

FLASHES OF THOUGHT

by C.H. Spurgeon

A compilation of striking, memorable sentences extracted from Spurgeon's sermons, gathering his most brilliant and pithy statements for reflection and meditation.

28 Chapters

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Chapter 1

BOOK: Flashes of Thought (Illustrations)

Flashes of Thought by

C. H. Spurgeon

Preface

The myriad hearers and readers of Mr. Spurgeon's Sermons well know that many of his sentences flash forth with a brightness all their own. They are striking, suggestive, and often startling. Some of these sentences are here taken from their original settings, that they may form a collection of choice extracts, to which the reader may turn at odd minutes, in the certainty of obtaining subject for meditation. The Publishers take this opportunity of informing their friends, that none of the passages given in this book have been published in any other volume of extracts that has issued from the press. They form an entirely original and carefully-prepared selection.

"A"

1. Abiding with Jesus

We are too much like the bird we read of in the old Saxon story. When the first missionary was preaching in the royal hall, he told of the peace which the gospel brings to sinners, and the rest which souls find in Jesus. After his sermon an ancient chieftain spake his mind, and compared himself and his countrymen in their unrest to the bird which just then, attracted by the light, flew into the bright hall through the open window, flitted through the warmth and light, and passed out again into the darkness and the cold by a window on the other side of the banqueting hall. The simile might well apply to our transient fellowship; we have brief communings, and then away we pass into worldliness and indifference. Oh, would it not be blessed if we could abide with Jesus for ever, building our nest in his palace! How heavenly our life if we could walk with him, as Enoch did, in our business, in our families, in all places and at all hours! If instead of now and then climbing the sunny peak of fellowship, and standing near to heaven, and conversing with the Son of God, we could for ever dwell in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, how much more noble a life to lead! Imitate Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, in her abiding unmovingly near her beloved one—abide with Jesus evermore.

2. Accessibility of God

Two friends agree never to go farther apart than they can communicate with one another by telegraph. One of them has crossed the Atlantic, and resides in the United States, or in the far west, but still he has only to go to the office, where a wire can be touched and a message will flash to his friend in England, and tell him his needs. This is just the compact God has made with his people: they shall never go where there is not a telegraphic communication between them and himself. You may be out at sea, or in Australia, but the communication of prayer is always open between your soul and God, and if you were commanded to ride on the wings of the morning to the uttermost parts of the sea, or if for awhile you had to make your bed in the abyss, if you were his child, still would you be able to reach his heart.

3. Acquaintanceship with Christ

Witnesses about other things exaggerate, but witnesses concerning Jesus Christ always fall short. Painters have frequently won repute by making portraits fairer than the originals, but none can ever paint Jesus with a pencil that shall give too much of lustre to his noble face. He is so glorious that even angels who have seen him all their lives, and bowed before him where his splendour is best revealed, could not tell to man nor to one another the thousandth part of his excellences. If you want to know him you must see him for yourself. You must make him your personal acquaintance; you must press by faith into the inner circle, and cry with the spouse, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine."

4. Activity, Christian

Oh! I would that some Christians would pay a little attention to their legs, instead of paying it all to their heads. When children's heads grow too fast it is a sign of disease, and they get the rickets, or water on the brain. So, there are some very sound brethren, who seem to me to have got some kind of disease, and when they try to walk, they straightway make a tumble of it, because they have paid so much attention to perplexing doctrinal views, instead of looking, as they ought to have done, to the practical part of Christianity. By all means let us have doctrine, but by all means let us have precept too. By all means let us have inward experience, but by all means let us also have outward "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." "We walk." This is more than some can say. They can affirm—"We talk; we think; we experience; we feel;" but true Christians can say, with the apostle Paul, "We walk." Oh that we may ever be able to Bay it too! Here, then, is the activity of the Christian life.

5. Activity, Christian. Dying view of

One feels sometimes in prospect of death like the venerable Bede, who, when he had nearly translated the Gospel of St. John, said to the young man who was writing from his dictation, "Write fast, write fast, for I am dying. How far are you now? How many verses remain?" "So many."

"Quicker, quicker," said he, "write more quickly, quickly, for I shall be dying." When at length he said, "I have come to the last verse," the good old man folded his arms, sung the Doxology, and fell asleep in Jesus. Quickly, brother, quickly, you will never get through the chapter if you do not work and write quickly. Quickly, quickly, your time of dying is so near. Quickly, and then when you have done, if you have worked quickly for Christ, though it is not of debt but of grace, you will be able to say at last, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," and with a Doxology on your quivering lip you will go to sing the Doxology in sweeter strains above.

6. Activity, Christian. Emblem of A little stream flowed through a manufacturing town; an unhappy little stream it was, for it was forced to turn huge wheels and heavy machinery, and it wound its miserable way through factories where it was dyed black and blue, until it became a foul and filthy ditch, and loathed itself. It felt the tyranny which polluted its very existence. Now, there came a deliverer who looked upon the streamlet and said, "I will set thee free and give thee rest." So he stopped up the water-course, and said, "Abide in thy place, thou shalt no more flow where thou art enslaved and defiled." In a very few days the brooklet found that it had but exchanged one evil for another. Its waters were stagnating, they were gathering into a great pool, and desiring to find a channel. It was in its very nature to flow on, and it foamed and swelled, and pressed against the dam which stayed it. Every hour it grew more inwardly restless! it threatened to break the barrier, and it made all who saw its angry looks tremble for the mischief it would do ere long. It never found rest until it was permitted to pursue an active course along a channel which had been prepared for it among the meadows and corn fields. Then, when it watered the plains and made glad the Tillages, it was a happy streamlet, perfectly at rest. So our souls are made for activity, and when we are set free from the activities of our self-righteousness and the slavery of our sin, we must do something, and we shall never rest until we find that something to do.

7. Affliction, a help to Piety

I have seen a little plant beneath an oak tree sheltered from the storm, and wind, and rain, and it felt pleased and happy to be so screened; but I have seen the woodman come with his axe and fell

the oak, and the little plant has trembled with fear because its protection was removed. "Alas! for me," it said, "the hot sun will scorch me, the driving rain will drown me, and the fierce wind will tear me up by the roots." But instead of these dreadful results, the shelter being removed, the plant has breathed freer air, drank more of the dews of heaven, received more of the light of the sun, and it has sprung up and borne flowers which else had never bloomed, and seeds that never else had sown themselves in the soil. Be glad when God thus visits thee, when he takes away these overshadowing but dwarfing comforts, to make thee have a clear way between thee and heaven, so that heavenly gifts might come more plentifully to thee.

8. Affliction, a School of Experience

Why should I dread to descend the shaft of affliction, if it leads me to the gold mine of spiritual experience? Why should I cry out if the sun of my prosperity goes down, if in the darkness of my adversity I shall be the better able to count the starry promises with which my faithful God has been pleased to gem the sky? Go, thou sun, for in thy absence we shall see ten thousand suns; and when thy blinding light is gone, we shall see worlds in the dark which were hidden from us by thy light. Many a promise is written in sympathetic ink, which you cannot read till the fire of trouble brings out the characters. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn thy statutes."

9. Affliction, Jewels of

Weep not because the vessel of thy present comfort has gone out to sea, and thou hast lost sight of the white sails; it shall come back again to thee laden with nobler treasure. Weep not because the sun has gone down, for it descendeth that the dews may be brought forth and the earth may be watered, and the flowers may drip with perfume. Wait thou awhile, and the sun shall come back to thee again, and the morn shall be the brighter because of the gloom of the night. O sorrow not, heir of heaven, because the skies are clouded, the clouds are big with mercy; and each cloud is the mother of ten thousand blossoms, and harvests lie concealed in yonder darkness! O be thou confident that amongst all thy jewels, all thy precious ornaments and tokens of love that God has given thee, thou hast nothing brighter than the jet jewels of affliction, no diamonds of a finer water than those of trouble.

10. Affliction, Preparation for Service

It is in the gymnasium of affliction that men are modelled and fashioned in the beauty of holiness, and all their spiritual powers are trained for harmonious action. It was meet also that they should suffer, in order to complete their service. Like their Lord, they had to be made perfect through suffering; and if they had not suffered they had not finished the work which he had given them to do. They needed tribulation, moreover, that they might be made like their Saviour; for a saint untroubled, how can he be like the man who wore the thorn crown? Never smitten, never slandered, never despised, never mocked at, never crucified, then how could we be like our Head? Shall the servant be above his Master, or the disciple above his Lord? They who are in heaven passed through tribulation, and they needed it as much as we do. Let us think of all this, for it may encourage us to press forward. They were knights of the same order as ourselves, and by the selfsame methods obtained the honours which they wear.

11. Affliction, Revealing Christ's heart

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted," many can say, not only because of the restoring effect of sorrow, but because their afflictions have acted like windows, to let them gaze into the very heart of Christ, and read his pity and understand his nature, as they never could have done by other means. Furnace light is memorably clear. Jesus is a brother born for adversity, because in the glimmer of the world's eventide, when all the lamps are going out, a glory shines around him, transforming midnight into day.

12. Age, Golden, to come

It has been the custom with men to speak of ages as "the age of brass or iron," and "the age of gold." This age of gold we are always looking for; the world's face is constantly turned to it; so much so that quacks play upon the simplicity of men and tell them when this golden age is coming, and fleece them of their pence, and sometimes of their pounds, under the notion that they can tell them somewhat about the good times which are coming. They know nothing about it whatever: they are blind leaders of the blind: but this one thing is clear to every one who cares to see it, namely, that such an age of gold shall come, that a period brighter far than fancy paints will dawn upon this poor, darkened, enslaved world.

13. Aim, Singleness of That eminent ornithologist, M. Audubon, who produced accurate drawings and descriptions of all the birds of the American Continent, made the perfection of that work the one object of his life. In order to achieve this he had to earn his own living by painting portraits, and other labours; he had to traverse frozen seas, forests, canebrakes, jungles, prairies, mountains, swollen rivers, and pestilential bogs. He exposed himself to perils of every sort, and underwent hardships of every kind. Now, whatever Audubon was doing, he was fighting his way towards his one object, the production of his history of American birds. Whether he was painting a lady's portrait, paddling a canoe, shooting a racoon, or felling a tree, his one drift was a bird-book. He had said to himself, "I mean to carve my name amongst the naturalists as having produced a complete ornithological work for America," and this resolution ate him up, and subdued his whole life. He accomplished his work because he gave himself wholly to it. This is the way in which the Christian man should make Christ his element. All that he does should be subservient to this one thing, "That I may finish my course with joy, that I may deliver my testimony for Christ, that I may glorify God whether I live or die."

14. Amen

We have it put on record by Jerome, that at Rome the people were accustomed to say "Amen" in the gatherings of the early Christians so heartily, I might add so lustily, that it was like the dash of a cataract, or a clap of thunder. I could wish that we more uniformly and universally said "Amen" at the close of public prayer; I am sure it would be scriptural and apostolic, and I believe it would be useful to you all. Perhaps the custom was dropped on account of the irregular way in which the brethren said "Amen." I have heard the same irregularity in certain rustic Methodist congregations, when I have thought that the "Amen" was put in the wrong place; and could have wished the custom to be discontinued altogether, because certain illiterate, rash, but zealous brethren said "Amen" when there was nothing to say "Amen" to, and so rather created ridicule than reverence, and showed as much folly as fervour. However, a judicious revival of the custom would, I doubt not, be useful in the Church of God. It then signifies, "So be it, so let it be," and is virtually the consent of the entire congregation to the prayer which has been put up.

15. Angelic Observation

What a scale of survey must a seraph have! How readily can we imagine an eye that takes in at once the landscape of the world! He need not confine himself to one single spot in God's universe, but with rapid wings he can steer far and wide over the infinity of space. May he not pause here a moment and there a moment, and with a glance peer into the multiform wisdom of God in all the ten thousand thousand worlds that stud the realms of space? Yet with all that facility of observation, it seems that the angels have some parts of the wisdom of God to learn, and some lessons of heavenly science to study which creation cannot unfold to their view, to be ascertained and certified by them only through the transcendent work of redemption which the Lord has carried on in his church.

16. Angelic Service, a Pattern for us

What would you think of an angel who was sent from the throne of God to bear a message, and who lingered on the way or refused to go? It was midnight, and the message came to Gabriel and his fellow songsters, "Go and sing o'er plains of Bethlehem, where shepherds keep their flocks. Here is your sonnet, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men." Could you conceive that they halted, that they wished to decline the task? Impossible with such music, and with such a commission given from such a Lord! They sped joyously on their way. Your mission is not less honourable than that of the angels. You are sent to speak of good things, which bring peace and good will to men, and glory to God. Will you loiter? Can you longer be dumb? Nay, as the Lord Jesus sends you, go forth, I pray you, go at once, and with joy tell out the story of his love.

17. Angels, Guardians of the Church

Invisible spirits of superior race are servitors to the beloved sons of God. All heaven's hosts are ready for our defence. If it were needful, the new Jerusalem would empty out itself of its thousands, as Thebes did of its myriads from all its hundred gates, and every angel would, with sword drawn, assail our foes, and put them to utter rout; for the Lord will not suffer one of the least of his own to perish.

18. Angels, Sympathy of

Angels, we know, have often been messengers of God's will to the sons of men. They have never shown any reluctance, on the contrary, great has been their joy to bear God's tidings down from heaven to earth, and their sympathy even with fallen men, with men who have grievously sinned and gone astray, is shown by the fact that they "rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons Which need no repentance." They are, as it were, in yonder gilded vessel, untossed of tempest; but they have sympathy with us in this poor heavy-laden bark, tossed with tempest and not comforted. I see them there on yonder sea of glass mingled with fire. I hear their harpings, as incessantly their joy goes up in music to the throne of the Most High. But they do not look down with scorn on us poor denizens of this dusky planet. On the contrary, they delight to think of us as their brethren, as their fellow servants, as it will be the consummation of their happiness when we shall all be gathered to the church of the first-born, that they shall make up the innumerable company of angels that surround the blood-washed throng.

19. Angels Watching the Professor

I should like to ask the man who professes to be a Christian, what the angels see him do? There is a little room upstairs there, your closet, or perhaps you use your bedside for prayer. I should like to know how you behave there. It is not difficult for a man who never prays to make a fine boast of his religion. It is not enough for you to kneel down, but do you ever have any real dealings with God? Do you have real communion with Christ? Do you talk to him as a man would talk to his friend? Do you pour out your heart before him? Oh! the heart-searching God knows how many there are that are fair trees without, but are rotten within; how many there are who are but painted harlots.

20. Annihilation, Doctrine of. Warning against

I do not wonder that ingenious persons have invented theories which aim at mitigating the terrors of the world to come to the impenitent. It is natural they should do so, for the facts are so alarming as they are truthfully given us in God's word, that if we desire to preach comfortable doctrine, and such as will quiet the consciences of idle professors, we must dilute the awful truth. The revelation of God concerning the doom of the wicked is so overwhelming as to make it penal, nay, I was about to say damnable, to be indifferent and careless in the work of evangelising the world. I do not wonder that this error in doctrine springs up just now when abounding callousness of heart needs an excuse for itself. What better pillow for idle heads than the doctrine that the finally impenitent become extinct? The logical reasoning of the sinner is, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," and the professing Christian is not slow to feel an ease of heart from pressing responsibilities when he accepts so consolatory an opinion. Forbear this sleeping draught, I pray you, for in very deed the sharp stimulant of the truth itself is abundantly needful; even when thus bestirred to duty we are sluggish enough, and need not that these sweet but sleep-producing theories should operate upon us.

21. Appearances, False Judgements by

You must never judge of character by circumstances. Diamonds may be worried upon the wheel, and common pebbles may bathe at ease in the brook. The most wicked are permitted to clamber to the high places of the earth, while the most righteous pine at the rich man's gate, with dogs for their companions. Choice flowers full often grow amid tangled briars. Who has not heard of the lily among thorns? Where dwell the pearls? Do not the dark depths of the ocean conceal them, amid mire and wreck? Judge not by appearances, for heirs of light may walk in darkness, and princes of the celestial line may sit upon dunghills. Men accepted of God may be brought very very low, as Jonah was.

22. Architecture, no help to Devotion

Architecture, with its arched roofs, and noble pillars, and dim religious light, is supposed to impart a reverence and awe which befit the solemn engagements of the Sabbath, and draw the mind towards the invisible God. Well, if combinations of stone can sanctify the spirit of man, it is a pity that the gospel did not prescribe architecture as the remedy for the ruin of the fall; if gorgeous buildings make men love God, and long-drawn aisles renovate men's spiritual nature, build, all ye builders, both day and night. If bricks and mortar can lead us to heaven, alas for the confusion which stopped the works at Babel. If there be such a connection between spires and spiritual things as to make human hearts beat in unison with the will of God, then build high and loftily, and

lavish your gold and silver; but if all that you produce is sensuous, and nothing more, then turn ye to living stones, and seek to build up a spiritual house with spiritual means.

23. Ark, The. A Type of Christ's Salvation

One of the earliest types of the Saviour was Noah's ark, by which a certain company, not only of men but also of the lowest animals, were preserved from perishing by water, and were floated out of the old world into the new. See, going up the hill on which the ark is built, not only the fleet gazelle, the timid sheep, the patient ox, the noble horse, the generous dog, and the fair creatures that you would wish to spare; but here comes the lion, his jaws all stained with blood; here is the fierce tiger and the wild hyena, the filthy swine and the stupid ass; creatures of all kinds come hither and find shelter. Who complains? I hear no voice lifting up its veto and crying, "There is no room for the swine here; there is no room for the fierce tiger here." The ark was ordained on purpose to save some of every kind; and just so, our Saviour Jesus receives all sorts of people into himself, and it is no marvel if this man receiveth sinners. Hither fly, ye loving and tender doves! Hither come, ye sweet birds of purest song! But ho, ye ravens, eagles, vultures, and birds of evil name, haste ye hither also, for the ark receives all who come!

24. Aspirations, Heavenly, Wrought by God

How often does my soul feel like an unhatched chick, shut up within a narrow shell, in darkness and discomfort! The life within labours hard to chip and break the shell, to know a little more of the great universe of truth, and see in clearer light the infinite of divine love. Oh, happy day, when the shell shall be broken, and the soul, complete in the image of Christ, shall enter into the freedom for which she is preparing! We look for that, and we shall have it. God, who gave us to aspire to holiness and spirituality and to likeness to himself, never implanted those aspirations in us out of mockery. He meant to gratify these holy longings, or else he would not have excited them.

25. Atonement, Greatness of the

If thou hast an eye to sin, take care to have an eye to the atonement too. Let thine eyes be full of tears, but let those tears act like magnifying-glasses to thine eyes, to make the cross appear a grander and a dearer thing than ever. Never let thy sin shake thy confidence in Christ, for if thou be a great sinner, glorify him by believing him to be a great Saviour. Do not diminish the value of the blood whilst thou magnifiest the intensity of thy sin. Think as badly of sin as thou canst, but think right gloriously of Christ, for there is no sin, however hellish or devilish, which the blood of Jesus cannot take away; and if the concentrated essence of everything that is diabolical in iniquity be found in thyself, yet "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and herein we must, yea, and will, rejoice.

26. Atonement Typified The Lord did not study attractive æsthetics, he did not prepare a tabernacle that should delight men's tastes; it was rich indeed, but so blood-stained as to be by no means beautiful. No staining of glass to charm the eye, but instead thereof the inwards of slaughtered bullocks. Such sights would disgust the delicate tastes of the fops of this present age. Blood, blood on every side; death, fire, smoke and ashes, varied with the bellowing of dying beasts, and the active exertions of men whose white garments were all crimson with the blood of victims. How clearly did the worshippers see the sternness and severity of the justice of God against human sin, and the intensity of the agony of the great Son of God who was in the fulness

of time by his own death to put away all the sins and transgressions of his people! By faith come ye, my brethren, and walk round that blood-stained altar, and as you mark its four-square form and its horns of strength, and see the sacrifices smoking thereon acceptable to God, look down and mark the blood with which its foundations are so completely saturated, and understand how all salvation and all acceptance rests on the atonement of the dying Son of God.

27. Atonement, Unlimited Character of the

I know there are some who think it necessary to their system of theology to limit the merit of the blood of Jesus: if my system of theology needed such a limitation, I would cast it to the winds. I cannot, dare not, allow the thought to find a lodging in my mind; it seems so near akin to blasphemy. In Christ's finished work I see an ocean of merit; my plummet finds no bottom, my eye discovers no shore. There must be sufficient efficacy in the blood of Christ, if God had so willed it, to have saved not only all this world, but ten thousand worlds, had they transgressed the Maker's law. Once admit infinity into the matter, and limit is out of the question. Having a divine person for an offering, it is not consistent to conceive of limited value; bound and measure are terms inapplicable to the divine sacrifice. The intent of the divine purpose fixes the application of the infinite offering, but does not change it into finite work. In the atonement of Christ Jesus there is "bread enough and to spare;" even as Paul wrote to Timothy, "He is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

28. Atonement, Value of, to the Sin-convinced

I do not think anyone ever knows the preciousness of the blood of Christ till he has had a full sight and sense of his sin, his uncleanness, and his ill-desert. Is there any such thing as really and truly coming to the cross of Christ until you first of all have seen what your sin really deserves? A little light into that dark cellar, sir; a little light into that hole within the soul; a little light cast into that infernal den of your humanity, and you would soon discern what sin is, and, seeing it, you would discover that there was no hope of being washed from it, except by a sacrifice far greater than you could ever render. Then the atonement of Christ would become fair and lustrous in your eyes, and you would rejoice with joy unspeakable in that boundless love which led the Saviour to give himself a ransom, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. May the Lord teach us, thundering at us, if need be, what sin means. May he teach it to us so that the lesson shall be burned into our souls, and we shall never forget it. I could fain wish that you were all burden-carriers till you grew weary. I could fain wish that you all laboured after eternal life until your strength failed, and that you might then rejoice in him who has finished the work, and who promises to be to you all in all when you believe in him and trust in him with your whole heart.

29. Atonement, Worthy of our Trust Is there a grander verse in the whole Bible, is there anything in the compass of Scripture, that ever glorified God more than that notable expression of David when he had been sinning with Bathsheba, and made himself as foul and as filthy as the very swine of hell? and yet he cries, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin." Ah! "Wash me," that is the cry, "wash me, the most scarlet and the blackest of hell-deserving sinners, do thou but wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Believe in the omnipotent power of the atonement. Still believe thou, and hold fast to Christ. Cling to his skirts, and if he even seem to frown upon thee, hold to him, like the woman whom he called

a dog, and yet she said, "The dogs eat of the crumbs." Do not believe that which thou thinkest thou dost hear him say, for he cannot say otherwise than this, that whosoever believeth in him is not condemned; and he that believeth in him, though he were dead yet shall he live. Out of thy very death believe him; from thy very hell of sin believe him. Wherever thou mayst be, still believe him. Never doubt him, for the just shall live by faith.

30. Avarice, Destroying Nature of

Oh, what tears have strong men shed in this city, tears which fell not outside the cheek, these had been harmless; but they dropped within the soul, to scald and sear it with ever-abiding melancholy! That which cheered and comforted them, the gain of wealth, has gone, and the busy merchants have been ready for the lunatic asylum or for suicide. How these golden bellows will cease to blow when men come to die! Ah, how little will wealth stimulate the joys of the last moment! Fool, thou hast only bought thyself a marble tomb, and what is that to thy poor dust and ashes? Thou art now to leave all thou hast; thou art as the partridge that sitteth on the eggs, but hatcheth them not; thy joys are all for another, and not for thee. Oh, how often do men that have been happy enough in the accumulation of riches, die in utter misery, with all their gold and silver about them, because their bellows of avaricious acquisition have been burned by their very success, and the flame of hope and ambition has hopelessly died out!

31. Awakened Souls, Opportunity of Preaching to

People go to sleep for a long time, but all on a sudden they begin to rub their eyes, and to enquire about this, and about that, and about something else. Well, now is the time, when the spirit is thus aroused, to preach the gospel to that awakened mind. It seems to me that no nobler opportunity could present itself than now. Now is the time when the corners of the streets should ring with ministers' voices; when the Word of God should be distributed in every house, when you should give away tracts, not such poor tracts as are mostly given away, but tracts with something solid in them, and these should be given away by millions, for just now men are thoughtful, and let them have the grand reality revealed to think about.

"B"

32. Babes, Dead, Missionaries to Survivors In this great city the deaths of little babes are among heaven's most important missionary operations. The many who are born only to die, are these wasted lives? Oh, no! Mothers are beckoned to the skies by their departing infants, and fathers, though they may be steeped in indifference to the gospel, are made to think seriously of the world to come. Ye infant cherubs, who in heaven behold the face of our great Father, how often are ye ministers of his that do his pleasure! In this sense, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hath God ordained strength.

33. Backsliding, Gradual

Remember, brethren, that decays in grace and backsliding are usually very much like the fall of the autumn leaves. You are watching the trees, for even now they are beginning to indicate the coming fall. They evidently know that their verdant robes are to be stripped from them, for they are casting off their first loose vestments. How slowly the time of the brown leaf comes on! You notice here and there a tinge of the copper hue, and anon the gold leaf or the bronze is apparent. Week after week you observe that the general fall of the leaves is drawing nearer, but it is a matter that creeps slowly on. And so with backsliders. They are not put out of the visible church all at once, they do not become open offenders all at once. The heart by slow degrees turns aside from the living God, and then at last comes the outward sin and the outward shame. God save us from falling by little and little! The devil's little strokes have felled many great oaks. Constant droppings of temptation have worn away many stones. God save us therefrom. Some cities have been carried by storm. Brave soldiers have made the irons of the scaling ladder bite on the top of the wall, and up they have swarmed in defiance of death, and carried the city by sudden force within a few hours. But many other cities have been taken by the slow process of the siege; the supplies have been cut off; warriors have been slain at the sally-ports, slowly; entrenchments have been thrown up nearer and nearer to the wall, mines have been dug under the bastions, forts have been weakened, gates have been shaken, and at last the city has been subdued. Where Satan captures one man by force of strong temptation, he captures ten by the gradual process of sapping and undermining the principles which should rule within.

34. Backsliding, not a Necessity

It is regarded by many as a law of nature, that our first love must grow cold, and our early zeal must necessarily decline. I do not believe it for a moment. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day;" and, were we watchful and careful to live near to God, there is no reason why our spiritual life should not continuously make progress both in strength and beauty. There is no inherent necessity in the divine life itself compelling it to decline, for is it not written, "It shall be in him a well of Water, springing up unto everlasting life:" "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Grace is a living and incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth for ever, and there is nowhere impressed upon the divine life a law of pining and decay. If we do falter and faint in the onward path, it is our sin, and it is doubly sinful to forge

excuses for it. It is not to be laid upon the back of some mysterious necessity of the new nature that it should be so, but it is to be brought as a charge against ourselves.

35. Battle Field, Christian Life a The devotion of the cloisters is by no means equal to that of the man who is engaged in the battle of life; the devotion of the nunnery and the monastery is at best the heroism of a soldier who shuns the battle; but the devotion of the man in business life, who turns all to the glory of God, is the courage of one who seeks the thickest of the fray, and there bears aloft the grand old standard of Jehovah-nissi.

36. Believer groaning for Heaven Did you hear that groan just now? It is a traveller lost in the deep snow on the mountain pass. No one has come to rescue him, and indeed he has fallen into a place from which escape is impossible. The snow is numbing his limbs, and his soul is breathed out with many a groan. Keep that groan in your ear, for I want you to hear another. The traveller has reached the hospice. He has been charitably received, he has been warmed at the fire, he has received abundant provision, he is warmly clothed. There is no fear of tempest, that grand old hospice has outstood many a thundering storm. The man is perfectly safe, and quite content, so far as that goes, and exceedingly grateful to think that he has been rescued; but yet I hear him groan because he has a wife and children down in yonder plain, and the snow is lying too deep for travelling, and the wind is howling, and the blinding snow flakes are falling so thickly that he cannot pursue his journey. Ask him. whether he is happy and content. He says, "Yes, I am happy and grateful. I have been saved from the snow. I do. not wish for anything more than I have here, I am perfectly satisfied, so far as this goes, but I long to look upon my household, and to be once more in my own sweet home, and until I reach it, I shall not cease to groan." Now, the first groan which you heard was deep and dreadful, as though it were fetched from the abyss of hell; that is the groan of the ungodly man as he perishes, and leaves all his dear delights; but the second groan is so softened and sweetened, that it is rather the note of desire than of distress. Such is the groan of the believer, who, though rescued and brought into the hospice of divine mercy, is longing to see his Father's face without a veil between, and to be united with the happy family on the other side the Jordan, where they rejoice for evermore.

37. Believers Influenced by Christ

Brethren, the Christian minister should be like these golden spring flowers which we are so glad to see. Have you observed them when the sun is shining? How they open their golden cups, and each one whispers to the great sun, "Fill me with thy beams!" but when the sun is hidden behind a cloud, where are they? They close their cups and droop their heads. So should the Christian feel the sweet influences of Jesus: so especially should the Christian minister be subject to his Lord. Jesus must be his sun, and he must be the flower which yields itself to the Sun of Righteousness.

38. Benefits, Divine

What though the physician should exhaust the resources of medical science while he spares no pains in watching his patient? that patient may die. What though the advocate plead for his client with intense fervour, cogent reasoning, and a torrent of eloquence? that client may yet lose his cause. What though the general of an army command the troops ever so skilfully, and fight against the enemy ever so bravely? the battle may yet be lost. The heroic volunteer who essays to rescue a drowning man may fail in the endeavour, and lose his own life in the attempt. The valiant crew

that man the life-boat may not succeed in bringing the shipwrecked to shore. The best aims may miscarry. Kindness, like ore of gold, in the breast of the creature may never be minted into the coin of benefit, or pass current for its real worth. Not all donations expended in charity are effectual to relieve distress. But the benefits of God are all fully beneficial. They answer the ends they are designed to serve. Forgetfulness on the part of God's children is without excuse, for here we are, monuments of mercy, pillars of grace, living epistles; ay, the living, the living to praise thee, O God, as I do this day; and thus beholden to the Lord for all his benefits, I feel that my thoughts and actions of adoring gratitude should break forth, restrained by no shore, but be continually overflowing every embankment that custom has thrown up, and send out in tears of love and sweat of labour, fertilising streams on the right hand and on the left.

39. Bible, Freshness of

I heard a gentleman say yesterday, that he could walk any number of miles when the scenery was good; but, he added, "When it is flat and uninteresting, how one tires!" What scenery it is through which the Christian man walks—the towering mountains of predestination, the great sea of providence, the mighty cliffs of divine promise, the green fields of divine grace, the river that makes glad the city of God;—oh, what scenery surrounds the Christian, and what fresh discoveries he makes at every step! The Bible is always a new book. If you want a novel, read your Bible; it is always new; there is not a stale page in the word of God; it is just as fresh as though the ink were not yet dry, but had flowed to-day from the pen of inspiration. There have been poets whose sayings startled all England when first their verses were thrown broadcast over the land, but nobody reads their writings now; yet the pages that were written by David and by Paul are glowing with the radiant glory which was upon them when long ago the Holy Spirit spake by them.

40. Bible, full of Christ

How delightful this Bible looks to me when I see the blood of Christ sprinkled upon it! Every leaf would have flashed with Sinai's lightnings, and every verse would have rolled with the thunders of Horeb, if it had not been for Calvary's cross. Now as you look you see on every page your Saviour's name. He loved you, and gave himself for you, and now you who are sprinkled with that blood, and have by faith rested in him, can take that precious book and find it to be green pastures and still waters to your souls.

41. Blessing, Anticipation of

Oh, start not back, ye men of prayer! Fail not now, since God is still your arm! Ye carry bows, turn not back in the day of battle! Ye have the trophies of past victories before your eyes! Now for a mighty attack upon the mercy seat, that you may win power to overcome the gates of hell! Let us be vehement—violent I was about to say; for "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Let us cannonade the gate of heaven! Let us arise, each man and each woman, every soul that has power, and let us cry unto the mighty God, that he would be pleased to give us such a blessing that we shall not have room enough to receive it. It must come, only be ready for it. It will come; it cometh even now! Thank God! Take courage! Be on your watchtower! and the Lord bless us for his name's sake. Amen.

42. Blood of Christ, the great Necessity

If I read the experience of men who have known their own hearts and mourned before the Lord, I wish that I had as deep a sense of sin as they had; or, if I read the story of saints who have lived the angelic life, and even here on earth have dwelt with Christ and walked the golden streets in fellowship with him, I wish I could rise to all their heights; but for all that, if my soul is still polluted with sin, for me the one thing needful is cleansing by the Redeemer's blood; I must at once believingly yield to Jesus, for this is of necessity, and the desirable things will come to me afterwards, if I sit down at Jesus' feet. So near the source of all good things, it will be easy to be enriched with all knowledge and grace, but our first business is to get there, and by the Holy Spirit's blessing we may come there without either the deep experience or the elevated feelings we have described; we may come just as we are, all guilty and lost, and submit ourselves to the Saviour. Having done that, we are in the best position for spiritual attainments—yea, they shall surely be ours. Let the heart yield itself to Jesus, and all is well. When he becomes our leader and commander, our sole reliance and sure confidence, it is well with us: we have all that is needful, and the pledge of all that is desirable.

43. Bodies of Believers, Resurrection of

How does Paul put it? "Absent from the body;" but you have hardly said that word, when he adds, "present with the Lord." The eyes are closed on earth and opened again in heaven. They lose their anchor, and immediately they come to the desired haven. How long that state of disembodied happiness shall last, it is not for us to know, but by-and-bye, when the fulness of time shall come, the Lord Jesus shall consummate all things by the resurrection of these bodies. The trumpet shall sound, and as Jesus Christ's body rose from the dead as the first-fruits, so shall we arise, every man in his own order. Raised up by divine power, our very bodies shall be reunited with our souls to live with Christ, raised however, not as they shall be put into the grave to slumber, but in a nobler image. They were sown like the shrivelled seed, they shall come up like the fair flowers which decorate your summer gardens. Planted as a dull, unattractive bulb, to develop into a glory like that of a lovely lily with snowy cup and petals of gold. Sown like the shrivelled barley or wheat, to come up as a fair green blade, or to become the golden ear. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Come my soul, what a promise is given thee in God's word of the life that is to come! A promise for my soul, did I say? A promise for my body too. These aches and pains shall be repaid; this weariness and these sicknesses shall all be recompensed. The body shall be re-married to the soul, from which it parted with so much grief, and the marriage shall be the more joyous because there never shall be another divorce. Then in body and in soul made perfect, the fulness of our bliss shall have arrived.

44. Books, Heretical, Danger of

I asked sometimes to read an heretical book: well, if I believed my reading it would help its refutation, and might be an assistance to others in keeping them out of error, I might do it as a hard matter of duty, but I shall not do it unless I see some good will come from it. I am not going to drag my spirit through a ditch for the sake of having it washed afterwards, for it is not my own. It may be that good medicine would restore me if I poisoned myself with putrid meat, but I am not going to try it: I dare not experiment on a mind which no longer belongs to me. There is a mother and a child, and the child has a book to play with, and a blacklead pencil. It is making drawings and marks upon the book, and the mother takes no notice. It lays down one book and snatches

another from the table, and at once the mother rises from her seat, and hurriedly takes the book away, saying: "No, my dear, you must not mark that, for it is not ours." So with my mind, intellect, and spirit; if it belonged to me I might or might not play tomfool with it, and go to hear Socinians, Ritualists, Universalists, and suchlike preach, but as it is not my own, I will preserve it from such fooleries, and the pure word shall not be mingled with the errors of men.

45. Broken Bones, the Sinner's Penalty

We think comparatively little of wounds which only tear the curtains of flesh, but when the solid pillars of the house of manhood are snapped in twain, and the supporters of the body are broken, then every man confesses that the pain is great indeed. David declares that such was his pain of mind. His soul was racked and tortured, anguished and tormented. The pain of a broken bone is as constant as it is excruciating. It prevents sleep by night and ease by day. The mind cannot be diverted from it. Men cannot shake off the remembrance that this their frame is so seriously injured. O beware, you believers, who are just now tempted by the sweets of sin, and remember the wormwood and gall which will be found in the dregs thereof. You who feel the soft blandishments of sin to be so pleasing to your flesh, and are ready to yield to its gentle fascinations, remember that when it reveals itself, the softness of its touch will all be gone, and it will be towards you as a huge hammer, or like the crushing wheels of the chariot of Juggernaut, crushing your spirit with anguish. The velvet paw of the tiger of sin conceals a lacerating claw. Beware in time!

46. Bubble Companies

It is not wise to aim at impossibilities—it is a waste of powder to fire at the man in the moon. Making deal boards out of Sawdust is a very sensible scheme compared with what some of my London friends have been aiming at, for they have been trying to get money by buying shares in companies: they might quite as soon catch the wind in a net, or carry water in a sieve. Bubbles are fine fun for boys, but bubble companies are edged tools that none should play with. If my friend has money which he can afford to lose, there is still no reason why he should hand it over to a set of knaves: if I wanted to get rid of my leg, I should not get a shark to snap it off for me. Give your money to fools sooner than let rogues wheedle you out of it.

47. Burdens to be cast on God

He who loved us from before the foundations of the world has immutably determined all the steps of our pilgrimage. Wherefore, then, disturb thyself? There is a hand upon the helm which shall steer thy vessel safely enough between the rocks, and by the quicksands, and away from the shoals and the headlands, through the mist, and through the darkness, safely to the desired haven. Our Pilot never sleeps, and his hand never relaxes its grasp. It is a blessed thing, after you have been muddling and meddling as you ought not to do with the affairs of providence, to leave them alone and cast your burden upon the Lord.

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48. Cares to be cast on God

Dear mother, the thought of the children at home has frequently disturbed your devotions in the assembly of the saints. Good friend engaged in business, you do not always find it easy to put a hedge between Saturday and Sunday. The cares of the week will stray into the sacred enclosure of the day of rest, and thus the cruel archers worry you. Ay, and perhaps in the case of those of us who are engaged in God's work, even our solemn engagements enlist against us a set of archers unknown to others; I mean anxieties about the right conducting of services, and arranging the various departments of the church. We become, like Martha, cumbered with much serving, even though we are serving the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and this deprives us of the delightful sitting at his feet, which is heaven below. It is well to be able to cast all our cares on him who careth for us, and thus, by an act of faith in our heavenly Father, to be delivered from the noise of these archers.

49. Carnal Mind, Ignorance of the The tree planted by the river feels not the ague which breeds in the fen and lurks in the morass; but, put a man there, and you will see him shivering from head to foot ere Long; and the carnal mind, dead in sin, knows not the miasma of temptation which lurks around him; but oh, if you were alive unto God your struggle would begin, and you would cry to the strong for help.

50. Cavillers

It is very likely that neither ministers nor their sermons are perfect—the best garden may have a few weeds in it, the cleanest corn may have some chaff—but cavillers cavil at anything or nothing, and find fault for the sake of showing off their deep knowledge: sooner than let their tongues have a holiday they would complain that the grass is not a nice shade of blue, and say that the sky would have looked neater if it had been whitewashed.

51. Ceremonialism, Quackery of

Dr. Ceremonial has patented a lotion for producing regeneration in little children, by the application of a few drops to their forehead. He puts his hands on the heads of boys and girls, and by what he calls occult influence, confirms them in grace. He professes to be able to make a piece of a loaf and a cup of wine to be actually divine, and in themselves a channel of grace to the souls of men. The substances are material—a mouse may nibble at the one, a bottle will hold the other; you can touch them, taste them, smell them, and yet fools adore them as divine, and imagine that material substances can be food for souls. Surely this Dr. Ceremonial flourishes all the more because of the monstrous absurdity of his teachings; his pills are huge, but men have wide swallows and can receive anything. Why, think for a minute, and then wonder for an hour: men are to be sanctified by gazing at genuflexions, millinery and candles! The east is said to be a more gracious quarter of the heavens than the west, and creeds repeated with the head in that direction possess a peculiar efficacy. It appears that in spiritual operation certain colours are peculiarly efficacious; prayers said or sung in white are far more prevalent than in black, and according to the age of the year and the

condition of the moon, puce, violet, scarlet, and blue, are more acceptable to God. I have no patience with these things; it is hardly good enough sport for laughter; but so long as fools abound, knaves will flourish, and this Dr. Ceremonial will get men to spend their substance in abundance, and laugh in his sleeve to think that rational beings should be his silly dupes. I trust there are none such here. I hope none of you are so befooled. What can there be in crossings, bowings, and uttering over and over the same words? What is any worship unless the reason and heart enter into it? What can there be in one material substance to give it sanctity? Is it not as absurd as the fetishism of the Bushman, to believe that bricks and mortar, and slates and boarding, could make a holy place? That, indeed, any one place can be a jot holier than another; that any plot of ground can be holier than common ground; or that any man, because certain words have been said over his godless, graceless head, can be made a dispenser of the grace of God, and a pardoner of sins! We are not so befooled, but still this quack drives a good trade, and is held in very high repute.

52. Ceremonies, No Peace in

It may be you have been brought in connection with that church which vainly rests its faith upon the figment of apostolical succession, and the empty parade of episcopal ordination. You have been taught to believe in aquatic regeneration, and confirmation by palmistry; you are the dupe of the dogma of sacramental efficacy, and priestly potency; if so, it is little marvel that you have not found peace, for, believe me, there is no peace to be found in the whole round of ceremonies, even if they were such as God himself prescribed; there is no peace to be found in them, except it be that deadly peace which rocks souls in the cradle of superstition into that deep sleep from which only the judgment trumpet shall awaken them.

53. Character, Impression of

There are men in this world who never do anything with energy, who never under any circumstances throw force into anything they have to do. They walk over the sands of life with a light foot, and make no impression; while others as they tread the pathway which God has allotted for them, take care to bring down their feet with such firmness of purpose and fixedness of resolve, that they leave behind them "footprints on the sands of time," which shall be seen by others after many days. The puff-ball is the emblem of many a forceless life.

54. Childhood, Purity of, a Restraint upon Sin The exhalations of our moral conduct sweeten or defile the general atmosphere of society, and in this children as well as others are partakers. I would say to every man who is giving full swing to his passions, if nothing else will check you, at any rate pause awhile when yonder fair-haired girls and lisping children are gazing upon you. If you care not for angels, stop for the sake of yon blue-eyed boy. Let not the leprosy of your sin pollute your offspring more than must be. Were you about to utter a lascivious sentence? Withhold it, I pray you, for it is not meet that little ears should so soon be desecrated by that which has become common enough to you, but will as yet be shocking to them. Were you about to blaspheme? Is it not enough to curse your Maker? Why need you bring a second curse upon that harmless little one? Why teach those lips that will be all too ready to learn to speak the hideous word? Man, if any feeling be left to you, respect the purity of childhood, and let the presence of youth, if it be not a motive for sanctity, at any rate be a reason for restraint in open sin. Do not sin cruelly and wantonly against the child.

55. Children in the Church I am very thankful that our heavenly Father has saved so many of the children of this church. We rejoice that

"Many dear children are gathering here, For of such is the kingdom of heaven."

May the Lord plant in his garden many more of those sweet flowers whose buds and blossoms he loves so well. Ah, mothers! you have not to keep a mournful vigil beneath your sons hanging upon the tree: do not grow weary, then, when you are called diligently to watch against your children's follies and failings. Have patience with them! Have compassion for them! What a mercy it is that they are yours! Notwithstanding the trouble they cost you, you would not for all the world lose the prattle of their little tongues, and the music of their merry feet; and as you remember—for perhaps you have already experienced it—how briny are those tears which fall upon little coffin-lids, thank God that you are indulged with the trouble of bringing up your babes; bless God that you have so sweet a weariness as that of caring for their souls.

56. Children, Salvation of

I hate to hear people say, "They have received a pack of children into the church." "A pack of children!" yes, and if Jesus carries them in his bosom, surely you are not imitating Christ, nor exhibiting much of his spirit when you look down upon them and despise them. To me one soul is as good as another. I rejoice as much in the addition of the poorest mechanic to this church as if he were a peer of the realm; I am as grateful to God when I hear of repentance in the young as in the aged, for souls, after all, are not affected in value by rank or age. Immortal spirits are all priceless, and not to be weighed in the scale with worlds. I pray you, therefore, rejoice if the Spirit of God dwells in the lowly or in the great, in the young or in the old. He is the selfsame Spirit, he makes each renewed person equally his temple, and each saved one is equally a jewel of Christ, dear to the heart of the Eternal Father, beloved by him who redeemed all his people alike with his most precious blood.

57. Child's Cry heard by God

It is very seldom Christ Jesus keeps poor sinners waiting long. Sometimes he does. He answers them not a word; but then it is to try their faith. Though he keeps them waiting, he will not send them away wanting; he will be sure to give them mercies, sooner or later. "Though the promise tarry, wait for it," and thou shalt find it yet, to thy soul's salvation. Child of God! has not thy Father come to thee yet? Cry for him! cry for him! Thy Father will come. Nothing fetches the parent to the child like the child's cry. Cry, little one, cry! Thou who hast but little faith. "Ah! but," thou sayest, "I am too weak to cry." Did you never notice that the little one sometimes cries so very low, that when you are sitting in the parlour with the mother, you do not hear it? Up she gets; there is the dear child crying upstairs; and off she goes. She can hear it, though you cannot; because it is her child that cries. Cry, little one; let thy prayer go up to heaven. Though thy minister doth not hear it; though unbelief says no one can hear it, there is a God in heaven who knoweth the cry of the penitent, who "healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

58. Cholera, Voice of the This cholera is like the sound of a trumpet. The voice of the Christian ministry is not heard. Those who go to listen to it do not all hear it, for they hear as though they heard not; while the great mass know nothing, and care less about the preacher's message. The ministry of London is not altogether powerless to those who attend it, but it is utterly without point

or force to the dense mass who lie outside the house of God. Disease, however, is a trumpet which must be heard. Its echoes reach the miserable garrets where the poor are crowded together, and have never heard nor cared for the name of Christ,—they hear the sound, and as one after another dies, they tremble. In the darkest cellar, in the most crowded haunt of vice; ay! and in the palaces of kings, in the halls of the rich and great, the sound finds an entrance, and the cry is raised, "The death plague is come! The cholera is among us!" All men are compelled to hear the trumpet-voice—would to God they heard it to better purpose! Would to God all of us were aroused to a searching of heart, and, above all, led to fly to Christ Jesus, the great sacrifice for sin, and to find in him a rescue from the greater plague, the wrath to come!

59. Christ a Physician

There lies a poor man; he has been wounded in battle. In yonder hospital there is a bundle of liniment. The blood is flowing: he has lost an arm; he has lost a leg. There are plenty at the hospital who can bind up his wounds, and plenty of medicines for all that he now suffers. But what use are they? He may lie forlorn on the battle-field and die unfriended: unless there is someone to bring the ambulance to carry him to the place, he cannot reach it himself. He lifts himself up on that one remaining arm, but he falls down faint; the blood is flowing freely, and his strength is ebbing with it. Oh! then it is not the liniment he cares for; it is not the ointment; it is someone who can bring those things to him. Ay, and if the remedies were all put there by his side, it may be, he is so faint and sick that he can do nothing for his own relief. Now, in the Christian religion, there is something more than prescriptions for our comfort. There is one, even the Spirit of truth, who takes of the things of Jesus, and applies them to us. Think not that Christ hath merely put joys within our reach that we may get for ourselves, but he comes and puts the joys inside our hearts. The poor, sick, way-worn pilgrim not only finds there is something to strengthen him to walk, but he is borne on eagles' wings. Christ does not merely help him to walk, but carries him, and says, "I will bind up your wounds; I will come to you myself." O poor soul, is not this joy for you? You have been often told by your minister to believe in Christ, but you say you cannot. You have often been invited to come to Jesus, but you feel you cannot come. Yes; but the best of the gospel is, that when a sinner cannot come to Christ, Christ can come to him. When the poor soul feels that it cannot get near Christ, Christ will be sure to draw him. O Christian, if thou art labouring under deep distresses, thy Father does not give thee promises and then leave thee. The promises he has written in the Word he will grave on your heart. He will manifest his love to you, and by his blessed Spirit, which bloweth like the wind, take away your cares and troubles.

60. Christ a Tender Shepherd

There is a mother here this morning: she has seven children; I know what child she has been thinking of while we have been preaching. She has not been thinking of John, who is married and away, nor of Mary, who is in health, nor of Thomas, who is sitting by her side, but she has been thinking of the poor little one at home in bed, and she has wondered whether it has had any sleep this morning, and whether it has been well taken care of. You know that my guess is correct.

Now Jesus Christ, our loving Shepherd, if he should forget those of us who are strong and in sound health, will be sure to recollect the sickly ones. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom. He shall gently lead those that are with young.

61. Christ, Absolute Rule of

Some people are militia-Christians—they serve the King with a limitation, and must not be sent out of England; but others are soldier-Christians, who give themselves wholly up to their Lord and Captain; they will go wherever he chooses to send them. Some professors appear to belong to God by copyhold. They grant a limited kind of divine right to their energies and substance; but there are many clauses which limit the holding. I hope that you are, dear friends, God's portion upon an absolute freehold. You are absolutely the Lord's, that he may do precisely as he wills with you. We greatly prefer a limited monarchy when man reigns, but when the Lord rules we desire him to exercise unlimited power over us. Oh come, my Master, and be absolute Lord of my soul! Reign over me, and subdue my every passion to do and be, and feel all that thy will ordains.

62. Christ All to the Believer

One of old said, "Aut Cæsar aut nullus," he would be either Cæsar or nobody; and so Jesus Christ will be either acknowledged the anointed Saviour, or he will be nothing to you. If you will not take him to be an expiation for your sins, and the true refiner of your life, you refuse him altogether. Mere admiration of the physician gives no part in his healing power. The loudest praises of light give not vision to blind men. Jesus is either the Saviour or nothing. For this he lived, for this he died. Alas, for those who will not receive him in this character! In the long run you shall always find that, despite their soft, speeches, they have not received the true Christ of God. He who rejects Jesus as an atoning sacrifice is sure to doubt his Godhead, and so to reject his grander nature. The deniers of the atonement, who are supposed to be admirers, of the example of Christ, generally turn out to be the greatest enemies to vital Christianity. There are no more real enemies of Christ than those who deny the doctrine of the cross. If they do not accept Christ to wash them, they soon prove that they have no part in him.

63. Christ, Coming to, as a Sinner A certain king was accustomed on set occasions to entertain all the beggars of the city. Around him sat his courtiers, all clothed in rich apparel; the beggars sat at the same table in their rags of poverty. Now, it came to pass that on a certain day one of the courtiers had spoiled his silken apparel, so that he dare not put it on, and he felt, "I cannot go to the king's feast, to-day, for my robe is foul." He sat weeping, till the thought struck him, "To-morrow, when the king holds his feast, some will come as courtiers, happily decked in their beautiful array; but others will come and be made quite as welcome who will be dressed in rags. Well, well," says he, "so long as I may see the king's face, and sit at the king's table, I will enter among the beggars." So, without mourning because he had lost his silken habit, he put on the rags of a beggar, and he saw the king's face as well as if he had worn his scarlet and fine linen. My soul has done this full many a time, and I bid you do the same; if you cannot come as a saint, come as a sinner, only do come, and you shall receive joy and peace.

64. Christ, Encouragement from his Sufferings That defile between overhanging rocks is so dark. I, a poor timid child, shrink back from it; but how is my courage restored as, I see Jesus bearing the lantern of his love, and going before me into the thick darkness! Hark! I hear him say, "Follow me;" and while he speaks I perceive a light streaming from his sacred person; every thorn of his crown gleams like a star; the jewels of his breastplate flash like lamps, and his wounds gleam with celestial splendour. "Fear not," saith he, "for in all your afflictions I have been afflicted. I was tempted in all points like as you are, though without sin." Who can tell the encouragement given to

the heir of heaven by the fact that the elder Brother has passed through all the dark passage which leads to the promised rest!

65. Christ Entertained by the Soul

Christ must be crowned in men's hearts, or we pine with grief. We cannot be satisfied to see him stand in the street, his head wet with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night: we must have the Son of God entertained, for oh! it grieves us even unto brokenness of heart; it troubles us exceedingly that he should be used so ill who loved us so well; that he should be rejected who gave up heaven and all its glories, that he might redeem us from going down to hell. By the wounds of Christ, and by the bloody sweat that covered him when he redeemed us from our sins, we do beseech you listen to this voice, "Where is the guest-chamber?" and reply, "Lord, that guest-chamber is in my soul to-day."

66. Christ, Face of, the Glorified Saints' Vision In the beatific vision it is Christ whom they see; and further, it is his face which they behold. They shall not see the skirts of his robe as Moses saw the back parts of Jehovah; they shall not be satisfied to touch the hem of his garment, or to sit far down at his feet where they can only see his sandals, but they "shall see his face;" by which I understand two things: first, that they shall literally and physically, with their risen bodies, actually look into the face of Jesus; and secondly, that spiritually their mental faculties shall be enlarged, so that they shall be enabled to look into the very heart, and soul, and character of Christ, so as to understand him, his work, his love, his all in all, as they never understood him before. They shall literally, I say, see his face, for Christ is no phantom; and in heaven, though divine, and therefore spiritual, he is still a man, and therefore material like ourselves. The very flesh and blood that suffered upon Calvary is in heaven; the hand that was pierced with the nail, now at this moment grasps the sceptre of all worlds; that very head which was bowed down with anguish is now crowned with a royal diadem; and the face that was so marred is the very face which beams resplendent amidst the thrones of heaven. Into that selfsame countenance we shall be permitted to gaze. O what a sight! Roll by, ye years; hasten on, ye laggard months and days, to let us but for once behold him, our Beloved, our hearts' care, who "redeemed us unto God by his blood," whose we are, and whom we love with such a passionate desire, that to be in his embrace we would be satisfied to suffer ten thousand deaths! They shall actually see Jesus.

67. Christ, Fulness of When you contemplate the Saviour, you find all the virtues enshrined in him; other men are stars, but he is a constellation, nay, he is the whole universe of stars gathered into one galaxy of splendour; other men are gems and jewels, but he is the crown imperial, where every jewel glitters; other men finish but a part of the picture, and the background is left, or else there is something in the foreground that is but roughly touched, but he finishes the whole; not the minutest portion is neglected; the character is perfect and matchless. If I look at Peter, I admire his courage; if I look at Paul, I wonder at his industry and devotedness to the cause of God; if I look at John, I see the loveliness and gentleness of his bearing: but when I look to the Saviour, I am not so much attracted by any one particular virtue as by the singular combination of the whole. There are all the spices—the stacte, and the onycha, and the galbanum, and the pure frankincense; the varied perfumes combine to make up one perfect confection.

68. Christ, Gentleness of

How very gentle, though all but omnipotent, is the influence of the sun upon the earth and all the planets! How they constantly revolve around and follow him in his wondrous march; yet you never feel that he draws! If you harness a horse to your chariot, he tugs and pulls by fits and starts; but the Father of lights draws all the ponderous planets along their appointed ways, and yet there is not enough of jar to shake an aphid from a rosebud. So there is no noise in the loving drawings of the Saviour. Much of the fanaticism which comes with religious excitements is not of God. The genuine dew of heaven falls calmly.

"As in soft silence vernal showers Fall to refresh the fields and flowers, So in sweet silence from above Drops the sweet influence of his love."

69. Christ Growing in Value As you grow in grace you will find many doctrines and points of church government which once appeared to you to be all-important, though you will still value them, will seem but of small consequence compared with Christ himself. Like the traveller ascending the Alps to reach the summit of Mont Blanc, at first he observes that lord of the hills as one horn among many, and often in the twistings of his upward path he sees other peaks which appear more elevated than that monarch of mountains; but when at last he is near the summit, he sees all the rest of the hills beneath his feet, and like a mighty wedge of alabaster, Mont Blanc pierces the very clouds. So, as we grow in grace, other things sink and Jesus rises. They must decrease, but Christ must increase; until he alone fills the full horizon of your soul, and rises clear and bright and glorious up into the very heaven of God. O that we may thus see "Jesus only!"

70. Christ, III-Treatment of

"My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Ah, sorrowful remembrances, for those drops were not the ordinary dew that fall upon the houseless traveller's unprotected head; his head was wet with scarlet dew, and his locks with crimson drops of a tenfold night of God's desertion, when he "sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." My heart, how vile art thou, for thou shuttest out the Crucified. Behold the Man thorn crowned and scourged, with traces of the spittle of the soldiery, canst thou close the door on him? Wilt thou despise the "despised and rejected of men"? Wilt thou grieve the "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief"? Dost thou forget that he suffered all this for thee, for thee, when thou deservest nothing at his hands? After all this, wilt thou give him no recompense, not even the poor return of admission to thy loving communings?

71. Christ: Intensity of his Zeal

Fancy yourselves, my brethren, standing on the beach when a ship is being broken on the rocks. If there were anything that you could do towards the rescue of the mariners, would you not feel within yourselves, "I must work"? Why, it is said that sometimes when the crowd see a vessel going to pieces, and hear the cries of the drowning men, they seem as if they were all seized with madness, because, not being able to give vent to their kindness and brotherly feeling towards the perishing ones by any practical activity, they know not what to do, and are ready to sacrifice their own lives if they might but do something to save others. Men feel that they must work in the presence of so dreadful a need. And Christ saw this world of ours quivering over the pit. He saw it floating, as it were, in an atmosphere of fire, and he wished to quench those flames, and make the world rejoice, and therefore he must work to that end. He could not, he could not possibly rest and

be quiet. He knew not how to take his ease even at night.

"Cold mountains and the midnight air Witnessed the fervour of his prayer."

And when he was faint and weary, and needed to eat, he would not eat, because the zeal of God's house had eaten him up, and it was his meat and his drink to do the will of him that sent him. The love within and the need without acted towards one common end, and formed an intense necessity, so that the Saviour must work.

72. Christ, Inhabitation to

Hark! hark! I hear the chariot wheels of death. He comes! he comes! and the axles of his chariot are hot with speed. He stands aloft driving his white horse. The skeleton rider brandishes his awful spear, and you are the victim. God has spared you up till now, but he may not bid you spend another Sabbath-day. I hear the mower's scythe everywhere, as I pass along, making ready to cut down the grass and the flower thereof. Ah! death's scythe is being sharpened now. He proceeds to reap his harvest every day, and, whether prepared or not, you must be cut down when God's time shall come. Fly, then, I pray you, and though you be, like John Mark, unfit, and unprepared, remember you may come naked to Christ, for he can clothe you; you may come filthy to Christ, for he can wash you; you may come ail unholy and defiled to Jesus, for he can put away your sin.

73. Christ, Kingship of, our Comfort A pestilence has gone forth from which few of our churches are free. Human intellect is adored as an idol, and in its pride it changes the teaching of the word, and sets up new dogmas which the word of God utterly rejects. If these things depress our spirits, nevertheless let us be of good courage; for if we cannot be joyful in our ministers, we will be joyful in our King. If the pulpit fail us, the throne is ever filled by him who is the Truth; and if we have to suspect the orthodoxy of one, and to know the heterodoxy of another, to see Judas here and Ahithophel there, nevertheless Judah still ruleth with God and is faithful with the saints. Our King abideth, and his truth endureth to all generations.

74. Christ, Kiss of Have you never heard of the Persian king who gave his various councillors different gifts: to one he gave a golden goblet, but to another a kiss; whereupon all the councillors of the court were envious of the man who had the kiss, and they counted the goblets of gold, and jewels, and caskets of silver, to be less than nothing as compared with that familiar token of royal favour. O poor but favoured saints, you will never envy those who quaff golden cups of fortune if you obtain the kiss from Jesus' mouth; for you know that his love is better than all the world beside, and the enjoyment of it will yield you richest rest. How can you feel the miseries of envy when you possess in Christ the best of all portions? Who wants cisterns by the river? Who cries for pebbles when he possesses pearls?

75. Christ, Likeness to

Now, here is a man who has been cutting a seal and making your crest, but when you come to stamp your letters with it, you find that the impression is very bad, that it is not your crest at all. You cannot make out what it is. It may be a griffin, but it is not at all like one. Well, what will you do? Will you try to polish up your wax, and so make the impression like what you wanted it to be? Would it not be a great deal wiser if you were to get the seal altered? Would not that set it all right directly? If you were to send the seal back to the man who cut the die, and get him to make the

seal properly, would not the stamp then be right? Now, how do we get likeness to Christ? Why, it is faith which puts the stamp there, and instead of saying, "The impression upon my character is not like Christ, therefore I must try to alter it," my dear friend, think about your faith; go to Christ, and through him get your faith altered; and when the stamp is set to rights, then the impression will be perfect. There is no holiness, no true holiness apart from faith.

76. Christ, Living on

Let the sons of earth be nourished as they may, and fattened like kings' sons, yet there are no faces that are so fair to look upon with holy joy and exultation, as the faces of the men who feed on Christ Jesus, who is the bread that came down from heaven; there are none who are so blest as those who live upon God himself, for they have this for their surpassing excellence, that eating as they do this bread, they live for ever. He that eats other bread derives temporary nourishment from it, but ere long he dies; he who feeds on Christ feeds on immortal food, and more, he becomes immortal himself—the food transforms the man. Matchless is the manna which comes from heaven, for it makes us heavenly and bears us up to the heaven from whence it came! They who live on Christ become like Christ; being fed upon him, they become conformed unto his image, made meet to be partakers of the glory of God in heaven.

77. Christ, Loving us in our Sins

We recollect the tears and prayers that we poured out day and night, asking for mercy; but Jesus, our friend, was loving to us then, taking delight in those penitential tears, putting them into his bottle, telling the angels that we were praying, and making them string their harps afresh to sweet notes of praise over sinners that repented. He knew us, knew us in the gloom, in the thick darkness in which we sought after God, if haply we might find him. He was near the prodigal's side when in all his rags and filth he was saying, "I will arise, and go to my Father," and it was Jesus through whom we were introduced to the Father's bosom, and received the parental kiss, and were made to sit down where there are music and dancing, because the dead are alive, and the lost are found.

78. Christ, Meditation on, Overwhelming The day in which I saw most of creation's grandeur was spent upon the Wengern Alp; my heart was near her God, and all around was majestic; the dread mountains, like pyramids of ice, the clouds like fleecy wool; I saw the avalanche, and heard the thunder of its fall; I marked the dashing waterfalls leaping into the vale of Lauterbrunnen beneath our feet, but my heart felt that creation was too scant a mirror to image all her God—his face was more terrible than the storm, his robes more pure than the virgin snow, his voice far louder than the thunder, his love far higher than the everlasting hills. I took out my pocket-book and wrote these lines.

Yon Alps, who lift their heads above the clouds,
And hold familiar converse with the stars,
Are dust, at which the balance trembleth not,
Compared with his divine immensity.
The snow-crown'd summits fail to set him forth
Who dwelleth in eternity and bears
Alone the name of High and Lofty One.

Depths unfathomed are too shallow to express
The wisdom and the knowledge of the Lord;
The mirror of the creatures has no space
To bear the image of the Infinite.

'Tis true the Lord hath fairly writ his name, And set his seal upon creation's brow; But as the skilful potter much excels The vessel which he fashions on the wheel, E'en so, but in proportion greater far, Jehovah's self transcends his noblest works:

Earth's ponderous wheels would break, her axles snap, If freighted with the load of Deity:

Space is too narrow for the Eternal's rest, And time too short a footstool for his throne.

E'en avalanche and thunder lack a voice To utter the full volume of his praise.

How then can I declare him? Where are words With which my glowing tongue may speak his name?

Silent I bow, and humbly I adore.

But in musing upon the person of Jesus Christ, and the plan of salvation, a very different result has been experienced. I have been prostrate under the weight of Deity there revealed, and ready to die amid the splendour there so graciously unveiled to my soul in rapt communion. No fear which cometh of bondage, but that which is born of gratitude and bliss, has bowed me before the mercy-throne with awful wonder at divine goodness.

79. Christ Only

Happy would it be for us if our hearts and our lips could become like Anacreon's harp, which was wedded to one subject, and would learn no other. He wished to sing of the sons of Atreus, and the mighty deeds of Hercules, but his harp resounded love alone: and when he would have sung of Cadmus, his harp refused—it would sing of love alone. Oh! to speak of Christ alone—to be tied and bound to this one theme for ever; to speak alone of Jesus, and of the amazing love of the glorious Son of God, who "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." This is the subject which is both "seed for the sower, and bread for the eater." This is the live coal for the lip of the preacher, and the master-key to the heart of the hearer. This is the tune for the minstrels of earth, and the song for the harpers of heaven.

80. Christ, Perfect Consecration of

If, beloved, you knew that at—say ten o'clock to-night—you would be led away to be mocked, and despised, and scourged, and that to-morrow's sun would see you falsely accused, hanging, a convicted criminal, to die upon a cross, do you think that you could sing tonight after your last meal? I am sure you could not, unless with more than earthborn courage and resignation your soul could say, "Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar." You would sing if your spirit were like the Saviour's spirit; if, like him, you could exclaim, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt;" but if there should remain in you any selfishness, any desire to be spared the bitterness of death, you would not be able to chant the "Hallel!" with the Master. Blessed Jesus, how wholly wert thou given up! how perfectly consecrated! so that whereas other men sing when they are marching to their joys, thou didst sing on the way to death; whereas other men lift up their cheerful voices when honour awaits them, thou hadst a brave and holy sonnet on thy lips when shame, and spitting, and death were to be thy portion.

81. Christ: Perfection of his Character The character of our Lord was such that no one virtue had undue preponderance. Take Peter, and there is a prominent feature peculiar to himself; one quality attracts you. Take John, and there is a lovely trait in his character which at once chains you, and his other graces are unobserved. But take the life of the blessed Jesus, and it shall perplex you to discover what virtue shines with purest radiance. His character is like the lovely countenance of a classic beauty, in which every single feature is so in exact harmony with all the rest, that when you have gazed upon it, you are struck with a sense of general beauty, but you do not remark upon the flashing eye, or chiselled nose, or the coral lips: an undivided impression of harmony remains upon your mind. Such a character should each of us strive after, a mingling of perfections to make up one perfection; a combining of all the sweet spices to make up a rare perfume, such as only God's Holy Spirit itself can make, but such as God accepts wherever he discovers it.

82. Christ: Perfection of his Character indescribable

You can depict the character of John, for a prominent excellence is visible; you can describe the characteristics of Peter; you can give an idea of Paul; for each of these is like a separate gem, and each one has its own especial brightness and colour, and I may add each one has its own peculiar flaw: but when you come to the altogether lovely One your descriptive powers fail you, for he is like the high priest's breastplate in which all the Jewels met in harmony. The excellences of all the excellent are in him, and none of the flaws. In him all perfections meet to make up one perfection. All the spices, the myrrh, the aloes, the cassia, the sweet cinnamon, and whatever else may be grateful to God and to holy men—all these divinely compounded with the art of the apothecary, and well-balanced as to the proportions, are to be found in one rare anointing oil upon the person of our Well-beloved.

83. Christ, Poverty of, in his Birth

Here in this quiet island, the bulk of men are comfortably seeking to acquire their thousands by commerce and manufactures. We are the sensible people who follow the main chance, and are not to be deluded by ideas of glory; we are making all the money we can, and wondering that other nations waste so much in fight. The main prop and pillar of England's joy is to be found, as some tell us, in the Three per Cents., in the possession of colonies, in the progress of machinery, in steadily increasing our capital. Is not Mammon a smiling deity? But here, in the cradle of the world's hope at Bethlehem, I see far more of poverty than wealth; I perceive no glitter of gold, or spangle of silver. I perceive only a poor babe, so poor, so very poor, that he is in a manger laid; and his mother is a mechanic's wife, a woman who wears neither silk nor gem. Not in your gold, O Britons, will ever lie your joy, but in the Gospel enjoyed by all classes, the gospel freely preached and joyfully received. Jesus by raising us to spiritual wealth, redeems us from the chains of Mammon, and in that liberty gives us joy.

84. Christ, Presence of

Jesus is actually present in the daily afflictions of believers. Jesus knocks at my door, and says, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards!" I look forth from the window into the cold and dreary night, and I answer him, "The night is black and

cheerless. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? I cannot arise and follow thee." But the Beloved is not thus to be refused; he knocks again, and he saith, "Come forth with me into the fields, let us lodge in the villages; there will I give thee my loves." Overcome by his love, I arise, and go with my heavenly Bridegroom. If the rain-drops fall pitilessly upon me, yet it is most sweet to see that his head also is filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night. The howling wind tosses his garments as well as mine; his feet tread the same miry places as my own; and all the while he calls me his beloved, his love, his dove, his undefiled and tells me of the land which lies beyond the darkness, and speaks of the mountains of myrrh and of the beds of spices, the top of Amana, Shenir, and Hermon. My soul is melted while my Beloved speaks, and my heart feels it sweet beyond expression to walk with him; for lo, while he is near me, the night is lit up with innumerable stars, the sky is aglow with glory, every cloud flames like a seraph's wing, while the pitiless blast is all unable to chill the heart which burns within while he talketh with me by the way. In after years we are wont to speak to one another of that dark night and its marvellous brightness; of that cold wind that was so strangely tempered, and we even say to one another, "I would fain pass through a thousand nights in such company; I would be willing to go on a midnight journey evermore with that dearest of friends, for oh! where he is night is day; in his presence suffering is joy; when he reveals himself pains are pleasures, and earth blossoms with flowers of Eden." Thus doth the Wellbeloved by his presence make our darkness light.

85. Christ, Presence of, Ensuring Success

It was enough for the army of Cromwell to know that he was there, the ever victorious, the irresistible, to lead on his Ironsides to the fray. Many a time the presence of an old Roman general was equal to another legion; as soon as the cohorts perceived that he was come whose eagle eye watched every motion of the enemy, and whose practised hand led his battalions upon the most salient points of attack, and each man's blood leaped within him, and he grasped his sword and rushed forward secure of success. My brethren, our King is in the midst of us, and our faith should be in active exercise—"The shout of a King is in the midst of us," it is said, for where the King is there the people shout for joy, and because of confidence of victory. The preacher may preach, but what is that? but if the King be there, then it is preaching in very deed. The congregations may have met, and they may have gone again.

"The panoramic view which has dissolved," you say. Ah, so it may seem to you, but if the Spirit of God was there, all that has been done will abide, and remain even to that day of judgment, when the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. "Nothing but a simple girl sitting down to talk to a few little children about their souls." Just so, but if the Lord be there, what awe gathers round that spot! If the King himself sit in that class, what deeds are done that shall make the angels of heaven sing anew for joy! "Nothing but a humble man, unlettered, earnest, but not eloquent, standing at the corner of a street, addressing a few hundred people. His talk will soon be forgotten." The footprints of every true servant of the Lord shall not be in the sand, but in the enduring brass, the record of which shall outlast the wreck of matter.

86. Christ, Presence of, the Church's Inspiration

Just when the battle was about to turn with the Ironsides, and the Cavaliers were coming on with one of Rupert's hot charges, ready to break the line, and the brave old Ironsides were half inclined

to turn, up came the General, old Noll, riding on his horse, and they passed the word along, "'Tis he, boys; here he comes!" and every man grew into a giant at once; they stood like iron columns, like walls of granite, and the Cavaliers as they came on broke like waves against rocks, and dashed away, and were heard of no more. It was the presence of the man that fired each soldier. And so it is now with us. We believe in Jesus Christ. We know that he is with his church. He was dead but rose again. He has gone to heaven, but his spirit is with us—King of kings, and Lord of lords is he. If he seems to sleep in the midst of our ship, yet he sleeps with his hand on the helm, and he will steer the vessel rightly; and now the love that we bear his name steers our souls to holiness, to self-denial, to seek after God, to make full proof of the faith and the fellowship of the gospel, to seek to become like God, and to be absorbed into God that he may be all in all. This is what was wanted—a stimulus potent enough, under God's grace, to break through the barriers of sin. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God has accomplished by sending his own dear Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin, and having condemned sin in the flesh, he has now removed its guilt, and destroyed its power.

87. Christ Real to a Christian The Christ of a great many professors is only fit to occupy a niche on the church wall, as a dead, inactive, but revered person. Jesus is not a real Christ to many, he is, not a Christ who can really befriend them in the hour of grief; not a brother born for adversity, not a condescending companion. But the Christ of the well-taught Christian is one that liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore, a sympathising, practical friend, who is actually near, entering into our sorrows, sharing in our crosses, and taking a part with us in all the battle of life.

88. Christ, Secret Rest in The Lord Jesus gives to his people a priceless casket, called the gift of rest; it is set with brilliants and inlaid with gems, and the substance thereof is of wrought gold; whosoever possesses it feels and knows that his warfare is accomplished and his sin is pardoned. After awhile the happy owner begins to examine his treasure. It is all his own, but he has not yet seen it all, for one day he detects a secret drawer, he touches a hidden spring, and lo! before him lies a priceless Koh-i-noor surpassing all the rest. It had been given him it is certain, but he had not seen it at first, and therefore he finds it. Jesus Christ gives us in the gift of himself all the rest we can ever enjoy, even heaven's rest lies in him; but after we have received him we have to learn his value, and find out by the teaching of his Spirit the fulness of the rest which he bestows.

89. Christ, Self-forgetfulness of

Jesus saith, "Let not your heart be troubled." His own face was towards the cross, he was hard by, the olive-press of Gethsemane: he was about to be troubled as never man was troubled, and yet among his last words were these, "Let not your heart be troubled." As if he wanted to monopolise all tears, and would not have them shed so much as one; as if he longed to take all the heart-trouble himself and remove it far from them; as if he would have them exercise their hearts so much with believing, that they would not have the smallest room left for grief; would have them so much taken up with the glorious result of his sufferings in procuring for them eternal mansions, that they would not think about their own present losses, but let them be swallowed up in a mighty sea of joyful expectation.

90. Christ, Sight of, worthy Death To lie at Jesus' feet is a right experience; to lie there as sick and wounded is better, but to lie there as dead is best of all; a man is taught in the mysteries of the kingdom, who comes to that. Moses with dim legal light needs to be told to put off his shoe from off

his foot in the presence of the Lord of Hosts, but John is manifestly far in advance of him, because he lies lower, and is like a dead man before the Infinite Majesty. How blessed a death is death in Christ! How divine a thing is life in him. If I might see Christ at this moment upon the terms of instant death, I would joyfully accept the offer, the bliss would far exceed the penalty. But as for the death of all within us, that is of the flesh and of fallen nature, it is beyond measure desirable, and if for nothing else, my soul would pant more and more to see Jesus. May that two-edged sword which cometh out of his mouth smite all my besetting sins; may the brightness of his countenance scorch and burn up in me the very roots of evil: may he mount his white horse and ride through my soul conquering and to conquer, casting out of me all that is of the old dragon and his inventions, and bringing every thought into subjection to himself. There would I lie at his dear conquering feet, slain by his mighty grace.

91. Christ, Standard of, to be Planted Everywhere When the Spanish mariners were traversing the seas upon voyages of discovery, they never touched upon new land, whether an insignificant island or a part of the main continent, without at once setting up the standard of Ferdinand and Isabella, and taking possession of the soil in the name of their Catholic Majesties of Spain. Wherever the Christian goes, his first thought should be to take possession of all hearts in the name of the Lord Jesus, consecrating all opportunities and influences to the Redeemer's service.

92. Christ, Sympathy with the Sufferings of The outside world knows nothing about Christ's soul sufferings. They draw a picture of him, they carve a piece of wood or ivory, but they do not know his soul-sufferings; they cannot enter into them. Nay, the mass of his own people even do not know them, for they are not made conformable to those sufferings by a spiritual fellowship. We have not that keen sense of mental things to sympathise with such grievings as he had, and even the favoured ones, the three, the elect out of the elect, who have the most of spiritual graces, and who have therefore the most of suffering to endure, and the most depression of spirits, even they cannot pry into the fulness of the mystery. God only knows the soul-anguish of the Saviour when he sweat great drops of blood; angels saw it, but yet they understood it not. They must have wondered more when they saw the Lord of life and glory sorrowful with exceeding sorrowfulness, even unto death, than when they saw this round world spring into beautiful existence from nothingness, or when they saw Jehovah garnish the heavens with his Spirit, and with his hand form the crooked serpent. Brethren, We cannot expect to know the length and breadth and height of these things, but as our own experience deepens and darkens we shall know more and more of what Christ suffered in the garden.

93. Christ the Believer's Pattern The painter would never attain to eminence if he went to an exhibition and devoted himself to the study of some work of moderate worth, and said, "I will attempt to reach this, and there I will stop contented." No, he goes to the galleries of the great masters, and though his timid pencil may not dare to hope that he shall strike out thoughts so clearly and make life stand out upon the canvas as they have done, yet he seeks to drink in their inspiration, hoping that he may rise to some proud eminence in art by imitating them. Let the Christian then aspire to be like unto his Lord, who is the author and finisher of his faith; and let him, as he runs the heavenly race, look unto Jesus, and make "the Apostle and High Priest of his profession" his continual study, and aim to be changed into his image from glory unto glory.

94. Christ the End of the Law

Christ was revealed in the end of the world to abrogate, to annihilate, utterly to abolish sin. Now, we all know what it is to have a thing abrogated. Certain laws have held good up to the first of January of this year with regard to the hiring of public carriages, but now we are under a new law. Suppose a driver complies with the new law, gets his license, puts up his flag, gives the passenger his card of prices, and afterwards the passenger summons him before the magistrate for asking a fare not authorised by the old law; the magistrate would say, "You are out of court, there is no such law. You cannot bring the man here, he has not broken the old law, for he is not under it. He has complied with the requisition of the new law, by which he declares himself no longer under the old rules, and I have no power over him." So he that believeth in Christ Jesus may be summoned by conscience when misinformed before the bar of God, but the answer of peace to his conscience is, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace."

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "All that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." In this way Christ has abrogated the sin of his people.

95. Christ the only Legislator for the Church

We deny that either king or parliament can legislate for Christ's church; for Thomas Cranmer's church they may if they please, but for Christ's church, never! In the midst of those churches which are true to Christ's authority, the Bible is the only statute book, and the living Jesus the only lawgiver. As Christ alone is the fountain of all spiritual legislation, so he alone gives authority to that legislation. If we be commanded to baptise, we baptise not because we have been authorised by a consistory, or have been licensed by a bishop or a presbytery, but we baptise because Christ has said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." If we come together to break bread, it is not in the name of a denomination or a court, but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you rest any church practice upon the authority of Augustine, Chrysostom, Calvin, or Luther, or base your faith upon some living preacher, and depend upon the force of his oratory, or upon the cogency of his argument, you put Christ out of his proper place. The reason why we should believe revealed truth is because Jesus has borne witness to it. His ipse dixit is the great ground of all our theology, for he is "the word of God;" and his regal supremacy is the argument for obedience to his commands.

96. Christ the Root of all true Religion

I like that story of the Sandwich Islanders who had been converted through some of our missionaries, and the Gospel had been preached to them for years. At last two or three gentlemen in long black gowns landed there, and the people asked them what they had come for. They said they were come to instruct them in the true faith, and to teach them. Well, they said, they should be glad to hear it if their teaching was true, and if it was like the Scriptures, so they would listen to them. By-and-bye there was a little diagram exhibited to the natives, which represented a tree. Now, this tree had many branches. The twigs which were farthest off were the different saints, the believers, those who do good works; then the limbs, which were a little larger, were the priests; the bigger boughs were bishops; the biggest boughs were the cardinals; and at last these all joined on to the trunk, which was the Pope, and that went all the way down to the bottom till it came to Peter, who was the root. So the natives asked about all these twigs, and branches, and so on, which they had to show, and there were certain rotten branches that were tumbling off into a fire. What were

they? Well, they were Luther, and Calvin, and all those other heretics who had been cut off from the true tree of the Church. "Well," said one of the islanders, "and pray what is the root of the tree?" Well, that was Jesus Christ. So they clapped their hands at once for joy, and said, "Well, never mind about the branches, and stems, and those things; we have never heard of them, but we have got the root, and that will do to grow on." So, brethren, we can say tonight, if we have got Christ, that we have got "the root out of the dry ground." We have got the root of the matter, the basis, the sum, the substance of it.

97. Christ the Standard Bearer

Whenever the old Knights of the Red Cross fought the Saracens, they always endeavoured to make their steel ring upon the helmet of the man whose hand held the crescent, the standard of Mohammed; ever the fight was bloodiest around the standard. Sometimes when the battle was over if you walked the field, you would see it strewn with legs and arms and mangled bodies everywhere. In one place there would be a heap where they were piled one upon another, a great mountain of flesh and armour, broken bones and smashed skulls, and you would ask, "What is this? How came they here? How trampled they so upon one another, and fought in pools of human blood?" The answer would be, "'Twas there the standard-bearer stood, and first the adversary made a dash and stole the banner, and then fifty knights vowed to redeem it, and they dashed against their foes and took it by storm, and then again hand to hand they fought with the banner between them, first in one hand and then in another, changing ownership each hour. Well, dear friends, Christ Jesus has always been the object of attack. You will remember when justice came forth against the elect it made five rents in the great banner, and those five rents all-glorious are in the banner still. Since that day many a shot has sought to riddle, but not one has been able to touch it. Borne aloft, first by one hand and then by another, the mighty God of Jacob being the strength of the standard-bearers, that flag has bidden defiance to the leaguered hosts of the flesh and the devil, but never has it been trailed in the river, and never once carried in jeering triumph by the adversary.

98. Christ the Topstone of Humanity

I see before me a stupendous pyramid; the base of it is exceeding broad: it is the inanimate creation. Stars unnumbered lie close together at its base, like the sands of the Lybian desert: ponderous masses of matter underlie the whole amazing structure, all radiant with the glory of God, with a light like a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Measureless fields of space, and all but infinite leagues of matter, form the grosser basis of the pyramid which now rises before my astonished vision. Overlying this, as though it were a layer of malachite or emerald, veined with blue, and scarlet, and vermilion, I see the vegetable creation with all its beauty of form and splendour of colour, cedar and hyssop, olive and lily, oak and bramble. No art of man, or polished jewels of the mine, can rival its magnificence. Over these, sparkling like the stone which was full of eyes, I see the animal kingdom with its mingled varieties of symmetry and strength, energy and vitality. Here on high the pyramid is narrower, but its light is far more excellent, for the likeness of the living creatures sparkles and flashes like burning coals of fire, with an energy unseen in the broader foundations which are placed beneath. Beasts and all cattle, creeping things and flying fowl, all magnify the Master-builder who has ordained for them their place in the pyramid of his manifested glory. Higher still, I see man, who is made to have dominion

over all the lower works of God—man of whom it is written, "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, the topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold."

Above these, I see men twice made, the regenerated men, the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, the peculiar portion and crown-jewels of Jehovah: but can my eyes endure to gaze upon the glowing brightness which forms the apex of the glittering pyramid? I looked, and lo! above the firmament, higher than the heaven of heavens, I saw the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the throne there sat the Son of Man in all the brightness of his Father's glory, encircled with a rainbow like unto an emerald, and hymned by innumerable spirits in strains like these: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." O my soul, art thou not overwhelmed with the vision of Man upon the throne of God, Man most true and manlike, born of a virgin, the woman's promised seed, and yet God over all blessed for ever! When that pyramid was crowned with such a matchless topstone, well might the morning stars sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy; well might there be from men and angels joyous shoutings of "Grace! grace! unto it." The great Master of the feast hath kept the best wine until now. Richest and rarest of the wines on the lees, well refined, is that which was set abroach on Calvary by the soldier's spear. Rich was the store which the glorious monarch of the ages placed upon the table of his benevolence; but in these last days he bringeth out the choicest of his dainties, the bread of heaven, the wine which maketh glad the heart of God and man. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

99. Christ, The Water of Life

Yonder shipwrecked man has constructed a raft, and far out on the wild expanse of pitiless waters he has floated wearily day after day, sighing for a friendly sail or for sight of land; what would he not give for a little water, for water has become the essential of his life; his tongue is like a firebrand, and his mouth is as an oven, and he himself all dried and parched, sighs and cries to heaven, hoping that perhaps a merciful shower may drop refreshment upon him. Now, Jesus Christ is the water of life, and the bread of life, to such as live unto God. It is absolutely necessary for the continuance of their spiritual life that they should live upon him; and as they do live upon him, their thirst is quenched, their hunger is removed, and their spirit rejoices with a "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Life and the food that sustaineth life are among the most precious things man can possess, and these are for your souls stored up in Jesus

100. Christ, Thoughts of Do you think of Christ, desiring still nearer access and a clearer view of him, sighing out with sacred love-sickness, saying, "O that I were with him where he is, or that he were with me where I am"? Do you think of him with admiration, wondering at the Altogether Lovely One. Do you think of him with an ardent wish to be conformed to his image, saying, "Gracious Saviour, make me like thyself"? Do you think of him with practical love, so that you help his cause, succour his poor people, proclaim his truth, aid his church, and pity sinners for whom he shed his blood? Do you so think of Christ as to speak well of him, and commend him to the love of mankind? Do thoughts of Jesus keep you back from sin, and incite you to continue in the paths of holiness for his name's sake? Do you so think of Christ that you pray for him, that you give to him, that you work for him? "What think ye of Christ?" Is he worthy of your actual, practical, diligent

service, or is it to be all talk and idle chat and broken resolutions and vain professions? "What think ye of Christ?"

101. Christ to be Praised

Let the loftiest panegyrics be heaped upon the head of Christ, and he will deserve something better. Let the angels make way for him, and let them pile their thrones one upon the other. Let them conduct him to the seventh heaven—even to the heaven of heavens, and let him fill a lofty throne there, yet, even then, is not he so high as his Father hath set him. Words cannot describe his glory—it boweth down all language beneath its weight. Metaphors, similes, though they were gathered with the wealth of wit and wisdom from all quarters of heaven and earth, cannot reach even to the skirts of his garments. Your love and your fidelity, your diligence and your zeal, are not fit even so much as to unloose the latches of his shoes, he is so great and so good. O talk much of him then! Let your talk run over like the language of Rutherford in his letters, where he seems sometimes to break through reason and moderation to glorify his Lord. Let your language of Christ be like the apostle Paul, where he putteth aside all syntax, grammar, speech, and all else, and maketh new words, and cometh fresh expressions, and confoundeth tenses and moods, and I know not what beside, because his soul could not express itself after the commonplace language of mankind. O let your praise run over to your Lord and King. Love him, praise him, exalt him, magnify him, live out his life again. You can but praise him so; die in his arms, that you may for ever extol him in the upper skies.

102. Christ to be Real to the Christian

Let not Jesus be a shadow to you or your religion will be unsubstantial; let him not be a name to you or your religion will be nominal; let him not be a myth of history or your religion will be mere fancy; let him be not alone a teacher or you will lack a Saviour; let him be not alone an exemplar or you will fail to appreciate the merit of his blood; let him be the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, the all in all of your spirits.

103. Christ, Transparency of his Character

It is really wonderful how little Jesus Christ seemed to notice what people thought of him. There used to be an idea that Christ did a great many things to prevent people forming such and such erroneous impressions of him. For instance: it was supposed that he was anxious after his resurrection to make it clear that he was himself, and that he was not an impostor. I do not think such a motive ever entered into his mind. He was so simple and child-like that he acted out his whole self, not perpetually guarding against misconstruction, nor restricting himself because of the adversary. His character was too transparent, and his actions were too unvarnished, to admit of his continually blocking up that loophole, or stopping up that gap. Not he! His life was clear, without a spot of defilement; his whole soul drifted right on to this one thing, the glory of God through the salvation of man. He was not deluded for a moment by the golden apples that were cast in his pathway. They would have made him a king, but he was a King too great to stoop to an earthly crown.

104. Christ, Victory of

Hercules cleansed the Augean stable, saith the fable, but what an Augean stable was this world! Yet Christ will purge it; he is purging it, did purge it by his death. This Aceldama shall yet become an Elysium; the field of blood shall be transformed into a garden of delights. Christ came to bear a load upon his shoulder, compared with which the burden of Atlas is as nothing. Atlas, according to the heathen mythology, bore the world between his shoulders, but Jesus bears the world's sin, and that is more. Can you see him there in the garden? Great drops of sweat prove what a tremendous toil he has undertaken. Do you see him on the cross? Not a bone is broken, but every bone is dislocated, to prove how great the labour, but how greater still the strength which achieved the whole. O Lord Jesus! when we see that thou hast burst the gates of death, that thou hast trodden on the neck of sin, that thou hast broken the head of Satan, that thou hast led captivity captive, and opened the gates of heaven to all thy people, we may indeed sing, "Thou hast a mighty arm."

105. Christ's ability to Save

Able to save is Jesus still. "No hope" is not to be said by any of the mariners' life brigade while he sights the crew of the sinking vessel. "No hope" is not to be said by any one of the fire brigade while he knows there are living men in the burning pile. "No hope" is not to be said by any one of the valiant brigade of the Christian church while the soul is still within reach of the sound of mercy. "No hope" is a cry which no human tongue should utter, which no human heart should heed. Oh, may God grant us grace whenever we get an opportunity to go and tell all we meet with that are bowed down, "There is lifting up." And tell them where it is likewise. Tell them it is only at the cross. Tell them it is through the precious blood. Tell them it is to be had for nothing, through simply trusting Christ. Tell them it is of free grace, that no merits of theirs are wanted, that no good things are they to bring, but that they may come just as they are, and find lifting up in Christ.

106. Christ's care of his People When Wickliffe was faint with standing, and begged to be allowed to sit, the bishop tells him that heretics shall have no seats, but John of Gaunt with rough, uncourtly words swears that he shall sit when he wills; and when the time comes the good man goes forth through the midst of the rabble protected by his friend. I know not that John of Gaunt knew the truth, but yet God touched the man's heart to protect his servant in the hour of peril. Vultures, when God has willed it, have protected doves, and eagles have covered with their wings defenceless children, whom God would save. When the Lord wills it, if all hell should shoot such a shower of arrows as should put out the sun, and if all those arrows were aimed at one poor heart, yet not a single shaft should hit, but all be turned aside by an invisible but irresistible power from the man whom Jehovah ordained to save. We understand, then, that Jesus has issued a royal passport for all his servants, which enables them to live on in the midst of deaths innumerable.

107. Christ's Place of Prayer

Jesus, to prevent interruption, to give himself the opportunity of pouring out his whole soul, and to avoid ostentation, sought the mountain. What a grand oratory for the Son of God! What walls would have been so suitable? What room would have worthily housed so mighty an intercessor? The Son of God most fittingly entered God's own glorious temple of nature when he would commune with heaven. Those giant hills, and the long shadows cast by the moonlight were alone worthy to be his companions. No pomp of gorgeous ceremony can possibly have equalled the glory of nature's midnight on the wild mountain's side, where the stars, like the eyes of God,

looked down upon the worshipper, and the winds seemed as though they would bear the burden of his sighs and tears upon their willing wings. Samson, in the temple of the Philistines, moving the giant pillars, is a mere dwarf compared with Jesus of Nazareth moving heaven and earth, as he bows himself alone in the great temple of Jehovah.

108. Christ Crucified, no Fear in The man who has lived a life of service, at last dies a felon's death! Look upon his head girt with the crown of thorns! Mark well his cheeks whence they have plucked off the hair! See the spittle from those scornful mouths, staining his marred countenance! Mark the crimson rivers which are flowing from his back where they have scourged him! See his hands and his feet which are pierced with the nails, and from which ensanguined rills are flowing! Look to that face so full of anguish, listen to his cry, "I thirst, I thirst; "and as you see him there expiring, can you think that he will spurn the seeker? As you see him turn his head and say to the dying thief by his side, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," you dare not belie him so much as to deem that you may not come to him. You will outrage your reason if you start back from Jesus crucified. The cross of Christ should be the centre to which all hearts are drawn, the focus of desire, the pivot of hope, the anchorage of faith. You may come, sinner, black, vile, hellish sinner, you may come and have life even as the dying thief had it when he said, "Lord, remember me."

"There is life in a look at the Crucified One."

Surely, you need not be afraid to come to him who went to Calvary for sinners.

109. Christ Crucified, the Everlasting Father

Look yonder at Christ on the cross! He did that day light such a candle as never can be put out. He is "the everlasting Father." He set rolling that day as it were a snow-flake of truth as he died upon the cross; and you know what the snow-flake does upon the high Alps; a bird's wing perhaps sets it rolling, and it gathers another and another and another, till, as it descends, it becomes a mass of snow; and by-and-by, as it leaps from crag to crag, it grows greater and greater and greater, until ponderous masses of ice and snow cohere together, and at the last, with an awful thundering crash the avalanche rolls down, fills the valley, and sweeps all before it; even so this Everlasting Father "on the cross set in motion a mighty force which has gone on swelling and increasing, gathering to be a ponderous mass of a mighty teaching, and the day shall come when, like an irresistible avalanche it shall fall upon the palaces of the Vatican and upon the towers of Rome, when the mosques of Mahomet and the temples of the gods shall be crushed beneath its stupendous weight, and the Everlasting Father shall have done the deed.

110. Christ Crucified, the Preacher's Theme Do not tell me that we ought mainly to preach Christ exalted. I will preach my Lord upon the throne and delight therein, but the great remedy for ruined manhood is not Christ in glory, but Christ in shame and death. We know some who select Christ's Second Advent as their one great theme, and we would not silence them; yet do they err. The second coming is a glorious hope for saints, but there is no cure in it for sinners; to them the coming of the Lord is darkness and not light; but Christ smitten for our sins, there is the star which breaks the sinner's midnight. I know if I preached Christ on the throne many proud hearts would have him; but, oh, sirs, ye must have Christ on the cross before ye can know him on the throne. Ye must bow before the Crucified, ye must trust a dying Saviour, or else if ye pretend to honour him by the glories which are to come, ye do but belie him, and ye know him not. To the Cross, to the

Cross, to the Cross! write that upon the sign posts of the road to the city of refuge! Fly there, ye guilty ones, as to the only sanctuary for the sinful, for "with his stripes we are healed." There is joy in this.

111. Christ Glorified, Attractions of

Nowhere on earth is Christ, and therefore nowhere on earth may our heart build her nest. Nowhere,—no, not in the high places, or in the quiet resting places; not in the garden of nuts, or in the beds of spices; not in the tents of Kedar, or between Solomon's curtains; not even at his sacramental table, nor yet among the means of grace, is Christ bodily, actually, present. So we will take the sweetness of all, and the spiritual good there may be in all outward means; but still they shall all point us upward; they shall all draw us away. As the sun exhales the dew, and attracts it upward towards heaven, so shall Christ magnetise and draw our hearts away, and our thoughts up, and our longings up, and our whole spirits up, towards himself! "He is not here." Then why should I be here? Oh, get thee up, my soul; get thee up, and let all thy sweetest incense go towards him who "is not here, for he is risen."

112. Christian, a Memorial of Christ

You have at home to-day some trifle which, notwithstanding its little value, you would not sell for a thousand times its weight in gold because it belonged to a son or to a daughter since departed this life. That little memento is connected with some little deed of daring or act of generous self-denial on the part of your beloved child, and therefore, -though in itself nothing, you count it very precious. Now, to the Father you, beloved brother, are a memorial of the Saviour's condescension in taking upon himself the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of human flesh. You are a memorial of his being found in fashion as a man, and becoming subject to death, even the death of the cross. As God looks at each of you he sees what his Son has done, beholds in you the griefs of Calvary, hears anew the sighs of Olivet and the groans of Golgotha. You are to God, therefore, most precious, as the token and memorial of the death of the Well-beloved.

113. Christian, Death of a

Ah! it is sweet to see a Christian die; it is the noblest thing on earth—the dismissal of a saint from his labour to his reward, from his conflicts to his triumphs. The gorgeous pageantry of princes is as nothing. The glory of the setting sun is not to be compared with the heavenly coruscations which illumine the soul as it fades from the organs of bodily sense, to be ushered into the august presence of the Lord.

114. Christian, Promptness of the

There have been some men in this world who have had little else to recommend them except that by which they have attracted their fellow men to yield them homage—like Napoleon Bonaparte, for instance, when he said to his soldiers at Austerlitz, "Soldiers, this battle must be a thunder-clap; we must hear no more of the foe." And the men, filled with eagerness by his passionate energy, did his bidding, and made it such a thunder-clap that all Europe shook beneath the march of those men-at-arms. He had the power, somehow or other, of making men yield to him, as if they were all machines, impelled by the force of his personal will. They were not dragged into battle, but rushed with enthusiasm to the fight, longing to win glory or death. Now, the voice of God should be to the

Christian a voice that speaks to all his soul, wakes up his dormant faculties, and stirs the enthusiasm of his noblest nature, so that his heart says, "I will indeed seek thy face." As the British sailor, when Nelson said to him, "Ready?" replied, "Ready, ay, ready," and fired red-hot shot at the foe, so should our hearts respond to God, "Seek ye my face." "Lord, blessed be thy name for telling me to do that, for thou and I are of one mind here; thou lovest me to seek thy face, and I love to seek thee; my heart responds—not my lip, not my body, dragged slavishly into the form of obedience—but my heart says, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.'"

115. Christian Vigorous in Death When travellers sail near to certain spice-islands, they tell their nearness to the gardens of perfume by the odours wafted to them on the winds; even so, as the Christian runner advances nearer to heaven, he enjoys new delights such as celestial spirits rejoice to experience. In proportion as he draws nearer and nearer, the perfume from the many mansions, from the garments of Christ who dwelleth there, and whose garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia—that perfume, I say, comes to him, and it quickens his pace. The body may be waxing feeble, but the soul is growing strong. The tabernacle may be falling, but the sacred priestly soul within carries on its devotion with greater zest; so, when you would think that the pilgrim's soul must faint, he grows vigorous; when he sinks to the earth, he stretches out his hand and grasps his crown.

116. Christian, Work of, Continual

I heard once of a clergyman who used to go hunting, and when he was reprov'd by his bishop, he replied that he never went hunting when he was on duty. But he was asked, "When is a clergyman off duty?" And so with the Christian, when is he off duty? He ought to be always about his Father's business, ready for anything and everything that may glorify God. He feels that he is not sent on Sunday only, but sent always, not called now and then to do good, but sent throughout his whole life to work for Christ.

117. Christian Experience, Seasons of

It is impossible to draw a fair comparison between the various stages of Christian experience, so as to give a judicious preference to one above another. Consider, as in a parable, the seasons of the year. There are many persons who, in the midst of the beauties of spring, say, "Ah, but how fitful is the weather! These March winds and April showers come and go by such fits and starts, that nothing is to be depended upon. Give me the safer glories of summer." Yet, when they feel the heat of summer, and wipe the sweat from their brows, they say, "After all, with all the full-blow of beauty around us, we admire more the freshness, verdure, and vivacity of spring. The snowdrop and the crocus, coming forth as the advance guard of the army of flowers, have a superior charm about them." Now, it is idle to compare spring with summer; they differ, and have each its beauties. We are in autumn now, and very likely, instead of prizing the peculiar treasures of autumn, some will despise the peaceful Sabbath of the year, and mournfully compare yon fading leaves to funeral sermons replete with sadness. Such will contrast summer and autumn, and exalt one above another. Now, whoever shall claim precedence for any season, shall have me for an opponent. They are all beautiful in their season, and each excels after its kind. Even thus it is wrong to compare the early zeal of the young Christian with the mature and mellow experience of the older believer, and make preferences. Each is beautiful according to its time. You, dear young friend, with your intense zeal, are to be commended and imitated; but very much of your fire I am

afraid arises from novelty, and you are not so strong as you are earnest; like a newborn river, you are swift in current, but neither deep nor broad. And you, my more advanced friend, who are much tried and buffeted, to you it is not easy to hold on your way under great inward struggles and severe depressions, but your deeper sense of weakness, your firmer grasp of truth, your more intense fellowship with the Lord Jesus in his sufferings, your patience, and your steadfastness, are all lovely in the eyes of the Lord your God. Be thankful each of you for what you have, for by the grace of God you are what you are.

118. Christian Experience, High, to be sought

I believe that high-toned Christian experience is, to a great extent, what common Christians think to be quite out of their reach. Oh to get up above yon mists which dim the valley! Oh to climb the mountain's top which laughs in the sunlight! Oh to get away from the heavy atmosphere of worldliness and doubt, of fear, of care, of fretfulness; to soar away from the worldlings who are always earth-hunting, digging into its mines and prying after its treasures, and to get up there where God dwells in the innermost circle of heavenly seclusion; where none can live but men who have been quickened from among the dead; where none can walk but men who are crucified with Christ, and who live only in him. Oh to get up there! where no more question concerning our security can molest us; where no carking care can disturb, because all is cast upon the Lord and rests wholly with him. Oh to live in such an entireness of confidence and child-like faith, that we will have nothing to do with anything now except with serving him and showing forth the gratitude we owe to him who has done so much for us.

119. Christianity contrasted with Profession

It is almost painful to watch little children when some little pet of theirs has died, how they can hardly realise the difference between death and life! Your little boy's bird moped for awhile upon its perch, and at last dropped down in the cage; and do you not remember how the little fellow tried to set it up, and gave it seed, and filled its glass with water, and was quite surprised to think that birdie would not open his little eye upon his friend as it did before, and would not take its seed nor drink its water! Ah, you had at last to make him know that a mysterious something had gone from his little favourite, and would not come back again. There is just such a spiritual difference between the mere professor and the genuine Christian. There is an invisible, but most real, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the absence or the presence of which makes all the difference between the sinner and the saint.

120. Christianity, Fountain of As the heathens spoke of Minerva leaping armed from the head of Jove, so did the religion of Christ spring armed from the very heart of Jesus Christ; and it stands in the midst of the world an enemy of all unrighteousness, the foe of all oppression, the friend of the poor and needy, and the enemy of everything that is at enmity to God. You are no Christian if such is not your Christianity, for Jesus Christ brought not a slumbering faith, but fire into the earth.

121. Christianity, Unostentatious As you travel over the mountains and are smitten with thirst, you look for the cooling stream, but the traveller who has often passed the hills never stoops to drink of the little streamlets which run uncovered down the mountain side; he knows that their exposure to the heat of the sun has warmed the water, and taken away its grateful freshness and coolness; but he looks for the trickling rill which gushes fresh from the rock, or bubbles up as a spring, or has

found its way under the moss and great stones all hidden from the light, and he loves to satisfy himself thereat. It is thus with our gifts and graces. If we expose them to public view, they lose their acceptability with the Most High God: but if we keep ourselves as much as possible from all ostentation, and seek to serve God humbly and in quiet, Jehovah himself finds delight in the gracious works of his own beloved people.

122. Christian's Adieu to Earth When we loose our cable, and bid farewell to earth, it shall not be with bitterness in the retrospect. There is sin in it, and we are called to leave it; there has been trial in it, and we are called to be delivered from it; there has been sorrow in it, and we are glad that we shall go where we shall sorrow no more. There have been weakness, and pain, and suffering in it, and we are glad that we shall be raised in power; there has been death in it, and we are glad to bid farewell to shrouds and to knells; but for all that there has been such mercy in it, such lovingkindness of God in it, that the wilderness and the solitary place have been made glad, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as a rose. We will not bid farewell to the world, execrating it, or leaving behind us a cold shudder and a sad remembrance; but we will depart, bidding adieu to the scenes that remain, and to the people of God that tarry therein yet a little longer, blessing him whose goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of our life, and who is now bringing us to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

123. Christians, Almost A leaky ship went to sea, and a passenger was almost persuaded not to trust his life in it, but he did so, and he perished. A bubble speculation was started in the city, and a merchant was almost persuaded not to have shares in it, but he bought the scrip, and his estate went down in the general shipwreck. A person exceedingly ill, heard of a remedy reputed to be most effectual, and he was almost persuaded to take it, but he did not, and therefore the disease grew worse and worse. A man who proposed to go into a subterranean vault in the dark, was almost persuaded to take a candle, but he did not, and therefore he stumbled and fell. You cannot have the blessing by being almost persuaded to have it. Your hunger cannot be appeased by almost eating, nor your thirst quenched by almost drinking. A culprit was almost saved from being hanged, for a reprieve came five minutes after he was turned off, but alas! he was altogether dead, despite the almost escape. A man who has been almost persuaded to be saved, will at the last be altogether damned; his being almost convinced will be of no conceivable service to him. This seems so grievous, that the life of God, and the light of God, and the heaven of God, should glide, by some of you, and you should be almost persuaded, and yet should miss them, through not being Christians.

124. Christians, Sleeping

Some somnambulists have been able to walk on places where, had they been awake, they never would have been able to endure the dizzy height; and I see some Christians, if indeed they be Christians, running awful risks which I think they would never venture upon unless they had fallen into the deep sleep of carnal security. Speak of a man slumbering at the mast-head, it is nothing to a professor of religion at ease while covetousness is his master, or worldly company his delight. If professors were awake, they would see their danger, and avoid sinful amusements and ungodly associations, as men fly from fierce tigers or deadly cobras.

125. Christians, Unoccupied

I walked, a few days ago, by, rows of houses all empty, and all shut up. and I could not help thinking if the landlords would take the smallest rent and put in the very poorest tenants, it would be better than to let them stand empty; for the boys had made all the windows targets for their skill in stone-throwing, the thieves had taken care to remove every piece of lead and movable metal they could get at, most of the lower rooms had evidently been play-rooms for children and dogs, and the unsightly carcasses were giving the neighbourhood a bad name from which it was not likely soon to recover. Better to have had the worst of tenants than to leave the houses to become rums. Some Christians had better take to the meanest occupation than let their souls stand in such a disreputable state as they do, like empty, unoccupied, useless, decaying, dilapidated houses.

126. Christless Souls, Danger of

I understand drinking bitter medicine, if it is to make me well; but who would drink wormwood and gall with no good result to follow? I can understand toiling if a wage is in prospect, but I cannot see the sense of toiling when there is no reward for it. Now, you who love not God, your lives are not all flowers and sunshine. It is not all music and dancing with you now. I know you have your cares and troubles, you have your thorns in the flesh, and perhaps a great many of them; but you have no Saviour to run to. You are like a ship in a storm, and there is no harbour for you; you are as birds driven before the wind, and you have no nests in which to shelter, but must be driven for ever before the blast of Jehovah's wrath. Consider this, I pray you, meditate upon your condition and prospects, and when you have so done, may your heart cry out, "I would fain have God to be my friend."

127. Church assured of Success in her Mission

We heard it said, the other day, that the religion of Jesus Christ could not be expected to prosper in some places unless it had a fair start. Did that remark come from an infidel, or a bishop? If I were asked and knew not, I know what my answer would be. A fair start indeed! Put the religion of Jesus Christ into any arena, and it asks but liberty to use its weapons; and even where that is denied it, it triumphs still. It only wants its own innate strength to be developed, and to be let alone by the kings and princes of this world, and it will work its own way. To be let alone, I said: let them oppose if they like, yet still our faith will overcome the regal opposition; only let them withdraw their patronage, that deadly thing which paralyzes all spiritual life, and the unshackled truth of God will most surely prevail. We do not tremble, then, we must not, because the servants of God may be poor, or may not be gifted, or may be but few. God shall, even our own God, shall bless us; and if we be few, as the twelve fishermen, and as unlettered as they, yet as the twelve fishermen made old Rome's empire to shake from end to end, and laid colossal systems of idolatry even with the ground, even so will the Christianity of to-day, if God do but return in power unto her, in the midst of her weakness, wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens.

128. Church, Building up the Did you ever win a soul to Christ? Did you ever get a grip of the hand of spiritual gratitude? Did you ever see the tear starting from the eye when the convert said, "Bless you!

I shall remember you in heaven, for you have brought me to Christ." Ah, my dear friend, you will not be satisfied merely with this. This is a kind of food that makes men hungry. Oh that you had a rich banquet of it, and yet wanted more still. The church will be built. If you and I sit still, it will be

built. This is a truth, though it is often turned to a mischievous end—the church will be built, even without us. But, oh, we shall miss the satisfaction of helping in its building. Yes, it will grow; every stone will be put in its place, and the pinnacle will soar into its predestinated place, but every stone from foundation to pinnacle, will seem to say to you, "Thou hadst nothing to do with this! Thou hadst no hand in this!" When Cyrus took one of his guests round his garden, the guest admired it greatly, and said he had much pleasure in it; "Ah," said Cyrus, "but you have not so much pleasure in this garden as I have, for I planted every tree in it myself." One reason why Christ has so much pleasure in his church is because he did so much for it; and one reason why some saints will have a greater fulness of heaven than others to rejoice in will be because they did more for heaven than others. By God's grace they were enabled to bring more souls there; and as they look upon the church they may, without self-reliance, and ascribing it all to grace, remember what they were enabled to do in its building up.

129. Church, Conversion of Souls her Mission A church that does not exist to reclaim heathenism, to fight with evil, to destroy error, to put down falsehood, a church that does not exist to take the side of the poor, to denounce injustice and to hold up righteousness, is a church that has no right to be. Not for thyself, O church, dost thou exist, any more than Christ existed for himself. His glory was that he laid aside his glory, and the glory of the church is when she lays aside her respectability and her dignity, and counts it to be her glory to gather together the outcasts, and her highest honour to seek amid the foulest mire the priceless jewels for which Jesus shed his blood. To rescue souls from hell and lead to God, to hope, to heaven, this is her heavenly occupation. O that the church would always feel this! Let her have her bishops and her preachers, and let them be supported, and let everything be done for Christ's sake decently and in order, but let the end be looked to, namely, the conversion of the wandering, the teaching of the ignorant, the help of the poor, the maintenance of the right, the putting down of the wrong, and the upholding at all hazards of the crown and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

130. Church, Crown of the As a church we have a crown, and for many years we have held it; but I would use the language of Christ in the Book of the Revelation, when, speaking to one of the churches, he says, "Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Now, what has been our crown as a church? It has not been our wealth, for in that we do not excel. It has not been our learning, we do not make any show of it. It has not been our tasteful services, the beauty of our music, and the sweetness of our chanting. No, we do not care about such things but cultivate simplicity. Our crown has been this one thing, that if there has been a church in Christendom which has given itself to winning souls, this church has done so. Our ministry has aimed always at this, the plucking of the brands from burning, the bringing of sinners out of darkness into marvellous light; and I do you nothing but simple justice, my brethren, when I say that by far the larger part of this church is really alive for soul-winning. It does my heart good to meet with divers knots of brethren among you who everywhere about this city are working away unostentatiously but successfully in bringing souls to Christ. I hope it always will be so. Hold fast, O church, what thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Let it always be our joy and glory that God gives us spiritual children, and souls are born to him.

131. Church, Divisions in the

Some of the old Roman walls are compacted with such excellent cement, that it would be almost impossible to separate one stone from another; in fact, the whole mass has become consolidated like one rock, so embedded in cement, that you cannot distinguish one stone from another. Happy the church thus built up, where each cares not only for his own prosperity, but for the prosperity of all—where if there be any joy in one member, all the members rejoice, and if there be sorrow in any one part of the body, all the rest of the body is in sorrow too, "remembering those that are in bonds as bound with them, and those that are in adversity as being yourselves also in the body." And yet, what are some churches but semi-religious clubs, mere conventions of people gathered together? They have not in them that holy soul which is the essence of unity; there is no life to keep them in entirety. Why, the body would soon become disjointed, and a mass of rottenness, if the soul were not in it; and if the Spirit of Christ be absent, the whole fabric of the outward church begins to fall to pieces; for where there is no life there can be no true union.

132. Church, Enemies a Blessing to the

We have looked upon our adversaries, though they seemed like stormy petrels, as being the index of a favourable wind to the good barque of Christ's church. Persecution seems to be the wave that, when it leaps up around her, speeds her course. Let the mountains be removed, and cast into the midst of the sea; but after long experience of Jehovah's faithfulness towards his people, we are confident that his church shall not be moved: in quietude shall she possess her soul.

133. Church, every Member to work for God A certain band of men, like knights, had been exceedingly victorious in all their conflicts. They were men of valour and of indomitable courage; they had carried everything before them, and subdued province after province for their king. But on a sudden they said in the council-chamber, "We have at our head a most valiant warrior, one whose arm is stout enough to smite down fifty of his adversaries; would it not be better if, with a few such as he to go out to the fight, the mere men-at-arms, who make up the ordinary ranks, were to stop at home? We should be much more at our ease; our horses would not so often be covered with foam, nor our armour be bruised in returning from the fray, and no doubt great things would be done." Now, the foremost champions, with fear and trembling, undertook the task and went to the conflict, and they fought well, no one could doubt it; to the best of their ability they unhorsed their foe, and they did great exploits. But still, from the very hour in which that scheme was planned and carried out, no city was taken, no province was conquered, and they met together and said, "How is this? Our former prestige is forgotten; our ranks are broken; our pennons are trailed in the dust; what is the cause of it?" When out spoke the champion, and said, "Of course it is so! How did you think that some twelve or fifteen of us could do the work of all the thousands? When you all went to the fight, and every man took his share, we dashed upon the foe like an avalanche, and crushed him beneath our tramp; but now that you stay at home and put us, but a handful, to do all the work, how can you expect that great things should be done?" So each man resolved to put on his helmet and his armour once again, and go to the battle, and so victory returned. I speak to you, I, one of the rank of God's servants, and I say, my brethren, if we are to have the victory you must be every one of you in the fight. We must not spare a single one, neither man nor woman, old nor young, rich nor poor, but you must each fight for the Lord Jesus according to your ability, that his kingdom may come, and that his will may be done upon earth even as it is in heaven. We shall see great things when you all agree to this and put it in practice.

134. Church, Glory of the

There is one lamp; well, that is very bright, very pleasing; you like to have it in your room; but think of all London illuminated to the very top of the cross of St. Paul's, and what an idea you then have of brightness. Now, one glorified Christian is a lamp. Think, then, of all heaven, with its domes of glory lit up with ten thousand times ten thousand companies of blood-bought spirits, whom Jesus Christ has taken up—a glorious church!

135. Church, Greatness of the A drop of water may be very precious to a thirsty tongue, but a river full of it! Children are pleased when for the first time in their lives they sail across some little lake, but how surprised they are when they come to the deep and rolling sea, which seems without shore or bottom. Well, so pleased am I at the very thought of the glorious church. As yet I have never seen anything but one little lake—this church, the church of God in England, the church of God in the world, what is it after all but "as a drop of a bucket!" but the glorious church—the whole of the people of God gathered together in one, all perfectly free from sin, all made like unto Christ, and all bedight and bright with the glory which excelleth even that which Moses and Elias had when they were with Christ in the holy mountain, or such as Moses had when he came down from the top of Horeb, when he had been forty days with God—a glorious church, a mighty company of glorified b

136. Church, Hope for, in the worst Circumstances

Suppose it should ever come to this, as some say it will, that the churches, many of them, should desert the old truths, and the ministers become dumb dogs that cannot bark, and one by one their testimony should be silent, and every candlestick should be taken out of its place, and the whole head should be sick, and the whole heart faint, and Zion be under a cloud, and there should be none to help her, and none to lift up the banner for the truth? What then? Why, then God would arise, and take again from the fishermen in their boats new apostles; and from the lowest dens of iniquity, and the worst haunts of vice, from the saloons of frivolity where the rich resort, and from the chambers of commerce and the palaces of merchandise where buyers and sellers make their contracts, he would take a fresh staff of men. Out of the roughest material he can make the finest fabric; out of the newest recruits he can raise the noblest regiment to show forth his praise, to do his work, and to secure victory for his cause.

137. Church, No need to Despond about the

According to the gloomy prophets, all England is going to the bad—not England alone, but all countries are hastening on to a general and everlasting smash. Then one begins to fret about the church of God; for according to the soothsayers of the age, Antichrist is yet to come, and new heresies are to spring up; the dogs of war are to be let loose, the Pope is to rule and burn us, and one hardly knows what else. Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation, have been made sometimes to minister poison to every bright hope, but here is our comfort with regard to the future—

"He everywhere hath sway, And all things serve his might; His every act pure blessing is, His path unsullied light."

Let the worst come to the worst, the best will come of it ere long. "If the heavens were a bow," saith one, "and the earth were the string, and God should fit the arrows of his vengeance thereon,

and shoot at the sons of men, yet they could find shelter with the archer himself." Our refuge is in God; let the worst calamities occur to the world in years to come, we are secure. It must be well: it cannot be ill. "Jehovah-Jireh." Lift high the banner and hopefully advance to the battle, for the victory shall surely come unto the arm eternal, the will immutable.

138. Church not to be forsaken in Adversity

Perhaps some of you are living in a district just now where the ministry is painfully devoid of power. The lamp burns very low in your sanctuary, the members worshipping are few, and zeal is altogether dead. Do not desert the church, do not flee away from her in the time of her necessity. Keep to your post, come what may. Be the last man to leave the sinking vessel, if sink she must. Resolve as a friend of Christ to love him at all times, and as a brother born into that church, feel that now, beyond all other times, in the season of adversity, you must adhere to her.

139. Church not to be Judged by her Hypocrites Was there ever a club in all the world without disreputable persons in it? Was there ever any association of men that might not be condemned, if the fool's rule was followed, of condemning the wheat because of the chaff? When with all our might and power we purge ourselves of deceivers as Boon as we detect them, what more can we do? If our rule and practice is to separate them wholly as soon as we unmask them, what more can virtue itself desire? I ask any man, however much he may hate Christianity, what more can the church do than watch her members with all diligence, and excommunicate the wicked when discovered? It is a foul piece of meanness on the part of the world that they should allege the faults of a few false professors against the whole church: it is a piece of miserable meanness of which the world ought to be ashamed. Nevertheless, so it is. "Ha! ha!" they say.

"So would we have it! So would we have it!" The daughter of Philistia rejoices, and the uncircumcised triumphs when Jesus is betrayed by his friend, and sold by his traitorous disciple. O deceitful professor, will not the Lord be avenged upon you for this? Is it nothing to make Jesus' name the drunkard's song? Nothing to make the enemy blaspheme? O hardened man, tremble, for this shall not go unpunished.

140. Church nothing without the Spirit

It awakens melancholy reflections when we hear of the bodies of old Egyptian kings, proud lords of millions of men, dragged by our discoverers out of their secret chambers in the pyramids and exposed to every vulgar eye. The great sarcophagus has had its lid uplifted, and the monarch who once ruled the world has been taken out, and his corpse unrolled for the sake of a little old linen, and an ounce or two of the embalming gum. Poor mummy! once a Pharaoh whose voice could shake a nation and devastate continents, now used to heat an Arab's kettle or to furnish an object for a museum. So with a church: alive by the divine indwelling, God gives it royalty, and makes it a king and priest unto himself among the sons of men; its influence is felt further than it dreams; the world trembles at it, for it is fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners; but when the Spirit of God is departed, what remains but its old records, ancient creeds, title-deeds, traditions, histories and memories? it is in fact a mummy of a church rather than a church of God, and it is better fitted to be looked at by antiquarians than to be treated as an existent agency.

141. Church, Order of the A church is not a load of bricks, remember; it is a house builded together. A church is not a bundle of cuttings in the gardener's hand: it is a vine, of which we are the branches. The true church is an organised whole; and life, true spiritual life, wherever it is paramount in the church, without rules and rubrics, is quite sure to create order and arrangement. Order without life reminds us of the rows of graves in a cemetery, all numbered and entered in the register: order with life reminds us of the long lines of fruit trees in Italy, festooned with fruitful vines. Sunday-school teachers, bear ye the banner of the folded lamb; sick visitors, follow the ensign of the open hand; preachers, rally to the token of the uplifted brazen serpent; and all of you, according to your sacred calling, gather to the name of Jesus, armed for the war.

142. Church, Purification of the

While a church is without the Spirit of God it will keep in its old way, it will plead precedent, it will endure grievous abuses, it will make excuses for this, and excuses for that; but, let the Lord once come, and out the hawkers and hucksters must go, tables, money-bags, doves, and all. He will not have them in his house of prayer; bag and baggage they must go when he comes in, and he only in his truth and power must reign in the midst of his own church. I do not believe we shall thoroughly purify any church by Acts of Parliament, nor by reformation associations, nor by agitation, nor by any merely human agency. No hand can grasp the scourge that can drive out the buyers and sellers, but that hand which once was fastened to the cross. Let the Lord do it and the work will be done, for it is not of man, nor shall man accomplish it.

143. Church Recruited by Conversion

I should reckon it to be a burning disgrace if it could be said, "The large church under that man's pastoral care is composed of members whom he has stolen away from other Christian churches." No, but I value beyond all price the godless, the careless, who are brought out from the world into communion with Christ. These are true prizes, not stealthily removed from friendly shores, but captured at the edge of the sword from an enemy's dominions. We welcome brethren from other churches if in the providence of God they are drifted to our shores, but we would never hang out the wrecker's beacon to dash other churches in pieces in order to enrich ourselves with the wreck. Far rather would we be looking after perishing souls than cajoling unstable ones from their present place of worship. To recruit one regiment from another is no real strengthening of the army; to bring in fresh men should be the aim of all.

144. Church, Safety of the

I stood this week by the side of a church which once was a considerable distance inland, but now it stands just by the ocean side. Almost every year a great mass of the clay cliff falls into the sea, and in a year or two this parish church must fall. It stands now in quietude and peace, but on a certain day it will all be swallowed up into the sea, as certainly as the elements still work according to their ordinary laws. I could not help thinking that the edifice was a type of certain ecclesiastical bodies, which stand upon the clay cliff of statecraft, or superstition. The tide of public enlightenment, and above all the ocean tide of God's Spirit, is advancing and wearing away their foundation till at last down the whole fabric must go. What then? Will you hold up your hands and cry, "The church of God is gone?" Forbear the foolish utterance; God's church is safe enough. Look yonder, there stands the church of God upon a stormy promontory, where the sea always

dashes and perpetually rages on all sides, and yet she fears no undermining, because she is built on no clay cliff, but on a rock against which the waves of hell shall not prevail. There, let your earthborn, state-propped churches go! Swallow them up, O sea of time, swallow them all up, and leave no wreck behind! But the church of the living God shall stand all the more glorious, because of the ruin which has overtaken her rivals and discovered their human origin.

145. Church Strengthened by her Conflicts

Every age produces a new crop of heretics and infidels. Just as the current of the times may run, so doth the stream of infidelity change its direction. We have lived long enough, some of us, to see three or four species of atheists and deists rise and die, for they are shortlived, an ephemeral generation. We have seen the church attacked by weapons borrowed from geology, ethnology, and anatomy, and then from the schools of criticism fierce warriors have issued, but she survives all her antagonists. She has been assailed from almost every quarter, but the fears that tarry in the church to-day are blown to the wind to-morrow; yea, the church has been enriched by the attacks, for her divines have set to work to study the points that were dubious, to strengthen the walls that seemed a little weak, and so her towers have been strengthened, and her bulwarks consolidated.

146. Church Sustained by God The church of God is God's battle-axe and weapons of war in fighting his battles for truth and righteousness; and, up till now, history shows that none have been able to stand against God in the midst of his people. It is the fact, that along the whole line of spiritual battle the victory has been to God's people. At first the enemy attacked the church with persecution. Those rough and barbarous weapons of war were used which were to be found in the Colosseum, with its wild beasts and cruel men, or in the axe, the stake, and the rack. Men have grown somewhat wiser now, but in those days, men and devils sought to destroy the testimony of our God by the destruction of the saints; and what was the result? O persecution, where are thy trophies? The virgin daughter of Zion hath shaken her head at thee, and laughed thee to scorn. The church, like a good ship beaten by the waves, has cut through every billow, and has been hastened on her way by the storm. Washed and cleansed and purged by opposition, the more the church has been opposed the more brightly glorious has she shone forth. God was in the midst of her and helped her; he helped her, and that right early. Our pulse beats fast, and our blood grows hot when we read of the persecutions of old pagan Rome. And when we turn to the story of the Reformation, and see the hunted ones among the Alps, the Huguenots driven out of France, our own Lollards, and the Covenanters of Scotland, we feel proud to belong to such a race of men, we glory in their lineage, and are amazed that the policy of persecution should so long have been continued by shrewd, sharp-witted men, when it ought to have been clear to them that in every case in which they persecuted the church, it multiplied the more exceedingly. God has indeed broken "the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle," by sustaining his people in times of persecution.

147. Church, the Garden of Christ

One flower is very sweet. I smell its perfume. But I walk into some vast conservatories, into some gentleman's garden acres in extent, and there are beds of flowers, the blue, and scarlet, and yellow. I see the verbena, the calceolaria, and the geranium and many others, all in order, and in ranks. Oh, how glorious is this! Those undulating lawns, those well-trimmed hedges, those trees so daintily kept, all growing in such luxuriance. One flower is sweet, but a garden! a garden! who

can tell how sweet this is! So, one glorified saint is one of God's flowers, but a glorious church is Christ's garden.

148. Church, the Garden of the King

If Louis Napoleon could call a senate of all the potentates in this world in Paris, and hold a congress there, the whole of them put together would not be worth the snap of a finger compared with half-a-dozen godly old women who meet together in the name of Christ as a church, in obedience to the Lord's command; for God would not be there with the potentates—what cares he for them?—but he would be with the most poor and despised of his people who meet together as a church in Jesus Christ's name. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," is more glorious than ermine, or purple, or crown. Constitute a church in the name of Christ, and meet together as such, and there is no assembly upon the face of the earth that can be compared with it, and even the assembly of the first-born in heaven is but a branch of the grand whole of which the assemblies of the church on earth make up an essential part. The church is the King's garden.

149. Church, the Place of Broad Vision

It was one of the common enjoyments of the citizen of any walled city to come to the top of the wall in order to take views afar. And when a man once gets into the altitudes of gospel doctrines, and has learned to understand the love of God in Christ Jesus, what views he can take! How he looks down upon the sorrows of life! How he looks beyond that narrow little stream of death! How, sometimes, when the weather is bright and his eye is clear enough to let him use the telescope, he can see within the gates of pearl, and behold the joys which no mortal eye hath seen, and hear the songs which no mortal ear hath heard, for these are things not for eyes and ears, but for hearts and spirits! Blessed is the man who dwelleth in the church of God, for he can find on her broad walls places from which he can see the king in his beauty, and the land which is very far off!

150. Church to be Self-sacrificing

O that the Christian church had more self-sacrificing men, like old Curtius, who, when there is a chasm to fill up, leap into it, and feel it an honour to be swallowed up for Christ's sake and the truth's sake. O for many a Christian Scævola, who, like the Roman hero, will hold his hand in the fire if need be, and flinch not, feeling that all suffering were little to bear for one who bled for us. We want more consecrated men. May God raise them up; and he will if you who feel your special sinnership find special mercy, and then render to God special returns

151. Church to Confess her Sin As a church we want to be kept low before the Lord. Why what are we as a church? There are some sad sinners among us, who are such clever hypocrites that we cannot find them out, and there are others who walk so ill that we fear they are tares among the wheat. The best of us are far from being as good as we should be. We have all grave accusations to bring against ourselves. If the Lord Jesus were to write on the ground here and say, "He that is without fault among you, let him throw the first stone at lukewarm Christians." I do not know who is the oldest and whether he would try to go out first, but I should follow very closely at his heels. We are all verily guilty before the Lord; we have not done as we ought, nor as we might: we are unworthy that he should use us; and if he should write "Ichabod" in letters of fire over this Tabernacle, and leave this house to be desolate as Shiloh was of old, he might well do it and none could blame him. Let us all confess this.

152. Church, Worldliness of, her Curse A worldly church chases away the Spirit of God. Wherever there is a people conformed to the maxims and ways of the world, indifferent in prayer and sluggish in effort, there will be the name to live, but there will be death; but where there is a people who with little strength have, nevertheless, kept God's word, and above all have kept their garments unspotted, there will ere long come the making bare of the almighty arm in the eyes of all the people. Wash ye, make ye clean, put away your secret iniquities, humble yourselves, O professors, before God. May the Lord give you the spirit of repentance, may he pour out his Spirit upon each of us, may we put away the old leaven, and so shall we keep the feast. May we shake ourselves from the dust of every sin, so shall we put on our beautiful garments, and the time of the church's glory and our triumph shall come.

153. Church Discipline, Object of

Some backsliders, I fear, are apostates, for having brought dishonour upon the Christian church, they nevertheless are far from being humbled, but impertinently thrust themselves and their supposed claims to attention upon the church whom they have grieved and injured; their much-talked-of repentance appearing to us to be more early than deep, and to be more pretentious than true: but at the same time, if a man hath fallen, and even if the church be obliged to put him away, we do not deliver such a one to Satan that he may blaspheme, but that he may learn not to blaspheme. The object of church discipline should always be the good of the person who has to endure it. There is no more Christlike work anywhere than for elder Christians to be watching over the young ones, checking their first declensions, nipping the evil in the bud—no nobler work, unless it be the restoration of those who have actually gone astray.

154. Church of England, Unsoundness of The Church of England is eaten through and through with Sacramentarianism, but Nonconformity appears to me to be almost as badly riddled with philosophical infidelity. Those of whom we thought better things are turning aside one by one from the fundamentals of the faith. At first they gave up the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment, now it must be the doctrine of the fall: first one thing, then another. If some men have their way, all the doctrines of the word must go. They treat the doctrines of Scripture as though they were all disproved, and only held by a few ignorant bigots. Through and through, I believe, the heart of England is honeycombed with a detestable infidelity, which dares still to go into the pulpit, and call itself Christian. I pray that God may preserve our denomination from it; but my prayer shall go up that he will give us the Holy Spirit, for men never go wrong with the Holy Spirit; he will keep them right, and lead them into all truth. Soundness of doctrine is only worth having when it is the result of the living indwelling of God in the church; and because too much the Holy Spirit has departed, we see the signs that the orthodox faith is given up, and the inventions of man preached instead thereof.

155. Coldness of Heart a Barrier to Communion As one said, on a certain occasion, there is a fleet lying in the river richly laden, but it cannot come up, because the river is blocked up with the ice; so, methinks, I see my Master's love lying out far down the river, and would fain come to my poor soul to enrich me, and make me holy and heavenly; but, alas! the coldness of my heart, like ice, blocks up the channel, and I get not what I might obtain. Come, heavenly love, and melt the ice; flow streams of grace, and dissolve every barrier; come Jesus, come Thou in to my own heart, and let thy treasures be mine for evermore!

156. Comfort for Troubled ones The saint's lot has its blacks, but it has also its whites; drops of wormwood are ours, but milk and honey are not denied us. We mourn at Marah, but we sing at Elim. Bochim still stands, but Bethel is ours too. The lion roars, but the turtle also yields her cheering note. Clouds are above us, but the stars smile on. Our sea has its ebbs, but, by turns, it comes to the flood. Winters bluster and freeze, but summer comes anon, and blossoms with joy, and autumn follows with its mellowness. We are cast down, but we are not destroyed; nay, we are not even injured, for if for a little time we seem to be losers by our castings down, we ere long discover our greater gains. Happy are the people that are in such a case, yea, blessed are the people whose God is the Lord. The cup of tried David is far better than that of proud Belshazzar; none are so comforted as those to whom the Holy Ghost is Comforter.

157. Comfort, Undying, in God

None of your dearest and most cherished loves are at all worthy to sit upon the throne of your heart—far down in the scale must they be placed when the God who gave them to you is brought into comparison. That broad bosom of your beloved husband beats fondly and faithfully, but when death lays it low, as ere long it must, how wretched will be your condition if you have not an everlasting Comforter upon whose breast to lean! Those dear little sparkling eyes, which are like stars in the heaven of your social joy, if these be the gods of your idolatry, how wretched will you be when their brightness is dim, and the mother's joy is mouldering back to dust! Happy is he who hath an everlasting joy and an undying comfort; and there is none in this respect like unto the God of Jeshurun. There would be fewer broken hearts if hearts were more completely the Lord's. We should have no rebellious spirits if, when we had our joys, we used them lawfully, and did not too much build our hopes upon them. All beneath the moon will wane. Everything on these shores ebbs and flows like the sea. Everything beneath the sun will be eclipsed. You will not find in time that which is only to be discovered in eternity, namely, an immutable and unfailing source of comfort.

158. Comforters, Awkward

You know, in common life, there are some people who seem to be born nurses. Others there are, to be sure, who cannot nurse at all; if you were ill, you would never have them about you even if they would come for nothing and pay you for having them. They mean well, but somehow or other they would stamp across the room every time they moved, and would be sure to wake you up; and if there were any physic to be taken at night, it would taste all the worse if they gave it to you. But you have known a real nurse—perhaps your own wife—you never did hear her walk across the room when you were ill, and you never would even if you had an instrument to your ear like a microscope to the eye, magnifying the minutest thing; she steps so softly that you might almost sooner hear her heart beat than her footfall. Then, too, she understands your taste exactly, and always knows what to bring you. Whoever heard of a nurse more fit for her work than Miss Nightingale? She seems as if she could do nothing else, and as if God had sent her into the world on purpose, not only that she might be a nurse herself, but that she might also teach others to nurse. Well, it is just the same in spiritual things. I have used a homely illustration to show you what I mean. There are some people who, if they try to comfort you when you are distressed, go so awkwardly to work about it, that they are sure to give you a great deal more trouble than you had before. They really mean well, and try to do their best, but they cannot do what you want

done. It is not their work; they are not "helps;" they take a great crowbar to do the thing which a little picklock would easily effect, and they go about everything in such a strange, clumsy style, that you can see they were not made for their work, The true "help "to a distressed soul is a person who, though his head may not be very big, has a large and warm heart. He is a man, in fact, all heart. It was said of John, that he was a pillar of fire from head to foot. This is the kind of man the soul wants when it is shivering in the cold winter of despondency.

159. Coming of the Lord, Welcoming the In Pompeii's last tremendous hour the bread was in the oven, but the baker never saw it taken from it; the meat was seething in the pot never to be eaten; the slave was at the mill, the prisoner in the dungeon, the traveller at the inn, the money dealer in his treasury, but none of these saw aught of their labours, their pains, their pleasures, or their profits again. The burning dust fell over all, the poisonous vapours sought out every crevice, and the ocean of mud buried inhabitant and habitation, worshipper and temple, worker and all that he had wrought! Should a sudden overthrow come upon us also, are we ready? Could we welcome the descending Lord, and feel that for us his coming with clouds to recompense justice would be a joyful appearing, to be welcomed with exulting acclamation? The question is too important to be dismissed until honestly answered: may sincerity direct the examination it suggests.

160. Communion, Bliss of

Communion with Christ has no after-bitterness in it. It never cloy; it is a sun without spots; it is a moon which never wanes; it is an ocean which never ebbs; it is a river which flows on for ever—it is all heaven and all bliss.

161. Communion, Gates of This city of communion has many pearly gates, every several gate is of one pearl, and each gate is thrown open to the uttermost that we may enter, assured of welcome. If there were but one small loophole through which to talk with Jesus, it would be a high privilege to thrust a word of fellowship through the narrow door: how much we are blessed in having so large an entrance! Had the Lord Jesus been far away from us, with many a stormy sea between, we should have longed to send a messenger to him to carry him our loves, and bring us tidings from his Father's house; but see his kindness, he has built his house next door to ours, nay, more, he takes lodging with us, and tabernacles in poor humble hearts, that so he may have perpetual intercourse with us. O how foolish must we be, if we do not live in habitual communion with him.

162. Communion with Christ, the means of Growth The well-head and fountain of growth in grace is well-sustained communion and manifest oneness with Christ; we may strive after moral virtue if we will, but we shall be like those foolish children who pluck flowers and thrust them into their little gardens without roots; but if we strive after increasing faith in Jesus, we shall be as wise men. who plant choice bulbs and living seeds, from which shall in due time arise the golden cups or the azure bells of lovely flowers, emblems of things that are lovely and of good repute.

163. Communion Table, Christ seen at the The elements of bread and wine become the lenses of a far-seeing optic-glass, through which we behold the Saviour; and I say again, if there be one spot of earth clear from the smoke of care, it is the table where saints have fellowship with their Lord. A door is often opened in heaven at this banquet, when his banner over us is love; but if it be so sweet to enjoy the emblem, what must it be to live with Christ himself, and drink the wine new with him in the kingdom of our Father!

164. Communion Table, Music for the

We should not choose a tune for the communion table which is not very soft. These are no boisterous themes with which we have to deal when we tarry here. A bleeding Saviour, robed in a vesture dyed with blood—this is a theme which you must treat with loving gentleness, for everything that is coarse is out of place. While the tune is soft, it must also be sweet. Silence, ye doubts; be dumb, ye fears; be hushed, ye cares! Why come ye here? My music must be sweet and soft when I sing of him. But oh! it must also be strong; there must be a full swell in my praise. Draw out the stops, and let the organ swell the diapason; In fulness let its roll of thundering harmony go up to heaven; let every note be sounded at its loudest. "Praise ye him upon the cymbals, upon the high-sounding cymbals; upon the harp with a solemn sound." Soft, sweet, and strong, let the music be.

165. Companionship of Jesus

If Jesus Christ be thy companion, thou mayest walk unharmed through Vanity Fair; and if thy path should lie through it, thou needst not care for all the fools that pluck at thy garment. Through a shower of mud it is safe and blessed travelling if Jesus be our companion. I hope you are not one of those who would choose to walk with him in silver slippers, but who would leave him if he came in poverty and shame! If so, you do not know the love of Jesus at all. Through briars and thorns lies the path of love; and yet that thorny road is paradise if Jesus do but tread it with us, and permit us to lean upon his arm. The more severe the troubles of life become, the higher shall your comforts rise if Jesus be with you. Tired soul, rest in Jesus! Only cast yourself on him, confide entirely in him, and you shall find that the peace which he gives you none can take from you.

166. Companionship with Jesus In days of persecution those who believed the Bible on secondhand have denied the faith, but those who have had it worked into the warp and woof of their being, who have had their souls dyed and tintured through and through with it, because they have lived upon Christ, and Christ has lived in them—these are the people who have stood on the fagots to bum, and have learned to sing the high praises of God while their flesh and bones were being consumed. If we want to become stalwart men, who cannot be turned aside by every wind of doctrine, whom neither Rationalism nor Sacramentarianism can shake from the gospel, we must be those who have been with Jesus, and in that way have learned experimentally from him, for such experimental Christians can never give up the truth.

167. Conceit of Man A certain worthy of our acquaintance, being out of a situation, made application to a friend to recommend him to a place, and remarked, that he would prefer a somewhat superior position, "for you know, Tomkins," said he, "I am not a fool, and I ain't ignorant." We would not insinuate that the brother was mistaken in his own estimate, but the remark might possibly excite suspicion, for the case is similar to that of a timid pedestrian at night alone, hurrying along a lonesome lane, when a gentleman corner out of the hedge just at the turning by Deadman's Corner, and accosts him in the following reassuring language, "I ain't a garrotter, and I never crack a fellow's head with, this here life-preserver." The outspoken self-assertion of the brother quoted above, is but the expression of the thought of the most, if not all of us. "I am not a fool, and I ain't ignorant," is the almost universal self-compliment, which is never out of season; and this is the great barrier to our benefiting by good advice, which we suppose to be directed to the foolish and ignorant world in general, but not to our elevated selves.

The poet did not say, but we will say it for him, "All men think all men faulty but themselves." It would be a great gain to us all, if we had those elegant quizzing glasses of ours silvered at the back, so that the next time we stick them in our eyes, in all the foppery of our conceit, we may be edified, and, let us hope, humbled, by seeing ourselves.

168. Condemnation not for the Believer The sin of the believer was laid upon the Lord Jesus Christ, "for the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." And from that day forward the penalty of sin has been discharged and removed by the Redeemer's having endured it himself. The black cloud of my sin has no rain in it; it has emptied out its rain upon Christ. Nay, the black cloud itself has ceased to be. The Red Sea of my sin cannot drown me; it is dried up by Christ; I have a safe passage through it. My sin is in itself most deadly and destructive, as I see it to have been in the person of my Lord Jesus; but it shall neither destroy nor condemn me, for it hath destroyed and condemned Christ, and he has destroyed and condemned it.

169. Condemnation through rejecting Christ

Here is a man out at sea; he has got a chart, and that chart, if well studied, will, with the help of the compass, guide him to his journey's end. The pole-star gleams out amidst the cloud-rifts, and that, too, will help him. "No," says he, "I will have nothing to do with your stars; I do not believe in the North Pole; I shall not attend to that little thing inside the box; one needle is as good as another needle; I do not believe in your rubbish, and I will have nothing to do with it; it is only a lot of nonsense got up by people on purpose to make money, and I will have nothing to do with it." The man does not get to shore anywhere; he drifts about, but never reaches port, and he says it is a very hard thing, a very hard thing. I do not; think so. So some of you say, "Well, I am not going to read your Bible; I am not going to listen to your talk about Jesus Christ; I do not believe in such things." You will be damned, then, sir! "That's very hard," say you. No, it is not. It is not more so than the fact that if you reject the compass and the pole-star you will not get to your journey's end.

170. Confidence in God That is a grand story of Alexander's confidence in his friend and physician. When the physician had mixed him a potion for his sickness, a letter was put into Alexander's hand, warning him not to drink the medicine, for it was poisoned. He held the letter in one hand and the cup in the other, and in the presence of his friend and physician, he drank up the draught, and after he had drained the cup, he bade his friend look at that letter, and judge of his confidence in him. Alexander had unstaggering faith in his friend, which did not admit of doubt. "See now," said he, "how I have trusted you." This is the assurance which the believer should exercise towards his God. The cup is very bitter, and some tell us it will prove to be deadly; that it is so nauseous that we shall never survive the draught. Unbelief whispers in our ear, "Your coming tribulation will utterly crush you." Drink it, my brother, and say, "If he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It cannot be that God should be unfaithful to his promise, or unmindful of his covenant. Your trial, then, will cease when it culminates: he will make darkness light before you when the darkest hour of the night has struck.

171. Confidence in God, Childlike

You heard your little boy the other day crying bitterly. His mother called him, and asked what ailed him? It was a splinter in his finger. Well, that was a small affair; you did not want to call in three surgeons to extract it, or raise a hue and cry in the public press. Bring a needle, and we will soon

set it right. Oh, but what a great thing it was to that pretty little sufferer, as he stood there with eyes all wet with tears of anguish. It was a great concern to him. Now, did it occur to that boy that his pain was too small a thing for his mother to attend to? Not at all; what were mothers and fathers made for but to look after the little wants of little children? And God our Father is a good father, he pities us as fathers pity their children, and condescends to us. He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names, yet he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. The same God who kindles the sun, has said, "I will not quench the smoking flax." If you have but confidence in God, you will take your great things and your little things to him, and he will never belie your confidence, for he has said they that trust in him shall never be ashamed or confounded, world without end. Faith must succeed.

172. Congratulations, Spiritual

Let us congratulate one another that our prayers, with all the faults that we are apt to find with them, are being heard. They are penetrating heaven, they are entering the pearly gate, they are swarming the throne of the Most High. Through Jesus' blood, which they use as their great prevailing weapon, they are moving the arm which moves the world; blessings are coming down upon our sons and daughters, and upon our kinsfolk and acquaintance, in answer to our wrestling, believing prayer. Let us congratulate one another. If we were depressed, if we were like a wilderness, we would condole with one another. Let us now congratulate; let us take the right hand of fellowship over again, and looking back upon the past, vow for the future, in God's name, that, if he will but strengthen us, nothing shall daunt our courage, nothing restrain our zeal. What he has done shall make us aspire to more! what has been accomplished by us as a people shall be but a stepping-stone to more daring attempts, to more zealous adventures, to more arduous labours for the promotion of his kingdom and the extension of his sway.

173. Congregations, Thin, Comfort in

Some years ago there was a young man, who, upon much such a morning as this—cold, snowy, dark—entered a house of prayer, as you have done to-day. I thought as I came here, this morning, of that young man. I said to myself, "This morning is so very forbidding that I shall have a very small congregation, but perhaps among them there will be one like that young man." To be plain with you, it comforted me to think that the morning when God blessed my soul, the preacher had a very small congregation, and it was cold and bitter, and therefore I said to myself this morning, "Why should not I go up merrily to my task, and preach if there should only be a dozen there?" for Jesus may intend to reveal himself to some one as he did to me, and that some one may be a soul-winner, and the means of the salvation of tens of thousands in years to come. I wonder if that will occur to that young man yonder, for I trust he has the enquiry of the wise men upon his lips. I trust he will not quench those desires which now burn within him, but rather may the spark be fanned to a flame, and may this day witness his decision for Jesus. Oh, has the Lord looked on that young woman, or on that dear child, or on yonder aged man? I know not who it may be, but I shall indeed bless God this morning, if the cry may be heard from many a lip, "Sir, what must I do to be saved? Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

174. Conscience, Awakened, Terror of

Seeing that there had been no wars in Cain's day, and that the human heart had not been brutalised as it now is, so as to speak of war as we now do in such gentle terms, surely if he had had any conscience at all, it must have been a horrible thought to him that he had killed his brother. "I have killed a man, I have shed his blood." Surely it made him start in his sleep. How could he be quiet upon his lonely couch? That red-handed man! Guilt, a grim chamberlain, with fingers bloody red, would surely draw the curtains of his bed. Would not the spectacle all come up before his mind? The talk in the field, the sudden impulse, the blow, the blood, the look of his victim as he cried for pity as one cruel stroke succeeded another; and then the sight of the ghastly body and the streaming blood, and the crimson marks on the soddened earth. Oh, it must have been a remembrance clinging like a viper around the murderer whenever he might be! He might well build a city, as we are told he did, in order to quench these fiery remembrances. Then would the thought come upon him, "You slew him though he was your brother."

"Am I my brother's keeper?" said he, but men can talk more braggingly than their heart talks in secret. The horror of brother-killing must have haunted Cain: "I slew my brother, I, the first that was born of woman slew the second born." And then it would be suggested, "And wherefore did I slay him? What evil had he done me? What if he did offer a different sacrifice from mine, and what if God did accept him and not me, yet what hurt had he done me?" The innocence of his victim, if Cain had any conscience, must have increased his uneasiness, for he would recollect how inoffensively he had kept those sheep of his, and had been like one among them, so lamblike, that shepherd man, himself a true sheep of God's pasture. "Yet," would Cain say, "I slew him because I hated God, the God before whose bar I am soon to stand, the God who set this mark on me." Can you picture the man who had thus to be daily schooled and upbraided by a brother's blood? It needs a poet's mind to teach him. Think how you would feel if you had killed your own brother, how the guilt would hang over you like a black cloud, and drop horror into your very soul.

175. Consecrated Buildings

If it be true that there is some sanctity this side of a brick-wall more than there is on the other side of it; if it be true that the fresh air blows away grace, and that for the highest acceptance we need groined arches, pillars, aisle, chancel, and transept, then farewell, ye green lanes, and fair gardens, and lovely woods, for henceforth we must, without ceasing, dwell where your fragrance and freshness can never reach us. But this is ridiculous; wherefore I gather that the frequenting of some one particular place has little or nothing to do with prayer; and such a conclusion is consistent with the saying of Paul upon Mars' Hill, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

176. Consecration, every Believer's Desire

You know in the church of Rome they have certain orders of men and women who devote themselves to certain benevolent, charitable, or superstitious works, and who come to be especially considered as the servants of the Lord Jesus. Now, we have never admired this form of fraternities and brotherhoods, and sisterhoods; but the spirit of the thing is just that which ought to enter into the heart of every Christian man and woman. Why, you members of the Christian church, you ought to be—what you are, if you are what you profess to be—wholly consecrated to the Saviour. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father," should be practised by all the church, not merely by certain orders thence to be called religious. Speak, O Sisters of Mercy!

Every Christian woman is a sister of mercy. We hear of men who belong to what is called "the order of Passionists." Every believing man ought to be of the order of the Passionists, moved by the passion of the Saviour to consecrate himself to the Saviour's work.

177. Consecration, Exhortation to

If you could know regrets in the realm of blessedness, would not these be the regrets, that you have not served Christ better, loved him more, spoke of him oftener, given more generously to his cause, and more uniformly proved yourselves to be consecrated to him? I am afraid that such would be the form of the regrets of Paradise, if any could intrude within those gates of pearl. Come, let us live while we live! Let us live up to the utmost stretch of our manhood! Let us ask the Lord to brace our nerves, to string our sinews, and make us true crusaders, knights of the blood-red cross, consecrated men and women, who, for the love we bear Christ's name, will count labour to be ease, and suffering to be joy, and reproach to be honour, and loss to be gain! If we have never yet given ourselves wholly up to Christ as his disciples, now hard by his cross, where we see his wounds still bleeding afresh, and himself quivering in pain for us, let us pledge ourselves in his strength, that we give ourselves wholly to him without reserve, and so may he help us by his Spirit, that the vow may be redeemed and the resolve may be carried out, that we may love Christ, and dying may find it gain.

178. Consecration, Partial

I noticed the other day, a remark which struck me. Speaking of a certain congregation, the writer said he believed there were a hundred persons in it who were worth not less than five thousand pounds a-year each, and then he mentioned the sum that was given for the maintenance of the work of God, and he added, "If any ordinary person who was not a Christian, went in there and heard them sing—

'And if I might make some reserve, And duty did not call, I love my God with zeal so great, That I would give him all,'—

he would say to himself, "I was at the theatre on Saturday night, and saw a farce, but if I want a screaming one I must come here on a Sunday." Indeed, I thought the remark to be sadly true. When I see how much there is of available strength both in worldly substance, in mental vigour, and in other forms in the church, which is never used, I dare hardly say that any church now upon earth really labours for Christ. A little of your spare strength is given to Jesus, and then ye think ye have done well. He is put off with odds and ends, the cheese parings and the potatoe peelings of the church. I ask you, does he get much more? What are the gifts of most? Do they give as much as would keep the lowest menial in their kitchens? It was not so in early times. Then men were Christians all over and altogether, and served Christ first, Christ last, Christ midst, and Christ without end; but now it is enough if we gloss over life with a little varnish of holy talk and pious profession. Would God these eyes might live to see a church that really laboured, putting forth all its strength with all its might, using all the force in its possession for the propagation of the gospel of the Lord and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

179. Consecration to be Entire

We must bring before God, if we would be accepted in our works, something of all virtues. It must not be all galbanum nor all stacte; not all intrepid courage without any subdued reverence, nor all the simplicity of affection without any of the sublimity of faith; it must not be all self-denial, though there must be some of it; gravity itself must be tempered with cheerfulness; there must be something of every form of virtue to make up the blessed compound. We must endeavour to bring something of all exercises; not prayer without praise, nor work without prayer; not mental energy without spiritual gifts, nor gifts without holiness; a mixture, a compound of the whole. We must bring something of all our powers: not all intellect, not all heart; something of intellect in judgment and understanding; something of the heart in enthusiasm and joy; something of the body, for the members of the body are members of Christ; but much of the soul, for the soul's service is the soul of service. We must bring to God a compound of excellencies from all the powers which he has renewed and consecrated to himself. Oh it were matchless, if God the Holy Spirit should graciously enable us to imitate Christ in this, that we might have some of all the graces, not lacking in any respect, but as a man of God thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

180. Consisting its own Reward To this hour truth offers no dowry but herself to those who will espouse her. Abuse, contempt, hard fare, ridicule, misrepresentation—these are the wages of consistency; and if better comes it is not to be reckoned on. If any man be of a noble enough spirit to love the truth for truth's sake, and God for God's sake, and Christ for Christ's sake, let him enlist with those of like mind; but if he seek anything over and above that, if he desire to be made famous, or to gain power, or to be well beneficed, he had better keep his place among the cowardly dirt-eaters who swarm around us. The church of God bribes no man. She has no mercenary rewards to proffer, and would scorn to use them if she had. If to serve the Lord be not enough reward, let those who look for more go their selfish way: if heaven be not enough, let those who can despise it seek their heaven below.

181. Consolation, Everlasting A man goes to work to make money, and after toiling hard for it he gets it, and it is a consolation to him, but it is not an "everlasting consolation," for he may spend or he may lose all his money; he may invest it in some company (limited or unlimited), and very soon find it vanish; or he may be compelled by death to leave it; it cannot be, at the best, more than a temporary consolation. A man toils hard for knowledge; he acquires it; he becomes eminent; his name is famous. This is a consolation to him for all his toil, but it cannot last long, for when he comes to feel the headache, or the heartache, his degrees and his fame cannot cheer him; or when his soul becomes a prey to despondency he may turn over many a learned tome before he will find a cure for melancholy. His consolation is but frail and fickle, it will only serve to cheer him at intermittent seasons; it is not "everlasting consolation." But I venture to say that through the consolation which God gives to his people they are unsurpassed for their endurance. They can stand all tests—the shock of trial, the bursting out of passion, the lapse of years; nay, they can even stand the passage to eternity, for God has given to his people "everlasting consolation."

182. Consolation, Strong

What is strong consolation? I think strong consolation is that which does not depend upon bodily health. What a cowardly old enemy the devil is! When we are strong and vigorous in body, it is very seldom that he will tempt us to doubt and fear, but if we have been racked with hours of pain and sleepless nights, and are getting to feel faint and weary, then he comes in with his horrible

insinuations: "God will forsake you. His promise will fail!" He is vile enough to put his black paws on the brightest truth in the Bible, ay, upon even the very existence of God himself, and turn the boldest believer into the most terrible doubter, so that we seem to have gone bodily over to the army of Satan and to be doubting every good thing that is in the word of God. Strong consolation, even at such times, enables us still to rejoice in the Lord though every nerve should twinge, and every bone should seem melted into jelly with pain. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Let him crush me, but he shall get nothing out of me but the wine of resignation. I will not fly in his face, but still say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." O may you have such strong consolation, my dear brethren.

183. Contentment through the Cross

Believers in Jesus carry the pearl of content in their bosoms. Jesus takes away the restless spirit, and gives us rest. Jesus is the door that fits the heart, and when he is near to us he shuts out the world's cold and heat, and gives us sweet content. O ambitious man, thou that runnest after something, and thou canst not tell what it is that can gratify thine immortal spirit, turn to the cross, for at the foot of it there springs a sacred fount of soul-satisfying delight, and if thou wilt but stoop and drink, thine ambition shall be over, and thou shalt want no more. There is satisfaction for the deepest longings of heart, and head, and conscience, in the fount which springs from the wounds of Jesus. Faith is the silver cup. Dip it into the overflowing stream and drink.

184. Conversion, Day of, Retrospect of the Do you recollect the day when the gospel carried your heart by storm? You never can forget when the great battering-ram of truth began to beat against the gates of Mansoul. You recollect how you strengthened the posts and bars, and stood out against the gospel, resolving not to yield. You were at times compelled to weep under impressions, but you wiped away your transient tears—your emotion was "as the morning cloud, and the early dew." But eternal love would not relinquish its gracious assaults, for it was determined to save. Providence and grace together besieged the city of your soul, and brought divine artillery to bear upon it. You were straitly shut up till—as it was with Samaria, so it was with you—there was a great famine in your soul. You recollect how, Sabbath after Sabbath, every sermon was a fresh assault from the hosts of heaven, a new blow from the celestial battering-ram. How often, when the gates of your prejudice were dashed to shivers, did you set up fresh barricades! Your heart trembled beneath the terrible strokes of justice, but, by the help of Satan, your depraved heart managed to secure the gates a little longer with iron clasps of pride, and brazen bars of insensibility; till at last, one blessed day—do you remember it?—one blessed day, the gospel battering-ram gave the effectual blow of grace, the gates flew wide open, and in rode the Prince of Peace, Immanuel, like a conqueror, riding in the chariots of salvation. Our will was subdued, our affections were overcome, our whole soul was brought into subjection to the sway of mercy. Jesus was glorious in our eyes that day, "the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." That day of days we have registered upon the tablets of our heart: it was the true coronation-day of Jesus in us, and our birthday for eternity. When our glorious Lord entered into our souls, wearing his vesture dipped in blood, pardoning and blessing in the plenitude of his grace, then the bells of our heart rang merry peals; the streamers of our joy floated in the fragrant air; the streets of our soul were strewn with roses; the fountains of our love ran with rich red wine, and our soul was as full of bliss as a heart could be this side of heaven; for salvation had come to our house, and mercy's King had deigned to visit us. Oh, the sweet perfume of the spikenard,

when, for the first time, the King sat at our table to sup with us! how the savour of his presence filled every chamber of our inner man! That day when grace redeemed us from our fears, the gospel was a glorious gospel indeed! Ah! dear hearer, you stood in the crowded aisle to hear the sermon, but you did not grow weary, the lips of the preacher refreshed you, for the truth dropped like sweet-smelling myrrh. You could have gone over hedge and ditch to hear the gospel at that season of first love; no matter how roughly it might have been served up by the preacher, you rolled the bread of heaven under your tongue as a sweet morsel, for it was the gospel of your salvation.

185. Conversion, Wisdom of God in

You know the children's toy, the kaleidoscope? Every time you turn it there is some fresh form of beauty. You seldom see the same form twice. So it is with nature, each time and season has its special beauty. There is always variety in its scenery; diversities of form and colour are strewn throughout the world. You never saw two hills moulded to the same pattern, or two rivers that wound after the same fashion from their source down to the sea; nature is full of variety. So is the work of the Holy Spirit. In calling sinners to Christ, there is singleness of purpose but no uniformity of means. Your conversion, my dear friend, in the main outline, is very like mine, yet your conversion has its distinctive incidents. God's wisdom is displayed equally in bringing you in that way, and in bringing me in another way. I believe there will be found evidence at the last of the wisdom of God in the very date, the very place, the very means in and by which every soul is brought to believe in Jesus; and angels will, no doubt, be able to perceive in every conversion some singular marks of beautiful originality proceeding from the inexhaustible Artist of Grace, the Holy Spirit.

186. Conversion Times, the Church's Joy

What joy there is in the church of God when sinners are converted! We have our high holidays, we have our mirthful days downstairs in the lecture-hall, when we hear of souls turned from the paths of the destroyer; and in the vestries behind, your pastors and elders often experience such joy as only heaven can equal, when we have heard the stories of souls emancipated from the slavery of sin, and led into the perfect liberty which Jesus gives.

187. Converts, not all Professed Ones Genuine The florist does not expect all his slips to become shrubs. Look ye at the trees which, in a few short days, will be smothered with blossoms and glorious with beauty; do you expect those blossoms all to become fruit? No gardener thinks that such a thing can be. He understands that full many of those flowers will wither, will be blown off in the March gales, or smitten by the evening's frost. He looks for fruit proportionate to the blossoming, but not to a fruit that shall be equal to the full promise of the bloom. And so think not ill of Christ's great days, because they seem to inexperienced eyes greater on the surface than they are. Thank God there is a residuum of reality, be thankful for that; but, do not be disappointed, much less scoff, because it is not all that you had hoped it was. If some be saved we are glad; if had a thousand professed converts, and only a hundred of them turned out to be genuine, I would be more grateful than if all my converts were genuine, and there was only half a dozen of them.

188. Conviction, Ordeal of

Sooner or later each saved man will have his hand-to-hand fight with the prince of darkness; and as a general rule, it is a great mercy to have it over on the outset of one's career, and be able afterwards to feel, "Whatever comes upon me, I never can suffer as I suffered when I was seeking Christ. Whatever staggering doubt, or hideous blasphemy, or ghastly insinuations, even of suicide itself, may assail my feeble heart, they cannot outdo the horror of great darkness through which my spirit passed when I was struggling after a Saviour." Now I do not say that it is desirable that we should have this painful ordeal, much less that we should seek it as an evidence of regeneration, but when we have passed through it victoriously, We may so use it that it may be a perpetual armoury to us.

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190. Co-operation in work for Christ

Jesus sent out his disciples by twos, for he knew that each would cheer his fellow. Service is usually best in companionship: he who works altogether alone will be in his temper either too high or too low, censorious or desponding. Two are better far than one; they not only accomplish twice the work, as we might have expected but they frequently multiply their power seven times by their co-operation. Happy are those wedded souls whose life of love to their Lord and one another is like the cluster on the staff, which they joyfully bear along! Happy those Christian companions who share each other's joys and sorrows, and so pass onward to the skies knit together as one man. Communication enriches, reticence impoverishes. Communion is strength, solitude is weakness. Alone, the fine old beech yields to the blast, and lies prone upon the sward: in the forest, supporting each other, the trees laugh at the hurricane. The sheep of Jesus flock together; the social element is the genius of Christianity. To find a brother is to find a pearl of great price; to retain a friend is to treasure up the purest gold. Between two upon a staff we find happiness. The monastic or hermit death-life is not our Master's beau ideal, but holy companionship is his chosen means for affording us help in service and advance in joy.

191. Courage necessary for the Christian

You tell me a deacon has thrown cold water upon your efforts. Cold water! Does that discourage you? Are you in a fluster about that? What would you have done if, like old Latimer, you had been called to take off your garments some cold morning in Smithfield, to be warmed after an awful fashion, by standing on a stake to play the man and light up a candle for your God? The pity that some people sigh for on account of their petty persecutions and troubles, it is a shame to ask and a waste to give. Cannot we suffer for Christ? If we cannot, it must be because we are not runners,

and scarcely walkers; our spiritual strength must be low, and our life unhealthy. O for more love, and more faith, and more spiritual vigour in our constitutions, and then we shall clear half our difficulties at a running leap, and scarcely call them other than light afflictions which are but for a moment, and are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

192. Covetousness, Danger of

Beware of a growing covetousness, for covetousness is of all sins one of the most insidious. It is like the silting up of a river. As the river comes down from the land it brings with it sand and earth, and it deposits all these at its mouth, and by degrees, unless the conservators watch it carefully, it will block itself up, and it will be difficult to find a channel for ships of great burden. You cannot see when the river closes its own mouth, but so it is, by daily deposit it creates a bar which is dangerous to navigation. Many a man when he begins to accumulate wealth begins also to ruin his soul, and the more he deposits the more he stops up his liberal spirit, which is, so to speak, the very mouth of his life.

193. Covetousness and Liberality

There is nothing in this world but lives by giving, except a covetous man, and such a man is a piece of grit in the machinery; he is out of gear with the universe. Man is a wheel running in the opposite direction to the wheels of God's great engine. He is a jibbing horse in the team. He is one that will not do what all the forces of the world beside are doing. He is a monster; he is not fit for this world at all. He has not realised the motion of the spheres. He keeps not step with the march of the ages. He is out of date; he is out of place; he is out of God's order altogether. But the cheerful giver is marching to the music of the spheres. He is in order with God's great natural laws, and God therefore loveth him, since he sees his own work in him.

194. Critical Christians

You shall usually find that the sharpest critics are those who never write; and the best judges of battles those who keep at a prudent distance from the guns. Christians of the kid-gloved order, who never make an attempt to save souls, are marvellously quick to tell us when we are too rough or too light in our speech; and they readily detect us if our modes of action are irregular or too enthusiastic. They have a very keen scent for anything like fanaticism or disorder. For my part, I feel pretty safe when I have the censures of these gentlemen; we are not far wrong when they condemn us. Let a man begin earnestly to work for the Lord Jesus, and he will soon find out that he is unworthy of the meanest place in the employ of one so glorious.

195. Critical Hearers, Warning of

Ah, dear hearer, beware of head knowledge without heart knowledge; beware of being so orthodox as to set yourself up as a judge of the preacher, and to refuse to be obedient to the truth. Beware of saying, "Oh yes, yes, yes, yes, that is very applicable to So-and-so, and very well put." Do not criticise but feel. It were better for you that you had been a common ploughboy, whistling at the plough, who never heard these things until to-day, and have now listened to them, and have received them in all their novelty, and power, and beauty for the first time; this were better for you than to have heard them till they ring in your ears like the bell which you have heard every Sabbath-day, of whose monotony you are weary. Beware of going down to hell with a millstone of

sound doctrine about your necks, for if ye will be damned you may as well perish knowing the truth as not knowing it. Nay, if you catch the formula and lay hold upon the creed, and imagine yourself to be teachers of others, it is even easier to perish in that state than it is if you came in to hear the Word, untaught heretofore in its glad message.

196. Cross, The, arresting Passion The stripes of Jesus, when well considered, arrest spiritual disorder. The man is brought to view his Lord as suffering for him, and a voice saith to his rising lusts, "Hitherto shall ye come, but no further. Here at Calvary shall your proud waves be stayed." My feet had almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped, had not my Master's cross stood before me, as a most effectual barrier to stay me in my fall. Many a man has gone post haste onward unchecked by any power, until a vision of the Man, the crucified Man, has appeared before his eyes, and he has been brought to a blessed halt. Read the memorable life of Colonel Gardiner, for what happened to him literally has happened to tens of thousands spiritually—they have been enlisted to sin, and sold to Satan, but a sight of the Saviour slain for sinners has made them pause, and henceforth they have no longer dared to offend. Now, it is a great thing for a physician to find a remedy which will hold the disease within bounds so that it reach not the direst stage of malignity; and this the cross of Christ does, it binds in chains the fury of unhallowed passion. What a miraculous power the griefs of Jesus have upon the believer! Though his corruption is still within him, yet it cannot have dominion over him, because he is not under the law, but under grace.

197. Cross, The, revealing Love

Standing, as it were, at the world's end, at the grave's mouth, and at hell's door, the cross of Jesus reveals love to the utmost end, and is a grand display of the immutability and invincibility of the affection of the heart of Jesus.

198. Cross, The, revealing the Glory of God

If any created mind would fain see the glory of God, he need not gaze upon the starry skies, nor soar into the heaven of heavens, he has but to bow at the cross foot, and watch the crimson streams which gush from Immanuel's wounds. If you would behold the glory of God, you need not gaze between the gates of pearls, you have but to look beyond the gates of Jerusalem and see the Prince of Peace expire. If you would receive the noblest conception that ever filled the human mind of the lovingkindness and the greatness and the pity, and yet the justice and the severity and the wrath of God, you need not lift up your eyes, nor cast them down, nor look to Paradise, nor gaze on Tophet, you have but to look into the heart of Christ all crushed and broken and bruised, and you have seen it all. Oh, the joy that springs from the fact that God has triumphed after all! Death is not the victor; evil is not master. There are not two rival kingdoms, one governed by the God of good, and the other by the God of evil; no, evil is bound, chained, and led captive; its sinews are cut, its head is broken; its king is bound to the dread chariot of Jehovah-Jesus, and as the white horses of triumph drag the Conqueror up the everlasting hills in splendour of glory, the monsters of the pit cringe at his chariot wheels.

199. Cross, The, the place for Worship From nature up to nature's God is well, but from grace to the God of grace is the more sure and easy way. I have never worshipped even in the presence of Mont Blanc, or amid the crash of thunder, as I have at the foot of the cross. A sense of goodness creates a better worshipper than a sense of the sublime. In our best seasons the most excellent

sublimities of nature become too little for us, they dwarf rather than magnify our conceptions of God.

200. Curse put away by the Cross

O unhappy men, unhappy men, who are under God's curse to-day! You may dress yourselves in scarlet and fine linen, you may go to your feasts, and drain your full bowls of wine; you may lift high the sparkling cup, and whirl in the joyous dance, but if God's curse be on you, what madness possesses you! O sirs, if you could but see it and understand it, this curse would darken all the windows of your mirth. O that you could hear for once the voice which speaks against you from Ebal, with doleful repetition: "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out." How is it you can rest while such sentences pursue you? Oh! unhappiest of men, those who pass out of this life still accursed. One might weep tears of blood to think of them. Let our thoughts fly to them for a moment, but O let us not continue in sin, lest our spirits be condemned to hold perpetual companionship in their grief. Let us fly to the dear cross of Christ, where the curse was put away, that we may never come to know in the fulness of its horror what the curse may mean

201. Curse of Sin gone

Since our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away the curse due to sin, a great rock has been lifted out from the river-bed of God's mercy, and the living stream comes rippling, rolling, swelling on in crystal tides, sweeping before it all human sin and sorrow, and making glad the thirsty who stoop down to drink thereat.

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202. Daily Cares brought to Christ

Oh! you that are now the poor slaves of your daily cares, how happy would you be if you came to Jesus and trusted in him! The cage would grow no larger; the income might become no richer; you might still be among the poor and the labouring ones, but you would have a rest in your condition, a satisfaction in your state, which would make it better though it changed it not; for it is all one to a man to have his estate brought up to his mind, or to have his mind brought down to his estate. It matters not, as long as he is content; it all cometh to the same end, and Christ, by a divine baptism of his love, bathing us, covering us completely in the floods of his divine grace, can give us, as to the cares of this world, a perfect rest.

203. Daily Grace, Need of

I tell you, if you have ever done business in deep waters, you have found that anchors at home are of no use in a storm, and that the anchor which stood so well a year ago, if it is left at home on shore, is of no use to you now in the storm. It is present grace, nothing but present grace, that will now do. You have eaten all the cold meats, and from the cupboard you have brought out every mouldy crust you can think of, and now your soul is reduced to the very last, and fainteth in you, and now you must cry to your God in your trouble, and get present grace in this your time of need.

204. Daily Troubles taken to God

I believe that we fail to bring little troubles to God, and perhaps on account of their being so little, we fancy that we must not mention them to the Most High. This is but the fruit of our pride, for how know we that our great things are so great as we think them to be? and are not our little things, after all, but the fractions of a considerable sum to such little creatures as ourselves? These little, little, little things are of momentous concern to such little ones as we are; and the God that stoops to us at all has already brought himself down in condescension so low that we need not fear that we shall bring him lower. No, you may go to him if you like about that lost key, or about that child's swelling finger, or about that word that irritated you just now. There is nothing little to a father in the thing that troubles his little child; and your great God, having once condescended to observe and care for you, numbering the very hairs of your head, and not suffering a sparrow to fall to the ground without his purpose and decree, will not think that you intrude upon him if you bring your daily troubles to him.

205. Death, Certainty of, to all

"All flesh is grass." The whole history of man may be seen in the meadow. He springs up green and tender, subject to the frosts of infancy which imperil his young life; he grows, he comes to maturity, he puts on beauty even as the grass is adorned with flowers, and the meads are bedecked with varied hues; but after awhile his strength departs, and his beauty is wrinkled, even as the grass withers, and is followed by a fresh generation, which withers in its turn. Like

ourselves, the grass ripens but to decay. The sons of men come to maturity in due time, and then decline and wither as the green herb. Some of the grass is not left to come to ripeness at all, but the mower's scythe suddenly removes it, even as swift-footed death overtakes the careless children of Adam.

206. Death, Forgetfulness of

Right on the edge of our graves sometimes we are, and yet we sport and laugh as though we had a lease of life! You forget death, most of you. The cemetery is so far out of town, but still you should not quite forget, for the hearse goes to and fro with awful regularity, and the church-bell that tolls is not rusty, and those words, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes," are still familiar to the ears of some of us. It will soon be your turn to die. You, too, must gather up your feet in the bed, and meet your father's God; God grant that you may then be found right with him. Little do I know for whom these sentences may have a special bearing; but they may have a bearing, dear friend, upon you. I see some of you dressed in black; you have had to go to the grave mourning because of others: that black will be worn by others soon for you, and the place that now knows you shall know you no more for ever. Oh! by the frailty of life, by the near approach of the Master, or by the certainty of death, I pray you see to it that you breathe the prayer, "Lord give me of thy grace." The Lord help you to pray it. Amen.

207. Death Inevitable to all

Take up the learned man's skull, and what is the difference between that and the skull of the merest pauper that scarcely knew his letters? Brown, impalpable powder, they both crumble down into the same elements. To die in a respectable position, what is the use of it? What are a few more plumes on the hearse, or a longer line of mourning coaches? Will these ease the miseries of Tophet? Ah! friends, you have to die. Why not make ready for the inevitable? Oh! if men were wise, they would see that all earth's joys are just like the bubbles which our children blow with soap; they glitter and they shine, and then they are gone, and there is not even a wreck left behind.

208. Death, Night of

"The night cometh." You cannot put it off. As sure as night comes in its due season to the earth, so death comes to you. There are no arts nor manoeuvres by which night can be deferred or prevented, nor by which death can be postponed or altogether adjourned. "The night cometh," however much we may dread it, or however much we may long for it; it comes, with stealthy tread, surely, and in its appointed time. "The night cometh." The night cometh for the pastor, who has laboured for his flock; for the evangelist, who has preached with earnestness; for the Sabbath-school teacher, who has loved her charge; for the missionary, who has worked for souls. "The night cometh." The night cometh for the sitters in the pews; for the father, the mother, the daughter, the husband, the wife. "The night cometh." Dear hearer, shall you need to be reminded that the night cometh for you? Will you take it home to yourself, or will you, nursing man's hapless delusion, "think all men mortal but yourself?" The night cometh when the eye shall be closed, when the limbs shall grow cold and stiff, when the pulse shall be feeble, and at last shall stop its beating. "The night cometh."

209. Death, Preparation for our Wisdom In the old wars of the Danish kings, there is a legend that, when Harold was contending with his brother Harequin, an arrow was seen flying in the air, quivering as if it scarcely knew its way, and was searching for its victim; then on a sudden it pierced the leader's forehead. A little imagination may picture us as being in the same position as the Danish lordling: the arrow of death is flying for awhile above us, but its descent is sure and its wound is fatal. It ill behoves us to laugh and sport while life hangs on a thread. The sword is out of its scabbard—let us not trifle; it is furbished, and the edge sparkles with fearful sharpness—let us prepare ourselves to meet it. He who does not prepare for death is more than an ordinary fool, he is a madman. When the voice of God is calling to us through the departures of others, if we do not listen to the warning, we may expect him to follow the rejected word of counsel with a blow of wrath; for he often strikes down right terribly those who would not listen to his reproving messages.

210. Death, Readiness for Our dear friend, Mr. James Smith, whom some of you remember as preaching the word at Park-street, and afterwards at Cheltenham, when I saw him, some little while before his departure, described himself thus: "You have seen a passenger that has gone to the station, taken his ticket, all his luggage brought in, all packed up, strapped, directed; and you have seen him sitting with his ticket in his hand waiting till the train comes up. That," said he, "is exactly my condition. I am ready to go as soon as my heavenly Father pleases to come for me." And is not that how we should always live—waiting for the Lord's appearing?

211. Death refining the Body

O death! thou art no gainer by us, but we shall be mighty gainers by thee, for though this poor body shall become worms' meat, and through and through and through this mortal frame decay shall drive its tunnels and make its solemn ways; though back to dust, eye and arm and hand and brain must moulder, yet not lost, nor in any degree injured, shall the whole fabric be; but as it were filtered, purified by the grave, the fair body shall emerge again. The grave shall be to the believer's body as the bath of spices in which Esther bathed herself to make herself ready to behold the great King. Corruption, earth, and worms do but refine this flesh, and make it pure according to God's will, until we shall put it on afresh at his bidding.

212. Death revealing Secrets The hour of death has often served as a touchstone by which formality has been revealed. Men have felt the mask rudely plucked off when lying at death's gate. They have been compelled to see the leprosy in their brow, which they had feared to think upon before; they have discovered then the foul and reeking pollutions concealed within their hearts, which aforesaid they had filmed over with religious duties, and virtues, and professions. Sepulchre light is brighter than we think: the dying bed is a great revealer of secrets.

213. Death, Revolting Character of

One of the saddest reflections about poor dead human nature is what it will be. Death in itself, though a solemn matter, is not so dreadful as that which comes of it. Many a time when that dear corpse has first been forsaken of the soul, those who have lost a dear one have been fain to imprint that cold brow with kisses still. The countenance has looked even more lovely than in life, and when friends have taken the last glimpse, there has been nothing revolting, but much that was attractive. Our dead ones have smiled like sleeping angels, even when we were about to commit them to the grave. Ah! but we cannot shake from us a wretched sense of what is sure to be

revealed before long. It is only a matter of time, and corruption must set in, and it must bring with it its daughter putridity; and by-and-by, the whole must be so noxious that if you had kept it above ground so long, you would vehemently cry with Abraham, "Bury my dead out of my sight!" for the natural and inevitable result of death is corruption.

214. Death, Sweetness of a Promise in

Ah, how delightful it is to die with a promise on the lip, feeling it in the heart! It may be a very lone cottage, and the stars may come and look through the tiles, and the hangings of the bed may be very ragged, and all the surroundings may be poverty-stricken, but he who can lie there and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," he that can rejoice in the promise of the resurrection, and of the life to come, dies grandly; his bed is changed into a throne, his little room, despite its poverty, becomes a palace chamber, and the child of God, who seemed so poor before, is perceived to be a peer of heaven's own blood royal, who is soon about to take possession of his heritage, appointed from before the foundation of the world.

215. Death, the Consummation of our Warfare The commander's eagle eye, as he surveys the plain, watches joyously the shock of battle as he sees that his victory is sure; but when at the last the fight culminates in one last assault, when the brave guards advance for the last attack, when the enemy gathers up all the shattered relics of his strength to make a last defence, when the army marches with sure and steady tramp to the last onslaught, then feels the warrior's heart a stern o'erflowing joy; and as his veterans sweep their foes before them like chaff before the winnowing fan, and the adversaries melt away, even as the altar fat consumes away in smoke, I see the commander exulting with beaming eye, and hear him rejoicing in that last shock of battle, for in another moment there shall be the shout of victory, and the campaign shall be over, and the adversary shall be trampled for ever beneath his feet. King Jesus looks upon the death of his saints as the last struggle of their life-conflict; and when that is over, it shall be said on earth, and sung in heaven, "Thy warfare is accomplished, thy sin is pardoned, thou hast received of the Lord's hand double for all thy sins."

216. Death, the Enemy of Humanity

O ye mourners! your sombre garments tell me that your family circle has been broken into, time after time, by this ruthless destroyer. The widow has lost her comfort and her stay; the children have been left desolate and fatherless. O death! thou art the cruel enemy of our hearths and homes. The youthful spirit has lost half itself when the beloved one has been rent away, and men have seemed like maimed souls when the best half of their hearts has been snatched from them. Hope looked not forth at the window because the mourners went about the streets. Joy drank no more from her crystal cup, for the golden bowl was broken, and the wheel was broken at the cistern, and all the daughters of music were brought low. How often have the unseen arrows of death afflicted our household, and smitten at our feet those whom we least could spare. The green have been taken as well as the ripe: death has cut down the father's hope and the mother's joy, and, worse than this, he has pitilessly rent away from the house its strongest pillar and torn out of the wall the corner-stone. Death has no bowels of compassion; his flinty heart feels for none; he spareth neither young nor old. Tears cannot keep our friends for us, nor can our sighs and prayers reanimate their dust. He is an enemy indeed, and the very thought of his cruel frauds upon our

love makes us weep.

217. Death, the Revealer of Religion

Death, I hope, beloved, will be to many of you the season of your greatest joy; you will climb to Pisgah's top with weary footsteps; but when once there, the vision of the landscape will make amends for all the toil. The brooks, and hills, and vales, with milk and honey flow; and your delighted eyes shall gaze upon your portion, your eternal heritage. But oh! how different will be our lot, if instead of this, "Tekel" shall be written upon us at the last, because we are found wanting. "O my God! my God! hast thou forsaken me? Am I, after all, mistaken? Have I played the hypocrite, and must I take the mask off now? Have I covered over the cancer? Have I worn a golden cloth over my leprous forehead, and must it be rent away? and must I stand, the mock of devils and the laughter of all worlds? What! have I drunk of thy cup, have I eaten with thee in the streets, and must I hear thee say, 'I never knew thee, depart from me thou worker of iniquity'? Oh! must it be?" Then how hard will be the bed on which I die! How stuffed with thorns that pillow! How tortured and anguished my poor broken heart, when every prop is knocked away, and the house comes tumbling down about my ears, when every drop of comfort is dried up, and even here the thirsty spirit lacks a drop of cordial to afford it comfort!

218. Death the Way to Life

We notice frequently over cemetery gates, as an emblematic device, a torch turned over, ready to be quenched. Ah, my brethren, it is not so, the torch of our life burns the better, and blazes the brighter for the change of death. The breaking of the pitcher which now surrounds the lamp and conceals the glory, will permit our inner life to reveal its lofty nature, and ere long even the pitcher shall be so remodelled as to become an aid to that light; its present breaking is but preparatory to its future refashioning. It is a blessed thought that the part of us which must most sadly feel the mortal stroke is secured beyond all fear from permanent destruction. We know that this very body, though it moulders into dust, shall live again; these weeping eyes shall have all tears wiped from them; these hands which grasp to-day the sword of conflict shall wave the palm branch of triumph.

219. Death to be Rejoiced in

I do not know why we always sing dirges at the funerals of the saints, and drape ourselves in black. I would desire, if I might have my way, to be drawn to my grave by white horses, or to be carried on the shoulders of men who would express joy as well as sorrow in their habiliments, for why should we sorrow over those who have gone to glory, and inherited immortality? I like the old Puritan plan of carrying the coffin on the shoulders of the saints, and singing a psalm as they walked to the grave. Why not? What is there, after all, to weep about concerning the glorified? Sound the gladsome trumpet! Let the shrill clarion peal out the joyous note of victory! The conqueror has won the battle; the king has climbed to his throne. "Rejoice," say our brethren from above, "rejoice with us, for we have entered into our rest." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." If we must keep up the signs of woe, for this is natural, yet let not your hearts be troubled, for that were unspiritual. Bless God evermore that over the pious dead we sing his living promises.

220. Death, Uncertainty of, and Incentive to Service

You came over Blackfriars Bridge tonight: you may drop down dead on it as you go back! You have come from your house tonight, and you have left at home a dear friend to whom you wish to speak about his soul. Do it tonight, for he may die in the night. I think I read it in the life of Dr. Chalmers, that on one occasion he spent an evening with a number of friends, and there was present a Highland chieftain, a very interesting character. They spent the evening in telling anecdotes of their lives, and repeating extracts from divers entertaining works of voyages and travels—spent the evening, as we should think, very properly indeed, and after having very much enjoyed themselves, they went to bed. At midnight, the whole family were startled from their sleep, for the Highland chieftain was in the pangs and agonies of death. He went up to his chamber in sound health, but died in the night. The impression upon Chalmers' mind was this: "Had I known that he would have so died, would not the evening have been differently spent? Then ought it not to have been spent in a very different manner by men all of whom might have died?" He felt as if the blood of that man's soul in some measure fell upon him; the occurrence itself was a lasting blessing to him. May it be so to us in the hearing of the story, and from this time forth may we work with all our might "while it is day."

221. Death-bed of the Rich

Around the sinner's death-bed the tempest thickens, and he hears the rumblings of the eternal storm: his soul is driven away, either amid the thunderings of curses loud and deep, or else in the dread calm which evermore forebodes the hurricane.

"Depart, ye cursed," is the horrible sound which is in his ears. But not so the righteous. He feels the Father's hand of benediction on his head, and underneath him are the everlasting arms. The best wine with him is kept to the last. At eventide it is light; and, as his sun is going down, it grows more glorious, and lights up all the surroundings with a celestial glow, whereat bystanders wonder, and exclaim "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." That pilgrim sets out upon a happy journey to whom Jehovah saith, "Depart in peace." This is a soft finger laid upon the closing eyelid by a tender father, and it ensures a happy waking, where eyes are never wet with tears.

222. Death Struggle, sometimes the most Terrible

It has been the custom of some great commanders to keep a body of picked men in reserve to make the final assault. Just when battalion after battalion has been swept away, and the main army reels; just when the victory is almost in the enemy's hands, the all but defeated commander pours his mightiest legions upon the foe, uncovers all his batteries and makes one terrible and final charge with the old guard that never has been beaten, and never can surrender, and then perhaps at the last moment he snatches triumph from between the foeman's teeth. Ah, Christian, the last charge may be the worst you have ever known; you may find in your last moments that you will have need of all your strength, and more, you will be constrained to cry to the Strong for strength, you will have to plead for heavenly reinforcements to succour you in that last article. Let no man conclude himself at the close of the war till he is within the pearly gate; for, if there be but another five minutes to live, Satan will, if possible, avail himself of it. The enemy may come in like a flood precisely at that flattering moment when you hoped to dwell in the land of Beulah, and to be lulled to rest by soft strains from the celestial choirs.

223. Deaths, Early

"Whom the gods love die young," said the heathen, and doubtless it is no small privilege to be so soon admitted into glory. Only shown on earth, and then snatched away to heaven, too precious to be left below. Precious child, how dear wert thou to the good God who sent thee here and then took thee home! Fair rose bud! yet in the perfection of thy young beauty taken to be worn by the Saviour on his bosom, how can we mourn thy translation to the skies?

224. Death of Believers, Holy Spirit's work in

We are to look upon the presence of the Holy Spirit in the witness of dying men, as in some sense the continuance of the Holy Spirit's instructive authorship. He has finished yonder book written with paper and ink, but he is writing fresh stanzas to the glory of God in the deaths of departing saints, who one by one are taken from the evil to come singing the Lord's praises as they depart. If this be not so, at any rate it is true that we have abundant testimonies to the faithfulness of God in the departure of those who, having lived by faith on earth, are now gone to see with their own eyes the King in his beauty, and the land which is very far off.

225. Debtors to God

Some of us had once a comfortable competence laid by in the bank of Self-righteousness, and we meant to draw it out when we came to die, and thought we should even have a little spending money for our old age out of the interest which was paid us in the coin of self-conceit; but the bank broke long ago, and now we have not so much as a farthing of our own merits left us, no, nor a chance of ever having any; and what is worse, we are deep in debt, and we have nothing to pay. Instead of having anything like a balance on our own account, behold, we are insolvent debtors to the justice of God, without a single farthing of assets, and unless we are freely forgiven we must be cast into prison, and lie there for ever. Job described us well when he said, "for want and famine they are solitary, fleeing into the wilderness, in former time desolate and waste. They have no covering in the cold, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter." See, then, what poverty-stricken creatures we are—of a poor stock, following a starving trade, and made bankrupts even in that.

226. Decision for Christ, Call to

I do not read that that poor man who was sent into the fields to feed swine ever gave his master any notice when he left him. His master sent him into the fields to feed swine, and he would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him. Then came the thought, "I will arise and go unto my father," and away he went, and did not stop to give his master three months' notice, or tell him he must get some one else. The fact is, it was such a bad trade that he was glad to get away from it directly, and he had such a bad master that he started off at once. I would to God that some sinner here would do the same tonight. Give your master no notice; he does not deserve any. Leave him! You have been sailing under the black flag all these years—thirty, forty, fifty, sixty—there is a grey-headed sinner yonder—seventy years sailing under that black flag. Down with it, sir! Thank God it is not nailed to the mast! It will be when you die; if it is there then, it will be nailed there to float there for ever. But it is not nailed to the mast now. Down with it! down with it! Oh! that the Holy Spirit would pull it down, and put up the blood-red cross in its place, that you might sail henceforth under the flag of Immanuel

227. Deep Experience of Christ, Value of

O you who in these regions profess to abide in the Lord, may you dwell deep in Christ. When you get upon the rock of Christ Jesus you are safe, but when you get into the rock then you are happy. A man on the rock will be subject to the wind and to the rain, to the damp of dews, and to the heat of the sun; but, Oh! a man in the rock—it does not matter to him what weather it is—whether it blows or shines, he is sheltered. Oh! to get fully into Christ—to have a deep experience of our union with him, and a solemn conviction, deepening into a full assurance, of our exaltation in him! Beloved, this is indeed to dwell in the Goshen of Christianity. This is to drink the choice wines of the kingdom. The nearer to Jesus the more perfect our peace. The innermost place of the sanctuary is the most divine.

228. Denominations, Use of

Suppose that all the lively companies in London should give up their distinctive names, so that there should be no Goldsmiths' Company, nor Cloth Workers, nor Merchant Tailors, nor Fishmongers, but that all should be called citizens, it would be a wonderful piece of policy, and would singularly unite the citizens of London, would it not? We believe that the reverse would be the case. The existence of the separate corporations, each with its peculiar interests to maintain, but all bound up with the prosperity of the city, help to create unity; and so the unity of the Saviour's body is preserved rather than destroyed by each believer carrying out his convictions of the Lord's will, and not refusing to identify himself with those who think with him, nor refusing to wear the name which describes them.

229. Departed, The, Comfort about

We shall enter into no questions now about whether heaven is a place, and where it is, or whether it be a state merely: it is enough for us that where Jesus is there his people are—not some of them on lower seats, or sitting outside, or in lower rooms, but they are all where he is. That will certainly content me, and if there be any degrees in glory you who want the high ones may have them. The lowest degree that I can perceive in Scripture is, "that they may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory," and that lowest degree is as high as my most vivid imagination can carry me. Here is enough to fill our souls even to the brim. And now do you sorrow? Do you not almost blame your tears when you learn that your beloved ones are promoted to such blissful scenes? Why, mother, did you ever wish for your child a higher place than that it should be where Jesus is? Husband, by the love you bore your wife, you cannot grudge her the glory into which she has entered. Wife, by the deep devotion of your heart to him who is taken from you, you could not wish to have detained him a moment from the joy in which his soul now triumphs with his Lord. If he were gone to some unknown land, if you could stand on life's brink, and hear the roaring billows of a dread mysterious ocean, and say, "My dear one has gone, I know not whither, to be tossed like a waif or stray upon yonder tempestuous sea," Oh, then you might mix your own tears with the brine of that ocean. But you know where they are, you know with whom they are, and you can form some idea by the joy of Christ's presence here on earth what must be their bliss above.

230. Despondency v. Cheerfulness

Despondency whispers, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" But cheerfulness points to the risen Saviour, and the stone already moved. Despondency scarcely

entertains as possible the plan which cheerfulness readily works out. Despondency gives up the work at the very first discouragement; but cheerfulness sings of success yet to come. Despondency is broken-hearted because of the hardness of men's hearts; but cheerfulness remembers the might of the eternal hammer which can break the rock in pieces. A sad heart goes mourning to its loneliness, sullenly murmuring at its hard lot; but the stout heart repairs to the throne of grace, and opens its mouth wide that God may fill it. You can work for God at a great rate when you can praise him whilst you are working for him.

231. Development, The Theory of, a Lie

I have heard lately, to my deep sorrow, certain preachers speaking of conversions as being developments. Is it so, then, that conversion is but the development of hidden graces within the human soul? It is not so: the theory is a lie from top to bottom. There lies within the heart of man no grain or vestige of spiritual good. He is to all good alien, insensible, dead, and he cannot be restored to God except by an agency which is altogether from without himself and from above. If you could develop what is in the heart of man, you would produce a devil, for that is the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience; develop that carnal mind which is enmity against God, and cannot by any possibility be reconciled to him, and the result is hell.

232. Devil, God's Purposes fulfilled by the

Perhaps, of all the powers which effect the divine- purposes in the world, none does more than the devil himself. He is but a scullion in the Eternal's kitchen; he unwillingly performs much work to which the Lord would not put his children, work which is just as needful as that which seraphim perform. Believe not that evil is a rival power of equal potency with the good God. No, sin and death are, like the Gibeonites, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the divine purposes; and, though they know it not, when the Lord's enemies rave and rage most they fulfil the eternal purposes to the praise of the glory of his wisdom and grace.

233. Dew of the Spirit The Oriental knew the value of dew. When he saw the green pastures turn brown and at last dry up, till they were nothing but dust and powder, how he sought for the shower and the dew; and when it came, how thankful was he! When that dew of the Holy Spirit is gone from us, what dead prayers, what miserable songs, what wearisome preaching, what wretched hearing! Oh, there is death everywhere when the Holy Spirit is denied us; but we need not be without him, for he is in the promise—"His heaven shall drop down dew." The words read as if there were much dew, superabundance of moisture. So, indeed, we may have the Holy Spirit most copiously if we have but faith enough to believe it, and earnestness enough to seek it. Would God we had such a down-dropping of dew to-day. If it has not come this morning, as I fear it has not, may it yet descend on your classes, and on your private meditations, this afternoon. May you be favoured with it this evening! O God, what are our services without thy Holy Spirit? It were better for us to be dumb than to speak without the Spirit of God. What is all the work the church attempts without thy power, most blessed Holy Ghost? When we have thee, then all is well—and thou art promised, therefore come and glorify thyself, and glorify the Lord Jesus. Amen and Amen.

234. Difficulties, God's Opportunities

Beloved, if you can conceive of an age that is worse than another, so much the more is it a fit platform for the heavenly energy; the more difficulty, the more room for omnipotence to show itself;

there is elbow-room for the great God when there is some great thing in the way, and some great difficulty that he may overturn. When there is a mountain to be cast into the valley, then there is almighty work to be done; and our covenant God only needs to see work to do for his praying people, and he will shortly do it.

235. Difficulties solved in Eternity Our disputes are often childish. We might as well leave some questions in abeyance for a little while. Two persons in the dark have differed about a colour, and they are wrangling about it. If we brought candles in and held them to the colour, the candles would not show what it was; but if we look at it to-morrow morning, when the sun shines, we shall be able to tell. How many difficulties in the word of God are like this! Not yet can they be justly discriminated; till the day dawn, the apocalyptic symbols will not be all transparent to our understanding. Besides, we have no time to waste while there is so much work to do. Much time is already spent. Sailing is dangerous; the winds are high; the sea is rough. Trim the ship; keep the sails in good order; manage her, and keep her off quicksands. As to certain other matters, we must wait till we get into the fair haven, and are able to talk with some of the bright spirits now before the throne. When some of the things they know shall be opened unto us, we shall confess the mistakes we made, and rejoice in the light we shall receive.

236. Disposition, Cheerful To a poor soul troubled with indigestion a wet morning is horrible, the roads are rivers of malicious mud, the heartless rain-drops come pattering down most cruelly, every one of them bitterly chilling your marrow and spitefully shivering your bones, while the grim clouds are piled one upon the other as though some celestial upholsterer, of most diabolical disposition, were furnishing an unlimited supply of funeral palls to be placed over the coffins of your joys. "All these things are against me!" say you, as you look to the threatening heavens above and to the slushy earth beneath. But how very different it is when your heart is glad! "Here come," say you, "the silver drops from heaven again; those blessed clouds of God are still bounteously bestowing the soil-enriching rain! God intends a blessing on the earth in all this, and I will rejoice in the rain-drops as so many sparkling love-tokens from the hand of my Father, who forgets not to moisten the earth when it needs it." So you walk along cheerfully to your work, splashing up stars from the pavement and hearing the rain playing on your umbrella almost as sweet a tune as if it were the music of the spheres, a music to which your heart keeps tune as you go on marching through Immanuel's ground to fairer worlds on high.

237. Dissatisfaction with Self

I suppose that the further we proceed in the way to heaven the more we shall be dissatisfied with ourselves, because our daily trials and troubles have the effect of bursting many of those bubbles in which we once put our confidence. All the wooden centres must be taken away from our masonry, for God builds his arches so that they will stand without supporting frameworks. The dog-shores must all be knocked away from our ship, for it is not meant to lie high and dry on the shore; it is to be launched upon a sea of everlasting glory. The dross is consuming; blessed be God for that, for the precious metal gains by the loss. Our outward man decayeth, but the inward man is renewed day by day.

238. Doctrine, False, Contagion of

Sin is like the bale of goods which came from the east to this city in the olden time, which brought the pest in it. Probably it was but a small bale, but yet it contained in it the deaths of hundreds of the inhabitants of London. In those days one piece of rag carried the infection into a whole town. So, if you permit one sin or false doctrine in a church knowingly and wittingly, none can tell the extent to which that evil may ultimately go. The church, therefore, is to be purged of practical and doctrinal evil as diligently as possible. That sour and corrupting thing which God abhors must be purged out, and it is to be the business of the Christian minister, and of all his fellow helpers, to keep the church free from it.

239. Doctrine of the Gospel, Universal Suitability of the The rabbis say that when the young Israelites grew older their clothes grew as they grew. I do not know how that was, but I do know that let us grow in mental stature as we may, the doctrines of the gospel still are suitable for us. If they were like milk to us when we were babes, they are strong meat to us when we become men. They always meet our needs and conditions, and thus we can joyfully say that the garment which covers our nakedness, which adorns us before God, and affords us consolation, has not waxed old these forty years.

240. Dreams, deceitfulness of

Many visions have led to the most disastrous results. When Napoleon had a vision of a universal monarchy over which he should preside, with the French eagle for his ensign, he drenched the lands in blood. Many visions have been wretchedly delusive. Men have dreamed of finding the fairy pleasure in the dark forest of sin. Carnal joys have danced before their eyes as temptingly as the mirage in the desert, and they have pursued the phantom forms to their misery in this world, and to their eternal ruin in the next. Mistaking license for liberty, and madness for mirth, they have dreamed themselves into hell. Many dreams have been enervating—sucking the life-blood out of men as vampires do. Men have passed from stern reality into dream-land, and while seemingly awakened, have continued like somnambulists to do all things in their sleep. Many pass all their days in one perpetual day-dream, speculating, building castles in the air, thinking of what they would do—if, and vowing how they would behave themselves—suppose. With fine capacities they have drivelled away existence: as their theory of life was born of smoke, so the result of their lives has been a cloud. The luxurious indolence of mere resolve, the useless tossings of regret—these have been all their sluggard life.

241. Drunkenness Inexcusable

We sometimes talk of a man being "as drunk as a beast," but whoever heard of a beast being drunk? Why, it is more beastly than anything a beast ever does. I do not believe that the devil himself is ever guilty of anything like that. I never heard even him charged with being drunk. It is a sin which has no sort of excuse; those who fall into it generally fall into other deadly vices. It is the devil's back-door to hell, and everything that is hellish: for he that once gives away his brains to drink, is ready to be caught by Satan for anything. Oh! but while the drunkard cannot have eternal life abiding in him while he is such, is it not a joy to think of the many drunkards who have been washed and saved? This night there are sitting here, those who have done with their cups, who have left behind them their strong drink, and who have renounced the haunts of their debauchery. They are washed and cleansed, and when they think of the contrast between where they used to be on Sunday night, and where they now are, they give echo to the question, "Is not this a brand

plucked out of the fire?"

242. Duty, Preparation for

Earnestness says: "I shall undertake some fresh duty this afternoon." Stop, dear brother, just a minute. If you want to praise God, would not it be as well first to begin with yourself? The musician said: "I will praise God better;" but the pipes of his instrument were foul; he had better look to them first. If the strings have slipped from their proper tension, it will be well to correct them before beginning the tune. If we would praise God more, it is not to be done as boys rush into a bath—head first. No; prepare yourself; make your heart ready. Thou needest the Spirit's aid to make thy soul fit for praising God. It is not every fool's work. Go, then, to thy chamber, confess the sins of the past, and ask the Lord to give thee much more grace that thou mayst begin to praise him.

243. Duty to be Performed at all Costs A Christian man is sometimes bound by duty to perform an action which, to all appearance, will destroy his future usefulness. I have often heard men urge, as a plea for remaining in a corrupt church, that they have obtained an influence in its midst, and by reason of their position, which they might lose if they followed their conscience and were true to God. They are bound to lose all their supposed influence and renounce their apparent vantage ground sooner than commit the least trespass upon their conscience; as much bound to do so as Abraham was bound to offer up Isaac, in whom all the promises of God were centred. It is neither your business nor mine to fulfil God's promise, nor to do the least wrong to produce the greatest good. To do evil that good may come is false morality, and wicked policy. For us is duty, for God is the fulfilment of his promise, and the preservation of our usefulness. Though he dash my reputation into shivers, and cast my usefulness to the four winds, yet if duty calleth me, I must not hesitate a single second, for in that hesitation I shall be disobedient to my God. At the behest of God Isaac must be offered, though the heavens fall, and faith must answer all politic suggestions by the assurance that what God ordains can never, in its ultimate issue, produce anything but good; obedience can never endanger blessings, for commands are never in real conflict with promises, for God can raise up Isaac and fulfil his own decree.

244. Dwarfish Christians

We have fallen upon a race of dwarfs, and are content, to a great extent, to have it so. There was once in London a club of small men, whose qualification for membership lay in their not exceeding five feet in height; these dwarfs held, or pretended to hold, the opinion that they were nearer the perfection of manhood than others, for they argued that primeval men had been far more gigantic than the present race, and consequently the way of progress was to grow less and less, and that the human race as it perfected itself would become as diminutive as themselves. Such a club of Christians might be established in London, and without any difficulty might attain to an enormously numerous membership; for the notion is common that our dwarfish Christianity is after all the standard, and many even imagine that nobler Christians are enthusiasts, fanatical, and hot-blooded; while we are cool because we are wise, and indifferent because intelligent. We must get rid of all this nonsense. The fact is, the most of us are vastly inferior to the early Christians, who, as I take it, were persecuted because they were thoroughly Christians, and we are not persecuted because we hardly are Christians at all.

245. Dying Daily, Blessings of

I do not know how wide the benefits of dying daily may be, but they seem to me to be commensurate with the whole period of human existence. You young people, you would not be likely to plunge into youthful gaities to your own damage, if you felt that you might die while yet you are young. That wild oat sowing would never cause you a harvest of regrets if you felt that you might perish in the midst of sin. Graves are often short trenches for little prattlers. Beware, ye boys and girls. You men of middle age, how it would check you in that eager pursuit after gold, that hasting to be rich which never leaves a man innocent, if you felt that it is little matter after all to gain wealth since so soon you must be parted from it. And you who totter on a staff, I cannot conceive of anything which would keep you in a holier frame of mind, or in a happier and calmer state than to be always dying the death of Jesus that you might live his life.

246. Dying Saints, Joy of

I have heard expressions from some dying men and women, that I never met with in the best written book. They have seemed to me as if they knew more about my Master than I had ever learned, or than the old divines, or the best of writers had ever been able to communicate. Ah, yes! when the tenement begins to shake, and the clay falls away, we see Christ through the rifts, and between the rafters the sunlight of heaven comes streaming through.

247. Dying Son

Let us pour forth a canticle of deep, mysterious melody of bliss when our dying hour is near at hand. Courage, brother! The waters are chilly; but fear will not by any means diminish the terrors of the river. Courage, brother! Death is solemn work; but playing the coward will not make it less so. Bring hither the harp; let thy lips remember the long-loved music, and let the notes be clear and shrill as thou dippest thy feet in the Jordan: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

248. Dying, Test of

God grant that we may stand the test of dying. But there is a still more terrible test than dying, for some sleep quietly through death, but, oh, the judgment! I see two ponderous scales, huge as hemispheres of this great globe, and there I see the weights—the standard weights of eternal justice. Into yonder scales every one of us must go, and what if there should be heard the dreadful sound, "Mene, mene, tekel?"

"Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting!" There will be no hope, then, of making up the short weight, or of coming up to the standard. Lost then, we shall be cast away for ever. O, if you only get an inch towards heaven, let it be a safe inch; for a safe inch is better than a counterfeit yard, and one drachm of grace is better than a million tons of profession. One genuine tear is better than a seaful of washing your hands in outward ceremonies.

249. Dying Testimony of the Believer

Traverse the azure way. Plume your wings for the last solemn flight. Let faith like a courier march before to track the way. Every semblance of affectation upon dying beds is shocking. I have never been able to admire the oft-quoted death-bed of Addison. "Come," said he, "and see how a

Christian can die." It seems to me too like a brag to be a fitting utterance for a soul humbly resting at the cross-foot, and looking out over the black waters which fringe the eternal shore. The true idea of a Christian's dying speech is a humble and gracious witness to those who look around, that though a sinner, he has found peace with God through the precious blood of Jesus, and would have others trust in the same Saviour. Prepare to deliver such a testimony. Often picture yourself as bidding adieu to every earthborn thing. Anticipate the final stroke, the upward mounting, the soaring through tracts unknown, the sight of the judgment throne, the eternal beatific vision. So will you die daily.

"E"

250. Early Piety, Beauty of

Early in the morning the dew still twinkles on the leaves, the maiden blush of dawn remains and reveals an opening beauty, which is lost to those who rise not to see the birth of day. There is a beauty about early piety which is indescribably charming, and unutterably lovely in freshness and radiance. We remark in childhood an artless simplicity, a child-like confidence, which is seen nowhere else. There may be less of knowing, but there is more of loving; there may be less of reasoning, but there is more of simply believing upon the authority of revelation; there may be less of deep-rootedness, but there is certainly more of perfume, beauty, and emerald verdure. If I must choose that part of the Christian life in which there is the most joy, next to the land Beulah, which I must set first and foremost by reason of its lying so near to Canaan, I think I would prefer that tract of Christian experience which lieth toward the sun-rising, which is sown with orient pearls of love, and cheered with the delicious music of the birds of hope.

251. Early Piety, Blessedness of No one can ever over-estimate the great privilege of being brought to God in childhood or youth. If it were only to be saved from the injury which a course of sin brings upon the mind, if it were only to escape from the regrets for the past which will arise even when the conscience is in after-days purged from sin, if it were only to have saved those precious hours of the early morning of life, and to have used them in the Master's cause, if it were only for those three reasons,—and they are but part of a great cluster,—they are something for which eternally to bless the special love of God. I appeal to those who have been brought to love the Lord in riper days, and those especially who have come to know him in old age. Beloved brethren, you love the Lord who has called you to himself, but have you not often said in your heart, "Would to God I had known him, like Timothy, at my mother's knee!" And is it not at this time the dearest desire of your soul that your children should not delay decision for God so long as you did, but that they should cast in their lot with the people of God while yet the ruddy hue of youth is on their cheeks? I know I speak your very hearts. You, therefore, are witnesses to the fact that early piety is a choice blessing, and he who has received it may think that he hears an angel say to him this morning, "O man, greatly beloved, when thou wast a child the Lord delighted in thee."

252. Early Piety, Simplicity of

Early in the morning, when we have just risen from slumber, work is easy; our occupation in the vineyard is a cheerful exercise rather than a toil such as those find it who bear the burden and heat of the day. The young Christian is not oppressed with the cares and troubles of the world as others are; he has nothing else to do but to serve his God. He is free from the embarrassments which surround so many of us, and prevent our doing good when we would consecrate ourselves wholly to it. The lad has nought to think of but his Lord. There are his books and his lessons, but he can be fervent of spirit in the midst of them. There are the companions of his childhood, but in guilelessness and simplicity he may be of service to them and to God through them. Give me, I say, if I would have an auspicious time to work for Jesus, give me the blessed morning hours,

when my heart is bounding lightest and joy's pure sunbeams tremble on my path; when my glowing breast lacks no ardour, and my happy spirit wears no chain of care.

253. Early Saints, Enthusiasm of

There was a trumpet ring in ancient Christian testimony which startled the old world which was lying in a deep sleep, dreaming filthy dreams; that world loved not to be so aroused, and turning over in its sleep, muttered curses deep and many, and vowed revenge against the disturber who dared break its horrible repose. Meanwhile believers in Jesus were not satisfied with witnessing by their lives, and testifying by their tongues, in the places where their lot was cast, but were continually commissioning fresh bands of missionaries to carry the word into other districts. It was not enough for Paul to preach the gospel at Jerusalem or Damascus; he must needs journey into Pisidia and Pamphylia, he must journey to the utmost verge of Asia Minor; and then so fall of Christ is he, that he dreams of eternal life, and when he falls asleep, he hears in a vision a man of Macedonia across the blue Ægean, entreating him, "Come over and help us." And with the morning light Paul rises, fully resolved to take ship and preach the gospel among the Gentiles. Having preached Christ throughout all Greece, he passed over to Italy, and though chained, he entered as God's ambassador within the walls of the imperial city of Rome; and it is believed that after that, his sacredly restless spirit was not satisfied with preaching throughout Italy, but he must needs cross into Spain, and it is said even into Britain itself. The ambition of the Christian for Christ was boundless; beyond the pillars of Hercules, to the utmost islands of the sea, believers in Jesus carried the news of a Saviour born for the sons of men. Those were days of ardour. I fear these are days of lukewarmness. Those were times when the flame was like coals of juniper, which have a most vehement heat, and neither shipwreck, nor peril by robbers, nor peril by rivers, nor peril by false brethren, nor the sword itself, could stay the enthusiasm of the saints, for they believed, and therefore spake; they loved, and therefore served, even to the death.

254. Earnestness essential to Testimony

How much depends in bearing testimony upon the way in which it is done. If our sermons were to hang like icicles around our lips, they would not be very likely to melt the ice in your minds; and if, in speaking to your Sunday-school class, your words fall like snow, they are not very likely to make children's hearts burn within them. If, in speaking privately to an individual, you treat your own conversion as though it were a commonplace affair, or aim at his conversion whom you address as though it were a matter that did not much signify, you might as well be silent. O sirs, you waste your breath, you lose your time. No good will come of it. Your testimony must be earnest, or it will be fruitless. There must be passion and there must be pathos. The soul must run over at the mouth, and the speech must be the outflowing lava of a heart that swells and heaves with inward fires.

255. Earnestness in warning Sinners

We have heard of a traveller who, journeying onward met, with one who said, "Sir, the night is dark, and I should not advise you to go on to the river, for the bridge is broken in the middle, you will be in the stream before you know it." This was said in so careless a tone that the traveller went on. He was met some time afterwards, fortunately for him, by another, who again warned him: "The bridge is broken! don't go on, you will be sure to lose your life if you attempt it. You cannot

ford the stream and the bridge is broken." The traveller replied, "Why, I have been told that tale before, but the man who told me it spoke in such a tone that I could see through him, I knew it was all a hoax." "Oh, but sir," said the other, "it is true! I have but now escaped myself. I am sure it is true!" "But," said the traveller, "I am not so easily scared." "Well, then," said the other, "I beseech you once again, do not go on, for you will perish," and rushing up to him he said, "I will not let you go." He grasped him and held him fast. "Now," said the other, "I believe you have spoken the truth, and I will turn with you." So there are some who warn souls of their danger in such a careless tone, that they create an unbelief which many an earnest tongue will not be able to dispel. But if you get hold of the soul and say to it, "I will not let thee perish;" if you say to your friends, as Whitfield would say to his congregation, "If you perish it shall not be for want of praying for, it shall not be for want of weeping over; if you are damned it shall not be because my heart was cold towards you;" you will win them, they will be led to believe from your earnestness. Who knows how many your earnest spirit may bring to Jesus? Praying and teaching, if effectual, must be earnest; and hence when the Spirit comes to save the sons of men he always gives us earnest praying men and earnest teachers.

256. Earth, Future Glory of As when the new moon first shows her slender ring of light, so the earth is rimmed and edged with a divine illumination which shall increase till the whole circle of the globe shall be irradiated, and shall in full orb'd splendour reflect the glory of God. Then, also, shall music blend with the growing brightness, light and sweetness shall be wedded again, and earth, like a lamp of God's sanctuary and a golden bell of the high priest's garment, shall shine forth and ring out the praises of her God. O blessed consummation! The Lord send it, and the Lord send it soon.

257. Earth the Preparation for Heaven

We do not know what will happen to us between this and heaven, but we can easily prognosticate the aim and result of all that will occur. We are harps which will be tuned in all their strings for the concerts of the blessed. The tuner is putting us in order. He sweeps his hands along the strings; there is a jar from every note; so he begins first with one string, and then goes to another. He continues at each string till he hears the exact note. The last time you were ill, one of your strings was tuned; the last time you had a bad debt, or trembled at declining business, another string was tuned. And so, between now and heaven, you will have every string set in order; and you will not enter heaven till all are in tune. Did you ever go to a place where they make pianos, and expect to hear sweet music? The tuning-room is enough to drive a man mad, and in the factory you hear the screeching of saws and the noise of hammers, and you say, "I thought this was a place where they made pianos." Yes, so it is, but it is not the place where they play them. On earth is the place where God makes musical instruments, and tunes them, and between now and heaven he will put all that is within them into fit condition for blessing and praising his name eternally.

258. Earthly Things, Vanity of, in view of Death Have you never seen the hoary saint stayed upon the pillows, prophesying like a seer concerning the things of this world and of the world to come? Have you never heard him deliver sentences as weighty as the verdict of a judge? "What," says he, "what are all these earthly things to me now, now that I am about to leave them? They are all bubbles and emptinesses." Solomon in his life could not moralize with such force as holy men do in their deaths: and then, as they point the finger to eternity, and tell of worlds to come, and of the

need of being prepared for the tremendous day of the great assize, they appear as if, clothed in their white raiment, they were performing a rehearsal of the last dread judgment. Many who care not for the voice of the ministry, nor even for the witness of God's written word, have felt the power of the speeches of men standing on the borders of eternity.

259. Echo of the Believer's Soul to God's Voice In the usual route which everybody takes in going through Switzerland, there is a long tract of country where there are innumerable beggars and people trying in various ways to get money from the traveller; and one way which generally succeeds, is that of blowing an enormous horn just opposite to certain rocks. As soon as this horn is blown, the rocks resound on either side, repeat the note exactly, and then again, and again, and again; sometimes, perhaps, twelve or twenty times the echoes take up the notes and prolong them, producing some of the sweetest effects that ever charmed the human ear—"Linked sweetnesses long drawn out." You want the boy to blow again; and as he blows another blast, and gives intonations and notes to it, the rocks begin to sing again. Those rocks reminded me, as I stood and listened to their sweet notes, of God's people. Ah! I thought, you could not sing if it were not for the horn; you could not make any of these sweet notes if it were not for the living breath that is here; but you are so placed by God in his arrangements, that so soon as the sound is made by the living mouth, it is taken up and repeated, sweet, and sweet, and sweeter still each time. Thus should all the people of God be, so that when the Lord speaks, all the Lord's people should take up the echo, and repeat it again and again by practical obedience to the divine command. As the echo to the voice, so should your heart and mine be to the voice of God.

260. Election, Doctrine of, Misused

I beseech our friends never to be afraid of that doctrine of election when they hear it spoken of. It is not to be controverted about every day in the week, and insisted upon as though it were the whole gospel, for it is only one truth among many, but it is a very precious one. There are certain preachers that get this doctrine into their theology as the organ grinders get a tune put into their barrels, and they can never grind out anything but election, over, and over, and over again. Such persons bring a most scriptural doctrine into disrepute. At the same time, it is an indisputable truth of Christianity, and one full of the richest comfort to the child of God, one which is intended to kindle in him perpetual flames of adoring gratitude, a truth which lays him low, and makes him feel that there is nothing in him, and then raises him up and bids him, like a seraph, adore before the throne. Distinguishing grace is a fact; prize the truth and hold it firmly; live upon Jesus Christ; bless him that you are made a partaker of his eternal love.

261. Elevation of Humanity, Danger of the

Young converts sometimes think that old saints can never know such contentions within, such doubtings, such humblings of spirit, as they feel. Ah! but whether they are dwarfs or giants, the experience of Christian men is amazingly alike. There are lines of weakness in the creature which even grace does not efface. "When the peacock looks at his fair feathers," says old Master Dyer, "he may afterwards look at his black feet." And so, whenever the brightest Christian begins to be proud of his graces, there will be sure to be something about him which will remind others as well as himself that he is yet in the body. I forget how many times it is that Ezekiel is called in the book of his prophecy "the son of man." I counted them the other day, and I do not find the same title applied to any other prophet so often as it is to him. Why is this? Why, there was never another

prophet who had such eagle wings as Ezekiel; it was given him to soar more loftily than any other; hence he is always called, "the son of man," to show that he is but a man after all. Your highest people, your most elevated saints, are but sons of fallen Adam, touched with the same infirmities and weaknesses as their fellow-creatures, and liable, unless grace prevents, to fall into the same sins as others fall into.

262. Elijah's Translation

Even to a Christian, death is not a soft, dainty thing. To die is no child's-play. We speak of it as a sleep; but it is no such sleep as yon youngster's, when he lies down upon the sunny bank, to wake again. There are solemnities about it. There are horses and there are chariots, and so far there is comfort; but they are all of fire, and he that sees them need have Elijah's eyes, or perhaps his own will blink. Elijah had seen fire before; he had called it from heaven upon his enemies; he had brought it down from heaven upon sacrifice; he had seen fire flashing on him at Horeb, till the whole sky was bright with sheets of forked flame, and the Lord was not in that fire as he was in this. He who had looked at that former fire, and feared not, for he was of unblushing eye and of uncoloured cheek, could bear to look upon the horses and chariots of fire which God had sent.

263. Eloquence unnecessary to Commend the Gospel

I saw in Paris, years ago, a public vendor of quack medicines, and an extraordinary personage he was. He came riding into the market-place with a fine chariot drawn by horses richly caparisoned, while a trumpet was sounded before him. This mighty healer of all diseases made his appearance clothed in a coat of as many colours as that of Joseph, and on his head Was a helmet adorned with variegated plumes. He delivered himself of a jargon which might be French, which might also be Latin, or might be nonsense, for no one in the crowd could understand it. With a little persuasion the natives bought his medicines, persuaded that so great and wise a man could surely cure them. Truly, this is one reason why there is an adoption in the Romish Church of the Latin tongue, and why in many other churches there is an affectation of a theological jargon which nobody can comprehend, and which would not be of any use to them if they did comprehend it; the whole is designed to delude the multitude. To what purpose are fine speeches in the gospel ministry? Sickneses are not healed by eloquence. It was an ill day in which rhetoric crept into the church of God, and men attempted to make the gospel a subject for oratory. The gospel wants no human eloquence to recommend it. It stands most securely when without a buttress. Like beauty, it is most adorned when unadorned the most. The native charms of the gospel suffice to commend it to those who have spiritual eyes, and those who are blind will not admire it, deck it as we may.

264. Eloquence, Worldly, unnecessary in the Minister

It is never worth a minister's while to go up his pulpit stairs to show his auditors that he is an adept in elocution. High-sounding words and flowery periods are a mockery of man's spiritual needs. If a man desireth to display his oratory, let him study for the bar, or enter Parliament, but let him not degrade the cross of Christ into a peg to hang his tawdry rags of speech upon. The cross is only lifted up aright when we can say, "Not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Every minister should be able to say with Paul, "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech."

265. Emotions, Natural, Not Saving

We have heard of many expedients for softening hard hearts, but none of them are of any avail. I know preachers who delight in talking of a mother's tears, and a father's grey hairs, of dying children and consumptive sisters, and I believe these are all legitimate topics; but no hearts are ever turned from stone to flesh merely by natural emotion. You may make a man weep over his dead child, or his dead wife, till his eyes are red, but his heart will be black for all that. Men's hearts are changed by quite another agency than oratorical or rhetorical appeals to the natural affections. I readily admit that such appeals have their own sphere, but for the renewing of the heart something much more effectual is wanted than natural emotion. It is written, "I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh," and there is the secret of the matter.

266. Empire of Christ, Lasting

Napoleon founded an empire—an empire which has not always been justly estimated, for perhaps undesignedly Napoleon was a grand advancer of human liberty, since he first taught the old kings that the pretence of divine right could not keep crowns upon unpopular heads, and that young men from the ranks might yet mount a throne. He produced a code of laws, which, for simplicity of justice have never been surpassed; still, he relied too much upon coercion and the sword—his enormous armies were his bulwark and security. Strong battalions were the corner-stone of his empire, and though for awhile he stood firm, and armies advancing against him were only like so many waves dashing against the rocks of his tremendous power; yet, after all his many wars, he was overthrown, and he was said to have uttered in St. Helena that memorable speech, "My empire has passed away. I founded it upon the sword, and it is gone. Jesus Christ established an empire upon love, and it will last for ever." So will it last. When all that kings and princes can do with statecraft and with power shall have dissolved as hoar frost in the sun, Christ's kingdom must stand, because it is based upon the law of love. His person is the incarnation of love, his teachings are the doctrines of love, his precepts are the rule of love, his Spirit is the creator of love, his whole religion is saturated with love, and because of this his kingdom cannot be moved.

267. Enchanted Ground, Dangers of

After crossing the Grimsel, on the way down towards Handeck, the traveller traverses a road cut in red marble, so smoothly polished that, even when it is divested of its usual thin coating of snow, it is dangerous in the extreme. Notwithstanding that steps are hewn, and rough marks made across the granite, he would be foolhardy who should try to ride along the slippery way, which is called Helle Platte, or Hell Place, for reasons which glisten on its surface. "Dismount," is the word, and none are slow to obey it. There are many such Hell Places on the road to the celestial city—smooth places of pleasure, ease, flattery, self-content, and the like; and it will be the wisest course, if any pilgrim has been fond of riding the high horse, for him to dismount at once and walk humbly with God. That enchanted ground of which Bunyan tells us that the air naturally tended to make one drowsy, is just the spot to which we refer; men had need be watchful whose path lies through that deceitful country.

268. End, better than the Beginning

"Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." Some pictures in nature will illustrate this. We compare the beginning and the end. The sower goes forth on a damp and drizzling morning with his handful of precious seed, which he is loth to spare; and as he scatters it, the rough wind

blows into his face, and the frost bites his cheek; and, literally, it may be said, that he "sows in tears;" the beginning, therefore, is by no means pleasant. Then comes the harvest home, with the songs and dances of smiling damsels and joyous swains, when the produce of the fields is safely housed; that is the end thereof. I think that every one can see that the harvest is better than the seed-time. Or starts forth a man upon a long journey. He takes a staff in his hand. He prepares himself to climb yonder crags. The storm will come on, but he must pass through it. There will be brooks swollen with the rains, but he must pass through them all. Summoning courage to his aid, he surmounts every obstacle. He comes in all flushed with the healthy exercise. He has climbed yonder crag; he has passed through the brooks; he has braved the storm; and now he comes to the blazing fire to sit down and rest himself, for the journey is over. "Better," says the traveller, "is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof. Toil came, but now toil is sweetened, for I look back upon it, and can take my rest." Or, see the good ship as the dock gates are opened, and she is drawn out into the river. Flags are flying, and every one cheers those who are about to make a venturesome voyage to the Indies. See her, however, coming up the river, well loaded, to go into dock, and ask the captain, who remembers the rough weather as he passed the Cape, and the storm just as he came off the Peninsula, and he will tell you that he likes coming up the river much better than going down. Coming home with his ship well freighted, after a prosperous voyage, he says with thanks to God, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof." One more picture. An army of soldiers goes forth to war. Can you see them with pleasure? I know you shout and crowd the streets as they march down your thoroughfares, and truly it is a thrilling sight to see the stalwart heroes as they go forth to fight their country's battles; but when you think of the number of those brave men who may lie dead on the battle ground, and how few may ever return, I am sure, to say the least, it is not a pleasurable sight. But when those brave men who have escaped the storm and dash of battle return to their native land, and again pass through the streets, they feel, if the spectators do not, that better is the end of war than the beginning thereof. Some one once said, he thought there was never a good war, and never a bad peace; and I believe to a very great extent he was right. Peace is of itself an inestimable blessing, and war in itself, whether just or unjust, a most terrific scourge. So whether, then, you see the sower in the field, or the traveller starting on his journey, or the voyager launching upon the deep, or the warrior going to the fight, you are ready to think that, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof."

269. Endurance, Blessedness of

Trial may be very hard to bear for a time, but since in the very hardness of the endurance lies the blessing, the bitter is sweet and the medicine is food. Courage, men and brethren, ye shall meet nought but friends between this and the pearly gate, or, if you meet an enemy, it shall be a conquered one, who shall crouch at your feet, and you shall put your foot on his neck, and win a brighter victory, and a heavier crown, because of the encounter; so that even the foe advances your honour. Courage, men and brethren, the winds which toss the waves of the Atlantic of your life, are all sworn to waft your bark safely into the desired haven. Every wind that rises, whether soft or fierce, it is a divine monsoon, hurrying in the same direction as your soul's desires are aiming at. God walks the tempest and rules the storm; order reigns supreme in the uproars of elements or men, for the divine hand compels the most rebellious creatures to obey without fail the divine word.

270. Enemies of God Recruiting his Army

It was during the persecution which raged against the saints at Jerusalem that the church obtained one of the greatest pillars that have ever strengthened and adorned her fabric—I mean the Apostle Paul. Breathing out threatenings against the people of God, he is on his road to Damascus, but the blaze of heavenly fire blinds him, strikes him to the ground, and afterwards he becomes a chosen vessel to carry, like an uplifted cresset, that very fire throughout the nations of the earth. I look, brethren, for recruits to the truth of God from the ranks of our enemies. Never despair, the brightest preacher of Christ may yet be fashioned out of the wretched raw material of Roman Catholic and Anglican priests. In politics, one of the leaders of reform has come to us from the hostile party; and we may expect in religious matters to see the same, or even more wonderful enlightenments. A monk reformed Germany; a parish priest was the morning star of England's day of light. The Lord can send out his warrant to arrest a ringleader in the bands of the devil and to say to him, "Thou shalt be no more against me; thou art mine; enlist beneath my banner, and from this day be a champion for the truth which thou hast despised." Never let us fear; the fire of God which Christ has cast among us shall go on to burn, let man do what he will to quench it.

271. Enemy of Souls, Vigilance of The eye of malice is very quick to perceive a weakness, and the hand of enmity soon takes advantage of it. When the arch-spy finds a weak place in the wall of our castle, he takes care to plant his battering-ram, and begin his siege. You may conceal, even from your dearest friend, your infirmity, but you will not conceal it from your worst enemy. He has lynx eyes, and detects in a moment the joint in your harness. He goes about with a match, and though you may think you have covered all the gunpowder of your heart, yet he knows how to find a crack to put his match through, and much mischief will he do, unless eternal mercy shall prevent.

272. Enterprise, Christian

Oh, if men had their wits as much about them when they serve God as they have when they are looking for guineas, how much more would be done in the church and the world, but there is often a blundering in the management of Christian societies and Christian churches which would not be tolerated for a moment in a house of business, and men are allowed to be head and foremost in Christian enterprises who would not be reckoned worth their salt for selling pins or driving pigs. We ought to be as thoughtful, as careful, as prudent, as quick, as enterprising, what if I say as go-a-head, in the service of God as we should be in the pursuits of life.

273. Enthusiasm for God's Glory

How earnest you feel about the cause of Christ when you have heard an inspiring sermon, but how long does it last? Ah, those old days of mission enterprise, when Exeter Hall used to be crowded because missionaries had interesting stories to tell of what God was doing—what enthusiasm there used to be—where is it now? Where is it now? Echo might well answer "Where is it now?" To a great degree it has departed. The zeal of many rises and falls like a barometer. They are hot as fire, and cold as ice, in the shortest space; their fervour is as transient as the flame of thorns, and hence it is very hard to turn it to any practical account. Oh, for more of the deep-seated principle of intense love to God's salvation, steady and abiding, which shall make a man say continually, "Let God be magnified." We would desire to wake up in the morning with this on our lips. We would begin with the enquiry, "What can I do to magnify God this day?" We would

be in business in the middle of the day, and yet never lose the one desire to magnify God. We would return to our family at night, urged by the same impulse, "How can I magnify God in my household?" If I lie sick, I would feel that I must magnify God by patience; if I rise from that bed, I would feel the sweet obligation to magnify him by gratitude; if I take a prominent position, I am doubly bound to magnify him who makes me a leader to his flock; and, if I be unknown and obscure in the church, I must with equal zeal magnify him by a conscientious discharge of the duties of my position. Oh, to have one end always before us, and to press forward towards it, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left. As though we were balls shot out of a rifled cannon, we would rush on, never hesitating or turning aside, but flying with all speed towards the centre of the target. May our spirits be impelled by a divine energy towards this one only thing. The Lord be magnified! whether I live or die, may God be glorified in me!

274. Enthusiasm of Love

Napoleon, singularly enough, had power to get the hearts of men twisted and twined about him: when he was in his wars there were many of his captains and even of his private soldiers who not only marched with the quick obedience of a soldier wherever they were bidden, but who felt an enthusiasm for him. Have you never heard of him who threw himself in the way of the shot to receive it in his bosom to save the Emperor? No obedience, no law could have required that of him, but enthusiastic love moved him to it; and it is such enthusiasm that my Master deserves in the very highest degree from us. It is out of and beyond all categories of law, it is far beyond all that law ventured to ask, and yet not supererogation for all that, for ye are not under the law but under grace; and ye will do more out of love than ye would have done out of the compulsion of demand.

275. Error Overcome by Truth The truth, like the virgin daughter of Zion, shakes her head at boastful error, and laughs it to scorn. Let falsehood put on her tawdry garments, and think herself a queen, and say that she shall sit alone, and see no sorrow; let error come forth in her panoply and wave her flaunting banner before the sun. She draws near her end. Her armour—what is it? It is but pasteboard, and the lance of truth shall pierce it through and through. Her banner, what is it but a foul rag of the Roman harlot? It shall be laid in the dust. Nay, let error bring forth all her hosts, and let them stand in their serried ranks, and through them the faithful soldiers of Jesus will ride, and bow the columns like reeds in the wind.

276. Eternal Punishment Preached by Christ

We heard the other day that the unquenchable fire and the undying worm were mediæval ideas to be scouted in these enlightened times. A courtly preacher insinuated as much and more; but a greater than he, who wore no soft raiment, and dwelt in no king's palaces, uses such expressions unmodified and undiluted. I pray you laugh not at them, and scoff not at them, for the lips that spoke them were the lips of him who loved the souls of men even to the death; the lips of him who shall come a second time to judge the quick and the dead.

277. Everlasting

Oh! what a word is that word "everlasting!" Methinks I see before me the gate of pearl, as though this word "everlasting" were that glorious gate. With what soft radiance it beams upon my eye at this moment! And lo! it turns upon its hinges; it stands wide open, and what do I see? Everlasting!

Everlasting! Why, I see before me the sea of glass, and the harpers standing on that waveless ocean "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." And what do I hear? I hear their songs like the sound of many waters, yet sweet as harpers harping with their harps. And what see I as I gaze, but Jesus Christ, the sun and centre of heaven's glory, and I behold his saints who trod this way everlasting on earth, continuing still to tread it, proceeding further into the bliss of his presence, and into the ecstasy of his love, and into the experience of his fellowship; every day advancing in this way that hath no end, this way everlasting. Oh, what a prayer this is! I do, when I say, "Lead me in the way everlasting," as good as ask for a holy life, a happy death, and a heaven to crown it all. I ask for all that is in the covenant, all that Christ came to give, all that God has laid up in store, and all that the Spirit works in men. It is a mighty prayer, indeed!

278. Evidences As soon as some people of an excitable temperament begin to narrate their treasured story of marvels, you may anticipate that they are going to tell you that they heard a voice, or saw a vision, or were impressed with this, or saw that; all which may be true or may be imagination, according to the truthfulness and common sense of the speaker. And all this may have a connection with their being saved, for there is no doubt that many have been impressed in dreams, and I will even venture to say by visions and voices. Many men's first religious thoughts have been awakened in them by strange impressions; and, therefore, these things are not to be laughed at: whether they are freaks of the imagination or not I care not, so long as men's minds are aroused, the mode matters but little; but if anybody shall say that the experience of singular impressions or remarkable emotions proves men to be believers, I must most gravely and solemnly demur for alas! there have been thousands who profess to have seen angels who are now with devils, and I do not doubt there are tens of thousands who have fought with devils who are now with angels of light. It is not what you see with these eyes, nor hear with these ears, nor feel with flesh and blood; our religion is spiritual, and is spiritually discerned—not a thing of rhapsody, excitement, and imagination, bat a matter of sober thought and meditation; and if you have not something more than a mere day or night of singularities to look back upon, your evidences of grace are worthless.

279. Evil, Origin of, a Mystery

There are ten thousand mysteries in nature which you know are there, but which you cannot understand. You cannot even tell me what electricity is, nor what the attraction of gravitation. There are these forces, for you see their effects, but how the forces first began you know not; and here is a great force which is in mankind, the force of evil, and you see its effects everywhere, but how it came there you could not have told unless God had said it came there through inheritance from your parents as the result of the fall of Adam, and there you must leave it and bow your heads.

280. Exchange of Earth for Heaven Have you ever visited the hospital, and sat by the side of the poor Christian woman who has lain upon that bed for months—her hearing almost gone, her sight failing, scarcely able to breathe, palpitation of the heart, life a protracted agony? Oh! what a change from the bed of languishing to the throne of God! What a difference between that hospital, with its sounds of sickness and of sorrow, and yonder new Jerusalem and the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast! What an escape from the dying bed to the living glory—from the glazing eye, and the wasting frame, and the cold death-sweat, to the glory which excelleth, and

the harps of angels, and the songs of the glorified! What a change, too, for some of the poor, for some of you sons of penury who are here this morning, from that hard work which scarcely knows a pause, from those weary fingers; and that flying needle, and that palpitating heart; from that sleep which gives but little rest, because the toil begins so soon that it seems to pervade and injure the sleep itself. What an exchange from that naked room, that unfurnished table! that cup which, so far from running over, you find it difficult to fill! from all those various pains and woes that penury is heir to, to the wealth and happiness of paradise! What a change for you to the mansions of the blessed, and the crowns of immortality, and the company of the princes of the blood royal, with whom you shall dwell for ever! And what a change, again, for the persecuted! I know how a father's angry word, breaks your heart, and how a husband's cruel remarks grieve you; but you shall soon escape from it all. The jeer of the workshop sometimes reminds you of the cruel mockings you have often read of. What a change for you to be in sweet company, where friends shall cheer and make you glad! My brethren, what a leap it must have been for the martyrs, right away from their stakes to their thrones! What a change for the men who rotted in dungeons till the moss grew on their eyelids, to the immortal beauty of the fairest of the fair, midst the bright ones doubly bright! What a change!

281. Excitement, Feverish, Folly of

I remember seeing a doctor when there was an accident in the street. He proceeded immediately to the spot; but should you think he went rushing down to the man as if he would break his neck? No, on the contrary, he walked down very quietly and demurely to the chemist's shop where the man was lying, and I could not help thinking that this was a common-sense thing to do even in an emergency; for if he had run and got out of breath, he would not have been able to have done half so well when he got there as he was able to do by going steadily to his work. The feverish excitement of hurry you should avoid; but there must be no delay. Unseemly haste might spoil your aim, because you would not be able to speak properly; but a senseless hesitancy would miss the golden opportunity, thwart the purpose altogether, and leave you to regret that you had never spoken at all.

282. Experience, the True Test A negro was once told by a friend that some man had said the Bible was not true. Now, our poor friend had never thought anybody could doubt the Bible, but his quick way of disposing of the novel difficulty was, "Dat book not true! why, I take it into my house and I sit down and read it, and it make my heart laugh. How can it be a lie dat make my heart laugh? I was drunkard, thief, and liar, and dat book talked to me and made me a new man—dat book no lie." The very best proof in the world, surely, at least to the man himself, if not to others. We who have had our hearts made to laugh by God's word cannot be laughed out of our faith.

283. Eye, Apple of, a Symbol of God's Care In the providence of God the apple of the eye is defended with peculiar care and transcendent skill. Those who have studied the formation of the pupil itself will tell you with how many coats the retina is preserved. Then the commonest observer knows how the eyebrows, the eyelashes, and the eyelids, are formed as outworks, fences, and barricades, to protect the pupil of the eye, which is thus made to dwell securely like a citizen within the entrenchments of a fortified town. God has bestowed extraordinary pains upon all that concerns the eye; being one of the tenderest organs of the physical frame, he has used many devices that it should be well preserved, notwithstanding its exceeding sensitiveness. Nor is it

merely sheltered in its own fastness, but sentries keep ward lest it should be exposed to peril. Whenever it is threatened with even the appearance of danger no time is lost in consultation with yourself, but with agility so brisk that it seems almost involuntary, the arm is lifted up and the hand is raised to screen it from harm or to resist attack. If you are about to stumble, you naturally put out your hands to save your eyes. Instinct seems to teach you at once the value of eyesight, and your whole strength is put forth to preserve it. In fact, all the members of the body may be regarded as a patrol for the wardship of the eye; and all the incorporated powers of manhood are in constant vigilance to guard and protect that precious orb. Admiring then this beautiful arrangement to conserve the delicate organ of vision, we may pray, "Lord, keep thou me as the apple of the eye, with many protections. Thou hast been pleased with the strong bastions of thy providence to surround thy people: I ask for such protection. Lead me not into temptation; do not suffer the events of my career or the incidents of my daily life to entangle me so that I shall be unable to escape out of the perplexing snares. Let the powers of heaven fight for me as of old the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. Let me be in league With the stones of the field, and command the beasts of the forest to be at peace with me. Let my tabernacle be in peace; and let no plague come nigh my dwelling. Do thou, O God, visit my habitation; and so abide with me beneath that lowly roof that I may not by any means through outward circumstances or inward thoughts be led into sin. Guard me, O my God! by all the power of those mysterious wheels, whose motions I cannot understand, but of whose results thou hast said, 'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his

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284. Faint Hearts cared for by Christ When the flock is on the march, it will happen, unless the shepherd is very watchful, that the lambs will lag behind. Those great Syrian flocks which feed in the plains of Palestine have to be driven many miles, because the pasturage is scant and the flocks are numerous; and in long journeys the lambs drop one by one for weariness, and then the shepherd carries them. So it is in the progress of the great Christian church; persecuted often, always more or less molested by the outside world, there are some who flag, they cannot keep up the pace; the spiritual warfare is too severe for them. They love their Lord; they would if they could be amongst the foremost; but, through the cares of this world, through weakness of mind, through a lack of spiritual vigour, they become lame and are ready to perish; such faint hearts are the peculiar care of their tender Lord.

285. Faith answered by God

I recollect one night, when we resolved to build this house of prayer, we knew that we were poor, much too poor ever to be able to raise so large a sum as this house would cost, especially when the vow was registered that it should never be built with borrowed money, but should either be paid for or else. not built at all; I recollect preaching that evening from the text, "And the iron did swim," and saying that the building of this house seemed as likely a thing to happen as if the iron should swim; but I said I was glad it was twenty-five thousand pounds which we wanted, for if it had been only five thousand pounds, or ten thousand pounds, we might feel able to raise it, but twenty-five thousand pounds was impossible, only I believed that God could do impossibilities. It was one of the most singular things that ever occurred, when a friend at a distance whom I never saw but once in my life, and who had no connection with us, put down five thousand pounds himself towards it. We were encouraged; we went to work, and the thing was done, and as it went on, more and more singular helps came.

286. Faith, Anticipation of

Farseeing faith climbs the staircase which hope has builded, and bowing upon the knees of prayer looks through the window which love has opened, and sees the Lord Jesus Christ coming in his glory and endowing all his people with the eternal life which is to be their portion.

287. Faith bringing the Distant near

Standing on some of the Alpine summits, you look far and wide, and see lakes spread at a distance beneath your feet, and far away there is a range of black mountains, or of hills clothed with snows; you know they are perhaps two hundred miles distant, but in a moment you are there. So quick does the sense of sight travel, that we go to the moon or to the sun without knowing that any space of time is taken up by our eyes travelling there; and those remote stars which the astronomers tell us are so distant that they can scarcely compute how far off they are, yet mine eye travels to them in a second of time, when I gaze upon the starry firmament—so quickly does sight travel—and equally rapid is the action or faith Brethren, we know not where heaven may

be—where the state, the place called "heaven" is, but faith takes us there in contemplation in a single moment. We cannot tell when the Lord may come; it may not be for centuries yet, but faith steps over the distance in a moment, and sees him coming in the clouds of heaven, and hears the trump of resurrection.

288. Faith, Definition of

True faith is reliance. Look at any Greek lexicon you like, and you will find that the word πιστεueiv does not merely mean to believe, but to trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with, and so forth; and the marrow of the meaning of faith is confidence in, reliance upon. Let me ask, then, every professor here who professes to have faith, is your faith the faith of reliance? You give credit to certain statements, do you also place trust in the one glorious person who alone can redeem? Have you confidence as well as credence? A creed will not save you, but reliance upon the anointed Saviour is the way of salvation. Remember, I beseech you, that if you could be taught an orthodoxy unadulterated with error, and could learn a creed written by the pen of the Eternal God himself, yet a mere notional faith, such as men exercise when they believe in the existence of men in the moon, or nebulae in space, could not save your soul. Of this we are sure, because we see around us many who have such a faith, and yet evidently are not children of God.

289. Faith Essential to Religion

Take away the Christian's faith, and the vitality of his religion has departed. Oh! many will get to heaven whose patience was very maimed, and some whose eye of hope was very dim; and there be some saints, I doubt not, entering into life halt and maimed, destitute of bright graces which ought to have adorned them, but not a soul ever lived to God here or obtained admission into the everlasting kingdom without faith. This is the sine qua non. This must be possessed. Without this a man is an unbeliever, and his end is to be destroyed. So, beloved, to live by faith is the very essence of the Christian life. Because of its deep importance, we must watch with the greater care that we have the faith of God's elect.

290. Faith fulfilling the Divine Purposes

Mr. Richard Knill, of happy and glorious memory, an earnest worker for Christ, felt moved, I know not why, to take me on his knee, at my grandfather's house, and to utter words like these, which were treasured up by the family, and by myself especially, "This child," said he, "will preach the gospel, and he will preach it to the largest congregations of our times," I believed his prophecy, and my standing here to-day is partly occasioned by such belief. It did not hinder me in my diligence in seeking to educate myself because I believed I was destined to preach the gospel to large congregations; not at all, but the prophecy helped forward its own fulfilment; and I prayed, and sought, and strove, always having this star of Bethlehem before me, that the day shall come when I should preach the gospel. Even so the belief that we shall one day be perfect, never hinders any true believer from diligence, but is the highest possible incentive to make a man struggle with the corruptions of the flesh, and seek to persevere according to God's promise.

291. Faith, Great Things Wrought by When the College of which I am President had been commenced, for a year or so all my means stayed; my purse was dried up, and I had no other means of carrying it on. In this very house, one Sunday evening, I had paid away all I had for the support of my young men for the ministry. There is a dear friend now sitting behind me who knows

the truth of what I am saying. I said to him, "There is nothing left whatever." He said, "You have a good banker, sir."

"Yes," I said, "and I should like to draw upon him now, for I have nothing." "Well," said he, "how do you know? have you prayed about it?" "Yes, I have." "Well, then, leave it with him; have you opened your letters?" "No, I do not open my letters on Sundays." "Well," said he, "open them for once." I did so, and in the first one I opened there was a banker's letter to this effect:—"Dear Sir, We beg to inform you that a lady, totally unknown to us, has left with us two hundred pounds for you to use in the education of young men." Such a sum has never come since, and it never came before; and I have no more idea than the dead in their graves how it came then, nor from whom it came, but to me it seemed that it came directly from God. We have gone on ever since with that work successfully, and are resolved to launch out into others; and I believe that we only want as a church, and your pastor only wants as your pastor, to have faith in God, and we shall find him "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." Wherever there is the hand of a true man there is the wing of an angel. Wherever there is the working of the sword of Joshua and the prayer of Moses, the almighty arm of the God of Israel is present. You have but to believe, and to go forward, leaning upon him who made heaven and earth, and all will be well.

292. Faith, Imperfect When I first went to Switzerland, with a friend, from Lucerne, we saw a mountain in the distance which we were going to climb. I pointed out a place where we should stop half-way up, and I said, "We shall be there in about four hours and a half." "Four hours and a half!" my friend said, "I'd undertake to walk it in ten minutes." "No, not you." "Well, but half an hour!" He looked again and said, "Anybody could get there in half an hour!" It seemed no distance at all. And yet when we came to toil up the four hours and a half turned into five or six before we reached the place. Our eyes were not accustomed to mountains, and we were not able to measure them; and it is only by considerable experience that you can get to understand what a mountain is, and how long a distance appears. You are altogether deceived, and do not know the position of things till you become wiser. And it is just so with faith. Faith in the Christian, when he first gets it, is true and saving; but it is not in proportion. The man believes one doctrine, perhaps, and that is so delightful that it swallows up every other. Then he gets hold of another, and he swings that way like a pendulum; no doctrine can be true but that one. Perhaps in a little time he swings back like a pendulum the other way. He is unsteady because, while his faith perceives the truth, it does not perceive the harmonies of truth: his faith, for instance, may perceive the Lord Jesus Christ, but as yet it has not learned the position which Christ occupies in the great economy of grace. He is half-blind, and cannot see far.

He has sight, but it is not the sight which he will yet receive. Like the blind man who, when our Lord healed him, saw men at first as trees walking. He came in due time to see clearly, for grace always goes on in its work—it will never halt half-way; but at first all was obscure and confused. Just as when you pass from darkness into light, you are unable to bear it, you are dazzled, and need a short time to accustom the eye to the brilliance; but in due time the eye is strengthened, and you can bear more and more light, till you again see with comfort. Let us ask, then, of the Lord, that he will increase our faith till the mental eye shall become clear and bright, and we shall be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, to be with Christ, and to see him as he is.

293. Faith in Daily Life Not alone in the study and in the closet, not alone in the assembly of the saints and at the table of fellowship, but in the market and on the exchange, in the shop and the counting-house, in the parlour or the drawing-room, at the plough-tail or at the carpenter's bench, in the senate-house or at the judgment-hall; the just man, wherever his life is cast, shall carry his faith with him; nay, his faith shall be in him as part of his life; he shall live there by faith.

294. Faith, Life of

Faith is not a piece of confectionery to be put upon drawing room tables, or a garment to be worn on Sundays; it is a working principle, to be used in the barn and in the field, in the shop and on the exchange; it is a grace for the housewife and the servant; it is for the House of Commons and for the poorest workshop, "The life which I live in the flesh, I live by faith." I would have the believing cobbler mend shoes religiously, and the tailor make garments by faith, and I would have every Christian buy and sell by faith. Whatever your trades may be, faith is to be taken into your daily callings, and that is alone the truly living faith which will bear the practical test. You are not to stop at the shop door and Bay, "Farewell to Christianity till I put the shutters up again." That is hypocrisy; but the genuine life of the Christian is the life which we live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God.

295. Faith looking for Triumph

Faith grasps the reality of this Book; she does not look upon it as a sepulchre with a stone laid thereon, but as a temple in which Christ reigns; as an ivory palace out of which he comes riding in his chariot, conquering and to conquer. Faith does not believe the gospel to be a worn-out scroll, to be rolled up and put away; she believes that the gospel instead of being in its dotage is in its youth; she anticipates for it a manhood of mighty strugglings, and a grand maturity of blessedness and triumph. Faith does not shirk the fight; she longs for it, because she foresees the victory.

296. Faith, Perfection of

Perhaps you have been on the top of a mountain, such as the Rigi or as Snowdon. You know these mountains do not move. They are good solid rock under your feet. But people erect platforms on the top of them to see the sun rise a little sooner, or something of that sort. From the top of one of those platforms a man may come down with a crash and break his limbs. That is something like our erections which we put up over our simple faith in Christ. Our beautiful frames and feelings and experiences—they will come down with a crash some day, for they are rotten stuff; but when a man stands upon this—"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and I am resting upon him: he is all my salvation and all my desire: his precious blood is all my confidence. The love of his heart, the power of his arm, the merit of his plea,—here I rest myself,"—O beloved, there is no fear of that confidence ever giving way beneath your feet. There you may stand and serenely rejoice when worlds shall melt and pillars of the earth shall reel.

297. Faith, Personal Have you never found it to be wonderfully easy to believe for other people? I know when I was seeking the Saviour, I had no doubt about his receiving any other penitent. I felt certain that if the vilest sinner out of hell had come to him, he was able to save him; and though I had no faith in him on my own account, had I met with another distressed soul in a similar condition to myself, I believe I should have encouraged him to put his trust in Jesus, though I was afraid to do so myself. To believe for others is an easy matter, but when it comes to your own

case, to believe that sins like yours can be blotted out, that you, who have so badly played the prodigal, may be received by your loving Father, that your spiritual diseases can be cured, and that the devil can be cast out of you;—here is the labour, here is the difficulty. But, beloved, we must believe this or else we have not saving faith. O my Saviour, shall I trifle in faith by believing or pretending to believe that thou canst heal a case parallel to mine, and yet cannot heal mine? Shall I draw a line and limit thee, thou Holy One of Israel, and say, "Thou canst save up to me, but not so far as I have gone"? Shall I dream that thy precious blood has some power, but not power enough to blot out my sins? Shall I dare, in the arrogance of my despair, to set a boundary to the merits of thy plea, and to the virtue of thine atoning sacrifice? God forbid. Jesus is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him,—he is able to save me. Him that cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out; I come to him, and he will not, cannot cast me out. Hast thou a personal faith, a faith about thyself, about thine own sins, and thine own condition before God? Dost thou believe that Christ can save thee? Sink or swim, dost thou cast thyself upon him, thine own proper self? He, his own self, bore our sins in his own body on the tree; and we, our own selves, must cast ourselves upon him. If we have so done, then we, like the man in the narrative, have the real faith, the faith of God's elect.

298. Faith Preserving from Death That old house, still standing in the High Street at Chester, is a lasting proof of the power of faith, with its old letters cut in the black wood, "God's Providence is mine inheritance." When everybody else was flying out of Chester into the country, the man who lived in that house just wrote that inscription up over the door, and stopped in the town, depending on God that he should be preserved, and none in his house fell a victim to that black death which was slaying its thousands on all sides. Strong faith has always a particular immunity in times of trouble. When a man has really, under a sense of duty, under a conscientious conviction, rested alone in God, he has been enabled to walk where the thickest dangers were flying, all unharmed. He has put his foot upon the adder, and the young lion and the dragon hath he trampled under his feet. Having confidence in God, God has verified and vindicated his promise, and the child of God that could so trust has never been put to confusion.

299. Faith, Signs of the Greatness of By some means Satan almost always manages it this way, that when we get a little hope it is generally a self-grounded hope, a vain idea that we are getting better in ourselves—a mischievous conceit: proud flesh, which hinders the cure, and which the surgeon must cut out; it is no sign of healing, it prevents healing. On the other hand, if we obtain a deep sense of sin, the evil one manages to put his hoof in there, and to insinuate that Jesus is not able to save such as we are. A great falsehood, for who shall say what the limit of Christ's power is? But if these two things could but meet. together, a thorough sense of sin and an immovable belief in the power of Christ to grapple with sin and to overcome it, surely the kingdom of heaven would then have come nigh unto us in power and in truth; and it would be again said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel"

300. Faith Strong in the King's Presence When the King is with us, faith is confident, because God girds faith as with a golden girdle, and from head to foot clothes her with a panoply of armour, and puts a sword into her hand which is all-destroying, and with which she cuts through coats of mail. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

301. Faith, the Indicator of the New Life The simplicity and apparent easiness of faith is no reason why I should not regard its existence as an infallible indication of the new birth within. How know we that the new born child lives except by its cry? Yet a child's cry—what a simple sound it is! how readily could it be imitated! a clever workman could with pipes and strings easily deceive us; yet was there never a child's cry in the world but what it indicated the mysteries of breathing, heart-beating, blood-flowing, and all the other wonders which come with life itself. Do you see yonder person just drawn out of the river? Does she live? Yes, life is there. Why? Because the lungs still heave. But does it not seem an easy thing to make lungs heave? A pair of bellows blown into them, might not that produce the motion? Ah, yes, the thing is easily imitated after a sort; but no lungs heave except where life is, no blood; is pumped to and fro from the heart except where life is. Take another illustration. Go into a telegraph office at any time, and you will see certain needles moving right and left with unceasing click. Electricity is a great mystery, and you cannot see or feel it; but the operator tells you that the electric current is moving along the wire. How does he know? "I know it by the needle." How is that? I could move your needles easily. "Yes; but do not you see the needle has made two motions to the right, one to the left, and two to the right again? I am reading a message." "But," say you, "I can see nothing in it; I could imitate that clicking and moving very easily." Yet he who is taught the art sees before him in those needles, not only electric action, but a deeper mystery still; he perceives that a mind is directing the invisible force, and speaking by means of it. Not to all, but to the initiated is it given to see the mystery hidden within the simplicity. The believer sees in the faith, which is simple as the movements of the needle, an indication that God is operating on the human mind, and the spiritual man discerns that there is an inner secret intimated thereby, which the carnal eye cannot decipher. To believe in Jesus is a better indicator of regeneration than anything else, and in no case did it ever mislead. Faith in the living God and his Son Jesus Christ is always the result of the new birth, and can never exist except in the regenerate. Whoever has faith is a saved man.

302. Faith, the Minister's Strength

Faith cries, "Trust me, my son, to make you preach better. Have more enterprise. Be more daring. Do not fight your own battle in the church-meeting, leave it to your God; trust all with him. Do not be afraid to go and speak to that foul-mouthed man; I will give you a word in the selfsame hour. Trust me, and go with prudence but with zeal into the darkest haunts of vice. Find out the worst of men and seek their salvation. There is nothing thou canst not do if thou wilt trust in God." Brother, your failure, if you fail, will begin in your faith. The air says to the eagle, "Trust me; spread thy broad wings. I will bear thee up to the sun. Only trust me. Take thy foot from off yon rock which thou canst feel beneath thee. Get away from it, and be buoyed up by the unseen element!" My brethren, eaglets of heaven, mount aloft, for God invites you. Mount! You have but to trust him. An unknown glory rests upon him, and the radiance thereof shall come upon you if you know how to trust.

303. Faith, The Old The followers of Whitfield and Wesley, instead of proving with diffidence, and apologising for the gospel with half-heartedness, came forth with, "Thus and thus saith the Lord." They mounted their pulpits as monarchs mount their thrones; and stood; forward not as timid apologists, but as ambassadors armed with divine authority; they proclaimed the truth, and men owned its power, till from one end of the land to the other the dry bones arose to life and stood as an exceeding great army. Brethren, our churches must come back to the old faith, and to a firm

belief in it. If you do not believe the articles of your faith, reject them, and do not be sham believers. If the doctrines which you profess be indeed true, grip them, hold them fast, get them engraven upon your souls, and burnt into your consciences. Have faith in God, and the truth—that the truth cannot be destroyed nor God defeated. Vitality and power in your faith will soon send force and life into all the other parts of your spiritual manhood.

304. Faith, the Sign of Life

See you yonder battle-field, strewn with men who have fallen in the terrible conflict! many have been slain, many more are wounded, and there they lie in ghastly confusion, the dead all stark and stiff, covered with their own crimson, and the wounded faint and bleeding, unable to leave the spot whereon they have fallen. Surgeons have gone over the field rapidly, ascertaining which are corpses beyond the reach of mercy's healing hand, and which are men faint with loss of blood. Each living man has a paper fastened conspicuously on his breast, and when the soldiers are sent out with the ambulances to gather up the wounded, they do not themselves need to stay and judge which may be living and which may be dead; they see a mark upon the living, and lifting them up right tenderly they bear them to the hospital, where their wounds may be dressed. Now, faith in the Son is God's infallible mark, which he has set upon every poor wounded sinner whose bleeding heart has received the Lord Jesus; though he faints and feels as lifeless as though he were mortally wounded, yet he most surely lives if he believes, for the possession of Jesus is the token which cannot deceive. Faith is God's mark witnessing in unmistakable language—"this soul liveth." Jesus saith, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." Tenderly, tenderly, ye ministers of Christ, and ye blood-bought ones who care for the broken-hearted, lift up this wounded one, bear him away, bind up his wounds with comfortable promises, and restore his ebbing life with precious consolations from the Book of God. Whatever else we cannot see, if a simple trust in Jesus is discernible in a convert, we need feel no suspicions, but receive him at once as a brother beloved; for this is the Father's will, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.

305. Faith, Unconquerable The faith of God's elect can write "invicta" upon its escutcheon; it is unconquered and unconquerable; but the faith which springs from mere human reason will speedily give way like a pasteboard helmet, or a wooden sword. O sharp temptations! terrible as ye are to me, yet I thank God for you, because the trial of my faith, which is much more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried by fire shall redound to the glory of God and to my own comfort.

306. Faith, Vitality of

Faith, casting herself upon the power of her Lord, never grows exhausted. She is like the eagle when it renews its youth. She drinks from the fountain head of all vitality, and her lost vigour comes back to her; such a soul would be strong evermore though she had to live the life of a Methuselah; myriads of years would not exhaust her, for she has learned to cast that which exhausts upon him who is inexhaustible, and therefore keeps on the even tenor of her way. She leaned because the road was long.

307. Fame, Danger of

Many activities are kept up by the love of fame. Men have climbed step by step the ladder of public esteem, and loved the dizzy height. How men will flame and blaze while fame blows the bellows! How content men are to burn away their lives for the approbation of their fellow creatures; yet many of them have lost all joy in honour long before they have departed this life! and certainly those who have nothing else to inspire the flame of hope in the last article of death but the approbation of men, will find their fires dwindling sadly low, and dark, dark, dark must be their departure. How sad for a soul to know that the clangour of fame's trumpet is dying away from its ears to be superseded by the blast of that awful trumpet ordained to wake the dead and call them to their last account!

308. Father, Love of, Precious

CÆsar's imperial couch is hard compared with the bosom of God. Cæsar's sceptre is a cumbrous thing compared with the ring of love which surrounds our finger. Give us but the Father's love, and who will may have the Indies. Ay, let the worlds be given to whom God may please, as men give husks to swine, if we have his love it is enough, our soul is filled to the brim, and floweth over with satisfaction.

309. Fatherhood of God A great iron wall of material forces is set up by certain philosophers between us and the great allworking Jehovah.

We hear little about him, but very much of the laws of nature: we take the thermometer and say, "Oh, the temperature fell so many degrees, and it was natural that the mist should become snow, or that instead of dew there should be hoarfrost." We talk now-a-days as if we were living in a world of machinery—as if the Lord had gone away and left the wheels of nature to go on working till the weights run down, or the great pendulum of time shall stop; but I hope every Christian heart revolts from such a view of the world as this. I had sooner be a child again, and be near to God, than be a philosopher, and with my philosophy only put God farther off. It seems to me, I say again, to make the world so magnificent, to light it up with such a lustre and such a splendour, to think that God is in it, and that it is his ice, and his snow, and his wind, and his cold, and that everything is his, since he is the Head of the House and Father of the Family. With such views I feel, as far I can be in this world, at home like a child in his own father's house; and the prayer, "Our Father, which art in heaven," seems to be a fitting and proper prayer for a denizen of a world where God is present still.

310. Fatherhood of God, Comfort of A Father! There is music in that word, but not to a fatherless child—to him it is full of sorrowful memories. Those who have never lost a father can scarcely know how precious a relation a father is. A father who is a father indeed, is very dear! Do we not remember how we climbed his knee? Do we not recollect the kisses we imprinted on his cheeks? Do we not recall to-day with gratitude the chidings of his wisdom and the gentle encouragements of his affection? We owe, ah! who shall tell how much we owe to our fathers according to the flesh, and when they are taken from us we lament their loss, and feel that a great gap is made in our family circle. Listen, then, to these words, "Our Father, who is in heaven." Consider the grace contained in the Lord's deigning to take us into the relationship of children, and giving us with the relationship the nature and the spirit of children, so that we say, "Abba, Father." Did you ever lie in bed with your limbs vexed with sore pains, and cry, "Father, pity thy child"? Did you ever look into the face of death, and as you thought you were about to depart, cry, "My Father, help me; uphold

me with thy gracious hand, and bear me through the stream of death"? It is at such times that we realise the glory of the Fatherhood of God, and in our feebleness learn to cling to the divine strength, and catch at the divine love.

311. Faults, A Looking-glass for

You can see great faults in others; but, my dear brother, be sure to look in the looking-glass every morning, and you will see quite as many faults, or else your eyes are weak. If that looking-glass were to show you your own heart you would never dare look again, I fear you would even break the glass. Old John Berridge, as odd as he was good, had a number of pictures of different ministers round his room, and he had a looking-glass in a frame to match. He would often take his friend into the room and say, "That is Calvin, that is John Bunyan," and when he took him up to the looking-glass he would add, "and that is the devil." "Why," the friend would say, "it is myself!" "Ah," said he, "there is a devil in us all." Being so imperfect, we ought not to condemn.

312. Feeble Churches, Care for the When slips of flowers are first put into the ground, they want more water than they will do afterwards; when they have sent out more roots, and these roots have abundant fibres searching through the soil for moisture, they may not require much of the gardener's care, but just now they must have it or die; therefore, I say, let the feeble, the weak, the young, the sick, the persecuted, be watered most anxiously and lovingly by you all.

313. Fellowship, Constant Desire for

I saw a group of lovely ferns the other day in a grotto from the roof of which continually distilled a cool, clear, crystal rain: these ferns were perpetually fresh and beautiful, because their leaves were continually bathed in the refreshing drops. Although it was at a season when verdure was scant, these lovely ferns were as verdant as possible. I observed to my friend that I would wish to live in the everlasting drip of grace, perpetually laved, and bathed, and baptised in the overflowing of divine fellowship.

314. Fellowship with Christ, Strength for Service In the battle of Salamanca, when Wellington bade one of his officers advance with his troops, and occupy a gap, which the Duke perceived in the lines of the French, the general rode up to him, and said, "My lord, I will do the work, but first give me a grasp of that conquering right hand of yours." He received a hearty grip, and away he rode to the deadly encounter. Often has my soul said to her Captain, "My Lord, I will do that work if thou wilt give me a grip of thy conquering right hand." Oh, what power it puts into a man when he gets a grip of Christ, and Christ gets a grip of him! Fellowship with Christ is the fountain of the church's strength.

315. Festival of the Saints The ancients were very fond of festive songs. When they assembled at their great festivals, led by their chosen minstrels, they sang right Joyously, with boisterous mirth. Let those who will speak to the praise of wine, my soul shall extol the precious blood of Jesus; let who will laud corn and oil, the rich produce of the harvest, my heart shall sing of the bread which came down from heaven, whereof if a man eateth, he shall never hunger. Speak ye of royal banquets, and minstrelsy fit for a monarch's ear! ours is a nobler festival; and our song is sweeter far. Here is room at this table tonight for all earth's poesy and music, for the place deserves songs more lustrous with delight, more sparkling with gems of holy mirth, than any of which the ancients could conceive.

316. Fidelity tested by Non-success To go on tilling a thankless soil, to continue to cast bread upon the waters and to find no return, has caused many a true heart to faint with inward bleeding. Yet this is full often the test of our fidelity. It is a noble thing to continue preaching, like Noah, throughout a lifetime, amid ridicule, reproach, and unbelief; but it is not every man who could endure to do so. The most of us need success to sustain our courage, and we serve our Master with most spirit when we see immediate results. Faint hearts of that kind there may be among my fellow soldiers, ready to lay down the weapons of their warfare because they win no victory at this present:—my brethren, I pray you do not desert the field of battle, but, like Jonah, remember the Lord, and abide by the royal standard still.

317. Filial Love seen in Small Services

Outside, in the streets, a man's companions will do him a kindness, and the action performed is friendly; but for filial acts you must look inside the house. There the child does not lend money to its father, or negotiate business, yet in his little acts there is more sonship. Who is it that comes to meet father when the day is over? and what is the action which often indicates childhood's love? See the little child comes tottering forward with father's slippers, and runs off with his boots as he puts them off. The service is little, but it is loving and filial, and has more of filial affection in it than the servant's bringing in the meal, or preparing the bed, or any more essential service. It gives the little one great pleasure, and expresses his love. No one who is not my child, or who does not love me in something like the same way, would ever dream of making such a service his speciality. The littleness of the act fits it to the child's capacity, and there is also something in it which makes it a suitable expression of a child's affection. So also in little acts for Jesus. Oftentimes men of the world will give their money to the cause of Christ, putting down large sums for charity or for missions, but they will not weep in secret over other men's sins, or speak a word of comfort to an afflicted saint. To visit a poor sick woman, teach a little child, reclaim a street Arab, breathe a prayer for enemies, or whisper a promise in the ear of a desponding saint, may show more of sonship than building a row of almshouses or endowing a church.

318. Final Perseverance a Spur to Service

I can never conceive that it dispirits the soldier, when he is fighting, to tell him that he must win the victory. This is what Cromwell's Ironsides said when they saw the great general riding along the ranks, "'Tis he!" they said, "'tis he!"

They felt the victory was sure where Cromwell was, and like thunderbolts they dashed upon their enemies, until as thin clouds before the tempest the foemen flew apace. The certainty of victory gives strength to the arm that wields the sword. To say to the Christian, you shall persevere till you get to the journey's end—will that make him sit down on the next mile-stone? No; he will climb the mountain, wiping the sweat from his brow; and as he looks upon the plain, he will descend with surer and more cautious footsteps, because he knows he shall reach the journey's end. God will speed the ship over the waves into the desired haven; will the conviction of that on the part of the captain make him neglect the vessel? Yes, if he be a fool; but if he be a man in his wits, the very certainty that he shall cross the deep will only strengthen him in time of storm to do what he would not have dreamt of doing if he had been afraid the vessel would be cast away. Brethren, let this doctrine impel us to a holy ardency of watchfulness, and may the Lord bless us and enable us to persevere to the end.

319. Final Perseverance, guaranteed by Christ The very least of God's people is safe, because the love of Christ is as much set upon the least as the greatest; because Jesus has as much bought with blood the least as the greatest; because Christ is as much the Surety of the little saints as of the strong saints; because the least in the family is as dear to the heavenly Father as the elder sons; because the absence of the feeblest saint would make a gap in heaven quite as much as the loss of the greatest; because if Jesus should suffer one of his people to perish, he would as much break his suretyship engagements by losing the least as the greatest; because it would be as much dishonour to Christ to suffer the meanest as the best to fall, for Satan would say, "He kept the strong, but could not keep the weak"; because Christ's love encompasses the lambs as much as the sheep, and eternal grace makes as sure their salvation as that of apostles and martyrs. God will not be thwarted, and Christ will not be robbed, the Holy Ghost will not be defeated, the covenant shall not be broken, the oath shall not fall to the ground, the blood shall not have been spilt in vain, and intercession shall not go up to heaven unheeded for anyone of these little ones—they must, they shall be kept. Though earth's old columns bow, not one of these shall be cast away.

320. Finding Christ, Recompense of

Let me assure you when you have found the Lord, your waiting will be richly recompensed. I would have lingered at his doors for eighty years if he would for a recompense give me but the one kiss of his lips. I would fain lie at his pool of mercy, ay, a whole natural life, if but at the last my crimson sins might be washed away, and my soul be made whiter than snow. "Oh," but thou sayest, "if he come not soon, I shall die of despair before his coming!" But he will bring such cordials to thee, such wines on the lees well refined, that thy despair shall take wings and fly away, and instead of the black raven of doubt, thou shalt receive the dove of consolation, bringing the olive branch of peace in her mouth.

321. Fishers of Men

I saw on Lake Como, when we visited Bellagio, some men fishing. They had torches burning in their boats, and the fish were attracted to them by the glare of the light. You must know how to get the fish together. You know there is such a thing as the ground-bait for the fishes. You must know how to allure men. The preacher does this by using images, symbols, and illustrations. You must know how to catch the fish, throwing out first, perhaps, not a remark directly to the point, because that might be unwise, but a sideway remark, which shall lead to another, and yet another. If you are to be a "fisher of men" you will want your wits about you. It will not do to blunder over men's souls. Fish are not caught by every boy who chooses to take a pin and a piece of cotton and make his way to the pond. Fish want a fisherman, and there is a sort of congruity between the fish and the man who catches them. I do not wonder that Izaak Walton could catch fish. He seems to have been born and made on purpose for it, and so there are some men who are made on purpose for winning souls. They naturally care for their fellows, and they have such a way of putting the truth, that as soon as they speak, men say, "Here is a man come who knows all about me, and knows how to deal with me," and they at once yield to his influence. Oh that I had hundreds of such in this church! I have a good share of them, and I bless God every time I remember them. God has called them, and has made them true fishers of men; they know about men, and also how to allure them.

322. Flesh, Works of, Withering When I was seeking the Lord, I not only believed that I could not pray without divine help, but I felt in my very soul that I could not. Then I could not even feel aright, or mourn as I would, or groan as I would. I longed to long more after Christ; but, alas! I could not even feel that I needed him as I ought to feel it. This heart was then as hard as adamant, as dead as those that rot in their graves. Oh, what would I at times have given for a tear! I wanted to repent, but could not; longed to believe, but could not; I felt bound, hampered, and paralysed. This is a humbling revelation of God's Holy Spirit, but a needful one; for the faith of the flesh is not the faith of God's elect. The faith which justifies the soul is the gift of God and not of ourselves. That repentance which is the work of the flesh will need to be repented of. The flower of the flesh must wither; only the seed of the Spirit will produce fruit unto perfection. The heirs of heaven are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of man, but of God. If the work in us be not the Spirit's working, but our own, it will droop and die when most we require its protection; and its end will be as the grass which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.

323. Forbearance of God sparing Life

You have no warrant either from his word or from his angels to assure you that God has suspended the sentence even for the next hour. You are living by his forbearance, spared by the divine sovereignty. Some rave against sovereignty, but in this case it is not justice that spares you, it is the mere will of God that for awhile keeps you out of hell. You tell me that nothing endangers your life at this moment; how know you that? The arrows of death often fly imperceptibly. I have stood in congregations preaching on two occasions when the unseen darts of death struck one of my hearers, so that one died on each occasion while listening to the word of the gospel. God needs no miracle to put his sentence into execution at this moment. He need not disturb the natural order of affairs for you to die instantly; and if he so willed it, your soul's destruction would, without the slightest effort on his part, take place at this very moment, even where you are 324.

Forgiveness, Freeness of

Gay, dissolute man, there is that poor girl ruined body and soul, through you, in years gone by, and nothing you can ever do can undo that mischief. Could your tears for ever flow, you can never unwrite the past, nor restore the lost one. Could you bring that wandering soul back by divine grace, even then the bitter past could not be unwritten, for she, too, has spread the poison. All that accursed past of sin must live on. God forgives sin, but much of the consequences of sin God himself does not avert. If you light the fire, it will bum on to the lowest hell; God may forgive your incendiarism, but the fire itself still continues. You spoke a word against the Lord Jesus in the ears of some youngster years gone by which turned him aside from the right path. You cannot unsay it, and that youngster's infidelity and unbelief you cannot now destroy. The perpetual mischief which you have done to others might fitly be a reason with the Most High why he should not forgive you; but yet he says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts." With all this before him, with all the consequences of your sin before him, he forgives you freely if you rest on Jesus.

325. Forgiveness, leading to Holiness

If a man has committed every crime in the whole catalogue of villainy, and his heart has become hard as the nether millstone, and his disposition altogether base and mean, and grovelling, and sensual, and devilish, the Spirit of God can turn that man in a single moment into a lover of that which is true and right and just, can break his heart concerning the past, make him angry with

himself for having lived as he has done, and can passionately inflame him with the desire to be perfectly holy; and that passion within the man can carry him on until he loves his fellow-creatures as himself, and makes great sacrifices for them; and all for the sake of Jesus, that blessed, crucified Son of man, who came "to seek and to save that which was lost." We do not preach that Christ forgives men and then lets them live as before; but we assert that the moment he gives the pardon of sin, he gives the new nature too. The gospel hospital is not merely a place where lepers are harboured, but where lepers are healed: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

326. Folly of Resisting God The huge Matterhorn lifts its colossal head above the clouds. Who will may speak against it; but it bows not its giant form; and no matter what of snow and sleet may dash against its ramparts, there it stands, still the same; emblem herein of the great throne of the Eternal, firm and immutable, though all the universe storm at its foot. To resist God is to strike with naked feet against a goad. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." You will hurt yourself; you cannot injure him, nor change his purposes by so much as the turning of a hair. God will have his way: none shall resist his will.

327. Formalism of Prayer A mere formalist can always pray so as to please himself. What has he to do but to open his book and read the prescribed words, or bow his knee and repeat such phrases as suggest themselves to his memory or his fancy? Like the Tartarian Praying Machine, give but the wind and the wheel, and the business is fully arranged. So much knee-bending and talking, and the prayer is done. The formalist's prayers are always good, or, rather, always bad, alike. But the living child of God never offers a prayer which pleases himself; his standard is above his attainments; he wonders that God listens to him, and though he knows he will be heard for Christ's sake, yet he accounts it a wonderful instance of condescending mercy that such poor prayers as his should ever reach the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth.

328. Forsaking God, Folly of When a child runs away from its home because it has a brutal parent, it is excused; but when the child leaves a tender mother and an affectionate father, what shall we say? If the sheep quits a barren field to seek after needed pasturage, who shall blame it? But if it leaves the green pastures, and forsakes the still waters to roam over the arid sand, or to go bleating in the forest among the wolves, in the midst of danger, how foolish a creature it proves itself! We have forsaken a throne for a dunghill! Such has been our folly. We have left gold for dross. We have quitted scarlet and fine linen for rags and beggary! We have left a palace for a hovel! We have turned from sunlight into darkness! We have forsaken the shining of the Sun of Righteousness, the sweet summer weather of communion, the singing of the birds of promise, and the turtle voice of the divine Spirit, and the blossoming of the roses and the fair lilies of divine love, to shiver in frozen regions among the ice caves and snow of absence from the Lord's presence.

329. Free Thought, Judgment of

There is a notion abroad that thought is free; but I remember reading, that although thoughts are toll-free, they are not hell-free; and that saying quite agrees with the good old Book. We cannot be summoned before an earthly court for thinking; but depend upon it we shall have to be tried for it at the Last Assizes. Evil thoughts are the marrow of sin; the malt that sin is brewed from; the tinder which catches the sparks of the devil's temptations; the churn in which the milk of imagination is churned into purpose and plan; the nest in which all evil birds lay their eggs. Be certain, then, that

as sure as fire burns brushwood as well as logs, God will punish thoughts of sin as well as deeds of sin.

330. Free Will and Grace The Lord knows how to leave us free, and yet to make us do his bidding, and therein lies the beauty of gospel influences. Suppose man's will to be a room; if you and I want to open it, we break in the lock; we do not understand the true method; but the Lord has the key, and knows how to open the door without a wrench. Without violating even the most delicate spring in the watch, the maker knows how to regulate it. Grace draws, but it is with bands of a man; it rules, but it is with a sceptre of love. The fact is, the great dispute between Calvinists and Arminians has arisen very much through not understanding one another, and from one brother saying, "What I hold is the truth,"—and the other saying, "What I hold is the truth and nothing else." The men need somebody to knock both their heads together, and fuse their beliefs into one. They need one capacious brain to hold both the truths which their two little heads contain; for God's word is neither all on one side nor altogether on the other: it overlaps all systems, and defies all formularies. It lays the full responsibility of his ruin on man, but all the power and glory of grace it ascribes to God; and it is wise of us to do the same.

331. Fretfulness, Folly of No good comes out of fretful, petulant, unbelieving heart-trouble. This lion yields no honey. If it would help you, you might reasonably sit down and weep till the tears had washed away your woe. If it were really to some practical benefit to be suspicious of God and distrustful of Providence, why then you might have a shadow of excuse; but as this is a mine out of which no one ever digged any silver, as this is a fishery out of which the diver never brought up a pearl, we would say, Renounce that which cannot be of service to you; for as it can do no good, it is certain that it does much mischief.

332. Friendship, Perpetuity of True

Solomon, speaking not of the world's sham friends, but of friends indeed, saith, "A friend loveth at all times." Having once given his heart to his chosen companion, he clings to him in all weathers, fair or foul; he loves him none the less because he becometh poor, or because his fame suffers an eclipse, but his friendship like a lamp shines the brighter, or is made more manifest because of the darkness that surrounds it. True friendship is not fed from the barn-floor or the winefat; it is not like the rainbow, dependent upon the sunshine, it is fixed as a rock, and firm as granite, and smiles superior to wind and tempest. If we have friendship at all, brethren and sisters, let this be the form it takes: let us be willing to be brought to the test of the wise man, and being tried, may we not be found wanting. "A friend loveth at all times."

333. Friendship, Ties of, easily Broken With very many, friendship sits very loosely: they could almost write as Horace Walpole does in one of his letters. He says he takes everything very easily, "and if," saith he, "a friend should die, I drive down to the St. James's coffeehouse, and bring home another," doubtless as cordial and enraptured with the new friend as with the old. Friends in this world are too often like the bees which swarm around the plants while they are covered with flowers, and those flowers contain nectar for their honey; but let November send its biting frosts, the flowers are nipped, and their friends the bees forsake them. Swallow friendship lives out with us our summer, but finds other loves in winter. It has always been so from of old, even until now; Ahithophel has deserted David and Judas his Lord.

334. Friendship with God in Death

I should not choose to enter upon the realm of spirits without having God to be my friend; for it were a dreadful thing to get into that mysterious unknown country, having nothing to take with me across its bourne except this,—an inveterate enmity to the King that reigns supreme in it. If I must cross the border, and go into a land I have never trodden, I would like, at least, to carry a passport with me, or to be able to say, "I am a friend of the King that reigns here;" but to go there as God's enemy—why, how terrible it must be!

335. Friendship with God, Necessity of

You doat upon that wife of yours; she may be smitten before your eyes, and waste with consumption or decline, or, more rapidly still, she may be taken from you at a stroke, and then where is your joy? Those children, those happy prattlers who make glad your hearth; could you hold them for a moment, if God should call back their spirits? If he said, "Return, ye children of men," your prayers, the physician, your love—what could all these avail you? You have but to buy the coffin, and the shroud, and the grave, and bury your dead out of your sight. God can sweep away all, if he will, and leave you penniless, childless, a widower, without comfort in the world. I would not contend with him who has so many ways to wound me. I am vulnerable at so many points, and he knows how to pierce me to the quick in them all. I will therefore make him my friend rather than my foe. I had better not strive with him who has the key of the postern, and of the front gate, and of the iron gate, and who can storm every position along my bastion whenever he shall please.

336. Fruitfulness, Christian

Sometimes in our garden we have a tree which is so loaded with fruit that we have to put props under it to keep the branches from trembling; there are one or two in this church of that sort, who bear much fruit for God, and are so weak in body that their very fruitfulness of zeal and earnestness seems as though it would break them. I pray God that with his gracious promise he may prop them up. I am afraid that this is not the picture of most of us. You say to the gardener sometimes, "Will there be any fruit on that tree this season? It is time that it should show." He looks, and looks, and looks again, and at last the good man says, "I think I can see one little one up at the top, sir, but I do not know whether it will come to much." That, I am afraid, is the photograph of many professors. There is fruit, or else they would not be saved ones, but it is "a little one." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." May your prayer be, not for fruit only, but for much fruit, and may God send it. Remember, if there be any fruit at all, it all belongs to the King. If a soul be saved, he shall have the glory of it. If there be any advance made in the great cause of truth and righteousness, the crown shall be put upon his head. The keepers of the vineyard shall have their hundreds, but the King himself shall have his ten thousand times ten thousand, for he deserves it all.

337. Fulness of Christ

I was in Windermere some three weeks ago, on a hot, dusty day, and I saw a little gushing stream of water, and a chain with a ladle to it for the passer-by to drink. I wanted to drink, and I went to it, but the ladle was cracked quite through, was very rusty, and would not hold a drop of water, neither was the water, if it had been held in it, fit to drink. There are ways of salvation chosen by

some that are equally as deceptive. They mock the traveller. But oh! my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, is a river of mercy, deep and broad. You have but to stoop and drink, and you may drink as much as you will, and none shall say you nay. Have you not his word for it?—"Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

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338. Garden, The Believer's This figure of a garden is a very sweet and attractive one. I need not tell you how much taste may be displayed and how much pleasure may be derived from the cultivation of such plots of ground. Our fancy is soon at work to invent a picture of flower-beds, and fruit-trees, shady walks, and pleasant fountains, laid out close to some grand mansion, and opening its fairest views to the best apartments of the palace. Such a garden needs constant care, and then, although it may be more beautiful at one season than another, it will never be like a wild heath, or totally bereft of charms. But alas! some professors of religion are not like this: there is little evidence of diligent cultivation in their character. Instead of flowers of some kind all the year round, it is hard to say that they ever show much bloom: fruits you would never expect from them. But, dear brethren, you know that it is a comely thing for every Christian church, whether it be a large mansion or a little villa, to have a garden surrounding it, so that you may look out from the windows and see the various walks and the different plants that flourish there. I have seen some gardens attached to small houses where the owner has portioned off little plots to each member of his family. And thus I believe the home has been made pleasanter and happier. But oh! it is always a good thing when every member of the church has a spot to engage his heart and hands, and when they can all look with so much more satisfaction upon the tender blossoms and the full-blown flowers because they have watched and tended and watered the plants with a ministry of love.

339. Gentleness v. Sternness When you have to distribute your tracts, or visit from house to house, or to teach a class of boys or girls, prefer sugar to vinegar for your breakfast. Vinegar did, according to very doubtful history, soften the rocks for Hannibal, but it will not soften hearts for you. There are more flies caught with honey than with vinegar. Better to go forth with a sweet smile upon your face, and with gentleness written across your countenance, than to be morose, stern, and uncivil; for if you are the latter, you belie with your face what you say with your tongue.

340. Gentleness of God with Man When a man has taken to gardening who does not understand it, if he takes his knife in the pruning season, at what a rate he goes to work! His cutting here and there will do ten times more harm than good, but the gardener who is well skilled is gentle with the knife; and truly, dear friends, our great Husbandman has been very gentle with the knife with all his trees. Some of you have lost a husband or a child, and you have come from wealth to poverty. Yes, he has used the knife, or else he were not wise; but he has still spared you some comforts, or else he were not kind; at any rate he has spared you yourself, and he is more than all to your languishing spirit. Thus in the way in which he has dealt with your excrescences, and imprudences, and sins, the Lord has had a world of gentleness with you.

341. Ghost, Lesson from a

I remember well, one night, having been preaching the word in a country village, I was walking home alone along a lonely footpath. I do not know what it was that ailed me, but I was prepared to be alarmed, when of a surety I saw something standing in the hedge, ghastly, giantlike, and with

outstretched arms. Surely, I thought, for once I have come across the supernatural; here is some restless spirit performing its midnight march beneath the moon, or some demon of the pit. I deliberated with myself a moment, and having no faith in ghosts, I plucked up courage, and resolved to solve the mystery. The monster stood on the other side of a ditch, right in the hedge. I jumped the ditch, and found myself grasping an old tree, which some waggish body had taken pains to colour with a little whitewash, with a view to frighten simpletons. That old tree has served me a good turn full often, for I have learned to leap at difficulties, and find them vanish or turn to triumphs.

342. Gift of the Pen to be used for Christ

There are numbers of believers who have not the gift of utterance with the tongue, who nevertheless can speak very fluently and admirably with the pen. If, then, you have the gift of the pen, are you using it for Christ as you ought? I want to stir up the gift that is in you. Letters have often been blessed to conversions; are you accustomed to write with that view? Perhaps you are a great contributor to the postal revenue; let me ask you what sort of matter it is with which you burden her Majesty's mails? Do you write letters to your children and friends full of loving testimony to what the grace of God has done for you? If you have not done so, dear friends, try at once. Jesus needs consecrated pens, and in his name I claim your service. The writing of tracts, and the dissemination of holy truth by means of the press, are most important,—any person who has any gifts in that direction should be sure to use them. Why are writers upon religion often so dull, while the world commands talent and vivacity? What thousands of pens are running every day upon the idlest nonsense, and making booksellers' shelves groan with the literature of fiction! Are there none who, with splendour of diction or in humbler guise, could write interestingly of the gospel, and tell of its power among the sons of men? If there be in the tribe of Zebulun any that handle the pen of the ready writer, let them not keep back from the help of the Lord—the help of the Lord against the mighty.

343. Gifts, Small, valued by God On our birthdays our little children love to give their father something, if it is only a bunch of flowers out of the garden, or a fourpenny piece with a hole in it; they like to do it to show their love; and wise parents will be sure to let their children do such things for them. So is it with our great Father in heaven. What are our Sunday-school teachings and our preachings, and all that, but these cracked fourpenny pieces? Just nothing at all; but the Lord allows us to do his work for his own love's sake. His love to us finds a sweetness in our love to him. I am most thankful that in the church there is room for such a variety of ministries.

344. Giving, Blessedness of

It is well to feel that whatever good your gift may do to the church, or the poor, or the sick, it is twice as much benefit to you to give it. It is well to give, because you love to give; as the flower which pours forth its perfume, because it never dreamed of doing otherwise; or like the bird which quivers with song, because it is a bird, and finds a pleasure in its notes; or like the sun which shines, not by constraint, but because, being a sun, it must shine; or like the waves of the sea, which flash back the brilliance of the sun, because it is their nature to reflect and not to hoard the light? Oh, to have such grace in our hearts that we shall joyfully make sacrifices unto our God.

345. Glory of Christ, Sight of the, desired

If I look to Christ with a bleared eye, that is ever so weak and clouded with tears, and if I only catch a glimpse of him through clouds and mists, yet the sight saves me. But who will remain content with such a poor gleam of his glory as that? Who wishes to see only "through a glass, darkly"? "No, let my eyes be cleansed till they become as doves by the rivers of waters, and I can see my Lord as he is seen by his bosom friends, and can sing of those beauties which are the light and crown of heaven itself. If you do but touch the hem of Jesus' garment, you shall be made whole; but will this always satisfy you? Will you not desire to get beyond the hem and beyond the garment, to himself, and to his heart, and there for ever take up your abode?"

346. God Glorified by Weak Instrumentalities

If Samson had the choice of weapons with which to rout his enemies; if he wished to do it in such a way as to make the feat illustrious; if there were before him a cannon, a fifty-pounder, and the jawbone of an ass, which would he take? Why, any fool can kill the enemy with a cannon, but it takes a Samson to smite them with the jawbone of an ass. And so, when God has the choice of weapons, and he always has, he chooses the weaker weapon, that he may get to himself the greater renown.

347. God Inimitable

Deity has a peculiar manner, which it is quite impossible to imitate with success. In the base counterfeit of the book of Mormon, a mere child, fresh from the Sunday-school, can discover marks and lines which are manifestly far from divine, and in the more commanding imposture of the Koran the blots of evil prove that it came not from the hand of the all-pure One. We can boldly challenge the patient examination of the Holy Scriptures by all candid men, and we believe that they will be found to establish their claim to be authentic productions of the hand which wrote the world's great hymn.

348. God, Joy of

It is a bold thing to speak of God as moved by joy or affected by grief; but still, since he is no God of wood and stone, no insensible block, we may, speaking after the manner of men, declare that God rejoiced over his risen Son with exceeding joy, while the Son rejoiced also because his great work was accomplished. Remembering that passage in the prophet, where God speaks of his saints, and declares that he will rejoice over them with singing, what if I say that much more he did this with his Son, and, resting in his love, he rejoiced over the risen one even with joy and singing.

349. God, Power of, in Nature

We see but little of God's power comparatively in our land. Now and then there comes a crash of thunder in a storm, and we look up with amazement when he sets the heavens on a blaze with his lightning. But go and do business on the deep waters; let your vessel fly before the howling hurricane; mark how every staunch timber seems to crack as though it were but match-board, and the steady mast goes by the board, and snaps, and is broken to shivers. Mark what God does when he stirs up the great deep, and seems to bring heaven down, and lift the earth up till the elements mingle in a common mass of tempest. Then go to the Alps, and listen to the thunder of the avalanche. Stand amazed, as you look down some grim precipice, or peer with awe-struck wonder into the blue mysteries of a crevasse; see the leaping cataracts, and mark those frozen

seas, the glaciers, as they come sweeping down the mountain side; stay awhile till a storm shall gather there, and Alp shall talk to Alp, and those white prophetic heads shall seem to bow while the wings of tempest cover them! There you may learn something of the power of God amidst the crash of nature. If you could have stood by the side of Dr. Woolfe, when rising early one morning, he went out of Aleppo, and upon turning his head, saw that Aleppo was no more, it having been in a single moment swallowed up by an earthquake, then again you might see what God can do.

350. God, Presence of, the Supreme Joy The hart longs after nothing else but waterbrooks. There may have been other times when the poor stag had other natural desires: she may have desired the grassy plains or the shady woods, but now, hunted, wearied, steaming, panting, it must drink or die: it has but one only thought—the waterbrooks, the cool rippling rills, the refreshing pools. Now, beloved brother or sister, if you are about to get a blessing from the Lord, you will have but one desire—your God, your God. You will have gathered up all your affections into one affection, and they will all be ascending towards your Lord you will make no conditions, no stipulations with him; if he will but come, even though he bring a rod with him, you will be contented if he will but come. If you may but have his company, you will accept poverty, or the weary bed of sickness, or bereavement, or anything and everything which he may allot to you, if you may but have fellowship with Jesus. Let others ask for the bursting wine vat, or the barn that is filled with corn; for you it will be enough if you find your Beloved, and may but hold him and not let him go, for this is the one only all-absorbing longing of your hungering and thirsting spirit, that you may find your God, and be comforted with his eternal consolation.

351. God, Throne of, Universal The sapphire throne of God, at this moment, is revealed in heaven, where adoring angels cast their crowns before it; and its power is felt on earth, where the works of creation praise the Lord. Even those who acknowledge not the divine government are compelled to feel it, for he doeth as he wills, not only among the angels in heaven, but among the inhabitants of this lower world. Hell feels the terror of that throne. Those chains of fire, those pangs unutterable, are the awful shadow of the throne of Deity; as God looks down upon the lost, the torment that flashes through their souls darts from his holiness, which cannot endure their sins. The influence of that throne, then, is found in every world where spirits dwell, and in the realms of inanimate nature it bears rule. Every leaf that fades in the trackless forest trembles at the Almighty's bidding, and every coral insect that dwelleth in the unfathomable depths of the sea feels and acknowledges the presence of the all-present King.

352. God, Word of, worthy of Credit Who shall doubt the King? Who dares impugn the Imperial word? It was well said that if integrity were banished from the hearts of all mankind besides, it ought still to dwell in the hearts of kings. Shame on a king if he can lie. The veriest beggar in the streets is dishonoured by a broken promise, but what shall we say of a king if his word cannot be depended upon? Oh, shame upon us, if we are unbelieving before the throne of the King of heaven and earth. With our God before us in all his glory, sitting on the throne of grace, will our hearts dare to say we mistrust him? Shall we imagine either that he cannot, or will not, keep his promise? Banished be such blasphemous thoughts, and if they must come, let them come upon us when we are somewhere in the outskirts of his dominions, if such a place there be, but not in prayer, when we are in his immediate presence, and behold him in all the glory of his throne of grace. There, surely, is the place for the child to trust its Father, for the loyal subject to trust his monarch; and, therefore, far from it be all wavering or suspicion. Unstaggering faith should be

predominant before the mercy-seat.

353. God, A, sought by Humanity

God has given to all the creatures he has made some peculiar form of strength—one has such swiftness of foot that at the baying of a hound it escapes from danger by outstripping the wind; another, with outspread wing, is lifted beyond the fowler; a third with horns pushes down its enemy, and a fourth with tooth and claw tears in pieces its adversary. To man he gave but little strength compared with the animals among which he was placed in Eden, and yet he was king over all, because the Lord was his strength. So long as he knew where to look for the source of his power, man remained the unresisted monarch of all around him. That image of God in which he shone resplendent sustained his sovereignty over the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea. By instinct man turned to his God in Paradise; and now, though he is to a sad degree a discrowned monarch, there lingers in his memory shadows of what he was, and remembrances of where his strength must still be found. Therefore, no matter where you find a man, you meet one who in his distress will ask for supernatural help. I believe in the truthfulness of this instinct, and that man prays because there is something in prayer. As when the Creator gives his creature the power of thirst, it is because water exists to meet its thirst; and as when he creates hunger there is food to correspond to the appetite; so when he inclines men to pray it is because prayer has a corresponding blessing connected with it 354. God and Man United by Faith

I see a great engine of enormous strength, and a well-fashioned machine: the machine cannot work of itself, it has no power in it, but if I could get the band to unite the machine with the engine, what might be done! Behold, I see the omnipotence of God, and the organisation of this church. O that I could get the band to bind the two together! The band is living faith. Do you possess it? Brethren, help me to pass it round the fly-wheel, and oh, how God will work, and we will work through his power, and what glorious things shall be done for Christ! We must receive power from on high, and faith is the belt that shall convey that power to us. The divine strength shall be manifest through our weakness. Cease not to pray. More than you ever have done, intercede for a blessing, and the Lord will bless us: he will bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

355. Godly Society, Absence of, a Trial to the Christian

Sometimes the child of God endures loneliness arising from the absence of godly society. It may be in early days he mixed much with gracious persons, was able to attend many of their meetings, and to converse in private with the excellent of the earth; but now his lot is cast where he is as a sparrow alone on the housetop. No others in the family think as he does, he enjoys no familiar converse concerning his Lord, and has no one to counsel or console him. He often wishes he could find friends to whom he could open his mind. He would rejoice to see a Christian minister, or an advanced believer; but, like Joseph in Egypt, he is a stranger in a strange land. This is a very great trial to the Christian, an ordeal of the most severe character; even the strong may dread it, and the weak are sorely shaken by it. To such lonely ones our Lord's words, now before us, are commended, with the prayer that they make may them their own. "I am alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." When Jacob was alone, at Bethel, he laid him down to sleep, and soon was in a region peopled by spirits innumerable, above whom was God himself. That vision made the night at Bethel the least lonely season that Jacob ever spent. Your meditations, oh, solitary ones, as you read the Bible in secret, and your prayers as you draw near

to God in your lone room, and your Saviour himself in his blessed person, these will be to you the ladder. The words of God's book made living to you shall be to your mind the angels, and God himself shall have fellowship with you. If you lament your loneliness, cure it by seeking heavenly company. If you have no companions below who are holy, seek all the more to commune with the things which are in heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.

356. God's Command our Warrant for Action

Wellington sent word to his troops, one night, "Ciudad Rodrigo must be taken tonight." And what do you think was the commentary of the British soldiers appointed for the attack? "Then," said they all, "we will do it." So when our great Captain sends round, as he doth to us, the word of command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," if we were all good soldiers of the cross, we should say at once, "We will do it." However hard the task, since God himself is with us to be our Captain, and Jesus the Priest of the Most High is with us to sound the trumpet, we will do it in Jehovah's name. May such dauntless resolution fire your breasts, my brethren and sisters, and may you thus prove yourselves "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

357. God's Heart towards the Sinner When a mother has a sick child, it is marvellous how quick her ears become while attending it. Good woman, we wonder she does not fall asleep. If you hired a nurse, it is ten to one she would. But the dear child in the middle of the night does not need to cry for water, or even speak; there is a little quick breathing—who will hear it? No one would except the mother; but her ears are quick, for they are in her child's heart. So, if there is a heart in the world that longs for God, God's ear is already in that poor sinner's heart. He will hear it. There is not a good desire on earth but the Lord has heard it. I recollect when at one time I was a little afraid to preach the gospel to sinners as sinners, and yet wanted to do so, I used to say, "If you have but a millionth part of a desire, come to Christ." I dare say more than that now, but at the same time I will say that at once—if you have a millionth part of a desire, if you have only a little breathing, if you desire to be reconciled, if you desire to be pardoned, if you would be forgiven, if there is only half a good thought formed in your soul, do not check it, do not stifle it, and do not think that God will reject it.

358. Goodness of God, Fulness of

It is no small task to water one garden, in the heat of the summer time, so that every flower shall be refreshed, and no plant overlooked. How great is the might of him who, from the salt sea, extracts the precious clouds of sweet rain, to fall not only on gardens, but the pastures of the wilderness, and the wild forest trees, till all nature laughs for joy, the mountains and the hills break forth into singing, and the trees of the field clap their hands. Brethren, it is a great thing to put a cup of cold water to the lips of a disciple; it shall not lose its reward. To refresh the bowels of one of God's saints is no mean thing; but how great is God's goodness, which puts a cup of salvation to every Christian's lips, which waters every plant of his right-hand planting, so that every one can have his leaf continually green, and his fruit ever brought forth in due season.

359. Gospel, Adorned by the Believer's Life

Let us endeavour to make men mark what kind of gospel we believe. Only a few weeks ago, a missionary in China took his gun to go up one of the rivers of the interior to shoot wild ducks; and, as he went along in the boat, he shot at some ducks, and down they fell; unfortunately they did not

happen to be wild fowl, but tame ducks belonging to some of the neighbours. The owner was miles away, but the boat was drawn up to the side of the river, and the missionary went about carefully endeavouring to find out the owner of the ducks, for he could not rest until he had paid for the damage he had ignorantly done. The owner was much surprised, he had been so accustomed to have people shoot his ducks and never say a word about it, that he could not understand the honesty of the man of God, and he told others, until crowds of Chinese gathered round and stared at the missionary as if he had dropped from the moon; a man so extremely honest as not to be willing to take away ducks when he had killed them! They listened to the gospel with attention, and observed that the teaching must be good which made people so conscientious as the missionary had been. I should not wonder but what that little accident did more for the gospel than the preaching of twenty sermons might have done without it. So let it be with us; let us so act in every position that we shall adorn the gospel which is committed to our trust.

360. Gospel, Exercising Insensible Influence

There is a lavender field over yonder, and though a man may hate the smell of it, and block up his windows and keep his doors closed, somehow or other, he may depend upon it, when the wind blows in the right direction, the perfume will reach him. And so it is here; if a man will not listen to the preaching of the gospel, if he constantly neglects attendance upon the means of grace, yet for all that, the kingdom of heaven has come nigh to him, and in some form or other the angel of mercy will frequently cross his path.

361. Gospel, Free yet Despised

I walked over a long sandy road one day, when the weather was sultry, and the heat, far beyond our common experience in this country, was almost tropical; I saw a little stream of cool water, and being parched with thirst I stooped down and drank. Do you think I asked anybody's leave, or enquired whether I might drink or not? I did not know who it belonged to, and I did not care. There it was, and I felt if it was there it was enough for me. Nobody was needed to call out "Ho!" My inward craving called out "Ho!" I was thirsty, and there was the water. I noticed after I had drank that there were two poor tramps came along, and they went down and drank too. I did not find anybody marching them off to prison. There was the stream. The stream being there, and the thirsty men being there, the supply was suited to their need, and they promptly partook of it. How strange it is that when God has provided the gospel, and men want it, they should require somebody to call out to them, "Ho! ho! ho!" and then they will not come after all. Oh! if they were a little more thirsty, if they did but know their need more, if they were convinced more of their sin, then they would scarcely want an invitation, but the mere fact of a supply would be sufficient for them, and they would come and drink, and satisfy the burning thirst within.

362. Gospel, Freeness of the

I recollect great complaint being made against a sermon of mine, "Compel them to come in," in which I spake with much tenderness for souls. That sermon was said to be Arminian and unsound. Brethren, it is a small matter to me to be judged of men's judgment, for my master set his seal on that message. I never preached a sermon by which so many souls were won to God, as our church meetings can testify; and all over the world, where the sermon has been scattered, sinners have been saved through its instrumentality, and, therefore, if it be vile to exhort sinners, I purpose

to be viler still. I am as firm a believer in the doctrines of grace as any man living, and a true Calvinist after the order of John Calvin himself; but if it be thought an evil thing to bid the sinner lay hold on eternal life, I will be yet more evil in this respect, and herein imitate my Lord and his apostles, who, though they taught that salvation is of grace, and grace alone, feared not to speak to men as rational beings and responsible agents, and bid them "strive to enter in at the strait gate," and "labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Beloved friends, cling to the great truth of electing love and divine sovereignty, but let not these bind you in fetters when, in the power of the Holy Ghost, you become fishers of the Gospel, Freshness of the Age for the gospel, it wears the dew of its youth after eighteen centuries of struggles; and it predominates most in those young nations which have evidently a history before them. The old systems are now most favoured by those nations which are left behind in the race of civilisation, but the peoples whom God has made quick by nature are those to whom he has given to be receptive of his grace. There are grand days coming for the church of God. Voltaire said that he lived in the twilight of Christianity; and so he did, but it was the twilight of the morning, not the twilight of the evening. Glory be unto God, the little cloud the size of a man's hand is spreading; it begins to cover the heavens, and the day is not far distant when the sound of abundance of rain shall be heard. Christ was not a strong man, who bounded forth at a leap, and then put forth no more strength, but he rejoiced to continue his work, and to run his race. He was not a shooting star that sparkles for a moment, but a sun that shall shine throughout the livelong day.

364. Gospel, Power of

Oh, what power there is in the gospel sword when Jesus holds the hilt, and what gashes it makes in hearts that were hard as adamant, when Jesus cuts right and left at the hearts and consciences of men.

365. Gospel, False, to be Despised

We cannot get on with philosophical gospels: we must bring together all these new geological gospels and neological gospels, and semi-Pelagian gospels, and do with them as the people of Ephesus did with the books—we must burn them, and let Paul preach again to us. We can do without modern learning, but we cannot do without the ancient gospel. We can do without oratory and eloquence, but we cannot do without Christ crucified. Lord, revive thy work by giving us the old-fashioned gospel back again in our pulpits. It is to be lamented that there are so many who are considered not to be bad preachers who scarcely ever mention Christ's name, and are very loose concerning atonement by his precious blood. You will hear people say they have gone to such and such a chapel, and whatever the sermon might have been about, it certainly was not about the gospel. Oh, may that cease to be the case! May our pulpits ring with the name of Jesus; may Christ be lifted up, and his precious blood be the daily theme of the ministry!

366. Gossips

Gossips of both genders, give up the shameful trade of talebearing; don't be the devil's bellows any longer to blow up the fire of strife. Leave off setting people by the ears. If you do not cut a bit off your tongues, at least season them with the salt of grace. Praise God more and blame neighbours less. Any goose can cackle, any fly can find out a sore place, any empty barrel can

give forth sound, any brier can tear a man's flesh. No flies will go down your throat if you keep your mouth shut, and no evil-speaking will come up. Think much, but say little: be quick at work and slow at talk; and above all, ask the great Lord to set a watch over your lips.

367. Grace, Daily, Reception of

We must ever keep in mind that we are only channels for grace, we are not even pools and reservoirs, we must have a continual supply of divine gifts. We must have an abiding union with the fountain of all good, or we should soon run dry, and only as fresh streams flow into us are we kept from becoming mere dry beds of sand and mire, but we know that he will never fail us. This spring is high up in heaven near the eternal throne, and it ripples down through the means of grace from the God of all grace, and we receive daily of his fulness grace for grace. Joyful truth for us, that because he lives we must live also. Till Jesus bows his head in death, we, the living members of his mystic body, can never droop or fail. His might is our strength, his resources our never-failing supply.

368. Grace, Doctrines of Do you imagine that when it was death to listen to the preacher, that men under the shadows of night, and amid the wings of tempest, would then listen to philosophical essays, or to mere moral precepts, or to diluted, adulterated, soul-less, theological suppositions? No, there is no energy in that kind of thing to draw men together under fear of their lives. But what did bring them together in the dead of night amidst the glare of lightning, and the roll of thunder—what brought them together? Why, the doctrine of the grace of God, "the doctrine of Jesus, and of his servants Paul, and Augustine, and Luther, and Calvin; for there is something in that doctrine which touches the heart of the Christian, and gives him food such as his soul loveth, savoury meat, suitable to his heaven-born appetite. To hear this, men braved death and defied the sword. And if we are to see once again the scarlet hat plucked from the wearer's head, and the shaven crowns, with all the gaudy trumpery of Rome sent back to the place from whence they came—and Heaven grant that they may take our Puseyite Established Church with them—it must be by declaring the doctrines of the grace of God. When these are declared and vindicated in every place, we shall yet again make these enemies of God and man to know that they cannot stand their ground for a moment, where men of God wield the sword of the Lord, and of Gideon, by preaching the doctrines of the grace of God.

369. Grace flowing Godward

You know there is a rule of this sort in hydrostatics, that water will rise to its own level. Not long ago, I thought such things were gone out. I was riding along where the road was in a little cutting, and a spout was actually taken over the road to carry water from one field to the other; it was dripping fast upon the passengers, and making an ugly place in the road. Now, they might easily have taken the little stream under the road, and up again in a pipe; but, I suppose, when the spout was made, it was not known to those who made it that water will rise as high as its source. Now, the grace of God will rise as high as its source. If you and I have grace that began with us, it will never get higher than we are. If you have grace that the priest gave you when you were christened, it will never get higher than the priest; but if you get the true grace of God which descends from heaven, it will take you as high as the New Jerusalem, from which it came. High up in the throne of God are the everlasting springs of divine mercy; at the foot of divine sovereignty it wells up a spring, clear as crystal, pure without a stain, and it flows down to earth, leaping down by

the way of the cross. And it will ascend as high as its source. It will go up to the throne again, that is where it came from, and it will rise to its own level, and it will float you up there with it. If, by the grace of God, you have been taken up by the stream of Jesu's dying love, it will take you up to its own source, and where God is, there you shall be. Because you have been made to taste, to feel, and to be saturated with the grace that came from God, from a divine source, you shall also have a divine portion for ever. The rivers go to the sea because they originally came from the sea. Did not the sun kiss the sea, and make it ascend to him in clouds, that it might descend in rain? And so, all the rivers of grace in us shall flow into the sea, whence they came, the bottomless, shoreless sea of everlasting love, because that is the eternal source and fountain of them all.

370. Grace, Manifestation of, in Little Things

Washing feet is not a great or essential act. A man may live, though his feet after a journey may not be cooled by the refreshing stream from the ewer. It is a small act, a grateful and refreshing act, and just such things Jesus Christ must continue to do for you and for me, if we are his people. We shall, in times of need, find Jesus in our chamber still girt with the towel and bearing the bason; ready still to wait on us, and administer loving refreshments; and we shall often wonder, "What! did he really help me in such a thing as that, and did I dare to take such a case as that to him?" Unbelief will say, "I dare not do that again. Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet; I cannot, I dare not make a servant of thee for such common things as these; I will leave the great matters of salvation with thee, but I will not come to thee each day for ordinary things." But, beloved, unless we do so, unless we do live this life of reception of great grace for little occasions, unless we live receiving wonders of lovingkindness which we feel we have no right to receive, marvels of mercy surpassing all expectation, unless, I say, our life is made up of tender mercies of which we are utterly unworthy, Jesus is not washing our feet, and we have no part with him.

371. Grace, Preventing

Beloved, I have thanked God a thousand times in my life that, before my conversion, when I had ill desires I had no opportunities; and, on the other hand, that when I had opportunities I had no desires; for when desires and opportunities come together, like the flint and steel, they make the spark that kindles the fire, but neither the one nor the other, though they may both be dangerous, can bring about any very great amount of evil so long as they are kept apart. Let us, then, look back, and if this has been our experience bless the preventing grace of God.

372. Grace, Reigning in Salvation

Certain sceptical philosophers have half conceded that there may have been an exhibition of divine strength in the beginning, when the great orbs of heaven were first caused to revolve, but then they affect to question whether any fresh power is put forth to preserve the stars in their courses; but you and I know that no forces of the past will suffice for the present demand, and we believe that divine power is always streaming forth to urge on the wheels of the universe. It is even so in the little world within us. It was grace that set our hearts moving towards Christ and holiness; it is equally grace that keeps us still following after the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. As the waters cover the channels of the sea, so does grace cover all our salvation. In every jot and every tittle of our heavenly charta, grace guided the pen.

373. Grace, Victorious over Sin

Grace came down to earth in the form of the Wellbeloved, and it met with sin. Long and sharp was the struggle, and grace appeared to be trampled under foot of sin; but grace at last seized sin, threw it on its own shoulders, and, though all but crushed beneath the burden, grace carried sin up to the cross and nailed it there, slew it there, put it to death for ever, and triumphed gloriously. For this cause at this hour grace sits on a throne, because it has conquered human sin, has borne the penalty of human guilt, and overthrown all its enemies.

374. Grace and Responsibility In the Square of St. Mark, at Venice, at certain hours, the bell of the clock is struck by two bronze figures as large as life, wielding hammers. Now, nobody ever thought of presenting thanks to those bronze men for the diligence with which they have struck the hours; of course, they cannot help it, they are wrought upon by machinery, and they strike the hours from necessity. Some years ago a stranger was upon the top of the tower, and incautiously went too near one of these bronze men: his time was come to strike the hour, he knocked the stranger from the battlement of the tower and killed him; nobody said the bronze man ought to be hanged; nobody ever laid it to his charge at all. There was no moral good or moral evil, because there was no will in the concern. It was not a moral act, because no mind and heart gave consent to it. Am I to believe that grace reduces men to this? I tell you, sirs, if you think to glorify the grace of God by such a theory, you know not what you do. To carve blocks, and move logs, is small glory; but this is the glory of God's grace, that, without violating the human will, he yet achieves his own purposes, and, treating men as men, he conquers their hearts with love, and wins their affections by his grace.

375. Grace of God in Conversion

If every convert were brought in through the usual means of grace, we should come to regard conversion as a necessary result from certain fixed causes, and attribute some mystic virtue to the outward means; but when God is pleased to distribute the blessing entirely apart from these, then he shows that he can do without means as well as with means, that nothing is too mighty a work for him, that his arm is not shortened at all, so that he needs to use an instrument to make up the length of it; neither has he lost any strength, so as to be forced to appeal to us to make up the deficiency. If it were God's will he could by a word convert a nation. If so he chose, he is such a master of human hearts, that as readily as the corn waves in the breath of the summer's wind, so could he make all hearts bow before the mysterious impulses of his Holy Spirit. Why he doth it not we know not, it is among his secrets; but when he works in a marked and decided way beyond all expectation, he doth but give us a proof of how he is able to work as he wills amongst the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of this lower world. Oh! the richness, the freeness, the power of the grace of God! The richness of it, that it conies to those who sought it not! The freeness of it, that it waits not for preparation on man's part! The power of it, that it makes the unwilling willing when the appointed hour has come!

376. Greed, Folly of

Greed is so afraid lest one brick of its house should be stolen that it pulls out the corner-stone to keep it safe under the bed, and the whole building tumbles about its ears.

377. Gratitude, Exhortation to

Why pine ye, ye saints? Why mourn ye, and lie upon your dunghills till the dogs of hell lick your sores? Come, wrap ye yourselves in your scarlet and fine linen, ye heirs of heaven! Live according to your portion, fare according to the banquet. All things are yours, let those harps be taken from the willows, and let that sackcloth and ashes be laid aside. Put on the beautiful apparel of gratitude, and sing the song of thankfulness unto the Shepherd who hath promised that you shall not want, and whose all-sufficiency will fill your heart, till like a cup it runneth over.

378. Gratitude, Song of

After the elders of the people had digged for awhile, the flowing crystal began to leap into the air; they saw it run over the margin of the well, the multitude pressed around to quench their thirst, and then they sang, "Spring up, O well! Flow on, flow on, perennial fount! Flow on, thou wondrous stream divinely given! Flow on, and let the praises of those who drink, flow also! Sing ye unto it, and ye that drink, lift up your songs, and ye that mark your neighbours as their eyes flash with delight as they receive the needed refreshment, let your song increase as you see the joy of others." All ye who have received anything of divine grace, sing ye unto it! Bless God by singing and praising his name while you are receiving his favours. I think we should be more conscious of God's blessing coming to us if we were more ready to praise him. Brethren, we receive so many of God's mercies at the back-door: we ought to stand at the door, and take them in ourselves. Presents from a great king ought not to be unacknowledged, stowed away in the dark, forgotten in unthankfulness. Let us magnify the name of the Lord!

379. Gratitude to be Expressed

There was a poor man who was a pauper, but a kind friend had taken care of him, and the old man was never better pleased than when he could garrulously tell out his thanks to passing strangers. "That's a dear man who lives up at the white house there, sir? Do you see these clothes? He has given me all. I have not a rag on me but what is of his finding, and I have a nice little cottage down there, and, you know, he gave it to me—told me I might live there rent free. He lets me walk through his grounds, and tells me I am welcome to all I can desire." It was the old man's joy to expatiate upon the extraordinary goodness of his benefactor. I wish we all imitated him. Do you see anything that is happy and peaceful in me? It all came from Jesus. I am a poor worm with nothing at all in myself that I could boast of, but if there be anything at all that could commend the gospel, I received it all from my dear Lord and Master, who has done more for me than tongue can tell.

"H"

380. Happiness laid up for the Believer No one but a person without sense would say that the farmer has lost so much of his capital when he has cast it in the form of seed-corn into the furrows. Nay, sir, he reckons that he has gained when he has sown, for the seed in the granary was worth so much, but that in the furrow is worth so much more on account of the labour expended in the sowing. The husbandman counts it gain to have sown his corn. He has transferred his treasure from one bank into another. He does not reckon that any of it has been lost. So with the happiness of a Christian. We may to-day seem less happy than the gay wordling who flaunts himself in the sunlight of human approbation, but it is not a loss to renounce such inferior joys. The postponement of our joys, our waiting, our letting joy lay by at interest, our tarrying for a moment that our position may be the richer, when we come into our estate, is no loss. Joy self-denied is not lost. Lost, my brethren? Lost, the happiness of a single hour in which we have wept for sin! Lost, the happiness of a single moment in which we have suffered affliction for Christ's sake, through persecution and slander! Nay, verily, it is put to our account, and the record of it remains in the eternal archives, against the day when the Judge of all the earth shall measure out the portions of his people.

381. Happiness Within

Thoughts are the flowers from which we must distil the essential flavourings of life. Paul and Silas sing in the stocks because their minds are at ease, while Herod frets on his throne because conscience makes him a coward. The soul of Linnæus exults within him at the sight of a common all golden with blooming gorse, while many a millionaire has roamed amid his gardens and conservatories, and found no joy amid them all. A crust of bread from one heart brings a song, from another a thousand acres of ripening grain can produce no thanksgiving. Alexander, according to the old classic tale, sits down to weep over a conquered world: while many a peasant who has not a foot of ground to call his own, rejoices in tribulation, and glories in reproach. Our weal or woe is the outgrowth of seeds germinating within, not of branches which from without run over the wall. Happiness lies not in the outward, but in the inward; the fairest garden is that whose walks and arbours are in the secret of the soul: the richest and most mellow fruits are not plucked from the trees of the orchard, but are ripened within the spirit.

382. Hardness of Heart

Oh man, I pray thee as thy fellow creature, let me speak with thee a word of expostulation. God declares that his wrath abides upon you as an unbeliever, and do you call that nothing? God says, "I am angry with you," and you say to him, "I do not care, it is of very small importance to me. The rise or fall of the consols is of much more consequence than whether God is angry with me or not. My dinner being done to a turn concerns me a great deal more than whether the infinite God loves me or hates me." That is the English of your conduct, and I put it to you whether there can be a higher impertinence against your Creator, or a direr form of arrogant revolt against the eternal Ruler. If it does not trouble you that God is angry with you, it ought to trouble you; and it troubles

me that it does not trouble you. We have heard of persons guilty of murder, whose behaviour during the trial has been cool and self-possessed. The coolness with which they pleaded "not guilty" has been all of a piece with the hardness of heart which led them to the bloody deed. He who is capable of great crime is also incapable of shame concerning it. A man who is able to take pleasure and be at ease while God is angry with him, shows that his heart is harder than steel.

383. Harmonies of Nature In the grandeur of nature there are awful harmonies. When the storm agitates the ocean below, the heavens above hear the tumult and answer to the clamour. Down comes a deluge of sonorous hail or swift-descending rain, attended with peals of thunder and flashes of flame. Frequently the waterspout evidences the sympathy of the two great waters, above and beneath the firmament; the great deep above stretches out its hand to the great deep below, and in voice of thunder their old relationship is recognised; as though the twin seas remembered how once they lay together in the same cradle of confusion, till the decree of the Eternal appointed each his bounds and place. "Deep calleth unto deep"—one splendour of creation holds fellowship with another. Amazed and overwhelmed by the spectacle of some tremendous tempest upon land, you have yet been able to observe how the clouds appear to be emptying themselves each into each, and the successive volleys of heaven's artillery are answered by rival clamours, the whole chorus of sublimities lifting up their voices. It has seemed to me that a strange wild joy was moving all the elements, and that the angels of wind and tempest were clapping their awful hands in glorious glee. Among the Alps, in the day of tempest, the solemnly silent peaks break through their sacred quiet, and speak to each other in that dread language which is echoing the voice of God—

"Far along, From peak to peak the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud."

Height calleth unto height even as "deep calleth unto deep." David perceiving these solemn harmonies, uses the metaphor to describe his own unhappy experience.

384. Harvest of Blessing from Seed of Sorrow

There is not in the whole area of our future life a single plot of stony ground which shall not yield us fertile harvests of joy. As Midas of old touched even the most valueless objects and turned them into gold, so does the hand of divine love transmute every trial and affliction into everlasting joy for his people. Two seeds lie before us—the one is warmed in the sun, the other falls from the sower's hand into the cold dark earth, and there it lies buried beneath the soil. That seed which suns itself in the noontide beam may rejoice in the light in which it basks, but it is liable to be devoured by the bird; and certainly nought can come of it, however long it may linger above ground; but the other seed, hidden beneath the clods in a damp, dark sepulchre, soon swells, germinates, bursts its sheath, upheaves the mould, springs up a green blade, buds, blossoms, becomes a flower, exhales perfume, and loads the wings of every wind. Better far for the seed to pass into the earth and die, than to lie in the sunshine and produce no fruit; and even thus for thee the future in its sorrow shall be as a sowing in a fertile land; tears shall moisten thee, grace shall increase within thee, and thou shalt grow up in the likeness of thy Lord unto perfection of holiness, to be such a flower of God's own planting as even angels shall delight to gaze upon in the day of thy transplanting to celestial Boil.

385. Haste for the Salvation of Souls

It must have been a noble spectacle to have seen Aaron when the plague broke out among the people, rushing for his censor, putting on the holy fire and the sacred incense, and running in between the living and the dead, that the plague might be stayed. He could not have had the honour of being the priest to stand in the gap in the hour of sudden wrath if he had not learned how to run. I suppose he was at that time from a hundred and twenty to a hundred and thirty years of age; but how nimbly he bestirred himself! The thought of saving his plague-stricken countrymen put new life into the venerable man. O sirs, if anything could make a man run, it should be the fact that men are dying—dying without Christ, dying in their sins, to die eternally, and perish without hope.

386. Health, Restoration to, a Reason for Praise

I know one, who has long been privileged to lift his voice in the choir of the great King. In that delightful labour none more happy than he. The longer he was engaged in the work the more he loved it. Now, it came to pass that on a certain day, this songster found himself shut out of the choir: he would have entered to take his part, but he was not permitted. Perhaps the King was angry; perhaps the songster had sung carelessly; perhaps he had acted unworthily in some other matter; or possibly his Master knew that his song would grow more sweet if he were silenced for awhile. How it was I know not, but this I know, that it caused great searching of heart. Often this chorister begged to be restored, but he was as often repulsed, and somewhat roughly too. I think it was more than three months that this unhappy songster was kept in enforced silence, with fire in his bones and no vent for it. The royal music went on without him; there was no lack of song, and in this he rejoiced, but he longed to take his place again. I cannot tell you how eagerly he longed. At last the happy hour arrived, the King gave his permit, he might sing again. The songster was full of gratitude, and I heard him say—you shall hear him say it: "My Lord, since I am again restored, I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more."

387. Hearers, Inattentive

How many hear the gospel but do not hear it attentively! A, telegram on the Exchange—they read it with both their eyes—will there be a rise or fall of stocks? An article from which they may judge of the general current of trade—how they devour it with their minds, they suck in the meaning, and then go and practise what they have gathered from it. A sermon heard, and lo, the minister is judged as to how he preached it—as if a man reading a telegram should say the capital letter was not well inked on the press, or the dot to the "i" had dropped off the letter; or as if a man reading an article of business should simply criticise the style of the article, instead of seeking to get at its meaning, and act upon its advice. Oh, how men will hear and think it to be right, to be the height of perfection to say they liked or disapproved of the sermon! As if the God-sent preacher cared one do it whether you did or did not like his sermon, his business being not to please your tastes, but to save your souls; not to win your approbation, but to win your hearts for Jesus, and bring you to be reconciled to God.

388. Hearers, Unsaved, Exhortation to The rain fell to-day, but fell upon thorns and briers as well as upon the green blades of the wheat. The dews will weep, and they will fall upon the thickly-tangled thistles and matted brier quite as copiously as upon the cottager's well-weeded

garden: and when the sun shines out with cheering ray, he will have rays quite as genial for the thistles and for the briars as for the fruit trees and for the barley and the wheat. So it is with you unconverted men and women. You have received God's daily favours in as great abundance as the righteous. Nay, perhaps you have had more: you have been sitting clothed in fine linen like Dives, while God's own saints have been rotting at your gates like Lazarus. You have not pined for lack of the outward influences of the means of grace. Some of you are sermon hearers; you are constantly within God's gates; your Bibles are not unknown to you; you frequent the place where the proclamation of mercy is freely made; and yet all this has been wasted on you. Are you not nigh unto cursing?—visited by daily favour, rebuked by conscience, aroused at times by the natural motion of your own heart, awakened by God's Spirit, awed under his Word, and yet, for all this, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel. Yet despair not! If your souls seek after better things, God is able to transform these wasteful thorns, these briars that bear no fruit, into fig trees, that shower their luscious fruit.

389. Heart, Christ Knocking at the

Jesus cries, "Open to me! Open to me!" Will you not admit your Saviour? Thou lovest him. He gave himself for thee, he pleads for thee: let him into thy soul, commune with him this morning. When you turn to read his word, every promise is a knock. He saith, "Come and enjoy this promise with me, for it is yea and amen in me." Every threatening is a knock. Every precept is a knock. In outward providences every boon which we receive through our Mediator's intercession is a gentle knock from his pierced hand, saying, "Take this mercy, but open to me! It comes to you through me; open to me!" Every affliction is a knock at our door: that wasting sickness, that broken bone, that consumptive daughter, that rebellious child, that burning house, that shipwrecked vessel, that dishonoured bill—all these are Christ's knockings, saying, "These things are not your joys, these worldly things can afford no rest for the sole of your foot; open to me, open to me! These idols I am breaking, these joys I am removing; open to me, and find in me a solace for all your woes." Knocking, alas! seems to be of little use to us. We are so stubborn, and so ungenerous towards our heavenly bridegroom, that he, the crucified, the immortal lover of our souls may stand and knock, and knock, and knock again, and the preacher and adversity may be his double hammer, but yet the door of the heart will not yield.

390. Heaven, Abundant Entrance into May we never be like a ship which has been all but wrecked and just escaped the rocks, tugged into harbour with extreme difficulty, her hull all but waterlogged, her cargo spoiled, her masts gone by the board, her streamers gone, her crew and passengers all wet, and saved as by the skin of their teeth, a mere hulk dragged into haven by infinite mercy: God grant, instead of that, that we may have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, sails all filled, with a goodly cargo on board, to the praise of the glory of his grace who hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

391. Heaven, Christ the Key into The great King has made a banquet, and he has proclaimed to all the world that none shall enter but those who bring with them the fairest flower that blooms. The spirits of men advance to the gate by thousands, and they bring each one the flower which he has thought the best: but in crowds they are driven from his presence, and enter not into the banquet. Some bear in their hand the deadly nightshade of superstition, or cany the flaunting poppies of Rome, but these are not dear to the King, the bearers are shut out of the pearly gates. My soul,

hast thou gathered the rose of Sharon? Dost thou wear the lily of the valley in thy bosom constantly? If so, when thou comest up to the gates of heaven thou wilt know its value, for thou hast only to show this, and the porter of the gate will open, not for a moment will he deny thee admission, for to that rose the porter openeth ever. Thou shalt find thy way with this rose in thy hand up to the throne of God himself, for heaven itself possesses nothing which excels the rose of Sharon, and of all the flowers that bloom in Paradise there is none that can rival the lily of the valleys. Get Calvary's blood-red rose into thy hand by faith, wear it; by communion preserve it; by daily watchfulness make it your all in all, and you shall be blessed beyond all bliss, happy beyond a dream. So be it yours for ever.

392. Heaven, Christ's Presence in, our Joy To hear but the King's silver trumpets sounding in the distance doth make the heart to dance, but what must it be to see the King in his beauty in the streets of his own metropolis, where he rideth forth in constant triumph? Have you not known the day when a word from him would have made your spirits like the chariots of Amminadib? what will be your ecstasy when you hear not a few words, but listen continually to him whose lips are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh! A stray kiss of those lips has ravished you beyond description, but what will it be when those cheeks that are as beds of spices, as sweet flowers, shall for ever be near you, when the full marriage of your soul with the royal spouse shall be come indeed, to your ineffable delight.

393. Heaven, Freedom from Death in

Such a thing as a funeral knell was never heard in heaven. No angel was ever carried to his grave—though angels have been in the sepulchre—for there sat two, at the head and the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; they were visitors, not dwellers there. There is nothing about angels upon which the death-worm can feed; no sepulchre could encase their free spirits, and the bonds of death could not hold them for a moment. So is it with the freed ones who have passed through the grave and are now with Christ—they cannot die: ages upon ages may roll on, eternity's ceaseless cycles may continue, but there shall be no grey hairs of decay upon the heads of the immortals; celestials shall never decay.

394. Heaven, Gates of, ajar

We know not yet as we are known, but we do know in part, and that part knowledge is precious. The gates have been ajar at times, and men have looked awhile, and beheld and wondered. Three times, at least, human eyes have seen something of the body of glory. The face of Moses, when he came down from the mount, shone so that those who gathered around him could not look thereon, and he had to cover it with a veil. In that lustrous face of the man who had been forty days in high communion with God, you behold some gleams of the brightness of glorified manhood. Our Lord made a yet clearer manifestation of the glorious body when he was transfigured in the presence of the three disciples. When his garments became bright and glistening, whiter than any fuller could make them, and he himself was all aglow with glory, his disciples saw and marvelled. The face of Stephen is a third window, as it were, through which we may look at the glory to be revealed, for even his enemies as they gazed upon the martyr in his confession of Christ, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Those three transient gleams of the morning light may serve as tokens to us to help us to form some faint idea of what the body of the glory of Christ and the body of our own glory will be.

395. Heaven, Opened by Christ

How wondrously David foretold the glorious opening of the gates, when he sang the ascent of the illustrious hero! He rose amid attending angels, ascending not in phantom form, but in a real body, and as he neared the heavenly portals, holy angels sang, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!" When on their hinges of diamond, those pearly gates revolved, and Jesus entered, then, once for all and for ever the door was opened in heaven, by which the chosen people shall all of them ascend into the joy of their Lord. At this very hour, as if to show us that he openeth and no man shutteth, we see the door most certainly open, because he has promised to come again, and, therefore, the door cannot be shut, for he is coming quickly. His promise ringeth in our ears, "Behold, I come as a thief! Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments;" yea, "blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb." Yet again saith he, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me." Expect him, then, and as you expect him, learn that a door is still open in heaven.

396. Heaven, Rehearsing for

One reason why we shall be able to rest in heaven, is because we shall there be able perpetually to achieve the object of our creation. Am I nearer heaven? then I will be doing more of the work which I shall do in heaven. I shall soon use the harp: let me be carefully tuning it: let me rehearse the hymns which I shall sing before the throne; for if the words in heaven shall be sweeter and more rich than any that poets can put together here, yet the essential song of heaven shall be the same as that which we present to Jehovah here below.

"They praise the Lamb in hymns above, And we in hymns below."

The essence of their praise is gratitude that he should bleed it is the essence of our praise too. They bless Immanuel's name for undeserved favours bestowed upon unworthy ones, and we do the same. My aged brethren, I congratulate you, for you are almost home; be yet more full of praise than ever. Quicken your footsteps as the glory land shines more brightly. You are close to the gate of pearl; sing on, dear brother, though infirmities increase, and let the song grow sweeter and louder until it melts into the infinite harmonies.

397. Heaven, Wonders of In heaven we shall see what God has lifted us up to be. We talk of being sons of God. Did we ever realise that? We speak of heaven being ours: but do we know what we mean by that language? Truly "it doth not yet appear what we shall be," neither hath eye seen or ear heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. When we shall stand on the sea of glass and hear the harpers, and join their endless music; when we shall see him who laid down his life for us—yea, see him as he is; when we shall behold the Lamb of God, who by his bowing to death lifted us up from our deadly fall—who by stripping himself of his royalties robed us with splendours—we shall be amazed, astounded, overwhelmed with wonder!

398. Heavenly Desires only for the Believer

Man by nature would be content to abide on earth for ever. If you long for a holy and spiritual state, your desire is not of nature's creation. God has wrought it in you. Yea, I will venture to say that the desire for heaven is contrary to nature; for as there is an inertia in matter which makes it indisposed to move, so is there in human nature an indisposition to leave the present for the

future. Like the limpet, we stick to the rock on which we crawl. We cling to earth like the ivy to the wall. We are afraid to set sail upon that unknown sea of eternity, and therefore shiver on the shore. We dread to leave "the warm precincts of this house of clay," and hovel as this body is, we count it dear. It is the Lord who forbids our lying among the pots, and gives us the wings of a dove to mount aloft. As soon would a clod seek the sun as a soul seek its God, if a miracle of grace were not wrought upon it.

399. Hell, Back Door to, for Hypocrites

Remember the back door to hell! There is a public entrance for the open sinner; but there is a back door for the professed saint; there is a back door for the hoary-headed professor, who has lived many years in apparent sincerity, but who has been a liar before God. There is a back door for the preacher who can talk fast and loudly, but who does not in his own heart know the truth he is preaching: there is a back door to hell for church members, who are amiable and excellent in many respects, but who have not really looked unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and found true salvation in him. God grant that this may wake some, who otherwise would sleep themselves into perdition.

400. Hell, Development of the Sinner in

What will be the development of an unregenerate character in hell I cannot tell, but I am certain it will be something which my imagination dares not now attempt to depict, for all the restraints of this life which have kept men decent and moral will be gone when they come into the next world of sin; and as heaven is to be the perfection of the saint's holiness, so hell will be the perfection of the sinner's loathsomeness, and there will he discover, and others will discover, what sin is when it cometh to its worst. "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death;" and this, dear hearer, do we solemnly remind you will be your portion for ever and ever, unless God be pleased to quicken you. Unless you be made to live together with Christ you will be in this world dead, perhaps in this world corrupt, but certainly so in the next world, where all the dreadful influences of sin will be developed and discovered to the very full, and you shall be cast away from the presence of God and the glory of his power. There can be no death in heaven, neither can corruption inherit incorruption, and if you have not been renewed in the spirit of your mind, within those pearly gates you can never have your portion, and where the light of heaven shines in perpetual noonday your lot can never be cast, 401. Helmet, Anointing the

The helmet is an old-fashioned kind of armour; and in old days, the lieutenants and other officers, when they went round the regiment, used to look, not only to see that the men had their helmets, but to see that they had oiled them; for in those times they used to oil their helmets to make them shine, and to keep the various joints, and buckles, and so on, in good order. No rust was ever allowed on the helmets, and it is said that when the soldiers marched out, with their brazen helmets and their white plumes, they shone most brilliantly in the sun. David speaks, you know, of "anointing the shield." He was speaking of a brazen shield which had to be anointed with oil. Now, when God anoints his people's hope, when he gives them the oil of joy, their hope begins to shine bright in the light of the Saviour's countenance, and what a fine array of soldiers they are then! Satan trembles at the gleaming of their swords; he cannot endure to look upon their helmets. But some of you do not keep your hope clear; you do not keep it bright; it gets rusty out of use, and then ere long it gets to sit uncomfortably upon you, and you get weary with the fight. O Holy Spirit,

anoint our heads with fresh oil, and let thy saints go forth terrible as an army with banners.

402. Helps On the summit of some of the Swiss passes, the canton, for the preservation and accommodation of travellers, maintains a small body of men, sometimes only two or three, who live in a little house at the top, and whose business it is to help travellers on their way. It was very pleasant when we were going through a pass in the mountains of Northern Italy, to see, some three or four miles from the top, a man coming down who saluted us as though he had known us for years. He carried a spade in his hand, and though we did not know what was coming, yet he evidently understood better than we did what was going to occur. By-and-by we came to deep snow, and the man went to work with his spade to clear a foot-way, and when he came to a very ugly piece of road, some of the party were carried along on the man's back. It was the man's business to care for the travellers, and ere long there came one of his companions with wine and refreshments, which were generously offered to the weary ones. These men were "helps," who spent their lives on that part of the road where it was known their services would be requisite; and when travellers reach the spot, these men are ready to give their assistance at the very nick of time. They would have been worth nothing at all down in the plains; they would have been only an incumbrance if they had met us in any other place, but they were exceedingly valuable, because they were just where they were required, and came exactly at the moment when they were wanted.

Now, my friends, "helps" are of no use to a man when he can help himself. When he has no difficulties, an offer of assistance is an intrusion. There is just one point, such a juncture as the passing of the summit of the mountain, where help will be exceedingly precious to him. And it seems to me, that the period of a man's experience which Bunyan describes by the Slough of Despond, is just that season when you, my dear brethren and sisters in Christ, may render invaluable aid to the Christian minister by coming to the rescue of those who seem as though they would be swallowed up.

403. Heroism, The Noblest The bearing of many of the martyrs has been singularly heroic. You will be struck in reading "Foxe's Acts and Monuments," to find how many of the humblest men and women acted as if they were of noblest blood. In every age the line of martyrs has been a line of true nobility. When the King of France told Bernard Palissy that, if he did not change his sentiments, he should be compelled to surrender him to the Inquisition, the brave potter said to the king, "You say I shall be compelled, and yet you are a king; but I, though only a poor potter, cannot be compelled to do other than I think to be right." Surely the potter was more royal than the king. The cases are numberless, and should be as household words among you, in which humble men, feeble women, and little children have shown a heroism which chivalry could not equal.

404. Holiness in Little Things

Much of the beauty of holiness lies in little things. Microscopic holiness is the perfection of excellence: if a life will bear examination in each hour of it, it is pure indeed. Those who are not careful about their words, and even their thoughts, will soon grow careless concerning their more notable actions. Those who tolerate sin in what they think to be little things, will soon indulge it in greater matters. To live by the day and to watch each step, is the true pilgrimage method. More lies in the careful noting of every single act than careless minds can well imagine. Be this then your prayer: "Lord, direct my morning thoughts, that the step out of my chamber into the world

may be taken in thy fear. At my table keep me in thy presence; behind my counter, or in my field, or wherever else I may be, suffer me not to grieve thy Spirit by any evil; and when I come to lie down at night, let the action (which seemeth so indifferent) of casting myself upon my pillow, be performed with a heart that loveth thee; so that I shall be prepared to be with thee, if wakeful, during the night." This brief prayer, "Order my steps," teaches us attention to the minutiae of life; may we have grace to learn the lesson.

405. Holiness, Marvels of

What a strange thing must holiness be, if the man who possesses it has to act in conformity to a thousand relationships! What a wonderful piece of artistic adjustment! A painting by a master-hand! A work of art unparalleled! A music of intricate and ravishing harmonies! "An honest man," says the proverb, "is the noblest work of God;" correct the phrase, and say a holy man, and you have the truth. I dare to affirm, that the balancing of the clouds, and the arranging of the firmament, the upheaval of the mountains, and the guidance of the stars; the creation of living bodies, with all their wondrous tissue of muscle, and sinew, and nerve—ay, and all other works of God put together—do not exceed in splendour of wisdom and power the holiness of a life which has been moulded by the Spirit's sacred power. In holiness God is more clearly seen than in anything else, save in the person of Christ Jesus the Lord, of whose life such holiness is but a repetition.

406. Holiness not Dependent upon Knowledge

How am I to account for it that there have been men of every extreme of doctrine, from Dr. Hawker down to Fletcher of Madeley, men ranging from semi-Pelagianism right up to the verge of Antinomianism, who nevertheless were so eminently holy, that one has hardly room for selection, because they have been equally seraphic, equally consecrated to Christ. Their doctrinal sentiments were so divergent, that in some of their minds it is clear that there must have been much confusion, but the life-spring within was not to be stopped by the rubbish of their misapprehensions; and through all their mistakes of doctrine the divine life came welling up in all its delightful purity, and produced its legitimate results. God forbid we should foster ignorance, or that we should for a moment settle down quietly under any errors of creed, but still it is a delightful thought that the inner life is not destroyed by our misapprehensions or want of knowledge, but still upward it gushes a vigorous and powerful principle, overcoming all.

407. Holiness, Persevering

Holiness consists not in the rushing of intense resolve, which, like Kishon, sweeps everything before it, and then subsides, but in the constant flow of Siloah's still waters, which perpetually make glad the city of our God. Holiness is no blazing comet, amazing nations with a transient glory; it is a fixed star that, with still, calm radiance, shines on through the darkness of a corrupt age. Holiness is persevering obedience; it is not holiness at all if it be occasional zeal and sensational piety.

408. Holiness the Root of Testimony In proportion as a church is holy, in that proportion will its testimony for Christ be powerful. Oh! were the saints immaculate, our testimony would be like fire among the stubble, like the flaming firebrand in the midst of the sheaves of corn. Were the saints of God less like the world, more disinterested, more prayerful, more godlike, the tramp of the

armies of Zion, would shake the nations, and the day of the victory of Christ would surely dawn. Freely might the church barter her most golden-mouthed preacher if she received in exchange men of apostolic life. I would be content that the pulpit should be empty if all the members of the church would preach Jesus by their patience in suffering, by their endurance in temptation, by exhibiting in the household those graces which adorn the gospel of Jesus Christ.

409. Holy Spirit, Treasury of the Church

Brethren, the more than golden treasure of the church is the Holy Spirit. The treasury of the church is not under the lock and key of the State; her caskets of wealth are not to be opened by the power of the policeman, by an Act of Parliament; the true treasury of the church is not even found in the gold and silver which may voluntarily be given to her; but in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit is the riches of the church of God. That is a rich church which shall meet in a barn or under the blue vault of heaven, if the Holy Ghost be there; but that is a poor church with "Ichabod" legibly written across its wall, which, with all its wealth, its intelligence, and its respectability, is devoid of the Spirit of the living God. This is the church's power, her energy, her life, the earnest of her future glory, the present power by which she is to resist and conquer her foes.

410. Holy Spirit, Vivifying the Word

It is the word of God that is living, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword. There must be life in it, for by it men are born again. As for believers, the Holy Spirit often sets the word on a blaze while they are studying it. The letters were at one time before us as mere letters, but the Holy Ghost suddenly came upon them, and they spake with tongues. The chapter is lowly as the bush at Horeb, but the Spirit descends upon it, and lo! it glows with celestial splendour, God appearing in the words, so that we feel like Moses when he put off his shoes from his feet, because the place whereon he stood was holy ground. It is true, the mass of readers understand not this, and look upon the Bible as a common book; but if they understand it not, at least let them allow the truthfulness of our assertion, when we declare that hundreds of times we have as surely felt the presence of God in the page of Scripture as ever Elijah did when he heard the Lord speaking in a still small voice. The Bible has often appeared to us a temple of God, and the posts of its doors have moved at the voice of him that cried, whose train also has filled the temple. We have been constrained adoringly to cry with the seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts." The Jews place as a frontispiece to their great Bible the text, "Surely God is in this place: it is none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven." And they say well. It is, indeed, a spiritual temple, a most holy house, garnished with precious stones for beauty, and overlaid within and without with pure gold, having for its chief glory the presence of the Lord, so gloriously revealed that oftentimes the priests of the Lord cannot stand to minister by reason of the glory of the Lord which fills the house. God the Holy Spirit vivifies the letter with his presence, and then it is to us a living word indeed.

411. Home, Longing for Do not you recollect how, in your schoolboy days, you used to make a little almanack with a square for every day, and how you always crossed off the day as soon as ever it began, as though you would try and make the distance from your joy as short as possible. You groaned for it, not with the unhappy groan that marks one who is to perish, but with the groan of one who, having tasted of the sweets of home, is not content until again he shall be indulged with the fulness of them.

412. Home, Waiting for

I do not know a more beautiful sight to be seen on earth than a man who has served his Lord many years, and who, having grown grey in service, feels that in the order of nature he must soon be called home. He is rejoicing in the first-fruits of the Spirit which he has obtained, but he is panting after the full harvest of the spirit which is guaranteed to him. I think I see him sitting on a jutting crag by the edge of Jordan, listening to the harpers on the other side, and waiting till the pitcher shall be broken at the cistern, and the wheel at the fountain, and the spirit shall depart to God that made it. A wife waiting for her husband's footsteps; a child waiting in the darkness of the night till its mother comes to give it the evening kiss, are portraits of our waiting. It is a pleasant and precious thing so to wait and so to hope.

413. Home Religion

If you tell me that you belong to Christ, I should like to ask a witness or two. Oh! it is so easy to get into a Christian church, and make a profession! The Lord knows I have used my best diligence, and I can say the same of my brethren the elders, we do use our best diligence to suffer none to join this church who are not sincere believers; but after all, what does our vigilance amount to? If you choose to be hypocrites, you can easily deceive such poor creatures as we are. The best witnesses, methinks, which you could bring as to your belonging to Christ would be witnesses of this kind, you can pray very nicely at the prayer-meeting; you could preach a bit if you were asked; you seem such a good man when you come among God's people, but I should like to ask your wife about you. How does he behave to you, ma'am? because if this man does not make a good husband, he is no Christian, for Christianity makes a man the best of husbands, the best of sons, the best of fathers, the best of brothers, the best of servants. If you are a servant, I should like to ask your master about you. Servants who stand about propping up walls, and then talk about being Christians, may talk a long while before their masters will believe them. Masters and mistresses, too, who are always in bad tempers, and making much of little faults, and unkind to servants, may talk as long as they will about being like Jesus Christ, but their servants would want a microscope to see the likeness.

414. Homeliness, a Minister's Power

Oh, dear, dear! the lofty ministerial airs that one has seen assumed by men who ought to have been meek and lowly. What a grand set of men some of the preachers of the past have thought themselves to be! I trust those who played the archbishop have nearly all gone to heaven, but a few linger among us who use little grace and much starch. The grand divines never shook hands with anybody, except, indeed, with the deacons, and a little knot of evidently superior persons. Amongst Dissenters it was almost as bad as it is in most church congregations, where you feel that the good man, by his manner, is always saying, "I hope you know who I am, sir; I am the rector of the parish." Now, all that kind of stuck-upishness is altogether wrong. No man can do good in that way; and no good at all comes of assuming superiority and distance. The best teacher for boys is the man who can make himself a boy; and the best teacher for girls is the woman who can make herself a girl among girls. I often regret that I have so large a congregation; you will say, "Why?" Why, when I had a smaller congregation at Park Street, there were too many even then, but I did get a shake of the hand sometimes; but now there are so many of you that I scarcely know you, good memory as I have, and I seldom have the pleasure of shaking hands with you—I

wish I did. If there is anybody in the wide world whose good I wish to promote, it is yours; therefore I wish to be at home with you: and if ever I should affect the airs of a great man, and set above you all, and separate myself by proud manners from your sympathy, I hope the Lord will take me down and make me right again. We may expect souls to be saved when we do as Christ did, namely, get publicans and sinners to draw near to us.

415. Home-sickness of the Believer

Sometimes the heir of heaven grows impatient of his bondage, and like a captive who, looking out of the narrow window of his prison, beholds the green fields of the unfettered earth, and marks the flashing waves of the ocean, ever free, and hears the songs of the uncaged tenants of the air, weeps as he views his narrow cell, and hears the clanking of his chains. There are times when the most patient of the Lord's banished ones feel the home-sickness strong upon them. Like those beasts which we have sometimes seen in our menageries, which pace to and fro in their dens, and chafe themselves against the bars—unresting, unhappy, bursting out every now and then into fierce roarings, as though they yearned for the forest or the jungle; even so we also chafe and fret in this our prison-house, longing to be free. As by the waters of Babylon the sons of Zion sat them down and wept, even so do we. Dwelling in Kedar's tents and sojourning with Mesech, we long for the wings of a dove that we might fly away and be at rest.

416. Honesty to the Souls of Men

We are told that men are drawn to Christ by love, and the statement is true; but, at the same time, "knowing the terror of the Lord," we are to persuade men, and not to keep back the evil tidings. Even Christ with weeping eyes and tender heart does not hesitate to tell Jerusalem of its coming destruction, and I believe it is a token that Christ is in the church when those terrible things of his are not kept back to please the popular taste; when there is no trying to cut them down and moderate them, in order to make the wrath to come look less terrible than it is. It must be thundered out again and again, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." It must be told the sinner that if he goeth on in his iniquity, he shall be driven away from hope and salvation, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Christ is not present in an unfaithful church, and this is a point upon which some churches are apt to grow unfaithful. We must deliver the whole truth, even the dark side of it as well as that which smiles with mercy, and Christ is not present unless it be so. The sympathy of Jesus led him, as it should lead us, to be lovingly honest with the sons of men.

417. Hope for the Vilest Sinners

While we try to cloak anything from God, we are both wicked and foolish. It argues a rebellious spirit when we have a desire to hide away from our Maker; but when a man uncovers his wound, invites inspection of its sore, bids the surgeon cut away the leprous film which covered its corruption, and saith to him, "Here, probe into its depths, see what evil there is in it; spare not, but make a sure cure of the wound," then he is in a fair way to be recovered. When a man is willing to make God his confessor, and doth freely, and without hypocrisy, pour out his heart like water before the Lord, there is good hope for him.

418. Hope while Life lasts Do you not hear the breaking of the waves of the unknown sea? You must go down into it! Do you not even now hear the boomings of its awful billows upon the cliffs of

time? What if it should be a sea of fire to you for ever? What if every billow in that sea of flame should break over you, and you be cast into it, but not drowned, shipwrecked and lost, but not annihilated? What if you must be drifting for ever across that fiery sea, with the word of divine wrath driving you on, never to find a haven? Sinner, there is hope yet. This is not the realm of despair. Not yet has the great iron key grated in the lock to shut you for ever in the dungeon! It is said of Christ that "He openeth and no man shutteth." He can open heaven to you. Trust him with your whole heart, mourning for sin and hating it. Rest in his blood! Find a shelter beneath his cross, and he will not, cannot cast you away, for "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him."

419. Hopes, Brightening of When sin conquered the realm of manhood, it slew all the minstrels except those of the race of Hope. For humanity, amid all its sorrows and sins, hope sings on. To believers in Jesus there remains a royal race of bards, for we have a hope of glory, a lively hope, a hope eternal and divine. Because our hope abides, our praise continues—"I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee." Because our hopes grow brighter, and are every day nearer and nearer to their fulfilment, therefore the volume of our praise increases. "I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more." A dying hope would bring forth declining songs; as the expectations grew more dim, so would the music become more faint; but a hope immortal and eternal, flaming forth each day with intenser brightness, brings forth a song of praise which, as it shall always continue to arise, so shall it always gather new force.

420. Hopes, False, Failing in Time of Need

I know of one who, travelling over a pass in Italy, one evening, secured a light to help him over a dangerous and difficult part of the way farther on. It was not needed till the narrow steep descent was reached; in fact, it was in the way till then, but just as the traveller came to the very spot where it was required it went out and left him in utter darkness. So it is full often in the sinner's experience, who travels in the dark; his lights go out when most needed. Oh! far better then to walk in daylight, using the eye of faith, in the clear sunshine of gospel light from the Sun of Righteousness.

421. Human Inability, no Excuse for the Sinner

"No man can save himself," says one. Yet the case is very like that of the master who sent his negro servant with a letter. The negro was, like some others, rather lazy, and came back with it. "Why did you not deliver it?" "I could not." "Could not deliver it?" "No, master." "Why not?"

"A deep river, sir, very deep river, I could not get across."

"A deep river?" said he. "Yes." "Is not there a ferryman there?" "Do not know, sir; if there was, he was on the other side." "Did you call across, 'Boat, ahoy!'"

"No, sir." "Why, then, you rascal," said he, "what does it matter; it is no excuse. It is true, you could not get across the river, but then there was one there who could take you, and you never cried to him." And so it is in your case. You say, "I cannot save myself." Quite true; but there is one who can, and you have never cried to him; for, mark you, if you cry to him, if your heart says, "Oh, Saviour, come and save me," and your spirit rests in him, deep as that river of your sin certainly is, he knows how to bear you safely through it, and land you on the other shore. May he do that with

each of you. With God all things are possible, though with man it is impossible.

422. Human Instrumentality and Divine Work

Suppose it were known that the events of a certain battle would depend entirely on the skill of the general. The two armies are equally balanced, and everything must depend upon the tact of the commander; would the soldiers therefore conclude that they needed not to load, or fire, or draw a sword, because everything depended on the commander? No, but the commander works, and his soldiery work together with him. So it is with us. Everything depends on God, but we are his instruments. We are his servants, and because he is at our back, let us go forward with courage and zeal. The results are certain, God being our helper.

423. Human Soul Tyrannised over

How certain it is that a yoke is essential to produce rest, and without it rest is unknown! Spain found rest by getting rid of that wretched monarch, Isabella; an iron yoke was her dominion upon the nation's neck, crushing every aspiration after progress by an intolerable tyranny. Up rose the nation, shook off its yoke, and threw aside its burden, and it had rest in a certain sense, rest from an evil. But Spain has not fully rested yet, and it seems she will never find permanent rest till she has voluntarily taken up another yoke, and found for herself another burden. In a word, she must have a strong, settled, recognised government, and then only will her distractions cease. This is just a picture of the human soul. It is under the dominion of Satan, it wears his awful yoke, and works for him; it bears his accursed burden, and groans under it; Jesus sets it free—but has it, therefore, a perfect rest? Yes, a rest from, but not a rest in. What is wanted now is a new government; the soul must have a sovereign, a ruling principle, a master-motive; and when Jesus has taken that position, rest is come.

424. Humiliation Necessary to Salvation

William Dawson once told this story to illustrate how humble the soul must be before it can find peace. He said that at a revival meeting, a little lad who was used to Methodist ways—I do not tell the story for the sake of the Methodism, but for the sake of the moral—the little boy went home to his mother and said, "Mother, John So-and-so is under conviction and seeking for peace, but he will not find it tonight, mother." "Why, William?" said she. "Because he is only down on one knee, mother, and he will never get peace until he is down on both knees." Now, the moral of it, using it metaphorically, is true. Until conviction of sin brings us down on both knees, until we are completely humbled, until we have no hope, no merit, no proud boasting left, we cannot find the Saviour; and willing must we be, not to embrace him like sanctified Mary, but to stand at a distance like the unclean lepers.

425. Humility of True Servants of God

Those who express great concern for prominent ministers, because of their temptations, do well, but they will be even more in the path of duty if they have as much solicitude about themselves. I remember one whose pride was visible in his very manner, a person unknown, of little service in the church, but as proud of his little badly-ploughed, weedy half acre, as ever a man could be, who informed me very pompously on more than one occasion, that he trembled lest I should be unduly exalted and puffed up with pride. Now, from his lips, it sounded like comedy, and reminded me of

Satan reproving sin. God never honours his servants with success without effectually preventing their grasping the honours of their work. If we are tempted to boast, he soon lays us low, He always whips behind the door at home those whom he most honours in public. You may rest assured that if God honours you to win many souls, you will have many stripes to bear, and stripes you would not like to tell another of, they will be so sharp and humbling.

426. Hypocrisy no Excuse for the Sins of others

Friend, you cannot have a greater abhorrence of hypocrites than I have. If you can find a fair chance of laughing at them, pray do so. If by any means you can stick pins into their wind-bags, and let the gas of their profession out, pray do so. I try to do a little of it in my way, do you do the same! You and I are agreed in this, I hope, in heartily hating anything like sham and falsehood; but if you begin to hold your head up, and think yourself so very superior because you make no profession, I must take you down a little by reminding you that it is no credit to a thief that he makes no profession of being honest, and it is not thought to be exceedingly honourable to a man that he makes no profession of speaking the truth. For the fact is, that a man who does not profess to be honest is a professed thief, and he who does not claim to speak the truth is an acknowledged liar; thus, in escaping one horn you are thrown upon another; you miss the rock, but run upon the quicksand. You are a confessed and avowed neglecter of God, a professed despiser of the great salvation, an acknowledged disbeliever in the Christ of God. When our Government at any time arrests persons suspected of Fenianism they have no difficulty about those gentlemen who glory in wearing the green uniform and flaunting the big feather. "Come along," says the constable, "you are the man, for you wear the regimentals of a rebel." Even so when the angel of justice arrests the enemies of the Lord, he will have no difficulty in accusing and arresting you, for, laying his hand upon your shoulder, he will say, "You wear the regimentals of an enemy of God; you plainly and unblushingly acknowledge that you do not fear God or trust in his salvation." No witnesses need be called concerning you at the last great day; you will stand up, not quite so bravely as you do to-day, for, when the heavens are on a blaze, and the earth is rocking to and fro, and the great white cloud fills the field of vision, and the eyes of the great Judge shall burn like lamps of fire, you will put on a different mien and a different carriage from that which you maintain before a poor preacher of the gospel. Ah! my ungodly hearer, with such a case as thine there shall be no need to judge, for out of thine own mouth shalt thou be condemned.

427. Hypocrite, Picture of a

I recollect when a child seeing on the mantel-piece a stone apple, wonderfully like an apple, too, and very well coloured. I saw that apple years after, but it was no riper. It had been in unfavourable circumstances for softening and sweetening, if it ever would have become mellow; but I do not think if the sun of the Equator had shone on it, or if the dews of Hermon had fallen on it, it would ever have been fit to be brought to table. Its hard marble substance would have broken a giant's teeth. It was a hypocritical professor, a hard-hearted mocker of little children, a mere mimic of God's fruits.

428. Hypocrites in the Church

Doubtless there are thousands in all Christian churches who have the stamp and the impress of the King upon them, and look like the genuine shekels of the sanctuary, who after all are only fit to

be, like bad money, fastened down on the footstool of the judgment seat, with a nail driven through them, to their everlasting reprobation and disgrace. How can we tell a bold man from a coward? Two soldiers wear the same regimentals: they will talk equally loudly of what they will do when the enemy shall come. It is the battle that tests and proves them; some peculiar phase of the conflict will bring out the difference; but till the battle comes how easy it is for the poltroon to play the hero, while perhaps the bravest man may modestly shrink into the rear!

429. Hypocrites, Providence revealing A lion may lie all day asleep, you may scarce know but what it is tame; but when the night brings the time for it to go forth to its prey, then it howls, and displays its ferocity. And so an ungodly man may lie down in the church of God with the lambs of the flock, and nothing may lead you to suspect his true character; but when the time comes for him to make profit by sin, or to get pleasure by sin, or to escape from persecution by sin, then you find out what he is. These providences are the King's coming in to scrutinise the guests. Changes in the conditions of the church, changes in the condition of the individual, all sorts of providential events go to make up the great sieve by which the wheat and the chaff are separated.



430. Idleness

Many a parson buys or hires a sermon, so that he may save himself the trouble of thinking. Is not this abominable laziness? They sneer at the Ranters, but there is not a Ranter in the kingdom but what would be ashamed to stand up and read somebody else's sermon as if it were his own. Many of our squires have nothing to do but to part their hair in the middle; and many of the London grandees, ladies and gentlemen both alike, as I am told, have no better work than killing time. Now, they say the higher a monkey climbs the more his tail is seen; and so the greater these people are the more their idleness is noticed, and the more they ought to be ashamed of it. I do not say that they ought to plough, but I do say that they ought to do something for the State besides being like the caterpillars on the cabbage, eating up the good things: or like the butterflies, showing themselves off, but making no honey.

431. Idol-making

Idol-making was not only the trade of Ephesus, but it is a trade all the world over. Making shrines for Diana, nay, shrines for self, we are all master craftsmen at this in some form or another. Images of jealousy, which become abominations of desolation, we have set up. We may even exalt some good pursuit into an idol, even work for the Master may sometimes take his place; as was the case with Martha, we are cumbered with much serving, and often think more about the serving than of him who is to be served; the secret being that we are too mindful of how we may look in the serving, and not enough considerate of him, and of how he may be honoured by our service. It is so very easy for our busy spirits to gad about, and so very difficult to sit at the Master's feet.

432. Ignorance, Spiritual, Masks of

It has long been a mystery who was the man in the iron mask. We believe that the mystery was solved some years ago, by the conjecture that he was the twin brother of Louis XIV., King of France, who, fearful lest he might have his throne disturbed by his twin brother, whose features were extremely like his own, encased his face in a mask of iron, and shut him up in the Bastille for life. Your body and your soul are twin brothers. Your body, as though it were jealous of your soul, encases it as in an iron mask of spiritual ignorance, lest its true lineaments, its immortal lineage, should be discovered, and shuts it up within the Bastille of sin, lest getting liberty and discovering its royalty it should win the mastery over the baser nature. But what a wretch was that Louis XIV. to do such a thing to his own brother! How brutal, how worse than the beasts that perish! But, sir, what art thou if thou doest thus to thine own soul, merely that thy body may be satisfied, and thy earthly nature may have a present gratification? O sirs, be not so unkind, so cruel to yourselves. But yet this sin of living for the mouth and living for the eye, this sin of living for what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink, and wherewithal ye shall be clothed, this sin of living by the clock within the narrow limits of the time that ticks by the pendulum, this sin of living as if this earth were all and

there were nought beyond—this is the sin that holds this City of London, and holds the world, and binds it like a martyr to the stake to perish, unless it be set free.

433. Illustrations, Use of The prophets frequently spoke in parables. This they did partly to excite the attention of their hearers. Those to whom they spoke might not have listened to didactic truth expressed in abstract terms, but when they heard mention of common things, such as bellows, and lead, and brass, they turned aside, and asked, "What is this which this man hath to say?" Moreover, metaphors often convey to the mind truth which otherwise would not have reached the understanding, for men frequently see under the guise and form of an illustration a doctrine which, if it had been nakedly stated, they could not have comprehended. Illustrations, like windows, let light into the chambers of the mind. There is this use also in a metaphor, that even if it be not understood at first, it excites thought, and men exercise their minds upon it as children upon an enigma, and so they learn perhaps more through a dark saying than through a sentence transparent at first sight. Yet further, metaphorical speech is apt to abide upon the memory, it retains its hold, even upon the unwilling mind, like a lion which has leaped upon a giraffe in the desert. Mere bald statement is soon forgotten, but illustrations stick in the soul like hooks in a fish's mouth.

434. Image of Christ in the Believer

I have heard it said that the good sculptor, whenever he sees a suitable block of marble, firmly believes that there is a statue concealed within it, and that his business is but to take away the superfluous material, and so unveil the "thing of beauty," which shall be "a joy for ever." Believer, you are that block of marble; you have been quarried by divine grace, and set apart for the Master's service, but we cannot see the image of Christ in you yet as we could wish; true, there are some traces of it, some dim outlines of what is to be; it is for you, with the chisel and the mallet, with constant endeavour and holy dependence upon God, to work out that image of Christ in yourself, till you shall be discovered to be by all men like unto your Lord and Master.

435. Imagination, the Cause of our Troubles

Probably the major part of our griefs are born, nourished, and perfected, entirely in an anxious, imaginative brain. Many of our sorrows are not woven in the loom of providence, but are purely homespun, and the pattern of our own invention. Some minds are specially fertile in self-torture; they have the creative faculty for all that is melancholy, desponding, and wretched. If they were placed in the brightest isles of the blessed, beneath unclouded skies, where birds of fairest wing poured out perpetual melody, and earth was rich with colour and perfume, they would not be content till they had imagined for themselves a sevenfold Styx, an infernal Tartarus, a valley of deathshade. Their ingenuity is stimulated even by the mercies of God; and that which would make others rejoice causes them to tremble lest the enjoyment should prove shortlived.

436. Imitation of Christianity

We can endure the odd ways of a really fervent lover of Jesus, but the mere wax-work of superstition is not to be tolerated. I frequently see persons coming into a place of worship looking into their hats, or shading their eyes with their hands, as if they were praying to God to grant a blessing on what they were about to hear, but, I suppose, in three cases out of four they are doing nothing of the sort; it is only because it happened to be the custom with some good people thus to

pray, that therefore formalists must needs pretend, at any rate, to do the same. In days gone by, certain Christian people set apart days of fasting, and then, in due time, everybody took to a course of salt fish. True Christians love the cross of Christ, therefore formalists must needs wear crosses of wood or ivory on their bosoms. If earnest believers practise true family prayer, others must sham the doing of it, though their heart is not in it. There is no Christian practice, there is no Christian habit, but what has been, or will be ere long, imitated by people who have no vital godliness whatever. If there be no good cheer within, at least, the landlord will hang out a sign. If there be no kernel, men put up with the shell. Let all washers of the outside of cups and platters, remember that true religion is not an outward but an inward thing; it is not a matter of the surface, but of the core of our nature; it is not a robe to be put on and to be taken off; it is a life, an inward principle, which becomes a part of the man's self; and if it be not so, it is not real at all.

437. Imitation of Jesus Have you ever noticed how badly boys write at the bottom of the pages in their copy-books? There is the copy at the top; and in the first line they look at that; in the second line they copy their own imitation; in the third line they copy their imitation of their imitation, and so the writing grows worse and worse as it descends the page. Now, the apostles followed Christ; the first fathers imitated the apostles; the next fathers copied the first fathers, and so the standard of holiness fell dreadfully; and now we are too apt to follow the very lees and dregs of Christianity, and we think if we are about as good as our poor, imperfect ministers or leaders in the church, that we shall do well and deserve praise. But now, my brethren, cover up the mere copies and imitations, and live by the first line. Copy Jesus; "he is altogether lovely;" and if you can write by the first line, you will write by the truest and best model in the world.

438. Impressions not always Saving

I am not always sanguine concerning persons who are readily excited, for they so soon cool down again. Some are like india-rubber, and every time you put your finger on them you leave a mark, but it is wasted time, because they get back into the old shape again as soon as you have done with them. I was preaching once in a certain city, and a very worthy but worldly man went out of the congregation while I was in the middle of the sermon, the third sermon he had been hearing from me during the week. One who followed him out asked him why he left, and he frankly replied that he could not stand it any longer, "for," said he, "I must have become religious if I had heard that sermon through. I was nearly gone. I have been," added he, "like an india-rubber doll under this man, but when he goes away I shall get back into the old shape again." Very many are of the same quality; they have so much natural amiability, good sense, and conscientiousness, that the gospel ministry has a power over them, and they feel its influence, though, alas, not so as to be saved by it. Beware, then, that you do not mistake the gilding of nature for the solid gold of grace. When God's grace helps the preacher to wield the gospel hammer, and it comes down with power upon a piece of flint, how speedily the stone flies to shivers, and what a glorious work of heart-breaking is done, and then the Lord comes in and gives, by his own almighty grace, a heart of flesh.

439. Impressions, Transient When I hear it said of such-and-such preachers that they have many converts for a time, but that few of these can be found after a month or two, I am grieved that there should be so much truth in the statement, but I am not at all surprised; for you shall go into your garden, and you shall see tens of thousands of buds upon the trees in the month of April, and yet,

in the autumn, you shall not find more than one apple for every thousand blossoms. This being the case, is the gardener disappointed? Does he not count the one apple a good percentage on the amount of flower? Suppose there be but one apple—perhaps there had not been that one if there had not been the thousand blooms. No one expects every bloom to become a fruit, and we cannot expect every one who is impressed under our ministry to become really a living child of God.

440. Incarnation of Christ, the Wonder of Angels Did you ever hear of angels hovering around the assemblies of philosophical societies? Very interesting papers are sometimes produced speculating upon geological facts; startling discoveries are every now and then made as to astronomy and the laws of motion; we are frequently surprised at the results of chemical analyses; yet I do not remember ever reading even in poetry that angelic beings have shown any excitement at the news. The fact is, that the story of the world's history in geologic times, and all the facts about this world, are as well known to angels as the letters of the alphabet are to us; all our profound sciences and recondite theories to them must seem utterly contemptible. Those august minds which have been long ago created of God, and preserved from defilement by his decree, are better able to judge than we are of the importance of things; and when we find them deeply interested in a matter, it cannot be of small account. Concerning an incarnate God, it is said, "which things the angels desire to look into." Their views of God's manifesting himself in the flesh are such, that over the mercy-seat they stand with outspread wings gazing in reverent admiration, and before the throne they sing, "Worthy is the Lamb, for he was slain." The doctrine of incarnate Deity may be folly to the Greeks, and the vainglorious wiseacres of this world may call it commonplace, but to angels it is an ever-flowing fount of adoring admiration. They turn from every other sight to view the incarnate Redeemer, regarding his condescending deed of grace as a bottomless ocean of mystery, a topless steep of wonder. Jesus was seen of angels, and they still delight to gaze upon him—this to the apostle's mind was conclusive evidence that the doctrines of our faith are of the greatest importance.

441. Inconsistent Professors

Stand in fancy in one of the fights of the old civil war. The Royalists are fighting desperately and are winning apace, but I hear a cry from the other side that Cromwell's Ironsides are coming. Now we shall see some fighting. Oliver and his men are lions. But, lo! I see that the fellows who come up hang fire, and are afraid to rush into the thick of the fight; surely these are not Cromwell's Ironsides, and yonder captain is not old Noll? I do not believe it; it cannot be. Why, if they were what they profess to be, they would have broken the ranks of those perfumed cavaliers long ago, and have made them fly before them like chaff before the wind. So when I hear men say, "Here is a body of Christians." What! those Christians? Those cowardly people, who hardly dare speak a word for Jesus! Those covetous people, who give a few cheese-parings to his cause! Those inconsistent people, whom you would not know to be Christian professors if they did not label themselves! What! such beings followers of a crucified Saviour? The world sneers at such pretensions, and well it may. With such a leader let us follow bravely; and bought with such a price, and being owned by such a Master, let us glorify him who condescends to call such poor creatures as we are, his portion, whom he hath set apart for himself.

442. Individual Responsibility In the nocturnal heavens there had long been observed bright masses of light: the astronomers called them "nebulæ;" they supposed them to be stores of

unfashioned chaotic matter, until the telescope of Herschel resolved them into distinct stars. What the telescope did for stars, the religion of Christ, when received into the heart, does for men. Men think of themselves as mixed up with the race, or swamped in the community, or absorbed in universal manhood; they have a very indistinct idea of their separate obligations to God, and their personal relations to his government, but the gospel, like a telescope, brings a man out to himself, makes him see himself as a separate existence, and compels him to meditate upon his own sin, his own salvation, and his own personal doom unless saved by grace.

443. Individuality of Man

There are cabinets in the chamber of the soul which no man can open but the individual himself. We must die alone; friends may surround the bed, but the departing spirit must take its flight by itself. We shall hear no tramp of thousands as we descend into the dark river, we shall be solitary travellers into the unknown land. We expect to stand before the judgment-seat in the midst of a great assembly, but still to be judged as if no other man were there. If all that multitude be condemned, and we are in Christ, we shall be saved, and if they should all be saved, and we are found wanting, we shall be cast away. In the balances we shall each be placed alone. There is a crucible for every ingot of gold, a furnace for every bar of silver. In the resurrection every seed shall receive his own body. There shall be an individuality about the frame that shall be raised in that day of wonders, an individuality most marked and manifest. If I am condemned at the last, no man can be damned for my spirit; no soul can enter the chambers of fire on my behalf, to endure for me the unutterable anguish. And, blessed hope, if I am saved, it will be I who shall see the King in his beauty; mine eyes shall behold him, and not another in my stead.

444. Industry a Check to Grief

John Bright, who married young, lost his wife shortly after marriage. He went to Leamington, where Cobden visited him, and found him bowed down by grief. "Come with me," said Cobden, "and we will never rest until we abolish the Corn Laws." Bright arose from his great sorrow, girded his loins to work side by side with his friend, and thus found consolation for his terrible loss. How often would deep despondencies and heavy glooms be chased away if an all-absorbing love to Jesus, and a fiery zeal for his honour burned within our bosoms. One fire puts out another, and a grander agony of soul quenches all other grief. The hands of holy industry pluck the canker of grief from the heart, and shed a shower of heavenly dew, which makes the believer, like the rose, pour forth a sweet perfume of holy joy. As quaint old Fuller says, "A divine benediction is always invisibly breathed on painful and lawful diligence." The clappers of sacred industry drive away the evil birds of melancholy and despair.

445. Infant Christ, a Sign to Man The sign that the joy of the world had come was this,—they were to go to the manger to find the Christ in it, and he was to be the sign. Every circumstance is therefore instructive. The babe was found "wrapped in swaddling clothes." Now, observe, as you look at this infant, that there is not the remotest appearance of temporal power here. Mark the two little puny arms of a little babe that must be carried if it go. Alas, the nations of the earth look for joy in military power. By what means can we make a nation of soldiers? The Prussian method is admirable; we must have thousands upon thousands of armed men, and big cannon and iron-clad vessels to kill and destroy by wholesale. Is it not a nation's pride to be gigantic in arms? What pride flushes the patriot's cheek when he remembers that his nation can murder faster than any

other people. Ah, foolish generation, ye are groping in the flames of hell to find your heaven, raking amid blood and bones for the foul thing which ye call glory. A nation's joy can never lie in the misery of others. Killing is not the path to prosperity; huge armaments are a curse to the nation itself as well as to its neighbours. The joy of a nation is a golden sand over which no stream of blood has ever rippled. It is only found in that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. The weakness of submissive gentleness is true power. Jesus founds his eternal empire not on force but on love. Here, O ye people, see your hope; the mild, pacific prince, whose glory is his self-sacrifice, is our true benefactor.

446. Infidelity, Poor Prospect of

Man is like a prisoner shut up in his cell, a cell all dark and cheerless save that there is a window through which he can gaze upon a glorious landscape. Infidelity comes like a demon into the cell, and with desperate hand blocks up the window, that man may sit for ever in the dark, or at best may have the boasted light of a farthing rushlight, called free-thinking. All that infidelity can tell him is that he will die like a dog. Fine prospect for a man who feels eternity pulsing within his spirit! I know I shall not die like the beast that perisheth; and, let who will propound the theory, my soul sickens and turns with disgust from it, nor would it be possible by the most specious arguments so to pervert the instincts of my nature as to convince me that I shall thus die, and that my soul, like the flame of an out-burnt candle, shall be quenched in utter annihilation. My inmost heart revolts at this degrading slander; she feels an innate nobility that will not allow her to be numbered with the beasts of the field, to die as they must do, without a hope. Oh, miserable prospect! How can men be so earnest in proclaiming their own wretchedness? Enthusiasts for annihilation! Why not fanatics for hell itself? Godliness hath promise of the life that is to come, but infidelity can do nothing better than deny the ennobling revelation of the great Father, and bid us be content with the dark prospect of being exterminated and put out of being. Aspiring, thoughtful, rational men, can ye be content with the howling wildernesses and dreary voids of infidelity? Leave them, I pray you, for the goodly land of the gospel, which floweth with milk and honey; abandon extinction for immortality, renounce perishing for paradise.

447. Infidelity and Superstition Abounding

These are times when scoffers are boundlessly impudent. Did it not make your blood chill when you heard revolutionists in unhappy Paris talk of having "demolished God"? It struck me as almost a sadder thing when I read the proposition of one of their philosophers, who would have them become religious again, that they should bring God back again for ten years at least—an audacious recommendation as blasphemously impertinent as the insolence which had proclaimed the triumph of atheism. But we need not look across the Channel; perhaps they speak more honestly on that side than we do here; for among ourselves we have abounding infidelity, which pretends to reverence Scripture, while it denies its plainest teachings; and we have what is quite as bad, a superstition which thrusts Christ aside for the human priest, and makes the sacraments everything, and simple trust in the great atonement to be as nothing.

448. Influence, Christian

Travelling on the Lake Lugano, one morning, we heard the swell of the song of the nightingale, and the oars were stilled on the blue lake as we listened to the silver sounds. We could not see a

single bird, nor do I know that we wished to see—we were so content with the sweetness of the music: even so it is with our Lord; we may enter a house where he is loved, and we may hear nothing concerning Christ, and yet we may perceive clearly enough that he is there, a holy influence streaming through their actions pervades the household; so that if Jesus be unseen, it is clear that he is not unknown. Go anywhere where Jesus is, and though you do not actually hear his name, yet the sweet influence which flows from his love will be plainly enough discernible.

449. Ingratitude of Despising Christ

Sometimes in our police courts you may have seen an inhuman husband brought before the magistrate for having maltreated the poor unhappy woman who is linked to him for life. The policeman has taken him in the very act of assaulting her, her poor sickly face bears evidence of his brutality: she can scarcely stand, for his cruelty has put her life in jeopardy. Watch her closely. The magistrate asks her to give evidence against the creature who has so cruelly injured her. She weeps and shakes her head, but says not a word. She is asked, "Did he not illtreat you yesterday?" She is long before she speaks, and then not a word is uttered against the husband whom she still loves, though there is nothing lovable about him. She declares that she cannot bear to appear against her husband, and she will not. What a stone must that man's heart be if he does not love her henceforth all her days. But, see a nobler counterpart. There is the Lord whom you have injured by your hard speeches and cruel mockeries. See you not his face all marred with your bruises, yet he does not accuse you to the Father, but when he opens his mouth to speak for sinners, he cries, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He must be ingratitude incarnate who can continue to use him or his cause despitefully. There is no chivalry, nay, there is no manhood in the heart which treats despitefully one who neither provokes nor retaliates.

450. Ingratitude, Sin of

I remember in our Baptist martyrology the story of one of the Baptists of Holland escaping from his persecutors. A river was frozen over, and the good man crossed it safely, but his enemy was of greater bulk, and the ice gave way under him. The Baptist, like a child of God as he was, turned round and rescued his persecutor just as he was sinking beneath the ice to certain death. And what did the wretch do? As soon as ever he was safely on the shore he seized the man who had saved his life, and dragged him off to the prison, from which he was only taken to be put to death! We wonder at such inhumanity; we are indignant at such base returns—but the returns which the ungodly make to God are baser far. I wonder myself as I talk to you, I wonder that I speak so calmly on so terribly humbling a theme; and, remembering our past lives, and our long ingratitude to God, I marvel that we do not turn this place into one vast Bochim, or place of weeping, and mingle our tears in a flood, with expressions of deep shame and self-abhorrence for our dealings towards God.

451. Inner Life, Manifestation of the The divine life is such a thing of force that surrounding circumstances do not operate upon it as you might have supposed. In frosty weather, when we have seen the rivers frozen across, we have been told by peasants that the old spring-head on the side of the hill was flowing on the same as ever. Decorated with icicles up to the edge of the old spout, still the stream gushes out. So a Christian may be placed in the worst imaginable circumstances; he may live in a family so ungodly that the name of Christ is only used to blaspheme with; he may scarcely ever meet with a Christian associate, he may even be denied

the means of grace, the Bible itself may be taken from him, but if the inner life be there, such is the native heat that you cannot freeze it; such is its constant force and power that it will continue flowing still.

452. Insensibility of the Sinner

You may stab a dead man in a thousand places, but he will not cry out. So is it with ungodly men. You may tell them of the love of Christ, the story of which might surely melt a rock, and make the adamant dissolve; but if they feel any emotion it is but for a moment—a little superficial feeling, no sooner begun than ended, and they go their way to forget it all. The love of the bleeding Immanuel is an idle tale to them. Then the preacher may bid Sinai thunder with all its mighty peals; God himself may be heard in judgments loud and terrible; but, while the forests bow and the rocks are shivered, the obdurate heart remains unmoved. Defiance is hurled by unbelief against Omnipotence itself. In vain we talk of the terrors of God and the judgment to come! In vain we poor preachers endeavour to convey our warning messages in the most affectionate and pathetic terms! Charm we ever so wisely, the deaf adder will not hear, and we go back to our Master and lament, "Who hath believed our report, to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" An awful insensibility has stolen over the natural heart of man, and therefore it is that, though poisoned through and through with the venom of sin, with Jesus waiting to heal, men crowd not to find the remedy.

453. Insignificance of Man a Plea for Mercy

You could not see on your road home tonight a poor fainting woman, and pass her by, I trust. You could not have brought in before your presence a half-starved child, that could not drag its weary limbs along, without feeling that you must give relief. The mere sight of weakness draws pity. It is said that, when a certain town was being sacked, one of the rough soldiery spared a little child, because it said, "Please, sir, don't kill me, I am so little," and the rough warrior felt the power of the plea. You may yourselves just plead thus with God. "O God, do not destroy me! I deserve it, but, oh! I am so little! Turn thy power upon some greater thing, and let thy bowels move with compassion towards me!"

454. Instruments, Weakness of, used by God

Remember the Greeks when they attacked old Troy: ye have the record in ancient story. They waited many years till their ships had well nigh rotted on the seas, but the prowess of Hector and the armed men of Troy kept back the "King of men," and all the hosts of the avengers. Suppose that after nine years had dragged along their weary length the chiefs of the Greeks had said, "It is of no avail, the city is impregnable! O Pelasgi, back to your fair lands washed by the blue Ægean, you will never subdue the valour of Ilium." No; but they persevered in the weary siege, with feats of strength and schemes of art, till at last they saw the city burned and heard the dire lament: "Troy was, but is no more." Let us still continue to attack the adversary. We are few, but strength lies not in numbers. The Eternal One has used the few where he has put aside the many. In our weakness lies part of our adaptation to the divine work; only let us gather up fresh faith, and renew our courage and industry, and we shall see greater things than these.

455. Instrumentalities, Humble, not to be Despised

See the gardeners going down to the pond, and dipping in their watering-pots to carry the refreshing liquid to the flowers. A child comes into the garden and wishes to help, and yonder is a little watering-pot for him. Now, see that little waterpot, though it does not carry so much, yet carries the same water; and it does not make any difference to the half-dozen flowers which get that water, whether it came out of the big pot or the little pot, so long as it is the same water, and they get it. You who are like children in God's church, you who do not know much, yet try and tell to others what you do know, and if it be the same gospel truth, and it be blest by the same Spirit, it will not matter to the souls who get blessed by you whether they were blessed by a man of one or ten talents. What difference will it make to me whether I was converted to God by means of a poor woman who was never made a blessing to anybody else, or by one who had brought his thousands to the Saviour's feet?

456. Intercession, Privilege of

O priceless grace; if thou, O believer, knowest how to ask by faith, thou mayst hand out to thy brethren wealth more precious than the gold of Ophir; for intercession is the key of the ivory palaces wherein are contained the boundless treasures of God. Saints in intercession reach a place where angels cannot stand. Those holy beings rejoice over penitent sinners, but we do not read of their being admitted as suppliants for the saints. Yet we, imperfect as we are, have this favour, we are permitted to open our mouth before the Lord for the sick and for the tried, for the troubled and for the downcast, with the assurance that whatsoever we shall ask in prayer believing we shall receive.

457. Intimacy with Christ

Even in our own days great men are not readily to be come at. There are so many back stairs to be climbed before you can reach the official who might have helped you, so many subalterns to be parleyed with, and servants to be passed by, that there is no coming at your object. The good men may be affable enough themselves, but they remind us of the old Russian fable of the hospitable householder in a village, who was willing enough to help all the poor who came to his door, but he kept so many big dogs loose in his yard that nobody was able to get up to the threshold, and therefore his personal affability was of no service to the wanderers. It is not so with our Master. Though he is greater than the greatest, and higher than the highest, he has been pleased to put out of the way everything which might keep the sinner from entering into his halls of gracious entertainment. From his lips we hear no threatenings against intrusion, but hundreds of invitations to the nearest and dearest intimacy. Jesus is to be approached, not now and then, but at all times, and not by some favoured few, but by all in whose hearts his Holy Spirit has kindled the desire to enter into his secret presence.

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458. Jealousy of God That is a very wonderful and suggestive expression—"a jealous God." See that it be engraven on your hearts. Jesus will not endure it that those of us who love him should divide our hearts between him and something else. The love which is strong as death is linked with a jealousy cruel as the grave, "the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame." The royal word to the spouse is, "Forget also thine own people and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." Of course, beloved, the Master never condemns that proper natural affection which we are bound to give, and which it is a part of our sanctification to give in its due and proper proportion to those who are related to us. Besides, we are bound to love all the saints, and all mankind in their proper place and measure. But there is a love which is for the Master alone. Inside the heart there must be a sanctum sanctorum, within the veil, where he himself alone must shine like the Shechinah, and reign on the mercy-seat. There must be a glorious high throne within our spirits, where the true Solomon alone must sit; the lions of watchful zeal must guard each step of it. There must he, the King in his beauty, sit enthroned, sole monarch of the heart's affection.

459. Jesus, Fulness of In the sacred armoury of the Son of David behold your battle-axe and your weapons of war; in the stores of him who is greater than Aaron see the robes in which to fulfil your priesthood; in the wounds of Jesus behold the power with which you may become a living sacrifice. If you would glow like a seraph, and serve like an apostle, behold the grace awaiting you in Jesus. If you would go from strength to strength, climbing the loftiest summits of holiness, behold grace upon grace prepared for you. If you are straitened, it will not be in Christ; if there be any bound to your holy attainments, it is set by yourself. The infinite God himself gives himself to you in the person of his dear Son, and he saith to you, "All things are yours." "The Lord is the portion of your inheritance and of your cup." Infinity is ours. He who gave us his own Son has in that very deed given us all things. Hath he not said, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it"?

460. Jesus, Name of, the Sweetest

Give me that harp and let my fingers never leave its strings, the harp whose strings resound the love of Christ alone. To harp upon the name of Jesus is the blessed monotony of a true ministry, a monotony more full of variety than all other subjects besides. When Jesus is the first, the midst, and the last, yea, all in all, then do we make full proof of our ministry. We do well when we are able to say, "Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum, we have such a high priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." May Christ be "all in all" in all our ministries, for so shall we prove that God hath called us to testify concerning his son Jesus.

461. Jewels, Gathering of the

What joy when altogether the jewels shall be put into the casket! Think of what they shall be gathered from! From poverty, from sickness, from beds of dust and silent clay they shall be

gathered; from slander and rebuke, from persecution, and from suffering, from the lion's jaws, and from the flames they shall be gathered, ten thousand times ten thousand of them, from sin and suffering to sin and suffer no more.

462. Joy connected with Strength A joyous man, such I have now in my mind's eye, is to all intents and purposes a strong man. He is strong in a calm, restful manner. Whatever happens he is not ruffled or disturbed. He is not afraid of evil tidings, his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord. The ruffled man is ever weak. He is in a hurry, and doth things ill. The man full of joy within is quiet, he bides his time and croucheth in the fulness of his strength. Such a man, though he is humble, is firm and stedfast; he is not carried away with every wind, or bowed by every breeze; he knows what he knows, and holds what he holds, and the golden anchor of his hope entereth within the veil, and holds him fast. His strength is not pretentious but real. The happiness arising from communion with God breeds in him no boastfulness; he does not talk of what he can do, but he does it; he does not say what he could bear, but he bears all that comes. He does not himself always know what he could do; his weakness is the more apparent to himself because of the strength which the Holy Ghost puts upon him; but when the time comes, his weakness only illustrates the divine might, while the man goes calmly on, conquering and to conquer. His inner light makes him independent of the outward sun; his secret granaries make him independent of the outer harvest; his inward fountains place him beyond dread though the brook Cherith may dry up; he is independent of men and angels, and fearless of devils; all creatures may turn against him if they please, but since God himself is his exceeding joy, he will not miss their love or mourn their hate. He standeth where others fall, he sings where others weep, he wins where others fly, he glorifies his God where others bring dishonour oh themselves and on the sacred name God grant us the inward joy which arises from real strength, and is so linked with it as to be in part its cause.

463. Joy, Heavenly and Earthly, Compared The wine pressed from the grapes of Sodom may sparkle and foam, but it is bitterness in the end, and the dregs thereof are death; only that which comes from the clusters of Eshcol is the true wine of the kingdom, making glad the heart of God and man. Holy joy is the joy of heaven, and that, be ye sure, is the very cream of joy. The joy of sin is a fire-fountain, having its source in the burning soil of hell, maddening and consuming those who drink its fire-water; of such delights we desire not to drink. It were to be worse than damned to be happy in sin, since it is the beginning of grace to be wretched in sin, and the consummation of grace to be wholly escaped from sin, and to shudder even at the thought of it. It is hell to live in sin and misery, it is a deep lower still when men could fashion a joy in sin. God save us from unholy peace and unholy joy!

464. Joy, Heavenly and Earthly, Contrasted

Weigh for one moment your so-called joy with ours, and put your peace as you conceive of peace into the scale against ours. Judge ye now. Is your joy as pure? Has it no alloy? Are your cups without dregs, and your delights without bitterness? Is it as lasting as ours? Will it never be cut off? Does your sun never go down? Do your riches never take to themselves wings and fly away? Does no moth corrupt, no thief break through and steal? Is it as powerful to fill the heart at all times? Does it never pall? Are you never weary of your delights? Can you live upon them for ever, and wish no higher good than to have them continued through eternity? Do your pleasures ennoble and exalt? Are you led by them ever higher and higher? Do they elevate you as a man,

and develop every higher power and faculty of your being? Do they give you a power and a strength in the path of duty, and never lead astray to folly? Or are they prone to spread snares for your feet, and to beguile you into evil ways? Ponder these questions, and, if I mistake not, you will learn to despise your present state, and seek that joy and peace which come through believing in Jesus.

465. Joy in the Love of God

I remember well, when I was under a sense of sin, looking at a dog and wishing I were such as he, that I might die without fear of judgment hereafter, for it seemed so awful a thing to live on for ever as a sinner; but now, on the other hand, I have sometimes looked at the happiest animals, and I have said to myself, "Ah, but yonder poor creature does not know the love of God, and how thankful I am to God that he has given me the capacity to know himself." Why, if I could hear of an angel in heaven who did not know the love of God, I should pity him. There are kings and mighty emperors who know not the Lord's love, and what poor, pitiable creatures they are. But as for you who rejoice in divine love, I would have you go in the darkest alley if you are forced to live there, and undergo the most wearisome toil if that be your lot—ay, and go home to a persecuting husband, or a churlish father, and yet hear melodious music ringing in your hearts, for "God, even our Father, which hath loved us, hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace." This is enough to make the wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose.

466. Joy of the Believer, Increasing

Young Christian, you do not know what is before you. There is the goodly land, and it is all yours. Do not imagine that you are always to be a babe. You shall grow and become a man, yea, a father, I hope, in Israel. Imagine not that you are always to be that little green blade which is peeping up out of the cold sod; you shall be one day the corn in the ear: yea, you shall one day be the golden corn which bends its head through its ripeness, and the glad harvest-homes shall be shouted over you. You shall not always be weak, and feeble, and afraid to come near. Oh! you would not know yourself if you could see what you will be! The songs you are yet to sing, the grapes of Eshcol you are yet to pluck, the fair days of joy that you are yet to spend, the banquetings and feasting, the real enjoyments which you are yet to know this side of the grave, might well make you happy if you could but foretaste them. You shall go forth. Only get Christ, and there is no end to your happiness. Get him, like a sun, and your light shall never be put out.

467. Judas, Character of May I venture to remind you of one who had the very closest intimacy with Christ in the days of his public ministry; he was so trusted by the Saviour that he kept the little treasury in which Christ put, when there were any, the excesses, the excessive gifts of charity; he was the treasurer of the little company; you know him—Judas. He had been with Jesus almost everywhere; he had been his familiar friend and acquaintance, and when he dipped the bread with him in the sop, it was but an indication of the close association which had been preserved between the Divine Master and a creature unworthy of such privilege. Yet there was never such a child of perdition as Judas, the friend and acquaintance of Christ; never one sinks lower in the depths of divine wrath, with so huge a millstone about his neck, as this man with whom Christ took such sweet counsel, and went to the house of God in company. The same sun ripens the corn and the poppies. This man was ripened in guilt by the same external process that ripened others in holiness.

468. Judgment, Solemnity of

Like Aaron's rod, the judgment hour swallows up every other hour. We hear of hours that have been big with the fate of nations, hours in which the welfare of millions trembled in the balances, hours in which for peace or war the die must be cast, hours that have been called crises of history; and we are apt to think that frequently periods such as this occur in the world's history: but here is the culminating crisis of all, here is the iron hour of severity, the golden hour of truth, the clear sapphire hour of manifestations. In that august hour there shall be proclamation made of the impartial decisions of the Lord Christ with regard to all the souls and bodies of men. Oh, what an hour is this which cometh on apace! My dear brethren, now and then I covet the tongue of the eloquent, and now I do so that I might on such a theme as this fire your imaginations and inflame your hearts; but let me pray you assist me now for a moment, and since this hour cometh, try to think it very very near.

469. Judgment Day, Terrors of

If I could take you just outside the garden wall, I would let you see a heap of weeds and slips that are taken from the vine, and there they are heaped together with a little straw, and the gardener burns them. The other branches, with their purple clusters, are in honour, but these dishonoured things are burnt outside the gate. I cannot picture to you that day of doom, that fate tremendous which shall come upon fruitless branches of the spiritual vine—outside the gate, with a great gulf fixed between them and heaven, where the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." If such people are cast away, what will become of some of you? If these good people who were in Christ, in a way, still perish, because they brought forth no fruit, O ye who are like hemlock in the furrows of the field, ye who produce the grapes of Gomorrah and the apples of Sodom, what shall be your doom in the day of account when the Master shall come forth in robes of judgment to execute righteousness among the sons of men?

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470. Kindness of God As we were sitting by the Lake of Lucerne, the rugged old Pilatus was suddenly covered with blackness, forth flashed the forked lightning, followed by sharp cracks of thunder reverberated in long peals, enough to let us know that the artillery of heaven had not spent its might, and that the arsenals of the storm were as fully stored as ever; yet as we looked around and saw the sun smiling forth again over the glorious hills, his beams flashing brightly upon the countless wavelets of the lake, vegetation freshened by the newly-fallen shower, glistening with rain drops as with sparkling diamonds and man and beast rejoicing in the clear shining and the cool air, we could not but feel that the stern Lord of Tempests was infinitely kind.

471. Kingdom of Christ Advancing

Walk in your gardens to-day, when all the fruit trees are opening their blossoms and pouring forth their perfumes on the air, and the birds are at the highest point of song, and you will think, "Yes, it has surely come, spring smiles on us after all." The cold, blustering winds and the cold, dark nights could not prevent it: the vernal blossoms are on every bough. Here is spring, and in its right hand it holds a faithful promise of the coming summer. We cannot say that in any one day in all these last months spring seemed to make any great advance; you cannot put your finger upon a certain day or hour, and say, "Now the weather is manifestly turning;" but the sweet days of bud and blossom have been introduced with a beautiful gentleness and growth. Even when the days lengthened we saw no great progress, for the cold strengthened, and if we enjoyed a mild day, there came a biting frost at night, but, surely and steadily, the veins of the trees were filled with the life-blood of sap, and the buds first swelled and then revealed their glories, while mother earth yielded to the roots of plants and trees fresh vigour, and helped them to put on their green array; and now we look for the beauties of summer, and the golden sheaves of autumn, with sure and certain hope. So Christ's reigning is woven into the warp and woof of providence, and though he has long been lifted on high, and has not yet drawn all men unto him, it is coming, and if we have faith we may almost see it. His kingdom is coming; the time of the singing birds is drawing near.

472. Kingdom of Christ, Coming of

"Up, guards, and at them!" was said in the day of battle, and I may still say it to every Christian. In these days, when popery gathers her might, and infidelity shoots forth her poisoned arrows, let none of us be wanting in the day of battle, lest the angels should say, as said the angel of the Lord, "Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." The best thing to do for truth and righteousness is to promote personal piety, and it will bring forth the outgrowth of personal effort. We shall not bless the world by big schemes, mighty theories, gigantic plans. Little by little grows the coral reef on which afterwards gardens are to be planted. Little by little must the kingdom come, each man bringing his mite and laying it down at Jesus' feet. So breaks the light. Beam by beam it comes. One by one come the arrows from the bow of the sun, and at last darkness flies. So must break the everlasting morn. But let us be glad. If the work be slow it is sure. God will see

the work accomplished, and when the morning cometh the night shall not succeed it, but it shall scatter the darkness for ever. The sun of righteousness goeth no more down. The day of the world's morning shall not tarry. The time of her halcyon days shall come, when the light of the sun shall be as the light of seven days, and the Lord God shall dwell among men, and manifest his glory to the sons of men.

473. Kinship of Trouble When you do not know where you are going, and have only half an idea that you are steering right, how cheerfully you make a friend of any poor labouring man who is going your way! If it be a rough-looking navvy, it does not matter, he is in the same distress, and you salute him. There is a close kinship in trouble. There are no gentlemen on board sinking ships: every man then is taken for what he is practically worth. When Christians are in the darkness of affliction, it is delightful to observe how "they that fear the Lord speak often one to another." Some poor old woman who knows the things of God by experience, becomes of more value to you in your hour of grief than the dainty gentleman whose company bewitched you aforetime.

474. Knowledge, The Best

It is coming on dark, and we are lost among the mountains. There is an awful precipice there, a quarter of a mile sharp down. There is a bog over yonder, and if a man once gets into it he will never get out again. There is a wood yonder, and if one should be lost in its tangled paths he will certainly not find his way out till the rising of the sun. What do we want just now? Why, we want some one who will tell us the way. Our friend the philosopher, with whom we talked half-an-hour ago, was very valuable to us then, and gave us a deal of information; but, as he does not happen to know the way, we would sooner have the poorest peasant-lad that feeds the sheep upon the hills for a companion than we would that man. The classic scholar who has been repeating to us some admirable lines from Horace, and delighting us with an admirable quotation from some Greek epic, did very well indeed for us while we could see our path and had hope of reaching our home by nightfall; but now the poorest lass with uncombed hair, who can just point the way to the cottage where we may rest tonight will be of more value to us than he. What we want is to know the way. This is just the case, dear friends, of poor fallen humanity. The want of mankind is not the refined prelection of the learned, nor the acute discussion of the polemic; we simply want some one, be it a lad or be it a lass, to show us the way, and the most precious person you and I have seen, or ever shall see, will be the person who shall be blessed and honoured of God to say to us, "Behold the way to God, to life, to salvation, and to heaven."

475. Knowledge of Christ Eagerly Desired

Suppose that as you wake up one morning you find lying upon your pillow a precious love-token from your unknown friend, a ring sparkling with jewels, and engraved with a tender inscription, a bouquet of flowers bound about with a love-motto! Your curiosity now knows no bounds. But you are informed that this wondrous being has not only done for you what you have seen, but a thousand deeds of love which you did not see, which were higher and greater still as proofs of his affection. You are told that he was wounded, and imprisoned, and scourged for your sake, for he had a love to you so great that death itself could not overcome it; you are informed that he is every moment occupied in your interests, because he has sworn by himself that where he is there you shall be; his honours you shall share, and of his happiness you shall be the crown. Why methinks you would say, "Tell me, men and women, any of you who know him, tell me who he is and what

he is;" and if they said, "But it is enough for you to know that he loves you, and to have daily proofs of his goodness," you would say, "No; these love-tokens increase my thirst. If ye see him, tell him I am sick of love. The flagons which he sends me, and the love-tokens which he gives me, they stay me for awhile with the assurance of his affection, but they only impel me onward with the more unconquerable desire that I may know him. I must know him; I cannot live without knowing him. His goodness makes me thirst, and pant, and faint, and even die that I may know him."

476. Knowledge of Christ, the Foundation of Preaching When I preach Christ and his salvation to you I do not preach what I learned in a college or was taught by men: I preach to you what I would die for; what is the chief joy of my soul; what I know, and believe, and have experienced. Years ago I was under the greatest conceivable darkness of spirit. I was but a lad, but my sin haunted me. I had such an idea of the guilt of my past life that my heart was heavy within me, and at intervals I was crushed down with fear. I would get away into corners and cry and pray, when no one saw me, and I laboured under the belief that everybody else might be saved, but that I should perish. Now, I heard of Jesus Christ, that he was able to put away sin at once from any one who simply looked to him, and trusted him. I heard that, and I was enabled by divine grace, as soon as I heard it, to trust the Saviour. I did there and then rest the whole weight of my soul for time and eternity upon the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God; and my witness is that, in one single moment a load was rolled from off my spirit, and as swiftly as a flash of lightning I passed from darkness into light, from misery into joy. From that hour I bless God that, being not exempt from trouble, and especially not free from a tendency to despondency, which is always with me, I yet rejoice, and will rejoice, and am happy, unspeakably happy, in resting upon Jesus Christ. Moreover, I have found that those points of my character which were most weak have been strengthened, while strong passions have been subdued; propensities have been kept under, and new principles have been implanted. I am changed: I am as different from what I was as a man could be who had been annihilated and had then been made again. Nor do I claim the credit for this—far from it. God has done great things for me, but he has done the same for others, and is willing to do it for any soul that seeks his face. He is willing to do it for every seeker here. There is such a thing as a new heart and a right spirit; I know there is. There is such a thing as perfect happiness in death, ay, and even a longing to depart. I know that peace with God is to be had, for I have felt it, and bear witness to it. Do you reject my witness? Peradventure, you doubt my truthfulness. Then I must endure your injustice: for I know that I lie not; but, if my character be right, and if you think I speak the truth, then I ask you to receive the witness I bear. I wish I could bear it more judiciously and more earnestly, but I do bear it in all sincerity, with this desire in my soul—I would that not only some of you, but all that hear me this day, knew the preciousness of Christ Jesus my Lord, and understood that beneath God's heaven there is nothing so blessed as to be resting upon the blood and merits of the once crucified but now exalted Saviour.

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477. Laziness, unworthy of the Christian

Laziness never yet had communion with Christ. Those who walk with Christ must walk swiftly. Jesus is no idler or loiterer; he is about his Father's business, and you must march with quick step if you would keep pace with him. As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, are sluggards to active persons. Those who have much to do have no fellowship with gossips, who drop in to while away the hours with chat. Jesus has no fellowship with you, who care not for souls that are perishing. He is incessantly active, and so must you be if you would know his love. There is a fierce furnace heat beating upon everything to-day: men are toiling hard to hold their own, and Jesus must not be served by slothful hearts. I am sure that I err not from his mind, when I say to you, beloved, if you would know the Beloved fully you must get up early and go afield with him to work with him. Your joy shall be in spending and being spent for him.

478. Leaning on the Beloved

Believe me, no sacred work can long be continued with energy except in this spirit, for flesh flags, and even the spirit languishes except there be the constant leaning upon the Beloved. As for you, men of business, you with your families, and with your shops, and with your fields, and your enterprises, you will find it poor living unless you evermore lean on your Beloved in all things. If you can bring your daily cares, your domestic troubles, your family sicknesses, your personal infirmities, your losses and your crosses, if you can bring all things to Jesus it will be easy and happy living. Even the furnace itself, when the coals glow most, is cool and comfortable as a royal chamber spread for banqueting with the king when the soul reclines on the bosom of divine love.

479. Lethargy, Trouble Arousing from

Staying for awhile in the valley of Aosta, in Northern Italy, we found the air to be heavy, close, and humid with pestilential exhalations. We were oppressed and feverish—one's life did not seem worth a pin. We could not breath freely, our lungs had a sense of having a hundred atmospheres piled upon them. Presently, at midday, there came a thunder-clap, attended by big drops of rain, and a stiff gale of wind, which grew into a perfect tornado, tearing down the trees; then followed what the poet calls "sonorous hail," and then again the lightning flash, and the thunder peal on peal echoing along the Alps. But how delightful was the effect, how we all went out upon the verandah to look at the lightning, and enjoy the music of the thunder! How cool the air and bracing! How delightful to walk out in the cool evening after the storm! Then you could breathe and feel a joy in life. Full often it is thus with the Christian after trouble. He has grown to be careless, lethargic, feverish, heavy, and ready to die, and just then he has been assailed by trouble, thundering threatenings have rolled from God's mouth, flashes of lightning have darted from providence: the property vanished, the wife died, the children were buried, trouble followed trouble, and then the man has turned to God, and though his face was wet with tears of repentance, yet he has felt his spirit to be remarkably restored. When he goes up to the house of

God it is far more sweet to hear the word than aforetime. He could not pray before, but now he leans his head on Jesus' bosom, and pours out his soul in fellowship. Eternity now exerts its heavenly attractions, and the man is saved from himself.

480. Life, A Frivolous

Some individuals appear to have a brain-case which was never properly filled. Like butterflies, they flit from flower to flower, but gather no honey. Look at the life of many in The West End, who pass all their existence in dressing and undressing, distributing bits of cardboard, riding in carriages, bowing and scraping, and eating and drinking. These notable do-nothings remind me of a set of butterflies flitting about a field of poppies. Nor are the poorer districts clear of such beings. Note the many fellows who go loafing from public-house to public-house, lolling and dawdling about from morning till night, as if they had nothing whatever to live for but to talk and booze. I hope that is not the case with any of you; if so, let me remind you that you may live in jest but you will have to die in earnest. You may waste this life in frivolity, but you will have to spend the next in eternal damnation. The moth may play, but the candle burns it, and then it suffers in earnest. You will come to be earnest enough when you wake up and find yourself condemned of God. Oh, if thou be a fool, or have been a fool up to this moment, may God sober thee, and make thee wise to number thy days.

481. Life Beginning in Trouble, Ending in Peace Have you not often seen a day which early in the morning was heavy with fog and rain? As it came on we waited patiently and anxiously, for we wished for fine weather; but those incessant drops of rain still fell. We looked to the wind quarter, and to the rain quarter, we looked with hope and then with fear, but the drops fell incessantly, and there seemed to be no chance of intermission; and yet ere noon has come we have seen the sun shining brightly, and we have heard the birds singing more sweetly, and it has been fair weather after rain. Take that morning as a prophecy to your doubting, poor troubled soul, of what your path in life will yet be.

482. Life, Changes in Our life is like an April day, the sunshine alternates with the shower; or like each day of all the year, the morning and the evening are needful to complete it. Quick on the heels of light treads the darkness, followed with equal haste by light again. The sun's rule, at this golden hour, is but temporary; he must abdicate in favour of the usurping stars, but they, in their turn, must give way before his lordly presence yet again. This world, which is our inn, owns to the sign of the "Chequers"—the blacks and whites are everywhere. We can be sure of nothing between here and heaven of the things which are seen; but of this we may be certain, that underneath all the outward change there is the immutable love of God towards his people, and that, after all, the change lies only in the seeming things, not in the things which truly are; for the things which are not seen are eternal, and changes come not there; it is but in the things which are seen that the change occurs. Let us set the less store by earth, because its fashion abides not. Let us prize heaven more, because it cannot fade.

483. Life, Human and Divine

What life was that which Father Adam conferred upon thy sons and daughters? Why, only life terrestrial, a bubble life, that melted and disappeared. But Jesus, as he comes again, will find none of his children dead, none of his sons and daughters lost; because he lives, they live also, for he is

the everlasting Father, and makes those to have everlasting life who live and breathe through him.

484. Life, Frailty of

You stand over the mouth of hell upon a single plank, and that plank is rotten. You hang over the jaws of perdition by a solitary rope, and the strands of that rope are snapping one by one. Frailer than the spider's web is your life, and yet that is the only thing which divides you from a world of despair. The slightest insect commissioned by God's providence may end your unhappy life. You know not where, or when, or how disease may overtake you. Death often floats in the atmosphere of the house of God. He may be looking through those stony eye-holes. The skeleton monarch may be looking at and marking you as his prey. Could Xerxes stand here tonight, could he have a little Christianity mingled with his philosophy, then doubtless the tears he wept as he saw his army, and remembered that in fifty years all would be dead, were nothing to those he would weep as he remembered that thousands this day found within the walls of churches and chapels, and tens of thousands who are not found in any sanctuary, within less time than that will be not only dead but damned!

485. Life, Lengthy of, a Trial

I look with admiration upon brethren who have remained faithful to God for sixty or seventy years. It seems to me that the length of the Christian's life is, in itself, oftentimes a very severe trial. A man might stand at the stake and burn for a few minutes, but it is hanging up over a slow fire—who can bear that? To do one brave and generous action, this seems simple enough; but to stand on the watchtower day and night, always vigilant; watching, lest the foe surprise us; watching, lest our hearts betray us; watching unto prayer, that we may keep ourselves in the love of God. Oh! this is a work, this is a labour which only grace can help us to perform. But here is the comfort. No length of days can exhaust the believer's patience or peril his spiritual life, because the just shall live by faith.

486. Life the only time to seek Salvation

Oh! bethink you, each one of you, there is but one hope, and that one hope lost, it is gone for ever. Defeated in one battle, a commander attempts another, and hopes that he may yet win the campaign. Your life is your one fight, and if it be lost it is lost for aye. The man who was bankrupt yesterday commences again in business with good heart, and hopes that he may yet succeed; but in the business of this mortal life, if you are found bankrupt, you are bankrupt for ever and ever. I do therefore charge you by the living God, before whom I stand, and before whom I may have to give an account of this day's preaching ere another day's sun shall shine, I charge you see to your own salvation.

487. Life, Trusting in Christ a Sign of

Suppose there is a person here who does not exactly know his age, and he wants to find the register of his birth, and he has tried and cannot find it. Now, what is the inference that he draws from his not being able to tell the day of his birth? Well, I do not know what the inference may be, but I will tell you one inference he does not draw. He does not say, therefore, "I am not alive." If he did, he would be an idiot, for if the man is alive he is alive, whether he knows his birthday or not. And if the man really trusts in Jesus, and is alive from the dead, he is a saved soul, whether he

knows exactly when and where he was saved or not.

488. Life, Spiritual, Prayer a Sign of

While a man can pray he is never far from light; he is at the window, though, perhaps, as yet the curtains are not drawn aside. The man who can pray has the clue in his hand by which to escape from the labyrinth of affliction. Like the trees in winter, we may say of the praying man, when his heart is greatly troubled, "his substance is in him, though he has lost his leaves." Prayer is the soul's breath, and if it breathes it lives, and, living, it will gather strength again. A man must have true and eternal life within him while he can continue still to pray, and while there is such life there is assured hope.

489. Life, Spiritual, the Guarantee of Growth The young beginner in grace should feel that it will not be impossible for him to grow to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus, because grace has quickened him and made him a babe. That is the greatest thing, to make me alive at all. When grace has gone so far as to give me life, and put me in the family, I need not fear but what grace will nurture that; life, and ultimately bring me to perfection. If I find myself growing in God's garden, though I be the tiniest plant in all the bed, yet it is such a mercy to be in the garden at all—I who was a wild, rank weed out in the wilderness before—that I will not doubt but what he will water me when I need it, and that he will tend and care for me till I shall come to perfection.

490. Lifelessness of the Church Our churches seem to be half alive. It is a dreadful thing to read of the punishment practised by ancient tyrants when they tied a living man to a corpse, and he had to go about with this corpse strapped to him, and rotting under his nostrils, and yet that is too often the condition of the living ones in our churches: they are bound by ties of church union to a portion of the church which is spiritually dead, though not so manifestly corrupt as to render it possible for us to cut it off. The tares, which we may not root up, hamper and dwarf the wheat. O God, the Holy Ghost, make the church alive right through, from the crown of its head to the soul of its foot, so that the whole church may cry continually, "Let God be magnified."

491. Light, Air, and Water, Emblems of Christ

You will have observed that all the good things which God has made are diffusive. There is light; you cannot confine light within narrow limits. Suppose we were to grow so bigoted and conceited as to conceive that we had all the light in the world inside the Tabernacle. We might have iron shutters made to keep the light in, yet it is very probable that the light would not agree with our bigotry, and would not come in at all, but leave us in the dark for wanting to confine it. With splendid mirrors, Turkey carpets, jewellery, fine pictures, rare statuary, you may court the light to come into palatial halls, it comes, it is true, but as it enters it whispers, "And I passed through the iron grating of a prison, just now. I shone upon the poor cottager beneath the rude thatched roof, I streamed through the window out of which half the glass was gone, and gleamed as cheerily and willingly upon the rags of poverty as in these marble halls." You cannot clip the wings of the morning, or monopolize the golden rays of the sun. What a space the light has traversed, doing good. Millions of miles it has come streaming from the sun, and yet further from yonder fixed star. O light! why couldst thou not be contented with thine own sphere, why journey so far from home? Missionary rays come to us from so vast a distance that they must have been hundreds of years in reaching us, and yet their mission is not over, for they flash on to yet remoter worlds. So with the

air; as far as the world is concerned, the air will throw itself down the shaft of the deepest coal pit, climb the loftiest Alp, and although men madly strive to shut it out, it will thrust itself into the fever lair and cool the brow of cholera. So with water. Here it comes dropping from every inch of the cloudy sky, flooding the streets, flushing the foul sewers, and soaking into the dry soil. Everywhere it will come, for water claims to have its influence everywhere felt. Fire, too, who can bind its giant hands? The king cannot claim it as a royal perquisite. Among those few sticks which the widow woman with the red cloak has been gathering in the wood, it burns as readily as in Her Majesty's palace. It is the nature of Jesus to diffuse himself; it is his life to do good.

492. Light, Every Christian a In Eastern dwellings it would be necessary, if you lost a piece of money and wanted to find it, to light a candle at any time; for in our Saviour's day glass was not used, and the windows of houses were only little slits in the side of the wall, and the rooms were very dark. Almost all the Oriental houses are very dark to this day, and if anything be dropped as small as a piece of silver, it must be looked for with a candle even at high noon. Now, the sphere in which the church moves here on earth is a dim twilight of mental ignorance, and moral darkness, and in order to find a lost soul light must be brought to bear upon it. The Holy Spirit uses the light of the gospel; he convinces men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come. The woman lit a candle, and even thus the Holy Spirit lights up some chosen man whom he makes to be a light in the world. He calls to himself whomsoever he wills, and makes him a lamp to shine upon the people. Such a man will have to be consumed in his calling, like a candle, he will be burnt up in life-giving. Earnest zeal and laborious self-sacrifice will eat him up. So may this church, and every church of God, be continually using up her anointed man and women, who shall be as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, to find out lost souls.

493. Light from Christ

Light! oh, how precious would it be to you, if you were immured in one of those prisons which we have seen at Venice, below the water's level, deep down, with winding passages, where even a refracted ray of light could never reach the prisoner, where he sat alone and felt for the wall, but could see nothing. "Truly," as Solomon says, "the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Now, the soul has no light, no true light, no heavenly light but what Jesus brings. When a spirit is once made to feel its guilt, it is shut up in prison until Christ brings it light in the darkness of its dismay. There is no hope to a convicted spirit till Jesus shows his atoning blood; there is no clear knowledge of the way of salvation till Christ brings the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in his own face. You who love him know what brightness he has given to you, what light has irradiated your once dark spirit since you have known him, and how your heart has laughed for very joy because he has turned again your captivity, and given you to rejoice in the light of his countenance.

494. Light, Sowing of The sun, like a sower, scatters broadcast his beams of light upon the once dark earth. Look up at night upon the sky bespangled with stars, and it seemeth as though God scattered them like gold-dust upon the floor of heaven in picturesque irregularity, thereby sowing light. Or if you want a fact which comes nearer to the sowing of light literally than anything which our poets have written, think of our vast coal-beds which are literally so much sown light. The sun shone upon primeval forests, and the monstrous; ferns grew and expanded under the quickening influence. They fell, as fall the leaves of chestnut and of oak in these autumns of our latter days,

and there they lie stored deep down in the great cellars of nature, for man's use; so much sown light, I say, which springs up beneath the hand of man in harvests of flame, which flood our streets with light, and cheer our hearths with heat. Sown light, then, is neither unpoetical nor yet altogether unliteral. There is such a thing as a matter-of-fact, and we may use the expression rightly enough, without grotesqueness of metaphor. Understand, then, that happiness, joy, gladness, symbolised by light, have been sown by God in fields that will surely yield their harvest for all those whom by his grace he has made upright in heart.

495. Light, Walking in

I cannot dwell in the sun, it is too bright a place for my residence, unless I shall be transformed, like Uriel, Milton's angel, who could dwell in the midst of the blaze of its excessive glory, but I can walk in the light of the sun though I cannot dwell in it; and so God is the light, he is himself the sun, and I can walk in the light as he is in the light, though I cannot attain to the same degree of perfection, and excellence, and purity, and truth, in which the Lord himself resides. Trapp is always for giving us truth in a way in which we can remember it, so he says we are to be in the light as God is in the light for quality, but not for equality; we are to have the same light and as truly to have it and walk in it as God does, though as for equality with God in his holiness and perfection, that must be left until we cross the Jordan and enter into the perfection of the Most High.

496. Likeness to Christ

Behold from heaven's mint golden pieces of inestimable value are sent forth, and each one bears the image and superscription of the Son of God. The face of Jesus is more lovely to God than all the worlds, his eyes are brighter than the stars, his voice is sweeter than bliss; therefore doth the Father will to have his Son's beauty reflected in ten thousand mirrors in saints made like to him, and his praises chanted by myriads of voices of those who love him, because his blood has saved them.

497. Likeness to Christ in Death and Glory

You see that creeping worm, how contemptible is its appearance! You wish to sweep it away; that is the beginning of the thing. You see that insect with gorgeous wings playing in the sunbeams, sipping at the flower bells, and full of happiness and life; that is the end thereof. That worm, that caterpillar, that maggot, if you will, is yourself; and you are to be content with that until you be wrapped up in the chrysalis of death; but you cannot tell what you shall be after death. All that we know is that when Christ shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Be content to be like him, a worm, a caterpillar in the beginning, that like him you may be satisfied when you wake up in his present likeness. Again, you see that rough-looking diamond; it is put upon the wheel of the lapidary. With much care he begins to use it, and to cut it on all sides. It loses much—much that seemed costly to itself. Do you see it? The king is to be crowned, the diadem is put upon the monarch's head with the trumpet's joyful sound. There is a glittering ray which flows from that diadem, and it comes from that diamond that was cut just now by the lapidary. You may venture to compare yourself to such a diamond, for you are one of God's people, and this is the time of the cutting process. You must endure it. Be of good courage, and murmur not. Let faith and patience do their perfect work. In the day when the crown shall be set upon the head of the King, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, one ray of glory shall stream for you, for

you shall be his.

498. Little Cares, Influence of

What fools we are, brethren, and yet if some one else were to call us fools we should not like it, though I do not doubt but that we are very well named, whoever may give us the title, for the whole of heaven cannot make us rejoice if we have one pain in our head; and all the harps of angels, and our knowledge of our interest in "the glory that is to be revealed," cannot make us happy if some little thing happens to go contrary to our minds. Somebody trod on the corns of your pride as you were coming in here, and if an angel had preached to you you would not have enjoyed it, because of your mind being discomposed. Oh, simpletons that we are! The table is daintily spread; the manna of heaven lies close to our hand, but because there is a little rent in the garment, or a small thorn in the finger, we sit down and cry as though the worst of ills had happened to us! Heaven is thine own, and yet thou criest because thy little room is scantily furnished! God is thy Father, and Christ thy brother, and yet thou weapest because a babe has been taken from thee to the skies! Thy sins are all forgiven, and yet thou mournest because thy clothes are mean. Thou art a child of God, an heir of heaven, and yet thou sorrowest as though thou wouldst break thy heart, because a fool hath called thee ill names! Strange is it; foolish is it, but such is man—strangely foolish, and only wise as God shall make him so.

499. Littles, The, Showing forth God

Seeing the jonquil, the hyacinth, the anemone, and many others of our garden flowers growing wild in the valleys on the Italian side of the Alps, and hearing the ceaseless chirping of the innumerable insects which fill the air with their song, and looking up to the snowy peaks piercing the clouds, one could not help comparing the beauty and perfectness of the little, with the overwhelming awe and sublimity of the great. He who launches the thunderbolt guides the fire-fly; he who hurls the falling mass from the shivering Alpine summit controls the descent of the dewdrop; and he, who covereth heaven and earth with the black wings of tempest, stoops down to cherish the violet blooming amid the velvet turf.

500. Longsuffering of God, Marvel of

Ah! my brethren, can you think for a minute what you and I would do if some cruel wretches should take our children and torture them, and burn them alive; how would our wrath be up, and how would we strike in their defence! But remember that from the days of Christ until now the dear children of God, dearer to him than our children are to us, have been shut up in prison to rot, have been sawn asunder, have wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins, have been burned at Smithfield and a thousand other places, and have crimsoned the snows of the Alps with their blood; and yet God, in the great deeps of his forbearance, has been still. There has been, it is true, a vengeance in providence in the long run: the reader of history knows how God has avenged every persecution; still the recompense was slow. There were no fiery arrows to pierce Bishop Bonner, when he condemned Anne Askew; there were no immediate lightning flashes to wither Domitian or Nero when they insultingly put the people of God to death. No, the Lord bears long with them, and his longsuffering is a deep, a great deep.

501. Lord's Supper, a Bond of Union

There is something painful, but pleasing, when the father dies, for the children to come together at the funeral, and to go together to his grave. Many family heartburnings have been healed when they have joined in a memorial. The poor man's grave, especially, has much charm in it to me. There come the sons and daughters, and club together their shillings to buy the grave and to buy the coffin. Often over the rich man's grave there is a squabble as to who shall share his wealth; but there is not any in this case. The man has died penniless, and John, and Mary, and Thomas, all come; and they all see who can do the most in providing the patriarch's grave; and if there be a tombstone, it is not one that pays for it, but they all put their moneys together, so that father's memorial may be shared in by them all. How I like that thought! We being many are one bread, and we being many are one cup. Brethren, I cannot do without you. If I want to celebrate the Lord's death, I cannot go into my chamber, and take the piece of bread and the cup, and celebrate the ordinance alone. I cannot do it. I must have you; I cannot do without you. And you, the most spiritual minded of you, if you shut yourselves up in a cell, and try to play the monk and the super-excellent, cannot keep this ordinance. You must have fellowship; you must come down among the saints; for our Saviour has put this as a memorial which cannot be celebrated except jointly, by the whole together. Ye must come together to break this bread. "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." Did the Master know that we should be so apt to split up into sections! Did he know that we should be so apt to be individualized till we forgot to bear one another's burdens? And did he, therefore, while he made baptism the personal, solitary confession of faith, make this communion to be a united joint memorial in order that we might be compelled to come together—might by sweet constraint be driven to meet in the same place with one accord, or else be unable to make a memorial of his death? It is a joint memorial.

502. Lord's Supper, a Means of Conversion

How often within these walls has God blessed the breaking of bread to the conversion of souls! Let me refresh the memories of such. Some of you have been looking on from these galleries; you dared not come down with the people of God, but you did not like to go away; and so you sat, and you looked on, and your mouths were watering, not for the bread and wine, but for Christ. You wanted him, and gradually you were like the robins in the cold winter's days. You first, as it were, tapped at the church's window-pane very gently, and you were afraid, and you stepped back again; but all the world was cold, and there was not a crumb for you. Then you saw the open window of a gracious promise, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" and, pressed by absolute necessity, you came to Jesus. You came into the family circle of Jesus Christ's people, and you feasted, and you are glad tonight.

503. Lord's Supper, a Place for Song When the shepherds sat down amongst the sheep they tuned their pipes, and warbled forth soft and sweet airs in harmony with rustic quietude. All around was calm and still; the sun was brightly shining, and the birds were making melody among the leafy branches. Shall I seem fanciful if I say, let us unite in a pastoral tonight? Sitting round the table, why should we not sing, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters"? If there be a place beneath the stars where one might feel perfectly at rest and ease, surely it is at the table of the Lord. Here, then, let us sing to our great Shepherd a pastoral of delight. Let the bleating of sheep be in our ears as we remember the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his flock.

504. Lost, Christ the Saviour of the

Some whom Christ saves are lost socially. They are not mentioned in the family now. It brings such a pang to the mother's heart, such a flush to the father's cheek. They could not enter now into any respectable society; they are marked men and marked women. There are some who are lost even before the laws of the land. The hand of justice has been laid upon them, and they are under the law; they are even marked as felons, it may be. And yet the Son of Man has come to seek and to save those who are socially lost. When the gates of society are shut, the gates of mercy are not shut. When man considers the case to be utterly hopeless, and men are put as it were into, a sort of lazaret-house, lest the infection should spread, Jesus walks into the lazaret-house, and touches the leper, and says, "I will; be thou clean." Ye may shut them out from yourselves, but not from the Saviour. When they have come to the worst, and have run their round of dissipation, till they themselves are jaded and sick, still can the Master step in and whisper into that ear, rendered attentive by pain and sickness, and snatch the firebrand from the flame, to the glory of his own grace.

505. Lost Souls, Cry of

There was a story in the papers some time ago of a man being found dead in a ditch, who had been lying there dead for six weeks. It was said that somebody had heard a cry of "Lost, lost," but it was dark, and he did not go out to see who it was! "Shocking! shocking!" say you, and yet just the very same thing may have been done by you. There are some persons here tonight who may not cry "Lost," because they do not feel they are lost, but they are so; and will you let them die in the ditch of their ignorance? There are others who are crying, "Lost!" and who want a word of comfort; and will you let them perish in despair for the want of it? My brethren, let the needs of humanity provoke you to activity.

506. Love and Duty

Men will do far more from love than we might dare to ask as a matter of duty. Napoleon's soldiers frequently achieved exploits under the influence of fervid attachment for him, which no law could have required them to attempt. Had there been cold-blooded orders issued by some domineering officer, who said, "You shall do this, and you shall do that," they would have mutinied against such tyranny, and yet when the favourite little corporal seizes the standard, and cries, "Come on!" they will rush even to the cannon's mouth, out of love to the person of their gallant leader. This is the difference between the law and the gospel. The law says, "You shall, or you shall be punished;" but the gospel says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have forgiven all your trespasses; now my love shall sweetly constrain you, and the influence of inward principle shall guide you in my ways, my law shall be Written, not upon stone, but upon the fleshy tablets of your hearts." The old covenant in all that it did only provided precepts; but the gospel provides the power to keep the precept. The old law appealed to the selfishness of our corrupt nature; the gospel appeals to the nobler instincts of a heaven-born life. The law drove us, but the gospel draws us. The law came behind us with its dog and stick, as our drovers do from the cattle markets; but the gospel goes before us, as the Eastern shepherd before his sheep, and we cheerfully follow where the gospel leads the way. This is the difference, then, between the old law and its inability to sanctify us, and the gospel and its wonderful power to purify.

507. Love, Christ Real to

Love makes the Saviour real to the heart. When I preach sometimes, and my love is cold, and my zeal is flagging, I talk about the Master as though he were but an historical personage, some one that had lived and gone; but when my heart is warm towards him, then I talk of him as though he were in the pulpit with me, as though I could see him, as though you too could see him, as though I was speaking of our own familiar friend who was here in the midst of us. Every spiritual mind knows, and I need not remind him of it, that love does realise Christ, and thus the contact which love makes between Christ and the soul is more real than any which the hand or the eye could form.

508. Love, Food of The food of love is a sense of sin, and a grateful sense of forgiveness. If you and I felt more deeply the guilt of our past lives, we should love Jesus Christ better. If we had but a clearer sense that our sins deserve the deepest hell, that Christ suffered what we ought to have suffered in order to redeem us from our iniquities, we should not be such cold-hearted creatures as we are. We are perfectly monstrous in our want of love to Christ, but the true secret of it is a forgetfulness of our ruined and lost natural estate, and a forgetfulness of the sufferings by which we have been redeemed from that condition. O that our love might feed itself and find a renewal of its strength in remembering what sovereign grace has done!

509. Love of Christ, All-embracing The saints were from the beginning joined to Christ by bands of everlasting love. Before he took on him their nature, or brought them into a conscious enjoyment of himself, his heart was set upon their persons, and his soul delighted in them. Long ere the worlds were made, his prescient eye beheld his chosen, and viewed them with delight. Strong were the indissoluble bands of love which then united Jesus to the souls whom he determined to redeem. Not bars of brass or triple steel could have been more real and effectual bonds. True love, of all things in the universe, has the greatest cementing force, and will bear the greatest strain and endure the heaviest pressure: who shall tell what trials the Saviour's love has borne, and how well it has sustained them? Never union more true than this. As the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, so that he loved David as his own soul, so was our glorious Lord united and joined to us by the ties of fervent, faithful love. Love has a most potent power in effecting and sustaining union, but never does it display its force so well as when we see it bringing the Maker into oneness with the creature, the divine into alliance with the human. This, then, is to be regarded as the day-spring of union—the love of Christ Jesus the Lord embracing in its folds the whole of the elected family.

510. Love of Christ in our Afflictions The penal result of sin Christ has exhausted; he endured it all, and now the cross that comes to you is garlanded with Jove, all over it is inscribed with lines of affection. I know that this is hard to be believed, especially while you are carrying a green cross, new to your shoulder, for this always frets the soul; it is when you become accustomed to sorrow by having borne the yoke in your youth, that you fret not and mourn not, as though some strange thing had happened to you.

511. Love of Christ to his People

There is no music in the rarest sounds compared with these three syllables, which drop from the Redeemer's lips like sweet-smelling myrrh. "Beloved!" If he had addressed but that one word to

any one of us, it might create a heaven within our soul, which neither sickness nor death could mar. Let me sound the note again, "Beloved!" Doth Jesus love me? Doth he own his love? Doth he seal the fact by declaring it with his own lips? Then I will not stipulate for promises, nor make demands of him. If he loves me he must act towards me with lovingkindness; he will not smite his beloved unless love dictates the blow; he will not forsake his chosen, for he never changes. Oh, the inexpressible, the heaped-up blessednesses which belong to the man who feels in his soul that Christ has called him beloved!

512. Love of God, the Fountain of Blessing

If it would be marvellous to see one river leap up from the earth full grown, what would it be to gaze upon a vast spring from which all the rivers of the earth should at once come bubbling up, a thousand of them born at a birth? What a vision would it be! Who can conceive it! And yet the love of God is that fountain from which all the rivers of mercy which have ever gladdened our race—all the rivers of grace in time and of glory hereafter—take their rise. My soul, stand thou at that sacred fountain-head, and adore and magnify for ever and ever "God, even our Father, who hath loved us."

513. Love of Jesus increased by Service for us

It is a strange thing in human nature, that if anybody does you a kindness, you may forget him, and be ungrateful; but if you bestow a kindness on a person, you will love him and remember him. It is not the receiver generally that is certain to give the love, it is the giver of kindness who binds himself to the other. A mother must love her child because she has done so much for it; she has suffered, and she has cared so much, that she must love it. The more you have done for a person the better you love him. Now, Jesus does not love us because of any good in us, but to-day he loves us because he has done so much for us. He has taken the yoke from our necks, he has laid meat to us, he has drawn us with bands of love, and cords of a man, and having spent so much love on us, he loves us dearly. Jesus who suffered so much, is bound to us by new bonds. Calvary is not only the fruit of his love, but the root of fresh love. Another stream of love springs up at the cross foot. "I," saith the Redeemer, "can see my groans and agonies in them." He loves us because he has loved us. This thought ought to cheer us—God has done too much for us to let us perish.

"Can he have taught me To trust in his name, And thus far have brought me To put me to shame?"

514. Love to Christ Implanted by God

I once knew a good woman who was the subject of many doubts, and when I got to the bottom of her doubt, it was this: she knew she loved Christ, but she was afraid he did not love her. "Oh!" I said, "that is a doubt that will never trouble me; never, by any possibility, because I am sure of this, that the heart is so corrupt, naturally, that love to God never did get there without God's putting it there." You may rest quite certain, that if you love God, it is a fruit, and not a root. It is the fruit of God's love to you, and did not get there by the force of any goodness in you. You may conclude, with absolute certainty, that God loves you if you love God. There never was any difficulty on his part. It always was on your part, and now that the difficulty is gone from you, none whatever remains. O let our hearts rejoice and be filled with great delight, because the Saviour has loved us and given himself for us.

515. Love to Christ not Disinterested

There are two gentlemen of equal rank in society, and the one is not at all obliged to the other; now, they, standing on an equality, can easily feel a disinterested admiration of each other's character, and a consequent disinterested affection; but I, a poor sinner, by nature sunk in the mire, full of everything that is evil, condemned, guilty of death, so that my only desert is to be cast into hell, am under such obligations to my Saviour and my God. that it would be idle for me to talk about a disinterested affection for him, since I owe to him my life, my all. Besides, until I catch the gleams of his mercy and his lovingkindness to the guilty, his holy, just, and righteous character are not lovable to me, I dread the purity which condemns my defilement, and shudder at the justice which will consume me for my sin. Do not, O seeker, trouble your heart with nice distinctions about disinterested love, but, be you content, with the beloved disciple, to love Christ because he first loved you.

516. Love to God the return of his Love to us

Love to God is like a great mountain. The majority of travellers view it from afar, or traverse the valley at its base: a few climb to a halting-place on one of its elevated spurs, whence they see a portion of its sublimities: here and there an adventurous traveller climbs a minor peak, and views glacier and alp at closer range; fewest of all are those who scale the topmost pinnacle and tread the virgin snow. So in the church of God. Every Christian abides under the shadow of divine love: a few enjoy and return that love to a remarkable degree: but there are few, in this age sadly few, who reach to seraphic love, who ascend into the hill of the Lord, to stand where the eagle's eye hath not seen, and walk the path which the lion's whelp hath never trodden, the high places of complete consecration and ardent self-consuming love. Now, mark you, it may be difficult to ascend so high, but there is one sure route, and only one, which the man must follow who would gain the sacred elevation. It is not the track of his works, nor the path of his own actions, but this, "We love him because he first loved us."

517. Loveliness of Christ

I am an engraver this morning, and I seek somewhat whereon I may engrave this heavenly line. Shall I take unto me ivory or silver? Shall I borrow crystal or gold? These are too common to Dear this unique inscription: I put them all aside. Shall I spell my text in gems, with an emerald, a sapphire, a ruby, a diamond, or a pearl for each single letter? Nay, these are poor perishable things: we put them all away. I want an immortal spirit to be the tablet for my writing; nay, I must lay aside my graving tool, and ask the Spirit of God to take it: I want a heart prepared of the Holy Ghost, upon whose fleshy tablets there shall be written no other sentence than this, and this shall suffice for a right royal motto to adorn it well: "Yea, he is altogether lovely."

518. Loveliness of Christ Universal

It generally happens that to the noblest building there is an unhappy point of view from which the architecture appears at a disadvantage; the choicest piece of workmanship may not be equally complete in all directions; the best human character is deformed by one flaw, if not with more; but with our Lord all is lovely, regard him as you will. You shall contemplate him from all points, and only find new confirmation of the statement that "he is altogether lovely." As the everlasting God before the world was made, angels loved him and adored; as the babe at Bethlehem or as the

man at Bethany; as walking the sea or as nailed to the cross; in his grave, dead, and buried, or on his throne triumphant; rising as forerunner, or descending a second time to judge the world in righteousness; in his shame, despised and spit upon, or in his glory, adored and beloved; with the thorns about his brow and the nails piercing his hands, or with the keys of death and hell swinging at his girdle; view him as you will, and where you will, and when you will, "he is altogether lovely." Under all aspects, and in all offices and relations, at all times and all seasons, under all circumstances and conditions, anywhere everywhere, "he is altogether lovely."

"M"

519. Magnifying our Troubles Being once surrounded by a dense mist on the Styhead Pass in the Lake District, we felt ourselves to be transported into a world of mystery, where everything was swollen to a size and appearance more vast, more terrible than is usual on this sober planet. A little mountain tarn, scarcely larger than a farmer's horse-pond, expanded into a great lake, whose distant shores were leagues beyond the reach of our poor optics; and as we descended into the valley of Wastwater, the rocks rose on one side like the battlements of heaven, and the descent on the other hand looked like the dreadful lips of a yawning abyss; and yet when one looked back again in the morning's clear light there was nothing very dangerous in the pathway, or terrible in the rocks. The road was a safe though sharp descent, devoid of terrors to ordinary mountain-climbers. In the distance through the fog the shepherd "stalks gigantic," and his sheep are full-grown lions. Into such blunders do we fall in our life-pilgrimage: a little trouble in the distance is, through our mistiness, magnified into a crushing adversity. We see a lion in the way, although it is written that no ravenous beast shall go up thereon. A puny foe is swollen into a Goliath, and the river of death widens into a shoreless sea. Come, heavenly wind, and blow the mist away, and then the foe will be despised, and the bright shores on the other side the river will stand out clear in the light of faith!

520. Majesty and Meekness in Christ

Lovingkindness and tender mercy are drawn in their golden chariot by the noble steeds of omnipotence and wisdom. Heroes who have been most distinguished for fury in the fight have been tender of heart as little children; sharp were their swords to the foe, but gentle their hands towards the weak. It is the index of a noble nature that it can be majestic as a lion in the midst of the fray, and roar like a young lion on the scene of conflict, and yet it has a dove's eye and a maiden's heart. Such is our Lord Jesus Christ; he is the conquering Captain of salvation, but he is meek and lowly of heart.

521. Man before the Fall

We all should be glad enough to welcome the return of the primeval gladness of Eden, but that is not the question; it is, should we be willing to be made mentally and morally what Adam was before his sin brought disease into manhood? And what was Adam? Why, he was a man who knew his God, knew many things beside, but mainly and chiefly knew his God; whose delight was to walk with God, to commune with him, to speak with him as a man speaketh with his friend: until he fell he was one whose will was submitted to the will of his Creator, anxious and desirous not to violate that will, but in all things to do what his Lord should bid him, He was placed in the garden to till the ground, to keep and dress the garden, and all that he did with joy. He was a whole, a sound man; his whole enjoyment consisted in his God; it was his one object as a living creature to do the will of him that made him. He knew nothing of rioting and drunkenness. For him there were no lascivious songs or wanton deeds. The flash of debauchery and the glitter of profligacy were far from him. He was pure, upright, chaste, obedient. How would you like to be made like him, sinner,

thou who art doing thine own will, thou who hast sought out many inventions, thou who findest happiness in this sin and the other filthiness, wouldst thou be willing to come back and find thy happiness in thy God, and henceforth serve him and none beside? Ah! perhaps thou sayest, blindly, "Yes," and it is possible thou knowest not what thou sayest. If the truth were more clearly before thee, thou wouldst obstinately refuse to be made whole. Life would under such an aspect seem to thee tame, joyless, slavish. Without the fire of lust, the excitement of drink, the laughter of folly, and the pomp of pride, what would existence be to many? To them our ideal of sound manhood is but another name for bondage and misery.

522. Man Tuned by God's Hand

Man is like a harp unstrung, and the music of his soul's living strings is discordant, his whole nature wails with sorrow; but the son of David, that mighty harper, has come to restore the harmony of humanity, and where his gracious fingers move among the strings, the touch of the fingers of an incarnate God brings forth music sweet as that of the spheres, and melody rich as a seraph's canticle. Would God that all men felt that divine hand.

523. Manhood Honoured in Christ's Humanity

O my soul, thou dost not stand now like a poor lone orphan wailing across the deep sea after thy Father who has gone far away and cannot hear thee; thou dost not now sob and sigh like an infant left naked and helpless, its Maker having gone too far away to regard its wants or listen to its cries. No, thy Maker has become like thyself. Is that too strong a word to use? He without whom was not anything made that was made is that same Word who tabernacled among us and was made flesh, made flesh in such a way that he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. O manhood, was there ever such news as this for thee! Poor manhood, thou weak worm of the dust, far lower than the angels, lift up thy head, and be not afraid! Poor manhood, born in weakness, living in toil, covered with sweat, and dying at last to be eaten by the worms, be not thou abashed even in the presence of seraphs, for next to God is man, and not even an archangel can come in between; nay, not next to God, there is scarcely that to be said, for Jesus who is God is man also; Jesus Christ, eternally God, was born, and lived and died as we also do.

524. Marriage, A Model

Sometimes we have seen a model marriage, founded in pure love and cemented in mutual esteem. Therein the husband acts as a tender head, and the wife, as a true spouse, realises the model marriage relation, and sets forth what our oneness with the Lord ought to be. She delights in her husband, in his person, his character, his affection; to her he is not only the chief and foremost of mankind, but in her eyes he is all in all, her heart's love belongs to him and to him only. She finds sweetest content and solace in his company, his fellowship, his fondness; he is her little world, her paradise, her choice treasure. To please him she would gladly lay aside her own pleasure to find it doubled in gratifying him. She is glad to sink her individuality in his. She seeks no name for herself, his honour is reflected upon her, and she rejoices in it. She would defend his name with her dying breath, safe enough is he where she can speak for him. The domestic circle is her kingdom; that she may there create happiness and comfort is her life-work, and his smiling gratitude is all the reward she seeks. Even in her dress she thinks of him, without constraint she consults his taste, and thinks nothing beautiful which is obnoxious to his eye. A tear from his eye,

because of any unkindness on her part, would grievously torment her. She asks not how her behaviour may please a stranger, or how another's judgment may be satisfied with her behaviour; let her beloved be content and she is glad. He has many objects in life, some of which she does not quite understand, but she believes in them all, and anything that she can do to promote them she delights to perform. He lavishes love on her and she on him. Their object in life is common. There are points where their affections so intimately unite that none could tell which is first and which is second. To see their children growing up in health and strength, to see them holding posts of usefulness and honour, is their mutual concern; in this and other matters they are fully one. Their wishes blend, their hearts are indivisible. By degrees they come very much to think the same thoughts. Intimate association creates conformity; we have known this to become so complete that at the same moment the same utterance has leaped to both their lips. Happy woman and happy man! If heaven be found on earth, they have it! At last the two are so welded, so engrafted on one stem, that their old age presents a lovely attachment, a common sympathy, by which its infirmities are greatly alleviated, and its burdens are transformed into fresh bonds of love. So happy a union of will, sentiment, thought, and heart exists between them, that the two streams of their life have washed away the dividing bank, and run on as one broad current of united existence till their common joy falls into the main ocean of felicity.

525. Martha and Mary When Lazarus was dead, you will remember Martha ran to meet Christ, but Mary sat still in the house; Martha wanted her own time, Mary could take Christ's time. So after awhile, just before our Lord's death, we find that Mary did a grand action, she did what Martha never thought of doing, she brought forth a box of precious ointment and poured it on the Lord's head, and anointed him with ointment. While she was sitting at Christ's feet, she was forming and filling the springs of action. You are not losing time while you are feeding the soul. While by contemplation you are getting purpose strengthened and motive purified, you are rightly using time. When the man becomes intense, when he gets within him principles vital, fervent, energetic, then when the season for work comes he will work with a power and a result which empty people can never attain however busy they may be. If the stream flows at once, as soon as ever there is a shower, it must be little better than a trickling rivulet; but if the current stream is dammed up, so that for awhile nothing pours down the river bed, you will in due time, when the waters have gathered strength, witness a torrent before which nothing can stand. Mary was filling up the fountain head, she was listening and learning, feeding, edifying, loving, and growing strong. The engine of her soul was getting its steam ready, and when all was right her action was prompt and forcible.

526. Masters and Servants

Now-a-days people change their servants once a month, and there are some servants who stop too long even then; but it strikes me that good masters and good mistresses make good servants; and where love and kindness are shown, it will not always, nor often, be the case that the servants will be a social evil. Instead of that they will be a great benefit; and a wise, prudent, Christian servant, becomes as much a part of the household as even a child. To make a church there must be a feeling of union. I should like to see the clan-feeling in our families, in which every servant would stand up for the master's honour, and every one would seek the good of the entire family; and even when the children were grown up and scattered, it would be well to see them still duly respecting the ties of Christian kindred, and seeking to promote the good and the unity of the

whole.

527. Means of Grace Valued by Humble Souls On foggy nights every twopenny link boy is a jewel. He is of no use in the day; we drive the urchin away; but when it is very thick and foggy, we are glad to see the blaze of his torch. When we are high and lifted up, and are marching on joyously, we are apt to despise the means; but when we are troubled the throne of grace, the prayer-meeting, and the preaching of God's Word are highly prized. Certain professors, who cannot hear anybody except their favourite minister, would be glad of consolation from any lip, if soul-trouble should overtake them. The candles of the promise stand us in good stead when we walk in the shades of sorrow, and the Word becomes a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths.

528. Medical Missions, Plea for Our Lord was a medical missionary: he not only preached the gospel, but he opened the eyes of the blind, cured those who were afflicted with fevers, made the lame to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing. You may say that all this was miracle. I grant it, but the mode of performing the cure is not the point in hand, I am speaking of the thing itself. True enough is it that we cannot work the miracles, but we may do what is within human reach in the way of healing, and so we may follow our Lord, not with equal footsteps, but in the same track. I rejoice to see in Edinburgh and in Glasgow, and also in London, the establishment of Medical Missions. I believe in some parts of London nothing would be so likely to do good to the people as to make the vestry a dispensary, and the godly surgeon a deacon of the church, if not an evangelist. It may one day be thought possible to have deaconesses whose self-denying nursing of the sick poor shall introduce the gospel into the meanest hovels. At any rate there should be associated with the city missionary, with the Bible-woman, and with home missions everywhere, to as great a degree as may be possible, the earnest aid of beloved physicians and men learned in the healing art, who should seek to do good to men's eyes, and ears, and legs, and feet, while others of us look to their spiritual infirmities. Many a young man who goes forth as a minister of Christ would do much more good if he understood a little of anatomy and medicine. He might be a double blessing to a remote hamlet, or to a district crowded with the poor. I pray for a closer connection between the surgeon and the Saviour. I would invoke the aid of truly believing members of the faculty. May there be many who, like Luke, are both physicians and evangelists. Perhaps some Christian young man walking the hospitals, and fearing God, may find in these into a guide as to his future career.

529. Medicine of Trouble

Heir of heaven, your present trials are yours in the sense of medicine. You need that your soul, like your body, should be dealt with by the beloved Physician. A thousand diseases have sown their seeds within you; one evil will often bring on another, and the cure of one too frequently engenders another. You need, therefore, oftentimes to gather the produce of the garden of herbs which is included in your inheritance—a garden which God will be sure to keep well stocked with wormwood and with rue. From these bitter herbs a potion shall be brewed, as precious as it is pungent, as curative as it is distasteful. Would you root up that herb garden, would you lay those healing beds all waste? Ah, then, when next disease attacked you, how could you expect help? I know the good Physician can heal without the lancet if he will, and restore us without the balm, but for all that, he does not choose to do so, but will use the means of affliction, for by these things

men live, and in all these is the life of their spirit.

530. Meditation the Telescope of Faith

Meditation and contemplation are often like windows of agate, and gates of carbuncle, through which we see the Redeemer. Meditation puts the telescope to the eye, and enables us to see Jesus after a better sort than we could have seen him if we had lived in the days of his flesh; for now we see not only Jesus in the flesh, but the spiritual Jesus; we see the spirit of Jesus, the core and essence of Jesus, the very soul of the Saviour. O happy you, that spend much time in contemplations! I wish that we had less to do, that we might do more of this heavenly work.

531. Memories of Christ's Dealings

Beloved, remember what you have heard of Christ, and what he has done for you; make your heart the golden cup to hold the rich recollections of his past lovingkindness; make it a pot of manna to preserve the heavenly bread whereon saints have fed in days gone by. Let your memory treasure up everything about Christ which you have either heard, or felt, or known, and then let your fond affections hold him fast evermore. Love him! Pour out that alabaster box of your heart, and let all the precious ointment of your affection come streaming on his feet. If you cannot do it with joy do it sorrowfully, wash his feet with tears, wipe them with the hairs of your head; but do love him, love the blessed Son of God, your ever tender Friend.

532. Mercies, Unexpected

Much of the pleasantness of a journey lies in unexpected views and scenes which burst upon the traveller as he climbs a hill or descends into a dale. If he could see all at once, one long, unvariegated avenue, it would become weary walking for him; but the very freshness and novelty of the events, adventures, and contingencies constantly occurrent, help to make life exciting, if not happy. I thank God for many a mercy which has come to me fresh from the mint of his providence. I could not have imagined that such a well-timed godsend could have come to me in such an unexpected manner: it had all the marks of novelty about it as if the Lord had been pleased to coin it and put it into my hand.

533. Mercies, Temporal, Sanctified by Christ

Temporal mercies without Christ are like ciphers without a figure; but when you have these temporal mercies, and Christ stands in front of them, oh, what an amount they make! Temporal mercies without Christ are unripe fruit; but when Christ shines upon them, they grow mellow and sweet. Temporal mercies without Christ are the dry rivers—Christ fills them to the brim. They are like trees with leaves only, but Christ comes to give them fruit upon which we may live. Brethren, what are all the mercies of this life to us without Christ? Would they not make our souls hunger? "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." The full wine vat, or the barn that needeth to be enlarged, what would these be without a Saviour? O God, take them all away if thou wilt, but give us more of Christ. Fill our hearts with the love of Christ, and thou mayst empty the cupboard and purse if thou wilt. Mercies are blessed when we have Christ with them, but if Christ be gone, they are but empty vanities.

534. Mercy and Argument for Service

Sitting down in the Orphanage grounds upon one of the Beats, we were talking with one of our brother trustees, when a little fellow, we should think about eight years of age, left the other boys who were playing around us, and came deliberately up to us. He opened fire upon us thus, "Please, Mister Spurgeon, I want to come and sit down on that seat between you two gentlemen." "Come along, Bob, and tell us what you want." "Please, Mr. Spurgeon, suppose there was a little boy who had no father, who lived in a orphanage with a lot of other little boys who had no fathers, and suppose those little boys had mothers and aunts who comed once a month, and brought them apples and oranges, and gave them pennies, and suppose this little boy had no mother and no aunt, and so nobody never came to bring him nice things, don't you think somebody ought to give him a penny? 'Cause, Mr. Spurgeon, that's me." Somebody felt something wet in his eye, and Bob got a sixpence, and went off in a great state of delight. Poor little soul, he had seized the opportunity to pour out a bitterness which had rankled in his little heart, and made him miserable when the monthly visiting day came round, and, as he said, "Nobody never came to bring him nice things." Turning the tables, we think some grown-up persons, who were once little Bobs and Harrys, might say, "Suppose there was a poor sinner who deserved to be sent to hell, but was forgiven all his sins by sovereign grace, and made a child of God, don't you think he ought to help on the Saviour's cause? 'Cause, Mr. Spurgeon, that's me."

535. Mercy for Sinners

There is no room for a man to be generous amongst yonder splendid mansions in Belgravia. Suppose a man had thousands of pounds in his pocket, and desired to give it away in charity, he would be terribly hampered amid princely palaces. If he were to knock at the doors of those great houses, and say he wanted an opportunity of being charitable, powdered footmen would slam the door in his face, and tell him to be gone with his impudence. But come along with me; let us wander down the mews all among the dunghills, and get away into back alleys where crowds of ragged children are playing amid filth and squalor, where all the people are miserably poor, and where cholera is festering. Now, sir, down with your money bags; here is plenty of room for your charity; now you may put both your hands into your pockets, and not fear that anybody will refuse you. You may spend your money right and left now with ease and satisfaction. When the God of mercy comes down to distribute mercy, he cannot give it to those who do not want it; but you need forgiveness, for you are full of sin, and you are just the person likely to receive it.

536. Mercy, Fulness of Will you, my fellow debtor, stand still awhile, and contemplate the abundant mercy of our blessed God! A river deep and broad is before you. Track it to its fountain head; see it welling up in the covenant of grace, in the eternal purposes of infinite wisdom. The secret source is no small spring, no mere bubbling fount, it is a very Geyser, leaping aloft in fulness of power; the springs of the sea are not comparable therewith. Not even an angel could fathom the springs of eternal love, or measure the depths of infinite grace. Follow now the stream; mark it in all its course. See how it widens and deepens, how at the cross foot it expands into a measureless river! Mark how the filthy come and wash; see how each polluted one comes up milk-white from the washing! Note how the dead are brought to be bathed in this sacred stream, and mark how they live the moment that they touch its wave; mark how the sick are laid upon the bank, and if but the spray of the river falls upon them they are made whole! See how on either bank rich verdure clothes the land! Wheresoever this stream cometh all is life and happiness. Observe along the margin the many trees whose leaves never wither, and whose fruits in season are always brought

to maturity; these all draw their life from this flood, and drink from this river of God, which is full of water. Fail not with gladsome eye to note the thousand barques of fairest sail which scud along the mighty river with colours flying, each vessel laden with joy. Behold how happily they are borne along by the current of mercy to the ocean of infinite felicity! Now we reach the mighty main of mercy, dare you attempt with wings of faith to fly over that glassy sea? No shore gives boundary to that great deep, no voice proclaims its length and breadth, but from its lowest deeps and all along its unruffled bosom I hear a voice which saith, "Herein is love."

537. Mercy, Fulness of, in Christ

If a sinner anywhere is saying, "God be merciful to me!" mercy has not gone out on travel, it dwells in Christ both night and day; it is there now at this moment. There is life in a look at the crucified One, not at certain canonical hours, but at any hour, in any place, by any man who looks. "From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed," and my prayer shall not be rejected. There is fulness of mercy in Christ to be had at any time, at any season, from any place. It pleased the Father that all fulness should permanently abide in him as in a house whose door is never shut.

538. Mercy, God's Delight in

Mercy is God's Benjamin, and he delighteth most of all in it. It is the son of his right hand, though, alas! in bringing it forth, it might well have been called the son of sorrow too, for mercy came into this world through the sorrows of the only-begotten Son of God. He delights in mercy, just as some men delight in trade, some in the arts, some in professions; and each man, according to his delight, becomes proficient in pursuing a work for the very love thereof. So God is proficient in mercy. He addicts himself to it. He is most God-like, most happy, if such a thing may be said of him, when he is stretching out his right hand with his golden sceptre in it, and saying to the guilty, "Come to me, touch this sceptre, and you shall live!"

539. Mercy, Hanging on May not the endurance of divine grace be faintly pictured in the following scene? Out yonder, just beyond those grinding rocks, there is a vessel, rolling and tossing on the jagged granite, and evidently going to pieces. See you not the mariners clinging to the masts? It is not possible that they should escape, except by help from the shore. The rocket apparatus has been used, and a rope is fastened to the vessel, and now a cradle is drawn along the rope. What joy! One man is safely landed, but the rope is weak, and it is doubtful whether it will bear the strain. Two at one time are clinging to the rope, and the ship is nearly broken up—will the rope bear them? The wind howls terribly, and the waves lash furiously—will the rope hold out? Another is venturing! Ah! see how the rope dips! The waves have gone over him. Will it be able to sustain his weight and save him? Now, we never have such anxiety concerning the salvation of souls by Christ Jesus, "for his mercy endureth forever." The salvation of God brings every soul to shore that hangs on it, and, when the world is gone to wreck, free grace will bring all who trust it to the eternal shore. Should the biggest sinner out of hell hang upon that rope of mercy it will bear him up, and bring him safe to land.

540. Mercy, Invitation to the House of, refused When the dove was weary, she recollected the ark, and flew into Noah's hand at once. Oh, ye weary ones, who know the ark, why will ye not fly to it? When an Israelite had slain, inadvertently, his fellow, he knew the city of refuge, he feared the

avenger of blood, and he fled along the road to the place of safety; but ye know the refuge, and every Sabbath we set up the sign-posts along the road, but yet ye come not to find salvation. The destitute waifs and strays of the streets of London find out the night refuge, and ask for shelter; they cluster round our workhouse doors, like sparrows under the eaves of a building on a rainy day; they piteously crave for lodging and a crust of bread; yet crowds of poor benighted spirits, when the house of mercy is lighted up, and the invitation is plainly written in bold letters, "Whosoever will, let him turn in hither," will not come, but prove the truth of Watts' verse—

"Thousands make a wretched choice, And rather starve than come."

'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful!

541. Mercy, Sparing, Gratitude for Have you seen those foul dungeons of Venice, which are below the water-mark of the canal, where, after winding through narrow, dark, stifling passages, you may creep into little cells in which a man can scarcely stand upright, where no ray of sunlight has ever entered since the foundations of the palace were laid—cold, foul, and black with damp and mildew, the fit nursery of fever, and abode of death? And yet those places it were luxury to inhabit compared with the everlasting burnings of hell. It were an excess of luxury to lost spirits if they could lie there with moss growing on their eyelids, in lonely misery, if they might but escape for a little season from a guilty conscience and the wrath of God. Friend, you are neither in those dungeons nor yet in hell; therefore pluck up courage, and say, "It is of the Lord's mercy we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not."

542. Mercy, Temple of

I would liken God's mercy to a great temple which strong men have sought to overturn with their utmost might. They have laboured to overturn the two great pillars whereon the house leans. The ancient temple of the Philistines stood firm enough till an unexpected hero entered it: Samson felt for the pillars, and finding them, bowed himself with all his might, and the pillars snapped, and down came the house upon the Philistine lords, and Samson himself perished. Many a Samson-like sinner has gone into the temple of God's mercy, and bowed with all his might to overturn it, to see if he could not wear out the patience of God and blaspheme himself into swift damnation; and yet these bold and gigantic sinners have never been able to do this, but very frequently these very men have been subdued by grace, and have worshipped him in the temple which they once sought to destroy. Yes, Philistia's house may bow, but the house of Jehovah standeth fast, and "his mercy endureth for ever."

543. Mercy Waiting for the Sinner As I think upon some of you who are not saved, I feel something like the boy I read of in the newspapers. There were two lads on the great rocks of Lundy Island, in the Bristol Channel, looking for sea-gulls' eggs; one of them went far down the cliff, and lost his footing, and when his brother, hearing a faint voice, looked down, he saw him clinging to a jutting crag, and striving in vain to find a place for his feet. There stood the anxious brother, alarmed and paralysed with dread, quite unable to help the younger one in so much peril below, who soon relaxed his hold and was dashed to pieces far beneath. I feel somewhat like that alarmed brother, only there is this happy difference: I can hope for you, and bid you hope for yourselves. You are clinging now, perhaps, to some false hope, and striving to find a rest where rest is not to be found; but the strong-winged angel of the everlasting gospel is just underneath you this morning, crying,

"Drop now; simply drop into my arms; I will take you and bear you aloft in safety." That angel is the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ. You must be dashed to pieces for ever unless you rest in him; but cast yourself upon him, I pray you, and then, as you are carried in safety far off from every fear, you will magnify the grace of God, and extol the glorious gospel.

544. Mercy-seat, Minister's Familiarity with the

Among all the formative influences which go to make up a man honoured of God in the ministry, I know of none more mighty than his own familiarity with the mercy-seat. All that a college course can do for a student is coarse and external compared with the spiritual and clear refinement obtained by communion with God. While the unformed minister is revolving upon the wheel of preparation, prayer is the tool of the great potter by which he moulds the vessel. All our libraries and studies are mere emptiness compared with our closets. We grow, we wax mighty, we prevail in private prayer. That we may be strong to labour, tender to sympathise, and wise to direct, let us pray. If study makes men of us, prayer will make saints of us. Our sacred furniture for our holy office can only be found in the arsenal of supplication; and after we have entered upon our consecrated warfare, prayer alone can keep our armour bright.

545. Message to Sinners

Ships are sometimes surrounded by a dense fog, and the mariners know not whether they are near the land or on the wide ocean—they lie becalmed, with no stir in the air, no stir in the sea; the ship has been like a lost thing, without power of motion or knowledge of her whereabouts, and then suddenly the mariners have heard bells ringing in the blessed Sabbath, and as the silver sounds have pierced the gloomy mist the mariners have known that they were somewhere near Old England's happy shores. My text rings out most sweetly, and, through the fogs of your soul's despair and doubt, I trust the glad message will reach you, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

546. Ministers to be Fearless

You are of no use in the ministry, my dear brother, if you are not quite willing to be called a fool, to be called a thief, or even to be called a devil! You will never be successful if you are afraid of being pelted. The true minister often finds his pulpit to be a place but little preferable to a pillory, and he is content to stand there, feeling that all the abuse and blasphemy which may come upon him are only the means by which the world recognises and proves its recognition of a God-sent man. Oh! to rest upon the covenant which is made in grace, and to hold fast the covenant which Christ has compelled us to make with him, resolved that even should he take all away, our joy, our comfort, and our ease, we will still stand to it, and still keep the covenant.

547. Ministers' Commission from God A minister stands trembling in the presence of a learned schoolmaster, who, with twenty schoolboys, makes an important item in a village congregation—is that a consistent condition of heart for a prophet of the Lord? A preacher is all on a quiver because a person with a white cravat under the gallery looks like a minister, and probably is a London divine who is staying in the neighbourhood for his health. Is that trembling preacher a man? I say a man! I will not ask, is he a man of God? If you have something to say of your own, my dear friend, do not try to say it when those learned people are present who can speak so much better; but, if God has something to say through you, he knows which trumpet is most fit for him to use; and

what matters it to you who may or may not be listening? Dare you play the coward in the presence of God? No. The conviction that you have a commission from God, and that the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, will make you very bold. Faith in God will cause us to honour our calling so much that we dare not disgrace it by cowardice.

548. Ministries, Rejected, Condemnation in

We cannot tell what the metal is till we get it in the fire, but the fire tries it: and if thou hast lain long in the white heat of an impressive gospel ministry, the love of Jesus being like coals of juniper, and yet thou hast never been melted, if thou do not tremble for thyself, I take leave to tremble for thee. If a mother has pleaded with thee, if she has even gone to her grave with sorrow because of the hardness of thy heart, oh! surely this will testify against thee in the day of reckoning; this marks thee, even to-day, as hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. If thou hast worn out one after another of faithful friends who would fain have conducted thee to the cross: if thou hast made thy God to be, as Amos saith, like a cart that is loaded with sheaves and pressed down, beware, O man, beware! Thou art filling up the measure of the Almighty's wrath; it is almost full, and when it is filled, beware! beware! beware! God is long in being provoked, but when his anger is at last stirred within him, woe unto those against whom he lifteth up himself, Oil is a smooth and gentle thing, but once set it on a blaze, and how it burns! and love, that tender thing, if once it turns to jealousy, how terrible its flame! Christ is the Lamb to-day, but to-morrow he may be a lion to you if you reject him. That face which wept over Jerusalem, that dear face which is the very mirror of everything that is compassionate, will, if you continue hardened in heart, become the image of everything that is terrible; so that you shall call to the rocks, "Hide us," and to the mountains, "Cover us; hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne."

549. Ministries, Rootlessness of some

How many has God blessed in the ministry for a little while, or, if not in the ministry, in some other form of service? and, alas! how soon have they swollen with conceit, and have become too big for the world to hold them! Puffed up with vanity, the honour put upon them has turned their brain, and they have gone astray into gross folly, sheer vanity, or defiling sin. Much branch and little root has brought down the tree; wing without weight has made the bird the sport of the hurricane. Even Paul's bark, when it enjoyed so mighty a wind of divine revelation, was nearly upset thereby, and would have been totally wrecked had it not been for the Lord's casting in the sacred ballast.

550. Ministries, Results of some The final result of some ministries appears to be a Gothic chapel in the place of the less ornamental but more serviceable old meeting-house. The good man feels that he has ministered to edification as a wise master-builder, when he hears passers-by say of his new edifice, "What a gem of a place!" We have known gentlemen of the cloth, whose hearts have been mainly set upon getting up a well-performed service, going as far as they dare in vestments and ornaments, and aping our Anglican Papacy in almost every respect. As if we did not know when the chapter was finished, we are told, "Here endeth the first lesson," or "Here endeth the second lesson!" and much is thought to be attained when that piece of mimicry is allowed; anthems and chants are greedily sought after; an organ, of course; a stone pulpit stuck in a corner; and then nothing will do but the brother must introduce at least a fragment of liturgy. Let but the poor creature have his way in all this, and his little heart overflows with joy, and he feels "I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." Such gentlemen have mistaken their vocation: they

would make capital conductors of concerts, masters of the ceremonies, man-milliners, or arrangers of shop-windows, but their talents are thrown away among Dissenters.

551. Ministry, A Searching

Every true preacher of the gospel will be sure to become a spiritual detective. He may not know anything of his hearers, but in the course of his ministry he will speak as if he had entered into the very chambers of their heart, and read the secrets of their soul. There are some who do not like close dealings, though that seems to me to be the very ministry every Christian ought to prefer, a heart-searching, rein-trying ministry. To many, plain preaching is very distasteful; they want to be patted on the back, and praised, and extolled, and they like to have human nature lifted on high, and have sweet things said unto them. They are like those of old, who said unto the prophets, "Prophecy smooth things unto us:" but the genuine gospel, whenever it comes with power, in this respect acts like a sieve, for vain and foolish people are offended at that which searches and tries them, and so they fall to the ground with the chaff; while the precious wheat, under such a ministry, remains to the glory of God.

552. Ministry, Living, Christ the Sum of a

I know that those ministries which consist of only fine-sounding words, climaxes, perorations, and all the florid strains and paltry tricks of play-actors, can never slake the thirst of a living soul. These are not true preachers, but mimics, who retail that empty stuff, that scum upon the pot, that froth which will never satisfy a bleeding heart. O beloved, you may sing what songs you will to a sad heart, but no music can charm away its griefs. Only let a ministry be full of Jesus, let Christ be lifted up and set forth, evidently crucified in the midst of the assembly—let his name be poured forth, like a sweet perfume, it shall be as ointment to the wounded heart, and then it will be recognised as the ministry of wheat, and not a ministry of chaff to your souls.

553. Ministry of the Apostle, Conversion the One Object of the Is it not very possible to work up a congregation to the highest possible state of excitement upon their bereavements, and yet after all have gained no step in advance in the direction of their eternal salvation? The deaths of the Herod family might have been worked into a touching appeal to Agrippa, but Paul was too manly to attempt the sentimentalist's effeminate discourings. Neither did the apostle excite Agrippa's patriotic sensibilities by rehearsing the glorious deeds of ancient Jewish valour with which the world had rung; no glowing stanzas of heroic verse or thrilling legend of chivalry were embossed upon his address, but in all simplicity the apostle aimed at this one thing, so far to convince the monarch's judgment as to change his heart, so far to affect his passions as by the power of the Holy Ghost to make a new man of him. This, this only, would content the apostolic orator, that his auditor might be a Christian, that he might be such a one as Paul also was, the Lord's servant, relying upon Christ's righteousness, and living for Christ's glory.

554. Mirth, Holy The priests of old were not to sully themselves with sorrow when they performed their functions, and saints who are of a higher priesthood should show forth delight in their approaches to their God. Angels sing, and why not God's other servants, who are a little lower, and yet far higher? David danced before the ark, which was but a symbol of Divinity; what ails us that our heart so seldom dances before the Lord himself? The old creation has its sunshine and flowers; its lowing herds and bleating flocks; its heaven-mounting larks and warbling nightingales;

its rivers laughing, and its seas clapping hands; is the new creation of grace to render less happy worship to God our exceeding joy? Nay, rather let us come into his presence with thanksgiving, and show ourselves glad in him with psalms. Most of the English versions alter the Old Hundredth Psalm into "Him serve with fear;" but, for my part, by God's grace I mean to sing it as it used to be, and still is sung in Scotland—

"All people that on earth do dwell.

Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell, Come ye before him and rejoice."

555. Misery, the Plea of the Sinner A man lying on the field of battle wounded, when the surgeon comes round, or the soldiers with the ambulance, does not say, "Oh, mine is a little wound," for he knows that then they would let him lie; but he cries out, "I have been bleeding here for hours, and am nearly dead with a terrible wound," for he thinks that he will gain speedier relief; and when he gets into the hospital he does not say to the nurse, "Mine is a small affair; I shall soon get over it"; but he tells the truth to the surgeon in the hope that he may set the bone at once, and that double care may be taken, Ah, sinner, do thou so with God. The right way to plead is to plead thy misery, thine impotence, thy danger, thy sin. Lay bare thy wounds before the Lord, and as Hezekiah spread Sennacherib's letter before the Lord, spread thy sins before him with many a tear and many a cry, and say, "Lord save me from all these; save me from these black and foul things, for thy infinite mercy's sake." Confess thy sin; wisdom dictates that thou shouldst do so, since salvation is of grace.

556. Missionary, Honour of a

I should not like you, if meant by the gifts of God for a great missionary, to die a millionaire. I should not like it, were you fitted to be a missionary, that you should drivel down into a king; for what are all your kings, what are all your nobles, what are all your stars, what are all your garters, what are all your diadems and your tiaras, when you put them all together, compared with the dignity of winning souls for Christ, with the special honour of building for Christ, not on another man's foundation, but preaching Christ's gospel in regions yet far beyond? I reckon him to be a man honoured of men who can do a foreign work for Christ, but he who shall go farthest in self-annihilation and in the furtherance of the glory of Christ, he shall be a king among men, though he wear no crown that carnal eyes can see.

557. Mistakes, Fatal Do not make mistakes about your soul's eternal matters, for mistakes here will be fatal: be built upon the rock, and be surely built on it; do not be afraid of being shaken now, because you must be shaken before long. That silent chamber must be tenanted by you, and on that bed you must be stretched. You will hear the warning voice of death in the silent tread of those who expect your departure, and in the faint whisper of the physician, as he warns your friends that there is no hope. You will be compelled to gaze into worlds unknown; you will hear the booming of the deep sea of eternity; and oh, if a fear should molest you then, how dark will be your descent into the valley! but oh, beloved, if you can be confident then, with what joy will you face your last hour, and with what triumph enter into eternity! How can you expect to be confident then if you are self-indulgent now, and will not dare to try your estate?

558. Monotony of Life

I noticed in a shop window last week a little invention of singular interest. A small metal wire, with a circular disc at each end, was suspended by a thread, and continued without ceasing to oscillate between two small galvanic batteries, first touching one and then the other. A little card informed me that this piece of metal had continued to move to and fro between those two batteries for more than thirty years, and had during that time passed over six thousand miles. The whole affair was so enclosed with a glass case that nothing was likely to disturb it, and so it kept the even tenor of its way, with a history which could be summed up in two lines of plainest prose. To and fro, to and fro for thirty years, and that was its whole monotonous history. Men's quiet lives are much after the same order; they have gone to business on Monday morning and home at night, the same on Tuesday and all the days of the year; no dire struggles, no fierce temptations, no gracious victories, no divine experiences of heavenly love; their whole inner life meagre of interest, because so free from every trial. But look at the man who is subject to trials, temporal and spiritual, and acquainted with difficulties of every sort! he is like yon mass of iron on the prow of a gallant barque which has crossed the Pacific and bathed itself in the Atlantic; storms have dashed upon it, a myriad waves have broken over it; it has seen the terrors of all the seas, and gleamed in the sunlight of both hemispheres. It has served its age most gloriously, and when old and worn with rust a world of interest surrounds it.

559. Moralist, Description of a

I tell thee, moralist, what thou art; thou art a corpse well washed and decently laid out, daintily robed in fair white linen, sprinkled plenteously with sweet perfumes, and wrapped in myrrh, and cassia, and aloes, with flowers wreathed about thy brow, and thy bosom bedecked by the hand of affection with sweetly blushing roses; but thou hast no life, and therefore thy destiny is the grave, corruption is thine heritage, and thy place of abode is fixed, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," for, "He that believeth not shall be damned." With all his excellencies and moralities, with all his baptisms and sacraments, "He that believeth not shall be damned." There is no middle place, no specially reserved and superior abodes for these noble and virtuous unbelievers. If they have not believed, they shall be bound up in bundles with the rest, for God has appointed to unbelievers their portion with liars, and thieves, and whoremongers, and drunkards, and idolaters. Beware, ye unbelievers, for your unbelief will be to the Judge himself, at the great assize, and to the attendant angels, most condemning evidence against you. "Take him away; Christ has not known him, and he has not known Christ; he had not the Son, and he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

560. Morality, not Saving To save the moral needs divine grace as certainly as to save the immoral. If you be lost, my dear hearer, it will be small avail to you that you perished respectably, and were accursed in decent company: if you lack but one thing, yet if the deficiency be fatal, it will be but a poor consolation that you had only one lack. If one leak sent the vessel to the bottom, it was no comfort to the crew that their ship only leaked in one place. One disease may kill a man; he may be sound everywhere else, but it will be a sorry comfort for him to know that he might have lived long had but that one organ been sound. If, dear hearer, thou shouldst have no sin whatever, save only an evil heart of unbelief, if all thy external life should be lovely and amiable, yet if that one fatal sin be in thee, thou canst draw small consolation from all else that is good about thee. Thou art lost by nature, and thou must be found by grace, whoever thou mayst be.

561. Mortality, Reminders of The whole of nature around us helps us to recollect that we are mortal. Look at the year. It is born amid the songs of birds and the beauty of upspringing flowers, it comes to its ripeness and luscious fruits and shouts of harvest home; but anon the old age of autumn comes, and a lamentation is heard, "The harvest is passed and the summer is ended." Amidst the fall of decaying leaves, and the howling of the cold winds of winter the year finds its end. So too with every day. Well does Herbert sing—

"Sweet day, so calm, so bright, The bridal of the earth and sky, The dew must weep thy fall tonight, For thou must die."

Every flower we see lavishing its fragrance on the breeze, trembles because it hears the footsteps of death. It blooms that it may wither; "Its root is ever in its grave, and it must die." Where see you immortal things beneath the moon? Lift up your eyes, look where ye may, see you not everywhere change, and mutability, and departure, written upon nature's brow! and all this God hangeth up, as it were, as a notice upon the wall, like the mystic characters which amazed Belshazzar, that we may not dare to forget that it is appointed unto all men once to die. Nay, as if this were not all, not only is nature full of helps to make us familiar with the grave, but our own bodies also tell us of our appointed change. What is that grey hair but the beginning, the first sign, the foretold of the coming winter which shall freeze the life-current within the vein and chill the heart itself? What is that loosened tooth but a part of the fabric crumbling to let us know that the whole tenement must soon come down? What are those aches and pains, and what that decay of the eyesight, and that dulness of hearing, what those tottering knees, and wherefore that staff, but that we may receive clear warnings that the whole tabernacle is shaking in the rude winds of time, and must soon totter to its fall? The Lord will not suffer us to win a freehold here, but he puts affliction into our family, and disease into our flesh, in order that we may seek after a better country, even a heavenly. Let me exhort you then, beloved brethren in Christ, seeing you have all these mementoes, to keep the lamp of the sepulchre always burning in your chambers, and to be well acquainted with the shroud and the winding-sheet.

562. Moses, Solitude of

I suppose every person who is called to serve God in a remarkable manner, or to suffer for him in a particular way, must have noticed the solitariness of his own life. Do not tell me about solitude being only in the wilderness; a man may have plenty of company there; the worst solitude is that which a man may have amongst millions of his fellow-creatures. Look at the solitude of Moses. When Moses had his cares upon him, with whom could he hold any communion? With seventy elders? As well might an eagle have stopped to have communion with so many sparrows. They were infinitely, I was about to say, beneath him; they had not hearts large enough to commune with the great-souled Moses. You will say, perhaps, that Aaron might have done. Ay, truly, a brother's heart is a very cheering one when it beats to the same tune as your own, but Aaron was a man of altogether another stature from Moses, and nobody would think of comparing the two men together. Moses is like some of those colossal figures that are cut in the Egyptian rocks, or stand amidst the ruins of Carnac; he seems to have been one of those great spirits of the grand olden time before the stature of men had declined, and he is all alone. He bears the people on his bosom, and throughout his life is a solitary man.

563. Motto for Life

Whilst thou livest let this be thy motto—"All for Jesus, all for Jesus; all for the man of sorrows, all for the man of sorrows!" O ye that love him, and fight for him, you are summoned to the front. Hasten to the conflict, I pray you, and charge home for the "man of sorrows!" Make this the battle-cry to-day! Slink not back like cowards! Hie not to your homes as lovers of ease! but press to the front for the "man of sorrows," like good men and true. By the cross which bore him, and by the heavy cross he bore, by his deadly agony, and by the agony of his life, I cry, "forward, for the man of sorrows!" Write this word, "for the man of sorrows," on your own bodies, wherein ye bear the marks of the Lord Jesus; brand it, if not in your flesh, yet in your souls, for henceforth ye are servants to the man of sorrows! Write this on your wealth, bind this inscription on all your possessions—"This belongs to the man of sorrows." Give your children to the "man of sorrows," as men of old consecrated their sons to patriotism, and to battle with their country's foes. Give up each hour to the "man of sorrows!" Learn even to eat and drink and sleep for the "man of sorrows," doing all in his name. Live for him, and be ready to die for him, and the Lord accept you for the "man of sorrows" sake. Amen.

564. Mysteries of Theology Solved only by God

Certain minds are very prone to contemplations upon themes more puzzling than profitable, such as predestination and freewill. We have all of us, I suppose, picked at that Gordian knot in our time, and we have been vain enough to hope to untie it; but that deed is not for us. Many and many a good hour have we wasted over that dark mystery—how far the eternal God hath fixed, and how far responsible man is left free. Milton pictures the very devils musing upon that metaphysical problem, and doubtless the angels have pondered it too; but only God's mind shall perfectly unriddle that enigma. Whenever we are oppressed with that great mystery, it must cheer us to know comforts of God which delight our souls. Amongst those comforts stands the grand fact that God is righteous, that he cannot err, that there cannot possibly be anything in sovereignty that wars with mercy or with justice.

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565. Name of Jesus, Preciousness of

I will defy any man to hold together a large congregation, year after year, with any other subject but Jesus Christ. He might do it for a time; he might charm the ear with the discoveries of science, or with the beauties of poetry, and his oratory might be of so high an order that he might attract the multitudes who have itching ears, but they would in time turn away and say, "This is no longer to be endured. We know it all." All music becomes wearisome but that of heaven; but oh! if the minstrel doth but strike this celestial harp, though he keepeth his fingers always among its golden strings, and be but poor and unskilled upon an instrument go divine, yet the melody of Jesus' name, and the sweet harmony of all his acts and attributes, will hold his listeners by the ears and thrill their hearts as nought beside can do. The theme of Jesus' love is inexhaustible, though preachers may have dwelt upon it century after century, a freshness and fulness still remain.

566. Nation, English, God's Care of the The events of English history are not less stirring than the annals of Judah and Israel. What a theme for a master singer would be the defeat of the proud Spanish Armada, or the frustration of Rome's knavish tricks on November the fifth, or the gallant fights of Oliver and his valiant Ironsides, or the landing of William III., and the overthrow of the hopes of the enemies of the gospel! Our national minstrelsy has never been so devout as it should be, and we are poor in holy national song as compared with the Hebrews; may the taste of coming ages improve in this respect. Let us, in the events which occur in our own time, see the hand of God, and if we cannot write psalms and hymns, yet at any rate let us feel the spirit of glowing thanksgiving to that God who has bidden the ocean gird our native isle, and thus protected her with a better guard than gates of brass or triple steel. Blessed be the Lord our God, who till now hath held the shield of omnipotence over this land, and made it the citadel of liberty, the refuge of the oppressed, and the stronghold of the gospel of Christ.

567. National Church, Exposure of its Weakness

It is miserably amusing to mark the way in which our so-called National Church tries to win men to God. It has recently been stated that in seven of the leading Ritualistic churches in London the subscriptions to foreign missions only reached the sum of £7 13s. 2d. for a whole year. It is fair to add that one of them contributed £5 13s. 10d. to a special fund for Honolulu, but even with this extra effort the total is not raised to £14, and the average is not £2 a piece. These seven superfinely apostolic churches contributed between them £13 7s. for foreign missions, and yet the incumbent of one of them, before the Ritual Commission, stated in his evidence that the cost of his choir alone was "about £1,009 a-year." O model church, with what wisdom hast thou acted? Behold thou givest £2 for the salvation of the heathen, and £1,000 for a box of whistles and a set of singing men and singing women to make music withal. Verily, this is a plain index of the whole business. Theirs is a religion of sensuous gratification, and not of soul-winning. To charm ears with music, eyes with dainty colours, and noses with incense, this is their religion. Men pay money for these delights, even as they would to the opera, or any other amusement in which their tastes find

pleasure; but, for the winning of souls abroad, a few halfpence may suffice to show the lack of zeal.

568. Nations and Churches, Cause of their Fall

Any church of God from which the Spirit has departed becomes very like that great empire with whose military glory the world was dazzled, and whose strength made the nations tremble. France, mistress of arms, queen of beauty, arbiter of politics, how soon has she fallen! I have heard many reasons given for her sudden overthrow, but I scarce believe any of them to be sufficient to account for such a fall. In an hour, like a lily broken at the stalk, she has withered. On a sudden, as though the hand of God had gone out against her, her glory has departed. Why was it? I do not believe that it was any lack of courage in her soldiery, nor do I even think that there was more than usual deficiency of skill in her commanders; her hour had come, she was weighed in the balances and found wanting, and her prowess failed her as in a moment. The nation once so great now lies bleeding at her victor's feet, pitied of us all none the less because her folly continues the useless fight. Just so have we seen it in churches; may we never so see it here. Everybody may be saying, "How wondrously that church flourishes! What power! What influence! What numbers!" And on a sudden some radical evil which had been eating out the very soul of the church may come to its issue, and then, as in a moment, all the apparent prosperity will subside, and the Philistines will rejoice.

569. Natural Depravity

You never need educate any man into sin. As soon as ever the young crocodile has left its shell it begins to act just like its parent, and to bite at the stick which broke the shell. The serpent is scarcely born before it rears itself and begins to hiss. The young tiger may be nurtured in your parlour, but it will develop ere long the same thirst for blood as if it were in the forest. So is it with man; he sins as naturally as the young lion seeks for blood, or the young serpent stores up venom. Sin is in his very nature that taints his inmost soul.

570. Nature, No Inclination in, to Seek God The first step towards ending the separation between the prodigal son and his father is taken by the father, not by the son. Midnight never seeks the sun; long would it be ere darkness found within itself the germs of light; long ages might revolve before Hades should develop the seeds of heaven, or Gehenna discover in its fires the elements of everlasting glory, but till then it shall never happen that corrupt nature shall educe from itself the germs of the new and spiritual life, or sigh after holiness and God.

571. Nature, Wonders of When we have watched those who practise sleight-of-hand perform their feats, we have marvelled greatly, but what are a few poor conjuring tricks when compared with the ordinary, but yet matchless, processes of nature? Our fields and hedgerows team with marvels never equalled by all the wisdom and skill of man. Walk into the grass-field, and you tread on miracles. Listen to the birds as they sing in the trees, and you hear marvellous speech. If one little mechanical bird, with a few clockwork movements, were warbling out something like music in an exhibition, everybody would gather round it, and some would even pay to hear it sing, and yet thousands of birds sing infinitely more sweetly than anything that man can make, and men had rather kill them than admire them. Men fail to see the miracle which God is working in each living thing.

572. Nature of the Sinner, Evil Bias of

Even as the bowl from the player's hand, however straightly it runs for awhile, before long begins to curve according to the bias, even so under all circumstances we tend towards evil. To our nature to do evil is easy, to do good is difficult. We loved darkness naturally rather than light. Uphill work it was to serve God, but as swiftly as a stone hurled down from a crag pursues its downward course, so readily did we follow the way of rebellion. Our sin was of the heart, not of the surface, "The leprosy was deep within." Our tendency to evil did not spring from imitation—for we had set before us, some of us, the noblest of Christian examples, but the prompting to evil was within, the taint was in our vital blood. Now there was need of healing here, since the disease had corrupted our essential being, and rendered us hopelessly unclean. To our heart's centre there was urgent need of healing.

573. Nearness to God

You have seen a little child when it is greatly pleased with a gift from its mother's hand; it says but little by way of gratitude, but it falls to kissing its mother at a vehement rate. as though it never could be done. Such drawing near in love exists between a regenerate soul and its God. True saints fall to close embraces of gratitude; exhibiting thankfulness inexpressible, real and deep, and therefore not to be worded; weights of love too heavy to be carried on the backs of such poor staggering bearers as our words. This is drawing near to God, and it is good for us. As when on a sultry day the traveller strips off his garments and plunges into the cool, refreshing brook, and rises from it invigorated to pursue his way, so when a spirit has learned either in prayer or in praise really to draw near to God, it bathes itself in the brooks of heaven (streamlets branching from the river of the water of life), and goes on its way refreshed with heavenly strength 574. Needful, The One Thing

Sitting at Jesus' feet, that is the first and only necessity. Now, I see all around me a crowd of things alluring and fascinating. Pleasure calls to me; I hear her syren song—but I reply, "I Cannot regard thee, for necessity presses upon me to hearken to another voice." Philosophy and learning charm me; fain would I yield my heart to them, but while I am yet unsaved the one thing needful demands my first care, and wisdom bids me give it. Not that we love human learning less, but eternal wisdom more. Pearls? Yes. Emeralds? Yes; but bread, in God's name—bread at once, when I am starving in the desert! What is the use of ingots of gold, or bars of silver, or caskets of jewels, when food is wanting? If one thing be needful, it devours, like Aaron's rod, all the matters which are merely pleasurable. All the fascinating things on earth may go, but needful things we must have.

575. Neediness of Men

We never wake up in the morning but we want strength for the day, and we never go to bed at night without needing grace to cover the sins of the past. We are needy at all periods of life: when we begin with Christ in our young days we need to be kept from the follies and passions which are so strong in giddy youth; in middle life our needs are greater still, lest the cares of this world should eat as doth a canker; and in old age we are needy still, and need preserving grace to bear us onward to the end. So needy are we that even in lying down to die we need our last bed to be made for us by mercy, and our last hour to be cheered by grace. So needy are we that if Jesus had not prepared a mansion for us in eternity we should have no place to dwell in. We are as full of

wants as the sea is full of water. We cannot stay at home and say, "I have much goods laid up for many years," for the wolf is at the door, and we must go out a-begging again. Our clamorous necessities follow us every moment, and dog our heels in every place. We must take the two adjectives and keep them close together in our confession—"I am poor and needy."

576. Neglect of Souls

See yonder poor wretches whose ship has gone down at sea; they have constructed a poor tottering raft, and have been swimming on it for days. Their supply of bread and water is exhausted, and they are famishing; they have bound a handkerchief to a pole and hoisted it, and a vessel is within sight. The captain of the ship takes his telescope, looks at the object, and knows that it is a shipwrecked crew. "Oh!" says he to his men, "we are in a hurry with our cargo, we cannot stop to look after an unknown object; it may be somebody perishing, and it may not be; but, however, it is not our business," and he keeps on his course. His neglect has murdered those who died on the raft. Yours is much the same case, only it is worse, because you deal with immortal souls, and he only deals with bodies which he suffers to die. Oh, my brother, I do implore you before the Lord, never let this sin lay at your door again; but if there be one who is impressed, and needs a word of comfort, fly on the wings of mercy to such a soul, and help to cheer him as God enables you.

577. Neutrality, None in Religion

You either belong to God or else you belong to his enemy. You are either bought with precious blood or else you are still a bond-slave of Satan. Which are you? If it were possible to dwell in an intermediate state this might be a puzzling enquiry; but there are no neutralities in religion. There is no such thing as being in the valley while the two hosts are on either side on the mountains. You are either this day standing shoulder to shoulder with Prince Immanuel's warriors, or else, when the muster-roll is read of the army on the opposite side, you are most certainly numbered there. All attempts to serve God and to serve the world too must end in bitter failure. Mark Antony yoked two lions together and rode with them through the streets of Rome, but no man shall ever yoke together the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Lion of the pit. No man ever tries to walk on two sides of the road at the same time, unless he should be intoxicated; and it argues gross intoxication of mind and of spirit when a man attempts to serve both God and Mammon—to win eternal life, and yet to live like the spiritually dead.

578. New Birth, Necessity of

I was staying one day at an inn in one of the valleys of Northern Italy, where the floor was dreadfully dirty. I had it in my mind to advise the landlady to scrub it, but when I perceived that it was made of mud I reflected that the more she scrubbed the worse it would be. The man who knows his own heart soon perceives that his corrupt nature admits of no improvement; there must be a new nature implanted, or the man will be only "washed to deeper stains." "Ye must be born again." Ours is not a case for mending, but for making new.

579. Nobility, The True Heavenly

Bring hither the poorest peasant; let her, if you will, be an aged woman, wrinkled and haggard with years; let her be ignorant of all learning: but let me know that in her there is faith in Christ, and that

consequently the Holy Ghost dwells within her, I will reverence her above all emperors and kings, for she is above them. What are these crowned ones but men who, perhaps, have waded through slaughter to a throne, while she has been uplifted by the righteousness of Jesus. Their dynasty is, after all, of mushroom growth, but she is of the blood royal of the skies. She hath God within her; Christ is waiting to receive her into his bliss; heaven's inhabitants, without her, could not be perfected, nor God's purpose be fulfilled, therefore is she noblest of the noble.

580. Non-essentials

It behoves Christians to have done with that cant about non-essentials. My brethren, every command of Christ is essential to us as servants. Not essential to our salvation—we are saved; that is not the question for us to raise; but being saved, and being servants of Christ, every command which comes from the great Captain it is essential for every soldier to keep. It matters not though it be simply a ceremonial, yet still we have no right to alter it. What would the court-martial say to any of the private soldiers who, having received an order from a captain, should say, "Well, I did not consider it to be exceedingly important"? "Drum him out of the regiment, sir; there is an end to all discipline in the army when soldiers criticise their orders." So is it with Christ's law. We have no right to say, for instance, about believers' baptism, "Well, it is a non-essential." Who told you so? If Jesus commands it, obey it, and if it be the Lord's law, make haste and delay not to keep the Master's statute.

"O"

581. Obstinacy

There's a queer chap in our village who keeps a bulldog, and he tells me that when the creature once gives a bite at anything he never lets go again, and if you want to get it out of his mouth you must cut his head off; that's the sort of man that has fretted me many a time, and almost made me mad. You might sooner argue a pitchfork into a threshing machine, or persuade a brickbat to turn into marble, than get the fellow to hear common sense. Scrubbing blackamoors white, and getting spots out of leopards, is nothing at all compared with trying to lead a downright obstinate man. Right or wrong, you might as easily make a hill walk to London, as turn him when his mind is made up. When a man is right, this sticking to his text is a grand thing; our minister says, "it is the stuff that martyrs are made of," but when an ignorant, wrongheaded fellow gets this hard grit into him, he makes martyrs of those who have to put up with him.

582. Omnipotence of Christ

There are no ebbs and flows with Christ's power. Omnipotence is in the hand that once was pierced, permanently abiding there. Oh, if we could but rouse it; if we could but bring the Captain of the host to the field again, to fight for his church, to work by his servants! What marvels should we see, for he is able. We are not straitened in him, we are straitened in ourselves if straitened at all.

583. Oracle, Divine, Simplicity of the

I have been amazed in times of difficulties to see how plain the oracle is. You have asked friends, and they could not advise you; but you have gone to your knees, and God has told you. You have questioned, and you have puzzled, and you have tried to elucidate the problem, and, lo! in the chapter read at morning prayer, or in a passage of Scripture that lay open before you, the direction has been given. Have we not seen a text, as it were, plume its wings, and fly from the word like a seraph, and touch our lips with a live altar coal? It lay like a slumbering angel amidst the beds of spices of the sacred word, but it received a divine mission, and brought consolation and instruction to your heart.

584. Ordination, The True The Puseyite mind utterly fails to fathom the depth of horror which is contained in the idea of an unauthorised man preaching, and a man out of the apostolical succession daring to teach the way of salvation. To me this horror seems very like a schoolboy's fright at a hobgoblin which his fears had conjured up. I think if I saw a man slip through the ice into a cold grave, and I could rescue him from drowning, it would not be so very horrible to me to be the means of saving him, though I may not be employed by the Royal Humane Society. I imagine if I saw a fire, and heard a poor woman scream at an upper window, and likely to be burned alive, if I should wheel the fire-escape up to the window, and preserve her life, it would not be so very dreadful a matter though I might not belong to the regular Fire Brigade. If a company of brave volunteers should chase an enemy out of their own county, I do not know that it would be anything

so shocking, although a whole army of mercenaries might be neglecting their work in obedience to some venerable military rubric which rendered them incapable of effective service. But mark you, the shepherds, and others like them, are in the apostolical succession, and they are authorised by divine ordinance, for every man who hears the gospel is authorised to tell it to others. Do you want authority? Here it is in confirmation strong from Holy Writ: "Let him that heareth say, Come,"—that is, let every man who truly hears the gospel bid others come to drink of the waters of life. This is all the warrant you require for preaching the gospel according to your ability.

585. Outward and Inward Religion

All the costly gifts cast into the treasury are valuable chiefly as representing an inner spirit of devotion, and of self-consecration. They may exist as outward acts without the living spirit which gives them value in God's eyes. We need therefore to cultivate the soul, and to see that that sacred spirit of devout submission dwells within us which dwelt in him, who not only sacrificed himself on the cross, being obedient unto death, but ever lived in that state of heart which was embodied in his prayer, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." Would the washing of the windows of a house make the inhabitants thereof clean? Yea, does the painting and ornamenting of the exterior of a mansion make the dwellers in it healthier or holier men? We read of devils entering into a clean swept and garnished house, and the last end of that man was worse than the first. All the outward cleansing is but the gilding of the bars of the cage full of unclean birds; the whitewashing of sepulchres full of rottenness and dead men's bones. Washing the outside of a box will leave all the clothes inside as foul as ever. Remember, therefore, that all that you can do in the "way of outward religion is nothing but the sacrifice of the fat of rams, and "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

"P"

586. Paper Religion

You know very well how bad it is for trade when there is a great quantity of paper money about, and not enough sterling bullion to back it up with; there is sure to come a panic and a crash. I am afraid that the Christian church issues a great deal of paper religion, and has not enough bullion to back it up with. After all, in God's sight, it is nothing but the solid gold that is worth having, and the paper profession will be burnt to ashes in the fire. May God "lift up" his church, and make her a truly golden church; that her piety may be a true bullion piety; that the circulation of the church may be a truly golden medium, and not a mere bill and paper piety.

587. Pardon, The Moment of, Joyful

I shall never forget when my iniquity was removed; it was indeed in one single moment. Wretched I was, and more; my sins terrified, alarmed me, they haunted me day and night, they made me to sit on the doorstep of hell; but how changed was the scene when I heard and understood that text, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth," for then I was enabled to look to Jesus, and one look removed mountains. As I looked, my iniquity was forgiven, my joy was overflowing. I had to restrain myself, and to do violence to my feelings in order to keep my seat. If the Methodists cry out, "Hallelujah," I could for once have cried out "Hallelujah" with the loudest of them. Oh, the bliss of pardon, when it comes by the Holy Ghost! You may hear about it, my brethren, you may read about it, and both of these are well in their way; I hope you will continue both to hear and read, but these are not enough; it is essential that you receive the word with living power within from God himself, against whom you have offended.

588. Patience under Trial When one's flesh and bones are full of aches and pains, it is as natural for us to murmur as for a horse to shake his head when the flies tease him, or a wheel to rattle when a spoke is loose; but nature should not be the rule with Christians, or what is their religion worth? If a soldier fights no better than a ploughboy, off with his red coat. We expect more fruit from an apple-tree than from a thorn, and we have a right to do so. The disciples of a patient Saviour should be patient themselves. Grin and bear it is the old-fashioned advice, but sing and bear it is a great deal better.

589. Paul, Purpose of God in sending

Look the whole Bible through, and you will find that the revelation is always congruous to the person to whom it is given. You do not find Ezekiel blessed with a revelation like that of Isaiah. Ezekiel is all imagination, therefore he must soar on the eagle's wing; Isaiah is all affection and boldness, and therefore he must speak with evangelical fulness. God does not give Nahum's revelation to the herdsman Amos: the herdsman Amos cannot speak like Nahum, nor can Nahum speak like Amos. Each man is after his own order, and a man of this masterly order of mind, like the apostle Paul, must have been created, it seems to me, for no other end than to be the appropriate means of revealing to us the fulness and the blessing of the gospel of peace.

590. Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

Paul had a secret grief somewhere, I know not where, but near his heart, continually, wherever he might be, irritating him; perpetually vexing him and wounding him. A thorn, a commonplace thing, such as might grow in any field, and fall to any man's lot. Thorns are plentiful enough, and have been since Father Adam scattered the first handful of the seed. A thorn—nothing to make a man remarkable, or give him the dignity of unusual sorrow. Some men boast about their great trials, and there is something in feeling that you are a man greatly afflicted; but a thorn could not give even this wretched satisfaction. It was not a sword in the bones, or a galling arrow in the loins, but only a thorn, about which little could be said. Everyone knows, however, that a thorn is one of the most wretched intruders that can molest our foot or hand. Those pains which are despised because they are seldom fatal, are frequently the source of the most intense anguish—toothache, headache, earache, what greater miseries are known to mortals? And so with a thorn. It sounds like a nothing; "it can be easily removed with a needle," say those who feel it not, and yet how it will fester; and if it remain in the flesh it will generate inconceivable torture. Such was Paul's trial; a secret smarting, incessantly irritating, something—we do not know what.

591. Peace between Christians to be sought In the best church there will always be some falling leaves. Somebody gets out at the elbow with another brother. We are not any of us perfect. We get on far more than reasonably well with one another, as a church. I never saw any church that was really so well knit together in Christian love as we are; but there are always a few leaves about, and not a little dust to be put in the corner and burned. May I ask a brother, whenever he sees any mischief, to sweep it up and say nothing about it. Whenever you find that such-and-such a brother is going a little amiss, talk to him about it quietly; do not spread it all over the church, and make jealousies and suspicions. Pick up the leaf and destroy it. When a brother member has offended you, so that you feel vexed, forgive him, for I dare say you will want forgiveness before many days are over. We have none of us, perhaps, the sweetest of tempers, but, if we have the sweetest, the way to prove it is by forgiving those who have not. If every one would seek to make peace there never could be any great accumulation of discord in the King's garden to annoy him; but when he came walking in he would find it all beautiful and in good order, and all the flowers blooming delightfully, and he would find his delights with the sons of men.

592. Peace, None with Sin

Oh! those blessed tempests! Do not give me calm weather when the air is still and heavy, and when lethargy is creeping over one's spirit. Lord, send a hurricane, give us a little stormy weather: when the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls, then God's servants know that the Lord is abroad, and that his right hand is no longer in his bosom, that the moral atmosphere will get clear, that God's kingdom will come, and his will be done on earth, even as it is in heaven. "Peace, peace, peace," that is the flap of the dragon's wings; the stern voice which proclaims perpetual war is the voice of the Captain of our salvation. You say, how is this? "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Peace, physical, Christ does make; there is to be no strife with the fist, no blow with the sword, but peace moral, and peace spiritual can never be in this world where Jesus Christ is, so long as error is there. But you know,

beloved, that you cannot do any good thing but what the devil will be sure to hinder you. What then? up and at him! coward looks and faint counsels are not for warriors of the cross. Expect fightings, and you will not be disappointed. Whitfield used to say that some divines would go from the first of January to the end of December with a perfectly whole skin; the devil never thought them worth while attacking; but, said he, let us begin to preach with all our might, and soul, and strength, the gospel of Jesus Christ, and men will soon put a fool's cap on our heads, and begin laughing at us, and ridiculing us; but if so, so much the better. We are not alarmed because Satan hindereth us.

593. Peculiarities to be used for God

Some of us have a vein of humour, and though we try to keep it under restraint it will peep out. What then? Why, let us make it bear the Lord's yoke. This faculty is not necessarily common or unclean: let it be made a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the Lord. On the other hand, some of you have a touch of despondency in your nature! take care to subdue it to the Lord's praise. You are the men to sing those grave melodies which in some respects are the pearls of song. A little pensiveness is good flavouring. The muse is at her best when she is pleasingly melancholy. Praise God, my brethren, as you are. Larks must not refrain from singing because they are not nightingales, nor must the sparrow refuse to chirp because he cannot emulate the linnet. Let every tree of the Lord's planting praise the Lord; clap your hands, ye trees of the wood, while fruitful trees and all cedars join in his praise. Both young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord, each one in his peculiar note; for ye are all needful to the perfect harmony. The Lord would not have you borrow your brother's tones, but use "all that is within you," all that is peculiar to your own idiosyncrasy, for his glory.

594. People, Triumph of the Gospel among the In the old days of persecution and of burning, who were the men that played the man most nobly at the stake? Here and there a bishop and a noble did so, but the rank and file of the heroes were from the poor or the middle class. There was one great man, with an unworthy right hand that recanted, and yet did well at the last; but the poor weavers of Colchester, and the cobblers of Bow, never recanted at all, but gloried in being made a burnt-offering for the truth. Wherever the gospel has been mainly upheld by the great ones of the earth it has had little success. Take, for instance, Spain and Italy, the converts of the Reformation there nearly all belonged to the higher ranks, and ere long its doctrines became extinct, but it lived among German peasants and British artizans. The valiant of Israel still come from the loom, the smithy, the plough, and the bench. Wherever the gospel entrenches itself among the common people, the devil himself cannot destroy it; it is then like a lion in its own forest, and none can drive it forth.

595. Perfection, the Christian's Aim

Although a young artist, when he starts in his work, dare not hope that he shall come up to Praxiteles in sculpture, or to Apelles in painting; yet were he to set before himself anything short of the highest standard, he would not be likely to attain honour as an academician. When he begins to work, he studies, not imperfect pictures, but models. He studies Raphael; he wants to see what Michael Angelo could do.

"Oh!" says one, "what are you trying to paint?" "Are you trying to be a Raphael?" "Will you ever paint like Raphael or Michael Angelo?—never." What mean your sneers and jibes? Would you have him go and buy some worthless print at a pawnshop, and copy from that! What sort of an artist would he make then? The only possibility of his being a good artist is his taking perfect models. So with you, Christian. Your model is to be the perfect Saviour, and this is to be what you are to aim at every day—"perfecting holiness." And for all you may say, "Ah! I shall never come up to that; many failures have proved to me that I shall not reach it;" yet you will do better with that as your ambition than you could have done if you had selected some imperfect model, and had said, "Well, if I am as good as that man, that will suit me." Nothing but perfection must content you. Beloved, press forward towards it, and God speed you in the race.

596. Perfection, Human, Unattainable

Whenever I meet with a person who feels that he is perfect, I conceive at once that he has not yet attained even a remote conception of what true perfection must be. The savage of Australia is satisfied with his weapons of war so long as he has never seen a rifle or heard of a cannon: to him his hovel is a model of architecture, for he has never heard of a cathedral or a palace. I have no doubt that a barn-door fowl would be quite surprised at the complaint which an eagle might make about its inability to mount as high as it desires to do. The fowl is perfect—perfect up to the condition of its barn-door, barley-scratching life; it knows nothing higher than its roosting-place, and so it concludes itself absolutely perfect and fit for all that is desirable in flight. But oh, could it know where the thunders dwell, and sail above the clouds where the callow lightnings wait the bidding of the Lord, then would the creature feel something of the aspirations and the grief which torment the heart of the royal bird. Men know not what God is, nor the infinity of his perfections, nor the majesty of his purity, else, when highest would they cry, "Higher, higher, higher," and mourn because they have not yet attained, and need still to mount as on eagle's wings.

597. Persecution Sifting the Church

Surely the blood of saints, shed for the testimony of Jesus, might have filled the Mediterranean to its brim. I know not whether every drop of the Atlantic ocean might not have been incriminated if the warm blood of all the martyrs had been poured into its all but boundless deeps. So many were the saints of God that were offered, that arithmetic can scarcely compute their number, and time would fail us to narrate their torments and their triumphs. The church was sifted by these persecutions: the vain and light, the formal and the insincere, went off from her, too glad to earn inglorious safety by dastardly apostasy; they could not afford to lose their lives for truth's sake; the cross was too heavy for their galled shoulder, and they turned aside. Yet not the least true grain fell to the ground; the church was never the worse for her fiercest persecution; in fact, she seemed to derive new vigour from her baptism of blood, and her voice was never so piercing and so potent as when it was uplifted from the rack and the stake. Her soldiers never fought so well as when the martyr's ruby crown hung visibly before their eyes. Sifted she has been, but never injured; she has been a grand gainer through the grace of God by all her tribulations and afflictions.

598. Persecution, Usefulness of

One might almost sigh for a brush of persecution to wake some of you up! Just a little salt cast here and there to make some of the sore places smart! Surely we go to sleep unless the whip be

now and then laid on. A stake or two at Smithfield might once again give back the old fire of enthusiasm to the church, but in these warm sunny days we forget our mercies. We go to sleep upon the bench, instead of tugging at the oar; and when we ought to be serving God with all our might and soul, I fear that the most of us who are saved are dreaming our lonely way to heaven, indifferent to a very great extent to the glory of God, and forgetful of our indebtedness to Christ for what he has done for us.

599. Personal Consecration Do you not know that all God's people are priests? These lying priests now-a-days put on their gaudy trappings like the priests of Baal, and come forward and say, "We are priests." Priests of Dagon, priests of Baal, priests of hell, but not God's priests. God's priests are those who are alive from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit, and every man and every woman here who loves Jesus is a priest to God. O brethren, God would have you all act as priests, and not to say, "We have a minister, let him serve God for us." "I will have nothing to do with your responsibilities. Serve God yourselves; it is as much as I can do to serve him; only by his grace am I upheld under my own load; in fact, my own responsibilities are so heavy that I cannot bear them; but as for being a proxy for any one of you, I cannot be anything of the kind. Personally you were bought with blood; personally you hope to enter heaven; personally, then, consecrate yourselves this day unto the Lord, and if you do so, oh, what a blessing it will be!"

600. Persuaded, Almost A person has rebelled against the government: in hot haste he has taken side with the rioters, but he is afterwards very sorry for it, and he asks that he may be forgiven; let mercy have free course. But another offender has been reasoned with, he has been shown the impolicy of treason; he has seen clearly the evil of taking up arms against the commonwealth, and he has been almost persuaded to be loyal. I say when he becomes a rebel, he is a traitor with a vengeance, to whom no mercy can be shown. The man who is almost persuaded to be honest, and yet deliberately becomes a thief, is a rogue ingrain. The murderer who almost saves his victim's life in the moment of passion, pausing because almost persuaded to forego revenge, and, after all, deliberately kills his enemy, deserves death beyond all others. The man who is deliberately an enemy to Christ, presumptuously rejects the offer of peace, in calm moments, puts from him the precious blood, who is almost persuaded, but yet by desperate effort overcomes his conscience, such a man shall go down to the pit with a millstone about his neck that shall sink him to the lowest hell. You almost-persuaded ones, I pray you look at this and tremble.

601. Philosophy and Christianity

There have been various dynasties of thought: at one time Plato reigned supreme over thoughtful minds; then Aristotle held a long and rigid rule—he so ruled and governed the entire universe of mind that even the Christian religion was continually infected and tainted by his philosophical speculations; but another philosophy found out his weakness and supplanted him, to be in its turn subverted by the next. As men grow more enlightened, or the human mind passes through another phase of change, men say to their once-revered rabbis and honoured teachers, "Stand out of the way, a new light has arisen; we have come to a new point of thought, and we have done with you." Things which were accounted sure and wise in years gone by, are now ridiculed by us as the height of folly. And why? Because these systems of philosophy and thought have not been based upon truth. There has been a worm in the centre of the fair apple of knowledge; there has been a flaw in the foundations of the great master-builder; they have built upon the sand, and their

edifices have tumbled to irretrievable ruin; but the truth, which Jesus taught from the mountain-top, reads as if it were delivered but yesterday. Christianity is as suitable to the nineteenth century as to the first; it hath the dew of its youth upon it. As Solomon's Song saith of Christ, his locks are bushy and black as a raven, to show his youth and vigour, so may I say of the gospel, it is still as young and vigorous, as full of masculine energy, as ever it was. We who preach it fear not for the result; give us a fair stage and no favour, and the Samson of divine truth, its locks still unshorn, will yet remove the pillars of the temple of error, and bring ruin to the powers of hell. Jesus must reign as the royal teacher, because all he teaches is based upon the surest truth.

602. Pillar of Cloud, the Protection of God's People

I do not think of the pillar of cloud as being simply a column of smoke arising from the centre of the Tabernacle; it was such, but besides that it covered the whole camp as a vast canopy or pavilion, so that in the great and terrible wilderness they fainted not under the burning heat of the sun; but this pillar of cloud interposed a friendly shade, so that they passed through the wilderness beneath the wings of God. At night their encampment would have been like a great city wrapped in darkness, but the pillar of fire supplied to them a light far superior to that which glows in London or in Paris through the art of man; that great flaming pillar lit up every house and habitation, so that in point of fact there was no night there. They were always sheltered by God both by day and by night. If they strayed away from the camp for a little time in the heat of the sun, they had only to come flying back, and there that emblem of the present God became their shelter; or at night, if they wandered for awhile, that vast blazing lampion conducted them back again to their place of rest. So it is with us. In nights of trouble and grief, the fire of divine comfort glows within us, the precious promises are round about us, and we rejoice in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; and when by day we travel over this burning wilderness to the rest appointed, God interposes perpetually the sweet presence of his love to screen us from the sharper sorrows of the world, that we may still, while walking onward to heaven, behold the shield of heaven uplifted above our heads.

603. Policy, a False Rule of Life The man who lives by policy is like a sailor in a gusty day, or who has a foul wind against him, and must tack about to reach first this point and then the other, and makes but slow progress after all in the direction which he really wishes to pursue. But the man who has the life of God, and follows the way of truth, is like the steam-vessel which ploughs its road straight on, wind or tide notwithstanding. Why needs it to tack? It bears its force within itself, and is not dependent upon the extraneous circumstances of winds and waves. Happy is that man who is in this condition! If he be poor he may cheerfully pursue the way of truth, and find his poverty a blessing. If he be rich, the same immortal principles which guided him in poverty will suffice him now that he has come to the possession of wealth. If he were elected to a kingdom, such a man, having the law of God in his heart, would know how to walk and to behave himself right royally. His way is everlasting, because he has not to stop every morning and enquire, "How am I to behave to-day? What is the new rule by which I shall shape my course?" Your tricky politicians, who this day are one thing and that the other, as they fancy the public mind may change, these had need to consult their barometer to know what kind of weather the popular will ordains; but we, if we are taught of God to do the right thing, care not about the weather or the will of man. Whether it be fair or foul, whether the sun shine or not, we would still serve our God and do the right, and if the heavens should fall expect to find a shelter still.

604. Policy, Deliverance by, only Temporary

You may find a temporary deliverance from your pressing sorrow by a sinful step, but you will purchase the deliverance at an awful price, since sorrow will return to you multiplied sevenfold, and will find you naked, because your clear conscience, which was once your shield, has been vilely cast away. He that, amidst a thousand troubles, keeps his heart whole by standing firm in his integrity, may battle against all the world and all the hosts of hell, and not be afraid; but he who giveth way for the sake of policy shall find that a wounded spirit none can bear, and the weakness that shall come upon him, through having turned aside to crooked ways, shall be such as shall cost him a far more dolorous lamentation than all his afflictions could have wrung from him.

605. Policy v. Principle

Now, brethren, I have almost always noticed that those persons who temporise, or attempt to find out a policy of going between, and doing as little wrong as possible, but still just a little, always blunder out of one ditch into another, and their whole life is a life of compromises, of sins, and of miseries; if they do get to heaven they go there slipshod, and with thorns piercing their feet all the way. But I have noticed others who have come right straight out, and rent away the cords which entangled them, and they have said, "I will do the right, if I die for it;" and though they have had to suffer (I could mention some cases where they have suffered for years, very much to the sorrow of him who gave them the advice upon which they acted, not because he regretted giving them the advice, but regretted that they had to suffer), yet always there has been a turn somewhere or other, and by-and-by they have had to say, "I thank God after all, notwithstanding all my crosses and losses, that I was led to be faithful to my convictions, for I am a happier man, if not a richer man."

606. Popery, Prevalence of Not many streets from the house in which we are assembled you may have your candles, and your incense, and your copes, and your albs, with all the other pomps and vanities of the detestable idolatry of Rome. That Romanism against which Latimer bore testimony at the stake has been suffered to hold its mummeries and practise its fantastic tricks in the name of this nation, until it counts its deluded admirers by tens of thousands. That monster, which stained Smithfield with gore, and made it an ash-heap for the martyrs of God, has come back to you; the old wolf that rent your fathers, and tore their palpitating hearts out of their bosoms, you have suffered to come back into your house, and you are cherishing it, and feeding it with your children's meat. Once again the harlot of Babylon flaunts her finery in our faces almost without rebuke. Do not tell me it is not Popery, it is the selfsame Antichrist with which your fathers wrestled, and a man with but half his wits about him may see it to be so: and yet this land bears it, and rejoices in it, and crouches at the foot of a priest once more. Our great ones, our delicate women, and dainty lords, are once again the willing vassals of priestcraft and superstition; and amid all this, if any one speaks out, he is assailed as uncharitable, and abhorred as a troubler in Israel. Is it for nothing that God has favoured this land with the gospel? Must all her light be turned to darkness? Must all the gains of the valiant men of old be lost by the sloth and cowardice of this thoughtless generation? In days of yore men like Knox and Welch in Scotland, and Hugh Latimer, and John Bradford, fought like lions for the truth, and are we to yield like coward curs? Are the men of oak succeeded by the men of willow? The men who cried, "No Popery here!" now sleep within their sepulchres, and their descendants wear the yoke which their fathers scorned. Shall not

God visit us for this? I would that a voice of thunder could arouse this slumbering generation. I am for liberty of conscience for every man: I would have, by all manner of means, the Catholic as free to practise his religion as any one else; I would have religion left to its own native power for its support, and would allow no church to offer to God what it had taken from an unwilling people by the legalised robbery of church-rate and tithe; but, above all things, if we must be doomed to have an Established Church, I pray God it may not for ever be a den of superstition and the haunt of Papistical heresies. If the Church of England does not sweep Tractarianism out of her midst, it should be the daily prayer of every Christian man, that God would sweep her utterly away from this nation; for the old leprosy of Rome ought not to be sanctioned and supported by a land which has shed so much of her blood to be purged from it.

607. Praise, a Daily Employment

We ought to spend at least a little time every day in adoring contemplation. Our private devotions are scarcely complete if they consist altogether of prayer. Should there not be praise? If possible, during each day, sing a hymn. Perhaps you are not in a position to sing it aloud, very loud, at any rate, but I would hum it over, if I were you. Many of you working men find time enough to sing a silly song, why cannot you find space for the praise of God? Every day let us praise him, when the eyelids of the morning first are opened, and when the curtains of the night are drawn, ay, and at midnight, if we wake at that solemn hour, let the heart pat fire to the sacred incense and present it unto the Lord that liveth for ever and ever. In the midst of the congregation also, whenever we come up to God's house, let us take care that our praise is not merely lip language, but that of the heart. Let us all sing, and so sing that God himself shall hear. We need more than the sweet sounds which die upon mortal ears, we want the deep melodies which spring from the heart, and which enter into the ears of the immortal God.

608. Praise, Garment of

"The garment of praise," what a dress is this! Speak of wrought gold, or fine linen, or needlework of divers colours, or taffeta, or damasks, or gorgeous silks, most rich and rare, which come from far-off lands—where is anything compared with the "garment of praise"? When a man wraps himself about, as it were, with psalmody, and lives for ever a chorister, singing not with equal voice, but with the same earnest heart as they do who day and night keep up the never-ending hymn before the throne of the infinite I AM, what a life is his, what a man is he! O mourner, this is to be your portion; take it now; Jesus Christ will cover you, even at this hour, with the garment of praise; so grateful shall you be for sins forgiven, for infirmity overcome, for watchfulness bestowed, for the church revived, for sinners saved, that you shall undergo the greatest conceivable change, and the sordid garments of your woe shall be put aside for the brilliant array of delight. It shall not be the spirit of praise for the spirit of heaviness, though that were a fair exchange, but as your heaviness you tried to keep to yourself, so your praise you shall not keep to yourself, it shall be a garment to you, external and visible, as well as inward and profound.

609. Praise, Putting on the Garment of

O ye mourning saints, ye have been putting on your sackcloth to-day, and you arranged it so carefully, for there is a kind of foppery about grief that makes it strew its ashes with deliberation. O sirs, could you not have spent some of your time at another wardrobe, and in putting on another

dress? Come, thou afflicted one, array thyself for a minute with the robe of whiteness, without spot or blemish! How well it will become you! How soon you will wear it! Now, put that unfading crown upon your head. You are a poor servant or a working man; and, ah, that head has often ached with weariness and woe, but put on the crown now! How royally it adorns your brow! It would not fit any other head, it was made for you; and you will soon have it. In a few days, or a few months, you will go by the way of the sepulchre, or else by the way of the second coming, up to your throne and your kingdom. Now hold that palm-branch in your hand! How delightful it looks! How your eye gleams at the thought of the victory which it betokens! Arise, I say, and put the silver sandals upon those weary feet! Bedeck yourself with the jewels and ornaments prepared for your wedding. Take down the harp, and try your fingers amongst its celestial strings. "Wake up, my glory! wake, psaltery and harp! I myself will awake right early." Blessed be the Lord who hath prepared for his people rivers of pleasure at his right hand for evermore. Our souls anticipate the day of enjoyment; and at this hour, by faith, we eat the fruit of the trees of life, and drink from the living fountains of waters. O clap your hands, ye righteous. Sound the cymbals, even the high-sounding cymbals, and give praise unto your God even for ever, who hath prepared for you the rest that knoweth no end.

610. Praise, Soul to be engaged in

I am afraid that where organs, choirs, and singing men and singing women are left to do the praise of the congregation, men's minds are more occupied with the due performance of the music than with the Lord, who alone is to be praised. God's house is meant to be sacred unto himself, but too often it is made an opera-house, and Christians form an audience, not an adoring assembly. The same thing may, unless great care be taken, happen amid the simplest worship, even though everything which does not savour of gospel plainness is excluded, for in that case we may drowsily drawl out the words and notes, with no heart whatever. To sing with the soul, this only is to offer acceptable song! We come not together to amuse ourselves, to display our powers of melody, or our aptness in creating harmony; we come to pay our adoration at the footstool of the Great King, to whom alone be glory for ever and ever. True praise is for God—for God alone.

611. Praise, The Time for

Get your holy-praise work done before affliction mars the tune. Fill the air with music while you can. While yet there is bread upon the table, sing, though famine may threaten: while yet the child runs laughing about the house, while yet the flush of health is in your cheek, while yet your goods are spared, while yet your heart is whole and sound, lift up your song of praise to the Most High God; and let your Master, the singing Saviour, be in this your goodly and comfortable example.

612. Praise, The Universal Employment May I ask you, beloved friends, now to recollect what God has done for you? Thread the jewels of his grace upon the thread of memory, and hang them about the neck of praise. Canst thou count the leaves of the forest in autumn, or number the small dust of the threshing-floor? Then, canst thou give the sum of his lovingkindnesses? For mercies beyond count, praise him without stint. Then let your conscience praise him. Conscience once weighed thy sins and condemned thee; now let it weigh the Lord's pardon and magnify his grace to thee. Count the purple drops of Calvary, and say, "Thus my sins were washed away." Let thy conscience praise the Sinbearer, who has caused it to flow with peace like a river, and to abound in righteousness as the waves of the sea. Let thy emotions join the sacred choir, for thou hast this

day, if thou art like the psalmist, many feelings of delight; bless him "who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies, and who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Is all within you peaceful to-day? Sing some sweet pastoral, like the twenty-third psalm. Let the calm of your spirit sound forth the praises of the Lord upon the pleasant harp and the psaltery. Do your days flow smoothly? Then consecrate the dulcimer to the Lord. Are you joyful this day? Do you feel the exhilaration of delight? Then praise ye the Lord with the timbrel and dance. On the other hand, is there a contention within? does the conflict disturb your mind? Then praise him with the sound of the trumpet, for he will go forth with you to the battle. When you return from the battle and divide the spoil, then "praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals." Whatever emotional state thy soul be found in, let me lead thee to bless thy Maker's holy name.

613. Praise to be Incessant

It is much to be desired that all day long, in every avocation, and every recreation, the soul should spontaneously pour forth praise, even as birds sing, and flowers perfume the air, and sunbeams cheer the earth. We would be incarnate psalmody, praise enshrined in flesh and blood. From this delightful duty we would desire no cessation, and ask no pause. "Praise waits for thee, O God, in Zion;" thy praise may come and go, from the outside world, where all things ebb and flow, for it lies beneath the moon, and there is no stability in it; but amidst thy people, who dwell in thee, and who possess eternal life—in them thy praise perpetually abideth.

614. Praise to be Personal

"Bless the Lord, O my soul," let the true Ego praise him, the essential I, the vital personality, the soul of my soul, the life of my life! Let me be true to the core to my God; let that which is most truly my own vitality spend itself in blessing the Lord. The soul is our best self; we must not merely bless the Lord with our body, which will soon become worms' meat, and is but dust at its best; but with our inner, ethereal nature, which makes us akin to angels,—yea, that which causes it to be said that in the image of God we were created. My spiritual nature, my loftiest powers, must magnify God,—not the voice which sings a hypocritical magnificat, but the heart which means it;—not the lips which cry Hosanna thoughtlessly,—but the mind which considers and intelligently worships. Not alone this little narrow walk of my body would I fill with song, but the infinite,—through which my spirit soars on wings of boundless thought!—I would make that shoreless region vocal with Jehovah's praise. My real self, my best self, shall bless the Lord. But the soul is also our immortal self, that which will outlast time; and, being redeemed by precious blood, shall pass through judgment and enter into the worlds unknown, for ever to dwell at the right hand of God, triumphant in his eternal love. My immortal soul, what hast thou to do with spending thine energies upon mortal things? Wilt thou hunt for fleeting shadows, whilst thou art thyself most real and abiding? Wilt thou heap up bubbles, whilst thou thyself wilt endure for ever, in a life coeval with the existence of God himself, for he hath given thee eternal life in his Son Jesus? Bless the Lord, then,—so noble a thing as thou art shouldst not be occupied with less worthy matters. Raise thyself on all thy wings, and like the six-winged cherubim adore thy God.

615. Praise, to be Whole-hearted

Look at the very birds on earth how they shame us! Dear little creatures, if you watch them when they are singing, you will sometimes wonder how so much sound can come out of such diminutive bodies. How they throw their whole selves into the music, and seem to melt themselves away in song! How the wing vibrates, the throat pulsates, and every part of their body rejoices to assist the strain! This is the way in which we ought to praise God. If birds that are sold at three for two farthings yet render God such praise, how much more heartily ought we to sing before him?

616. Praise of Christ

We take into reckoning whenever we do honour to a prince all that he may have done for the nation over which he rules. What, then, has Jesus done for us? Rather let me say what has he not done? Upon his shoulders were laid our sins; he carried them into the wilderness, and they are gone for ever. Against him came forth our foes; he met them in shock of battle, and where are they now? They are cast into the depths of the sea. As for death itself, that last of foes, he has virtually overcome it, and ere long the weakest of us through him shall say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" He is the hero of heaven. He returned to his Father's throne amidst the acclamations of the universe. Do we not, for whom he fought, for whom he conquered, do we not desire to honour him? I feel I speak with bated breath upon a theme where all our powers of speech should be let loose. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him! Is it not the universal verdict of all who know him? Ought it not to be the cry of all the sons of men? East and west, north and south, ought they not to ring the joy bells and hang out streamers on his marriage day, for joy of him? Is the King's Son to be married, is there a festival in his honour? O then let him be great, let him be glorious! Long live the King! Let the maidens go forth with their timbrels, and the sons of music make sweet melody—yea, let all creatures that have breath break forth with his praises. "Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

617. Prayer, A Child's

I wish we did believe in prayer: I am afraid most of us do not. People will say, "What a wonderful thing it is that God hears George Müller's prayers!" But is it not a sad thing that we should think it wonderful for God to hear prayer? We are come to a pretty pass certainly when we think it wonderful that God is true! Much better faith was that of a little boy in one of the schools at Edinburgh, who had attended the prayer-meetings, and at last said to his teacher who conducted the prayer-meeting, "Teacher, I wish my sister could be got to read the Bible; she never reads it."

"Why, Johnny, should your sister read the Bible?" "Because if she once could read it, I am sure it would do her good, and she would be converted and be saved?" "Do you think so, Johnny?" "Yes, I do, sir, and I wish the next time there's a prayer-meeting you would ask the people to pray for my sister, that she may begin to read the Bible."

"Well, well, it shall be done, John." So the teacher gave out that a little boy was very anxious that prayers should be offered that his sister might begin to read the Bible. John was observed to get up and go out. The teacher thought it very unkind of the boy to disturb the people in a crowded room and go out like that, and so the next day when the lad came, he said, "John, I thought that was very rude of you to get up in the prayer-meeting and go out. You ought not to have done it." "Oh! sir," said the boy, I did not mean to be rude, but I thought I should just like to go home and see my sister read her Bible for the first time." That is how we ought to believe, and wait with

expectation to see the answer to prayer. The girl was reading the Bible when the boy went home. God had been pleased to hear the prayer; and if we could but trust God after that fashion we should often see similar things accomplished.

618. Prayer, A Cry A cry is the most natural form of utterance. It is a natural expression made up of pain and desire for relief. A cry is the first sign of human life; as if to indicate that we are most alive when most we cry; as if a cry were the way to life and the path to higher life ever afterwards. A cry! There is something cutting and piercing in it; it cleaves its way up to the throne of God. A spiritual cry! It is born in the heart, down deep in the inner recesses of regenerate nature. It is not a mere lip-worship, it is not a thing of the tongue and of the jaw. A cry! it comes from the very soul, and hence it reaches to God's ear and God's heart. A cry! it is a plaintive, bitter, painful thing; and, mark ye, God's people seldom get a blessing in the conversion of souls till their prayer turns into a cry mingled with weeping; and if there be sobbing and groaning, it is none the worse. You know, dear friends, the difference between the prayers which are not cries, and those which are. When a brother merely prays what we call prayer, he stand up and utters very proper words, very edifying, very suitable, no doubt, and then he has done. Another brother comes forward; he wants a blessing, he tells the Lord what he desires; he takes the promises, he wrestles with God, and then he seems to say, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." He cannot be satisfied till, with the cry of "Abba, Father," he has come before the throne and really obtained an audience with the Most High.

619. Prayer, a National Safeguard A man who lives habitually near to God is like a great cloud for ever dropping with fertilizing showers. This is the man who can say, "The earth is dissolved; I bear up the pillars thereof." France had never seen so bloody a revolution had there been men of prayer to preserve her. England, amidst the commotions which make her rock to and fro, is held fast because prayer is put up incessantly by the faithful. The flag of old England is nailed to her mast, not by the hands of her sailors, but by the prayers of the people of God. These, as they intercede day and night, and as they go about their spiritual ministry, these are they for whom God spareth nations, for whom he permitteth the earth still to exist; and when their time is over, and they are taken away, the salt being taken from the earth, then shall the elements dissolve with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up; but not until he hath caught away the saints with Christ into the air, shall this world pass away.

620. Prayer Accepted through Christ

Sometimes poor people come to us with petitions which they wish to send to some company or great personage. They bring the petition and ask us to have it presented for them. It is very badly spelt, very queerly written, and we can but just make out what they mean; but still there is enough to let us know what they want. First of all we make out a fair copy for them, and then, having stated their case, we put our name at the bottom, and if we have any interest, of course they get what they desire through the power of the name signed at the foot of the petition. This is just what the Lord Jesus Christ does with our poor prayers. He makes a fair copy of them, stamps them with the seal of his atoning blood, puts his own name at the foot, and thus they go up to God's throne. It is your prayer, but oh! it is his prayer too, and it is the fact of its being his prayer that makes it prevail.

621. Prayer Accepted through Christ's Intercession

I think it is Ambrose who uses a very pretty figure concerning believers' prayers. He says we are like little children who run into the garden to gather flowers to please their father, but we are so ignorant and childish that we pluck as many weeds as flowers, and some of them very noxious, and we would carry this strange mixture in our hands, thinking that such base weeds would be acceptable to him. The mother meets the child at the door, and she says to it, "Little one, thou knowest not what thou hast gathered;" she unbinds this mixture and takes from it all the weeds, and leaves only the sweet flowers, and then she takes other flowers sweeter than those which the child has plucked, and inserts them instead of the weeds, and then puts back the perfect posy into the child's hand, and it runs therewith to its father. Jesus Christ in more than motherly tenderness thus deals with our supplications. If we could see one of our prayers after Christ Jesus has amended it, we should scarce know it again. He has such skill that even our good flowers grow fairer in his hand; we clumsily tied them into a bundle, but he arranges them into a fair bouquet, where each beauty enhances the charm of its neighbour. If I could see my prayer after the Lord has prayed it, I should miss so much, and I should find so much there that was none of mine, that I am sure its fullest acceptance with God would not cause me a moment's pride, but rather make me blush with grateful humility before him whose boundless sweetness lent to me and my poor prayer a sweetness not our own. So then, though the prayers of God's people are as precious incense, they would never be a sweet smell unto God, were it not that they are accepted in the beloved.

622. Prayer, and Unsheathed Sword A man who is going along a dark road where he knows that there are enemies, if he must be alone and has a sword with him, he carries it drawn in his hand, to let the robbers know he is ready for them. So, Christian, pray without ceasing; carry your sword in your hand, wave that mighty weapon of all-prayer of which Bunyan speaks. Never sheathe it; it will cut through coats of mail. You need fear no foe if you can but pray.

623. Prayer, Church Exhorted to

Strain after a devotional vacation. Surely if you can spare time for holidays and recreations, you can clear a space for special drawing near to God. I believe this church would be visited with a very great ingathering if all the members of it made it a solemn matter of duty to draw near to God especially and particularly; I feel persuaded the ministry would revive in freshness, converts would be more numerous, and the people of God more rejoicing, if we did this. We might expect to see a general revival of religion if all the faithful in Christ's church drew near to him with greater vehemence of supplication, a higher expectation, and a greater boldness of faith. May God give us grace to attempt this!

624. Prayer, Ejaculatory

It has been said of some great men that they could not talk in company; when they got upon their legs and had a prepared discourse, they could speak very much to edification, but in general society they could not edify anyone. And some one said they had gold, but their money was all in bullion; it was not minted; they could not put it into shape so that it might be current in society. Well now, we must have the bullion of prayer, so as to be able to wrestle with God by the hour together if needful; but it is well to have the minted small change of ejaculatory prayer, to send a thought up to heaven—the glance of an eye, a tear-bedewed word to let drop before the throne—that is well.

625. Prayer helping Work

Sometimes we think we are too busy to pray. That is a great mistake, for praying is a saving of time. You remember Luther's remark, "I have so much to do to-day that I shall never get through it with less than three hours' prayer." He had not been accustomed to take so much time for prayer on ordinary days, but since that was a busy day, he must needs have more communion with his God. But perhaps our occupations begin early, and we therefore say, "How can I get alone with God in prayer?" It is said of Sir Henry Havelock that every morning when the march began at six, he always rose at four, that he might not miss his time for the reading of the Scripture and communion with his God. If we have no time we must make time, for if God has given us time for secondary duties, he must have given us time for primary ones, and to draw near to him is a primary duty, and we must let nothing set it on one side. There is no real need to sacrifice any duty, we have time enough for all, if we are not idle; and, indeed, the one will help the other instead of clashing with it. When Edward Payson was a student at college, he found he had so much to do to attend his classes and prepare for examinations, that he could not spend as much time as he should in private prayer; but, at last, waking up to the feeling that he was going back in divine things through his habits, he took due time for devotion, and he asserts in his diary that he did more in his studies in a single week after he had spent time with God in prayer, than he had accomplished in twelve months before. God can multiply our ability to make use of time. If we give the Lord his due, we shall have enough for all necessary purposes. In this matter seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Your other engagements will run smoothly if you do not forget your engagement with God.

626. Prayer, Importunity in A tree does not always drop its fruit at the first shake you give it. Shake it again, man; give it another shake! And sometimes, when the tree is loaded, and is pretty firm in the earth, you have to shake it to and fro, and at last you plant your feet, and get a hold of it, and shake it with might and main, till you strain every muscle and sinew to get the fruit down. And that is the way to pray. Shake the tree of life until the mercy drops into your lap. Christ loves for men to beg hard. You cannot be too importunate. That which might be disagreeable to your fellow-creatures when you beg of them, will be agreeable to Christ. Oh! get ye to your chambers; get ye to your chambers, ye that have not found Christ! To your bed-sides, to your little closets, and "seek the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near!" May the Spirit of God constrain you to pray. May he constrain you to continue in prayer. Jesus must hear you. The gate of heaven is open to the sturdy knocker that will not take a denial. The Lord enable you so to plead, that at the last you will say—"Thou hast heard my voice and my supplication; thou hast inclined thine ear unto me; therefore will I Dray unto thee as long as I live."

627. Prayer Justified by Results

If your heart be cold in prayer, do not restrain prayer until your heart warms, but pray your soul unto heat by the help of the ever-blessed Spirit who helpeth our infirmities. If the iron be hot then hammer it, and if it be cold hammer it till you heat it. Never cease prayer for any sort of reason or argument. If the philosopher should tell you that every event is fixed, and therefore prayer cannot possibly change anything, and, consequently, must be folly; still, if you cannot answer him and are somewhat puzzled, go on with your supplications notwithstanding all. No difficult problem concerning digestion would prevent your eating, for the result justifies the practice, and so no

quibble should make us cease prayer, for the assured success of it commends it to us.

628. Prayer, Large Expectation in

I have heard that in the old times in England, on Christinas morning, the poor villagers were wont to call at the house of the lord of the manor, each one with his basin, which it was the custom to fill to the brim. I warrant you the basins grew sensibly larger every year, till one would think they had rather brought the bushel measure from the barn than the basin from the cupboard. It was wise of the poor folk, for his lordship could not do less than fill whatever they brought. Alas! we are not so wise, but we rather lessen our vessels than increase their size. Ye have not because ye ask not, or because ye ask amiss.

629. Prayer, Large-hearted

It is said—I know not how truly—that the explanation of the text, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it," may be found in a very singular Oriental custom. It is said that not many years ago—I remember the circumstance being reported—the King of Persia ordered the chief of his nobility, who had done something or other which greatly gratified him, to open his mouth, and when he had done so he began to put into his mouth pearls, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, till he had filled it as full as it could hold, and then he bade him go his way. This is said to have been occasionally done in Oriental courts towards great favourites. Now certainly, whether that be an explanation of the text or not, it is an illustration of it. God says, "Open thy mouth with arguments," and then he will fill it with mercies priceless, gems unspeakably valuable. Would not a man open his mouth wide when he had to have it filled in such a style? Surely the most simple-minded among you would be wise enough for that. Oh! let us then open wide our mouth when we have to plead with God. Our needs are great, let our askings be great, and the supply shall be great too. You are not straitened in him; you are straitened in your own bowels. The Lord give you large-mouthedness in prayer, great potency, not in the use of language, but in employing arguments⁶³⁰. Prayer, Playing at

If you were to go to one of the banks in Lombard Street, and see a man go in and out and lay a piece of paper on the table, and take it up again and nothing more; if he did that several times a day, I think there would soon be orders issued to the porter to keep the man out, because he was merely wasting the clerk's time, and doing nothing to purpose. Those city men, who come to the bank in earnest, present their cheques, they wait till they receive their gold, and then they go, but not without having transacted real business. They do not put the paper down, speak about the excellent signature, and discuss the correctness of the document, but they want their money for it, and they are not content without it. These are the people who are always welcome at the bank, and not the triflers. Alas, a great many people play at praying, it is nothing better. I say they play at praying, they do not expect God to give them an answer, and thus they are mere triflers, who mock the Lord. He who prays in a business-like way, meaning what he says, honours the Lord. The Lord does not play at promising; Jesus did not sport at confirming the word by his blood; and we must not make a jest of prayer by going about it in a listless, unexpecting spirit.

631. Prayer Pleasing to God

You love to hear your own little children's talk. Now, you know very well when your little girl wants a new dress, and you are well aware that when your little boy needs fresh school books, there is

no necessity whatever that Mary should inform you about her clothes, or that Master John should tell you about, his books; for you know what they have need of long before they ask you: but you like them to feel their wants and to recognise that they are supplied by their father; and, therefore, you like to hear them express their desires. Sometimes you will stop a bit and say, "No, why should I give you this?" You set them a-peading, because you like to hear their little prattling voices, and to have them put their little arms around your neck and overcome you with kisses. You let them believe that they master you with their pretty reasonings and fond embraces, and it is pleasant to you as well as to them. Now, our heavenly Father is far above us, and yet he bids us learn his character from our own feelings as parents. If we, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more shall our heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? The Lord declares that he dealeth with us as with sons; I know the next word is, "for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?" but I do not believe that God's likeness to a father is limited to his chastening. The text cannot be so cross and crabbed as that. Oh, no! there is a likeness to a father in his hearing our cries. He loves communion with his people. The Lord loves to have the hearts of his children talk to him; he delights to hear them spread out their wants before him and order their case with arguments and prevail with them. Oh, then, never be slack in your pleadings, which are pleasant to God as fragrant incense 632. Prayer, Reality of

I should not try to prove to a blind man that the grass is green and the sky blue, because he can have no idea of the proposition which I am proving. Argument in such a case is folly on both sides. To us, at any rate, prayer is no vain thing. We go to our chambers alone, believing that we are transacting high and real business when we pray. We do not bow the knee merely because it is a duty, and a commendable spiritual exercise; but because we believe that into the ear of the eternal God we speak our wants, and that his ear is linked with a heart feeling for us and a hand working on our behalf. To us true prayer is true power.

633. Prayer, Simplicity of

Finery in dress or language is out of place in beggars. I heard a man in the street one day begging aloud by means of a magnificent oration. He used grand language in very pompous style, and I dare say he thought he was sure of getting piles of coppers by his borrowed speech, but I for one, gave him nothing, but felt more inclined to laugh at his bombast. Is it not likely that many great prayers are about as useless? Many prayer meetings' prayers are a great deal too fine. Keep your figures and metaphors and parabolical expressions for your fellow-creatures, use them to those who want to be instructed, but do not parade them before God. When we pray, the simpler our prayers are the better; the plainest, humblest language which expresses our meaning is the best.

634. Prayer, Spirit of Our Lord meant by saying men ought always to pray, that they ought to be always in the spirit of prayer, always ready to pray. Like the old knights, always in warfare, not always on their steeds dashing forward with their lances in rest to unhorse an adversary, but always wearing their weapons where they could readily reach them, and always ready to encounter wounds or death for the sake of the cause which they championed. Those grim warriors often slept in their armour; so even when we sleep, we are still to be in the spirit of prayer, so that if perchance we wake in the night we may still be with God. Our soul, having received the divine centripetal influence which makes it seek its heavenly centre, should be evermore naturally rising towards God himself. Our heart is to be like those beacons and watchtowers which were prepared

along the coast of England when the invasion of the Armada was hourly expected, not always blazing, but with the wood always dry, and the match always there, the whole pile being ready to blaze up at the appointed moment. Our souls should be in such a condition that ejaculatory prayer should be very frequent with us. No need to pause in business and leave the counter, and fall down upon the knees; the spirit should send up its silent, short, swift petitions to the throne of grace.

635. Prayer, True Sphere of

Certain people believe in ready-made prayers, cut and dried for all occasions, and, at the same time, they believe persons to be regenerated in baptism though their lives are anything but Christian; ought they not to provide prayers for all circumstances in which these, the dear regenerated but graceless sons and daughters of their church, are found? As, for instance, a pious collect for a young prince or nobleman, who is about to go to a shooting-match, that he may be forgiven for his cruelty towards those poor pigeons who are only badly wounded and made to linger in misery, as also a prayer for a religious and regenerated gentleman who is going to a horserace, and a collect for young persons who have received the grace of confirmation, upon their going to the theatre to attend a very questionable play. Could not such special collects be made to order? You revolt at the idea. Well, then, have nothing to do with that which you cannot ask God's blessing upon, have nothing to do with it, for if God cannot bless it, you may depend upon it the devil has cursed it. Anything that is right for you to do you may consecrate with prayer, and let this be a sure gauge and test to you, if you feel that it would be an insult to the majesty of heaven for you to ask the Lord's blessing upon what is proposed to you, then stand clear of the unholy thing.

636. Prayer to be Continual A man who does not pray usually, is but a hypocrite when he pretends to pray specially. Who would care to live in a miser's house who starved you all the year round, except that now and then on a feast day he fed you daintily? We must not be miserly in prayer, neglecting it regularly, and only abounding in it on particular occasions, when ostentation rather than sincerity may influence us. But even he who keeps a bounteous table, sometimes spreads a more luxurious feast than at other times; and even so must we, if we habitually live near to God, select our extraordinary seasons in which the soul shall have her fill of fellowship.

637. Prayer to be Intense The prayer which mounts to heaven may have but very few of the tail feathers of adornment about it, but it must have the strong wing feathers of intense desire; it must not be as the peacock, gorgeous for beauty, but it must be as the eagle, for soaring aloft, if it would ascend up to the seventh heaven.

638. Prayer to be Well Ordered

"As the sergeant sets the soldiers in a row when he is about to drill them, and marshals them, and as the commander-in-chief forms them into battalions, and so on, even so will I set my desires in proper order, and marshal them in battalions before the mercy-seat, that I may show that I am not uttering the crude, undigested thoughts of a careless mind, taking solemn words upon a thoughtless tongue; but that I am speaking to God that which has caused me thought, which fills me with emotions still, and comes from my soul with an intent and a desire, myself knowing what that intent and desire may be."

639. Prayer, Victorious A people who can pray can never be overcome, because their reserve forces can never be exhausted. Go into battle, my brother; and if you be vanquished with the strength you have, prayer shall call up another legion, yea, twenty legions of angels, and the foe shall marvel to see undefeated adversaries still holding the field. If ten thousand saints were burned to-morrow, their dying prayers would make the church rise like a phoenix from her ashes. Who, therefore, can stand against a people whose prayers enlist God in their quarrel? "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." We cry unto the Lord, and he heareth us; he breaketh through the ranks of the foe; he giveth us triumph in the day of battle: therefore, terrible as an army with banners are those who wield the weapon of all-prayer.

640. Prayer, Zeal in The Christian zealot may be recognised very manifestly by his prayers. Hear his utterance in the prayer-meeting. It is no repetition of a set of sacred phrases, no going over the metaphors which have become time-worn and tedious, but he prays like a man who means it. He comes up to heaven's gate, grasps the knocker, and knocks, and knocks, and knocks again, waiting until the door is opened. He gets hold of the gates of heaven, and labours to shake them to and fro as though he would pull them up, bolts and bars and all, as Samson did the gates of Gaza, rather than not prevail with God. These men, like Elias, have power to shut up heaven or to open the gates thereof. O that we had more of such in our own midst! We have a few who, as soon as they stand up to pray, fire our hearts by their earnestness; may they be multiplied. The like is true, of course, of the private prayers of the Christian as well as of his public ones. Oh, brothers and sisters, we want more resolve when we go before God that we will have the blessing, more determination that seeing we are asking what is according to his mind we will take no denial, but will say to the angel, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

641. Prayer and Fasting, Power of The church of God would be far stronger to wrestle with this ungodly age if she were more given to prayer and fasting. There is a mighty efficacy in these two gospel ordinances. The first links us to heaven, the second separates us from earth. Prayer takes us into the banqueting-house of God; fasting overturns the surfeiting tables of earth. Prayer gives us to feed on the bread of heaven, and fasting delivers the soul from being encumbered with the fulness of bread which perisheth. When Christians shall bring themselves up to the uttermost possibilities of spiritual vigour, then they will be able, by God's Spirit working in them, to cast out devils which to-day, without the prayer and fasting, laugh them to scorn.

642. Prayer and Natural Laws When a man, in order to fulfil a promise, has to disarrange all his affairs, and, so to speak, to stop all his machinery, it proves that he is but a man, and that his wisdom and power are limited; but he is God indeed who, without reversing the engine or removing a single cog from a wheel, fulfils the desires of his people as they come up before him. The Lord is so omnipotent that he can work results tantamount to miracles without in the slightest degree suspending any one of his laws. He did, as it were in the olden times, stop the machinery of the universe to answer prayer, but now, with equally godlike glory, he orders events so as to answer believing prayers, and yet suspends no natural law.

643. Prayerlessness A prayerless church member is a hindrance, he is in the body like a rotting bone, or a decayed tooth, and, ere long, since he does not contribute to the benefit of his brethren, he will become a danger and a sorrow to them.

644. Prayer Meetings the Gauge of Prosperity

It might make a man weep tears of blood to think that in our Dissenting churches in so many cases the prayer meetings are so shamefully attended. I could indicate places that I know of, situated not many miles from where we now stand, where there are sometimes so few in attendance that there are scarcely praying men enough to keep up variety in the prayer meeting. I know towns where the prayer meeting is put off during the summer months, as if the devil would be put off during the summer! I know of agricultural districts where they are always put off during the harvest, and I make some kind of excuse for them, because the fruits of the earth must be gathered in, but I cannot understand large congregations, where the prayer meeting and lecture are amalgamated because there will not be enough persons coming out to make two decent services in the week. And then they say that God does not bless the word! How can he bless the word? They say "Our conversions are not so numerous as they were," and they wonder how it is that we at the Tabernacle have so large an increase month by month. Do you wonder, brethren, that they have not a blessing when they do not seek it? Do you wonder that we have it when we do seek it? That is but a natural law of God's own government, that if men will not pray, neither shall they have; and if men will pray, and pray vehemently, God will deny them nothing.

645. Prayers of the Church Pleading in Heaven

Look back and think of the prayers of all the ages as being in the golden bowl at this one time. The prayers of the apostles, the cries of the persecuted times, the wrestlings of the lonely ones of the Middle Ages, the moans from the valleys and mountains of Piedmont—the groans of our brethren during the Marian persecution, the pleadings of Covenanters and of Puritans—all in the golden bowl together, and all with the live coals upon them, coming up from the hand of the great covenant angel, who stands for them before the throne, pleading with God on the behalf of his people. Let us rejoice that the blended prayers of the church are very sweet to the eternal God.

646. Prayers of the Church, Universal Blessing The prayers of God's church are like the clouds which ascend from the sea, as the sun shines on the waves; they fall on the fields which have been sown by man, but they also drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side.

647. Preacher, Inattention of Men to the The most of men remind us of the old story in Strabo, of the musician who thought himself very wonderfully gifted with power to create melody. Before his audience he was pouring forth his notes, and as he thought holding them all spell bound, but just then the market bell, with its vile tinkle was heard, and all his admirers except one person left him, for they could not afford to lose the chance of the market. The musician turned to his solitary listener, and complimented him upon having a soul above mere merchandise, and an ear which could appreciate music, so that he was not drawn away by the tinkling of a market bell. "Master," said the man, "I am hard of hearing, did you say the market bell had rung?" "Yes." "Then I must be off, or I shall be too late." And away went the last man, unrestrained by the bonds of harmony. So when we preach up Jesus Christ, there will be some who will listen to us, and we perhaps think, "Now we shall surely win them," but ah! to-morrow's market bell—I will not say market bell—to morrow's bell of sin, and bell of iniquity, the bell that rings to frivolities, and rings to transgressions, they will go after that. Anything that pleases the flesh will secure them. It may be, there is one who has heard with unusual attention, and we begin to say, "This man has a nobler spirit;" but then, perhaps, he has not yet felt the force of temptation, and when he feels it he will go too. What

urgent need there is for the Spirit of God to illuminate the dark judgments of the sons of men. May he do so; may he begin with you, if hitherto you have been blind. May he give you faith, and the promises, and Christ Jesus. It is my heart's deepest wish.

648. Preacher, Self-denial Necessary for a The minister of Christ must know how to take the scaling-ladder, and fix it against the wall of the conscience, and climb it sword in hand, to meet the man face to face in sacred duel, for the capture of his heart. He must not flinch to tell the faults he knows, or deal with the errors he perceives. There must be a consecrated self-denial about the preacher, so that it matters not to him, even though he should draw down the wrath of his hearer upon his head; one thing he must aim at, that he may persuade him to be a Christian, and for this he must strike home, coming to close quarters, if perhaps by God's grace, he may prick the man in his heart, slay his enmity, and bring him into captivity to Jesus.

649. Preachers, Speculative

Many preachers—and I speak it with sorrow—have built a tower of theological speculations, upon which they sit like Nero, riddling the tune of their own philosophy while the world is burning in sin and misery; they are playing with the toys of speculation while men's souls are being lost. Much of human wisdom is a mere coverlet for the absence of vital godliness. I went into railway carriages of the first class in Italy which were lined with very pretty crochet-work, and I thought the voyagers highly honoured, since no doubt some delicate fingers had sumptuously furnished the cars for them. The crochet-work was simply put on to cover the grease and dirt of the cloth. A great deal that is now preached of very pretty sentimentalism and religiousness is a mere crochet-work covering for detestable heresies long since disproved, which dared not appear again without a disguise for their hideousness. With words of human wisdom and speculations of their own invention men disguise falsehood and deceive many. Be it ours to give to the people what God gives to us. Be ye each of you as Micaiah, who declared: "As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto me that will I speak."

650. Preacher, Spiritual Life the Power of the

It is a long time since I preached a sermon that I was satisfied with. I scarcely recollect ever having done so. You do not know, for you cannot hear my groanings when I go home, Sunday after Sunday, and wish that I could learn to preach somehow or other; wish that I could discover the way to touch your hearts and your consciences, for I seem to myself to be just like the fire when it wants stirring: the coals have got black when I want them to flame forth. If I could but say in the pulpit what I feel in my study, or if I could but get out of my mouth what I have tried to get into my own soul, then I should preach indeed, and move your souls, I think. Yet perhaps God will use our weakness, and we may use it with ourselves, to stir us up to greater strength. You know the difference between slow motion and rapidity. If there were a cannon ball rolled slowly down these aisles, it might not hurt anybody; it might be very large, very huge, but it might be so rolled along that you might not rise from your seats in fear. But if somebody would give me a rifle, and ever so small a ball, I reckon that if the ball flew along the Tabernacle, some of you might find it very difficult to stand in its way. It is the force that does the thing. So, it is not the great man who is loaded with learning that will achieve work for God; it is the man, who, however small his ability, is filled with force and fire, and who rushes forward in the energy which heaven has given him, that will accomplish the work—the man who has the most intense spiritual life, who has real vitality at

its highest point of tension, and living, while he lives, with all the force of his nature for the glory of God.

651. Preaching, Definition of

What is meant by the word "preach"? I take its meaning in this place to be very extensive. Some can literally preach—that is, act as heralds, proclaiming the gospel as the town crier proclaims in the street the message which he is bidden to cry aloud. The town crier is, in fact, the world's preacher, and the preacher of the gospel is to be a crier, crying aloud and sparing not, the truth of Christ. I do not believe that Christ tells us to go and play the orator to every creature. Such a command would be impracticable to most of us, and useless to any of us. Of all the things that desecrate the Sabbath and grieve the Spirit, attempts at high-flown oratory and gorgeous eloquence in preaching I believe are about the worst. Our business is just to speak out the gospel simply and plainly to every creature. We do not actually preach the gospel to a man if we do not make him understand what we are talking about. If our language does not come down to his level, it may be the gospel, but it is not the gospel to him. The preacher should adopt language which shall be suitable to all his congregation—in preaching he should strive to instruct, to enforce, to explain, to expound, to plead, and to bring home to every man's heart and conscience, as in the sight of God, so far as his ability goes, the truth which beyond all argument or cavil has the stamp of divine revelation.

652. Preaching, not Easy Work

I believe that at bottom, most people think it an uncommonly easy thing to preach, and that they could do it amazingly well themselves. Every donkey thinks itself worthy to stand with the king's horses; every girl thinks she could keep house better than her mother; but thoughts are not facts, for the sprat thought itself a herring, but the fisherman knew better. I dare say those who can whistle, fancy that they can plough; but there's more than whistling in a good ploughman, and so let me tell you there's more in good preaching than taking a text, and saying firstly, secondly, and thirdly. I try my hand at preaching myself, and in my poor way I find it no very easy thing to give the folks something worth hearing; and if the fine critics, who reckon us up on their thumbs, would but try their own hands at it, they might be a little more quiet. Dogs, however, always will bark, and what is worse, some of them will bite too; but let decent people do all they can, if not to muzzle them, yet to prevent their doing any great mischief.

653. Preaching of Jesus

Remember what kind of preacher Jesus was. "Never man spake like this man." He was a son of consolation indeed. It was said of him, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench." He was gentleness itself: his speech did not fall like a hail shower, it dropped like the rain, and distilled as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb. He came down like the soft vernal shower upon the new-mown grass, scattering refreshment and revival wherever his words were heard. The widow at the gates of Nain dried her eyes when he spake, and Jairus no longer mourned for his child. Magdalene gave over weeping, and Thomas ceased from doubting, when Jesus showed himself. Heavy hearts leaped for joy, and dim eyes sparkled with delight at his bidding. Now, if such be the person who declares he will comfort the broken-hearted, if he be such a preacher, we may rest assured he will accomplish his work.

654. Precious Things

"He is precious," that is, Jesus Christ is precious; here is the priceless gem. "Exceeding great and precious promises;" here is the worthy casket which holds the gem. "Like precious faith," as Paul calls it, "like precious faith" with the apostles—here is the blessed hand by which we grasp the casket and the gem too. Mark well, I pray you, the precious pearl, the precious casket to hold it, and the precious title-deed that secures it to us, or as I said before, the precious hand which enables us to grasp the unrivalled jewel, and to call it all our own.

655. Preparation for Death Be ready, minister, see to it that thy church be in good order, for the grave shall soon be digged for thee; be ready, parent, see that your children are brought up in the fear of God, for they must soon be orphans; be ready, men of business, you that are busy in the world, see that your affairs are correct, see that you serve God with all your heart, for the days of your terrestrial service will soon be ended, and you will be called to give account for the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. O may we all prepare for the tribunal of the great King with a care which shall be rewarded with the commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

656. Preparation for meeting God

"Prepare to meet thy God." Why, methinks there are no more joyous words under heaven than those under some aspects, certainly none more solemn out of hell under others. "Prepare to meet thy God." These words may have sounded through the green alleys of Paradise, and have caused no discord there. Blending with the sweet song of new created birds, these notes would have but given emphasis to the harmony. Often from the mossy couch whereon he reclined in the happy life of his innocence and bliss, the great sire of men would be aroused by this holy summons. When the sun first scattered the shades of darkness, and began to gild the tops of the snow-clad hills with morning light, Adam was awakened by the birds amid the groves of Eden, whose earliest song his heart interpreted, as meaning, "Awake, O wondrous man, and prepare to meet thy God." Then climbing some verdant hill from whence he looked down upon the landscape, all aglow with glory and with God, Adam would in holy rapture meet his God, and in lowly reverence would speak with him as a man speaketh with his friend. Then, too, at eventide the dewdrops as they fell, each one would say to that blest man, "Prepare to meet thy God." The lengthened shadows would silently give forth the selfsame message, and peradventure it is no imagination, angels would alight upon lawns besprent with lilies, and pause where Adam stood pruning the growth of some too luxuriant vine, and would with courteous speech remind him that the day's work was over, for the sun was descending to the western sea, and it was time for the favoured creature to have audience with his God. The faintest intimation would suffice for our first parent, for the crown of Paradise to him was the presence of the Lord God; and Eden's rivers, though they flowed over sands of gold, had no river in them equal to the stream whereby the spirit of Adam was gladdened when he had communion with the Most High, for then he drank from that river of the water of life which flowed from underneath the throne of the Great Supreme. Unfallen man had no greater joy than walking with God. It was heaven on earth to meet in converse tender and sublime with the great Father of Spirits. No marriage bells ever rang out a sweeter or more joyous melody than these glad words as they were heard amid the myrtle bowers and palm groves of Eden by our first parents in the heyday of their innocence, "Prepare to meet thy God." Then when Jehovah walked

in the garden in the cool of the day, he had no need to say aloud, "Adam, where art thou?" for his happy creature whom he had made to have dominion over all the works of his hands was waiting for him as a child waiteth for his father when the day's work is done, watching to hear his father's footfall, and to see his father's face. Oh, yes! those were words in fullest harmony with Eden's joys, "Prepare to meet thy God."

657. Presence of God, Inspiration of the Were you ever called to attack some deadly popular error, and, with rough, bold hand, like an iconoclast, to dash down the graven images of the age? Have you heard the clamour of many, some saying this thing, and some the other—some saying, "He is a good man," but others saying, "Nay, but he deceiveth the people"? Did you ever see the rancour of the priests of Baal flashing from their faces and foaming from their mouths? Did you ever read their hard expressions, see their misrepresentations of your speech, and of your motives? and did you never feel the delight of saying, "The best of all is, that God is with us; and, in the name of God, instead of folding up the standard, we will set up our banners. If this be vile, we purpose to be viler still; and throw down the gauntlet once more in the name of the God of truth, against the error of the times"?

658. Pride checked by Affliction

Just as the fever must be held in check by the bitter draught of quinine, so must the bitter cup of affliction rebuke our rising pride and worldliness. We should exalt ourselves above measure, and provoke the Lord to jealousy against us, were it not that trouble lays us low. None of us shall know until we read our biography in the light of heaven, from what inbred sins, foul corruptions, damnable uncleanness, and detestable lusts we have been delivered, by being driven again and again along the fiery road of affliction. Adversities are the sharp knives with which God doth cut from us the deadly ulcers of our sins; these are the two-edged swords with which he slays our enemies and his own which lurk within us.

659. Pride keeping the Soul from Christ Do not stand at the swine's trough saying, "I will not arise and go to my Father, for I am not fit to go till I have suffered a great deal more;" but hear the voice which bids thee say, "I will arise and go unto my Father, and what I have to say I will say unto him, and if I have to weep I will weep with my head in his bosom, while I receive the kisses of his love." Come, poor sinner, do not set up thy proud humility in the teeth of God; but, since he bids thee look and live, oh! give up thy prayers, and even thy tears, and thy repentings, and thy convictions—have done with them all as grounds of confidence, and look to Jesus Christ, and to Jesus Christ alone.

660. Pride, the Universal Disease

I recollect firing a shot once with much greater success than I knew of. A certain person had frequently said to me that I had been the subject of her earnest prayers lest I should be exalted above measure, for she could see my danger: and, after having heard this so many times that I really knew it by heart, I just made the remark that I thought it would be my duty to pray for her too, lest she should be exalted above measure. I was greatly amused when this answer came, "I have no temptation to be proud: my experience is such that I am in no danger whatever of being puffed up;" not knowing that her little speech was about the proudest statement that could have been made, and that everybody else thought her to be the most officious and haughty person within ten

miles. Why, do not you believe there may be as much pride in rags as in an alderman's gown? Is it not just as possible for a man to be proud in a dust cart as if he rode in her Majesty's chariot? A man may be just as proud with half a yard of ground as Alexander with all his kingdoms, and may be just as lifted up with a few pence as Croesus with all his treasure.

661. Priesthood of Christ, Perfection of the The typical priests stood because there was work to do; still must they present their sacrifices; but our Lord sits down because there is no more sacrificial work to do; atonement is complete, he has finished his task. There were no seats in the tabernacle. Observe the Levitical descriptions, and you will see that there were no resting-places for the priests in the holy place. Not only were none allowed to sit, but there was nothing whatever to sit upon. According to the rabbis, the king might sit in the holy places, and perhaps David did sit there; if so, he was a striking type of Christ sitting as king. A priest never sat in the tabernacle, he was under a dispensation which did not afford rest, and was not intended to give it, a covenant of works which gives the soul no repose. Jesus sits in the holy of holies, and herein we see that his work is finished.

662. Primitive Christianity

One of our colporteurs, some years ago, abroad, was selling his Testaments, when the cure of a parish said to him, "Your books say a very great deal about pardon, but I do not see much in them about confession." The colporteur was about to reply, when a public notary who was present, taking up the Testament, said to the priest, "Ah, my dear sir, what you say is very true, the New Testament does not say much about confession to priests; do you not remember that Jesus Christ saved the dying thief without the help of a priest, and that St. Stephen, when he was stoned, was not shriven by a confessor, but entered glory without a priest!" "Ah," said the curé, "but the rules of the church were very different in those days from what they are now." Full surely they were! We will go back, however, to the primitive times, and as the dying thief said, "Lord, remember me," so will we turn our eyes to that once crucified Saviour, sitting in the highest heaven, and breathe the selfsame prayer, "Lord, remember me;" and as Stephen looked up directly into heaven, and found peace even amidst that stony shower, so on our dying bed, our glance shall be to the Christ in the open heaven; and we shall find rest in our last hours. Blessed be God, the doctrine of justification by faith is now so openly declared that priestcraft cannot hold us captives. The nations no longer need to crouch at the feet of shaveling impostors. Now that there is a fountain open, we can say, "Begone, ye priests, the whole herd of you, to whichever church ye belong; we who have believed are truly priests, every one of us, and ye are mere pretenders. We have done with you; a plague and curse to humanity have ye been too long, and the gospel ends your detestable trade.

663. Primitive Church, Power of the My dear brethren, we are weak, but we are not weaker than the first disciples of Christ. Neither were they learned, nor were they the wealthy of the earth: fishermen, the most of them, by no means men of cultivated ability—their tramp was that of a legion that went forth to conquer as well as to fight. Wherever they went and wielded the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, their enemies were put to confusion. It is true they died in the conflict. Some of them were slain by the sword, and others of them were rent in sunder by wild beasts; but in all these things they were more than conquerors through him that loved them. The primitive church did tell upon its age, and left a seed behind which the whole earth could not destroy; and so shall we by God's grace, if we are equally set upon it, equally filled with the divine

life, equally resolved by any means and by all means to spread abroad the savour of Jesus Christ's name: our weakness shall be our strength, for God shall make it to be the platform upon which the omnipotence of his grace shall be displayed. Keep together, brethren, keep close to Christ; close up your ranks. Heed the battle cry; hold fast the faith; quit yourselves like men in the conflict; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. Only may the King himself lead us onward to the fray, and we shall not fear the result.

664. Privileges, Despised, to be Accounted for

There is a curtain, but it is lifting, it is lifting, it is lifting; and when it is lifted, what do I see? The spirit world! 'Tis death that lifts the curtain; and when it is lifted, these present things will vanish, for they are but shadows. The world of eternity and reality will then be seen. I would summon a jury of the spirits that have passed that curtain; and they would not be long debating about the question whether Christ is worth the winning. I care not where you select them from—whether from among the condemned in hell, or from among the beatified in heaven. Let them sit—let even those who are in hell sit, and judge upon the matter, and, if they could for once speak honestly, they would tell you that it is a dreadful thing to despise Christ; now that they have come to see things in a true light—now that they are lost for ever, for ever, for ever—now that they are crushed with knowledge and feeling which have come too late to be profitable—now they wish that they had listened to the ministrations of truth, to the proclamations of the gospel. Ah! if they could have a sane mind back again, they would shriek, "Oh! for one more Sabbath. Oh! to listen once more to an honest preacher, though his words might be clumsy and uncouth! Oh! to hear a voice once more say, 'Come to Jesus while the day of mercy lasts!' Oh! to be once more pressed to come to the marriage-feast—once more bidden to look to Jesus and to live!" I tell you, sirs, some of you who make so light of Sundays, and think preaching is but a pastime, so that you come here to hear us as you would go to hear some fiddler on a week night—I tell you, sirs, the lost in hell reckon these things at a very different rate, and so will you ere long, when another preacher, with skeleton fingers, shall talk to you upon your death-bed. Ah! then you will see that we were in earnest and you were the players; and you will comprehend that what we said to you demanded earnest, immediate attention, though, alas! you would not give it, and so played false to your own soul, and committed spiritual suicide, and went your way like a bullock to the slaughter, to be the murderers of your own spirits!

665. Procrastination

"Ah!" says Madam Bubble, "here is a young person impressed—if we laugh at him it will deepen the impression; but we will say to him, 'Come, come; let the impression go for a little while; this is not the fit time; when you have a more convenient season you can bring it on again.'" This game the old tempter keeps on playing over and over again. He does it very blandly; he does not oppose religion, but "everything in its proper place," says he, "and this is not just the time for it; wait a little longer." He said this to some of you ten years ago, and he is saying the same to you tonight, and if you live he will say the same ten years hence; and again when you are on your dying bed; and so with this cunning he will cheat you out of your soul.

666. Profession, Heartless, a Weariness

I tell you solemnly, I do believe that the half of professors do not know what true religion means. They have never got to it. They have got to the skimmed milk, the scum, and the froth, but they have not got down into the depth. The more you give up self, the more you dare and do for Christ; the more fully Jesus sits on the throne of your heart, the more divinely blessed will this life become to you; and the farther you keep from Christ, and the more content you are with a half-hearted religion, the more will you find it to be a weariness, a mere burden to be borne, a custom to be endured—not a banquet to be enjoyed, nor a thing divine to be loved and to be grasped with all your mind.

667. Profession, Lifeless

Professions there are not unfrequently upon which we may gaze with a vacant wonder and turn away with a cold shudder, as from the sombre gaudiness of a funeral, wherein prancing steeds, stately mutes, nodding plumes, and velvet palls adorn the obsequies of the dead. God save us from a lifeless profession!

668. Progress of the Divine Work Have you never perceived that when true religion either in your own soul or in the world seems to have gone back that suddenly it makes a leap again? There will come waves upon the beach, and each one will seem stronger than its fellow; but then there will follow one that sucks them all back, and you might think the sea was retiring from its strength; yet the flood tide is coming in, coming even while that wave recedes so far. All is working for progress, though there may seem to be a retardment here and there. There rushes on the stream like a mighty Niagara, and thou art there by the shore in a little eddy, revolving round and round in a tiny vortex, and thou sayest the stream is rushing in the wrong direction, it has made no progress, "I am weary with this circular motion." Ah! but thou hast never been in the broad current, or if thine eye has gazed upon it, it has been dazed with the sight of its breadth and length, and thou hast not understood it. The Lord reigneth, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and Jesus sits at his side, while truth like his angel follows at his heel, mighty still! The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall yet perform his word! And the Spirit that for a while has hidden his great might and concealed himself in the secret chambers of his church shall come forth, and the day shall be in which the Lord's truth shall be declared among the people with power, even with such power that the world shall bow before it, and the song shall go up unto the Lord God Almighty, and he shall be worshipped from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same!

669. Promises Countersigned by Faith

Some bank bills require the signature of the person for whom they are drawn, and they would not be payable at the bank, though regularly signed, unless countersigned by the person to whom they are due: now many of the Lord's promises are drawn in like fashion. Armed with such promises, you go to the bank of prayer, and you ask to have them fulfilled, but your petitions are not granted because they need to be countersigned by the sign-manual of your faith in them; and when God has given you grace to believe his promise, then shall you see the fulfilment of it with your eyes.

670. Promises, Preciousness of the

All hail, ye fair promises! Ye meet me as the angels met Jacob at Mahanaim; but all hail, fair precepts! Ye meet me as Nathan met David, and rebuke me for my sins. Ye also are my friends, and I salute you and am glad to bear you company. Brethren, we cannot do without a promise,

precept, exhortation, and rebuke; the compound of the Scripture, like the powders of the merchants for sweetness and excellence, must not be injured by being robbed of one single ingredient. Love the precept, I pray you; be of the mind of David, who wrote the whole of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm, not so much in praise of the promises as in praise of the statutes and the laws of God, as he found them given in that part of the Old Testament which it was his privilege to read. Sometimes a precept is the necessary counteracting principle to guard us from the perversion of a promise. Promises alone are like sweetmeats given to children which when too profusely eaten bring on sickness, but the precept comes in as a healthy tonic, so that you may feed upon the promise without injury.

671. Promises Sealed by God

Every promise of this sacred book is God's own promise spoken through his prophets and apostles, but yet spoken by himself. The signet of heaven seals every promise. You will never know the sweetness of a promise till it is God's promise to you. They are precious promises because they are divine. If they were the poetic effusions of elevated genius, wherein great men of old spake but their own minds in happy hopefulness, they would be to us but as brass and iron; but inasmuch as these reveal to us the mind of God, they are more precious than all the treasures of the mine. No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls, for their price is above rubies. The least promise of God is too rich to be valued with the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx or the sapphire.

672. Prosperity Hurtful to Grace

Depend upon it, the most of us cannot endure great prosperity long together. As some constitutions cannot bear certain meats, so a long run of spiritual ease is much too strong a thing for the constitution of average Christians. The pools of our heart are apt to grow stagnant unless stirred by affliction. Peace and quietness are hotbeds for shams and superficialities; but when sharp troubles and keen temptations assail us, nothing will stand but that which is real and lasting. We should be very grateful to our gracious Lord for sending his rough providences to despoil us of our supposed excellency, and lay bare the poverty and nakedness of our natural estate. Traders with rotten establishments are afraid to have their books overhauled, but judicious men long to know their true position; and if they are shown by a wise accountant that supposed gains are real losses, they are thankful for the information, and change their mode of business at once. Soul trouble does this for our spiritual trading. It finds out the bad debts, the windy speculations the worthless paper, the spurious securities which the soul has been dealing in, and sets our spiritual efforts upon a less cheering, but much more certain footing.

673. Prosperity, Removal of, the Voice of God

Children of God, have you been living at a distance from your Father? The silver bell rings this morning, and invites you to return. An angel voice cries, "Come back! come back! come back!" Will you not answer, "I will arise and go to my Father"? Have you had a little prosperity, a thriving time in business, and have you ungratefully forgotten the God who gave you this? Oh! now that the prosperity is for awhile removed, out of the darkness let the voice of longsuffering mercy be heard, for it calls to thee, "Return unto me, backsliding child, return." It shall be good for thee to acquaint thyself with God now; though thou hast lost the privilege of communion for awhile, the privilege has not lost its sweetness; it will bring thee countless blessings to approach thy God.

674. Promises of God, Memories of

I have seen a mother go to the secret drawer to look at a certain little pair of woollen shoes; with these in her hands, she would sit down and weep for the hour together. Ah, there were little feet that wore those shoes once, and they are laid all stiff and motionless in the lap of earth. I have seen a certain friend look at a ring—a little plain gold ring which he wears on his finger, and as he looked at it he has wept. There was a dear hand once upon which that ring was fondly placed in happier days. Yes, and just in that way some of the promises of God have been so rich to us, and so connected with family memories, and with personal trials and personal mercies, that they are unutterably precious.

675. Providence, Arrangements of, Wisdom in the

You are to consider that the position which you occupy is, all things considered, the most advantageous that you could possibly have occupied for doing the utmost that you are capable of doing for the glory of God. Suppose the mole should cry, "How I could have honoured the great Creator if I could have been allowed to fly!" it would have been very foolish, for a mole flying would be a very ridiculous object, while a mole fashioning its tunnels and casting up its castles, is viewed with admiring wonder by the naturalist, who perceives its remarkable suitability to its sphere. The fish of the sea might say, "How could I display the wisdom of God if I could sing, or mount a tree, like a bird;" but you know a fish in a tree would be a very grotesque affair, and there would be no wisdom of God to admire in fishes climbing trees; but when the fish cuts the wave with agile fin, all who have observed it say how wonderfully it is adapted to its habitat, how exactly its every bone is fitted for its mode of life. Brother, it is just so with you. If you begin to say, "I cannot glorify God where I am, and as I am;" I answer, neither could you anywhere, if not where you are. Providence, which arranged your surroundings, appointed them so that, all things being considered, you are in the position in which you can best display the wisdom and the grace of God.

676. Providence of God in all a Believer's Life

Peter among the apostles is singularly honoured, for everything about him was in some way or other connected with a miracle. His person—it was by a miracle that he had walked the waters; it was by a miracle that he had been saved from drowning when the Saviour stretched out his hand and bade him stand fast upon the liquid wave. There was a miracle in connection with his boat, for it was from that boat that the miraculous draught of fishes had been taken, and it was filled so full that it began to sink, and Simon knelt down and adored the Saviour. There was a miracle in connection with Peter's rusty sword; he cut off with it the ear of the high priest's servant, but the Master healed the wound that his rash defender made. His wife's mother was restored from a great fever by the almighty power of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every Christian man should be ambitious to have the hand of God connected with everything that he has, so that when he looks upon his house he may see God's providence in giving it to him; when he looks upon the garments that he wears, he may see them to be the livery of love, and may view the food upon his table as the daily gift of divine charity. In looking back upon his whole biography, the believer may see bright spots where the presence of God flames forth and makes the humblest circumstances to be illustrious: but, above all, it ought to be his prayer that God's hand should be very conspicuous in connection with his relatives, that of every one of them it might be said, "The Lord restored her," or, "The Lord gave him spiritual life in answer to my prayer." May husband, wife, children,

servants, all receive healing from "the beloved Physician"; may our whole household be, "holiness unto the Lord," and may all sing for joy, because the Lord has done great things for them whereof we are glad.

677. Providence of God in Everything

All things that shall happen, be they ever so cross to your thoughts and counter to your wishes, will, nevertheless, come up, like Blucher at Waterloo, at the exact moment when they shall help on the grand old cause. Justice must reign; the church of God must be free from her adulterous connection with the State. God ordereth everything in providence; neither the good by excess of zeal, nor the bad by their malice, shall mar his work. Through the thick darkness I hear the tramp of another host marching to battle, and though I cannot see their plumes, yet am I assured that whether friend or foe, they must, ere the battle is over, have yielded no mean service to our holy cause. Homage must be done even by the powers of darkness to the great King, the Lord of Hosts.

678. Providence, Ship of

Suppose one goes to sea under the most skilful captain: that captain cannot possibly know what may occur during the voyage, and with the greatest foresight he can never promise an absolutely safe passage. There may be dangers which he has never yet encountered—Atlantic waves, tornadoes, and hurricanes may yet sweep the good ship away, and they that sailed out of port merrily may never reach the haven. But when you come into the ship of Providence, he who is at the helm is the Master of every wind that shall blow, and of every wave that shall break its force upon that ship; and he foresees as well the events that shall happen at the harbour for which we make, as those that happen at the port from which we start. He knows in his own soul every wave, with its height, and breadth, and force. He knows each wind; though the winds seem to be left without control, he knows each wind in all its connections, and the speed at which each shall travel. How safe are we, then, when embarked in the good ship of Providence, with such a Captain, who has fore-arranged and fore-ordained all things from the beginning even unto the end.

679. Providence, Sins laid upon

Brethren and sisters, let me warn you against the many ways in which men have sought to discover God's will apart from his word—all foolish, and some of them wicked. I have known some who have opened the Book as if the passage on which they should alight at hap-hazard became their oracle, or if another passage of a different complexion, irrespective of the context, should open or turn up, that should guide them. Do you not know that this was an old heathen custom? The Romans, using Virgil or some other poet, as you use your Bibles, did just the same thing. When you are so doing you are simply guilty of idolatry, and might just as well go to the shrine of Delphi and consult the Pythian oracle, and thus tempt the Lord your God. We have known some cast lots to know what they should do; as if the most precarious hazard could interpret God's will, which is so clear and plain! I marvel how any civilized man can be so besotted as to do such things, and yet I know that this is an evil pastime and practice which lingers among some Christians. Others judge of the Divine mind by providence. But what do you mean by providence? Is it the current of the wind, the drifting of the tide, the aspect of the clouds, or the fortuitous coincidences that have arrested your attention? Such providence, you know, will guide you any

way, if you follow that. Jonah went to go to Tarshish, and he found a ship—of course he did—a providence was it? Yes, he might have said, "I should never have gone, but the finger of providence seemed so clear." Many people have got into prison through such providence. Your rule is not to be providence, but the command of God. Who are you that you should interpret providence? Is that a providence when a man means to rob another that he finds the house neglected? If a man means to cheat, is that a providence that he meets some easy customer in the course of business? Yet many talk so, and try to lay their sins upon the providence of God. My brethren and sisters, never do this; you will either be the victims of infatuation or the perpetrators of wicked folly, if you do anything of the kind.

680. Providence, Wide Extent of

Providence may look very dark to-day, but it is full of light—latent light—light which must flash forth as the noonday for brightness. All circumstances are teeming with benefit to you if you be in Christ. Ships with black hulls are bringing you bright gold. Ravens shall bring you meat, and even devils shall be slaves to your service. There is not a dying child or an ailing wife, there is not a dishonoured bill, there is not a wrecked vessel, there is not a burnt house, there is not a single diseased bullock, but what you shall see at the last, and perhaps before then, to have been full of real blessedness for you. There is not only mercy in God's dealings with his people in the gross, but in the detail. All the providence of God, far-reaching as it is, and extending from our cradle to our tomb, is full of the divine intent that his children shall be blessed, and blessed they shall be.

681. Puritan hearing of the Word In the old Puritanic times, sermons must have been tiresome to the thoughtless, but now-a-days I should think they are more tiresome to the thoughtful. The Christian of those days wanted to know a great deal of the things of God; and provided that the preacher could open up some mystery to him, or explain some point of Christian practice to make him holier and wiser, he was well satisfied, though the man might be no orator, and might lead him into no fields of novel speculation. Christians then did not want a new faith; but having received the old faith, they wished to be well rooted and grounded in it, and therefore they sought daily for illumination as well as for quickening; they desired not only to have the emotions excited, but also to have the intellect richly stored with divine truth; and there must be much of this in every church, if it is to be built up. No neglect of an appeal to the passions, certainly; no forgetfulness as to what is popular and exciting; but with this we must have the solid bread-corn of the kingdom, without which God's children will faint in the weary way of this wilderness.

682. Puritanism Commended

Although the world may openly denounce the rigid Puritan, it secretly admires him. When the big heart of the world speaks out, it has respect to the man that is sternly honest, and will not yield his principles, no, not to a hair's breadth. In such an age as this, when there is so little principle, when principle is cast to the winds, and a general latitudinarianism, both of thought and of practice, seems to rule the day, it is still the fact that a man who is decided, and speaks his mind, commands the reverence of mankind. Depend upon it, woman, your husband and your children will respect you none the more because you say, "I will give up some of my Christian privileges," or "I will go sometimes with you into that which is sinful." You cannot help them out of the mire if you go and plunge into the mud yourself. You cannot help to make them clean if you go and blacken your own hands. How can you wash their faces then? You, young man in the shop—you, young

woman in the workroom—if you keep yourselves to yourselves in Christ's name, chaste and pure for Jesus, not laughing at that which so often wins a laugh, but which is doubtful; not mixing up with a pleasure that is suspicious, but feeling, on the other hand, that to you a doubtful thing is a sinful thing, and that only that which is of faith and of truth is good to you—if you will so keep yourselves, your company in the midst of others shall be as though an angel shook his wings, and they will say to one another, "Do not do that just now, for so-and-so is there." They will fear you, in a certain sense; they will admire you, and who can tell but they at last may come to imitate you.

683. Puritanism and Modern Thought The modern men would be rich if they possessed even the crumbs that fall from the table of the Puritans. They have given us nothing new, after all. A few variegated bladders they have blown, and they have burst while the blowers were admiring them: but, as for anything worth knowing, which has improved the heart, benefited the understanding, or fitted men for service in the battle of life, there have been no contributions made by this "modern thought" worth recording; whereas the old thought of the Puritans and the Reformers, which I believe to be none other than the thought of God thought out again in man's brain and heart, is constantly giving consolation to the afflicted, furnishing strength to the weak, and guiding men's minds to behave themselves aright in the house of God and in the world at large.

684. Purity of the Church, Christ's Desire for The Lord Jesus Christ, looking around his church, if he sees anything evil in it, will do one of two things: either he will go right away from his church because the evil is tolerated there, and he will leave that church to be like Laodicea, to go on from bad to worse, till it becomes no church at all; or else he will come and he will trim the lamp, or to use the figure of John xv., he will prune the vine-branch, and with his knife will cut off this member and the other, and cast them into the fire; while, as for the rest, he will cut them till they bleed again, because they are fruit-bearing members, but they have too much wood, and he wants them to bring forth more fruit. It is not a trifling matter to be in the church of God. God's fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

685. Purity of the Saved Soul

We do not see snow very often now, but when we did see it last time, what a dazzling whiteness there was upon it! You took a sheet of paper, you laid it upon the snow, and you were perfectly surprised to see the clean white paper turned yellow or brown, in comparison with its dazzling whiteness. David says, "I shall be whiter than snow." Well, you see snow is only earthly whiteness, only creature whiteness, but the whiteness which Christ gives when he washes in his blood is divine whiteness: the whiteness is the righteousness of God himself. Then snow soon melts: the snow goes, and where is the whiteness? The snow and the whiteness run away together. But there is no power in temptation, no power in sin, which is able to stain the whiteness which God gives to a pardoned sinner.

686. Purpose of God in Death

Every grain of dust that is whirled from the threshing-floor is steered with as unerring a wisdom as the stars in their courses, and there is not a leaf that trembles in the autumn from the tree but is piloted by the plan and purpose of the Lord, as much as Arcturus and his sons. Surely, then, in so great an event as death, involving so much of pain to the person falling, so much of bereavement and sorrow to the families of those who are smitten, we cannot believe but what God has a

purpose. The insatiable archer is not permitted to shoot his bolts at random—every arrow that flies bears this inscription, "I have a message from God for thee."

"Q"

687. Question, A Solemn

I would do with you what the Roman ambassadors did with Antiochus. They met him and asked him whether he meant war or peace. He said he must see; and one of them taking his staff, made a circle round him where he stood, and said, "You must answer before you leave that spot. If you step out of that, it is war. Now, war or peace?" And I too would draw a secret circle round you in the pew this morning, and say to you, "Which shall it be, sin or holiness, self or Christ? Shall it be grace or enmity, heaven or hell?" And I pray you answer that question in the light of hell. It is a dread light, but it is a revealing one. It is a fire that will devour the scales that are about your blind eyes. God grant that it may scorch those scales away, that you may see now how dreadful a thing it is to be an enemy of God, and be led by his Holy Spirit to apply to Jesus Christ even now.

"R"

688. Rebellion against God, Futility of

If we were profane enough to imagine the Lord to be vulnerable, yet where is the bow and where the arrow that could reach him on his throne? What javelin shall pierce Jehovah's buckler? Let all the nations of the earth rise and rage against God, how shall they reach his throne? They cannot even shake his footstool. If all the angels of heaven should rebel against the Great King, and their squadrons should advance in serried ranks to besiege the palace of the Most High, he has but to will it, and they would wither as autumn leaves, or consume as the fat upon the altar. Reserved in chains of darkness, the opponents of his power would for ever become mementoes of his wrath. None can touch him; he is the God that ever liveth. Let us who delight in the living God bow down before him, and humbly worship him, as the God in whom we live and move, and have our being.

689. Recognition in Heaven When we read at funerals that famous chapter in the epistle to the Corinthians, we find in it no comfort concerning the immortal spirit, for it is not required, but we find much consolation with regard to that which is "sown in dishonour," but shall be "raised in glory." Thy dead men shall live; that decaying dust shall live again. Weep not as though thou hadst cast thy treasure into the sea, where thou couldst never find it; thou hast only laid it by in a casket, whence thou shalt receive it again brighter than before. Thou shalt look again with thine own eyes into those eyes which have spoken love to thee so often, but which are now closed in sepulchral darkness. Thy child shall see thee yet again; thou shalt know thy child; the selfsame form shall rise. Thy departed friend shall come back to thee, and having loved his Lord as thou dost, thou shalt rejoice with him in the land where they die no more. It is but a short parting, it will be an eternal meeting. For ever with the Lord, we shall also be for ever with each other. Let us comfort one another, then, with these words.

690. Redemption, Greatness of

Christ has not died merely to win this little island, and a few other nations; he has died to redeem this whole round world as a jewel which he will wear in his crown, and he shall have it yet; I say the whole round world yet shall shine like a pearl in his diadem; he must, he shall reign over all nations till every enemy is put under foot. The sails that whiten every sea shall bear his messengers to the islands of the South, the caravans that cross the arid desert shall convey his ambassadors to proclaim in the far-off oasis, or among the wandering Bedouins, his sacred name. The gates of brass which deny him entrance must be broken; the bars of iron that shut out his heralds from any land must be snapped. Hoary systems of superstition must crumble, and the moles and bats shall yet be the sole companions of the gods of heathendom. Rejoice, rejoice, the cause for which you plead is one which heaven ordains to bless. Everlasting decrees stand like lions to guard the throne of Christ. The puissant arm of the Most High is made bare to avenge his own elect. High shall the pennon of the cross be lifted; soon shall the shout of victory make heaven's loftiest arches ring, and hell itself shall tremble at the dreaded sound, for the King immortal, eternal, invisible, must reign and put down all dominion and power, and then shall he give the kingdom to

God, even the Father.

691. Reformation, Personal, required

It highly gratifies some people when they can find a fault in some highly-respected brother; they just pull him to pieces with about the same zest that might be displayed by a jackdaw or an ape. That is their forte, the strength of their genius—detraction—pulling to pieces what they could not put together, and attempting to raise themselves by lowering others. But notice, the apostle says, "Let us cleanse ourselves." Oh, that we would look at home! Oh, that we did more indoor work in this department! Yes, it is our business to tell our brother of his faults, certainly. This ought we to have done, but certainly we ought not to have left the other undone, for that is the first business. "Let us cleanse ourselves." It is very well to drag the church of God up to the altar, like some bleeding victim, and there to stab her with the sharpest knife of our criticism, and to say of the modern church that she is not this, and she is not that. One might ask, how far do I help to make her what she is? If she be degenerate, how far is that degeneracy consequent upon my having fallen from the high standing which I ought to have occupied? We shall all have contributed our quota to the reform of the church when we are reformed ourselves. There can be no better way of promoting general holiness than by increasing in personal holiness. "Let us cleanse ourselves"

692. Regeneration, False and True The sprinkling of an infant makes no change in that child whatever; it is, as I believe, a vain ceremony, not commanded of God, nor warranted in Scripture; and as the Church of England practises it, it is altogether pernicious and superstitious, and if there be any effect following it, it must be an evil effect upon those who wickedly lie unto Almighty God, by promising and vowing that the unconscious shall keep God's commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life; which they cannot do for the child, inasmuch as they cannot even so do for themselves. Ye must have another regeneration than this, the work not of priestly fingers, with their hocus-pocus and superstitious genuflexions, but the work of the Eternal Spirit, who alone can regenerate the soul, whose office alone it is that can give light to the spiritually blinded eye, and sensation to the spiritually dead heart. Be not misled by the priests of this age. Ye profess to have cast off Rome, cast off her Anglican children. Wear not the rags of her superstition, nor bear her mark in your foreheads. Ye must be born again in another sense than formality can work in you. It must be an inward work, a spiritual work, and only this can save your souls. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature, that is, he has experienced a radical change.

693. Rejection of Christ

Within a few more years, you and I will have mixed our bones with mother earth, and then after that shall come a general resurrection, and we shall live and stand in the latter days upon the earth, and Christ will come in the clouds of heaven, and you who heard the gospel and despised him, what will you say? Have your apology ready, for you will soon be called upon to say why judgment should not be pronounced upon you. You cannot say you did not know the gospel, or that you were not warned of the result of rejecting it: you have known, what more could you have known? But your heart would not receive what you knew. When the Lord begins to say, "Depart, ye cursed," what claim will you have not to be numbered with that accursed company? It will be in vain to say, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets," for that will be an aggravation that the kingdom of heaven came so nigh unto you, and yet you received it not. And when the thunderbolts are launched, and he who was once the Lamb so full of

mercy, shall shine forth as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, full of majesty, that thunderbolt shall be winged with extra force and speed with this tremendous fact—that you rejected Christ, that you heard him, but turned a deaf ear to him; that you neglected the great salvation, and did despite to the Spirit of grace.

694. Rejection of Christ Fatal

You cannot reject the Saviour and be a little damaged thereby; there is no alternative but that you utterly perish. You shall eat bread, it shall nourish you, it shall provide for you the material of flesh and sinew, nerve and bone. Refuse to eat it, and you put your life from you. You may, if you will, try to impose upon others, but, whether watched or unwatched, you shall die if you will not eat. So ordained is it by wise decree that there is no living without food; let but the space of time be long enough, and death must be inevitable to those who will not eat. So is it with Christ, who is the bread sent down from heaven. Receive him, you have all that your soul wants to sustain it and drive away its hunger; reject him, and there is neither in heaven nor in earth anything that can supply your soul's lack.

695. Relationship to God

Things are precious, often because of their relationship. The most precious thing a mother hath is her dear babe. We all love those who are near to us by the ties of nature. Precious, therefore, in the sight of the Lord are his saints, because they are born in his household, by regeneration made to be his sons and daughters. Think not that God our Father has a less affection towards his sons than we have towards ours. Ah, no! No mother's heart ever yearned over her child, and no father's bosom ever rejoiced over his offspring, as the heart of God yearns over his erring children, and as his soul rejoices when they come back to him.

696. Religion Costing Little

How few Christians have ever read this text and understood it, "Sell what thou hast and give alms." Their almsgiving has never come to that; they have given but the cheese-parings and candle-ends to Christ; they never knew they had given them, they made no sacrifice to do so. Many do not give to Jesus so much in a year as it costs to clean their shoes. Christ's cause costs them not half the hire of the most menial servant in their kitchens. Is not this a crying evil, to be answered for by those who are guilty of it? How can we expect the kingdom to come, and the cause of Christ to grow, while in these days of unreal profession Christ's followers deny him his due, and straiten the exchequer of his church. If no garments strew the road, and no man gives up his colt, how shall the prince celebrate a triumph?

697. Religion, Eternal Sweetness of The top of the cup of religion may be bitter, but it grows sweeter the deeper down you drink. The cup at Satan's banquet is sweet upon the brim, where the bubbles glow like rainbows, but, ah, the horrid dregs of it! The cup that Christ gives has no dregs, but it has at its bottom the sweetness of the wines on the lees, well refined. And O, the inexpressible sweetness when you get to the bottom of all—where there is no bottom, indeed—when you get a drink of eternal joys and never-ending blessings!

698. Religion, Feeble Manifestations of

I do feel, brethren, as if few of us had ever entered into the power of religion; we are living in the weakness of it. We live on the outskirts; we have not pierced into the metropolitan city of intense vital godliness. We are like those poor Esquimaux far away at the poles. O that we could reach the tropics of true godliness, where the sun of divine grace should be vertical all the day long, and its divine heat should bring forth in our hearts all the tropical luxuriance of which renewed nature can be capable. We want to yield sweet fruits for Christ, delicious flowers, and all that human nature can produce when sanctified by the blessed Spirit.

699. Religion to be seen Everywhere Our religion is for the market-place, for the shop, for the streets, and for the field. And as God's being is not confined to temples made by the hands of men, but is present everywhere, on heath, and city, and moor, and field—in the sunbeams that light the peasant's cot as well as the monarch's palace; present in the minute as well as in the magnificent; down there in the glades where the red-deer wander and the child loves to play; up there where the storms gather upon the mountain's hoary brow; as visible in a blade of grass as in the cedar and the tall waving pine; to be seen as well in the dewdrop as in the avalanche; as certainly in the falling of a leaf as in the tremendous roar of the thunder, everywhere present, so is true religion, everywhere—in the cottage as well as in the temple; in business as well as in devotions; abroad in the streets as well as in the silence of retirement; up yonder where men wrestle with God, and down there where they come to contend with men and for his truth. Thou hast never received the Spirit so as to know that Christ is the glorified One, unless in thy life as well as with thy lips thou dost show forth his praise.

700. Religion, True, not Dependent upon Circumstances

I wonder how much religion some of us would have if it were all set to cool! There seems to be a great volume of it now while we are living in a warm and genial atmosphere with our friends and comrades in the gospel. Suppose we were exposed to the trial of a bleak night, suppose we were taken away from the church of which we are members, and made to live in the country where we had no fellow Christians to talk with, I wonder how much of the substance and fervour of our religion we should preserve! It is wonderful how great appearances often diminish and grow small when circumstances change. Remember, Christian, just so much and no more than would abide such an ordeal is the total that you possess now. The rest that seems to be, counts for nothing. I am afraid we sometimes think we grow very fast, when, in fact, our progress is rather like the growth of the mushroom than the growth of an oak. When the Christian sees not his signs, and fears that he does not grow, he often is growing in grace; growing downwards, being rooted in humility, getting a deeper sense of his own nothingness and unworthiness, and consequently a higher sense of his Lord's fulness and lovingkindness. Then he is growing truly.

701. Religion of Christ a Fire

If the gospel of Jesus Christ had been a mystic philosophy, which only a few could comprehend, it would not have been a matter of fire; if it had been a mere pompous ceremonial which the people could only look upon and admire, it would have had no ardent influence; if it had been a mere orthodoxy, to be learnt by heart, and to be accepted every jot and tittle thereof without consideration; or if it had been a mere law of civilities and legalities, a mere ordinance of propriety, and rule, and regulation, it would never have been what Christ says it is; but, inasmuch as it is a principle which affects the heart, which takes possession of our entire manhood, changes, renews,

uplifts, and inspires us, making us akin to God, and filling us with the divine fulness, it becomes in this world a thing of flame and fire, burning its way to victory.

"I am come to send fire on the earth."

702. Religious Juggler, The

I have seen, when I was a boy, a juggler in the street throw up half-a-dozen balls, or knives and plates, and continue catching and throwing them, and to me it seemed marvellous; but the religious juggler beats all others hollow. He has to keep up Christianity and worldliness at the same time, and catch two sets of balls at once. To be a freeman of Christ and a slave of the world at the same time must need fine acting. One of these days you, Sir Juggler, will make a slip with one of the balls, and your game will be over. A man cannot always keep it up, and play the game so cleverly at all hours; sooner or later he fails, and then he is made a hissing and a by-word, and becomes ashamed, if any shame be left in him.

703. Renewal, Divine In the creation of the old world God first gave light, and afterwards he created life—the life that crept, the life that walked, the life that dived, the life that flew in the midst of heaven. So hath he wrought in our hearts; he hath given us the life that creeps upon the ground in humiliation for sin; the life that walks in service, the life that swims in sacred waters of repentance, the life that flies on the wings of faith in the midst of heaven; and, as God separated the light from the darkness, and the dry land from the sea, so in the new creature he hath separated the old depravity from the new life. He hath given to us a holy and incorruptible life which is for ever separated from, and opposed to, the old natural death; and at last, when the old creation was all but finished, God brought forth man in his own image as the topstone. A like work he will do in us as his new creatures. Having given us light, and life, and order, he will renew in us the image of God. Yea, that image is in every man who is in Christ Jesus at this hour. Though it is not yet complete, the outlines, as it were, are there. The great Sculptor has begun to chisel out the image of himself in this rough block of human marble; you cannot see all the features, the lineaments divine are not yet apparent; still, because it is in his design, the Master seeth what we see not; he seeth in our unhewn nature his own perfect likeness as it is to be revealed in the day of the revealing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

704. Repentance, God's Work

You feel that you cannot repent, but cannot Jesus make thee repent by his Spirit? Do you hesitate about that question? See the world a few months ago hard bound with frost, but how daffodil, and crocus, and snowdrop, have come up above that once frozen soil, how snow and ice have gone, and the genial sun shines out! God does it readily, with the soft breath of the south wind and the kind sunbeams, and he can do the same in the spiritual world for thee. Believe he can, and ask him now to do it, and thou shalt find that the rock of ice shalt thaw, that huge, horrible, devilish iceberg of a heart of thine shall begin to drip with showers of crystal penitence, which God shall accept through his dear Son.

705. Repentance preceding Joy As certain fabrics need to be damped before they will take the glowing colours with which they are to be adorned, so our spirits need the bedewing of repentance before they can receive the radiant colouring of delight. The glad news of the gospel can only be printed on wet paper. Have you ever seen clearer shining than that which follows a shower? Then

the sun transforms the rain-drops into gems, the flowers look up with fresher smiles and faces glittering from their refreshing bath, and the birds from among the dripping branches sing with notes more rapturous, because they have paused awhile. So, when the soul has been saturated with the rain of penitence, the clear shining of forgiving love makes the flowers of gladness blossom all around. The steps by which we ascend to the palace of delight are usually moist with tears. Grief for sin is the porch of the House Beautiful, where the guests are full of "the joy of the Lord." I hope, then, that the mourners, to whom these words shall come, will discover and enjoy the meaning of that divine benediction in the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

706. Reputations, Obscured, to Shine Forth A Christian minister must expect to lose his repute among men. He must be willing to suffer every reproach for Christ's sake. But, then, he may rest assured that he will never lose his real honour if it be risked for the truth's sake, and placed in the Redeemer's hand. The day shall declare the excellence of the upright, for it will reveal all that was hidden, and bring to the light that which was concealed. There will be a resurrection of characters as well as persons. Every reputation that has been obscured by clouds of reproach for Christ's sake shall be rendered glorious when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

707. Resurrection Drawing Nigh As the pendulum of the clock continues unceasingly to beat like the heart of time, as morning dawn gives place to evening shade, and the seasons follow in constant cycle, we are drifted along the river of time nearer to the ocean of eternity. Borne as on the wings of some mighty angel who never pauses in his matchless flight, I onward journey towards the judgment bar of God. My brethren, by that selfsame flight are you also hurried on. Look to the resurrection, then, as a thing that ever cometh, silently drawing nearer and nearer hour by hour. Such contemplations will be of the utmost service to you.

708. Resurrection, Key-stone of the Christian Arch

"Can these dry bones live?" is still the unbeliever's sneer. The doctrine of the resurrection is a lamp kindled by the hand which once was pierced. It is indeed in some respects the key-stone of the Christian arch. It is linked in our holy faith with the person of Jesus Christ, and is one of the brightest gems in his crown. What if I call it the signet on his finger, the seal by which he hath proven to a demonstration that he hath the king's authority, and hath come forth from God?

709. Resurrection of Christ The sun comes forth, at the appointed hour, from the gates of day, and begins to gladden the earth; even so on the third day, early in the morning, Jesus, our Lord, arose from his sleep, and there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre. Then did the Sun of Righteousness arise. Then did the great Bridegroom come forth from his chamber, and begin his joyful race. It must have been a ravishing sight to have beheld the risen Saviour: well might the disciples hold him by the feet and worship him. Methinks, if ever angels sung more sweetly at one time than another, it must have been on the first Easter Morning, when they saw the divine champion break his bonds of death asunder, and rise into the glorious resurrection life. Then was he revealed to the sons of men; and, no longer hidden, he began to tell his disciples the meaning of those enigmas which had been dark to them; things which they had not understood, which seemed inexplicable, were all opened up by him, for now was his time to come out of his chamber.

His words, though plain enough, had aforetime hidden him even from those who loved him; but now he speaketh no more in proverbs, but showeth them openly concerning himself and the Father. He hath laid aside the incognito in which he traversed the earth as a stranger, and he is now divinely familiar with his friends, bidding them even touch his hands and his side. In his death the veil was rent, and in his resurrection the High Priest came forth in his robes of glory and beauty. A little while he was gone away, but he returned from the secret chambers of the ivory palaces, and showed himself unto his disciples. Blessed were the eyes that saw him in that day.

710. Resurrection of Christ, a Pledge of future Victory Our Lord came into this world to destroy all the works of the devil. Behold before you the works of the devil pictured as a grim and horrible castle, massive and terrible, overgrown with the moss of ages, colossal, stupendous, cemented with blood of men, ramparted by mischief and craft, surrounded with deep trenches, and garrisoned with fiends. A structure dread enough to cause despair to every one who goeth round about it to count its towers and mark its bulwarks. In the fulness of time our Champion came into the world to destroy the works of the devil. During his life he sounded an alarm at the great castle, and dislodged here and there a stone, for the sick were healed, the dead were raised, and the poor had the gospel preached unto them. But on the resurrection morning the huge fortress trembled from top to bottom; huge rifts were in its walls; and tottering were all its strongholds. A stronger than the master of that citadel had evidently entered it, and was beginning to overturn, overturn, overturn, from pinnacle to basement. One huge stone, upon which the building much depended, a corner-stone which knit the whole fabric together, was lifted bodily from its bed and hurled to the ground. Jesus tore the huge granite stone of death from its position, and so gave a sure token that every other would follow. When that stone was rolled away from Jesus' sepulchre, it was a prophecy that every stone of Satan's building should come down, and not one should rest upon another of all that the powers of darkness had ever piled up, from the days of their first apostacy even unto the end. Brethren, that stone rolled away from the door of the sepulchre gives me glorious hope. Evil is still mighty, but evil will come down. Spiritual wickedness reigns in high places; the multitude still clamour after evil; the nations still sit in thick darkness; many worship the scarlet woman of Babylon, others bow before the crescent of Mohammed, and millions bend themselves before blocks of wood and stone; the dark places and habitations of the earth are full of cruelty still; but Christ has given such a shiver to the whole fabric of evil that, depend upon it, every stone will be certain to fall. We have but to work on, use the battering-ram of the gospel, continue each one to keep in his place, and like the hosts around Jericho, to sound the trumpet still, and the day must come when every hoary evil, every colossal superstition shall be laid low, even with the ground, and the prophecy shall be fulfilled, "Overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him." That loosened stone on which the angel sits is the sure prognostic of the coming doom of everything that is base and vile. Rejoice, ye sons of God, for Babylon's fall draweth near. Sing, O heavens, and rejoice, O earth, for there shall not an evil be spared. Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be one stone left upon another, which shall not be thrown down.

711. Rest Necessary for Workers

Rest time is not waste time. It is economy to gather fresh strength. Look at the mower on the summer's day, with so much to cut down ere the sun sets. He pauses in his labour—is he a sluggard? He looks for his stone, and begins to draw it up and down his scythe, with

"rink-a-tink—rink-a-tink—rink-a-tink." Is that idle music—is he wasting precious moments? How much he might have mown while he has been ringing out those notes on his scythe! But he is sharpening his tool, and he will do far more when once again he gives his strength to those long sweeps which lay the grass prostrate in rows before him. Even thus a little pause prepares the mind for greater service in the good cause. Fishermen must mend their nets, and we must every now and then repair our mental waste and set our machinery in order for future service. To tug the oar from day to day, like a galley-slave who knows no holidays, suits not mortal men. Millstreams go on and on for ever, but we must have our pauses and our intervals. Who can help being out of breath when the race is continued without intermission? Even beasts of burden must be turned out to grass occasionally; the very sea pauses at ebb and flood; earth keeps the Sabbath of the wintry months; and man, even when exalted to be God's ambassador, must rest or faint; must trim his lamp or let it burn low; must recruit his vigour or grow prematurely old. It is wisdom to take occasional furlough. In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less.

712. Rest in Christ, our Portion

It is only at the gospel supper that our proper posture is that of recumbency, reclining, or sitting down, because our warfare is accomplished. They that have believed have entered into rest. Jesus hath given us rest, we are not traversing the wilderness, we are come unto mount Zion, unto the glorious assembly of the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. Our justifying work is finished, finished by Christ. Sit down Christian, sit down and rest in thy Lord. There is much to be done as to fighting your sins, much to be done for Christ in the world: but so far as justification and forgiveness are concerned, rest is your proper place, peace in Christ Jesus your lawful portion.

713. Rest in the Bosom of God Have you never seen a little child that has lost its way crying in the streets for "Mother"? Now, you shall give that child what you will, but it will not stay its crying for "Mother." It has lost her, and cannot be content. Take the little wanderer into your house, show it many toys, give it many sweetmeats, but all are of no avail, it wants "Mother," and its little heart will burst unless it finds her. Now, just show the little one its mother, let it fly into her bosom, and what more does it want? How perfectly content it is to be there! So have I felt, that if I might but sob myself to sleep on the bosom of my dear God, if I must have all else taken away from me, if so it should please him, if I could but be with him, no other desire or longing could ever cross my soul. I know it is so with all the family of the Lord our God; their love to him makes his presence their all in all.

714. Restlessness, Cure for

It has been said by a great physician, that when persons find much difficulty in sleeping, they have sometimes been able to win the embrace of "tired nature's sweet restorer," by fixing their minds upon a single sublime subject, a grand absorbing topic, a master-theme for thought. As soon as the mind has been thoroughly absorbed in contemplation, it has been at rest, and the body has rested too. I know not how that may be, but certainly, when God would give "his beloved sleep" in times of distraction, and would lull their souls into a calm repose, there is no better sleeping-draught which his hand can administer to the troubled spirit than a meditation upon the amazing goodness of the Lord our God.

715. Restraining Grace

Ah! my fine fellow, if you could have had your own way, you would have been at the top of the mountain by now! So you think, but no, you would have been over the precipice long before this if God had let you climb at all, and so he has kept you in the valley because he has designs of love towards you, and because you shall not sin as others sin. Divine grace has its hand upon the bridle of your horse. You may spur your steed, and use the lash against the man who holds you back; or perhaps it is a woman, and you may speak bitter words against that wife, that sister, or that mother, whom God has put there to hold you back; but you cannot go on, you shall not go on. Another inch forward and you will be over the precipice and lost, and therefore God has put that hand there to throw your horse back on its haunches, and make you pause, and think, and turn from the error of your ways. What a mercy it is that when God's people do go into sin to any extent, he speaks and says, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no further; here shall thy proud sins be stayed!"

716. Restraints, Usefulness of As for ourselves, let us never wish to be without our daily cross. The kite broke away from its string, and instead of mounting to the stars it descended into the mire. The river grew weary of its restraining banks, and longed to burst them, that it might rush on in the wild joy of freedom; down went the embankments, the river became a flood, and carried destruction and desolation wherever it rushed. Unrein the coursers of the sun, and, lo! the earth is burned; unbind the girdle of the elements, and chaos reigns! Let us never desire to be rid of those restraints which God has seen fit to lay upon us; they are more needful than we dream. Remember how the vine, when bound to the stake which upheld it, judged itself a martyr, and longed to be free; but when it saw the wild vine at its feet, rotting on the damps and pining amidst the heats, and producing no fruit, it felt how needful were its bonds if its clusters were ever to ripen.

717. Revelations of Christ, Variety of As to the manner in which the Lord may be pleased to reveal himself to any one of us, I am sure that if we know that salvation is of grace, we shall never quarrel about that any more. To some of us, the Lord revealed himself on a sudden. We know when we were converted to a day. I know the place to a yard. But many others do not. The day breaks on them gradually; first twilight, then a brighter light, and afterwards comes the noon. Do not let us quarrel about that. So long as I get a Saviour, I do not mind how I get him; so long as he blots out my sins, I will not cavil about the way in which he manifests his love to me. If it be of grace, that silences everything; Jew and Gentile shut their mouths without a murmuring word, and all together sit down at the foot of the cross, no more to question, but reverently to adore.

718. Revival, Hindrance to A city of three millions, not wholly given to idolatry, but still very much given to sin, and we ourselves so weak in the midst of it! if we could but realise this position, and then take hold upon the arm omnipotent, and by an overcoming faith, such as only God could give to any one of us, believe it possible for the Lord Jesus to save this city, and then go forward boldly expecting him to do it, we might see more than we have ever seen. And now, what if I prophesy that we shall see it! what if I say, that if God will but stir up his people everywhere for prayer, he will do a work in our day that shall make both the ears of him that heareth it to tingle, not with horror, but with joy! He will yet let the world know that there is a God in Israel. Verily, that which hindereth is our want of faith, for if the Son of man should descend among us, would he find faith on the earth? O unbelieving church, O thankless generation, ye are not straitened in God, ye are

straitened in your own bowels; and if ye could but believe him, and so prove him by your faith, he would yet open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, such that ye should not have room enough to receive it.

719. Revivals, Spurious and True My dear friends, we have, in our time, seen in certain churches great blazings of enthusiasm, as if Vesuvius and Etna had both taken to work; these outbursts of flame have been misnamed revivals, but might just as well have been called agitations. I have known, in my short time, certain churches, in the paroxysms of delirium, meeting houses crowded, aisles filled, preachers stamping and thundering, hearers intoxicated with excitement, and persons converted by wholesale—even children converted by hundreds—they said thousands. Well, and a month or two after, where were the congregations? where were the converts? Echo has answered, "Where, where?" Why, the converts were worse sinners than they were before; or mere professors puffed up into a superficial religion, from which they soon fell into a hopeless coldness, which has rendered it difficult ever to stir them again. I love all genuine revivals, with all my heart, and I would aid and abet them; but I now speak of certain spurious things which I have seen, and which are not uncommon even now, where there has not been God's Holy Spirit, but mere excitement, loudness of talk, bigness of words, fanaticism, and rant, and nothing more. Now, in such cases, why was it the fire went out? Why, the man who blew the bellows went away to use his lungs elsewhere, and as soon as ever the good man who, by his remarkable manner and telling style had created this stir, was gone, the fire went out.

720. Rewards of Grace The Duke of Burgundy was waited upon by a poor man, a very loyal subject, who brought him a very large root which he had grown. He was a very poor man indeed, and every root he grew in his garden was of consequence to him; but merely as a loyal offering he brought to his prince the largest his little garden produced. The prince was so pleased with the man's evident loyalty and affection that he gave him a very large sum. The steward thought, "Well, I see this pays; this man has got fifty pounds for his large root, I think I shall make the duke a present." So he bought a horse, and he reckoned that he should have in return ten times as much for it as it was worth, and he presented it with that view: the duke, like a wise man, quietly accepted the horse, and gave the greedy steward nothing. That was all. So you say, "Well, here is a Christian man, and he gets rewarded. He has been giving to the poor, helping the Lord's church, and see, he is saved; the thing pays, I shall make a little investment." Yes, but you see the steward did not give the horse out of any idea of loyalty, and kindness, and love to the duke, but out of very great love to himself, and therefore had no return; and if you perform deeds of charity out of the idea of getting to heaven by them, why it is yourself that you are feeding, it is yourself that you are clothing; all your virtue is not virtue, it is rank selfishness, it smells strong of selfhood, and Christ will never accept it; you will never hear him say, "Thank you," for it.

721. Riches in the Heart, Evil of

Many a man sinks in wealth like a horse in a bog; his possessions suck him under. While your earthly goods are kept under foot they will do you no hurt, but when they rise as high as your heart, they have begun to bury you alive. While a man carries money in his purse, it is well, especially if the rings are not too tight; but when he carries it in his heart, it is bad, be he who he may; his gold shall eat as doth a canker, and work him infinite mischief.

722. Righteous, Blessedness of the

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him," from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same; from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, from the first gatherings of evening shadows until the day-star shines. It shall be well with him when, like Samuel, God calls him from the bed of his childhood; it shall be well with him when, like David in his old age, he is stayed up in the bed to conclude his life with a song of praise; it shall be well with him if, like Solomon, he shall abound in wealth, and well with him if, like Lazarus, he shall lie upon a dunghill, and the dogs shall lick his sores; it shall be well with him if, like Job, he washes his feet with oil and his steps with butter, if the princes are before him bowing their heads, and the great ones of the earth do him obeisance; but it shall be equally well with him if, like Job in his trial, he sits down to scrape himself with a potsherd, his children gone, his wife bidding him curse his God, his friends become miserable comforters to him, and himself left alone; it shall be well, always well.

723. Ripeness for Heaven, Sign of

Ripe fruit soon parts from the bough. You shake the tree and the ripest apples fall. If you wish to eat fresh fruit you put out your hand to pluck it, and if it comes off with great difficulty you feel you had better leave it alone a little longer; but when it drops into your hand, quite ready to be withdrawn from the branch, you know it to be in good condition. When, like Paul, we can say, "I am ready to depart," when we set loose by all earthly things, oh, then it is that we are ripe for heaven. You should measure your state of heart by your adhesiveness or your resignation in reference to the things of this world. You have some comforts here, some of you have money, and you look upon them, and you feel, "it were hard to part with these"—this is green fruit; when your grace is mature, you will feel that though God should give you even greater abundance of this world, you are still an exile longing for the better land. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? There is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

724. Ripening for Heaven

I believe we ripen in grace more in ten minutes when we live near to God than we might do in ten years of absence from his presence. Some fruit on a tree will not ripen fast, it is shielded from the sun. We have seen the cottagers pluck off the leaves from their vines in our chilly climate, in order to let the sun get at the vine, and bring out the colour and ripeness of the clusters: even thus the great Husbandman takes away many of the leaves of worldly comfort from us, that the comfort of his own dear presence may come at us, and ripen us for himself.

725. Ritualism, Sinfulness of

Step in where the Ritualist has dressed himself in all his gaudy apparel, flaunting like a peacock before God himself, and you may well say to him, "If thou knewest the gift of God," thou wouldst lay aside these fooleries and come before God sooner in sackcloth than in thy tag-rags, humbling thyself before the Most High as a poor, guilty sinner, most accursed of all the human race for having dared to call thyself a priest; for priest thou art not for thy fellow men, for one is priest, even Christ Jesus, and no other is priest, save only that all saints have a common priesthood which some cannot usurp to themselves alone, unless they dare to bring upon themselves the vengeance of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who called themselves priests and were not. "If thou knewest the gift of God," poor simpleton that thou art, thou wouldst doff that priestly array, and bow before the great High Priest of our profession, and worship him alone.

726. Ritualism, Vanity of

I am sometimes up on the Alps amidst the glories of nature, with the glacier and snow-clad peak; I am in the open, and I breathe the fresh air that comes from the ancient hills, but you tell me that there I am on "unholy ground"! Stands there, hard by, a little place, painted in all gaudy colours, in honour of a woman—blessed among women, it is true. I step inside, look round, and behold, the place is full of dolls and toys! Am I to be told that this is God's house inside, and that outside thereof is not God's house? It seems monstrous! How can any rational man credit it? Look into a little shell, full of "holy water." Go outside, and see the foaming waters sparkling in the cascade, or coming down from the clouds, and they say, "There is no holiness in that"! It's a wicked notion—wicked, I say—to think that your four walls make that place holy, and your incantations, and I know not what, consecrate it. But, where God is, outside there, with the storm and the thunder, the rain and wind, it is not holy. Oh, sirs, I think the outside is the holier of the two! For my part, I can worship best there, and love God, and think of him as being nearer to me there, than I can within. The superstitious notion which makes people think that if they go at particular times to these places, and go through certain actions, they have done service to God, leads them to forget, if not altogether to disclaim God at ordinary times, and in common circumstances. Their god is a local god, and his worship is local. So we see men, when they have gone through the ritual, go back to revel in their vanities, and to repeat their sins. A change of heart they do not care about: they were regenerated in baptism. To be taught the way of God more perfectly—what does that matter? Were they not confirmed? To live upon Christ and feed upon his flesh and blood in spirit and in truth—that is nothing. They have had the bread and wine at the communion: will not that suffice? The whole thing generates formalism, and eats out the soul of true piety.

727. Romish Priestcraft Dishonouring to God

Alas! alas! It makes a Christian's blood boil to see glory given in a professed place of worship, ay, and in a professed Protestant church, too, to a pack of scamps who call themselves "priests"! I would not call them by such a name if they were honest enough to go off to the Church of Rome, where they ought to be; but having the impudent effrontery to attempt to palm themselves off in this country of ours for what they are not, I know of no words bad enough for them. What reverence or respect is to be paid to those gentry inside those brass gates, around the thing they call an altar? I suppose those gates enclose a sort of holy place, into which the poor laity must not go! If these priests had their way, we should have to go down and lick the soles of their feet, as our benighted forefathers aforesaid bowed before the hirelings of Rome. Does it not make a man feel, when you see pictures of his holiness and the cardinals, and so on, scattering their benedictions at the Vatican, or at St. Peter's, while admiring crowds fall down and worship them, that it were infinitely better to bow to the devil himself? We give glory unto God, but not a particle of glory to anything in the shape of a man, or an angel either. Have I not stood and seen the crowds by hundreds fall down and worship images and dressed-up dolls? I have seen them worship bones and old teeth; I have seen them worship a skeleton, dressed out in modern costume, said to be the skeleton of a saint; and I have marvelled how we could, in this nineteenth century, find people so infatuated as to think that such idolatry was pleasing to the most high God. We, brethren, the people of God, who know Christ, can give no glory to this rubbish, but turn away from it with horror. Our glory must be given to Christ, and to Christ alone. Now, here is the touchstone to try your religion by. When you pray, to whom do you pray? Through whom do you

pray? When you sing, for whom is the song meant? When you preach, to whose honour do you preach? To whom do you intend to do service? When you go out among the poor, when you distribute alms, when you scatter your tracts, when you talk about the gospel, for whom do you do this? For, as the Lord liveth, if you do it for yourselves, or for any beside the Lord Jesus, you do not know what the vitality of godliness is, for Christ, and Christ only, must be the grand object of the Christian; the promotion of his glory must be that for which he is willing to live, and for which, if needs be, he would be prepared to die. Oh! down, down, down with everything else, but up, up, up with the cross of Christ! Down with your baptism, and your masses, and your sacraments! Down with your priestcraft, and your rituals, and your liturgies! Down with your fine music, and your pomp, and your robes, and your garments, and all your ceremonials. But up, up, up with the doctrine of the naked cross, and the expiring Saviour. Let the voice ring throughout the whole world, "Look unto me and live!" There is life in a look at the crucified One. There is life in simple confidence in him, but there is life nowhere else. God send to his church an undying passion to promote the Saviour's glory, an invincible, unconquerable pang of desire, and longing that by any means King Jesus may have his own, and may reign throughout these realms! In this sense, then, Jesus is and must be the glory of his people.

728. Routine, Usefulness of

We are told that in unhappy Paris, when first the mails were stopped, the drivers of the mail-carts took their seats upon their boxes and sat there, though no horse was forthcoming. Red tape commands as much reverence as the magic cord of the Brahmins. Formal routine satisfies many. Preachers, deacons, and teachers sit on the boxes of their mail-coaches for the appointed time, but the power which moves the whole is too much forgotten, and in some cases ignored. Souls are not saved by systems, but by the Spirit. Organizations without the Holy Ghost are windmills without wind. Methods and arrangements without grace are pipes from a dry conduit, lamps without oil. Even the most scriptural forms of church-government and effort are null and void without the "power from on high."

"S"

729. Sabbath, a Dull Day to Many

I was awakened at six o'clock, in the Hartz mountains, by the cheerful notes of a trumpet playing a sweet, enlivening German air; it struck me that was a right fitting way to begin the Sabbath—to wake up with music, to leave off sleep with a dream of angels singing the songs of heaven, and to begin the day by uniting in their praise. Let the Sabbath always begin so—not with the dull, solemn note of the sackbut, but with psaltery and harp of joyful sound. Alas! with many the cry is, "Here's another dull day, in which the Crystal Palace is shut up, and all amusement denied us!" An English Sabbath is called by many a dull and dreary day! Ah! ye miserable heathens, well may you speak so: it must be dreary to you; but to the genuine Christian, the thought that the world's burden is laid aside, and that now he is to commune with heaven, is as the sweet sound of the trumpet waking him to a day of feasting and delight.

730. Sacramentarianism, Deceitfulness of

I see now in vision a company of men gathering herbs along the slopes of the Seven Hills of Rome; with mystic rites they cull those ancient plants, whose noxious influence once drugged our fathers into deadly slumbers. They are compounding again the cup of Rome's ancient sorcery, and saying:

"Here is the universal medicine! the great Catholic remedy." I see them pouring their Belladonna, Monkshood, and deadly Henbane, into the great pot for ever simmering on the Papal hearth. Think you the nations are to be healed by this accursed amalgam? Will not the end be as in the days of the prophets, when one gathered wild gourds, and they cried out, "There is death in the pot"? Ay, indeed, so it will be, even though Oxford and Canterbury set their seal upon the patent medicine. Come, ye brave sons of protesting fathers! Come and overturn this witches' caldron, and spiff it back into the hell for which alone it is fit. Pity that even old Tiber's tawny flood should be poisoned with it, or bear its deadly mixture to that sea across which once sailed the apostolic barque. The wine of Rome's abominations is now imported into this island, and distributed in a thousand towns and villages by your own national clergy, and all classes and conditions of men are being made drunk therewith. Ye lovers of your race, and of your God, stop the traffic, and proclaim around the Popish caldron, "There is no healing there." No healing plants ever grew upon the Seven Hills of Rome, nor are the roots improved in virtue if transplanted to Canterbury, or the city on the Isis. There is one divine remedy, and only one. It is no mixture. Receive ye it and live—"With his stripes we are healed." No sprinkling can wash out sin, no confirmation can confer grace, no masses can propitiate God. Your hope must be in Jesus, Jesus smitten, Jesus bruised, Jesus slain, Jesus the Substitute for sinners. Whosoever believes in him is healed, but all other hopes are a lie from top to bottom. Of sacramentarianism, I will say that its Alpha is a lie, and its Omega is a lie, it is false as the devil who devised it; but Christ, and only Christ, is the true Physician of souls, and his stripes the only remedy. Oh, for a trumpet to sound this through every town of England! through every city of Europe! Oh, to preach this in the Colosseum! or better still, from the pulpit of St.

Peter's!—"With his stripes we are healed." Away, away ye deceivers, with your mixtures and compounds: away ye proud sons of men with your boastings of what ye feel, and think, and do, and what ye intend and tow. "With his stripes we are healed." A crucified Saviour is the sole and only hope of a sinful world.

731. Safety in Christ

I read a story, the other day, of some Russians crossing wide plains studded over here and there with forests. The villages were ten or a dozen miles from each other, and the wolves were out, and the horses were rushing forward madly, and the travellers could hear the baying of the wolves behind them; and though the horses tore along with all speed, yet the wolves were fast behind, and they only escaped, as we say, "by the skin of their teeth," managing just to get inside some hut that stood in the road, and to shut-to the door. Then they could hear the wolves leap on the roof; they could hear them dash against the sides of the hut; they could hear them gnawing at the door, and howling, and making all sorts of dismal noises; but the travellers were safe, because they had entered by the door, and the door was shut. Now, when a man gets in Christ, he can hear, as it were, the devils howling like wolves, all fierce and hungry for him; and his own sins, like wolves, are seeking to drag him down to destruction. But he has got in to Christ, and that is such a shelter that all the devils in the world, if they were to come at once, could not start a single beam of that eternal refuge: it must stand fast, though earth and heaven should pass away.

732. Safety of the Believer at all Times

Beneath the wings of the Almighty God night with its pestilence cannot smite the saints, and day with its cares cannot destroy them; youth with its passions shall be safely passed; middle age with its whirl of business shall be navigated in safety; old age with its infirmities shall become the land of Beulah; death's gloomy vale shall be lit up with the coming splendour; the actual moment of departure, the last and solemn article shall be the passing over of a river dry-shod. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, saith the Lord." "They shall never perish."

733. Saints, Solitary

Think of God working in the solitary things, for the grass does not merely grow around our populous cities, and where men take care of it, but up there on the side of the bleak Alp, where no traveller has ever passed. Where only the eye of the wild bird has beheld their lonely verdure, the moss and the grass come to perfection, and display all their beauty, for God's works are fair to other eyes than those of mortals. And you, solitary child of God, dwelling far away from any friend, unknown and obscure, in a remote hamlet; or you in the midst of London, hiding away in your little garret, unknown to fame, and forsaken by friendship, you are not forgotten by the love of heaven. He maketh the grass to grow all alone, and shall not he make you flourish in loneliness? He can bring forth your graces, and educate you for the skies, in solitude and neglect.

734. Saints, Love-sickness of the

There are two love-sicknesses in Solomon's Song. The one is when the spouse longs for the presence of her Lord, and the second is when she gets that presence; he is so glorious to her, that

she is ready to die with excess of joy, and she exclaims, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love." If you cannot get the second, recollect that the first is the clear way to it. Resolve in your heart, my brother and sister, that you never will be happy till you win the face of Christ. Settle it in your soul that there shall be no end to your cries and tears till you can say with all your heart, "My Beloved is near me; I can speak to him; I am in the enjoyment of his love." If you can be content without it, you shall go without it, but if you must have it, you shall have it. If your hunger will break through stone walls to reach your Lord, no stone walls shall keep him from you. If you are insatiable after Christ, he will feed you with himself. If you bid good-bye to all the dainties of the world, and all its sweet draughts and delicacies, and must have Christ, and Christ alone, then no hungering soul shall long be kept without him. He must come to you. There are cords that draw him to you at this hour, His love draws you to him, but your love draws him close to you. Be not afraid, your soul shall be like the chariots of Amminadib; perhaps even this morning, and you shall go on your way rejoicing.

735. Saints, Manifestation of the When a Roman general came home from the wars he entered Rome by stealth, and slept at night, and tarried by day, perhaps for a week or two, among his friends. He went through the streets, and people whispered, "That is the general, the valiant one," but he was not publicly acknowledged. But on a certain set day, the gates were thrown wide open, and the general, victorious from the wars in Africa or Asia, with his snow-white horses bearing the trophies of his many battles, rode through the streets, which were strewn with roses, while the music sounded, and the multitudes, with glad acclaim, accompanied him to the Capitol. That was his triumphant entry. Those in heaven have, as it were, stolen there. They are blessed, but they have not had their public entrance. They are waiting till their Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel, and the voice of God; then shall their bodies rise, then shall the world be judged; then shall the righteous be divided from the wicked; and then, up-streaming in marvellous procession, leading captivity captive for the last time, the Prince at their head, the whole of the blood-washed host, wearing their white robes, and bearing their palms of victory, shall march up to their crowns and to their thrones, to reign for ever and ever! After this consummation the believing heart is panting, groaning, and sighing.

736. Saints' Victory over Sin

Some men are great on account of their victories. How they crowd the streets when a Cæsar or a Napoleon returns in triumph from the slaughter of his fellow creatures! Io Triumphe! Sound the trumpets! Beat the drums! Hang out the garlands! Gather, ye crowds! Here comes the red-handed man, crimson with the blood of his fellows! What glory is this? Bah! It smells of the butcher's shambles. The glory of a child of God is the glory which Christ has given him of having slain his sins, of having trampled under foot his corruptions, the glory of having fought with devils and overcome them, having wrestled with principalities and powers, and laid them in the dust. This is true glory. And what glory shall that be which awaits every true believer when up the everlasting hills he shall ascend, to be welcomed where his Master sits, welcomed with the selfsame words of gratulation, "Well done!"

737. Saints, Satan's Attack upon

If you are more generous than other saints, if you live nearer to God than others, as the birds peck most at the ripest fruit, so may you expect Satan to be most busy against you. Who cares to

contend for a province covered with stones and barren rocks, and ice-bound by frozen seas? But in all time there is sure to be a contention after the fat valleys, where the wheat-sheaves are plenteous, and where the husbandman's toil is well requited, and thus, for you who honour God most, Satan will struggle very sternly. He wants to pluck God's jewels from his crown, if he can, and take the Redeemer's precious stones even from the breastplate itself. He considers, then, God's people; viewing them as hindrances to his reign, he contrives methods by which he may remove them out of his way, or turn them to his own account. Darkness would cover the earth if he could blow out the lights; there would be no fruit to shake like Lebanon, if he could destroy that handful of corn upon the top of the mountains; hence his perpetual consideration is to make the faithful fail from among men.

738. Salvation before Calling In the olden times of imprisonment for debt, it would have been quite correct for you to step into the cell of a debtor, and say to him, I have freed you, if you had paid his debts and obtained an order for his discharge. Well, but he is still in prison. Yes; but you really liberated him as soon as you paid his debts. It is true he was still in prison, but he was not legally there, and no sooner did he know that the debt was paid, and that receipt was pleaded before proper authorities, than the man obtained his liberty. So the Lord Jesus Christ paid the debts of his people before they knew anything about it. Did he not pay them on the cross more than eighteen hundred years ago to the utmost penny? and is not this the reason why, as soon as he meets with us in a way of grace, he cries, "I have saved thee; lay hold on eternal life." We are, then, virtually, though not actually, saved before we are called.

739. Salvation, Certainty of

It is not at all unusual for God to make a complete shipwreck of that vessel in which his people sail, although he fulfils his promise, that not a hair of their heads shall perish. I should not wonder if he would cause two seas to meet around your barque, so that there should not be more than a few boards and broken pieces of the ship left to you, but oh! if you have faith in Christ, he will certainly bring you safe to shore.

740. Salvation, Full

Though a man had damned himself a thousand times with the blackest filth that ever came from hell, yet, if he believes in Jesus, God must be true to his solemn promise: it is not possible that the sin of man could justify God in flying from his promise or denying his own self. He declares full pardon to every soul that trusteth in the Lord Jesus: I pray you slander not my Lord and Master by saying that this or that could make him take his words back, or break his covenant in Christ Jesus.

741. Salvation, Great When Christ opened the holy of holies, he did not make a little slit therein, but the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, so that the hugest sinner that ever lived might come through it to the blood-besprinkled mercy-seat.

742. Salvation, Possession of, making Truth precious

It has been very well observed that a man is not often a very thorough democrat after he gets a little money in the savings-bank. Well, I think it is very likely that when a man gets a little stake in his country, he begins to be, just to the merest extent, conservative. As soon as ever a man gets a stake in Christianity, and feels that he has got salvation in Jesus Christ, he gets to be very, very

conservative of the old fashioned truth. He cannot give up the Bible then, because it is a broad land of wealth to him. He cannot give up Christ, for he is his Saviour, his salvation. He cannot give up a single promise, because that promise is so dear to his own soul.

743. Salvation, Security of

If you can so pervert your imaginations, and make your judgments play the acrobat as to conceive a justified soul damned, then I ask you what greater curse could the infernal fiend himself confer upon a mortal than this so-called justification. A spirit pronounced just, and then sent down to hell, accursed of God, accursed by the same lips that justified it,—blasphemous thought! To lie in those flames, and to remember that I once had the righteousness of Christ, that I once was washed in his precious blood—oh, impossible! It shall not, must not, cannot be, while the Deity is immutable, and while the strong hand of God will not suffer the righteousness of Christ thus to be covered with disgrace. He did not begin to build, and then fail to finish. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." Where a man has done the greater, he does not fail to do the less. Now, it is a greater thing to justify a man than it is to glorify him. I mean this—that justification cost the Saviour's life, and the Saviour's death; but to glorify a man who is already justified costs God nothing. The expense is already laid out in the justification of the soul; and to take a man to heaven is only to take him to a prepared place, for which he is himself prepared. Shall he do the greater, and then neglect the less?" He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

744. Salvation, Simplicity of the Way of Does is not seem to you to be inconsistent with the character of the God of nature that he should have instituted a plan of salvation so singularly complicated and theatrical as that which is now-a-days taught us by priests? Nature is simple: her grandeur lies in her simplicity. If you walk in the fields of our own happy land, or climb the lofty ranges of the Alps, you are delighted with the beautiful simplicity of nature, in which there is an utter absence of everything meretricious, showy, and theatrical. Everything has a practical design, and even the colours of the flowers, which are not without intent and design, enable the plant to drink in certain rays of light which shall best satisfy its need. There is nothing in nature for mere display; but you step inside a place of worship dedicated to salvation by ceremonies, and I am persuaded that your taste will be outraged, if that taste has been formed upon the model of nature. Frequently, on the Continent, I turned with loathing from gaudily decorated churches, daubed with paint, smothered with gilt, and bedizened with pictures, dolls, and all sorts of baby prettinesses; I turned aside from them, muttering, "If your God accepts such rubbish as this he is no God to me; the God of yon rolling cloud and crashing thunder, yon foaming billow and towering rock, is the God whom I adore. Too sublime, too noble, too great-minded to take delight in your genuflections, and stage-play devotions." When I beheld processions with banners, and crosses, and smoking censers, and saw men who claimed to be sent of God, and yet dress themselves like Tom fools, I did not care for their God, but reckoned that he was some heathenish idol whom I counted it my glory as a man to scoff at and to despise. Do not fall into the notion that the God of nature is different from the God of grace. He who wrote the book of nature wrote the book of revelation, and writes the book of experience within the human heart. Do not therefore choose a way of salvation utterly at variance with the divine character.

745. Salvation Secured for all Believers In a few hours, dear friends, I shall be crossing the sea, and I will suppose that there shall be a good stiff wind, and that the vessel may be driven out of her course, and be in danger. As I walk the deck, I see a poor girl on board; she is very weak and ill, quite a contrast to that fine strong, burly passenger who is standing beside her, apparently enjoying the salt spray and the rough wind. Now suppose a storm should come on, which of these two is the more safe? Well, I cannot see any difference, because if the ship goes to the bottom, they will both go, and if the ship gets to the other side of the channel they will both land in security. The safety is equal when the thing upon which it depends is the same. So, if the weakest Christian is in the boat of salvation—that is if he trusts Christ—he is as safe as the strongest Christian; because if Christ failed the weak one, he would fail the strong one too. Why, if the least Christian who believes in Jesus does not get to heaven, then Peter himself will not get to heaven. I am sure of it, that if the smallest star which Christ ever kindled does not blaze in eternity, neither will the brightest star. If you who have given yourselves to Jesus, should any of you be cast away, this would prove that Jesus is not able to save, and then all of us must be cast away too. Oh, yes! "we believe that we shall be saved, even as they."

746. Salvation, the Great Need

Prosperity in this world, earn if you can do so fairly, but "what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" A golden coffin will be a poor compensation for a damned soul. To be cast away from God's presence, can that misery be assuaged by mountains of treasure? Can the bitterness of the second death be sweetened by the thought that the wretch was once a millionaire, and that his wealth could affect the politics of nations? No, there is nothing in health or wealth comparable to salvation. Nor can honour and reputation bear a comparison therewith. Truly they are but baubles, and yet for all that they have a strange fascination for the sons of men. Oh, sirs, if every harpstring in the world should resound your glories, and every trumpet should proclaim your fame, what would it matter if a louder voice should say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Salvation! salvation! SALVATION! Nothing on earth can match it, for the merchandise of it is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. The possession of the whole universe would be no equivalent to a lost soul for the awful damage it has sustained and must sustain for ever. Pile up the worlds, and let them fill the balance: ay, bring as many worlds as there are stars, and heap up the scale on the one side; then in this other scale place a single soul endowed with immortality, and it outweighs the whole.

747. Salvation, the Trade of Christ

If I saw the doctor's brougham driving along at a great rate through the streets, I should be sure that he was not coming to my house, for I do not require him; but if I had to guess where he was going, I should conclude that he was hastening to some sick or dying person. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Physician of souls. The more sick thou art, the more room is there for the physician's art. When a man sets up in a trade, he likes to find a locality where his articles are wanted, and there he opens his shop. What if I say it is my Master's trade to save sinners? What if I say it is the only business and calling that he undertook, to become a Saviour of lost and ruined souls? Then he can drive a brisk trade in thy heart, and I believe that he will open shop there, and enrich himself with thy praise and thy love by saving thee.

748. Salvation through Christ Alone

Hear, dear friend, your true position. It is the case of a soldier on the battle field, wounded, bleeding, life oozing away from him, he is perishing, but he is sufficiently sensible to know it and to call for help. The surgeon is on the field within hearing, the sufferer pleads for relief with many cries and entreaties. So far well; but I pray you remember that crying and weeping will not of themselves heal the sick man—the surgeon must actually come and bind up his wounds; and if he refuses to receive him, he may cry as he wills, but he will bleed to death. So remember that your prayers and seekings of themselves cannot save you, Jesus must come to you, and it is madness on your part to refuse him by your unbelief.

749. Salvation through Clinging to Christ A certain woman thought that there was power in the hem of Jesus' garment to make her whole. She was mistaken in imagining that there was a healing efficacy in his dress, but since it was a mistake of faith, and reflected honour upon Christ, the Lord made it true to her; he made virtue go out of himself even into the skirts of his garments for her sake. And so, though we may err here and err there in reference to our Lord, yet, if our soul does but cling to him like a child to its mother, knowing little of its mother except that its mother loves it, and that it is dependent upon her, that clinging will be saving.

750. Salvation, Unpurchasable

Suppose you were to empty Potosi of its silver, and Golconda should be drained of its diamonds; nay, count up all the treasures that couch beneath the surface of the earth: if you brought them all, what would they be to God? And if you could pile up gold reaching from the nethermost parts of the earth to the highest heavens, what would the mass be to him? How could all this enrich his coffers, or buy your salvation? Can he be affected by anything you do to augment the sum of his happiness, or to increase the glory of his kingdom? If he were hungry, he would not tell you. "The cattle on ten thousand hills," saith he, "are mine." Your goodness may please your fellow creatures, and your charity may make them grateful, but will God owe anything to you for your alms, or be beholden to you for your influence? Preposterous questions! When you have done all, what will you be but a poor, unworthy, unprofitable servant? You will not have done what you ought, much less will there be any balance in your favour to make atonement for sin, or to purchase for you an inheritance in the realms of light.

751. Salvation of Grace

Every good thing that is in a Christian, not merely begins, but progresses and is consummated by the fostering grace of God, through Jesus Christ. If my finger were on the golden latch of Paradise, and my foot were on its jasper threshold, I should not take the last step so as to enter heaven unless the grace which brought me so far should enable me fully and fairly to complete my pilgrimage. Salvation is God's work, not man's. This is the theology which Jonah learned in the great fish college, in the university of the great deep, to which college it would be a good thing if many of our divines in these days could be sent, for human learning often puffeth up with the idea of human sufficiency; but he that is schooled and disciplined in the college of a deep experience, and made to know the vileness of his own heart, as he peers into its chambers of imagery, will confess that from first to last salvation is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

752. Salvation of Hearers, the Preacher's desire

I will make no terms with God if you will but accept Christ. I am somewhat of the mind of a dear little girl who is now dying, if she has not already departed. She sent a little note in pencil to her minister, and it was delivered at the prayer-meeting. "A little believer in Christ, nine years of age, asks the prayers of the people for her father, for he is an unbeliever." She was visited by her minister, and she said to him, "Oh, sir, I have asked father to come and hear you preach; I thought he might get saved, but he mocks at it, and will not come; but, sir, he must hear you preach one day, and that is when I shall be buried, for I shall soon be with Jesus. Oh, sir! when he stands at the grave do be sure to tell him about the love of Christ, and say that I asked you to do so, for perhaps when I am dead that might help to break his heart." Oh, yes! if anything would break your hearts, that were a mercy if it happened. If the preacher himself were dead, if his interment in the grave could bring you to the Saviour, it were a cheap price to pay. Only may God save you; may the Holy Ghost renew you; may the Saviour wash you in his precious blood; and I shall be well content.

753. Sanctification, Emblem of

Autumn has a more sober aspect, but still it rivals the glory of spring. Ripe fruit has its own peculiar beauty. As the fruit ripens, the sun tints it with surpassing loveliness, and the colours deepen till the beauty of the fruit is equal to the beauty of the blossom, and in some respects is superior. What a delicacy of bloom there is upon the grape, the peach, the plum, when they have attained perfection! Nature far excels art, and all the attempts of the modeller in wax cannot reach the marvellous blendings of colour, the matchless tints of the ripe fruit, worthy of Eden before the fall. It is another sort of beauty altogether from that of the blossom, yielding to the eye of the husbandman, who has the care of the garden, a fairer sight by far. The perfumed bloom yields in value to the golden apple, even as promise is surpassed by fulfilment. The blossom is painted by the pencil of hope, but the fruit is dyed in the hue of enjoyment. There is in ripe Christians the beauty of realised sanctification, which the word of God knows by the name of "the beauty of holiness." This consecration to God, this setting apart for his service, this watchful avoidance of evil, this careful walking in integrity, this dwelling near to God, this being made like unto Christ—in a word, this beauty of holiness is one of the surest emblems of maturity in grace. You have no ripe fruit if you are not holy, if still your passions are unsubdued, if still you are carried about by every wind of temptation. If still, "Lo here, and lo there," will attract you to the right hand and to the left, you have not reached to anything like maturity; perhaps you are not even fruit unto God at all. But where holiness is perfected in the fear of God, and the Christian is at least striving after perfect holiness, and aiming to be conformed to the image of Christ, one of the marks of the ripe fruit is plainly present.

754. Satan, Limit of his Power The fair and lovely dove may fall into the mire, but the mire has not any dominion over her, for she rises up as quickly as she can, and away she flies and seeks to cleanse herself at some crystal fount. As for the duck, put that into the mire, and the mire hath dominion over its nature. So the believer may fall into sin that he hates, and defile his garments with uncleanness that he loathes. Let a sheep tumble into a ditch, and it scrambles out again, but let the swine go there, and it rolls in it, for the mire has dominion over its nature. There is nothing here to excuse you from watchfulness, no reason shown nor any pledge that sin may not

sometimes terribly overcome you. It may carry the war right into the province of your spirit, and ravage it, and the whole of your nature may for awhile seem to be subdued, except the heart. Happily a limit is prescribed. Though the enemy may seem to conquer the territory of your manhood, yet it cannot establish a kingdom there, for it shall be driven out again in due time, and that before long. When the enemy cometh in as a flood, the Spirit of God will lift up the standard against him, and the enemy shall yet be worsted in the combat.

755. Satan, Service of

I am often in my soul amazed at what men will do for that black master, the devil. Why, sirs, the devil will sometimes summon men to one of his conventicles at the street corner, where the gas is flaming, and they will cheerfully obey the summons. They will meet in such places with companions, rude, boisterous, selfish, vulgar, and everything else that is undesirable, and call them jolly good fellows. If the devil would pick out some fine brave spirits for them to meet, men of wit and genius, and information, one would not wonder so much at the readiness with which the dupes assemble; but the congregations of Satan are usually made up of men and women of the lowest and most degraded kind, and these people know it; but when they are beckoned off to the assembly of the scorners, they go with the greatest readiness. And what is done at this gathering of the foolish? Well, they commune together in stupidities at which it must be hard to laugh, and meanwhile they pass round the cup of liquid fire, out of which they cheerfully drink, and drink, and drink again, though each successive goblet is filled with deeper damnation. These willing slaves drink at their master's bidding, though the cup makes their brain reel, sets their heart on flame, and makes them unable to keep their feet. Yes, and when he still cries, "Drink, yea, drink abundantly," these faithful servants swallow down the poison till they lie down like logs, or roar like demons. They will keep the death-cup to their lips till delirium tremens comes upon them, and possesses them as with hell itself. Thousands obediently render homage unto Satan by drinking away their lives, and ruining their souls. How much further they go in serving their master than we do in following ours! Into hell itself they follow their accursed leader. They pay him his revenues without arrears, and yet his taxes are heavy, and his exactions are most oppressive.

756. Satan, Subtlety of

Satan never brushes the feathers of his birds the wrong way; he generally deals with us according to our tastes and likings. He flavours his bait to his fish.

757. Satisfaction, not in the World The soul that has once learned to swim in the river of Christ will, when his presence is withdrawn, be like a fish laid by the fisherman on the sandy shore, it begins to palpitate in dire distress, and ere long it will die, if not again restored to its vital element. You cannot get the flavour of the bread of heaven in your mouth, and afterwards contentedly feed on ashes. He who has never tasted anything but the brown, gritty cakes of the world, may be very well satisfied with them; but he who has once tasted the pure white bread of heaven can never be content with the old diet. It spoils a man for satisfaction with this world to have had heart-ravishing dealings with the world to come. I mean not that it spoils him for practical activity in it, for the heavenly life is the truest life even for earth, but it spoils him for the sinful pleasures of this world; it prevents his feeding his soul upon anything save the Lord Jesus Christ's sweet love. Jesus is the chief ingredient of all his joy, and he finds that no other enjoyment beneath the sky is worth a moment's comparison with the King's wines on the lees well refined.

758. Saved, Almost

You are almost saved; you are awakened, you are aroused, you have many good desires, but a man who is only almost saved will be altogether damned. There was a householder who almost bolted his door at night, but the thief came in; a prisoner was condemned to be hanged, and was almost pardoned, but he hung on the gallows: a ship was almost saved from shipwreck, but she went to the bottom with all hands on board; a fire was almost extinguished, but it consumed a city; a man almost decided remains to perish in the flames of hell. So is it with you: except you believe, all these things which you possess of good desire and emotion shall be of no service to you at all, for "he that believeth not shall be damned."

759. Savior, Name of, a Comfort for Sinners

I am a sinner lost and ruined, but I rejoice, for Jesus has come to seek and to save that which was lost. My sins trouble me, but he shall save his people from their sins. Satan annoys me, but he has come to destroy the works of the devil. He is not a nominal, but a real Saviour. We know captains and colonels who have no troops, and never saw fighting, but not so the Captain of our salvation; he brings many sons unto glory. If a man is called a builder, we expect him to build; if a merchant, we expect him to trade; and as Jesus is a Saviour, he will carry on his sacred business, he will save multitudes. Why, surely there is comfortable hope here. Do you not see the dawning in the name of Saviour? Surely, if he comes to save, and you need saving, there is a blessed suitability in you for one another. A prisoner at the bar is glad to meet one who is by profession an advocate; a ship out of its track welcomes a pilot; a traveller lost on the moors is delighted if he meets one who is by trade a guide; and so a sinner should rejoice at the bare mention of a Saviour.

760. Saying and Doing

We meet in common life with persons who say that they are rich, but this does not make them so. They apply for credit, and say that they are wealthy, when they are worth nothing. Companies will ask for your money with which they may speculate, and they say that they are sound, but they are oftentimes found to be rotten; though some of them make a very fair show in the prospectus, the result appears very foul in the winding-up of the association. Persons have been known to say that they were of distinguished rank, but when they have had to prove their title before the House of Lords, oftentimes has it been discovered that they have made a mistake. Lunatics in Bethlehem Hospital have been found by scores to say that they were kings or queens. In the old houses, where madmen were confined, it often happened that some poor creature twisted a crown of straw, put it on his head, and said that he was a monarch. But that did not make him so. No armies arose at his bidding; no fleets crossed the ocean to do his will; no tribute was brought to his feet; he remained a poor pauper madman still, though he said that he was a king. Many a time have you found the difference, in your commercial transactions, between blank saying and positive truth. A man has said that he would meet that bill, or that he would discharge that debt; he has said that the rent should be paid when it was due; he has said a thousand things—and you have found out that it was easy enough for him to say, but it was not quite so easy for you to obtain the doing of it. And when the engagement has been turned to writing, registered, and made as fast as black and white can make it, you have not found it thoroughly reliable, for to say by subscribing a contract or covenant does not always make it certain that a man will fulfil it; to say is not necessarily a pledge of good faith, or a warrant against perfidy. Rest assured, then, that if in these

temporal matters to say is not the same thing as to be or to do, neither is it so in spiritual things. A minister may say that he is sent of God, and yet be a wolf in sheep's clothing. A man may say that he unites himself to the church of God, but he may be no better than a hypocrite and an alien, who has no part in her fellowship. We may say that we pray, and yet never a prayer may come from our hearts. We may say to our fellow men that we are Christians, and yet we may never have been born again—never have obtained the precious faith of God's elect—never have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ. And, sirs, as you would not be satisfied with merely saying that you are rich; as you want the title-deeds of the broad acres; as you want to hear the coins chink in your box; as you want the real thing, and not the mere saying of it—so, I pray you, be not put off with the mere profession of religion. Be not content with a bare assertion, or think that is enough; but seek to have your own profession verified by the witness of heaven, as well as by that of your own conscience.

761. Scripture, Feast of

Ye may suck as ye will, but ye shall never have too much out of the breast of Scripture. Here you can come and drop your bucket every morning and night, but you shall never draw too much from this well, whose cool depths supply an even crystal stream. Oh, come to the banquet, ye hungry ones, and never think to rise from that table, but sit there till your souls shall be taken away to a table yet more richly furnished. Feast on still, with appetites whose edges are ever keen.

762. Scripture, Neglect of

I was assured the other day by a good man, with a great deal of alarm, that all England was going over to Popery. I told him I did not know what kind of God he worshipped, but my God was a good deal bigger than the devil, and did not intend to let the devil have his way after all, and that I was not half as much afraid of the Pope at Rome as of the Ritualists at home. But mark it, there is some truth in these fears. There will be a going over to one form of error or another, unless there be in the Christian church a more honest, industrious, and general reading of the Holy Scripture. What if I were to say most of you church members do not read your Bibles, should I be slandering you? You hear on the Sabbath day a chapter read, and you perhaps read a passage at family prayer, but a very large number never read the Bible privately for themselves, they take their religion out of the monthly magazine, or accept it from the minister's lips. Oh, for the Berean spirit back again, to search the Scriptures whether these things be so. I would like to see a huge pile of all the books, good and bad that were ever written, prayer-books, and sermons, and hymn-books, and all, smoking like Sodom of old, if the reading of those books keeps you away from the reading of the Bible; for a ton weight of human literature is not worth an ounce of Scripture; one single drop of the essential tincture of the word of God is better than a sea full of our commentings and sermonisings, and the like.

763. Scripture, Pointing to Christ

Some time ago, when in Italy, at a town on the Italian side of the Alps, I saw one Sunday afternoon, in a quiet walk alone, a sight which struck me very much, and which remains fixed upon my memory. There was outside the town a mountain, all the way up the sides of which were different representations of the progress of our Lord, from the garden where Judas betrayed him to the place of his resurrection. The figures were as large as life, carved in either stone or wood, and

painted to imitate nature. When I got to the very summit of the hill, there was a church. There was no one in it, and I pushed open the door and went in. All was still. It was a large building, and all around it were images of the prophets and the apostles. There stood Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and all the rest—one knew the usual portraits of them; and up in the dome, at the very top of the church, was a large and striking image of the Saviour. Now, what struck me about the church was this—that the images of those prophets and apostles who stood there had their fingers all pointed upwards, so that when I went in I could not help looking up to the top to see what they were pointing at. All round the church there were the words, in Latin, "Moses and the prophets spake concerning him: "and there stood Moses and the prophets carved in stone, and all pointing to him.

Isaiah had a little scroll in his hand, on which was written, "The Lord hath made to meet on him the iniquity of us all." Jeremiah had a scroll in his hand, on which was written, "Behold, and see if there was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow, which was done unto me." I think the church just represented the truth in that case. It is even so. All the prophets stand as a complete circle of distinct testifiers, and, with uplifted fingers, they all concur with John the Baptist when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." They all point to Christ. If you read the life of Christ, and then read what they said of him, you will be persuaded that this is he which was to come.

764. Scripture, Purity of

I should like to see all the good books themselves burnt, as well as the bad books of Ephesus, if they keep men from reading Holy Scripture for themselves. Here is the well of purest gospel undefiled: it springs up in this precious volume with freshness and sweetness unequalled. We who write upon it, hand out that same sweet water to you in our own cups and goblets, but to some extent all our vessels are defiled. There is in the purest intellect some measure of error; and the living water which we hand out to the people must in some measure participate in our imperfection. Do not be content to drink from our pipkins and our chalices, but come and put your lips right down to where the living water, with all the self-sufficient fulness of the deeps eternal, comes welling up from the very heart of God.

765. Scripture, Suitability of, to All When you are on the dunghill, there sits Scripture, with dust and ashes on its head, weeping side by side with you, and not upbraiding like Job's miserable comforters. But suppose you come to the book with gleaming eyes of joy, you will hear it laugh; it will sing and play to you as with psaltery and harp; it will bring forth the high-sounding cymbals. Enter its goodly land in a happy state, and you shall go forth with joy and be led forth with peace, its mountains and its hills shall break before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. As in water the face is reflected, so in the living stream of revealed truth a man sees his own image.

766. Seashore, Christian Work at the Can we not do something for Jesus on the sands? If so, let us not miss such a happiness. What situation and surroundings can be better for earnest, loving conversation with our young friends concerning their souls' best interests? A few words about the sea of eternity and its great deeps, a sentence or two upon the broken shells and our frailty, upon the Rock of Ages and the sands of time, may never be forgotten, especially if they be but few, and those pleasant, solemn, and congruous with the occasion. A good book lent to a loungee may also

prove a blessing. A handful of interesting pamphlets scattered discreetly may prove to be fruitful seed. Souls are to be caught by the seashore and in the boat: gospel fisherman, take your net with you.

767. Security, Carnal, Danger of My soul shudders at the thought of routine religion, formal service, dead devotion, mechanical godliness. What a mercy to reach the fresh springs, to feel a daily renewed youth, an anointing with fresh oil! For this I pine and pant. One gets driving on in the dark, as coachmen sometimes do when they are asleep on the box: dangerous work, this! I know that I am safe in Christ, but I could fain suffer anything rather than become habitually of a slumbering heart. Better smart under the long whip of affliction, or feel the stings of conscience, or even the darts of the devil, than lie down in carnal security's lap to be shorn of one's locks by the Philistines; yet I fear this has been my case.

768. Security of the Believer in Christ

How many Christians are like the miser who never feels sure about the safety of his money, even though he has locked up the iron safe, and secured the room in which he keeps it, and locked up the house, and bolted and barred every door! In the dead of night he thinks he hears a footstep, and tremblingly he goes down to inspect his strong room. Having searched the room, and tested all the iron bars in the window, and discovered no thief, he fears that the robber may have come and gone, and stolen his precious charge. So he opens the door of his iron safe, he looks and pries, he finds his bag of gold quite safe, and those deeds, those bonds, they are safe too. He puts them away, shuts the door, locks it, bolts and bars the room in which is the safe and all its contents; but even as he goes to bed, he fancies that a thief has just now broken in. So he scarcely ever enjoys sound, refreshing sleep. The safety of the Christian's treasure is of quite another sort. His soul is not under bolt and bar, or under lock and key of his own securing, but he has transferred his all to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, our Saviour—and such is his security that he enjoys the sleep of the beloved, calmly resting, for all is well.

769. Self-denial, a Christian Virtue

He that wears the herb heart's-ease in his bosom is richer than he that can wear diamonds upon his fingers, if those fingers be stained with guilt. It is comparatively easy to be correct and upright when these things pay, when we can by them secure the esteem of our fellow men, and that confidence which is as good as money to a man in business, because of the credit it brings with it. But it is quite another thing to do the right when it means to strip oneself of all, and to give up long-loved and cherished possessions, hopes, and prospects, both for ourselves and family. This is the hour of temptation, when Satan comes with his glory and wealth in one hand, and a suggestion of evil in the other, and bids us open our lap to receive them, reminding us that to deny him is to close with injury and loss to reputation, to our business, and to our loved families at home. How many have made the dread compact with the Prince of Darkness! They have gained the world but lost their soul. They have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage, and bartered heaven for hell; time has been taken and eternity rejected. The honour of men has been esteemed more than the praise of God; they have grasped the gold and it has been a millstone round their neck, and into the deepest depths of woe it has dragged them, lost! lost! lost for ever!

770. Self-righteous, Doom of

I think I see the King coming in his glory, and the last tremendous morning dawn. When the King sits on his glory-throne, where are the self-righteous? Where are they? I cannot see them. Where are they? Come, come, Pharisee, come and tell the Lord that thou didst fast twice in the week, and then wast not even as the Publican! There sits the Publican at the right hand of the Judge! Come and say that thou wast cleaner and more holy than he! But where is the wretch? Where is he? Come hither, ye proud and ostentatious ones, who said you had no need to be washed in blood; come and tell the Judge so; tell him he made a mistake; tell him that the Saviour was only wanted to be a make-weight and assistant to those who could help themselves! But where are they? Why, they were dressed so finely; can those poor, naked, shivering wretches be the gay, vaunting professors we used to know? Yes. Hear them as they cry to the rocks to fall on them, and the hills to cover them, to hide them from the presence of the great Judge whom in their lifetime they insulted by putting their poor merits in comparison with the boundless wealth and merit of his blood.

771. Self-sacrifice, Examples of When I read of some of the saints giving up all that they have, crossing the sea, penetrating into barbarous regions, bearing their lives in their hands, sacrificing comforts, and living day by day on the verge of death, amid fever and wild beasts, and all that they might honour Christ, I am utterly ashamed. What are we, my brethren! Unto what shall we liken ourselves? Like a Colossus such men bestride their age, while we, base things, hide our dishonourable heads for shame at our spiritual littleness. The love of Christ to us is like that ancient furnace which was heated seven times hotter, while our love is like a solitary spark which wonders within itself that it is yet alive. May the Holy Spirit change this, and give us yet to glow and burn with sacred fire, like the bush in Horeb when it was aglow with deity.

772. Self-sacrifice, our Duty

Men in business may work as many hours as they like, and as hard as they will, to get money, and very seldom does any sagacious, prudent Mentor shake his head and tell the young merchant that he is laying out his strength too recklessly, and devoting his energies too vigorously, in getting gain or acquiring a fortune. Oh, no! they would rather tell him to spread all his canvas and ply every sinew, especially when wind and tide are in his favour. But the minister of God, the servant of Christ, often has that judicious advice tendered to him, "Do thyself no harm; be sure and not work too hard." "It was never intended," they say, "that anyone should risk his health, consume his spirits, or deny himself innocent recreation, with an enthusiasm that far exceeds the line of duty," as if there were such a line, or it were possible to define it. Ah! well, if the love of his Master be in him, as a constraining power, then kindling with the noble passion, and labouring with a fiery zeal, he will resent such expostulations as Christ did that of Peter, when, replying to his pitiful rebuke, "Pity thyself, Lord"—he said, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." We are bound to sacrifice ourselves, yielding up the members of our bodies as instruments of righteousness unto God, and devoting the faculties of our renewed minds, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

773. Sensitiveness of the Believer The sensitive plant, as soon as it is touched, begins to fold up its leaves; touch it again, and the little branchlets droop, until at last it stands like the bare poles of a vessel, all its sail of leaf is furled, and it seems as if it would, if it could, shrink into nothing to

avoid your hand. So should you be, so should I be, tender to the touch of sin, so as to say with the psalmist, "Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law."

774. Separation from Christ Impossible

Even the diamond can be dissolved; bring but sufficient heat to bear upon it, focus upon it the full rays of the sun, and the sparkling crystal dissolves into a little gas; but though men have tried to focus all the heat of persecution upon the Christian, they have never been able to separate him from the love of Christ; and though earth and hell have stirred up their malice, and the furnace has been heated seven times hotter, and the child of God has been tossed into it, and apparently deserted to the fury of his enemies, yet never in a single case has the precious gem of Christ Jesus in the heart been destroyed, nor the believer's interest in it; for Jesus and his servants have lived together, according to the glorious promise, "Because I live, ye shall live also."

775. Sermons intended to Reveal Jesus

Many persons in hearing a sermon are like children looking at a cornfield—it is full of yellow garlic, or perhaps of scarlet poppies, and they cry "'What a lovely field;" but the farmer thinks not so, he is looking for the wheat. Many a hearer watches for pretty speeches and flowery metaphors, and cries, "How well he puts it! What a well-turned sentence! How sweetly he quotes poetry!" and so on. Bah! Is that what you come to God's house for? O fools and slow of heart, is this your end in hearing the life-giving gospel of the bleeding Lamb? I assure you it is not this that we are aiming at in preaching to you. If you came to look after the good corn, you would care little for the gaudy poppies of a flaunting eloquence so much regarded by the men of these days. Come with the intent to find faith in Jesus; cry to God to make his word effectual to your salvation, and then hearing will be quite another business with you. Alas! I fear you will perish, let us preach as we may, while we are regarded by you as mere orators to be criticised, and not as witnesses whose testimony is to be weighed.

776. Sermons, Length of

Having learned by long experience that we exactly fill the twelve pages which our publishers allow for a penny sermon, when we speak for forty or forty-five minutes, we have come to adopt that period as our stint, and we usually find it neither too short nor too long. In occasional services, when we address persons who have no other opportunity of hearing us, we take more latitude, but our regulation allowance is three-quarters of an hour. A man who speaks well for that length of time has told his people quite enough, and from him who preaches badly they have in that time heard too much. Most divines can deliver all their best thoughts upon a text in forty minutes, and as it is a pity to bring forth "afterwards that which is worse," they had better bring the feast to an end. To men of prodigious jaw it may seem a hardship to be confined to time, but a broad charity will judge it to be better that one man should suffer than that a whole congregation should be tormented.

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777. Sermons, Vagueness of

It was observed by a very excellent critic, not long ago, that if you were to hear thirteen lectures on astronomy or geology, you might get a pretty good idea of what the science was, and the theory of the person who gave the lectures; but that if you were to hear thirteen hundred sermons from some ministers, you would not know at all what they were preaching about, or what their doctrinal sentiments were. It ought not to be so. Is not this the reason why Puseyism spreads so, and all sorts of errors have such a foothold, because our people as a whole do not know what they believe? The doctrines of the gospel, if well received, give to a man something which he knows, and which he holds, and which will become dear to him, for which he would be prepared to die if the fires of persecution were again kindled.

778. Service of Christ, Call to the My king in his wars has lost his men, and the regiment wants making up. Who will come? I put the colours in my hat now, but I will not stand here and tempt you with lies about the ease of the service, for it is a hard service; yet I assure you we have a blessed Leader, a glorious conflict, and a grand reward. Who will come? Who will come to fill up gaps in the ranks? Who will be baptised for the dead, to stand in their place of Christian service, and take up the torch which they have dropped? I will put the question round, and I hope that many a heart will say, "Would God the Lord would have me. O that he would blot out my sins and receive me!" He delighteth in contrite hearts; he saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. He will have whom he will have, but the way to be enlisted is plain. "Oh," say you, "what must I give to be Christ's soldier?" To be the Queen's soldier you do not give anything; you receive a shilling. You take, to be a soldier of the Queen, and so to be Christ's soldier you must take Christ to be your all in all, holding out your empty hand and receiving of his blood and righteousness, to be your hope and your salvation.

779. Service for Christ, Perpetual The sun has been shining now a great many thousand years, but I have not heard that he intends retiring from the business yet. God has given to us fruitful seasons, and I have not heard that he intends to cease to bless our husbandry; every day we drink from the river of his mercy, and we have had no intimation yet that that river has ceased to flow, and that God intends to cut off the supplies. Why, then, should any one of us dream of staying his hand? What is a lifetime, at its utmost length, for the service of God? Suppose a man could spend seventy clear years in unflagging exertion in the service of his Master, what would it be after all? But now half our time must go in sleep, and in the necessary refreshment of the body; next, a very large proportion must be taken off for the business of the world, and then what is left? Why, we can only give our Master a few hours in the week, the most of us, and yet you talk about having served him so long. Dear Master, put thy hand upon our lips next time we would use such words,

and never permit us to insult the sovereignty of thy dear love by making such an excuse for our sluggishness.

780. Service for Christ, Personal Our prayer should be, "Show me what thou wouldst have me to do"—have me to do in particular; not what is generally right, but what is particularly right for me to do. My servant might, perhaps, think it a very proper thing for her to arrange my papers for me in my study, but I should feel but a very slender amount of gratitude to her. If, however, she will have a cup of coffee ready for me early in the morning, when I have to go out to a distant country town to preach, I shall be much more likely to appreciate her services. So, some friends think, "How I could get on if I were in such and such a position, if I were made a deacon, if I were elevated to such a post." Go thy way, and work as thy Master would have thee. Thou wilt do better where he puts thee than thou wilt do where thou puttest thyself. Thou art no servant, indeed, at all, when thou dost pick and choose thy service, for the very spirit, the very essence of service consists in saying, "Not my will, but thine be done. I wait for orders from the throne: teach me what thou wouldst have me to do."

781. Service for Christ, to be Thorough

I see the Master at the table, and his servants place before him various meats, that he may eat and be satisfied. He tastes the cold meats, and he eats of the bread hot from the oven, but as for tepid drinks and half-baked cakes he puts them away with disgust. He will look on you who are cold, and are mourning your coldness, and he will give you heat; and he will look on you who are hot, and serve him with the best you have; but of the middle-man, the lukewarm, he saith, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." Jesus cannot bear lukewarm religion; he is sick of it. The religion of this present time is much of it rather nauseating to the Saviour than acceptable to him. If Baal be God, serve him; but if God be God, serve him truly. Let there be no mockery, but be true to the core. Be thorough; throw your soul into your religion. I charge you, young man, stand back awhile and count the cost; for if you wish to give to Christ a little, and to Baal a little, ye shall be cast away and utterly rejected—the Lord of heaven will have nought to do with you. Bless the Lord, then, all that is within me, for only such sincere and undivided homage can be accepted of the Lord.

782. Service of Christ to be Vigorous

See yonder man with a hammer in his hand—he touches the heads of the nails right daintily, as if he were afraid to hurt them. See another, how heartily he drives them in, and gives them yet another blow to clinch them and make all sure. Too many play at work, but the earnest man means work when he is working, and throws his heart into it. It is dreadful to see some men at their ordinary occupation; I cannot call it labour, one drop of their perspiration must be a very costly thing, as rare as a pearl of the first water. But others throw their soul into whatsoever they have to do, and not only strike while the iron is hot, but make the iron hot by striking. They do not wait for opportunities, but accept the present event as an opportunity. They work with both hands, and make the anvil ring again with the music of their hearty blows. Now, in the service of God we are bound to fulfil our work with the utmost degree of vigour. If the Lord's work is worth doing, it is worth doing well; and as the service of Christ is the highest in which any man can be engaged, the Master ought to be served with body, soul, and spirit.

783. Service for Christ, True Spirit of In the heroic days when Xerxes led his army into Greece, there was a remarkable contrast between the way in which the Persian soldiers and the Grecian warriors were urged to combat. The unwilling hosts of Persia were driven to the conflict by blows and stripes from their officers; they were either mercenaries or cowards, and they feared close contact with their opponents. They were driven to their duty as beasts are, with rods and goads. On the other side the armies of Greece were small, but each man was a patriot and a hero, and hence when they marched to the conflict it was with quick and joyous step, with a martial song upon their lips, and when they neared the foe, they rushed upon his ranks with an enthusiasm and a fury which nothing could withstand. No whips were needed for the Spartan men-at-arms—like high-mettled chargers they would have resented the touch thereof; they were drawn to battle by the cords of a man, and by the bands of patriotic love, they were bound to hold their posts at all hazards. "Spartans," would their leaders say, "your fathers disdained to number the Persians with the dogs of their flock, and will you be their slaves? Say ye, is it not better to die as freemen than to live as slaves? What if your foes be many, yet one lion can tear in pieces a far-reaching flock of sheep. Use well your weapons this day! Avenge your slaughtered sires, and fill the courts of Shushan with confusion and lamentation!" Such were the manly arguments which drew the Lacedæmonians and Athenians to the fight—not the whips so fit for beasts, nor the cords so suitable for cattle. This illustration may set forth the difference between the world's service of bondage, and the Christian's religion of love: the worldling is flogged to his duty under fear, and terror, and dread, but the Christian man is touched by motives which appeal to his highest nature; he is affected by motives so dignified as to be worthy of the sons of God; he is not driven as a beast, he is moved as a man.

784. Service, Extraordinary, Reward of

Whenever the Lord sets his servants to do extraordinary work he always gives them extraordinary strength; or if he puts them to unusual suffering he will give them unusual patience. When we enter upon war with some petty New Zealand chief, our troops expect to have their charges defrayed, and accordingly we pay them gold by thousands, as their expenses may require; but when an army marches against a grim monarch, in an unknown country, who has insulted the British flag, we pay, as we know to our cost, not by thousands, but by millions. There is a difference in the payment of an attack upon petty chieftains, and a war against an emperor. And so, my brethren, if God calls you to common and ordinary trials, he will pay the charges of your warfare by thousands, but if he commands you to an unusual struggle with some tremendous foe, he will discharge the liabilities of your war by millions, according to the riches of his grace in which he has abounded towards us through Christ Jesus.

785. Service of Heaven Unwearying

Joyous is the thought that Jesus rules over all redeemed spirits in heaven, for we hope to be there soon, and this shall be among our dearest joys that, without temptation, without infirmity, without weariness, we shall serve our Lord day and night in his temple. My brethren, of all the joys of heaven, next to that of being with Christ, one delights to think of serving Christ. Ah! how rapturous will be our song! how zealously we will praise him! how earnest shall be our service! If he should give us commissions to distant worlds, as perhaps he will; if he shall prepare us to become preachers of his truth to creatures in unknown orbs; if he shall call us through revolving ages to

publish to new created myriads the wondrous grace of God in Christ, with what ardent pleasure will we accept the service! How constantly, how heartily will we tell out the story of our salvation by the precious blood of Jesus! O that we could serve him here as we wish! but we shall serve him there without fault or flaw. Oh, happy heaven, because Jesus hath the key of it, and reigns supreme, when shall we stand upon the sea of glass before his throne?

786. Shame to be Borne for Christ

It is not a fashionable thing to be a Christian. To be a Christian after the world's sort, I grant you; but after the sort of the New Testament it is not, and many say, "Well, it is not fashionable," and they bend to the fashion; and many in another shape do the like, for young men are laughed out of going to the house of God, and young women are decoyed from attending the means of grace by the laughter, and jeers, and jokes of their companions. Remember that they can laugh you into hell, but they can never laugh you out again, and though their jokes can shut-to the door, their jokes can never open that door again. Oh, is this all? Will you sell your souls to escape from fool's laughter? Then what a fool must you be yourself. What, are you so thin-skinned that you cannot bear to be questioned, or to be asked whether you are a follower of the Lord Jesus? Ah, sir, you shall have that thin skin of yours tormented well enough in the world to come, when shame, which you dread so much, shall be your everlasting portion! Oh, soul, why canst thou sell Christ for the applause of men? How canst thou give him up for the laughter of fools?

787. Sick Beds, Testimony of

There are sick beds which have been more fruitful in conversions than pulpits. I have known women confined to their chambers by the space of twenty years together, whose remarkable cheerfulness of spirit has been the talk of the entire district, and many there have been who have called to see poor Sarah in her cottage, knowing that she has scarce been a single day without distressing pain, and have heard her voice, and looked into that dear smiling face, and have learned the reality of godliness. The bedridden saint has been a power throughout all the district, and many have turned to God, saying, "What is this which enables the Christian to give thanks always to God?" Beloved, our crusty tempers and sour faces will never be evangelists. They may become messengers of Satan, but they will never become helpers of the gospel. To labour to make other people happy, is one of the grand things a Christian should always try to do.

788. Sight, Wonders of, a picture of Faith

It is a wonderful faculty, that of sight. Your eyes and mine take in at once the whole of this building, with all the assembled company. This eye will next, if it be placed at a point of vantage, take in the entire city of London with the whole of its populous streets. Give the eye but the opportunity, let the sun go down, and it will take in all the thousands of worlds that stud the brow of night. What is there which the eye cannot grasp, and mark you, not the eye of the great and mighty only, but of the poorest also? Yea, the little insignificant eye of the lark can take in as much, no doubt, as the big eye of the bullock; and the smallest eyes that God creates he enables to compass greatest things. A marvellous thing is that eye, darting its shafts everywhere, sending its rays around, and embracing all things. Now, just such a power is faith. What a faculty faith has for grasping everything, for it layeth hold upon the past, the present, and the future. It pierceth through most intricate things, and seeth God producing good out of all the tortuous circumstances of providence.

And what is more, faith does what the eye cannot do—it sees the infinite; it beholds the invisible; it looks upon that which eye hath not seen, which ear hath not heard; it seeth beneath the veil that parts us from the land of terror, and, moved with fear, it makes us fly to the Saviour. Faith sees through the pearly gate, and, beholding the glory of the better land, it makes us fly to Jesus, who bears the keys of paradise at his girdle. Faith seeth—I know not how to describe fully what faith seeth. What is there she doth not behold? She seeth even God himself; for though in my finite conception I cannot grasp God, and my understanding can only perceive, as it were, his train and skirts, yet my faith, with awful comprehension, can take in the whole of God, and believe what she does not know, and accept what she cannot comprehend.

789. Sight and Faith

Walking by sight is just this—"I believe in myself;" whereas walking by faith is—"I believe in God." If I walk by sight I walk by myself; if I walk by faith, then there are two of us, and the second one—ah! how great, how glorious, how mighty is he—the Great All-in-all—God-all-sufficient! Sight goes a warfare at its own charges, and becomes a bankrupt, and is defeated. Faith goes a warfare at the charges of the King's Exchequer, and there is no fear that Faith's bank shall ever be broken. Sight builds the house from its own quarry, and on its own foundation, but it begins to build and is never able to finish, and what it does build rests on the sand and falls. But faith builds on the foundation laid in eternity, in the fair colours of the Saviour's blood, in the covenant of grace. It goes to God for every stone to be used in the building, and brings forth the topstone with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it."

790. Simplicity, Beauty of The moment you get to complexity you get into a snarl, and are on the brink of weakness. Simplicity, how solid it is! See the old-fashioned plan of putting a plank across the village brook—that was the old way of making a bridge. Well, then, somebody came in and invented an arch—a grand invention, certainly, but not in all cases available, because in a measure complex. What are the engineers coming back to? The old plan of the plank. The Menai tubular bridge is nothing more than the old plan of a plank thrown across the brook, and more and more great engineers revert to simplicities. When man grows wisest, he comes back to where he was when he started. I suppose that when the swan first sailed across the lake it gave to the navigator the best possible model of a vessel, to which navigation will always have to keep close if it would keep close to the true and beautiful. Now, as in nature simplicity is strength, so is it certainly in grace. Trust Christ and live! and let me say, simple as it looks, it is the most philosophical plan of salvation that could have been thought out, for faith is the mainspring of the entire man, and when faith is right all the powers are right.

791. Simplicity in Preaching

If it be granted that a spice of vulgarity may adapt a man for special service among navvies and costermongers, we question whether even with them there may not be a more excellent way, and there are other people in the world to be considered besides these. We are confident that, ordinarily, coarseness is weakness, and ought to be avoided; and we should no more think of preaching the gospel in the slang of the thieves' kitchen than in the jargon of the Neologists. The gospel's apples of gold are worthy to be carried in baskets of silver. Language should be fitted to the dignity of the subject. The most truly dignified language is, however, the simplest; simplicity and sublimity are next of kin. Gospel simplicity is equally removed from childishness and

coarseness. Bunyan's English is as pure as it is plain. Our grand old authorised version is a model of speech; though marred here and there by an antique indelicacy, it is, as a whole, perfection itself, both for grandeur and simplicity of style. We need men who not only speak so that they can be understood, but so that they cannot be misunderstood. The plodding multitudes will never be benefited by preaching which requires them to bring a dictionary with them to the house of God. Why should they be called to work on the day of rest in order to get at the minister's meaning? Of what use is it to them to listen to spread-eagle talk, which conveys to them no clear sense? The Reformation banished an unknown tongue from the reading-desk: we need another to banish it from the pulpit. I speak for English people, and demand English preaching.

792. Singing, a part of Divine Worship

We should do well if we added to our godly service more singing. The world sings: the million have their songs; and I must say the taste of the populace is a very remarkable taste just now as to its favourite songs. They are, many of them, so absurd and meaningless as to be unworthy of an idiot. I should insult an idiot if I could suppose that such songs as people sing nowadays would really be agreeable to him. Yet these things will be heard from men, and places will be thronged to hear the stuff. Now, why should we, with the grand psalms we have of David, with the noble hymns of Cowper, of Milton, of Watts—why should not we sing as well as they? Let us sing the songs of Zion: they are as cheerful as the songs of Sodom any day. Let us drown the howling nonsense of Gomorrah with the melodies of the New Jerusalem.

793. Singing, Revival in

It is always a token of a revival of religion, it is said, when there is a revival of psalmody. When Luther's preaching began to tell upon men, you could hear ploughmen at the plough tail singing Luther's psalms. Whitfield and Wesley had never done the great work they did if it had not been for Charles Wesley's poetry, and for the singing of such men as Toplady, and Scott, and Newton, and many others of the same class; and even now we mark that since there has been somewhat of a religious revival in our denominations, there are more hymn-books than ever there were, and far more attention is paid to Christian psalmody than before. When your heart is full of Christ, you will want to sing. It is a blessed thing to sing at your labour and work, if you are in a place where you can do so; and if the world should laugh at you, you must tell them that you have as good a right to sing the songs that delight your heart as they have to sing any of the songs in which their hearts delight. Praise his name, Christians; be not dumb; sing aloud unto Jesus the Lamb; and if we as Englishmen can sometimes sing our national air, let us as believers have our national hymn, and sing—

"Crown him, crown him Lord of all."

794. Singing and Suffering

I love to think of Christ's army of martyrs, ay, and of all his church, marching over the battle-field, singing as they fight, never ceasing the song, never suffering a note to fall, and at the same time advancing from victory to victory; chanting the sacred hallelujah while they tramp over their foes. I saw one day upon the lake of Orta, in northern Italy, on some holyday of the Church of Rome, a number of boats coming from all quarters of the lake towards the church upon the central islet of the lake, and it was singularly beautiful to hear the splash of the oars and the sound of song as the

boats came up in long processions, with all the villagers in them, bearing their banners to the appointed place of meeting. As the oars splashed they kept time to the rowers, and the rowers never missed a stroke because they sang, neither was the song marred because of the splash of the oars, but on they came, singing and rowing; and so has it been with the church of God. That oar of obedience, and that other oar of suffering—the church has learned to ply both of these, and to sing as she rows: "Thanks be unto God, who always maketh us to triumph in every place!" Though we be made to suffer and be made to fight, yet we are more than conquerors, because we are conquerors even while fighting; we sing even in the heat of the battle, waving high the banner, and dividing the spoil even in the centre of the fray. When the fight is hottest, we are then most happy; and when the strife is sternest, then most blessed; and when the battle grows most arduous, then, "calm 'mid the bewildering cry, confident of victory."

795. Signs, Unreasonableness of Seeking for To ask a sign from God when he pledges his word seems to me to be out of all reason. You are a beggar, remember, and we have an old proverb that beggars must not be choosers; above all, how dare a beggar demand a sign before he will receive an alms? I am walking in the street, and am accosted by a hungry man, and if I offer him a loaf of bread, is he to refuse to take it unless I will fly in the air or help him to turn a stone into bread? "Let the man starve, sir," you will say, "if he be so unreasonable as to demand a sign." And yet that is just like you, you will not take the mercy which the gospel freely offers you, which God even commands you to accept—you will not take it unless some astounding sign or wonder shall be wrought in you.

796. Sin, beginning in the Heart

Persons will dare to profess the religion of Christ who can enjoy a lascivious song and broad talk, who are given to what is softly styled imprudence, which is really impurity. Impure familiarities, glances, and sports, are the commencement of actual crimes. Men and women who in any way injure their delicacy and modesty, by insensible degrees proceed to overt sin. All men wonder when a professor falls into foul sin, but they would not wonder if they knew how long the transgressor had gone to the verge of the precipice; the wonder would be rather that the moth had not burnt its wings in the candle long before. Oh, hate the very thoughts of uncleanness! Your members are members of Christ, your bodies are to be raised in the image of Christ; defile them not, but walk with the utmost purity as in the sight of the thrice holy God.

797. Sin Blotted Out In some parts of Scripture we read of sin being "wiped out," and the expression is remarkably expressive. Sometimes the wiping out refers to the housewife's meaning of the word—when the dish is wiped out and turned bottom upwards; so can God take our sinful souls and wipe them right out, so that they shall be perfectly clean, and the pot which was filthy and had death in it, shall be "holiness unto the Lord." At other times the wiping out refers to the erasure of notes made upon tablets. Some writings are cleared off with a sponge; at other times, if the tablet was of wax, and the marks were made with an iron pen, or stylus, then the wax was softened and smoothed again, and all evidence of the record totally disappeared. Though our sins be written with an iron pen, and graven with the point of a diamond upon the very horns of our altars, yet will the Lord make the record to disappear when his mercy is revealed to our faith. He blots out the handwriting which was against us, he puts it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; he makes our sins, like clouds, to pass away for ever. God can, O sinner, wipe out your

transgressions so that they shall not exist; through the precious blood of Jesus he can finish your transgressions, and make an end of all your sin.

798. Sin, calling for the Gospel The very sins of men, horrible as they are to think upon, may be made an argument for proclaiming the gospel. Oh, the cruel and ravenous sins which destroy the sons of men, and rend their choicest joys in pieces! When I see monstrous lusts defiling the temple of God, and gods many and lords many usurping the throne of the Almighty, I can hear aloud the cry, "Who will go for us?" Do not perishing souls suggest to us the question of the text? Men are going down to the grave, perishing for lack of knowledge; the tomb engulfs them, eternity swallows them up, and in the dark they die without a glimmer of hope. No candle of the Lord ever shines upon their faces. By these perishing souls we implore you to feel that heralds of the cross are wanted, wanted lest these souls be ruined everlastingly; wanted that they may be lifted up from the dunghill of their corruption, and made to sit among princes redeemed by Christ Jesus. The cry swells into a wail of mighty pathetic pleading; all time echoes it, and all eternity prolongs it, while heaven, and earth, and hell give weight to the chorus.

799. Sin Conquered by Christ

I think I see before me the hero of Golgotha using his cross as an anvil, and his woes as a hammer, and dashing to shivers bundle after bundle of our sins, those poisoned "arrows of the bow;" trampling on every charge, and destroying every accusation. What glorious blows the mighty breaker gives! How the weapons fly to fragments, beaten small as the dust of the threshing floor! Behold, I see him drawing from its sheath of hellish workmanship the dread sword of hellish power! See, he snaps it across his knee, as a man breaks the dry wood of a fagot, and casts it into the fire. Like David, he crieth, "He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms." "I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them. And I have consumed them and wounded them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet..... Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth; I did stamp them as the mire of the street." Beloved, no sin of a believer can now be an arrow mortally to wound him, no condemnation can now be a sword to kill him, for the punishment of our sin was borne by Christ, a full atonement has been made for all our iniquities by our blessed Substitute and Surety. Who now accuseth? Who now condemneth? Christ hath died, yea, rather hath risen again. Let hell, if it can, find a single arrow to shoot against the beloved of the Lord; they are all broken, not one of them is left. Christ has emptied the quivers of hell, has quenched every fiery dart, and broken off the head of every arrow of wrath; the ground is strewn with the splinters and relics of the weapons of hell's warfare, which are only visible to us to remind us of our former danger, and of our great deliverance. Sin hath no more dominion over us. Jesus has made an end of it, and put it away for ever. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end. Talk ye of all the wondrous works of the Lord, ye who make mention of his name, keep not silence.

800. Sin, Destroying Power of

You have heard of the Spartan youth who concealed a stolen fox under his garment, and although it was eating into his bowels, he would not show it, and therefore died through the creature's bites; you are of that sort, sinner, you are carrying sin in your bosom, and it is eating out your heart. God knows what it is, and you know what it is; now you cannot keep it there and be unbiten, undestroyed. Why keep it there? Oh cry to God with a vehement cry, God save me from my sin!

Oh bring me, even me, to the foot of thy Son's cross, and forgive me, and then crucify my sin, for I see clearly now that sin must perish or I must.

801. Sin Glorifying Christ's Power

I suppose great engineers have been very glad of Niagara, that they might span it, very glad of the Mont Cenis, that they might bore it, very glad of the Suez Isthmus, that they might cut a canal through it, glad that there were difficulties that there might be room for engineering skill. Were there no sin there had been no Saviour; if no death, no resurrection; if no fall, no new covenant; if no rebellious race, no incarnation, no Calvary, no ascension, no second advent. That is a grand way of looking at evil, and marvellously stimulating. Though we do not know, and perhaps shall never know, the deepest reason why an infinitely gracious God permitted sin and suffering to enter the universe, yet we may at least encourage this practical thought—God will be glorified in the overcoming of evil and its consequences, and therefore let us gird up our loins in God's name for our part of the conflict.

802. Sin, Hardening Nature of

I have heard that the men who make the big boilers in Southwark, when they are first put inside the boiler, are nearly stunned by the horrible noise made by those who are hammering on the outside, but after a while they get so used to the sound that they can almost go to sleep, and let the men hammer away as long as they please. Or, as Rowland Hill has said, "Men become like the blacksmith's dog, which goes to sleep while the sparks are flying about its ears," so there are many who, after awhile, will go to sleep under the most startling sermons. They used to hear a minister who spoke very plain English to them, and they were greatly startled, and they said, "I cannot hear him and go on in sin;" but they can hear him quietly now, and not only go on in their old sins, but wax worse and worse.

803. Sin in the Heart

There was a citizen of Gaunt who had never been outside the city walls. For some reason or other the magistrate passed an order that he should not go outside. Strange to tell, up to the moment that the command had passed, the man had been perfectly easy, and never thought of passing the line, but as soon as ever he was forbidden to do it, he pined, and sickened, and even died moaning over the restriction. If a man sees a thing to be law, he wants to break that law. Our nature is so evil, that forbid us to do a thing, and at once we want to do the thing that is forbidden, and in many minds the principle of law instead of leading to purity has even offered opportunities for greater impurity. Beside, although you may point out the way of uprightness to a man, and tell him what is right and what is wrong, with all the wisdom and force of counsel and caution, unless you can give him a heart to choose the right, and a heart to love the true, you have not done much for him. This is just the province of law. It can write out its precepts on the brazen tablets, and it can brandish its fiery sword, and say, "Do this, or else be punished," but man, carnal man, only wraps himself the more closely in his self-conceit, and perseveres the more doggedly in his obstinate rebellion.

804. Sin Meeting on Christ

Before a great storm, when the sky is growing black and the wind is beginning to howl, you have seen the clouds hurrying from almost every point of the compass, as though the great day of battle were come, and all the dread artillery of God were hurrying to the field. In the centre of the whirlwind and the storm, when the lightnings threaten to set all heaven on a blaze, and the black clouds fold on fold labour to conceal the light of day, you have a very graphic metaphor of the meeting of all sin upon the person of Christ, the sin of the ages past and the sin of the ages to come, the sins of those of the elect who were in heathendom, and of those who were in Jewry; the sin of the young and of the old, sin original and sin actual, all made to meet, all the black clouds concentrated and brought together into one great tempest, that it might rush in one tremendous tornado upon the person of the great Redeemer and Substitute.

805. Sin not to be Removed by Man

Man tries to act as a bleacher to his sin, and he dips the stained garment into the strong liquid which is to make it white, hoping that some spots will be removed; but when he takes it out again, if his eye be clear, he says, "Alas! it seems as spotted as ever. I laid it to soak in that which I thought full surely would take out the stain, but so far as I can see, there is another stain added to the rest. I find myself worse instead of better; I must add a more pungent salt, I must use a stronger lye. I must make my tears more briny, I must fetch them up from the deep salt wells of my heart." He lays his vesture again to soak, but each time as he takes it out his own eyes become more keen, and he sees more foulness in the garment than he had observed before. Then goeth he and taketh unto himself nitre and much soap, but when he has used it all, when he has gone to his church, when he has gone to his chapel, when he has repeated his prayers, attended to ceremonies, done I know not what to prove the genuineness of his repentance, ah! the iniquity is still there, and will be there, and must be, let him do what he may. Yet what your repentings cannot do in thousands of years God can do for you, sinner, and that in one single day.

806. Sin, Original Our father Adam had a great estate enough at first, but he soon lost it. He violated the trust on which he held his property, and he was cast out of the inheritance, and turned adrift into the world to earn his bread as a day labourer by tilling the ground whence he was taken. His eldest son was a vagabond; the first-born of our race was a convict upon ticket-of-leave. If any suppose that we have inherited some good thing by natural descent, they go very contrary to what David tells us, when he declares, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Our first parents were utter bankrupts. They left us nothing but a heritage of old debts, and a propensity to accumulate yet more personal obligations. Well may we be poor who come into this world "heirs of wrath," with a decayed estate and tainted blood.

807. Sin, Overcoming

How grand a thing to get a passion down and hold it by the throat, strangling it despite its struggles! It is fine work to hang up some old sin as an accursed thing before the Lord, just as they hung up the Canaanitish kings before the face of the sun; or if you cannot quite kill the lust, it is honourable work to roll a great stone at the cave's mouth, and shut in the wretches till the evening comes, when they shall meet their doom. It is a joyous thing when by God's grace under temptation you are kept from falling as you did on a former occasion, and so are made conquerors over a weakness which was your curse in past years. It is a noble thing to be made strong through the blood of the Lamb so as to overcome sin.

808. Sin, Past, to be Hated

I hate to hear a man speak of his experience in sin as a Greenwich pensioner might talk of Trafalgar and the Nile. The best thing to do with our past sin, if it be indeed forgiven, is to bury it; yes, and let us bury it as they used to bury suicides, let us drive a stake through it, in horror and contempt, and never set up a monument to its memory. If you ever do tell anybody about your youthful wrong-doing, let it be with blushes and tears, with shame and confusion of face; and always speak of it to the honour of the infinite mercy which forgave you.

809. Sin put away by Christ

Speak of the load which Atlas carried, when he is fabled to have sustained the world, it was nothing compared with this more than Atlantean load which crushes us down, and will crush us to the lowest hell. "I will remove it," says the Saviour, and he has kept his word He took the load upon his own shoulders, and so removed it from us; and then he carried it right up to the cross, and from the top of Calvary he hurled it into his sepulchre, and there he left it, a dead and buried thing; and if it be searched for it shall not be found, "Yea, it shall not be," saith the Lord.

810. Sin put away by the Penalty being Borne

Sin cannot be put away until the penalty is borne to the end, and that can never be by finite man. What a work was here, then, for the only begotten Son of God to do! Speak of the labours of Hercules! they were nothing compared with the labours of Emmanuel. Speak of miracles! to tread the sea, to hush the billows, to heal the sick, to raise the dead, these are all bright stars, but their light is hid when compared with this miracle of miracles, when the Sun of Christ's righteousness arises with healing beneath his wings, and thick clouds of sin are put away by him.

811. Sin, Terrible Nature of That plant must possess great vitality which increases by being uprooted and cut down. That which lives by being killed is strangely full of force. That must be a very hard substance which is hardened by lying in the blast furnace, in the central heat of the fire, where iron melts and runs like wax. That must be a very terrible power which gathers strength from that which should restrain it, and rushes on the more violently in proportion as it is reigned in. Sin kills men by that which was ordained to life. It makes heaven's gifts the stepping stones to hell, uses the lamps of the temple to show the way to perdition, and makes the ark of the Lord as in Uzzah's case, the messenger of death. Sin is that strange fire which burns the more fiercely for being damped, finding fuel in the water which was intended to quench it. The Lord brings good out of evil, but sin brings evil out of good. It is a deadly evil, judge ye how deadly! O that men knew its nature and abhorred it with all their hearts! May the Eternal Spirit teach men to know aright this worst of ills, that they may flee from it to him who alone can deliver.

812. Sin, Thoughts of, to be Abhorred

I do not believe that a man becomes a villain all at once. He puts his soul to school, his thoughts are his teachers, or rather they are the school-books in which his soul reads; and at last he becomes capable of transacting the deeds of a scoundrel. If you think long upon any sin, the chances are that, as soon as the temptation to that sin comes you will commit it. I have known persons produce a monomania by constant brooding. I did know once a man who was constantly apprehensive that he was being poisoned by people; and I always stood in trepidation for that man

lest he should poison himself. If you will harbour the thought—if you will ruminate on any sin, turn it over, and advise with it on your pillow, your affability will disarm your fear; and the traitor you have harboured will betray you before your suspicions are aroused. Beware, then, of all thoughts of sin. If you show a thief all the locks, and bolts, and bars in your house, and tell him how the cellar-window could be opened, or the back-door lock be made to give way, do not be surprised if, one of these nights, you should find all your goods stolen. If you will do this, and introduce these evil things into your habitation, you cannot wonder at the consequence, however startled your friends may be at the detection.

813. Sin to be Hated by the Christian

Look down the roll of history and see if sin be not man's worst enemy. Whose hot breath blasted Eden, withered all its bowers of bliss, and caused the earth to become barren, so that without labour even unto sweat she will not yield bread for our sustenance! Mark well yon innumerable graves which cover every plain with hillocks. Who slew all these? By what gate came death into the world? Was not sin the janitor to open the portal? Hearken at this moment to the shouts of war which in every age of the world's history have created a horrible din of groans of dying men, and shrieks of flying women. Who first dipped yon flag in blood, and made the air pestilent with carnage? And yonder despotic throne, which has crushed down the multitude and made the lives of many bitter with hard bondage, who laid its dark foundations and cemented it with blood? Whence came war with its carnage, and tyranny with its sufferings? Whence, indeed, but from the sins and lusts of men? All over the world, if there be hemlock in the furrow, and thistles on the ridge, sin's hand has sown them broadcast. Sin turned the apples of Sodom to ashes, and the grapes of Gomorrah to gall. The trail of this serpent, with its horrid slime, has obliterated the footsteps of joy. Before the march of sin I see the garden of the Lord, and behind it a desert and a charnel. Stay ye awhile. Nay, start not, but come with me. Look down into the ghastly gloom of Tophet, that region abhorred, where dwell the finally impenitent, who died with unforgiven sins upon their heads. Can you bear to hear their groans and moans of anguish? We will not attempt to describe the sufferings of spirits driven from their God, eternally banished from all hope and peace; but we will ask you, O son of man, who digged yon pit, and cast men into it? Who provides the fuel for that terrible flame, and whence getteth the worm that dieth not its tooth which never blunts? Sin has done it all. Sin, the mother of hell, the fire fountain to which ye may trace each burning stream. O sin, it is not meet that any heir from heaven, redeemed from hell, should make friends with thee. Shall we fondle the adder, or press the deadly cobra to our bosom? If it had not been for the grace of God our sins would have shut us up in hell already, and even now they seek to drag us there; therefore, let us take these enemies of our souls and slay them—let not one escape.

814. Sin, to Die in the Believer

There were certain heretics who disturbed the early Christian church, who said that our Lord did not really and actually die; but we know that he died, for his heart was pierced by the spear, and the flowing of the blood and water proved that he was in very deed most truly dead. Moreover, the Roman officer would not have sanctioned that the body should be given up if he had not made sure that he was dead already, and even made assurance doubly sure by piercing our Lord's most blessed side. Christ really and truly died, there was no sham or make believe; it was no phantom

which bled, and the atoning death was no syncope or long swoon. Even thus it must be with our old propensities; they must not pretend to die, but actually die; they must not be restrained by holy customs; they must not be mewed up by temporary austerities, or laid in a trance by fleeting reveries, or ostentatiously buried alive by religious resolves and professions; they must actually die, and die a real and true death before the Lord and within our souls.

815. Sinner, Appeal to, to receive Christ

It is dreadful to compel a city to open its gates unwillingly to let an enemy come in, for however gentle be the enemy his face is an unwelcome sight to the vanquished. But oh! how I wish I could burst open the gates of a sinner's heart to-day, for the Prince Emmanuel to come in. He who is at your gates is not an alien monarch, he is your rightful prince, he is your friend and lover. It will not be a strange face that you will see, when Jesus comes to reign in you. When the King in his beauty wins your soul, you will think yourselves a thousand fools that you did not receive him before. Instead of fearing that he will ransack your soul, you will open all its doors, and invite him to search each room. You will cry, "Take all, thou blessed monarch, it shall be most mine when it is thine. Take all, and reign and rule."

816. Sinner Aroused, Hopefulness of

Men who are dissatisfied with the darkness are evidently not altogether dead, for the dead shall slumber in the catacombs, heedless whether it be noon or night. Such men are evidently not altogether asleep, for they that slumber shall sleep the better for the darkness; they ask no sunbeams to molest their dreams. Such people are evidently not altogether blind, for to the blind little doth it matter whether the sun floods the landscape with glory, or night conceal it with her sable veil. Those to whom our thoughts are directly turned are evidently somewhat awakened, aroused, and bestirred, and this is no small blessing, for, alas! the most of men are a stolid mass as regards spiritual things, and the preacher might almost as hopefully strive to create a soul within the ribs of death, or extort warm tears of pity from Sicilian marble, as to evoke spiritual emotions from the men of this generation. So far, the persons whom I seek, are hopeful in their condition; for as the trees twist their branches towards the sunlight, so do these long after Jesus, the light and life of men.

817. Sinner Asleep in Danger

It is said that on the great river of America, there was once seen a canoe some miles off Niagara floating down the stream, and as the current turned it so that those on the bank could well perceive it, they saw that the paddle was shipped and an Indian was lying in the canoe fast asleep. They shouted as best they could to awake him, for they knew well the imminent hazard of the poor wretch. They shouted, and called aloud, as they ran along the bank, but it was of no use. He had either been drinking or had been so fatigued that his slumber was most profound, and the canoe went floating on, continually increasing its pace. It dashed at last against a headland, and spun round in the torrent; and they said one to another, "He is safe, the man will be awakened. Such a start as that will surely arouse him, and he will paddle out of danger." But no, he went right on till the roaring of the fall was near, and then the course of the boat was so rapid that none could keep up with it, and it went whirling on faster and faster. So profound was the Indian's sleep, that for awhile even the roar of the fall did not awaken him; at last he was aroused, and then he grasped

his paddle; but it was all too late; he was borne onward, and the last that was seen of him was his standing bolt upright in the boat, as it plunged over the abyss, and was never seen or heard of more. Ah! my fellow men, how like is this to those of you who are asleep and are borne onward by the treacherous current. That fever, that sick-bed, like a headland jutting into the stream, methought it would have made you think. That frail bark of thine was twisted round and round. O that thy soul had but been aroused from its slumber! The noise of hell may well be in thy ears, and the sound that cometh up from the abyss of terror may well arouse thee; but alas! I fear thou wilt sleep on until the cataract of destruction shall be just before thee in the pangs of death, and then, alas! full of horror, thou shalt seek escape when escape is no longer possible.

818. Sinner, Blindness of the

I being my blind friend to an elevated spot, and I bid him look upon yonder landscape. "See how the silver river threads its way amid the emerald fields. See how yonder trees make up a shadowy wood; how wisely yonder garden, near at hand, is cultivated to perfection; and how nobly yonder lordly castle rises on yon knoll of matchless beauty." See, he shakes his head; he has no admiration for the scene. I borrow poetical expressions, but still he joins not in my delight. I try plain words and tell him, "There is the garden, and there is the castle, and there is the wood, and there is the river—do you not see them?" "No," he cannot see one of them, and does not know what they are like. What ails the man? Have not I described the landscape well? Have I been faulty in my explanations? Have I not given him my own testimony that I have walked those glades and sailed along that stream? He shakes his head, my words are lost. His eyes alone are to blame. Let us come to this conviction about sinners; for, if not, we shall hammer away and do nothing: let us be assured that there is something the matter with the sinner himself which we cannot cure, let us do what we will with him, and yet we cannot get him saved unless it be cured.

819. Sinner, Called to Christ In the courts of law I have sometimes heard a man called as a witness, and no sooner is he called, though he may be at the end of the court, than he begins to press his way up to the witness box. Nobody says, "Who is this man pushing here?" or, if they should say, "Who are you?" it would be a sufficient answer to say, "My name was called." "But you are not rich, you have no gold ring upon your finger!" "No, but that is not it, I was called." "But you are not a man of repute, or rank, or character." "It matters not, I was called; make way." So make way, ye doubts and fears, make way, ye devils of the infernal lake, Christ calls the sinner. Sinner, come. Though thou hast nought to recommend thee, yet, since it is written, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" come thou, and the Lord bless thee, for Christ's sake.

820. Sinner, Cries of, Heard by God

If the booming of the storm and the roar of the tempest, when the thunders roll like drums in the march of the God of armies; if the clapping of the thousand hands of the roaring sea when it rejoices in its strength should not be heard by the eternal ear, yet, surely, the bemoanings of a sinner should be regarded. The crash of thunder is to the Lord no more than the sound of the falling of a sere leaf on a still summer's eve, but the cry of one of his children peals through heaven, and moves the infinite heart, so that swift on wings of love the God of mercy flies.

821. Sinner, Death of a When the death-thirst is in your throat, what do you think you will do without God? To die in God's presence, is simply to let life blossom into something better than life;

but to die without God must be horrible! You will not want your boon companions then. The drink will not pacify you then. Music will have no charms for you then. The love of a tender and gentle wife can yield you but sorry comfort then. You may have your money bags at your side, but they will not calm your palpitating heart then. You will hear the boomings of the waves of the great sea of eternity; you will feel your feet slipping into the dreadful quicksand; you will clutch about you for help, but there will be none! Instead thereof invisible hands shall begin to pull you down, and down through the dark sea you must descend to those darker depths, where dread despair will be your everlasting heritage!

822. Sinner, Destitute of Power

If this world of ours could suddenly be left to itself, could forget the centripetal force which holds it in alliance with the sun, and could set out upon a fearful journey into the darkness of far-off space, if it should travel so far away that no longer could a single beam of light reach it from the sun, and it were altogether in darkness, it is quite certain that it could never find the sun again; for who could light a candle upon the earth wherewith we might search for the sun? The sun can only be seen by its own light. Where upon earth would be found the bands and cords with which to draw us back to the sun? The world could only be drawn by an influence from the sun itself; the central orb must give the motive power. So, when a soul wanders from God, it has no light in it with which to see God, and no force in it to draw God to itself. God must enlighten and draw the soul to him. In a threefold sense we are lost:—by nature, by practice, and by an utter inability to find out our God, and to return to him. Yet, terrible as this lost estate is, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

823. Sinner, Doom of a A grim assemblage must gather around some men's beds when guilt, like a grim chamberlain, shall usher them in one by one, and call out their names with horrible distinctness, and tell out their doings and dealings with the wretch who shivers on the brink of death accused by so many, and unable to answer one of a thousand. I picture such a man travelling over the wastes of remorse, hounded by the wolves of his past sins, rushing with desperation into a destruction still worse than his present woe, all unable to endure the horrible baying of his old sins, much less to endure their sharper fangs when they shall tear him in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver.

824. Sinner, Driven to and Drawn by Christ The dove may have been driven part of the way to the ark by the wind, but the last act of getting into the ark was when Noah put out his hand and pulled the dove into the ark. The real act which brings us into connection with Christ, is always a drawing act—an act of gentleness. Every converted man may say, when he is converted, "Thy gentleness has made me great." The heathen picture one of their goddesses in her chariot drawn by doves. Surely it is by doves that we are drawn, in the chariot of the gospel, towards the Lord Jesus!

825. Sinner, End of a

It is ill with thee, sinner, because thy joys all hang upon a thread. Let life's thread be cut, and where are thy merriments? Thy dainty music and thy costly cups, the mirth that flashes from thy wanton eye, and the jollity of thy thoughtless soul, where will this be when death, with bony hand, shall come and touch thy heart, and make it cease its beating? It is ill with you, because when these Joys are over you have no more to come. You have one bright chapter in the story, but ah!

the never-ending chapter, it is woe, woe, woe from beginning to the end: the woe of death, and after death the judgment, and after judgment the woe of condemnation, and then that woe that rolleth onward for ever, eternal woe, never coming to a pause, never knowing an alleviation.

826. Sinner, Enlightenment of the

I can only compare the enlightened sinner to a person who has been shut up in a dark prison and has never seen the light, and suddenly his liberator opens a window and the prisoner is staggered and amazed at what he sees when he looks abroad on hill and flood. To the believer, heaven-given sight is so superlative a gift, and what is revealed to him so amazes him, that he scarce knows where he is. Very frequently, when Christ opens the eyes, it is done in a moment, and done completely in that moment, though in other instances it is a more gradual light: men are at first seen as trees walking, and then by degrees film after film is taken from the spiritual eye.

827. Sinner, Folly of Be not like the foolish drunkard who, staggering home one night, saw his candle lit for him. "Two candles," said he, for his drunkenness made him see double, "I will blow out one;" and, as he blew it out, in a moment he was in the dark. Many a man sees double through the drunkenness of sin—he thinks he has one life to sow his wild oats in, and then the last part of life in which to turn to God; so, like a fool, he blows out the only candle that he has, and in the dark he will have to lie down for ever.

828. Sinner, Impossibility of his Hiding from God

It was said of the Roman empire under the Cæsars that the whole world was only one great prison for Cæsar, for if any man offended the Emperor it was impossible for him to escape. If he crossed the Alps, could not Cæsar find him out in Gaul? If he sought to hide himself in the Indies, even the swarthy monarchs there knew the power of the Roman arms, so that they would give no shelter to a man who had incurred imperial vengeance. And yet, perhaps, a fugitive from Rome might have prolonged his miserable life by hiding in the dens and caves of the earth. But, O sinner, there is no hiding from God.

829. Sinner in Heaven, out of place A bee in a garden in the midst of the flowers is at home, and gathers honey from all their cups and bells; but open the gate and admit a swine, and it sees no beauty in lilies and roses, and gillyflowers; and, therefore, it proceeds to root and tear and spoil in all directions. Such would an unregenerate man be in heaven. While holy saints shall find bliss in everything in the paradise of God, an ungodly sinner would be at war with everything in that holy region.

830. Sinner must be Driven to Christ When a man is at first alarmed about his soul he will do anything rather than come to Christ. Christ is a harbour that no ship ever enters except under stress of weather. Mariners on the sea of life steer for any port except the fair haven of free grace.

831. Sinner, Pity for the

I hear enchanting music, which seems more a thing of heaven than of earth: it is one of Handel's half-inspired oratorios. Yonder sits a man who says, "I hear nothing to commend." He has not the power to perceive the linked sweetnesses, the delicious harmonies of sounds. Do you blame him? No, but you who have an ear for music say, "How I pity him, he misses half the joy of life!" Here, again, is a glorious landscape, hills and valleys, and flowing rivers, expansive lakes, and

undulating meadows. I bring to the point of view a friend whom I would gratify, and I say to him, "Is not that a charming scene?" Turning his head to me he says, "I see nothing." I perceive that he cannot enjoy what is so delightful to me; he has some little sight, but he sees only what is very near, and he is blind to all beyond. Now, do I blame him? Or if he proceed to argue with me, and say, "You are very foolish to be so enthusiastic about a nonexistent landscape, it is merely your excitement," shall I argue with him? Shall I be angry with him? No, but I shed a tear and whisper to myself, "Great are the losses of the blind." Now, you who have never heard music in the name of Jesus, you are to be greatly pitied, for your loss is heavy. You who never saw beauty in Jesus, and who never will for ever, you need all our tears. It is hell enough not to love Christ! It is the lowest abyss of Tartarus, and its fiercest flame, not to be enamoured of the Christ of God.

832. Sinner, Ruin of the

Ah, poor sinner, what a ruin you are at best! Alas! for human dignity, with its lofty pinnacles of morality and turrets of excellency. What theatrical pasteboard! What sand-built rubbish all appears when seen in the blaze of divine light! Vain are your filmings of your deadly sore; your heart is in itself vile and deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. You may wash the platter as you may, you may make the outside of the cup as clean as you will, but your inward parts are very wickedness. The imaginations of the thoughts of your hearts are evil, only evil, and that continually.

"Ye must be born again;" your nature is too depraved for mending. You must be created anew in Christ Jesus.

833. Sinner Welcomed to Christ

I have never heard of Jesus Christ shutting the door against a sinner. There is a notice that is put in some gentlemen's parks, stating that they do not allow beggars nor dogs there; but Jesus Christ puts up a notice that he does allow beggars; in fact, there are none but beggars who ever go to him; and even those who are such beggars that you would not pick their clothes from a dunghill, Jesus Christ receives into his house, into his heart, into the bath of his blood, and wraps them in the robe of his perfect righteousness. O poor sinner, do come and try him, and he will not cast you out!

834. Sinner, the, a Criminal At this present moment you are spared, and suffered to go about this world, but you are like a criminal in a condemned cell. The sentence has gone out against you, and only God's longsuffering stays that gleaming axe from falling and utterly destroying you. Do you understand that? Have you really got that thought into you? There you are, just like a man to be beheaded, with your neck on the block, and the axe uplifted now, and it may fall. While I am yet speaking the axe of death may come, and you, soul and body, may be lost for ever ere that clock ticks again. You know this, but do you understand it? Will you try to understand it? Will you try to make it real to your thoughts? For methinks if you would there would be some hope that now you would escape from your present ruin, and lift up your heart to the great Father of mercies, and say, "Lord, save me, or I perish."

835. Sinners' Best Plea A man called at my house some time ago for charity; an arrant beggar, I have no doubt. Thinking that the man's rags and poverty were real, I gave him a little money, some of my clothes, and a pair of shoes. After he had put them on and gone out, I thought, "Well, after

all, I have done you a bad turn very likely, for you will not get so much money now as before, because you will not look so wretched an object." Happening to go out a quarter of an hour afterwards, I saw my friend, but he was not wearing the clothes I had given him, not he; why, I should have ruined his business if I could have compelled him to look respectable. He had been wise enough to slip down an archway, take all the good clothes off, and put his rags on again. Did I blame him? Yes, for being a rogue, but not for carrying on his business in a business-like manner. He only wore his proper livery, for rags are the livery of a beggar. The more ragged he looked the more he would get. Just so is it with you. If you are to go to Christ, do not put on your good doings and feelings, or you will get nothing; go in your sins, they are your livery. Your ruin is your argument for mercy; your poverty is your plea for heavenly alms; and your need is the motive for heavenly goodness.

836. Sinners, Folly of

I know a man at the present moment, a man I said, but alas! poor wretched mortal, he looks hardly like a man. I saw him in rags, shivering in the drenching rain but yesterday. He came of reputable parents; I knew his relatives well. He had some four hundred pounds or more left him a few years ago. As soon as ever he could get hold of it he came to London, and in about a month he spent it all, in a hideous whirlwind of evil. He went back a beggar and in rags, full of horrible sickness, loathsome, and an outcast. Since that time he has been so often aided by his friends that they have entirely given him up, and now this poor wretch, with scarce enough rags to hide his nakedness, has no eye left to pity him, and no hand to help him. He has been helped again and again, and again; but to help him appears to be useless, for at the very first opportunity he returns to his old sins. The workhouse, the hospital, the grave are his portion, for he seems unable to rise to the dignity of labour, and no one will harbour him. I could fairly cry at the sight of him, but what can be done for him, if he will destroy himself by his sins? If you say to him, "Why do your friends not notice you?" he will tell you, "They cannot notice me." He has brought his mother to the grave; he has wearied out everybody who has pitied him, for his life has been so thoroughly bad that it excites no pity, but disgusts his own relatives. For the love of the Lord Jesus I will try this unhappy man again, and intend to-morrow to see him washed, and clothed, and fed, and put in a way of livelihood, but I have very slender hope of being of any lasting service to him, for he has been tried so often. Yet I never saw a wretch in such misery. He is emaciated, ragged, and has known hunger, and cold, and nakedness month after month, and unless he mends his ways this will be his lot till he dies. We have more than enough of such cases who cross our path, but this one outdoes all. Now I know that some of these forlorn persons sometimes steal into the Tabernacle, and if such be here, let me ask you, what is to be done with you? You put even the best and most tender of persons out of patience with you. Trouble has no power to break you, and kindness no influence to melt you. Oh, while there is a remedy, may God apply it to you poor guilty souls! There are some who have felt these goadings to the most fearful extent, till they have lost all, and yet they cling to their sins. I would to God that saints would cling to Christ half as earnestly as sinners cling to the devil. If we were as willing to suffer for God as some are to suffer for their lusts, what perseverance and zeal would be seen on all sides!

837. Sinners, Ignorance of The man who puts the fire-escape against the window of a burning house, may readily enough rescue those who are aware of their danger, and who rush to the front and help him, or at least are submissive to him in his work of delivering them; but if a man were

insane, if he played with the flames, if he were idiotic and thought that some grand illumination were going on, and knew nothing of the danger, but was only "glamoured by the glare," then would it be hard work for the rescuer. Even thus it is with sinners. They know not, though they profess to know, that sin is hell, that to be an alien from God is to be condemned already, to live in sin is to be dead while you live.

838. Sinners, Insensibility of The most of men are not seeking to escape from the wrath to come: they are busy in worldly things while hell is near them; like idiots catching flies on board a ship which is in the very act of going down. Surely those men must have some fictitious hope somewhere, or they would not act like this. We see many persons busy about their persons, decorating themselves when their soul is in ruin; like a man painting the front door when the house is in flames. Surely they must harbour some baseless hope which makes them thus insensible.

839. Sinners Sleeping Do you remember in David's life when he went with one of his mighty men at night into Saul's camp, and found the king and his guards all asleep? There were certain men of war who ought to have watched at Saul's bed head, to take care of their master, who lay in the trench, but no one was awake at all; and David and his friend went all among the sleepers, treading gently and softly, lest they should wake one of them; till, by-and-by, they came to the centre of the circle, where lay the king, with a cruse of water at his bolster, and his spear stuck in the ground. Little did he know as he slept so calmly there that Abishai was saying to David, "Let me strike him; it shall be but this once." How easily that strong hand with that sharp javelin would have pinned the king to the ground. One only stroke, and it would be done, and David's enemy would pursue him no more for ever. Methinks I see you, O ye sleeping sinners, lying in the same imminent peril. At this moment the evil one is saying: "Let me smite him; I will smite him but this once; let me prevent his hearing the gospel this night; let me thrust the javelin of unbelief into his soul but this once; and then the harvest will be past, the summer will be ended, and he will not be saved." Slumbering sinner, I would fain shout as the thunder of God, if thereby I could arouse you. Man, the knife is at your throat, and can you sleep? The spear is ready to smite you, and will you still doat and dream? I think I see the angel of justice who has long been pursuing the sinner who is rejecting Christ, and he cries: "Let me smite him! he has had time enough; let me smite him!" Or, as Christ puts it in the parable, there has come one into the vineyard who has looked at you, the barren tree, and seen no fruit; and he has come these three years, and now he is saying: "Cut it down! why cumbereth it the ground?" O mercy, stay the axe! O God, bid the enemy put by the spear, and let the sleeper wake, not in hell, but still on mercy's plains, where there is a Christ to forgive him and a Spirit to sanctify him!

840. Sins of Omission

Omissions cannot be trivial, if we only reflect what an influence they would have upon an ordinary commonwealth, if they were perpetrated there as they are in God's commonwealth. Think a minute, if one person has a right to omit his duty, another has, and all have. Then the watchman would omit to guard the house, the policeman would omit to arrest the thief, the judge would omit to sentence the offender, the sheriff would omit to punish the culprit, the government would omit to carry out its laws; then every occupation would cease, and the world die of stagnation; the merchant would omit to attend to his calling, the husbandman would omit to plough his land: where would the commonwealth be? The kingdom would be out of joint; the machine would break down,

for no cog of the wheels would act upon its fellow. How would societies of men exist at all? And surely if this is not to be tolerated in a society of men, much less in that great commonwealth of which God is the king, in which angels and glorified spirits are the peers, and all creatures citizens? How can the Lord tolerate that here there should be an omission, and there an omission, in defiance of his authority? As the judge of all the earth, he must bring down his strong right hand upon these omissions, and crush out for ever the spirit that would thus revolt against his will.

841. Sitting at Jesus' feet

Imagine not that to sit at Jesus' feet is a very small, unmeaning thing. It means peace, for they who submit to Jesus find peace through his precious blood. It means holiness, for those who learn of Jesus learn no sin, but are instructed in things lovely and of good repute. It means strength, for they that sit with Jesus, and feed upon him are girded with his strength; the joy of the Lord is their strength. It means wisdom, for they that learn of the Son of God understand more than the ancients, because they keep his statutes. It means zeal, for the love of Christ fires hearts that live upon it, and they that are much with Jesus become like Jesus, so that the zeal of the Lord's house eats them up. If we say that in an army the one thing needful is loyalty to the sovereign, we know what that means; for the loyal soldier will be sure to be obedient to his officers, and if attached to his queen, he will be brave in the day of battle, and do his duty well. If we said that the one thing needful in a family was love, we should not have required a small thing, for love will place husband and wife in their true position; love will produce obedience in children, and diligence in servants. Let love permeate everything, and other virtues will grow out of it, as flowers spring from the soil. So when we say that sitting at Jesus' feet is the one thing needful, we have not uttered a mere truism: it comprehends a world of blessings.

842. Sluggish Workers

Men ride stags when they hunt for gain, and snails when they are on the road to heaven. Preachers go on see-sawing, droning, and prosing, and the people fall to yawning and folding their arms, and then say that God is withholding the blessing. Every sluggard when he finds himself enlisted in the ragged regiment, blames his luck, and some churches have learned the same wicked trick. I believe that when Paul plants and Apollos waters, God gives the increase, and I have no patience with those who throw the blame on God when it belongs to themselves.

843. Soldier Tested by the Battle An anchor may be very pretty on shore, and it may be very showy as an ornament when it lies on the ship's deck, or hangs from the side, but what is the good of it if it will not hold when the wind blows, and the vessel needs to be held fast? So, alas! there is much of religion and of godliness, so called, that is no good when it comes to the day of trial. The soldier is truly proved to be a soldier when the war-trumpet sounds, and the regiment must go up to the cannon's mouth. Then shall you know, when the bayonets begin to cross, who has the true soldier's blood in him; but ah! how many turn back when it really comes to the conflict, for then the day of trial is too much for them!

844. Soldier, The Christian A soldier is a practical man, a man who has work to do, and hard, stern work. He may sometimes, when he is at his ease, wear the fineries of war, but when he comes to real warfare he cares little enough for them; the dust and the smoke, and the garments rolled in blood, these are for those who go a soldiering; and swords all hacked, and dented armour, and

bruised shields, these are the things that mark the good, the practical soldier. Truly to serve God, really to exhibit Christian graces, fully to achieve a life-work for Christ, actually to win souls, this is to bear fruit worthy of a Christian. A soldier is a man of deeds, and not of words. He has to contend and fight. In war times his life knows little of luxurious ease. In the dead of night perhaps the trumpet sounds to boot and saddle, just at the time when he is most weary, and he must away to the attack just when he would best prefer to take his rest in sleep. The Christian is a soldier in an enemy's country, always needing to stand on his watchtower, constantly to be contending, though not with flesh and blood, with far worse foes, namely, with spiritual wickednesses in high places.

845. Soldiers of Christ called to Conflict

Any service for God, if it be done at all, should be hard work. If you want to be feather-bed soldiers go and enlist somewhere else, but Christ's soldiers must fight, and they will find the battle rough and stern. We, of the church militant, are engaged in no mimic manoeuvres and grand parades; our life is real and earnest; our battle, though not with flesh and blood, is with spiritual wickedness in high places, and it involves hard blows and keen anguish. You must look for real fighting if you become a soldier of Christ, and, O sir, if the excuse for fainting be that the work is toilsome, that it is too much a drag upon you, why did you begin it? You ought to have known this at the first. You should have counted the cost. But, ah, let me add, the work was not toilsome when your heart was loving, neither would it now be so hard if your soul were right with God. This is but an unworthy excuse. Ardent spirits love difficulties; fervent love delights in making sacrifices; they would not wish to swim for ever in smooth seas of pleasure; they know that manhood's truest glory lies in contending with and overcoming that which is hard. Give to the child the easy task, but let the man have something worth the doing to perform. Instead of shrinking because the work is tedious, we ought to gird up our loins and push on the enterprise with all the greater force.

846. Soldiership of the Believer

How needful to be clothed with your armour! How needful to have it of the right kind, to keep it bright, and to wear it constantly! You are a soldier, a soldier in battle, a soldier in the foeman's country, a soldier with a cruel and malicious enemy, who knows neither truce nor parley, and who gives no quarter, but will fight with you till you die. Heaven is the land where your sword should be sheathed; there shall you hang the banner high, but here we wrestle with the foe, and must do so till we cross the torrent of death. Right up to the river's edge roust the conflict be waged. Foot by foot, and inch by inch, must all the land to Canaan's happy shore be won. Not a step can be taken without conflict and strife; but once there, you may lay aside your helmet, and put on your crown, put away your sword, and take your palm-branch; your fingers shall no longer need to learn to war, but your hearts shall learn the music of the happy songsters in the skies.

847. Solitariness of Great Minds A minister fully equipped for his work, will usually be a spirit by himself, above, beyond, and apart from others. The most loving of his people cannot enter into his peculiar thoughts, cares, and temptations. In the ranks men walk shoulder to shoulder, with many comrades, but as the officer rises in rank, men of his standing are fewer in number. There are many soldiers, few captains, fewer colonels, but only one commander-in-chief. So, in our churches, the man whom the Lord raises as a leader becomes, in the same degree in which he is a superior man, a solitary man. The mountain-tops stand solemnly apart, and talk only with God as he visits their terrible solitudes. Men of God who rise above their fellows into nearer communion

with heavenly things, in their weaker moments feel the lack of human sympathy. Like their Lord in Gethsemane, they look in vain for comfort to the disciples sleeping around them; they are shocked at the apathy of their little band of brethren, and return to their secret agony with all the heavier burden pressing upon them, because they have found their dearest companions slumbering. No one knows, but he who has endured it, the solitude of a soul which has outstripped its fellows in zeal for the Lord of hosts: it dares not reveal itself, lest men count it mad; it cannot conceal itself, for a fire burns within its bones: only before the Lord does it find rest. Our Lord's sending out his disciples by two and two manifested that he knew what was in man; but for such a man as Paul, it seems to me that no helpmeet was found; Barnabas, or Silas, or Luke, were hills too low to hold high converse with such a Himalayan summit as the apostle of the Gentiles. This loneliness, which if I mistake not is felt by many of my brethren, is a fertile source of depression, and our ministers' fraternal meetings, and the cultivation of holy intercourse with kindred minds will, with God's blessing, help us greatly to escape the snare.

848. Solitude Helpful to Prayer That was a wise direction which the prophet gave to the poor woman when the Lord was about to multiply her oil. "Go, take the cruse," he said, "pour out and fill the borrowed vessels," but what did he also say? "Shut the door upon thee." If the door had been open, some of her gossiping neighbours would have looked in and said, "What are you doing? Do you really hope to fill all these jars out of that little oil cruse? why, woman, you must be mad!" I am afraid she would not have been able to perform that act of faith if the objectors had not been shut out. It is a grand thing when the soul can bolt the doors against distractions, and keep out those intruders; for then it is that prayer and faith will perform their miracle, and our soul shall be filled with the blessing of the Lord. Oh, for grace to overcome circumstances, and at least to breathe out prayer, if we cannot reach to a more powerful form of it!

849. Songs of Heaven Woven out of Trials

I reckon that at the last, when Christian service shall be done, and Christian reward shall be rendered, the toils endured in serving God, the disappointment, and the racking of the heart, will all make raw material for everlasting song. Oh, how we shall bless God to think that we were accounted worthy to do anything for Christ! Was I enlisted in the host that stood the shock of battle? Did the Master suffer me to have a hand upon the standard that waved so proudly aloft amidst the smoke of the battle? Did he suffer me to leap into the ditch, or scale the rampart of the wall amongst the forlorn hope; or did he even suffer me to watch by the baggage while the battle was raging afar off? Then am I thankful that he in any way whatever permitted me to have a share in the glory of that triumphant conflict. And then, brethren, as old soldiers show their scars, and as the warriors in many conflicts delight to tell of hair-breadth escapes in "the imminent breach," and of dangers grim and ghastly, so shall we rejoice as we return to God to tell of our going forth, and of our weeping when we carried the precious seed. There is not a single drop of gall which will not turn to honey. There is not this day one drop of sweat upon your aching brow but shall crystallise into a pearl for your everlasting crown; not one pang of anguish or disappointment but shall be transmuted into celestial glory to increase your joy, world without end.

850. Sonship, Future Manifestation of

Cannot you imagine that a child taken from the lowest ranks of society, who is adopted by a Roman senator, will be saying to himself, "I wish the day were come when I shall be publicly

revealed as the child of my new father. Then, I shall leave off these plebeian garments, and be robed as becomes my senatorial rank." Happy in what he has received, for that very reason he groans to get to the fulness of what is promised him. So it is with us to-day. We are waiting till we shall put on our proper garments, and shall be manifested as the children of God. Ye are young princes, and ye have not been crowned yet. Ye are young brides, and the marriage-day is not come, and by the love your spouse bears you, you are led to long and to sigh for the marriage-day. Your very happiness makes you groan; your joy, like a swollen spring, longs to leap up like some Iceland Geyser, climbing to the skies, as it heaves and groans within the bowels of your spirit for want of space and room by which to manifest itself to men.

851. Sonship, Motives of

You could not hope to govern the nation by the same rules and methods with which as a father you order your family. In your family it may be there is not even a rod, certainly there is no policeman, no prison, no black cap, no transportation. Children are ruled by a father on a scheme essentially different from the rule of magistrates and kings. There are maxims of courts of legislature which would never be tolerated in the home of love. Just so within the family of God there are no penal inflictions, no words of threatening, such as must be employed by the great King when he deals with the mass of his rebellious subjects. Ye are not under the law, else were there judgment and curses for you; ye are under grace, and now the motives by which you are to be moved are such as might not affect others, but which, since you are renewed in the spirit of your mind, must powerfully affect you.

852. Sorrow, Brotherhood of As soldiers show their scars and talk of battles when they come at last to spend their old age in the country at home, so shall we in the dear land to which we are hastening, speak of the goodness and faithfulness of God which brought us through all the trials of the way. I would not like to stand in that white-robed host and hear it said, "These are they that come out of great tribulation, all except that one." Would you like to be there to see yourself pointed at as the one saint who never knew a sorrow? Oh, no! for you would be an alien in the midst of the sacred brotherhood. We will be content to share the battle, for we shall soon wear the crown and wave the palm.

853. Soul Engrossed with Christ That true man of God, Dr. Hawker—I am told by a friend of mine who visited him one morning—was asked to go and see a review that was then taking place at Plymouth. The doctor said, "No." My friend pressed him, and said, "I know you are a loyal subject, and you like to see your country's fleets; it is a noble spectacle." The doctor said no, he could not go; and being pressed until he was ashamed, he made this remarkable answer, "There are times when I could go and enjoy it, but mine eyes have seen the King in his beauty this morning, and I have had so sweet a sense of fellowship with the Lord Jesus, that I dare not go to look upon any spectacle lest I should lose the present enjoyment which now engrosses my soul." I think you and I have felt the same thing in our measure when Christ has manifested himself to us. What! look on vanity, my Lord, when thy hand has touched my heart—thy pierced hand?

854. Soul Sold to Satan

There is a story told of a most eccentric minister, that walking out one morning he saw a man going to work, and said to him, "What a lovely morning! How grateful we ought to be to God for all

his mercies!" The man said he did not know much about it. "Why," said the minister, "I suppose you always pray to God for your wife and family—for your children—don't you?" "No," said he, "I do not know that I do." "What," said the minister, "do you never pray?" "No." "Then I will give you half-a-crown if you will promise me you never will as long as you live." "Oh," says he, "I shall be very glad of half-a-crown to get me a drop of beer." He took the half-crown, and promised never to pray as long as he lived. He went to his work, and when he had been digging for a little while, he thought to himself, "That's a queer thing I have done this morning—a very strange thing—I've taken money and promised never to pray as long as I live." He thought it over, and it made him feel wretched. He went home to his wife and told her of it."

"Well, John," said she, "you may depend upon it it was the devil, you've sold yourself to the devil for half-a-crown." This so bowed the poor wretch down that he did not know what to do with himself; this was all his thought, that he had sold himself to the devil for money, and would soon be carried off to hell. He commenced attending places of worship, conscious that it was of no use, for he had sold himself to the devil, but he was really ill, bodily ill, through the fear and trembling which had come upon him. One night he recognised in the preacher the very man who had given him the half-crown, and probably the preacher recognised him, for the text was, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" The preacher remarked that he knew a man who had sold his soul for half-a-crown. The poor man rushed forward and said, "Take it back! take it back!" "You said you would never pray," said the minister, "if I gave you half-a-crown; do you want to pray?"

"Oh, yes, I would give the world to be allowed to pray." That man was a great fool to sell his soul for half-a-crown, but some of you are a great deal bigger fools, for you never had the half-crown, and yet you do not pray, and I dare say never will, but will go down to hell never having sought God.

855. Soul, Wide View of the The eye needs to be far-seeing. It is a great pity when the eye can only see a short distance. We strain our natural eye to see some ship far out at sea, that looks perchance like a speck on the horizon, or we want to stretch our vision far over mountain and valley, river and lake, from some lofty Alp, compassing the entire prospect at a glance. But oh! it is well when our soul can take a wide view, and embrace the grand perspective which revelation unfolds, free from cloud and vapour, not pestered with the cares of the day so as to obscure the immortal joys that await our arrival at the city of the blessed; not earthbound, and absorbed by incidents that transpire within the tick of this clock, but prospecting the fields of light beyond, where moments, hours, days, years, and centuries of years are unknown.

856. Soul yielding to God's power

I looked last Friday night at a very remarkable sight, the burning of a huge floorcloth manufactory. I was just about returning home from my Master's work when I saw a little blaze, and in an incredibly short space a volume of fire rolled up in great masses to the skies. Why blazed it so suddenly? Why, because for months before many men had been busily employed in hanging up the floorcloth and in saturating the building with combustible materials; I do not mean with the intention of making a blaze, but in the ordinary course of their manufacture; so that when at last the spark came it grew into a great sheet of flame all at once. So sometimes when the gospel is faithfully preached a sinner gets present peace and pardon, and he is so full of joy his friends

cannot make him out, his progress is so rapid. But be it remembered that God has been mysteriously at work months before in that man's heart, preparing his soul to catch the heavenly flame, so that there was only a spark needed, and then up rolled the flame to heaven. O that I could be that spark to some heart in whom God has been working this morning, but He alone can make me so! I noticed when that factory was on fire from top to bottom that it seemed to glow like pure gold, or like transparent glass, and then I expected to see it fall, and by-and-by fall it did, for after about half-an-hour all on a sudden one timber went over, and then the whole mass fell with a tremendous crash. I venture to compare that final crash with the actual salvation of a soul long prepared to receive it. The heart has been glowing with a divine desire, a heavenly flame for even months and years, and then at last, in a moment, the final movement is made, and doubts, and fears, and sins fall to the ground, and there is room to build a temple for the living God.

857. Soul Prosperity, Want of

John once wished for Gaius that his body might prosper and be in health even as his soul prospered. Now, suppose our bodies were to prosper just as our souls do! Why, there would sit in one place a living woman, and side by side with her a dead husband; further on a living child, and then a dead, grey headed grandsire. Oh, what a sight this place would be! We should hasten to gather up our skirts, those of us who are alive, and say, "Let us be gone! How can we sit side by side with corpses?" The effect would be startling to the last degree, and yet, most probably, the spiritual fact does not disturb us at all; we know it to be true, but we take it as a matter of course, and we go our way with scarce a prayer for our poor dead neighbours.

858. Soul's Flight to Christ

See that dove just taken from the cage to be set free. Tempt it to remain with you, cast down the seeds it loves to feed upon; no, it will not dwell with you, it mounts, it makes a few circles in the air, and then having turned its eye to the dear familiar dovecote, it is all wing for home. What can stay its flight? Call to it, allure it as you will, straight as an arrow from a bow it flies to its own beloved home, and rests not its weary wing till it rests in the house of its love. Even so is it with the believer's soul, let him but go free and have his desire, unbind him of his corruptions, strip him of his cares, liberate him from his unbelief, let him have his freedom, and he will fly at once to his Lord Jesus, nor will anything tempt him to linger or find solace save in that bosom of infinite love.

859. Souls Perishing, Uncared for

It would be an awful piece of brutality if a boatful of shipwrecked mariners, far out at sea, saw a vessel in the offing, and yet that vessel would not turn aside to help them. But that is the conduct of many professors of Christ; they see others perishing, but they will not tell them the way of salvation; they neither pray for them nor labour for them; but they let them go down to hell unwept, unpitied, and uncared for. Where are your bowels of compassion, professor, that you have done this? Perhaps you have done it; if so, do not merely regret, but earnestly amend.

860. Soul's Restlessness in Sin

How apt was the simile of the old Saxon chieftian, when he compared the unenlightened soul to the bird which flew in at the open windows of the banquet-hall, was scared by the uproarious shouts of boisterous warriors around the fire, and passed out again by another window into the

cold and the darkness. Our spirit, attracted by the tempting glare, darts into the halls of pleasure, but anon is frightened and alarmed by the rough voice of conscience, and the demands of insatiable passions, and away it flies from the momentary gleam of pleasure and dream of happiness into the thick darkness of discontent, and the snow storm of remorse. Man, without God, is like the mariner in the story, condemned to sail on for ever, and never to find a haven. He is the real Wandering Jew, immortal in his restlessness.

861. Souls Saved, the Crown of Jesus

If like the old Swiss hero we could gather up all the death-bearing lances into our own bosom, and die in opening a road to victory for our fellow-soldiers, it were a destiny for which to bless God. It would be a glorious thing to die, if by our martyrdom the world might be won for him. High thrones for Jesus, where shall we find them? Bright crowns for Jesus, where shall we find them? We will snatch them from your heads, ye kings, if there be no others. Nay, but your diadems are too mean for his brow, and are only worthy to be thrown into the dust before him; they have not lustre enough for him. We will find jewels for him in the tears of penitents, and gold in the songs of believers. We will weave chaplets for him out of souls emancipated, and spirits perfected. He must have them; he must have them. Such a One as he cannot but be great unto the ends of the earth.

862. Souls' Haven, the Cross

While your bark is tossed about at sea, it is very likely that she wants a new copper bottom, or the deck requires holystoning, or the rigging is out of repair, or the sails want overhauling, or fifty other things may be necessary; but if the wind is blowing great guns, and the vessel is drifting towards those white-crested breakers, the first business of the mariner is to make for the haven at once, to avoid the hurricane. When he is all snug in port, he can attend to hull and rigging, and all the odds and ends besides. So with you, child of God, one thing you must do, and I beseech you do it. Do not be looking to this, or to that, or to the other out of a thousand things that may be amiss, but steer straight for the cross of Christ, which is the haven for distressed spirits; fly at once to the wounds of Jesus, as the dove flies to her nest in the cleft of the rock.

863. Souls of Men, Unfaithfulness to the

If you could but stand by one death bed where a soul is taking its leap in the dark; if for once in your lives you could hear the cries of a spirit as it enters into the thick darkness which is to be its everlasting abode; if you could but have painted before your eyes in verity the last tremendous day, and the multitudes on the left hand; if you could but gaze for a moment at the heaven which your own children I fear may miss through your indifference; or if you could but look but for a second upon that hell to which multitudes of your neighbours are descending every day, surely you would be down on your knees saying, "Forgive me, great God, for all my past neglect, and from this hour cleanse me from the blood of souls by the blood of Jesus, and help me to be instant in season and out of season in instructing my fellow men. Never from this day until I die may I neglect an opportunity of telling to men how they may be saved."

864. Sowing, the Preparation for Reaping

I find that upon some hearts warm earnest preaching drops like an unusual thing which startles but does not convince, and in other congregations, where good gospel preaching has been the rule, I

can see the words drop into the hearers' souls, by the glancing of their eyes and the motions of their countenances. I can perceive that it is no new thing to them to hear the living truth, and that God has been setting some other brother both to plough and to sow, and to harrow, and that then he sent me, as he often does, to many churches, to be a reaper, and, though I may seem to bring in the sheaves, yet it is the previous work that made room for the reaper to do his happy business.

865. Spirit of God Needed in the Church

Without the Spirit of God, we are like to a ship stranded on the beach; when the tide has receded, there is no moving her until the flood shall once again lift her from the sands. We are like that frozen ship, of which we read the other day, frostbound in the far-off Arctic Sea: until the Spirit of God shall thaw the chilly coldness of our natural estate, and bid the life-floods of our heart flow forth, there we must lie, cold, cheerless, lifeless, powerless. The Christian, like the mariner, depends upon the breath of heaven, or his barque is without motion. We are like the plants of the field, and this genial season suggests the metaphor: all the winter through vegetation sleeps wrapped up in her frost garments, but when the mysterious influence of spring is felt, she unbinds her cloak to put on her vest of many colours, while every bud begins to swell and each flower to open. And so a church lies asleep in a long and dreary winter until God the Holy Ghost looseth the bands of lethargy, and hearts bud and blossom, and the time of the singing of birds is come.

866. Spiritual Forces The more spiritual a force is the less it lies within the chains of time. The electric current, which has a greater nearness to the spiritual than the grosser forms of materialism, is inconceivably rapid from that very reason, and by it time is all but annihilated. The influences of the Spirit of God are a force most spiritual, and more quick than anything beneath the sun. As soon as we agonise in soul the Holy Spirit can, if he pleases, convert the person for whom we have pleaded. While we are yet speaking he hears, and before we call he answers. Some calculate the expected progress of a church by arithmetic; and I think I have heard of arithmetical sermons in which there have been ingenious calculations as to how many missionaries it would take to convert the world, and how much cash would be demanded. Now, there is no room here for the application of mathematics; spiritual forces are not calculable by an arithmetic which is most at home in the material universe. A truth which is calculated to strike the mind of one man to-day may readily enough produce a like effect upon a million minds to-morrow. The preaching which moves one heart needs not to be altered to tell upon ten thousand. With God's Spirit our present instrumentalities will suffice to win the world to Jesus; without him, ten thousand times as much apparent force would be only so much weakness.

867. Spiritual Life the Gift of Christ The poor mariner's wife rushes down to the beach in the storm, and see, the waves at last have washed up her lost beloved, the father of the babe which is hanging at her breast. He is dead. The ungenerous sea has made a wife a widow. Oh, what would she not give, if she had it, to restore life once more to that well-beloved form! but life is a boon her prayers and tears cannot obtain. Herein is Jesus glorified, for he gives life to those who are spiritually dead, and if any one of you are weeping to-day over an unconverted husband, a child who is dead in trespasses and sins, a sister or a brother unsaved, Jesus can come to you and give life to your dear ones in answer to your prayers. He is himself the resurrection and the life.

868. Spiritual Man, Loneliness of the In the plain everything is in company, but the higher you ascend the more lone is the mountain path. At this moment there must be an awful solitude on the

top of Mont Blanc. Where the stars look silently on the monarch of mountains, how deep the silence above the untrodden snows! How lonely is the summit of the Matterhorn, or the peak of Monte Rosa! When a man grows in grace he rises out of the fellowship of the many, and draws nearer to God. Unless placed in very happy circumstances, he will find very few who understand the higher life, and can thoroughly commune with him. But then the man will be as humble as he is elevated, and he will fall back necessarily, and naturally upon the eternal fellowship of God. As the mountain pierces the skies, and offers its massive peak to be the footstool of the throne of God, so the good man passes within the veil, unseen by mortal eyes, into the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, where he abides under the shadow of the Almighty.

869. Spiritual Prosperity Produced by Trial A child had a little garden in which it planted many flowers, but they never grew. She put them in, as she thought, tenderly and carefully, but they would not live. She sowed seeds and they sprang up; but very soon they withered away. So she ran to her father's gardener, and when he came to look at it he said, "I will make it a nice garden for you, that you may grow whatever you want." He fetched a pick, and when the little child saw the terrible pick, she was afraid for her little garden. The gardener struck his tool into the ground, and began to make the earth heave and shake, for his pickaxe had caught the edge of a huge stone, which underlayed almost all the little plot of ground. All the little flowers were turned out of their places, and the garden spoiled for a season, so that the little maid wept much. He told her he would make it a fair garden yet, and so he did, for having removed that stone which had prevented all the plants from striking root, he soon filled the ground with flowers which lived and flourished. So the Lord has come, and has turned up all the soil of your present comfort to get rid of some big stone that was at the bottom of all your spiritual prosperity, and would not let your soul flourish. Do not weep with the child, but be comforted by the blessed results, and thank your Father's tender hand.

870. Spiritual Taste

Many who see the dainties of God's Word pass them by. Like those poor hungry children that we have seen standing outside a shop where the savoury meat is just within the window: they can see it and smell it, but they cannot eat thereof. Many of our hearers have sense enough to perceive that there is something in the Bible that is very satisfying and nourishing; they see it with their eyes, but, like the men of Samaria, they taste not of it themselves. Ay, and there are some who are so far gone—and we were such once—that they have no wish to taste, for their palate has become so depraved that they feed upon ashes, a deceived heart turning them aside. Like the raven, which has no longing for the clean feeding of the dove, they are content with the carrion of the world; like the swine, they are satisfied with the husks, and they pine not to be fed with the children's bread.

871. Spirituality, Misconception of, by the Ungodly

I sat one day, at a public dinner, opposite a gentleman of the gourmand species, who seemed a man of vast erudition as to wines and spirits, and all the viands of the table; he judged and criticised at such a rate that I thought he ought to have been employed by our provision merchants as taster in general. He had finely developed lips, and he smacked them frequently. His palate was in a fine critical condition.

He was also as proficient in the quantity as in the quality, and disposed of meats and drinks in a most wholesale manner. His retreating forehead, empurpled nose, and protruding lips, made him, while eating at least, more like an animal than a man. At last, hearing a little conversation around him upon religious matters, he opened his small eyes and his great mouth, and delivered himself of this sage utterance, "I have lived sixty years in this world, and I never felt or believed in anything spiritual in all my life." The speech was a needless diversion of his energies from the roast duck. We did not want him to tell us that. I, for one, was quite clear about it before he spoke. If the cat under the table had suddenly jumped on a chair and said the same thing, I should have attached as much importance to the utterance of the one as to the declaration of the other; and so, by one sin in one man and another in another man, they betray their spiritual death. Until a man has received the divine life, his remarks thereon, even if he be an archbishop, go for nothing.

872. Spirituality and Orthodoxy

I believe that a spiritual mind is an orthodox mind. There is not much fear of our embracing any serious errors in the head when the heart is not in error, for there it is that heresies are born and bred, in that witches' caldron of our heart. Let the heart be constantly kept at the foot of the cross, and let the Holy Spirit bedew it with his sacred influence, and though we may for a little time, through our want of mental capacity, fail to understand the truth, it will not be for long. The Holy Ghost will lead us into all truth, and thus the text shall be fulfilled, "The Lord shall guide thee continually," whether as relating to matters of providence or to matters of doctrinal instruction.

873. Spring in the Soul

You never hear it said, "The world is not fit for the sun, because it is so dark; for where the sun comes he makes light;" and if after a long winter the world has grown cold and frostbitten, it is not said of the spring, "Thou must not come, for the world is not fit for thee!" No; but the genial influences of spring loosen the rivers, and clothe the earth with verdure, and bid the bonds of frost be removed; and so spring makes a palace fit for herself, and strews it with flowers from her own hands. My Master will come into your house and live, though you are not worthy that he should come under your roof.

874. State Alliance the Weakness of the Church The ark of God of old was never captured till it was defended with carnal weapons, and even then so soon as it was left alone it rescued itself. When there was not a soldier to take care of it, when it was imprisoned in the temple of Dagon, then Dagon fell, and Philistia was humbled. And so in England and Ireland, state alliance is bringing the gospel into jeopardy, but if that alliance can be broken, which is the worst of ills, then the gospel in its grandeur of unaided might will confound all adversaries. Never be afraid—it does not become a Christian to fear; it is unmanly, unchristian, to talk as if Christ's cause were going to be trampled out like a spark under our feet. It cannot be. As enduring as the earth itself, and more eternal far—as everlasting as the throne of God are the cross and honour and dignity of Christ. Let us feel this, for he must reign, and anticipated changes, instead of preventing him from reigning, will help him to reign more universally; and the shaking off of old abuses, instead of being an injury to the cross of Christ, will give its glories ampler space, for he must reign, let men say what they will.

875. State Church, Doom of the

We must expect often to hear that the ship of Christ's church is in a storm; there must not be smooth sailing for the vessel of the church; it must be tossed with tempest and driven to and fro. At the present juncture, all established churches are in the sieve. I believe there is much good corn in the established church, though intermixed with a sad amount of chaff; and now the whole is being sifted, and will be sifted yet more and more. I do not care who holds the sieve, whether it be a politician or an ecclesiastic, but I am persuaded that by God's grace good will come of all this strife, and debate, and agitation. The public mind when it stirs itself about religion is often mysteriously guided to the right path, and even if it choose a wrong thing for a season, yet the wrong only plays itself out, and the right by-and-by comes to the fore, and wins the victory. God will not have his church in alliance with the State; and therefore though they settle down upon their lees, and are at quiet in an adulterous connection with the powers that be, the trying time must come, and the sieve must be used. The true friends of the church need not wish for the sifting to be withheld, for not one grain of precious truth will fall to the ground: all that will perish will be the chaff, which it is a signal blessing to lose. Purification will be the result of agitation.

876. Stones, Voice of the

If the stones were to speak they could tell of their Maker; and shall not we tell of him who made us anew, and out of stones raised up children unto Abraham? They could speak of ages long since gone; the old rocks could tell of chaos and order, and the handiwork of God in various stages of creation's drama; and cannot we talk of God's decrees, of God's great work in ancient times, and all that he did for his church? If the stones were to speak they could tell of their breaker, how he took them from the quarry, and made them fit for the temple; and cannot we tell of our Creator and Maker, who broke our hearts with the hammer of his word that he might build us into his temple? If the stones were to speak, they would tell of their builder, who polished them and fashioned them after the similitude of a palace; and shall not we talk of our Architect and Builder, who has put us in our place in the temple of the living God? Oh, if the stones could speak, they might have a long, long story to tell by way of memorial, for many a time hath a great stone been rolled as a memorial unto God; and we can tell of Ebenezers, stones of help, stones of remembrance. The broken stones of the law cry out against us, but Christ himself, who has rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, speaks for us. Stones might well cry out, but we will not let them: we will hush their noise with ours, we will break forth into sacred song, and bless the majesty of the Most High all our days.

877. Storm, God in the

I do not doubt that servants of God in times of danger at sea, when the huge billows have roared and the tempest has raged, and the vessel seemed likely to go to pieces, have often cheered their hearts with such a thought as this—"Now, he that holdeth the waters in the hollow of his hand, will take care of us, and cover us with his feathers, and under his wings may we trust." Perhaps at this very moment, down in some cabin, or amidst the noise and tumult, and the raging of the ocean, when many are alarmed, there are Christians with calm faces, patiently waiting their Father's will, whether it shall be to reach the port of heaven, or to be spared to come again to land, into the midst of life's trials and struggles once more. They feel that they are well-cared for, they know that the storm has a bit in its mouth, and that God holds it in, and nothing can hurt them; nothing can happen to them but what God permits.

878. Storm, the Voice of God in the

Some are particularly timid in times of storm, when the thunder comes peal upon peal, and the lightning flashes follow each other, when it seems as if the very earth did tremble, and the skies fled away from the glance of an angry God. Oh! how it calms the anxious breast, stills the boding fears, and makes the heart tranquil, to feel that he covers us with his feathers, and that under his wings we may trust. I always feel ashamed to keep indoors when peals of thunder shake the solid earth, and lightnings flash like arrows from the sky. Then God is abroad, and I love to walk out in the open space, and to look up and mark the opening gates of heaven, as the lightning reveals far beyond, and enables you to look into the unseen. I like to hear my heavenly Father's voice, but I do not think we could ever come to a state of peace in such times as those if we did not feel that he was near, that he was our friend, that he would not hurt the children of his own love.

879. Strength of God, a Believer's Defence As well should a bird with broken wing attempt to mount into the skies as you attempt to reach heaven by your own strength. As well should a child with a straw hope to stand against a host of armed men, as you to bear the onslaught of your spiritual enemies, unless the mighty God of Jacob should be your defence. Your warfare needs the Eternal arm to bear you through it, and yet you are weakness itself, how shall you be able to achieve the victory? Cease from self-confidence. Know yourself to be feebleness itself. Look above you to a nobler and surer source of strength than yourself.

880. Strife among Believers, Inconsistency of

I read a story the other day of an elder of a Scotch kirk, who at the elders' meeting had angrily disputed with his minister, until he almost broke his heart. The night after he had a dream which so impressed him, that his wife said to him in the morning, "Ye look very sad, Jan; what is the matter wi' ye?" "And well I am," said he, "for I have had a dream that I had hard words with our minister, and he went home and died, and soon after I died too; and I dreamed that I went up to heaven, and when I got to the gate, out came the minister, and put out his hands to welcome me," saying, "Come along, Jan, there's nae strife up here, I'm so glad to see ye." So the elder went down to the minister's house to beg his pardon, and found in very truth that he was dead. He was so smitten by the blow that within two weeks he followed his pastor to the skies; and I should not wonder but what his minister did meet him, and say, "Come along, Jan, there's nae strife up here." Brethren, why should there be strife below? Let us love each other, and by the fact that we are co-heirs of that blessed inheritance, let us dwell together as partakers of a common life, and soon to be partakers of a common heaven.

881. Students' Medicine

He who forgets the humming of the bees among the heather, the cooing of the wood-pigeons in the forest, the song of birds in the wood, the rippling of rills among the rushes, and the sighing of the wind among the pines, needs not wonder if his heart forgets to sing and his soul grows heavy. A day's breathing of fresh air upon the hills, or a few hours' ramble in the beech woods' umbrageous calm, would sweep the cobwebs out of the brains of scores of our toiling ministers who are now but half alive. A mouthful of sea air, or a stiff walk in the wind's face, would not give grace to the soul, but it would yield oxygen to the body, which is next best.

"Heaviest the heart is in a heavy air, Ev'ry wind that rises blows away despair." The ferns and the rabbits, the streams and the trouts, the fir trees and the squirrels, the primroses and the violets, the farm-yard, the new-mown hay, and the fragrant hops—these are the best medicines for hypochondriacs, the surest tonics for the declining, the best refreshments for the weary. For lack of opportunity, or inclination, these great remedies are neglected, and the student becomes a self-immolated victim.

882. Submission to God's Will As long as I trace my pain to accident, my bereavement to mistake, my loss to another's wrong, my discomfort to an enemy, and so on, I am of the earth earthy, and shall break my teeth with gravel stones; but when I rise to my God and see his hand at work, I grow calm, I have not a word of repining, "I open not my mouth because thou didst it." David preferred to fall into the hands of God, and every believer knows that he feels safest and happiest when he recognises that he is even yet in the divine hands. Cavilling with man is poor work, but pleading with God brings help and comfort. "Cast thy burden on the Lord" is a precept which it will be easy to practise when you see that the burden came originally from God.

883. Substitution of Christ The death of Christ gloriously set forth divine justice, because it taught manifestly this truth, that sin can never go without punishment. It is a law of God's moral universe that sin must be punished. He has made that as necessary as the law of gravitation. The law of gravitation he may suspend, the law of justice never. He will by no means spare the guilty. "The soul that sinneth—it shall die." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the law to do them." As the Lord had appointed the salvation of his people, even this, the dearest desire of his soul, does not lead him to tamper with his inviolable law. No, a substitute shall be provided, who shall to the utmost farthing pay whate'er his people owe. Upon his head the fire-cloud shall discharge itself, and into his bosom shall be emptied out the coals of fire. No pardon without punishment! If the question be asked, "Why not?" it were enough to say that so long as God rules the universe he rules it in wisdom, and his wisdom knows that it would be unsafe if sin were at any time permitted to be blotted out, apart from satisfaction received. Christ, therefore, must himself give a satisfaction for sin, that this rule may be declared, and written upon the fore-front of the skies. God will not pardon sin by overlooking it. There must be redemption before there can be remission.

884. Substitution, The Sinner's Hope The doctrine of atonement, as it is often preached, is a hazy, misty doing of something by which the law is honoured, or perhaps dishonoured, for I scarce know which to call it; this yields me no joy; but when I know that Christ was literally and positively, not metaphorically and by way of figure, but literally and positively the substitute for his own people, and when I know that trusting in him I have the evidence of being one of his people, why my soul begins to say, Now let me live! I'm clean, through Jesu's blood I'm clean. Now let me die! for I shall boldly stand in the day of resurrection, through Jesus my Lord.

885. Success, All Divine

It is very significant that before Christ fed the thousands, he made the disciples sum up all their provisions. It was well to let them see how low the commissariat had become, for then when the crowds were fed they could not say the basket fed them, nor that the lad had done it. God will make us feel how little are our barley loaves, and how small our fishes, and compel us to enquire, "What are they among so many?" When the Saviour bade his disciples cast the net on the right

side of the ship, and they dragged such a mighty shoal to land, he did not work the miracle till they had confessed that they had toiled all the night and had taken nothing. They were thus taught that the success of their fishery was dependent upon the Lord, and that it was not their net, nor their way of dragging it, nor their skill and art in handling their vessels, but, that altogether and entirely their success came from their Lord.

886. Suffering for Christ

Oh! what ought we not to suffer for our Lord! I feel as though I could blush scarlet that I should have to say a word to any of you about suffering for Christ, because what is it, what is it that we have to suffer? Pshaw! It is not to be talked of! Those were sufferings when women like Blandina were set in the red hot chair, or enveloped in a net and tossed upon the horns of bulls. Those were sufferings when they scraped the flesh from off the martyrs' bones. Those were sufferings when every bone was dislocated, and every sinew stretched upon the rack; or when, like the martyrs at Smithfield, men stood upon the burning fagot till each finger blazed like a candle, and yet shouted, "None but Christ!" Yes, those were tribulations indeed! But we are poor feather-bed soldiers. We have comparatively nothing to endure, and yet, young man, last week you were ashamed to own that you are a Christian, because—yes, because they chaffed you in the shop! And you, young woman, blushed to own that you had avowed your Lord in the despised ordinance of baptism when your friends were jeering you. O men and women, how little is your faith! And yet my Master is not angry with you. You little ones, he will comfort you, and strengthen you, and give you more faith, but still do you not feel ashamed to think you should ever have been ashamed of him?

887. Summer and Winter of the Church

All through the summer months, bright for the world, it is usually dark for the church. In the country towns the multitude engaged in agricultural occupations cannot be expected to come out to week-night services; and prayer-meetings, Bible-classes, and the like generally flag, while the long days demand longer labour. I do not say it is right that these meetings should flag so much as they do, but the fact remains that during the summer season there generally is a flagging of religious interest in the villages and towns; and even amongst ourselves it is to some extent the same. During the long days, the man who has to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, must work, and it is only when the evenings begin to draw in, and the winter months come, that the happier seasons in the church arrive, and the winter becomes our summer, as the summer had been our winter. Right on from this period of the year the church should shake herself and say, "Now our harvest time comes; now is the period for kings to go forth to battle. God has given us the opportunity now, and we must avail ourselves of it, lest ere another harvest time is past, and another spiritual summer time is ended, many may be where they can never be saved."

888. Sun, Glory of, and Emblem of Christ

What Milton calls the golden-tressed sun is the most glorious object in creation, and in Jesus the fulness of glory dwells; the sun is at the same time the most influential of existences, acting upon the whole world, and truly our Lord is, in the deepest sense, "of this great world both eye and soul;" he "with benignant ray sheds beauty, life, and joyance from above." The sun is, moreover, the most abiding of creatures; and therein it is also a type of him who remaineth from generation to generation, and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The king of day is so vast and so

bright that the human eye cannot bear to gaze upon him; we delight in his beams, but we should be blinded should we continue to peer into his face; even yet more brilliant is our Lord by nature, for as God he is a consuming fire, but he deigns to smile upon us with milder beams as our brother and Redeemer. Jesus, like the sun, is the centre and soul of all things, the fulness of all good, the lamp that lights us, the fire that warms us, the magnet that guides and controls us; he is the source and fountain of all life, beauty, fruitfulness, and strength; he is the fosterer of tender herbs of penitence, the quickener of the vital sap of grace, the ripener of fruits of holiness, and the life of everything that grows within the garden of the Lord. Whereas to adore the sun would be idolatry, it were treason not to worship ardently the divine Sun of Righteousness.

889. Sunday-school Teachers, A Word to

I am afraid that very often the truth which we deliver from the pulpit—and doubtless it is much the same in your classes—is a thing which is extraneous and out of ourselves, like the staff which we hold in our hand but which is not a part of ourselves. We take doctrinal or practical truth as Gehazi did the staff, and we lay it upon the face of the child, but we ourselves do not agonise for its soul. We try this doctrine and that truth, this anecdote and the other illustration, this way of teaching a lesson and that manner of delivering an address; but so long as ever the truth which we deliver is a matter apart from ourselves and unconnected with our innermost being, so long it will have no more effect upon a dead soul than Elisha's staff had upon the dead child.

890. Sympathy Needful to Christ

There are men to whom it is a small matter to be friendless; their coarse minds scorn the gentle joys of fellowship. Sterner virtues may tread beneath their iron heel the sweet flowers of friendship; and men may be so defiantly self-reliant that, like lions, they are most at home amid congenial solitudes. Sympathy they scorn as womanish, and fellowship as a superfluity. But our Saviour was not such; he was too perfect a man to become isolated and misanthropical. His grand gentle nature was full of sympathy towards others, and therefore sought it in return. You hear the voice of grief at the loss of brotherly sympathy in the mournful accents of that gentle rebuke, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" How could they sleep whilst he must sweat; how could they repose while he was exceeding sorrowful even unto death? He showed the greatness of his soul even in its depression when he lovingly excused them by saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

891. Sympathy, Human, used by God

Disembodied spirits might have been sent to proclaim the word, but they could not have entered into the feelings of those who, being in this body, do groan, being burdened; angels might have been ordained evangelists, but their celestial attributes would have disqualified them from having compassion on the ignorant; men of marble might have been fashioned, but their impassive natures would have been a sarcasm upon our feebleness, and a mockery of our wants. Men, and men subject to human passions, the all-wise God has chosen to be his vessels of grace; hence these tears, hence these perplexities and castings down.

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892. Talents no Substitute for Grace On the slabs of stone which mark the burial places of the early Christians in the catacombs of Rome, the inscriptions are nearly all ill spelt, many of them have here a letter in Greek, and there a letter in Latin; grammar is forgotten, and orthography is violated, a proof that the early Christians who thus commemorated the martyred dead were many of them uneducated person's; but for all that they crushed the wisdom of the sages and smote the gods of classic lands. They smote Jupiter and Saturn until they were broken in pieces, and Venus and Diana fell from their seats of power. Their conquests were not by the learning of the schools; that hindered them—the Gnostic heresy, the heresy of pretended knowledge hindered but never helped the church of God. Even thus at this hour the culture so much vaunted in certain places is opposed to the simplicity of the gospel. Therefore I say we do not despise true learning, but we dare not depend upon it. We believe that God can bless and does bless thousands by very simple and humble testimonies; we are none of us to hold our tongues for Christ, because we cannot speak as the learned; we are none of us to refuse the Lord's message to ourselves because it is spoken by an unlettered messenger. We are not to select our pastors simply because of their talents and acquirements; we must regard their unction, we must look at their call, and see whether the Spirit of God is with them; if not, we shall make learning to be our brazen serpent, and it will need to be broken in pieces.

893. Talking for Christ

There lived some fifty years or so ago a set of great table-talkers, who were asked out to dine because of their lively conversational powers. Now if this be in any of you never waste it in mere pleasantries, but say something worth the saying, and aim at the highest results. Remember Jesus was a mighty table-talker, as the evangelists took care to note. I wish I could with discreet adroitness break in upon a conversation in a railway carriage and turn it round to the Saviour—turn it round to something worth speaking of. I often envy those of my brethren who can go up to individuals and talk to them with freedom. I do not always find myself able to do so, though when I have been divinely aided I have had a large reward. When a Christian man can get hold of a man and talk to him, it is like one of the old men-of-war laying alongside a French ship and giving her a broadside, making every timber shiver, and at last sending her to the bottom. How many a soul has been brought to Christ by the loving personal exhortations of Christian people who know how to do it! To be able, like Elijah, to stretch yourselves upon the dead child, to put your hands upon his hands, your feet upon his feet, and breathe the life by God's help into the dead—oh, some of you can do this better, perhaps, than those who are called to speak to hundreds and thousands. Do use it if you have the ability; and try to get the ability if you have it not.

894. Temporal Blessings the Guarantee of Spiritual

You call at a friend's house—you are riding on horseback; he takes your horse into the stable, and is remarkably attentive to it—the creature is well groomed, well housed, well fed; you are not at all afraid that you will be shut out, there is surely a warm place in the parlour for the rider, where the

horse is so well attended to in the stable. Now, your body, which I might liken to the horse, has had its temporal prosperity in abundance, and surely the Lord will take care of your soul if you seek his face! Let your prayer be, "My God, my Father, be my guide. Since thou hast dealt so well with me in these external matters, give me grace within my heart, give me the true riches, give me to love thy Son and trust in him to be henceforth thy child. Thou hast given me the nether springs, give me to drink of the upper springs."

895. Tenderness of Christ Our Example Our Lord Jesus Christ never discarded a single follower on account of his being juvenile in the faith. Far from it. He has been pleased, in his infinite tenderness, to look especially after these. A young man came to him who was not then converted—probably never was—and yet though the good work in him was so immature, that it may have been compared to the morning cloud and the morning dew which pass away, yet our Saviour, looking upon him, loved him; for he delights to see the hopeful token, however slender; he quenches not the smoking flax, and breaks not the bruised reed. He did not repulse the self-righteous youth. He was ignorant of the very first principle of the gospel, namely, justification by faith and not by works; yet, since he desired to do right, and was evidently sincere, our Lord Jesus Christ further instructed him. I earnestly pray Christians to imitate my Master in this. Where you see anything of Christ, encourage it. You may observe much that you lament, but, I pray you, do not kill the child because its face is black. Do not cut down the trees because in spring they have no fruit upon them. Be thankful that they make a show of buds, which may come to fruit by-and-by.

896. Texts Interpreted by Prayer

If you have ever sailed down the Rhine, the water-scenery of that majestic river will have struck you as being very like in effect to a series of lakes. Before and behind, the vessel appears to be enclosed in massive walls of rock, or circles of vine-clad terraces, till on a sudden you turn a corner, and before you the rejoicing and abounding river flows onward in its strength. So the laborious student often finds it with a text; it appears to be fast closed against you, but prayer propels your vessel, and turns its prow into fresh waters, and you behold the broad and deep stream of sacred truth flowing in its fulness, and you feel that it is bearing you with it. Is not this a convincing reason for abiding in supplication? Use prayer as a boring rod, and wells of living water will leap up from the bowels of the Word. Who will be content to thirst when living waters are so readily to be obtained?

897. Thankfulness, an Assistance in Work

Soldiers march best to battle when the trumpet and drum excite them with enlivening strains; the mariner brightens his toil by a cheery cry at every pull of the rope; and it is an excellent thing when Christian men know how to sing as well as to work, and mingle holy music with holy service. The best music of a Christian consists in thankfulness to God. Thanks should be rendered by the believer with all the acts common to men. Our eating, our drinking, our social meetings, our quiet conversings one with another, in all we should give thanks unto God and the Father. This we should do in the labours peculiar to our vocation. Whatever your trade and calling may be, if you cannot sing aloud, you can sing in your hearts while your hands are busy; you can ring out the praises of God as well to the sound of the hammer on the anvil as to the peal of the organ; your feet at the sewing machine may beat time to a sacred tune; you can as well praise God while you

crack your whip as when you sing to a Psalm tune. Why not? If the heart be right you can mount up to the heavens from any place or labour.

898. Thirst, Spiritual The panting of a thirsty hart is something terrible to see. It appears to thirst all over; every pore of its body is thirsting. It is not alone that heated tongue, those snorting nostrils, that glaring eye, but the creature in every part, in every hair, thirsts and pants. And so with the believer when he is without his God; if his soul be in a right state, he longs with all the force of his being to get back into his former happy condition. There is no staying him, there is no making him pause. Surely the psalmist chose thirst for this reason, because it is a longing not to be appeased. Men have gone for days without food, but they could not during the same length of time abstain from drink. In a long and weary march soldiers have been able to endure much absence of solids, but we find in cases like the marches of Alexander, that soldiers have died by hundreds from want of drink. It has been said hunger you can palliate for awhile, but thirst is awful. You cannot reason with it; thirst has no ears; you cannot forget it—the more thirsty the man becomes the more does the want thrust itself before him. O my God, painful as is such a spiritual thirst, yet would I desire to be always in this state when I am not in immediate fellowship with thee. I would be so thirsty as never to find a moment's peace, nor ease, nor comfort, except when I am near to thee. "Tears have been my meat," says David, "day and night;" as though he could get nothing from himself by way of comfort, for his soul flowed over at his eyes in briny tears, which made him thirstier still. Still his cry went up at morn and midnight, "My God, my God, I must behold thee, I must approach thee, I must enjoy thy love. Shut me not up in this dungeon, cast me not from thy presence, take not thy Holy Spirit from me, bring me to thyself again, for I long, I groan, I faint, I die for thee. O come to me and manifest thy favour."

899. Thoughts, Holy

Good thoughts are blessed guests, and should be heartily welcomed, well fed, and much sought after. Like rose leaves, they give out a sweet smell if laid up in the jar of memory. They cannot be too much cultivated; they are like a crop which enriches the soil. As the hen broods her chickens under her wings, so should we cherish all holy thoughts. As the poor man's ewe lamb ate of his own bread and lay in his bosom, even so should godly meditation be very dear to us. Holy thoughts breed holy words and holy actions, and are hopeful evidences of a renewed heart.

900. Thoughts of Christ the Test of Piety

I will judge of your piety by this barometer: does Christ stand high or low with you? If you have thought little of Christ, if you have been content to live without his presence, if you have cared little for his honour, if you have been neglectful of his laws, then I know that your soul is sick—God grant that it may not be sick unto death! But if the first thought of your spirit has been, how can I honour Jesus? if the daily desire of your soul has been, O that I knew where I might find him! I tell you that you may have a thousand infirmities, and may even scarcely know whether you are a child of God at all, and yet I am persuaded, beyond a doubt, that you are safe, since Jesus is great in your esteem. I care not for thy rags, what thinkest thou of his royal apparel? I care not for thy wounds, though they bleed in torrents, what thinkest thou of his wounds? are they like glittering rubies in thine esteem? I think nothing less of thee, though thou liest like Lazarus on the dunghill, and the dogs do lick thee; I judge thee not by thy poverty: what thinkest thou of the King in his beauty? Has he a glorious high throne in thy heart? Wouldst thou set him higher if thou couldst?

Wouldst thou be willing to die if thou couldst but add another trumpet to the strain which proclaims his praise? Ah! then, it is well with thee. Whatever thou mayst think of thyself, if Christ be great to thee, thou shalt be with him ere long.

901. Threatenings, Divine, to be attended to

We were in a sick room the other day, and the surgeon, with carefully soft whisper, told us something painful in reference to the case. We caught the glance of the patient, and translated it in a moment; that keen eye said, "You are whispering about me, and my case is a very bad one, pray tell me what will come of it!" It would be well for you, reader, if you were equally sensitive; there are threatenings of fearful import in the word of God; do you never in your heart remember that these speak of you? Bare your bosom to the arrows of the gospel, for those whom these shafts shall kill shall graciously be made alive again. Invite the operation of searching truths, which divide the joints and marrow, for their keen edge will destroy nothing but that which would destroy you.

902. Ties in Heaven

It is a glorious thing to become indifferent to the visible, and only earnest about the invisible. We are like a balloon while it is tied to the earth, it cannot mount; even so our ascent to heaven is delayed by a thousand detaining cords and bands, and the process of setting us free is cutting the ropes one by one. Some of you are conscious of getting older and weaker, God is evidently loosening the ties of earth. You have already more relatives in heaven than on earth; if you count over the names of dear companions on earth, they make but a slender list; but count over the names of dear saints which have gone before, and with whom you have had fellowship, and then the roll is long. Be thankful that you have so many ties upward and so few bonds to earth. Prepare to mount to the majority. The wheat may well rejoice for the sharp cuts of the sickle, because it is the sign of going home to the garner. After the wheat is cut it stands in shocks, shocks of corn fully ripe, not growing out of the earth, but merely standing on it. The shock is quite disconnected from the soil. How happy is the state of a Christian when he is in the world but is not linked to it! His ripeness drops here and there a grain into the soil, for he is still ready to do good, but he has no longer any vital connection with aught below, he is waiting to be in heaven.

Here comes the wain; the corn is put into it, and with shoutings it is carried home. Soon will our heavenly Father send his chariot, and we who have been ripened by the latter rain, and separated from earth by his Spirit's sickle, shall be borne in the chariot of triumph, amidst the shoutings of the angels, and the songs of thrice blessed spirits, up to the eternal garner.

903. Time, Flight of, Swiftness of the A thousand years is a long time, but how soon it flies! One almost seems, in reading English history, to go back and shake hands with William the Conqueror; a few lives bring us even to the flood. You who are getting on to be forty years old, and especially you who are sixty or seventy, must feel how fast time flies. I only seem to preach a sermon one Sunday in time to get ready for the next. Time flies with such a whirl that no express train can overtake it, and even the lightning flash seems to lag behind it. We shall soon be at the great white throne; we shall soon be at the judgment bar of God. Oh! let us be making ready for it. Let us not live so much in this present, which is but a dream, an empty show, but let us live in the real, substantial future.

904. Tomb, the Company of Jesus in

What more appropriate chamber for a prince's son to go to sleep in than the prince's own tomb? There slept Emmanuel. There, my body, thou mayst be well content to sleep too! What more royal couch canst thou desire than the bosom of that same mother earth whereon the Saviour was laid to rest awhile? Think, beloved, of the ten thousand saints that have gone that way to heaven. Who shall dread to go where all the flock have gone? Thou one poor timid sheep, if thou alone hadst to go through this dark valley, thou mightest well be afraid; but, oh, in addition to thy Shepherd, who marches at the head of all the flock, listen to the footsteps of the innumerable sheep that follow him. And some were very dear to thee, and fed in the same pasture with thee. Dost thou dread to go where they have gone? No; see the place where Jesus lay, to see what good company is to be had, though it may seem to be in a dark chamber.

905. Tongues of Fire As the tongues of fire came upon the apostles, when they sat watching and praying, even so will they come upon you. You will find yourselves, when you might perhaps have flagged, suddenly upborne, as by a seraph's power. Wheels of fire will be fastened to your chariot, which had begun to drag right heavily, and steeds angelic will be in a moment harnessed to your fiery car, till you climb the heavens like Elijah, in a rapture of flaming inspiration.

906. Transformation by Prayer

One night alone in prayer might make us new men, changed from poverty of soul to spiritual wealth, from trembling to triumphing. We have an example of it in the life of Jacob. Aforetime the crafty shuffler, always bargaining and calculating, unlovely in almost every respect, yet one night in prayer turned the supplanter into a prevailing prince, and robed him with celestial grandeur. From that night he lives on the sacred page as one of the nobility of heaven. Could not we, at least now and then, in these weary earthbound years, hedge about a single night for such enriching traffic with the skies? What, have we no sacred ambition? Are we deaf to the yearnings of divine love? Yet, my brethren, for wealth and for science men will cheerfully quit their warm couches, and cannot we do it now and again for the love of God and the good of souls? Where is our zeal, our gratitude, our sincerity? I am ashamed while I thus upbraid both myself and you. May we often tarry at Jabbok, and cry with Jacob, as he grasped the angel—

"With thee all night I mean to stay, And wrestle till the break of day."

Surely, brethren, if we have given whole days to folly, we can afford a space for heavenly wisdom. Time was when we gave whole nights to chambering and wantonness, to dancing and the world's revelry; we did not tire then; we were chiding the sun that he rose so soon, and wishing the hours would lag awhile that we might delight in wilder merriment, and perhaps deeper sin. Oh, wherefore, should we weary in heavenly employments? Why grow we weary when asked to watch with our Lord? Up, sluggish heart, Jesus calls thee! Rise and go forth to meet the heavenly Friend in the place where he manifests himself.

907. Travail Preceding Spiritual Birth

I have heard of a young man who had grown up and left the parental roof, and through evil influences had been enticed to hold sceptical views. His father and mother were both earnest Christians, and it almost broke their hearts to see their son so opposed to the Redeemer. On one occasion they induced him to go with them to hear a celebrated minister. He accompanied them simply to please them, and for no higher motive. The sermon happened to be upon the glories of

heaven. It was a very extraordinary sermon, and was calculated to make every Christian in the audience leap for joy. The young man was much gratified with the eloquence of the preacher, but nothing more; he gave him credit for superior oratorical ability, and was interested in the sermon, but felt none of its power. He chanced to look at his father and mother during the discourse, and was surprised to see them weeping. He could not imagine why they, being Christian people, should sit and weep under a sermon which was most jubilant in its strain. When he reached home, he said, "Father, we have had a capital sermon, but I could not understand what could make you sit there and cry, and my mother too?" His father said, "My dear son, I certainly had no reason to weep concerning myself, nor your mother, but I could not help thinking all through the sermon about you, for alas! I have no hope that you will be a partaker in the bright joys which await the righteous. It breaks my heart to think that you will be shut out of heaven." His mother said, "The very same thoughts crossed my mind, and the more the preacher spoke of the joys of the saved, the more I sorrowed for my dear boy that he should never know what they were." That touched the young man's heart, led him to seek his father's God, and before long he was at the same communion table, rejoicing in the God and Saviour whom his parents worshipped. The travail comes before the bringing forth the earnest anxiety, the deep emotion within, precede our being made the instruments of the salvation of others.

908. Treasures, Earthly, to be held loosely

See you not how the glittering dewdrops exhale as the day grows old—such and so fleeting are human joys. Mark how the meteor marks the brow of night, and anon is seen no more—such and so hasty is mortal bliss. Hold not earth's treasures with too firm a grasp. Give them all up to your Father, and use them as temporary comforts borrowed for awhile, to be returned anon. Our bereavements would not be half so sharp if we always viewed our friends as being lent to us. A man does not cry when he has to return a tool which he has borrowed. No; but as an honest man he knew he borrowed it; he never called it his own, and he hands it back, thankful that he has had it so long. When you weep who have lost your friends, you do well; but if you carry that weeping to repining, you ought to recollect the mercy of God in letting you retain these dear ones at all, and in sparing them to you so long; and you should mourn that a rebellious spirit should so reign in you as to make you lament, because your God takes back his own.

909. Trembling Ones the Care of Jesus

Yonder is a mother who has a numerous family of children. My dear mother, may I argue with you? If you must neglect one of your children, shall I tell you which it should be? It should be that one which is lame in the feet, and has always been so sickly. Why, I think I see the mother looking at me angrily, "Stop," she says, "such shameful talk! that very one I look after with the most anxiety. If I did neglect one, it would be the big boy, grown up, and able to take care of himself, but that poor little dear! I could not forsake him, I carry him in my bosom from morning to night. If there is one that I am most tender over, it is just that very one." The instincts of our nature tell us that. The beatings of Jesus' heart are towards the trembling one. When should a man forget or forsake his spouse? Never under any conceivable circumstances, but certainly not when she is sick or sorrowful. Shall he sue in the Divorce Court against her because she is afflicted, and full of pains and griefs? Is she to be cast out of doors, because her spirits are broken? Villany alone could dictate such an argument, and rest assured, beloved, such an argument should have no tolerance

with the Wellbeloved.

910. Trial, Uplifting Power of

There is our nest, and a very pretty, round, snug nest it is; and we have been very busy picking up all the softest feathers that we could find, and all the prettiest bits of moss that earth could yield, and we have been engaged night and day making that nest soft and warm. There we intended to remain. We meant for ourselves a long indulgence, sheltered from inclement winds, never to put our feet among the cold dewdrops, nor to weary our pinions by mounting up into the clouds. But suddenly a thorn came into our breast; we tried to remove it, but the more we struggled the more it chafed, and the more deeply the thorn fixed itself into us. Then we just began to spread our wings, and as we mounted it would seem as though the atmosphere had changed, and our souls had changed too with the mounting, and we began to sing the old forgotten song—which in the nest we never should have sung—the song of those who mount from earth and have communion with the skies.

911. Trials, Ballast of When the vessel first was launched upon the river, and was about to cross the sea, it felt itself light and airy, and ready to bound over the waves, so that it longed for a voyage across the Atlantic, that it might fly like a sea bird over the crest of the billows; but suddenly, to her sorrow, the gallant ship was stopped in her career, and moored close by a bank of sand and shingle, and men began to cast stones and earth into her. Then the barque murmured, "What! am I to be weighed down and sunk low in the water with a cargo of mire and dirt? What a hindrance to my speed! I thought I could fly just now like a sea bird: am I to be weighted till I am like a log?" It was even so; for had not the vessel been thus ballasted, she had soon been wrecked and had never reached the desired haven. That ballast was a gift, a gift as much as if it had been bars of gold or ingots of silver. So your trials, your troubles and your infirmities, are gifts to you, O believers, and you must regard them as such.

912. Trials, Change of

You may anticipate, Christian, that you will have your trial changed: indeed, you must reckon that it is so. I mean that if to-day it is smooth sailing with you, though yesterday waves rolled mountains high, it is only a change of trial; you are now tried by prosperity, which may prove to be a more severe test for you than adversity. Is the wind balmy, blows it from the south? It is but another trial for thee, be sure of that, for they who have withstood the northern blast and grown the ruddier and stronger for its influence, have often grown faint and weary under softer airs. Watch thou in all things, thy trials are with thee constantly; the crucible is changed, the fire still burns.

913. Trials, Daily Grace to Bear Our God does not trust us with so much life as a month at once—we live as the clock ticks, a second at a time. Is not that a wiser method of living rather than to perplex our heads by living by the month or by the year? You have no promise for the year: the word of mercy runs, "As thy days thy strength shall be." You are not commanded to pray for supplies by the year, but, "Give us this day our daily bread." Said a good man to me the other day who had many troubles, who has borne them manfully to my knowledge, for these fifteen or twenty years, when I asked him how his patience had held out—"Ah," said he, "I said to my afflicted wife the other day, when the coals come in, it takes several big fellows to bring in the sacks, but yet our little kitchen-maid Mary, has brought the whole ton up from the cellar into our parlour; but she has

done it a scuttle-full at a time. She has as surely moved those tons of coal as ever did the wagons when they brought them in, but she has moved them by little and little, and done it easily." This is how to bear the troubles of life, a day's portion at a time. Wave by wave our trials come, and let us breast them one by one, and not attempt to buffet the whole ocean's billows at once. Let us stand as the brave old Spartan did, in the Thermopylæ of the day, and fight the Persians as they come one by one, thus shall we keep our adversities at bay, and overcome them as they advance in single file; but let us not venture into the plain-amidst the innumerable hordes of Persians, or we shall speedily be swallowed up, and our faith and patience will be overcome.

914. Trials, Profit of

Tribulations are treasures; and if we were wise, we should reckon our afflictions among our rarest jewels. The caverns of sorrow are mines of diamonds. Our earthly possessions may be silver, but temporal trials are, to the saints, invariably gold. We may grow in grace through what we enjoy, but we probably make the greatest progress through what we suffer. Soft gales may be pleasant for heaven-bound vessels, but rough winds are better. The calm is our way, but God hath his way in the whirlwind, and he rides on the wings of the wind. Saints gain more by their losses than by their profits. Health cometh out of their sicknesses, and wealth floweth out of their poverties.

915. Trials, Quickening Nature of

There is an old story in the Greek annals of a soldier under Antigonus who had a disease about him, an extremely painful one, likely to bring him soon to the grave. Always first in the ranks was this soldier, and in the hottest part of the fray; he was always to be seen leading the van, the bravest of the brave, because his pain prompted him to fight that he might forget it; and he feared not death, because he knew that in any case he had not long to live. Antigonus, who greatly admired the valour of his soldier, finding out that he suffered from a disease, had him cured by one of the most eminent physicians of the day, but, alas! from that moment the warrior was absent from the front of the battle. He now sought his ease, for, as he remarked to his companions, he had something worth living for—health, home, family, and other comforts, and he would not risk his life now as aforesaid. So when our troubles are many, we are made courageous in serving our God, we feel that we have nothing to live for in this world, and we are driven by hope of the world to come to exhibit zeal, self-denial, and industry; but how often is it otherwise in better times? for then the joys and pleasures of this world make it hard for us to remember the world to come, and we sink into inglorious ease. Master, we thank thee for our griefs, for they have quickened us. We bless thee for winds and waves, for these have driven us away from treacherous shores. Before we were afflicted we went astray, but now have we kept thy word.

916. Trials the Strengtheners of Life

I know not whether all soldiers love the thought of war, but there are many who pant for a campaign. How many an officer of low rank has said, "There is no promotion, no hope of rising, no honours, as if we had to fight. If we could rush to the cannon's mouth there would be some hope that we might gain promotion in the ranks." Men get few medals to hang upon their breasts who never knew the smell of gunpowder. The brave days, as men call them, of Nelson and Trafalgar, have gone by, and we thank God for it; but still we do not expect to see such brave old veterans, the offspring of this age, as those who are still to be found lingering in our hospitals, the relics of

our old campaigns. No, brethren, we must have trials if we are to get on. Young men do not become midshipmen altogether through going to the school at Greenwich and climbing the mast on dry land; they must go out to sea. We must go out to sea and really be on deck in the storm, we must have stood side by side with king David, we must have gone down into the pit to slay the lion, or have lifted up the spear against the eight hundred. Conflicts bring experience, and experience brings that growth in grace which is not to be attained by any other means.

917. Tribulation, Glorifying in

It is joy, when between the millstones crushed like an olive, to yield nothing but the oil of thankfulness; when bruised beneath the flail of tribulation, still to lose nothing but the chaff, and to yield to God the precious grain of entire submissiveness. Why, this is a little heaven upon earth. To glory in tribulations also, this is a high degree of up-climbing towards the likeness of our Lord. Perhaps the usual communions which we have with our Beloved, though exceeding precious, will never equal those which we enjoy when we have to break through thorns and briars to be at him; when we follow him into the wilderness then we feel the love of our espousals to be doubly sweet. It is a joyous thing when in the midst of mournful circumstances, we yet feel that we cannot mourn, because The Bridegroom is with us. Blessed is that man who in the most terrible storm is driven in not from his God, but even rides upon the crest of the lofty billows nearer towards heaven. Such happiness is the Christian's lot. I do not say that every Christian possesses it, but I am sure that every Christian ought to do so. There is a highway to heaven, and all in it are safe; but in the middle of that road there is a special way, an inner path, and all who who walk therein are happy as well as safe. Many professors are only just within the hedge, they walk in the ditch by the road side, and because they are safe there, they are content to put up with all the inconveniences of their walk; but he who takes the crown of the causeway, and walks in the very centre of the road that God has cast up, shall find that no lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon, for there the Lord himself shall be his companion, and will manifest himself to him. You shallow Christians who do but believe in Christ, and barely that, whose Bibles are unread, whose closets are unfrequented, whose communion with God is a thing of spasms, you have not the joy of the Lord, neither are you strong. I beseech you, rest not as you are, but let your conscious feebleness provoke you to seek the means of strength: and that means of strength is to be found in a pleasant medicine, sweet as it is profitable—the delicious and effectual medicine of "the joy of the Lord."

918. Tribulation leading to Hell

There is a groundless notion abroad, that those who are badly off in this world will certainly have it made up to them in the world to come; and I have heard the parable of Lazarus and Dives quoted as though it taught that those who are poor here will be rich hereafter. There is not a shadow of reason for any such belief. You may go through much tribulation to hell as well as to heaven; and as a man may have two heavens, here and hereafter, by living near to God, so may a man have two hells, the hell which he bringeth upon himself in this life by his extravagances, his wickedness, and his lust, and the hell that shall be his punishment for ever in the world to come. Believe me, many a ragged, loathsome beggar has been damned; he was as poor as Lazarus, but not as gracious as he, and therefore no angels carried him to Abraham's bosom. There is no efficacy in the tongues of dogs to lick away sin, neither can a hungry belly atone for a guilty soul. Many a soul

has begged for crumbs on earth, and has afterwards craved in vain for water in hell. You must take care not to suck poisonous error out of the flowers of truth.

919. Triflers, Danger of

One of our city missionaries was witness to a deadful scene, when in a poor house he found persons playing cards, using for a table a coffin covered with a white cloth, the coffin containing the father of the family. This was a mournful instance of hardness of heart, but in some aspects all triflers with religion are in much the same condition, for their souls are in jeopardy of eternal wrath, and yet they persevere in their merriment; they enjoy their frivolities while God's sword is furbished and bathed in heaven, and must ere long smite them to destruction.

920. Triumph of the Saints

All true believers who really trust in Jesus' love, and are really fired with it, will be far more glorious than the Roman conqueror when he drove his milk white steeds through the imperial city's streets; then the young men and maidens, matrons and old men, gathered to the windows and chimney-tops, and scattered flowers upon the conquering legions as they came along; but what is this compared with the triumph which is going on even now as the great host of God's elect come streaming through the streets of the New Jerusalem? What flowers are they which angels strew in the path of the blessed? What songs are those which rise from yonder halls of Zion, conjubilant with song as the saints pass along to their everlasting habitations?

921. Trouble a Test of Friendship

Somebody has thrown a handful of mud at a professed Christian: let us clear the coast, for the mud may light upon us too. So say cowards, but so say not we. No, brother, if you belong to the army of Immanuel, and our persecuted brother has done no wrong, let us stand or fall by him. Let us never desert a comrade. If the world says, "Down with him! down with him! down with him!" we will rush like the old Greek hero to the rescue, and hold our shield over the fallen one, fighting for him till he can get up again; for one of these days we may be down too, and we may want a brother soldier to cover us from the enemy. Let us pray our brethren out of their troubles and not desert them, and if that prayer should be long before it gets an answer, let us persevere in importunity, saying with David, "Yet my prayer shall be in their calamities."

922. Trouble, Fellowship with Christ in

We should never have such fellowship with Jesus as we do if we had not such troubles as we have. You cannot see the stars in the daytime, but they tell us that if you go down into a well you can. Sometimes God sinks wells of trouble and puts his servants into them, and then they see his starry promises. You might hunt in vain for glowworms by day, but they shall all be seen at night, and so shall the comfortable words and thoughts of Holy Scripture. The fire-flies shall flash best at night when the sunlight is gone, and so oftentimes the light of the promises is better seen in the night of trouble than in the day of outward prosperity. The black foils of trouble shall bring out the brighter jewel of divine grace. You cannot know Christ except by following in his footsteps. Poverty will reveal him who for our sakes became poor; sickness will show him whose visage was more marred than any man's; shame will teach you his shame, and suffering will reveal to you his suffering; and even death itself, which shall remove the foundations, shall give you conformity to

his death that you may have part in his resurrection.

923. Trouble Leading Heavenwards

Severe trouble in a true believer has the effect of loosening the roots of his soul earthward, and tightening the anchor-hold of his heart heavenward. How can he love the world which has become so drear to him? Why should he seek lifier grapes so bitter to his taste? Should he not now ask for the wings of a dove that he may fly away to his own dear country, and be at rest for ever? Every mariner on the sea of life knows that when the soft zephyrs blow men tempt the open sea with outspread sails, but when the black tempest comes howling from its den they hurry with all speed to the haven. Afflictions clip our wings with regard to earthly things, so that we cannot fly away from our dear Master's hand, but sit there and sing to him; but the same afflictions make our wings grow with regard to heavenly things: we are feathered like eagles, we catch the soaring spirit, a thorn is in our nest, and we spread our pinions towards the sun.

924. Trouble Sure to Succeed to Great Deliverances A little inconvenience in getting into your pews; a hasty word spoken by somebody outside the gate; the thought of a child at home, something which is very little and insignificant compared with all that God has wrought for you, will sometimes take away the present joy and comfort of the great, the unspeakably great, boons which you know you have received. You may know your standing in Christ, and yet some little trouble keeps buzzing about your ears, and may be distracting you even now. Let me say two or three words to you. It is very usual for God's people, when they have had some great deliverance, to have some little trouble that is too much for them. Samson slays a thousand Philistines, and piles them up in heaps, and then he must needs die for want of a little water! Look at Jacob; he wrestles with God at Peniel, and overcomes omnipotence itself, and yet he goes "halting on his thigh!" Strange, is it not, that there must be a touching of the sinew whenever you and I win the day?

925. Troubles not to be Met Beforehand

Yonder man is employed in carrying sacks of flour every day. He carries so many hundredweight each time, and in the day it comes to tons; and so many tons a day will come to an enormous mass in a year. Now, suppose, on the first of January, this man were to calculate the year's load, and say, "I have all that immense mass to carry; I cannot do it;" you would remind him that he has not to carry it all at once; he has all the work-days of the year to carry it in. So we put all our troubles together, and we cry, "However shall I get over them?" Well, they will only come one at a time, and as they come the strength will come with them. A man who has walked a thousand miles did not traverse the thousand miles at a step, nor in a day, but he took his time and did it; and we also must take our time, and with patience we shall accomplish our work. A fine lesson for us all is that word wait, wait, WAIT.

926. Troubles, Self-made

It is bad to make troubles. I always say of home-made troubles, that they are very like home-made clothes, they never fit well, and they are generally a long while before they are worn out. You had better take the troubles God sends you; they are more suitable for you; you will be able to carry them, and you will be able to get over them by his grace.

927. Troubles Turned into Blessings

Some fruit which you gather from your trees is of such a nature that if you were to try and eat it in the autumn it would be very sour, and would make you very unwell; but just store it up a little, and see how luscious and juicy it becomes! It is a pity to destroy the fruit and pain yourself by premature use! It is just so with your troubles, they are all darkness now, do not meddle with them, leave them till God has ripened them and turned them into light.

928. Trusting in Christ

I recollect standing at the Mansion House one day, waiting to cross over to the other side, when the omnibuses were coming from all the corners of the compass, and I was looking for an opportunity to run in and out between them. A blind man came up and said, "I am sure you will lead me across; I am sure you will lead me across." I am sure I did not want the job; but I was quite sure that, if the blind man was sure I would do it, I could not decline to do it; and I did it accordingly. I did not like to have a blind man's confidence thrown away; it seemed as if his confidence was my compulsion. And, oh, blind sinner, lay hold upon the skirts of Christ tonight, and say, "Jesus, I believe thou wilt lead me into heaven. At any rate, I mean to trust thee to do it. I have done with saving myself, and I mean to rely on thee, and thee only." I tell you, your faith will compel him; you] trust shall hold him fast; he will do anything for faith.

929. Christ, Dilution of the

I have likened the career of certain divines to the journey of a Roman wine cask from the vineyard to the city. It starts from the wine-press as the pure juice of the grape, but at the first halting-place the drivers of the cart must needs quench their thirst, and when they come to a fountain they substitute water for what they have drunk. In the next village there are numbers of lovers of wine who beg or buy a little, and the discreet carrier dilutes again. The watering is repeated, till, on its entrance into Rome, the fluid is remarkably different from that which originally started from the vineyard. There is a way of doctoring the gospel in much the same manner. A little truth is given up, and then a little more, and men fill up the vacuum with opinions, inferences, speculations, and dreams, till their wine is mixed with water, and the water none of the best.

930. Truth, Freedom of When winds may be manacled, when waves be fettered, and when clouds may be shut up in dungeons, then, nay not even then, may the Word of God be bound. The free spirit of the cross of Christ cannot be vanquished by armies, nor can legions tread it down. If our devotion hovered around an earthly shrine, and could only be presented by a certain order of men, robed in a peculiar garb, and chanting a peculiar ritual, then the truth of Christ might be put down for awhile, if not extinguished; but we depend on none of these things, we can as well worship God in barns as in basilicas, in catacombs as in cathedrals; ploughmen and paupers are as much priests to God as presbyters or prelates; and solemn silence may yield as true praise as the voices of the sons of music with all their pipes and organs. Our religion is so spiritual that death itself in ridding us of these material bodies shall rather assist than injure our devotions, so that we laugh to scorn both spear, and sword, and buckler, for our holy faith is beyond the reach of carnal weapons.

931. Truth, Superficial Belief in

We are superficial in our beliefs: we are often drenched with truth, and yet it runs off from us like water from a marble slab; but affliction, as it were, ploughs us and sub-soils us, and opens up our hearts, so that into our innermost nature the truth penetrates and soaks like rain into ploughed land. Blessed is that man who receives the truth of God into his inmost self; he shall never lose it, but it shall be the life of his spirit.

932. Truth to be Held Firmly

Oh! there is a light way of holding truth, and there is a tenacious way of grasping it. I have held doctrines, as it were, in my hand, like a boy's ball, that might be thrown away. But it is another thing when the King prints the mark of the doctrine right into your very soul, so that you could no more part with it than you could part with life itself. Trials often burn doctrines into us, and heresies and infidelities make the good confession dear in our sight as a prize which we could never part with. Thus opposition to the truth leads to the multiplication of evidences in its support, and the more we are assailed with the arguments of science, falsely so-called, the firmer we adhere to the oracles of God.

933. Truthfulness, the Result of Grace

There are persons who cannot brook to speak the truth. To them two must always be twenty; to their eyesight the faults of any neighbour are crimes, and the virtues of any, except their especial favourites, are always tinged with vice; naturally they have a malicious judgment towards others, they are envious of anything that is honourable in their fellow man. Now, what sayest thou, sir? Art thou willing to be made whole, and from this hour to speak nothing but the truth towards God and towards man? I am afraid many a tongue that is glib now would have little to say if it said nought but truth, and many a man might and would, if he were honest enough to say it, refuse the benediction of being made perfectly truthful.

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934. Unchanging Love From Gethsemane to Golgotha, along the blood-besprinkled road, you see proof that having loved his own he loved them to the end. Not all the pains of death could shake his firm affection to his own. They may bind his hands, but his heart is not restrained from love; they may scourge him, but they cannot drive out of him his affection to his beloved; they may slanderously revile him, but they cannot compel him to say a word against his people; they may nail him to the accursed tree, and they may bid him come down from the cross, and they will believe on him, but they cannot tempt him to forsake his work of love; he must press forward for his people's sake until he can say, "It is finished."

935. Unction, Preaching with

I wonder how long we might beat our brains before we could plainly put into words what is meant by preaching with unction! yet he who preaches knows its presence, and he who hears soon detects its absence; Samaria, in famine, typifies a discourse without it; Jerusalem, with her feasts of fat things, full of marrow, may represent a sermon enriched with it. Everyone knows what the freshness of the morning is when orient pearls abound on every blade of grass, but who can describe it, much less produce it of himself? Such is the mystery of spiritual anointing; we know, but we cannot tell to others what it is. It is as easy as it is foolish to counterfeit it, as some do who use expressions which are meant to betoken fervent love, but oftener indicate sickly sentimentalism or mere cant.

936. Unemployed Christians A Greek historian desired very intensely to say a word about the people of the city where he was born. He felt he could not write his history without saying something of his own native place, and accordingly he wrote this—"While Athens was building temples, and Sparta was waging war, my countrymen were doing nothing." I am afraid there are too many Christians, of whom, if the book were written as to what they are doing in the Church, it would have to be said, they have been doing nothing all their lives.

937. Ungodly, Fearful Picture of the

Think ye for awhile what the ungodly man's life is! I can only compare it to that famous diabolical invention of the Inquisition of ancient times. They had as a fatal punishment for heretics, what they called the "Virgin's Kiss." There stood in a long corridor the image of the Virgin. She outstretched her arms to receive her heretic child; she looked fair, and her dress was adorned with gold and tinsel, but as soon as the poor victim came into her arms the machinery within began to work, and the arms closed and pressed the wretch closer and closer to her bosom, which was set with knives, and daggers, and lancets, and razors, and everything that could cut and tear him, till he was ground to pieces in the horrible embrace; and such is the ungodly man's life. It standeth like a fair virgin, and with witching smile it seems to say, "Come to my bosom, no place so warm and blissful as this;" and then anon it begins to fold its arms of habit about the sinner, and he sins again and again, brings misery into his body, perhaps, if he fall into some form of sin, stings his

soul, makes his thoughts a case of knives to torture him, and grinds him to powder beneath the force of his own iniquities. Men perceive this, and dare not deny it; and yet into this virgin's bosom they still thrust themselves, and reap the deep damnation that iniquity must everywhere involve.

938. Union at the Cross The Churchman, laden with his many forms and vestments; the Presbyterian, with his stern covenant and his love of those who stained the heather with their blood; the Independent, with his passion for stern liberty, and the separateness of the churches; the Methodist with his various intricate forms of church government, sometimes forms of bondage, but still forms of power; the Baptist, remembering the ancient pedigree and the days in which his fathers were hounded even by Christians themselves, and counted not worthy of that name—they come, they come! Multitudes of opinions divide them; they see not eye to eye; here and there they will have a skirmish for the old landmarks; and rightly so, for we ought to be jealous, as Josiah was, to do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, and neither decline to the right hand or to the left. But, to the cross! To the cross! To the cross! and then, all weapons of internecine war being cast aside, we are brethren, fellow-comrades in blessed evangelical alliance; we are prepared to suffer and to do for his dear sake. Forward then, Christians, to the point of union! Much as I value thorough reformation in times of peace, little care I for aught beside the cross in the day we defend our coasts, or when the hosts go forth to battle.

939. Unity of Life

Find a drop of water glittering in the rainbow, leaping in the cataract, rippling in the rivulet, lying silent in the stagnant pool, or dashing in spray against the vessel's side, that water claims the kinship with every drop of water the wide world over, because it is the same in its elements; and even so there is a unity of the Spirit which we cannot imitate, which consists in our being "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," bearing in us the Holy Ghost as our daily quickener, and walking in the path of faith in the living God. Here is the unity of spirit, a unity of life, nature working itself out in love.

940. Unsaved, Incapable of Enjoying Religion

Alphonse Karr tells a story of a servant-man who asked his master to be allowed to leave his cottage and sleep over the stable. What was the matter with his cottage? "Why, sir, the nightingales all around the cottage make such a 'jug, jug, jug' at night, that I cannot bear them." A man with a musical ear would be charmed with the nightingale's song, but here was a man without a musical soul who found the sweetest notes a nuisance. This is a feeble image of the incapacity of unregenerate man for the enjoyments of the world to come, and as he is incapable of enjoying them, so is he incapable of longing for them. But if you and I have grown out of all taste for the things of sin and time, and are sighing for holy, godly joys, we have therein an evidence that God has wrought in us by his grace, and will continue to do so till we are made perfect and immortal.

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942. Valour, Exhortation to

O anxious gazer! look not at the battle so much below, for there thou shalt be enshrouded in smoke and amazed with garments rolled in blood; but lift thine eyes yonder where thy Saviour lives and pleads, for while he intercedes the cause of God is safe. Let us fight as if it all depended upon us, but let us look up and know that all depends upon him. Now by the lilies of Christian purity and by the roses of the Saviour's atonement, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, we charge you who are lovers of Jesus to do valiantly in the Holy War; for truth and righteousness, for the kingdom and crown jewels of your Master, against the harlot of Rome and the many-headed beast on which she rides, charge ye with dauntless courage.

943. Value of the Saints to Christ Had Napoleon spoken forth his mind about the lives of men in the day of battle, he would have likened them to so much water spilt upon the ground. To win a victory, or subdue a province, it mattered not though he strewed the ground with corpses thick as autumn leaves, nor did it signify though in every village orphans and widows wailed the loss of sires and husbands. What were the deaths of conscript peasants when compared with the fame of the Emperor? So long as Austria was humbled, or Russia invaded, little cared the imperial Corsican though half the race had perished. Not thus is it with the King of kings; he spares the poor and needy, and saves the souls of the needy, and precious shall their blood be in his sight. Our glorious Leader never squanders the lives of his soldiers; he values the church militant beyond all price; and though he permits his saints to lay down their lives for his sake, yet is not one life spent in vain, or unnecessarily expended.

944. Veil Rent by Christ

You remember, when Christ died, the veil of the temple was rent in twain. There was not a little slit for little sinners to creep through, but it was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, so that big sinners might come, just in the same way as when Samson pulled up gates, posts, bar, and all, there was a clear way out into the country for all who were locked up in the town. Prisoner, the prison doors are open. Captive, loose the bonds on thy neck; be free! I sound the trump of jubilee. Bond-slaves, Christ hath redeemed you.

945. Victory of the Christian

Hebe is a champion just come from the Greek games; he has well nigh killed his adversary in a severe boxing match, and he comes in to receive the crown. Step up to him, look at that arm, and observe the thews and sinews. Why! the man's muscles are like steel, and you say to him, "I do not wonder that you beat and bruised your foe; if I had set up a machine made of steel, and worked by a little watery vapour, it could have done the same, though nothing but mere matter would have been at work. You are a stronger man and more vigorous in constitution than your foe: that is clear; but where is the particular glory about that? One machine is stronger than another. No doubt, credit is to be given to you for your endurance, after a sort; but you are just one big

brute beating another big brute. Dogs, and bulls, and game-cocks, and all kinds of animals, would have endured as much, and perhaps more." Now, see the Christian champion coming from the fight, having won the victory! Look at him! He has overcome human wisdom; but when I look at him I perceive no learning nor cunning: he is a simple, unlettered person, who just knows that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; yet he has won the victory over profound philosophers: then he is more than a conqueror. He has been tempted and tried in all sorts of ways, and he was not at all a crafty person; he was very weak, yet somehow he has conquered. Now this is being more than a conqueror, when weakness overcomes strength, when brute force is baffled by gentleness and love. This is victory indeed, when the little things overcome the great things; when the base things of this world overthrow the mighty; and the things that are not bring to nought the things that are: yet this is just the triumph of grace. The Christian is, viewed according to the eye of sense, weak as water; yet faith knows him to be irresistible. According to the eye of sense, he is a thing to be trampled upon, for he will not resist; and yet, in the sight of God he becomes in this very way, by his gentleness and patience, more than a conqueror.

946. Victory of the Christian, Certainty of The fight may seem to hang in the scales to-day, but the conquest is sure to come unto him whose right it is. He shall gather all the sceptres of kings beneath his arm in one mighty sheaf, and take their diadems from off their brows, and be himself crowned with many crowns, for God hath said it, and heaven and earth shall pass away, but every promise of his must and shall be fulfilled. Push on, then, through hosts of enemies, ye warriors of the cross. Fight up the hill, ye soldiers of Christ, through the smoke and through the dust. Ye may not see your banner just now, neither do ye hear the trumpet that rings out the note of victory, but the mist shall clear away, and you shall gain the summit of the hill, and your foes shall fly before you, and the King himself shall come, and you shall be rewarded who have continued steadfast in his service.

947. Victory over Difficulties, Resolution to obtain

There is nothing but what you can make a way through if you can find something harder to bore it with. Look at the Mont Cenis tunnel, made through one of the hardest of known rocks: with a sharp tool, edged with diamond, they have pierced the heart of the Alps, and made a passage for the commerce of nations. As St. Bernard says:—"Is thy work hard? set a harder resolution against it, for there is nothing so hard that it cannot be cut by something harder still." May the Spirit of God work in thee invincible resolution and unconquerable perseverance. Let not the iron break the northern iron and the steel. Under persecutions and difficulties, let God's people resolve on victory, and by faith they shall have it, for according to our faith so shall it be unto us.

948. Victory, the Church's Watchword A message came to Sir Colin Campbell at the Alma, that Her Majesty's Guards were falling thick and fast beneath the shot, had they not better retire for a little while into safe quarters? The answer was, "It were better, sir, that every one of Her Majesty's Guards should lie dead on this battle field than turn their backs on the enemy." And it is so. Let us die, yea, it were to be devoutly wished rather than that we lived a coward's life! Let the preacher first of all be carried to his grave, let him never live to see the shame of this Israel. Let these eyes be sealed in death rather than behold "Ichabod" written on these walls. No, brethren, it shall not be; you will serve Jesus, you will love him, and "Onward to victory" shall be your watchword from to-day. Be more in prayer, for this is the great matter. Seek out each one your own sphere of

action; give yourselves wholly to it; and if any grow cold or careless, let him remember Jesus saith, "I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

949. Vision of Christ, Inspiring to Service A vision of the Crucified, my brethren, is that which we want When we are toiling in his harvest-field, and sit down to wipe the sweat from our brow, we grow very weary; the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few: we feel that the edge of our sickle is growing very, very blunt, and we wish we could lie down under the spreading tree from the heat of the sun, and toil no longer; but just then we see the Crucified One coming forward with his mighty sickle; and as we mark the blood-drops streaming from his brow, and see the nail-print in the hand with which he grasps the sickle; when we see how he toils, and how he labours, with what an awful love he sacrifices himself, how he has stripped off his very garments, and, in all the nakedness of self-denial, gives himself up that he may save others while himself he cannot save; then we pluck up heart again, and take our sickle in the hand which once did hang down, saying, "Jesus, I will never be weary, for thou wast not weary; and when I shall be faint awhile, I will see thee, whose meat and drink it was to do thy Father's will, and I will make it my meat and my drink to serve thee." Surely you cannot do God's work so well as when you have Jesus Christ with you.

950. Voice of the Love of Christ

Silent as to vocal utterance, but like familiar tones that sometimes greet us in our dreams, the voice of Christ is distinctly audible to the soul. It will come to you in sweet or in bitter providences; yea, there is such a thing as hearing Christ's voice in the rustling of every leaf upon the tree, in the moaning of every wind, in the rippling of every wave. And there be those that have learned to lean on Christ's bosom, till they have looked for all the world as though they were a shell that lay in the ocean of Christ's love, listening for ever to the sonorous cadence of that deep, unfathomed, all-mysterious main. The billows of his love never cease to swell. The billowy anthem still peals on with solemn grandeur in the ear of the Christian.

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951. Waiting on God for Victory

You have not wasted those many silent prayers and those bitter tears. Those feeble efforts of yours which were so imperfect that you could scarcely hope them to be successful, are all co-operating to produce a victory, the shouts of which shall be heard all down the ages. You may but lay a single stone of the heavenly temple, but if it be done for Christ, it is a stone which will stand the fire, and your share of the building will remain to the last, while many a great one who has built a mass of wood, and hay, and stubble, shall see his labours all consumed in the day that trieth every man's work. O, my fellow soldiers, as we rest in this bivouac to-day, waiting till another fight begins, let us be of good courage, and the Lord shall strengthen our hearts. Wait, I say, on the Lord, for the Lord is on our side. Our foes are tall as Goliath, and mighty as Pharaoh, and proud as Nebuchadnezzar, but in the name of God will we destroy them, for in the name of Jesus again we will say Jehovah-Nissi, and setting up the banner, we follow our Captain, whose vesture is dipped in blood. He rides forth conquering and to conquer, and we follow him to absolute victory; it is but a little ere we shall hear the shout of "Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

952. Watchfulness, Exhortation to

I do not know how far my confession may be echoed by my brethren, but I am shrewdly suspicious that the more wakeful you are, the more heartily will you acknowledge a terrible tendency in the other direction. Again let me remind you that to sleep now is an evil thing, dangerous to yourselves, a cruel thing to others, an ungrateful act towards Christ, and dishonourable to his cause. Shall such a King be served by lie-a-bed soldiers? Shall his midnight pleadings be repaid by our daylight sleepiness? Shall an agony of bloody sweat be recompensed by heavy eyelids and yawning mouths? Away, for ever away, O ye who are redeemed by the Wellbeloved, with this detestable slumber, of which I fear you must honestly confess yourselves to have been guilty!

953. Watching and Praying A child would generally stand on his feet in a gust of wind if he knew it was coming; but when the wind happens to come round a corner furiously, he may be taken off his feet. Mind you are well ballasted by prayer every morning before your vessel puts out to sea, or, carrying the quantity of sail you do, you may be blown over upon the waves to your perpetual shipwreck. Watch constantly against those things which are thought to be no temptations. The most poisonous serpents are found where the sweetest flowers grow, and when Cleopatra would have an asp to poison herself, it was brought in a basket of fair flowers. Beware of arrows shot from a golden bow, or by a woman's hand. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

954. Watering Other, a Work for All Believers

If I cannot carry about me some ponderous load as the Eastern water-bearer can, yet I will take my little waterpot, my little jug or pitcher, and go to the well; for if I cannot water the forest tree, I may water the tiny plant which grows at its root. Watering is work for all sorts of people; so then we will make a personal application to every Christian here: you can all do something in watering, and

this promise can therefore be realised by you all, "He that watereth shall be watered also himself."

955. Way of Salvation, Simplicity of, a Stumbling Block The Pharisees came to Christ, and they said, making a great fuss about their zeal, "What shall we do? Oh, sir, here is our money; here is our talent; here is our time: what shall we do that we may work the work of God?" They opened all their ears and all their eyes. They thought he would say, "Give tithing of mint, and anise, and cummin." They thought he would say, "Be careful to wash your hands every time you eat meat; give your money to the poor; endow a row of almshouses; become monks; lacerate your backs; tear your flesh," He said nothing of the kind; but they wondered, I have no doubt, what he was going to say, and they seemed to be all on tiptoe. "Now he is going to tell us the greatest work that a creature can do." "What shall we do that we may work the work of God?" He answers to them thus: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent." Ah, then they went away directly. No, no, such a simple thing and such a humbling thing as this—they would not do that. Now, there are some of you say, "Why don't you preach morality?" "Talk of morality!" says Cowper—"Thou bleeding Lamb, the best morality is love to thee;" and so indeed it is. But if I were now to say, and should tell you that I was commissioned by God to say it, that if you walked from here to John o'Groats house in the cold and wet bare-footed, and ate nothing on the way but dry bread, and drank nothing but water, you should inherit eternal life, why you would all be on the road to-morrow morning, if not tonight; but when it is just this, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved," what then? Why, it is too simple; fool, fool that thou art, to be damned because the way is too simple! My anger waxes hot against thee, that thou shouldest play the fool with thine own soul! Too easy! and so thou wilt be damned because it is too easy? Think of a man that has a disease that is killing him, and he will not take the medicine because it is too simple; he will not apply to the physician because his terms are too cheap; he will not apply such and such a remedy because it is too simple! Then, when that man dies, who shall pity him? who can? Did he not reject the remedy from the worst and emptiest of all motives? "Oh," says one, "but, simple as it is, it seems too hard for me; I cannot believe!" Sinner, what can you not believe?—cannot believe that if Jesus Christ took human sin, and was punished for it, God can be just in forgiving it? Why, you can believe that! "Cannot believe," that is, cannot trust Christ. Why, poor soul, I should find it the hardest work in the world if I were to try not to trust him, for he is such a precious Saviour, such a mighty Saviour, that I can say with John Hyatt that I would not only trust him with one soul, but with a million souls if I had them.

956. Wealth, Responsibility of

There is a responsibility attaching to wealth which some do not seem to realise. Among our great men, how few use money as they should! Their gifts are nothing in proportion to their possessions. Alas! things are even worse than this with some who are miscalled honourable and noble. Our hereditary legislators are some of them a dishonour to their ancient houses, and a disgrace to the peerage, from which they ought to be ignominiously expelled. What right have gamblers to be making laws? How shall we trust those with the affairs of the nation who bring themselves down to poverty by their gambling, and set an example which the poorest peasant might well scorn to follow? God will visit our land for this. Wickedness reigns in high places, and there the reckoning will begin. Would to God that our great men would recollect that they are responsible, and that wealth is not given them to lavish upon their passions, but to employ for God and for the common weal. If your cup runs over, call the poor to catch the drops, and give an extra spill that they may

have the more.

957. Weariness Cured by Looking to Christ

If you are getting weary in the battle of life and tired of serving God, "Behold the Lamb of God!" wrestling unto blood, and your courage will return. Reaper in the summer's heat, see him as he grasps the sickle with that pierced hand! What strides he makes, how untiringly he labours till his bloody sweat falls on the ground. Up and do thy reaping too, working at his side. Builder in the house of God, if thou seest not the temple rising as thou couldst desire, lay not down thy trowel or thy mallet, but see the master-builder standing there with indefatigable perseverance following out his glorious design. Let not self-denial or self-sacrifice be hard when the Lamb of God is before thee. Let not perseverance be difficult, or shame, or scorn be hard to endure, or defeat, or death itself, be impossible to triumph in, when the Lamb of God is before thee. He conquered upon Golgotha, perhaps thou wilt only conquer there. Only keep thine eye upon the Lamb of God and this will make thee strong to do and to endure.⁹⁵⁸ Will of God the Guarantee of Success That was a mighty cry which was once profaned to purposes of fanaticism under the preaching of Peter the Hermit, "Deus vult" "God wills it." It sounded through Christendom, it made monarchs exchange their crowns for helmets, it made the artisan throw down his hammer to grasp the spear, it changed men's ploughshares into swords, and their pruning hooks into spears, and they rushed to die in Palestine, under the dominant idea of clearing that holy land from Pagan intrusion. Oh that such an impulse would go through Christendom again for a higher and a nobler purpose, "Deus vult!" The Lord wills it! Let truth banish error! Let superstition yield to the gospel! Let forms and ceremonies fly before the doctrines of free grace! Let every knee bow at the name of Jesus, because "Deus vult!" Let the Crucified be everywhere adored, for God wills it. If this force shall not move all Christendom, at any rate let it influence our own hearts, and may we take heed to God's commandments because they express his will.

959. Will of Man to be Surrendered to God

We cannot serve the Lord if we pick and choose our duties. He who enlists in the army of the Most High, surrenders his will to the discipline of the army and the bidding of the Captain. Whatsoever Christ bids any of us do in the future, we must unhesitatingly perform. It may be that his finger will point to distant lands, thither must we go cheerfully. We must follow the pillar of cloud without repining. We may be called to posts of labour for which we feel ourselves to be inadequate; we may be bidden to attempt work from which our spirit as yet recoils, but if we be called to it, it is not ours to ask the reason why; it is ours, if necessary, even to dare and die in serving the Lord. What hast thou to do with finding strength? It is his to give it thee in the hour of need. What hast thou to do with likings or dislikings? Servants must like that which their masters bid them. Man, thy will must be subdued; thy prejudices, instead of being pampered, must be destroyed; thou must be as willing to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water as to be a prince and a standard-bearer; thou must be as content to teach a little child his letters for Christ as to testify the gospel before an audience of kings. To thee it must be equal whether thou shalt sit on a throne for Christ or rot in a dungeon for Christ. He only is a sincere servant who is intent upon doing the whole of his Lord's will, let that will be what it may.

960. Winning Souls, Importance of

If a woman had the charge of a number of children that were not her own, I do not suppose she would notice some of the incipient stages of disease; but when a mother nurses her own dear children, she scarcely for an hour permits the first symptoms of disease to go unnoticed. As soon as ever, upon the cheek or in the eye, there is some token of approaching sickness, she perceives it at once. I wish we had just as quick an eye, just as tender a heart, towards precious souls. Men that are making money, when their hearts are set upon gain, can always see their chance. Where a clerk employed in the office sees nothing, because he has not an interest in it, the principal, who is to make the profit, quick as thought, perceives the way to work; and when our hearts are set on winning souls and getting treasure for Christ, we shall soon see the first good sign and opportunity, and we shall be at once ready to do what is required.

961. Without Christ A soul without Christ! Why, it were better for thee, man, that thou hadst never been born if thou shalt continue so! thou would'st be better off with the millstone about thy neck, and cast into the sea, if that would make an end of thee. Thou wert happier far than thou art now without Christ, for without Christ thou art without God, and without hope in the world. Thou art a sheep lost on the mountains, and no Shepherd to find thee; a soul wandering in the blackness of darkness, and no lamp to guide thy wandering footsteps; and soon thou wilt be a desolate spirit, without a comfort, without a home, shut out in the blackness of darkness for ever! Does not that make thee long for Christ? Oh! it would, if I could make thee feel what I can only say. I can only deal with your outward ears; my Master must deal with your hearts; and I do pray him, by his mighty Spirit, to make you feel so wretched without Christ, that you will not dare to sleep until you have sought him, and laid hold upon him, and said, "I will not let thee go!"

962. Wonders, Folly of Waiting for

Riding along I see in the hedgerow a tree with rich fruit upon it, I am surprised, I do not know how it came there, it is a very unusual thing to see our garden fruit-trees in public hedgerows; but when I have seen I do not think any the less of my neighbour who over yonder is planting fruit-trees in his orchard. That is the ordinary way to get fruit. If now and then a fruit-tree springs up upon the heath, if we are hungry, we are glad to pluck the fruit—we do not know how it got there, and it is of no consequence that we should know, there is the fruit, and we are glad of it: but still we do not give up our orchard. Because sometimes a man finds a shilling, does he give up work? Extraordinary events in nature are always treated as such, and are not made the rule of every-day action; even thus wise men treat unusual displays of divine power. To forego regular agency that we may wait for wonders, were as idle as to leave the regular pursuits of commerce to live upon the waifs washed up by the sea.

963. Word of God destined to Triumph When I have seen a text sometimes in the hand of the enemy made use of against the deity of Christ, or against the doctrine of election, or against some other important and vital doctrine, I have not felt at all inclined to give up the text or think lightly of it. I rather admire those Americans in the South, who, when they had lost some guns, were asked by the commanding officer whether they had not spiked the guns before they gave them up to the foe? "Spiked them! no," said they, "we did not like to spoil such beautiful guns; we will take them again to-morrow." And so they did. I would not have a text touched. Grand old text! we honour thee even while we cannot keep the field, or ward thee from the aggression of the invader. But shall we spoil it, or give it up as lost? Never, we will take it out of the hand of the enemy, use it for

the defence of the gospel, and show that it does not mean what they think, or answer the ends to which they would apply it. Are we baffled in attack, or do we lose ground in an argument, it is for us by more diligent study and closer research, to take the guns, the good old guns, and use those which the enemy used against ourselves—to turn them round and use them against him.

964. Word of God Food to a Believer

There is a great deal of error in many Christians, and a great deal of sin, and many try to correct the error and remove the sin, and they do well; but have you never heard a doctor say, when a person has been covered with some eruption, "I shall not deal with these eruptions at all; I shall apply no ointment. They are caused by the poorness of the patient's blood. I shall recommend to him a generous diet; I shall give him a strengthening medicine which will invigorate the system, and these blotches will disappear as a natural consequence." Depend upon it very many of the faults which are to be condemned in Christians are the result of their not leaning upon God's word, their not knowing the whole of it, especially the strong meat parts of it, as they ought to do; and if they did come to find God's word, and to eat it, their spiritual constitution would be stronger, and then they would throw off many of the ailments that are now such an injury to them, and they would become healthy, vigorous, mighty in the service of God.

965. Word of God in the Heart

We have heard of a certain scholar who used to carry miniature copies of all the classic authors about with him, so that he seemed to have almost a Bodleian in his pocket. O that you would carry miniature Bibles about with you! or, better still, that you had all the word of God constantly with you in your heart, so that you might be able to speak a word in season to them that are weary!

966. Word of God, Interest in the To read a will is not an interesting occupation—repetitions, legal phrases, tautologies multiplied to utter weariness; but if there be a legacy left to you in that will, no writing will be more fascinating; you will trip lightly over the lawyer's fences and five-barred gates, and rejoice as one that findeth spoil when you reach those clauses which leave certain "messuages, tenements, and hereditaments" to yourself and heirs. In such a case every repetition becomes musical, and technical phrases sound harmoniously. After this manner we learn to enjoy the word of God by discovering that we have a part and lot in it. When we perceive that the Lord is calling us and blessing us, then have we found his word. When the divine promise assures us personally that our sin is forgiven, that our spirit is clothed in the righteousness of Christ, that heaven is for us, that we are accepted in the Beloved, then the word is found indeed.

967. Word of God to be Impartially Studied

Beware of picking and choosing in God's word. It is a very dangerous symptom when there is any portion of Scripture that we are afraid to read. If there is one single chapter in the Book that I do not like, it must be because I feel it accuses and condemns me, and my duty ought to be to face that chapter at once and answer its accusation, and endeavour as far as possible to purify myself by God's help from that which the passage of Scripture condemns. Brethren, read that passage most which stings you most.

968. Words of Jesus The works of man will seldom bear close inspection. You shall take a needle which is highly polished, which appears to be without the slightest inequality upon its surface, and

you shall put it under a microscope, and it will look like a rough bar of iron; but you shall select what you will from nature, the bark or the leaf of a tree, or the wing or the foot of an insect, and you shall discover no flaw, magnify it as much as you will, and gaze upon it as long as you please. So take the words of man. The first time you hear them they will strike you; you may hear them again and still admire their sentiment, but you shall soon weary of their repetition, and call them hackneyed and over-estimated. The words of Jesus' are not so; they never lose their dew, they never become threadbare. You may ring the changes upon his words, and never exhaust their music: you may consider them by day and by night, but familiarity shall not breed contempt. You shall beat them in the mortar of contemplation, with the pestle of criticism, and their perfume shall but become the more apparent. Dissect, investigate, and weigh the Master's teaching word by word, and each syllable will repay you. When loitering upon the Island of Liddo, off Venice, and listening to the sound of the city's bells, I thought the music charming as it floated across the lagune; but when I returned to the city, and sat down in the centre of the music, in the very midst of all the bells, the sweetness changed to a horrible clash, the charming sounds were transformed into a maddening din; not the slightest melody could I detect in any one bell, while harmony in the whole company of noisemakers was out of the question. Distance had lent enchantment to the sound. The words of poets and eloquent writers may, as a whole, and heard from afar, sound charmingly enough; but how few of them bear a near and minute investigation! Their belfry rings passably, but one would soon weary of each separate bell. It is never so with the divine words of Jesus. You hear them ringing from afar, and they are sweetness itself. When as a sinner, you roamed at midnight like a traveller lost on the wilds, how sweetly did they call you home! But now you have reached the house of mercy, you sit and listen to each distinct note of love's perfect peal, and wonderingly feel that even angelic harps cannot excel it.

969. Work, a Sphere of, for Every Christian

Out of this whole structure of the human body, every little muscle, every single cell, has its own secretion and its own work; and though some physicians have said this and that organ might be spared, I believe there is not a single thread in the whole embroidery of human nature that could well be spared—the whole of the fabric is required. So in the mystical body, the church, the least member is necessary, the most uncomely member of the Christian church is needful for its growth. Find out, then, what your sphere is, and occupy it. Ask God to tell you what is your niche, and stand in it, occupying the place till Jesus Christ shall come and give you your reward. Use what ability you have, and use it at once.

970. Work, Life the Time for

Mother, you cannot bend over your children and teach them the way of life when you have departed. If you would have them taught in the things of God, your voice at least will never teach them then of the love of Jesus. Missionary, if that district of yours be unattended, and souls be lost, you at least can never make up for the damage you have done, for the mischief which you have caused. Your memory and your love are past. You are gone. The place that knew you once knows you no more. Amongst the deeds of the living you can take no share. If you lifted, by your example, the floodgates of sin, you cannot return to let them down again, or to stem the current. If you missed opportunities of serving Jesus here, you cannot come back again to retrieve them. If one were a warrior, and had lost a battle, one might pant for another day to dawn, for another

conflict yet to retrieve the campaign; but if you lose the battle of life, you shall never have it to fight again. The tradesman may have made a bankruptcy once, but he trusts that, with more careful dealing, he may yet achieve a success. But bankruptcy in our spiritual service is bankruptcy for ever, and we have no chance of retrieving our loss. It is a night in which no man can work. The myriads before the throne can do no service here. The poverty of London they cannot alleviate; its shame and sin they cannot remove. They can praise God, but they cannot help man. They can sing unto him that loved them and washed them, but they cannot preach of him, nor proclaim to those who need to be washed at the fountain that is filled with his blood. It were almost to be desired that they could, for surely they would do the work so much better than we can do it! But the Master has decreed otherwise. They must fight no more: they must stand and look on at the battle. They must delve the field no longer: they shall eat the fruit, but they cannot till the soil. The work is left to those who are still here. Let us have no regrets because they cannot join in it, but rather let us thank God that he reserves to us all the honour as well as all the labour. Let us plunge into the work now. As the British soldiers in battle, when few, were told by their king that he hoped there was not one man there who desired that they should be more; for, said he, "the fewer the men, the greater each man's share of the honour;" so let us scarce desire that we should have helpers from the skies. With the might of God upon us; with the open Word still full of precious promises; with the mercy-seat still rich in blessing; with the Holy Ghost, the irresistible Deity, still dwelling in us; with the precious name of Jesus, which makes hell tremble, still to cheer us, let us go forth, feeling that we "must work while it is day: for the night cometh when no man can work;" that we will work while the day lasteth—hearing the chariot wheels of eternity behind us, we will speed on with all our might and main.

971. Work, Christian, to be Done Speedily The wheels of eternity are sounding behind us; life must be short. To those to whom it is longest it is but brief. Work on, worker! You have scarce time to finish your day's work. Waste not a second. Throw not away these priceless hours. Speed! speed! speed! as with sevenfold wing it glides forward—swifter than the thunderbolt. Oh, pause not, trifle not. Oh, Christian, if thou wouldst take thy crowns up to thy Lord, and great sheaves from the harvest, "work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work." "It is high time," says our apostle, "to awake out of sleep." Would that you would consider it. Be not as those who open their eyes in the morning only to close them again, like the sluggard with the reflection, "I need not bestir myself just yet." But start, man, from thy slumbers as one who feels that he has slept too long, and must now briskly cast off dull sloth, bestirring himself with eager haste to do his appointed task, to redeem the time, to reclaim the golden hours. For, consider this, thy calling is of God, and the King's business requireth haste.

972. Work for Christ, Humble

It comes to this, beloved, anything that can be done for Christ is too good for us to do. Somebody wanted to keep the door! Somebody wanted to rout out the back lanes? Somebody wanted to teach ragged roughs! Somebody wanted to ask people to come to the place of worship, and to lend them their seats, and stand in the aisle while they sit. Well, be it what it may, I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord, or the door mat either, than I would be accounted amongst the noblest in the tents of wickedness. Anything for Jesus, the lower the better; anything for Jesus, the humbler the better; anything for Jesus. The more going down into the deeps, the more thrusting the arms up to the elbows in the mud to find out precious jewels, the more of that the

better. This is the true spirit of the Christian religion. Not the soaring up there to sit among the choristers, and sing in grand style; not the putting on of apparel, and preaching in lawn sleeves; not the going through gaudy and imposing ceremonies—all that is of Babylon, but to strip yourself to the shirt sleeves to fight the battle for Christ, and to go out among men as a humble worker, resolved by any means to save some—this is what your Lord would have you to do, for this is the unloosing the latches of his shoes.

973. Work for Christ, Solemnity of To seek to save souls from going down to the pit is no pastime: to talk of Jesus is no trifle. We do not meet to pray in sport; we do not gather together in supplication as a mere matter of form. Angels are in our midst observing us, the King himself is here. How would you behave if you actually saw Jesus with your eyes? If I were to vacate this pulpit and the crucified One stood here, stretching out his pierced hands and looking down upon you with the mild radiance of his sovereign love, how would you feel? Ask to feel just so, for he is here. Faith can perceive him. Ask to feel just so at this present moment, and so to go out to your work all the remaining days of your life, as a servant of God who is standing in the presence of his Lord upon holy ground, and cannot therefore afford to trifle, since he has solemn work to do, and means to do it in his Master's name.

974. Work for Christ, the Relief in Trouble

I recollect the story of a mother, who, when her little boy was playing in the room, was shedding many bitter tears for her widowhood. Her little boy, who seemed to know right well the source of the mother's grief, came up to her, and putting his arms around her neck, said, "You have got me, mother," and you cannot tell how it comforted her heart as she thought, "Yes, I have a solemn charge in you to train you up to know your father's God, and to follow to the heaven where your father is at rest." The necessary care which she rendered to her little son helped to wipe away the tears which else might long have worn a furrow down her cheeks. There is nothing healthier for the sick, there is nothing more encouraging for the desponding, there is nothing more strengthening for the weak, there is nothing more soul-enriching for the poor in spirit, than for every Christian man among us to gird himself to do something for his Lord and Master.

975. Work of God Humbling When John in Patmos saw the Lord, he fell at his feet as dead; a sense of the glory of his Lord overpowered him: such has been in a degree our own experience, alike in meditating upon Scripture and in wandering in the dark gorges of the Alps. Let a man stand on what is called the Devil's Bridge on the St. Gothard road, where the fury of the Reuss seems lashed to madness—let him look above, beneath, and around, and as he shivers into nothingness let him say, "As for man, whose breath is in his nostrils, wherein is he to be accounted of?"

976. Work of God and Man meeting When the Mont Cenis Tunnel was being made, a party of engineers worked from the Italian side for six years, and expected at the end of that period to see an open roadway through the mountain. They knew that the work would take, at the rate they were going, twelve years at least, and yet they knew it would be completed in six years, because there was another party on the French side working to meet them; and accordingly, in due time, they met to an inch. I cannot understand these miracles of engineering, and do not know how two tunnelling parties manage to meet each other in the heart of an Alp; neither do I know how the Lord's work in men's consciences will fit in with mine, but I am sure it will, and, therefore, in faith I

go on working with all my might.

977. Workers for Christ Unsanctified

It is very possible for a man to get to dislike the very religion which he feels bound still by force of custom to go on teaching to others. "Is that possible?" says one. Alas! that it is. Have you never heard of the flower-girl in the streets? What is her occupation? I dare say some girls like her have passed by and seen her with a great basket full of violets, and said, "What a delightful occupation, to have that fragrant smell for ever near to one!" Yes, but there was one girl who sold them, and said she hated the smell of violets. She had got to loathe them, and to think that there was no smell in the world so offensive, because they were always under her nostrils all day, and taken home to her little scanty room at night, and having nothing but violets around her, she hated them altogether. And I do believe that there are persons without the grace of Christ in their hearts who keep on talking about grace and mercy, and practising prayer, and yet in their heart of hearts they hate the very fragrance of the name of Jesus, and need that there should come upon them an awakening out of their sleep of presumption and hypocrisy, to make them know that, though they thought they were the friends of God, they were, after all, his enemies. They were mere keepers of other men's vineyards, but their own vineyards had gone to ruin.

978. Workers in the Church Unsaved

Years ago Hamburg was nearly half of it burned down, and among the incidents that happened, there was this one. A large house had connected with it a yard in which there was a great black dog, and this black dog in the middle of the night barked and howled most furiously. It was only by his barking that the family were awakened just in time to escape from the flames, and their lives were spared; but the poor dog was chained to his kennel, and though he barked and thus saved the lives of others, he was burned himself. Oh! do not you, who work for God in this church, perish in that fashion. Do not permit your sins to enchain you, so that while you warn others you become lost yourselves. Do see that you have the godliness which has the promise of the life that is to come.

979. Workers' Strength in God

Once on a time certain strong labourers were sent forth by the great King to level a primeval forest, to plough it, to sow it, and to bring him the harvest. They were stout-hearted and strong, and willing enough for labour, and well they needed all their strength and more. One stalwart labourer was named Industry—consecrated work was his. His brother Patience, with thews of steel, went with him, and tired not in the longest days, under the heaviest labours. To help them they had Zeal, clothed with ardent and indomitable energy. Side by side, there stood his kinsman Self-denial, and his friend Importunity. These went forth to their labour, and they took with them, to cheer their toils, their well-beloved sister Hope; and well it was they did, for the forest trees were huge, and needed many sturdy blows of the axe ere they would fall prone upon the ground. One by one they yielded, but the labour was immense and incessant. At night when they went to their rest, the day's work always seemed so light for as they crossed the threshold, Patience, wiping the sweat from his brow, would be encouraged, and Self-denial would be strengthened, for they heard a sweet voice within sing, "God will bless us; God, even our own God, will bless us." They felled the giant trees to the music of that strain; they cleared the acres one by one; they tore from their

sockets the huge roots; they delved the soil; they sowed the corn, and waited for the harvest, often much discouraged, but still in silver chains and golden fetters by the sweet sound of the voice which chanted so constantly, "God, even our own God, will bless us." They never could refrain from service, for she never could refrain from song. They were ashamed to be discouraged, they were shocked to be despairing, for still the voice rang clearly out, at morn and eventide, "God will bless us; God, even our own God, will bless us." You know the parable, you recognise the voice: may you hear it in your souls to-day!

980. Workers' Sympathy with Jesus

I know of no service that can be more distinguished than the doing of good, the scattering of blessings among the sons of men. Methinks the very angels before the throne might envy us poor men who are permitted to talk of Christ, even though it be but to little children. I reckon the humblest ragged-school teacher to be more honoured than even Gabriel himself, in being commissioned to tell out the story of the cross, and to win youthful hearts to the Saviour's service. You are not employed as scullions in your Master's kitchen, though you might be content with such a service; you are not made as his hired servants, to toil in meanest drudgery; you are not sent to be hewers of wood and drawers of water; but you are his friends, the friends of Jesus, to do such work as he did; and even greater work? than he did are you enabled to do, because he hath gone to his Father. "This honour have all the saints," the honour of being gentlemen-at-arms under Jesus, the Captain of their salvation.

981. Workers, Humble, used by God

How often the eminent preachers, which are the church's delight, are brought into the church by those of less degree, even as Simon Peter was converted by Andrew! Who shall tell what might have become of Simon Peter if it had not been for Andrew? Who shall say that the church would ever have possessed a Peter if she had closed the mouth of Andrew? And who shall put their finger upon the brother or sister of inferior talent, and say, "These must hold their peace"? Nay, brother, if thou hast but one talent, the more zealously use it. God will require it of thee; let not thy brethren hold thee back from putting it out to interest. If thou art but as a glowworm's lamp, hide not thy light, for there is an eye predestinated to see by thy light, a heart ordained to find comfort by thy faint gleam. Shine thou, and the Lord accept thee!

982. Works, Impossibility of Salvation by A poor and wretched man dreamed that he was counting out gold. There it stood upon the table before him in great bags, and, as he untied string after string, he found himself wealthy beyond a Croesus' treasures. He was lying upon a bed of straw, in the midst of filth and squalor, a mass of rags and wretchedness; but he dreamed of riches. A charitable friend who had brought him help stood at the sleeper's side, and said, "I have brought you help, for I know your urgent need." Now the man was in a deep sleep, and the voice mingled with his dream as though it were part of it: he replied, therefore, with scornful indignation, "Get ye gone, I need no miserable charity from you; I am possessor of heaps of gold. Can you not see them? I will open a bag and pour out a heap that shall glitter before your eyes." Thus foolishly he talked on, babbling of a treasure which existed only in his dream, till he who came to help him accepted his repulse and departed mournfully. When the man awakened, he had no comfort from his dream, but found that he had been duped by it into rejecting his only friend. Such is the position of every person who is hoping to be saved by his good works. You have no good works except in

your dream. Those things which you supposed to be excellent are really defiled with sin and spoiled with impurity. Jesus stands this morning by you, and cries, "Soul, I have come from heaven to redeem thee. If thou hadst any good works, there had been no need for me to come to save thee; but, inasmuch as thou art naked, and poor, and miserable, I came to earth, and this face was bedewed with sweat of blood, and these hands were pierced, and this side was opened, to work out thy salvation. Take it; I freely present it to thee." Will you, in your sleep this morning, make that sad reply, "Jesus, we are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing. We have neither cursed thy Father's name, nor broken thy Sabbath, nor done aught amiss"? If so, dear friends, you are resting upon a delusion, and will find it so when it is too late.

983. Works, Little, Rewarded by Christ

I know your gifts to his church and his poor are necessarily but little, for yours is the poor widow's portion perhaps, and you can give only your two mites; but I know that, as they fall into the treasury, Jesus sits over against the treasury and hears sweet sounds in the dropping of your gifts. I know your life is such that you mourn over it every day, but still you do serve God in it, and you long to serve him more, and that love of yours is written in the book of the King's record, and you shall be his in the day when he makes up his jewels; and your works shall be his too, for your works shall follow you to the skies when you rise in Jesus, and your reward even for a cup of cold water shall be as sure as it will be gracious, and your entrance into the joy of your Lord shall certainly be bestowed upon you according to the grace which is in Christ Jesus, by which he has accepted you.

984. Works of God, Delight in the

Some people never smile. Dear souls! They pull the blinds down on Sunday. They are sorry that the flowers are so beautiful, and think that they ought to have been whitewashed; they almost believe that if the garden beds were of a little more serious colour, it would be advisable. I have known some, and some whom I very greatly respect, talk in this way. One good brother, whose shoe-latchet I am not worthy to unloose, said, on one occasion, that when he went up the Rhine he never looked at the rocks, or the old castles, or the flowing river, he was so taken up with other things! Why, to me nature is a looking-glass in which I see the face of God. I delight to gaze abroad, and "Look through nature up to nature's God." But that was all unholiness to him. I confess I do not understand that kind of thing; I have no sympathy with those who look upon this material world as though it were a very wicked place, and as if there were here no trace whatever of the divine hand, and no proofs of the divine wisdom, nor manifestations of the divine care. I think we may delight ourselves in the works of God, and find much pleasure therein, and get much advanced towards God himself by considering his works.

985. Works of God Worthy of Attention

Modern fanatics, who profess to be so absorbed in heavenly things that they are blind to the most marvellous of Jehovah's handiwork, should go to school with David as the schoolmaster, and learn to "consider the heavens;" and should sit with Job upon the dunghill of their pride, while the Lord rehearses the thundering stanzas of creation's greatness, until they cry with the patriarch, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." For our part, we feel that what was worth the Lord's making richly

deserves the attention of the most cultivated and purified intellect; and we think it blasphemy against God himself to speak slightingly of his universe, as if, forsooth, we poor puny mortals were too spiritual to be interested in that matchless architecture which made the morning stars ling together, and caused the sons of God to shout for joy.

986. World, Lamentation over Its Sin

Like the marvellous structures of Palmyra, of Baalbek, in the far off east, the earth in ruins reveals a magnificence which betokens a royal founder, and an extraordinary purpose. Creation glows with a thousand beauties, even in its present fallen condition; yet clearly enough it is not as when it came from the Maker's hand; the slime of the serpent is on it all; this is not the world which God pronounced to be "very good." We hear of tornadoes, of earthquakes, of tempests, of volcanoes, of avalanches, and of the sea which devoureth its thousands: there is sorrow on the sea, and there is misery on the land; and into the highest palaces as well as the poorest cottages, death, the insatiable, is shooting his arrows, while his quiver is still full to bursting with future woes. It is a sad, sad world. The curse has fallen on it since the fall, and thorns and thistles it bringeth forth, not from its soil alone, but from all that comes of it. Earth wears upon her brow, like Cain of old, the brand of transgression. Sad would it be to our thoughts if it were always to be so. If there were no future to this world as well as to ourselves, we might be glad to escape from it, counting it to be nothing better than a huge penal colony, from which it would be a thousand mercies for both body and soul to be emancipated. At this present time, the groaning and travailing which are general throughout creation, are deeply felt among the sons of men. The dreariest thing you can read is the newspaper. I heard of one who sat up at the end of last year to groan last year out; it was ill done, but in truth it was a year of groaning, and the present one opens amid turbulence and distress. We heard of abundant harvests, but we soon discovered that they were all a dream, and that there would be scant in the worker's cottage. And now, what with strifes between men and masters, which are banishing trade from England, and what with political convulsions, which unhinge everything, the vessel of the state is drifting fast to the shallows. May God in mercy put his hand to the helm of the ship, and steer her safely! There is a general wail among nations and peoples. You can hear it in the streets of the city. The Lord reigneth, or we might lament right bitterly.

987. World to be Changed by the Gospel The world is upside down now; the gospel has begun to turn it the right way uppermost, but when the day of grace is over, and the day of glory comes, then shall it be righted indeed; then those that wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins shall be clothed in glittering apparel, being transfigured like the Saviour upon Tabor; then those of whom the world was not worthy shall come to a world that shall be worthy of them; then those who were hurried to the stake and to the flames shall triumph with chariots of fire and horses of fire, and swell the splendour of the Master's pompous appearing.

988. Worldliness Stopping the Ears of Man

If you stood in a street where the traffic is abundant, where the constant thunder of rumbling wheels creates a din, it would be difficult to preach so as to command an audience, for the abundant sound would prevent all hearing; and, to a great extent, the mass of mankind are just in that position as to the joyful sound of the gospel; the rumbling of the wheels of commerce, the noise of trade and the cries of competition, the whirl of cares and the riot of pleasures—all these drown the persuasive voice of heavenly love, so that men hear no more of it than they would hear

a pin fall in the midst of a hurricane at sea. Only when God unstops the ear is the still small voice of truth heard in the chambers of the heart.

989. Worry, A Corrective for

Beloved, I desire for myself never again to be worried with the cares of this church, but to take them all to my Master, and wait at his feet. I desire not to be troubled about my preaching, nor to be cumbered about anything beneath the sun, but to leave all these, as he would have me leave them, in his hands. You who are working in the classes, in the school, or anywhere else, I pray you look well to your fellowship with Jesus. You cannot slay the enemy by throwing away your sword, and nearness to Christ is your battle-axe and weapons of war; you have lost your power when you have left your Lord. One thing is needful—let the rest go. What if we have not learning? what if we have not eloquence? If we live near to Christ, we have something better than all these; if we abide in him, and he abides in us, we shall ask what we will, and it shall be done unto us. If his word abides in us, we shall go and bring forth fruit, and our fruit shall remain; if he abides in us, we shall enjoy heaven on earth, and be daily preparing for that eternal heaven which is to be our portion. "One thing is needful." God grant it to every one of us!

990. Worry, Folly of

Why dost thou worry thyself? What use can thy fretting serve? Thou art on board a vessel which thou couldst not steer even if the great Captain put thee at the helm, of which thou couldst not so much as reef a sail, yet thou worriest as if thou wert captain and helmsman. O, be quiet, God is Master—dost thou think that all this din and hurly-burly that is abroad betokens that God has left his throne? No, man, his coursers rush furiously on, and his chariot is the storm, but there is a bit between their jaws, and he holds fast the reins, and guides them as he wills! Jehovah is Master yet; believe it; peace be unto thee! be not afraid!

991. Worship, Modes of, may be Altered

I have frequently, especially in our country churches, met with the most determined protests against the most trivial alteration of the routine of their worship. You must sing at such a time, for they always have sung at such a point in the service; you must pray at such a moment, they always have prayed at that part of the worship; and if you can keep to the same quantity of minutes usually occupied, so much the better. The whole service, though not in a book—for our sturdy brethren would rise in revolt against the use of a book—yet is quite as stereotyped as if it were taken from the Common Prayer. Now, I believe that in public worship we should do well to be bound by no human rules, and constrained by no stereotyped order. I like, and we have often done it, to have an interval of silence sometimes, Why not?

Why should it be all vocal worship? And why not begin with the sermon occasionally? You who come in late would probably mend your manners in such a case. And then why should we not sing when we have been accustomed to pray, and pray when we have been accustomed to sing? We are under the dispensation of the Spirit, and, as far as I know, the Spirit of God has not inspired those cards which I see sometimes nailed up in pulpits—"Begin with short prayer, sing, read, pray, preach," and so on. A legality of form is growing up among us, and I enter my heart's protest against it. Not that you and I may have been affected by this Dissenting ritualism, but practices good in themselves are to be protested against if they gender to bondage, for the Spirit of God

bloweth where he listeth, and if we worship God according to his guidance, the worship cannot invariably take the same form.

992. Worship, Spiritual, the Divine requirement

If the Eternal were such an one as thou art, O man, he might be pleased with thy painted windows. But what a child's toy must coloured glass be to God! I can sit and gaze upon a cathedral, with all its magnificence of architecture, and think what a wonderful exhibition of human skill; but what must that be to God, who piles the heavens, who digs the foundation of the deep, who leads Arcturus with his sons? Why, it must be to him the veriest trifle, a mere heap of stones. I delight to hear the swell of organs, the harmony of sweet voices, the Gregorian chant, but what is this artistic sound to him more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal? As a sight, I admire the choristers and priests, and the whole show of a grand ceremonial; but do you believe that God is imposed upon by those frocks and gowns of white, and blue, and scarlet, and fine linen? It seems to me as if such a notion brings down God to the level of a silly woman who is fond of finery. The infinite God, who spreads out the heavens and scatters stars with both his hands, whom heaven and earth cannot contain, to whom space is but a speck, and time is as nothing, do you think that he dwelleth in temples made with hands—that is to say, of man's building? And is he to be worshipped with your organs, and your rood-screens, and your gaudy millinery? He laugheth at them, he treadeth on them as being less than nothing and vanity. Spiritual worship is what he regardeth, because he is a Spirit. My brethren, if you could get together a procession of worlds, if you could make the stars walk along the streets of some great new Jerusalem, dressed in their brightest array; if, instead of the songs of a few boys or men, you could catch the sonnets of eternal ages; if, instead of a few men to officiate as priests, you could enlist time, eternity, heaven and earth to be the priesthood, yet all this would be to him but as a company of grasshoppers, and he would take up the whole as a very little thing.

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"Y"

993. Yielding to God, Wisdom of

If a man expose himself to the rush of an avalanche, can he expect the rolling mass to suspend itself in mid air for him? If a mariner will go to sea in a vessel worm-eaten and unseaworthy, will the waves pity the barque, and cease from their rough play and rougher warfare? No, they roll around the leaking craft as they would have done around a better vessel; they toss it, they sink it, the careless mariner perishes. If a man will act contrary to natural laws, he must suffer for it. If you dash your head against a granite rock, it will not for your sake soften into down; and it is just so with the moral laws of God's government, certain results follow from sinful courses of action, inevitably and as a matter of course. Yield, then, to the divine wisdom which has rightly ordained the consequences of sin. Do not necessitate your own destruction. Submit freely where rebellion is absurd. Against Omnipotence it were folly to strive; be wise, then, and submit to the power of the omnipotent God.

994. Young men the Hope of the Church

I do not believe that any age was better than this, all things considered, but this is the time when we shall want our young men to be strong to all the intents of strength. Battles are coming in which they will need to stand with firm foot. There will be strifes in which they will not be of the slightest value if they cannot brave the conflict in the very van, or fight where fly whole showers of fiery arrows and hot bolts of hell. Rest assured these are not silken days, nor times to make us dream that we have won the victory. Our fathers, where are they? They are looking down upon us from their thrones, but what do they see? Do they see us wearing the crown and waving the palm-branch? If so, they see us lunatics indeed, for that were a madman's sport; but rather they see us sharpening our swords afresh, and buckling on our panoply anew, to fight the same fight which they fought under other circumstances. The young blood of the church, under God, is our great hope in the conflict for King Jesus. The young men of the church must be in the next twenty years the very soul and vigour of it, and, therefore, may God raise up among us a goodly seed, a race of heroes, swifter than eagles for zeal, and stronger than lions for faith.

995. Youthful Piety, Loveliness of An apple-tree when loaded with apples is a very comely sight; but give me, for beauty, the apple-tree in bloom. The whole world does not present a more lovely sight than an apple blossom. Painters have declared that there is nothing in the whole world to excel it in beauty. Now, a full-grown Christian laden with fruit is a blessed sight, but still there is a blessedness, a peculiar blessedness, about the young Christian in bloom. Let me just tell you what I think that blessedness is. You have probably now a greater tenderness about sin than some professors who have known the Lord for years; they might wish that they felt your tenderness of conscience. You have now a graver sense of duty, and a more solemn fear of the neglect of it than some who have known the Lord for years; and you have a greater zeal than many. You are now doing your first works for God, and burning with your first love; nothing is too hot for you or too hard for you. To go to a sermon now—no matter what weather it may be—seems to you to be an

imperative necessity; you would go over hedge and ditch to hear the Word. But some who are of older growth want soft cushions to sit upon; they cannot stand in the aisle now as they used to do; everybody must be particularly polite when they come in, or they care not to worship at all. At one time they were so hungry that if you had thrown them a piece of meat on a skewer they would have eaten it; but now it must be delicately cooked, and all sorts of sauce served up with it, and it must be well garnished, or they cannot eat it. They hear this minister, and they are tired of the other. They are in the state of the fools in the Psalm, who abhorred all manner of meat, and I fear their souls draw nigh unto death; but at first there is such a good appetite, such zeal, such hunger, that I am sure you will look back in years to come to your springing, and say, "Ah, God did bless the springing thereof!" Go on, dear friends, to something higher; press forward to something more full and complete, but bless God for what you have.

"Z"

996. Zeal, Cloak of

Thousands of our church members are locked in the deadly arms of an Arctic propriety. They are proper, very proper. They are always afraid of being fanatical, even more than of being worldly or backsliding. When religious work is being done in earnest, they say it is exciting and irregular, and they therefore avoid it. They have heard of unwise excitement attending some religious meetings, and they at once conceive a great dread of everything like excitement, however holy and useful; and therefore, in order to avoid as much as possible that which is at all unusual, they make to their tents, and shun the very angels of God, lest they should become too enthusiastic by conversing with them. So far am I from commending them for this, I am persuaded there is no cloak in which a man can be so well wrapped up against the trials of the world and the temptations of business as a cloak of zeal that covers him all over. The devil cannot so readily assail a zealous man. There is a point, of course, at which he can overthrow him by turning that zeal into unhallowed passion, fierce bigotry, or unbridled rant; but still, in the ordinary temptations of life, the man who is thoroughly and heartily possessed by the spirit of true and thoroughly Christian zeal, throws off the blows of the enemy as the shields of the ancient warrior hurled off the fiery darts of the foe.

997. Zeal, Exhortation to Shall we ever forget Park Street, those prayer-meetings, when I felt compelled to let you go without a word from my lips, because the Spirit of God was so awfully present that we felt bowed to the dust, and any language of mine would have been a mere impertinence? What zeal you have had! Some of you have sought for the conversion of souls. When I look upon some of you. I know you are spiritual mothers and fathers in Israel, not to ones or twos, but scores. Shall your zeal relax? We have by God's grace lived to see many of our enemies clothed with shame, we have preached the Word till that Word begins to tell, and make the solid rocks of error shake. Will you draw back, will you lose your force, will you slacken in prayer, will you refuse to receive the blessing which awaits you? Will you take your heads from the crown when it is ready to descend? I pray you do not so. Let us be banded together as one man; let us contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; let us pray with fervour, let us live in holiness, let us preach constantly, and preach with fire; and let us so live that we may impress our age, and leave our footprints on the sands of time.

998. Zeal for Church Purity When the body gets a piece of rotten bone into it, it never rests, till, with pain, it casts out the dead thing: and so with the church; the church may be increased by dead members, but when she begins to get vigorous and full of life, her first effort is, with much pain, perhaps with much marring of her present beauty, to cause the dead substance to come forth; and if this should be the case, though we shall pity those who are cast forth, yet for our own health's sake, we may thank God and take courage.

999. Zeal in our Service for Christ

I know that the most of you are diligent in business. You never hear the ring of a guinea without being on the alert to earn it if possible. Your coats are off, and very likely your shirt-sleeves are turned up when there is a chance of driving trade. That I commend; but oh! do let us have something like it in the service of Jesus Christ. Do not let us be drudging in the world, and drawling in the church; lively in the service of mammon, and then laggard in the service of Christ. Heart and soul, manliness, vigour, vehemence—let the utmost strain of all our powers be put forth in the service of him who was never supine or dilatory in the service of our souls when they had to be redeemed.

1000. Zeal, Incentive to

If this church do not serve God—mark these words, I speak, I think, prophetically—God will make this house a hissing, and write "Ichabod" upon these walls. Never was a church more favoured than you have been. More than two hundred years God has given you a succession of faithful pastors. We have each of us in our lot striven to do our work; we have stood upon the walls of Zion, and those who have gone before, at least, have not been found unfaithful; and, as God helpeth me, neither will I be unfaithful, either to God's truth or to the souls of men. But if, with such appliances, with such preaching of the gospel, and helped so marvellously, and so many of you great sinners saved from great sins, having had much forgiven—if you do not love much and serve much, O my God, let me not live to see the curse fall upon this church, but at least in my day let the blessing still continue; ay, and when this head sleeps among the clods of the valley, find them better men than we are to preach the Word, and let this church still be a star in thy right hand to shine amidst the thick darkness of the world. Dear friends, if you be not in earnest about this, I am. Oh! we must not let this opportunity pass. There is much which you can do. I want you to help the heathen world, but I want you to begin with caring for this great heathen world of London; and, if you can do nothing else, at least give us your prayers.

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