from hope of reward, laid an information against his kind friend on the score of religion. This accusation would have brought the merchant to death by burning if he had not found a means of escape. Returning to his house, the injured man did not change his generous behaviour to the malignant cobbler, but, on the contrary, was more liberal than ever. The cobbler was, however, in an ill mood, and avoided the good man with all his might, running away at his approach. One day he was obliged to meet him face to face, and the Christian man asked him gently, "Why do you shun me? I am not your enemy. I know all that you did to injure me, but I never had an angry thought against you. I have helped you, and I am willing to do so as long as I live, only let us be friends." Do you marvel that they clasped hands?—Spurgeon.

## KIND WORDS.

Kind words are the outpouring of a warm and charitable heart. Who can calculate the amount of good they do in this cold, unfriendly world? Oh, who could bear up under the buffet with the storms of life, if it were not for a kind word that sometimes falls on the ear, and cheers the drooping spirits! With what a soft melody do kind words fall on the ear, so smooth and gentle—they produce no harsh discord upon those that hear them. It does not take as great an effort, or as great an expenditure of strength to speak kind words as it does angry ones; besides, they are always followed by a secret pleasure in the heart.

What power a kind word has to still the angry passions! Oh, that we would all ever bear in mind the wise proverb that "a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger!" Kind words are appropriate at all times. They fall on the sorrowing heart as the soft and refreshing dew on the drooping and withering flower, infusing new life into it. They are the most effectual means of reclaiming an erring one, and leading him back in the path of duty.

They cheer the aged and weary pilgrim and make him more resigned to bear the afflictions of dreary old age. "Kind words can never die," the heart will ever cherish them with fondness and pleasure; they will be as a gleam of sunshine to it, warming it up for the growth of pure and virtuous actions.—Christian Observer.

## A LEARNED COMPANY SOLD.

A correspondent tells the following story in the *New York Observer*:

The Society of Alpha Sigma was having a full meeting of some twenty-five or thirty pastors of New York City, Brooklyn, and adjoining cities of New Jersey. The literary and devotional exercises were finished, and we were all seated at the dinner-table, Dr. Krebs being at one end of the long table and myself at the other. We were discussing the dessert, when Dr. Krebs called out, with his clear, ringing voice: "Brethren, I have a question to ask, which, by leave of our Chairman on Conundrums, I will propound to the Society. It is this:

"When from the ark's most ample folds  
The race came forth in pairs,  
Who was it first that heard the sound  
Of boots upon the stairs?"

Many of the brethren ventured some sort of a reply. One said: "Noah's wife, because he must have gone out first, and she next to him." Another said that Noah must have first heard his own boots sound. But this could not be proved, and so all was unsatisfactory. Some said that there were no boots at that time, and could give no answer.

Dr. Krebs then asked several of the brethren: "Can you tell? Can you?" And then, at last, he asked me, as Chairman of Committee on Conundrums, while all were intently listening: "Brother Lee, can you tell?" I replied that I could not. Then said the Doctor: "Neither can I; and I have never seen any one who could. If you ever find any one who can tell I wish that you would let me know."