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DOMINION OF FASHION

AND OTHER SERMONS

## TITLES OF THE TWENTY VOLUMES

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- VOL. I. GOD EVERYWHERE.  
II. AMERICA FOR GOD.  
III. THE GOSPEL OF HEALTH, AND OTHER SERMONS.  
IV. DIVINE SATIRE, AND OTHER SERMONS.  
V. GATES OF CARBUNCLE, AND OTHER SERMONS.  
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X. THE SONG OF THE DRUNKARDS, AND OTHER SERMONS.  
XI. DOMINION OF FASHION, AND OTHER SERMONS.  
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Sermons

T. DE WITT TALMAGE

In Twenty Volumes



Vol. 11

**The Christian Herald**

Louis Klopsch, Proprietor

Bible House—A. D. 1900—New York

BLA  
11

## PREFACE\*

In opening the front door of these twenty volumes—containing over five hundred sermons which were selected from thousands of sermons, first with reference to usefulness, and next with reference to variety—an explanatory statement is appropriate.

Many of these sermons were preached during my pastorates in Philadelphia, Brooklyn and Washington, and others in Europe and Asia and the Islands of the Sea. Chronological order has not been observed. Some of them were delivered thirty years apart, a fact that will account for certain dates and allusions. Some reference in almost every discourse will indicate the approximate time of its delivery. The publication of these volumes is partly induced by the kindness with which my previous books have been received by the press here and abroad. I am more indebted than any other man to the newspaper fraternity for the facilities they have given me for preaching the Gospel for over thirty years, without the exception of a single week, in almost every neighborhood of Christendom and in "the regions beyond"; and I gladly avail myself of every opportunity for thanking them and I thank them now.

Of the more than fifty different books published under my name in this country and in other lands, the large majority were not authorized by me for publication, and were pirated. I knew nothing of them until I saw them advertised. I have personally corrected the proofs for these twenty volumes, and their publication is hereby sanctioned. If they shall alleviate the fatigue of some travelers on the rough road of this life, and help some to find the way to the sinless and tearless Capital, whose twelve gates stand wide open, my prayer will be answered.

*T De Witt Talmage*

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## DOMINION OF FASHION

Deut., 22: 5: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God."

God thought womanly attire of enough importance to have it discussed in the Bible. Paul, the apostle, by no means a sentimentalist, and accustomed to dwell on the great themes of God and the resurrection, writes about the arrangement of woman's hair and the style of her jewelry; and in my text, Moses, his ear yet filled with the thunder at Mount Sinai, declares that womanly attire must be in marked contrast with masculine attire, and infraction of that law excites the indignation of high heaven. Just in proportion as the morals of a country or an age are depressed is that law defied. Show me the fashion plates of any century from the time of the Deluge to this, and I will tell you the exact state of public morals. Bloomerism in this country years ago seemed about to break down this divine law, but there was enough of good in American society to beat back the indecency. Yet ever and anon we have imported from France, or perhaps invented on this side the sea a style that proposes as far as possible to make women dress like men; and thousands of young women catch the mode, until some one goes a little too far in imitation of masculinity, and the whole custom, by the good sense of American womanhood, is obliterated. The costumes of the countries are different, and in the same country may change, but there is a divinely ordered dissimilarity which must be forever observed.

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Any divergence from this is administrative of vice and runs against the keen thrust of the text, which says: "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God."

Many years ago, a French authoress, signing herself George Sand, by her corrupt but brilliant writings depraved homes and libraries innumerable, and was a literary grandmother of all the present French and American authors, who have written things so much worse that they have made her putrefaction quite presentable. That French authoress put on masculine attire. She was consistent. Her writings and her behavior were perfectly accordant.

My text abhors mannish women and womanish men. What a sickening thing it is to see a man copying the speech, the walk, the manner of a woman. The trouble is that they do not imitate a sensible woman, but some female imbecile. And they simper, and they go with mincing step, and lisp, and scream at nothing, and take on a languishing look, and bang their hair, and are the nauseation of honest folks of both sexes. O man, be a man! You belong to quite a respectable sex. Do not try to cross over, and to become a hybrid; neither one nor the other, but a failure, half-way between. Alike repugnant are masculine women. They copy a man's stalking gait and go down the street with the stride of a walking-beam. They wish they could smoke cigarettes, and some of them do. They talk boisterously and try to sing bass. They do not laugh, they roar. They cannot quite manage the broad profanity of the sex they rival, but their conversation is often a half-swear; and if they said, "O Lord!" in earnest prayer as often as they say it in lightness they would be high up in saint-

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hood. Withal there is an assumed rugosity of apparel, and they wear a man's hat, only changed by being in two or three places smashed in and a dead canary clinging to the general wreck, and a man's coat tucked in here and there according to unaccountable æsthetics. O woman, stay a woman! You also belong to a very respectable sex. Do not try to cross over. If you do you will be a failure as a woman and only a nondescript of a man. We already have enough intellectual and moral bankrupts in our sex without your coming over to make worse the deficit.

My text also sanctions fashion. Indeed, it sets a fashion! There is a great deal of senseless cant about fashion. A woman or man who does not regard it is unfit for good neighborhood. The only question is what is right fashion and what is wrong fashion. Before I stop I want to show you that fashion has been one of the most potent of reformers and one of the vilest of usurpers. Sometimes it has been an angel from heaven, and at others the mother of abominations. As the world grows better, there will be as much fashion as now, but it will be a righteous fashion. In the heavenly life white robes always have been and always will be in the fashion.

There is a great outcry against this submission to social custom, as though any consultation of the tastes and feelings of others were deplorable; but without it the world would have neither law, order, civilization nor common decency. There has been a canonization of bluntness. There are men and women who boast that they can tell you all they know and hear about you, especially if it be unpleasant. Some have mistaken rough behavior for frankness, when the two qualities do not belong to the same family. You have no right, with your eccentricities,

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to crash in upon the sensitiveness of others. There is no virtue in walking with hoofs over fine carpets. The most jagged rock is covered with blossoming moss. The storm that comes jarring down in thunder strews rainbow colors upon the sky and silvery drops on the orchard.

Then there are men who pride themselves on their capacity to "stick" others. They say: "I have brought him down; didn't I make him squirm!" Others pride themselves on their outlandish apparel. They boast of being out of the fashion. They wear a queer hat. They ride in an odd carriage. By dint of perpetual application they would persuade the world that they are perfectly indifferent to public opinion. They are more proud of being "out of fashion" than others are of being in. They are utterly and universally disagreeable. Their rough corners have never been worn off. They prefer a hedgehog to a lamb.

The accomplishments of life are in nowise productive of effeminacy or enervation. Good manners and a respect for the tastes of others are indispensable. The Good Book speaks favorably of those who are a "peculiar" people; but that does not sanction the behavior of queer people. There is no excuse, under any circumstances, for not being the lady or gentleman. Rudeness is sin. We have no words too ardent to express our admiration for the refinement of society. There is no law, moral or divine, to forbid elegance of demeanor, or artistic display in the dwelling, gracefulness of gait and bearing, polite salutation or honest compliments; and he who is shocked or offended by these had better, like the ancient Scythians, wear tiger-skins and take one wild leap back into midnight barbarism. As Christianity advances there will be better apparel, higher styles

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of architecture, more exquisite adornments, sweeter music, more correct behavior and more thorough ladies and gentlemen.

But there is another story to be told. Wrong fashion is to be charged with producing many of the worst evils of society, and its path has often been strewn with the bodies of the slain. It has set up a false standard by which people are to be judged. Our common sense, as well as all the divine intimations on the subject, teach us that people ought to be esteemed according to their individual and moral attainments. The man who has the most nobility of soul should be first, and he who has the least of such qualities should stand last. No crest or shield or escutcheon can indicate one's moral peerage. Titles of duke, earl, viscount, lord, esquire or partrician ought not to raise one into the first rank. Some of the meanest men I have ever known had at the end of their name D. D. or LL. D. or A. M. Truth, honor, charity, heroism, self-sacrifice, should win highest favor; but inordinate fashion says: "Count not a woman's virtues; count her adornments." "Look not at the contour of the head, but see the way she arranges her hair." "Ask not what noble deeds have been accomplished by that man's hand; but is it white and soft?" Ask not what good sense is in her conversation, but "In what was she dressed?" Ask not whether there were hospitality and cheerfulness in the house, but "In what style do they live?" As a consequence, some of the most ignorant and vicious men are at the top, and some of the most virtuous and intelligent at the bottom.

During our Civil War we suddenly saw men elevated into the highest social positions. Had they suddenly reformed from evil habits or graduated in



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science or achieved some good work for society? No; they simply had obtained a government contract! This accounts for the utter chagrin which people feel at the treatment they receive when they lose their property. Hold up your head amid financial disaster like a Christian! Fifty thousand subtracted from a good man leaves how much? Honor; truth; faith in God; triumphant hope; and a kingdom of ineffable glory, over which he is to reign forever and ever. If the owner of millions should lose a penny out of his pocket, would he sit down on a curbstone and cry? And shall a man possessed of everlasting fortunes wear himself out with grief because he has lost worldly treasure? You have only lost that in which hundreds of wretched misers could have surpassed you; and you have saved that which the Cæsars and the Pharaohs and the Alexanders could never attain. And yet society thinks differently, and we see the most intimate friendships broken up as the consequence of financial embarrassments.

Proclamation has gone forth: "Velvets must go up and plain apparel must come down," and the question is: "How does the coat fit?" not "Who wears it?" The power that bears the tides of excited population up and down our streets, and rocks the world of commerce, and thrills all nations, trans-Atlantic and cis-Atlantic, is clothes. It decides the last offices of respect; and how long the dress shall be totally black; and when it may subside into spots of grief on silk, calico or gingham. Men die in good circumstances, but by reason of extravagant funeral expenses are well-nigh insolvent before they get buried. Wrong fashion is productive of a most ruinous rivalry. The expenditure of many households is adjusted by what their neighbors have, not by what they themselves can afford to have; and the great



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anxiety is as to who shall have the finest house and the most costly equipage. The weapons used in the warfare of social life are not minie rifles and Dahlgren guns and Hotchkiss shells, but chairs and mirrors and vases and Gobelins and Axminsters. Many household establishments are like racing steamboats, propelled at the utmost strain and risk, and just coming to a terrific explosion. "Who cares," say they, "if we only come out ahead?" There is no one cause to-day of more financial embarrassment and of more dishonesties than this determination at all hazards to live as well as or better than other people. There are persons who will risk their eternity upon one pier mirror, or who will dash out the splendors of heaven to get another trinket. There are scores of men in the dungeons of the penitentiary who risked honor, business, everything, in the effort to shine like others. Though the heavens fall they must be "in the fashion." The most famous frauds of the day have resulted from this feeling. It keeps hundreds of men struggling for their commercial existence. The trouble is that some are caught and incarcerated if their larceny be small. If it be great they escape and build their castle on the Rhine or the Hudson.

Again, wrong fashion makes people unnatural and untrue. It is a factory from which has come forth more hollow and unmeaning flatteries and hypocrisies than the Lowell mills ever turned out shawls and garments.

Few people are really natural and unaffected. When I say this I do not mean to deprecate cultured manners. It is right that we should have more admiration for the sculptured marble than for the unhewn block of the quarry. From many circles in life fashion has driven out vivacity. A frozen dignity

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instead floats about the room, and iceberg grinds against iceberg. You must not laugh outright; it is vulgar. You must smile. You must not dash rapidly across the room; you must glide. There is a round of bows and grins and flatteries, and oh's and ah's and simperings, and namby-pambyism — a world of which is not worth one good, round, honest peal of laughter. From such a hollow round the tortured guest retires at the close of the evening, and assures his host that he has enjoyed himself. Thus social life has been contorted and deformed, until, in some mountain cabin, where rustics gather to the quilting or the apple-paring, there is more good cheer than in all the frescoed icehouses of the metropolis. We want in all the higher circles of society more warmth of heart and naturalness of behavior, and not so many refrigerators.

Again, wrong fashion is incompatible with happiness. Those who depend for their comfort upon the admiration of others are subject to frequent disappointment. Somebody will criticise their appearance, or surpass them in charm, or will receive more attention. Oh, the jealousy and detraction and heart-burnings of those who move in this bewildered maze! Poor butterflies! Bright wings do not always bring happiness. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." The revelations of high life that come to the challenge and the fight are only the occasional croppings out of disquietudes that are, underneath, like the stars of heaven for multitude, but like the demons of the pit for hate. The misery that will to-night in the cellar cuddle up in the straw is not so utter as the princely disquietude which stalks through splendid drawing-rooms, brooding over the slights and offenses of luxurious life. The bitterness of life seems not so unfitting when drunk out of a

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pewter mug as when it pours from the chased lips of a golden chalice. In the sharp crack of the voluptuary's pistol, putting an end to his earthly misery, I hear the confirmation that in a hollow, fastidious life there is no peace.

Again, devotion to wrong fashion is productive of physical disease, mental imbecility and spiritual withering. Apparel insufficient to keep out the cold and the rain, or so fitted upon the person that the functions of life are restrained; late hours filled with excitement and feasting; free drafts of wine that make one not beastly intoxicated, but only fashionably drunk; and luxurious indolence—are the instruments by which this unreal life pushes its disciples into valetudinarianism and the grave. Along the walks of prosperous life death goes a-mowing—and such harvests as are reaped! *Materia medica* has been exhausted to find curatives for these physiological devastations. Dropsies, cancers, consumptions, gout and almost every infirmity in all the realm of pathology have been the penalties paid. To counteract the damage, pharmacy has found forthwith medicament, panacea, elixir, embrocation, salve and cataplasm. With swollen feet upon cushioned ottoman, and groaning with aches innumerable, the votary of luxurious living is not half so happy as his groom or coal-heaver. Wrong fashion is the world's undertaker, and drives thousands of hearses to Greenwood and Laurel Hill and Mount Auburn.

But, worse than that, this folly is an intellectual depletion. This endless study of proprieties and etiquette, patterns and styles, is bedwarring to the intellect. I never knew a woman or a man of extreme fashion who knew much. How belittling the study of the cut of a coat or the tie of a cravat or the wrinkle in a sleeve or the color of a ribbon! How

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they are worried if something gets untied or hangs awry or is not nicely adjusted! With a mind capable of measuring the height and depth of great subjects; able to unravel mysteries, to walk through the universe, to soar up into the infinity of God's attributes—hovering perpetually over a new style of cloak! I have known men, reckless as to their character and regardless of interests momentous and eternal, exasperated by the shape of a vest-button.

Worse than all—this folly is not satisfied until it extirpates every moral sentiment and blasts the soul. A wardrobe is the rock upon which many a soul has been riven. The excitement of a luxurious life has been the vortex that has swallowed up more souls than the maelstrom off Norway ever destroyed ships. What room for elevating themes in a heart filled with the trivial and unreal? Who can wonder that in this haste for sun-gilded baubles and winged thistle-down men and women should tumble into ruin? The travelers to destruction are not all clothed in rags. In the wild tumult of the Last Day—the mountains falling, the heavens flying, the thrones uprising, the universe assembling; amid the boom of the last great thunder-peal, and under the crackling of a burning world—what will become of the disciple of fashion?

Watch the career of one thoroughly artificial. Through inheritance, or, perhaps, his own skill, having obtained enough for purposes of display, he feels himself thoroughly established. He sits aloof from the common herd, and looks out of his window upon the poor man, and says: "Put that dirty wretch off my steps immediately!" On Sabbath days he finds the church, but mourns the fact that he must worship with so many of the inelegant, and says: "They are perfectly awful! That man whom you put in my

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pew had a coat on his back that did not cost five dollars." He struts through life unsympathetic with trouble, and says: "I cannot be bothered." Is delighted with some doubtful story of Parisian life, but thinks there are some very indecent things in the Bible. Walks arm and arm with the successful man of the world, but does not know his own brother. Loves to be praised for his splendid house, and, when told that he looks younger, says: "Well, really, do you think so?" But the brief strut of his life is about over. Upstairs he dies. No angel wings hovering about him. No Gospel promises kindling up the darkness; but exquisite embroidery, elegant pictures, and a bust of Shakespeare on the mantel. The pulses stop. The minister comes in to read of the resurrection, that day when the dead shall come up — both he that died on the floor and he that expired under princely upholstery. He is carried out to burial. Only a few mourners, but a great array of carriages. Not one common man at the funeral. No befriended orphan to weep a tear on his grave. No child of want, pressing through the ranks of the weeping, saying: "He was the best friend I had."

What now? He was a great man. Shall not chariots of salvation come down to the other side of the Jordan and escort him up to the palace? Shall not the angels exclaim: "Turn out! A prince is coming." Will the bells chime? Will there be harpers with their harps, and trumpeters with their trumpets? No! No! No! There will be a shudder, as though a calamity had happened. Standing on heaven's battlement, a watchman will see something shoot past, with fiery downfall, and shriek: "Wandering star — for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness!"

But sadder yet is the closing of a woman's life

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who has been worshipful of worldliness, all the wealth of a lifetime's opportunity wasted. What a tragedy! A woman on her dying pillow, thinking of what she might have done for God and humanity, and yet having done nothing! Compare her demise with that of a Harriet Newell, going down to peacefully die in the Isle of France, reviewing her lifetime sacrifices for the redemption of India; or the last hours of Elizabeth Hervey, having exchanged her bright New England home for a life at Bombay amid stolid heathenism, that she might illumine it, saying in her last moments: "If this is the dark valley, it has not a dark spot in it; all is light, light!" or the exit of Mrs. Lenox, falling under sudden disease at Smyrna, breathing out her soul with the last words, "Oh, how happy!" or the departure of Mrs. Sarah D. Comstock, spending her life for the salvation of Burmah, giving up her children that they might come home to America to be educated, and saying as she kissed them good-by, never to see them again: "O Jesus! I do this for thee!" or the going of ten thousand good women, who in less resounding spheres have lived not for themselves, but for God and the alleviation of human suffering.

That was a brilliant scene when, in 1485, in the campaign for the capture of Ronda, Queen Elizabeth of Castile, on horseback, side by side with King Ferdinand, rode out to review the troops. As she, in bright armor, rode along the lines of the Spanish host, and waved her jeweled hand to the warriors, and ever and anon uttered words of cheer to the worn veterans who, far away from their homes, were risking their lives for the kingdom, it was a spectacle which illumines history. But more glorious will be the scene when some consecrated Christian woman, crowned in heaven, shall review the souls that on

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earth she clothed and fed and medicined and evangelized, and then introduced into the ranks celestial. As on the white horse of victory, side by side with the King, this queen unto God shall ride past the lines of those in whose salvation she bore a part, the scene will surpass anything ever witnessed on earth in the life of Joan of Arc or Penelope or Semiramis or Aspasia or Marianne or Margaret of Anjou. Ride on, victor!





## THE OLD HOMESTEAD

Joshua, 24: 15: "As for me and my house, we will serve  
the Lord."



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Joshua, 24: 15: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Absurd Joshua! You have no time for family religion. You are a military man and your entire time will be taken with affairs connected with the army. You are a statesman and your time will be taken up with public affairs. You are the Washington, the Wellington, the MacMahon of the Israelitish army, and you will have no time for religion. But Joshua in the same voice with which he commanded the sun and the moon to halt and stack arms of light on the parade ground of the Heavens, cried out: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Before we make the same resolution it is best for us to see whether it is a wise and sensible resolution. If religion is going to put my piano out of tune, and clog the feet of my children racing through the hall, and sour the bread, and put crape on the door bell, I do not want it to come into my house. I paid six dollars to hear Jenny Lind warble. I never paid a cent to hear anybody groan. I want to know what religion is going to do if it gets into my house; what it is going to do in the dining hall, in the nursery, in the parlor, in the sleeping apartment, in every room from cellar to attic.

It is a great deal easier to invite a disagreeable guest than to get rid of him. If you do not want religion, you had better not ask it to come, for after coming, it may stay a great while. Isaac Watts went to visit Sir Thomas and Lady Abney at their place in

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Theobald, and was to stay a week, and stayed thirty-five years, and if religion once gets into your household, the probability is it will stay there forever.

Now, the question I want to discuss is, what will religion do for the household? Question the first, What did it do for your father's house if you were brought up in a Christian home? This morning the scene all flashes back upon you. It is time for morning prayers in the old homestead. You are called in. You sit down. You are somewhat fidgety while you listen to the reading. Your father makes no pretense to rhetorical reading of the Scripture, but just goes right on and reads in a plain way. Then you kneel. You remember it now just as well as though it were yesterday. If you were an artist you could photograph the scene. You were not as devotional perhaps as your older brother or sisters, and while they had their heads bowed solemnly down, you were thoughtless and looking around, and you know just the posture of your father and mother, and brothers and sisters.

The prayer was longer than you would like to have had it. It was about the same prayer morning by morning and night by night, for your father had the same sins to deplore and the same blessings to thank God for. You were somewhat impatient to have the prayers over. Perhaps the game of ball was waiting, or the skates were lying under the shed, or you wanted to look two or three times over your lesson before you started for school, and you were somewhat impatient. After a while, the prayers were over. Your parents did not rise from the floor as easily as you, for their limbs were rheumatic and stiffened with age.

You recall it all this morning. A tear trickles down your cheek and it seems to melt all that scene, but it comes back again. There is father, there is

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mother, there are your brothers and your sisters. Was that morning exercise in your father's house degrading or elevating? As you look back now thirty, forty, fifty years, you hear the same prayers — the prayers of 1830, 1840, 1850, just as familiar to your mind now as though you had heard them from lips long ago turned to dust. But all that scene comes back. Was it elevating or degrading?

Do you not realize that there has been many a battle in life when that scene upheld you? Do you not remember, O man, when once you proposed to go to some place where you ought not to go, and that prayer jerked you back? Do you know, my brother, my sister, reviewing that scene, bringing it to your mind — do you really think it was good economy or a waste of time that your father and mother spent those moments in prayer for themselves and prayer for their families?

Ah! my friends, we begin to think of it this morning, and we come almost to the conclusion that if those scenes were improving to our father's household, they would be improving to our own household. They did no damage there; they do no damage now. "Is God dead?" said a little child to her father. "Is God dead?" "O, no," he said, "my child; what do you ask that question for?" "Oh," she said, "when mother was living we used to have prayers, but since mother has been dead we have not had prayers. I thought perhaps God was dead too." A family well launched in the morning with prayers goes with a blessing all day. The breakfast hour over, the family scatter — some to household cares, some to school, some to business life in the city. Before night comes there will be many temptations, many perils, perils of misstep, perils of street car, perils of the ferryboat, perils of quick temper; many temptations threatening to do

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you harm. Somewhere between seven o'clock a. m. and ten o'clock p. m. there may be a moment when you will want God. Oh, you had better launch the day right! It will not hinder you, my brother, in business life. It will be a secular advantage.

A man went off to the war and fought for his country, and the children stayed and cultivated the farm, and the mother prayed. One young man was telling the story afterward and some one hearing the story said: "Well, well, your father fighting, children digging on the farm, and mother praying at home; it seems to me all these agencies ought to bring us out of our national troubles."

My friends, what is your memory of those early scenes? Do you think we had better have God in our own household? "But," says some one, "I can't formulate a prayer; I never prayed in my life." Well then, my brother, there are Philip Henry's prayers, and McDuff's prayers, and Doddridge's prayers, and Episcopal Church prayers and a score of good books with supplications appropriate to your family. If you do not feel yourself competent to formulate a prayer, just take one of those prayer books, put it down on the bottom of the chair, kneel by it and then commend to a merciful God your own soul and the souls of your family. "But!" says a father, "I couldn't do that at all; I am naturally so retiring and reticent it is impossible." Well, I think sometimes it is the mother's duty to lead in the prayer. I say, sometimes. She knows more of God, she knows more about the family wants, she can read the Scriptures with more tender enunciation. To put it in plain words, she prays better. I remember my father's praying morning by morning and night by night, but when he was absent from home and my mother prayed it was very different. Though sometimes when father prayed we

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were listless or indifferent, we were none of us listless or indifferent when mother prayed, for we remember just how she looked as she said: "I ask not for my children riches or honor, or fame, but I ask that they all may become subjects of thy converting grace." "Why," you say, "I never could forget that;" neither could you. These mothers seem to decide everything. Nero's mother was a murderess. Lord Byron's mother was haughty and impious. So you might have judged from their children. Walter Scott's mother was fond of poetry. Washington's mother was patriotic. St. Bernard's mother was a noble-minded woman. So you might have judged from their children. Good men have good mothers. There are exceptions to the rule, but they are only exceptions. The father and the mother loving God, their children are almost certain to love God. The son may make a wide curve from the straight path, but he will almost be sure to curve back again after a while. God remembers the prayers and brings the son back on the right road, sometimes after the parents are gone. How often we hear it said: "Oh, he was a wild young man until his father's death; since that he has been very different; he has been very steady since his father's death; he has become a Christian." The fact is that the lid of the father's casket is often the altar of repentance for a wandering boy. The marble pillar of the tomb is the point at which many a young man has been revolutioned. O young man! how long is it since you were out to your father's grave? Perhaps you had better go this week. Perhaps the storms of last winter may have bent the headstone toward the earth, and it may need straightening. Perhaps the letters may be somewhat defaced by the elements. Perhaps the gate of the lot may be open. Perhaps you might find a sermon in the faded grass. Better go out and look. O

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prodigal! do you remember your father's house? Do you think that religion which did well for the old people would do well for you?

It seems to me we are all resolved to have religion in our homes, but let it come in at the front door and not at the back door. In other words do not let us try to smuggle religion into the household. Do not let us be like those families that feel very much mortified when they are caught at family prayers. They do not dare to sing at family prayers lest the neighbors should hear them, and they never have prayers when they have company. If we are going to have religion in our house let it come in at the front door.

Some of our beautiful homes have not the courage of the western trapper. A traveller passing along far away from home was overtaken by night and by a storm, and he put in at a cabin. He saw firearms there. It was a rough-looking place, but he did not dare to go into the darkness and storm. He had a large amount of money with him and he felt very much excited and disturbed. After a while the trapper came home. He had a gun on his shoulder. He put the gun roughly down in the cabin, and then the traveller was more disturbed. He was sure he was not safe in that place. After a while he heard the family talking together, and he said, "Now, they are plotting for my ruin; I wish I was out in the night and storm instead of being here; I would be safer there." After a while the old trapper came up to the traveller and said: "Stranger, we are a rough people; we get our living by hunting, and when we come in at night we are quite tired and we go to bed early, but before we go to bed, we are in the habit of reading a few verses from the Scriptures and say a short prayer; if you don't believe in such things, if you would just please to step outside the door for a little while, I'll be obliged



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to you." There was the courage to do one's whole duty under all circumstances, and a house that has prayers in it is a safe house, it is a holy house, it is a divinely guarded house. So the traveller found out as he tarried in the cabin of that western trapper. But there are families that want religion a good way off, yet within calling distance for a funeral; but to have religion dominant in the household from the first day of January, seven o'clock a. m., to the thirty-first day of December, ten o'clock p. m., they do not want it.

I had in my ancestral line an incident I must tell about for the encouragement of all Christian parents. My grandfather and grandmother went from Somerville to Baskenridge to attend revival meetings under the ministry of Dr. Finney. They were so impressed with the meetings that when they came back to Somerville, they were seized upon by a great desire for the salvation of their children. That evening the children were going off to a gay party, and my grandmother said to the children, "When you get all ready for the entertainment come into my room; I have something very important to tell you." After they were all ready for the gay entertainment, they came into my grandmother's room and she said to them, "Go and have a good time; but while you are gone I want you to know I am praying for you and will do nothing but pray for you until you get back." They went off to the gay entertainment. They did not enjoy it much because they thought all the time of the fact that mother was praying for them. The evening passed. The children returned. The next day my grandparents heard sobbing and crying in the daughter's room, and they went in and found her praying for the salvation of God, and her daughter Phebe said: "I wish you would go to the barn and to the wagon

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house, for Jehiel and David (the brothers) are under powerful conviction of sin." My grandparent went to the barn, and Jehiel, who afterward became a useful minister of the Gospel, was imploring the mercy of Christ, and then having first knelt with him and commended his soul to Christ, they went to the wagon house, and there was David crying for the salvation of his soul — David, who afterward became my father. The whole family was swept into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. David could not keep the story to himself, and he crossed the fields to a farmhouse and told one to whom he had been affianced the story of his own salvation, and she yielded her heart to God. It was David and Catherine, and they stood up in the village church together a few weeks after — for the story of the converted household went all through the neighborhood — in a few weeks two hundred souls stood up in the plain meeting house at Somerville to profess faith in Christ, among them David and Catherine, afterward my parents.

My mother, impressed with that, in after life, when she had a large family of children gathered around her, made a covenant with three neighbors, three mothers. They would meet once a week to pray for the salvation of their children until all their children were converted — this incident not known until after my mother's death, the covenant then revealed by one of the survivors. We used to say: "Mother, where are you going?" and she would say, "I am just going out a little while; going over to the neighbors." They kept on in that covenant until all their families were brought into the kingdom of God, myself the last, and I trace that line of results back to that evening when my grandmother commended our family to Christ, the tide of influence going on until this hour, and it will never cease.

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I tell this for the encouragement of fathers and mothers who are praying for their children. Take courage. God will answer prayer. He will keep his bargain. He will remember his covenant. O! my friends, take your family Bible and read out of it this afternoon. Some of you have such a Bible in the household. I have one in my home. It is a perfect fascination to me. If you looked at it, you would not find a page that was not discolored either with time or tears. My parents read out of it as long as I can remember; morning and evening they read out of it.

When my brother Van Nest died in a foreign land, and the news came to our country home, that night they read the eternal consolations out of the old book. When my brother David died in this city, then that book comforted the old people in their trouble. My father in mid-life, fifteen years an invalid, out of that book read of the ravens that fed Elijah all through the hard struggle for bread. When my mother died that book illumined the dark valley. In the years that followed of loneliness, it comforted my father with the thought of reunion which took place afterward in Heaven. Doré never illustrated a Bible as that Bible is illustrated to me, or your family Bible is illustrated to you. Only three or four pictures in it, but we look right through and we see the marriages and the burials, the joys and the sorrows, the Thanksgiving days and the Christmas festivals, the cradles and the deathbeds. Old, old book. The hand that leafed you has gone to ashes; the eyes that perused you are closed. Old, old book! What a pillow thou wouldst make for a dying head!

I believe this morning that, under the power of the Holy Ghost, there are hundreds of people here who are going to invite religion into their household. Let religion come into the dining-room to break the

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bread, into the parlor to purify the socialities, into the library to select their reading, into the bed-room to hallow the slumber, into the hallway to watch us when we go out and when we come in. There are hundreds of people here this morning, I believe, who are ready to say from their heart with the old soldier of the text, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

My subject has two arms. One arm of this subject puts its hand on the head of parents and says: "Do not interfere with your children's happiness, do not intercept their eternal welfare, do not put out your foot and trip any of them into a ruin. Start them under the shelter and benediction of the Christian religion. Catechisms will not save them, though catechisms are good; the rod will not save them, though the rod may be necessary; lessons of virtue will not save them, though such lessons are very important. Your becoming a Christian through and through, up and down, out and out, will make your children Christians." The other arm of this subject puts its hand on all those who had good bringing up, but as yet have not yielded to the anticipations in regard to them. I said that the path of the son or the daughter might widely diverge, and yet it is almost certain that the wandering one would come around again on the straight path. There are exceptions, and you, my brother, might be the exception. You have curved out long enough; it is time to curve in. Would it not be awful after all the prayers offered for your salvation, if you missed Heaven? If your parents prayed for you twenty years and they offered two prayers a day for twenty years, that would make twenty-nine thousand two hundred prayers for you. Those twenty-nine thousand two hundred prayers are either the mountain over which you will climb into Heaven, or

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they will be an avalanche coming down upon your soul.

By the cradle that rocked your childhood with the foot that long ceased to move; by the crib in which your children sleep night by night under God's protecting care; by the two graves in which the two old hearts are resting, the two hearts that beat with love toward you since before you were born; by the two graves in which you, the now living father and mother, will soon repose, I urge you to faithfulness.

O! thou glorified Christian ancestry. Bend from the skies to-day and give new emphasis to what you told us once with tears and many anxieties. Keep a place for us by your blissful side, for to-day in the presence of earth and Heaven and hell, and by the help of the cross, and amid these overwhelming and gracious memories we all resolve, each one for himself and for his loved ones: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." May the Lord God of Joshua have mercy on us!



## WOMEN OF AMERICA

Prov., 14: 1: "Every wise woman buildeth her house."





## WOMEN OF AMERICA

Prov., 14: 1: "Every wise woman buildeth her house."

Woman a mere adjunct to man, an appendix to the masculine volume, an appendage, a sort of after-thought, something thrown in to make things even — that is the heresy entertained and implied by some men. Woman's insignificance, as compared to man, is evident to them, because Adam was first created, and then Eve. They do not read the whole story, or they would find that the porpoise and the bear and the hawk were created before Adam, so that this argument, drawn from priority of creation, might prove that the sheep and the dog were greater than man. No. Woman was an independent creation, and was intended, if she chose, to live alone, to walk alone, act alone, think alone, and fight her battles alone. The Bible says it is not good for man to be alone, but never says it is not good for woman to be alone; and the simple fact is, that many women who are harnessed for life in the marriage relation would be a thousand-fold better off if they were alone.

Who are these men who, year after year, hang around hotels and engine-houses and theatre doors, and come in and out to bother busy clerks and merchants and mechanics, doing nothing, when there is plenty to do? They are men supported by their wives and mothers. If the statistics of any of our cities could be taken on this subject, you would find that a vast multitude of women not only support themselves, but support masculines too. A great legion of men amount to nothing, and a woman,

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manacled by marriage to one of these nonentities, needs condolence. A woman standing outside the marriage relation is several hundred thousand times better off than a woman badly married. Many a bride, instead of a wreath of orange blossoms, might more properly wear a bunch of nettles and nightshade, and, instead of the wedding march, a more appropriate tune would be the dead march in Saul, and, instead of a banquet of confectionery and ices, there might be more appropriately spread a table covered with apples of Sodom, which are outside fair and inside ashes.

Many an attractive woman, of good, sound sense in other things, has married one of these men to reform him. What was the result? Like when a dove, noticing that a vulture was rapacious and cruel, set about to reform it, and said: "I have a mild disposition, and I like peace, and was brought up in the quiet of a dove-cote, and I will bring the vulture to the same liking by marrying him." So, one day, after the vulture declared he would give up his carnivorous habits and cease longing for blood of flock and herd, at an altar of rock covered with moss and lichen, the twain were married, a bald-headed eagle officiating, the vulture saying: "With all my dominion of earth and sky, I thee endow, and promise to love and cherish till death do us part." But one day the dove in her fright, saw the vulture busy at a carcass, and cried: "Stop that! did you not promise me that you would quit your carnivorous and filthy habits if I married you?" "Yes," said the vulture, "but if you do not like my way, you can leave," and with one angry stroke of the beak, and another fierce clutch of claw, the vulture left the dove eyeless and wingless and lifeless. And a flock of robins flying past, cried to each other, and said: "See there! that

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comes from a dove's marrying a vulture to reform him." Many a woman who has had the hand of a young inebriate offered, but declined it, or who was asked to chain her life to a man selfish or of bad temper, and refused the shackles, will bless God throughout all eternity that she escaped that earthly pandemonium.

Besides all this, in our country about one million men were sacrificed in our Civil War, and that decreed a million women to celibacy. Besides that, since the war, several armies of men as large as the Federal and Confederate armies put together, have fallen under malt liquors and distilled spirits, so full of poisoned ingredients that the work was done more rapidly, and the victims fell while yet young. And if fifty thousand men are destroyed every year by strong drink before marriage, that makes in the twenty-three years since the war one million one hundred and fifty thousand men slain, and decrees one million one hundred and fifty thousand women to celibacy. Take, then, the fact that so many women are unhappy in their marriage, and the fact that the slaughter of two million one hundred and fifty thousand men, by war and rum combined, decides that at least that number of women shall be unaffianced for life, my text comes in with a cheer and a potency and appropriateness that I never saw in it before when it says: "Every wise woman buildeth her house;" that is, let woman be her own architect, lay out her own plans, be her own supervisor, achieve her own destiny.

In addressing these women who will have to fight the battle alone, I congratulate you on your happy escape. Rejoice forever that you will not have to navigate the faults of the other sex, when you have faults enough of your own. Think of the bereave-

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ments you avoid, of the risks of unassimilated temper which you will not have to run, of the cares you will never have to carry, and of the opportunity of outside usefulness from which marital life would have partially debarred you, and that you are free to go and come as one who has the responsibilities of a household can seldom be. God has not given you a hard lot, as compared with your sisters. When young women shall make up their minds at the start that masculine companionship is not a necessity in order to happiness, and that there is a strong probability that they will have to fight the battle of life alone, they will be getting the timber ready for their own fortune, and their saw and ax and plane sharpened for its construction, since "Every wise woman buildeth her house."

As no boy ought to be brought up without learning some business at which he could earn a livelihood, so no girl ought to be brought up without learning the science of self-support. The difficulty is that many a family goes sailing on the high tides of success, and the husband and father depends on his own health and acumen for the welfare of his household, but one day he gets his feet wet, and in three days pneumonia has closed his life, and the daughters are turned out on a cold world to earn bread, and there is nothing practical that they can do. The friends come in and hold consultation. "Give music lessons," says an outsider. Yes; that is a useful calling, and if you have great genius for it, go on in that direction. But there are enough music teachers now starving to death in all our towns and cities to occupy all the piano stools and sofas and chairs and front-door steps of the city. Besides that, the daughter has been playing only for amusement, and is only at the foot of the ladder, to the top of which

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a great many masters on piano and harp and flute and organ have climbed. "Put the bereft daughters as saleswomen in stores," says another adviser. But there they must compete with salesmen of long experience, or with men who have served an apprenticeship in commerce and who began as shop boys at ten years of age. Some kind-hearted drygoods man, having known the father, now gone, says: "We are not in need of any more help just now, but send your daughters to my store, and I will do as well by them as possible." Very soon the question comes up, Why do not the female employees of that establishment get as much wages as the male employees? For the simple reason, in many cases, the females were suddenly flung by misfortune behind that counter, while the males have from the day they left the public school been learning the business.

How is this evil to be cured? Start clear back in the homestead and teach your daughters that life is an earnest thing, and that there is a possibility, if not a strong probability, that they will have to fight the battle of life alone. Let every father and mother say to their daughters: "Now, what would you do for a livelihood if what I now own were swept away by financial disaster, or old age, or death should end my career?" "Well, I could paint on pottery and do such decorative work." Yes; that is beautiful, and if you have genius for it go on in that direction. But there are enough busy at that now to make a line of decorated hardware from here to the East River and across the bridge. "Well, I could make recitations in public and earn my living as a dramatist; I could render 'King Lear' or 'Macbeth' till your hair would rise on end, or give you 'Sheridan's Ride' or Dickens's 'Pickwick.'" Yes; that is a beautiful art, but ever and anon, as now, there is an epi-

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demic of dramatization that makes hundreds of households nervous with the cries and shrieks and groans of young tragediennes dying in the fifth act, and the trouble is that while your friends would like to hear you, and really think that you could surpass Ristori and Charlotte Cushman and Fanny Kemble of the past, to say nothing of the present, you could not, in the way of living, in ten years earn ten cents.

My advice to all girls and all unmarried women, whether in affluent homes or in homes where most stringent economies are grinding, is to learn to do some kind of work that the world must have while the world stands. I am glad to see a marvelous change for the better, and that women have found out that there are hundreds of practical things that a woman can do for a living if she begins soon enough, and that men have been compelled to admit it. You and I can remember when the majority of occupations were thought inappropriate for women; but our Civil War came, and the hosts of men went forth from North and South; and to conduct the business of our cities during the patriotic absence, women were demanded by the tens of thousands to take the vacant places; and multitudes of women, who had been hitherto supported by fathers and brothers and sons, were compelled from that time to take care of themselves. From that time a mighty change took place favorable to the employment of females.

Among the occupations appropriate for woman I place the following, into many of which she has already entered, and all the others she will enter: Stenography, and you may find her at nearly all the reportorial stands in your educational, political and religious meetings. Savings banks, the work clean

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and honorable, and who so great a right to toil there, for a woman founded the first savings bank — Mrs. Priscilla Wakefield? Copyists, and there is hardly a professional man that does not need the service of her penmanship; and, as amanuensis, many of the greatest books of our day have been dictated for her writing. There they are as florists and confectioners and music teachers and bookkeepers, for which they are specially qualified by patience and accuracy; and wood-engraving, in which the Cooper Institute has turned out so many qualified; and telegraphy, for which she is specially prepared, as thousands of the telegraphic offices will testify. Photography, and in nearly all our establishments they may be found there at cheerful work. As workers in ivory and gutta percha and gum elastic and tortoise-shell and gilding, and in chemicals, in porcelain, in terra cotta, in embroidery. As postmistresses, and the President is giving them appointments all over the land. As keepers of lighthouses, many of them, if they had the chance, ready to do as brave a thing with oar and boat as did Ida Lewis and Grace Darling. As proof-readers, as translators, as modelers, as designers, as draughtswomen, as lithographers, as teachers in schools and seminaries, for which they are especially endowed, the first teacher of every child, by divine arrangement, being a woman. As physicians, having graduated after a regular course of study from the female colleges of our large cities, where they get as scientific and thorough preparation as any doctors ever had, and go forth to a work which no one but women could so appropriately and delicately do. On the lecturing platform; for you know the brilliant success of Mrs. Livermore and Mrs. Hallowell and Miss Willard and Mrs. Lathrop. As physiological



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lecturers to their own sex, for which service there is a demand appalling and terrific. As preachers of the Gospel, and all the protests of ecclesiastical courts cannot hinder them, for they have a pathos and a power in their religious utterances that men can never reach. Witness all those who have heard their mother pray.

O young women of America! as many of you will have to fight your own battles alone, do not wait until you are flung of disaster, and your father is dead, and all the resources of your family have been scattered; but now, while in a good house and envired by all prosperities, learn how to do some kind of work that the world must have as long as the world stands. Turn your attention from the embroidery of fine slippers, of which there is a surplus, and make a useful shoe. Expend the time in which you adorn a cigar-case in learning how to make a good, honest loaf of bread. Turn your attention from the making of flimsy nothings to the manufacturing of important somethings.

Much of the time spent in young ladies' seminaries in studying what are called the "higher branches," might better be expended in teaching them something by which they could support themselves. If you are going to be teachers, or if you have so much assured wealth that you can always dwell in those high regions, trigonometry of course, metaphysics of course, Latin and Greek and German and French and Italian of course, and a hundred other things of course; but if you are not expecting to teach, and your wealth is not established beyond misfortune, after you have learned the ordinary branches, take hold of that kind of study that will pay in dollars and cents in case you are thrown on your



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own resources. Learn to do something better than anybody else. Buy Virginia Penny's book, entitled *The Employment of Women*, and learn there are five hundred ways in which a woman may earn a living.

"No, no!" says some young woman, "I will not undertake anything so unromantic and commonplace as that. An excellent author writes that after he had, in a book, argued for efficiency in womanly work in order to success, and positive apprenticeship by way of preparation, a prominent chemist advertised that he would teach a class of women to become druggists and apothecaries if they would go through an apprenticeship as men do; and a printer advertised that he would take a class of women to learn the printer's trade if they would go through an apprenticeship as men do: and how many, according to the account of the authoress, do you suppose applied to become skilled in the druggist business and printing business? Not one! One young woman said she would be willing to try the printing business for six months, but by that time her elder sister would be married and then her mother would want her at home. My sister, it will be skilled labor by which women will finally triumph.

"But," you ask, "what would my father and mother say if they saw I was doing such unfashionable work?" Throw the whole responsibility upon this preacher, who is constantly hearing of young women in all these cities, who, unqualified by their previous luxurious surroundings for the awful struggle of life into which they have been suddenly hurled, seemed to have nothing left them but a choice between starvation and moral ruin. There they go along the street at seven o'clock in the wintry mornings,

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through the slush and storm, to the place where they shall earn only half enough for subsistence, the daughters of once-prosperous merchants, lawyers, clergymen, artists, bankers and capitalists, who brought up their children under the infernal delusion that it was not high-toned for women to learn a profitable calling. Young women! take this affair in your own hand, and let there be an insurrection in all prosperous families of Christendom on the part of the daughters of this day, demanding knowledge in occupations and styles of business by which they may be their own defense and their own support if all fatherly and husbandly and brotherly hands forever fail them. I have seen two sad sights — the one a woman in all the glory of her young life, stricken by disease, and in a week lifeless in a home of which she had been the pride. As her hands were folded over the still heart and her eyes closed for the last slumber, and she was taken out amid the lamentations of kindred and friends, I thought that was a sadness immeasurable. But I have seen something compared with which that scene was bright and songful. It was a young woman who had been all her days amid wealthy surroundings, by the visit of death and bankruptcy to the household turned out on a cold world without one lesson about how to get food or shelter, and into the awful whirlpool of city life, where strong ships have gone down, and for twenty years not one word has been heard from her. Vessels last week went out on the Atlantic Ocean looking for a shipwrecked craft that was left alone and forsaken on the sea a few weeks ago, with the idea of bringing it into port. But who shall ever bring again into the harbor of peace and hope and heaven that lost immortal woman, driven in what tempest, aflame in what

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conflagration, sinking into what abyss? O God, help! O Christ, rescue!

My sisters, give not your time to learning fancy work which the world may dispense with in hard times, but connect your skill with the indispensables of life. The world will always want something to wear and something to eat, and shelter and fuel for the body, and knowledge for the mind, and religion for the soul. And all these things will continue to be the necessaries, and if you fasten your energies upon occupations and professions thus related, the world will be unable to do without you. Remember, that in proportion as you are skilful in anything, your rivalries become less. For unskilled toil, women by the million. But you may rise to where there are only a thousand; and still higher, till there are only a hundred; and still higher, till there are only ten; and still higher, in some particular department, till there is only a unit, and that yourself. For a while you may keep wages and a place through the kindly sympathies of an employer, but you will eventually get no more compensation than you can make yourself worth.

Let me say to all women who have already entered upon the battle of life, that the time is coming when woman shall not only get as much salary and wages as men get, but for certain styles of employment will have higher salary and more wages, for the reason that for some styles of work they have more adaptation. But this justice will come to woman, not through any sentiment of gallantry, not because woman is physically weaker than man, and, therefore, ought to have more consideration shown her, but because through her finer natural taste and more grace of manner and quicker perception, and more

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delicate touch and more educated adroitness, she will, in certain callings, be to her employer worth ten per cent. more or twenty per cent. more than the other sex. She will not get it by asking for it, but by earning it, and it shall be hers by lawful conquest.

Now, men of America, be fair, and give the women a chance. Are you afraid that they will do some of your work, and hence harm your prosperities? Remember that there are scores of thousands of men doing women's work. Do not be afraid! God knows the end from the beginning, and he knows how many people this world can feed and shelter, and when it gets too full he will end the world, and, if need be, start another. God will halt the inventive faculty, which, by producing a machine that will do the work of ten or twenty or a hundred men and women, will leave that number of people without work. I hope that there will not be invented another sewing machine or reaping machine or corn-thresher or any other new machine for the next five hundred years. We want no more wooden hands and iron hands and steel hands and electric hands substituted for men and women, who would otherwise do the work and get the pay and earn the livelihood. But God will arrange all, and all we have to do is to do our best and trust him for the rest.

Let me cheer all women fighting the battle of life alone with the fact of thousands of women who have won the day. Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke Female Seminary, fought the battle alone; Adelaide Newton, the tract distributor, alone; Fidelity Fisk, the consecrated missionary, alone; Dorothea Dix, the angel of the insane asylums, alone; Caro-

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line Herschel, the indispensable re-enforcement of her brother, alone; Maria Takrzewska, the heroine of the Berlin hospital, alone; Helen Chalmers, patron of sewing-schools for the poor of Edinburgh, alone. And thousands and tens of thousands of women, of whose bravery and self-sacrifice and glory of character the world has made no record, but whose deeds are in the heavenly archives of martyrs who fought the battle alone, and, though unrecognized for the short thirty or fifty or eighty years of their earthly existence, shall through the quintillion ages of the higher world be pointed out with the admiring cry: "These are they who came out of great tribulation and had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb."

Let me also say, for the encouragement of all women fighting the battle of life alone, that their conflict will soon end. There is one word written on the faces of many of them, and that word is Despair. My sister, you need appeal to Christ, who comforted the sisters of Bethany in domestic trouble, and who in his last hours forgot all the pangs of his own hands and feet and heart, as he looked into the face of maternal anguish, and called a friend's attention to it, in substance, saying: "John, I cannot take care of her any longer. Do for her as I would have done, if I had lived. Behold thy mother!" If, under the pressure of unrewarded and unappreciated work, your hair is whitening and the wrinkles come, rejoice that you are nearing the hour of escape from your very last fatigue, and may your departure be as pleasant as that of Isabella Graham, who closed her life with a smile and the word "Peace."

The daughter of a regiment in any army is all surrounded by bayonets of defense, and, in the battle,

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whoever falls, she is kept safe. And you are the daughter of the regiment commanded by the Lord of Hosts. After all, you are not fighting the battle of life alone. All heaven is on your side. You will be wise to appropriate to yourself the words of sacred rhythm:

One who has known in storms to sail  
I have on board;  
Above the roaring of the gale  
I hear my Lord.

He holds me; when the billows smite  
I shall not fall.  
If short, 'tis sharp; if long, 'tis light;  
He tempers all.

## WORLDLY MARRIAGES

I Sam., 25: 2: "And there was a man in Maon whose possessions were in Carmel, and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats."





## WORLDLY MARRIAGES

I Sam., 25: 2: "And there was a man in Maon whose possessions were in Carmel, and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats."

My text introduces us to a drunken bloat of large property. Before the day of safety deposits and government bonds and national banks, people had their investment in flocks and herds, and this man, Nabal, of the text, had much of his possessions in live-stock. He came also of a distinguished family, and had glorious Caleb for an ancestor. But this descendant was a sneak, a churl, a sot and a fool. One instance to illustrate: It was a wool-raising country, and at the time of shearing a great feast was prepared for the shearers; and David and his warriors, who had in other days saved from destruction the threshing-floors of Nabal, sent to him, asking, in this time of plenty, for some bread for their hungry men. And Nabal cried out: "Who is David?" As though an Englishman had said, "Who is Wellington?" or a German should say, "Who is Von Moltke?" or an American should say, "Who is Washington?" Nothing did Nabal give to the starving men, and that night the scoundrel lay dead drunk at home; and the Bible gives us a full length picture of him, sprawling and maudlin and helpless.

Now that was the man whom Abigail, the lovely and gracious and good woman, married — a tuberose planted beside a thistle, a palm-branch twined into a wreath of deadly nightshade. Surely that was not one of the matches made in heaven. We throw up our

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hands in horror at that wedding. How did she ever consent to link her destinies with such a creature? Well, she no doubt thought that it would be an honor to be associated with an aristocratic family; and no one can despise a great name. Beside that, wealth would come, and with it chains of gold, in mansions lighted by swinging lamps of aromatic oil, and resounding with the cheer of banqueters, seated at tables laden with wines from the richest vineyards, with fruit from ripest orchards, and nuts threshed from foreign woods, and meats smoking in platters of gold, carried by slaves in bright uniform. Before she plighted her troth with this dissipated man, she sometimes said to herself: "How can I endure him? To be associated for life with such a debauchee I cannot and will not!" But then again she said to herself: "It is time I was married, and this is a cold world to depend on, and perhaps I might do worse, and may be I will make a sober man out of him, and marriage is a lottery anyhow." And when, one day, this representative of a great house presented himself in a parenthesis of sobriety, and with assumed geniality and gallantry of manner, and with promises of fidelity and kindness and self-abnegation, a June morning smiled on a March squall, and the great-souled woman surrendered her happiness to the keeping of this infamous son of fortune, whose possessions were in Carmel; "and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats."

Behold here a domestic tragedy repeated every hour of every day, all over Christendom — marriage for worldly success, without regard to character. So Marie Jeanne Philipon, the daughter of the humble engraver, became the famous Madame Roland of history, the vivacious and brilliant girl, united with the cold, formal, monotonous man, because he came of

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an affluent family of Amiens, and had lordly blood in his veins. The day when, through political revolution, this patriotic woman was led to the scaffold, around which lay piles of human heads that had fallen from the ax, and she said to an aged man whom she had comforted as they ascended the scaffold, "Go first, that you may not witness my death," and then, undaunted, took her turn to die — that day was to her only the last act of a tragedy, of which her marriage day was the first.

Good and genial character in a man, the very first requisite for a woman's happy marriage. Mistake me not as depreciative of worldly prosperities. There is a religious cant that would seem to represent poverty as a virtue and wealth as a crime. I can take you through a thousand mansions where God is as much worshiped as he ever was in a cabin. The Gospel inculcates the virtues which tend toward wealth. In the millennium we will all dwell in palaces, and ride in chariots, and sit at sumptuous banquets, and sleep under rich embroideries, and live four or five hundred years, for, if according to the Bible, in those times a child shall die a hundred years old, the average human life will be at least five centuries.

The whole tendency of sin is toward poverty, and the whole tendency of righteousness is toward wealth. Godliness is profitable for the life that now is, as well as for that which is to come. No inventory can be made of the picture galleries consecrated to God, or of sculpture, or of libraries, pillared magnificence, of parks and fountains and gardens in the ownership of good men and women. The two most lordly residences in which I was ever a guest had morning and evening prayers, all the employees present, and all day long there was an air of cheerful piety in the conversation and behavior. Lord Radstock carried the

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Gospel to the Russian nobility. Lord Cavan and Lord Cairns spent their vacation in evangelistic services. Lord Congleton became missionary to Bagdad. And the Christ who was born in an Eastern caravansary has lived in a palace.

It is a grand thing to have plenty of money; to own horses that do not compel you to take the dust of every lumbering and lazy vehicle, and books of history that give you a glimpse of all the past, and shelves of poetry to which you may go and ask Milton or Tennyson or Spencer or Tom Moore or Robert Burns to step down and spend an evening with you; and other shelves to which you may go while you feel disgusted with the shams of the world, and ask Thackeray to express your chagrin, or Charles Dickens to expose Pecksniffianism, or Thomas Carlyle to thunder your indignation; or the other shelves where the old Gospel writers stand ready to warn and cheer us, while they open doors into that City which is so bright the noonday sun is abolished.

There is no virtue in owning a horse that takes four minutes to go a mile, if you can own one that can go in a little over two minutes and a half; no virtue in running into the teeth of a northeast wind with thin apparel if you can afford furs; no virtue in being poor when you can honestly be rich. There are names of men and women that I have only to mention, and they suggest not only wealth, but religion and generosity and philanthropy, such as Amos Lawrence, James Lenox, Peter Cooper, William E. Dodge, Lord Shaftesbury, Miss Catherine Wolfe, Mrs. Astor, and Miss Helen Gould. A recent writer says that of fifty leading business men in one of our Eastern cities, and of the fifty leading business men of one of our Western cities, three-fourths of them are Christians. The fact is, that about all the brain and the business genius

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is on the side of religion. Infidelity is incipient insanity. All infidels are cranks. Many of them talk brightly, but you soon find that in their mental machinery there is a screw loose. When they are not lecturing against Christianity they are sitting in bar-rooms, squirting tobacco juice, and when they get mad swear till the place is sulphurous. They only talk to keep their courage up, and at last will feel like the infidel who begged to be buried with his Christian wife and daughter, and when asked why he wanted such burial, replied: "If there be a resurrection of the good, as some folks say there will be, my Christian wife and daughter will somehow get me up and take me along with them."

Men may pretend to despise religion, but they are rank hypocrites. The sea-captain was right when he came up to the village on the seacoast, and insisted on paying ten dollars to the church, although he did not attend himself. When asked his reason, he said that he had been in the habit of carrying cargoes of oysters and clams from that place, and he found, since that church was built, the people were more honest than they used to be, for before the church was built he often found the load, when he came to count it, a thousand clams short. Yes. Godliness is profitable for both worlds. Most of the great, honest, permanent worldly successes are by those who reverence God and the Bible. But what I do say is that if a man have nothing but social position and financial resources, a woman who puts her happiness by marriage in his hand, re-enacts the folly of Abigail when she accepted disagreeable Nabal, "whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats."

If there be good moral character accompanied by affluent circumstances, I congratulate you. If not,

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let the morning lark fly clear of the Rocky Mountain eagle. The sacrifice of woman on the altar of social and financial expectation is cruel and stupendous. I sketch you a scene you have more than once witnessed. A comfortable home, with nothing more than ordinary surroundings; but an attractive daughter carefully and Christianly reared. From the outside world comes in a man with nothing but money, unless you count profanity and selfishness and fondness for champagne and general recklessness as part of his possessions. He has his coat collar turned up when there is no chill in the air, not because he is cold, but because it gives him an air of abandon; and eyeglass, not because he is nearsighted, but because it gives a classical appearance; and with an attire somewhat loud, a cane thick enough to be the club of Hercules and clutched at the middle, his conversation interlarded with French phrases inaccurately pronounced, and a sweep of manner indicating that he was not born like most folks, but terrestrially landed. By arts learned of the devil he insinuates himself into the affections of the daughter of that Christian home. All the kindred congratulate her on the auspicious prospects. Reports come in that the young man is fast in his habits, that he has broken several young hearts, and that he is mean and selfish and cruel. But all this is covered up with the fact that he has several houses in his own name, and has large deposits at the bank, and, more than all, has a father worth many hundred thousand dollars and in very feeble health, who may any day drop off, and this is the only son. If a round dollar held close to one's eye is large enough to shut out a great desert, how much more will several bushels of dollars shut out! The marriage day comes and goes. The wedding ring was costly enough and the orange blossoms fragrant enough and the benediction solemn enough and the



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wedding march stirring enough. The audience shed tears of sympathetic gladness, supposing that the craft containing the two has sailed off on a placid lake, although God knows that they are launched on a dead sea, its waters brackish with tears and ghastly with upturned faces of despair, floating to the surface and then going down. There they are, the newly-married pair in their new home. He turns out to be a tyrant. Her will is nothing, his will everything. Lavish of money for his own pleasure, he begrudges her the pennies he doles out into her trembling palm. Instead of the kind words she left behind in her former home, now there are complaints and fault-findings. He is the master and she the slave.

The worst villain on earth is the man who, having captured a woman from her father's house, and after the oath of the marriage altar has been pronounced, says, by his manner if not his words: "I have you now in my power. What can you do? My arm is stronger than yours. My voice is louder than yours. My fortune is greater than yours. My name is mightier than yours. Now crouch before me like a dog. Now crawl away from me like a reptile. You are nothing but a woman anyhow. Down, you miserable wretch!" Can halls of mosaic, can long lines of Etruscan bronze, or statuary by Palmer and Powers and Crawford and Chantry and Canova, can galleries rich from the pencil of Bierstadt and Church and Kenset and Cole and Cropsey, could flutes played on by an Ole Bull or pianos fingered by a Gottschalk or solos warbled by a Sonntag, could wardrobes like those of a Marie Antoinette, could jewels like those of a Eugenie, make a wife in such a companionship happy? Imprisoned in a castle! Her gold bracelets are the chains of a lifelong servitude. There is a sword over her every feast, not like that of Damocles,

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not staying suspended, but dropping through her lacerated heart. Her wardrobe is full of shrouds for deaths which she dies daily, and she is buried alive, though buried under gorgeous upholstery. There is one word that sounds under the arches, that rolls along the corridors and weeps in the falling fountains, that echoes in the shutting of every door, and groans in every note of stringed and wind instrument: "Woe! Woe!" The oxen and sheep, in olden times, brought to a temple of Jupiter to be sacrificed, used to be covered with ribbons and flowers — ribbons on the horns and flowers on the neck. But the floral and ribboned decoration did not make the stab of the butcher's knife less deathful, and all the chandeliers you hang over such a woman, and all the robes with which you enwrap her, and all the ribbons with which you adorn her, and all the bewitching charms with which you embank her footsteps are the ribbons and flowers of a horrible butchery.

As if to show how wretched a good woman may be in splendid surroundings, we have two recent illustrations, two ducal palaces in Great Britain. They are the *foci* of the best things that are possible in art, in literature, in architecture, the accumulation of other estates, until their wealth is beyond calculation, and their grandeur beyond description. One of the castles has a cabinet set with gems that cost two million five hundred thousand dollars and the walls of it bloom with Rembrandts and Claudes and Pouissins and Guidos and Raphaels, and there are Southdown flocks in summer grazing on its lawns, and Arab steeds prancing at the doorways on the "first open day at the kennels." From the one castle the duchess has removed with her children, because she can no longer endure the orgies of her husband, the duke, and in the other castle the duchess remains. confronted by



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insults and abominations, in the presence of which I do not think God or decent society requires a good woman to remain.

Alas for the ducal country seats: They on a large scale illustrate what on a smaller scale may be seen in many places, that without moral character in a husband, all the accessories of wealth are to a wife's soul tantalization and mockery. When Abigail found Nabal, her husband, beastly drunk, as she came home from interceding for his fortune and life, it was no alleviation that the old brute had possessions in Carmel, and "was very great, and had three thousand sheep and one thousand goats," and he the worst goat among them. The animal in his nature seized the soul and ran off with it. Before things are right in this world genteel villains are to be expurgated. Instead of being welcomed into respectable society because of the number of stars and garters and medals and estates they represent, they ought to be fumigated two or three years before they are allowed to put their hand on the door-knob of a moral house. The time must come when a masculine estray will be as repugnant to good society as a feminine estray, and no coat of arms or family emblazonry or epaulet can pass a Lothario unchallenged among the sanctities of home life. By what law of God or common sense is an Absalom better than a Delilah, a Don Juan better than a Messalina? The brush that paints the one black must paint the other black.

But what a spectacle it was when one summer much of "watering-place" society went wild with enthusiasm over an unclean foreign dignitary, whose name in both hemispheres is a synonym for profligacy, and princesses of American society from all parts of the land had him ride in their carriages and sit at their tables, though they knew him to be a portable laza-

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retto, a charnel house of moral putrefaction, his breath a typhoid, his foot that of a Satyr, and his touch death. Here is an evil that man cannot stop, but woman may. Keep all such out of your parlors, have no recognition for them in the street, and no more think of allying your life and destiny with theirs than "gales from Araby" would consent to pass the honeymoon with an Egyptian plague. All the money or social position a bad man brings to a woman in marriage is a splendid despair, a gilded horror, a brilliant agony, a prolonged death; and the longer the marital union lasts, the more evident will be the fact that she might better never have been born. Yet you and I have been at brilliant weddings, where, before the feast was over, the bridegroom's tongue was thick and his eye glassy and his step a stagger, as he clicked glasses with jolly comrades, all going, with lightning express train, to the fatal crash over the embankment of a ruined life and a lost eternity.

Woman, join not your right hand with such a right hand. Accept from such an one no jewel for finger or ear, lest that sparkle of precious stone turn out to be the eye of a basilisk; and let not the ring come on the finger of your left hand, lest that ring turn out to be one link of a chain that shall bind you in never-ending captivity. In the name of God and heaven and home, in the name of all time and all eternity, I forbid the banns! Consent not to join one of the many regiments of women who have married for worldly success without regard to moral character. If you are ambitious for noble affiancing, why not marry a king? And to that honor you are invited by the Monarch of heaven and earth, and this day a voice from the sky sounds forth: "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Let him put upon thee the ring of this royal

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marriage. Here is an honor worth reaching after. By repentance and faith you may come into a marriage with the Emperor of universal dominion, and you may be an Empress unto God forever, and reign with him in palaces that the centuries cannot crumble, or cannonades demolish.

High, worldly marriage is not necessary, or marriage of any kind, in order to your happiness. Celibacy has been honored by the best Being that ever lived and by his greatest apostle — Christ and Paul. What higher honor could single life on earth have? But what you need, O woman, is to be affianced forever and forever, and the banns of that marriage I am now ready to publish. Let the angels of heaven bend from their galleries of light to witness, while I pronounce you one — a loving God and a forgiven soul.

One of the most stirring passages in history with which I am acquainted tells us how Cleopatra, the exiled Queen of Egypt, won the sympathies of Julius Cæsar, the conqueror, until he became the bridegroom, and she the bride. Driven from her throne, she sailed away on the Mediterranean sea in a storm, and when the large ship anchored, she put out with one womanly friend in a small boat, until she arrived at Alexandria, where was Cæsar, the great general. Knowing that she would not be permitted to land or pass the guards on the way to Cæsar's palace, she laid upon the bottom of the boat some shawls and scarfs and richly dyed upholstery, and then laid down upon them, and her friend wrapped her in them, and she was admitted ashore in this wrapping of goods, which was announced as a present for Cæsar. This bundle was permitted to pass the guards of the gates of the palace and was put down at the feet of the Roman general. When the bundle was unrolled, there

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rose before Cæsar one whose courage and beauty and brilliancy are the astonishment of the ages. This exiled queen of Egypt told the story of her sorrows, and he promised her that she should get back her throne in Egypt and take the throne of wifely dominion in his own heart. Afterward they made a triumphal tour in a barge which the pictures of many art galleries have called "Cleopatra's Barge," and that barge was covered with silken awning, and its deck was soft with luxuriant carpets, and the oars were silver-tipped, and the prow was gold-mounted, and the air was redolent with the spicery of tropical gardens, and resonant with the music that made the night glad as the day.

You may rejoice, O woman, that you are not a Cleopatra, and that the One to whom you may be affianced had none of the sins of Cæsar, the conqueror. But it suggests to me how you, a soul exiled from happiness and peace, may find your way to the feet of the Conqueror of earth and sky. Though it may be a dark night of spiritual agitation in which you put out, you may sail into the harbor of peace, and when all the wrappings of fear and doubt and sin shall be removed, you will be found at the feet of him who will put you on a throne to be acknowledged as his in the day when all the silver trumpets of the sky shall proclaim: "Behold the bridegroom cometh;" and in a barge of light you sail with him the river whose source is the foot of the throne, and whose mouth is at the sea of glass mingled with fire.

## THE FIRST WOMAN

Gen., 3: 6: " And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."



## THE FIRST WOMAN

Gen., 3: 6: "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

It is the first Saturday afternoon in the world's existence. Ever since sunrise Adam has been watching the brilliant pageantry of wings and scales and clouds, and in his first lessons in zoology and ornithology and ichthyology he has noticed that the robins fly the air in twos, and that the fish swim the water in twos, and that the lions walk the fields in twos, and in the warm redolence of that Saturday afternoon he falls off into slumber; and as if by allegory to teach all ages that the greatest of earthly blessings is sound sleep, this paradisaical somnolence ends with the discovery on the part of Adam of a corresponding intelligence just landed on the new planet. Of the mother of all the living I speak — Eve, the first, the fairest, and the best.

I make me a garden. I inlay the paths with mountain moss, and I border them with pearls from Ceylon and diamonds from Golconda. There are woodbine and honeysuckle climbing over the wall, and starred spaniels sprawling themselves on the grass. And yet the place is a desert filled with darkness and death as compared with the residence of the woman of the text, the subject of my story. Never since have such skies looked down through such leaves into such waters! Never has river wave had such curve and

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sheen and bank as adorned the Pison, the Havilah, the Gihon, and the Hiddekel, even the pebbles being bdellium and onyx stone! What fruits, with no curculio to sting the rind! What flowers, with no slug to gnaw the root! What atmosphere, with no frost to chill and with no heat to consume! Bright colors tangled in the grass. Perfume in the air. Music in the sky. Great scene of gladness and love and joy. Right there under a bower of leaf and vine and shrub occurred the first marriage. Adam took the hand of this immaculate daughter of God and performed the ceremony when he said: "Bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."

A forbidden tree stood in the midst of that exquisite park. Eve sauntering out one day alone, looks up at the tree and sees the beautiful fruit, and wonders if it is sweet, and wonders if it is sour, and standing there, says: "I think I will just put my hand upon the fruit; it will do no damage to the tree; I will not take the fruit to eat, but I will just take it down to examine it." She examined the fruit. She said: "I do not think there can be any harm in my just breaking the rind of it." She put the fruit to her teeth, she tasted, she allowed Adam also to taste the fruit, the door of the world opened, and then Sin entered. Let the heavens gather blackness, and the wind sigh on the bosom of the hills and cavern and desert and earth and sky join in one long, deep, hell-rending howl — "The world is lost!"

Beasts that before were harmless and full of play put forth claw and sting and tooth and tusk. Birds whet their beak for prey. Clouds troop in the sky. Sharp thorns shoot up through the soft grass. Blastings on the leaves. All the chords of that great harmony are snapped. Upon the brightest home this world ever saw, our first parents turned their back and



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led forth on a path of sorrow the broken-hearted myriads of a ruined race.

Do you not see, in the first place, the danger of a poorly regulated inquisitiveness? She wanted to know how the fruit tasted. She found out, but six thousand years have deplored that unhealthful curiosity. Healthful curiosity has done a great deal for letters, for art, for science, and for religion. It has gone down into the depths of the earth with the geologist, and seen the first chapter of Genesis written in the book of nature illustrated with engraving on rock, and it stood with the antiquarian while he blew the trumpet of resurrection over buried Herculaneum and Pompeii, until from their sepulcher there came up shaft and terrace and amphitheater. Healthful curiosity has enlarged the telescopic vision of the astronomer until worlds hidden in the distant heavens have trooped forth and have joined the choir praising the Lord. Planet weighed against planet and wildest comet lassoed with resplendent law. I say nothing against healthful curiosity. May it have other Leyden jars and other electric batteries and other voltaic piles and other magnifying-glasses with which to storm the barred castles of the natural world, until it shall surrender its last secret. We thank God for the geological curiosity of Professor Hitchcock, and the chemical curiosity of Liebig, and the zoological curiosity of Cuvier, and the inventive curiosity of Edison; but we must admit that unhealthful and irregular inquisitiveness has rushed thousands and tens of thousands into ruin.

Eve just tasted the fruit. She was curious to find out how it tasted, and that curiosity blasted her and blasted all nations. So there are clergymen in this city, inspired by unhealthful inquisitiveness, who have tried to look through the key-hole of God's mysteries

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—mysteries that were barred and bolted from all human inspection, and they have wrenched their whole moral nature out of joint by trying to pluck fruit from branches beyond their reach, or have come out on limbs of the tree from which they have tumbled into ruin without remedy. A thousand trees of religious knowledge from which we may eat and get advantage; but from certain trees of mystery how many have plucked their ruin! Election, free agency, trinity, resurrection — in the discussion of these subjects hundreds and thousands of people ruin the soul. There are men who actually have been kept out of the kingdom of heaven because they could not understand who Melchisedec was not!

Oh, how many have been destroyed by an unhealthful inquisitiveness! It is seen in all directions. There are those who stand with the eye-stare and mouth-gape of curiosity. They are the first to hear a falsehood, build it another story high and add two wings to it. About other people's apparel, about other people's business, about other people's financial condition, about other people's affairs, they are over-anxious. Every nice piece of gossip stops at their door, and they fatten and luxuriate in the endless round of the great world of tittle-tattle. Whoever hath an innuendo, whoever hath a scandal, whoever hath a valuable secret, let him come and sacrifice it to this Goddess of Splutter. Thousands of Adams and Eves do nothing but eat fruit that does not belong to them. Men quite well known as mathematicians failing in this computation of moral algebra: good sense plus good breeding, minus curiosity, equals minding your own affairs!

Then, how many young men through curiosity go through the whole realm of French novels, to see whether they are really as bad as moralists have pro-

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nounced them! They come near the verge of the precipice just to look off. They want to see how far it really is down, but they lose their balance while they look, and fall into irremediable ruin; or, catching themselves, clamber up, bleeding and ghastly, on the rock, gibbering with curses or groaning ineffectual prayer. By all means encourage healthful inquisitiveness, but by all means discourage ill-regulated curiosity.

This subject also impresses me with the fact that fruits that are sweet to the taste may afterward produce great agony. Forbidden fruit for Eve was so pleasant she invited her husband also to take of it; but her banishment from Paradise and six thousand years of sorrow and wretchedness and war and woe paid for that luxury. Sin may be very sweet at the start, and it may induce great wretchedness afterward. The cup of sin is sparkling at the top, but there is death at the bottom. Intoxication has great exhilaration for a while, and it fillips the blood, and it makes a man see five stars where others can see only one star, and it makes the poor man think himself rich, and turns cheeks which are white red as roses; but what about the dreams that come after, when he seems falling from great heights, or is prostrated by other fancied disasters, and the perspiration stands on the forehead — the night dew of everlasting darkness — and he is ground under the horrible hoof of nightmares shrieking with lips that crackle with all-consuming torture? “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment!” Sweet at the start, horrible at the last. Go into that hall of revelry, where ungodly mirth staggers and blasphemes. Listen to the senseless gabble, see the last trace of intelligence dashed out from

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faces made in God's own image. "Aha! aha!" says the roistering inebriate; "this is joy for you; fill high your cups, my boys. I drink to my wife's misery and my children's rags and my God's defiance." And he knows not that a fiend stirs the goblet in his hand and that adders uncoil from the dregs and thrust their forked tongues hissing through the froth on the rim. Sin rapturous at the start, awful at the last.

That one Edenic transgression did not seem to be much, but it struck a blow which to this day makes the earth stagger. To find out the consequences of that one sin, you would have to compel the world to throw open all its prison doors and display the crime, and throw open all its hospitals and display the disease, and throw open all the insane asylums and show the wretchedness, and open all the sepulchres and show the dead, and open all the doors of the lost world and show the damned. That one Edenic transgression stretched chords of misery across the heart of the world and struck them with dolorous wailing, and it has seated the plagues upon the air and the shipwrecks upon the tempest, and fastened, like a leech, famine to the heart of the sick and dying nations. Beautiful at the start, horrible at the last. Oh, how many have experienced it!

Are there among us those who are votaries of pleasure? Let me warn you, my brother. Your pleasure boat is far from shore, and your summer day is ending roughly, for the winds and the waves are loud-voiced, and the overcoming clouds are all awrithe and agleam with terror. You are past the "Narrows," and almost outside the "Hook," and if the Atlantic take you, frail mortal, you shall never get to shore again. Put back! row swiftly, swifter, swifter! Jesus from the shore casts a rope. Clasp it quickly, now or never. Are there not some of you who are freighting

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all your loves and joys and hopes upon a vessel which shall never reach the port of heaven? You near the breakers. One heave upon the rocks. What an awful crash was that! Another lunge may crush you beneath the spars or grind your bones to powder amid the torn timbers. Overboard for your life, overboard! Trust not that loose plank nor attempt the wave, but quickly clasp the feet of Jesus walking on the watery pavement, shouting until he hear you: "Lord, save me, or I perish." Sin beautiful at the start — oh, how sad, how distressful at the last! The ground over which it leads you is hollow. The fruit it offers to your taste is poison. The promise it makes to you is a lie. Over that ungodly banquet the keen sword of God's judgment hangs, and there are ominous handwritings on the walls.

Observe also in this subject how repelling sin is when appended to great attractiveness. Since Eve's death there has been no such perfection of womanhood. You could not suggest another attractiveness to the body or suggest any added refinement to the manner. You could add no gracefulness to the gait, no lustre to the eye, no sweetness to the voice. A perfect God made her a perfect woman, to be the companion of a perfect man in a perfect home, and her entire nature vibrated in accord with the beauty and song of Paradise. But she rebelled against God's government, and with the same hand with which she plucked the fruit she launched upon the world the crimes, the wars, the tumults that have set the universe a-wailing. A terrible offset to all her attractiveness. We are not surprised when we find men and women naturally vulgar going into transgression. We expect that people who live in the ditch shall have the manners of the ditch; but how shocking when we find sin appended to superior education and to the refinements

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of social life! The accomplishments of Mary Queen of Scots make her patronage of Darnley, the profligate, the more appalling. The genius of Catherine II of Russia only sets forth in more powerful contrast her unappeasable ambition. The translations from the Greek and the Latin by Elizabeth, and her wonderful qualifications for a queen, make the more disgusting her capriciousness of affection and her hotness of temper. The greatness of Byron's mind makes the more alarming Byron's sensuality. Let no one think that refinement of manner or exquisiteness of taste or superiority of education can in any wise apologize for ill-temper, for an oppressive spirit, for unkindness, for any kind of sin. Disobedience Godward and transgression manward can have no excuse. Accomplishment heaven-high is no apology for vice hell-deep.

My subject also impresses me with the regal influence of woman. When I see Eve with this powerful influence over Adam and over the generations that have followed, it suggests to me that great power all women have for good or for evil. I have no sympathy, nor have you, with the hollow flatteries showered upon woman from the platform and the stage. They mean nothing; they are accepted as nothing. Woman's nobility consists in the exercise of a Christian influence; and when I see this powerful influence of Eve upon her husband and upon the whole human race, I make up my mind that the frail arm of woman can strike a blow which will resound through all eternity down among the dungeons or up among the thrones. I am not now speaking of representative women — of Eve, who ruined the race by one fruit-picking; of Jael, who drove a spike through the head of Sisera, the warrior; of Esther, who overcame royalty; of Abigail, who stopped a host by her

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own beautiful prowess; of Mary, who nursed the world's Saviour; of Grandmother Lois, immortalized in her grandson Timothy; of Charlotte Corday, who drove the dagger through the heart of the assassin of her lover; or of Marie Antoinette, who by one look from the balcony of her castle quieted a mob, her own scaffold the throne of forgiveness and womanly courage. I speak not of these extraordinary persons, but of those who, unambitious for political power, as wives and mothers and sisters and daughters, attend to the thousand sweet offices of home.

When at last we come to calculate the forces that decided the destiny of nations, it will be found that the mightiest and grandest influence came from home, where the wife cheered up despondency and fatigue and sorrow by her own sympathy, and the mother trained her child for heaven, starting the little feet on the path to the Celestial City; and the sisters by their gentleness refined the manners of the brother; and the daughters were diligent in their kindness to the aged, throwing wreaths of blessing on the road that leads father and mother down the steep of years. God bless our homes!





## THE QUEENS OF HOME

Sol. Song, 6: 8: "There are three-score queens."



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Sol. Song, 6: 8: "There are three-score queens."

So Solomon, by one stroke, set forth the imperial character of a true Christian woman. She is not a slave, not a hireling, not a subordinate, but a queen. In a former sermon I showed you that crown and courtly attendants and imperial wardrobe were not necessary to make a queen; but that graces of the heart and life will give coronation to any woman. I showed you at some length that woman's position was higher in the world than man's, and that although she had often been denied the right of suffrage, she always did vote and always would vote by her influence, and that her chief desire ought to be that she should have grace rightly to rule in the dominion which she has already won. I began an enumeration of some of her rights, and now I resume the subject.

In the first place, woman has the special and the superlative right — of blessing and comforting the sick. What land, what street, what house, has not felt the smitings of disease? Tens of thousands of sick-beds! What shall we do with them? Shall man, with his rough hand and clumsy foot, go stumbling around the sick-room, trying to soothe the distracted nerves and alleviate the pains of the distressed patient? The young man at college may scoff at the idea of being under maternal influences; but at the first blast of typhoid fever on his cheek, he says, "Where is mother?" Walter Scott wrote partly in satire and partly in compliment:

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O woman, in our hours of ease,  
Uncertain, coy and hard to please;  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou.

I think the most pathetic passage in all the Bible is the description of the lad who went out to the harvest field of Shunem and got sunstruck—pressing his hands on his temples and crying out: “Oh, my head! my head!” And they said: “Carry him to his mother.” And then the record is: “He sat on her knees till noon, and then died.”

It is an awful thing to be ill away from home in a strange hotel, once in a while men coming in to look at you, holding their hand over their mouth for fear they will catch the contagion. How roughly they turn you in bed. How loudly they talk. How you long for the ministries of home. I know one such who went away from one of the brightest homes, for several weeks' business absence at the West. A telegram came at midnight that he was on his deathbed far away from home. By express train the wife and daughters went westward; but they went too late. He feared not to die, but he was in an agony to live until his family got there. He tried to bribe the doctor to make him live a little while longer. He said: “I am willing to die, but not alone.” But the pulses fluttered, the eyes closed, and the heart stopped. The express trains met in the midnight; wife and daughters going westward—lifeless remains of husband and father coming eastward. Oh, it was a sad, pitiful, overwhelming spectacle! When we are sick we want to be sick at home. When the time comes for us to die we want to die at home. The room may be very humble, and the faces that look into ours may be very plain; but who cares for that? Loving hands to bathe the temples. Loving voices to speak good cheer. Loving lips to read the comforting promises of Jesus.

## The Queens of Home

In our Civil War, men cast the cannon, men fashioned the musketry, men cried to the hosts, "Forward, march!" men hurled their battalions on the sharp edges of the enemy, crying, "Charge! charge!" but woman scraped the lint, woman administered the cordials, woman watched by the dying couch, woman wrote the last message to the home circle, woman wept at the solitary burial, attended by herself and four men with a spade. We greeted the generals home with brass bands and triumphal arches and wild huzzas; but the story is too good to be written anywhere, save in the chronicles of heaven, of Mrs. Brady, who came down among the sick in the swamps of the Chickahominy; of Annie Ross, in the cooper-shop hospital; of Margaret Breckinridge, who came to men who had been for weeks with their wounds undressed — some of them frozen to the ground, and when she turned them over, those that had an arm left, waved it and filled the air with their "Hurrah!"—of Mrs. Hodge, who came from Chicago, with blankets and with pillows, until the men shouted, "Three cheers for the Christian Commission! God bless the women at home;" then sitting down to take the last message: "Tell my wife not to fret about me, but to meet me in heaven; tell her to train up the boys whom we have loved so well; tell her we shall meet again in the good land; tell her to bear my loss like the Christian wife of a Christian soldier"—and of Mrs. Shelton, into whose face the convalescent soldier looked, and said: "Your grapes and cologne cured me." And so it was also through all of our war with Spain — women heroic on the field, braving death and wounds to reach the fallen, watching by their fever cots in the West Indian hospitals or on the troopships or in our smitten home camps. Men did their work with shot and shell and carbine and howitzer; women did their work with

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socks and slippers and bandages and warm drinks and Scripture texts and gentle strokings of the hot temples and stories of that land where they never have any pain. Men knelt down over the wounded and said, "On which side did you fight?" Women knelt down over the wounded and said, "Where are you hurt? What nice thing can I make for you to eat? What makes you cry?" To-night, while we men are sound asleep in our beds, there will be a light in yonder loft; there will be groaning down that dark alley; there will be cries of distress in that cellar. Men will sleep, and women will watch.

Again: woman has a special right to take care of the poor. There are hundreds and thousands of them all over the land. There is a kind of work that men cannot do for the poor. Here comes a group of little barefoot children to the door of the Dorcas Society. They need to be clothed and provided for. Which of these directors of banks would know how many yards it would take to make that little girl a dress? Which of these masculine hands could fit a hat to that little girl's head? Which of the wise men would know how to tie on that new pair of shoes? Man sometimes gives his charity in a rough way, and it falls like the fruit of a tree in the East, which fruit comes down so heavily that it breaks the skull of the man trying to gather it. But woman glides so softly into the house of destitution, and finds out all the sorrows of the place, and puts so quietly the donation on the table, that all the family come out on the front steps as she departs, expecting that from under her shawl she will thrust out two wings and go right up toward heaven, from whence she seems to have come down.

O, Christian young woman! if you would make yourself happy, and win the blessing of Christ, go out among the destitute. A loaf of bread or a bundle of

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socks may make a homely load to carry, but the angels of God will come out to watch, and the Lord Almighty will give His messenger hosts a charge, saying, "Look after that woman; canopy her with your wings, and shelter her from all harm;" and while you are seated in the house of destitution and suffering, the little ones around the room will whisper, "Who is she? Ain't she beautiful!" and if you will listen right sharply, you will hear dripping down through the leaky roof, and rolling over the rotten stairs, the angel chant that shook Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men."

Can you tell me why a Christian woman, going down among the haunts of iniquity, on a Christian errand, never meets with any indignity? I stood in the chapel of Helen Chalmers, the daughter of the celebrated Dr. Chalmers, in the most abandoned part of the city of Edinburgh, and I said to her as I looked around upon the fearful surroundings of that place, "Do you come here nights to hold a service?" "O, yes," she said. "Can it be possible that you never meet with an insult while performing this Christian errand?" "Never," she said, "never." That young woman who has her father by her side, walking down the street, armed police at each corner, is not so well defended as that Christian woman who goes forth on Gospel work into the haunts of iniquity, carrying the Bibles and bread. God, with the red right arm of his wrath omnipotent, would tear to pieces any one who should offer indignity to her. He would smite him with lightnings and drown him with floods and swallow him with earthquakes and damn him with eternal indignations. Some one said: "I dislike very much to see that Christian woman teaching those bad boys in the mission school. I am afraid to have her

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instruct them." "So," said another man, "I am afraid, too." Said the first: "I am afraid they will use vile language before they leave the place." "Ah," said the other man, "I am not afraid of that. What I am afraid of is, that if any of those boys should use a bad word in her presence, the other boys would tear him to pieces and kill him on the spot." That woman is the best sheltered who is sheltered by the Lord God Almighty, and you need never fear going anywhere where God tells you to go.

It seems as if the Lord had ordained woman for an especial work in the solicitation of charities. Backed up by barrels in which there is no flour, and by stoves in which there is no fire, and by wardrobes in which there are no clothes, a woman is irresistible; passing on her errand, God says to her: "You go into that bank or store or shop and get the money." She goes in and gets it. The man is hard-fisted, but she gets it. She could not help but get it. It is decreed from eternity she should get it. No need of your turning your back and pretending you don't hear; you do hear. There is no need of your saying you are begged to death. There is no need of your wasting your time, and you might as well submit first as last. You had better right away take down your check-book, mark the number of the check, fill up the blank, sign your name, and hand it to her. There is no need of wasting time. Those poor children on the back street have been hungry long enough. That sick man must have some farina. That consumptive must have something to ease his cough. I meet this delegate of a relief society coming out of the store of such a hard-fisted man, and I say: "Did you get the money?" "Of course," she says, "I got the money; that's what I went for. The Lord told me to go in and get it, and he never sends me on a fool's errand."



## The Queens of Home

“Again: I have to tell you that it is a woman’s specific right to comfort under the stress of dire disaster. She is called the weaker vessel; but all profane as well as sacred history attests that when the crisis comes she is better prepared than man to meet the emergency. How often you have seen a woman who seemed to be a disciple of frivolity and indolence, who, under one stroke of calamity, changed to a heroine. Oh, what a great mistake those business men make who never tell their business troubles to their wives! There comes some great loss to their store, or some of their companions in business play them a sad trick, and they carry the burden all alone. He is asked in the household again and again: What is the matter? But he believes it a sort of Christian duty to keep all that trouble within his own soul. Oh, sir! your first duty was to tell your wife all about it. She, perhaps might not have disentangled your finances, or extended your credit, but she would have helped you to bear misfortune. You have no right to carry on one shoulder that which is intended for two. Business men know what I mean. There came a crisis in your affairs. You struggled bravely and long; but after a while there came a day when you said, “Here I shall have to stop;” and you called in your partners, and you called in the most prominent men in your employ, and you said: “We have got to stop.” You left the store suddenly. You could hardly make up your mind to pass through the street and over on the ferry-boat. You felt everybody would be looking at you and blaming you and denouncing you. You hastened home. You told your wife all about the affair. What did she say? Did she play the butterfly? Did she talk about the silks and the ribbons and the fashions? No. She came up to the emergency. She quailed not under the stroke. She offered to go

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out of the comfortable house into a smaller one, and wear the old cloak another winter. She was the one who understood your affairs without blaming you. You looked upon what you thought was a thin, weak woman's arm holding you up; but while you looked at that arm, there came into the feeble muscles of it the strength of the eternal God. No chiding. No fretting. No telling you about the beautiful house of her father, from which you brought her ten, twenty, or thirty years ago.. You said: "Well, this is the happiest day of my life. I am glad I have got from under my burden. My wife don't care — I don't care." At the moment you were exhausted, God sent a Deborah to meet the host of the Amalekites and scatter them like chaff over the plain. There are sometimes women who sit reading sentimental novels, and who wish that they had some grand field in which to display their Christian powers. What grand and glorious things they could do if they only had an opportunity! My sister, you need not wait for any such time. A crisis will come in your affairs. There will be a Thermopylæ in your own household where God will tell you to stand. There are scores and hundreds of households to-day where as much bravery and courage are demanded of women as was exhibited by Grace Darling or Marie Antoinette or Joan of Arc.

Again: I remark it is woman's right to bring us the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a woman to be a Christian than for a man. Why? You say she is weaker. No. Her heart is more responsive to the pleadings of divine love. She is in vast majority. The fact that she can more easily become a Christian, I prove by the statement that three-fourths of the members of the churches in all Christendom are women. So God appoints them to be the chief agencies for bringing this world back to God. I may stand

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here and say the soul is immortal. There is a man who will deny it. I may stand here and say we are lost and undone without Christ. There is a man who will contradict it. I may stand here and say there will be a judgment day after a while. Yonder is some one who will dispute it. But a Christian woman in a Christian household, living in the faith and the consistency of Christ's gospel — nobody can refute that. The greatest sermons are not preached on celebrated platforms; they are preached with an audience of two or three, and in private home life. A consistent, consecrated Christian service is an unanswerable demonstration of God's truth.

A sailor came slipping down the ratlines one night, as though something had happened, and the sailors cried: "What's the matter?" He said: "My mother's prayers haunt me like a ghost." Home influences, consecrated Christian home influences, are the mightiest of all influences upon the soul. There are men who have maintained their integrity, not because they were any better naturally than some other people, but because there were home influences praying for them all the time. They got a good start. They were launched on the world with the benedictions of a Christian mother. They may track Siberian snows, they may plunge in African jungles, they may flee to the earth's end — they cannot go so far and so fast but the prayers will keep up with them.

Speak to women who have the eternal salvation of their husbands in their right hand. On the marriage day you took an oath before men and angels that you would be faithful and kind until death did you part, and I believe you are going to keep that oath; but after that parting at the grave, will it be an eternal separation? Is there any such thing as an immortal marriage, making the flowers that grow on the top of

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the sepulcher brighter than the garlands which at the marriage banquet flooded the air with aroma? Yes; I stand here as an ambassador of the most high God, to proclaim the banns of an immortal union for all those who join hands in the grace of Christ. O woman, is your husband, your father, your son, away from God? The Lord demands their redemption at your hands. There are prayers for you to offer, there are exhortations for you to give, there are examples for you to set, and I say now, as Paul said to the Corinthian woman: "What knowest thou, but thou shalt save thy husband?" A man was dying; and he said to his wife: "Rebecca, you wouldn't let me have family prayers; you laughed about all that, and you got me away into worldliness; and now I'm going to die, and my fate is sealed, and you are the cause of my ruin?" O woman, what knowest thou but thou canst destroy thy husband?

Are there not some of you who have kindly influences at home? Are there not some who have wandered far away from God, who can remember the Christian influences in their early home? Do not despise those influences, my brother. If you die without Christ what will you do with your mother's prayers, with your wife's importunities, with your sister's entreaties? What will you do with the letters they used to write to you, with the memory of those days when they attended you so kindly in times of sickness? Oh, if there be just one strand holding you from floating off on that dark sea, I would just like to take hold of that strand now and pull you to the beach! For the sake of your wife's God, for the sake of your mother's God, for the sake of your daughter's God, for the sake of your sister's God, come this day and be saved.

Lastly: I wish to say that one of the specific rights

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of woman is, through the grace of Christ, finally to reach heaven. Oh, what a multitude of women in heaven! Mary, Christ's mother, in heaven, Elizabeth Fry in heaven, Charlotte Elizabeth in heaven, the mother of Augustine in heaven, the Countess of Huntingdon — who sold her splendid jewels to build chapels — in heaven, while a great many others, who have never been heard of on earth, or known but little, have gone into the rest and peace of heaven. What a rest! What a change it was from the small room, with no fire and one window (the glass broken out), and the aching side and worn-out eyes, to the "house of many mansions!" No more stitching until twelve o'clock at night, no more thrusting of the thumb by the employer through the work, to show it was not done quite right. Plenty of bread at last! Heaven for aching heads! heaven for broken hearts! heaven for anguish-bitten frames! No more sitting up until midnight for the coming of staggering steps! No more rough blows across the temples! No more sharp, keen, bitter curses!

Some of you will have no rest in this world. It will be toil and struggle and suffering all the way up. You will have to stand at your door fighting back the wolf with your own hand, red with carnage. But God has a crown for you. I want you to realize this morning that he is now making it, and whenever you weep a tear, he sets another gem in that crown; whenever you have a pang of body or soul, he puts another gem in that crown; until, after a while, in all the tiara there will be no room for another splendor, and God will say to his angel, "The crown is done; let her up, that she may wear it." And as the Lord of Righteousness puts the crown upon your brow, angel will cry to angel, "Who is she?" and Christ will say, "I will tell you who she is. She is the one that came up out

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of great tribulation, and had her robe washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." And then God will spread a banquet, and he will invite all the principalities of heaven to sit at the feast, and the tables will blush with the best clusters from the vineyards of God and crimson with the twelve manner of fruits from the Tree of Life, and waters from the fountains of the rock will flash from the golden tankards, and the old harpers of heaven will sit there, making music with their harps, and Christ will point you out, amid the celebrities of heaven, saying: "She suffered with me on earth, now we are going to be glorified together." And the banqueters, no longer able to hold their peace, will break forth with congratulation: "Hail! hail!" And there will be handwritings on the wall — not such as struck the Babylonian noblemen with horror — but fire-tipped fingers, writing in blazing capitals of light and love, "God hath wiped away all tears from all faces!"

## WOMAN'S HAPPINESS

I Timothy, 5: 6: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."





## WOMAN'S HAPPINESS

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The editor of a Boston newspaper some time ago wrote asking me the terse questions: "What is the road to happiness?" and "Ought happiness to be the chief aim of life?" My answer was: "The road to happiness is the continuous effort to make others happy. The chief aim of life ought to be usefulness, not happiness; but happiness always follows usefulness." This morning's text in a strong way sets forth the truth that a woman who seeks in worldly advantage her chief enjoyment, will come to disappointment and death. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."

My friends, you all want to be happy. You have had a great many recipes by which it is proposed to give you satisfaction—solid satisfaction. At times you feel a thorough unrest. You know as well as older people what it is to be depressed. As dark shadows sometimes fall upon the geography of the schoolgirl as on the page of the spectacled philosopher. I have seen as cloudy days in May as in November. There are no deeper sighs breathed by the grandmother than by the granddaughter. I correct the popular impression that people are happier in childhood and youth than they ever will be again. If we live aright; the older, the happier. The happiest woman that I ever knew was a Christian octogenarian; her hair white as white could be; the sunlight of heaven late in the afternoon gilding the peaks of snow. I have to

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say to a great many of the young people that the most miserable time you are ever to have is just now. As you advance in life, as you come out into the world and have your head and heart full of good, honest, practical Christian work, then you will know what it is to begin to be happy. There are those who would have us believe that life is chasing thistle-down and grasping bubbles. We have not found it so. To many of us it has been discovering diamonds larger than the Kohinoor; and I think that our joy will continue to increase until nothing short of the everlasting jubilee of heaven will be able to express it.

Horatio Greenough, at the close of the hardest life a man ever lives—the life of an American artist—wrote: “I don’t want to leave this world until I give some sign that, born by the grace of God in this land, I have found life to be a very cheerful thing, and not the dark and bitter thing with which my early prospects were clouded.” Albert Barnes, the good Christian, known the world over, stood in his pulpit in Philadelphia, at seventy or eighty years of age, and said: “This world is so very attractive to me, I am very sorry I shall have to leave it.” I know that Solomon said some very dolorous things about this world, and three times declared: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Yet I do not think that Solomon was there declaring a doctrine. I think he was giving his own personal experience. I suppose his seven hundred wives almost pestered the life out of him. But I would rather turn to the description he gave after his conversion, when he says in another place: “Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” It is reasonable to expect it will be so. The longer the fruit hangs on the tree, the riper and more mellow it ought to grow.

Hear, then, while I discourse upon some of the

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mistakes which young people make in regard to happiness, and point out to the young women what I consider to be the source of complete satisfaction.

And, in the first place, I advise you not to build your happiness upon mere social position. Persons at your age, looking off upon life, are apt to think that if, by some stroke of what is called good luck, you could arrive at an elevated and affluent position, a little higher than that in which God has called you to live, you would be completely happy. Infinite mistake! The palace floor of Ahasuerus is red with the blood of Vashti's broken heart. There have been no more scalding tears wept than those which coursed the cheeks of Josephine. If the sob of unhappy womanhood in the great cities could break through the tapestried wall, that sob would come along your streets to-day like the simoon of the desert. Sometimes I have heard in the rustling of the robes on the city pavement the hiss of the adders that followed in the wake. You have come out from your home, and you have looked up at the great house and coveted a life under those arches; when perhaps, at that very moment, within that house, there may have been the wringing of hands, the start of horror, and the very agony of hell. I knew of such an one. Her father's house was plain; most of the people who came there were plain; but, by a change in fortune such as sometimes comes, a hand had been offered that led her into a brilliant sphere. All the neighbors congratulated her upon her grand prospects; but what an exchange! On her side it was a heart full of generous impulse and affection. On his side it was a soul dry and withered as the stubble of the field. On her side it was a father's house, where God was honored and the Sabbath light flooded the rooms with the very mirth of heaven. On his side it was a gorgeous residence and the coming of mighty

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men to be entertained there ; but within it were revelry and godlessness. Hardly had the orange blossoms of the marriage feast lost their fragrance than the night of discontent began to cast its shadow. Cruelties and unkindnesses changed all those splendid trappings into a hollow mockery. The platters of solid silver, the caskets of pure gold, the headdress of gleaming diamonds, were there ; but no God, no peace, no kind words, no Christian sympathy. The festal music that broke on the captive's ear turned out to be a dirge, and the wreath in the plush was a reptile coil, and the upholstery that swayed in the wind was the wing of a destroying angel, and the bead-drops on the pitcher were the sweat of everlasting despair.

Oh, how many rivalries and unhappinesses among those who seek in social life their chief happiness ! It matters not how fine you have things, there are other people who have them finer. Taking out your watch to tell the hour of day, some one will correct your timepiece by pulling out a watch more richly chased and jeweled. Ride in a carriage that cost you eight hundred dollars, and before you get around that park you will meet one that cost two thousand dollars. Have on your wall a picture by Copley, and before night you will hear of some one who has a picture fresh from the studio of Church or Bierstadt. All that this world can do for you in silver, in gold, in Axminster plush, in Gobelin tapestry, in wide halls, in lordly acquaintanceship, will not give you the ten-thousandth part of a grain of solid satisfaction. The English lord, moving in the very highest sphere, was one day found seated with his chin on his hand and his elbow on the window-sill, looking out and saying : " Oh, I wish I could exchange places with that dog ! " Mere social position will never give happiness to a woman's soul. I have had wide and continuous ob-

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servation, and I tell young women that they who build on mere social position their soul's immortal happiness are building on the sand.

Suppose that a young woman expends the brightness of her early life in this unsatisfactory struggle and omits the present opportunity of usefulness in the home circle: what a mistake! So surely as the years roll around, that home in which you now dwell will become extinct. The parents will be gone, the property will go into other possession, you yourself will be in other relationships, and that home which only a year before was full of congratulation will be extinguished. When that period comes you will look back to see what you did or what you neglected to do in the way of making home happy. It will be too late to correct mistakes. If you did not smooth the path of your parents toward the tomb; if you did not make their last days bright and happy; if you allowed your younger brother to go out into the world unhallowed by Christian and sisterly influences; if you allowed the younger sisters of your family to come up without feeling that there had been a Christian example set them on your part—there will be nothing but bitterness of lamentation. That bitterness will be increased by all the surroundings of that home; by every chair, by every picture, by the old-time mantel ornaments, by everything you can think of as connected with that home. All these things will rouse up agonizing memories. Young woman, have you anything to do in the way of making your father's home happy? Now is the time to attend to it, or leave it forever undone. Time is flying very quickly away. I suppose you notice the wrinkles are gathering and accumulating on those kindly faces that have so long looked upon you; there is frost in the locks; the foot is not as firm in its step as it used to be; and they will soon be gone. The

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heaviest clod that ever falls on a parent's coffin-lid is the memory of an ungrateful daughter. Oh, make their last days bright and beautiful. Do not act as though they were in the way. Ask their counsel, seek their prayers; and after long years have passed, and you go out to see the grave where they sleep, you will find growing all over the mound something lovelier than cypress, something sweeter than the rose, something chaster than the lily—the bright and beautiful memories of filial kindness performed ere the dying hand dropped on you a benediction, and you closed the lids over the weary eyes of the worn-out pilgrim. Better that, in the hour of your birth, you had been struck with orphanage, and that you had been handed over into the cold arms of the world, rather than that you should have been brought up under a father's care and a mother's tenderness, at last to scoff at their example and deride their influence; and on the day when you follow them in long procession to the tomb, to find that you are followed by a still larger procession of un-filial deeds done and wrong words uttered. The one procession will leave its burden in the tomb and disband; but that longer procession of unhappy memories will forever march and forever wail. Oh, it is a good time for a young woman when she is in her father's house. How careful they are of her welfare! How watchful those parents of all her interests! Seated at the morning repast, father at one end of the table, children on each side and between; but the years will roll on, and great changes will be effected, and one will be missed from one end of the table, and another will be missed from the other end of the table. God pity that young woman's soul who, in that hour, has nothing but regretful recollections.

I go further, and advise you not to depend for enjoyment upon mere personal attractions. It would be



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sheer hypocrisy, because we may not have it ourselves, to despise or affect to despise beauty in others. When God gives it, he gives it as a blessing and as a means of usefulness. David and his army were coming down from the mountains to destroy Nabal and his flocks and vineyards. The beautiful Abigail, the wife of Nabal, went out to arrest him when he came down from the mountains, and she succeeded. Coming to the foot of the hill, she knelt. David with his army of sworn men came down over the cliffs, and when he saw her kneeling at the foot of the hill he cried "Halt!" to his men, and the caves echoed it, "Halt! halt!" That one beautiful woman kneeling at the foot of the cliff had arrested all those armed troops. A dewdrop dashed back Niagara. The Bible sets before us the portraits of Sarah and Rebecca and Abishag and Job's daughters, and says: "They were fair to look upon." By outdoor exercise, and by skilful arrangement of apparel, let women make themselves attractive. The sloven has only one mission, and that is to excite our loathing and disgust. But alas for those who depend upon personal charms for their happiness! Beauty is such a subtle thing, it does not seem to depend upon facial proportions or upon the sparkle of the eye or upon the flush of the cheek. You sometimes find it among irregular features. It is the soul shining through the face that makes one beautiful. But alas for those who depend upon mere personal charms! They will come to disappointment and to a great fret. There are so many different opinions about what are personal charms; and then sickness and trouble and age do make such ravages! The poorest god that a woman ever worships is her own face. The saddest sight in all the world is a woman who has built everything on good looks, when the charms begin to vanish. Oh, how they try to cover the wrinkles and hide the

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ravages of Time! When Time, with iron-shod feet, steps on a face, the footprints remain, and you cannot hide them. It is silly to try to hide them. I think the most repulsive fool in all the world is an old fool. Why, my friends, should you be ashamed of getting old? It is a sign—it is *prima facie* evidence—that you have behaved tolerably well, or you would not have lived to this time. The grandest thing, I think, is eternity, and that is made up of countless years. When the Bible would set forth the attractiveness of Jesus Christ, it says: “His hair was white as snow.” But when the color goes from the cheek, and the luster from the eye, and the spring from the step, and the gracefulness from the gait, alas for those who have built their time and their eternity upon good looks! But all the passage of years cannot take out of one’s face benignity and kindness and compassion and faith. Cultivate your heart and you cultivate your face. The brightest glory that ever beamed from a woman’s face is the religion of Jesus Christ.

During our Civil War two hundred wounded soldiers came to Philadelphia one night, and came unheralded, and we had to extemporize a hospital for them; and the Christian women of my church, and of other churches, went out that night to take care of the poor, wounded fellows. That night I saw a Christian woman in the wards of the hospital, her sleeves rolled up, ready for hard work, her hair disheveled in the excitement of the hour. Her face was plain, very plain; but after the wounds were washed and the new bandages were put around the splintered limbs, and the exhausted boy fell off into his first refreshing sleep, she put her hand on his brow and he started in his dream, and said: “Oh, I thought an angel touched me!” There may have been no classic elegance in the features of Mrs. Harris, who came into the hospital after



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the "Seven Days" awful fight, as she sat down by a wounded drummer-boy and heard him soliloquize: "A ball through my body, and my poor mother will never again see her boy. What a pity it is!" And she leaned over him and said: "Shall I be your mother, and comfort you?" And he looked up and said: "Yes, I'll try to think she's here. Please to write a long letter to her, and tell her all about it, and send her a lock of my hair and comfort her. But I would like you to tell her how much I suffered—yes, I would like you to do that, for she would feel so for me. Hold my hand while I die." There may have been no classic elegance in her features, but all the hospitals of Harrison's Landing and Fortress Monroe would have agreed that she was beautiful, and if any rough man in all that ward had insulted her, some wounded soldier would have leaped from his couch on his best foot and struck him dead with a crutch.

Again, I advise you not to depend for happiness upon the flatteries of men. It is a poor compliment to your sex that so many men feel obliged, in your presence, to offer unmeaning compliments. Many capable of elegant and elaborate conversation elsewhere, sometimes feel called upon at the door of the drawing-room to drop their common sense and to dole out sickening flatteries. They say things about your dress and about your appearance, that you know and they know are false. They say you are an angel. You know you are not. Determined to tell the truth in office and store and shop, they consider it honorable to lie to a woman. The same thing that they told you on this side of the drawing-room, three minutes ago they said to some one on the other side of the drawing-room. Oh, let no one trample on your self-respect. The meanest thing on which a woman can build her happiness is the flatteries of men.

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Again, I charge you not to depend for happiness upon the discipleship of worldliness. I have seen men as vain of their old-fashioned and their eccentric hat as the brainless fop is proud of his dangling fooleries. Fashion sometimes makes a reasonable demand of us, and then we ought to yield to it. The daisies of the field have their fashion of color and leaf; the honey-suckles have their fashion of ear-drop; and the snow-flakes flung out of the winter heavens have their fashion of exquisiteness. After the summer shower the sky weds the earth with ring of rainbow. And I do not think we have a right to despise the elegances and fashions of this world, especially if they make reasonable demands upon us; but the discipleship and worship of fashion is death to the body and death to the soul.

I am glad the world is improving. Look at the fashion-plates of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and you will find that the world is not so extravagant now as it was then; and all the marvelous things that the granddaughter will do will never equal that done by the grandmother. Go still farther back, to the Bible times, and you find that in those times fashion wielded a more terrible scepter. You have only to turn to the third chapter of Isaiah, a portion of the Scriptures from which I once preached to you, to read the Jewish fashion-plate: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, and bonnets, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the earrings, the rings, and the nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the

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mantles, and the wimples, and the crissing pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods and the veils." Only think of a woman having all that on! I am glad that the world is getting better and that fashion, which has dominated in the world so ruinously in other days, has for a little time, for a little degree at any rate, relaxed its energies.

All the splendors and the extravaganzas of this world dyed into your robe, and flung over your shoulder, cannot wrap peace around your heart for a single moment. The gayest wardrobe will utter no voice of condolence in the day of trouble and darkness. The woman is grandly dressed, and only she, who is wrapped in the robe of a Saviour's righteousness. The home may be very humble, the hat may be very plain, the frock may be very coarse, but the halo of heaven settles in the room when she wears it, and the faintest touch of the resurrection angel will change that garment into raiment of exceeding white, so that no fuller on earth could whiten it.

I come to you, young woman, to-day, to say that this world cannot make you happy. I know it is a bright world, with glorious sunshine and golden rivers and fire-worked sunset and bird orchestra, and the darkest cave has its crystals and the wrathiast wave has its foam wreath and the coldest midnight its flaming aurora; but God will put out all these lights with the blast of his own nostrils, and the glories of this world will perish in the final conflagration. You will never be happy until you get your sins forgiven and allow Christ Jesus to take full possession of your soul. He will be your friend in every perplexity. He will be your comfort in every trial. He will be your defender in every strait. I do not ask you to bring, like Mary, the spices to the sepulcher of a dead Christ; but to bring your all to the foot of a living Jesus. His word

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is peace. His look is love. His hand is help. His touch is life. His smile is heaven. Oh, come, then, in flocks and groups. Come like the south wind over banks of myrrh. Come like the morning light, tripping over the mountains. Wreath all your affections on Christ's brow, set all your gems in Christ's coronet; let the Sabbath air rustle with the wings of rejoicing angels, and the towers of God ring out the news of souls saved.

This world its fancied pearl may carve,  
'Tis not the pearl for me;  
'Twill dim its luster in the grave,  
'Twill perish in the sea.  
But there's a pearl of price untold,  
Which never can be bought with gold;  
Oh, that's the pearl for me!

The snow was very deep, and it was still falling rapidly, when, in the first year of my Christian ministry, I hastened to see a young woman die. It was a very humble home. She was an orphan; her father had been shipwrecked on the banks of Newfoundland. She had earned her own living. As I entered the room I saw nothing attractive. No pictures; no tapestry; not even a cushioned chair. The snow on the window casement was not whiter than the cheek of that dying girl. It was a face never to be forgotten. Sweetness and majesty of soul and faith in God had given her a matchless beauty, and the sculptor who could have caught the outlines of those features and frozen them into stone would have made himself immortal. With her large, brown eyes she looked calmly into the great eternity. I sat down by her bedside and said: "Now tell me all your troubles and sorrows and struggles and doubts." She replied: "I have no doubts or struggles. It is all plain to me. Jesus has smoothed

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the way for my feet. I wish when you go to your pulpit next Sunday, you would tell the people that religion will make them happy. 'O Death, where is thy sting?' Mr. Talmage, I wonder if this is not the bliss of dying?" I said: "Yes, I think it must be." I lingered around the couch. The sun was setting, and her sister lighted a candle. She lighted the candle for me. The dying girl, the dawn of heaven in her face, needed no candle. I rose to go, and she said: "I thank you for coming. Good night! When we meet again it will be in heaven—in heaven. Good night! Good night!" For her it was good night to tears, good night to poverty, good night to death; but when the sun rose again it was good morning. The light of another day had burst in upon her soul. Good morning! The angels were singing her welcome home, and the hand of Christ was putting upon her brow a garland. Good morning! Her sun rising. Her palm waving. Her spirit exulting before the throne of God. Good morning! Good morning! The white lily of poor Margaret's cheek had blushed into the rose of health immortal, and the snows through which we carried her to the country graveyard were symbols of that robe which she wears, so white that no fuller on earth could whiten it. My sister, my daughter, may your last end be like hers!



## A WEDDING PRESENT

Joshua, 15: 19: "Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs."





## A WEDDING PRESENT

Joshua, 15: 19: "Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs and the nether springs."

The city of Debir was the Boston of antiquity — a great place for brain and books. Caleb wanted it, and he offered his daughter Achsah as a prize to any one who would capture that city. It was a strange thing for Caleb to do; and yet the man that could take the city would have, at any rate, two elements of manhood — bravery and patriotism. Besides, I do not think that Caleb was as foolish in offering his daughter to the conqueror of Debir, as thousands in this day who seek alliances for their children with those who have large means, without any reference to moral or mental acquirements. Of two evils, I would rather measure manly worth by the length of the sword than by the length of the pocket-book. In one case there is sure to be one good element of character; in the other there may be none at all. With Caleb's daughter as a prize to fight for, General Othniel rode into the battle. The gates of Debir were thundered into the dust, and the city of books lay at the feet of the conquerors. The work done, Othniel comes back to claim his bride. Having conquered the city, it is no great job for him to conquer the girl's heart; for, however faint-hearted a woman herself may be, she always loves courage in a man. I never saw an exception to that. The wedding festivity having gone by, Othniel and Achsah are about to go to their new home. However loudly the cymbals may clash and the laugh-

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ter ring, parents are always sad when a fondly-cherished daughter goes off to stay; and Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, knows that now is the time to get almost anything she wants of her father. It seems that Caleb, the good old man, had given as a wedding present to his daughter a piece of land that was mountainous, and sloping southward toward the deserts of Arabia, swept with some very hot winds. It was called "a south land." But Achsah wants an addition of property; she wants a piece of land that is well watered and fertile. Now it is no wonder that Caleb, standing amidst the bridal party, his eyes so full of tears because she was going away that he could hardly see her at all, gives her more than she asks. She said to him, "Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs."

The fact is, that as Caleb, the father, gave Achsah, the daughter, a south land, so God gives to us his world. I am very thankful he has given it to us. But I am like Achsah in the fact that I am not satisfied with the portion. Trees and flowers and grass and blue skies are very well in their places; but he who has nothing but this world for a portion has no portion at all. It is a mountainous land, sloping off toward the desert of sorrow, swept by fiery siroccos; it is "a south land," a poor portion for any man that tries to put his trust in it. What has been your experience? What has been the experience of every man, of every woman that has tried this world for a portion? Queen Elizabeth, amidst the surroundings of pomp, is unhappy because the painter sketches too minutely the wrinkles on her face, and she indignantly cries out, "You must strike off my likeness without any shadows!" Hogarth, at the very height of his artistic triumph, is stung almost to death with chagrin be-

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cause the painting he had dedicated to the king does not seem to be acceptable; for George II cries out, "Who is this Hogarth? Take his trumpery out of my presence." Brinsley Sheridan thrilled the earth with his eloquence, but had for his last words, "I am absolutely undone." Walter Scott, fumbling around the inkstand, trying to write, says to his daughter, "Oh, take me back to my room; there is no rest for Sir Walter but in the grave!" Stephen Girard, the wealthiest man in his day, or, at any rate, only second in wealth, says, "I live the life of a galley-slave; when I arise in the morning my one effort is to work so hard that I can sleep when it gets to be night." Charles Lamb, applauded of all the world, in the very midst of his literary triumph, says, "Do you remember, Bridget, when we used to laugh from the shilling gallery at the play? There are now no good plays to laugh at from the boxes." But why go so far as that? I need to go no farther than your street to find an illustration of what I am saying.

Pick me out ten successful worldlings — and you know what I mean by thoroughly successful worldlings — pick me out ten successful worldlings, and you cannot find more than one that looks happy. Care drags him to business; care drags him back. Take your stand at two o'clock at the corner of the streets and see the anxious physiognomies. Your high officials, your bankers, your insurance men, your importers, your wholesalers, and your retailers, as a class — as a class, are they happy? No. Care dogs their steps; and, making no appeal to God for help or comfort, many of them are tossed everywhither. How has it been with you, my hearer? Are you more contented in the house of fourteen rooms than you were in the two rooms you had in a house when you started? Have you not had more care and worriment

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since you won that fifty thousand dollars than you did before? Some of the poorest men I have ever known have been those of great fortune. A man of small means may be put in great business straits, but the ghastliest of all embarrassments is that of the man who has large estates. The men who commit suicide because of monetary losses are those who cannot bear the burden any more, because they have only fifty thousand dollars left.

On Bowling Green, New York, there is a house where Talleyrand used to go. He was a favored man. All the world knew him, and he had wealth almost unlimited; yet at the close of his life he says, "Behold, eighty-three years have passed without any practical result, save fatigue of body and fatigue of mind, great discouragement for the future, and great disgust for the past." Oh, my friends, this is a "south land," and it slopes off toward deserts of sorrows; and the prayer which Achsah made to her father Caleb we make this day to our Father God: "Thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs."

Blessed be God! we have more advantages given us than we can really appreciate. We have spiritual blessings offered us in this world which I shall call the nether springs, and glories in the world to come which I shall call the upper springs.

Where shall I find words enough threaded with light to set forth the pleasure of religion? David, unable to describe it in words, played it on a harp. Mrs. Hemans, not finding enough power in prose, sings that praise in a canto. Christopher Wren, unable to describe it in language, sprung it into the arches of St. Paul's. John Bunyan, unable to present it in ordinary phraseology, takes all the fascination of allegory. Handel, with ordinary music unable to reach the

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height of the theme, rouses it up in an oratorio. Oh, there is no life on earth so happy as a really Christian life! I do not mean a sham Christian life, but a real Christian life. Where there is a thorn, there is a whole garland of roses. Where there is one groan, there are three doxologies. Where there is one day of cloud, there is a whole season of sunshine. Take the humblest Christian man that you know — angels of God canopy him with their white wings; the lightnings of heaven are his armed allies; the Lord is his Shepherd, picking out for him green pastures by still waters; if he walks forth, heaven is his body-guard; if he lie down to sleep, ladders of light, angel-blossoming, are let into his dreams; if he be thirsty, the potentates of heaven are his cup-bearers; if he sit down to food, his plain table blooms into the King's banquet. Men say, "Look at that odd fellow with the worn-out coat;" the angels of God cry, "Lift up your heads, ye everlasting gates, and let him come in!" Fastidious people cry, "Get off my front steps!" the door-keepers of heaven cry, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom!" When he comes to die, though he may be carried out in a pine box to the potter's field, to that potter's field the chariots of Christ will come down, and the cavalcade will crowd all the boulevards of heaven.

I bless Christ for the present satisfaction of religion. It makes a man all right with reference to the past; it makes a man all right with reference to the future. Oh, these nether springs of comfort! They are perennial. The foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, "The Lord knoweth them that are his." "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, who hath mercy upon thee." Oh,

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cluster of diamonds set in burnished gold! Oh, nether springs of comfort bursting through all the valleys of trial and tribulation! When you see, you of the world, what satisfaction there is on earth in religion, do you not thirst after it as the daughter of Caleb thirsted after the water-springs? It is no stagnant pond, scummed over with malaria, but springs of water leaping from the Rock of Ages! Take up one cup of that spring-water, and across the top of the chalice will float the delicate shadows of the heavenly wall, the yellow of jasper, the green of emerald, the blue of sardonyx, the fire of jacinth.

I wish I could make you understand the joy religion is to some of us. It makes a man happy while he lives, and glad when he dies. With two feet upon a chair and bursting with dropsies, I heard an old man in the poorhouse cry out, "Bless the Lord, oh, my soul!" I looked around and said, "What has this man got to thank God for?" It makes the lame man leap as a hart, and the dumb sing. They say that the old Puritan religion is a juiceless and joyless religion; but I remember reading of Dr. Goodwin, the celebrated Puritan, who in his last moment said, "Is this dying? Why, my bow abides in strength! I am swallowed up in God!" "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Oh, you who have been trying to satisfy yourselves with the "south land" of this world, do you not feel that you would, this morning, like to have access to the nether springs of spiritual comfort? Would you not like to have Jesus Christ bend over your cradle and bless your table and heal your wounds and strew flowers of consolation all up and down the graves of your dead?

'Tis religion that can give  
Sweetest pleasure while we live;  
'Tis religion can supply  
Sweetest comfort when we die.

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But I have something better to tell you, suggested by this text. It seems that old Father Caleb, on the wedding day of his daughter, wanted to make her just as happy as possible. Though Othniel was taking her away, and his heart was almost broken because she was going, yet he gives her a "south land;" not only that, but the nether springs; not only that, but the upper springs. O, God! my Father, I thank thee that thou hast given me a "south land" in this world; and the nether springs of spiritual comfort in this world; but, more than all, I thank thee for the upper springs in heaven.

It is very fortunate that we cannot see heaven until we get into it. O Christian man, if you could see what a place it is, we would never get you back again to the office or store or shop, and the duties you ought to perform would go neglected. I am glad I shall not see that world until I enter it. Suppose we were allowed to go on an excursion into that good land with the idea of returning. When we got there and heard the song and looked at their raptured faces and mingled in the supernal society, we would cry out, "Let us stay! We are coming here anyhow. Why take the trouble of going back again to that old world? We are here now; let us stay." And it would take angelic violence to put us out of that world, if once we got there. But as people who cannot afford to pay for an entertainment sometimes come around it and look through the door ajar, or through the openings in the fence, so we come and look through the crevices into that good land which God has provided for us. We can just catch a glimpse of it. We come near enough to hear the rumbling of the eternal orchestra, though not near enough to know who blows the cornet or who fingers the harp. My soul spreads out both wings and claps them in triumph at the thought



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of those upper springs. One of them pours from beneath the throne; another breaks forth from beneath the altar of the temple; another at the door of "the house of many mansions." Upper springs of gladness! upper springs of light! upper springs of love! It is no fancy of mine. "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water." O, Saviour divine, roll in upon our souls one of those anticipated raptures! Pour around the roots of the parched tongue one drop of that liquid life! Toss before our vision those fountains of God, rainbowed with eternal victory. Hear it! They are never sick there, not so much as a headache or twinge rheumatic or thrust neuralgic. The inhabitants never says, "I am sick." They are never tired there. Flight to farthest world is only the play of a holiday. They never sin there. It is as easy for them to be holy as it is for us to sin. They never die there. You might go through all the outskirts of the great city and find not one place where the ground was broken for a grave. There is health in every cheek. There is spring in every foot. There is majesty on every brow. There is joy in every heart. There is hosanna on every lip. How they must pity us as they look over and look down and see us, and say, "Poor things, away down in that world!" And when some Christian is hurled into a fatal accident, they cry, "Good, he is coming!" And when we stand around the couch of some loved one whose strength is going away, and we shake our heads forebodingly, they cry, "I am glad he is worse; he has been down there long enough. There, he is dead! Come home! come home!" Oh, if we could only get our ideas about that future world untwisted, our thought of transfer from here to there would be as pleasant to us as it



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was to a little child that was dying. She said, "Papa, when will I go home?" And he said, "To-day, Florence." "To-day? so soon? I am so glad!" I wish I could stimulate you with these thoughts, O Christian man, to the highest possible exhilaration. The day of your deliverance is coming, is coming rolling on with the shining wheels of the day, and the jet wheels of the night. Every thump of the heart is only a hammer-stroke striking off another chain of clay. Better scour the deck and coil the rope, for the harbor is only six miles away. Jesus will come down in the "Narrows" to meet you. "Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed."

Man of the world! will you not to-day make a choice between these two portions, between the "south land" of this world, which slopes to the desert, and this glorious land which thy Father offers thee, running with eternal water-courses? Why let your tongue be consumed of thirst when there are the nether springs and the upper springs: comfort here and glory hereafter? You and I need something better than this world can give us. The fact is that it cannot give us anything after a while. It is a changing world. Do you know that even the mountains on the back of a thousand streams are leaping into the valley. The Alleghanies are dying. The dews with crystalline mallet are hammering away the rocks. Frosts and showers and lightnings are sculpturing Mount Washington and the Catskills. Niagara every year is digging for itself a quicker plunge. The sea all around the earth on its shifting shores is making mighty changes in bar and bay and frith and promontory. Some of the old seacoasts are under water now. Off Nantucket, eight feet below low-water mark, are found now the stumps of trees, showing that the waves are

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conquering the land. Parts of Nova Scotia are sinking. Ships to-day sail over what, only a little while ago, was solid ground. Near the mouth of the St. Croix river is an island which, in the movements of the earth, is slowly but certainly rotating. All the face of the earth changing — changing. In 1831, an island springs up in the Mediterranean sea. In 1866, another island comes up under the observation of the American consul as he looks off from the beach. The earth all the time changing, the columns of a temple near Bizoli show that the water has risen nine feet above the place it was when these columns were put down. Changing! Our Colorado river, once vaster than the Mississippi, flowing through the great American desert, which was then an Eden of luxuriance, has now dwindled to a small stream creeping down through a gorge. The earth itself, that was once vapor, afterward water — nothing but water — afterward molten rock, cooling off through the ages until plants might live, and animals might live, and men might live, changing all the while, now crumbling, now breaking off. The sun, burning down gradually in its socket. Changing! Changing! an intimation of the last great change to come over the world even infused into the mind of the heathen who has never seen the Bible. The Hindoos believe that Bramah, the creator, once made all things. He created the water, then moved over the water, out of it lifted the land, grew the plants and animals and men on it. Out of his eye went the sun. Out of his lips went the fire. Out of his ear went the air. Then Bramah laid down to sleep four thousand three hundred and twenty million years. After that, they say, he will wake up, and then the world will be destroyed, and he will make it over again, bringing up land, bringing up

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creatures upon it; then lying down again to sleep four thousand three hundred and twenty million years, then waking up and destroying the world again — creation and demolition following each other, until after three hundred and twenty sleeps, each one of these slumbers four thousand three hundred and twenty million years long, Bramah will wake up and die, and the universe will die with him — an intimation, though very faint, of the great change to come upon this physical earth spoken of in the Bible. But while Bramah may sleep, our God never slumbers nor sleeps; and the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all things that are therein shall be burned up.

“Well,” says some one, “if that is so; if the world is going from one change to another, then what is the use of my toiling for its betterment?” That is the point on which I want to guard you. I do not want you to become misanthropic. It is a great and glorious world. If Christ could afford to spend thirty-three years on it for its redemption, then you can afford to toil and pray for the betterment of the nations, and for the bringing on of that glorious time when all people shall see the salvation of God. While, therefore, I want to guard you against misanthropic notions in respect to this subject I have presented, I want you to take this thought home with you: This world is a poor foundation to build on. It is a changing world, and it is a dying world. The shifting scenes and the changing sands are only emblems of all earthly expectation. Life is very much like this day through which we have passed. To many of us it is storm and darkness, then sunshine, storm and darkness, then afterward a little sunshine, now again darkness and storm. Oh, build not your hopes upon this un-

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certain world! Build on God. Confide in Jesus. Plan for an eternal residence at Christ's right hand. Then, come sickness or health, come joy or sorrow, come life or death, all is well, all is well.

In the name of the God of Caleb, and his daughter, Achsah, I this day offer you the "upper springs" of unfading and everlasting rapture.

## HARBOR OF HOME

Mark, 5: 19: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."



## HARBOR OF HOME

Mark, 5: 19: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."

There are a great many people longing for some grand sphere in which to serve God. They admire Luther at the Diet of Worms, and only wish that they had some such great opportunity in which to display their Christian prowess. They admire Paul making Felix tremble, and they only wish that they had some such grand occasion in which to preach righteousness, temperance and judgment to come. All they want is an opportunity to exhibit their Christian heroism. Now the apostle comes to us and he practically says: "I will show you a place where you can exhibit all that is grand and beautiful and glorious in Christian character, and that is the domestic circle."

If one is not faithful in an insignificant sphere he will not be faithful in a resounding sphere. If Peter will not help the cripple at the gate of the temple, he will never be able to preach three thousand souls into the kingdom at the Pentecost. If Paul will not take pains to instruct the sheriff of the Philippian dungeon in the way of salvation, he will never make Felix tremble. He who is not faithful in skirmish would not be faithful in an Armageddon. The fact is, we are all placed in just the position in which we can most grandly serve God, and we ought not to be chiefly thoughtful about some sphere of usefulness which we may after a while gain, but the all-absorbing question with you and with me ought to be: "Lord, what wilt thou have me (now and here) to do?"

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There is one word in my text around which the most of our thoughts will revolve. That word is "home." Ask ten different men the meaning of that word and they will give you ten different definitions. To one it means love at the hearth, it means plenty at the table, industry at the workstand, intelligence at the books, devotion at the altar. To him it means a greeting at the door and a smile at the chair. Peace hovering like wings. Joy clapping its hands with laughter. Life a tranquil lake. Pillowed on the ripples sleep the shadows. Ask another man what home is, and he will tell you it is want, looking out of a cheerless fire-grate and kneading hunger in an empty bread-tray. The damp air shivering with curses. No Bible on the shelf. Children, robbers and murderers in embryo. Vile songs their lullaby. Every face a picture of ruin. Want in the background and sin staring from the front. No Sabbath wave rolling over that doorsill. Vestibule of the pit. Shadow of infernal walls. Furnace for forging everlasting chains. Faggots for an unending funeral pile. Awful word! It is spelled with curses, it weeps with ruin, it chokes with woe, it sweats with the death-agony of despair. The word "home" in the one case means everything bright; in the other case, everything terrific.

I shall speak to you of home as a test of character, home as a refuge, home as a political safeguard, home as a school, and home as a type of heaven.

And in the first place I remark that home is a powerful test of character. The disposition in public may be in gay costume, while in private it is in dishabille. As play-actors may appear in one garb on the stage and may appear in another garb behind the scenes, so private character may be very different from public character. Private character is often public character turned wrong side out. A man may



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receive you into his parlor as though he were a distillation of smiles, and yet his heart may be a swamp of nettles. There are business men who all day long are mild and courteous and genial and good-natured in commercial life, keeping back their irritability and their petulance and their discontent; but at nightfall the dam breaks, and scolding pours forth in floods and freshets.

The reason men do not display their bad temper in public is because they do not want to be knocked down. There are men who hide their petulance and their irritability just for the same reason that they do not let their notes go to protest; it does not pay. Or for the same reason that they do not want a man in their stock company to sell his stock at less than the right price, lest it depreciate the value. As at sunset the wind rises, so after a sunshiny day there may be a tempestuous night. There are people who in public act the philanthropist, who at home act the Nero with respect to their slippers and their gown.

Audubon, the great ornithologist, with gun and pencil, went through the forests of America to bring down and so sketch the beautiful birds, and after years of toil and exposure completed his manuscript and put it in a trunk in Philadelphia for a few days of recreation and rest, and came back and found that the rats had utterly destroyed the manuscript; but without any discomposure and without any fret or bad temper, he again picked up his gun and pencil and visited again all the great forests of America and reproduced his immortal work. And yet there are people with a ten-thousandth part of that loss who are utterly irreconcilable, who, at the loss of a pencil or an article of raiment, will blow as long and sharp as a northeast storm. Now, that man who is affable in public and who is irritable in private is making a

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fraudulent over-issue of stock, and he is as bad as a bank that might have four or five hundred thousand dollars of bills in circulation, with no specie in the vault. Let us learn "to show piety at home." If we have it not there, we have it not anywhere. If we have not genuine grace in the family circle, all our outward and public affability merely springs from a fear of the world or from the slimy, putrid pool of our own selfishness. I tell you the home is a mighty test of character. What you are at home you are everywhere, whether you demonstrate it or not.

Again, I remark that home is a refuge. Life is the United States army on the national road to the front, a long march with ever and anon a skirmish and a battle. At eventide we pitch our tent and stack our arms; we hang up the war cap and lay our head on the knapsack; we sleep until the morning bugle calls us to marching and action. How pleasant it is to rehearse the victories and the surprises and the attacks of the day seated by the still camp-fire of the home circle! Yea, life is a stormy sea. With shivered masts and torn sails and hulk aleak, we put into the harbor of home. Blessed harbor! there we go for repairs in the dry dock of quiet life. The candle in the window is to the toiling man the lighthouse guiding him into port. Children go forth to meet their fathers as pilots at the Narrows take the hand of ships. The door-sill of the home is the wharf where heavy life is unladen. There is the place where we may talk of what we have done without being charged with self-adulation. There is the place where we may lounge without being thought undignified. There is the place where we may express affection without being thought silly. There is the place where we may forget our annoyances and exasperations and troubles. Forlorn earth-pilgrim! no home? Then die.

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That is better. The grave is brighter and grander and more glorious than this world, with no tent from marchings, with no harbor from the storm, with no place to rest from this scene of greed and gouge and loss and gain. God pity the man or woman who has no home!

Further, I remark, that home is a political safeguard. The safety of the State must be built on the safety of the home. The Christian hearthstone is the only corner-stone for a republic. The virtues cultured in the family circle are an absolute necessity for the State. If there be not enough moral principle to make the family adhere, there will not be enough political principle to make the State adhere. "No home" means the Goths and Vandals, means the nomads of Asia, means the Numidians of Africa, changing from place to place according as the pasture happens to change. Confounded be all those Babels of iniquity which would overthrow and destroy the home! The same storm that upsets the ship in which the family sails will sink the frigate of the Constitution. Jails and penitentiaries and armies and navies are not our best defense. The door of the home is the best fortress. Household utensils are the best artillery, and the chimneys of our dwelling-houses are the grandest monuments of safety and triumph. No home! no republic.

Further, I remark, that home is a school. Old ground must be turned up with subsoil plow, and it must be harrowed and reharrowed, and then the crop will not be as large as that of the new ground with less culture. Now, youth and childhood are new ground, and all the influences thrown over their heart and life will come up in after-life luxuriantly. Every time you have given a smile of approbation — all the good cheer of your life will come up again in the

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geniality of your children. And every ebullition of anger and every uncontrollable display of wrath will be fuel to their disposition twenty or thirty or forty years from now—fuel for a bad fire a quarter of a century from this. Make your home the brightest place on earth, if you would charm your children to the high path of virtue and rectitude and religion! Do not always turn the blinds the wrong way. Let the light which puts gold on the gentian and spots the pansy pour into your dwellings. Do not expect the little feet to keep step to a Dead March. Get you no hint of cheerfulness from grasshopper's leap and lamb's frisk and quail's whistle, and garrulous streamlet, which, from the rock at the mountain-top clear down to the meadow ferns under the shadow of the steep, comes looking for the steepest place to leap off at, and talking just to hear itself talk? If all the skies hurtled with tempest, and everlasting storm wandered over the sea, and every mountain stream went raving mad, frothing at the mouth with mad foam, and there were nothing but simoons blowing among the hills, and there were neither lark's carol nor humming-bird's trill nor waterfall's dash, but only bear's bark and panther's scream and wolf's howl, then you might well gather into your homes only the shadows. But when God has strewn the earth and the heavens with beauty and with gladness, let us take into our home circles all innocent hilarity, all brightness, and all good cheer. A dark home makes bad boys and bad girls, in preparation for bad men and bad women.

Above all, take into your homes Christian principle. Can it be that in any of our comfortable homes the voice of prayer is never lifted! What! No supplication at night for protection? What! No thanksgiving in the morning for care? How will you an-

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swer God in the day of judgment with reference to your children? Oh, if you do not inculcate Christian principle in the hearts of your children, and you do not warn them against evil, and you do not invite them to holiness and to God, and they wander off into dissipation and into infidelity, and at last make shipwreck of their immortal souls, on their deathbed and in the day of judgment they will curse you!

My mind runs back to one of the best of early homes. Prayer, like a roof over it. Peace, like an atmosphere in it. Parents, personifications of faith in trial and comfort in darkness. The two pillars of that earthly home long ago crumbled to dust. But shall I ever forget that earthly home? Yes, when the flower forgets the sun that warms it. Yes, when the mariner forgets the star that guided him. Yes, when love has gone out on the heart's altar, and memory has emptied its urn into forgetfulness. Then, home of my childhood, I will forget thee; the family altar of a father's importunity and a mother's tenderness, the voices of affection, the funerals of our dead; father and mother with interlocked arms like intertwining branches of trees making a perpetual arbor of love and peace and kindness — then I will forget thee — then, and only then. You know, that a hundred times you have been kept out of sin by the memory of such a scene as I have been describing. You have often had raging temptations, but you know what has held you with supernatural grasp. I tell you a man who has had such a good home as that never gets over it, and a man who has had a bad early home never gets over it.

Again, I remark that home is a type of heaven. At our best estate we are only pilgrims and strangers here. "Heaven is our home." Death will never

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knock at the door of that mansion, and in all that country there is not a single grave. How glad parents are in holiday time to gather their children home again! But I have noticed that almost always there is a son or a daughter absent — absent from home, perhaps absent from the country, perhaps absent from the world. Oh, how glad our Heavenly Father will be when he gets all his children home with him in heaven! And how delightful it will be for brothers and sisters to meet after long separation! Once they parted at the door of the tomb; now they meet at the door of immortality. Once they saw only "through a glass, darkly;" now it is "face to face," corruption, incorruption; mortality, immortality. Where are now all their sins and sorrows and troubles? Overwhelmed in the Red Sea of death while they passed through dryshod. Gates of pearl, capstones of amethyst, thrones of dominion do not stir my soul so much as the thought of home. Once there, let earthly sorrows howl like storms and roll like seas. Home! Let thrones rot and empires wither. Home! Let the world die in earthquake struggle and be buried amid procession of planets and dirge of spheres. Home! Let everlasting ages roll in irresistible sweep. Home! No sorrow, no crying. No tears. No death. But home, sweet home; home, beautiful home, everlasting home, home with each other, home with angels, home with God.

One night, lying on my lounge, when very tired, my children all around about me in full romp and hilarity and laughter — on the lounge, half awake and half asleep, I dreamed this dream: I was in a far country. It was not Persia, although more than Oriental luxuriance crowned the cities. It was not the tropics, although more than tropical fruitfulness



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filled the gardens. It was not Italy, although more than Italian softness filled the air. And I wandered around looking for thorns and nettles, but I found that none of them grew there, and I saw the sun rise, and I watched to see it set, but it sank not. And I saw the people in holiday attire, and I said: "When will they put off this and put on workmen's garb and again delve in the mine or swelter at the forge?" but they never put off the holiday attire. And I wandered in the suburbs of the city to find the place where the dead sleep, and I looked all along the line of the beautiful hills, the place where the dead might most blissfully sleep; and I saw towers and castles, but not a mausoleum or a monument or a white slab could I see. And I went into the chapel of the great town and I said: "Where do the poor worship and where are the hard benches on which they sit?" And the answer was made me: "We have no poor in this country." And then I wandered out to find the hovels of the destitute, and I found mansions of amber and ivory and gold, but not a tear could I see, not a sigh could I hear, and I was bewildered and I sat down under the branches of a great tree and I said, "Where am I? And whence comes all this scene?" And then out from among the leaves, and up the flowery paths, and across the bright streams there came a beautiful group, thronging all about me, and as I saw them come, I thought I knew their step, and as they shouted, I thought I knew their voices; yet they were so gloriously arrayed that I bowed as stranger to stranger. But when again they clapped their hands and shouted, "Welcome, welcome!" the mystery all vanished, and I found that time had gone and eternity had come, and we were all together again in our new home in heaven. And I looked around and I said:

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“Are we all here?” and the voices of many generations responded, “All here!” And while tears of gladness were raining down our cheeks, and the branches of the Lebanon cedars were clapping their hands, and the towers of the great city were chiming their welcome, we all together began to leap and shout and sing: “Home, home, home!”



## TREATMENT OF PARENTS

Prov., 10: 1: "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother."



## TREATMENT OF PARENTS

Prov., 10: 1: "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother."

All parents want their children to turn out well. However poorly father and mother may have done themselves, they want their sons and daughters to do splendidly. Up to forty years of age parents may have ambitions for themselves, after that their chief ambition is for their children. Some of the old-time names indicate this. The name of Abner means "his father's lamp." The name Abigail means "her father's joy." And what a parental delight was Solomon to David and Samuel to Hannah and Joseph to Jacob! And the best earthly staff that a father has to lean on is a good son, and the strongest arm a mother has to help her down the steps of years is that of a grateful child.

But it is not a rare thing to find people unfilial, and often the parents are themselves to blame. Aged persons sometimes become querulous and snappy, and the children have their hands full with the old folks. Before entering my profession I was for three months what is called a *colporteur*. One day in the country districts I stopped at the house of a good, intelligent, genial farmer. The hospitality of such a country house is especially pleasing to me, for I was born in the country. This farmer and his wife were hard-working people, but tried to make their home agreeable and attractive. The farmer's father, about sixty-five years of age, and his grandfather, about ninety, were yet alive and with him. Indeed, there were four generations in the house, for the farmer had some little chil-

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dren playing about the room. We gathered at the dining-table. After the blessing was asked, the farmer put some of the meat upon his plate and courteously passed it to me, when his father of sixty-five years of age cried out to his son, who was at least thirty years of age: "Why do you not pass the meat as you always do, and let us take it off the plate ourselves? You are trying to show off because we have company." Meanwhile his grandfather of ninety sat with his hat on at the table, his face unclean and his apparel untidy. Still the farmer kept his patience and equipoise, and I never think of him without admiration. He must have had more grace than I ever had.

Because people are old they have no right to be either ungentlemanly or uncouth. There are old people so disagreeable that they have nearly broken up some homes. The young married man with whom the aged one lives stands it because he has been used to it all his life, but the young wife, coming in from another household, can hardly endure it, and sometimes almost cries her eyes out. And when little children gather in the house, they are afraid of the venerable patriarch, who has forgotten that he ever was a child himself, and cannot understand why children should ever want to play "hide and seek" or roll hoop or fly kite, and he becomes impatient at the sound from the nursery, and shouts with an expenditure of voice that keeps him coughing fifteen minutes afterwards, "Boys! stop that racket!" as though any boy that ever amounted to anything in the world did not begin life by making a racket!

Indeed, there are children who owe nothing to their parents, for those parents have been profligates. My lamented friend, good and Christian and lovely Henry Wilson, Vice-President of the United States, in early life changed his name. Henry Wilson was

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not his original name. He dropped his father's name because that father was a drunkard and a disgrace, and the son did not feel called upon to carry such a stigma all his life. While children must always be dutiful, I sympathize with all young people who have disagreeable or unprincipled old folks around the house. Some of us, drawing out our memories, know that it is possible, after sixty or seventy or eighty or ninety years of age, for the old to be kind and genial; and the grandest adornment of a home is an aged father and an aged mother, if the process of years has mellowed them. Besides that, if your old parents are hard to get along with now, you must remember there was a time when they had hard work to get along with you. When you were about five or seven or ten or twelve years of age what a time they had with you! If they had kept a written account of your early pranks and misdoings, it would make a whole volume. That time when you gave your little sister a clip; that time when you explored the depth of a jar of sweet things for which you had no permission; that havoc you one day made with your jack-knife; that plucking from the orchard of unripe fruit; that day when, instead of being at school, as your parents supposed, you went a-fishing; and many a time did you imperil your young life in places where you had no business to climb or swim or venture. To get you through your first fifteen years with your life and your good morals was a fearful draft upon parental fidelity and endurance. Indeed, it may be that much of this present physical and mental weakness in your parents may have been a result of your early waywardness. You made such large and sudden drafts upon the bank of their patience that you broke the bank. They were injured in being thrown while trying to break the colt. It is a matter of only common honesty that you pay back to them some of

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the long-suffering which they paid to you. A father said to his son, "Surely no father ever had as bad a boy as I have." "Yes," said the son, "my grandfather had." It is about the same from generation to generation, and parents need to be patient with children, and children dutiful to their parents. Taking it for granted that those who hear me to-day have had a good parentage, I want to urge upon all the young the fact that the happiness and longevity of parents much depend upon the right behavior of their children, and I can do this no more effectually than by demonstrating the truth of my text, "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother."

Perhaps some young man astray may be brought back by a thought of how they feel about him at home. A French soldier lay wounded and dying in the hospital at Geneva, Switzerland. His father, at home, seventy years of age, heard of his son's suffering, and started, and took the long journey, and found the hospital; and as he entered the son cried: "O father, I am so glad you have come to see me die." "No," said the father; "you are not going to die; your mother is waiting for you, and I am going to take you home; I have brought you money and everything you need." "No," said the soldier, "they give me here everything that is nice to eat, but I have no appetite, and I must die." Then the father took from his knapsack a loaf of rye-bread, such as the plain people of his country ate, and said, "Here is a loaf of bread your mother made, and I am sure you can eat this; she sent it to you." Then the soldier brightened up, and took the bread and ate it, and said "It is so good, the bread from home, the bread that my mother made!" No wonder that in a few days he had recovered. O young man, wounded in the battle of life, and discouraged, given up by yourself, and

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given up by others, the old folks at the country fire-side have not given you up. I bring you bread from home. It may be plain bread, but it is that bread of which if a man eat he never again shall hunger. Bread from home!

Carrying out the idea of my text, I remark that a reckless or dissipated son makes a heavy-hearted parent because it hurts the family pride. It is not the given name, or the name which you received at the christening, that is injured by your prodigality. You cannot hurt your name of John or George or Henry or Mary or Frances or Rachel, because there have been thousands of people, good and bad, having those names, and you cannot improve or depreciate the respectability of those given names. But it is your last name, your family name, that is at your mercy. All who bear that name are bound, before God and man, not to damage its happy significance. You are charged, by all the generations of the past and all the generations to come, to do your share for the protection and the honor and the integrity of that name. You have no right, my young friend, by a bad life to blot the old family Bible containing the story of the marriage and births and deaths of the years gone by, or to cast a blot upon the family Bibles whose records are yet to be opened. There are in our American city-directories names that always suggest commercial dishonesty or libertinism or cruelty or meanness, just because one man or woman bearing that name cursed it forever by miscreancy. Look out how you stab the family name! It is especially dear to your mother. She was not born under that name. She was born under another name, but the years passed on and she came to young womanhood, and she saw some one with whom she could trust her happiness, her life, and her immortal destiny; and she took his name, took it

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while the orange blossoms were filling the air with fragrance, took it with joined hands, took it while the heavens witnessed. She chose it out of all the family names since the world stood, for better or worse, through sickness and through health, by cradles and by graves. Yea, she put off her old family name to take the family name you now wear, and she has done her part to make it an honorable name. How heavy a trouble you put upon her when, by misdeeds, you wrench that name from its high significance! To haul it down from your mother's forehead and trample it in the dust would be criminal. Your father's name may not be a distinguished name, but I hope it stands for something good. It may not be famous like that of Homer, the father of epic poetry, or Izaak Walton, the father of angling, or Æschylus, the father of tragedy, or Ethelwold, the father of monks, or Herodotus, the father of history, or Thomas Aquinas, the father of moral philosophy, or Abraham, the father of the faithful, but your father has a name in a small circle as precious to him as theirs in a larger circle. Look out how you tarnish it!

Further, the recklessness and dissipation of a young man are a cause of parental distress at a time when the parent is least able to bear it. The vicissitudes of life have left their impression upon those parents. The eye is not as clear as once, nor the hearing as acute, nor the nerves as steady, nor the step as strong, and with the tide of incoming years comes the weight of unfilial behavior. You take your parents at a great disadvantage, for they cannot stand as much as they once could. They have not the elasticity of feeling with which once they could throw off trouble. That shoulder, now somewhat bent, cannot bear as heavy a burden as once it could. At the time when the machinery is getting worn out you put upon it the



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most terrific strain. At sixty and seventy years the vitality is not so strong as at thirty or forty. Surely they are descending the down grade of life swiftly enough without any need of your increasing the momentum. They will be gone soon enough without your pushing them away. Call in all the doctors who ever lived since Hippocrates raised medicine from a superstition to a science, and they could not cure the heartbreak of a mother over her ruined boy. There may be, as some suppose, enough herbs on earth, if discovered, to cure all the ailments of the body; but nothing save a leaf from the tree of heavenly Paradise can cure a wound made by a foolish son who is the heaviness of his mother.

Perhaps it is a good thing that cruel treatment by a child abbreviates a parent's life; for what is there desirable in a father's life or a mother's life if its peace be gone? Do you not think death is something beneficent if it stops the mother's heart from aching and her eyes from weeping, and says: "You need not bear the excruciation any longer. Go and sleep. I will put the defense of a marble slab between you and that boy's outrages. Go now where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest?" At the departure of such mothers let the music be an anthem instead of a dirge. While you and I hear no sound, yet there are at this moment tens of thousands of parental hearts breaking. All care was taken with the boy's schooling, all good counsels given, and the equipment for a sober and earnest and useful life was provided, but it has all gone, and the foolish son has become the heaviness of his mother.

Much of the poignancy of the parental grief arises from the ingratitude of such behavior. What an undertaking it is to conduct a family through the ailments and exposures of early life! Talk about the

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skill demanded of a sea-captain commanding a ship across the ocean! That requires less skill than to navigate a young soul in safety across the infantile and boyhood years. The sicknesses that assault, the temptations that entrap, the anxieties that are excited! Young man, you will never know what your mother has suffered for you. You will never know how your father has toiled for you. You have been in all their thoughts, in all their plans, in all their prayers, from the time your first breath was drawn to this moment's respiration. What they could do for your health, what they could do for your happiness, what they could do for your mind, what they could do for your soul, have been absorbing questions. To earn a livelihood for you has not always been an easy thing for your father. By what fatigues of body and what disturbances of mind and long years of struggle, in which sometimes the losses were greater than the gains, he got bread for you, paying for it in the sweat of his own brow and the red drops of his own heart's blood! He looks older than he ought to look at his years, for it has been work, work, work. Many a time he felt like giving up the battle, but when he looked at your helplessness and the helplessness of the household, then he nerved himself up anew and said: "By the help of God I will not stop; my children must have home and education and advantages and a comfortable starting in the world, and I must get a little something ahead, so that if I am taken away these helpless ones will not be turned out on the cold charities of the world." Yes, your father has been a good friend to you. He has never told any one, and he never will tell any one of the sacrifices he has made for you. And he is ready to keep right on until unto that hand that has been toiling for you all these years shall come the very

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numbness of death. You cannot afford to break his heart. But you are doing it. Yes, you are. You have driven the dagger clear in up to the hilt.

And your mother — I warrant she has never told you much about the nights when you were down with scarlet fever, or diphtheria, and she slept not a wink, or falling into drowsiness, your first cry awakened her, and brought the words, "What is it, my dear?" Oh, if the old rocking-chair could speak! Oh, if the cradle could only tell its story of years! And when you got better, and were fretful and hard to please, as is usual in convalescence, she kept her patience so well, and was as kind as you were unreasonable and cross. Oh, the midnights of motherly watching, how can you keep silence? Speak out and tell that wandering young man the story that he so much needs to hear.

By the by, I wonder what has become of our old cradle in which all of us children were rocked! I must ask my sister when I see her next time. We were a large family, and that old cradle was going a good many years. I remember just how it looked. It was old-fashioned and had no tapestry. Its two sides and canopy all of plain wood, but there was a great deal of sound sleeping in that cradle, and many aches and pains were soothed by it as it moved to and fro by day and night. Most vividly I remember that the rockers, which came out from under the cradle, were on the top and side very smooth, so smooth that they actually glistened. They must have been worn smooth by a foot that long ago ceased its journey. How tired the foot that pressed it must sometimes have become! But it did not stop for that. It went right on and rocked for Phœbe the first, and for DeWitt the last. And it was a cradle like that, or perhaps of modern make and richly upholstered, in which your mother rocked you.

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Can it be that for all that care and devotion you are paying her back with harsh words or neglects or a wicked life? Then I must tell you that you are the "foolish son which is the heaviness of his mother." Better go home and kiss her, and ask her forgiveness. Kiss her on the lips that have so often prayed for you. Kiss her on the forehead that so often ached for you. Kiss her on the eyes that have so often wept over you. Better go right away, for she will be dead before long. And how will you feel then after you realize it is your waywardness that killed her? Romulus made no law against parricide, or the slaying of a father, matricide, or the slaying of a mother, because he considered such crimes impossible, and for six hundred years there was not a crime of that sort in Rome. But then came Lucius Ostius, and slew his father, proving the crime possible. Now, do you not think that the child who by wrong behavior sends his father to a premature grave is a parricide, or who by misconduct hastens a mother into the tomb is a matricide?

The heaviness of parents over a son's depravity is all the greater because it means spiritual disaster and overthrow. That is the worst thing about it. In the pension regulations a soldier receives for loss of both hands or feet seventy-two dollars a month. For loss of one hand and one foot thirty-six dollars. For loss of a hand or foot thirty dollars. For loss of both eyes seventy-two dollars. But who can calculate the value of a whole man ruined body, mind and soul? How can parents have any happiness about your future destiny, O young man gone astray? Can such opposite lives as you and they are living come out at the same place? Can holiness and dissipation enter the same gate?

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Where is the little prayer that was taught you at your mother's knee? Is the God they loved and worshiped your God? It is your soul about which they are most anxious, your soul that shall live after the earth itself shall be girdled with flames, and the flames, dying down, will leave the planet only a live coal, and the live coal shall have become ashes, and then the ashes shall be scattered by the whirlwinds of the Almighty.

"But," says some young man, "my mother is gone; my behavior will not trouble her any more."

Oh that these lips had language! Life has passed  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.

What! Is she dead? How you startle me! Is she dead? Then, perhaps, you have her picture. Hang it up in your room in the place where you oftenest sit. Go and study her features, and while you are looking the past will come back, and you may hear her voice, which is now so still, speak again, saying: "From my heavenly home, my dear boy, I solicit your reformation and salvation. Go to the Christ who pardoned me, and he will pardon you. My heaven will not be complete till I hear of your changing. But I will hear of it right away, for there is joy up here when one sinner repenteth; and would that the next news of that kind that comes up here might come up regarding you, O my child of many tears and anxieties and prayers! Come, my boy, do you not hear your mother's voice? O my son, my son, would God that I could die for thee! O my son, my son!" Young man! what news for heaven would be your conversion. Swifter than telegraphic wire ever carried congratulations to a wedding or a coronation would fly heaven-

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ward the news of your deliverance; and whether the one most interested in your salvation were on river-bank or in the temple or on the battlements or in the great tower, the message would be instantly received, and before this service is closed angel would cry to angel: "Have you heard the news? Out yonder is a mother who has just heard of her wayward boy's redemption. Another prodigal has got home. The dead is alive again, and the lost is found. Hallelujah! Amen!"

## ORPAH'S RETREAT

Ruth, 1: 14: "And they lifted up their voices and wept, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her."





## ORPHA'S RETREAT

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Moab was a heathen land. Naomi is about to leave it and go into the land of Bethlehem. She has two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, who conclude to go with her. Naomi tells them they had better not leave their native land and undertake the hardship of the journey, but they will not be persuaded. They all three start out on their journey. After a while, Naomi, although she highly prized the company of her two daughters-in-law, attempted to again persuade them to go back because of the hardship and self-denial through which they would be obliged to go. Ruth responds in the words from which I once discoursed to you: "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee, for where thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, thy people shall be my people and thy God my God, where thou diest will I die and there will I be buried, the Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." Not so with her sister Orpah. Her determination had already been shaken. The length and peril of the journey began to appall her, and she had worshiped the gods of Moab so long that it was hard to give them up. From that point Orpah turned back, the parting being described in the words of my text: "And they lifted up their voice and wept again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her."

Learn from this story of Orpah that some of those

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who did not leave the Moab of their iniquities are persons of fine susceptibility. It was compassion for Naomi in widowhood and sorrow that led Orpah to start with her toward Bethlehem. It was not because of any lack of affection for her that she turned back. We know this from the grief exhibited at parting. I do not know but that she had as much warmth and ardor of nature as Ruth, but she lacked the courage and persistence of her sister-in-law. That there are many with as fine susceptibility as Orpah who will not take up their cross and follow Christ, is a truth which needs but little demonstration. Many of those who have become the followers of Jesus have but little natural impressibility. Grace often takes hold of the hardest heart and the most unlovely character and transforms it. It is a hammer that breaks rocks. In this, Christ often shows his power. It wants but little generalship to conquer a flat country, but might of artillery and heroism to take a fort manned and ready for raking cannonade. The great Captain of our salvation has forced his way into many an armed castle. I doubt not that Christ could have found many a fisherman naturally more noble-hearted than Simon Peter, but there was no one by whose conversion he could more gloriously have magnified his grace. The conversion of a score of Johns would not have illustrated the power of the Holy Ghost as much as the conversion of one Peter. It would have been easier to drive twenty lambs like John into the fold than to tame one lion like Peter. God has often made some of his most efficient servants out of men naturally unimpressible. As men take stiff and unwieldy timbers, and under huge-handed machinery bend them into the hulk of great ships, thus God has often shaped and bent into his service the most unwieldy natures, while

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those naturally impressionable are still in their unchanged state.

Oh, how many, like Orpah, have warm affections and yet never become Christians! Like Orpah, they know how to weep, but they do not know how to pray. Their fineness of feeling leads them into the friendships of the world, but not into communion with God. They can love everybody but him, who is altogether lovely. All other sorrow rends their heart, but they are untouched by the woes of a dying Christ. Good news fills them with excitement, but the glad tidings of great joy and salvation stir not their soul. Anxious to do what is right, yet they rob God. Grateful for the slightest favors, they make no return to him who wrung out the last drop of blood from his heart to deliver them from going down to the pit. They would weep at the door of a prison at the sight of a wicked captive in chains, but have no compassion for their own souls over which Satan, like a grim jailer, holds the lock and key. When repulsive, grasping, unsympathetic natures resist the story of a Saviour's love, it does not excite our surprise; but it is among the greatest of wonders that so many who exhibit Orpah's susceptibility also exhibit Orpah's obduracy. We are not surprised that there is barrenness in a desert, but a strange thing is it that sometimes the Rose of Sharon will not grow in a garden. On a summer morning we are not surprised to find a rock without any dew on it, but if, going among a flock of lilies, we saw in them no glittering drops, we would say, "What foul sprite has been robbing these vases?" We are not surprised that Herod did not become a Christian, but how strange that the young man Jesus loved for his sweetness of temper should not have loved the Redeemer. Hard-hearted Felix

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trembled, proud Nebuchadnezzar repented, and cruel Manasseh turned unto the Lord; but many a nature, affectionate and gentle, has fought successfully against divine influences. Many a dove has refused to come in the window of the ark, although finding no rest for the sole of her foot.

Again: The history of Orpah impresses upon me the truth that there are many who make a good starting, but after a while change their minds and turn back. When these three mourners start from their home in Moab there is as much probability that Orpah will reach Bethlehem as that her sister-in-law and her mother-in-law Naomi will arrive there. But while these continue in the journey they commenced, Orpah after a while gets discouraged and turns back. This is the history of many a soul. Perhaps it was during a revival of religion they resolved upon a Christian life, and made preparations to leave Moab. Before that they were indifferent to the sanctuary, and they looked upon churches as necessary evils. The minister almost always preached poor sermons, because they had not the heart to hear them. They thought the bread was not good because their appetite was poor. Religion did very well for invalids and the aged, but they had no desire for it. Suddenly a change came upon their soul. They found that something must be done. Every night there was a thorn in their pillow. There was gall in their wine. They found that their pleasures were only false lights of a swamp that rise out of decay and death. Losing their self-control they were startled by their own prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." They did not suspect it, but the Holy Ghost was in their soul. Without thinking what they were doing, they brushed the dust off the family Bible. The ground did not feel as firm under them nor did the air seem as bright. They tried

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to dam back the flood of their emotions, but the attempt failed, and they confessed their anguish of soul before they meant to. The secret was out! They wanted to know what they must do to be saved. With Ruth and Naomi, weeping Orpah started for the land of Bethlehem.

They longed for the Sabbath to come. Straight as an arrow to the mark the sermon struck them. They thought the minister must have heard of their case and was preaching right at them. They thought the sermon was very short, nor did they once coil themselves up in their pew with their eyes shut and head averted with an air of unmoved dignity. They began to pray with an earnestness that astonished themselves and astonished others. Shoving the plane or writing up accounts or walking the street, when you might have thought their mind entirely upon the world, they were saying within themselves: "Oh, that I were a Christian!" Orpah is fully started on the road to Bethlehem. Christian friends observing the religious anxiety of the awakened soul say, "He must certainly be a Christian. There is another soldier in Christ's ranks, another sick one has been cured of the leprosy." The observers turn their attention another way; they say, "Orpah is safe enough; she has gone to Bethlehem."

Starting out for heaven is a very different thing from arriving there. Remember Lot's wife. She looked back with longing to the place from which she came, and was destroyed. Half way between Sodom and the city of Refuge that strange storm comes upon her, and its salt and brimstone gather on her garments until they are so stiffened she cannot proceed, nor can she lie down, because of this dreadful wrapping around her garments and limbs; and long after her life has gone she still stands there so covered up by the strange storm that she is called a pillar of salt, as some sailor

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on ship's deck in the wintry tempest stands covered with a mail of ice. Ten thousand times ten thousand men have been destroyed half-way between Sodom and the city of Refuge. Orpah might as well never have started as afterward to turn back. Yet multitudes have walked in her footsteps. Go among those the least interested in sacred things and you will find that they were once out of the land of Moab. Every one of them prayed right heartily and studied their Bibles and frequented the sanctuary, but Lot's wife looked back wistfully to Sodom, and Orpah retreated from the company of Ruth and Naomi. It is an impressive thought that after Orpah had gone so far as actually to look over into the land of Bethlehem she turned back and died in Moab.

Again: Let our subject impress upon us the truth that those who have once felt it their duty to leave their natural state cannot give up their duty and go back to hardness of heart without a struggle. After Orpah had thoroughly made up her mind to go back to the place from which she started, she went through the sad scene of parting with Ruth and Naomi. My text says, "They lifted up their voice and wept." Ah, my hearers, it requires more decision and perseverance to stay away from the kingdom of God than to enter it. Although she did not know it, Orpah passed through a greater struggle in turning back into the land of Moab than would have been necessary to take her clear through to Bethlehem. Suppose you that those persons who have remained in their evil ways have had no struggle? Why, they have been obliged to fight every inch of their way. The road to death is not such easy traveling as some ministers have been accustomed to describe it. From beginning to end it is fighting against the sharp sword of the Spirit. It is climbing over the cross. It is wading through the

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deep blood of the Son of God. It is scaling mountains of privilege. It is wading through lakes of sorrow. It is breaking over communion tables and baptismal fonts and pulpits and Bibles. It is wedging one's self through between pious kindred who stand before and press us back and hold on to us by their prayers even after we have passed them in our headlong downward career. No man ought to think of undertaking to go back into Moab after having come within sight of Bethlehem unless we have a heart that cannot be made to quake, and a sure foot that will not slip among infinite perils, and an arm that can drive back the Son of God, who stands in the center of the broad road spreading out his arms and shouting into the ear of the thoughtless pilgrim, "Stop! Stop!"

We talk about taking up the cross and following Jesus, but that cross is not half so heavy as the burden which the sinner carries. It is a very solemn thing to be a Christian, but it is a more solemn thing not to be a Christian. There are multitudes who, afraid of the self-denials of the Christian, rush into the harder self-denials of the unbelievers. Any yoke but Christ's, however tight and galling! Orpah goes back to her idolatries, but she returns weeping; and all who follow her will find the same sorrows. Just in proportion as Gospel advantages have been numerous will be the disturbance of the heart that will not come to Christ. The Bible says, in regard to the place where Christ was buried, "In the midst of the garden there was a sepulchre;" and in the midst of the most flowery enjoyments of the unpardoned there is a chilliness of death. Although they may pull out the arrows that strike their soul from the Almighty's quiver, there remain a sting and a smarting. If men wrench themselves away from Christ they will bear the mark of his hand by which he would have rescued them. The



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pleasures of the world may give temporary relief from the upbraidings of conscience, but are like stupefying drugs that dull the pain only temporarily. Ahab has a great kingdom, and you would think he ought to be happy with his courtiers and his chariots and palaces; yet he goes to bed sick, because Naboth will not sell him his vineyard. Haman is prime minister of the greatest nation in the world; yet one poor man, who will not bow the head, makes him utterly miserable. Herod monopolizes the most of the world's honor, and yet is thrown into a rage because they say a little child is born in Bethlehem who may after a while dispute his authority. Byron conquered the world with his pen, and yet said that he felt more unhappiness from the criticism of the most illiterate reader than he experienced pleasure from the praise of all the talented.

My friends, there is no solid happiness in anything but religion. I care not how bright a home Orpah has in Moab, when she turns away from duty she turns away from peace. Amid the bacchanalia of Belshazzar's feast and the glittering of chalices, there always will come out a hand-writing on the wall, the fearfully ominous "Tekel," weighed in the balances and found wanting. When you can reap harvests off bare rocks, and gather balm out of nightshade, and make sunlight sleep in the heart of sepulchers, and build a firm house on a rocking billow, then an unpardoned soul can find firm enjoyment amid its transgressions. Then can Orpah go back to Moab without weeping.

Again: This subject teaches that a religious choice and the want of it frequently divide families. Ruth and Orpah and Naomi were tenderly attached. They were all widows, and their lives had been united by a baptism of tears. In the fire of trial their affections had been forged. Together they were so pleasantly united, you can hardly imagine them sepa-



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rated. Yet a fatal line is drawn dividing them from each other, perhaps forever. Naomi cannot live in a heathen country. She must go into Bethlehem, that there among the pious she may worship the true God. Ruth makes a similar choice, but Orpah rebels. "And they lifted up their voice and wept again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her." The history of this family of Elimelech is the history of many families of this day. How often it is that in a circle of relatives, while they look alike and walk alike and talk alike, there is a great difference. Outwardly united in the affectional relations of this life, they are separated in the most important respects. Some now are the children of light, and others the children of darkness. These are alive in Christ, and those are dead in sin. Ruth in the land of Bethlehem, Orpah in Moab. Of the same family are David and Solomon, worshipers of the Most High God, and Adonijah and Absalom, who live and die the enemies of all righteousness. Belonging to the same family were the holy and devout Eli and the reckless Phinehas and Hophni. Jonathan Edwards, the good, and Pierrepont Edwards, the bad, belonged to the same family. Aaron Burr, the dissolute, had a most excellent father. Dying, yet immortal hearer, by the solemnity of the parental and filial and conjugal relation, by the sacredness of the family hearth, by the honor of the family name, by the memory of departed kindred, I point out this parting of Ruth and Orpah.

Again: This subject suggests to me two of the prominent reasons why people refuse the kingdom of Christ. There may have been many other reasons why Orpah left her sister and mother-in-law, and went back home, but there were two reasons which I think were more prominent than the rest. She had been brought up in idolatries. She loved the heathen

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gods which her ancestors had worshiped, and, though these blocks of wood and stone could not hear, she thought they could hear, and, though they could not see, she thought they could see, and, though they could not feel, she thought they could feel. A new religion had been brought to her attention. She had married a godly man. She must often have heard her mother-in-law talk of the God of Israel. She was so much shaken in her original belief that she concluded to leave her idolatries, but, coming to the margin of the land of Bethlehem, her determination failed her, and speedily she returned to her gods. This is the very reason why multitudes of persons never become Christians. They cannot bear to give up their gods. Business is the American Juggernaut that crushes more men than the car of the Hindoos. To it they say their morning and evening prayers. A little of Christ's religion may creep into the Sabbath, but Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday are the days devoted to this American idol. Every hour there is a sacrifice on the altar. Home duties, health of body, manly strength and immortal affections must all burn in this holocaust. Men act as though they could take their bonds and mortgages and saws and axes and trowels and day-books with them into heaven. There are many who have no unholy thirst for gold, yet who are devoting themselves to their worldly occupations with a ruinous intensity. Men of the stock exchange, men of the yardstick, men of the saw, men of the trowel, men of the day-book, what will become of you, if unforgiven, in the great day when there are no houses to build, and no goods to sell, and no bargains to make? It is possible to devote one's self even to a lawful calling until it becomes sinful. There is no excuse on the earth or under the earth for the neglect of our

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deathless spirit. Lydia was a seller of purple, yet she did not allow her occupation to keep her from becoming a Christian. Daniel was secretary of the State and attorney-general in the empire of Babylon, yet three times a day he found time to pray with his face toward Jerusalem. The man who has no time to attend to religion will have no time to enter heaven.

But there are others who, while their worldly occupation has no particular fascination over them, are entirely absorbed in the gains that come to that occupation. This is the worship of Mammon. The jingle of dollars and cents is the only litany they care for. Though in the last day the earth itself will not be worth a farthing, a heap of ashes scattered in the whirlwind, they are now giving their time and eternity for the acquisition of so much of it as you might at last hold in the hollow of one hand. The American Indian who gave enough land to make a State out of for a string of beads, made a princely bargain compared with the speculation of that man who gains the whole world and loses his own soul. How much comfort do the men take who died unforgiven ten years ago, leaving large fortunes to their heirs? Do they ever come up to count the gold they hoarded or walk through the mansions they built? Though they could have bought an empire, they have not now as much money as you have this moment in your pocket. Solomon looked upon his palace and the grounds surrounding it, pools rimmed with gold, and circling roads along which, at times, rushed his fourteen hundred chariots, while under the outbranching sycamores and cedars walked the apes and peacocks, which by the navy of Hiram had been brought from Tarshish, and from the window curtains with embroidered gold and purple through which came out

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the thrill of harps and psalteries mingling with the song of the waters. When Solomon saw that all these luxuries of sight and sound had been purchased by his wealth, he broke forth in the exclamation, "Money answereth all things." But we cannot receive it as literal. It cannot still the voice of conscience. It cannot drown the sorrows of the soul. It cannot put a bribe in the hand of death. It cannot unlock the gate of heaven. The tower of Siloam fell and killed eighteen of its admirers, but this idol to whose worship the exchanges and banks and custom-houses of the world have been dedicated, will fall and crush to death its thousands. But I cannot enumerate the idolatries to which men give themselves. They are kept by them from a religious life. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," and the first thing that Christ does when he comes into the temple of the soul is to drive out the exchangers.

But it was not only the gods of Moab that made Orpah leave her sister and mother-in-law and turn back. She doubtless had a dread of the hardship to which they would be exposed on the journey to Bethlehem, and Orpah was not alone in the fear. Doubtless some of you have been appalled and driven back by the self-denials of the Christian life. The taunt of the world, the charge of hypocrisy which they would sometimes be obliged to confront, has kept many away from the land of Bethlehem. They spend their life in counting the cost and, because a Christian life demands so much courage and faith, they dare not begin to build. Perhaps they are courageous in every other respect. They are not timid in presence of any danger except that of trusting in the infinite mercy of Christ. The sheep are more afraid of the shepherd than of the wolves. They shrink away from the pres-

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ence of Christ as though he were a tyrant rather than a friend who sticketh closer than a brother. They feel more safe in the ranks of the enemy, where they must suffer infinite defeat, than in the army of Christ, which shall be more than conquerors, through him that hath loved them. Men shiver and tremble before religion as though they were commanded to throw their life away, as though it were a surrender of honor and manliness and reason and self-respect and all that is worth keeping.

What has God ever done that his mercy should be doubted? Was there ever a sorrow of his frailest child that he did not pity? Was there ever a soul that he left unhelped in the darkness? Was there ever a martyr that he did not strengthen in the flames? Was there ever a dying man to whose relief he did not come at the cry of "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Aye, my soul, what has God done that so basely thou hast doubted him? Did he make the whole earth a desert? Are all the skies dark and storm-swept? Is life all sickness? Is the air all plague? Are there nothing but rods and scorpions and furnaces? God knew how many suspicions and unbeliefs men would entertain in regard to him and therefore, after making a multitude of plain and precious promises, he places his hand on his own heart and swears by his own existence: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth." Why then fight against God? This day the battle rages. Thou art armed with thy sins, thy ingratitude, thy neglects, and Christ is armed against thee, but his weapons are tears, are dying agonies, are calls of mercy, and the battle-cry which he this day sends over thy soul as he rushes toward thee is "save thee from going down to the pit, for I

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have found a ransom." I would not envy thy victory, O hearer, if thou dost conquer, for what wilt thou do with the weapons thou hast snatched from the armed Redeemer, what with the tears, what with his dying agonies, what with his calls for mercy? Would God that Orpah would get tired of Moab! Would God that Orpah would keep on till she reaches Bethlehem!

## THE BEAUTIFUL GLEANER

Ruth, 2: 3: "And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech."





## THE BEAUTIFUL GLEANER

Ruth, 2: 3: "And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech."

The time that Ruth and Naomi arrive at Bethlehem is harvest time. It was the custom commanded by Moses when a sheaf fell from a load in the harvest-field for the reapers to refuse to gather it up; that was to be left for the poor who might happen to come along that way. If there were handfuls of grain scattered across the field after the main harvest had been reaped, instead of raking it, as farmers do now, it was, by the custom of the land, left in its place, so that the poor, coming along that way, might glean it and get their bread. But, you say, "What is the use of all these harvest-fields to Ruth and Naomi? Naomi is too old and feeble to go out and toil in the sun; and can you expect that Ruth, the young and the beautiful, should tan her cheeks and blister her hands in the harvest-field?"

Boaz owns a large farm, and he goes out to see the reapers gather in the grain. Coming there, right behind the swarthy, sun-browned reapers, he beholds a beautiful woman gleaning—a woman more fit to bend to a harp, or sit upon a throne, than to stoop among the sheaves.

That was an eventful day! It was love at first sight. Boaz forms an attachment for the womanly gleaner—an attachment full of undying interest to the Church of God in all ages; while Ruth, with an ephah, or nearly a bushel of barley, goes home to Naomi to tell her the successes and adventures of

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the day. That Ruth, who left her native land of Moab in darkness, and traveled so far impelled by an undying affection for her mother-in-law, is in the harvest-field of Boaz, is affianced to one of the best families in Judah, and becomes in after time the ancestress of Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory! Out of so dark a night did there ever dawn so bright a morning?

I learn, in the first place, from this subject how trouble develops character. It was bereavement, poverty and exile that developed, illustrated and announced to all ages the sublimity of Ruth's character. That is a very unfortunate man who has no trouble. It was sorrow that made John Bunyan the better dreamer, and Dr. Young the better poet, and O'Connell the better orator, and Bishop Hall the better preacher, and Havelock the better soldier, and Kitto the better encyclopedist, and Ruth the better daughter-in-law. I once asked an aged man in regard to his pastor, who was a brilliant man, "Why is it that your pastor, so very brilliant, seems to have so little heart and tenderness in his sermons?" "Well," he replied, "the reason is, our pastor has never had any trouble. When misfortune comes upon him, his style will be different." After a while the Lord took a child out of that pastor's house; and though the preacher was just as brilliant as he was before, oh, the warmth, the tenderness of his discourses! The fact is, that trouble is a great educator. You see sometimes a musician sit down at an instrument, and his execution is cold and formal and unfeeling. The reason is that all his life he has been prospered. But let misfortune or bereavement come to that man, and he sits down at the instrument, and you discover the pathos in the first sweep of the keys. Misfortune and trials are great educators. A young doctor comes

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into a sick room where there is a dying child. Perhaps he is very rough in his prescription, and very rough in his manner, and rough in the feeling of the pulse, and rough in his answer to the mother's anxious question; but years roll on, and there has been one dead in his own house; and now he comes into the sick room, and with tearful eye he looks at the dying child, and he says, "Oh, how this reminds me of my Henry!" Trouble, the great educator. Sorrow — I see its touch in the grandest painting; I hear its tremor in the sweetest song; I feel its power in the mightiest argument.

Grecian mythology said that the fountain of Hippocrene was struck out by the foot of the winged horse, Pegasus, and I have often noticed in life that the brightest and most beautiful fountains of Christian comfort and spiritual life have been struck out by the iron-shod hoof of disaster and calamity. I see Shadrach's courage best by the flash of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. I see Paul's prowess best when I find him on the foundering ship under the glare of the lightning in the breakers of Melita. God crowns his children amid the howling of wild beasts and the chopping of blood-splashed guillotine and the crackling fires of martyrdom. It took all the hostilities against the Scotch Covenanters and the fury of Lord Claverhouse to develop James Renwick and Andrew Melville and Hugh McKail, the glorious martyrs of Scotch history. It took the stormy sea and the December blast and the desolate New England coast and the war-whoop of savages to show forth the prowess of the Pilgrim Fathers:

When amid the storms they sang,  
And the stars heard, and the sea;  
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang  
To the anthems of the free.

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It took all our past national distresses, and it takes all our present national sorrows, to lift up our nation on that high career where it will march long after the foreign aristocracies that have mocked and the tyrannies that have jeered shall be swept down under the Omnipotent wrath of God, who hates despotism, and who, by the strength of his own red right arm, will make all men free. And so it is individually and in the family and in the church and in the world, that through darkness and storm and trouble men, women, churches, nations, are developed.

Again: I see in my text the beauty of unfaltering friendship. I suppose there were plenty of friends for Naomi while she was in prosperity; but of all her acquaintances, how many were willing to trudge off with her toward Judah, when she had to make that lonely journey? One—the heroine of my text. One—absolutely one. I suppose when Naomi's husband was living, and they had plenty of money, and all things went well, they had a great many callers; but I suppose that after her husband died, and her property went, and she got old and poor, she was not troubled very much with callers. All the birds that sang in the bower while the sun shone have gone to their nests, now the night has fallen. Oh, these beautiful sunflowers that spread out their color in the morning hour; but they are always asleep when the sun is going down! Job had plenty of friends when he was the richest man in Uz; but when his property went and the trials came, then there were none so much pestered him as Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. Life often seems to be a mere game, where the successful player pulls down all the other men into his own lap. Let suspicions arise about a man's character, and he becomes like a bank in a panic, and all the

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imputations rush on him and break down in a day that character which in due time would have had strength to defend itself. There are reputations that have been half a century in building, which go down under some moral exposure, as a vast temple is consumed by the touch of a sulphurous match. A hog can uproot a century plant.

In this world, so full of heartlessness and hypocrisy, how thrilling it is to find some friend as faithful in days of adversity as in days of prosperity! David had such a friend in Hushai. The Jews had such a friend in Mordecai, who never forgot their cause. Paul had such a friend in Onesiphorus, who visited him in jail. Christ had such in the Marys, who adhered to him on the cross. Naomi had such a one in Ruth, who cried out: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

Again: I learn from this subject that paths which open in hardship and darkness often come out in places of joy. When Ruth started from Moab toward Jerusalem, to go along with her mother-in-law, I suppose the people said, "What a foolish creature to go away from her father's house, to go off with a poor old woman toward the land of Judah! They won't live to get across the desert. They will be lost in the mountains, or the jackals of the wilderness will destroy them." It was a very dark morning when Ruth started off with Naomi; but behold her in my text in the harvest-field of Boaz, to be affianced to one of the lords of the land, and become one of the grandmothers of Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. And so

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it often is that a path which starts very darkly ends very brightly.

When you started out for heaven, oh, how dark was the hour of conviction — how Sinai thundered, and devils tormented, and the darkness thickened! All the sins of your life pounced upon you, and it was the darkest hour you ever saw when you first found out your sins. After a while you went into the harvest-field of God's mercy; you began to glean in the fields of divine promise, and you had more sheaves than you could carry, as the voice of God addressed you, saying: "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered." A very dark starting in conviction, a very bright ending in the pardon and the hope and the triumph of the Gospel. So, very often in our worldly business or in our spiritual career, we start off on a very dark path. We must go. The flesh may shrink back, but there is a voice within or a voice from above, saying: "You must go," and we have to drink the gall, and we have to carry the cross, and we have to traverse the desert, and we are pounded and flailed of misrepresentation and abuse, and we have to urge our way through ten thousand obstacles that must be overcome by our own right arm. We have to ford the river, we have to climb the mountain, we have to storm the castle; but blessed be God, the day of rest and reward will come. On the top of the captured battlements we will shout the victory; if not in this world, then in that world where there is no gall to drink, no burdens to carry, no battles to fight. How do I know it? Know it! I know it because God says so. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes."

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It was very hard for Noah to endure the scoffing of the people in his day, while he was trying to build the ark, and was every morning quizzed about his old boat that would never be of any practical use; but when the deluge came, and the mountains disappeared like the backs of sea-monsters, and the elements, lashed into fury, clapped their hands over a drowned world, then Noah in the ark rejoiced in his own safety and in the safety of his family, and looked out on the wreck of a ruined earth.

Christ, hounded of persecutors, denied a pillow, worse maltreated than the thieves on either side of the cross, human hate smacking its lips in satisfaction after it had been draining his last drop of blood, the sheeted dead bursting from the sepulchers at his crucifixion. Tell me, O Gethsemane and Golgotha, were there ever darker times than those? Like the booming of the midnight sea against the rock, the surges of Christ's anguish beat against the gates of eternity, to be echoed back by all the thrones of heaven and all the dungeons of hell. But the day of reward comes for Christ; all the pomp and dominion of this world are to be hung on his throne, crowned heads are to bow before him on whose head are many crowns, and all celestial worship is to come up at his feet, like the humming of the forest, like the rushing of the waters, like the thundering of the seas, while all heaven, rising on their thrones, beat time with their scepters. "Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Hallelujah, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

That song of love, now low and far,  
Ere long shall swell from star to star;  
That light, the breaking day which tips  
The golden-spired Apocalypse.



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Again: I learn from my subject that events which seem to be most insignificant may be momentous. Can you imagine anything more unimportant than the coming of a poor woman from Moab to Judah? Can you imagine anything more trivial than the fact that this Ruth just happened to alight — as they say — just happened to alight on that field of Boaz? Yet all ages, all generations, have an interest in the fact that she was to become an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all nations and kingdoms must look at that one little incident with a thrill of unspeakable and eternal satisfaction. So it is in your history and in mine; events that you thought of no importance at all have been of very great moment. That casual conversation, that accidental meeting — you did not think of it again for a long while; but how it changed all the current of your life! It seemed to be of no importance that Jubal invented rude instruments of music, calling them harp and organ; but they were the introduction of all the world's minstrelsy; and as you hear the vibration of a stringed instrument, even after the fingers have been taken away from it, so all music now of lute and drum and cornet are only the long-continued strains of Jubal's harp and Jubal's organ. It seemed to be a matter of very little importance that Tubal Cain learned the uses of copper and iron; but that rude foundry of ancient days has its echo in the rattle of Birmingham machinery and the roar and bang of factories on the Merrimac. It seemed to be a matter of no importance that Luther found a Bible in a monastery; but as he opened that Bible, and the brass-bound lids fell back, they jarred everything, from the Vatican to the furthest convent in Germany, and the rustling of the wormed leaves was the sound of the wings of the angel of the Reformation. So the insignificant events of this world seem, after all,



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to be most momentous. The fact that you came up that street or this street seemed to be of no importance to you, and the fact that you went inside of some church may seem to be a matter of very great insignificance to you, but you may find it the turning point in your history.

Again: I see in my subject an illustration of the beauty of female industry. Behold Ruth toiling in the harvest-field under the hot sun, or at noon taking plain bread with the reapers, or eating the parched corn which Boaz handed to her. The customs of society, of course, have changed, and without the hardships and exposure to which Ruth was subjected, every intelligent woman will find something to do. I know there is a sickly sentimentality on this subject. In some families there are persons of no practical service to the household or community; and though there are so many woes all around about them in the world, they spend their time languishing over a new pattern, or bursting into tears at midnight over the story of some lover who shot himself! They would not deign to look at Ruth carrying back the barley on her way home to her mother-in-law, Naomi. All this fastidiousness may seem to do very well while they are under the shelter of their father's house; but when the sharp winter of misfortune comes, what of these butterflies? Persons under indulgent parentage may get upon themselves habits of indolence; but when they come out into practical life, their soul will recoil with disgust and chagrin. They will feel in their hearts what the poet so severely satirized when he said:

Folks are so awkward, things so impolite,  
They're elegantly pained from morn till night.

Through that gate of indolence, how many men and women have marched, useless on earth, to a de-

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stroyed eternity! Spinola said to Sir Horace Vere: "Of what did your brother die?" "Of having nothing to do," was the answer. "Ah!" said Spinola, "that's enough to kill any general of us." Can it be possible in this world, where there is so much suffering to be alleviated, so much darkness to be enlightened, and so many burdens to be carried that there is any person who cannot find anything to do?

Madame de Staël did a world of work in her time; and one day, while she was seated amid instruments of music, all of which she had mastered, and amid manuscript books, which she had written, some one said to her, "How do you find time to attend to all these things?" "Oh," she replied, "these are not the things I am proud of. My chief boast is in the fact that I have seventeen trades, by any one of which I could make a livelihood if necessary." And if in secular spheres there is so much to be done, in spiritual work how vast the field! How many dying all around about us without one word of comfort! We want more Abigails, more Hannahs, more Rebeccas, more Marys, more Deborahs consecrated — body, mind, soul — to the Lord who bought them.

Once more I learn from my subject the value of gleaning. Ruth going into that harvest-field might have said: "There is a straw, and there is a straw, but what is a straw? I can't get any barley for myself or my mother-in-law out of these separate straws." Not so said beautiful Ruth. She gathered two straws, and she put them together, and more straws, until she got enough to make a sheaf. Putting that down, she went and gathered more straws, until she had another sheaf and another and another and another, and then she brought them all together, and she threshed them out, and she had an ephah of

## The Beautiful Gleaner

barley, nigh a bushel. Oh, that we might all be gleaners!

Elihu Burritt learned many things while toiling in a blacksmith's shop. Abercrombie, the world-renowned philosopher, was a philosopher in Scotland, and he got his philosophy, or the chief part of it, while, as a physician, he was waiting for the door of the sick-room to open. Yet how many there are in this day who say they are so busy they have no time for mental or spiritual improvement; the great duties of life cross the field like strong reapers, and carry off all the hours, and there is only here and there a fragment left, that is not worth gleaning. You could go into the busiest day and busiest week of your life and find golden opportunities, which gathered, might at last make a whole sheaf for the Lord's garner. It is the stray opportunities and the stray privileges which, taken up and bound together and beaten out, will at last fill you with rejoicing. There are a few moments left worth the gleaning. Now, Ruth, to the field! May each one have a measure full and running over! Ho! you gleaners, to the field! And if there be in your household an aged one or a sick relative that is not strong enough to come forth and toil in this field, then let Ruth take home to feeble Naomi this sheaf of the gleanings: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." May the Lord God of Ruth and Naomi be our portion forever!



## THE GRANDMOTHER

II Tim., 1: 5: "The unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois."



## THE GRANDMOTHER

II Tim., 1: 5: "The unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois."

In this affectionate letter which Paul, the old minister, is writing to Timothy, the young minister, the family record is brought out. Paul practically says: "Timothy, what a good grandmother you had! You ought to be better than most folks, you had not only a good mother, but a good grandmother. Two preceding generations of piety ought to give you a mighty push in the right direction." The fact was that Timothy needed encouragement. He was in poor health, having a weak stomach, and was dyspeptic, and Paul prescribed for him a tonic, "a little wine, for thy stomach's sake" — not much wine, but a little wine, and only as a medicine. And if the wine then had been as much adulterated with logwood and strychnine as our modern wines, he would not have prescribed any.

But Timothy, not strong physically, is encouraged spiritually by the recital of grandmotherly excellence, Paul hinting to him, as I now hint to you, that God sometimes gathers up, as in a reservoir away back of the active generations of to-day, a godly influence, and then in response to prayer, lets down the power upon children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The world is woefully in want of a table of statistics in regard to what is the protractedness and immensity of influence of one good woman in the church and world. We have accounts of how much evil has been wrought by Margaret, the mother of criminals, who

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lived nearly a hundred years ago, and of how many hundreds of criminals her descendants furnished for the penitentiary and the gallows, and how many hundreds of thousands of dollars they cost this country in their arraignment and prison support, as well as in the property they burglarized or destroyed. But will not some one with brain comprehensive enough and heart warm enough and pen keen enough come out and give us the facts in regard to some good woman of a hundred years ago, and let us know how many Christian men and women and reformers and useful people have been found among her descendants, and how many asylums and colleges and churches they built, and how many millions of dollars they contributed for humanitarian and Christian purposes? The good women whose tombstones were planted in the eighteenth century are more alive for good in the nineteenth century than they were before, as the good women of this nineteenth century will be more alive for good in the twentieth century than now. Mark you, I have no idea that the grandmothers were any better than their granddaughters. You cannot get very old people to talk much about how things were when they were boys and girls. They have a reticence and a non-committalism which makes me think they feel themselves to be the custodians of the reputation of their early comrades. While our dear old folks are rehearsing the follies of the present, if you put them on the witness-stand and cross-examine them as to how things were seventy years ago, the silence becomes oppressive.

A celebrated Frenchman by the name of Volney visited this country in 1796, and he says of woman's diet in those times: "If a premium was offered for a regimen most destructive to health, none could be devised more efficacious for these ends than that in



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use among these people." That eclipses our lobster salad at midnight. Everybody talks about the dissipations of modern society, and how womanly health goes down under it, but it was worse a hundred years ago, for the chaplain of a French regiment in our Revolutionary War wrote in 1782, in his book of American women, saying: "They are tall and well-proportioned, their features are generally regular, their complexions are generally fair and without color. At twenty years of age the women have no longer the freshness of youth. At thirty or forty they are decrepit." In 1812 a foreign consul wrote a book entitled, "A Sketch of the United States at the Commencement of the Present Century," and he says of the women of those times, "At the age of thirty all their charms have disappeared." One glance at the portraits of the women a hundred years ago and their style of dress makes us wonder how they ever got their breath. All this makes me think that the express rail-train is no more an improvement on the old canal-boat, or the telegraph no more an improvement on the old-time saddlebags, than the women of our day are an improvement on the women of the last century.

But, notwithstanding that those times were so much worse than ours, there was a glorious race of godly women seventy and a hundred years ago, who held the world back from sin and lifted it toward virtue, and without their exalted and sanctified influence the last good influence would have perished from the earth before this. Indeed, all over this land there are seated to-day — not so much in churches, for many of them are too feeble to come — a great many aged grandmothers. They sometimes feel that the world has gone past them, and they have an idea that they are of little account. Their head sometimes

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gets aching from the racket of the grandchildren downstairs or in the next room. They steady themselves by the banisters as they go up and down. When they get a cold, it hangs on to them longer than it used to. They cannot bear to have the grandchildren punished even when they deserve it, and have so relaxed their ideas of family discipline that they would spoil all the youngsters of the household by too great leniency. These old folks are the confidantes when great troubles come, and there is a calming and soothing power in the touch of an aged hand that is almost supernatural. They feel they are almost through with the journey of life, and read the old Book more than they used to, hardly knowing which most they enjoy, the Old Testament or the New, and often stop and dwell tearfully over the family record half way between. We hail them today, whether in the house of God or at the homestead. Blessed is that household that has in it a grandmother Lois. Where she is, angels are hovering round, and God is in the room. May her last days be like those lovely autumnal days that we call Indian Summer.

I never knew the joy of having a grandmother; that is the disadvantage of being the youngest child of the family. The elder members only have that benediction. But though she went up out of this life before I began it, I have heard of her faith in God, that brought all her children into the kingdom and two of them into the ministry, and then brought all her grandchildren into the kingdom, myself the last and least worthy. Is it not time that you and I do two things, swing open a picture-gallery of the wrinkled faces and stooped shoulders of the past, and call down from their heavenly thrones the godly grandmothers, to give them our thanks, and then per-

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suade the mothers of to-day that they are living for all time, and that against the sides of every cradle in which a child is rocked beat the two eternities. Here we have an untried, undiscussed, and unexplored subject. You often hear about your influence upon your own children — I am not talking about that. What about your influence upon the twentieth century, upon the thirtieth century, upon the fortieth century, upon the year 2000, upon the year 4000, if the world lasts so long? The world stood four thousand years before Christ came; it is not unreasonable to suppose that it may stand four thousand years after his arrival. Four thousand years the world swung off in sin; four thousand years it may be swinging back into righteousness. By the ordinary rate of multiplication of the world's population in a century, your descendants will be over three hundred, and by two centuries at least thirty thousand, and upon every one of them you, the mother of to-day, will have an influence for good or evil. And if in four centuries your descendants shall have with their names filled a scroll of hundreds of thousands, will some angel from heaven to whom is given the capacity to calculate the number of the stars of heaven and the sands of the seashore, step down and tell us how many descendants you will have in the four thousandth year of the world's possible continuance?

Do not let the grandmothers any longer think that they are retired, and sit clear back out of sight from the world, feeling that they have no relation to it. The mothers of the last century are to-day in the senates, the parliaments, the palaces, the pulpits, the banking-houses, the professional chairs, the prisons, the almshouses, the company of midnight brigands, the cellars, the ditches of this country. You have been thinking about the importance of having

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the right influence upon one nursery. You have been thinking about the importance of getting those two little feet on the right path. You have been thinking of your child's destiny for the next eighty years, if it should pass on to be an octogenarian. That is well, but my subject sweeps a thousand years, a million years, a quadrillion of years. I cannot stop at one cradle; I am looking at the cradles that reach all round the world and across all time. I am not talking of mother Eunice; I am talking of grandmother Lois.

The only way you can tell the force of a current is by sailing up-stream; or the force of an ocean wave, by running the ship against it. Running along with it we cannot appreciate the force. In estimating maternal influence we generally run along with it down the stream of time, and so we do not understand the full force. Let us come up to it from the eternity side, after it has been working on for centuries, and see all the good it has done and all the evil it has accomplished multiplied in magnificent or appalling compound interest. The difference between that mother's influence on her children now, and the influence when it has been multiplied in hundreds of thousands of lives, is the difference between the Mississippi river, way up at the top of the continent, starting from the little Lake Itasca, seven miles long and one wide, and its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico, where navies might ride. Between the birth of that river and its burial in the sea, the Missouri pours in, and the Ohio pours in, and the Arkansas pours in, and the Red and White and Yazoo rivers pour in, and all the States and Territories between the Alleghany and Rocky mountains make contribution. Now, in order to test the power of a mother's influence, we need to come in off of the ocean of eternity and sail up toward the one cradle,

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and we find ten thousand tributaries of influence pouring in and pouring down. But it is, after all, one great river of power rolling on and rolling forever. Who can fathom it? Who can bridge it? Who can stop it? Had not mothers better be intensifying their prayers? Had they not better be elevating by their example? Had they not better be rousing themselves with the consideration that by their faithfulness or neglect they are starting an influence which will be stupendous after the last mountain of earth is flat, and the last sea has been dried up, and the last flake of the ashes of a consumed world shall have been blown away, and all the telescopes of other worlds, directed to the track around which our world once swung, shall discover not so much as a cinder of the burned-down and swept-off planet. In Ceylon there is a granite column thirty-six feet square in size, which is thought, by the natives, to decide the world's continuance. An angel with robe spun from zephyrs is once a century to descend and sweep the hem of that robe across the granite, and when, by that attrition the column is worn away, they say time will end. But, by that process, that granite column would be worn out of existence before a mother's influence will begin to give way.

If a mother tell a child that if he is not good, some bugaboo will come and catch him, the fear excited may make the child a coward, and the fact that he finds that there is no bugaboo may make him a liar, and the echo of that false alarm may be heard after fifteen generations have been born and have expired. If a mother promise a child a reward for good behavior, and after the good behavior forgets to give the reward, the cheat may crop out in some faithlessness half a thousand years further on. If a mother cultivate a child's vanity, and eulogize his curls, and extol the night-black or sky-blue or nut-brown of the child's

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eyes, and call out in his presence the admiration of spectators, pride and arrogance may be prolonged after half a dozen family records have been obliterated. If a mother express doubt about some statement of the Holy Bible in a child's presence, long after the gates of this historical era have closed and the gates of another era have opened, the result may be seen in a champion blasphemer. But, on the other hand, if a mother walking with a child see a suffering one by the wayside and says: "My child, give that ten-cent piece to that lame boy," the result may be seen on the other side of the following century in some George Muller building a whole village of orphanages. If a mother sit almost every evening by the trundle-bed of a child and teach it lessons of a Saviour's love and a Saviour's example, of the importance of truth and the horror of a lie, and the virtues of industry and kindness and sympathy and self-sacrifice, long after the mother is gone, and the child has gone, and the lettering on both the tombstones shall have been washed out by the storms of innumerable winters, there may be standing, as a result of those trundle-bed lessons, flaming evangels, world-moving reformers, seraphic Summerfields, weeping Paysons, thundering Whitefields, emancipating Washingtons.

Good or bad influence may skip one generation or two generations, but it will be sure to land in the third or fourth generation, just as the Ten Commandments, speaking of the visitation of God on families, says nothing about the second generation, but entirely skips the second and speaks of the third and fourth generations: "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the third and fourth generations of them that hate me." Parental influence, right and wrong, may jump over a generation, but it will come down further on, as sure as you sit there and I stand here. Timothy's ministry



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was projected by his grandmother Lois. There are men and women here, the sons and daughters of the Christian church, who are such as a result of the consecration of great-great-grandmothers. Why, who do you think the Lord is? You talk as though his memory was weak. He can no easier remember a prayer five minutes than he can five centuries.

This explains what we often see — some man or woman distinguished for benevolence when the father and mother were distinguished for penuriousness; or you see some young man or woman with a bad father and a hard mother come out gloriously for Christ, and make the church sob and shout and sing under their exhortations. We stand in corners of the vestry and whisper over the matter and say: “How is this, such great piety in sons and daughters of such parental worldliness and sin?” I will explain it to you if you will fetch me the old family Bible containing the full record. Let some septuagenarian look with me upon the pages of births and marriages, and tell me who that woman was with the old-fashioned name of Jemima or Betsy or Mehitabel. Ah, there she is, the old grandmother or great-grandmother, who had enough religion to saturate a century. There she is, the dear old soul, grandmother Lois. In beautiful Greenwood there is the resting-place of George W. Bethune, once a minister of Brooklyn Heights, his name never spoken among intelligent Americans without suggesting two things — eloquence and evangelism. In the same tomb sleeps his grandmother, Isabella Graham, who was the chief inspiration of his ministry. You are not surprised at the poetry and pathos and pulpit power of the grandson when you read of the faith and devotion of his wonderful ancestress. When you read this grandmother’s letter, in which she poured out her widowed soul in longings

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for a son's salvation, you will not wonder that succeeding generations have been blessed:

NEW YORK, *May 20, 1791.*

This day my only son left me in bitter wringings of heart; he is again launched on the ocean, God's ocean. The Lord saved him from shipwreck, brought him to my home and allowed me once more to indulge my affections over him. He has been with me but a short time, and ill have I improved it; he is gone from my sight, and my heart bursts with tumultuous grief. Lord, have mercy on the widow's son, "the only son of his mother."

I ask nothing in all this world for him; I repeat my petition — save his soul alive, give him salvation from sin. It is not the danger of the seas that distresses me; it is not the hardships he must undergo; it is not the dread of never seeing him more in this world; it is because I cannot discern the fulfillment of the promise in him, I cannot discern the new birth nor its fruit, but every symptom of captivity to Satan, the world and self-will. This, this is what distresses me; and in connection with this, his being shut out from ordinances at a distance from Christians; shut up with those who forget God, profane his name and break his Sabbaths; men who often live and die like beasts, yet are accountable creatures, who must answer for every moment of time and every word, thought and action.

O, Lord, many wonders hast thou shown me; thy ways of dealing with me and mine have not been common ones; add this wonder to the rest. Call, convert, regenerate and establish a sailor in the faith. Lord, all things are possible with thee; glorify thy Son and extend his kingdom by sea and land; take the prey from the strong. I roll him over upon thee. Many friends try to comfort me; miserable comforters are they all. Thou art the God of consolation; only confirm to me thy precious word, on which thou causedst me to hope in the day when thou saidst to me, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive." Only let this life be a spiritual life, and I put a blank in thy hand as to all temporal things.

I wait for thy salvation. Amen.

With such a grandmother would you not have a right to expect a George W. Bethune? and all the



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thousands converted through his ministry may date the saving power back to Isabella Graham.

God fill the earth and heavens with such grandmothers; we must some day go up and thank these dear old souls. Surely, God will let us go up and tell them of the results of their influence. Among our first questions in heaven will be, "Where is grandmother?" They will point her out, for we would hardly know her even if we had seen her on earth, so bent over with years once, and there so straight, so dim of eye through the blinding of earthly tears, and now her eye as clear as heaven, so full of aches and pains once, and now so agile with celestial health, the wrinkles blooming into carnation roses, and her step like the roe on the mountains. Yes, I must see her, my grandmother on my father's side, Mary McCoy, descendant of the Scotch. When I first spoke to an audience in Glasgow, Scotland, and felt somewhat diffident, being a stranger, I began by telling them that my grandmother was a Scotchwoman, and then went up a shout of welcome which made me feel as easy as I do here. I must see her. You must see these women of the early nineteenth century and of the eighteenth century, the answer of whose prayers is in your welfare to-day.

God bless all the aged women up and down the land and in all lands! What a happy thing, Pomponius Atticus, to say, when making the funeral address of his mother: "Though I have resided with her sixty-seven years, I was never once reconciled to her, because there never happened the least discord between us, and consequently, there was no need of reconciliation." Make it as easy for the old folks as you can. When they are sick, get for them the best doctors. Give them your arm when the streets are slippery. Stay with them all the time you can. Go

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home and see the old folks. Find the place for them in the hymn-book. Never be ashamed if they prefer styles of apparel a little antiquated. Never say anything that implies that they are in the way. Make the road for the last mile as smooth as you can. How you will miss her when she is gone. I would give the house from over my head to see my mother. I have so many things I would like to tell her, things that have happened in all these years since she went away. Morning, noon and night let us thank God for the good influences that have come down from good mothers all the way back. Timothy, do not forget your mother Eunice, and do not forget your grandmother Lois. And hand down to others this patrimony of blessing. Pass along the coronets. Make religion an heirloom from generation to generation. Mothers of America, consecrate yourselves to God, and you will help consecrate all the ages following! Do not dwell so much on your hardships that you miss your chance of wielding an influence that shall look down upon you from the towers of an endless future.

This is a hard world for women. Aye, I go further and say, it is a hard world for men. But for all women and men who trust their bodies and souls in the hand of Christ, the shining gates will soon swing open. Do you not see the sickly pallor on the sky? That is the pallor on the cold cheek of the dying night. Do you not see the brightening of the clouds? That is the flush on the warm forehead of the morning. Cheer up, you are coming within sight of the Celestial City.

Cairo, capital of Egypt, was called "City of Victory." Athens, capital of Greece, was called "City of the Violet Crown"; Baalbeck was called "City of the Sun"; London was called "The City of Masts." Lucia's imaginary metropolis beyond the Zodiac was

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called "The City of Lanterns." But the city to which you journey hath all these in one, the victory, the crowns, the masts of those that have been harbored after the storm. Aye, all but the lanterns and the sun, because they have no need of any other light, since the Lamb is the light thereof.



## THE OLD FOLKS' VISIT

Gen., 45: 28: "I will go and see him before I die."



## THE OLD FOLKS' VISIT

Gen., 45: 28: "I will go and see him before I die."

Jacob had long since passed the hundred year milestone. In those times people were distinguished for longevity. In the centuries after persons lived to great age. Galen, the most celebrated physician of his time, took so little of his own medicine that he lived to one hundred and forty years. A man of undoubted veracity on the witness-stand in England swore that he remembered an event one hundred and fifty years before. Lord Bacon speaks of a countess who had cut three sets of teeth, and died at one hundred and forty years. Joseph Crele, of Pennsylvania, lived one hundred and forty years. In 1857 a book was printed containing the names of thirty-seven persons who lived one hundred and forty years, and the names of eleven persons who lived one hundred and fifty years.

Among the grand old people of whom we have record was Jacob, the shepherd of the text. But he had a bad lot of boys. They were jealous and ambitious and every way unprincipled. Joseph, however, seemed to be an exception; but he had been gone many years, and the probability was that he was dead. As sometimes now in a house you will find kept at the table a vacant chair, a plate, a knife, a fork, for some deceased member of the family, so Jacob kept in his heart a place for his beloved Joseph. There sits the old man, the flock of one hundred and forty years in their flight having alighted long enough to leave the marks of their claw on forehead and cheek and temple. His long beard snows down over his chest. His eyes

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are somewhat dim, and he can see further when they are closed than when they are open, for he can see clear back into the time when beautiful Rachel, his wife, was living, and his children shook the Oriental abode with their merriment.

The centenarian is sitting dreaming over the past when he hears a wagon rumbling to the front door. He gets up and goes to the door to see who has arrived, and his long absent sons from Egypt come in and announce to him that Joseph instead of being dead is living in an Egyptian palace, with all the investiture of prime minister, next to the king in the mightiest empire of all the world! The news was too sudden and too glad for the old man, and his cheeks whiten, and he has a dazed look, and his staff falls out of his hand, and he would have dropped had not the sons caught him and led him to a lounge and put cold water on his face, and fanned him a little.

In that half delirium the old man mumbles something about his son, Joseph. He says: "You don't mean Joseph, do you? my dear son who has been dead so long. You don't mean Joseph, do you?" But after they had fully resuscitated him, and the news was confirmed, the tears begin the winding way down the cross roads of the wrinkles, and the sunken lips of the old man quiver, and he brings his bent fingers together as he says: "Joseph is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die."

It did not take the old man a great while to get ready, I warrant you. He put on the best clothes that the shepherd's wardrobe could afford. He got into the wagon, and though the aged are cautious and like to ride slow, the wagon did not get along fast enough for this old man; and when the wagon with the old man met Joseph's chariot coming down to meet him, and Joseph got out of the chariot and got



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into the wagon and threw his arms around his father's neck, it was an antithesis of royalty and rusticity, of simplicity and pomp, of filial affection and paternal love, which leaves us so much in doubt about whether we had better laugh or cry, that we do both. So Jacob kept the resolution of the text: "I will go and see him before I die." And if our friends, the reporters, would like to have an appropriate title for this sermon, they might call it "The Old Folks' Visit."

What a strong and unailing thing is parental attachment! Was it not almost time for Jacob to forget Joseph? The hot suns of many summers had blazed on the heath; the river Nile had overflowed and receded, overflowed and receded again and again; the seed had been sown and the harvests reaped; stars rose and set; years of plenty and years of famine had passed on; but the love of Jacob for Joseph in my text is overwhelmingly dramatic. Oh, that is a cord that is not snapped, though pulled on by many decades! Though when the little child expired the parents may not have been more than twenty-five years of age, and now they are seventy-five, yet the vision of the cradle, and the childish face, and the first utterances of the infantile lips are fresh to-day, in spite of the passage of a half century. Joseph was as fresh in Jacob's memory as ever, though at seventeen years of age the boy had disappeared from the old homestead. I found in our family record the story of an infant that had died fifty years before, and I said to my parents: "What is this record, and what does it mean?" Their chief answer was a long, deep sigh. It was yet to them a very tender sorrow. What does that all mean? Why, it means our children departed are ours yet, and that cord of attachment reaching across the years will hold us until it brings us together in the palace, as Jacob and Joseph

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were brought together. That is one thing that makes old people die happy. They realize it is reunion with those from whom they have long been separated.

I am often asked as pastor — and every pastor is asked the question — “Will my children be children in heaven and forever children?” Well, there was no doubt a great change in Joseph from the time Jacob lost him, and the time when Jacob found him — between the boy seventeen years of age and the man in mid-life, his forehead developed with a great business estate; but Jacob was glad to get back Joseph anyhow, and it did not make much difference to the old man whether the boy looked older or looked younger. And it will be enough joy for that parent if he can get back that son, that daughter, at the gate of heaven, whether the departed loved one shall come a cherub or in full-grown angelhood. There must be a change wrought by that celestial climate and by those supernal years, but it will only be from loveliness to more loveliness, and from health to more radiant health. O parent, as you think of the darling panting and white in membranous croup, I want you to know it will be gloriously bettered in that land where there has never been a death and where all the inhabitants will live on in the great future as long as God! Joseph was Joseph notwithstanding the palace, and your child will be your child notwithstanding all the raining splendors of everlasting noon.

What a thrilling visit was that of the old shepherd to the prime minister, Joseph! I see the old countryman seated in the palace looking around at the mirrors and the fountains and the carved pillars, and oh! how he wishes that Rachel, his wife, was alive and she could have come there with him to see their son in his great house. “Oh,” says the old man within himself, “I do wish Rachel could be here to see all this!” I

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visited at the farmhouse of the father of Millard Fillmore when the son was President of the United States, and the octogenarian farmer entertained me until eleven o'clock at night telling me what great things he saw in his son's house at Washington, and how grandly Millard treated him in the White House. The old man's face was illumined with the story until almost midnight. He had just been visiting his son at the Capital. And I suppose it was something of the same joy that thrilled the heart of the old shepherd as he stood in the palace of the prime minister. It is a great day with you when your old parents come to visit you. Your little children stand around with great, wide-open eyes, wondering how anybody could be so old. The parents cannot stay many days, for they are a little restless, and especially at nightfall, because they sleep better in their own bed; but while they tarry you somehow feel there is a benediction in every room in the house. They are a little feeble, and you make it as easy as you can for them, and you realize they will probably not visit you very often — perhaps never again. You go to their room after they have retired at night to see if the lights are properly put out, for the old people understand candle and lamp better than the modern apparatus for illumination. In the morning, with real interest in their health, you ask them how they rested last night. Joseph in the historical scene of the text did not think any more of his father than you do of your parents. The probability is, before they leave your house they half spoil your children with kindnesses. Grandfather and grandmother are more lenient and indulgent to your children than they ever were with you. And what wonders of revelation in the bombasine pocket of the one and the sleeve of the other!

Blessed is that home where Christian parents come

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to visit! Whatever may have been the style of the architecture when they came, it is a palace before they leave. If they visit you fifty times, the two most memorable visits will be the first and the last. Those two pictures will hang in the hall of your memory while memory lasts, and you will remember just how they looked, and where they sat, and what they said, and at what figure of the carpet, and at what doorsill they parted from you, giving you the final good-by. Do not be embarrassed if your father come to town and he have the manners of the shepherd, and if your mother come to town and there be in her hat no sign of costly millinery. The wife of Emperor Theodosius said a wise thing when she said: "Husband, remember what you lately were, and remember what you are, and be thankful."

By this time you all notice what kindly provision Joseph made for his father, Jacob. Joseph did not say: "I can't have the old man around this place. How clumsy he would look climbing up these marble stairs and walking over those mosaics! Then, he would be putting his hands upon some of these frescoes. People would wonder where that old greenhorn came from. He would shock all the Egyptian court with his manners at table. Besides that, he might get sick on my hands, and he might be querulous, and he might talk to me as though I were only a boy, when I am the second man in all the realm. Of course, he must not suffer, and if there is famine in his country — and I hear there is — I will send him some provisions; but I can't take a man from Padan-aram and introduce him into this polite Egyptian court. What a nuisance it is have poor relations!" Joseph did not say that, but he rushed out to meet his father with perfect abandon of affection and brought him up to the palace, and introduced him to the Emperor, and provided for all

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the rest of the father's days, and nothing was too good for the old man while living; and when he was dead, Joseph, with military escort, took his father's remains to the family cemetery at Machpelah and put them down beside Leah, his wife. Would God all children were as kind to their parents!

If the father have large property, and he be wise enough to keep it in his own name, he will be respected by the heirs; but how often it is when the son finds his father in famine, as Joseph found Jacob in famine, the young people make it very hard for the old man. They are so surprised he eats with a knife instead of a fork. They are chagrined at his antediluvian habits. They are provoked because he cannot hear as well as he used to, and when he asks it over again, and the son has to repeat it, he bawls in the old man's ear: "I hope you hear that!" How long he must wear the old coat or the old hat before they get him a new one! How chagrined they are at his independence of the English grammar! How long he hangs on! Seventy years and not gone yet! Seventy-five years and not gone yet! Eighty years and not gone yet! Will he ever go? They think it of no use to have a doctor in his last sickness, and go up to the drugstore and get a dose of something that makes him worse, and economize on a coffin, and beat the undertaker down to the last point, giving a note for the reduced amount, which they never pay! I have officiated at obsequies of aged people where the family have been so inordinately resigned to Providence that I felt like taking my text from Proverbs: "The eye that mocketh at its father, and refuseth to obey its mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." In other words, such an ingrate ought to have a flock of crows for pall-bearers! I congratulate you if you have the honor of providing

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for aged parents. The blessing of the Lord God of Joseph and Jacob will be on you.

I rejoice to remember that though my father lived in a plain house the most of his days, he died in a mansion provided by the filial piety of a son who had achieved a fortune. There the octogenarian sat, and the servants waited on him, and there were plenty of horses and plenty of carriages to convey him, and a bower in which to sit on long summer afternoons, dreaming over the past, and there was not a room in the house where he was not welcome, and there were musical instruments of all sorts to regale him; and when life had passed, the neighbors came out and expressed all honor possible, and carried him to the village Machpelah and put him down beside the Rachel with whom he had lived more than half a century. Share your successes with the old people. The probability is, that the principles they inculcated achieved your fortune. Give them a Christian percentage of kindly consideration. Let Joseph divide with Jacob the pasture fields of Goshen, and the glories of the Egyptian court.

And here I would like to sing the praises of the sisterhood who remained unmarried that they might administer to aged parents. The brutal world calls these self-sacrificing ones by ungallant names, and says they are peculiar or angular; but if you had had as many annoyances as they have had, Xanthippe would have been an angel compared with you. It is easier to take care of five rollicking, romping children than one childish old man. Among the best women of these cities are those who allowed the bloom of life to pass away while they were caring for their parents. While other maidens were sound asleep, they were bathing the old man's feet, or tucking up the covers around the invalid mother. While other maidens were in the



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cotillon, they were dancing attendance upon rheumatism and spreading plasters for the lame back of the septenarian, and heating catnip tea for insomnia. In almost every circle of our kindred there has been some queen of self-sacrifice to whom jeweled hand was offered in marriage, but who stayed on the old place because of the sense of filial obligation, until the health was gone and the attractiveness of personal presence had vanished. Brutal society may call such an one by a nickname; God calls her daughter, and Heaven calls her saint, and I call her domestic martyr. A half-dozen ordinary women have not as much nobility as could be found in the smallest joint of the little finger of her left hand. Although the world has stood six thousand years, this is the first apotheosis of maidenhood, although in the long line of those who have declined marriage that they might be qualified for some special mission are the names of Anna Ross and Margaret Breckinridge and Mary Shelton and Anna Etheridge and Georgiana Willetts the angels of the battle-fields of Fair Oaks and Lookout Mountain and Chancellorsville and Cooper Shop Hospital; and though single life has been honored by the fact that the three grandest men of the Bible — John and Paul and Christ—were celibates.

Let the ungrateful world sneer at the maiden aunt, but God has a throne burnished for her arrival, and on one side of that throne in Heaven there is a vase containing two jewels, the one brighter than the Kohinoor of London Tower, and the other larger than any diamond ever found in the districts of Golconda — the one jewel by the lapidary of the palace cut with the words: "Inasmuch as ye did it to father;" the other jewel by the lapidary of the palace cut with the words: "Inasmuch as ye did it to mother." "Over the hills to the poorhouse" is the exquisite ballad of

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Will Carleton, who found an old woman who had been turned off by her prosperous sons; but I thank God I may find in my text "Over the hills to the palace."

As if to disgust us with unfilial conduct, the Bible presents us the story of Micah, who stole the eleven hundred shekels from his mother, and the story of Absalom, who tried to dethrone his father. But all history is beautiful with stories of filial fidelity. Epaminondas, the warrior, found his chief delight in reciting to his parents his victories. There goes Æneas from burning Troy, on his shoulders Anchises, his father. The Athenians punished with death any unfilial conduct. There goes beautiful Ruth escorting venerable Naomi across the desert amid the howling of the wolves and the barking of the jackals. John Lawrence, burned at the stake in Colchester, was cheered in the flames by his children, who said: "O God, strengthen thy servant and keep thy promise!" And Christ in the hour of excruciation provided for his old mother. Jacob kept his resolution, "I will go and see him before I die," and a little while after we find them walking the tessellated floor of the palace, Jacob and Joseph, the prime minister proud of the shepherd.

I may say in regard to the most of you that your parents have probably visited you for the last time, or will soon pay you such a visit, and I have wondered if they will ever visit you in the King's palace. "Oh," you say, "I am in the pit of sin!" Joseph was in the pit. "Oh," you say, "I am in the prison of mine iniquity!" Joseph was once in prison. "Oh," you say, "I didn't have a fair chance; I was denied maternal kindness!" Joseph was denied maternal attendance. "Oh," you say, "I am far away from the land of my nativity!" Joseph was far from home. "Oh," you say, "I have been betrayed and exasperated!"



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Did not Joseph's brethren sell him to a passing Ishmaelitic caravan? Yet God brought him to that emblazoned residence; and if you will trust his grace in Jesus Christ you, too, will be empalaced. Oh, what a day that will be when the old folks come from an adjoining mansion in heaven, and find you amid the alabaster pillars of the throne-room and living with the King! They are coming up the steps now, and the epauletted guard of the palace rushes in and says: "Your father's coming, your mother's coming!" And when under the arches of precious stones and on the pavement of porphyry you greet each other, the scene will eclipse the meeting on the Goshen highway, when Joseph and Jacob fell on each other's neck and wept a good while.

But oh, how changed the old folks will be! Their cheek smoothed into the flesh of a little child. Their stooped posture lifted into immortal symmetry. Their foot now so feeble, then with the sprightliness of a bounding roe as they shall say to you: "A spirit passed this way from earth and told us that you were wayward and dissipated after we left the world; but you have repented, our prayer has been answered, and you are here; and as we used to visit you on earth before we died, now we visit you in your new home after our ascension." And father will say, "Mother, don't you see Joseph is yet alive?" and mother will say, "Yes, father, Joseph is yet alive." And then they will talk over their earthly anxieties in regard to you, and the midnight supplications in your behalf, and they will recite to each other the old Scripture passage with which they used to cheer their staggering faith: "I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee." Oh, the palace, the palace, the palace! That is what Richard Baxter called "The Saint's Everlasting Rest." That is what John Bunyan called the

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“Celestial City.” That is Young’s “Night Thoughts” turned into morning exultations. That is Gray’s “Elegy in a Churchyard” turned to resurrection spectacle. That is the “Cotter’s Saturday Night” exchanged for the cotter’s Sabbath morning. That is the shepherd of Salisbury Plains amid the flocks on the hills of heaven. That is the famine-struck Padanaram turned into the rich pasture fields of Goshen. That is Jacob visiting Joseph at the emerald castle.

## MARTYRS OF THE NEEDLE

Matt., 19: 24: "It is easier for a camel to go through the  
eye of a needle."



## MARTYRS OF THE NEEDLE

Matt., 19: 24: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle."

Whether this "eye of the needle" be the small gate at the side of the big gate at the entrance of the wall of the ancient city, as is generally interpreted, or the eye of a needle such as is now handled in sewing a garment, I do not say. In either case it would be a tight thing for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. But there are whole caravans of fatigues and hardships going through the eye of the sewing-woman's needle.

Very long ago the needle was busy. It was considered honorable for women to ply it in olden time. Alexander the Great stood in his palace showing garments made by his own mother. The finest tapestries at Bayeux were made by the Queen of William the Conqueror. Augustus, the Emperor, would not wear any garments except those that were fashioned by some member of his royal family. So let the needle-woman be respected!

The greatest blessing that could have happened to our first parents was being turned out of Eden after they had done wrong. Adam and Eve, in their perfect state, might have got along without work, or only such slight employment as a perfect garden, with no weeds in it, demanded. But, as soon as they had sinned, the best thing for them was to be turned out where they would have to work. We know what a debilitating thing it is for a man to have nothing to do. Good old Ashbel Green, at fourscore years,

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when asked why he kept on working, said: "I do so to keep out of mischief." We see that a man who has a large amount of money to start with has no chance. Of the thousand prosperous and honorable men that you know, nine hundred and ninety-nine had to work vigorously at the beginning.

But I am now to tell you that industry is just as important for a woman's safety and happiness. The most unhappy women in our communities to-day are those who have no engagements to call them up in the morning; who, once having risen and breakfasted, lounge through the dull forenoon in slippers down at the heel, and with disheveled hair, reading the latest novel; and who, having dragged through a wretched forenoon and taken their afternoon sleep; and having spent an hour and a half at their toilet, pick up their card-case and go out to make calls; and who pass their evenings waiting for somebody to come in and break up the monotony. Arabella Stuart never was imprisoned in so dark a dungeon as that.

There is no happiness for an idle woman. It may be with hand, it may be with brain, it may be with foot; but work she must, or be wretched forever. The little girls of our families must be started with that idea. The curse of our American society is that our young women are taught that the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, tenth, fiftieth, thousandth thing in their life is to get somebody to take care of them. Instead of that the first lesson should be, how under God, they may take care of themselves. The simple fact is that a majority of them do have to take care of themselves, and that, too, after having, through the false notions of their parents, wasted the years in which they ought to have learned how successfully to maintain themselves. We now and here declare the inhumanity, cru-

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erty and outrage of that father and mother who pass their daughters into womanhood, having given them no facility for earning their livelihood. Madame de Staël said: "It is not these writings that I am proud of, but the fact that I have facility in ten occupations, in any one of which I could make a livelihood."

You say you have a fortune to leave them. O man and woman! have you not learned that, like vultures, like hawks, like eagles, riches have wings and fly away? Though you should be successful in leaving a competency behind you, the trickery of executors may swamp it in a night; or some elders or deacons of our churches may get up a fraudulent company, and induce your orphans to put their money into it, and if it be lost, prove to them that it was eternally decreed that that was the way they were to lose it, and that it went in the most orthodox and heavenly style. Oh, the damnable schemes that professing Christians will engage in—until God puts his fingers on the collar of the hypocrite's robe and rips it clear down to the bottom! You have no right, because you are well off, to conclude that your children are going to be as well off. A man died, leaving a large fortune. His son fell dead in a Philadelphia grog-shop. His old comrades came in and said, as they bent over his corpse, "What is the matter with you, Boggsey?" The surgeon standing over him said: "Hush up! he is dead!" "Ah, he is dead!" they said. "Come, boys, let us go and take a drink in memory of poor Boggsey!"

Have you nothing better than money to leave your children? If you have not, and send your daughters into the world with empty brain and unskilled hand, you are guilty of assassination, homicide, regicide, infanticide. There are women toiling in our cities for three and four dollars per week who were the daugh-

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ters of merchant princes. These suffering ones now would be glad to have the crumbs that once fell from their father's table. That worn-out, broken shoe that she wears is the lineal descendant of the twelve-dollar gaiters in which her mother walked; and that torn and faded calico had ancestry of magnificent brocade, that swept Broadway clean without any expense to the street commissioners. Though you live in an elegant residence, and fare sumptuously every day, let your daughters feel it is a disgrace to them not to know how to work. I denounce the idea, prevalent in society, that though our young women may embroider slippers and crochet and make mats for lamps to stand on, without disgrace, the idea of doing anything for a livelihood is dishonorable. It is a shame for a young woman, belonging to a large family, to be inefficient when the father toils his life away for her support. It is a shame for a daughter to be idle while her mother toils at the washtub. It is as honorable to sweep house, make beds, or trim hats, as it is to twist a watch-chain.

As far as I can understand, the line of respectability, as it is drawn by society, lies between that which is useful and that which is useless. If women do that which is of no value, their work is honorable. If they do practical work, it is dishonorable. That our young women may escape the censure of doing dishonorable work, I shall particularize. You may knit a tidy for the back of an arm chair, but by no means make the money wherewith to buy the chair. You may, with delicate brush, beautify a mantel ornament, but die rather than earn enough to buy a marble mantel. You may learn artistic music until you can squall Italian, but never sing "Ortonville" or "Old Hundred." Do nothing practical, if you would, in the eyes of some realms of society, preserve your re-



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spectability. I scout these finical notions. I tell you no woman, any more than a man, has a right to occupy a place in this world unless she pays a rent for it.

In the course of a lifetime you consume whole harvests and droves of cattle, and every day you live breathe forty hogsheads of good pure air. You must, by some kind of usefulness, pay for all this. Our race was the last thing created—the birds and the fishes on the fourth day, the cattle and lizards on the fifth day, and man on the sixth day. If geologists are right, the earth was a million of years in the possession of the insects, beasts and birds, before our race came upon it. In one sense, we were intruders. The cattle, the lizards and the hawks had pre-emption right. The question is not what we are to do with the lizards and summer insects, but what the lizards and summer insects are to do with us.

If we want a place in this world we must earn it. The partridge makes its own nest before it occupies it. The lark, by its morning song, earns its breakfast before it eats it; the Bible gives an intimation that the first duty of an idler is to starve, when it says if he "will not work, neither shall he eat." Idleness ruins the health; and very soon Nature says: "This man has refused to pay his rent; out with him!"

Society is to be reconstructed on the subject of woman's toil. A vast majority of those who would have woman industrious shut her up to a few kinds of work. My judgment in this matter is, that a woman has a right to do anything she can do well. There should be no department of merchandise, mechanism, art, or science barred against her. If Miss Hosmer has genius for sculpture, give her a chisel. If Rosa Bonheur has a fondness for delineating animals, let her make "The Horse Fair." If Miss Mitchell will

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study astronomy, let her mount the starry ladder. If Lydia will be a merchant, let her sell purple. If Lucretia Mott will preach the Gospel, let her thrill with her womanly eloquence the audience in the Quaker meeting-house.

It is said, if woman be given such opportunities, she will occupy places that might be taken by men. I say, if she have more skill and capacity for any position than a man has, let her have it! She has as much right to her bread, to her apparel, and to her home, as men have.

But it is said that her nature is so delicate that she is unfitted for exhausting toil. I ask in the name of all past history, what toil on earth is more severe, exhausting, and tremendous than that toil of the needle, to which, for ages, she has been subjected? The battering-ram, the sword, the carbine, the battle-ax have made no such havoc as the needle. I would that these living sepulchers in which women have for ages been buried might be opened, and that some resurrection trumpet might bring up these living corpses to the fresh air and sunlight.

Go with me, and I will show you a woman who, by hardest toil, supports her children, her drunken husband, her old father and mother, pays her house-rent, always has wholesome food on the table, and, when she can get some neighbor on the Sabbath to come in and take care of her family, appears in church, with hat and cloak that are far from indicating the toil to which she is subjected. Such a woman as that has body and soul enough to fit her for any position. She could stand beside the majority of your salesmen and dispose of more goods. She could go into your wheelwright shops and beat one-half your workmen at making carriages. We talk about woman as though we had resigned to her all the light work, and ourselves

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had shouldered the heavier. But the day of judgment, which will reveal the sufferings of the stake and inquisition, will marshal before the throne of God and the hierarchs of heaven the martyrs of wash-tub and needle. Now, I say, if there be any preference in occupation, let woman have it. God knows her trials are the severer. By her acuter sensitiveness to misfortune, by her hour of anguish, I demand that no one hedge up her pathway to a livelihood. Oh, the meanness, the despicability of men who begrudge a woman the right to work anywhere, in any honorable calling!

I go still further, and say that women should have equal compensation with men. By what principle of justice is it that women in many of our cities get only two-thirds as much pay as men, and in many cases only half? Here is the gigantic injustice—that for work equally well, if not better done, woman receives far less compensation than man. Start with the National Government: for a long while women clerks in Washington got nine hundred dollars for doing that for which men received eighteen hundred. To thousands of young women in our cities to-day there is only this alternative: starvation or dishonor. Many of the largest mercantile establishments of our cities are accessory to these abominations; and from their large establishments there are scores of souls being pitched off into death; and their employers know it! Is there a God? Will there be a judgment? I tell you, if God rises up to redress woman's wrongs, many of our large establishments will be swallowed up quicker than a South American earthquake ever took down a city. God will catch these oppressors between the two millstones of his wrath, and grind them to powder! I hear from all this land the wail of womanhood. Man has nothing to answer to that wail but

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flatteries. He says she is an angel. She is not. She knows she is not. She is a human being, who gets hungry when she has no food, and cold when she has no fire. Give her no more flatteries; give her justice!

There are about fifty thousand sewing-girls in New York and Brooklyn. Across the darkness of the night I hear their death-groan. It is not such a cry as comes from those who are suddenly hurled out of life, but a slow, grinding, horrible wasting away. Gather them before you and look into their faces, pinched, ghastly, hunger-struck! Look at their fingers, needle-pricked and blood-tipped! See that premature stoop in the shoulders! Hear that dry, hacking, merciless cough! At a large meeting of these women, held in a hall in Philadelphia, grand speeches were delivered, but a needlewoman took the stand, threw aside her faded shawl, and with her shriveled arm, hurled a very thunderbolt of eloquence, speaking out the horrors of her own experience.

Stand at the corner of a street in New York in the very early morning, as the women go to their work. Many of them had no breakfast except the crumbs that were left over from the night before, or a crust they chew on their way through the street. Here they come! the working girls of the city! These engaged in bead-work, these in flower-making, in millinery, enameling, cigar-making, book-binding, labeling, feather-picking, print-coloring, paper-box making; but, most overworked of all, the least compensated, the sewing-women. Why do they not take the city cars on their way up? They cannot afford the five cents! If, concluding to deny herself something else, she gets into the car, give her a seat! You want to see how Latimer and Ridley appeared in the fire, look at that woman and behold a more horrible martyrdom, a hotter fire, a more agonizing death!

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One Sabbath night, in the vestibule of my church, after service, a woman fell in convulsions. The doctor said she needed medicine not so much as something to eat. As she began to revive, in her delirium, she said, gaspingly: "Eight cents! Eight cents! Eight cents! I wish I could get it done! I am so tired! I wish I could get some sleep, but I must get it done! Eight cents! Eight cents!" We found afterwards that she was making garments at eight cents apiece, and that she could make but three of them in a day. Hear it! Three times eight are twenty-four! Hear it, men and women who have comfortable homes!

Some of the worst villains of the city are the employers of these women. They beat them down to the last penny, and try to cheat them out of that. The woman must deposit a dollar or two before she gets the garments to work on. When the work is done it is sharply inspected, the most insignificant flaw picked out, and the wages refused, and sometimes the dollar deposited not given back. The Women's Protective Union reports a case where one of these poor souls, finding a place where she could get more wages, resolved to change employers, and went to get her pay for work done. The employer says: "I hear you are going to leave me?" "Yes," she said, "and I have come to get what you owe me." He made no answer. She said: "Are you not going to pay me?" "Yes," he said, "I will pay you;" and he kicked her down the stairs.

How are these evils to be eradicated? What have you to answer, you who sell coats, and have shoes made, and contract for the Southern and Western markets? What help is there, what panacea, what redemption? Some say: "Give women the ballot." What effect such ballot might have on other questions I am not here to discuss; but what would be the ef-

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fect of female suffrage upon woman's wages? I do not believe that woman will ever get justice by woman's ballot. Indeed, women oppress women as much as men do. Do not women, as much as men, beat down to the lowest figure the woman who sews for them? Are not women as sharp as men on washerwomen, and milliners, and mantua-makers? If a woman asks a dollar for her work, does not her female employer ask her if she will not take ninety cents? You say "only ten cents difference;" but that is sometimes the difference between heaven and hell. Women often have less commiseration for women than men. If a woman steps aside from the path of virtue, man may forgive—woman never! Woman will never get justice done her from woman's ballot. Never did she get it from man's ballot. How, then? God will rise up for her. God has more resources than we know of. The flaming sword that hung at Eden's gate when woman was driven out will cleave with its terrible edge her oppressors.

But there is something for our women to do. Let our young people prepare to excel in spheres of work, and they will be able, after a while, to get larger wages. If it be shown that a woman can, in a store, sell more goods in a year than a man, she will soon be able not only to ask but to demand more wages, and to demand them successfully. Unskilled and incompetent labor must take what is given; skilled and competent labor will eventually make its own standard. Admitting that the law of supply and demand regulates these things, I contend that the demand for skilled labor is very great, and the supply very small.

Start with the idea that work is honorable, and that you can do some one thing better than any one else. Resolve that, God helping, you will take care of yourself. If you are, after a while, called into an-



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other relation you will all the better be qualified for it by your spirit of self-reliance; or if you are called to stay as you are, you can be happy and self-supporting. Poets are fond of talking about man as an oak, and woman the vine that climbs it; but I have seen many a tree fall that not only went down itself, but took all the vines with it. I can tell you of something stronger than an oak for an ivy to climb on, and that is the throne of the great Jehovah. Single or affianced, that woman is strong who leans on God and does her best. The needle may break; the factory-band may slip; the wages may fail; but over every good woman's head there are spread the two great, gentle, stupendous wings of the Almighty.

Many of you will go single-handed through life, and you will have to choose between two characters. Young woman, I am sure you will turn your back upon the useless, giggling, painted nonentity which society ignominiously acknowledges to be a woman, and ask God to make you an humble, active, earnest Christian. What will become of this godless disciple of fashion? What an insult to her sex! Her manners are an outrage upon decency. She is more thoughtful of the attitude she strikes upon the carpet than how she will look in the Judgment; more worried about her freckles than her sins; more interested in her bonnet-strings than in her redemption. Her apparel is the poorest part of a Christian woman, however magnificently dressed, and no one has so much right to dress well as a Christian. Not so with the godless disciple of fashion. Take her robes, and you take everything. Death will come down on her some day, and rub the bistre off her eyelids, and the rouge off her cheeks, and with two rough, bony hands, scatter spangles and glass beads and rings and ribbons

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and lace and brooches and buckles and sashes and frisettes and golden clasps.

The dying actress whose life had been vicious said: "The scene closes. Draw the curtain." Generally the tragedy comes first, the farce afterward; but in her life it was first the farce of a useless life, and then the tragedy of a wretched eternity. Compare the life and death of such an one with that of some Christian aunt that was once a blessing to your household. I do not know that she was ever offered a hand in marriage. She lived single, that untrammelled she might be everybody's blessing. Whenever the sick were to be visited, or the poor to be provided with bread, she went with a blessing. She could pray, or sing "Rock of Ages," for any sick pauper who asked her. As she got older, there were days when she was a little sharp, but for the most part Auntie was a sunbeam—just the one for Christmas eve. She knew better than any one else how to fix things. Her every prayer, as God heard it, was full of everybody who had trouble. The brightest things in all the house dropped from her fingers. She had peculiar notions, but the grandest notion she ever had was to make you happy. She dressed well—Auntie always dressed well; but her highest adornment was that of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price. When old Auntie died, you all gathered lovingly about her; and as you carried her out to rest, the Sunday school class almost covered the coffin with japonicas; and the poor people stood at the end of the alley, with their aprons to their eyes, sobbing bitterly; and the man of the world said, with Solomon: "Her price was above rubies;" and Jesus, as unto the maiden in Judea, commanded: "I say unto thee, arise!"



## THE SHEIK'S DAUGHTER

Exodus, 3: 1: "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian."



## THE SHEIK'S DAUGHTER

Exodus, 3: 1: "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian."

In the southeastern part of Arabia a man is sitting by a well. It is an arid country, and water is scarce, so that a well is of great value, and flocks and herds are driven vast distances to have their thirst slaked. Jethro, a Midianite sheik and priest, was so fortunate as to have seven daughters; and they are practical girls, and yonder they come driving the sheep and cattle and camels of their father to the watering. They lower the buckets and then pull them up, the water plashing on the stones and chilling their feet, and the troughs are filled. Who is that man out there sitting unconcerned and looking on? Why does he not come and help the women in this hard work of drawing water? But no sooner have the dry lips and panting nostrils of the flocks begun to cool a little in the brimming trough of the well, than some rough Bedouin shepherds break in upon the scene, and with clubs and shouts drive back the animals that were drinking, and affright these girls until they fly in retreat, and the flocks of these ill-mannered shepherds are driven to the troughs, taking the places of the other flocks. Now that man sitting by the well begins to color up, and his eye flashes with indignation, and all the gallantry of his nature is aroused. It is Moses, who naturally had a quick temper anyhow, as he demonstrated on one occasion when he saw an Egyptian oppressing an Israelite and gave the Egyptian a sudden clip and buried him in the sand,

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and as he showed afterward when he broke all the Ten Commandments at once by shattering the two granite slabs on which the law was written. But the injustice of this treatment of the seven girls sets him on fire with wrath, and he takes this shepherd by the throat, and pushes back another shepherd till he falls over the trough, and aims a stunning blow between the eyes of another, as he cries, "Begone, you villains!" and he hoots and roars at the sheep and cattle and camels of these invaders and drives them back; and having cleared the place of the desperadoes, he told the seven girls of this Midianite sheik to gather their flocks together and bring them again to the watering.

You ought to see a fight between the shepherds at a well in the Orient as I saw it in December, 1889. There were here a group of rough men who had driven the cattle many miles, and here another group who had driven their cattle as many miles. Who should have precedence? Such clashing of buckets! Such hooking of horns! Such kicking of hoofs! Such vehemence in a language I fortunately could not understand! Now the sheep with a peculiar mark across their woolly backs were at the trough, and now the sheep of another mark. It was one of the most exciting scenes I ever witnessed. An old book describes one of these contentions at an Eastern well when it says: "One day the poor men, the widows and the orphans met together and were driving their camels and their flocks to drink, and were all standing by the water-side. Daji came up and stopped them all, and took possession of the water for his master's cattle. Just then an old woman belonging to the tribe of Abs came up and accosted him in a suppliant manner, saying, 'Be so good, Master Daji, as to let my cattle drink. They are all the property

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I possess and I live by their milk. Pity my flock, have compassion on me. Grant my request and let them drink.' Then came another old woman and addressed him: 'O, Master Daji, I am a poor, weak old woman, as you see. Time has dealt hardly with me. It has aimed its arrows at me, and its daily and nightly calamities have destroyed all my men. I have lost my children and my husband, and since then I have been in great distress. These goats or cattle are all that I possess. Let them drink, for I live on the milk that they produce. Pity my forlorn state. I have no one to tend them. Therefore, grant my supplication and of thy kindness let them drink.' But in this case the brutal slave, so far from granting this humble request, smote the woman to the ground."

A like scrimmage has taken place at the well in the triangle of Arabia between the Bedouin shepherds and Moses championing the cause of the seven daughters who had driven their father's flocks to the watering. One of these girls, Zipporah, her name meaning "little bird," was fascinated by this heroic behavior of Moses; for, however timid woman herself may be, she always admires courage in a man. Zipporah became the bride of Moses, one of the mightiest men of all the centuries. Zipporah little thought that that morning as she helped drive her father's flocks to the well, she was splendidly deciding her own destiny. Had she stayed in the tent or house while the other six daughters of the sheik tended to their herds, her life would probably have been a tame and uneventful life in the solitudes. But her industry, her fidelity to her father's interest, her spirit of helpfulness brought her into league with one of the grandest characters of all history. They met at that famous well, and while she admired the courage of Moses, he admired the filial behavior of Zipporah.

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The fact that it took the seven daughters to drive the flocks to the well implies that they were immense flocks, and that her father was a man of wealth. What was the use of Zipporah's bemeaning herself with work when she might have reclined on the hillside near her father's tent, and plucked buttercups, and dreamed out romances, and sighed idly to the winds, and wept over imaginary songs to the brooks. No; she knew that work was honorable, and that every girl ought to have something to do, and so she starts with the bleating and lowing and bellowing and neighing droves to the well for the watering.

Around every home there are flocks and droves of cares and anxieties, and every daughter of the family, though there be seven, ought to be doing her part to take care of the flocks. In many households, not only is Zipporah, but all her sisters, without practical and useful employments. Many of them are waiting for fortunate and prosperous matrimonial alliance, but some lounge like themselves will come along, and after counting the large number of father Jethro's sheep and camels will make proposal that will be accepted; and neither of them having done anything more practical than to chew chocolate caramels, the two nothings will start on the road of life together, every step more and more a failure. That daughter of the Midianitish sheik will never find her Moses. Girls of America! imitate Zipporah. Do something practical. Do something helpful. Do something well. Many have fathers with great flocks of absorbing duties, and such a father needs help in home or office or field. Go out and help him with the flocks. The reason that so many men now condemn themselves to unaffianced and solitary life is because they cannot support the modern young woman, who rises at half-past ten in the morning and

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retires at midnight, one of the trashiest of novels in her hands most of the time between the late rising and the late retiring — a thousand of them not worth one Zipporah.

There is a question that every father and mother ought to ask the daughter at breakfast or tea table, and that all the daughters of the wealthy sheik ought to ask each other: "What would you do if the family fortune should fail, if sickness should prostrate the breadwinner, if the flocks of Jethro should be destroyed by a sudden incursion of wolves and bears and hyenas from the mountain? What would you do for a living? Could you support yourself? Can you take care of an invalid mother or brother or sister as well as yourself?" Yea, bring it down to what any day might come to a prosperous family. "Can you cook a dinner if the servants should make a strike for higher wages and leave that morning?" Every minute of every hour of every day of every year there are families flung from prosperity into hardship, and alas! if in such exigency the seven daughters of Jethro can do nothing but sit around and cry and wait for some one to come and hunt them up a situation for which they have no qualification. Get at something useful; get at it right away!

My friend and Washingtonian townsman, W. W. Corcoran, did a magnificent thing when he built and endowed the "Louise Home" for the support of the unfortunate aristocracy of the South — the people who once had everything but have come to nothing. We want another W. W. Corcoran to build a "Louise Home" for the unfortunate aristocracy of the North. But institutions like that in every city of the land could not take care of one-half of the unfortunate aristocracy of the North and South, whose large fortunes have failed, and who, through lack of acquaintance

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with any style of work, cannot now earn their own bread. There needs to be peaceful, yet radical revolution among most of the prosperous homes of America, by which the elegant do-nothings may be transformed into practical do-somethings. Let useless women go to work and gather the flocks. Come, Zipporah, let me introduce you to Moses!

But you do not mean that this man affianced to this country girl was the great Moses of history, do you? You do not mean that he was the man who afterward wrought such wonders? Surely, you do not mean the man whose staff dropped, wriggled into a serpent, and then, clutched, stiffened again into a staff? You do not mean the challenger of Egyptian thrones and palaces? You do not mean him who struck the rock so hard it wept in a stream for thirsty hosts? Surely, you do not mean the man who stood alone with God on the quaking Sinaitic ranges; not him to whom the Red Sea was surrendered? Yes, the same Moses who afterward rescued a nation, defending the seven daughters of the Midianitish sheik. Why, do you not know that this is the way men and women get prepared for special work. The wilderness of Arabia was the law school, the theological seminary, the university of rock and sand, from which he graduated for a mission that will balk seas, and drown armies, and lift the lantern of illumined cloud by night, and start the workmen with bleeding backs among Egyptian brick-kilns toward the pasture lands that flow with milk and the trees of Canaan dripping with honey. Gracious God, teach all the people this lesson. You must go into humiliation and retirement and hidden closets of prayer if you are to be fitted for special usefulness. How did John the Baptist get prepared to become a forerunner of Christ? Show me his wardrobe. It will be hung with silken socks



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and embroidered robes and attire of Tyrian purple? Show me his dining table. On it the tankards ablush with the richest wines of the vineyards of Engedi, and rarest birds that were ever caught in net, and sweetest venison that ever dropped antlers before the hunter? No; we are distinctly told "the same John had his raiment of camels' hair" — not the fine hair of the camel which we call camlet, but the long, coarse hair such as beggars in the East wear — and his only meat was of insects, the green locust, about two inches long, roasted, a disgusting food. These insects were caught and the wings and legs torn off, and they were stuck on wooden spits and turned before the fire. The Bedouins pack them in salt and carry them in sacks. What a menu for John the Baptist! Through what deprivation he came to what exaltation!

And you will have to go down before you go up. From the pit into which his brothers threw him, and the prison in which his enemies incarcerated him, Joseph rose to be Egyptian prime minister. Elijah, who was to be the greatest of all the ancient prophets, Elijah, who made King Ahab's knees knock together with the prophecy that the dogs would be his only undertakers; Elijah, whose one prayer brought more than three years of drought, and whose other prayer brought drenching showers; the man who wrapped up his cape of sheepskin into a roll and with it cut a path through raging Jordan for just two to pass over; the man who with wheel of fire rode over death and escaped into the skies without mortuary disintegration; the man who, hundreds of years after, was called out of the eternities to stand beside Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor when it was ablaze with the splendors of transfiguration — this man could look back to the time when voracious and filthy ravens were his only caterers.

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You see John Knox preaching the coronation sermon of James VI, and arraigning Queen Mary and Lord Darnley in a public discourse at Edinburgh, and telling the French ambassador to go home and call his king a murderer; John Knox making all Christendom feel his moral power, and at his burial the Earl of Morton saying, "Here lieth a man who in his life never feared the face of man." Where did John Knox get much of his schooling for such resounding and everlasting achievement? He got it while in chains pulling at the boat's oar in French captivity. Michael Faraday, one of the greatest masters in the scientific world, did not begin by lecturing in the university. He began by washing bottles in the laboratory of Humphrey Davy. So the privations and hardships of your life may on a smaller scale be the preface and introduction to usefulness and victory.

See also in this call of Moses that God has a great memory. Four hundred years before he had promised the deliverance of the oppressed Israelites of Egypt, The clock of time has struck the hour, and now Moses is called to the work of rescue. Four hundred years is a very long time, but you see God can remember a promise four hundred years as well as you can remember four hundred minutes. Four hundred years includes all your ancestry that you know anything about and all the promises made to them, and we may expect fulfillment in our heart and life of all the blessings predicted to our Christian ancestry centuries ago. You have a dim remembrance, if any remembrance at all, of your great-grandfather, but God sees those who were on their knees in 1598 as well as those on their knees in 1898, and the blessings he promised the former and their descendants have arrived, or will arrive. While piety is not hereditary, it is a grand thing to have had a pious ancestry. So God in this chapter

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calls up the pedigree of the people whom Moses was to deliver, and Moses is ordered to say to them, "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob hath sent me unto you." If that thought be divinely accurate, let me ask, What are we doing by prayer and by a holy life for the redemption of the next four hundred years? Our work is not only with the people of the latter part of the nineteenth century, but with those in the closing of the twentieth century and the closing of the twenty-first century and the closing of the twenty-second century and the closing of the twenty-third century. For four hundred years, if the world continues to swing until that time, or if it drops, then notwithstanding the influence will go on in other latitudes and longitudes of God's universe.

No one realizes how great he is for good or for evil. There are branchings out and rebounds and reverberations and elaborations of influence that cannot be estimated. The fifty or one hundred years of our earthly stay are only a small part of our sphere. The flap of the wing of the destroying angel that smote the Egyptian oppressors, the wash of the Red Sea over the heads of the drowned Egyptians, were all fulfillments of promises four centuries old. And things occur in your life and in mine that we cannot account for. They may be the echoes of what was promised in the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Oh, the prolongation of the divine memory!

Notice, also, that Moses was eighty years of age when he got this call to become the Israelitish deliverer. Forty years he had lived in palaces as a prince; another forty years he had lived in the wilderness of Arabia. I should not wonder if he had said: "Take a younger man for this work. Eighty winters have exposed my health; eighty summers have poured their

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heats upon my head. There are the forty years that I spent among the enervating luxuries of a palace, and then followed the forty years of wilderness hardship. I am too old. Let me off. Better call a man in the forties or fifties, and not one who has entered upon the eighties." Nevertheless, he undertook the work, and if we want to know whether he succeeded, ask the abandoned brick-kilns of Egyptian task-masters, and the splintered chariot wheels strewn on the beach of the Red Sea, and the timbrels which Miriam clapped for the Israelites passed over and the Egyptians gone under. Do not retire too early. Like Moses, you may have your chief work to do after eighty. It may not be in the high places of the field; it may not be where a strong arm and an athletic foot and a clear vision are required, but there is something for you yet to do. Perhaps it may be to round off the work you have already done; to demonstrate the patience you have been recommending all your lifetime; perhaps to stand a lighthouse at the mouth of the bay to light others into harbor; perhaps to show how glorious a sunset may come after a stormy day. If aged men do not feel strong enough for anything else, let them sit around in our churches and pray, and perhaps in that way they may accomplish more good than they ever did in the meridian of their life. It makes us feel strong to see aged men and women all up and down the pews, their faces showing they have been on mountains of transfiguration. We want in all our churches more men like Moses, men who have been through the deeps and climbed up the shelled beach on the other side. We want aged Jacobs, who have seen ladders which let down heaven into their dreams. We want aged Peters, who have been at Pentecosts, and aged Pauls, who have made Felix tremble. There are here and there those who feel like the woman of

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ninety years who said to Fontenelle, who was eighty-five years of age, "Death appears to have forgotten us." "Hush," said Fontenelle, the wit, putting his finger to his lip. No, my friend you have not been forgotten. You will be called at the right time. Meantime, be holily occupied. Let the aged remember that by increased longevity of the race men are not as old at sixty as they used to be at fifty, not as old at seventy as they used to be at sixty, not as old at eighty as they used to be at seventy. Sanitary precaution better understood; medical science further advanced; laws of health more thoroughly adopted; dentistry continuing for longer time successful mastication; homes and churches and court-rooms and places of business better ventilated — all these have prolonged life, and men and women in the close of this century ought not to retire until at least fifteen years later than in the opening of the century. Do not put the harness off until you have fought a few more battles. Think of Moses starting out for his chief work an octogenarian; forty years of wilderness life after forty years of palace life, yet just beginning.

There died, at Hawarden, England, one of the most wonderful men that ever lived since the ages of time began their roll. He was the chief citizen of the whole world. Three times had he practically been king of Great Britain. Again and again coming from the House of Commons, which he had thrilled and overawed in his eloquence, on Saturday, on Sunday morning reading prayers for the people with illumined countenance and brimming eyes and resounding voice, saying, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord." The world has no other such man to lose as Gladstone; the Church had no other such champion to mourn over. I shall never cease to thank God

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that on Mr. Gladstone's invitation I visited him at Hawarden, and heard from his own lips his belief in the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the grandeurs of the world to come. At his table and in the walk through his grounds I was impressed as I was never before, and probably will never be again, with the majesty of a nature all consecrated to God and the world's betterment. In the presence of such a man, what have those to say who profess to think that our religion is a pusillanimous and weak and cowardly and unreasonable affair? Matchless William E. Gladstone!

Still further, watch this spectacle of genuine courage. No wonder when Moses scattered the rude shepherds, he won Zipporah's heart. What mattered it to Moses whether the cattle of the seven daughters of Jethro were driven from the troughs by the rude herdsmen? Sense of justice fired his courage; and the world wants more of the spirit that will dare almost anything to see others righted. All the time at wells of comfort, at wells of joy, at wells of religion, and at wells of literature there are outrages practised, the wrong herds getting the first water. Those who have the previous right come in last, if they come in at all. Thank God, we have here and there a strong man to set things right! I am so glad that when God has an especial work to do, he has some one ready to accomplish it. Is there a Bible to translate, there is a Wickliffe to translate it; if there is a literature to be energized, there is a Shakespeare to energize it; if there is an error to smite, there is a Luther to smite it; if there is to be a nation freed, there is a Moses to free it. But courage is needed in religion, in literature, in statesmanship, in all spheres; heroics to defend Jethro's seven daughters and their flocks and put to flight the insolent invaders. And those who do



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the brave work will win somewhere high reward. The loudest cheer of heaven is to be given "to him that overcometh."

Still further, see in this call of Moses that if God has any especial work for you to do he will find you. There were Egypt and Arabia and Palestine with their crowded population, but the man the Lord wanted was at the southern point of the triangle of Arabia, and he picks him right out, the shepherd who kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest and sheik. So God will not find it hard to take you out from the sixteen hundred million of the human race if he wants you for anything especial. There was only just one man qualified. Other men had courage like Moses; other men had some of the talents of Moses; other men had romance in their history, as had Moses; other men were impetuous, like Moses; but no other man had these different qualities in the exact proportion as had Moses; and God, who makes no mistake, found the right man for the right place. Do not fear you will be overlooked, or that when you are wanted God cannot find you. He knows your name, your features, your temperament, and your characteristics, and in what land or city or ward or neighborhood or house you live. He will not have to send out scouts or explorers to find your residence or place of stopping, and when he wants you he will make it as plain that he means you as he made it plain that he needed Moses. He called his name twice, as afterward when he called the great apostle of the Gentiles he called twice, saying "Saul, Saul," and when he called the troubled housekeeper he called her twice, saying "Martha, Martha," and when he called the prophet to his mission he called him twice, saying, "Samuel, Samuel," and now he wants a deliverer he calls twice, saying "Moses, Moses." Yes, if God has anything

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for us to do he will call us twice by name. At the first announcement of our name we may think it possible that we misunderstood the sound, but after he calls us twice by name we know he means us as certainly as when he twice spoke the names of Saul or Martha or Samuel or Moses.

You see, religion is a tremendous personality. We all have the general call to salvation. We hear it in songs, in sermons, in prayers; we hear it year after year. But after a while, through our own sudden and alarming illness, or the death of a playmate or a schoolmate or a college-mate, or the decease of a business partner, or the demise of a next-door neighbor, we get the especial call to repentance and a new life and eternal happiness, and we know that God means us. Oh, have you noticed this way in which God calls us twice? Two failures of investments; two sicknesses; two persecutions; two bereavements; two disappointments; two disasters. Moses! Moses!

Still further notice that the call of Moses was written in letters of fire. On the Sinaitic peninsula there is a thorn bush called the acacia, dry and brittle, and it easily goes down at the touch of the flame. It crackles and turns to ashes very quickly. Moses seeing one of these bushes on fire, goes to look at it. At first, no doubt, it seemed to be a botanical curiosity, burning, yet crumpling no leaf, parting no stem, scattering no ashes. It was a supernatural fire that did no damage to the vegetation. That burning bush was the call. Your call will probably come in letters of fire. Ministers get their call to preach in letters on paper or parchment or typewritten, but it does not amount to much, unless they have already had a call in letters of fire. You will not amount to much in usefulness until somewhere near you find a burning bush. It may be found burning in the hectic flush of



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your child's cheek; it may be found burning in business misfortune; it may be found burning in the fire of the world's scorn or hate or misrepresentation. But hearken to the crackle of the burning bush!

What a fascinating and inspiring character, this Moses! How tame all other stories compared with the biography of Moses! From the lattice of her bathing-house on the Nile, Thermutis, daughter of Pharaoh, sees him in the floating cradle of papyrus leaves made water-tight by bitumen; his infantile cry is heard among the marble palaces and princesses hush him with their lullabies; workmen by the roadside drop their work to look on him when as a boy he passed, so beautiful was he; two bowls put before his infant eyes for choice to demonstrate his wisdom, the one bowl containing rubies and the other coals of fire. Sufficiently wise was he to take the gems, but, divinely directed, he took the coals and put them to his mouth, and his tongue was burnt, and he was left a stammerer all his days, so that he declared, in Exod. 4:10, "I am slow of speech and of slow tongue;" on and on until he set firm foot among the crumbling basalt, and his ear was not deafened by the thunderous "Thou shalt not" of Mount Sinai, the man who went to the relief of the Israelites who were scourged because with chopped straw they were required to make firm bricks, the story of their oppression found chiseled on the tomb of Roschere at Thebes; and when the armies were impeded by venomous serpents, sent crates of ibises, the snake-destroying birds, to clear the way so that his host could march straight ahead, thus surprising the enemy, who thought they must take another route to avoid the reptiles; the whole sky an aviary, to drop quails for him and the hosts following: the only man in all ages whom Christ likens to himself; the man of whom it is written, "Je-

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hovah spoke unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh to his friend;" the man who had the most wondrous funeral of all time, the Lord coming down out of heaven to bury him. No human lips to read the service. No choir to chant a psalm. No organ to roll a requiem. No angel alighting upon the scene; but God laying him out for the last sleep; God upturning the earth to receive the saint; God smoothing or banking the dust above the sacred form; God, with farewell and benediction, closing the sublime obsequies of lawgiver, poet and warrior. "And no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day."

## SPIDERS IN PALACES

Prov., 30: 28: "The spider taketh hold with her hands,  
and is in kings' palaces."



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Prov., 30: 28: "The spider taketh hold with her hands,  
and is in kings' palaces."

Privileged a few years ago to attend the meeting of the British Scientific Association at Edinburgh, I found that no paper read excited more attention than that read by Rev. Dr. Cook, of America, on the subject of "Spiders." It seems that my talented countryman, banished from his pulpit for a short time by ill-health, had in the fields and forests given himself up to the study of insects. And surely, if it is not beneath the dignity of God to make spiders, it is not beneath the dignity of man to study them.

We are all watching for phenomena. A sky full of stars, shining from year to year, calls out not so many remarks as the blazing of one meteor. A whole flock of robins take not so much of our attention as one blundering bat darting into the window on a summer eve. Things of ordinary sound and sight and occurrence fail to reach us, yet no grasshopper ever springs up in our path, no moth ever dashes into the evening candle, no mote ever floats in the sunbeam that pours through the crack of the window-shutter, no barnacle on ship's hull, no burr on chestnut, no limpet clinging to a rock, no rind of an artichoke but would teach us a lesson if we were not so stupid.

God, in his Bible sets forth for our consideration the lily and the snowflake and the locust and the stork's nest and the hind's foot and the aurora borealis and the ant-hills. One of the sacred writers, sitting amid the mountains, sees a hind skipping over

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the rocks. The hind has such a peculiarly shaped foot that it can go over the steepest places without falling, and as the prophet looks upon that marking of the hind's foot upon the rocks, and thinks of the divine care over him, he says: "Thou makest my feet like hinds' feet that I may walk on high places." And another sacred writer sees the ostrich leave its egg in the sand of the desert, and, without any care of incubation, walk off; and the Scripture says that is like some parents leaving their children without any wing of protection or care. In my text, inspiration opens before us the gate of a palace, and we are inducted amid the pomp of the throne and the courtier, and while we are looking around upon the magnificence, inspiration points us to a spider plying its shuttle and weaving its net on the wall. It does not call us to regard the grand surroundings of the palace, but to a solemn and earnest consideration of the fact that "the spider taketh hold with her hands and is in kings' palaces." It is not very certain what was the particular species of insect spoken of in the text, but I shall proceed to learn from it:

First, the exquisiteness of the divine mechanism. The king's chamberlain comes into the palace and looks around, and sees the spider on the wall, and says, "Away with that intruder," and the servant of Solomon's palace comes with his broom and dashes down the insect, saying, "What a loathsome thing it is." But under microscopic inspection I find it more wondrous of construction than the embroideries on the palace wall, and the upholstery about the windows. All the machinery of the earth could not make anything so delicate and beautiful as the prehensile foot with which that spider clutches its prey, or as any of its eight eyes. We do not have to go so far up to see the power of God in the tapestry hanging around the

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windows of heaven, or in the horses and chariots of fire with which the dying day departs, or to look at the mountain swinging out its sword-arm from under the mantle of darkness until it can strike with its scimiter of the lightning. I love better to study God in the shape of a fly's wing, in the formation of a fish's scale, in the snowy whiteness of a pond-lily. I love to track his footsteps in the mountain moss, and to hear his voice in the hum of the rye-fields, and discover the rustle of his robe of light in the south wind. Oh! this wonder of divine power that can build a habitation for God in an apple blossom, and tune a bee's voice until it is fit for the eternal orchestra, and can say to a firefly, "Let there be light," and from holding an ocean in the hollow of his hand, goes forth to find heights and depths and lengths and breadths of omnipotency in a dewdrop, and dismounts from a chariot of midnight hurricane to cross over on the suspension bridge of a spider's web. You may take your telescope and sway it across the heavens in order to behold the glory of God; but I will take the leaf holding the spider and the spider's web, and I will bring the microscope to my eye, and while I gaze and look and study, and am confounded, I will kneel down in the grass and cry: "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty."

Second: Again, my text teaches me that insignificance is no excuse for inaction. This spider that Solomon saw on the wall might have said, "I can't weave a web worthy of this great palace; what can I do amid all this gold and embroidery? I am not able to make anything fit for so grand a place, and so I will not work my spinning-jenny." Not so said the spider. "The spider taketh hold with her hands." Oh! what a lesson that is for you and me! You say if you had some great sermon to preach, if you only had a great

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audience to talk to, if you had a great army to marshal, if you only had a constitution to write, if there were some great thing in the world for you to do, then you would show us. Yes, you would show us! What if the Levite in the ancient temple had refused to snuff the candle because he could not be a high priest? What if the humming-bird should refuse to sing its song into the ear of the honeysuckle, because it cannot, like the eagle, dash its wing into the sun? What if the raindrop should refuse to descend because it is not a Niagara? What if the spider of the text should refuse to move its shuttle because it cannot weave a Solomon's robe? Away with such folly! If you are lazy with the one talent you would be lazy with the ten talents. If Milo cannot lift the calf he never will have strength to lift the ox. In the Lord's army there is order for promotion; but you cannot be a general until you have been a captain, a lieutenant, and a colonel. It is step by step, it is inch by inch, it is stroke by stroke that our Christian character is builded. Therefore be content to do what God commands you to do. God is not ashamed to do small things. He is not ashamed to be found chiseling a grain of sand, or helping a honey-bee to construct its cell with mathematical accuracy, or tingeing a shell in the surf, or shaping the bill of a chaffinch. What God does, he does well. What you do, do well, be it a great work or a small work. If ten talents, employ all the ten. If five talents, employ all the five. If one talent, employ the one. If only the thousandth part of a talent, employ that. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." I tell you if you are not faithful to God in a small sphere, you would be indolent and insignificant in a large sphere.

Third: Again, my text teaches me that repulsive-



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ness and loathsomeness will sometimes climb up into very elevated places. You would have tried to kill the spider that Solomon saw. You would have said, "This is no place for it. If that spider is determined to weave a web, let it do so down in the cellar of this palace, or in some dark dungeon." Ah! the spider of the text could not be discouraged. It clambered on and climbed up, higher and higher and higher, until, after a while it reached the king's vision, and he said, "The spider taketh hold with her hands and is in king's palaces." And so it often is now that things that are loathsome and repulsive get up into very elevated places. The church of Christ is a palace. The King of heaven on earth lives in it. According to the Bible, her beams are of cedar, and her rafters of fir, and her windows of agate, and the fountains of salvation dash a rain of light. It is a glorious palace; and yet sometimes unseemly and loathsome things creep up into it — evil-speaking and rancor and slander and backbiting and abuse, crawling up on the walls of the church, spinning a web from arch to arch, and from the top of one communion tankard to the top of another communion tankard. Glorious palace, in which there ought only to be light and love and pardon and grace — yet a spider in the palace!

Home ought to be a castle. It ought to be the residence of everything loyal. Kindness, love, peace, patience, and forbearance ought to be the princes residing there, and yet sometimes dissipation crawls up into that home, and the jealous eye comes up, and the scene of peace and plenty becomes the scene of domestic jargon and dissonance. You say, "What is the matter with the home?" I will tell you what is the matter with it. A spider in the palace.

A well-developed Christian character is a grand thing to look at. You see some men with great in-

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tellectual and spiritual proportions. You say, "How useful that man must be!" But you find amid all his splendor of faculties there is some prejudice, some whim, some evil habit, that a great many people do not notice, but that you have happened to notice, and it is gradually spoiling that man's character; it is gradually going to injure his entire influence. Others may not see it, but you are anxious in regard to his welfare, and you deplore it. A dead fly in the ointment. A spider in the palace.

Fourth: Again, my text teaches me that perseverance will mount into the king's palace. It must have seemed a long distance for that spider to climb in Solomon's splendid residence, but it started at the very foot of the wall and went up over the panels of Lebanon cedar, higher and higher, until it stood higher than the highest throne in all the nations — the throne of Solomon. And so God has decreed it, that many of those who are down in the dust of sin and dishonor shall gradually attain to the king's palace. We see it in worldly things. Who is that banker in Philadelphia? Why, he used to be the boy who held the horses of Stephen Girard while the millionaire went in to collect his dividends. Arkwright toils on up from a barber's shop until he gets into the palace of invention. Fletcher toils on up from the most insignificant family position until he gets into the palace of Christian eloquence. Hogarth, engraving pewter mugs for a living, toils on up until he reaches the palace of world-renowned art. And God hath decided that though you may be weak of arm and slow of tongue and be struck through with a great many mental and moral deficits, by his Almighty grace you shall yet arrive in the King's palace — not such a one as is spoken of in the text, not one of marble, not one adorned with pillars of alabaster and thrones of ivory

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and flagons of burnished gold — but a palace in which God is the King and the angels of heaven are the cup-bearers.

The spider crawling up the wall of Solomon's palace was not worth looking after or considering as compared with the fact that we, who are the worms of the dust, may at last ascend into the palace of the King immortal. By the grace of God we may all reach it. Oh! heaven is not a dull place. It is not a worn-out mansion with faded curtains and outlandish chairs and cracked ware. No; it is as fresh and fair and beautiful as though it were completed but yesterday. The kings of the earth shall bring their honor and glory into it.

A palace means splendor of apartments. Now, I do not know where heaven is, and I do not know how it looks, but if our bodies are to be resurrected at the last day, I think heaven must have a material splendor as well as a spiritual grandeur. What grandeur of apartments, when that divine hand which turns the sea into blue and the foliage into green, and sets the sunset on fire, shall gather all the beautiful colors of earth around his throne, and when that arm which lifted the pillars of Alpine rock and bent the arch of the sky shall raise before our soul the eternal architecture, and that hand which hung with loops of fire the curtains of morning shall prepare the upholstery of our kingly residence!

A palace also means splendor of associations. The poor man, the outcast, cannot get into the Tuileries, or Windsor Castle. The sentinel stands there and cries "Halt!" as he tries to enter. But in that palace we may all become residents, and we shall all be princes and kings. We may have been beggars, we may have been outcasts, we may have been wandering as we all have been, but there we shall take our regal

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power. What companionship in heaven! To walk side by side with John and James and Peter and Paul and Moses and Joshua and Caleb and Ezekiel and Jeremiah and Micah and Zechariah and Wilberforce and Oliver Cromwell and Philip Doddridge and Edward Payson and John Milton and Elizabeth Fry and Hannah More and Charlotte Elizabeth, and all the other kings and queens of heaven. O my soul, what a companionship!

A palace means splendor of banquet. There will be no common ware on that table. There will be no unskilled musicians at that entertainment. There will be no scanty supply of fruit or beverage. There have been banquets spread that cost a million of dollars each; but who can tell the untold wealth of that banquet? I do not know whether John's description of it is literal or figurative; I cannot prove it. I do not know but that it may be literal. I do not know but that there may be real fruits plucked from the tree of life. I do not know but that Christ referred to the real juice of the grape when he said that we should drink new wine in our Father's kingdom. I do not say it is so; but I have as much right for thinking it is so as you have for thinking the other way. At any rate, it will be a glorious banquet. Hark! the chariots rumbling in the distance. I really believe the guests are coming now. The gates swing open, the guests dismount, the palace is filling, and all the chalices, flashing with pearl and amethyst and carbuncle, are lifted to the lips of the myriad banqueters, while standing in robes of snowy white they drink to the honor of our Glorious King! "Oh," you say, "that is too grand a place for me." No, it is not. If a spider, according to the text, could crawl up on the walls of Solomon's palace, shall not our poor souls, through the blood of Christ, mount up from the depths of sin

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and shame, and finally reach the palace of the Eternal King? "Where sin abounded grace shall much more abound, that whereas sin reigned unto death, even so may grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Years ago, with lanterns and torches and guide, we went down in the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. You may walk fourteen miles and see no sunlight. It is a stupendous place. In some places the roof of the cave one hundred feet high. The grottoes filled with grotesque echoes. Cascades falling from invisible height to invisible depth. Stalagmites rising up from the floor of the cave, stalactites descending from the roof of the cave, joining each other and making a pillar of the Almighty's sculpturing. There are rosettes of amethyst in halls of gypsum. As the guide carries the lantern ahead of you, the shadows have an appearance supernatural and spectral. The darkness is fearful. Two people getting lost from their guide only for a few hours, years ago, were demented, and for days sat in their insanity. You feel like holding your breath, as you walk across the bridges that seem to span the bottomless abyss. The guide throws his calcium light down into the caverns, and the light rolls and tosses from rock to rock and from depth to depth, making at every plunge a new revelation of the awful power that could have made such a place as that. A sense of suffocation comes upon you, as you think that you are two hundred and fifty feet in a straight line from the sunlit surface of the earth. The guide after a while takes you into what is called the "star chamber" and he says to you, "Sit here," and then he takes the lantern and goes down under the rocks, and it gets darker and darker, until the night is so thick that the hand, an inch from the eye, is invisible. And then, by kindling one of the lanterns and placing

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it in a cleft in the rock, there is a reflection cast on the dome of the cave and there are stars coming out in constellation — a brilliant night heaven — and you involuntarily exclaim “Beautiful! Beautiful!” Then he takes the lantern down in the other depths of the cavern and wanders on and on, until he comes up from behind the rocks gradually, and it seems like the dawn of morning, and it grows brighter and brighter. The guide is a skilled ventriloquist, and he imitates the voices of the morning. Soon the gloom is all gone and you stand congratulating yourself over the wonderful spectacle. Well, there are a great many people who look down into the grave as a vast cavern. They think it is one thousand miles subterraneous, and all the echoes seem to be the voices of despair, and the cascades seem to be the falling tears that always fall, and the gloom of earth seems coming up in stalagmites, making pillars of indescribable horror. The grave is no such place as that to me, thank God! Our Divine Guide takes us down into the cavern, and we have the lamp at our feet and the light to our path, and all the echoes in the rifts of the rocks are anthems, and all the falling waters are fountains of salvation, and after a while we look up and behold the cavern of the tomb has become a King’s star chamber. And while we are looking at the pomp of it, and everlasting morning begins to rise, and all the tears of the earth begin to crystallize into stalagmites rising up in a pillar on the one side, and all the glories of heaven seem to be descending in a stalactite, making a pillar on the other side, and you push against the gate that swings between the two pillars, and as that gate flashes open, you find it is one of the twelve gates which are twelve pearls. Blessed be God that through this Gospel the Mammoth Cave of the sepulcher has

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become the illuminated star chamber of the King. Oh, the palaces, the eternal palaces, the King's palaces!

In the far East there is a bird called the huma, about which is the beautiful superstition that, upon whatever head the shadow of that bird rests, upon that head there shall be a crown. Oh, thou Dove of the Spirit, floating above us, let the shadow of thy wing fall upon this congregation, that each at last in heaven may upon his head wear a crown! a crown! and hold in his right hand a star! a star!





## A MOTHERLY GOD

Isa., 66: 13: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will  
I comfort you."



## A MOTHERLY GOD

Isa., 66: 13: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

The Bible is a warm letter of affection from a parent to a child, and yet there are many who see chiefly the severer passages. As there may be fifty or sixty nights of gentle dew in one summer that will not cause as much remark as one hail-storm of half an hour, so there are those who are more struck by those passages of the Bible that utter the indignation of God than by those that express his affection. There may come to a household twenty or fifty letters of affection during the year, and they will not make as much excitement in that home as one sheriff's writ; and so there are people who are more attentive to those passages which declare the wrath of God than to those which assure his mercy and his favor. God is a Lion, John says in the Book of Revelation. God is a Breaker, Micah announces in his prophecy. God is a Rock. God is a King. But hear also that God is Love. A father and his child are walking out in the fields on a summer's day, and there comes up a thunder-storm. A flash of lightning startles the child, and the father says, "My dear, that is God's eye." There comes a peal of thunder, and the father says, "My dear, that is God's voice." But the clouds go off the sky, and the storm is gone, and light floods the heavens and floods the landscape, and the father forgets to say, "That is God's smile."

I bring you a text which bends with great gentleness and love over all who are prostrate in sin and

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trouble. It lights up with compassion. It melts with tenderness. It breathes upon us the hush of an eternal lullaby, for it declares that God is our Mother. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I remark, in the first place, that God has a mother's simplicity of instruction. A father does not know how to teach a child the A B C. Men are not skillful in the primary department; but a mother has so much patience that she will tell a child for the hundredth time the difference between F and G and between I and J. Sometimes it is by blocks; sometimes by the worsted-work; sometimes by the slate; sometimes by the book. She thus teaches the child, and has no awkwardness of condescension in so doing. So God, with the mother, stoops down to our infantile minds. Though we are told a thing a thousand times, and we do not understand it, our heavenly Mother goes on, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. God has been teaching some of us thirty years, and some of us sixty years, one word of one syllable, and we do not know it yet — f-a-i-t-h, faith. When we come to that word we stumble, we halt, we lose our place, we pronounce it wrong. Still, God's patience is not exhausted. God, our Mother, puts us in the school of prosperity, and the letters are in sunshine, but we cannot spell them. God puts us in the school of adversity, and the letters are black, but we cannot spell them. If God were merely a king, he would punish us; if he were simply a father, he would whip us; but God is a mother, and so we are borne with and helped all the way through.

A mother teaches her child chiefly by pictures. If she wants to set forth to her child the hideousness of a quarrelsome spirit, instead of giving a lecture upon

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that subject, she turns over a leaf and shows the child two boys in a wrangle, and says, "Does not that look horrible?" If she wants to teach her child the awfulness of war, she turns over the picture-book and shows the war-charger, the headless trunks of butchered men, the wild, agonizing, bloodshot eye of battle rolling under lids of flame, and she says, "That is war!" The child understands it. In a great many books the best part is the pictures. The style may be insipid, the type poor, but a picture always attracts a child's attention. Now God, our Mother, teaches us almost everything by pictures. Is the divine goodness to be set forth? How does God, our Mother, teach us? By an autumnal picture. The barns are full. The wheat-stacks are rounded. The cattle are chewing the cud lazily in the sun. The orchards are dropping the ripe pippins into the lap of the farmer. The natural world, that has been busy all summer, seems now to be resting in great abundance. We look at the picture and say, "Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness." Our family comes around the breakfast-table. It has been a very cold night, but the children are all bright, because they slept under thick coverlets, and they are now in the warm blast of the open register, and their appetites make luxuries out of the plainest fare, and we look at the picture and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul!"

God wishes to set forth the fact that in the Judgment the good will be divided from the wicked. How is it done? By a picture; by a parable—a fishing scene. A group of hardy men, long-bearded, garbed for standing to the waist in water; sleeves rolled up. Long oar, sun-gilt; boat battered as though it had been a playmate of the storm. A full net, thumping about with the fish, which have just discovered their captivity, the worthless moss-bunkers and the useful

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flounders all in the same net. The fisherman puts his hand down amid the squirming fins, takes out the moss-bunkers and throws them into the water, and gathers the good fish into the pail. So, says Christ, it shall be at the end of the world. The bad he will cast away, and the good he will keep. Another picture!

God, our Mother, wanted to set forth the duty of neighborly love, and it is done by a picture. A human form, a mere mass of wounds, on the road to Jericho. A traveler has been fighting a robber. The robber stabbed him and knocked him down. Two ministers come along. They look at the poor fellow, but do not help him. A traveler comes along — a Samaritan. He says "Whoa" to the beast he is riding, and dismounts. He examines the wounds; he takes out some wine, and with it washes the wounds, and then he takes some oil, and puts that in to make the wounds stop smarting; and then he tears off a piece of his own garment for a bandage. Then he helps the wounded man upon the beast, and walks by the side, holding him on until they come to a tavern. He says to the landlord, "Here is money to pay the man's board for two days; take care of him; if it costs anything more, charge it to me, and I will pay it." Picture — The Good Samaritan, or Who is your Neighbor?

Does God, our Mother, want to set forth what a foolish thing it is to go away from the right, and how glad divine mercy is to take back the wanderer? How is it done? By a picture. A good father. Large farm, with fat sheep and oxen. Fine house, with exquisite wardrobe. Discontented boy. Goes away. Sharpers fleece him. Feeds hogs. Gets homesick. Starts back. Sees an old man running. It is father! The hand, torn of the husks, gets a ring. The foot, inflamed and bleeding, gets a sandal. The bare shoulder, showing

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through the tatters, gets a robe. The stomach, gnawing itself with hunger, gets a full platter smoking with meat. The father cannot eat for looking at the returned wanderer. Tears running down the face until they come to a smile — the night dew melting into the morning. No work on the farm that day; for when a bad boy repents, and comes back, promising to do better, God knows that is enough for one day. "And they began to be merry." Picture—Prodigal Son Returned from the Wilderness. So God, our Mother, teaches us everything by pictures. The sinner is a lost sheep. Jesus is the Bridegroom. The useless man a barren fig-tree. The Gospel is a great supper. Satan, a sower of tares. Truth, a mustard-seed. That which we could not have understood in the abstract statement, God, our Mother, presents to us in this Bible-album of pictures, God engraved. "Is not the divine Maternity ever thus teaching us?"

I remark again, that God has a mother's favoritism. A father sometimes shows a sort of favoritism. Here is a boy — strong, well, of high forehead and 'quick intellect. The father says, "I will take that boy into my firm yet;" or, "I will give him the very best education." There are instances where, for the culture of the one boy, all the others have been robbed. A sad favoritism; but that is not the mother's favorite. I will tell you her favorite. There is a child who at two years of age had a fall. He has never got over it. The scarlet fever muffled his hearing. He is not what he once was. That child has caused the mother more anxious nights than all the other children. If he coughs in the night, she springs out of a sound sleep and goes to him. The last thing she does when going out of the house is to give a charge in regard to him. The first thing on coming in is to ask about him. Why, the children of the family all know that he is the

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favorite, and say, "Mother, you let him do just as he pleases, and you give him a great many things which you do not give us. He is your favorite." The mother smiles; she knows it is so.

So he ought to be; for if there is any one in the world who needs sympathy more than another, it is an invalid child, weary on the first mile of life's journey; carrying an aching head, a weak side, an irritated lung. So the mother ought to make him a favorite. God, our Mother, has favorites. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." That is, one whom he especially loves he chasteneth. God loves us all; but is there one weak and sick and sore and wounded and suffering and faint? That is the one who lies nearest and more perpetually on the great, loving heart of God. Why, it never coughs but our Mother, God, hears it. It never stirs a weary limb in the bed but our Mother, God, knows of it. There is no such a watcher as God. The best nurse may be overborne by fatigue, and fall asleep in the chair; but God, our Mother, after being up a year of nights with a suffering child, never slumbers nor sleeps.

"Oh!" says one, "I cannot understand all that about affliction." A refiner of silver once explained it to a Christian lady. "I put the silver in the fire, and I keep refining it and trying it till I can see my face in it, and then I take it out." Just so it is that God keeps his dear children in the furnace till the divine image may be seen in them; then they are taken out of the fire. "Well," says some one, "if that is the way that God treats his favorites, I do not want to be a favorite." There is a barren field on an autumn day just wanting to be let alone. There is a bang at the bars, and a rattle of whiffletrees and cleavices. The field says, "What is the farmer going to do with me now?" The farmer puts the plow in the ground,



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shouts to the horses, the coulter goes tearing through the sod, and the furrow reaches from fence to fence. Next day there is a bang at the bars, and a rattle of whiffletrees again. The field says, "I wonder what the farmer is going to do now." The farmer hitches the horses to the harrow, and it goes bounding and tearing across the field. Next day there is a rattle at the bars again, and the field says, "What is the farmer going to do now?" He walks heavily across the field, scattering seed as he walks. After a while a cloud comes. The field says, "What, more trouble!" It begins to rain. After a while the wind changes to the northeast, and it begins to snow. Says the field, "Is it not enough that I have been torn, and trampled upon, and drowned? Must I now be snowed under?" After a while, Spring comes out of the gates of the south, and warmth and gladness come with it. A green scarf bandages the gash of the wheat-field, and the July morning drops a crown of gold on the head of the grain. "Oh!" says the field, "now I know the use of the plow, of the harrow, of the heavy foot, of the shower, and of the snow-storm. It is well enough to be trodden and trampled and drowned and snowed under, if in the end I can yield such a glorious harvest." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

When I see God especially busy in troubling and trying a Christian, I know that out of that Christian's character there is to come especial good. A quarryman goes down into the excavation, and with strong-handed machinery bores into the rock. The rock says, "What do you do that for?" He puts powder in; he lights a fuse. There is a thundering crash. The rock says, "Why, the whole mountain is going to pieces." The crowbar is plunged; the rock is dragged out.

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After a while it is taken into the artist's studio. It says, "Well, now I have got to a good, warm, comfortable place at last." But the sculptor takes the chisel and mallet, and he digs for the eyes, and he cuts for the mouth, and he bores for the ear, and he rubs it with sand-paper, until the rock says, "When will this torture be ended?" A sheet is thrown over it. It stands in darkness. After a while it is taken out. The covering is removed. It stands in the sunlight, in the presence of ten thousand applauding people, as they greet the statue of the poet or the prince or the conqueror. "Ah!" says the stone, "now I understand it. I am a great deal better off now standing as a statue of a conqueror than I would have been down in the quarry." So God finds a man down in the quarry of ignorance and sin. How to get him up? He must be bored and blasted and chiseled and scoured, and stand sometimes in the darkness. But after a while the mantle of affliction will fall off, and his soul will be greeted by the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and the thousands of thousands, as more than the conqueror. Oh, my friends, God, our Mother, is just as kind in our afflictions as in our prosperities. God never touches us but for our good. If a field clean and cultured is better off than a barren field, and if a stone that has become a statue is better off than the marble in the quarry, then that soul that God chastens may be his favorite. Oh, the rocking of the soul is not the rocking of an earthquake, but the rocking of God's cradle. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." I have been told that the pearl in an oyster is merely the result of a wound, or a sickness inflicted upon it, and I do not know but that the brightest gems of heaven will be found to have been the wounds of earth kindled into the jeweled brightness of eternal glory.

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I remark that God has a mother's capacity for attending to little hurts. The father is shocked at the broken bone of the child, or at the sickness that sets the cradle on fire with fever, but it takes the mother to sympathize with all the little ailments and bruises of the child. If the child have a splinter in its hand, it wants the mother to take it out, and not the father. The father says, "Oh, that is nothing," but the mother knows it is something, and that a little hurt sometimes is to a child a very great hurt. So with God, our Mother: all our annoyances are important enough to look at and sympathize with. Nothing with God is something. There are no ciphers in God's arithmetic. And if we were only good enough of sight, we could see as much through a microscope as through a telescope. Those things that may be impalpable and infinitesimal to us, may be pronounced and infinite to God. A mathematical point is defined as having no parts, no magnitude. It is so small you cannot imagine it, and yet a mathematical point may be a starting-point for a great eternity. God's surveyors carry a very long chain. A scale must be very delicate that can weigh a grain, but God's scale is so delicate that he can weigh with it that which is so small that a grain is a million times heavier. When John Kitto, a poor boy on a back street of Plymouth, cut his foot with a piece of glass, God bound it up so successfully that Kitto became the great Christian geographer, and a commentator known among all nations. So every wound of the soul, however insignificant, God is willing to bind up. As at the first cry of the child the mother rushes to kiss the wound, so God, our Mother, takes the smallest wound of the heart, and presses it to the lips of divine sympathy. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I remark further that God has a mother's patience

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with the erring. If one does wrong, first his associates in life cast him off; if he goes on in the wrong way, his business partner casts him off; if he goes on, his best friends cast him off — his father casts him off. But after all others have cast him off, where does he go? Who holds no grudge, and forgives the last time as well as the first? Who sits by the murderer's counsel all through the long trial? Who carries the longest at the windows of a culprit's cell? Who, when all others think ill of a man, keeps on thinking well of him? It is his mother. God bless her gray hairs, if she be still alive; and bless her grave, if she be gone! And bless the rocking-chair in which she used to sit, and bless the cradle that she used to rock, and bless the Bible she used to read! So God, our Mother, has patience for all the erring. After everybody else has cast a man off, God, our Mother, comes to the rescue. God leaps to take charge of a bad case. After all the other doctors have got through, the heavenly Physician comes in.

Human sympathy at such a time does not amount to much. Even the sympathy of the Church, I am sorry to say, often does not amount to much. I have seen the most harsh and bitter treatment on the part of those who professed faith in Christ toward those who were wavering and erring. They tried on the wanderer sarcasm and billingsgate and caricature, and they tried tittle-tattle. There was one thing they did not try, and that was forgiveness. A soldier in England was brought by a sergeant to the colonel. "What," says the colonel, "bringing this man here again! We have tried everything with him." "Oh, no," says the sergeant, "there is one thing you have not tried. I would like you to try that." "What is that?" said the colonel. Said the man, "Forgiveness."

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The case had not gone so far but that it might take that turn, and so the colonel said, "Well, young man, you have done so and so. What is your excuse?" "I have no excuse, but I am very sorry," said the man. "We have made up our minds to forgive you," said the colonel. The tears started. He had never once been accosted in that way before. His life was reformed, and that was the starting-point for a positively Christian life. Oh, Church of God, quit your sarcasm when a man falls! Quit your irony, quit your tittle-tattle, and try forgiveness. God, your Mother, tries it all the time. A man's sin may be like a continent, but God's forgiveness is like the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, bounding it on both sides.

The Bible often talks about God's hand. I wonder how it looks. You remember distinctly how your mother's hand looked, though thirty years ago it withered away. It was different from your father's hand. When you were to be chastised, you had rather have mother punish you than father. It did not hurt so much. And father's hand was different from mother's, partly because it had outdoor toil, and partly because God intended it to be different. The knuckles were more firmly set, and the palm was calloused. But mother's hand was more delicate. There were blue veins running through the back of it. Though the fingers, some of them, were pricked with a needle, the palm of it was soft. Oh! it was very soft. Was there ever any poultice like that to take pain out of a wound? So God's hand is a mother's hand. What it touches it heals. If it smite you, it does not hurt as if it were another hand. Oh, you poor wandering soul in sin, it is not a bailiff's hand that seizes you to-day. It is not a hard hand. It is not an unsympathetic hand. It is not a cold hand. It is not an enemy's hand. No.

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It is a gentle hand, a loving hand, a sympathetic hand, a soft hand, a mother's hand. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I want to say, finally, that God has a mother's way of putting a child to sleep. You know there is no cradle-song like a mother's. After the excitement of the evening it is almost impossible to get the child to sleep. If the rocking-chair stop a moment, the eyes are wide open; but the mother's patience and the mother's soothing manner keep on until, after a while, the angel of slumber puts his wing over the pillow. Well, the time will come when we will be wanting to be put to sleep. The day of our life will be done, and the shadows of the night of death will be gathering around us. Then we want God to soothe us, to hush us to sleep. Let the music at our going not be the dirge of the organ, or the knell of the church-tower, or the drumming of a "dead march," but let it be the hush of a mother's lullaby. Oh! the cradle of the grave will be soft with the pillow of all the promises. When we are being rocked into that last slumber, I want this to be the cradle-song: "As one whom a mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

Asleep in Jesus! Far from thee  
Thy kindred and their graves may be;  
But thine is still a blessed sleep,  
From which none ever wake to weep.

A Scotchman was dying. His daughter Nellie sat by the bedside. It was Sunday evening, and the bell of the church was ringing, calling the people to church. The good old man, in his dying dream, thought that he was on the way to church, as he used to be when he went in the sleigh across the river; and as the evening bell struck up, in his dying dream he thought it was the call to church. He said, "Hark, children,

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the bells are ringing; we shall be late; we must make the mare step out quick!" He shivered, and then said, "Pull the buffalo robe up closer, my lass! It is cold crossing the river; but we will soon be there, Nellie, we will soon be there!" And he smiled and said, "Just there now." No wonder he smiled. The good old man had got to church. Not the old country church, but the temple in the skies. Just across the river. How comfortably did God hush that old man to sleep! As one whom his mother comforteth, so God comforted him.





## GARRISON DUTY

I Sam., 30: 24: "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."



## GARRISON DUTY \*

I Sam., 30: 24: "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

If you have never seen an army change quarters you have no idea of the amount of baggage — twenty loads, fifty loads, a hundred loads of baggage. David and his army were about to start on a double-quick march for the recovery of their captured families from the Amalekites. So they left by the brook Besor their blankets, their knapsacks, their baggage, and their carriages. Who shall be detailed to watch this stuff? There are sick soldiers and wounded soldiers and aged soldiers who are not able to go on this swift military expedition, but who are able to do some work, and so they are detailed to watch the baggage. There is many a soldier who is not strong enough to march thirty miles in a day, and then plunge into a ten hours' fight, who is able with drawn sword lifted against his shoulder to pace up and down as a sentinel to keep off an enemy who might put the torch to the baggage. There are two hundred of these crippled and aged and wounded soldiers detailed to watch the baggage. Some of them, I suppose, had bandages across the brow, and some of them had their arms in slings, and some of them walked on crutches. They were not cowards shirking duty. They had fought in many a fierce battle for their country and their God. They are now part of the time in hospital, and part of the time on garrison duty. They almost cry because they

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\* First preached in Brooklyn. Afterward, with some changes, in City Road, London, John Wesley's chapel.

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cannot go with the other troops to the front. While these sentinels watch the baggage, the Lord watches the sentinels.

There is quite a different scene being enacted in the distance. The Amalekites, having ravaged and ransacked and robbed whole countries, are celebrating their success in a roaring carousal. Some of them are dancing on the lawn with wonderful gyration of heel and toe, and some of them are examining the spoils of victory — the finger rings and earrings, the necklaces, the wristlets, the head-bands diamond starred, and the coffers with coronets and cornelians and pearls and sapphires and emeralds, and all the wealth of plate and jewels and decanter and the silver and the gold banked up on the earth in princely profusion, and the embroideries and the robes and the turbans and the cloaks of an imperial wardrobe. The banquet has gone on until the banqueters are maudlin and weak and stupid and indecent and loathsomely drunk. What a time it is now for David and his men to swoop on them. So the English lost the battle of Bannockburn because the night before they were in wassail and bibulous celebration, while the Scotch were in prayer. So the Syrians were overthrown in their carousal by the Israelites. So Chedorlaomer and his army were overthrown in their carousal by Abraham and his men. So our Northern forces were defeated in a battle because one of the commanders was drunk. Now is the time for David and his men to swoop upon these carousing Amalekites. Some of the Amalekites are hacked to pieces on the spot, some of them are just able to go staggering and hiccoughing off the field, some of them crawl on camels and speed off in the distance.

David and his men gather together the wardrobes, the jewels, and put them upon the backs of camels, and

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into wagons, and they gather together the sheep and cattle that had been stolen, and start back toward the garrison.

Yonder they come! yonder they come! The limping men of the garrison come out and greet them with cheer. The Bible says David saluted them. That is, he asked them how they all were. "How is your broken arm?" "How is your fractured jaw?" "Has the stiffened limb been unlimbered?" "Have you had another chill?" "Are you getting better?" He saluted them.

But now came a very difficult thing, the distribution of the spoils of victory. Drive up those laden camels now. Who shall have the spoils? Well, some selfish soul suggests that these treasures ought all to belong to those who had been out in active service. "We did all the fighting, while these men stayed at home in the garrison, and we ought to have all the treasures." But David looked into the worn faces of these veterans who had stayed in the garrison, and he looked around and saw how cleanly everything had been kept, and he saw that the baggage was all safe, and he knew how that these wounded and crippled men would gladly enough have been at the front if they had been able, and the little general looks up from under his helmet and says: "No, no; let us have fair play;" and he rushes up to one of these men and he says, "Hold your hands together," and the hands are held together, and he fills them with silver. And he rushes up to another man who was sitting away back and had no idea of getting any of the spoils, and throws a Babylonish garment over him and fills his hand with gold. And he rushes up to another man who had lost all his property in serving God and his country years before, and he drives up some of the cattle and some of the sheep that they had brought

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back from the Amalekites, and he gives two or three of the cattle and three or four of the sheep to this poor man, so he shall always be fed and clothed. He sees a man so emaciated and worn out and sick he needs stimulants and he gives him a little of the wine that he brought from the Amalekites. Yonder is a man who has no appetite for the rough rations of the army, and he gives him a rare morsel from the Amalekitish banquet, and the two hundred crippled and maimed and aged soldiers who tarried on garrison duty get just as much of the spoils of battle as any of the two hundred men that went to the front. "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

The impression is abroad that the Christian rewards are for those who do conspicuous service in distinguished places — great martyrs, great patriots, great preachers, great philanthropists. But my text sets forth the idea that there is just as much reward for a man who stays at home and minds his own business, and who, crippled and unable to go forth and lead in great movements and in the high places of the earth, does his whole duty just where he is. Garrison duty as important and as remunerative as service at the front. "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

The Earl of Kintore said to me on an English railway: "Mr. Talmage, when you get back to America I want you to preach a sermon on the discharge of ordinary duty in ordinary places, and then send me a copy of it." Afterward an English clergyman coming to this land brought from the Earl of Kintore the same message. Alas! that before I got ready to do what he asked me to do, the good Earl of Kintore had departed this life. But that man, surrounded by all palatial surroundings and in a distinguished sphere,

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felt sympathetic with those who had ordinary duties to perform in ordinary places and in ordinary ways. A great many people are discouraged when they hear the story of Moses and of Joshua and of David and of Luther and of John Knox and of Deborah and of Florence Nightingale. They say: "Oh, that was all good and right for them, but I shall never be called to receive the law on Mount Sinai, I shall never be called to command the sun and the moon to stand still, I shall never be called to slay a giant, I shall never preach on Mars Hill, I shall never defy the Diet of Worms, I shall never be called to make a queen tremble for her crimes, I shall never preside over a hospital."

There are women who say: "If I had as brilliant a sphere as those people had, I should be as brave and as grand; but my business is to get the children off to school and to hunt up things when they are lost and to see that dinner is ready and to keep account of the household expenses and to hinder the children from being strangulated by the whooping cough, and to go through all the annoyances and vexations of housekeeping. Oh, my sphere is so infinitesimal and so insignificant, I am clear discouraged." Woman, God places you on garrison duty, and your reward will be just as great as that of Florence Nightingale, who, moving so often night by night with a light in her hand through the hospitals, was called by the wounded the "lady of the lamp." Your reward will be just as great as that of Mrs. Hertzog, who built and endowed theological seminary buildings. Your reward will be just as great as that of Hannah More, who by her excellent books won for her admirers Garrick and Edmund Burke and Joshua Reynolds. Rewards are not to be given according to the amount of noise you make in the world, nor even according to the

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amount of good you do, but according to whether you work to your full capacity, according to whether or not you do your full duty in the sphere where God has placed you.

Suppose you give to two of your children errands and they are to go off to make purchases, and to one you give one dollar and to the other you give twenty dollars. Do you reward the boy to whom you gave twenty dollars for purchasing more with that amount of money than the other boy purchased with one dollar? Of course not. If God give wealth or social position or eloquence or twenty times the faculty to a man that he gives to the ordinary men, is he going to give to the favored man a reward because he has more power and more influence? Oh, no! In other words, if you and I do our whole duty, and you have twenty times more talent than I have, you will get no more divine reward than I will. Is God going to reward you because he gave you more? That would not be fair, that would not be right. These two hundred men of the text who fainted by the brook Besor did their whole duty; they watched the baggage, they took care of the stuff, and they got as much of the spoils of victory as the men who went to the front. "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

There is high encouragement in this for all who have great responsibility and little credit for what they do. You know the names of the great commercial houses of these cities. Do you know the names of the confidential clerks — the men who have the key to the safe, the men who know the combination of the lock? A distinguished merchant goes forth at the summer watering place and he flashes past, and you say: "Who is that?" "Oh," replies some one, "don't you know? that is the great importer, that is the great



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banker, that is the great manufacturer." The confidential clerk has his week off. Nobody notices whether he comes or goes. Nobody knows him, and after a while his week is done, and he sits down again at his desk. But God will reward his fidelity just as much as he recognizes the work of the merchant philanthropist whose investments this unknown clerk so carefully guarded. Hudson River Railroad, Pennsylvania Railroad, Erie Railroad, New York and New Haven Railroad — business men know the names of the presidents of these roads and of the prominent directors; but they do not know the names of the engineers, the names of the switchmen, the names of the flagmen, the names of the brakemen. These men have awful responsibilities, and sometimes through the recklessness of an engineer, or the unfaithfulness of a switchman, it has brought to mind the faithfulness of nearly all the rest of them. Such men do not have recognition of their services. They have small wages and much complaint. I very often ride upon locomotives, for I like engineers, and riding on the locomotive you seem to get there sooner, and I ask the question, as we shoot around some curve, or under some ledge of rocks, "How much wages do you receive?" and I am always surprised to find how little for such vast responsibility. Do you not suppose God is going to recognize that fidelity? Thomas Scott, the president of the Pennsylvania Railway, going up at death to receive from God his destiny, was no better known in that hour than was known the brakeman who last night on the Erie Railroad was jammed to death amid the car coupling. "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

Once, for thirty-six hours we expected every moment to go to the bottom of the ocean. The waves

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struck through the skylights and rushed down into the hold of the ship and hissed against the boilers. It was an awful time; but by the blessing of God and the faithfulness of the men in charge we came out of the cyclone and we arrived at home. Each one before leaving the ship thanked Captain Andrews. I do not think there was a man or woman that went off that ship without thanking Captain Andrews, and when years after I heard of his death I was impelled to write a letter of condolence to his family in Liverpool. Everybody recognized the goodness, the courage, the kindness of Captain Andrews; but it occurs to me now that we never thanked the engineer. He stood away down in the darkness amid the hissing furnaces doing his whole duty. Nobody thanked the engineer, but God recognized his heroism and his fidelity, and there will be just as high reward for the engineer who worked out of sight as the captain who stood on the bridge of the ship in the midst of the howling tempest. "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

A Christian woman was seen going along the edge of a wood every eventide, and the neighbors in the country did not understand how a mother with so many cares and anxieties should waste so much time as to be idly sauntering out evening by evening. It was found out afterward that she went there to pray for her household, and while there one evening she wrote that beautiful hymn, famous in all ages for cheering Christian hearts:

I love to steal a while away  
From every cumbering care,  
And spend the hours of setting day  
In humble, grateful prayer.

Shall there be no reward for such unpretending yet everlasting service?

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Clear back in the country there is a boy who wants to go to college and get an education. They call him a bookworm. Whenever they find him — in the barn or in the house — he is reading a book. "What a pity it is," they say, "that Ed cannot get an education." His father, work as hard as he will, can no more than support the family by the product of the farm. One night Ed has retired to his room and there is a family conference about him. The sisters say: "Father, I wish you would send Ed to college; if you will, we will work harder than we ever did, and we will make our old dresses do." The mother says: "Yes, I will get along without any hired help; although I am not as strong as I used to be, I think I can get along without any hired help." The father says, "Well, I think by husking corn nights I can get along without any assistance." Sugar is banished from the table, butter is banished from the plate. That family is put down on rigid, yea, suffering economy, that the boy may go to college. Time passes on. Commencement Day has come. Think not that I mention an imaginary case. God knows it happened. Commencement Day has come, and the professors walk in on the stage in their long gowns. The interest of the occasion is passing on, and after a while it comes to a climax of interest as the valedictorian is to be introduced. Ed has studied so hard and worked so well that he has had the honor conferred upon him. There are rounds of applause, sometimes breaking into vociferation. It is a great day for Ed. But away back in the galleries are his sisters in their plain hats and their faded shawls, and the old-fashioned father and mother — dear me, she has not had a new hat for six years, he has not had a new coat for six years — and they get up and look over on the platform, and they laugh and they cry, and they sit down, and they look pale, and then

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they are very much flushed. Ed gets the garlands, and the old-fashioned group in the gallery have their full share of the triumph. They have made that scene possible, and in the day when God shall more fully reward self-sacrifices made for others, he will give grand and glorious recognition. "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

There is high encouragement in this subject also for those who once wrought mightily for Christ and the church, but through sickness or collapse of fortune or advanced years cannot now go to the front. These two hundred men of the text were veterans. Let that man bare his arm and show how the muscles were torn. Let him pull aside the turban and see the mark of a battle axe. Pull aside the coat and see where the spear thrust him. Would it have been fair for those men crippled, weak and old, by the brook Besor, to have no share in the spoils of triumph? I was in the soldiers' hospital in Paris and I saw there some of the men of the First Napoleon, and I asked them where they had fought under their great commander. One man said, "I was at Austerlitz." Another man said, "I was at the Pyramids." Another man said, "I was in the awful retreat from Moscow." Another man said, "I was at the bridge of Lodi." Some of them were lame, they were all aged. Did the French Government turn off those old soldiers to die in want? No; their last days were spent like princes. Do you think my Lord is going to turn off his old soldiers because they are weak and worn and because they fainted by the brook Besor? Are they going to get no part of the spoils of the victory? Just look at them. Do you think those crevices in the face are wrinkles? No; they are battle scars. They fought against sickness, they fought against trouble, they fought against sin, they fought for God, they fought

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for the church, they fought for the truth, they fought for Heaven. When they had plenty of money their names were always on the subscription list. When there was any hard work to be done for God, they were ready to take the heaviest part of it. When there came a great revival, they were ready to pray all night for the anxious and the sin-struck. They were ready to do any work, endure any sacrifice, do the most unpopular thing that God demanded of them. But now they cannot go further. Now they have physical infirmities, now their heads trouble them. They are weak and faint by the brook Besor. Are they to have no share in the triumph? Are they to get none of the treasures, none of the spoils of conquest? You must think that Christ has a very short memory if you think he has forgotten their services.

Fret not, ye aged ones. Just tarry by the stuff and wait for your share of the spoils. Yonder they are coming. I hear the bleating of the fat lambs and I see the jewels glint in the sun. It makes me laugh to think how you will be surprised when they throw a chain of gold over your neck, and tell you to go in and dine with the King. I see you backing out because you feel unworthy. The shining ones come up on the one side, and the shining ones come up on the other side, and they push you on and they push you up, and they say, "Here is an old soldier of Jesus Christ," and the shining ones will rush out toward you and say, "Yes, that man saved my soul," or they will rush out and say, "Oh, yes, she was with me in the last sickness." And then the cry will go round the circle, "Come in, come in, come up, come up; we saw you away down there, old and sick and decrepit and discouraged because you could not go to the front, but 'As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff.'"

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There is high consolation also in this for aged ministers. They sit in pews in our churches. They used to stand in pulpits. Their hair is white with the blossoms of the tree of life. Their names marked on the roll of the General Assembly, or of the consociation, "Emeritus." They sometimes hear a text announced which brings to mind a sermon they preached fifty years ago on that same subject. They preached more Gospel on four hundred dollars a year than some of their successors preach on four thousand dollars. Some Sunday the old minister is in a church and near by in another pew there is a husband and a wife and a row of children. And after the benediction the lady comes up and says, "Doctor, you don't know me, do you?" "Well," he says, "Your face is familiar, but I cannot call you by name." "Why," she says, "You baptized me and you married me and you buried my father and mother and sisters." "Oh, yes," he says; "my eyesight isn't as good as it used to be."

They are in all our churches — the heroes of 1860, the heroes of 1870, the heroes of 1880. By the long grave trench that cut through half a century, they have stood sounding the resurrection. They have been in more Balaklavas and have taken more Sebastopols than you ever heard of. Sometimes they get a little fretful because they cannot be at the front. They hear the sound of the battle and the old war horse champs his bit. But the eighty thousand ministers of religion this day standing in the brunt of the fray shall have no more reward than those retired veterans. "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."

Cheer up, men and women of unappreciated ser-

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vices. You will get your reward, if not here, hereafter. When Charles Wesley comes up to judgment and the thousands of souls which were wafted into glory through his songs shall be enumerated, he will take his throne. When John Wesley comes up to judgment, and after his name has been mentioned in connection with the salvation of the millions of souls brought to God through the Methodism which he founded, he will take his throne. But between the two thrones of Charles Wesley and John Wesley, there will be a throne higher than either on which shall sit Susannah Wesley, who, with maternal consecration in Epworth rectory, Lincolnshire, started those two souls on their triumphant mission of sermon and song through all following ages. Oh, what a day that will be for many who rocked Christian cradles with weary foot, and who patched worn-out garments and darned socks, and out of a small income made the children comfortable for the winter! What a day that will be for those to whom the world gave the cold shoulder and called them nobodies, and begrudged them the least recognition, and who, weary and worn and sick, fainted by the brook Besor. Oh, that will be a mighty day when the Son of David shall distribute among them the garlands, the crowns, the scepters, the chariots, the thrones. And then it shall be found out that all who on earth served God in inconspicuous spheres receive just as much reward as those who filled the earth with uproar of achievement. Then they shall understand the height, the depth, the length, the breadth, the pillared and domed magnificence of my text, "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff."





## THE BATTLE FOR BREAD

I Kings, 17: 6: "And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening."



## THE BATTLE FOR BREAD

I Kings, 17: 6: "And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening."

The ornithology of the Bible is a very interesting study. The stork which knoweth her appointed time. The common sparrows teaching the lesson of God's providence. The ostriches of the desert, by careless incubation, illustrating the recklessness of parents who do not take enough pains with their children. The eagle symbolizing riches which take wings and fly away. The pelican emblemizing solitude. The bat, a flake of the darkness. The night hawk, the ossifrage, the cuckoo, the lapwing, the osprey, by the command of God in Leviticus, flung out of the world's bill of fare.

I would like to have been with Audubon as he went through the woods, with gun and pencil, bringing down and sketching the fowls of heaven, his unfolded portfolio thrilling all Christendom. What wonderful creatures of God the birds are! Some of them, this morning, like the songs of heaven let loose, bursting through the gates of heaven. Consider their feathers, which are clothing and conveyance at the same time; the nine vertebræ of the neck, the three eyelids to each eye, the third eyelid an extra curtain for graduating the light of the sun. Some of these birds scavengers and some of them orchestra. Thank God for quail's whistle and lark's carol and the twitter of the wren, called by the ancients the king of birds, because when the fowls of heaven went into a contest as to who could fly the highest, and the eagle

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swung nearest the sun, a wren on the back of the eagle, after the eagle was exhausted, sprang up much higher, and so was called by the ancients the king of birds. Consider those of them that have golden crowns and crests, showing them to be feathered imperials. And listen to the humming-bird's serenade in the ear of the honeysuckle. Look at the belted kingfisher, striking like a dart from sky to water. Listen to the voice of the owl, giving the keynote to all croakers. And behold the condor among the Andes, battling with the fallow-deer. I do not know whether an aquarium or aviary is the best altar from which to worship God.

There is an incident in my text that baffles all the ornithological wonders of the world. The grain crop has been cut off. Famine was in the land. In a cave by the brook Cherith sat a minister of God, Elijah, waiting for something to eat. Why did he not go to the neighbors? There were no neighbors; it was a wilderness. Why did he not pick some of the berries? There were none. If there had been, they would have been dried up. Seated one morning at the mouth of his cave, the prophet sees a flock of birds approaching. Oh, if they were only partridges, or if he only had an arrow with which to bring them down? But as they come nearer, he finds they are not comestible, but unclean, and the eating of them would be spiritual death. The strength of their beaks, the length of their wings, the blackness of their color, their loud, harsh, "Cruck! cruck!" prove them to be ravens.

They whirl around about the prophet's head, and then they come on fluttering wing and pause on the level of his hands, and one of the ravens brings bread, and another raven brings meat, and after they have discharged their tiny cargo they wheel past, and others come, until after a while the prophet has enough,

## The Battle for Bread

and these black servants of the wilderness table are gone. For six months, and some say a whole year, morning and evening, a breakfast and a supper-bell sounded as these ravens rang out on the air their "Cruck! cruck!" Guess where they got the food from. The old rabbins say they got it from the kitchen of King Ahab. Others say that the ravens got their food from pious Obadiah, who was in the habit of feeding the persecuted. Some say that the ravens brought the food to their young in the trees, and that Elijah had only to climb up and get it. Some say that the whole story is improbable; for these were carnivorous birds, and the food they carried was the torn flesh of living beasts, and that ceremonially unclean; or it was carrion, and it would not have been fit for the prophet. Some say they were not ravens at all, but that the word translated "ravens" in my text ought to have been translated "Arabs"; so it would have read, "The Arabs brought bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening." Anything but admit the Bible to be true.

Hew away at this miracle until all the miracle is gone. Go on with the depleting process, but know that you are robbing only one man — and that is yourself — of one of the most comforting, beautiful, pathetic, and triumphant lessons in all the ages. I can tell you who these purveyors were — they were ravens. I can tell you who freighted them with provisions — God. I can tell you who launched them — God. I can tell you who taught them which way to fly — God. I can tell you who told them at what cave to swoop — God. I can tell you who introduced raven to prophet and prophet to raven — God. There is one passage I will whisper in your ear, for I would not want to utter it aloud, lest some one should drop down under its power — "If any man shall take away

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from the words of the prophecy of this book, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the Holy City."

While, then, we watch the ravens feeding Elijah, let the swift dove of God's Spirit sweep down the sky with divine food, and on outspread wing pause at the lip of every soul hungering for comfort.

On the banks of what rivers have been the great battles of the world? While you are looking over the map of the world to answer that, I will tell you that the great conflict to-day is on the Thames, on the Hudson, on the Mississippi, on the Kennebec, on the Savannah, on the Rhine, on the Nile, on the Ganges, on the Hoang-Ho. It is a battle that has been going on for six thousand years. The troops engaged in it are fourteen hundred millions, and those who have fallen are vaster in numbers than those who march. It is a battle for bread.

The sentimentalist sits in a cushioned chair, in his pictured study, with his slippers on a damask ottoman, and says that this world is a great scene of avarice and greed. It does not seem so to me. If it were not for the absolute necessities of the cases, nine-tenths of the stores, factories, shops, banking-houses of the land would be closed to-morrow. Who is that man delving in the Colorado hills? or toiling in a New England factory? or going through a roll of bills in the bank? or measuring a fabric on the counter? He is a champion sent forth in behalf of some home circle that has to be cared for, in behalf of some church of God that has to be supported, in behalf of some asylum of mercy that has to be sustained. Who is that woman bending over the sewing-machine or carrying the bundle or sweeping the room or mending the garment or sweltering at the washtub? That is Deborah, one of the Lord's heroines, battling against Amalekitish

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want, which comes down with iron chariot to crush her and hers.

The great question with the vast majority of people to-day is not "Home Rule," but whether there shall be any home to rule; not one of tariff, but whether they shall have anything to tax. The great question is, "How shall I support my family? How shall I meet my notes? How shall I pay my rent? How shall I give food, clothing, and education to those who are dependent upon me?" If God will help me to assist you in the solution of that problem, the happiest man in this house will be your preacher! I have gone out on a cold morning with expert sportsmen to hunt for pigeons; I have gone out on the meadows to hunt for quail; I have gone out on the marsh to hunt for reed-birds; but this morning I am out for ravens.

Notice, in the first place in the story of my text, that these winged caterers came to Elijah directly from God. "I have commanded the ravens that they feed thee," we find God saying in an adjoining passage. They did not come out of some other cave. They did not just happen to alight there. God freighted them, God launched them, and God told them by what cave to swoop. That is the same God that is going to supply you. He is your Father. You would have to make an elaborate calculation before you could tell me how many pounds of food and how many yards of clothing would be necessary for you and your family; but God knows without any calculation. You have a plate at his table, and you are going to be waited on, unless you act like a naughty child, and kick and scramble and pound saucily the plate and try to upset things.

God has a vast family, and everything is methodized, and you are going to be served if you will only wait your turn. God has already ordered all the suits of clothes you will ever need, down to the last suit in

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which you shall be laid out. God has already ordered all the food you will ever eat, down to the last crumb that will be put in your mouth in the dying sacrament. It may not be just the kind of food or apparel we would prefer. The sensible parent depends on his own judgment as to what ought to be the apparel and the food of the minor in the family. The child would say, "Give me sugars and confections." "Oh, no," says the parent; "you must have something plainer first." The child would say, "Oh, give me these great festoons of color in the garment." "No," says the parent; "that would not be suitable." Now, God is our Father and we are minors, and he is going to clothe us and feed us, although he may not always yield to our infantile wish for sweets and glitter. These ravens of the text did not bring pomegranates from the glittering platter of King Ahab. They brought bread and meat. God had all the heavens and the earth before him and under him, and yet he sent this plain food, because it was best for Elijah to have it. Oh, be strong, my hearer, in the fact that the same God is going to supply you! It is never "hard times" with him. His ships never break on the rocks. His banks never fail. He has the supply for you and he has the means for sending it. He has not only the cargo, but the ship. If it were necessary, he would swing out from the heavens a flock of ravens reaching from his gate to yours, until the food would be flung down the sky from beak to beak and from talon to talon.

Notice again in this story of the text, that the ravens did not allow Elijah to hoard up a surplus. They did not bring enough on Monday to last all the week. They did not bring enough one morning to last until the next morning. They came twice a day, and brought just enough for one time. You



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know as well I, that the great fret of the world is that we want a surplus; we want the ravens to bring enough for fifty years. You have more confidence in the Broadway Bank or the Park Bank or Bank of England than you have in the Royal Bank of Heaven. You say, "All that is very poetic, but you may have the black ravens; give me the gold eagles." We had better be content with just enough. If in the morning your family eat up all the food there is in the house, do not sit down and cry and say, "I don't know where the next meal is to come from." About noon, or six o'clock in the evening just look up, and you will see two black spots on the sky, and you will hear the flapping of wings, and instead of Edgar A. Poe's insane raven alighting on the chamber door, "only this and nothing more," you will find Elijah's two ravens, or the two ravens of the Lord, the one bringing bread and the other bringing meat—plumed butcher and baker.

God is infinite in resource. When the city of Rochelle was besieged and the inhabitants were dying of the famine, the tides washed up on the beach, as never before nor since, enough shell-fish to feed the whole city. God is good. There is no mistake about that. History tells us that in 1555 in England there was a great drought. The crops failed; but in Essex, on the rocks, in a place where they were neither sown nor cultured, a great crop of peas grew until they filled a hundred measures; and there were blossoming vines enough, promising as much more.

But why go so far? I can give you a family incident. Some generations back there was a great drought in Connecticut, New England. The water disappeared from the hills, and the farmers living on the hills drove their cattle down toward the valleys, and had them supplied at the wells and fountains of the

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neighbors. But these after a while began to fail, and the neighbors said to Mr. Birdseye, of whom I shall speak, "You must not send your flocks and herds down here any more; our wells are giving out." Mr. Birdseye, the old Christian man, gathered his family at the altar, and with his family he gathered the slaves of the household — for bondage was then in vogue in Connecticut — and on their knees before God they cried for water; and the family story is, that there was weeping and great sobbing and prayer at that altar that the family might not perish for lack of water, and that the herds and flocks might not perish. The family rose from the altar. Mr. Birdseye, the old man, took his staff and walked out over the hills, and in a place where he had been scores of times without noticing anything particular, he saw the ground was very dark, and he took his spade and turned up the ground, and water started; and he beckoned to his servants, and they came and they brought pails and buckets until all the family and all the flocks and the herds were cared for; and then they made troughs reaching from that place down to the house and barn, and the water flowed, and it is a living fountain to-day. Now I call that old grandfather Elijah, and I call that brook that began to roll then, and is rolling still, the brook Cherith; and the lesson to me and to all who hear it is, when you are in great stress of circumstances pray and dig, dig and pray, and pray and dig.

How does that passage go? "The mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my loving kindness shall not fail." If your merchandise, if your mechanism, if your husbandry, fail, look you out for ravens. If you have in your despondency put God on trial and condemned him as guilty of cruelty, I move for a new trial. If the biography of your life is ever written, I will tell you what the first chapter and the

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middle chapter and the last chapter will be about, if it is written accurately. The first chapter about mercy, the middle chapter about mercy, the last chapter about mercy. The mercy that hovered over your cradle. The mercy that will hover over your grave. The mercy that will cover all between.

Again, this story of the text impresses me that relief came to this prophet with the most unexpected and with the seemingly impossible conveyance. If it had been a robin-redbreast or a musical meadow lark or a meek turtle-dove or a sublime albatross that had brought the food to Elijah, it would not have been so surprising. But no. It was a bird so fierce and inauspicious that we have fashioned one of our most forceful and repulsive words out of it — ravenous. That bird has a passion for picking out the eyes of men and of animals. It loves to maul the sick and the dying. It swallows with vulturous guzzle everything it can put its beak on; and yet all the food Elijah gets for six months or a year is from ravens. So your supply will come from an unexpected source. You think some great-hearted, generous man will come along and give you his name on the back of your note, or he will go security for you in some great enterprise. No, he will not. God will open the heart of some Shylock toward you. Your relief will come from the most unexpected quarter. The Providence which seemed ominous will be to you more than that which seemed auspicious. It will not be a chaffinch with breast and wing dashed with white and brown and chestnut; it will be a black raven.

Here is where we all make our mistake, and that is in regard to the color of God's providence. A white providence comes to us, and we say, "Oh, it is mercy!" Then a black providence comes toward us, and we say, "Oh, that is disaster!" The white provi-

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dence comes to you, and you have great business success, and you have fifty thousand dollars, and you get proud, and you get independent of God, and you begin to feel that the prayer, "Give me this day my daily bread," is inappropriate for you, for you have made provision for a hundred years. Then a black providence comes, and it sweeps everything away, and then you begin to pray, and you begin to feel your dependence, and begin to be humble before God, and you cry out for treasures in heaven. The black providence brought you salvation. The white providence brought you ruin. That which seemed to be harsh and fierce and dissonant was your greatest mercy. It was a raven.

There was a child born in your house. All your friends congratulated you. The other children of the family stood amazed looking at the new-comer, and asked a great many questions, genealogical and chronological. You said with poetic truthfulness that a white angel flew through the room and left the little one there. That little one stood with its two feet in the very sanctuary of your affection, and with its two hands it took hold of the altar of your soul. But one day there came one of the three scourges of children — scarlet fever or croup or diphtheria — and all that bright scene vanished. The chattering, the strange questions, the pulling at the dress as you crossed the floor — all ceased. As the great Friend of children stooped down and leaned toward the cradle, and took the little one in his arms and walked away with it into the bower of eternal summer, your eye began to follow him, and you followed the treasure he carried, and you have been following them ever since; and instead of thinking of heaven only once a week, as formerly, you are thinking of it all the time, and you are

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more pure and tender-hearted than you used to be, and you are patiently waiting for the daybreak. It is not self-righteousness in you to acknowledge that you are a better man than you used to be — that you are a better woman than you used to be. What was it that brought you the sanctifying blessing? Oh, it was the dark shadow on the nursery; it was the dark shadow on the short grave; it was the dark shadow on your broken heart; it was the brooding of a great black trouble; it was a raven — it was a raven! Dear Lord, teach this people that white providences do not always mean advancement, and that black providences do not always mean retrogression.

Children of God, get up out of your despondency. The Lord never had so many ravens as he has now. Fling your fret and worry to the winds. Sometimes under the vexations of life you feel like my daughter when she was a little girl of four years, who said, under some childish vexation, "Oh, I wish I could go to heaven and see God and pick flowers!" He will let you go when the right time comes to pick flowers. Until then, whatever you want, pray for. I suppose Elijah prayed pretty much all the time. Tremendous work behind him. Tremendous work before him. God has no spare ravens for idlers or for people who are prayerless. I put it in the boldest shape possible, and I am willing to risk my eternity on it; ask God in the right way for what you want, and you shall have it if it is best for you.

Mrs. Jane Pithey, of Chicago, a well-known Christian woman, was left by her husband a widow with one-half dollar and a cottage. She was palsied, and had a mother ninety years of age to support. The widowed soul every day asked God for all that was needed in the household, and even the servant was as-

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tonished at the precision with which God answered the prayers of that woman, item by item, item by item. One day, rising from the family altar, the servant said, "You have not asked for coal, and the coal is out." Then they stood and prayed for the coal. One hour after that the servant threw open the door and said, "The coal has come." A generous man, whose name I could give you, had sent — as never before and never since — a supply of coal. You cannot understand it. I do. Ravens! Ravens!

My friend, you have a right to argue from precedent that God is going to take care of you. Has he not done it two or three times every day? That is most marvelous. I look back and I wonder that God has given me food three times a day regularly all my lifetime, never missing but once, and then I was lost in the mountains; but that very morning and that very night I met the ravens.

Oh, the Lord is so good that I wish you all would trust him with the two lives — the life you are now living and that which every tick of the watch and every stroke of the clock inform you is approaching. Bread for your immortal soul comes to-day. See! Ravens! Ravens! "Blessed are they that hunger after righteousness, for they shall be filled." To all the sinning and the sorrowing and the tempted deliverance comes this hour. Look down, and you see nothing but your spiritual deformities. Look back, and you see nothing but wasted opportunity. Cast your eye forward, and you have a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary. But look up, and you behold the whipped shoulders of an interceding Christ, and the face of a pardoning God, and the irradiation of an opening heaven. I hear the whirr of their wings. Do you not feel the rush of the air on your cheek? Ravens! Ravens!

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There is only one question I want to ask: How many of you are willing to trust God for the supply of your bodies, and trust the Lord Jesus Christ for the redemption of your immortal souls? Amid the clatter of the hoofs and the clang of the wheels of the judgment-chariot the whole matter will be demonstrated.





## HEAVY LOADS

Psalm, 55: 22: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."



## HEAVY LOADS

Psalm, 55: 22: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

David was here taking his own medicine. If anybody had on him heavy weights, David had them, and yet out of his own experience he advises you and me as to the best way of getting rid of burdens. This is a world of burden-bearing. Tidings come from across the sea that Bishop Wiley, of the Methodist Church, in the discharge of his duty — going around the world — falls at his work at Foo Chow, China. A man full of the Holy Ghost was he, his name the synonym for all that is good and kind and gracious and beneficent, and that entire denomination has a burden of mourning. Word comes to us from West Virginia and from Kentucky of a scourge sweeping off hundreds and thousands of people, and there is a burden of sorrow. Sorrow on the sea and sorrow on the land. Coming into the house of prayer there may be no sign of sadness or sorrow, **but** where is the man who has not a conflict? Where is the soul that has not a struggle? And there is not a day of all the year when my text is not gloriously appropriate, and there is never an audience assembled on the planet where the text is not gloriously appropriate: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

In the far East, wells of water are so infrequent that when a man owns a well he has a property of very great value, and sometimes battles have been fought for the possession of one well of water; but there is one well that every man owns, a deep well,

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a perennial well, a well of tears. If a man has not a burden on this shoulder, he has a burden on the other shoulder.

The day I left home to look after myself and for myself, in the wagon my father sat driving, and he said that day something which has kept with me all my life: "DeWitt, it is always safe to trust God. I have many a time come to a crisis of difficulty. You may know that, having been sick for fifteen years, it was no easy thing for me to support a family; but always God came to the rescue. I remember the time," he said, "when I did not know what to do, and I saw a man on horseback riding up the farm lane, and he announced to me that I had been nominated for the most lucrative office in the gift of the people of the county; and to that office I was elected, and God in that way met all my wants, and I tell you it is always safe to trust him."

What we want is a practical religion! The religion many people have is so high up you cannot reach it. I had a friend who entered the life of an evangelist. He gave up a lucrative business in Chicago, and he and his wife finally came to severe want. He told me that in the morning at prayers he said: "O Lord, thou knowest we have not a mouthful of food in the house! Help me, help us!" And he started out on the street, and a gentleman met him, and said: "Sir, I have been thinking of you for a good while. You know I am a flour merchant; if you won't be offended, I should like to send you a barrel of flour." He cast his burden on the Lord, and the Lord sustained him. Now, that is the kind of religion we want.

In the Straits of Magellan, I have been told, there is a place where whichever way a ship captain puts his ship he finds the wind against him, and there are

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men who all their lives have been running in the teeth of the wind, and which way to turn they do not know. I address them not perfunctorily, but as one brother talks to another brother: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

There are a great many men who have business burdens. When we see a man harried and perplexed and annoyed in business life, we are apt to say: "He ought not to have attempted to carry so much." Ah! that man may not be to blame at all. When a man plants a business he does not know what will be its outgrowths, what will be its roots, what will be its branches. There is many a man with keen foresight and large business faculty who has been flung into the dust by unforeseen circumstances springing upon him from ambush. When to buy, when to sell, when to trust and to what amount of credit, what will be the effect of this new invention of machinery, what will be the effect of that loss of crop, and a thousand other questions perplex business men until the hair is silvered and deep wrinkles are plowed in the cheek; and the stocks go up by the mountains and go down by valleys, and are at their wits' ends, and stagger like drunken men. There never has been a time when there have been such rivalries in business as now. It is hardware against hardware, books against books, chandlery against chandlery, imported article against imported article. A thousand stores in combat with another thousand stores. Never such advantage of light, never such variety of assortment, never so much splendor of show window, never so much adroitness of salesmen, never so much acuteness of advertising, and amid all these severities of rivalry in business, how many men break down! Oh, the burden on the shoulder! Oh, the burden on the heart!

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You hear that it is avarice which drives these men of business through the street, and that is the commonly accepted idea. I do not believe a word of it. The vast multitude of these business men are toiling for others. To educate their children, to put wing of protection over their households, to have something left so when they pass out of this life their wives and children will not have to go to the poor-house — that is the way I translate the vast majority of that energy in the street and store. Grip, Gouge & Co. do not do all the business. Some of us remember when the *Central America* was coming home from California she was wrecked. President Arthur's father-in-law was the heroic captain of that ship, and went down with most of the passengers. Some got off into the lifeboats, but there was a young man returning from California who had a bag of gold in his hand; and as the last boat shoved off from the ship that was to go down, that young man shouted to a comrade in the boat, "Here, John, catch this gold; there are three thousand dollars; take it home to my old mother, it will make her comfortable in her last days." Grip, Gouge & Co. do not do all the business of the world.

Do you say that God does not care anything about your worldly business? I tell you God knows more about it than you do. He knows all your perplexities. he knows what mortgagee is about to foreclose; he knows what note you cannot pay; he knows what unsalable goods you have on your shelves; he knows all your trials from the day you took hold of the first yardstick down to that sale of the last yard of ribbon, and the God who helped David to be king, and who helped Daniel to be prime minister, and who helped Havelock to be a soldier will help you to discharge all your duties. He is going to see you

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through. When loss comes, and you find your property going, just take the Bible and put it down by your ledger, and read of the eternal possessions that will come to you through our Lord Jesus Christ. And when your business partner betrays you, and your friends turn against you, just take the insulting letter, put it down on the table, put your Bible beside the insulting letter, and then read of the friendship of him who "sticketh closer than a brother."

God has a sympathy with anybody who is in any kind of toil. He knows how heavy is the hod of bricks that the workman carries up the ladder of the wall; he hears the pickax of the miner down in the coal shaft; he knows how strong the tempest strikes the sailor at the masthead; he sees the factory girl among the spindles, and knows how her arms ache; he sees the sewing woman in the fourth story, and knows how few pence she gets for making a garment; and louder than all the din and roar of the city comes the voice of a sympathetic God: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

Then there are a great many who have a weight of persecution and abuse upon them. Sometimes society gets a grudge against a man. All his motives are misinterpreted and his good deeds are depreciated. With more virtue than some of the honored and applauded, he runs only against raillery and sharp criticism. When a man begins to go down, he has not only the force of natural gravitation, but a hundred hands to help him in the precipitation. Men are persecuted for their virtues and their successes. Germanicus said he had just as many bitter antagonists as he had adornments. The character sometimes is so lustrous that the weak eyes of Envy and Jealousy cannot bear to look at it. It was their integrity that put Joseph in the pit, and Daniel in the den, and

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Shadrach in the fire, and sent John the Evangelist to desolate Patmos, and Calvin to the castle of persecution, and John Huss to the stake, and Korah after Moses, and Saul after David, and Herod after Christ. Be sure if you have anything to do for church or State, and you attempt it with all your soul, lightning will strike you. The world always has had a cross between two thieves for the one who comes to save it. High and holy enterprise has always been followed by abuse. The most sublime tragedy of self-sacrifice has come to burlesque. The graceful gait of virtue is always followed by scoffers' grimace and travesty. The sweetest strain of poetry ever written has come to ridiculous parody, and as long as there are virtue and righteousness in the world, there will be something for iniquity to grin at. All along the line of the ages, and in all lands, the cry has been: "Not this man, but Barabbas. Now, Barabbas was a robber."

What makes the persecutions of life worse, is that they come from people whom you have helped, from those to whom you loaned money or have started in business, or whom you rescued in some great crisis. I think it has been the history of all our lives — the most acrimonious assault has come from those whom we have benefited, whom we have helped, and that makes it all the harder to bear. A man is in danger of becoming cynical. A clergyman of the Universalist Church went into a neighborhood for the establishment of a church of his denomination, and he was pointed to a certain house, and went there. He said to the man of the house: "I understand you are a Universalist; I want you to help me in the enterprise." "Well," said the man, "I am a Universalist, but I have a peculiar kind of Universalism." "What is that?" asked the minister. "Well," replied the other,



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“I have been out in the world, and I have been cheated and slandered and outraged and abused until I believe in universal damnation!” The great danger is that men will become cynical and given to believe, as David was tempted to say, that all men are liars. Oh, my friends, do not let that be the effect upon your souls! If you cannot endure a little persecution, how do you think our fathers endured great persecution? Motley, in his *Dutch Republic*, tells of Egmont, the martyr, who, condemned to be beheaded, unfastened his collar on the way to the scaffold; and when they asked him why he did that, he said: “So they will not be detained in their work; I want to be ready.” Oh, how little we have to endure compared with those who have gone before us!

Now, if you have come across ill-treatment, let me tell you you are in excellent company — Christ and Luther and Galileo and Columbus and John Jay and Josiah Quincy and thousands of men and women, the best spirits of earth and heaven. Budge not one inch, though all hell wreak upon you its vengeance, and you be made a target for devils to shoot at. Do you not think Christ knows all about persecution? Was he not hissed at? Was he not struck on the cheek? Was he not pursued all the days of his life? Did they not expectorate in his face? Or, to put it in Bible language, “They spit upon him.” And cannot he understand what persecution is? “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.”

Then, there are others who carry great burdens of physical ailments. When sudden sickness has come, and fierce choleras and malignant fevers take the castles of life by storm, we appeal to God; but in these chronic ailments which wear out the strength day after day, and week after week, and year after year, how little resorting to God for solace! Then

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people depend upon their tonics and their plasters and their cordials rather than upon heavenly stimulants. How few people there are completely well! Some of you, by dint of perseverance and care, have kept living to this time; but how you have had to war against physical ailments! Antediluvians, without medical college and infirmary and apothecary shop, multiplied their years by hundreds; but he who has gone through the gauntlet of disease in our time, and has come to seventy years of age, is a hero worthy of a palm. The world seems to be a great hospital, and you encounter rheumatisms and consumptions and scrofulas and neuralgias and scores of old diseases baptized by new nomenclature. Oh, how heavy a burden sickness is! It takes the color out of the sky and the sparkle out of the wave and the sweetness out of the fruit and the luster out of the night. When the limbs ache, when the respiration is painful, when the mouth is hot, when the ear roars with unhealthy obstructions, how hard it is to be patient and cheerful and assiduous! "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Does your head ache? His wore the thorn. Do your feet hurt? His were crushed of the spikes. Is your side painful? His was struck by the spear. Do you feel like giving way under the burden? His weakness gave way under a cross. While you are in every possible way to try to restore your physical vigor, you are to remember that more soothing than any anodyne, and more vitalizing than any stimulant, and more strengthening than any tonic is the prescription of the text: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee."

We hear a great deal of talk now about faith cure, and some people say it cannot be done and it is a failure. I do not know but that the chief advance

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of the Church is to be in that direction. Marvelous things come to me day by day which make me think that if the age of miracles is past, it is because the faith of miracles is past. A prominent merchant of New York said to a member of my family: "My mother wants her case mentioned to Mr. Talmage." This was the case. He said: "My mother had a dreadful abscess, from which she had suffered untold agonies, and all surgery had been exhausted upon her, and worse and worse she grew until we called in a few Christian friends and proceeded to pray about it. We commended her case to God, and the abscess began immediately to be cured. She is entirely well now, and without knife and without any surgery." So that case has come to me, and there are a score of other cases coming to our ears from all parts of the earth. Oh, ye who are sick, go to Christ! Oh, ye who are worn out with agonies of body, "cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee!"

Another burden some have to carry is the burden of bereavement. Ah! these are the troubles that wear us out. If we lose our property, by additional industry perhaps we may bring back the lost fortune; if we lose our good name, perhaps by reformation of morals we may achieve again reputation for integrity; but who will bring back the dear departed? Alas! for these empty cradles and these trunks of childish toys that will never be used again. Alas! for the empty chair and the silence in the halls that will never echo again to those familiar footsteps. Alas! for the cry of widowhood and orphanage. What bitter maraahs in the wilderness, what cities of the dead, what long, black shadow from the wing of death, what eyes sunken with grief, what hands tremulous with bereavement, what instruments of music shut now be-

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cause there are no fingers to play on them! Is there no relief for such souls? Ay, let that soul ride into the harbor of my text:

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell shall endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.

Now, the grave is brighter than the ancient tomb where the lights were perpetually kept burning. The scarred feet of him who was "the resurrection and the life" are on the broken grave hillock, while the voices of angels ring down the sky at the coronation of another soul come home to glory.

Then there are many who carry the burden of sin. We all carry it until, in the appointed way, that burden is lifted. We need no Bible to prove that the whole race is ruined. What a spectacle it would be if we could tear off the mask that hides human defilement, or beat a drum that would bring up the whole army of the world's transgressions — the deception, the fraud, the rapine, the murder and the crime of all the centuries! Ay, if I could sound the trumpet of resurrection in the soul of the best in the world, and all the dead sins of the past should come up, we could not endure the sight. Sin, grim and dire, has put its clutch upon the immortal soul, and that clutch will never relax unless it be under the heel of him who came to destroy the works of the devil.

What it is to have a mountain of sin on the soul! Is there no way to have the burden moved? Yes. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." The sinless one came to take the consequences of our sin! And I know he is in earnest. How do I know it? By the streaming temples and the streaming hands as he says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy

## Heavy Loads

laden, and I will give you rest." Why will prodigals live on swines' husks when the robe and the ring and the father's welcome are ready? Why go wandering over the great Sahara Desert of your sin when you are invited to the gardens of God, the trees of life, and the fountains of living water? Why be houseless and homeless forever, when you may become the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty?



## ISAAC RESCUED

Genesis, 22: 7: "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?"





## ISAAC RESCUED

Genesis, 22: 7: "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?"

Here are Abraham and Isaac; the one a kind, old, gracious, affectionate father; the other a brave, obedient, religious son. From his bronzed appearance you can tell that this son has been much in the fields, and from his shaggy dress you know that he has been watching the herds. The mountain air has painted his cheek rubicund. He is twenty, or twenty-five, or, as some suppose, thirty-three years of age; nevertheless a boy, considering the length of life to which people lived in those times, and the fact that a son never is anything but a boy to a father. I remember that my father used to come into the house when the children were home on some festal occasion, and say: "Where are the boys?" although "the boys" were twenty-five and thirty, and thirty-five years of age. So this Isaac is only a boy to Abraham, and this father's heart is in him. It is Isaac here and Isaac there. If there is any festivity around the father's tent, Isaac must enjoy it. It is Isaac's walk and Isaac's apparel and Isaac's manners and Isaac's prospects and Isaac's prosperity. The father's heart-strings are all wrapped around that boy, and wrapped again, until nine-tenths of the old man's life is in Isaac. I can just imagine how lovingly and proudly he looked at his only son.

Well, the dear old man had borne a great deal of trouble, and it had left its mark upon him. In hieroglyphics of wrinkle, the story was written from fore-

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head to chin. But now his trouble seems all gone, and we are glad that he is very soon to rest forever. If the old man shall get decrepit, Isaac is strong enough to wait on him. If the father get dim of eyesight, Isaac will lead him by the hand. If the father become destitute, Isaac will earn him bread. How glad we are that the ship that has been in such a stormy sea is coming at last into the harbor. Are you not rejoiced that glorious old Abraham is through with his troubles? No! no! A thunderbolt! From that clear eastern sky there drops into that father's tent a voice with an announcement enough to turn black hair white, and to stun the patriarch into instant annihilation. God said: "Abraham!" The old man answered: "Here I am." God said to him: "Take thy son, thy only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering." In other words, slay him; cut his body into fragments; put the fragments on the wood; set fire to the wood, and let Isaac's body be consumed.

"Atrocity! Murder!" says some one. "Not so," said Abraham. I hear him soliloquize: "Here is the boy on whom I have depended! Oh, how I loved him! He was given in answer to prayer, and now must I surrender him? O Isaac, my son! Isaac, how shall I part with you? But then it is always safer to do as God asks me to; I have been in dark places before, and God delivered me. I will implicitly do as God has told me, although it is very dark. I can't see my way, but I know God makes no mistakes, and to him I commit myself and my darling son."

Early in the morning there is a stir around Abraham's tent. A beast of burden is fed and saddled. Abraham makes no disclosure of the awful secret. At the break of day he says: "Come, come,

## Isaac Rescued

Isaac, get up! We are going off on a two or three days' journey." I hear the ax hewing and splitting amid the wood until the sticks are made the right length and the right thickness, and then they are fastened on the beast of burden. They pass on — there are four of them — Abraham, the father; Isaac, the son; and two servants. Going along the road, I see Isaac looking up into his father's face, and saying: "Father, what is the matter? Are you not well? Has anything happened? Are you tired? Lean on my arm." Then, turning around to the servants, the son says: "Ah! father is getting old, and he has had trouble enough in other days to kill him."

The third morning has come, and it is the day of the tragedy. The two servants are left with the beast of burden, while Abraham and his son Isaac, as was the custom of good people, in those times, went up on the hill to sacrifice to the Lord. The wood is taken off the beast's back, and put on Isaac's back. Abraham has in one hand a pan of coals or a lamp, and in the other a sharp, keen knife. Here are all the appliances for sacrifice, you say. No, there is one thing wanting; there is no victim — no pigeon or heifer or lamb. Isaac, not knowing that he is to be the victim, looks up into his father's face, and asks a question which must have cut the old man to the bone: "My father!" The father said: "My son, Isaac, here I am." The son said: "Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb?" The father's lip quivered, and his heart fainted, and his knees knocked together, and his entire body, mind, and soul shivered in sickening anguish as he struggles to gain equipoise; for he does not want to break down. And then he looks into his son's face, with a thousand rushing tendernesses and say: "My son, God will provide himself a lamb."

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The twain are now at the top of the hill, the place which is to be famous for a most transcendent occurrence. They gather some stones out of the field, and build an altar three or four feet high. Then they take this wood off Isaac's back and sprinkle it over the stones, so as to help and invite the flame. The altar is done — it is all done. Isaac has helped to build it. With his father he has discussed whether the top of the table is even, and whether the wood is properly prepared. Then there is a pause. The son looks around to see if there is not some living animal that can be caught and butchered for the offering. Abraham tries to choke down his fatherly feelings and suppress his grief, in order that he may break to his son the terrific news that he is to be the victim.

Ah! Isaac never looked more beautiful than on that day to his father. As the old man ran his emaciated fingers through his son's hair, he said to himself: "How shall I give him up? What will his mother say when I come back without my boy? I thought he would have been the comfort of my declining days. I thought he would have been the hope of ages to come. Beautiful and loving, and yet to die under my own hand. Oh, God! is there not some other sacrifice that will do? Take my life, and spare his! Pour out my blood, and save Isaac for his mother and the world!" But this was an inward struggle. The father controls his feelings, and looks into his son's face, and says: "Isaac, must I tell you all?" His son said: "Yes, father. I thought you had something on your mind; tell it." The father said: "My son, Isaac, thou art the lamb!" "Oh," you say, "why did not that young man, if he was twenty or thirty years of age, smite into the dust his

## Isaac Rescued

infirm father? He could have done it." Ah! Isaac may have had some intimation by this time that the scene was typical of a Messiah who was to come, and so he made no struggle. They fell on each other's necks, and wailed out the parting. Awful and matchless scene of the wilderness. The rocks echo back the breaking of their hearts. The cry: "My son! my son!" The answer: "My father! my father!"

Do not compare this, as some people have to Agamemnon, willing to offer up his daughter, Iphigenia, to please the gods. There is nothing comparable to this wonderful obedience to the true God. You know that victims for sacrifice were always bound, so that they might not struggle away. Rawlings, the martyr, when he was dying for Christ's sake, said to the blacksmith who held the manacles: "Fasten those chains tight now, for my flesh may struggle mightily." So Isaac's arms are fastened, his feet are tied. The old man, rallying all his strength, lifts him on to a pile of wood. Fastening a thong on one side of the altar, he makes it span the body of Isaac, and fastens the thong at the other side of the altar, and another thong, and another thong. There is the lamp flickering in the wind, ready to be put under the brush-wood of the altar. There is the knife, sharp and keen. Abraham — struggling with his mortal feelings on the one side, and the commands of God on the other — takes that knife, rubs the flat of it on the palm of his hand, cries to God for help, comes up to the side of the altar, puts a parting kiss on the brow of his boy, takes a message from him for mother and home, and then, lifting the glittering weapon for the plunge of the death-stroke — his muscles knitting for the work — the hand begins to descend. It falls! Not on the heart of Isaac, but on the arm of God,

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who arrests the stroke, making the wilderness quake with the cry: "Abraham! Abraham! lay not thy hand upon the lad, nor do him any harm!"

What is this sound back in the woods! It is a crackling as of tree branches, a bleating and a struggle. Go, Abraham, and see what it is. Oh, it was a ram that, going through the woods, has its crooked horns fastened and entangled in the brushwood, and could not get loose; and Abraham seizes it gladly, and quickly unloosens Isaac from the altar, puts the ram on in his place, sets the lamp under the brushwood of the altar, and as the dense smoke of the sacrifice begins to rise, the blood rolls down the sides of the altar, and drops hissing into the fire, and I hear the words: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."

Well, what are you going to get out of this? There is an aged minister of the Gospel. He says: "I should get out of it that when God tells you to do a thing, whether it seems reasonable to you or not, go ahead and do it. Here Abraham could not have been mistaken. God did not speak so indistinctly that it was not certain whether he called Sarah, or Abraham, or somebody else; but with divine articulation, divine intonation, divine emphasis, he said: 'Abraham!' Abraham rushed blindly ahead to do his duty, knowing that things would come out right. Likewise do so yourselves. There is a mystery of your life. There is some burden you have to carry. You do not know why God has put it on you. There is some persecution, some trial, and you do not know why God allows it. There is a work for you to do, and you have not enough grace, you think, to do it. Do as Abraham did. Advance, and do your whole duty. Be willing to give up Isaac, and perhaps you will not have to give up anything. 'Jehovah-jireh'—

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the Lord will provide." A capital lesson this old minister gives us.

Out yonder is an aged woman; the light of heaven in her face; she is half-way through the door; she has her hand on the pearl of the gate. Mother, what would you get out of this subject? "Oh," she says, "I would learn that it is in the last pinch that God comes to the relief. You see the altar was ready, and Isaac was fastened on it, and the knife was lifted; and just at the last moment God broke in and stopped proceedings. So it has been in my life of seventy-five years. Why, sir, there was a time when the flour was all out of the house; and I set the table at noon and had nothing to put on it; but five minutes of one o'clock a loaf of bread came. The Lord will provide. My son was very sick, and I said: 'Dear Lord, you do not mean to take him away from me, do you? Please, Lord, do not take him away. Why, there are neighbors who have three and four sons; this is my only son; this is my Isaac. Lord, you will not take him away from me, will you?' But I saw he was getting worse and worse all the time; and I turned round and prayed, until after a while I felt submissive, and I could say: 'Thy will, O Lord, be done!' The doctors gave him up, and we all gave him up. And, as was the custom in those times, we had made the grave-clothes, and we were whispering about the last exercises when I looked, and I saw some perspiration on his brow, showing that the fever had broken, and he spoke to us so naturally that I knew he was going to get well. He did get well, and my son Isaac, who, I thought, was going to be slain and consumed of disease, was loosened from that altar. And, bless your souls, that has been so for seventy-five years; and if my voice were not so weak, and if I could see better, I could preach to you younger



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people a sermon; for though I cannot see much, I can see this, whenever you get into a tough place, and your heart is breaking, if you will look a little farther into the woods, you will see, caught in the branches, a substitute and a deliverance. 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb.'"

Thank you, mother, for that short sermon. I could preach back to you for a minute or two and say, never do you fear. I wish I had half as good a hope of heaven as you have. Do not fear, mother; whatever happens, no harm will ever happen to you. I was going up a long flight of stairs; and I saw an aged woman, very decrepit, and with a cane, creeping on up. She made but very little progress, and I felt very exuberant; and I said to her: "Why, mother, that is no way to go upstairs;" and I threw my arms around her and I carried her up and put her down on the landing at the top of the stairs. She said: "Thank you, thank you; I am very thankful." O mother, when you get through this life's work and you want to go upstairs and rest in the good place that God has provided for you, you will not have to climb up — you will not have to crawl up painfully. The two arms that were stretched on the Cross will be flung around you, and you will be hoisted with a glorious lift beyond all weariness and all struggle. May the God of Abraham and Isaac be with you until you see the Lamb on the hilltop.

Now, that aged minister has made a suggestion, and this aged woman has made a suggestion; I will make a suggestion: Isaac going up the hill makes me think of the great sacrifice. Isaac, the only son of Abraham. Jesus, the only Son of God. On those two "onlys" I build a tearful emphasis. O Isaac! O Jesus! But this last sacrifice was a more tremendous one. When the knife was lifted over Calvary, there



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was no voice that cried "Stop!" and no hand arrested it. Sharp, keen, and tremendous, it cut down through nerve and artery until the blood sprayed the faces of the executioners, and the mid-day sun dropped a veil of cloud over its face because it could not endure the spectacle. O Isaac, of Mount Moriah! O Jesus, of Mount Calvary! Better could God have thrown away into annihilation a thousand worlds than to have sacrificed his only Son. It was not one of ten sons — it was his only Son. If he had not given up him, you and I would have perished. "God so loved the world that he gave his only —" I stop there, not because I have forgotten the quotation, but because I want to think. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Great God! break my heart at the thought of that sacrifice. Isaac the only, typical of Jesus the Only.

You see Isaac going up the hill and carrying the wood. O Abraham, why not take the load off the boy? If he is going to die so soon, why not make his last hours easy? Abraham, all unconscious of the fact, was furnishing a type that future ages would understand. We see now that in carrying that wood up Mount Moriah, Isaac was to be a symbol of Christ carrying his own cross up Calvary. I do not know how heavy that cross was — whether it was made of oak or acacia or Lebanon cedar. I suppose it may have weighed one or two or three hundred pounds. That was the lightest part of the burden. All the sins and sorrows of the world were wound around that cross. The heft of one, the heft of two, worlds; earth and hell were on his shoulders. O Isaac, carrying the wood of sacrifice up Mount Moriah! O Jesus, carrying the wood of sacrifice up Mount Calvary, the

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agonies of earth and hell wrapped around that cross! I shall never think of the heavy load on Isaac's back, that I shall not think of the crushing load on Christ's back. For whom that load? For you. For you. For me. For me. Would that all the tears that we have ever wept over our sorrows had been saved until now, and that we might now pour them out on the lacerated back and feet and heart of the Son of God.

You say: "If this young man was twenty or thirty years of age, why did not he resist? Why was it not Isaac binding Abraham instead of Abraham binding Isaac? The muscle in Isaac's arm was stronger than the muscle in Abraham's withered arm. No young man twenty-five years of age would submit to have his father fasten him to a pile of wood with intention of burning." Isaac was a willing sacrifice, and so a type of Christ who willingly came to save the world. If all the armies of heaven had resolved to force Christ out from the gate, they could not have done it. Christ was equal with God. If all the battalions of glory had armed themselves and resolved to put Christ forth and make him come out and save this world they could not have succeeded in it. With one stroke he would have toppled over angelic and archangelic dominion.

But there was one thing that the Omnipotent Christ could not stand. Our sorrows mastered him. He could not bear to see the world die without an offer of pardon and help, and if all heaven had armed itself to keep him back, if the gates of life had been bolted and double-barred, Christ would have flung the everlasting doors from their hinges, and would have sprung forth, scattering the hindering hosts of heaven like chaff before the whirlwind, as he cried: "Lo! I come to suffer. Lo! I come to die." Christ — a willing sacrifice. Willing to take Bethlehem humiliation, and Sanhedrin outrage, and

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whipping-post maltreatment, and Golgotha butchery. Willing to be bound. Willing to suffer. Willing to die. Willing to save.

How does this affect you? Do not your very best impulses bound out toward this pain-struck Christ? Get down at his feet, O ye people! Put your lips against the wound on his right foot and help kiss away the pang. Wipe the foam from his dying lip. Get under the cross until you feel the baptism of his rushing tears. Take him into your heart with warmest love and undying enthusiasm. By your resistances you have abused him long enough. Christ is willing to save you. Are you willing to be saved? It seems to me as if this moment were throbbing with the invitations of an all-compassionate God.

I have been told that the Cathedral of St. Mark's stands in a quarter in the center of the city of Venice, and that when the clock strikes twelve at noon, all the birds from the city and the regions round about the city fly to the square and settle down. It came in this wise: A large-hearted woman passing one noon-day across the square, saw some birds shivering in the cold, and she scattered some crumbs of bread among them. The next day, at the same hour, she scattered more crumbs of bread among them, and so on from year to year until the day of her death. In her will she bequeathed a certain amount of money to keep up the same practice, and now, at the first stroke of the bell at noon, the birds begin to come there, and when the clock has struck twelve, the square is covered with them. How beautifully suggestive! Christ comes out to feed thy soul to-day. The more hungry you feel yourselves to be, the better it is. It is noon and the Gospel clock strikes twelve. Come in flocks! Come as doves to the window! All the air is filled with the liquid chime: Come! Come! Come!



## PAIN

Rev., 21: 4: "Neither shall there be any more pain."



## PAIN

Rev., 21: 4: "Neither shall there be any more pain."

At the close of a period of much suffering, many perishing day by day under the heat, and thousands of cases unreported, save to the mothers and the wives and the daughters who received the faint and exhausted ones, and while there are many wounded of great and appalling casualty, in midsummer I preach a sermon consolatory. The first question that you ask when about to change your residence to any city is, "What is the health of the place? is it shaken of terrible disorders? what are the bills of mortality? what is the death-rate? how high rises the thermometer?" And am I not reasonable in asking, What are the sanitary conditions of the heavenly city into which we all hope to move? My text answers it by saying, "Neither shall there be any more pain."

First, I remark, there will be no pain of disappointment in heaven. If I could put the picture of what you anticipated of life when you began it beside the picture of what you have realized, I would find a great difference. You have stumbled upon great disappointments. Perhaps you expected riches, and you have worked hard enough to gain them; you have planned and worried and persisted until your hands were worn and your brain was racked and your heart fainted, and at the end of this long strife with misfortune you find that if you have not been positively defeated it has been a drawn battle. It is still tug and tussle—this year losing what you gained last, financial uncertainties pulling down faster than you

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build. For perhaps twenty or thirty years you have been running your craft straight into the teeth of the wind. Perhaps you have had domestic disappointment. Your children, upon whose education you lavished your hard-earned dollars, have not turned out as expected. Notwithstanding all your counsels and prayers and painstaking they will not do right. Many a good father has had a bad boy. Absalom trod on David's heart. That mother never imagined all this as twenty or thirty years ago she sat by that child's cradle.

Your life has been a chapter of disappointments. But, come with me, and I will show you a different scene. By God's grace, entering the other city you will never again have a blasted hope. The most jubilant of expectations will not reach the realization. Coming to the top of one hill of joy, there will be other heights rising upon the vision. This song of transport will but lift you to higher anthems; the sweetest choral but a prelude to more glorious harmony; all things better than you had anticipated — the robe richer, the crown brighter, the temple grander, the throng mightier.

Further, I remark, there will be no pain of weariness. It is now twelve or fifteen hours since you quit work, but many of you are unrested, some from overwork, and some from dulness of trade, the latter more exhausting than the former. Your ankles ache, your spirits flag, you want rest. Are these wheels always to turn? these shuttles to fly? these axes to hew? these shovels to delve? these pens to fly? these books to be posted? these goods to be sold? Ah! the great holiday approaches. No more curse of taskmasters. No more stooping until the back aches. No more calculation until the brain is bewildered. No more pain. No more carpentry, for the mansions are all built. No



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more masonry, for the walls are all reared. No more diamond-cutting, for the gems are all set. No more gold-beating, for the crowns are all completed. No more agriculture, for the harvests are spontaneous.

Further, there will be no more pain of poverty. It is a hard thing to be really poor, to have your coat wear out, and no money to get another; to have your flour-barrel empty, and nothing to buy bread with for your children; to live in an unhealthy row, and no means to change your habitation; to have your child sick with some mysterious disease, and not be able to secure eminent medical ability; to have son or daughter begin the world, and you not have anything to help them in starting; with a mind capable of research and high contemplation, to be perpetually fixed on questions of mere livelihood. Poets try to throw a romance about the poor man's cot; but there is no romance about it. Poverty is hard, cruel, unrelenting. But Lazarus waked up without his rags and his diseases, and so all of Christ's poor wake up at last without any of their disadvantages — no almshouses, for they are all princes; no rents to pay, for the residence is gratuitous; no garments to buy, for the robes are divinely fashioned; no seats in church for poor folks, but equality among temple worshipers. No hovels, no hard crusts, no insufficient apparel. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat." No more pain!

Further, there will be no pain of parting. All these associations must some time break up. We clasp hands and walk together, and talk and laugh and weep together; but we must after a while separate. Your grave will be in one place, mine in another. We will look each other full in the face for the last time. We will be sitting together some evening, or walking

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together some day, and nothing will be unusual in our appearance or our conversation; but God knows that it is the last time; and messengers from eternity, on their errand to take us away, know it is the last time; and in heaven, where they make ready for our departing spirits, they know it is the last time.

Oh, the long agony of earthly separation! It is awful to stand in your nursery fighting death back from the couch of your child, and try to hold fast the little one, and see all the time that he is getting weaker, and the breath is shorter, and make outcry to God to help us, and to the doctors to save him, and see it is of no avail, and then to know that his spirit is gone, and that you have nothing left but the casket that held the jewel, and that in two or three days you must even put that away, and walk around about the house and find it desolate, sometimes feeling rebellious, and then to resolve to feel differently, and to resolve on self-control, and just as you have come to what you think is perfect self-control, to suddenly come upon some little sack or picture or shoe half worn out, and how all the floods of the soul burst in one wild wail of agony! Oh, my God, how hard it is to part, to close the eyes that never can look merry at our coming, to kiss the hand that will never again do us a kindness. I know religion gives great consolation in such an hour, and we ought to be comforted; but anyhow and anyway you make it, it is awful. On steamboat wharf and at rail-car window we may smile when we say farewell; but these good-byes at the death-bed, they just take hold of the heart with iron pincers, and tear it out by the roots until all the fibers quiver and curl in the torture, and drop thick blood. These separations are wine-presses into which our hearts, like red clusters, are thrown, and then trouble turns the windlass round and round until we are utterly crushed,

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and have no more capacity to suffer, and we stop crying because we have wept all our tears.

On every street, at every doorstep, by every couch, there have been partings. But once past the heavenly portals, and you are through with such scenes forever. In that land there are many hand-claspings and embracings, but only in recognition. That great home circle never breaks. Once find your comrades there, and you have them forever. No crape floats from the door of that blissful residence. No cleft hillside where the dead sleep. All awake, wide awake, and forever. No pushing out of emigrant ship for foreign shore. No tolling of bell as the funeral passes. Whole generations in glory. Hand to hand, heart to heart, joy to joy. No creeping up the limbs of the death-chill, the feet cold until hot flannels cannot warm them. No rattle of sepulchral gates. No parting, no pain.

Further, the heavenly city will have no pain of body. The race is pierced with sharp distresses. The surgeon's knife must cut. The dentist's pincers must pull. Pain is fought with pain. The world is a hospital. Scores of diseases, like vultures contending for a carcass, struggle as to which shall have it. Our natures are infinitely susceptible to suffering. The eye, the foot, the hand, with immense capacity of anguish.

The little child meets at the entrance of life manifold diseases. You hear the shrill cry of infancy as the lancet strikes into the swollen gum. You see its head toss in consuming fevers that take more than half of them into the dust. Old age passes, dizzy and weak and short-breathed and dim-sighted. On every northeast wind come down pleurisies and pneumonias. War lifts its sword and hacks away the life of whole generations. The hospitals of the earth groan into the ear of God their complaint. Asiatic choleras and

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ship-fevers and typhoids and London plagues make the world's knees knock together.

Pain has gone through every street, and up every ladder, and down every shaft. It is on the wave, on the mast, on the beach. Wounds from clip of elephant's tusk and adder's sting and crocodile's teeth and horse's hoof and wheel's revolution. We gather up the infirmities of our parents and transmit to our children the inheritance augmented by our own sicknesses, and they add to them their own disorders, to pass the inheritance to other generations. In 262 the plague in Rome smote into the dust five thousand citizens daily. In 544, in Constantinople, one thousand grave-diggers were not enough to bury the dead. In 1813 the ophthalmia seized the whole Prussian army. At times the earth has sweltered with suffering. Count up the pains of Austerlitz, where thirty thousand fell; of Fontenoy, where one hundred thousand fell; of Chalons, where three hundred thousand fell; of Marius' fight, in which two hundred and ninety thousand fell; of the tragedy at Herat, where Genghis Khan massacred one million six hundred thousand men, and of Nishar, where he slew one million seven hundred and forty-seven thousand people; of the eighteen million this monster sacrificed in fourteen years, as he went forth to do as he declared, to exterminate the entire Chinese nation and make the empire a pasture for cattle. Think of the death-throes of the five million men sacrificed in one campaign of Xerxes. Think of the one hundred and twenty thousand that perished in the siege of Ostend; of three hundred thousand dead at Acre; of one million one hundred thousand dead in the siege of Jerusalem; of one million eight hundred and sixteen thousand of the dead at Troy, and then complete the review by considering the stupendous estimate of Edmund Burke, that the

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loss by war has been thirty-five times the entire then present population of the globe.

Go through and examine the lacerations, the gunshot fractures, the saber wounds, the gashes of the battle-ax, the slain of bombshell and exploded mine and falling wall, and those destroyed under the gun-carriage and the hoof of the cavalry horse, the burning thirsts, the camp fevers, the frosts that shivered, the tropical suns that smote. Add it up, gather it into one line, compress it into one word, spell it in one syllable, clank it in one chain, pour it out in one groan, distill it into one tear.

Ay, the world has writhed in six thousand years of suffering. Why doubt the possibility of a future world of suffering when we see the tortures that have been inflicted in this? A deserter from Sebastopol coming over to the army of the allies pointed back to the fortress and said, "That place is a perfect hell." Our lexicographers, aware of the immense necessity of having plenty of words to express the different shades of trouble, have strewn over their pages such words as "annoyance," "distress," "grief," "bitterness," "heartache," "misery," "twinge," "pang," "torture," "affliction," "anguish," "tribulation," "wretchedness," "woe." But I have a glad sound for every hospital, for every sick room, for every lifelong invalid, for every broken heart. "There shall be no more pain." Thank God! thank God! No malarials float in the air. No bruised foot treads that street. No weary arm. No painful respiration. No hectic flush. No one can drink of that healthy fountain and keep faint-hearted or faint-headed. He whose foot touches that pavement becometh an athlete. The first kiss of that summer air will take the wrinkles from the old man's cheek. Amid the multitude of songsters, not one diseased throat. The first flash of the throne

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will scatter the darkness of those who were born blind. See, the lame man, leaps as a hart, and the dumb sing. From that bath of infinite delight we shall step forth, our weariness forgotten.

Who are those radiant ones? Why, that one had his jaw shot off at Fredericksburg; that one lost his eyes in a powder blast; that one had his back broken by a fall from the ship's halyards; that one died of gangrene in the hospital. No more pain. Sure enough, here is Robert Hall, who never before saw a well day, and Edward Payson, whose body was ever torn of distress, and Richard Baxter, who passed through untold physical torture. All well. No more pain. Here, too, are the Theban legion, a great host of six thousand six hundred and sixty-six put to the sword for Christ's sake. No distortion on their countenances. No fires to hurt them, or floods to drown them, or racks to tear them. All well. Here are the Scotch Covenanters, none to hunt them now. The dark cave and imprecations of Lord Claverhouse exchanged for temple service, and the presence of him who helped Hugh Latimer out of the fire. All well. No more pain.

In this sermon I set open the door of heaven until there blows on you this refreshing breeze. The fountains of God have made it cool, and the gardens have made it sweet. I do not know that Solomon ever heard on a hot day, the ice click in an ice-pitcher, but he wrote as if he did when he said, "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Clambering among the Green Mountains one summer, I was tired and hot and thirsty, and I shall not forget how refreshing it was when, after a while, I heard the mountain brook tumbling over the rocks. I had no cup, no chalice, so I got down on my knees and face to drink. Oh, ye climbers on the journey,

## Pain

with cut feet and parched tongues and fevered temples, listen to the rumbling of sapphire brooks, amid flowered banks, over golden shelvings. Listen! "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall lead them unto living fountains of water." I do not offer it to you in a chalice. To take this you must bend. Get down on your knees and on your face, and drink out of this great fountain of God's consolation. "And lo! I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters."





## WHERE'S MOTHER?

Judges, 5: 28: "The mother of Sisera looked out at a  
window."



## WHERE'S MOTHER?

Judges, 5: 28: "The mother of Sisera looked out at a window."

Spiked to the ground of Jael's tent lay the dead commander-in-chief of the Canaanitish host, General Sisera, not far from the river Kishon, which was only a dry bed of pebbles when in 1889, in Palestine, we crossed it, but the gullies and ravines which ran into it indicated the possibility of great freshets like the one at the time of the text. General Sisera had gone out with nine hundred iron chariots, but he was defeated, and, his chariot-wheels interlocked with the wheels of other chariots, he could not retreat fast enough; and so he leaped to the ground and ran till, exhausted, he went into Jael's tent for safety. She had just been churning, and when he asked for water she gave him buttermilk, which in the East is considered a most refreshing drink. Very tired, and supposing he was safe, he went to sleep upon the floor, but Jael, who had resolved upon his death, took a tentpin, long and round and sharp, and a hammer, and putting the sharp end of the tentpin to the temple of Sisera with one hand, with her other hand she lifted the hammer and brought it down on the head of the pin with a stout stroke, when Sisera struggled to rise, and she struck him again, and he struggled to rise, and the third time she struck him, and the commander-in-chief of the Canaanitish host lay dead.

Meanwhile, in the distance Sisera's mother sits amid the surroundings of wealth and pomp and scenes palatial, waiting for his return. Every mother expects

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her son to be victorious, and this mother looked out at the window expecting to see him drive up in his chariot, followed by wagons loaded with embroideries, and also by regiments of men vanquished and enslaved. I see her now sitting at the window, in high expectation. She watches the furthest turn of the road. She looks for the flying dust of the swift hoofs. The first flash of the bit of the horse's bridle she will catch.

The ladies of her court stand round and she tells them of what they shall have when her son comes up — chains of gold and carcanets of beauty, and dresses of such wondrous fabric and splendor as the Bible only hints at but leaves us to imagine. "He ought to be here by this time," says his mother, "that battle is surely over. I hope that freshet of the river Kishon has not impeded him. I hope those strange appearances we saw last night in the sky were not ominous, when the stars seemed to fight in their courses. No, no! He is so brave in battle I know he has won the day. He will soon be here." But alas! for the disappointed mother; she will not see the glittering head-gear of the horses at full gallop bringing her son home from victorious battle. As a solitary messenger arriving in hot haste rides up to the window at which the mother of Sisera sits, he cries: "Your armies are defeated and your son is dead," there is a scene of horror and anguish from which we turn away.

Now you see the full meaning of my short text: "The mother of Sisera looked out at a window." Well, we are all out in the battle of life; it is raging now and the most of us have a mother watching and waiting for news of our victory or defeat; if she be not sitting at the window of earth, she is sitting at a window of heaven, and she is going to hear all about it.

By all the rules of war, Sisera ought to have been

## Where's Mother?

triumphant. He had nine hundred iron chariots and a host many thousands vaster than the armies of Israel. But God was on the other side; and the angry freshets of Kishon and the hail, the lightning and the unmanageable war horses and the capsized chariots and the stellar panic in the sky discomfited Sisera. Josephus in his history describes the scene in the following words: "When they were come to a close fight there came down from heaven a great storm with a vast quantity of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in the face of the Canaanites, and so darkened their eyes that their arrows and slings were of no advantage to them, nor would the coldness of the air permit the soldiers to make use of their swords: while this storm did not so much incommode the Israelites, because it came on their backs. They also took such courage upon the conviction that God was assisting them that they fell upon the very midst of their enemies and slew a great number of them; so that some of them fell by the Israelites, some fell by their own horses which were put into disorder, and not a few were killed by their own chariots." Hence, my hearers, the bad news brought to the mother of Sisera looking out at the window. And our mother, whether sitting at a window of earth or a window of heaven, will hear the news of our victory or defeat. Not according to our talents or educational equipment or our opportunities, but according as God is for us or against us.

"Where's mother?" is the question most frequently asked in many households. It is asked by the husband as well as the child, coming in at nightfall. "Where's mother?" It is asked by the little ones when they get hurt and come in crying with the pain: "Where's mother?" It is asked by those who have seen some grand sight or heard some good news or received some beautiful gift: "Where's mother?"

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She sometimes feels wearied by the question, for they all ask it and keep asking it all the time. She is not only the first to hear every case of perplexity, but she is the judge in every court of domestic appeal. That is what puts the premature wrinkles on so many maternal faces, and powders white so many maternal foreheads. You see it is a question that keeps on for all the years of childhood. It comes from the nursery and from the evening stand, where the boys and girls are learning their school lesson, and from the starting out in the morning, when the cape or hat or slate or book or overshoe is lost, until at night, all out of breath, the youngsters come in and shout until you can hear them from cellar to garret, and from front door to the back fence of the back yard. "Where's mother?" Indeed a child's life is so full of that question that if he be taken away, one of the things that the mother most misses and the silence that most oppresses her, is the absence of that question, which she will never hear on earth again, except she hears it in a dream which sometimes restores the nursery just as it was; and then the voice comes back so natural, and so sweet, and so innocent, and so inquiring, that the dream breaks at the words, "Where's mother?"

If that question were put to most of us now, we would have to say, if we spoke truthfully, that, like Sisera's mother, she is at the palace window. She has become a queen unto God forever, and she is pulling back the rich folds of the King's upholstery to look down at us. We are not told the particulars about the residence of Sisera's mother, but there is in that scene in the Book of Judges so much about embroideries and needlework and ladies in waiting that we know her residence must have been princely and palatial. So we have no minute and particular description of the palace at whose window our glorified

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mother sits, but there is so much in the closing chapters of the good old Book about crowns, and pearls big enough to make a gate out of one of them, new songs, and marriage suppers, and harps, and white horses, with kings in the stirrups, and golden candlesticks, that we know the heavenly residence of our mother is superb, is unique, is colonnaded, is domed, is embowered, is fountained, is glorified, beyond the power of pencil or pen or tongue to present, and in the window of that palace the mother sits, watching for news from the battle.

What a contrast between that celestial surrounding and her once earthly surroundings. What a work to bring up a family, in the old time way, with but little or no hired help, except perhaps for the washing-day, or for the swine-slaughtering, commonly called "the killing-day." There was then no reading of elaborate treatises on the best modes of rearing children, and then leaving it all to hired help, with one or two visits a day to the nursery to see if the principles adopted are being carried out. The most of those old folks did the sewing, the washing, the mending, the darning, the patching, the millinery, the mantua-making, the housekeeping, and in hurried harvest time helped spread the hay or tread down the load in the mow. They were at the same time caterers, tailors, doctors, chaplains, and nurses for the whole household all together down with the measles or scarlet fever, or round the house with whooping coughs and croups and run-round fingers and earaches, and all the infantile distempers which at some time swoop upon every large household.

Some of those mothers never got rested in this world. Instead of the self-rocking cradles of our day, which, wound up, will go hour after hour for the solace of the young slumberer, it was weary foot on the

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rocker sometimes half the day or half the night — rock — rock — rock — rock. Instead of our drug-stores filled with all the wonders of *materia medica*, and called up through a telephone, with them the only drugstore short of four miles' ride was the garret, with its bunches of peppermint and pennyroyal and catnip and mustard and camomile flowers, which were expected to do everything. Just think of it! Fifty years of preparing breakfast, dinner, and supper. The chief music they heard was that of spinning-wheel and rocking-chair. Fagged out, head-achy, and with ankles swollen. Those old-fashioned mothers — if any persons ever fitted appropriately into a good, easy comfortable heaven, they were the folks, and they got there and they are rested. They wear no spectacles, for they have their third sight — as they lived long enough on earth to get their second sight — and they do not have to pant for breath after going up the emerald stairs of the Eternal Palace, at whose window they now sit waiting for news from the battle.

But if anyone keeps on asking the question "Where's mother?" I answer, she is in your present character. The probability is that your physical features suggest her. If there be seven children in a household at least six of them look like their mother, and the older you get, the more you will look like her. But I speak now especially of your character, and not of your looks. This is easily explained. During the first ten years of your life you were almost all the time with her, and your father you saw only mornings and nights. There are no years in any life so important for impression as the first ten. Then and there is the impression made for virtue or vice, for truth or falsehood, for bravery or cowardice, for religion or skepticism. Suddenly start out from behind a door and frighten the child, and you may shatter his nervous



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system for a lifetime. During the first ten years you can tell him enough spook stories to make him a coward till he dies. Act before him as though Friday were an unlucky day, and it were baleful to have thirteen at the table, or see the moon over the left shoulder, and he will never recover from the idiotic superstitions. You may give that girl before she is ten years old a fondness for dress that will make her a mere "dummy frame" or fashion-plate for forty years. Ezekiel, 16: 44: "As is the mother so is her daughter."

Before one decade has passed you can decide whether that boy shall be a Shylock or a George Peabody. Boys and girls are generally echoes of fathers and mothers. What an incoherent thing for a mother out of temper to punish a child for getting mad, or for a father who smokes to shut his boy up in a dark closet because he has found him with an old stump of a cigar in his mouth; or for that mother to rebuke her daughter for staring at herself too much in the looking-glass, when the mother has her own mirrors so arranged as to repeat her form from all sides. The great English poet's loose moral character was decided before he left the nursery, and his schoolmaster in the school-room overheard this conversation: "Byron, your mother is a fool," and he answered, "I know it." You can hear through all the heroic life of Senator Sam Houston the words of his mother, when she in the war of 1812 put a musket in his hand and said: "There, my son, take this and never disgrace it, for remember I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave than that one of them should turn his back on an enemy. Go and remember, too, that while the door of my cottage is open to all brave men, it is always shut against cowards." Agrippina, the mother of Nero, a murderess, you are not surprised

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that her son was a murderer. Give that child an overdose of catechism, and make him recite verses of the Bible as a punishment, and make Sunday a bore, and he will become a stout antagonist of Christianity. Impress him with the kindness and the geniality and the loveliness of religion and he will be its advocate and exemplar for all time and eternity.

On one occasion, while I was traveling in the West, right before our express train on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, the preceding train had gone down through a broken bridge, twelve cars falling a hundred feet and then consumed, I saw that only one span of the bridge was down and all the other spans were standing. Plan a good bridge of morals for your sons and daughters, but have the first span of ten years defective and through that they will crash down, though all the rest keep standing. O man! O woman! if you have preserved your integrity and are really Christian, you have first of all to thank God, and I think next you have to thank your mother. The most impressive thing at the inauguration of James A. Garfield as President of the United States was that after he had taken the oath of office he turned round, and in the presence of the Supreme Court and the Senate of the United States, kissed his old mother. If I had time to take statistics from among you, and I could ask what proportion of you who are Christians owe your salvation under God to maternal fidelity, I think about three-fourths of you would spring to your feet. "Ha! ha!" said the soldiers of the regiment to Charlie, one of their comrades, "What has made the change in you? You used to like sin as well as any of us." Pulling from his pocket his mother's letter in which, after telling of some comforts she had sent him, she concluded: "We are all praying for

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you, Charlie, that you may be a Christian," he said, "Boys that's the sentence."

The trouble with Sisera's mother was, sitting at the window watching for news of her son from the battle-field, that she had the two bad qualities of being dissolute and being too fond of personal adornment. The Bible account says: "Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself: 'Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colors, a prey of divers colors of needlework, of divers colors of needlework on both sides?'" She makes no anxious utterance about the wounded in battle, about the bloodshed, about the dying, about the dead, about the principles involved in the battle going on; a battle so important that the stars and the freshets took part, and the clash of swords was answered by the thunder of the skies. What she thinks most of is the bright colors of the wardrobes to be captured, and the needlework. "To Sisera a prey of divers colors, a prey of divers colors of needlework, of divers colors of needlework on both sides."

Now, neither Sisera's mother nor anyone else can say too much in eulogy of the needle. It has made more useful conquests than the sword. Pointed at one end, and with an eye at the other, whether of bone or ivory as in earliest time, or of bronze, as in Pliny's time, or of steel, as in modern time; whether laboriously fashioned as formerly by one hand or as now, when a hundred workmen in a factory are employed to make the different parts of one needle, it is an instrument divinely ordered for the comfort, for the life, for the health, for the adornment of the human race. The eye of the needle hath seen more domestic comfort and more gladdened poverty and more Chris-

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tian service than any other eye. The modern sewing-machine has in no wise abolished the needle, but rather enthroned it. Thank God for the needlework, from the time when the Lord Almighty from the heavens ordered in regard to the embroidered door of the ancient tabernacle: "Thou shalt make a hanging for the door of the tent of blue and purple and scarlet and fine-twined linen, wrought with needlework," down to the womanly hands which this season are presenting for benevolent purposes their needlework. But there was nothing except vanity and worldliness and social splash in what Sisera's mother said about the needlework she expected her son would bring home from the battle. And I am not surprised to find that Sisera fought on the wrong side, when his mother at the window of my text, in that awful exigency had her chief thought on drygoods achievement and social display. God only knows how many homes have made shipwreck on the wardrobe. And that mother who sits at the window watching for vainglorious triumph of millinery and fine colors, and domestic pageantry, will after a while hear as bad news from her children out in the battle of life, as Sisera's mother heard from the struggle at Esdrælon.

But if you still press the question "Where's mother?" I will tell you where she is not, though once she was there. Some of you started with her likeness in your face and her principles in your soul. But you have cast her out. That was an awful thing for you to do, but you have done it. That hard, grinding, dissipated look you never got from her. If you had seen anyone strike her, you would have struck him down, without much care whether the blow was just sufficient or fatal; but, my boy, you have struck her down—struck her innocence from your face and struck her principles from your soul. You struck her

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down! The tentpin that Jael drove three times into the skull of Sisera was not so cruel as the stab you have made more than three times through your mother's heart. But she is waiting yet, for mothers are slow to give up their boys — waiting at some window, it may be a window on earth or at some window in heaven. All others may cast you off. Your wife may seek divorce and have no more patience with you. Your father may disinherit you and say, "Let him never again darken the door of our house." But there are two persons who do not give you up — God and mother.

How many disappointed mothers waiting at the window. Perhaps the panes of the window are not great glass plate, bevel-edged and shaded by exquisite lambrequin, but the window is made of small panes, I would say about six or eight of them, in summer wreathed with trailing vine, and in winter pictured by the Raphaels of the frost, a real country window. The mother sits there knitting, or busy with her needle of homely repairs, when she looks up, and sees coming across the bridge of the meadow brook a stranger who dismounts in front of the window. He lifts and drops the heavy knocker of the farmhouse door. "Come in!" is the response. He gives his name, and says, "I have come on a sad errand." "There is nothing the matter with my son in the city, is there?" she asks. "Yes!" he says. "Your son got into an unfortunate encounter with a young man in a liquor saloon last night, and is badly hurt. The fact is he cannot get well. I hate to tell you all. I am sorry to say he is dead." "Dead!" she cries as she totters back. "Oh, my son! my son! my son! Would God I had died for thee!" That is the ending of all her cares and anxieties and good counsels for that boy. That is her pay for her self-sacrifices in his behalf. That is

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the bad news from the battle. So the tidings of derelict or Christian sons travel to the windows of earth, or the windows of heaven at which mothers sit.

“But,” says some one, “are you not mistaken about my glorified mother hearing of my evil doings since she went away?” Says some one else: “Are you not mistaken about my glorified mother hearing of my self-sacrifice and moral bravery and struggle to do right?” No! heaven and earth are in constant communication. There are trains running every five minutes — trains of immortals ascending and descending. Spirits going from earth to heaven to live there. Spirits descending from heaven to earth to minister and help. They hear from us many times every day. Do they hear good news or bad news from this battle, this Sedan, this Thermopylæ, this Austerlitz, in which every one of us is fighting on the right side or the wrong side?

O God! whose I am, and whom I am trying to serve, as a result of this sermon, roll over on all mothers a new sense of their responsibility; and upon all children, whether still in the nursery or out on the tremendous Esdrælon of mid-life or old age, the fact that their victories or defeats sound clear out, clear up to the windows of sympathetic maternity. Oh, is not this the minute when the cloud of blessing filled with the exhaled tears of anxious mothers shall burst upon us all in showers of mercy!

There is one thought that is almost too tender for utterance. I almost fear to start it, lest I have not enough control of my emotion to conclude it. As when we were children we so often came in from play or from a hurt or from some childish injustice practiced upon us, and as soon as the door was opened we cried: “Where’s mother?” and she said: “Here I am,” and we buried our weeping faces in her lap; so

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after a while, when we get through with the pleasures and hurts of this life, we will, by the pardoning mercy of Christ, enter the heavenly home, and among the first questions, not the first but among the first, will be the old question that we used to ask, the question that is being asked in thousands of places at this very moment—the question: “Where’s mother?” And it will not take long for us to find her or for her to find us, for she will have been watching at the window for our coming, and with the other children of our household of earth we will again gather round her, and she will say: “Well! how did you get through the battle of life? I have often heard from others about you; but now I want to hear it from your own souls. Tell me all about it, my children!” And then we will tell her of all our earthly experiences, the holidays, the marriages, the birth-hours, the burials, the heart-breaks, the losses, the gains, the victories, the defeats, and she will say, “Never mind, it is all over now. I see each one of you has a crown which was given you at the gate as you came through. Now cast it at the feet of the Christ who saved you and me and saved us all. Thank God we are never to part, and for all the ages of eternity you will never again have to ask, ‘Where’s mother?’”





## HOMESICKNESS

Luke, 15: 18: " I will arise and go to my father."



## HOMESICKNESS

Luke, 15: 18: "I will arise and go to my father."

There is nothing like hunger to take the energy out of a man. A hungry man can toil neither with pen nor hand nor foot with any spirit. There has been many an army defeated not so much for lack of ammunition as for lack of bread. It was that fact that took the fire out of this young man of the text. Storm and exposure will wear out any man's life in time, but hunger makes quick work. The most awful cry ever heard on earth is the cry for bread.

A traveler tells us that in Asia Minor there are trees which bear fruit looking very much like the long bean of our time. It is called the carob. Once in a while the people reduced to destitution would eat these carobs, but generally the carobs, the beans spoken of here in the text, were thrown only to the swine and they crunched them with great avidity. But this young man of my text could not even get them without stealing them. So one day amid the swine troughs he begins to soliloquize. He says: "These are no clothes for a rich man's son to wear; this is no kind of business for a Jew to be engaged in — feeding swine; I will go home, I will go home; I will arise and go to my father."

I know there are a great many people who try to throw a fascination, a romance, a halo about sin; but notwithstanding all that Lord Byron and George Sand have said in regard to it, it is a mean, low, contemptible business, and putting food and fodder into the troughs of a herd of iniquities that root and wallow in

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the soul of man is a very poor business for men and women intended to be sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. And when this young man resolved to go home, it was a very wise thing for him to do, and the only question is whether we will follow him. Satan promises large wages if we will serve him; but he clothes his victims with rags, and he pinches them with hunger, and when they start out to do better he sets after them all the bloodhounds of hell. Satan comes to us to-day and he promises all luxuries, all emoluments if we will only serve him. Liar, down with thee to the pit! "The wages of sin is death." The young man of the text was wise when he uttered the resolution: "I will arise and go to my father."

In the time of Mary, called bloody because of her cruelties, a persecutor came to a Christian woman who had hidden in her house for the Lord's sake one of Christ's servants, and the persecutor said: "Where is that heretic?" The Christian woman said: "You open that trunk and you will see the heretic." The persecutor opened the trunk, and on the top of the linen of the trunk he saw a glass. He said: "There is no heretic here." "Ah!" she said, "you look in the glass and you will see the heretic!" She was right, for a persecutor not having Christ's spirit is the worst kind of a heretic. As I take up the mirror of God's word to-day, I would that instead of seeing the prodigal of the text, we might see ourselves — our want, our wandering, our sin, our lost condition, so that we might be as wise as this young man was and say: "I will arise and go to my father."

The resolution of this text was formed in disgust at his present circumstances. If this young man had been set by his employers to culturing flowers, or training vines over an arbor, or keeping account of the pork market, or overseeing other laborers, he would

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not have thought of going home. If he had had his pockets full of money, if he had been able to say, "I have a thousand dollars now of my own; what's the use of my going back to my father's house? Do you think I am going back to apologize to the old man? Why he would put me on the limits; he would not have going on around the old place such conduct as I have been engaged in. I will not go home; there is no reason why I should go home. I have plenty of money, plenty of pleasant surroundings, why should I go home?" Ah! it was his pauperism, it was his beggary. He had to go home.

Some man comes and says to me: "Why do you talk about the ruined state of the human soul? why do you not speak about the progress of the nineteenth century, and talk of something more exhilarating?" It is for this reason; a man never wants the Gospel until he realizes he is in a famine-struck state. Suppose I should come to you in your home and you are now in good, sound, robust health, and I should begin to talk about medicines, and about how much better this medicine is than that, and some other medicine than some other medicine, and talk about this physician and that physician. After a while you would get tired, and you would say: "I do not want to hear about medicines. Why do you talk to me about physicians? I never have a doctor." Suppose I come into your house and I find you severely sick, and I know the medicines that will cure you, and I know the physician who is skilful enough to deal with your case. You say: "Bring on that medicine, bring on that physician! I am terribly sick and I want help." If I come to you and you feel you are all right in body and all right in mind, and all right in soul, you have need of nothing; but suppose I have persuaded you that the leprosy of sin is upon you, the worst of all

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sickness, oh, then you say: "Bring me that divine medicament; bring me Jesus Christ, the great Physician."

But says some one, "How do you prove that we are in a ruined condition by sin?" Well, I can prove it in two ways, and you may have your choice. I can prove it either by the statements of men, or by the statement of God. Which shall it be? You will say, "Let us have the statement of God. Well, he will say in one place: "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." He says in another place: "What is man that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" He says in another place: "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." He says in another place: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

"Well," you say, "I am willing to acknowledge that, but why should I take the particular rescue that you propose?" This is the reason: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "There is one name given under heaven among men whereby they may be saved." Then there are a thousand voices here ready to say: "Well, I am ready to accept this help of the Gospel; I would like to have this divine cure; how shall I go to work?" Let me say that a mere whim, an undefined longing amounts to nothing. You must have a stout, all-conquering resolution like this young man of the text when he said: "I will arise and go to my father."

Some man says: "How do I know my father wants me? How do I know, if I go back, I would be received?" Another says: "You do not know where I have been; you do not know how far I have wandered; you would not talk that way to me if you knew all the iniquities I have committed." What is that

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flutter among the angels of God? It is news! Christ has found the lost.

Nor angels can their joy contain,  
But kindle with new fire;  
The sinner lost, is found, they sing,  
And strike the sounding lyre.

When Napoleon talked of going to Italy, they said: "You cannot get there; if you knew what the Alps were you would not talk about it or think of it; you cannot get your ammunition wagons over the Alps." Then Napoleon rose in his stirrups, and waving his hand toward the mountains he said: "There shall be no Alps." That wonderful pass was laid out which has been the wonderment of all engineers. And you tell me there are such mountains of sin between your soul and God, there is no mercy. Then I see Christ waving his hand toward the mountains, and I hear him say, "I will come over the mountains of thy sin and the hills of thine iniquity." There shall be no Pyrenees, there shall be no Alps.

Again, I notice that this resolution of the young man of the text was founded in sorrow at his misbehavior. It was not mere physical plight. It was grief that he had so maltreated his father. It is a sad thing after a father has done everything for a child to have that child ungrateful.

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is  
To have a thankless child.

That is Shakespeare. "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." That is the Bible. Well, my friends, have not some of us been cruel prodigals? Have we not maltreated our Father? And such a

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Father? So loving, so kind. If he had been a stranger, if he had forsaken us, if he had flagellated us, if he had pounded us and turned us out of doors on the commons, it would not have been so wonderful — our treatment of him; but he is a Father so loving, so kind, and yet how many of us for our wanderings have never apologized. We apologize for wrongs done to our fellows, but some of us perhaps have committed ten thousand times ten thousand wrongs against God and never apologized.

I remark still further, that this resolution of the text was founded in a feeling of homesickness. I do not know how long this young man, how many months, how many years, he had been away from his father's house; but there is something about the reading of my text that makes me think he was homesick. Some of you know what that feeling is. Soldiers sometimes get nostalgia or homesickness, and army doctors say that when a man gets it they have great difficulty in curing it, and there is no sure cure except a furlough. Far away from home sometimes, surrounded by everything bright and pleasant — plenty of friends — you have said: "I would give the world to be home to-night." Well, this young man was homesick for his father's house. I have no doubt when he thought of his father's house he said: "Now, perhaps, father may not be living."

We read nothing in this story — this parable founded on everyday life — we read nothing about the mother. It says nothing about going home to her. I think she was dead. I think she had died of a broken heart at his wanderings, or perhaps he had gone into dissipation from the fact he could not remember a loving and sympathetic mother. A man never gets over having lost his mother. Nothing said about her here. But he is homesick for his father's house. He



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thought he would just like to go and walk around the old place. He thought he would just like to go and see if things were as they used to be. Many a man after having been off a long while, has gone home and knocked at the door, and a stranger has come. It is the old homestead, but a stranger comes to the door. He finds out father is gone, and mother is gone, and brothers and sisters all gone. I think this young man of the text said to himself: "Perhaps father may be dead." Still, he starts to find out. He is homesick. Are there any here homesick for God, homesick for heaven?

A sailor, after having been long on the sea, returned to his father's house, and his mother tried to persuade him not to go away again. She said: "Now you had better stay at home; do not go away; we do not want you to go; you will have it a great deal better here." But it made him angry. The night before he went away again to sea, he heard his mother praying in the next room, and that made him more angry. He went far out on the sea and a storm came up, and he was ordered to very perilous duty, and he ran up the ratlines, and amid the shrouds of the ship he heard the voice that he had heard in the next room. He tried to whistle it off, he tried to rally his courage; but he could not silence that voice he had heard in the next room, and there in the storm and the darkness he said: "O! Lord, what a wretch I have been, what a wretch I am. Help me just now, Lord God." In this assemblage there may be some who may have the memory of a father's petition, or a mother's prayer pressing mightily upon the soul, and who this hour may make the same resolution I find in my text, saying: "I will arise and go to my father."

A lad at Liverpool went out to bathe, went out into the sea, went out too far, got beyond his depth and

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he floated far away. A ship bound for Dublin came along and took him on board. Sailors are generally very generous fellows, and one gave him a cap and another gave him a jacket, and another gave him shoes. A gentleman passing along on the beach at Liverpool found the lad's clothes and took them home, and the father was heartbroken, the mother was heartbroken, at the loss of their child. They had heard nothing from him day after day, and they ordered the usual mourning for the sad event. But the lad took ship from Dublin and arrived in Liverpool the very day the garments arrived. He knocked at the door and the father was overjoyed, and the mother was overjoyed at the return of their lost son. O! my friends, have you waded out too deep? Have you waded down into sin? Have you waded from the shore? Will you come back? When you come back will you come in the rags of your sin, or will you come robed in the Saviour's righteousness? I believe the latter. Go home to your God to-day. He is waiting for you. Go home!

But I remark the characteristic of this young man's resolution was, it was immediately put into execution. The context says, "He arose and came to his father." The trouble in nine hundred and ninety-nine times out of a thousand is that our resolutions amount to nothing because we make them for some distant time. If I resolve to become a Christian next year, that amounts to nothing at all. If I resolve to become a Christian to-morrow, that amounts to nothing at all. If I resolve that at the service to-night I will become a Christian, that amounts to nothing at all. If I resolve after I go home to-day to yield my heart to God, that amounts to nothing at all. The only kind of resolution that amounts to anything is the resolution that is immediately put into execution.

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There is a man who had the typhoid fever. He said: "Oh! if I could get over this terrible distress; if this fever should depart, if I could be restored to health, I would all the rest of my life serve God." The fever departed. He got well enough to walk around the block. He got well enough to go to New York and attend to business. He is well to-day — as well as he ever was. Where is the broken vow? There is a man who said long ago: "If I could live to the year 1899, by that time I will have my business matters all arranged, and I will have time to attend to religion, and I will be a good thorough, consecrated Christian. The year 1899 has come. January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September — three-fourths of the year gone. Where is your broken vow? "Oh!" says some man, "I'll attend to that when I can get my character fixed up, when I can get over my evil habits; I am now given to strong drink," or, says the man, "I am given to uncleanness," or, says the man, "I am given to dishonesty. When I get over my present habits, then I will be a thorough Christian." My brother, you will get worse and worse until Christ takes you in hand. "Not the righteous, sinners Jesus came to call." "I agree with you on all that," you say, "but I must put it off a little longer." Do you know there were many who came just as near as you are to the kingdom of God and never entered it? I was this summer at East Hampton and I went into the cemetery to look around, and in that cemetery there are twelve graves side by side — the graves of sailors. This crew, some years ago, in a ship went into the breakers at Amaganset, about three miles away. My brother, then preaching at East Hampton, had been at the burial. These men of the crew came very near being saved. The people from Amaganset saw the vessel, and they shot rockets, and

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they sent ropes from the shore, and these poor fellows got into the boat, and they pulled mightily for the shore, but just before they got to the shore, the rope snapped and the boat capsized and they were lost, their bodies afterward washed up on the beach. Oh! what a solemn day it was — I have been told of it by my brother — when these twelve men lay at the foot of the pulpit and he read over them the funeral service. They came very near shore — within shouting distance of the shore, yet did not arrive on solid land. There are some men who come almost to the shore of God's mercy, but not quite, not quite. To be only almost saved is to be lost.

I will tell you of two prodigals, the one that got back and the other that did not get back. In Richmond, Virginia, there is a very prosperous and beautiful home in many respects. A young man wandered off from that home. He wandered very far into sin. They heard of him often, but he was always on the wrong track. He would not go home. At the door of that beautiful home one night there was a great outcry. The young man of the house ran down and opened the door to see what was the matter. It was midnight. The rest of the family were asleep. There were the wife and the children of this prodigal young man. The fact was he had come home and driven them out. He said: "Out of this house. Away with these children; I will dash their brains out. Out into the storm!" The mother gathered them up and fled. The next morning, the brother, the young man who had stayed at home, went out to find this prodigal brother and son, and he came where he was, and saw the young man wandering up and down in front of the place where he had been staying, and the young man who had kept his integrity, said to the older brother: "Here, what does all this mean? what is the matter

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with you? Why do you act in this way?" The prodigal looked at him and said: "Who am I? Who do you take me to be?" He said: "You are my brother." "No, I am not. I am a brute. Have you seen anything of my wife and children? are they dead? I drove them out last night in the storm. I am a brute. John, do you think there is any help for me? Do you think I will ever get over this life of dissipation? There is just one thing that will stop this," and the prodigal ran his finger across his throat and added: "That will stop it, and I'll stop it before night. Oh! my brain; I can stand it no longer." That prodigal never got home.

But I will tell you of a prodigal who did get home. In England two young men started from their father's house and went down to Portsmouth. The father could not pursue his children; for some reason he could not leave home, and so he wrote a letter down to Mr. Griffin, saying: "Mr. Griffin, I wish you would go and see my two sons. They have arrived in Portsmouth, and they are going to take ship and going away from home. I wish you would persuade them back." Mr. Griffin went and he tried to persuade them back. He persuaded one to go. He went with very easy persuasion because he was very homesick already. The other young man said, "I will not go. I have had enough of home. I'll never go home." "Well," said Mr. Griffin, "then if you won't go home, I'll get you a respectable position on a respectable ship." "No, you won't," said the prodigal; "no you won't. I am going as a common sailor; that will plague my father most, and what will do most to tantalize and worry him will please me best." Years passed on and Mr. Griffin was seated in his study one day when a message came to him saying there was a young man in irons on a ship at the dock — a young

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man condemned to death — who wished to see this clergyman. Mr. Griffin went down to the dock and went on shipboard. The young man said to him: "You don't know me, do you?" "No," he said, "I don't know you." "Why, don't you remember that young man you tried to persuade to go home and he wouldn't go?" "Oh! yes," said Mr. Griffin, "are you that man?" "Yes, I am that man," said the other. "I would like to have you pray for me. I have committed murder and I must die; but I don't want to go out of this world until some one prays for me. You are my father's friend and I would like to have you pray for me." Mr. Griffin went from judicial authority to judicial authority to get that young man's pardon. He slept not night nor day. He went from influential person to influential person until, in some way, he got that young man's pardon. He came down on the dock, and as he arrived on the dock with the pardon the father came. He had heard that his son, under an assumed name, had been committing crime and was going to be put to death. So Mr. Griffin and the father went on the ship's deck, and at the very moment Mr. Griffin offered the pardon to the young man, the old father threw his arms around the son's neck and the son said: "Father, I have done very wrong and I am very sorry. I wish I had never broken your heart. I am very sorry." "Oh!" said the father, "don't let us dwell on it. It don't make any difference now. It is all over. I forgive you, my son," and he kissed him and kissed him.

To-day I offer you the pardon of the Gospel — full pardon, free pardon. I do not care what your crime has been. Though you say you have committed a crime against God, against your own soul, against your fellow-man, against your family, against the day of judgment, against the cross of Christ — whatever

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your crime has been, here is pardon, full pardon, and the very moment you take that pardon your heavenly Father throws his arms around about you and says: "My son, I forgive you. It is all right. You are as much in my favor now as if you had never sinned." And so there is joy on earth and joy in heaven. Who will take the father's embrace?





## CONTENTMENT

Heb., 13: 5. "Be content with such things as ye have."



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Heb., 13: 5: "Be content with such things as ye have."

IF I should ask some one, "Where is Brooklyn to-day?" he would say, "At Brighton Beach, or East Hampton, or Shelter Island." "Where is New York, to-day?" "At Long Branch." "Where is Philadelphia?" "Cape May." "Where is Boston?" "At Martha's Vineyard." "Where is Virginia?" "At the Sulphur Springs." "Where the great multitude from all parts of the land?" "At Saratoga." But the largest multitude are at home, detained by business or circumstances. Among them all newspaper men, the hardest worked and the least compensated; city railroad employees, and ferry masters, and the police, and the tens of thousands of clerks and merchants waiting for their turn of absence, and households with an invalid who cannot be moved, and others hindered by stringent circumstances, and the great multitude of well-to-do people who stay at home because they like home better than any other place, refusing to obey the dictum that they must follow the fashion and simply go because it is the fashion to go away. When the express wagon, with its mountain of trunks, directed to the Catskills or Niagara, goes through the streets, we stand at our window envious and impatient, and wonder why we cannot go as well as others. Fools that we are, as though one could not be as happy at home as anywhere else! Our grandfathers and grandmothers had as good a time as we have, long before the first

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spring was bored at Saratoga, or the first deer shot in the Adirondacks. They made their wedding-tour to the next farmhouse, or, living in New York, they celebrated the event by an extra walk on the Battery.

Now, the genuine American is not happy until he is going somewhere, and the passion is so great that there are Christian people, with their families, detained in the city, who come not to the house of God, trying to give people the idea that they are out of town, leaving the door-plate unscoured for the same reason, and for two months keeping the front shutters closed while they sit in the back part of the house, the thermometer at ninety! If it is best for us to go, let us go and be happy. If it is best for us to stay at home, let us stay at home and be happy. There is a great deal of good common sense in this scriptural advice to the Hebrews: "Be content with such things as ye have." To be content is to be in good humor with our circumstances, not picking a quarrel with our obscurity, or our poverty, or our social position. There are four or five grand reasons why we should be content with such things as we have.

The first reason that I mention as leading to this spirit, advised in the text, is the consideration that the poorest of us have all that is indispensable in life. We make great ado about our hardships, but how little we talk of our blessings. Health of body, which is given in largest quantity to those who have never been petted and fondled, and spoiled by fortune, we take as a matter of course. Rather have this luxury, and have it alone, than, without it, look out of a palace window upon parks of deer feeding between fountains and statuary. These people sleep sounder on a straw mattress than fashionable invalids on a couch of ivory and eagles' down. The dinner of herbs tastes better to the appetite sharpened on a

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woodman's axe or a reaper's scythe, than wealthy indigestion experiences seated at a table covered with partridge and venison and pineapple. The grandest luxury God ever gave a man is health. He who trades that off for all the palaces of the earth is infinitely cheated. We look back at the glory of the last Napoleon, but who would have taken his Versailles, and his Tuilleries, if with them we had to take his gout?

"Oh," says some one, "it is not the grosser pleasures I covet, but it is the gratification of an artistic and intellectual taste." Why, you have the original from which these pictures are copied. What is a sunset on a wall compared with a sunset hung in loops of fire on the heavens? What is a cascade, silent on a canvas, compared to a cascade that makes the mountain tremble, its spray ascending like the departed spirit of the water slain on the rocks? Oh, there is a great deal of hollow affectation about a fondness for pictures on the part of those who never appreciate the original from which the pictures are taken. As though a parent should have no regard for his child, but go into ecstasies over its photograph. Bless the Lord to-day, O man! O woman! that though you may be shut out from the works of a Church, a Bierstadt, a Rubens, and a Raphael, you still have free access to a gallery grander than the Louvre, or the Luxembourg, or the Vatican—the royal gallery of the noonday heavens, the King's gallery of the midnight sky.

Another consideration leading us to a spirit of contentment, is the fact that our happiness is not dependent upon outward circumstances. You see people happy and miserable amid all circumstances. In a family where the last loaf is on the table, and the last stick of wood on the fire, you sometimes find

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a cheerful confidence in God; while in a very fine place you will hear discord sounding her war-whoop, and see hospitality freezing to death in a cheerless parlor.

I stopped one day on Broadway, New York, at the head of Wall Street, at the foot of Trinity Church, to see who seemed the happiest people passing. I judged, from their looks, the happiest people were not those who went down into Wall Street, for they had on their brow the anxiety of the dollars they expected to make; nor the people who came out of Wall Street, for they had on their brow the anxiety of the dollars they had lost; nor the people who swept by in splendid equipage, for they met a carriage that was finer than theirs. The happiest person in all that crowd, judging from the countenance, was the woman who sat at the apple-stand, knitting. I believe real happiness oftener looks out of the window of an humble home, than through the opera-glass of the gilded box of a theatre.

I find Nero growling on a throne. I find Paul singing in a dungeon. I find King Ahab going to bed at noon, through melancholy, while near by is Naboth contented in the possession of a vineyard. Haman, prime minister of Persia, frets himself almost to death because a poor Jew will not tip his hat; and Ahithophel, one of the greatest lawyers of Bible times, through fear of dying, hangs himself. The wealthiest man, forty years ago, in New York, when congratulated over his large estate, replied, "Ah, you don't know how much trouble I have in taking care of it!" Byron declared, in his last hours, that he had never seen more than twelve happy days in all his life. I do not believe that he had seen twelve minutes of thorough satisfaction. Napoleon I said, "I turn with disgust from the cowardice and selfish-

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ness of man. I hold life a horror; death is repose. What I have suffered the last twenty days is beyond human comprehension." While, on the other hand, to show how one may be happy amid the most disadvantageous circumstances, just after the *Ocean Monarch* had been wrecked in the English Channel, a steamer was cruising along in the darkness, when the captain heard a song, a sweet song, coming over the water, and he bore down toward that voice, and found it was a Christian woman on a plank of the wrecked steamer, singing to the tune of Martyn:

Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the billows near me roll,  
While the tempest still is high.

The heart right toward God and man, we are happy.  
The heart wrong toward God and man, we are unhappy.

Another reason why we should come to this spirit inculcated in the text, is the fact that all the differences of earthly condition are transitory. The houses you build, the land you cultivate, the places in which you barter, are soon to go into other hands. However hard you may have it now, if you are a Christian the scene will soon end. Pain, trial, persecution, never knock at the door of the grave. A coffin made out of pine boards is just as good a resting-place as one made out of silver-mounted mahogany or rosewood. Go down among the resting-places of the dead, and you will find that though people there had a great difference of worldly circumstances, now their bodies are all alike unconscious. The hand that greeted the senator, and the president, and the king, is still as the hand that hardened on

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the mechanic's hammer, or the manufacturer's wheel. It does not make any difference now, whether there is a plain stone above them, from which the traveller pulls aside the weeds to read the name, or a tall shaft springing into the heavens as though to tell their virtues to the skies. In that silent land there are no titles for great men, and there are no rumblings of chariot-wheels, and there is never heard the foot of the dance. The Egyptian guano which is thrown on the fields in the East for the enrichment of the soil, is the dust raked out from the sepulchres of kings and lords and mighty men. O the chagrin of those men if they had ever known that in the after ages of the world they would have been called Egyptian guano!

Of how much worth now is the crown of Cæsar? Who bids for it? Who cares now anything about the Amphitryonic Council or the laws of Lycurgus? Who trembles now because Xerxes crossed the Hellespont on a bridge of boats? Who fears because Nebuchadnezzar thunders at the gates of Jerusalem? Who cares now whether or not Cleopatra marries Antony? Who crouches before Ferdinand, or Boniface, or Alaric? Can Cromwell dissolve the English Parliament now? Is William Prince of Orange, king of the Netherlands? No; no! However much Elizabeth may love the Russian crown, she must pass it to Peter, and Peter to Catherine, and Catherine to Paul, and Paul to Alexander, and Alexander to Nicholas. Leopold puts the German sceptre into the hand of Joseph, and Philip comes down off the Spanish throne to let Ferdinand go on. House of Aragon, house of Hapsburg, house of Stuart, house of Bourbon, quarreling about everything else, but agreeing in this: "The fashion of this world passeth away." But have all these dignitaries gone? Can they not be



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called back? I have been to assemblages where I have heard the roll called, and many distinguished men have answered. If I should call the roll to-day of some of those mighty ones who have gone, I wonder if they would not answer. I will call the roll. I will call the roll of the kings first: Alfred the Great! William the Conqueror! Frederick II! Louis XVI! No answer. I will call the roll of the poets: Robert Southey! Thomas Campbell! John Keats! George Crabbe! Robert Burns! No answer. I will call the roll of artists: Michael Angelo! Paul Veronese! William Turner! Christopher Wren! No answer. Eyes closed. Ears deaf. Lips silent. Hands palsied. Sceptre, pencil, pen, sword, put down forever. Why should we struggle for such baubles?

Another reason why we should cultivate this spirit of cheerfulness is the fact that God knows what is best for his creatures. You know what is best for your child. He thinks you are not as liberal with him as you ought to be. He criticises your discipline, but you look over the whole field, and you, loving that child, do what in your deliberate judgment is best for him. Now, God is the best of fathers. Sometimes his children think that he is hard on them, and that he is not as liberal with them as he might be. But children do not know as much as a father. I can tell you why you are not affluent, and why you have not been successful.

It is because you cannot stand the temptation. If your path had been smooth, you would have depended upon your own surefootedness; but God roughened that path, so you have to take hold of his hand. If the weather had been mild, you would have loitered along the water-courses; but at the first howl of the storm you quickened your pace heavenward,

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and wrapped around you the robe of a Saviour's righteousness.

Who are those before the throne? The answer came: "These are they who, out of great tribulation, had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." Would God that we could understand that our trials are the very best thing for us. If we had an appreciation of that truth, then we should know why it was that John Noyra, the martyr, in the very midst of the flame, reached down and picked up one of the fagots that was consuming him, and kissed it, and said, "Blessed be God for the time when I was born for this preferment!" They who suffer with him on earth, shall be glorified with him in heaven. Be content, then, with such things as you have.

Another consideration leading us to the spirit of the text, is the assurance that the Lord will provide somehow. Will he who holds the water in the hollow of his hand allow his children to die of thirst? Will he who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and all the earth's luxuriance of grain and fruit, allow his children to starve? Go out to-morrow morning at five o'clock, into the woods, and hear the birds chant. They have had no breakfast, they know not where they will dine, they have no idea where they will sup; but hear the birds chant at five o'clock in the morning. "Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

Five thousand people, in Christ's time, went into the desert. They were the most improvident people I ever heard of. They deserved to starve. They might have taken food enough to last them until they got back. Nothing did they take. A lad, who had more wit than all of them put together, asked his

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mother that morning for some loaves of bread and some fishes. They were put into his satchel. He went out into the desert. From this provision the five thousand were fed, and the more they ate the larger the loaves grew, until the provision that the boy brought in one satchel was multiplied so he could not have carried the fragments home in six satchels. "Oh," you say, "times have changed, and the day of miracles has gone." I reply that, what God did then by miracle, he does now in some other way, and by natural laws. "I have been young," said King David, "and now am old; yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." It is high time that you people who are fretting about worldly circumstances, and who are fearing that you are coming to want, understood that the oath of the Eternal God is involved in the fact that you are to have enough to eat and to wear.

Again: I remark that the religion of Jesus is the grandest influence to make a man contented. Indemnity against all financial and spiritual harm! It calms the spirit, dwindles the earth into insignificance, and swallows up the soul with the thought of heaven. O ye who have been going about from place to place, expecting to find in change of circumstances something to give solace to the spirit, I commend you to the warm-hearted, earnest, practical, common-sense religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. "There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked," and as long as you continue in your sin, you will be miserable. Come to Christ. Make him your portion and start for heaven, and you will be a happy man — you will be a happy woman.

Yet, notwithstanding all these inducements to a spirit of contentment, I have to tell you that the human race is divided into two classes — those who

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scold, and those who get scolded. The carpenter wants to be anything but a carpenter, and the mason anything but a mason, and the banker anything but a banker, and the lawyer anything but a lawyer, and the minister anything but a minister, and everybody would be truly happy if he were only somebody else. Ah, you never make any advance through such a spirit as that. You cannot fret yourself up; you may fret yourself down. Amid all this grating of tones I strike this string of the Gospel harp: "Godliness with contentment is great gain. We brought nothing into the world, and it is very certain we can carry nothing out; having food and raiment, let us therewith be content."

Let us all remember, if we are Christians, that we are going after a while, whatever be our circumstances now, to have a glorious vacation. As in summer we put off our garments, and go down into the cool sea to bathe, so we will put off these garments of flesh, and step into the cool Jordan. We will look around for some place to lay down our weariness, and the trees will say: "Come and rest under our shadow;" and the earth will say: "Come and sleep in my bosom;" and the winds will say: "Hush! while I sing thee a cradle hymn;" and while six strong men carry us out to our last resting-place, and ashes come to ashes, and dust to dust, we will see two scarred feet standing amid the broken soil, and a lacerated brow bending over the open grave, while a voice, tender with all affection, and mighty with all omnipotence, will declare: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Comfort one another with these words.

## REMINISCENCES

Psalm, 39: 3: "While I was musing, the fire burned."



## REMINISCENCES

Psalm, 39: 3: "While I was musing, the fire burned."

Here is David, the Psalmist, with the forefinger of his right hand against his temple, and the door shut against the world, engaged in contemplation. And it would be well for us to take the same posture often, while we sit down in sweet solitude to contemplate.

In a small island off the coast of Nova Scotia I once passed a Sabbath in delightful solitude, for I had resolved that I would have one day of entire quiet before I entered upon autumnal work. I thought to have spent the day in laying out plans for Christian work; but instead of that it became a day of tender reminiscence. I reviewed my pastorate; I shook hands with an old departed friend, whom I shall greet again when the curtains of life are lifted. The days of my boyhood came back, and I was ten years of age, and I was eight, and I was five. There was but one house on the island, and yet from Sabbath daybreak, when the bird-chant woke me, until the evening melted into the Bay of Fundy, from shore to shore there were ten thousand memories, and the groves were a-hum with voices that had long ago ceased.

Youth is apt too much to spend all its time in looking forward. Old age is apt too much to spend all its time in looking backward. People in mid-life and on the apex look both ways. It would be well for us, I think, however, to spend more time in reminiscence. By the constitution of our nature we spend most of the time looking forward. And the vast ma-

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majority of people live not so much in the present as in the future. I find that you mean to make a reputation, you mean to establish yourself, and the advantages that you expect to achieve absorb a great deal of your time. But I see no harm in this, if it does not make you discontented with the present, or disqualify you for existing duties. It is a useful thing sometimes to look back, and to see the dangers we have escaped, and to see the sorrows we have suffered, and the trials and wanderings of our earthly pilgrimage, and to sum up our enjoyments. I mean, so far as God may help me, to stir up your memory of the past, so that in the review you may be encouraged and humbled and urged to pray.

There is a chapel in Florence with a fresco by Giotto. It was covered up with two inches of stucco until our American and European artists went there, and after long toil removed the covering and retraced the fresco. And I am aware that the memory of the past, with many of you, is all covered up with obliterations, and I now propose, so far as the Lord may help me, to take away the covering, that the old picture may shine out again. I want to bind in one sheaf all your past advantages, and I want to bind in another sheaf all your past adversities, and I must be cautious how I swing the scythe.

Among the greatest advantages of your past life was an early home and its surroundings. The bad men of the day, for the most part, dip their heated passions out of the boiling spring of an unhappy home. We are not surprised to find that Byron's heart was a concentration of sin, when we hear that his mother was abandoned, and that she made sport of his infirmity, and often called him "the lame brat." He who has vicious parents has to fight every inch of his way if he would maintain his integrity, and at last



## Reminiscences

reach the home of the good in heaven. Perhaps your early home was in a city. It may have been when Pennsylvania avenue, Washington, was residential as now it is commercial, and Canal street, New York, was far up-town. That old house in the city may have been demolished or changed into stores, and it seemed like sacrilege to you—for there was more meaning in that small house than there is in a granite mansion or turreted cathedral. Looking back you see it as though it were only yesterday the sitting-room, where the loved one sat by the plain lamp, the mother at the evening stand; the brothers and sisters, perhaps long ago gathered into the skies, then plotting mischief on the floor or under the table; your father with firm voice commanding a silence that lasted half a minute.

Oh, those were good days! If you had your foot hurt, your mother always had a soothing salve to heal it. If you were wronged in the street, your father was always ready to protect you. The year was one round of frolic and mirth. Your greatest trouble was an April shower, more sunshine than shower. The heart had not been ransacked by trouble, nor had sickness broken it, and no lamb had a warmer sheepfold than the home in which your childhood nestled.

Perhaps you were brought up in the country. You stand now to-day in memory under the old tree. You clubbed it for fruit that was not quite ripe, because you couldn't wait any longer. You hear the brook rumbling along over the pebbles. You step again into the furrow where your father in his shirt-sleeves shouted to the lazy oxen. You frighten the swallows from the rafters of the barn, and take just one egg, and silence your conscience by saying they will not miss it. You take a drink again out of the very bucket that the old well fetched up. You go

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for the cows at night, and find them pushing their heads through the bars. Oftentimes in the dusty and busy streets you wish you were home again on that cool grass, or in the rag-carpeted hall of the farmhouse, through which there came the breath of new-mown hay or the blossom of buckwheat.

You may have in your windows now beautiful plants and flowers brought from across the seas, but not one of them stirs in your soul so much charm and memory as the old ivy and the yellow sunflower that stood sentinel along the garden-walk, and the forget-me-nots playing hide and seek mid the long grass. The father who used to come in sunburnt from the field, and sit down on the doorsill and wipe the sweat from his brow may have gone to his everlasting rest. The mother, who used to sit at the door a little bent over, cap and spectacles on, her face mellowing with the vicissitudes of many years, may have put down her gray head on the pillow in the valley; but forget that home you never will. Have you thanked God for it? Have you rehearsed all these blessed reminiscences? Oh, thank God for a Christian father; thank God for a Christian mother; thank God for an early Christian altar at which you were taught to kneel; thank God for an early Christian home.

I bring to mind another passage in the history of your life. The day came when you set up your own household. The days passed along in quiet blessedness. You twain sat at the table morning and night, and talked over your plans for the future. The most insignificant affair in your life became the subject of mutual consultation and advisement. You were so happy you felt you never could be any happier. One day a dark cloud hovered over your dwelling, and it got darker and darker; but out of that

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cloud the shining messenger of God descended to incarnate an immortal spirit. Two little feet started on an eternal journey, and you were to lead them, a gem to flash in heaven's coronet, and you to polish it; eternal ages of light and darkness watching the starting out of a newly-created creature. You rejoiced and you trembled at the responsibility that in your possession an immortal treasure was placed. You prayed and rejoiced, and wept and wondered; you were earnest in supplication that you might lead it through life into the kingdom of God. There was a tremor in your earnestness. There was a double interest about that home. There was an additional interest why you should stay there and be faithful, and when in a few months your house was filled with the music of the child's laughter, you were struck through with the fact that you had a stupendous mission.

Have you kept that vow? Have you neglected any of these duties? Is your home as much to you as it used to be? Have those anticipations been gratified? God help you in your solemn reminiscence, and let his mercy fall upon your soul if your kindness has been ill requited. God have mercy on the parent, on the wrinkles of whose face is written the story of a child's sin. God have mercy on the mother who, in addition to her other pangs, has the pang of a child's iniquity. Oh, there are many, many sad sounds in this sad world, but the saddest sound that is ever heard is the breaking of a mother's heart!

I find another point in your life history. You found one day you were in the wrong road; you could not sleep at night; there was just one word that seemed to sob through your banking-house, or through your office or your shop or your bedroom, and that word was "Eternity." You said: "I'm not ready for it. O God, have mercy." The Lord

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heard. Peace came to your heart. In the breath of the hill and in the waterfall's dash you heard the voice of God's love; the clouds and the trees hailed you with gladness; you came into the house of God. You remember how your hand trembled as you took up the cup of the communion. You remember the old minister who consecrated it, and you remember the church officials who carried it through the aisle; you remember the old people who at the close of the service took your hand in theirs in congratulating sympathy, as much as to say: "Welcome home, you lost prodigal;" and though those hands be all withered away, that communion Sabbath is resurrected to-day; it is resurrected with all its prayers and songs and tears and sermons and transfiguration. Have you kept those vows? Have you been a backslider? God help you. This day kneel at the foot of mercy and start again for heaven. Start now as you started then. I rouse your soul by that reminiscence.

But I must not spend any more of my time in going over the advantages of your life. I just put them in one great sheaf, and I call them up in your memory with one loud harvest song, such as the reapers sing. Praise the Lord, ye blood-bought immortals on earth! Praise the Lord, ye crowned spirits of heaven!

But some of you have not always had a smooth life. Some of you are now in the shadow. Others had their troubles years ago; you are a mere wreck of what you once were. I must gather up the sorrows of your past life; but how shall I do it? You say that is impossible, as you have had so many troubles and adversities. Then I will just take two, the first trouble and the last trouble. As when you are walking along the street, and there has been music in the distance, you unconsciously find yourselves keeping step to the

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music, so when you started life your very life was a musical timebeat. The air was full of joy and hilarity; with the bright clear oar you made the boat skip; you went on, and life grew brighter, until after a while, suddenly a voice from heaven said, "Halt!" and quick as the sunshine you halted; you grew pale, you confronted your first sorrow. You had no idea that the flush of your child's cheek was an unhealthy flush. You said it cannot be anything serious. Death in slippered feet walked round about the cradle. You did not hear the tread; but after a while the truth flashed on you. You walked the floor. Oh, if you could, with your strong, stout hand, have wrenched that child from the destroyer! You went to your room, and you said, "God, save my child! God, save my child!" The world seemed going out in darkness. You said, "I can't bear it, I can't bear it." You felt as if you could not put the long lashes over the bright eyes, never to see them again sparkle. If you could have taken that little one in your arms, and with it leaped the grave, how gladly you would have done it! If you could let your property go, your houses go, your land and your storehouse go, how gladly you would have allowed them to depart if you could only have kept that one treasure!

But one day there came up a chill blast that swept through the bedroom, and instantly all the lights went out, and there was darkness — thick, murky, impenetrable, shuddering darkness. But God did not leave you there. Mercy spoke. As you took up the bitter cup to put it to your lips, God said: "Let it pass," and forthwith, as by the hand of angels, another cup was put into your hands; it was the cup of God's consolation. And as you have sometimes lifted the head of a wounded soldier and poured wine into his lips, so God puts his left arm under your head, and with his

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right hand he pours into your lips the wine of his comfort and his consolation, and you looked at the empty cradle and looked at your broken heart, and you looked at the Lord's chastisement, and you said: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

Ah, it was your first trouble. How did you get over it? God comforted you. You have been a better man ever since. You have been a better woman ever since. In the jar of the closing gate of the sepulcher you heard the clanging of the opening gate of heaven, and you felt an irresistible drawing heavenward. You have been spiritually better ever since that night when the little one for the last time put its arms around your neck and said, "Good-night, papa; good-night, mamma. Meet me in heaven."

But I must come to your latest sorrow. What was it? Perhaps it was sickness. The child's tread on the stair or the tick of the watch on the stand disturbed you. Through the long, weary days you counted the figures in the carpet or the flowers in the wall-paper. Oh, the weariness of exhaustion? Oh, the burning pangs? Would God it were morning, would God it were night, was your frequent cry. But you are better, or perhaps even well. Have you thanked God that to-day you can come out in the fresh air; that you are in your place to hear God's name, and to sing God's praise, and to implore God's help, and to ask God's forgiveness? Bless the Lord who healeth all our diseases, and redeemeth our lives from destruction!

Perhaps your last sorrow was a financial embarrassment. I congratulate some of you on your lucrative profession or occupation, on ornate apparel, on a commodious residence — everything you put your hands on seems to turn to gold. But there are others

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of you who are like the ship on which Paul sailed where two seas met, and you are broken by the violence of the waves. By an unadvised indorsement, or by a conjunction of unforeseen events, or by fire or storm or a senseless panic, you have been flung headlong, and where you once dispensed great charities now you have hard work to win your daily bread. Have you forgotten to thank God for your days of prosperity, and that through your trials some of you have made investments which will continue after the last bank of this world has exploded, and the silver and gold are molten in the fires of a burning world? Have you, amid all your losses and discouragements, forgotten that there was bread on your table this morning, and that there shall be a shelter for your head from the storm, and there is air for your lungs and blood for your heart and light for your eye and a glad and glorious and triumphant religion for your soul?

Perhaps your last trouble was a bereavement. That heart which in childhood was your refuge, the parental heart, and which has been a source of the quickest sympathy ever since, has suddenly become silent forever. And now sometimes, whenever in sudden annoyance and without deliberation you say: "I will go and tell mother," the thought flashes on you: "I have no mother." Or the father, with voice less tender, but with heart as loving, watchful of all your ways, exultant over your success without saying much, although the old people do talk it over by themselves, his trembling hand on that staff which you now keep as a family relic, his memory embalmed in grateful hearts, is taken away forever. Or there was your companion in life, sharer of your joys and sorrows, taken, leaving the heart an old ruin, where the ill winds blow over a wide wilderness of desola-



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tion, the sands of the desert driving across the place which once bloomed like the garden of God. And Abraham mourns for Sarah at the cave of Machpelah. As you were moving along your path in life, suddenly, right before you, was an open grave. People looked down, and they saw it was only a few feet deep and a few feet wide, but to you it was a cavern, down which went all your hopes and all your expectations. But cheer up in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Comforter. He is not going to forsake you. Did the Lord take that child out of your arms? Why, he is going to shelter it better than you could. He is going to array it in a white robe and palm branch, and have it all ready to greet you at your coming home. Blessed the broken heart that Jesus heals! Blessed the importunate cry that Jesus compassionates! Blessed the weeping eye from which the soft hand of Jesus wipes away the tear!

Some years ago I was sailing down the St. John river, which is the Rhine and the Hudson commingled in one scene of beauty and grandeur, and while I was on the deck of the steamer a gentleman pointed out to me the places of interest, and he said: "All this is interval land, and it is the richest land in all the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia." "What," said I, "do you mean by 'interval land?'" "Well," he said, "this land is submerged for a part of the year; spring freshets come down, and all these plains are overflowed with the water, and the water leaves a rich deposit, and when the waters are gone the harvest springs up, and there is a richer harvest than I know of elsewhere." And I instantly thought: "It is not the heights of the Church, and it is not the heights of this world that are the scene of the greatest prosperity, but the soul over which the floods of sorrow have gone; the soul over which the fresh-



## Reminiscences

ets of tribulation have torn their way, that yields the greatest fruits of righteousness and the largest harvest for time, and the richest harvest for eternity." Bless God that your soul is interval land!

There is one more point of absorbing reminiscence, and that is the last hour of life, when we have to look over all our past existence. What a moment that will be! I place Napoleon's dying reminiscence on St. Helena beside Mrs. Judson's dying reminiscence in the harbor of St. Helena, the same island, twenty years after. Napoleon's dying reminiscence was one of delirium—*Tete d'armee*—"Head of the Army." Mrs. Judson's dying reminiscence, as she came home from her missionary toil and her life of self-sacrifice for God, dying in the cabin of the ship in the harbor of St. Helena, was: "I always did love the Lord Jesus Christ." And then, the historian says, she fell into a sound sleep for an hour, and woke amid the songs of angels. I place the dying reminiscence of Augustus Cæsar against the dying reminiscence of the apostle Paul. The dying reminiscence of Augustus Cæsar was, addressing his attendants: "Have I played my part well on the stage of life?" and they answered in the affirmative, and he said: "Why, then, don't you applaud me?" The dying reminiscence of Paul the apostle was: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing." Augustus Cæsar died amid pomp and great surroundings. Paul uttered his dying reminiscence looking up through the wall of a dungeon. God grant that our dying pillow may be the closing of a useful life, and the opening of a glorious eternity.



# INDEXES



# INDEXES

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## PREFATORY NOTE

A glance at the following Indexes will show their purpose and value. The **Texts** of Sermons are first given in Biblical order, they then appear in conjunction with the **Titles** of Sermons in alphabetical order. The titles are indexed as fully as cross-references will permit. The Index of **Anecdotal** and **Historical Illustrations** will afford a mine of wealth to the preacher, Sunday-school teacher and Christian worker. In the Index of **Subjects** those dwelt upon at any length will be found in groups, while others more lightly touched upon are dismissed with a line. While nothing short of a concordance would exhibit all the variety of Dr. Talmage's presentations of truth, familiarity with these Indexes will prove their thoroughly practical and comprehensive character.

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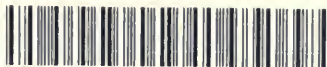
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