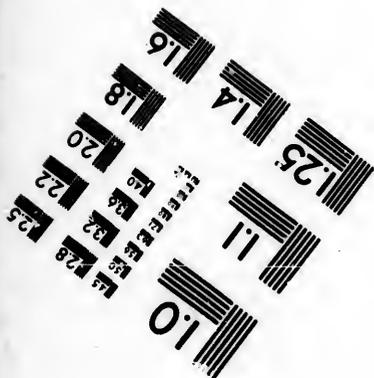
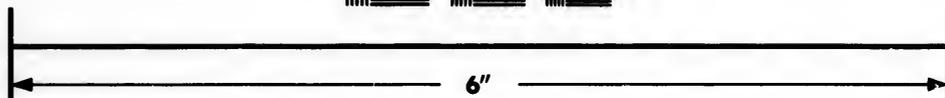
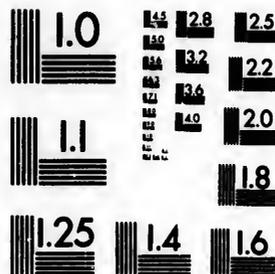


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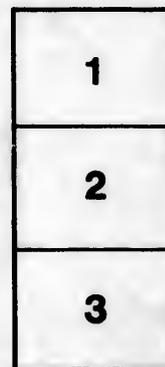
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## PREFACE.

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IN presenting this volume to my brethren and the public, I fulfil a pledge made some time ago. In publishing the Lecture delivered before the Theological Union of the Toronto Conference, June, 1886, I carry out a request kindly and appreciatingly put upon me by the desire of the Union. My one hope is that all who read it may receive suggestion or inspiration therefrom.

The sermons that accompany the lecture are published in deference to a strongly expressed wish made by my brethren some three years ago, when a volume of my lectures and sermons, in a re-issued and enlarged edition, was rapidly disposed of through the generosity of my brethren and the public. My one desire in these sermons is to present in a brief and clear form great and saving truths.

## PREFACE.

As will be readily seen, the first six discourses are addressed to the unsaved, to warn, or urge, or allure to the Saviour; the next seven appeal to Christian people as a summons to service, or character-building, or fidelity; the remainder are doctrinal discourses, seeking to present briefly great and vital as well as consoling doctrines of God's Word.

May the All-giver graciously give His blessing with this volume, is the sincere prayer of the

AUTHOR.

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# The Pulpit the Age Needs.

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[Lecture delivered before the Theological Union of the Toronto Conference, June, 1886, and published by request.]

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**A**SSUMING as true, what no man who knows history will attempt to dispute, that the pulpit has been God's chosen agency for the moral and spiritual blessing of the world since the day of Pentecost, it will be seen to be of the first importance that the functions of the pulpit be correctly understood, and the efficiency of the pulpit thoroughly maintained. As certainly as the sermon spread Christianity at the beginning, and every subsequent epoch of the world's moral life has been an epoch of preaching, so certainly, while human nature remains as it is, and men need spiritual illumination and inspiration, and the Gospel is dependent on moral forces, the function of the preacher can never be superseded. As the printed book cannot supersede the teacher, or the reports of committees the debates of parliament, or the examination of witnesses the pleadings of counsel, neither can the widest diffusion of literature take the place of the Christian preacher. Literature and science have their distinct place and mission in the service of society, and in serving the cause of truth and mankind they become the servants of God. The Christian

pulpit no longer monopolizes the functions of other professions, but is required more and more to keep within its own sphere. There never was, however, a better field, or a grander outlook, or a greater demand for a living pulpit than now. Thank God, much of the superstitious sanctity which once surrounded preachers as belonging to a sacerdotal class, and which led the people to receive what was uttered simply because a minister said it, has passed away. But as the priestly idea, born of an age subsequent to Christ and His apostles, and begotten of a strange blending of Judaism and paganism, declines and goes to the oblivion of all unrealities, so the prophetic and apostolic functions of a true ministry rise more clearly to view. Men see less of the person of the preacher, but more of the word of Him that liveth and abideth forever. The ministry itself is chiefly esteemed because that by the manifestation of the truth it commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. As the eloquence and fervor of the prophet and the aptness and tender sympathy of the pastor blend in the modern pulpit, the depths of human hunger will be reached, the greatest problems of human destiny will be solved, and the holiest treasures that the heart can know will be richly enjoyed. The world, with an increasing appreciation of the fact "that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God," will delightedly maintain the preaching of that word as the last human institution to pass away.

#### I. THE AGE NEEDS A PULPIT PRE-EMINENTLY EVANGELICAL.

I do not mean this in any narrow and restricted sense, but in that broad and inclusive sense which loyalty to Christ and His Word enjoins. We have to confront the difficulties and demands of men's daily calling, and the grave personal,

political, social and educational issues that are all about us, at the root of which there is much ignorance, selfishness and sin. The question is, how can we most effectually redeem men from evil, conquer and expel all false principles, and bring home to the business and bosoms of living men the truth of God? Certainly it will not be by moral essays, or lectures on science, or dissertations on history, but by preaching the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As men hear His stern denunciations of all unrighteousness, and His tender and helpful sympathy with all that is right and good, they will be warned and encouraged, or led in the way everlasting. What I urge is, that we be careful and painstaking expositors and preachers of the Word of God—to-day explaining a type, to-morrow defining a doctrine; now presenting the precepts which guide, then the promises which support; here uttering the solemn warning, there the tender and gracious entreaty. Whilst our preaching shall bring a psalm of joy to the heart of the sorrowful, or a proverb of wisdom to the feet that had well-nigh slipped, or a parable of love to the broken-hearted but repentant prodigal, or a pillar of fire to some benighted pilgrim on his way to the celestial city, or an angel ministry to some one alone at the mouth of the cave of despair, it shall not lack the warm appreciation of eager and hungry hearts. If, as good Doctor Arnold put it, our business is to make earth like heaven and every man like God, there is no plan so sure and no instrumentality so potent as to preach Christ. If I would heal poor, sin-smitten humanity, I must lead to Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost. If I would help men who have succumbed to the power of temptation and gone down fearfully with the moral debris, I am compelled to bring them to Him who casts out devils and cures all manner of diseases. If I would comfort

a tired sufferer who is distressingly sure that some day He shall fall by the hand of the enemy, I must point to Him who is able to keep them from falling and whose grace is sufficient even for them. If I would sustain and inspire some fiercely opposed or discouraged worker in the fields of holy toil, I must direct the eye to Him who says, "I know thy works," "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Christ is the light of life, the only real way to God, neither is there salvation in any other name. As men learn faith, and obedience, and self-denial, and consecration, and all the fundamental principles of Christianity through Christ, and feel that filial and immediate relations are established between the soul and God by Him, they will more and more see that He is the Desire of all nations. As they catch His spirit, and copy His example, and share His image, and rise into His sacrifices, and become complete in Him, they will feel that they can do all things—however hard, or painful, or self-denying—through Christ which strengtheneth them. They will realize that the cross of Christ has lost none of its power, the heart of Christ none of its love, the name of Christ none of its lustre, the spirit of Christ none of its influence, the example of Christ none of its beauty, the atonement of Christ none of its efficacy, the intercession of Christ none of its prevalence, the promises of Christ none of their sweetness. As we witness the type of manhood produced, the sublime heroism inspired, the Christlike principles brought into every department of life, by this preaching, we shall see the need, the absolute compulsion, for a pre-eminently evangelical pulpit. Nothing can take its place. Without it religion will be sickly, manhood dwarfed, philanthropy paralyzed, hope blotted out, and sin will triumph universally with its innumerable wrongs and woes and hells. Then let us

preach, not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord. When men ask for bread, let us not give them a stone; or when they ask for a fish, let us not give them a serpent. There is light enough in Christ for all the blind, comfort enough for all the sorrowful, wisdom enough for all the ignorant, peace enough for all the troubled, rest enough for all the weary, hope enough for all the despairing, strength enough for all the weak, wealth enough for all the poor, merit enough for all the vile, life enough for all the dead. Let us then hold up Christ over the field of human sin and want, and let the pulpit of universal Christendom cry, "Come unto Him, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest."

## II. THE AGE NEEDS A PULPIT COURAGEOUSLY INDEPENDENT.

The preacher must be the teacher, not the pupil; the leader, not the slave, of his audience. Our preaching must have the ring of authoritative certainty, the authority inherent in truth, to command the ear and confidence of those who hear us, and bring respect and strength to our preaching. The preacher will have to rebuke, to denounce, the sins of mankind—the envy, the jealousy, the pride, the injustice, the love of money, the advantage-taking, the rascalities of trade, the drunkenness, the licentiousness, the deceptions, the undue striving after power, the innumerable wrongs into which men have fallen. When they ask, "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?" he must be able at once to affirm, "I have a message from God unto thee."

The greatest, the most reforming, the most beneficent preachers of the world have been courageously independent—Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Paul,

Chrysostom, Wycliffe, Savonarola, Luther, Latimer, Knox, Bunyan, Baxter, Wesley, Whitefield, down to the most useful and mighty preachers of to-day. As truly as Elijah rebuked Ahab, and startled the worst king of Israel into momentary fear and repentance; and John the Baptist told Herod his crimes to his face, however enraged the guilty monarch might be; and Paul again and again fearlessly preached the whole truth of God to kings and governors and persecuting multitudes, so must the preacher of this age declare to old and young all the words of this life. He must charge home the message received from the Most High upon the conscience and life of his hearers, warning every man and teaching every man, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To do this at all times and in all places the preacher will need a martyr's courage, a martyr's constancy. There among his audience is a business man who puffs, who adulterates, who lies by advertisement, and quietly passes it over by saying, "Business is business;" there is another who justifies any cruel pressure or unscrupulous dealing by saying that it is his first duty to succeed, and then to do right if he can; there is another who has made a fortune by grinding his workmen, or gambling in stocks, or defrauding his creditors; and to these and others the preacher must be faithful, as he values the approval of God and the salvation of those that hear him. But to be faithful, with the consciousness of his own weakness and the conviction that some will be offended and the ministry blamed, will require that he does not even count his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he has received of the Lord Jesus. In the presence of duties such as these the bravest preacher has sometimes faltered. Yet the age requires that while the preacher's eye moistens, and his lips quiver, and

his heart sympathies are stirred, his tongue shall fearlessly utter the whole counsel of God,—never speaking with the lisping weakness of a child where he should utter himself with the dauntless eloquence of a man. Oh, my brethren, we shall require the most brave, the most heroic courage, never to be false to the life and destiny of our hearers; always to set our faces against all that is unscriptural and wrong; never to yield to the dictation of wealth, or flattery, or fashion, or fear; always to be ready to attract to ourselves the storm that shall cloud our popularity while it clears the atmosphere and brings health and fragrance and sunshine to the Church. Let us, if need be, become crucified with Christ, if by that all-daring and sublime courage we can the better bear witness to the light and proclaim the universal language of God's love and commandment to mankind.

### III. THE AGE NEEDS A PULPIT, FRESH, NATURAL, ORIGINAL.

If I am asked to define originality, I should take an illustration from physical nature—the body. You take food of different kinds into your system, and masticate and digest it. After that it becomes yourself—blood, bone, muscle, flesh, skin,—all that makes up your body. It is the life and vigor and strength and preservation of that body. The food becomes you, naturally, properly. Just so, mentally or morally! You read, observe, think, feel, acquire from books, science, nature, art, the heavens above, or the earth beneath, and when well digested it becomes the conviction, the principle, the belief, the character, the intellectual and moral life of yourself. It is you emphatically. As you speak in your own language, and after your own manner, the convictions and truths born of the pangs and

travail of the living growth of a living man, you are original, as much so as any true or great preacher since the days of Noah. This originality will maintain and demand perpetual freshness. Such a preacher will be ever acquiring, cultivating, searching after suitable knowledge. Conscious that no man can impart what he has not, he will avail himself of all the knowledge within his reach—literary, scientific, historical, philological, experimental—and lay it under profitable contribution for the enrichment of the pulpit. In him will be fulfilled the prediction of Malachi: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and the people shall seek the law at his mouth." In these days of mental culture and ever-widening education, the pulpit must possess resources sufficient to meet the intelligence and proper demands of the pew. If we have to warn, to comfort, to edify; if mental enlightenment is necessary to spiritual growth and stability; if appeals to the intellect have to be made, as well as to the heart; if systems of error must be exploded, and deep-rooted fallacies exposed, and the Christian teacher must stand not merely on the defensive; if the very love of truth constrains men to seek for new treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the spirit of independent investigation, then we must seek the arguments which convince, the truth which stimulates, the illustrations which allure, the principles which sanctify. We might as well expect a pauper to bequeath a fortune to posterity as expect the man whose brain is an uncultivated waste to mould and guide and bless thinking men. Perpetual learning is essential to perpetual teaching. When we cease to acquire we cease to impart. The time is past when our congregations will be satisfied with labored essays or a few highly studied and thoroughly dry discourses preached over and over again from the pulpit. We must be students, especially of the

Bible and all that helps to explain it, if we would be thoroughly furnished for our work. Then let us so respect the just needs of the age, and the power and honor of the pulpit, that we will not let ourselves run down and exhaust like the fields of a thriftless farmer. Let us rather root out idleness and sloth, and bring to our pulpit perpetual freshness and inspiration,—not going weekly to some valley of dry bones to supply a poor diluted repetition, but to the inexhaustible granary of God's Word to break of the very bread of life to the hungry heart. When Dr. Arnold was asked why he continued to study, as if he would not have enough for his pupils, he nobly replied, "It is not because I fear I shall not have enough to give them, but because I prefer that they shall be supplied from a clear, running stream, rather than from a stagnant pool." We must also be natural. Imitations are always sickly or feeble. Copyists generally follow the defects, not the excellences, of those whom they attempt to imitate. Into the pulpit of this day every man should carry his own personality. The apostles did this. Each stamped his own individuality on every word uttered. Paul was Paul, and not someone else. John was John, Peter was Peter. Each presented the truth in his own way; hence the charming variety, as well as the marvellous unity, of that first group of Gospel preachers. So should men in the pulpit now be themselves. It is thus that variety will be secured which God has designed, and which is so necessary to meet the requirements of the people. One man will have one way of presenting the truth, and another man another, but in God's variety there will be no confusion, for the diversity of gifts proceed from one spirit. In this way real seers will enter the pulpit unshorn of their strength, and the most richly dowered human souls will spend their finest powers in feeding the flock of Christ. In

this way will the pulpit of the age attract, ennoble, and save the world it seeks to serve.

#### IV. THE AGE NEEDS A PULPIT WISELY, SKILFULLY ADAPTED.

The universal cry of this age is for skilled workmen, in medicine, in music, in art, in science, in education, in mechanism; in every department the demand is the same. Not less so does the pulpit of the age require wise adaptation as an essential of success. Now the preacher has to show men how wrong, how unreasonable, how dishonorable, how ruinous it is to act wickedly, and then to exhort with a love, a tenderness, a pathos that would win the doubting or cheer the downcast. The next day he will have to brook failure, and wait and be quiet amid the disappointment which mocks hope, because reluctant men provokingly prefer fables to truth, and turn away from sound teaching to have their ears tickled because they itch. Nothing tries the mettle of a true minister more than this. He will need much wisdom to keep his spirit against discouragement, to keep his temper against resentment, to keep his manhood against disgust, and to keep on in his work faithfully. But faith and skill the hardest problems solve, and, with this conviction, the true minister must endure hardness, however hard it is. He must meet the diversity of character and temperament and experience around him by seeking to become all things to all men. A preacher must not be a mere cast-iron machine for turning out sermons and doing ministerial duty. He must be a manly, godly man, tremulously alive all over, not to his own things only, but also to the things of others. Alive with sensitive love, quick to take hints, quick to read faces, quick to catch meanings, quick to feel chivalrous, quick to live in other

lives, quick with tact. If I were asked to define a great preacher I should say, a man who combines depth with brilliancy, accuracy with ardor, sound judgment with fervid enthusiasm, a capacity of logic that will baffle the sceptic, with a skill in rhetoric that will attract the crowd. Yet, with all these rare accomplishments, a preacher, to be great or useful, must have *tact*. The true preacher must be a workman to whom the secret of his craft has been revealed. He will have a subject, and marshal his thoughts and choose his words fitly, and set a proper value on gesture and manner and delivery. But to him these will be but the tools, the methods to accomplish his object. In all his preparations for the pulpit he will have in view the people. He would help out of the darkness and bondage of the present into the light and inheritance of the children of God.

To this end our preaching must have the skill, the aim, of a wise adaptation and directness. A sermon that might be very acceptable and do much good at one time, might be wholly unsuited to the necessities of another. Our preaching must go straight to our audience. What would you say of a man who, taking his gun, went out into the field and fired away all day into the air, aiming at nothing in particular, but hoping that something would happen to come in the way of his shot? Would you call him a sportsman, a success? No! And this drawing the bow at a venture and shooting at random from the pulpit will not do much more execution. The pulpit needs *skilled marksmen*. The wise minister, while he uses great plainness of speech, will also be very careful of the *manner* in which the truth is preached, so as not unnecessarily to give offence on the one hand or fail to win a soul on the other. At times he will see that the way in which the truth is spoken excites opposition, rather than the truth itself, or the manner in which

it is urged wins easy and direct access to the heart. Seeing how much depends on himself and the skilful use of the pulpit, the preacher will use all lawful and proper means if haply he may save some. We have but to take the case of two preachers, and let them preach precisely the same sermon before the same audience, to see the great difference between skilled and unskilled workmen, and how much depends on the way in which the truth is presented. The one has an ear for modulation and emphasis, and knows the charm and power of a felicitous and forceful phrase; the other lets his words fall out as they will. The one calls to his aid all the accessories of adroit and life-like delineation; the other limits himself to monotonous and simple detail. The features of one light up with the glow and radiance of oratory, and his whole countenance speaks; the other is cold and awkward. Is there any difference in the effect produced? The one has carried all hearts with him and attracted and melted and swayed his audience at will: he has held them as by a magic spell; while the words of the other have fallen on the ear of the people with an insipid flatness that left them inattentive and careless. Beyond all other callings, the pulpit needs trained and skilled workmen.

V. THE AGE NEEDS A PULPIT, CLEAR, WHOLE-HEARTED,  
AND ENTHUSIASTIC.

A preacher should never carry his doubts into the pulpit. Whatever questions may at times perplex or exercise him, let him bring them to God and the light of His Word in the solitude of his study; but from the pulpit the preacher should proclaim only what is clear—clearly revealed, clearly understood, clearly defined. A preacher, with a commission and a revelation from God, to have only doubts and suggestions to communicate to the people, is an impertinence

and a mockery. The truth which Paul proclaimed was not vague and indefinite, but clear as the noon-day, and such is the demand of the pulpit of this age. Our preaching must have about it the ring of certainty. Don't let a word from the pulpit suggest doubt rather than faith, lead to scepticism rather than Christian confidence, guide to barren wastes rather than to green pastures, poison rather than feed. Above and beyond everything else, we are cultivators of the heart, and in delivering it from sin, and reconciling to God, and transforming it into a spiritual temple, we must know the way of truth to be able to guide that heart in the way everlasting. If ever you are tempted to mock its hunger and agonies by flowers of rhetoric, or gems of poetry, or the illusions of philosophic dreamers, listen to the rebuke of Joab to Ahimaaz, "Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready." I know that the close study, the wrestling with truth, the fasting from self, essential to a pulpit that will never give forth an uncertain sound, will require the most whole-hearted consecration. That is what the age demands and what we should ungrudgingly present. Let us so feel the greatness, the exceeding greatness and overwhelming responsibility of our work, as never to cease to be whole-hearted in that work, laying all our powers under contribution to fulfil our vocation of God. As the Apostle Paul puts it, "Give thyself wholly to these things, that thy profiting may appear." Do not let us be divided or exhausted by other occupations, however tempting the speculation or remunerative the opening. Let us feel that the ministry is the one great and absorbing business of our life. Let us also bring to the pulpit the ardor and enthusiasm of the most impassioned earnestness. We should cultivate zeal and arouse ourselves by the most

weighty considerations to the most fervent devotion to our work. The very conviction that the message we deliver is God's message, should quicken us with an energy beyond our own. When we remember that Christ's honor and dominion over souls may be largely determined by the way in which the message is declared; that the salvation or damnation of men may hinge on our sincerity; that souls may pass on thoughtless, lost forever, through our carelessness, or be saved forever amid the wealth and splendor of a sun-bathed heaven through our pleading urgency; the very possibility of this should inspire the pulpit with the deepest enthusiasm. The world is constantly presenting to us brilliant examples of self-sacrificing zeal in the cause of science, or literature, or discovery, or commerce, or patriotism, or duty; and shall we applaud the courage, the consecration, of those who have taken their lives in their hands and gone forth to explore some unknown land, or sacrificed themselves as victims to science, or died defending some perilous post of duty, and then apologize for zeal in preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. What would Paul, and John, and Polycarp, and Ignatius, and other eminent leaders of the early Christian Church, have thought of an apology for being thoroughly given to their work. Let it never be said that duty, and brotherhood, and love for souls, and love to Christ, cannot constrain to the most heroic and self-sacrificing labor in the pulpit. Let it be seen that Christianity has fire enough in its heart to kindle the most impassioned devotion, and that when the lips are touched with fire from off the divine altar, and the heart throbs with the life-beats of God, tremulous with loving entreaty or eloquent with irresistible appeal, the pulpit, glowing with the white heat of all-constraining love, is on fire for souls.

VI. THE AGE NEEDS A PULPIT MORALLY BLAMELESS  
AND EMINENTLY SPIRITUAL.

Nowhere is character so observed, so scrutinized, so rigidly exacted, as in the Christian pulpit of this age; and it is best and right that it should be so. The demand of the Gospel, deep sympathy with our work, a clear insight into the highest forms of spiritual truth—the chief condition of great and permanent success—requires eminent piety—a piety as deep as it is visible, and as visible as it is deep—and a character pure, strong, consecrated, Christlike. The pulpit cannot accomplish its true work of bringing men to think and act according to the will of God, and rise above all its difficulties, and be equal to its most exacting sacrifices, without exalted spiritual character. How can a man successfully preach truthfulness to others while he prevaricates, or purity while he is impure, or forgiveness while his own actions breathe the spirit of retaliation, or heavenly-mindedness while he is greedy after the things of the world, or humility while his own heart is proud, or sympathy and humaneness while he is cold and uncharitable, or a life of ideal goodness for others to follow while his own is a counterfeit? Insincerity, inconsistency, unholiness, would neutralize, would paralyze, the most clever, the most richly endowed pulpit. It is not the business of the preacher merely to teach how to think, but to show how to live. To this end he must overcome selfishness, tread down pride, escape besetting sins, and be filled with the spirit of Christ. Power begets power, faith begets faith. It was after Jacob had wrestled and prevailed with God that he prevailed with his brother. It was after Elijah had earnestly pleaded with Jehovah that the fire came down and consumed the sacrifice and convinced the people. It was

after Moses had been alone with God in the mount that his countenance shone with a glory that awed the children of Israel. It was after the high-priest had entered the holy of holies that he came forth radiant and rich with blessings for the congregation. It will be as the result of the closest fellowship with Jesus that the pulpit of to-day will have power with God and with man; and until we have power with God we cannot succeed with man. Let us then go often into those holy solitudes where God holds secret and prolonged communion with men, there to break our deepest want and roll our conscious sins on the Sin-bearer; there to acknowledge our most subtle and peculiar temptations and obtain grace for the solemn responsibilities of our calling; there to receive strength and completeness and unutterable peace in the infinite presence; there to see sights and hear whispers, and bathe in the flood-light of the divine fellowship; there to receive nutriment and unction from the living lips of God.

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## II.

### EARLY PIETY.

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“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth.”

—ECCLES. xii. 1.

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**E**VERY period of life is fitted to awaken the most solemn reflections, but none more so than the season of youth. Climb with me the hill-side that overlooks the sea, and behold that splendid vessel just putting out to sea. The winds are filling the unfurled canvas, and the vessel is gliding along delightfully toward the land she is chartered for. But thought begins to speculate. Will that vessel ever reach its desired haven? The sea is so deceitful. Rage and tempest sleep in its bosom. Often has it received a vessel with sunny smiles, afterward to cast it a wreck on some foreign shore. Will the vessel be stranded. Solemn and unavoidable are such reflections as you gaze upon a ship sailing away to her distant port. But still more painful is the reflection as you watch young life just putting out to sea to make its voyage. Bright and clear may be the day of sailing, but as night falls the clouds are heavy, the wind moans, and tempest and rain thicken till not a star appears, and the billows run mountains high. Then the question arises, Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? how shall he make the voyage of life securely? by what guidance or under what pilotage can he make sure to shun every danger and reach his desired

haven safely? The answer comes: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

I. THE PERSON WE SHOULD REMEMBER—"Thy Creator."

There can be no doubt as to who this is and what thoughts should immediately impress us, for there is but one Creator. The term Creator at once suggests *Originator*, *Owner*. The Lord is our maker, and we are the work of His hands. It is He that formed us and not we ourselves. He made all things above, below, far and near. He created the heavens and stretched them out, and formed the mountains, and clothed and beautified the landscape, and holds the waters in the hollow of His hand. The noble powers by which we are distinguished—powers of thought, reason, and will—are His production. From Him they are derived, and by Him sustained and preserved. For in Him we live and move and have our being. So that, as our Creator, His right to us is complete and absolute. In this respect He owns us, and hath an infinitely greater claim to us than one creature can ever have in another. I beseech you consider the rightfulness, the unchallengeableness, the perfectness of the Creator's claim upon you, and respect and acknowledge that claim. What the Creator demands and deserves from His creatures is *obedience*, instant, unreserved, complete obedience. It is but reasonable to say that our obedience should be as complete as His claims are just and true. We are *capable* of yielding to our Creator the returns, the service, He requires. In fact, when we look at the powers with which God hath endowed us, and the culture and care He hath bestowed on us, and the relation He sustains to us, we read plainly: "This people have I formed for myself." It is a terrible perversion of our reason and understanding and affections and soul faculties to lay out

these for mere carnal and selfish ends. We descend beneath ourselves and forget our true moral dignity when we lay out our powers merely to amass wealth, or secure distinction, or gain fame, or promote personal aggrandizement. The original and true intent of our Maker concerning us is definitely declared in the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Don't let us rob God of that unconditional obedience and service which His transcendent perfections and essential goodness and infinite love and supreme authority should instantly command. Remember thy Creator, *i.e.*, keep Him in mind, meditate on Him, let Him dwell in thy thought and heart. Remember Him gratefully, reverently, constantly.

## II. WHEN WE SHOULD REMEMBER HIM—"Now."

This means in youth, so that the question to be considered is the urgency, the advantage, the blessedness of early piety.

1st. *Remember thy Creator now, because youth is the period which presents fewest obstacles to the practice of piety.* This is clear if we consider external circumstances, natural powers, or moral habits. In youth we are most free from those troubles which embitter, those schemes which engross, those engagements which hinder in more advanced and connected life. Then the body is healthy and vigorous, the mind active, the memory retentive, the affections easily swayed, the habits unformed, and the conscience susceptible and tender. Under the Hebrew economy the first was to be presented to God. The first-born of man, of beast, or the first-fruits of the field, were to be yielded up to God. The young alone can spiritualize and fulfil this idea, by giving to Him who merits all the

first of their days and the first-fruits of their reason and affection. Never had they such an opportunity to show the goodness and sincerity of the motives by which they are influenced. What does an old man offer when he turns to God? His wealth? He can use it no longer. His pleasures? He can enjoy them no more. His honor? It is already withered on his brow. He flies from the world because he is burnt out. He enters the temple that he may take refuge at the horns of the altar. He gives to God the gleanings of life after the enemy has reaped the harvest. But they who consecrate their youth to God freely, readily yield to Him the best of themselves. A religious life formed at such a time and entered upon under such circumstances is far more easy and safe than at any other period. We have often seen the power of habit, and know that it is formed gradually by the repetition of acts which in time mould and fix the character. The real stamp may not at first appear, but sooner or later the evil or the good will mature itself and stamp the man and life. Now it is a much easier thing to break the force of habit before it is confirmed and settled than afterwards. Therefore, upon this showing, it is much easier to serve God in youth than in after life. More than this, early piety will save from the entanglements and consequent embarrassment of godless relationships and evil associations. To be safe and to make our religious life more easy and pleasant, no one can begin too soon.

2nd. *Because it will preserve from those sins and follies into which youthful inexperience may rush.* In all periods of life men feel the force of influences prompting them to sin, but there are circumstances connected with youth which render it a period specially liable to sin. Youth is a season of comparative ignorance—ignorance of the deceitfulness of

the natural heart and of the wiles and snares of the outside world. The world, to the young, is a charming fairy-land, with no disappointments, or discords, or griefs, just because they look at it through glasses stained with the wild poetry of a buoyant hope. It is not to be wondered at if, voyaging over life's sea, exposed to rocks and pirates and sleepless billows, without the chart of knowledge or the compass of experience, the youthful vessel becomes a total wreck. Then add to this the force of passions. In the early stages of life we are largely the creatures of sense, influenced and governed by impulse. The intellect or belief is not supreme, but the mind is the vassal of matter. Under the influence of passions pleading for indulgence and struggling against restraints, is there not a fearful liability to sin? Judgment is weak and passion strong in youth; and the enemy often tries to gain his point by urging the gratification of appetite. The first sin was the sin of appetite, and the tempter made his thrusts at Christ in the wilderness through the same means. The history of humanity and the saddest experiences we have known show the desolating power of unholy appetite. Persons sometimes speak about young men sowing wild oats. You have never known that kind of seed to produce a good harvest. In every way it is best for youth to place itself early under the restraints and obedience of the divine laws. Further, add the susceptibility to influence, so characteristic of youth, and you see its keen exposure to wrong,—that very susceptibility exposes youth to all the corruptions of its age. Nothing can effectually preserve the young from the power and influence of evil but the fear of God.

3rd. *Because of its beneficial influence over the life.* Youth is the spring of life, and by this will be determined the glory of summer, the abundance of autumn, the provision of

winter. Just as the farmer who neglects the cultivation of his land in spring will suffer for it in the biting winter, or the merchant who neglects the conditions of commercial success will find it out to his ruin, so the youth who neglects early piety will feel the effect of it afterwards on both his physical and spiritual nature. The connection between body and soul is intimate. The passions that disease the body and deform and wear it out prematurely affect also the spiritual constitution by darkening and corrupting the intellect, hardening and blighting the heart, crushing and withering the sympathies, condemning and degrading the soul, smiting with paralysis the whole moral nature, or sweeping like the moaning winds of a wintry night over the dethroned and ruined man. Such is the effect of sin that late religion cannot restore what early piety would have prevented. Often do the sins of youth affect a man years after their performance, and perhaps years after they have been forgiven in Christ. Their being washed away in the blood of Jesus does not efface them from the memory of the man, but they fetter and cloud the joys of life. What a difference there must be between the experience of an aged Christian who commenced his religious life young, and the aged man who spent his first years in sin and was converted late in life! One is untrammelled by the past, the other has to grapple with old habits that are like so many fetters, taking years of devout toil and resistance to master and completely overcome. It is a tremendous fallacy to suppose that it is as easy to get off the line of evil as to get on. The first sin is the hardest, and safety lies in never crossing the threshold of evil. Sin holds with almost unconquerable tenacity when once it has taken root. There is nothing in the world so difficult to get rid of as an evil habit. It is so hard to conquer. Long years of restraint and watchfulness:

and prayer have been necessary to preserve men from the very tendencies of their own nature. Every wrong done becomes a scar which, long after the evil is forgiven, may leave its mark.

Then the bearing of the past life upon society will agonize that man converted late in life. A converted old man who has spent most of his life in sin cannot review his history without being painfully conscious of the influence for evil which he has exerted upon others. The memory of some who have passed away forever whom he might have assisted to save, but did help to ruin, must overwhelm him. Would we be saved from such memories of remorse and agony, we should early lay our life at the feet of Jesus and serve Him.

4th. *Because of the joy and triumph it will shed on the closing scene of life.* Youthful piety crowned with manly grace makes the close of life beautiful and blessed. I know of no sight more saddening than that of an old man shuddering on the brink of the grave without hope and without God. There is something about age with its oppressive cares, worn frame, enfeebled strength, dimmed sight, tottering limbs, shattered nerves, benumbed feelings, and fled life, that is saddening in itself. But to sink into the grave without a hope of heaven is terrible. Now, the old age of true piety is bright, hopeful, triumphant. Visiting an old Christian some time ago, who has since crossed the river and entered the pearly gates, it was remarked, "You have toiled long for Christ, what have you to say about His religion now?" "Say of it?" said he, "it is the better part, the only thing worth having now, the one thing most precious." In that dying Christian there was light at eventide; and the saint of fourscore years calmly, hopefully passed through the valley shouting, "More than conqueror through Him that hath loved us!" Incomparably grand is

the peaceful close of a holy pilgrimage, when the curse is turned into a blessing, when the house of sorrow becomes a scene of triumph, when the troubled waters die into a waveless calm, when the winding sheet becomes a bridal robe, when death becomes the entrance into life, when the farewell of friends below is exchanged for the greetings of celestial friendship, and the soul lays down its diseased body to be clothed upon of God. But such a victorious termination of life must be preceded by early, by entire dedication of the life to God's service. If we do not serve Him truly, worthily, heartily through life, we cannot hope for a triumphant close.

It is impossible to overestimate the value of early piety. It makes sure of what is all important, and what, if deferred, is rendered uncertain or impossible. "Allow me, my children," said an old man, "to warn you from my dying bed. When young I enjoyed religious privileges and was the subject of serious reflections. At sixteen I was urged to seek religion, but not being willing there and then, I deliberately promised God that when I became a man I would give myself to Him to love and serve Him. My anxieties then left me. But at twenty-five the monitor returned, reminding me of my forgotten promise. I acknowledged, but deferred, and vowed with increased solemnity that when the cares of life were less I would seek religion in earnest. Again my vows were forgotten and life passed on; but at fifty, I remember, the monitor returned with strong pleadings and said, 'Seek religion now, fulfil thy promise.' I knew that I had promised to do so, and was dissatisfied with myself that I had not kept my pledge with God and served Him long years before. But again I put it off, hoping for a more convenient time. And now I am old and dying. I have trifled with conviction until it is too late. I have refused

God, and now He hath cast me off. Oh, my children, be warned by my example and seek religion at once, and don't, like me, put it off to die in despair, a lost man."

Let everyone feel that while a spiritual change is not impossible to God at any period of life, to begin early to serve Him is the one safe and sure way of attaining spiritual manhood and spiritual victory. Young friends, knowing that you have a soul to save and a spiritual character to build up, enter at once upon the holy and necessary work. While the heart is tender, and the conscience susceptible, and the judgment unbiassed, and the affections unpolluted, remember your Creator, and He will be your best Friend and Guide and Saviour, for time and eternity.

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### III.

## CHRIST AT THE DOOR.

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“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”—Rev. iii. 20.

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**T**Hese words were spoken to and of the Church at Laodicea, the last of the seven Asiatic Churches. Laodicea at this time was a large and flourishing city of Phrygia, beautifully situated and abounding in wealth and luxury. The Church there, though numerous, was not by any means spiritually-minded. It partook too much of the character of the people. They were proud, haughty, ease-loving, effeminate, and self-satisfied. No one can read the graphic description of their state given in this chapter without weeping over their vanity and fatal self-confidence, leading as it did to the threatened punishment, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Laodicea has long since become an abandoned ruin. Earthquakes have engulfed a large part of the city and desolated the country around. There, amid her six or seven hills, Laodicea now sits like a lonely and desolate widow, with the walls grass-grown, the temple demolished, the theatres peopled with wolves and foxes, and the name perished from under heaven, while the winds that moan and wail through the deserted ruins sound like the sarcastic laugh of time exulting over the destruction of the proudest and most self-confident of people. It was to this people thus conditioned that these words were originally addressed. To them in their loathsomeness and sin Christ

thus graciously stoops. But the same Saviour to-day graciously condescends to knock at the door of the poorest and the most sinful of men, so intense is His desire for the salvation of all.

I. CHRIST AT THE DOOR.—“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.”

1st. *The suitor*—“I.” Here is a sight to make angels wonder, the condescension of an insulted God stooping to plead with a rebellious world. The offended Sovereign of the universe entreating the sinner that has despised and rejected Him to accept a free salvation purchased with the offended One’s agony and blood. Well might we wonderingly pause and ask, Who is this that knocks? *Who?* Jesus, the Son of God! He in the beginning was with God. By His power the worlds were brought into being—the One who formed us and preserves us day by day. The Creator at the door of the creature, the Master at the door of the servant, the King of kings, than whom there is no greater, standing like a beggar at the door. The Saviour who ransomed us with His blood, the Intercessor who is exalted to give remission of sins, the Judge who shall one day condemn or crown all men, it is He who stands without. Shall it be said, “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.” Would a child keep his *father* outside in the pitiless storm knocking for years at a closed door? Would a diseased patient keep a *physician* outside in the cold till his patience was exhausted? Would any man of common courtesy keep a *friend* knocking at his door repeatedly and never open it? Will you keep out your best Friend and Benefactor, who stands at the door and knocks with a hand that bears the mark of the nail that pierced it? Will you dare longer to keep Him, the blessed, the holy, the loving, the condescend-

ing Saviour, outside the door, despised or unheeded, while you harbor guests with whom Christ could not dwell.

2nd. *Christ's attitude*—"I stand at the door." The word is properly translated "I stand," to denote continual and unwearied attention. He not merely has stood, but he stands, patiently waiting an introduction to the soul. He once stood personally and bodily before men in the days of His flesh. He now stands spiritually and representatively there. Of the *door* at which Christ stands we may but briefly speak. There is the door of the *mind*. It is not difficult to see how that door is approached, and that it must be the first to open. Until there is a conviction there will be no spiritual awakening, and conviction can only come intelligently through reflection. We must know before we can love, or imitate, or follow. As the mind thinks and reads and learns about Christ, so the eyes of the understanding will be enlightened, and Christ will enter readily through the door of thought to the door of the *heart*. Through the heart all our sympathies and yearnings and affections pass, and Christ longs that its door should open to Him. No one is so worthy of your heart, and no one can make it new again like Christ can. Let us throw the door of the heart wide open, and bid Christ a royal welcome. He also stands at the door of the *will*. Through that door desire, intention, purpose, passes into action and service. Christ is most anxious that this door should also be open to Him without resistance and without delay, so that every yearning of love and pleading of emotion and aspiration of thought may become consecration and service, that the brain and heart may be marshalled by a strong and resolute will into perfect harmony with the will of God. Through these doors or avenues to the town of Man-soul, Christ seeks to enter.

3rd. *Christ's action*—"And knock." He knocks in a variety of ways, outwardly and inwardly. He knocks by *physical reverses and visitations*. When the soul has deadened itself in relation to God, and will not hearken to His appeal, God's only opportunity of asserting His sovereignty may be through a physical medium. Where doctrine fails plague may succeed. Where love has been mocked the sword may prevail. Where goodness has been despised want may lead to reflection. So you see again and again physical retribution has followed moral disorder, and no man should complain of this, for the same law operates in the common walks of life. When a child sins, a wise and loving parent inflicts punishment. When a citizen breaks the law, imprisonment or some bodily punishment is inflicted by the magistrate. When a servant or workman is unfaithful to his employer, he is dismissed or punished in some form. All this is admittedly right and proper and necessary. Then shall unreasoning and impious men grow excited and be mad if God, in vindication of the purity of law or the claims of righteousness, should inflict punishment, if He should shut up the rain, or blight the harvest, or sweep away by devastating storms, or change the tides of commercial prosperity till fortune is withdrawn, or send a fatal plague upon our homes, or permit affliction to take health and strength away, till man has learnt that it is God who takes away. He knocks by *sickness and death*. In this way God teaches many a thoughtless man to think, and makes him to see the measure of his days, so that he may apply his heart unto wisdom. How many have said with David, "It was good for me that I was afflicted, for before I went astray, but now have I kept Thy law." From the bed of sickness many have risen to walk in newness of life and become the servants of God unto holiness. The knock

was long, and every nerve quivered at the sound of it, but it led to the opening of the door. Sometimes, where sickness has not been heeded, death has knocked still louder. A loved child, or brother, or parent, or friend, has been taken away, and in the terrible stillness and solemnity of that hour a knock has been heard, so clear and reiterated that the most hardened have been sometimes constrained to open the door. He knocks by *conscience*. Oh, what histories might be written of consciences stifled, or lulled, or bribed, or seared, to prevent their hearing the Master's knock. But with all their attempts to override or silence the voice of conscience, there are times when it does and will speak for Christ, and ask and urge His claims to be admitted within the soul ; that conscience within us is one of the most faithful of Christ's servants, and through it He perpetually knocks at the door of the heart. He knocks by his *Word*. The Word of God is called a hammer, to break the heart of stone, and in numberless instances that Word, by its invitation, or promise, or warning, or rebuke, has broken the heart of hardened man. It was the passage, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, but put ye on the Lord Jesus," which awakened Augustine. It was this verse, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin," spoken by John Wesley, that led a highway robber to become a true and faithful Christian. It was the verse, "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God," that led a French colonel from a life of dissipation and the passion of a duel to seek reconciliation with God and man. It was that precious passage of the Word, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life," proclaimed by a South Sea missionary, that led the first native convert to Christ. This Word of God, which has

called so many into His fold, is still knocking at the door of the world. He knocks by *the Spirit*. Sometimes the Spirit strives powerfully, mightily, and it is difficult for the most hardened to resist his appeal. "At other times the Spirit knocks gently, tenderly, pleadingly. But in whatever way He knocks, it is with a view to Christ's admission into the heart of man.

II. MAN'S DUTY AND CHRIST'S PROMISE—"If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

1st. *The invitation or appeal is indiscriminate*—"If any man." Alluding to the Eastern custom that he who knocked spoke, to let it be known who it was that stood without, Christ says, "If any man hear My voice." How free and universal is this blessed invitation. It is in strict agreement with the teachings of Holy Scripture everywhere. "If any man" means that there is no restriction to the man of wealth, or social position, or scholarly refinement, or wide culture, or refined taste. It is not for the privileged few, but for all the world, that Christ's invitation is sent out. The wealthy from their mansions, and the toiler from his cottage; the merchant from his busy market-place, and the idler from the street corner; the Pharisee from his self-righteous exclusion, and the sinner from the street; the infidel who wanders through the world without a Father, and the prodigal who longs to return; the worldlying who knows no desire beyond the present, and the profane blasphemer whose words pollute wherever they fall; all, all are invited. "If any man" voices Christ's invitation without any miserable quibbling, and bids all men welcome, if they will but hear and obey Him. Let the invitation of the Master go

forth everywhere with its offer of love and blessing, so free, so generous, so general, that whosoever will may come.

2nd. *It is man's duty to open and admit.* Christ's knock implies and expresses in the intensest form His desire to be admitted, and His recognition of the right and prerogative of man to admit or exclude. Christ will not force the door, nor will He intrude Himself unwelcomed upon the soul. Man has the great and perilous gift of free-will, and God does not put force on him and compel him to accept blessings. This point and principle of human freedom we must recognize. We are all invested with the attribute of personal freedom. We are not mere machines, impelled or compelled by the despotism of circumstances. We are free to choose, to prefer, to admit. Oh, it is this power, this prerogative, *that is the real majesty of man, which even God respects!* The wide ocean, the lofty mountain, are the embodiment of power, but *unconscious* power. That pale man sitting there in his study finding out a path for the lightning, or graduating the planets, or tracing the course of the comet, is mightier than all the great physical things about him. He can look in the face of the sun or of the stars and say, "I am greater than you. You *must* travel the course and obey the laws your Creator has set for you; I *may*." Oh, this power of choice, this attribute of freedom, enables man to break with his surroundings and rise superior to sense and sin, and choose the sublimest possibilities and blessings for himself, and forever; or to sink in his self-asserted freedom lower and lower, until man and fiend become one. In the act and moment of conversion we cannot too clearly recognize this prerogative of freedom and power of will. I have no faith in Luther's declaration of a "passive righteousness" in which the soul does nothing and receives everything. The soul receives all things in doing something.

God helps us to help ourselves. He works not for, but with us and within us. If you choose to put it differently, He works for us only as we let Him and become workers together with Him. In conversion Christ comes to a man, as He came to the impotent man, or the leper, or the man with the withered arm, and bids him do the impossible. But as we attempt to stretch forth the withered hand, it is made whole; or go to the priest, the leprosy departs; or take up the bed and walk, the power comes, and we are made every whit whole. As we resolve to live a life of love and service, the power to love and serve comes to the resolving, determined soul. But no man comes into the spirit and freedom of the life which is in Christ by being plunged impotent into an angel-troubled bath, but by the resolute purpose to vanquish sin and live the life of faith upon the Son of God. Let us then look fairly at the condition upon which Christ will consent to share with us the temple of the soul, and accept the full responsibility of His admission or exclusion.

3rd. *Christ's promise*—"I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Here is intimacy and friendship—"I will come in to him." Here is grand and royal feasting—"And will sup with him." Here is communion and gladness in return—"And he with me." Oh, what a promise of large and liberal benefactions! what a feast of fat things! That supper shall supply every want of the soul: light for the understanding usurped by error; pardon for the condemned who were under sentence of death; freedom for the enslaved who were bound by habit and sin; joy for the sad and mournful whose sun had gone down; precepts for the guidance of the life that longed to serve and do; counsel for the most perplexing and difficult experiences; rest from every fear that disquiets the

heart ; purity to make the soul all like God ; heaven to reward and crown the life forever ; and Christ, the grandest, holiest portion of all ! Oh, what a banquet, when the soul shall sit down with Christ at the the royal supper which He supplies ! God help us that we may not be so foolish, so unworthy, so wicked, as to shut out Christ and all His blessings, to the impoverishment of our souls for time and eternity.

Come, oh, come to the royal banquet, sup with Him and let the feast be everlasting love ! Open wide the door to Christ at once. Can earth afford a more painful sight than man spurning the invitation of his imploring Saviour, and with contempt rejecting the greatest possible good ? I am afraid men still too much resemble an old picture I once saw, of a man in his little room counting his gold, with three bags of it standing in front of him on his table, and others scattered before him that he was carefully piling up. Just on the side was a door that led into his little room, where stood a noble and beautiful countenance, gently knocking, the head inclining forward as if listening for the answer that would admit him. The countenance was anxious, as though it pitied the man inside and would fain bless him if possible. But the man within goes on counting, simply lifting his hand to say, "Can't stay to admit anyone. Be off, be off, I am too busy, too absorbed for anyone's company." Do not men in the busy occupations of life so treat Christ still ? Other claims are responded to, but the first and greatest claim of all is deliberately and persistently declined. Let this be so no longer, but let Christ enter with all our heart's welcome, and then let us retain Him as our guest forever.

#### IV.

## PROFIT AND LOSS.

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“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”—MARK viii. 36.

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**A** DISTINGUISHED moralist once observed that the necessities of the body were the proper measure of our care for the things of this life. An inordinate desire for the present world lies at the bottom of much of the misery beneath which society groans. You will have observed that the heart which is the farthest from God is most engrossed in the pursuit of the present world. It is still a great inviolable truth of Scripture, that no man can serve two masters. When the world is enthroned within, and the whole affections prostrated at the shrine of mammon, it leaves no room for things of a higher moment. Though religion comes with winning looks and silvery voice, seeking admittance into the heart, she is rejected. Although at times, by her clear logic and heart-melting appeals, she forces an acknowledgment of her claims, yet mankind are so blinded as to exclaim, “Go thy way for this time.” To all such the heart-searching enquiry of Christ comes with overwhelming appeal, demanding that this great question shall be weighed and duly considered.

### I. THE OBJECT GAINED—“*The whole world.*”

The Saxon language defines the term world as something wearing old and wearing out. A description most striking

and suggestive. You observe the possession here indicated is unlimited and complete. The *whole* world, not a part. So that Christ supposes a man to own the world to a degree beyond what any man has yet reached. And then He asks us to consider what the man has gained. To this point let us briefly look.

1st. *We may suppose a man to gain the whole world by power.* What does a man gain if he gains the world by power? Perhaps we may best understand this idea by looking at a few illustrations. Take for example Alexander the Great. A more striking instance of absolute, unlimited, universal power the world has never known. He could say of his dominions, although they had their limits, that he did not know the nations who were not tributary to him. He could travel to the limits of the then known world and claim it only as the boundary of his kingdom. He had at his command millions of armed men. His word was law throughout his vast empire. But did power satisfy and profit him? did pre-eminence of empire and unlimited power make him a happy, contented man? No. One world was not enough to gratify his ambition, and he is said to have wept unmanly tears for another world to conquer. You have another illustration in the person of Napoleon the First. His supreme ambition was to reach the throne and then found a universal monarchy. Rising from obscurity until he became the commander-in-chief of the French army, he waded his way through a field of blood to the Imperial throne. But in his ambition to found a universal empire he lost his army amid the snows of Russia and the battle-field of Waterloo. As you look at him in the height of his proud ambition, or a prisoner in the Island of St. Helena, you have a striking illustration of the unsatisfying nature and uncertain continuance of power. Hear the

mutterings of this man in his island prison: he cries, "I am no longer the great Napoleon; my strength, my faculties forsake me; oh, why did the cannon ball spare me to die in this wretched manner?" And if you were to select other instances and illustrations of power, you would find no more satisfaction or pleasure to be found in its possession. A man may gain all the power that it is possible to put into the hands of one man, and yet be as wretched and unhappy as he can be.

2nd. *We may suppose a man to gain the world by wealth.* Is wealth more satisfying, or desirable, or durable, than power? A Scottish nobleman once took a friend to the summit of a high hill and bade him look in every direction, reminding him that all he could see belonged to him. "Your Lordship must be a very happy man," said his friend; to which the nobleman replied, "I do not believe that in all this region there exists a man as unhappy as myself." To him wealth brought no profit. Look again at another illustration, William Bickford. Inheriting an immense fortune, he pulled down a splendid mansion erected by his father at a cost of one million dollars, to build an abbey of the most imposing grandeur, the floors of which he covered with the richest Persian carpets, while the ceilings were gilded and painted in the most superb manner. On his table were vessels of silver and gold. His furniture was the most luxurious, and his banquets the most splendid. Add to all this a princely income, and you may well ask, Was he not happy? did it not profit him? An unexpected reverse came upon him and he was driven from his gorgeous mansion to spend his last days in misery and dependence. No matter where you turn for your illustrations, un sanctified wealth can never bring satisfaction and happiness to the heart of man. It is not in the power of

fortune, no matter how great, to buy contentment and bless the soul of man.

3rd. *We may suppose a man to gain the world by fame.* Let us see if this is a real gain to the man who obtains it. Take for example Pitt, the great statesman. Endowed with the finest gifts of nature, he rose rapidly to the foremost place in the kingdom of his day. Practically prime minister of England at twenty-five, the greatest men of the realm bowed before him and the highest offices of state were in his patronage. Every morning when he arose he could say that throughout the British Empire the sun shone on no man more powerful than himself. But fame failed to satisfy or gratify him, and he died at the age of forty-seven, careworn and wretched, an example of the truth that the greatest and most famous of statesmen might be as miserable as he was mighty. Byron is another instance of the same melancholy truth under another form. Suddenly, and in very early life, he rose to the highest pinnacles of fame. Everything that would stimulate or gratify or delight was offered to him. The highest circles of society courted his presence, a hundred drawing-rooms bade him welcome, the applause of the nation was offered as an incense to him, all that fame could bring he had, but was he happy? No. Addressing himself, he said,

“Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,  
Count o'er the days of anguish free,  
And know whatever thou hast been,  
’Tis something better not to be.”

The man, however brilliant his genius or great his fame, that could not count twelve happy days in his life, is a sad illustration of the unsatisfying character of earthly fame. Sir Walter Scott is another illustration of the same truth.

Never, perhaps, did literary talent receive so universal a homage as that of Scott. His reputation was co-extensive with civilization. Wherever he appeared he was the lion of the day. His company was the most select, his domestic enjoyments all that heart could desire, and his literary productions yielded him an ample fortune. But ambitious to found a family, he got into debt, and in old age he was embarrassed, bereaved and ruined. When leaving Abottsford for the last time, he mournfully said, "I have only one hope left, the long halt will come at last, and I shall find rest in the grave." Fame, from whatever source it comes, and to whatever pinnacle it exalts, is incapable of profiting or satisfying an enlightened soul.

4th. *We may suppose a man to gain the world by pleasure.* Is this a more successful way of finding satisfaction and profit in the world? Solomon is the most striking illustration that history supplies of the attempt to find happiness in the pleasures of this world. A monarch of great honor and power, a man of much wisdom and experience, he had all that heart could wish, or wealth command, or wisdom select. Surrounding him was the most cultivated society of his kingdom; his ear was greeted with the sweetest strains of music and psalmody; mighty armies upheld his power; beauty charmed his palace; riches poured their treasures at his feet; the world revered and wondered at his knowledge. We should readily conclude that his was the climax of joy, a life of the fullest possible happiness. But listen to his own confession, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity;" and if Solomon found worldly happiness, derived from so many sources, incapable of satisfying him, can any man hope to find true pleasure from this world? Worldly happiness may give momentary pleasure to an unreflecting and worldly man, but only so long as he can forget the

truth of God or the realities of eternity. It is not in the nature of the world to satisfy the cravings of a soul, and therefore its pleasures cannot intelligently and permanently please, from the very nature of things. That which brings pleasure must be suited to the nature and sufficient to meet the cravings of the heart it would delight. And while the world remains what it is it cannot profit any man's soul if he could obtain all its pleasures and enjoyments; there would still be a void.

## II. THE LOSS SPOKEN OF—"The soul."

The word here translated soul is in some places translated life. It would seem that our translators regarded the terms as convertible, and so they are. The soul is the man, the life. Take that essence from us which we call soul, that which thinks, feels, acts, recalls the past and anticipates the future—take this soul from us and we cease to be men, we are only corpses. And if the soul be to all intents and purposes one's self, how shall we estimate its value or loss? Who, who can tell the value of a soul immortal, or estimate the loss of that soul?

1st. *Look at its immateriality.* Ignorant as we are of the extent of the universe, it were presumptuous in us to pronounce decisively on the variety of substances God has created. But as far as we have become acquainted with creation, it may be divided into two classes, *matter* and *mind*. The material includes a great variety. The earth, the ocean, the atmosphere, the bodies of men, all the worlds that roll in space, everything, in fact, that is subject to the perception of sense, is material. Mind has its variety also, but to what extent we know not; mind is not matter in any sense and cannot be received and examined by the corporeal sense. But mind is not only distinct from matter

but *superior* to it. That superiority appears in various ways. The qualities which are most esteemed and valued are mental. What are any of the properties of matter compared to such mental qualities as intelligence, freedom, feeling, sympathy, or any other attribute of the soul? But the chief evidence of the superiority of mind or soul lies in this, that the most glorious being in the universe, the supreme and absolute God, is a Spirit, and the soul is the counterpart of that eternal Spirit, partaking of His own essence. Matter is what God *creates*, mind is what God *is*. From this resemblance to God we begin to see from its very nature something of the value of the soul.

2nd. *Look at the soul's capabilities.* The soul has great *intellectual powers*, nor can we limit the strength and knowledge which the soul may ultimately acquire. Even in this world, short and unfavorable as our position is, the intellect often attains great power and vast knowledge. But what the intellect may become, what fields of thought it may traverse, what treasures of wisdom it may amass, beyond this, we know not. Without doubt it will attain wonderful, sublime heights of knowledge amid the fields of boundless exploration in the limitless, tireless future. The soul has great *moral capabilities*. Depraved through sin though it be, it is nevertheless capable of complete renewal and restoration to the image of God. Though the gold has become dim and mixed with base alloy, yet through the divine process the Refiner may purge it of all its dross. And of what moral excellence is not the soul capable when renewed by grace? The faith which honors God, the love which cleaves to Him, the hope which lifts its head above the clouds of earth, the charity which banishes selfishness and lives to do good, the humility which accepts at once the will of God without a murmur—whatsoever things are just

or good or praiseworthy—these are the attributes of which the soul is capable. These are the perfections in which the soul shall shine in the image of God forever. How great then the endowments and capabilities of the soul, if it can attain so much distinction and felicity and life. If in time it can acquire so much in a world like this, what may not eternity yield? And from these wonderful capabilities you may form some idea of the value of the soul.

3rd. *Look at the price paid for its redemption.* We are not left to conjecture what the price was that was paid for the redemption of the soul. Peter tells us in the first chapter of his first epistle that we were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. In the book of Acts Paul speaks of the Church of God which He had purchased with His own blood. In several other part of Scripture the same great and wonderful truth is clearly and repeatedly taught. Do you estimate the value of a captive by the price paid for his ransom? Do you judge the worth of an estate or property by the price paid for it? In this view how great must be the value of the soul to call forth and justify so great a sacrifice as the sufferings and death of the Son of God! A price all price beyond. The greatest price that God Himself ever did or could pay. The gems and jewels and precious stones and valuables of earth all piled together would be but dross to this great price of the Son of God. Then when you would seek to set a value upon the soul, think of the purchase price of it, and tremble at its immeasurable worth.

4th. *Look at its immortality.* Duration gives importance, swells the price. An angel, if a creature of a day, what would he be? A trifle of no weight. Or stand or fall, no matter when he's gone. Immortality stamps everything with worth; and to understand the real value of the

soul you look at its endless duration. The nature of the soul, the indestructibility of spirit, the instinctive longings and the desires of the soul, plainly suggest existence beyond; while the Word of God teaches clearly that the soul will live forever, a thinking, conscious, active being, dwelling eternally in heaven's glory and blessedness, or in hell's appalling wrath. A soul that cannot decay or decompose must live forever somewhere. Formed for an eternal state, the soul's duration will be coeval with Him who sits upon the throne of eternity. It is a solemn thought that we have life upon our hands that we cannot get rid of, but we must spend an endless existence somewhere. The very thought of the eternalness of the soul's destiny causes every promise to breathe in balmy sweetness and every warning to roll in deeper thunder. Then think of what value that soul must be which will thus live forever, and how impossible it is to measure or declare its value. And as you put together these thoughts that in any way help you to form an idea, however faint, of the value of the soul, see if you can answer the Master's question urged in our text.

III. THE QUESTION ASKED—“*What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*”

1st. *What shall it profit a man in death.* Men are generally anxious to acquire wealth, to attain to positions of eminence, to gain the esteem of their fellows, and all no doubt to an extent share in this feeling. We do not condemn it. It is not sinful except when cherished in excess, so as to interfere with the motives and pursuits of a higher good; but that it is so cherished by many no one can doubt, and we know of nothing so fitted to suppress the feeling as the reflection that it will profit us nothing in the grave. What does it matter

whether you amass wealth or die in poverty? it will be all the same a hundred years hence. What does it matter whether your neighbors speak well or ill of you? can it affect you in the world to come? You may build a splendid mansion, surround it with beautiful grounds, and collect within it everything that could gratify the taste; but what will your success be worth when you are borne from that mansion a lifeless corpse? What profit is there in a fortune when the key drops from your nerveless grasp and a spendthrift heir squanders to his ruin the wealth which you had accumulated? You may rise to an exalted social position, but what will that do for you when mouldering in the dust? You may realize great success in business, but what will that avail when you pass away to everlasting contempt? To have lived a Christian life will be infinitely better than accumulated millions. To have saved but one soul will be better than the largest fortune. To have offered one true prayer, or to have performed one God-like act, will be far better than the largest earthly treasure or the world's loudest applause. What are the late prominent actors on the world's theatre the better now for the applause they received in life? Wealth does not pass current in the invisible world. Kingdoms are worthless to him who has come under the dominion of death. The voice of fame never breaks upon the stillness of death. We could see reason in your ambition were you to live here always, or could you in the next world derive profit from your rank or wealth or reputation in this, or could your wealth procure you a mitigation of the pangs, or an augmentation of the joys, of eternity. Did present elevation secure a corresponding rank among the hierarchy of heaven, then we could commend your ambition; but when we remember that very soon—it may be only a few hours hence—it will

not matter what your temporal circumstances were, and that in consequence of a too eager pursuit of the things of earth you may forego the possession of heaven, and sink into everlasting perdition, we urge you to weigh well the claims of the soul and do not barter it for that which will profit you nothing in death.

2nd. *What shall it profit a man in the day of judgment or in eternity forever?* The day is not distant when Christ shall come to close up the great drama of earth and summon all nations to His bar, and what will wealth or rank or fame do for us then? The distinctions and decisions of the day of judgment will be based on moral character without respect of persons. Then wealth will find itself no longer popular or powerful, and poverty will be no longer feeble or despised. Rank will have no influence and obscurity no disadvantage. Earthly distinctions will be laid aside, and every man shall give an account of himself to God. Then virtue and goodness alone will be found to have true worth and dignity, and sin, however arrayed, will bring disgrace and dishonor and damnation. And when the soul is thus launched into eternity, lost, forever lost, what can it profit a man to have once owned great fortune or great fame or great possessions? Will it mitigate his agony or change the character of his eternity? You instantly see that there can be nothing more dreadful, more overwhelmingly awful, than the fact of a soul being flung upon the dreary, naked consciousness of its own being, without one ray of hope or happiness forever. Oh, I urge you to remember that worldly gain cannot profit you in the eternal state beyond. The rich man's hell was not less fearful, but by contrast more awful, because of his worldly position and pleasures. To gain the world without God is but to hang a millstone about the neck to sink you deeper into the gulf of perdition. If it were possible to carry any

of the world's possessions into that future state it would be but as beauty to the blind, or music to the deaf, or luxury to the dying; it would only mock the desires that it could never satisfy. But when you know that the soul can carry nothing with it of this world into the next, what can it profit if you gain the whole world and lose the soul? Even in this life the gain of the world has so many drawbacks that it is a doubtful gain. But in eternity it will appear as the most terrible, the most guilty of all deeds, for a man to have sacrificed his soul's interests forever to the infatuation of a day.

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## THE PRODIGAL LEAVING HOME.

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"A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him."—LUKE xv. 11-16.

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 F the primary application of this wonderful parable two different views have been entertained. Some regard the two sons as referring to the Jew and Gentile world. The younger son's departure from his father's house sets forth the apostasy of the Gentiles, and his return their reception into the privileges of the new covenant; while the elder brother is a type of the Jew abiding in the divine house and family, but narrow and exclusive. Others take another view of the parable, and see in the younger son a pattern of all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who have departed from God, and after tasting the misery and degradation of sin, are by divine grace brought back to the true source of life; while they behold in the elder brother a form of self-righteous, self-satisfied Pharisaism. Now, which ever opinion you adopt respecting its original reference, all will admit that the parable reveals character

and principles of world-wide application, and in this discourse we propose to look at the degrading and ruinous effects of sin as seen in this young man's far-off wanderings and experience.

### I. THE PRODIGAL LEAVING HOME.

1st. *Observe his desire to be independent.* The young man wanted to be free, and have the unrestricted disposal of his property, forgetting that liberty does not consist in serving one's self, but in acts of disinterested good. He looks upon liberty as freedom from parental restraints and being his own master. There is a proper feeling of independence which will not allow itself to hang on and live upon an aged parent. But the prodigal's independence was selfish and self-seeking. "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me," was his demand. Not disputing his legal right to the property, his request showed a spirit of inconsideration and ingratitude, a loss of confidence and filial affection. This is the picture of the sinner going away from God through unbelief. Losing confidence in God's fatherhood, he ceases to trust and believe God altogether. Then the desire that spurns God from the thought demands "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." The words may not come from the lips, but they do from the action. Let me dispose of all that I have just as I will. Give me my *body* to gratify its appetites. Give me my *mind* to employ its powers as I will. Give me my *heart* to bestow its affections as I like. Give me my *time* to waste or spend, or use as I choose. Give me my *talents* to use or bury just as I like. Let me be self-indulgent and live wholly as I please. I need not remind you that such a separation from God and such a rejection of divine paternity is sinful, is criminal. It is the very essence of wickedness. Self-restraint

is not only a duty, but the highest form of liberty, and the most fatal fallacy into which any young man can fall is to suppose that liberty is license. The highest evidence of liberty is self-restraint, the supremacy of conscience, the reign of law in the soul.

2nd. *The father yields to the request of his son.* His request, though wrong, was granted; and, strange as it may seem, God often acts thus with sinners. The miser, the ambitious, the vain, the vicious, often receive their portion, and in the glee of mad revelry say to the shrivelled soul, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years." God does not, when the request is presumptuously urged, slay the body, blight the mind, or withdraw the life. He allows the sinner to fill up the measure of his iniquity. It may seem marvellous that God should allow a man power to steal, or lie, or swear, or be wicked in any way. But remember, power to do is not deed, or necessity. Man acts independently and from himself, taking his own God-given portion to himself, and thereby he assumes the full responsibility and consequence of his own actions. He may spend in wrong ways, to his own ruin, the noblest portion with which God ever entrusted a man, or he may spend it for the highest uses to which it could be possibly applied. But having demanded his portion the outlay of it is man's own act, for which he must be responsible.

3rd. *The prodigal's departure.* Probably the few days from the time of receiving his portion until his departure were used by the prodigal in exchanging his property for money or jewels, or what he could conveniently carry with him. Leaving his father's house was necessary to this young man's idea of independence, for the presence of his father would be a rebuke and a restraint. Is not this the emblem of every man's departure from God through sin?

He desires to live away from God's presence in some far country; and though no sinner can succeed in flying from the presence of the Lord (for no darkness, or solitude, or distance can exclude the All-seeing One, who besets us behind and before), yet he does depart from God in spirit by forgetting and despising Him. Thus a man blots the sun from himself, though not from the sky, by closing his eyes and shutting out its light. Thus a man departs from a friend by shutting him out of his heart. Local separation is not necessary to moral or spiritual departure. By ceasing to love and obey God, by refusing to walk with him in meditation and prayer, a man practically lives away from God. And though God sees him and spares him, yet he heartlessly wanders on utterly regardless of God. Days may pass, or even years, before the moral departure fully reveals itself; yet after the neglected duty, the forsaken service, the disregarded home, open sin will follow, and this separation from God be manifest in the saddest of departures.

## II. THE PRODIGAL'S EXPERIENCE.

1st. *The riotous course he pursued.* He speedily spent the property his father gave him by playing the fast young man and giving full scope to his appetites. The voice of conscience is lost amid the din of passion, and reason becomes the tool of lust. He lives and spends simply to gratify his bodily appetites and carnal nature. Is not this the life-like portrait of a sinner in his unrestrained search after sinful pleasures. Despising every appeal and remonstrance, he wastes his substance in riotous living. Having forsaken the fountain of living waters, he hews out cisterns that can hold no water. In referring to the many ways he wastes his substance, you see he wastes the body, or time, or money, in mad intoxication and self-seeking, and wastes his

influence by using it in the cause of evil, and wastes his affections by bestowing them on forbidden things, and wastes his mind by neglecting its cultivation or misapplying its powers, and wastes his life in squandered opportunities, and wastes his higher manhood in the decay and riot of sin, thus allowing the most splendid of all fortunes, the most noble of all possessions, God-given functions of being, to be worse than wasted, to the debasement and eternal ruin of the soul.

2nd. *His ruin and want*—"And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in the land; and he began to be in want." The famine might have existed long before the prodigal felt it, for while his money lasted he was screened from want; but when that was gone, and he was incapacitated for honest labor, he felt the result of his foolish and unrestrained course of life. "He began to be in want." It is true everywhere that waste brings want. The sinner who wanders far from God may not at first feel the pressure of famine. For a time the cravings of the higher nature are forgotten amid the fascinations of society. The love of earthly objects, the indulgence of tastes, the excitement of pleasure, are all-absorbing. The creature takes the place of the Creator, and in that partial supply the want of the infinite is forgotten or unfelt. But a change comes, the famine sets in, and a sense of want and hunger and destitution agonizes the soul. The soul needs food as well as the body. Its want is not gold, or acres, or earthly possessions. Man's soul, related to the infinite God, seeks a divine supply. I do not say that every sinner knows his real need, and those around him may know no better than he; but he is in terrible want notwithstanding. As truly as the eye was formed for sight, or the ear for sound, or the tongue for speech, so truly was the soul formed for God, and

as long as it is without God it must be in want. Nothing can supply its deep, inner cravings short of the God who formed it. The soul created in God's image, partaking of God's nature, can only be truly supplied and satisfied from God himself.

3rd. *His degradation*—"And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." What a change for a young man well brought up to become the slave of a foreigner, who sends him into his field to feed swine. In the estimation of a Jew this was the most degrading of all work. Swine were unclean and forbidden under the Levitical law; therefore to a Jew this occupation was degradation degraded. How striking the scale and graduation of this life of sin! The young man of indulgence becomes a slave, then a swineherd. This is the graphic picture of the progress in sin of the wicked hireling of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Every sinful step leads to slavery. Every sinful act forges a link in the chain that fetters the soul. Though he dwells in a mansion and boasts of his liberty, every sinner is the hired servant of pleasure, of the world, of sin, of Satan. In that servitude he often enters the lower service on the descending scale to gratify his baser self. How many prodigals will remember with sadness and overwhelming grief that bad company was a chief instrument in their ruin! This prodigal joined himself to a foreign citizen, a citizen of that country to which he had gone, and that sealed his degradation and ruin. In how many instances does the prison cell and the hovel of crime echo the same painful truth. Men join themselves to foreign usurpers and abandon themselves to the company and habits of those with whom they unite, and through the influence of that company descend to the deepest shame,

the foulest wrong, the wickedest lives. The excitement and example of evil company is a powerful factor in the ruin of young men. Then let every one shun the company that would only send him into fields of deeper degradation.

4th. *His impatient self-feeding, but cold refusal*—"And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." The man who had become the disgust of his tribe would now feed on swine's food. The husk was the fruit of the *carob* tree, which grows in pods, is hard and woody, and only eaten, Eastern travellers tell us, by the very poorest to escape starvation. Would not the sinner fain fill himself with what is utterly unfit for the soul? Away from God he pines and hungers and is sick. Unfound the bone, unfed the hunger! I cannot multiply all the husks on which the sinner seeks to feed, but everywhere you can see the tokens of the eager, impatient hunger of the soul. It drives some madly forward through burdens and toils that would be rank oppression to a slave. It shows the uneasiness of others by new schemes, new plans, new positions. It is shown in others by their excessive attempt to over-supply the body and make its appetites receive double. It shows itself in others by their closeness and selfishness and greed. The grudging heart is pinched by its own destitution. The hunger of others is seen in their quarrels and discontents and fraudulent practices. Others seek to feed on ambition and flattery and vanity. But all these are only husks that the swine do eat. You that fret and complain of the poverty of the present life, don't blame the world, but yourselves. Remember that a Godlike soul cannot feed on anything below Him. He must be the complement of your weakness and the crown of your glory. We are only fed perfectly when we are filled with all the fulness of God. God longs

that life should be full of wholesome pleasures. They are His good gifts ; but no man will find gratification or enjoyment long in feeding on husks. But you are staggered to read, "and no man gave unto him." How cold and selfish is sin ! Will you ever remember that sin is essentially selfish ? It will get or keep, but it never gives. It will drain the life or pocket or powers, but when it has got all it never turns round to sympathize or help. Riotous companions are false and desert a man, like Adonijah's guests, as soon as he has spent all. The man who has spent his last dime in the tavern or gambling-room is flung out un pityingly to shift for himself or die in the gutter. Sin never loves, never sympathizes, never pities ; it is not in its nature. Then don't pursue so cold, so heartless, so cruel a course as a sinful life must be. Turn from its Arctic regions to the warm sunlight and beneficent tenderness and holy philanthropy of Christian fellowship and love. The company of the good will not desert a man in the day of trial, but help him, and befriend him, and lift him up into strength and citizenship again.

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VI.

THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

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"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."—LUKE xv. 17-24.

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A PARABLE is to compare things natural with things spiritual. Its scope and design is to be seen by the declarations affixed to it. As a form of teaching it had the advantage of attracting attention, and when understood of being well remembered. Our Lord's recorded parables seem to group themselves under three different types or forms. The first are drawn from the world of nature, and have for their subject the laws of the divine kingdom; the second are drawn from the life of men; the third are prophetic, in part of the rejection of Israel, and in part of the great retribution at the coming of the Lord. Most of the parables of the first and third groups are found in Matthew's Gospel, who has been aptly called:

the Evangelist of the kingdom. The parables of the second group are found chiefly in Luke's Gospel, the Gospel which dwells most on the sympathy of Christ for all men. This incomparably grand and tender parable, that has been rightly called the pearl of parables, is drawn from life and men, and is wonderfully true to life. It merits the first rank of parables, not merely because of its graphic and powerful delineation of the effect of sin upon life and character, and of the natural course of sin upon a life's history, but also because of its inimitable description of the love that welcomes and receives the returning one. In the former discourse you have seen the prodigal take himself in charge, and have marked his retrogressive course as step by step he passed down to want and ruin. You have now to see him in his extremity waking up to a new life and making one desperate effort to retrieve his lost position and dwell again under the old roof's shelter, amid honor and plenty, to his father's relief and delight.

### I. THE PRODIGAL'S RETURN.

1st. *There is rational awakening.* "And when he came to himself," you say; was he not himself before? No! He went to indulge self and lost himself in self-seeking. He found that independence was slavery, and selfishness absolute ruin, and in his degradation the man was verily mad. Is not moral separation from God a departure from one's better self, and coming to God in moral affinities really coming to one's self? It is not too strong to say a sinful life is moral madness. If you saw a man pursuing his shadow, grasping bubbles, living on dreams, you would not doubt his insanity. And on what are sinners living but the veriest shadows? A sinful life is an incredible folly. What more insane conduct can there be than to know that there

is a hell, yet never shun it; or to know that there is a heaven, yet never seek it; or to know that there is a coming judgment, yet never prepare for it?

2nd. *Calm and salutary retrospection*—"How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger." In his wild and abandoned course he never thought of the past. It was on, on, till he groaned in hunger and pined in want. But the moment he began to think, the past of comfort and plenty appeared before him, and in that retrospection his folly humbled him. Is not spiritual awakening the result of salutary review, or of God's overruling of some conscious extremity into which men are brought? When men have become dissatisfied and disappointed with the world, or when rejected by wicked ones who curl the lip of scorn; when want or affliction or death pinches sore, have they not at times, as the last resource, lifted the broken heart to the healing Saviour and looked and longed for home? Has not the thinking sinner, while the Spirit strives with him, been led to ask, What have I done? what have I attained? am I living right? have I achieved my life's mission? Then he sees his criminal forgetfulness of God, his wicked perversion of himself, his abuse of all the powers entrusted to him, the grievous wrong and mistake of his life, and he cries out in the agony of his heart, "I perish."

3rd. *A good resolution put into practice.* The prodigal resolves that the remains of himself shall be united in one desperate effort to reach home again. His resolve takes the right shape. Some men's resolves are too feeble to climb into purpose and ascendancy. They wither in the germ and the man is the tomb of his own intentions. But the prodigal's "I will" marshals every activity and energy of his nature into successful daring. "I will" and "he arose,"

taken connectedly, show us that reflection, desire, purpose action, all unite in a true return. As you mark the determination fearlessly executed, you admire that coming home to his father through a long, intricate, dangerous journey over trackless plains, up steep mountains, across foaming streams, enduring hunger and fatigue, yet deterred by nothing. So must every sinner decide and act at once. Say "I will," and then arise, making action follow swiftly upon the heels of resolution, and going straight along the Godward path, whatever difficulties may arise, pausing only in the rest and peace of forgiveness. I urge this strange paradox, if you perish, perish crying after God. When right feelings move the heart let them not smoulder in sighs or songs, but flash them into living acts. It is the grand crisis of life when the wanderer returns home, and with the change of journey he knows a change of heart.

4th. *Here is full confession*—"I have sinned." He does not say, I have been the unfortunate victim of temptation or impulse, but with a conviction that his conduct was his own he says, "I have sinned." He acknowledges that his conduct is a crime against heaven as well as earth. Such contrition and confession must ever mark a sinner's return to God. There must be no disposition to enter on self-defence or self-justification of past wrong; but with Job he must feel, "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse." Feeling that all sin of every kind is against God, he will acknowledge, "Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned." A man may with sorrow confess the wickedness of his conduct if it injures his worldly prospects, alienates his friends, or plunges him into ruin, and yet such grief be selfish, not penitential. We cannot feel contrite till we feel that our sin is against Him. Then this confession must be compre-

hensive and unreserved. The heart must be laid open, dissimulation must be laid aside, and the prostrate, self-abased spirit, like David, or Nehemiah, must confess all to God. This confession, to be genuine, must come from the heart.

5th. *True humility*—"And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Here was a keen sense of past misconduct and personal unworthiness; and such an acknowledgment becomes everyone in approaching God. Some seem afraid that God will not receive them because they are unworthy; but when will you be more worthy, or merit sonship as a right? Staying till we are better is a foolish presumption. If we come to God aright, it must be as outcasts and unworthy. There is no language more befitting a man than this, "I am not worthy"—not worthy because of original sin; not worthy because of actual sin; not worthy because of the demerit of sin; not worthy of forgiveness, or peace, or acceptance, or citizenship, or heaven. If ever we are saved, any of us, it will be according to God's abundant mercy.

## II. THE PRODIGAL'S RECEPTION.

- 1st. *His reception was generous and affectionate*—"But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Words cannot express the father's deep and tender compassion. I have read of instances of parental love before which one weeps, but this is unprecedented. There is the prodigal turned towards home, his feet shoeless, his back ragged, legs bleeding, person filthy, face haggard, eyes swollen, a shattered wreck. He has not gone far in his tattered garments and lacerated flesh before he asks himself, "Will my father see me? shall I ever reach him and home?"

Then he starts off again, to die, if he must, on the threshold of the homestead; and on he journeys, till he sees in the distance the old mansion home. It is a fine morning, with a clear and cloudless sky. The father is where he has often been, standing upon the brow of the hill and looking as far off as the eye can stretch, hoping to catch a glimpse of his son before he dies. Presently his attention is arrested—there is a moving something just ascending that distant hill. He looks and sees that the object is approaching. That object is a man. Can that be my son? asks the anxious father. Oh, it cannot be! My son was a fine, well-clothed young man, and that object approaching is only a mass of sapless bones, the barest outlines of a man. Presently he remembers that his son has been leading a wicked life, and thinks it may be he. He strains his eyes as the object approaches nearer and nearer. At last the father moves toward that son with a speed and swiftness beyond his years till he comes in full face of him, and there for a moment they pause. The son sees his father so grey and haggard, and fears that he is coming to forbid him the home. The father looks upon his son and for the moment doubts if it can be he, for it is only a shadow of his former self. But presently a voice cries, Father, and the father runs to embrace and forgive him. When the father is sufficiently recovered from his convulsive joy, he breaks the silence of love's blessed reconciliation by assuring his son of his welcome and restoration. Then he takes him home and orders them to put on him the best robe, and put shoes on his feet, and a ring on his finger in token of his restored dignity and sonship. But how shall we, even from this act of prompt and generous love, image forth the forgiving love of God, so deep, so immeasurable, so divine. To say that the first step in the return is of God is a mere truism, but this seeing men afar off is supremely Godlike.

The first sigh of contrition, the first sincere prayer, the first groan of the heart, the first true resolution to return, He sees, and hastens to strengthen and deepen and fulfil. Burying the past sins in loving forgetfulness, blotting them out forever, He covers with the robe of righteousness the restored and adopted son, and bids him welcome to the privileges of the family of God.

2nd. *His reception was joyous*—"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." The best provision to be found the father willingly gave to celebrate the restoration of his son. What a feast of joy as they sat down to the grand banquet of mirth, each heart present mingling in the gladness of the hour! Need I say that the restoration of a lost sinner is a joyous event to every true and noble spirit in this world. Nor is the gladness confined to the good on earth, for we are told there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Up yonder repentance and restoration, the divorce of the soul from sin and its turning to God, awaken supreme and abiding interest in the bosom of glorified spirits. As they see sin blotted out and salvation brought in; as they see death and hell robbed, and a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, become the possession of the restored son; as they see God glorified, and Christ's heart gladdened with unutterable joy as He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied, in the admission of the saved one into the divine family again, the angels of heaven gladly share in the banquet of love and delight. So that among the good on earth and the glorified in heaven a sinner's restoration is celebrated with rapturous delight.

3rd. *The prodigal gratefully accepts the father's generosity.* Before returning the prodigal resolved to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." But with a father's arms

about him, his broken heart could go no further than, "I am not worthy." That was far enough, if he did not wish ungratefully to refuse the blessing of sonship and ask again to be a slave. That would have been a false, an ungrateful rejection of the reality of his father's love and forgiveness. The prodigal wisely and in a childlike spirit receives his pardon, and opens his heart to all the benefits offered. That is the way in which all of us should receive the saving blessings of God. When as penitents we return to our Father and acknowledge that we have forsaken Him, and forgotten Him, and sinned against Him, then we should readily receive His pardon and restoration through the merits of Christ, instead of saying, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." When God forgives you, and saves you in His abundant goodness, don't say, "I must wait, the change is too sudden; I must still be a hired servant, to groan, and weep, and pray, and repent, and doubt God's generosity." Readily accept God's free and forgiving love in your moment of penitential seeking and believing trust. When the arms of love embrace you and the kiss of pardon seals the Father's acceptance, don't doubt God; for instead of pleasing Him by that doubt you will grieve Him much. Receive His blessings with a heart as ready and responsive as His love is generous and sincere. Then you shall be a hired servant never more, but a son, an heir of God forever.

## VII.

### THE PRODIGAL'S BROTHER.

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“Now his elder son was in the field : and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.”—LUKE xv. 25-28.

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NE cannot study this wonderful parable without marking the great difference of these two sons of the same father. You would fancy that every child in a family would be alike, just as two coins struck from the same mould resemble each other; but experience contradicts such speculation. There may be a hunting Esau and a home-loving Jacob in the same family, or, as in this case, a runaway and a stay-at-home. How different the impression these brothers have made upon the world. The prodigal every one has heard of, and around the story of that prodigal multitudes of the homeless and characterless have gathered to warm themselves, and in doing so have felt a new hope awakened in their hearts as they have thought of him, one of themselves, recovered and saved. But this elder brother, so cold and staid and self-righteous and stiff, the personification of respectability and selfish conceit, very few ever cared for. We have already traced the story of the wild but repentant prodigal, and now we turn to look upon this proud, self-

satisfied elder brother, and seek to trace his character and learn the lessons of his example and life.

I. THIS ELDER BROTHER LACKED SYMPATHY WITH THE RECONSTRUCTION OF HUMANITY.

The younger brother had been reinstated into the family home. The shattered temple was rebuilt. The long disinherited prodigal had become a son once more. One would have thought that the spectator of such a change would have exulted in the sight of that haggard and degraded criminal becoming a man and a Christian. But a frown darkens the countenance of the elder brother; he has no sympathy with the restoration. Judging from his conduct, we are forced to conclude that this angry man was content that this brother should pursue his career of ruin until prodigality ended in damnation. I am afraid this angry brother is not alone. There are people who profess to be good, but never receive a penitent with gladness. Not having been sorely rent by the power of temptation themselves, they cannot sympathize with those who have yielded to the demon force. Having always lived moral and prudent lives, controlled and self-controlling, their hearts never melt unto tenderness over those who have terribly fallen. Respectable men, they seem as though they would enter heaven by merit rather than through the mercy of God; and fancying everyone ought to have been as prudent as themselves, they turn unpityingly away from the fallen seeker or lost one who has been restored—unlike Him who spoke kindly to the trembling women, or mingled with publicans and sinners that He might bless them, or whispered forgiveness to the dying thief, and never rejected the poorest outcast who crept to His feet for shelter. Having always passed as decent members of society, they fling

the stone of retribution at the returning prodigal, instead of eyes filled with tears of sympathy and a hand that warmly clasps a returning brother. All that such persons wish to see kneeling at the Church's altar are carefully collected specimens of blamelessness, people who have never figured in the statistics of crime. But if we are in sympathy with Christ we shall delight in the moral reconstruction of the most abandoned. Instead of a narrow, pretentious bigotry, we shall, like Christ, go about doing good, and seek to save the lost. Men who truly understand the principles of the Gospel, and the example and spirit of Christ, will never commit the egregious blunder of supposing that the Christian Church is simply a museum for the collection of carefully prepared specimens of blamelessness. They will seek with their whole heart to rescue the perishing, to care for the dying, to snatch the most degraded from the brink of woe, and raise them into the fellowship and sonship and citizenship of God. They will eagerly welcome returning prodigals.

## II. THIS ELDER BROTHER JUDGES THE SOLEMN CRISIS IN A BROTHER'S LIFE BY THE STANDARD OF HIS OWN SELFISHNESS.

Throughout his reply to his father he is always referring to himself—his spirit, his doings, his friends, his consistency, his property, his behavior. His ruling impulse is selfishness, and that leads him to disfranchise his brother. Instead of kindling into delight at this great crisis of family history, and obliterating all unhappy memories by a generous forgiveness, he instantly falls back upon his own position in the family, thinks of his rights, and grieves that the fatted calf is killed. His selfishness not only ignored all brotherhood, but it treated the paternal spirit with

irreverence. This is the type of a man who is obedient for the sake of advantage or gain. This man's obedience was an investment from which he expected large interest. And are there not many who thus serve God still? While the summer smiles, and the wind is fair, and everything is prosperous, they are good and their goodness passes unchallenged; but let God interpose an event for which they are not prepared, let Him send a severe trial to the home or test their service by discipline, and instantly they grow angry and sometimes curse Him to His face. But this man's selfishness made him reverse the expressions of his life and filial relationship; instead of "My brother" he said, "This thy son," and then meanly recounts the supposed misdeeds and sins of the brother. Noble-minded men, true-hearted Christians, never call up or allude to the misspent and irrecoverable past. They seek to forget evils that are atoned for and forgiven, and blot out in affectionate silence, or by a river of tears, what cannot be recalled. That is how God deals with penitent sinners when He casts their sins behind His back to be remembered against them no more forever. So should every Christian rise to the dignity of a joyous oblivion of the sinful past of a restored man. Never drag a grand crisis down to your selfish standards, but rather rise to the greatness of the occasion and the hour and be unselfishly generous and forgiving.

### III. THE EXPRESSIONS OF THE ELDER BROTHER SUGGEST THAT EAGERNESS TO ACCUSE ANOTHER IS NO GUARANTEE OF PERSONAL GOODNESS.

As you see and hear this man stating his brother's crimes so emphatically, you might conclude that he had never sinned; yet such a conclusion would have been utterly false. It was not the sanctity of home he was concerned about, or

he would have quivered with sorrow over his erring brother ; and instead of branding him with crime, have cast over him the mantle of love ; and instead of treating his father's tenderness with cruelty, he would have applauded his noble and frank forgiveness. The chief difference between the accused and the accuser was, that the sin of the prodigal was open to the eyes of the world, and the sin of his brother veiled in a cold and selfish nature. How mournful that one sinner should so accuse and brand a fellow-sinner ; but such men are to be found every day, and almost everywhere—men who imagine that by thus condemning other offenders they prove their own goodness. But such men, however flushed their cheek, have not the spirit of Him who frankly forgave the insolvent. The Pharisees were far more ready to condemn men than Christ was, and there are sectarian bigots to-day who would hurry men to perdition because they are not of them ; but eagerness to denounce another is a poor, poor pledge of personal goodness. There is a man yonder who drinks freely at home, yet he turns scornfully away from a drunkard in the street. There is a stingy, shrivelled soul that hardly affords himself or his family common necessaries, who accounts himself clever if he can grind down his workman, or cheat his storekeeper, or get a thing for half its value in the market, yet he turns disdainfully away from the prodigal in the street. There is a proud, haughty man who never felt for the weak or assisted the needy, or smiled upon the life of another, yet he can turn reproachfully away from prodigals like this. There is another who can spend hours to slander, or dishonor, or belittle another, and yet regard himself as so far above a prodigal. It makes one's heart sad to think how one child of guilt can brand another and say all manner of evil against him. I would not for a moment have you ignore the clear

distinction between honor and dishonor, between true manhood and wicked deception; we owe it to the dignity of virtue to maintain proper distinctions, and anything that lowers character or belittles the moral law is fatally hurtful. But let the law be administered by those who are holy; let personal innocence precede reproof; let him that is without sin cast the first stone; then will men deal gently with the erring one, as God hath dealt with them.

#### IV. IN THIS ELDER BROTHER'S SELF-EXCLUSION HE CASTS THE BLAME ON OTHERS.

“He was angry and would not go in”—there is the explanation of his misery and discontent and exclusion. Day by day we are meeting this angry elder brother. He is in the Church, the market, the street, in business, in daily life, everywhere you cross this discontented angry brother. Accustomed to quiet, the least change unsettles him. He prefers to stand still rather than make any change, and the moment a reform or alteration is proposed he is angry and will not go forward; but he always manages to blame others for his own self-exclusion. I would have you beware of this elder brother either in the Church, or in society, or in the State, or anywhere; he is a most unsafe man every way. The Church that does not study wise adaptation will fail, and deserves to fail. The principles of God's Word abide, and the aims of the Christian Church should ever be single and God-honoring; but methods must vary according to altered circumstances and the needs and conditions of men. This idea cannot be too clearly presented and urged at the present hour. Many well-meant efforts of good men fail partially or utterly because of a want of adaptation. Tact, skill, suitable methods, all must be brought into requisition by Christian men to push forward the triumphs of the kingdom of

Christ. And instead of sitting down and growing angry, and becoming rigidly exacting and resistive of all change, good men must become all things to all men if happily they would save some. And the man who excludes himself from the Church, or from society, or from the activities of Christian work, by this temper and spirit, must not blame others for his exclusion. If a man has no relish for the royal banquet, or sympathy with restored prodigals, he would do better to seek a new heart and a right spirit rather than to stand off angry and complaining. From the example of this elder brother you may see much to shun or overcome if you would be a worker together with God or a benefactor of your fellow-men. If all the world were modelled after this example no prodigal would ever be restored or welcomed back into a new and noble life. The whole aim and mission of Christ would be frustrated, the spirit and genius of the Gospel would be falsified, and the world perish unpitied and unhelped. Let every man, then, as he values his own life and usefulness, and the call and claims of others, and the will and intentions of God, seek to have a heart full of compassion and sympathy for all.

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## VIII.

# CHRIST ON THE MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION.

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"And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."—*MATT.* xvii. 1-5.

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**T**HE mountains of the Bible were the scene of many of the greatest events of sacred history. It was upon Mount Ararat the ark rested after the deluge. It was upon Mount Moriah Abraham gave the sublimest proof of his obedience, by offering up his son Isaac. It was amid the solemn grandeur of Mount Sinai that the Law was given by God. It was on Mount Nebo Moses beheld the promised land, and then passed home to God. It was on the mountain of Jerusalem Solomon reared his magnificent temple. It was on Mount Carmel Elijah tested the rival faiths of Israel, and grandly vindicated the claims of Jehovah. It was on the Mount Christ preached His model sermon. It was on Mount Calvary Christ died for man's

redemption. It was on the Mount of Olives Christ parted from His weeping followers and passed home to His eternal throne. And it was on a mount that this transfiguration scene occurred. Whether Tabor or Hermon was the scene of this wonderful event we cannot decide. An ancient tradition—as early as the middle of the fourth century—locates the transfiguration on Mount Tabor, the lofty and beautiful mountain of Galilee. And so eagerly was this tradition accepted that churches and monasteries were built on its summit, to correspond to the three tabernacles which Peter was *not* permitted to build. There is no evidence in favor of this tradition, but strong evidence against it, for the summit of Tabor was employed as a fortification at the time, and hence unfit for quiet seclusion and the scene before us. Modern critics favor Mount Hermon, the highest of all the Lebanon Mountains, and the chief and most conspicuous mountain of Palestine. We need not trouble ourselves about the name of the mountain on which the transfiguration scene occurred, because it is with the glorious event that took place there we have to do. Let us go up into this high mountain apart with Jesus, and catch the bracing air, and drink in the holy lessons and teachings of this wonderful event.

#### I. THE TRANSFIGURED CHRIST AND HIS CELESTIAL VISITORS.

1st. *Christ transfigured.* Whether the glory which clothed the Messiah came *to* Him, or proceeded *from* Him, is a matter of opinion and speculation. Bengal and other critics have thought that Christ always possessed the glory in Himself, and at the transfiguration the enshrouded Deity burst forth. But be that as it may, we read that His raiment became shining exceeding white as light, and His face as the sun. He took so much of that glory which now

adorns Him as might raise the admiration without confounding the faculties of the spectators. And to the wondering disciples how changed must Christ have appeared. Up to this time His divine glory was concealed, and He was known as the man of sorrows ; but now the divinity shines forth with overwhelming splendor, and the Godhead is no longer hidden. What a striking assurance this furnished to all beholders of His true Messiahship, of the illustrious majesty and glory with which Christ will appear in heaven, and of the beauty of glorified humanity when clothed upon of God!

2nd. *The celestial visitors.* I cannot think of the appearing of Moses and Elijah on that mountain with Christ but a twofold reflection arises. Their appearing is typical of the great events of Christ's second advent. Hundreds of years before this Moses died, and was buried in the valley of Moab. And though his grave was unknown, yet no one doubted his death and burial. And when he appeared in his glorified body, he fitly represented those who shall come up from the grave and stand with Christ as resurrected saints. Elijah, the seer of sublime courage and lightning speed, was charioted off to heaven without seeing death. And he is the representative of those saints who, living when Christ shall appear, shall be changed without seeing corruption. Thus they are types of the glorified company who shall surround Christ at the great assize. These men appeared also as the representatives of the Law and the Prophets. Moses was Israel's great lawgiver ; Elijah its great prophet. And it is not too much to say they came to lay down their offices at Jesus' feet. And when the cloud was gone, and Jesus left alone, it was a symbol that the former dispensations were closed, and that Christ and His economy had the pre-eminence.

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## II. THE CONVERSATION OF THE VISITORS WITH CHRIST.

Our curiosity is excited to know what subject would be selected on this wonderful occasion. Surely glorified ones and Christ would discourse of something great and grand; something to which heedful multitudes might listen with bated breath. Their theme, we are told by Luke in a parallel passage, was *Christ's Decease*. Then it is natural to infer that this decease was to be different from the death of other men, else why was it the topic of conversation at such a moment. It is not difficult to show that the decease of Christ centred in it what no other death ever did, and was distinguished by characteristics altogether its own. It was the first instance of the death of a perfect and *sinless* man. Men had died universally before this, but because of sin; Christ was without sin. It was the only instance of *man* dying for sin. The Jew was familiar enough with animal sacrifices, but man sacrifice was a new idea. And then it was the only death which was to give moral life to the world.

1st. *They conversed about his decease because it was the chief object of Christ's incarnation.* You will remember from the Word of God that the death of Christ was contemplated in the councils of heaven, and pre-arranged from the beginning,—“He is a lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” It was the substance of the promise made to Adam before his expulsion. It was the central truth of all subsequent revelations in promise or type or prediction. And also the grand central point of interest to the moral universe; the key to interpret the mysteries of the moral empire of God. And when Christ came His eye, His heart, His life, was set for its accomplishment. You remember that passage which makes death the goal of Christ's life,—

"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." *Christ lived to die.* He became man to acquire the possibility of dying. It could never be said of any one but Christ that he was born and lived that he might die. Death with us is not an object, but an accident. The death of man is a necessity, the death of Christ was a *choice*. Men die because they cannot live longer; Christ laid down His life of Himself. Men die when nature is worn out and diseased; Christ gave up the ghost. Christ lived to die, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death.

2nd. *Because it was the sole ground of their admission to heaven.* While on earth it was a subject in which they felt a deep interest, because their typical sacrifices could never take away sin, but derived all their merit and value from that true sacrifice which was to be made in the fulness of time. So that their admission into heaven was purely on the ground of the anticipated death of Christ. Their sins could not have been forgiven, and they could not have been glorified and sanctified, but for the pre-determined sacrifice of Christ. Had not God made that perfect atonement for sin absolutely certain in His own *intention*, and treated those things that are not as though they were, Moses and Elias would never have entered heaven. All the glorified saints, from the days of Paradise to the days of Calvary, entered heaven through faith in a coming Saviour. How anxiously then must they have anticipated the awful hour when the crisis should come. And how anxious must they have been to encourage Christ to go forward to that death by which He should perfect forever them that are sanctified.

3rd. *They conversed with Him on His decease from a desire to strengthen and encourage Him.* Sympathy has great

power to nerve men for noble deeds. A smile, a word of encouragement, will sometimes save a heart from breaking and invigorate it for the holiest service. The human heart of Christ craved sympathy. His greatness only made His susceptibilities the more keen, sensitive, and appreciative. And in this particular matter of His decease He especially needed sympathy, for even His own disciples rebuked Him in this, and parted company with Him on the question of His death. He had to tread the wine-press alone, and of the people there were none with Him. It was meet then and right that the glorified ones should seek to strengthen and encourage Him for the successful accomplishment of this event. And who was so well prepared to strengthen Him as they? Suppose you were engaged in some hard and self-sacrificing labor to raise your fellow-man from degradation to great exaltation. Suppose at that moment a gentleman of noble birth and bearing passed along and spoke most encouraging words, and gave you his sympathy and help. You would feel grateful to him, and greatly encouraged in your work. But imagine one of equal nobleness and standing coming up just at that time and saying to you: "Take courage, I was once as low as any you seek to raise, but by your efforts I am what I am." You can easily see what encouragement and stimulus would be conveyed by the expression; and how much greater would be the encouragement and inspiration from the one whom you had rescued and saved. Now, here were men raised by Christ from the depths of depravity into the fellowship and citizenship of heaven. In them He could see what a ransomed world would be. And so for the joy thus set before Him He endured the cross. How anxious should everyone be to encourage the Saviour in His blessed work of saving men, by accepting His love and forgive-

ness, and so sending pulsations of rapture thrilling through His mighty heart.

III. GOD'S DECLARATION OF CHRIST—"*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*"

1st. *God is well pleased with Him, because Christ's mediation magnified the divine attributes.* Amid all the demonstrations of majesty given by God under the Jewish dispensation there was no figure or similitude of His person or properties. Thrilling voices and burning clouds were Israel's protraiture of God. But by assuming human nature Christ exhibited to mankind all that can be known of God. Standing in the midst of an evil generation, but manifestly a being of another sphere, whatever may be conceived of the sublime and tender, of majesty and compassion, of grandeur and meekness, on a contracted stage, of this was Christ the personification. And when evil spirits fled, and storms hushed, and disease and death obeyed His voice, and humility and love was exhibited in all His actions, was there not a manifestation of the ever-living God that eclipsed all former revelations of Him? Never did the majesty of Jehovah shine out so clearly as in the person of Christ. Never was the grandeur of Deity so fully magnified as in the mild loveliness of Christ's perfect humanity. The only perfect revelation of God's greatness and character is seen in His infinite Son. He was truly God manifest in the flesh. Then add to this the fact that Christ glorified the Father by His suffering and obedience in our stead. Had no mediator interposed when man fell, not one could have been rescued from eternal death. We have no right to speak as if there could have been a choice of remedies. Without Christ's suretyship the curse which disobedience had provoked could never have been repealed or

mitigated. And had we been left to perish in our sins no solitary tongue could have been raised against its perfect justice. But contrast such an universal ruin with the glorious things of redemption. Contrast God's justice as magnified by the penalty expected from man, and the pangs sustained by Christ. Contrast God's law as honored by the punishment of its violators, and by the obedience which fulfilled it. Contrast God's hatred of sin displayed in man's eternal destruction, and in the restoration of Christ. And in all Christ did God is clearly, blessedly glorified. Who can see this amazing combination, a guilty world, a just Saviour, a divine Justifier, and not perceive that the Son crucified is emphatically the Father glorified? And if Christ in His mediatorial capacity thus magnified the perfections of God, and whilst delivering man revealed the magnificence of the eternal Jehovah, can we wonder at this voice of divine gratulation and delight?

2nd. *God is well pleased with His Son because His mediation met the necessities of man.* We are not to imagine that God, enthroned in inaccessible splendor, could survey without emotion the guilty world. It may indeed appear that if the world had been blotted from creation so soon as profaned by sin, there would have been no void in God's universe. The whole expanse might then have spread itself before Him without shadow or crime. But however unable we may be to explain how the love of such a one as God could fix itself on man, the fact is unquestionable. The whole tenor of Scripture warrants the assertion that with exquisite tenderness our Heavenly Father regarded the lost world; that all heaven was occupied with the scheme by which the guilty might be restored. And if such be the yearnings of God over fallen man, when the Mediator presented Himself, into whose person was collected

every capacity for arresting the wandering world and restoring it to its original place and purity—the Mediator who could bear the world's guilt and supply the world's wants—may we not suppose that even God rejoiced at the thought of so great and grand a result; that His heart thrilled at the prospect of the greatest sinner becoming a ransomed saint to dwell with Him forever in His kingdom? He was pleased with Christ's work, so should we be.

#### IV. PETER'S EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESSION.

The *experience*, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," was true and delightful. As Hebrews, it must have been delightful to them to be in the presence of Moses and Elijah, whose deeds and courage and heroism their fathers so proudly boasted of. And above all, to behold the transfigured Christ and gaze upon His glory must have been good indeed. Who of us would not rejoice, if holy enough for the sight, to behold the glorified form of Christ, and the saintly ones that have slept in Christ. Peter was right in his experience and description of it. It was good to be there. And it will be good for all of us to get as near as possible to Christ, often, always; to sun ourselves in His smile and strengthen our life in His communion. It is always good to be where Jesus is. But the *expression* of Peter, "Let us make here three tabernacles," was wrong everyway. His idea was to take up permanent residence in that delightful spot and company. Peter's wrong lay in his wish to be separated from the world and its cares and duties. He was in a good frame and place, and did not wish to have his joys marred again. Well served to-day, he wanted to remain at the banquet board permanently, leaving the world to look after itself or perish. But we imitate Peter when we wish to live self-indulgent lives and

think only of ourselves, and covet enjoyments and blessings simply for the pleasure of them. We are called, not simply to accept salvation, but also to communicate it. I am afraid the theological rather than the philanthropical side of Christianity is too often seen and acted upon. The idea is current that it is enough for salvation humbly to trust in the merit of a work which Jesus did for us eighteen hundred years ago, without feeling the necessity of sharing the spirit in which Christ did that work for us. We are told that salvation is a free gift to be received trustfully for ourselves, and advised to take for our motto, "Simply trusting, nothing more." The motto and the truth is good if not abused by a wrong spirit. But the Word of God clearly teaches, "That if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." That is not a saving faith which boasts of the completed work of Christ, if it does not save us from selfishness. True faith in Christ is a fellowship of spirit and of endeavor with Christ. It is not simple contentedness to be saved. It is not mere willingness to receive. It is equal forwardness to impart. It gladly sacrifices self to communicate and share with others the good received. And to accept salvation and spiritual enjoyments simply for ourselves is a terrible Christian delusion. If saved we must be ready to sacrifice our fancies, or follies, or indulgences, or time, or preferences, or resentments, or opinions, if need be, at the call of duty, at the demand of service. The world needs the Christianity of the true Christian in all its vocations and at all seasons, to restrain its sins and to educate a noble and Christlike spirit. The Christian is as much needed in trade, in society, in the world, as in the sanctuary of God. And fellowship on the mount should fit us for service in the world. Converse with Christ should fit us for Christlike work. Be-

holding His glory, however faintly, we should be inspired to concern that others may behold Him. Let us delight in prayer and to go up alone with Christ, that we may borrow strength and endurance and love for service. Let the Sabbath and the sermon and the song and the revealed presence of God make us more upright and manly and true and self-denying and faithful to the humblest service. Let us never selfishly covet to abide in pleasure and enjoyment while others around us are perishing in sin. While there is one soul in the world unsaved, let us covet the honor of being God's instrument of blessing it. Then in God's time of fuller manifestation and glory we shall not need to think of building tabernacles, but shall find MANSIONS prepared and ready for us.

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## IX.

# NOAH'S FAITH.

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“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”—HEB. xi. 7.

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**T**HE moment we refer to antediluvian times, our curiosity is at once excited. We ask a thousand questions, which no one can solve. We enquire what sort of people were they that lived before the flood? What were their manners, and customs, and habits of life? What form of government did they live under? And in what way were their laws taught and proclaimed? What language did they speak? And did all the people speak one tongue? Were they divided into separate nations, with all the features and phases of nationality as at present? Did they then war and aggress on each other as nations do to-day? These, with a number of other enquiries, press upon us until we turn somewhere hoping to find relief or solution. But the Scriptures, the only correct and authentic history of the world before the flood, do not satisfy our curiosity or aid our difficulty. The account given in the Bible of this world before the flood is so brief that it is but a sketch rather than a historic record of the men, and times, and deeds, and events that happened in that early era of the world. Of the celebrated personages that then

flourished the names are seldom mentioned, and the transactions in which they engaged are not specified in detail. The inhabitants of the old world pass before us like the shade of departed greatness, with an infallible judgment passed on their character, and a distinct declaration of their doom. But amid the deep and universal pollution that then abounded, it is pleasing to find that God had at least one witness for Himself—a man whose genuine piety, eminent principles, sublime religiousness, and distinguished character, enabled him to shine forth as a brilliant light and example amid surrounding depravity and sin. No wonder Paul places this man Noah on the muster-roll of the heroes of faith.

#### I. NOAH'S FAITH.

1st. *Noah's was a faith of obedience.* Being warned or commanded of God, he prepared an ark. In the Book of Genesis you read, "Thus did Noah according to all that God had commanded him, so did he." This was said of him with special reference to his compliance with the Divine directions respecting the ark. Viewed in all its aspects, this is one of the finest instances of obedience on record. That which he was commanded to build was a vast structure—a work of years. The labor and experience necessary to prepare the materials, and then construct it, was immense. Its dimensions and description and materials are fully outlined in the Book of Genesis. According to Hebrew measurement the ark was about five hundred and twenty-five feet long, eighty-seven feet wide, and fifty-two feet high. Thus, you see, it was an immense structure, by far the largest vessel that ever floated upon the waters. The principal material used in its construction was gopher wood, *i.e.*, pine, or cypress. With lower, second and third

stories he was to make it, and with rooms or apartments for the different kinds of animals, and for the accommodation of the living inmates. There were to be windows for light and ventilation, and a door for ingress and egress. It was not modeled like a modern ship, or equipped with rudder and sails. Had it been built like a ship, from a keel, with curving bottom, it could not have afterwards rested on dry land without falling over on its side, to the danger of its occupants. It was a large vessel, answering exactly the purpose for which it was designed. Concerning the *place* where the ark was built, conjecture has said strange things. One supposes it was built in Palestine, another in Mount Caucasia, another in China, another in America. In the absence of definite information, it is most probable from tradition and inference that it was built in the land of Shinar, on the banks of the Tigris. If asked whether Noah took the whole of the one hundred and twenty years to build the ark, we should reply, No, for in that case, without a miracle the first part of the vessel would decay before the last was finished. This huge craft, constructed for an unwonted emergency, Noah built at the command of God and in obedience to His word.

2nd. *Noah's faith was persistent and persevering.* Being warned of God of things not seen as yet, he believed God's word and accepted it as true and certain. The length of time that intervened between the first intimations of the deluge and the actual flood afforded many striking proofs of the mental and moral character of Noah, and the strength and persistence of his faith. When God indicated His determination to destroy the world for its iniquity, without doubt unbelief often whispered, Surely this cannot be God's voice? Will God find it in His heart to destroy every living thing? And where will He find water enough to

drown the world? And how will the creatures to be preserved be collected and kept in the ark? And a thousand other difficulties unbelief would suggest in all these years. Yet Noah perseveres. And while going forth as a preacher of righteousness, he would require no small courage. It is a comparatively easy thing to preach righteousness when public sentiment is on our side, but it is a hard and difficult work when sin hath universal dominion. Yet this man, undaunted, went forth to instruct and warn and reprove the people, telling them of God's purpose unless they repented of their sins. Some would laugh and scoff, others turn indifferently away. Yet he continued to remonstrate and warn up to the last moment of divine forbearance. What faith and boldness! What an example to us who are ashamed or afraid to express our abhorrence of evil, or adherence to virtue's side! What a reproof to those timid spirits who are afraid to reprove popular wrong! We need more men like Noah, who in love and pity will ceaselessly toil to urge people to repent and escape the menacing doom, and yet, with iron nerve and manly courage, will speak out boldly the words of truth and dare to be singular for Christ's sake, and persevere in this course unswervingly, amid ungodliness and opposition, or unfaithfulness and unremunerative fields of waste. In your faith and fidelity be like Noah, firm as the rock that hath weathered a thousand storms. Let not allurements withdraw or terror drive you from the adherence to the right. Though mockery and reproach, menace, or whatever hell can invent or depravity perform, be tried upon you, "cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart."

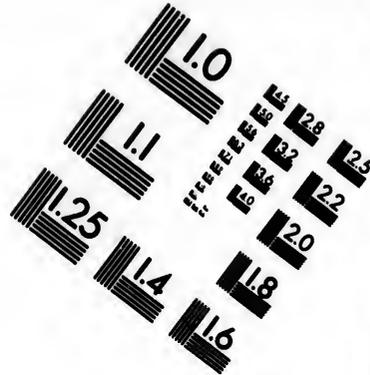
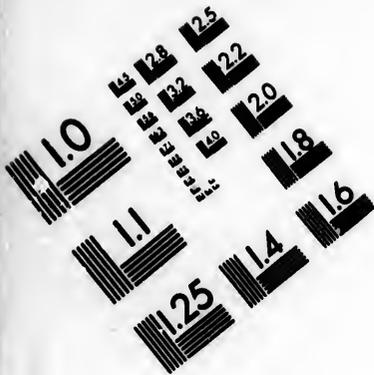
3rd. *Noah's was a faith of patience.* Noah's faith was tried not a little. The length of time, one hundred and twenty years, was a severe tax itself. It is rue, viewed compara-

tively, the length of time, compared with the life of man before the flood and now, was only about the eighth part of a life. But the years were not less because of the length to which men lived. For a man to wait all these years till the cup of iniquity was full—till the long-suffering mercy of God was exhausted—without any sign to confirm his faith, with nothing but the testimony of God, was a patient continuance rarely equalled. But then Noah had to wait so much that was hard to bear. His patience, as well as his integrity, was severely tested. He was exposed to scoff, and insult, and ridicule. Whilst collecting materials and building the ark, sneering ridicule would diligently ply its weapons and pour out its abusive tirade, and there is scarcely anything harder to bear than this. Many have shrunk from glorious enterprises rather than be objects of ridicule. Many have left the path of duty, with their work half done, because they could not bear the scoffs of men. But Noah executed all the work assigned him. He preached all the days he was appointed, and fulfilled his other tasks, notwithstanding all that he had to meet. He bore up bravely to the last, and only ceased his work when the Lord shut him in. Now, as you see Noah's faith bearing him up amid the fiercest trials, and nerving him to perform the most trying and sin-condemning work, you cannot wonder that it is said he became an heir, or possessor of the righteousness which is by faith—was ranked among its most illustrious examples and heired its richest heritage.

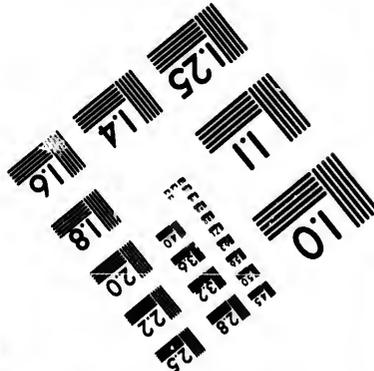
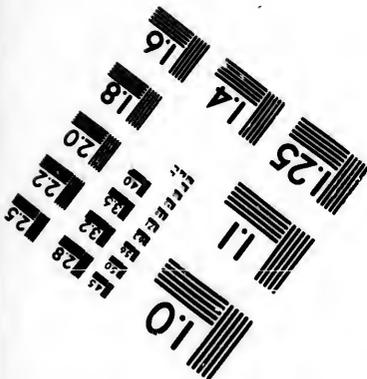
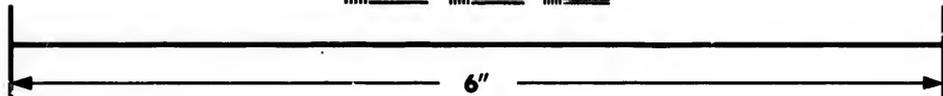
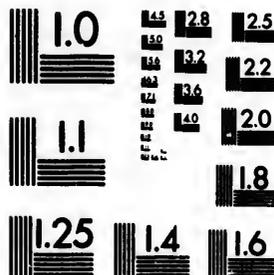
## II. NOAH'S FAITH CONDEMNED THE WORLD OVERTHROWN BY THE FLOOD.

How Noah's faith condemned the guilty world is easily seen, and requires no elaboration. The saving of a good man is as a sentence against the sin and negligence of all





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who are unsaved. They having the same means, and privileges, and opportunities, they might have embraced the same salvation and blessings.

Several questions will arise that should be briefly answered. It may be asked, "Had Noah *no other sons* than these three who were saved in the ark?" Undoubtedly he had, for he was five hundred years old when Japheth, the eldest of these three, was born. In all probability Noah, like the other antediluvians, began to sustain the parental relation at about fifty years of age, so that it is only reasonable to infer that Noah's family in more than four hundred years must have been large. But very likely, under the pernicious influence of that age, they had become corrupt and depraved, and therefore undistinguishable from the ungodly world, so that they shared the fate of the multitude whose example they had imitated; while, in all probability, these three sons, born after Noah had received intimations of the deluge, he exercised over them a more rigorous and restraintive influence, and suffered them not to wander unrestrained, as the others had done. So that Noah's faith, like many a godly parent's now, condemned some of his own household.

It will be further asked, "*Was the deluge universal?*" The language of the Bible plainly indicates that it was, for it says, "All the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered." It is clear from the testimony of Scripture that all mankind except those in the ark were destroyed by the flood. Whether the waters extended over the whole surface of the globe, I cannot say, for I know not whether the whole world was peopled then. It is certain from the age of the world, and the length of human life, that the population at that time must have been equal to the present population of the world. And if

all the habitable parts of the earth were then peopled, in the most literal and geographical sense it was submerged. The *geological* argument for a universal deluge, founded on the fossil remains discovered in the rocky strata of the highest mountains, I leave. It is from the variety of every climate collected in the ark, and from the clear testimony of Scripture, that I see the absolute universality of the deluge.

It may be further asked, "*Where did all the water come from by which the earth was overflowed?*" You observe the Bible says, "Then were the windows of heaven opened." So that the water, instead of descending in drops, fell in torrents. It is also declared that "the fountains of the great deep were broken up"—an expression that many old writers thought denoted a vast ocean in the interior of the earth, from whence the waters came. But science has shown that the interior of the earth is a bed of fire, instead of water, so that the expression indicates that the waters of the globe were lifted up and made to overflow. Thus you see that the rain which fell for forty days and forty nights was assisted in its work of ruin by the overflowing seas.

What must have been Noah's feelings when the Lord shut him in! With what emotion he must have gazed forth from the window of the ark upon the dying world, and witnessed the wide-spread death struggle, and heard the shrieking out of universal life! Without doubt his whole soul was stirred when he saw the gates of death so crowded, and not a few of his relatives lost forever. But who shall describe the feelings and expressions of the condemned ones themselves? You have seen or read of partial floods and inundations, when dams have given way, or great rivers, swollen by the melting snows or abundant rains, have

spread desolation and death for miles around, and that scene of ruin and distress has made your flesh creep. But what is that to the deluge here referred to? What is the destruction of a few to the loss of a world? Oh, you cannot realize that day, that scene, when the heavens poured down their floods in merciless torrents, and the great deep lifted up its voice, and roared its dirge of death, and when the foaming waters on every side met to cut off the last hope of man! I have seen pictures vivid and heartrending, but they are only pictures; the reality of this scene defies description. See those men who had scoffed and mocked for long at the old fanatic's faith, when the waters had actually commenced to rise, rushing toward the ark and imploring shelter when it was too late. Entry was then impossible, for God had barred the door. See them then turn toward the highest tower, or rush frantically to the top of the highest mountains! The aged and the sick are swept down the flood, with no one to relieve. The mother, frantic and wild, lifts her child on her arms to keep it out of the water in which she herself is drowning.\* There the young man of strength, who has climbed the highest tree with his sister in his arms, holds on till his limbs are stiff and they fall helpless into the foaming flood. From those high cliffs men and beasts drop one by one in their exhaustion. Those on the high mountains, who have been watching the awful swell of waters, now feel the terror of their lot. Hunger and want pursue them like armed men and add to their despair. The waters rise, and the area of possible existence narrows until at last every barricade and tower and mountain is overflowed, and the last survivor shrieks out his despair and sinks to share the common ruin. What a scene that drowned world presented! What a sound that death groan of expiring humanity! But as you think of that

scene of desolation, and remember the sin, the unbelief, that condemned that world, and the faith that outrode the storm and came forth from the flood to be the father of a new generation, look on and on to the end of time and the grand assize of the last day, and think of the second deluge of fire that will one day consume this world, and then remember the millions whose faith in Christ shall forever shut them in with God, while all that lived in sin and died in unbelief shall perish without hope, or shelter, or refuge. "For shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And remembering that, fly at once to the refuge set before you, so that you may be prepared for that awful day whenever it shall come to pass, and enter through the gates into that city whose builder and maker is God.

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## X.

### MOSES' FAITH.

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"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward."—HEB. xi. 24-26.

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**A** GRAND chapter of heroism is this eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In it you have a very brief summary of that holy war, in which the most distinguished saints of former times so nobly engaged. It reveals the principles by which they were inspired, and the grand achievements by which their names are handed down to a worthy immortality. It shows you that the battles they fought were bloodlessly achieved, and their victories peacefully won, over foes the most powerful, and trials the most severe, and suffering the most protracted. In this bright constellation of ancient worthies you have described the same faith, but very diversely exercised, under very different circumstances, showing that while faith is one in essence, it is many-sided in its forms of expression and power of service. In looking at the faith of Moses, you see a man of rare gifts, and great wisdom, and much culture, and distinguished bravery, and great possessions, and brilliant prospects, made yet greater by faith.

## I. MOSES' FAITH AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS.

1st. *The nature of his faith.* We read "that he endured as seeing Him who is invisible." Thus you see his faith realized the unseen and future, and brought it into his present consciousness. The man who has no true faith lives only in the world that is seen and present. The pressure of outward and visible things limits and restricts him. The claims of business, or pleasure, or trial, are all absorbing; and being so engrossed he is blind to and almost unconscious of all beyond. But faith penetrates the thin partition of matter which separates the unseen and invisible from us, and makes us conscious of its reality and power, and we at once feel that the future is present; the hidden, real; and that the eternal incloses us on every side. We feel constrained to live as if heaven were real and eternity everything. In this way the faith of Moses exerted its legitimate influence and brought him into real and living sympathy with eternity and God; and he accepted God's will and word and purposes concerning him, with unhesitating faith and devotion. He did not doubt, but believed with a persuasion and confidence that banished all hesitation and fear. The want of assurance is the secret of the limited influence which Divine truth exerts on many who professedly believe it. A celebrated historian has remarked of the Roman philosophers, "That they professed to believe in a future state, but it had no influence over them because they were so uncertain." The same may be said of a great many of the professors of Christianity. The truth they profess has little influence upon them because they do not receive it with assurance and certainty. They are not sufficiently convinced of its reality. They profess to believe what they really and practically doubt. But in the case of Moses, as

it should be with all Christians, the heart was purged from the skepticism and doubt which depravity engenders; and the mist and fog, with which sin clouds the vision of the soul, were cleared away; and his heart found rest and peace and satisfaction in God. And he was enabled to endure all hardships and sacrifices and sufferings as seeing Him who is invisible. Faith elevated him above the ties of common life, and the enchantment of worldly possessions, and enabled him to live a life of true boldness, and self-reliance, and divine dependence—a life that was God-trained, God-directed, God-like.

2nd. *The choice of faith.* Moses' choice involved singular self-sacrifice. His position was one of no ordinary character,—the only son of Pharaoh's daughter, all the honors and privileges and advantages of the finest earthly prospects were waiting for him,—but he voluntarily renounces it at the call of duty. Not, remember, that there is any *necessary opposition* between the present and the future. Serious evils have arisen from the unscriptural notion that there is a necessary opposition between the world and religion. This opinion has given rise to the existence of monasteries and nunneries, and has been the excuse of others for not being more spiritual and consistent; but, in truth, the proper claims of business and life, instead of being opposed to spiritual culture, may greatly promote it. The man of toil is called by that very labor to the exercise of endurance and self-dependence—a most essential element of Christian character. The man of business has an opportunity to get an insight into human nature and test his own principles. The man who labors anywhere must by that effort grow in vigor of character and manliness of purpose, if he works under right principles. Any thought of a necessary antagonism between the present and the

future is opposed to the Divine teachings, and the very end for which man is placed in the world. I know there is a danger of being absorbed in the present, to the exclusion of the future. It is possible to become carnalized and mammonized, but this is not of *necessity*, but of *perversion*. There are times when the world stands in direct opposition to the claims of religion; then the duty of separation is clear and imperative. This was the situation into which Moses was brought when, at the call of God, he made this noble and self-sacrificing choice, and renounced all the advantages of his position.

*He renounced the ties of obligation and chose dependence.* There appears no room to doubt that Pharaoh's daughter had always considered him and treated him as her son, and in all probability he would have worn the crown of Egypt at Pharaoh's death. Egypt at that time was the greatest and most powerful of kingdoms, and in all the land of Egypt none could take higher rank than Moses. Treated with the greatest possible consideration, filling the highest offices of the state, the heir to the wealth of Pharaoh's daughter, all the ease and luxury and privileges were within his reach; yet with a sublime faith he voluntarily relinquished all the ties of obligation and love, separated himself from the home and person to whom he owed so much, and for whom he felt such true regard, preferring the path of duty to every other tie. And by this choice he renounced the *treasures* of Egypt, and these treasures were many and varied. There were the treasures of *Wealth*, for it was the wealthiest land in gold and silver and precious stones. There were the treasures of *Literature*, in exceptional abundance, and one learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians might have found great attractions there. There were the treasures of *Art*, and so abundant were these collections of sculpture and

architectural beauty that they are even now the boast of the world. Nothing was beyond him except the throne of Pharaoh, but, by faith, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and *chose the sufferings of Christ rather than the pleasures of sin*. I am not prepared to describe the special pleasures here intended. We may justly suppose that they were innocent enough in themselves, and rendered sinful only because duty required their relinquishment. They were most likely the pleasures of wealth and power and science and position and honor and comfort. These pleasures were both innocent and right till duty crossed their path. But as soon as God had laid His hand on Moses and bidden him separate himself to another work, his duty was clear: to honor God was his first obligation, and to delay or refuse from any other consideration would have been sinful disobedience. But Moses does not hesitate to renounce all at the call of God and go and join himself to his enslaved and down-trodden brethren, and share their afflictions and their future with all its trials and privations and perils and persecutions. All honor to the man who could become a slave while his brethren groaned beneath the tyrant's lash, that he might comfort and help and deliver them.

3rd. *The period of choice further suggests the strength and power of Moses' faith*. It was when he was come to years that his faith rose to this magnificent self-denial and heroic surrender for God—the years of mature and deliberate understanding and appreciation of all that he surrendered, and when he was best prepared to enjoy what he gave up. So that you see the time of his choice emphasizes immeasurably the strength of the faith that inspired to it. It was not when he was old and incapable of enjoying the world he surrendered, just like an old sinner burned out by his

pleasures, and so tries to escape to shore on some broken piece of wreck, if haply he may be saved ; but it was in the very prime of his intellectual power, at the moment when the world spread all before him, like a bewitching panorama, and seemed most fascinating and attractive ; then he voluntarily, deliberately chose rather Christ's riches than the treasures of Egypt. It is to the young, in the very pride and vigor of their manhood's life, this example appeals. To you, young men, who have power to work and life to work in ; to you whose fame is not paralyzed, or passion fires exhausted, or sun gone down ; to you who yet own life in all its fulness and sparkle and music and power ; to you it says consecrate all to God. Do not wait till famine has pinched you sore, or until you are the worn-out and used-up pensioners on the dregs of Divine bounty, or until life is all gone and you have nothing to offer but chaff and husks and sin. Now, in the very morning of life, let your faith, like Moses', inspire to immediate, complete, and life-long service for God. Give God the best, give Him all.

II. THE REWARD OF FAITH.—“ *For he had respect unto the recompense of reward.*”

Future glory, the reward of a virtuous life, is frequently expressed in Scripture under this designation—*recompense*. Not that the term is to be taken in its literal signification, as though virtue merited future blessedness, for man's greatest service could never merit God's smallest gift. But it must not be forgotten that as rewards sweeten toil, so there is something in Christianity analogous to this. It helps us to see that a life of future blessedness will be the fruit of present devotion and service, for that follows as closely and clearly as cause and effect. Thus you see that the future state will compensate us for all our sacrifices,

indemnify us for all losses in the service of God, and give back to us, in overwhelming interest, the results of all we have done or suffered for God here; and it further suggests that God takes special pleasure in man's obedience and seeks in every way to encourage and promote it. In speaking of the reward of faith you must consider two or three distinct points.

1st. *It was a sure reward.* Whether we shall possess it or not may be a matter of grave uncertainty, because it is possible we may not be of the description of person to whom it is promised, and falling short of the conditions and the meetness, we may never inherit the recompense. But the reward itself is certain. In this respect it bears a striking contrast with the rewards of earth. The most ardent votary of the world is never sure that he shall possess an adequate reward for his toils. The world often mocks her followers with delusive hopes, and after unremitting labor the object pursued is as distant as ever; and at the close of a life of disappointment many are compelled to confess that they have sown to the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Of the many prizes the world presents before its competitors not one is *certain*. Success depends on circumstances often beyond man's control, or the uncertainty arises from the folly and competition of rivals. But how different is it with the reward of faith, the rewards of God in the heavenly home. There no well-meant effort shall go unacknowledged. The jealousy of rivals cannot interfere where there is enough for all and enough for evermore. And not only the service performed shall be remunerated, but that which it was our intention and desire to have performed if opportunity or means allowed, will be rewarded. In this world some of the most devoted and disinterested of men have fallen victims to the caprice of others, by being made

answerable for events beyond their control. And often the most important services have passed unobserved because performed in a humble way, or by an obscure person. But the rewards of heaven are not exposed to such fluctuations and uncertainties and ficklenesses. They are secured by the oath, and promise, and veracity of God. God hath promised, and His faithfulness and unchangeableness can be depended on. As God is true, heaven is sure.

2nd. *A satisfying reward.* How far this feature belongs to earthly rewards universal experience can attest. Instead of satisfying they often inflame the desire they cannot gratify. The pursuit of wealth is one of the most common and attractive objects sought in this life; but no sooner has a man gained the portion he sought than he thirsts for more; and what he previously esteemed wealth he now calls a common necessary, and he transfers the name to ampler possessions and larger revenues. Nor is fame, however high it has climbed, more satisfying. Nor can a man find satisfaction in the pleasures of the world. His desires often make him a prey to uneasiness, because of some fancied good he has not. A childish impatience of the slightest disappointment often poisons the most sparkling cup of worldly pleasure. Look at Haman; he enumerates the various ingredients of a brilliant fortune, and then adds, "All this availeth me nothing while Mordecai, the Jew, is at the gate." But the rewards of heaven satisfy fully and completely. There is no desire unmet, no wish unrealized, no expectation unfulfilled; the most ardent dream and hopeful outlook are abundantly satisfied in the mansions of glory. Nor can any desire ever arise that heaven cannot at once meet and supply; there in the fullest sense the inhabitants will hunger no more, neither thirst any more.

3rd. *The reward is eternal.* Everything of this earth is

short-lived and passeth away, but man's soul being immortal must have possessions that do not grow old or fade away.

Imagine an immortal being—a glorified saint—sunning and basking himself in the full blessedness of heaven. Imagine his mighty power waxing stronger and stronger as the field of his knowledge enlarges. Imagine this glorious being rising higher and higher in capacity and enjoyments until he has attained a dignity and rapture that at one time seemed impossible. And then, suppose a revelation suddenly made to this exalted spirit that his glory and blessedness would end. That intimation would paralyze his energies and incapacitate him for further enjoyment. The intense delight that previously thrilled his soul, the soaring and Godlike conceptions that crowded upon his aspiring thought, would give place to doubt and fear and overwhelming disappointment. All his capacities and endowments, his love to God, and his sinless perfection, would fit him for endless service and blessedness, but all this would be as nothing if there was no eternal life to enjoy. But, be it remembered, the rewards of heaven are eternal. They fade not away, they are as permanent as the eternal throne, as lasting as the crown of life, as endless as God. The river of life never runs dry; across the walkers of the golden streets there shall never pass the shadow of an end. Heaven's communion shall never know an interval; its light shall never dim. There the inhabitants die no more, but are forever with the Lamb.

Let me entreat you, by all the hopes and promises of the gospel, do not let this life pass without putting forth your best efforts for Christ. Yet a little while and the shadows will drape your home, and if faithful you shall pass to the skies. Meanwhile seek to maintain a character and lead a life in harmony with your future prospects. Look forward

and live with the light of heaven constantly upon your path. Let the recompense of the future be a strong and impelling motive to glorify God in the present. Let your eye ever be on the recompense, and by all means make your calling sure. When trials assail or sorrow overwhelms, look to the recompense. When pestilence darkens the dwelling, or bereavement crushes the heart, look to the recompense. When slander wounds the reputation and reproach is heaped upon your name, look to the recompense. When temptation seeks to corrupt, or the world tries to pollute, look to the recompense. When discouragement damps the zeal, or unfaithful examples tempt to despair, look to the recompense. When life is ebbing to a close and you stand face to face with death, look to the recompense. It will make you holier in solitude, and braver in public, more patient in suffering, more heroic in sacrifice. It will deliver you from the insane madness of preferring the present to the future, this world to eternity, and lead you to look forward by faith to the home and reward of everlasting life.

## THE THREE HEBREW MARTYRS.

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DANIEL iii. 14-30.

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**N**IMROD appears to have founded the city and kingdom of Babylon upon the site and about the time of the tower of Babel. And from that time it continued to grow in wealth and strength until the days of Nebuchadnezzar, when it reached the height of its splendor as the capital of the Chaldean Empire and metropolis of the world. The city was surrounded by a wall sixty miles in circumference, three hundred and fifty feet high, and eighty-seven feet thick, while the river Euphrates ran through it from north to south. But its greatest boast was an artificial mountain four hundred feet high, reared in its midst by Nebuchadnezzar, and formed into hanging gardens and terraces of exquisite beauty. It was upon this that the king is supposed to have been looking when he exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" It is also called the Golden City, because of its immense wealth, for in it was treasured the riches and spoil of conquered nations. But Babylon in the midst of its greatness was wickedly self-indulgent and idolatrous. Of this you have the most painful confirmation in the chapter before you. The pagan idolatry of the city and people must have added much to the trials and sufferings of the exiled

S. Hebrews. The three young men to whom our text refers have been previously introduced in the first chapter of this book, as some of the exiled Jews, of noble descent and well-favored and gifted, and of rare merit, whom the king wisely sought to train and nationalize and win for the good government and consolidation of his empire. The king and his chief steward, under whose special charge they were, hoping they had succeeded in changing their language and manners and principles, gave them Chaldean names, to identify them more intimately with the land of their adoption. Hananiah they called Shadrach, "Messenger of the king." Mishael they named Meshach, "Servant of the god Sheshach." Azariah was changed to Abed-nego, "Servant of the god Nego." But altered names and customs and high promotion could not change the beliefs and principles of these servants of the living God. They had already with Daniel stood one severe test of their principles, and come off victorious. Now they are called to another, a more severe and public trial of their high and holy principles. And the question is asked, Will they endure this testing time also, and pass safely through this solemn crucial crisis? Let us see.

I. LOOK AT THE TEMPTATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES THESE MEN HAD TO RESIST IN CARRYING OUT THEIR RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.

1st. *They had to resist the authority and command of the king.* Nebuchadnezzar had won and consolidated an immense empire, throughout which his command was absolute. But not content with receiving from his people civil obedience, he planned to secure their religious homage. He set up, in the plain of Dura, a vast golden image resembling the one he saw in his dream. And to make that image

as impressive and attractive as possible, he collected around it the charms of music. Perhaps he thought by making sure of the *eye* and *ear*, the *heart* would yield. A gifted writer has sarcastically said, with too much truth, that if you secure the five senses of men you may calculate upon all the rest. Men are too often led by their senses, and worship appearance rather than truth. The image set up, the decree proclaimed, every one at the signal of music must fall down and worship the *idol*, or be cast into a fiery furnace—the mode of capital punishment peculiar to the Chaldeans. In that trying situation these young men refused to bow down and worship the king's image. They must have felt it very undesirable and trying to take such a position. They would feel it to be very ungracious for a subject and a captive to rebel against royal authority, and oppose the proclaimed will of the monarch. And then the king had been very kind to them, and they owed him gratitude as well as loyalty. But they felt, as we should ever feel, that duty to God is stronger than all other claims; and they would not worship the golden image. This disobedience was soon reported to the king, who at once sent for the young men to know why they refused to worship his god. The thought of anyone refusing to obey his command the king would not tolerate. And the king said unto them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, do not ye serve my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?" And they replied, not insolently but firmly, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." Neither charms nor threats could force them into idolatry and sin. What noble moral heroism; what sublime devotion and fidelity to God. And gathering strength for the struggle they said, in the depth and power of their convictions, "Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will

not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." So should men ever feel. Yielding the readiest civil obedience to the government and constitution under which they live, but causing man's rule to end where that of conscience begins; recognizing and defending at all costs the sole and absolute supremacy of God.

2nd. *They had to resist popular custom and practice.* They lived amid a nation of idolaters. Idolatry was the religion of the throne and people. And when the king set up this golden god and summoned the nation to its worship, the people promptly obeyed. There is too much reason for believing that the Jews generally followed the national example. But these three, unmoved by custom, were faithful to God; never stopping to ask or see what others did, they dared to be true to their convictions in the face of a nation of idolaters. What bravery, casting into the shade earth's proudest warriors! I commend to you this sacred regard to the claims of conscience, to the dictates of duty; this cleaving to the right amid the scorn and roar of popular reproach and opposition. There is nothing more contemptible than the spirit that crouches down to popular custom at the sacrifice of principle, and which follows the multitude to do evil. It requires very little courage to assume the Christian name when it is fashionable. When truth is popular the veriest coward can sing its praise. It is the storm that tests the vessel and shows the quality of its timber and iron. It is the make-up of the opposing army that shows the qualities and valor of the soldier. And it is when expediency and custom and ridicule confront the Christian man that you see whether he is a moral hero or a heartless coward. What we need to-day is that stern fidelity to truth which will not yield to the claims of custom. Custom is now, as it ever has been, the stern foe of sincere

piety. There lies our danger. Religion has found general favor, but the favored religion has a large amount of worldliness mixed up with it. Men say, "Business is business," and try to show that strict morality and right will not apply to the shop or market. In their view, to apply Christian rules to secular callings would be ruinous. Religion, they affirm, is all right for the Church and the Sabbath, but what has it to do with trade and daily life. Now we must show these men of the world that Christ's spirit and likeness may and should be carried into every department and vocation; that there is no place or business in this world where Christian principle cannot and should not reign. So that instead of yielding to custom and going down to the world's level, let us change the customs and currents of life, and bring them up to the standard and will of God.

3rd. *They had to resist the claims of self-interest and gain.* The cost and sacrifice at which they maintained their convictions was great. Disobedience to the king must cost them loss of position and life. They were to be instantly hurled from place and power into the fiery furnace. In such circumstances as they now stand we ask, "Will they submit and live, or obey God and die?" Nothing moved from their Christian steadfastness, they are equal to the crisis, and remain firm and true; not even counting their own lives dear unto them, that they might finish their course with joy. Their confidence in God was perfect, and therefore their triumph over self-interest was complete. Such instances of prompt and unwavering devotion to God have not been wanting in other ages of the Church. Tertullian says of the Christians of his day, "We are thrown to the wild beast, we are burned in the flames, we are banished to the islands, but all have failed to make us recant;

we are true to God." Cyprian, when urged to preserve his life by the denial of Christianity, answered, "There can be no deliberating in a matter so sacred." Chrysostom, when threatened with banishment by the Roman emperor, replied, "Thou canst not banish me, for the world is my Father's house." Said the emperor, "I will slay thee." "Nay, but thou canst not, for my life is hid with Christ in God." Then replied the emperor angrily, "I will drive thee from every friend." "Thou canst not, for I have a friend in Heaven, who will never leave me; I defy thee, there is nothing thou canst do to me, for I am God's." Self-sacrificing moral heroism is not wanting in every epoch of the Church. Are we thus self-denying for Christ and truth? Have we the martyr's spirit, so that if need be we could bear the martyr's testimony? Do we serve God faithfully in our present positions, or are we temporizing and cowardly through fear of man, or from self-interest? I am afraid some religious people seek to make capital out of their allegiance to the Church. The same persons would sell their convictions and risk their eternity to-morrow if the temptation of gain was on the other side. May I urge that no allurements or prospect of advantage should ever tempt you to desert God or disown the truth. It is better to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

## II. THE RESULT OF THEIR UNCOMPROMISING FAITHFULNESS TO GOD.

1st. *They proved that no believing trust in God is misplaced, but that He is true to His people and His promises.* The young men said to the king, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king." Miraculously,

or otherwise, just as it shall please God, He will deliver us. And you see their confidence was not misplaced. God did deliver them. As Nebuchadnezzar walked forth, in sight of the fiery furnace, he saw four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire unhurt. The fourth, he said, was like the Son of God. The expression "Son of God," does not indicate that the king knew or thought of the Messiah; he thought it to be an angel, who were commonly termed sons of God. The king plainly recognized Divine interposition and deliverance. And hard as his heart was, and proudly as he had acted in this matter, he is compelled to say, "There is no other God that can deliver after this sort." Sometimes it pleases Infinite Wisdom to place His people in those circumstances in which they cannot doubt His faithfulness; in which they are so shut up as to see and feel that the door of escape or deliverance must have been opened by God. In this instance friends and foes alike witness God's preservation and care for His own. All that happened to these good men in the furnace apparently was the burning of their *bands*. Not an hair of their head was singed, neither were their coats changed, nor even the smell of fire had passed on them. They were not only delivered, but came out of the furnace freer than they went in. So shall it ever be with God's people who trust in Him perfectly. He may suffer them to be cast into the furnace of trial, or suffering, and that furnace or trial may be *very hot*; but it will only burn their bands. Out of the furnace they will ultimately come, purer, freer, holier, better every way. Whilst in the furnace God will be with them, and when the last band that binds them to earth, or self, or sin, is burned, He will bring them forth as gold *refined*.

2nd. *You see the power and influence of true, consistent example.* The monarch, impressed with the superiority of

these young men's faith, with the depth and power of their convictions, and the wonderful interposition of God on their behalf, issues a decree which shows his profound impression and conviction. While, on the one hand, it betrays his ignorance of the nature and genius of true religion, on the other it shows how thoroughly he was convinced that the God of the Hebrews was the true God. Such a change of sentiment reveals the power and influence of consistent example and life. God has often used a *lived* Christianity to promote His cause and kingdom in the earth. There is a power in the preached Gospel that has achieved wonders in the world. But there is a silent power in a lived Gospel not less mighty for good. In removing prejudices, correcting misrepresentations, and attesting to the Divinity of truth, there is nothing more potent than a holy life. The life Christians lead, and the death Christians die, often exceed the pulpit in converting power. In this way every true life is an element of power, while history clearly shows us that the truth does not die with her martyrs, but rather they being dead yet speak.

3rd. *You see that the persecution which could not drive these men from their religious convictions defeated itself.* Instead of branding and overthrowing the Hebrews and their religion, as the persecutors designed, they only brought them and their religion into greater prominence. The king at once proclaims his will, and commands, under the severest penalties, that no one in his vast kingdom should speak against the Hebrew faith, or fail to reverence the Hebrews' God. Now, while we must condemn the king's *method* of spreading the religion of the true God, as opposed to the spirit and plain directions of the Divine Word, and as too much in keeping with the king's arbitrary and despotic way of ruling his own kingdom, yet we can greatly rejoice that

the persecutors are defeated, their mean and malicious designs frustrated, and the cause of the God of Heaven triumphant. And this is not the only instance in which persecution has outwitted itself, showing the vileness, the malignity of the cause and person of the persecutors, and, by contrast, the moral worth and power of the religion of Christ. The voice may be silenced for a while by the door of a prison, or the authority of an arbitrary decree, or the bigotry of councils and sectarian zealots; but soon the great liberator will come that way and walk into the very midst of the furnace or prison, and proclaim liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound. And the cause that God undertakes to defend and extend He will not fail to help in every time of need. Even the bitterest persecutor may be compelled to confess the claims of the very God he sought to overthrow.

4th. *The experience of these men proves that fidelity to God and truth shall not lose its reward.* "Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in the province of Babylon." This is not the only instance in which fortitude in subduing trial, and faith in conquering death, has led to eminent secular honor. Joseph, the slave in Egypt, raised to great power and honor; David, the shepherd, crowned a king over a powerful kingdom; Daniel, the captive, made the first president of the greatest empire of his times;—are striking instances of the high places of the earth to which the best of men have been promoted. And of this we may be sure, that if fidelity to God does not bring secular honor and dignity and wealth, it will bring everlasting honor at the right hand of God.

## XII.

### DANIEL'S INTEGRITY.

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"Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."—DAN. vi. 10.

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**D**ANIEL, the prophet, was one of the most pure and faithful of saints. His character and life is at once a study and an example. Born in the city of Jerusalem, and descended from the royal tribe of Judah, his hundred years' pilgrimage was full of strange and wonderful history. His first years were spent amid the decline of the Jewish monarchy. The most of his life was spent in the seventy years of Babylonish captivity. His last days witnessed the restoration of his fellow-countrymen to their native land. So that his life, sharing the changes of his tribe and people, was full of painful interest. He was a man of scholarly refinement, great genius, eminent wisdom, unblemished life, and close intimacy with God. God Himself, in the Book of Ezekiel, bears unmistakable testimony to his eminent character and Scriptural holiness, where He says, "Though these men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness." Daniel's character was one of the purest ever lived on earth by man. You cannot wonder that he was prosperous even in adversity, free even in exile, had native privileges in strange countries, and that God made even his

enemies to be at peace with him ; and that he was admitted into the most heavenly visions and revelations. This chapter presents Daniel to your study in a wonderful, a unique position. Confronted by the most cruel and malignant opposers, he is called upon to pass through one of the most severe ordeals to which a human being was ever subjected. Let us see how he met the greatest trial of his life.

#### I. THE PARTICULAR DANGER WHICH THREATENED DANIEL AT THIS CRISIS OF HIS LIFE.

"The writing was signed," suggesting the dark-laid plot, and the ominous sentence, which overhung Daniel at this hour.

1st. *There was the scheming of political avarice and malignity.* Darius, the Medo-Persian king, who now ruled the destinies of Babylon, saw something in the character and conduct of Daniel that fitted him for the highest position and responsibilities. He had witnessed his skill in solving a mysterious inscription ; he saw his prudence and wisdom and success in all he undertook. And though he did not understand Daniel's creed, he appreciated his honesty, his integrity, and his talents. Darius therefore determined, in his own interest, to array himself in new honor by the wisdom and goodness of Daniel. Therefore the king preferred Daniel above the presidents, and made him the prime minister over the grandest empire on which the sun had ever shone up to that time. But Daniel's endowments and elevation roused the pride and envy of the partizan zealots, who saw themselves cast into the shade by Daniel's promotion. And it is said they hated him. They could not dismiss him, nor impeach him, but they could and did hate him. Not because his policy was bad, or that like most eastern statesmen he was eager to receive bribes. Not

because he aimed at the king's crown, or was disloyal, or untrustworthy, or corrupt. They could find no occasion of fault in him, inasmuch as he was faithful in all things. Why then did they so dislike him? Possibly it was because he was a Jew and a stranger, and the conceited and haughty princes of the realm were greatly offended and could not forgive the idea of one who was a captive being the chief ruler over them. But we think that the principal reason why these men so hated Daniel was because of his *integrity*. He was an honest prime minister presiding over a corrupt cabinet. He would not take bribes, and so his example and presence shamed their greed, and stood in the way of their unlawful money getting. And because his office was in the way of their power and supremacy, and his integrity checked and shamed their avarice, they formed against him a most daring political plot, as dark as it was cruel. And because they could find no pretext for his removal or destruction in his character or administration, they assailed him through his religious conviction. Here you see the hatred and opposition of these political rivals and schemers stopped at nothing. They entered the sacred region of personal conviction and conscience, and dared to dictate to the soul on the question of its relation to its Maker. How bitter the malevolence, how daring the blasphemy that would step in to prevent the soul from worshipping its God. But Daniel had more to meet than simply the scheming and plots of unprincipled rivals.

2nd. *The signed decree foreshadowed and threatened his complete ruin.* Having seen what political craft and scheming could bring about, to realize fully Daniel's peril you must look at the nature of the signed writing. It plainly contemplated the casting of Daniel into the den of lions—a mode of punishment peculiar to the Medo-Persians. So

that when Daniel looked upon the writing, he saw his own sealed death-warrant; and the mode of carrying it out must have filled him with shuddering. To say that the king regretted and vainly endeavored to set aside his fatal decree when he discovered the foul murder that was to be perpetrated, is saying nothing to relieve Daniel. The sleepless monarch nor the rejoicing persecutors affected the changeless decree. According to that writing Daniel must compromise or die, renounce God or become a martyr. To die, especially through the scheming of wicked men, is most painful and unnatural. Man was never made to die. It was not a part of God's original design, therefore man shrinks from death. It is true when the believer dies he does not cease to be; there is not even a suspension of the continuity of life. Death is to him the vestibule of glory, the beginning of the blissful, thrilling endless life of heaven. But still there is nothing unmanly or unchristian in recoiling from death—a thing superinduced by sin. And to shrink from such a death as this—a death brought about by plottings so disreputable, and scheming so utterly unworthy and malignant; a death so terrible in the mode of its execution; a death so horrible in whatever way we look at it—is not unworthy of this noble and heroic man. But let us see how Daniel met the situation.

## II. DANIEL'S FIDELITY TO GOD AND HIS RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.

1st. *You have Daniel's sentiment respecting the interference of the state in the concerns of religion.* For Darius as a man Daniel could have but little respect, for historians describe him as weak and cruel, furious in his anger and tyrannical in the exercise of his power. According to this narrative he allowed his nobles to make laws which he

signed and afterwards wanted to retract. He cast Daniel into the lions' den, and then wept over his own severity. He obeyed his nobles in punishing Daniel, and afterward in terrible revenge flung them into the same den. So capricious and despotic a tyrant, however arrayed in the trappings of regal splendor, no one could respect. But his authority as a king Daniel duly honored. In everything political and national he properly submitted to him. Good men ever have been the truest subjects, the best citizens of the state, and the most loyal to the government and laws of the nation under which they live. But Daniel correctly felt that he could not render to the king the homage which was due only to God. In the affairs of religion he must be free. The monarch might decide what death the prophet should die, but Daniel himself must choose what God he would worship. Hence, when forbidden to serve God he would not deviate for a single day from the custom of his religion or habits of devotion. And Christians everywhere should manifest the same fortitude and decision of soul. The right of private judgment is not only the birthright of every man but the legitimate and natural fruit of spiritual religion. Liberty of conscience is a right, a divine, inalienable right, which no man should barter or betray. He deserves not the name of a Christian who will not contend for the rights of private judgment on the question of religion as the dearest earthly possession. As Daniel, as the holy apostles and fathers of primitive Christianity, as Wycliffe, as Luther, as the Puritans, as the Covenanters, as the noble army of martyrs, obtained this freedom at great price, so let us maintain the form of sound words. It is no part of the secular government to teach or enforce religion. Religion is a matter too sacred for that; it is a holy thing between a man's soul and his God. The moral sense cannot

be controlled rightly by acts of parliament, or governments, or kings, or chief magistrates. *Within* the Christian Church there is no sphere for the exercise of the civil power; there it becomes an intrusion, a usurpation to be resisted. When and how we are to worship cannot be settled by any earthly force, but must be determined by the word of Him that liveth and abideth forever. Religion is emphatically personal and spiritual, the most purely personal matter in the world. Here we must listen to the voice of Him who says, "One is your Master, even Christ," and we dare not render unto Cæsar the things that are God's.

2nd. *Daniel's steadfast adherence to religious duty in the face of danger.* In looking at the manner in which Daniel discharged his duty, at first sight he would appear singular, if not ostentatious, as he enters his room with his window opened toward Jerusalem. But as you look at his attitude and adherence to custom, remember the true explanation. On the top of every Jewish house, which was flat-roofed, there was what is called in the Book of Acts, "an upper room" or chamber, or domestic chapel, where the Jew always went for retirement and devotion. So that Daniel's *window being opened toward Jerusalem* was in strict agreement with the custom and worship of the Jews—a custom easily explained by two considerations: Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple, in which he asked God at all times to hear the prayer of His people directed toward that place; and the fact that that temple contained the only sign or symbol of the mediatorial intercession of Christ. Therefore Daniel, when he retired to that upper room with its open window, did not seek to *display* his religion, or to *defy* those who had conspired against him. He did that which he had always been accustomed to do in the same simple, beautiful habit that his inner life had been trained

to. Had Daniel gone to that room for prayer then for the first time, and opened that window as a signal defiantly, he would have been assuming singularity which is weak, if not wrong and contemptible. When duty makes singularity inevitable it is Christian, it is sublime; and we should never be ashamed to be singular for Christ. We never hear of men being ashamed of being called singularly rich, or wise, or great, or successful, they rather rejoice in singularity of that sort; and is not religion wiser than wisdom, richer than gold, greater than any earthly success? No man should ever *seek* singularity, but he should not *fear* it when duty requires and God demands. There are times when it is sublime to stand alone in that lonesomeness which throws a man upon himself and God—that lonesomeness which forgets the excitement of the throng in the inspiration of duty. Never let us hearken to policy or expediency, but pursue the path of conviction and right at all costs. Suffer, if needs be, rather than renounce the truth or dishonor a divine conviction. Imitate Daniel, and as you sometimes sing, "Dare to be a Daniel," rather than follow the expediency men that are all about us. It is the men who have the courage of their convictions that wrestle with the difficulties of their times, and rise above their surroundings to honor God and bless men.

3rd. *You have Daniel's attachment to devotion and prayer.* His very life seems to have been fed and expressed by prayer. It was his approach to God in the simplicity and earnestness of prayer that gave integrity and faithfulness to his life in every situation and trial. Prayer from the heart in that upper room when alone with God brought him strength and courage and power and self-mastery and endurance. Well would it be for men, for nations, for the world, if every statesman would take counsel with God.

And well would it be if every man would delight in prayer, and live and move and breathe in its holy communion and fellowships. Prayer is not only the wealth of poverty, the strength of weakness, the light of darkness, the refuge of distress, the joy of trouble, but it is the very breath and life of the Christian believer. Prayer has often reversed the struggles of war, defeated the craft of statesmen, paralyzed the arm of persecution, and brought to naught the counsels of evil men and the opposition of malignant devils ; because prayer has moved the hand that moves the world. Good men must pray, but not to *inform* God : He knows better what we need than we can express ; or to *change God's purpose* : He knows His own will ; or to be seen of men. They must pray to obtain the refreshment, the nutriment, the power essential to a great life and service. Prayer is power in its highest degree and might.

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### XIII.

## THE RIGHTEOUS SHINING.

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“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”—DANIEL xii. 3.

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**A**MONG men of the most distinguished learning and piety the authenticity of this book has never been questioned. They have regarded it as written by Daniel, who claims to be the author in the expression, “A vision appeared to me, Daniel,” and written at the time and place it says: six hundred years before Christ, on the plains of Shinar. And if modern skeptics require proof of the veracity and inspiration of the predictions of Daniel, they may find it in the fact that it was received as authentic by the Jews, and existed in the Hebrew Bible, and was translated by the Hellenistic Jews into Greek three hundred years before Christ. And further, the direct allusions of Christ and His apostles to the book prove its inspiration. Josephus and other eminent historians also bear direct testimony to its authenticity. The predictions Daniel was inspired to deliver were most remarkable, as was also the clearness with which events were disclosed to him on the prophetic chart. God’s wisdom in veiling prophecy generally in obscurity is manifest. It secures the accomplishment of the Divine moral purpose without the interference of the agent. But Daniel was favored and honored above

others, for he was carried far beyond the ordinary range of prophetic vision. His eye swept down the stream of time, marking the rise and decay of kingdoms, and the revolutions of the world, until he saw established over all the universal kingdom of Christ before the end was. But amid the foliage of prophecy, the details of biography, the epochs of history, and the mysterious chronology of days and seasons, Daniel never fails to proclaim spiritual and saving truths—truths as profitable as they are sanctifying and divine. In the words before us we have stated with much clearness and wealth of suggestion the mission and rewards of life.

#### I. THE COURSE TO WHICH EVERY LIFE IS DIRECTED AND COMMISSIONED.

The terms "they that be wise," and "they that turn many to righteousness" are so connected that you may regard them as correlative, if not synonymous. The wise man seeks to turn many to righteousness as the proper endeavor and end of life; and they that turn many to righteousness wisely answer the Divine mission of manhood and bless the world. So that you have in this expression the character of a true Christian—a *wise man*; and the suggestion that service and usefulness is the true object and commission of life.

1st. *He is a wise man who turns many to righteousness, because he overtakes the ruin of sin and assists to promote man's recovery and Christ's work.* I need not lead you down to the lowest strata of humanity to prove the truth and completeness of man's depravity. The world was not made what we find it to-day. It was created holy and beautiful. Every sound was once harmony, every sight was once lovely; sin has unhinged and disfigured it, and

brought upon it paralysis and disaster. The intellect is darkened by the vapors of sin, the judgment is warped by the prejudice of sin, the conscience is diseased by the corruptions of sin, the heart is the seat of all uncleanness through the pollution of sin. Every spot of earth, from the prison cell to the highest mansion, has echoed the voice of sin. It has trod softly the paths of shame, and burst wildly in the roar of revolution ; and wherever the stream of sin has flowed, human happiness has been swept away and only ruin and wretchedness remained. In this condition man is not only without holiness but without hope. He can no more restore himself than he can create a star, or turn a river up the mountain, or summon the dead to life. But while man was thus ruined by sin, Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost ; exchanging the admiration of angels for the insults of men, the diadem of glory for the crown of thorns, that Calvary might behold God in human nature die, and depraved man find a perfect and available means for his complete restoration to the favor and fold of God again. And the man that turns many to righteousness overtakes the moral ruin of sin by leading the lost one in God's name and in God's appointed way to enjoy the renewal and blessedness of the saved, and, in the possession of the title and the qualification, the franchise and the fitness, for earth's sonship and heaven's glory, to become Godlike again. And when sin is thus restrained, and the ruin of sin thus overtaken by one turning to righteousness, the object of Christ's offering for sin and the end of Christ's work for sinners is fulfilled. And the man who thus elevates his fellow and becomes a co-worker with Christ is wise beyond all expression, and is wisely answering the best ends of his being in the salvation of his fellow-man.

2nd. *He is a wise man who turns many to righteousness,*

*because he fulfils the divine commission of manhood and faith.* Every man and every life is charged by the Creator with a mission to mankind. But the profession and possession of religion superadds a special and more inclusive service and responsibility. We are too forgetful of the claims of our fellows upon us as a part of the same great world family. But we can never overstate the solemn responsibility which our religious profession brings. By diffusing through us the spirit of Christ, and setting before us the example of Christ, and guiding all our actions by the precepts of Christ, spiritual religion lays claim to the entire man and service for the good of others. And if we become narrow, selfish spiritual epicures, living only to save our own souls, in the narrowest and most selfish sense of those words, and are concerned only for our own enjoyment of religion, or how we may escape the penalties of sin, instead of receiving religion that we may impart it to others, we violate the very condition and laws of Christian life. The Bible plainly insists on all who have felt the truth doing their utmost to save the erring. That is God's way of finding the lost. True, He could promote the good of mankind without our service, but our concern is not with what God can do, but what He does. That is His revealed and appointed means. The sun does not write His Gospel on the clouds, nor angel voices proclaim it through the world. He spreads before us the hungry, needy, ruined tribes of earth, and then says, "Go work in my vineyard." "Occupy till I come." The field of occupation may differ. One man may be a parent whose duty it is to watch, and form, and train, and guide, and develop the moral character of his family. Another may be the loving watcher at the bedside, or over the bent and helpless form of some aged paralytic, and it is his to let him down by a bed into the room

where Jesus is. Another may be a self-denying and earnest teacher of some Sabbath class, where every Sunday through much difficulty and after much self-fasting, he finds a field of toil for Jesus. One may be called upon specially to care for the physical wants and woes of suffering ones around him, and his chief duty is to soothe and heal and comfort broken or orphan hearts. Another may realize the deeper spiritual needs and hunger that is about him, and find his chief work in ministering to the soul. But whatever be the form of service all Christians have an apostolic commission, and may share the glories of an apostolic service. Nor must we forget that many Christians are becoming more and more conscious of their obligations, and looking with deeper interest into the needs and sorrows and claims of the fallen and dependent. We recognize with great thankfulness that this is an age of passionate pity for human suffering and oppression and want. Institutions with every charitable purpose are multiplying around us. Retreats and homes for the aged, asylums for the orphan and dependent, hospitals for the sick and incurable, industrial and ragged schools to grapple with ignorance and crime, and a thousand other institutions, that are seeking to educate, and bless, and overtake the moral and spiritual needs of mankind. The haunts of vice are being explored by the feet of pitying love, the whole law of service is undergoing a change, and the lowest criminals are being rescued and changed into citizens and saints, as the choicest fruit of the Christian spirit. But I am afraid that even yet this principle of spiritual life is not sufficiently recognized by *individuals and churches*. We do not understand a drunken Christian, or a profligate Christian, but we seem to admit that strange paradox, an *idle* Christian, though the Bible distinctly affirms, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion,"

and Christ commanded, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." The man who sits still doing nothing, or only grumbling at what others do, will not receive the reward and commendation of the faithful servant. Let us remember that we have all a work to do for Christ and for man, and let us be Christian enough to do it.

## II. THE REWARDS OF SERVICE.

1st. *There is the reward of success and the gratulation and joy that attends it.* The expressions so connected, "they that be wise," and "they that turn many to righteousness" seem to suggest and insure that all wise and well-directed effort must be successful. There is neither doubt nor fear nor hesitation expressed. The same blessed assurance is conveyed in Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians where he writes, "Paul planteth, Apollos watereth, God giveth the increase." And whenever did wise, well-directed and faithful labor for the well-being of others fail of blessing? All departments of Christian toil—the home, the school, the temple, the wayside—bear testimony by a tribute of souls to the success of spiritual service. And in that success, with all its accompanying good, the Christian worker finds an abundant reward. John Newton once said, "If I might but soothe the grief of a child, or hold a cup of cold water to the lips of a beggar, I should feel that God had put signal honor on me." Elizabeth Fry once replied to a friend, who met her on her way to Newgate prison, and expressed her wonder that she (Miss Fry) who had known the rarest pleasures of the gay world, who was a daughter of the Gurneys, should be content to spend her time with outcasts and thieves, "I never knew real happiness until my dear Master and Lord revealed to me what life is for, and I learned like Him to go about doing good." Regarding all Christian

effort in the same high and holy light—to feed the hungry, to clothe the destitute, to wipe away the tear of sorrow, to pour comfort into the heart of the grief-stricken, to shed light and hope into the home of the poor and bereaved, to change the habitation of crime into a temple of God, and the criminal into a saint, to light up the room of the dying with an immortal hope, to lift a life into fellowship with Christ here and hereafter—is a blessed work that brings its own reward. And no one can know the joy, the ecstatic joy, of Christian service but those who engage in it.

2nd. *The reward of heaven with all its compensation and glory.* The word compensation will be accepted by all Christians in this connection with the full recognition of the limit which readily suggests itself. We can never *merit*, but we may truly and worthily *win*, the heavenly rewards. The moment the eye of a saint is turned toward the heavenly home it kindles into eloquent brightness. There he feels every want will be met, and every service honored. Nothing done, or suffered, or sacrificed for Christ will be forgotten or go unrewarded. While thrones and crowns and palaces and earthly grandeur vanish away, the thought, the tear, the gift, the toil for Christ will be remembered. Every pang shall become a pleasure, every scar an abiding memorial of honor, because representing the faithfulness which the diadem shall crown. Then shall the recorded word and look of kindness dropped by one who had no more to give, and the mite, and cup of cold water presented with a heart big enough to have given the world, be divinely acknowledged. And the service of the Sabbath and the life, multiplied a hundred-fold, shall then ripen into a glorious harvest. But while no work shall go unacknowledged, all the glorified will not be rewarded alike. It has been beautifully said, all the saints shall have *one* heaven ; but surely

they who have led many to righteousness shall have *many* heavens in one. Rank, station, conduct, motives, sacrifices, services, all will appear and be duly acknowledged in the *degrees* of the glorified. And when our text speaks of the glorified saint shining as the brightness of the firmament, or as the stars forever and ever, you must not forget the other passage in the fifteenth chapter of the first of Corinthians which speaks of one star differing from another star in glory. Let it never be supposed that Paul, after a life of complete devotion to his Master's glory, shall have no higher heaven than the penitent thief, who was saved by a miracle of mercy when the pendulum of life was making its last vibration. God will carefully see, and heaven will delightedly acknowledge, to, the just claims and rewards of all the saved, so that every redeemed one shall receive according as his work has been.

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XIV.

REST AT LAST.

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“But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”—DANIEL xii. 13.

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**T**HE VIEW prophecy in the light of a partial or complete fulfilment is a great advantage. It satisfies us that the prophet was inspired and his prediction true. Now, of most of the predictions of Daniel it may be said they are fulfilled and have become history. All his predictions relating to the kings of Babylon were fulfilled in his own time. And his predictions relating to the four great monarchies became history long centuries ago. The first or GOLDEN HEAD, viz., Babylon, swayed its wide sceptre over the nations with absolute power until its destruction, as Daniel predicted, by the armies of Cyrus. The second, THE BREAST AND ARMS OF SILVER, viz., the Medo-Persian, established an empire from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof, and continued supreme in power and dominion until the third arose, with HIS BELLY AND THIGHS OF BRASS, viz., the Græco-Macedonian, or, as they are termed in classic literature, the brazen-coated Greeks, because they wore coats and helmets of brass. Under Alexander the Great, and after the battle of Arbela, the Græco-Macedonian Empire became supreme and held universal sway. But it too gave place to a fourth and yet greater power, an IRON KINGDOM, “WITH ITS LEGS AND FEET OF IRON.” The Roman Empire arose and

extended and subdued until its power was universal and co-extensive with the known world. The Iron Kingdom swallowed up all the rest for hundreds of years, until it, according to this prediction, was divided into TEN KINGDOMS. And from that time, Daniel remarks, there shall be no universal monarchy set up on the earth until Christ shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. And this prediction has been singularly fulfilled. Charlemagne and Napoleon Bonaparte tried hard by the sword and by alliances to establish a universal monarchy, but both failed terribly because the Word of the Lord standeth sure. But some of the predictions of this book may yet remain to be fulfilled; and till God's time comes we are commanded in the right spirit to wait and work. Let us do so in the same spirit that Daniel did.

I. THE SUGGESTED COURSE OF A TRUE AND CONSISTENT LIFE—“*Go thou thy way till the end be.*”

1st. *We see that the practical, not the curious and speculative, is the real destiny of life.* “Go thou thy way till the end be” is a standing rebuke to the curious seeking, while it reveals the essential practicalness of true living. It is as though Daniel while gazing upon dynasties changed, crowns tossed as bubbles amid the royal gambling of war, and sceptres and kingdoms and the most brilliant of earthly things a mere wreck on the heaving surge, felt lost in the mysteries of the wonderful vision and wanted still further to know of the times and seasons which God had withheld. And he said, “Oh, my Lord, what shall be the end of these wonders?” And God replied, “Go thou thy way, Daniel, till the end be.” The words are closed and sealed till then, when they shall be unfolded and fulfilled according to the pre-arranged and Divine purpose. This one rebuke and direc-

tion was enough for Daniel and should be for the Christian world. To every one God's voice is, Work. Go thy divinely directed way of service to the very close of life, rather than waste brain and being in profitless and curious questionings. The counsel here given is needed by all, for there are events in every life, more or less wrapped in mystery, the difficulties or meaning of which we are sometimes impatient to know, and vainly strive to solve; whilst some by taste and disposition have little or no sympathy for the practical, but are always running after the curious. Noble and God-glorifying service they call *drudgery*; but they are willing, nay anxious, to talk from morning to night about millenniums, and second comings, and when the battle of Armageddon was fought, and about the seven plagues, and the seven vials, and the scarlet woman, and the lost tribes, and other utterly profitless questions. They could quote all the passages of Scripture that feed a favorite *ism*, but that precious text of the Master's own example, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day," they never study or follow. To all the curious, and speculative, and unprofitable squanderers of life's precious hours and time's golden opportunities these words speak in strong and earnest rebuke, "Go thou thy way till the end be." As Christians and as Churches, duties press upon us, so many and weighty and overwhelming that there is not a moment or an opportunity to be lost. We are called upon of God to purify earth as well as to people heaven, to Christianize the laws and customs and habits of the people as well as to save their souls. And in seeking to sanctify human surroundings, and to dash the cup of poison from the drunkard's lips, and raise the fallen and debased to manhood and citizenship and Christlikeness, and to fulfil our duty to our nation as well as to individuals, to secure the ascendancy of Christian

principles in all representative and official positions, is a work so great and pressing that it challenges our best powers and exacts our most prolonged and self-sacrificing efforts always and everywhere. And that man is not a Christian who neglects his duty to God and to his country that he may gratify an idle curiosity.

2nd. *These words suggest that spiritual life should be maintained and spiritual service performed despite every dividing circumstance.* "Thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days" reminds you in the most solemn tones that evasives and circumstances will not be accepted in the place of duty and fidelity to God, by Him who knoweth all things. We shall stand in our lot, *accepted* if we have been true, *rejected* if we have been false or unfaithful. We shall stand in *our lot*, apart from all persons and separate from all surroundings. Circumstances are influential, and we are often their victims. But we are not *necessarily* swayed by either favorable or unfavorable circumstances. Our moral freedom may, and should, assert its superiority to all surroundings. There is within us a greater power than our environment. Hence we are responsible for our character and conduct, and shall stand in our lot of accountability and destiny. Christian people should not seek to excuse or justify their delinquencies by pleading peculiarity of temperament or situation, for they must give an account to *God*. Let no Christian person suppose that he would be pure and angelic but for some unfortunate something that has prevented it. That is a false plea altogether. If a man cannot be a Christian where he is and where God has placed him, he cannot be a Christian anywhere. If one cannot serve God amid self-denial and difficulties and cross-bearing, he would not in more fortunate and agreeable circumstances. As we think of standing in our lot, and remember the

solemn, overwhelming isolation these words set forth, let us be true to conviction and opportunity and duty.

3rd. *The end.* The end here referred to is the close of time. The end of the days of probation and privilege. The end of the days of conflict and change. And what an end that will be! The end of disputes, and quarrels, and sectarianism. The end of despotism, and rebellion, and of evil. The end of toil, and weariness, and suffering. The end of names, and sects, and isms. The end of war, and want, and ruin. The end of sin and death. Then shall the desert blossom as the rose, and the valley become jubilant with praise. Then shall the nations recount God's marvels, and history retrace His footsteps, and the redeemed earth break forth in one grand harmony of song. Blessed end for the righteous, when all their days of warfare and weeping and trial shall have passed forever. When evil in every form shall have come to a perpetual end. When only goodness and blessedness, and salvation, and glory, and honor shall remain to all eternity.

## II. THE DECLARED BLESSEDNESS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S FUTURE—*"Thou shalt REST."*

The word rest is full of charm and sweetness to the tired pilgrim. Amid the weariness of the present we long for rest. It is nature's sweet restorer, and all nature needs and seeks it. The leafless tree in winter, the quiet bird in its nest, and the sleeping infant in its cot, all follow this same law. And the magic of night, as it noiselessly comes over the face of nature, and moves from land to land with soft and soothing touch, lulls the world to rest. God has made the very best provision to meet this inevitable need. Rest is the stimulus and need and preparation for work. The intellect must have its retreats

and seasons of quietude to sustain its exertions. The mind must have resting places of truth from which to start and to which it may return, or temptation will overwhelm it. The heart must have relaxation or it cannot bear long the strain on its noblest sympathies. The holiest sorrow or joy or love exhaust without repose. And even the spiritual faculty must rest in God, or it will sink into doubt and despair. But the allusion before us is to the rest beyond—the rest that remaineth for the people of God on the other side of the death river in the eternal home above.

1st. *That rest is not one of unconsciousness.* We cannot understand how any wise man can conclude that the human spirit, after death, is unconscious. A man may say, I cannot tell how there can be thought and consciousness in a disembodied spirit. Of course he cannot understand it, because it is outside and beyond the sphere of his present knowledge. Will you think for a moment of what *dreams* may foreshadow or suggest? Sleep is the image of death, and in it the senses are sealed up so that a man knows nothing of what is going on around him. Yet the spirit in dreams opens up new scenes, solves strange and wonderful questions, and seems to think and act in a world of its own. And if the spirit can thus act without the aid of the bodily senses, may it not be an intimation of the capability of the soul living in consciousness and acting freely while the body is lying in the grave. To-day you meet a man on the street, or in his home, full of life and power; five minutes after you hear that he is dead. Which is the conscious, thinking man, that which lies before you, or that which has passed away? That which lies before you is a lifeless body from which the consciousness has passed. If so, then the consciousness must be with the part that has passed away. You might readily conclude that

the state upon which the Christian's spirit enters in the life beyond is full of conscious blessedness from the statements of God's Word. Paul declared that to depart is far better. But with his intellect and range of sympathy and love for Christ and love for men, would he have said "To die is gain" if death was a passing into unconsciousness? Under such circumstances, to such a man, death would be a calamity to be shuddered at. But confident that after death he would enter at once upon a higher and holier life, in the full possession of all the powers and capabilities of his spirit, he hailed the change that freed him from the limitations of the body with delight, and longed for the grander existence beyond.

2nd. *It is a rest of tireless activity and complete victory.* It is rest in contradistinction to the toil and labor and sorrows and disappointments of earth. Can you conceive of a rest where there will be tireless activity and yet no sense of weakness or languor, but immortal vigor and youth and power and susceptibility. A rest of unwearied service, of ceaseless worship; where they serve Him day and night in His temple. A rest of calm, conscious victory over all that disturbs or destroys. A rest that no impatience or disappointment or ambition shall ever disquiet. A rest where the victory is so complete that every mystery shall be changed into a mercy; every Providence into a chapter of goodness; and death itself be swallowed up in victory. A rest where the whole eternity shall become a heaven of unutterable glory and coronation. A rest in the throne, room and bosom of the King of kings. A rest so glorious and perfect that its peace shall never again be disturbed, that its joy shall never again be saddened, that its purity shall never again be marred, that its victory shall never again be challenged. O glorious rest, forever with the Lord.

3rd. *It will be an uninterrupted rest.* In this respect how unlike the experience of earth this rest will be. Here we find rest for our faith, or heart, or hope, or soul confidence for a time only, to be again agitated and tried. And how often, amid the changeful and distracting experience of earth, we long for a rest unbroken and perfect. In heaven the Christian shall reach this experience of uninterrupted rest. Bereaved one, death enters not, slays not, sunders not there. Sick one, disease pales not, enfeebles not, wastes not there. Oppressed one, cruelty injures not, wounds not, crushes not there. Forsaken one, inconstancy disappoints not, chills not, mocks not there. Penitent one, sin exists not, embitters not, burdens not there. Weeping one, tears spring not, scald not, dim not there. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest. Do not, through unfaithfulness, or perversity, or indifference, or sin, miss so grand a home and rest forever.

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## REPENTANCE.

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“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”—LUKE xiii. 3.

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**A**MONG the great crowd who were at this moment listening to Christ, was one who readily seized the opportunity to draw Him out on one of the oldest and commonest beliefs of the Jews. “There were present at that season some that told Him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.” Just when this slaughter of these Galileans occurred is not recorded. It must have been at some feast at Jerusalem, in the outer court of the temple, since the blood of the worshippers was mingled with their sacrifices. But the silence of Josephus the historian about it seems to indicate that riots and massacres during the Procuratorship of Pilate were so frequent that it was needless to recount them all. This piece of news was told to Christ to get His deliverance on the question of the connection between sin and calamity. The Jews believed that all physical maladies and visitations were a direct judgment from God on personal and particular sins. The proverb was commonly held by them: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” The question put to Christ, “Who hath sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” grew out of a strong belief of the Jews that disease or affliction always implied moral and specific wrong. Christ

instantly corrected this view and taught them that they could not judge a man's moral condition by his material surroundings, or by physical laws. A man might be very poor, or afflicted, or tried, and yet be very godly; or a man might be very rich, or prosperous, or healthy, and yet be desperately wicked. Worldly or bodily conditions, He shows, are not the proper measure of a man's spiritual state; but character, the condition of the heart within and before God, is the true test of what we are really and spiritually. Having taught His questioners that every world and condition is governed by its own laws, and not by the arbitrary and foolish beliefs of men, Christ proceeds to show them the common need of man from a common moral state. As all have sinned and all are sinners, all must repent, and all must know the same spiritual change within. From this text we propose to set forth *the doctrine of Repentance*.

#### I. THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE.

It is not easy to draw a line of distinction between the direct approaches to repentance and the workings of repentance itself; or between those operations of the mind and heart which constitute repentance and the effects produced. What leads to and is of the very essence of evangelical repentance, and what flows from it in the experience and life, so interblend and act upon each other that a theologian, however metaphysically gifted, cannot analyze and describe them as the chemist does his drugs. There are points in the experience of genuine repentance not separable, not definable in exact terms and data. But the nature and place of true repentance one cannot fail to understand if he will seek and follow the leadings of God's Word.

1st. *Repentance includes deep and true conviction.* What means God will employ to produce this awakening of the

conscience that we call conviction—the first clearly marked step in the path of true repentance—we cannot determine. Sometimes God makes use of His Word to penetrate between the joints of the harness and search and scorch to the very innermost centre of the being. At other times He uses providential or national visitations, such as reverses, losses, devastating floods, pestilence, war, or some great overshadowing calamity, to awaken the slumbering conscience. At another time He enters the household and takes the child or husband or wife or idol of the family, hoping thereby to arouse the forgetful and unconcerned. The Holy Spirit is also waiting His opportunity to warn, or instruct, or appeal to the alarms or hopes of our inner selves. But whatever instrumentality God may use to bring about this first stage in a repentant state, true conviction there must be in order to true repentance. The mind taught by the truth, the heart aroused by the Spirit, must move the conscience to a deep and sincere conviction of sin. When the conscience is thus aroused, as if by the distinct and peremptory voice of God within, it will press through all questions and difficulties, borne on by the agonies of its own unrest, and the conviction of its own sense of right, to the footstool of the God of mercy. There it voices the soul-tumult, the conscience-deeps that wail and cry out for the living God; there it finds that the convulsions and upheavings of conviction but break the heart that it may be truly and effectually renewed; there it finds that the piercings of conviction but probe to the bottom that the hurt of sin may not be slightly but radically healed.

2nd. *Repentance includes genuine contrition.* A true and godly sorrow for sin is another essential feature in the experience of evangelical repentance. There is a sorrow for sin which does not lead to repentance. The man who

has impoverished himself and his family by his folly, may show unfeigned and fruitless sorrow for the loss of fortune, but that is not contrition. The man whose crimes may have made him the inmate of a prison, may lament over the consequences of his crime, and yet not feel one penitent emotion. The most craven may at times grieve because of the penalties of sin and crawl with abject meanness, until they become things of scorn, to escape the torture and consequences of sin, but shuddering at and dreading the results is not a godly sorrow for sin. Judas in this sense repented. He reflected on his crime with horror and trembled for the result, till goaded by terror he rushed upon a suicide's death? But that is what the Scriptures call the sorrow of the world which worketh death. Contrast with this the repentance of Job. When addressing the God against whom he had sinned, he said: "I repent and abhor myself in dust and ashes." Not dissimilar are the feelings attributed in Scripture to all true and genuine penitents before God. This deep contrition and self-abasement of soul must be felt by every one who truly repents of sin. Feeling that in God's sight he is guilty and that he does not deserve forgiveness, and that he can only hope for it through the love and sacrifice of Christ, he looks on Him whom he has pierced and mourns. Sincere contrition for sin will vary in its outward expressions, because we differ in temperament and experience. In one you may trace it in deep thoughtfulness and reflection; in another it may be seen in excessive weeping. In one it may produce a strange silence that cannot shed a tear to relieve itself; in another it may be frantic with grief. One it may plunge forward into more absorbing business pursuits; another it may unfit for the time for all business or common concerns. But however diverse the expression, real and contrite sorrow for sin there must be. Is it

not natural and right that it should be so? Who that has a proper conception of the foulness and guilt of sin could feel otherwise? When you think of the grand harmony of the universe deranged by the discord of sin; when you think of the strife of self-will in battle with the loving will of God through the opposition of sin; when you think of having had a spirit from God pure and noble, and then see that it has been dulled and degraded through the effects of sin; when you think of having injured another through time, through eternity, by the temptations of sin; when you think of the extinction of love in the soul, and, thereby, the quenching of a light brighter than the sun through the dominion of sin; when you think of sin dashing its angry waves and raging against the purity of the throne of God; tell me if any sorrow, even if it border on despair, can be too great to utter the agony, the horror, of a penitent heart at the vileness and hatefulness of sin. Every enlightened person will feel, as he looks upon the nature of sin and the estrangement it has created between the soul and God, that, if ever he is to receive the pardon of God and live in fellowship with God, his heart must be contrite before God. Well did the repentent Psalmist declare, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart will He not despise."

3rd. *Repentance includes sincere confession.* I need scarcely say that the confession required in Scripture is to God, not to man. It is a wicked perversion of the teachings and genius of God's Word to declare that confession to man or to the Church is necessary in order to salvation. There may be instances where one man has greatly wronged or injured another, and when awakened and brought to Christ he may feel the guilt of that past injustice lying like lead upon his conscience. Then, as he values peace of soul, he

will have, it may be, not only to acknowledge the wrong done, but to make restitution to the injured. But an exceptional instance of acknowledgment between man and man is not the rule and guide for all, especially on great questions of spiritual concern. Let no morbid feelings within, or false teachings of any Church, lead you wrong on this important point. Confession to God there must be in order to true repentance. The Bible clearly shows that on the eve of a new life men were required to acknowledge the iniquity of the past. When David confessed, "I have sinned," then he heard the words of pardon, "The Lord hath also put away thy sin." When the publican humbly cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner," then he went down to his house justified. When the people of Ephesus came forward and burnt their books, and confessed and showed their deeds, then they rose into a Christian Church of power and spiritual character. So it will ever be. If we hide iniquity in our heart the Lord will not hear us, but if we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. If from a diseased sensitiveness we shrink from the honest confession of sin to God, we must never expect the divine favor; but if we frankly confess our sins before Him, He will blot them out forever. Let us then not hesitate, when our hearts are touched by the Spirit of God, to come at once to Him in this spirit of true repentance. Don't delay to pour out before Him the stagnation and wretchedness of the awakened heart, that He may cleanse it from all sin and burst the shackles of the soul for the wider, purer, nobler life of faith. Then the conflict of passion and sin shall give place to the serenity of the new heart and the right spirit.

4th. *Repentance includes a change of heart and conduct.* If I were asked to put the final step of repentance into a sentence, I should say: the divorce of the soul from sin and

its turning to God. Whatever may be our convictions or resolutions, without a change of character there can be no genuine repentance. To be sorry for sin without turning from it is hypocrisy. Sorrow for sin must lead to that entire change of heart and desire and aim which turns utterly away from sin of every form, or, in the absence of such a change, the sincerity of our repentance remains unproved. Thus you see that repentance is more than feeling, or resolving, or confessing, or doing; it is feeling, resolution, confession, action, combined. We may say that repentance is a change of mind toward God in His being, and person, and dealings, and law, and requirements, and towards the whole range of spiritual truth and duty. We may further say that repentance is a change of disposition toward Christ, and the Bible, and the means of grace, and the service and work of God. We may further add that repentance is a change of conduct and life, lifting the whole deportment into new and nobler currents of action. But however we may subdivide the idea, there is the claim and obligation upon every repentant one to turn from sin and live to God. Repentance has never been better defined than in the words of the poet—

“Repentance is to leave the sins we loved before,  
And show that we in earnest grieve by doing so no more.”

## II. THE NECESSITY AND PLACE OF REPENTANCE.

1st. *Repentance is necessary to give us right views of, and to place us in a right relation toward, sin.* Properly to appreciate the great doctrines of revelation, or rightly to value the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we must have a proper estimate of sin. Too much of the teaching of to-day tends to an underestimate of the sinfulness of sin. It is well to dwell more upon the remedy than upon the disease; but the disease must be seen in all its horror and loathsomeness.

ness if we would have it probed to the bottom and cured radically. It is not wise to be whispering "Come to Jesus," when we should be crying, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," and I know of no state of mind or heart that will give us such correct views of sin as a state of true repentance will. From every part of the Bible we see that men who truly repented saw sin and their own relation to it as they should, and from their experience we learn important teachings.

We learn that sin is a *wrong act and state*. Sin is an act of transgression. It is in this form that each of us first meet it in experience. Sin is an act of coming short or of passing over, and we are as culpable for stopping short of the line of command as for going over the line of prohibition. When a wrong act has been done, forthwith the soul of the wrong-doer is in a wrong state. The act is passed, but the guilty state continues. The facts are plain. When a sinful deed is committed, a sinful state exists, and that state is blameworthy and condemnable. We also learn that sin is *separation from God*, that it makes us so averse to God as to dislike Him, and shrink from Him, and say to Him: "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." A sinful character kept and persisted in, at length must snap asunder every cord that binds us to good, nullify every attraction that holds to hope and heaven, and inevitably separate between God and the soul forever. We further learn that sin is *unnatural and delusive*. Sin is a deviation from rule. We sometimes speak of the nature of sin, but properly sin is unnatural. Nature has laws, and order, and harmony. But sin is discord, disorder, lawlessness. Sin is delusive. It deludes as to its nature and results. It rarely appears in its true character, but often puts on the garb of virtue, and so blinds the mind of him who commits it to its moral deformity. It never yield

the enjoyment it promises, but deceives at every turn, until, in the end, its fruit is most bitter and ruinous. Finally, we learn that sin is *self-caused*, and that our personal responsibility is clear and unmistakable. We often speak about our sins being inherited, and assume that our nature is corrupt and our hearts evil because the first human sin corrupted human nature at its very source and thence in all its streams. In that way we often strive about words to no profit, and seek to confuse and shift a responsibility that the Scriptures make as clear as day. But when the heart is humbled before God in repentance, there is no attempt at self-justification or to shirk personal accountability. The cry is, "I have sinned," "I acknowledge *my* transgressions, *my* sin is ever before me," "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." There is no attempt to lay the blame on a tainted nature or a tempting devil, but we feel that the blame and guilt is all our own. Then our personal relation to sin is rightly seen. We see that it is individual—my sin, not Adam's, not another's, but my own act with the consent of my own will. Satan tempted by his bewitching offers, but I fell down and worshipped him. I have been led captive by the devil, but I yielded to him and agreed to the plunder. Oh, it is *my sin*, my own guilty sin. I am responsible. Others have their responsibilities, but that does not remove mine. Upon me rests the guilt and crime of sin. I am self-cursed. I have cherished sinful thoughts and rejected good ones. I have looked at the faults of others and forgotten my own. I have yielded to evil desires and trampled upon good intentions. Oh, I have sinned, I am full of sin. Oh, God, cast me not away in Thine anger.

2nd. *Repentance is a condition of salvation.* We cannot be saved except we repent. Though, remember, it is only a condition. We are not saved *because* we repent. Do not

err in placing repentance properly in our reconciliation to God. Repentance must precede pardon, but do not hamper the Gospel with a network of human conditions and say that repentance must precede our coming to Christ. It is when weeping and humbled at Christ's feet that we best and truly repent of sin. Repentance is necessary to prepare the heart to receive Christ's forgiveness and blessing. The seed scattered upon the beaten highway will not root and grow, for the preparation of the soil is necessary. So the soil of the heart must be upturned and cultivated by a repentant state in order that the truth may grow and bring forth fruit unto eternal life. Just as hunger values food and prepares us gratefully to receive it, or as thirst values water and is so thankful for a draught, so the deep and earnest cravings of the soul awakened by repentance make us truly appreciative of the great and boundless generosity of our Lord. That God, who in His Word requires that men shall hunger and thirst after righteousness that they may be filled, that men shall feel themselves to be weary and heavy-laden rightly to come for His offered rest, wisely requires that men shall feel their need of Him in the upwelling and conscious yearning of the heart in order to salvation. A sovereign or a government might as well offer pardon to any part or province of their country in the heat of rebellion as God could press His forgiveness on men in revolt against his authority and law. The whole soul must go forth to meet Him in a proper attitude of thought, and affection, and trust, and self-surrender, in order that the Unseen One may safely come in and dwell with us unto salvation.

3rd. *Repentance is necessary to escape the punishment of sin.* Retribution, the punishment of sin in the world to come, is plainly taught in Scripture. I know that some would have us believe that future punishment is only a

childish superstition or the dream of a morbid fancy, and that hell is only a world of shadows. But the Bible does not teach so when it declares, "That upon the wicked God will pour indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," or when it declares of the impenitent, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." I admit that much of the language of Scripture on this subject is figurative, but are they not figures of the most intense and unmitigated anguish? Do you say, God is love? Oh, yes, but look around you in the world to-day, and do you not see that His love does not shrink from sternness and punishment? Do you say that God is infinite in mercy? Yes, but He is also perfect in justice. To-day you see that sin operates like other things under the law of cause and effect. In that changed countenance, or emaciated frame, or ruined health, or wasted fortune, you may see one whose bones are filled with the sins of his youth: As you watch the result toward which sin works, and the final effect of which it is the cause, you clearly see that, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." Sin and suffering are inseparable, and that law will not be reversed in any world while God is supreme. So, if we sin, we must suffer; and if we persist in sin, we must suffer forever. Nothing is more certain than that the Scriptures plainly menace the wicked with the punishment of eternal death, and if there is any meaning in language it will be *eternal*. We have no greater proof of God's eternity, or of heaven's eternity, or of the soul's eternity, than of the eternity of the punishment of the lost. When you think of the horror, the unutterable agony of a soul dying in sin and going unpardoned, unsaved, into the presence of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and being banished hopelessly to the perdition of the lost, with all its fearfulness of meaning, will you not flee from the wrath to come by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance,

## JUSTIFICATION.

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“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”—Rom. v. 1.

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**A**MONG evangelical Christians there exists no doubt of the value and importance of this Epistle, and its value at the time of publication must have been immense. Paul reminds us that the Church of Rome had attained some celebrity among sister Churches, for their faith was spoken of throughout the world. But the Church had not grown perfect in Christian doctrine, for Paul longed to instruct and establish them. And to dispel their remaining ignorance, and inform them correctly on man's moral state, and God's system of spiritual recovery, he penned this letter. And from the first day till now this Epistle has been a tower of strength to the believing world, checking the encroachments of infidelity and antichrist, frowning upon apostasy and error, and furnishing a text-book to all who may desire to study in the school of Christ. It testifies with uncompromising severity against sin; it is the most graphic limner of man's depravity; it unfolds clearly the universal remedy of the all-healing Saviour, and contains and defines the most momentous of Christian doctrines. The doctrine here spoken of—justification by faith—was regarded by the apostles and reformers as vital to the life

and stability of the Church. Luther maintained that if this one doctrine were abandoned, the whole Christian system must perish with it. And this doctrine is inseparably connected with Christ's atonement for sin, as clearly set forth in this Scripture.

### I. JUSTIFICATION.

Many writers and speakers on this subject regard the word justification as a *forensic* term, borrowed from a court of justice. As we see it, the application is obscure and incorrect. The primary and distinctive meaning of the word "justify" would be this:—Suppose the person accused of crime was brought to judgment and an enquiry instituted as to whether he had violated the law, and the evidence brought failed to establish the charge, and being found blameless he would be pronounced just; but a case of pardon is perfectly dissimilar to a case of justification. The pardoned man must have been found guilty by evidence or confession, and justice pronounces his guilt; mercy arrests the sentence, and grants forgiveness and liberty, yet he goes forth to the world with the stigma of crime which nothing can reverse. The one who pardons the man cannot change his character or obliterate his guilt. To say that a pardoned man is justified is a perversion of language; and to say that an acquitted man is pardoned is a gross insult to the individual. Then the question would arise, how could any man be justified in the sight of God, "For all have sinned and come short of His glory." Therefore every mouth must be stopped, for the whole world is guilty before God. Man's moral depravity is proved by the clearest evidence, the most universal experience, by painful personal consciousness, and God's own attestations. The best men—the purest in the judgment of the world and Scripture, standing like

polished columns of noble, dignified, virtuous manhood—have ever felt in God's sight to say, "Behold, I am vile, for I have sinned against heaven and before Thee." This being the case, the only escape from the consequences of transgression must be pardon, the blotting out of sin, or passing by sin, through divine mercy. But this in itself is not justification; properly speaking, it is something extended to a man by pure favor on the very ground that he cannot be justified. Here it is that we see that the term has obtained an important theological significance, a *new sense* applying it to a case where it cannot strictly apply, indicating that some ideas have been *imported into it*, which were not there originally, whose parentage must be traced to the New Testament, and that the term as used in the Scriptures, and in reference to sinners, is employed in a sense peculiar to itself, and without parallel in any human transaction. For with God *pardon is justification*. The forgiveness of sin is the recognition of righteousness. Strange and inexplicable as this may appear, Paul's idea of pardon is not merely forgiveness, but justification. One act implies and always accompanies the other. The subject has given rise to a great number of questions as to the *ground* on which the Divine action proceeds, the *principles* by which it is regulated, and the *way* in which it is accomplished. One thing is certain, that the whole transaction is based upon, and springs out of, the *atonement work of Christ*. In the substitutionary sacrifice of the Son of God the whole mystery is explained, so far as it may be explained, and that substitutionary work the Apostle thus epitomizes: "God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Do not mistake the language or suppose that Christ was actually made sin, or a sinner; it means that by ready and voluntary con-

sent, Christ became the representative of the sinner, and accordingly was proceeded against as though He had been the sinner. "For the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "By His stripes we are healed." In the same sense as our *demerit* is imputed to Christ, Christ's *merit* is imputed to us. So that in the eye of justice, and for all the purposes of God's moral government, His sufferings are our sufferings, His obedience is our obedience, and we are made the righteousness of God in Him. Not that Christ's righteousness is actually transferred to us to make us personally meritorious, for moral character cannot be transferred. But the sacrifice for sin offered by the accepted, sinless substitute presented a complete satisfaction to God for man. "So that He could be just while the justifier of him that believeth in Christ." Justification is expressed and simplified in the parable of Joshua the High Priest. Joshua comes in clothed with filthy garments. The voice says, Take away those filthy garments, put a mitre on his head, clothe him in royal raiment, make him rich and fair. These filthy garments representing sin, and the changed state representing regeneration and justification; here you have a graphic picture of the glorious change wrought in man, and for man, through the justification of Christ.

## II. THE DIVINELY APPOINTED WAY OF JUSTIFICATION—

### "*By faith.*"

Faith is one of the simplest subjects of Scripture, not needing some elaborate treatise of man's genius to explain it. Believing is *breathing*, and every man understands that, though he cannot define it. Breathing is easy when the body is right; so is believing when the soul is right. Breathing is impossible to the dead; so is believing from the heart unto salvation to the man dead in trespasses

and in sins. Faith is the *vision* of the soul, supplying the place of sight. Faith is an *act*, not a *state*. Faith is an active creative principle in the soul; it seizes and draws the truth from itself, and appropriates it as a living element within us, vivifying and making part of ourselves the truth which reason or revelation leaves without us. Not a few have mystified faith by talking of different sorts. They have spoken of natural faith, historical faith, spiritual faith. They might as well speak of geological faith, or astronomical faith, or military faith, for faith; while it has innumerable objects, is in *essence one*. Believing in the depths of the ocean does not make it a marine faith. Believing the history of Moses does not make it a biographical faith. A justifying faith is the same in nature and substance as we exercise every day in common and temporal things, only the object to which it looks and on which it rests is different. God's wisdom in making faith the medium of justification is very apparent on the face of things.

1st. *Faith can be understood by all.* Faith, instead of being, as some have stated, the portion only of weak minds and diseased imaginations, is, in a sense, the common heritage of the race, and a thing of daily exercise. What can be done without faith? It is the law and condition and strength of social relations. That child accepts many things before he can reason or understand them for himself, and you applaud his faith in a parent's testimony. You send him to school and there is the same disposition and faith manifested towards the teacher. The mass of men accept faith many facts which they have neither time nor power to comprehend. The world's commerce and trade is carried on on this principle of faith. You believe in the existence of countries and people whom you have never seen. You must and do accept the most of your information

on the testimony of others by faith. You are ill, and send for a physician, and receive his prescription, and take his medicine because you have faith in his skill and art. The world could not hold together without faith. You go from your shop, or mill, or office to your everyday meal in faith, so that faith, as a thing of every day exercise, is and must be easily understood.

2nd. *Faith may be exercised by all.* Justification before God must be on the ground of *human merit* or *divine grace*. Men attempt in vain to unite the two as a conjoined basis of acceptance before God, but they are as discordant as a thing of *right* and a thing of *favor*, as that which you *claim* or *beg*. Paul argues, if justification be by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace can be no more grace. It would lose its nature and cease to be what it is by the admixture, frustrating the whole scheme of redeeming mercy, and falsifying the representations of truth. Justification by any merit of ours is *impossible*. There may be some of you thinking to reach heaven by obedience to law; are you wiser than God? Is the atonement a mistake? Christ is become of no effect unto you who are justified by the law. Ye are fallen from grace. Go to the law and see if every requirement has been fulfilled, and then go deeper and see how far the spirit has been apprehended and lived. Have you loved the Lord with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself? What answer does conscience force you to give? Is there not the blush of guilt on the cheek and the agony of condemnation within? And unless Christ takes you up into His infinite compassion and removes your guilt and sin, you are cast out forever, "For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." Justification by faith is the only ground of acceptance, the only standard of justification attainable by

all. The vilest, the most guilty, the most unworthy may find encouragement and hope here. While they remember that in the sufferings, and obedience, and death of Christ, God's honor has been consulted and man's condition met. Any other course or condition of justification must be limited and partial; all men could not labor, or purchase, or merit it if it depended on any of these. But all can accept a free gift, all may receive the bounty and benevolence of God.

III. THE RESULT OF JUSTIFICATION—“*We have peace with God.*”

This peace is peculiar, and new, and personal, and incomparable. Who can describe the peace which first flows into the forgiven soul, when the storm and tempest of sin and condemnation is passed, and the sweet calm and holy tranquility of Divine peace succeeds; when the soul is again reconciled and at one with God? For this is peace *with* God, that is, between the soul and God. The jarring discords and unrest of sin have given place to sweet communion and holy confidence in God. This peace is *real, conscious, personal*. “*We have peace.*” There is a peace which is not felt and real, but merely outside and superficial. The sunny sides of Etna smile with vineyards, grapes ripen, flowers bloom, birds sing, flocks play, yet beneath all this scene of placid beauty volcanic fires are heaving and young earthquakes struggle in birth throes. Such is the peace the world gives. The lips may smile, the eyes sparkle, and laughter resound, yet underneath all there may be a current of restless agony. We all live a *double life*. The life which others see and think we live, and the life of the soul revealed only to our own consciousness and God. The real life of every man is this inner life

of conflict, and trial, and hope, and fear, and remorse, and self-congratulation. There is nothing this side of eternity so sublime and awe-inspiring as this life-battle which *desolates* or *divines* the soul. You see a man with gentle movement bowing smilingly in his morning greeting as he walks the street. Nothing indicates disquietude within. But look within him in lonely hours, in midnight watchings, in seasons of forced reflection, what a despair flood rushes through him, hurrying him to temporal and eternal ruin. Remorse thunders through every avenue of the soul, passion charges his weak defences, till he cries out in very helplessness. Such is the world's gift to its devotees. The peace of youth and prosperity and pleasure the first storm overthrows; but the real heartfelt peace of the believer is very different. He may be assailed and drenched by the angry tempest without, while the grin of ridicule may mock his exhausting sorrow, but in the inner depths of his soul, at the very springs of feeling, there is calm and peace and holy quietude. His soul is at rest in the conscious confidence that God is his friend, and that all things shall work together for good under God's all-superintending fatherhood. He abideth under the shadow of the Almighty, and there, he finds deep, pure, spiritual, assuring, unchangeable peace, which but anticipates the calm and unruffled peace of heaven. That peace which is imaged in the waveless sea of crystal where storm and tempest may agitate no more. And there ultimately and forever the man who through the blood of the everlasting covenant is justified, and sanctified, and glorified, shall find the fulness of that peace which Christ gives as the portion of them that believe.

## XVII.

# SANCTIFICATION.

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“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”—MATT. v. 8.

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THIS text forms a part of our Lord's incomparable sermon on the Mount. From such lips you would expect the highest truths affecting man's well-being and destiny. And it is only asserting the merest truism to say that in this sermon you are more than gratified. The whole discourse is only such as Christ could deliver. Every sentence is full, is comprehensive, is instructive, is tender, is sublime, is Christlike; and the complete sermon reveals a compass of subject, breadth of view, clearness of perception, force of argument, grandeur of thought, and perfection of style, found nowhere else. There is hardly a topic referring to man's present or future, his outer or inner life, on which it does not treat clearly and faithfully. Christ's utterances are not the blushing, hesitating utterance of a child, but the fearless, emphatic declarations of the God-man. How beautifully He commences His discourse with blessing, and how specific and true is He in the selection of character, and how He unfolds the nature of the blessing to be enjoyed by each. But of the nine distinct characters he pronounces “Blessed,” not one evidences the divinity and spirituality of His teaching as clearly as the one before us.

## I. THE PURITY REFERRED TO—SANCTIFICATION.

The doctrine here stated under the designation "purity of heart" is the doctrine of Christian Sanctification, and on this we present three leading thoughts :—

1st. *The nature of purity of heart, or Sanctification.* Properly to understand this purity we should know the *subject* of it. Purity differs according to the being possessing it. If we speak of *angelic purity* we refer to the unstained and spotless perfection of unfallen spirits. If we speak of *absolute purity*, such as God's, we refer to that state in which the nature has no contact or affinities with evil; is inaccessible to sin, perfectly untemptable. Such a state of purity may not be realized by man here. We must look for a definition in harmony with what Scripture shows to be attainable by man on earth. Two thoughts will render the nature of this purity obvious to you. IT IS AN ENTIRE FREEDOM FROM THAT WHICH ORIGINATES SIN, AND A COMPLETE DELIVERANCE FROM THAT WHICH ADOPTS AND DELIGHTS IN SIN. If you want these thoughts enlarged, that which originates sin is a corrupt heart, for out of the heart proceeds lying, fornication, murder, and all manner of evil. This corrupt and corrupting heart must be changed into a devout and pure heart, and then it must be delivered from that which adopts and delights in sin, whenever a fitting opportunity occurs. Satan and the world are both impure, and will spare no pains to tempt you to sin, especially on the besetting sin, and there is no state of grace in this world which can elevate us above the possibility of temptation from without. Then what we mean by being delivered from that which adopts sin is being freed from that latent, lurking, morbid desire, which loves to think of sin, that would commit sin but for the consequences, that wishes the

punishment was not so severe and open, that dwells with pleasure on forbidden images. There must be a complete separation from this before we are pure in heart. There must be an humble endeavor to be like the Master who said: "Satan cometh and hath nothing in me." What purity is to water, and whiteness is in snow, so must the mind and spirit be of him that is pure in heart. Corrupt passions, self-king, evil thoughts, vitiated affections, wrong desires, everything evil, must give place to the dominion of what is holy and undefiled before we are truly renewed in heart. You see, therefore, that sanctification is not *faultlessness*, which is the mere negation of evil, but *perfection*, which is the positive attainment of all conceivable excellence. It is not to perform an act, but to achieve a character. It is to retrace God's likeness upon the renewed soul.

2nd. *The necessity of purity of heart.* Several arguments might be used to show this necessity; but two or three will now suffice us. (a) *The omniscience of God.* A Jew would more readily understand this term "purity of heart" than we do, the reference being to the purity of the sacrificial victim. The lamb brought for sacrifice must not only be externally without blemish, but its skin was taken off by the sacrificial knife, to see that the flesh was spotless; and then the victim was opened, and divided to see that the internal parts, especially the heart, was perfect, and if a defect was found anywhere it was unfit for sacrifice. Now, God's omniscient eye searches every nature more minutely than any sacrificial operation can. "For his eyes are like a flame of fire running to and fro the earth, discerning the evil and the good," hence the necessity of purity of heart. Had you only to do with human society external faultlessness would be sufficient. Men could require no more than

a blameless upright morality. If they pretended to accuse you of wrong feelings or motives you might at once reply, I have strictly obeyed your laws and you have no right to question my motives, but in dealing with one who knows all our thoughts and feelings and motives—one who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity—we must be holy in the very recesses of the heart, abstaining from that which we would not have an angel record or God witness. (b) *The utter impracticableness of the Divine law without purity.* You cannot really and truly obey the Divine command without purity of heart, for that requires truth in the inward parts. It not only needs purity to meet its outward requirements, but it demands holiness within, and it traces the connection between external obedience and internal conformity. "Thy law have I hid in my heart that I should not sin against thee with my tongue." And it suggests the need of pure motive to stamp the deed with holiness. "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light." And in showing the utter impossibility of fulfilling the Divine law without inward purity, the apostle says, "When I would do good evil is present with me." So that we cannot do the good we would, or that the Word of God commands, until evil is removed by the presence and power of Scriptural holiness. (c) *The impossibility of entering heaven without purity.* The Bible does not speak very minutely about the world of light and glory; the great Sabbath eternity where the soul shall rest in God and throb with the life-beats of immortality. But there is one thing respecting heaven of which it affords the clearest testimony: its *sinlessness*—its HOLINESS. "For without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "There shall in no wise enter in that which defileth or worketh abomination or maketh a lie." Those holy gates forever bar pollution, sin, and shame. Could you suppose

an entrance vouchsafed to an unholy man, it could afford him no pleasure. What delight could a polluted soul have in the presence of a sinless God? What relish could it have for the society of the holy? What gratitude could it express for favors the life had despised? In such a condition, instead of finding heaven a place of unmingled bliss, the soul would find it a place of intolerable anguish. There must be congruity of mind with the source of felicity. Every principle must harmonize with the will and nature of God. There must be holiness of desire, of nature, of life, before heaven is possible. And to miss heaven is the most overwhelming loss; it is to fail of the very end of life and to perish forever.

3rd. *The means to secure purity of heart.* The Holy Spirit is the one efficient agent in the renewal and sanctification of man. Though He neither circumscribes nor supercedes our own exertion, nor sets aside subordinate means, yet no effort of ours will prove successful unless the Spirit unites with it. But while remembering He is the agent, there are means that we must adopt to secure this purity of heart. (a) *We must set our heart upon it as necessary and attainable.* Realizing the degradation and confusion and misery of a mixed state, where all the springs of action are out of harmony with God's law, and conceiving the dignity and essential blessedness of a pure state, the peace, the elevation above the sweep of passion, the glowing vision of the fancy, the oneness of the soul with God, the conscious participation of the Christlike. Keeping this in view, it should be the accepted aim of the life to be pure and holy, and the heart fixed on such a requirement as attainable and necessary, will pray and strive until it grows into the holiness it seeks. But unless you believe it necessary and attainable you will not put forth the required effort to secure it. If

you say, "Purity of heart is good and desirable in many ways," yet "I can do without it," you will not press after it as you should. You must feel, I can and will secure this purity in order to make my calling and election sure. (b) *There must also be a settled conviction of God's ability and willingness to purify the heart.* No one can observe in Scripture God's apparatus of cleansing for the purification of souls, such as washings, sprinklings, baptisms, purifying fires, furnaces of affliction, purgings of conscience, without regarding it as a great, a crowning object, in the Divine arrangement to promote the moral purity of man. God wills, God desires, God seeks, God is able to purify all men and restore them to His image, for He is able to make all grace to abound to them that believe. (c) *And there must be a full belief in the power and efficacy of the atoning blood of Christ to purify the heart.* It is right to regard the atonement of Christ as having made a complete satisfaction to God for man, as being a sufficient sacrifice for human sin, as furnishing a sufficient basis for man's trust and God's honor. And it is sweet to recall, in connection with it, the innumerable sins Christ has blotted out in every age and land. To see Him, one generation after another, giving peace to the penitent, consolation to the broken-hearted, and power to them that have no strength. To see Him kindling the zeal of preachers, illuminating the prison cell of confessors, enrapturing the suffering martyr, and grasping the hand of the feeblest believer as he passes the death river to the life above. But with all this we must believe in the power and efficacy of the blood of Jesus to cleanse from all sin; to sanctify and present a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. If we limit Christ's atoning blood to the satisfaction it affords to God, and the pardon it gives to man, we rob it of its very perfectness, and limit it

at the point where it can bring most glory to God and most blessedness to man. You strip it of the very jewel of the final salvation of those it has redeemed. It is said of the glorified, "They have washed their robes and made them WHITE in the blood of the Lamb." No partial cleansing, but a perfect, a complete renewal does the blood of Jesus secure. There are *subordinate means* that we must adopt so that the larger means may not fail of their effect; we must *avoid all incentives* to impurity, worthless books, vain amusements, suspicious places, filthy language, immoderate eating and drinking, useless or unbecoming apparel, anything that would tend to destroy the spirit and life of holiness. It may, it will, cost a long, fierce struggle and conflict, but practice the required self-denial. "For if thy right hand offend thee cut it off, or if thy right eye offend thee pluck it out, and cast it from thee, for it is better for thee to enter into life halt, or maimed, rather than having two hands or two eyes to be cast into hell fire." And superadded to this, we must *observe all promotives* to purity. Watchfulness, prayer, diligence, honor, self-denial, the Bible, the Church, the Sabbath and all other aids to vital godliness.

## II. THE BLESSEDNESS OF THIS STATE—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

1st. *They shall see God in the more distinct and complete manifestation of His nature and perfection.* God only can reveal Himself. He is the only light by which Himself is seen. Like the *sun*, which can be seen only by its *own light*. If the sun is hid from us, as it is by night, and we were to select all the artificial light in the world and go in search of it, we should not see it until the return of morning, when its own rays would make it visible. So if God is hid He must reveal Himself, or we cannot see Him. And is not God hidden

from a wicked man. Moral depravity sends up a night mist over the soul so that an unbeliever is emphatically without God in the world. But when the nature is renewed the cloud and darkness are dispersed and the moral firmament becomes clear and bright. Then God comes forth in full and attractive manifestation. His *nature* is open to intelligent scrutiny as the perfection of beauty. His *love* in all its intensity, eternity and fulness, is revealed, and His *power* to keep, to guide, to establish, to preserve, is sublimely portrayed. God is light and in that light alone can He be seen.

2nd. *In the mysterious dealings of His providence.* Divine providence mantled in profound concealment is to a wicked man dark and perplexing. He experiences reverses or sorrows, and they are all as black as midnight to him. He may think of fate or chance putting its rude hand upon him, but he is the more confused. Providence is a wheel within a wheel. But he cannot see that the wheel is full of eyes; all is dark because he cannot see God. But the pure in heart see God in His most mysterious providences. Job, in the sudden and unexpected reverse of his fortunes, saw the hand of God. One ran and told him the Sabeans had fallen upon his oxen and asses and carried them away; another ran and told him that the Chaldeans had fallen upon his sheep and camels and taken them away; and yet another ran and told him that a great wind had swept and destroyed the house where his sons and daughters were feasting, so that they were all dead. But pure-hearted Job said, "The LORD,"—not the Sabeans nor the Chaldeans, nor the fire, nor the whirlwind, but "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." And so every renewed man feels, however deep, and still, and dark, and awful the providence, God is in it; not merely His hand but Himself; and if sickness, or bereavement, or loss has shadowed the path, he sees God in it and that is enough.

He may not know the cause or issue of what he suffers, but he feels that ever and everywhere he is engirdled with God, and though the visitation may set him aside, in that seclusion he is closeted with God, he leans on God's arm, weeps on God's bosom, rests under the shadow of God's wing, and though his meal be a crust and water, he banquets with Christ at a royal table; and though his home be a poor cottage, angel visits are often; and though he lie on a solitary bed of straw, there God manifests Himself as He doth not unto the world. His darkest night is arched with a jeweled sky and there is no cloud without its bow of hope.

3rd. *In His ordinances.* There are pleasing and blessed institutions of God's own appointment in connection with every gospel Church. The Sacrament, in which Christ is set forth as slain for us. The preaching of the gospel where all the blessings of the redeeming plan are offered and pressed upon the acceptance of all, and prayer and praise, and every other ordinance of God's appointment, are but so many avenues that lead to God. The wicked man can see no God in any of them. He may admire the taste or talent of the minister, or be impressed with other parts of the service, but he does not see God there. The pure in heart alone meet God in His holy ordinances. To them the means of grace are precious, the medium of sweet and hallowed blessings, where they find shelter and refuge and joy amid the world's cares, where they bring their sorrows and lay them before the throne of Him who shines into the communing heart, and amid the tender and blessed revelations of His ordinances God is indeed present to the consciousness and faith of His people.

4th. *They shall see God as He is in the clear and perfect manifestation of Himself in heaven.* Every holy man regards it as the highest privilege of the heavenly state to enjoy the vision of God. The Divine essence, that which is

God indeed, is invisible to the best men in this world. But in heaven the glorified live in the unveiled light of His countenance. To that beatific vision good men look and long. The vision of friends, and thrones, and crowns, and palms, and harps, and mansions is not so desired as to see "the King in his beauty." Believers in every age have sighed and longed for the sight of God. When Job sat down to gaze with sadness on the wreck of his splendid fortune he was consoled with the hope, "In my flesh I shall see God." When David pictured to himself the greatest joy of heaven he said, "I shall behold His face in righteousness." When John expressed the grandest idea of his own longing and prospect he exclaimed, "We shall see Him as He is." And when Christ would give the listening multitudes an idea of the chief felicity of heaven He declared, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Oh, what a mystery of blessedness does this include. To gaze forever upon that glory, before which angels veil their faces, is the perfection of felicity. In what particular *form* God shall manifest Himself in heaven we cannot say. We know that revelation shall be one of ineffable splendor. The glory of the universe is but a shadow to Him who builds His throne with gems of insuperable brightness and lays the beams of night beneath His feet. So bright is His glory that heaven needs no other light—His presence is eternal noon, eternal summer. But however high or bright or glorious the sight, the pure in heart shall see Him in all His perfections, and gaze upon His exalted dignity and peerless beauty and supreme Godhead. The privilege, the glory, the ecstasy of beholding Him, who, *who* shall describe? What a sight of almost unbearable blessedness, of almost unendurable glory, to behold GOD, face to face. Oh, that we may share in that perfect, that glorious vision in God's own home!

## XVIII.

# GOD'S KINGDOM.

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" Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."—REV. xix. 6.

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**T**HE joyous feelings with which the evangelist would celebrate the reign of Jehovah are in strict agreement with the excellence and proper claim of his theme. Everyone should delight and rejoice in such a glorious fact as the universal establishment of the kingdom of God. Every evil with which our world abounds may be traced to a rejection of the Divine King. In man's original and unfallen state God was in all his thoughts, and his heart was God's temple. It was only after man forfeited his moral rectitude and revolted against the King of kings that sin and all its attendant evils was introduced into this world. And ceasing to be the subject of God's spiritual kingdom, an effort was soon made to change the first and purest form of government—that in which God was the sole civil governor—and the idea of human monarchy was entertained and set up. Whether human kingship, being an outgrowth of the fall, shall again cease when the days of universal righteousness dawn, may be a matter of speculation. One thing, however, is certain, God shall again receive the homage of the undivided heart of the world. And under His glorious reign the moral aspect of society will be so changed that what was a boundless waste shall become fruitful and beautiful; and man be again clothed upon of

God. John appears to have been particularly favored in this vision with the most literal and glorious disclosures of the ultimate victory of the kingdom of God, and his heart thrilled with delight at the fact and its blessed results. And so should our hearts rejoice and be glad at the coming triumphs of Christ.

### I. THE KING.

If the question is asked, Who is this king? the answer is immediately given, "The Lord God omnipotent." So that you see our theme is the King and kingdom of God or Christ—one of the greatest themes of Bible teaching and the chief object of human hope. I am afraid that in the past this theme or truth has been too much neglected. Christ the Saviour has been honored, while Christ the King has been comparatively forgotten. The Throne has been shadowed by the Cross, instead of leading triumphantly up to it. But it will be necessary to remember, while we dwell on the King and kingdom of Christ, that though He is the King of kings, and hath a kingdom of incomparable range and power, yet it hath nothing of the likeness and pomp of earthly kingdoms. For armies, and captains, and royal pageantry, and the splendor of earthly courts, it hath no place or use. Thrones, even episcopal thrones, have nothing to do with it, except to degrade it by violating the imperative commandment and example of the Lord. Let us now look briefly at the King and we will dwell longer on the kingdom.

1st. *A king is the centre of supremacy.* A king is the chief or head of the state he governs. God in this sense is the head over all things in His Church. It is His by right to appoint its ministers, its officers, its servants. There is a most expressive passage in a former part of this book

which points to Christ as sitting in the midst of the golden candlesticks, or churches, holding the stars, or ministers, in His right hand; implying that it is He who appoints the office, gives the commission, and bestows the necessary qualification for the work. The Scriptures make it clear that it was Christ who ascended up on high and gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Church. Paul also thanked God that He counted him faithful, putting him into the ministry. God does call and qualify and commission every true minister and teacher of His word. Physical strength, mental powers, a love for souls, zeal for God's glory and the world's salvation, and every other qualification necessary to this blessed work, is from God. And any ministry that is not heaven called, heaven taught, heaven inspired, heaven saved, heaven sealed, is but a mockery and a usurpation of the most sacred trust on earth.

2nd. *A king is the centre of legislation.* In absolute and autocratic monarchies the king is the source of all law; his will is supreme. But in constitutional monarchies the king is simply the head or centre around which legislation gathers. Yet there his assent and seal is necessary to make the act of parliament law. God is the lawgiver of His Church. It is but the merest truism to affirm that God's law is more holy and perfect and complete than the best laws and constitutions of the wisest statesmen. God's law is perfect, converting the soul; it is *wise*, making wise the simple. The divine law is not the result of any arbitrary expression of God's *will*, but flows necessarily from the purity and wisdom of *His nature*. God's law is what it is and ever must be because He is God. His law is a copy of His mind, a transcript of His nature, it is God in precept.

This divine law furnishes rules and precepts for the whole of life under every condition. The temper, the tongue, the principles, the thoughts, the acts, the aims, the whole man without, within, is clearly directed and completely furnished by this law. Let us be careful that the King's law, not ours, is proclaimed and respected.

3rd. *A king is the centre of protection.* In ancient times kings used to lead forth their armies to battle, and place themselves in the very fore front of the conflict. In this sense, as well as every other, God is the true leader and defender of His people. How completely the whole Church, and every individual member of it, is under the constant guardianship and protection of God. How often in foreign lands and among heathen savages has God defended and preserved the life of His servants. In unnumbered instances He has held back the wrath of man, or turned aside the poisoned arrow, or taken out the sting from the deadliest serpent. Because of this precious truth God's servants have been willing to go anywhere, and have been safe everywhere till their work is done. Blessed, blessed truth, God protects His people, and no weapon that is formed against them can prosper. He that is for us is more than all that can be against us.

## II. THE KINGDOM.

1st. *Look at the foundation of God's kingdom.* This kingdom is founded in mercy, and truth, and goodness, and wisdom, and righteousness, and power, in the perfections and purpose of the eternal God. The sacrifice of Christ is the foundation of the government and kingdom which God seeks to establish among mankind. The sin of man made the atonement necessary, when God had resolved on extending mercy to His guilty creatures, if the principles of eternal

righteousness were to be maintained. The insufficiency of all typical or other forms of sacrifice that had been offered showed the absolute necessity of the one sacrificial offering for sin made by Christ. God must have been constrained, so to speak, by a Divine necessity to show mercy to man, and there must have been a Divine necessity, also, that sin should be punished in the sinner's own person, or in the person of his substitute. The atonement was primarily an act of homage to law, not an appeal to the conscience and affections of man. We read, "He was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It is a misrepresentation of the Christian system to affirm that God, in the severity and intensity of His vindictive justice, would not forgive man until His wrath was appeased, and the claims of the law satisfied, by the agony and death of some innocent substitute. It is He Himself whom we see in Gethsemane; He Himself whom we see on the cross. He who would have discharged all claims upon Him by causing sorrow and shame to descend upon others, stoops Himself to bear the burden of mysterious and inconceivable woe. Those who deny the doctrine of the atonement on the plea of exalting the mercy of God, deny Him the glory of that which constitutes the crown and perfection of human love—self-sacrifice on behalf of those whom love desires to bless. In the sacrificial death of Christ, God at the same time, and by the same act, manifests His holiness and truth, His justice and mercy. Justice is always venerable, but never so venerable as in the act of showing mercy; mercy is always precious, but it is never so precious as when it respects the claims of

justice. Looking then at the redemption of Christ, God's greatest work, a work too great ever to be repeated, a work too glorious ever to be forgotten, a work too complete over to need repetition, you see the one secure foundation on which God's spiritual kingdom among men rests. And other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid. Christ's finished work, meeting all the requirements of God's moral government and man's necessities, is the one true, permanent, and divine foundation of the kingdom of God. But on this foundation the kingdom will be secure, solid, abiding, glorious—a kingdom that floods cannot overthrow, nor storms uproot, nor persecution destroy, nor time decay, nor hell successfully assail. Millions have already built on this foundation and are safe forever. And when the kingdom of God shall be finished, and all nations shall be gathered into it, this foundation shall be found broad enough and safe enough for all and forever.

2nd. *Look at the agency employed to extend God's kingdom.* Looking at the instrumentality that God has appointed for the extension of His kingdom, you see how strikingly it contrasts with the agency employed to extend human kingdoms. Looking at any earthly kingdom, ancient or modern, you will invariably find that every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. Treachery, falsehood, deception of every form, greed, with all the implements of ready and rapid murder that science has invented, and that skill has learned so successfully to use, have all been employed to extend earthly kingdoms. And there are no sadder chapters of human history, or sadder manifestations of the lowest and most brutal passions of men, than those connected with the aggressions and extensions of earthly kingdoms. But the kingdom of God is extended by means far different to the

weapons of military conquest. When Peter drew the sword to defend his Master, Christ instantly commanded him, "Put up thy sword into its sheath, for they that use the sword shall perish by the sword." The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, the Gospel of Christ. This Word or Gospel was the agency employed in first setting up and establishing the kingdom of Christ at the beginning. And small and contemptible as the means appeared to some, the Word grandly prevailed over every form of opposition, and went forth conquering and to conquer. And this same Word is, and ever must be, the agency employed for the restoration of a lost world to the fellowship of the Divine. It is for this reason that the Church has been put in trust of the Gospel. And it is her plainest and most imperative duty to translate and extend and proclaim that Gospel. Some have affirmed that God could, if it pleased Him, convert the world without the Gospel. Without doubt God could have made things differently at the first. By constituting the mind and soul of man differently He might have been influenced and governed by laws perfectly distinct from what are now employed. God might have written His law in the clouds above, or grass beneath. He might have converted the world by the exercise of His omnipotent power. His gentlest whisper might have hushed all storms to rest. A mere speck of His throne might have bathed the world in light and glory. His very smile might have brought to all an everlasting spring. The pulsation of His life might have quickened and thrilled the world's heart forever. But we have not to speculate about what *might have been*, but to accept *what is*. And as things now are, it might as truthfully be said that God could burn without fire, or drown without water, or feed without food.

as that He could instruct intelligent beings without knowledge, and influence moral beings without motive, and reclaim lost men without the power and love of the Gospel of Christ. It is no detraction from the power and honor of God to affirm that He must accomplish results by means suited to the constitution that God Himself hath established. And it is just as certain that God hath commanded the Church to spread His Gospel, and assist to save men by it. Human agency is a distinct and recognized power in the conversions of Scripture. You may see it clearly in the conversion of Peter, who was brought to Jesus by his own brother Andrew; in the conversion of Paul, to whom Ananias was sent that he might receive his sight; in the conversion of Cornelius, to whom Peter was sent that he might teach him the way of truth. Solemn and painful as the responsibility may be, God, having intrusted the Church with the diffusion of the Gospel, holds her responsible for the performance of duty. You ask is it possible that the salvation of any one person can depend on the words and action of another? We say it is possible. And all our exertion in the cause of truth should be based on such a possibility. In too many churches the saved are represented as Heaven's favorites, by an election or separation *from* the lost, rather than as Heaven's ambassadors, by a missionary and philanthropic election, *to* the lost. Let us never use the evasive language of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" But from generation to generation let us press forward this blessed work of winning men to walk in the truth, by the constraint of the Gospel, by the power of the Spirit, by the conviction of truth, by the self-sacrificing, all-ministering love that labors unceasingly if happily it may save some.

3rd. *Look at the blessed results where God's kingdom is established.* Where the kingdom of God is established

every form and system of error is completely overthrown, and an entire change is effected in the moral condition of society. When Christianity commenced her march over the old continent, ages ago, nations then sunk in the grossest barbarism ceased to sacrifice human victims; to wear the skin of their enemies for apparel; to devour the hearts of their captives; to commit suicide from principle; to murder the aged and infirm; to cast their children to the flames. Whilst people who could not be approached because of their ferocity became gentle and meek. Lactantius in his apology for the Christians of his time speaks thus to the heathen: "Give me a man who is passionate, malicious, headstrong; with a few Gospel precepts I will render him as meek as a lamb. Give me one who is covetous, I will soon persuade him to be liberal and charitable. Give me one who dreads affliction and death, I will make him run and court martyrdom. Give me an unclean, intemperate, unjust, cruel, sinful wretch; I will, by the knowledge of Christ, and by the influence of His laws, render him chaste, sober, merciful, innocent and holy." Lactantius had good reason for what he asserts; he had seen the Gospel of Christ take these vices out of men's hearts, and witnessed the happiest effects of it. And what Christianity has done for one age and land it can and will for every land. It has already, in millions of instances, rescued men from the degradation and loathsome corruptions of idolatry and paganism. It has led multitudes from the carelessness, and impurity, and blasphemy of infidelity into the light and fellowship of the truth. And when you look at the transforming influence of God's kingdom upon society wherever it is truly received, you cannot but admire and glory in the moral results. Revenge has dropped his dagger to kiss the hand of mercy. Anger has cleared his cloudy brow and blushed with smiles.

Pride has stooped to kiss humility. Lust has washed his miry hands, and leaned on chaste desire. Falsehood and treachery have laid aside the cloak of deception. Covetousness has unclasped his sinewy hand to deal out to the needy. Hatred has given place to love. Sloth has given place to industry. The prison house has been thrown open, and the basest criminal become a saint of the most high God. The most fallen have risen to manhood and citizenship again. Science, and art, and education, and order, and every good institution flourish wherever this kingdom is established. Every family becomes a church, and every day a Sabbath, and every common meal a sacrament, because holiness unto the Lord is inscribed upon it. And as it wins men to truth, and purifies their hearts, and stimulates their energies, and stirs their charities, it makes them wiser, better, nobler subjects of the manifold governments of this world. Loyal subjects of the eternal King are the most loyal and true citizens of earthly states. The kingdom of God sets itself against no form of civil government, no principle of combination, no mode of activity, personal, social, or political, to which man may be led to attach himself in working out the experiment of freedom and righteousness: while it holds ever before its sight the purifying, elevating, inspiring vision of a pure and perfect order of society, in which men dwell together in brotherhood and peace and love. Looking, then, at the blessed results of God's kingdom shall we not all, in the language of the great and immortal Carey, "Expect great things *from* God; attempt great things *for* God."

4th. *God's kingdom shall yet be universal.* To the God-renewed, God-inspired man the conversion of the world is a glorious certainty. The magnificent predictions of the Bible are sure of being fulfilled. Christ shall yet be King in

fact, as well as by right, over all people. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. God's happiness is not more assured, His throne is not more secure, His existence is not more certain, than the conversion of the world. "As I live, saith the Lord God, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory." The time is coming when the world will need no teacher, because none will be ignorant; no comforter, because none will be miserable or sad; no benefactor, because none will be in distress; no reconciler, because none will be at war. The very deserts of the earth will be covered with moral wealth and beauty; and the songs which filled the night with joy when Christ was born, shall be heard again, in sweeter, loftier strains, proclaiming good will to man: and heaven and earth shall unite to celebrate the final victory of God's love over the hearts of restored men. In spite of the ridicule of some, and the fears of others, our confidence is strong in the Word of God. The promise of the Father unto the Son can never be falsified, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Universal empire—the many crowns—is the special honor reserved by the Father for the Son. "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Does unbelief say, Impossible, it cannot be; why if God were to make windows in heaven it could not be. I beseech you lift up your eyes and see what God hath already accomplished. If it were possible for the apostles of the first century, or for the Reformers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, to look at Christendom as it is at present, the contrast which it would present to the world around them would fill them with hope and assurance. *A world* in which slavery is abolished, in which the

spirit of *Christ's life* is generally *acknowledged* by the public conscience, and is gradually *moulding* the institutions of men, in which almost every great need of mankind has some organization formed for its relief, in which the *sense* of unity and brotherhood among men has been an admitted principle, in which Christian teaching is absolutely free, would contrast most delightfully with the hard, cold, cruel world of their times. Look at the triumphs of God's kingdom in this century. Modern missions to the heathen world were only instituted near the close of the last century, and yet there are to-day between four and five million adherents of Christianity in heathen lands. It is estimated that at the end of the first century there were over half a million of Christians, and at the close of the second century over two millions. By these figures you see that the present Christian Church has won from paganism, in half the time, double the number of followers. And if you take a broader survey, these modern years will be seen to be wonderfully fruitful. In 1500 there were in the world one hundred million nominal Christians; in 1800 there were two hundred millions; in 1885 four hundred and fifty millions. So that Christianity has gained more in this century than in the previous eighteen. I know that, according to the estimate, there are yet one thousand millions of heathen and Mohammedans to be brought to Christ. But will any one look back upon the past and say that there is anything too hard for the Lord. Where once the most dreadful savages held sway, and no man's life was safe, there to-day are training institutions for the education of native teachers, and grand mission centres for the most aggressive Christian work. And are there any difficulties to be encountered in the future more formidable than in the past? Rather, is not God by the world's system of modern commerce, by the

community and co-operation of human interests, by the achievements and discoveries of modern science, opening the world as never before for the spread of His kingdom? Look where you will to-day and there are highways of God advancing to the very heart of hermit nations; and the bosom of what has been called the Dark Continent, the hunting ground of the slave-trader and the most cruel oppressions, is inviting the Christian preacher and teacher and trader. Everywhere ignorance is waiting for illumination, misery sighing for relief, heathenism open to the Gospel. And shall we not become distributors to the hungry multitudes of the bread which the Lord has blessed. In the first days of His kingdom Christ showed that He had power to enlist the most able and devoted band of champions which ever placed itself at the disposal of a king in the whole course of history. And shall there not now arise at the summons of the King Eternal an army of enthusiastic followers, before whose devotion all the loyalties of earthly monarchies are but as pallid marsh fires. Then shall be heard the confession, not of the apostate only, but of the whole world, "Oh, Galilean, thou hast conquered." Don't talk about waiting for the millennium and the second advent, as if the visible manifestation of Christ at His second coming should crush out all the evils which evangelical forces could not subdue. And then go whining hopelessly along as if the forces that are in the world to-day were not mighty enough for the forces of sin. Don't so dishonor God, and belie the whole evangelical plan. In that day when the Comforter came in power upon the Church, the descent of the Spirit was the spiritual advent of the Son of God. And He came to reign—gloriously, universally to reign. And He shall reign. Already the framework of that structure is rising which shall be filled with His life

and irradiate with His glory. And year by year it is rising nearer and nearer to completion. Heathenism is breaking up in its strongholds and looking for the dawn of a brighter day. The Crescent is waning before the advancing glory of the Cross. Education is thinking more about Him who is the light of the world. Literature is becoming more and more inspired with the law and love of Heaven. Science is increasingly reverent and deferential to the Supreme King. Statesmanship is learning more and more of the Golden Rule, and teaching men so to do. And if the Church is true and faithful, and acts up to her creed, very soon a ransomed world shall be found sitting at the feet of Jesus, restored and in its right mind.

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## XIX.

### THE RESURRECTION.

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“But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?”—1 Cor. xv. 35.

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THESE words are placed by the Apostle, as you perceive, in the lips of a caviller who wishes to know how the resurrection is possible, and in what manner the dispersed elements shall be collected and reunited, which question the Apostle answers with much reason, clearness, and power. This chapter, in which more attention is devoted to the discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection than in any part of the sacred Scriptures, is one of the most elaborate, argumentative and masterly ever written. It is the greatest production of the ablest Christian reasoner on the subject. Paul commences by asserting the fact of Christ's resurrection—a fact testified to by the most varied and competent witnesses, and on the truth of that he grounds the hope and certainty of the general resurrection of mankind. Accepting Christ's resurrection as the pledge and first-fruits of the final ingathering to the eternal harvest he proceeds to discuss the doctrine generally. The arguments he uses and the form in which he presents the whole question your study of the chapter has made familiar to you, so that without any further observations I shall invite you to look calmly and candidly at this question.

I. THE PROOF CONFIRMATORY OF THE HOPES OF A GENERAL  
RESURRECTION OF MANKIND SHOWING HOW AND WHY  
WE BELIEVE THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED.

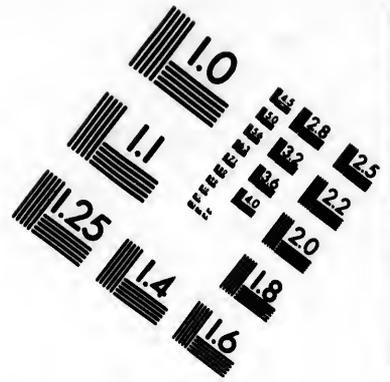
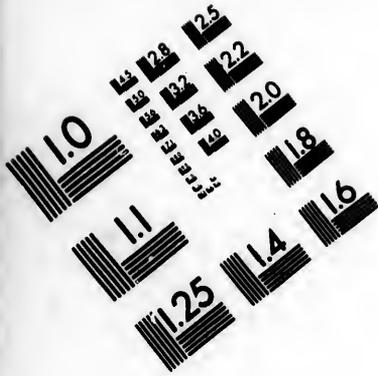
1st. *The general resurrection neither supposes nor requires greater power than God has already shown in the operations of nature.* I know there are difficulties connected with the resurrection of the body which have led the gravest philosophers into a maze of absurdities and left all philosophy at fault, for it is one of those subjects that metaphysical or natural science cannot fully explain. Our knowledge of it must be a matter of pure revelation, and in the absence of such a revelation the wisest heathen sages regarded death as the extinction of being. They doubted even the immortality of the soul, so obscure were their views of the life to come from their ignorance of the doctrine of the resurrection. They knew that their conscious, thinking life was connected with a visible body, and that body, they saw, went to decay, while they received no intimation that that decay would ever pass away, so that there was nothing to bridge over the great chasm that lies between the present and the future. When they looked upon death they saw only ruin earthed among its kindred dusts, and resolved into it. They saw waste and a mouldering heap, but no promise of change. Hence the great Pliny classed the calling of the dead back to life among the impossible things which Deity cannot accomplish. And Celsus regarded the resurrection as the hope of worms, a filthy and an abominable thing, which God neither can nor will do. But why this complete denial of the doctrine of the resurrection? Is there nothing in nature which, rightly viewed, suggests the *possibility* and *probability* of the resurrection of the dead? And does not *Creation* show as much power and

skill and mystery as reorganization and resurrection? Is one mystery greater than another? Or is it harder to compile than to create? The sun sinks upon the western sea and to-morrow reappears in the eastern sky. The moon wanes and vanishes and then returns full-orbed. The earth becomes torpid in winter, but teems with life in spring. Flowers and fruits decay and perish, but revive and re-bloom with recurring seasons. The caterpillar dies as a chrysalis and receives new life as a butterfly. And are not these foreshadowings of the resurrection? It is no greater miracle that a body should have a second existence than a first; that dry bones should at God's bidding put on holy and new forms, than that a dead seed should have power to fill the air with perfume, or a torpid chrysalis burst forth into new activity and life. The only difference is that one is a familiar miracle, and the other we have yet to see. If God could people the fields of space with matchless wonder, and light up the sky with ever-burning germs of stars, and pulsate all animate tribes with life, He certainly can re-construct that which He at first formed from nothing—a far less difficult task. No greater power is necessary to raise the dead than nature already manifests. Creation shows that Omnipotence cannot be limited or baffled, and the resurrection will yet proclaim that nothing is too hard for the Lord.

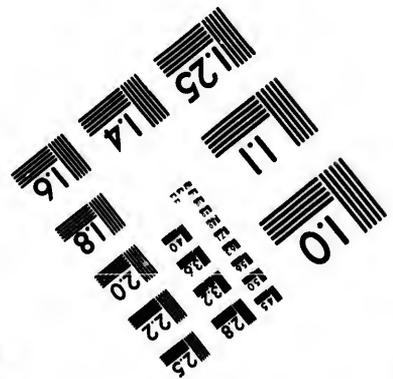
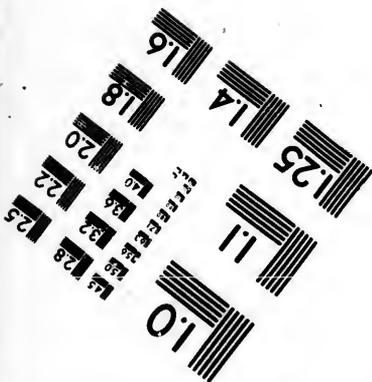
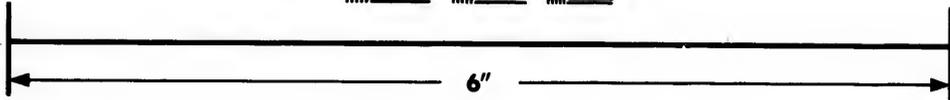
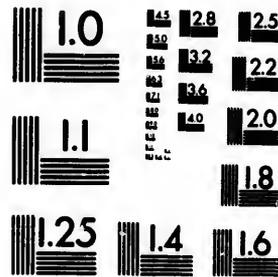
2nd. *The general resurrection is clearly taught in the Holy Scriptures.* Though I do not regard as unimportant the possibility of a resurrection as taught in nature, but rather boast that boundless power linked to infinite knowledge can perform all I am taught to expect, so that my faith hopes for nothing impossible to God; yet in accepting this doctrine as absolutely and undeniably certain, I must take it as a revealed fact, and rest upon the testimony of

God's Word. You remember the doctrine of the resurrection is explicitly and emphatically taught in both parts of Scriptures. In the Old Testament Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Isaiah proclaimed, "Thy dead men shall rise up together with my dead body shall they arise." Daniel exclaimed, "They that sleep in the dust of the earth shall come forth," while Hosea cries out, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave." And in the New Testament it is written with the clearness of a sunbeam, and taught as a favorite theme of apostolic preaching. The apostles guarded the doctrine with a godly jealousy as the very keystone of the Christian arch, the life and power and strength of the revealed system, and a visible door to immortality. Matthias might be a great and good man, but he must not be of the number of the twelve, unless he had been a witness of the resurrection. The Corinthians might have strong faith and good preachers, as is here shown, but if there be no resurrection then are the faith and preaching vain. If this doctrine failed, they which had fallen asleep in Christ had perished, and others were yet in their sins. That is why Paul, when standing before Felix, or Agrippa, or his Hebrew accusers, makes this grand defence, "I confess that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I God, and have hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection of the dead." "And again, as touching the resurrection of the dead, am I called in question." While Jesus strengthens the position immeasurably by confirming the prophetic and apostolic by the words that are divine, teaching with an authority and clearness that only the world's teacher could, this precious article of the Christian faith, "Marvel not at





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this, the hour is coming and now is, when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth." And to His distinct teachings He added the most practical proofs in the victims He reclaimed from the power of death during His sojourn on earth—the most remarkable, Lazarus of Bethany, who had been dead four days, yet Christ burst open the barred gate and summoned Lazarus by His word, and that resurrection was the first sheaf gathered by the great reaper as a specimen of the general resurrection. By it Christ speaks to every bereaved one, "Thy brother shall rise again."

3rd. *The general resurrection is necessary to the completeness of Christ's victory and deliverance.* Redemption is both *virtual* and *actual*. We were virtually redeemed when the covenant price was paid, but actual and true redemption takes place only on the complete liberation of the captive. At present we are bought with a price, and therefore are Christ's freedmen. But as the Apostle expresses it, "We are waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body," when the spoils of death shall be given back and the liberation of the captive complete. We cannot conceive of Christ taking away sin without taking away also the death that came by sin. The enemy must have nothing—not even man's dust—or the victory of Christ would be incomplete. The rescued spirit might have fled to its rest, and Christ have stood confessed the victor and Lord of souls, but how Satan would boast if he could say, "Bruised as my head is, yet man's body is mine henceforth. The dust which Heaven once breathed in, and in which incarnate God once dwelt to honor and exalt it, I have borne *this* off the field in triumph." If there should be one silent body amid the indiscriminate dust of centuries of mortality, from the first victim of the fatal sentence down to the very

last that shall enter the grave of the dead, forgotten, or left to perish unawakened forever, then Satan could say to Christ, "Your deliverance is but partial." But he is denied this boast, for Jesus hath commanded concerning our bones. Despite the worm, despite the winds, despite the fury of the last elemental scattering, the dead shall be raised; the reclaimed relics of the dead are a part of Christ's trophies of redemption. He was to destroy both death and him that had the power of death. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Death is as much His enemy as the sin which entailed it. If, then, Christ must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet, and if the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death, then when the resurrection is universal and perfect; when the worst and best of men are raised incorruptible, and the living changed in a moment; when every soul shall claim its rightful property in God's acre; when the soul on the border of the tomb shall enrobe itself with its other half, and the compound nature of all mankind be reunited forever—then, not till then, shall the sublime shout be heard: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

## II. THE FORM AND CHARACTERISTIC PROPERTIES OF THE RAISED BODY—"With what body do they come?"

1st. *The same body, with all its essential and peculiar features and perfect personal identity as was before possessed, shall be raised.* The question may be asked, "How is it possible that bodies so disjoined, and mixed and scattered, can be re-collected and raised in all their marked and discoverable identity?" Some of the bodies of mankind have been scattered far and wide among the desert sands, others

have been burnt at the martyr's stake, others have been engulfed by the great wide sea, others have been incorporated in the bodies of fish and animals, others have gone to fatten the soil for trees, and shrubs, and grass, and have lived anew in the vegetable, the plant, the sheep, the successive generations, for all matter by an inevitable law is constantly undergoing changes. How, then, can all this be restored and raised? With God this is not impossible. Reasoning from analogy, you see its possibility. Modern science has shown that chemists can mix several liquids of different kinds so that the smallest particles shall partake of all the constituent liquids, and then, by analysis, separate these compound substances into all the simple liquids of which it was composed. There is a story told of a workman of the great chemist Faraday. One day he knocked into a jar of acid a little silver cup. It disappeared, was eaten up by the acid, and could not be found. The question came up whether it could ever be found. One said he could find it; another said it was held in solution, and there was no possibility of finding it. The chemist came in, and put some chemical into the jar, and in a moment every particle of the silver was precipitated to the bottom. He lifted it out a shapeless mass, sent it to the silversmith, and the cup was restored. Now if man, by the aid of science, can detect and separate the mixed substances of nature, is it not rational to infer that the Creator of all things can easily separate the principal atoms of the decayed human form, and raise it on a scale of greatness and perfection? But let me say that the resurrection of every identical particle of the body that was buried is not necessary to the most literal and personal resurrection. Our only difficulty readily to realize this is in our own ignorance of what *personal identity is, and what is necessary to it*. But that the

presence of the same material particles is necessary, reason, and science, and vegetation, and Scripture clearly disprove. According to physiologists, the human body, even during this life, is in a constant state of waste, and mutation, and change: I am not bodily the same man I was a few years ago, and yet the identity of the personal conscious, thinking principle has been no more affected by this change than if it had been a mere change of location, so that while every particle of the body may waste and decay in its process, whilst the principle which thinks, and feels, and knows, remains the same, my personal identity is perfect, be it what it may. And will not this argument apply, with all its force, to the resurrection? The body laid in the grave may change and separate, yet when these, or like particles, are gathered and united to our own proper personal sentient, conscious, germinal self, we shall feel that body is our body, and we are the same men. Any change of corporal particles will be a mere accident, that will not affect personal identity and sameness, according to all right conceptions of individuality. And this the Apostle fully shows by the simple analogy of vegetation. "Thou fool," says he to the sceptical enquirer, "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." As if he had said, "A part of that grain you sow decomposes and wastes, but its indestructible germ, quickened by an unseen power, shoots forth and finally bears the same like grain," and the identity between the wheat sown and the wheat reaped is perfect; so in the resurrection body, some of the atoms that pass to the tomb may decay, but the germ shall be raised in full possession of all the essential qualities, and features, and affections, and lineaments of individual being, so that the very same man who lived and breathed and acted before shall come forth with all the marks of real and striking personality. As Christ

arose, *this same Jesus*, so each will exclaim, "It is *I myself*." And when the soul comes at the bidding of the last trumpet, to make inquisition for flesh, it shall not mistake its partner, but amid the crowd single its other half with ease, and that raised body will represent *its degrees of age*; except the perishable features, all trace of decay will be gone; but children will not rise as men, but with their own body shall all flesh come forth, with every distinction of nature, and sex, and age, and degree of maturity.

2nd. *The body shall be changed and immortalized, in harmony with its new condition and state.* "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." No more sickness to waste, or disease to decay, or carnality to pollute, or animalism to degrade, or death to destroy. All unholy thoughts and inclinations shall have passed away, and the body become a hallowed and glorious temple of the Godlike soul, fitted for the home it shall inhabit, and the spirit it shall encase, and the services it shall fulfil, and the company it shall mingle with forever.

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## REUNION IN HEAVEN.

“I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”—2 SAM. xii. 23.

TRUE greatness and magnanimity of spirit is only manifested in some great misfortune or trial. Crisis reveals character. There is no earthly calamity equal to bereavement; it is the heaviest stroke of the Father's hand, the sharpest arrow from the almighty quiver. As we stand by the lifeless remains of a child or a near friend, and gaze upon the cold form confined before us, we feel that death has made a terrible gap in our social circle. There, we say, lies one who was with me in life's darkest struggle to support and encourage and console me, or a child that was the companion and joy of my heart, but now they are passed from me forever. Such separations are life's sorrow time, testing time. It was in those dark hours of bereavement that the monarch of Israel uttered the sublime hope of our text; and manifested a fortitude and heroism more touching and grand than the bravery of his greatest battles. In all the many-sided and striking events of David's life never did he appear so tender and wonderful as in this dark chapter of his history. On the one side you mourn to see a distinguished and saintly life stained with sin and blood, and most severely condemned and punished. On the other side you see a type of perfect submission to the Divine will, and a magnanimous victory over popular

custom and personal feeling. Our present intention is to take hold of the great truth suggested and expressed in these words—*the reunion and recognition of the saintly departed in the heavenly world*. The question has been asked a thousand times over, Shall we *meet* and *know* and *love* our friends again in heaven? Parents have asked, Shall I meet my redeemed child in the better land? Children have asked, Shall I meet my sainted parent in the glorified home? and the sorrowing disciple or Church have asked, Shall we meet our faithful and beloved ministers again in the glorified realm? Are our departed friends lost or merely gone the earlier home? They are lost, we know, to our present society and toils and pleasures, but are they lost forever; or are they, like the vessels of a fleet parted by the storm, to meet again, when the tempest has passed away, in some quiet and beautiful harbor of safety? Now, I have no hesitation in saying that as I read the Word of God, or interpret the longings of Christian men, the link of Christianity is holier than the common ties of earth and stronger than the grave. The fellowship of faith, the bond of spiritual union is indestructible; and therefore the reunion of the whole family of God is assured. It is to the discussion of this delightful theme we invite you. In justice to this subject it is right that I should first briefly indicate some general points which the text suggests.

It suggests *the separate immortal existence of the soul after death*. "I shall go to *him*" plainly indicates that there must be a *him* of real personal existence to go to. If death was the end of being, then to speak of separate existence beyond it is false and contradictory. Materialism, one of the latest forms of infidelity, teaches that man has but one unmixed, identical nature. That he is altogether earthly. That mind is only the delicate offspring of matter

and that it grows and dies with the body: Now, such views are repugnant to reason, to fact, to revelation. The gradual development of the powers of the soul because of the weakness of the bodily organism is fully admitted. But the growth of the soul, and its identity with the body, is contrary to all reason and experience. Men, the joy and pride of the Church and the world, men of massive intellects and brilliant genius, have had bodies very disproportionate. Biography tells us that the bodies of many celebrated writers have been like moving corpses; yet their giant minds have been clear, vigorous and masculine. And the same is true of the soul at death. Who that is familiar with dying scenes of Christian victory has not beheld the most triumphant and exulting soul-conquests? As the human temple sank to ruin, the spiritual man appeared more affluent in fancy, more expanded in faculty, more perfect in affection. Amid the decay of the body the inner, the spiritual self flashed out brilliantly; showing that death was but the opening of the soul's life; proclaiming the materialistic theory a pitiful sophistry, and the separate existence of the soul a blessed truth. We cannot tell the form the spirit assumes when it leaves the body and takes its place in the higher world; but of this we are certain, it never loses either its *consciousness*, or *identity*, or *life*.

These words further suggest *the doctrine of infant salvation*. Concerning the salvation of children we have the plainest assurance in the Word of God and from the lips of Jesus. Therefore all who have relinquished their loved ones at the stern bidding of death may find those words a true comfort: "I shall go to him." The unchallenged and unchallengeable message of Christ is, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The young, tender, holy departed spirit sits by the pure river, or rests amid the branches of the tree of life. And

every heart-bleeding parent should remember that death plucks to transplant to a better land. That the voice so harsh is only death's rough way of delivering the Master's invitation, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." Do not let any pleading of natural ties or love forbid your children the home and glory to which Christ welcomes them. If He takes them as children they go from the cot to the crown, from the bosom of love and weakness to the kingdom of love and perfection.

#### I. CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIPS WILL BE RENEWED IN THE HEAVENLY WORLD.

In all lands and in all ages the desire for friendship beyond the grave has been cherished. You may take your illustrations from Christendom or heathendom. Cyprian, in the third century, wrote: "Heaven is my fatherland, many of my friends are there, and I long to meet them." Luther's fervent hope to greet his friends and fellow-warriors in the Christian conflict in the other world led him to rejoice at death. Baxter said: "The expectation of meeting my friends in heaven principally kindles my love to them here." Haliburton exclaimed on his death-bed: "I have a father and mother and ten brothers and sisters in heaven, and I shall be the eleventh. Oh, blessed day!" Socrates, with the fatal hemlock in his hand, looked beyond death and said: "Yonder I hope to re-meet such friends as Homer and Orpheus and others, when I shall rise above the din of this sordid scene to join the assembly of departed spirits." Cicero exclaimed: "Oh, glorious day when I shall retire from the scenes of earth and associate with the spirit of the departed, and with my dear Cato, the best of sons and noblest of men." Not only have the most renowned Christians and the wisest sages cherished this desire of renewed

friendship in the better world ; but the wildest sons of the forest have ever loved the tale of the blue mountains where they supposed they should meet the spirits of their ancestors. And even Louis Blanc, the wildest theorist and most brilliant expounder and leader of Socialism in France, before he passed away to the other land, confessed one night to a friend and companion : "I am a freethinker, but impelled by sentiment to clutch at the doctrine of immortality. I could not bear to think that I am never again to meet my departed wife Christina." The cold denials of atheism could not in his best hours silence the pleadings of affection nor crush the yearnings of love. This desire, so universal and passionate, is a fact and fixture in our constitution, put there by God as a prophecy of its fulfilment and gratification. If the universal foreboding of men respecting the general judgment suggests a final judgment, then the universal desire for renewed friendship in another world may suggest the certainty of that renewal. God made the eye to love the beautiful, and He has made beauty for the eye. God made the ear to delight in music, and He has made music for the ear. And so in the constitution of man He has planted a desire for hereafter friendships, to fulfil it in the world to come. Passing to the teachings of the Bible, there we read such passages as these from the lips of Jesus : "Many shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven." From the writings of Paul : "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect." From the utterances of John : "And, lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their

hands." Passages which prove beyond a doubt the communion and commingling of saints in the heavenly world. You have here also *the personal and particular friendships of the glorified state*. "I shall go to him," with the social family representations of Scripture, clearly conveys the near relationships and peculiar ties which bind us to the objects of our love. We renew in heaven the associations of earth, and enjoy again the communion which has brightened so many hours of time. I know that some have asserted that the particular friendships of this life will be unknown in the life to come. That those sweet fellowships which the heart now cherishes will be absorbed in the universal brotherhood of the skies. But those who read with care the Scripture revelations of a future state, and who know the power of true friendship, will feel that what is a source of so much happiness here is a necessity to perfect happiness there. We may infer that particular friendships are in strict harmony with sinless celestial perfection from the example of Jesus. When on earth He loved the Bethany family and other friends in a special manner and to a special degree. And that love He still cherishes toward His people though in heaven. And as Christ was and is, so His people shall be in this respect also when they shall see Him and be like Him.

#### . II. CHRISTIAN RECOGNITIONS WILL GLADDEN AND CONSUMMATE THE REUNIONS OF HEAVEN.

The power of recognition itself is an argument in favor of its heavenly existence. Suppose we were unable to know one another, to know a friend from a foe, what a sad and unsociable world this would be. But we have the power of knowing one another so acutely that we can distinguish individuals after many changes and in other

lands. And does death rob us of that power? If so, friendship in the other world is impossible. But if, as science teaches, not a single particle of matter is lost in the flight of ages, then no part of the human soul can ever be lost. And whatever influence death may exert over the soul, its natural characteristics shall remain to individualize and identify it forever. Our power to recognize each other will be more perfect then than now. Facts confirm this theory. Death did all for Lazarus that it could do, but when he rose from the grave he instantly recognized his relatives and friends. Moses and Elias appeared on the mount of transfiguration, but the apostles not only recognized them but were able to distinguish one from the other. The rich man was in hell without his body, but he clearly recognized Abraham, and Lazarus in his bosom, though their bodies were in the grave. And if the power of recognition remains amid the ravages of death, and the features and personality of the soul abide, then recognition in the future world is certain. But this doctrine of future recognition is sustained by other views. The raised, glorified body will in all its essential features be the same as was deposited in the grave. And if every lineament of the countenance, and tone of the voice, and emotion of the soul shall outlive death, what can prevent the recognition of glorified ones in the world to come? Changed as the body will be when made like unto Christ's glorious body, heavenly perfection will neither disguise nor destroy so desirable a knowledge. There we shall know even as we are known. You may ask *how* this recognition is to be renewed or brought about. It may be by *personal recognition*. A man may have lived in obscurity and enter heaven an apparent stranger, yet some member of his own family among the glorified may have watched his entry to greet him at his coming. And

when so recognized by a loved one how much at home he will instantly feel, and how many other friends he will readily know. This recognition in the heavenly home may be *by introduction or announcement*. The successful racer in the ancient games was proclaimed aloud that all might know him and honor him. A king when he comes to the throne and is to be crowned the monarch of his kingdom is at once announced or proclaimed by the herald. And may not Christ, or an angel, or a saint, be commissioned to proclaim the entry into the higher life of the successful Christian racer, or the crowned saint who is to be a king and a priest unto God forever. Nothing could be more delightful than for the Christian, as he enters that new and unknown kingdom, to be announced to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, who are to be his companions forever. Or the heavenly recognition might be *by conversation*. But however it may be brought about, there is no ground to doubt or dispute on this precious doctrine. God's people shall reunite in heaven with the fullest knowledge and the most perfect fellowship of friendship and love forever.

### III. THE REUNION AND RECOGNITION OF HEAVEN WILL BE IMPROVED AND PERFECTED.

When we meet above in our Father's house, friendship and relationship will have no flaws or imperfections. *Tempers* very often mar present friendships; dogged tempers, or impatient tempers, or sullen tempers, or ungovernable tempers, have often in their own way marred or separated the friendships of earth, but these scars and imperfections will be unknown in that land where all infirmity is laid aside forever. *Jealousy or misunderstanding* has often distrusted the truest friends, and so

alienated the noblest hearts in the present state. And we are often pained to see how small and trivial a thing suspicious jealousy will sometimes make a sufficient reason for severing the kindest hearts in this world. The friendships of the present life are beset with so many perils and dangers from the misunderstandings and weaknesses of men that all along the pathway you may pick up the *debris* of severed homes and hearts and loves. But up yonder in the better land, where the whole family of God meet, there will be unbroken friendship forever. Jealousy, or misunderstanding, or mistrust, or suspicion, or envy, or strife, or hatred, or any of the weaknesses of the flesh, cannot enter there. So that the love which clasps hands in that heavenly home will never unclasp them again. The friendships that mingle in sweetest, purest intimacy there will never part company again. And the brotherhood so perfect and equal and true in that land of holy citizenship shall never be able to look upon distinctions and dignities and possessions with envy evermore. The heavenly inhabitant is too pure and perfect to know one wrong thought. And the heavenly state is too complete and full and satisfying to admit of one unfulfilled desire. To compare heaven with earth in this respect is impossible, it is all *contrast*—a contrast so wide and glorious and blessed that the earthly, with all its drawbacks and imperfections, shall never be seen again. But the heavenly, with its perfect and unshadowed day, shall shine forth with increasing splendor and glory till every one shall say there is nothing left but **HEAVEN.**

