

The Mental Agonies of Hell by Robert Murray M'Cheyne

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Description

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Transcript

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Meaning of the Word Castaway" points: - "The word castaway is taken from workers of metals" - "Those who are cast away will be found to be of no use" - "The wicked will be cast away from Christ and punished with everlasting destruction" - heading: "The State of Wicked Men" points: - "Wicked men will be cast away from God's holy creatures" - "Wicked men will be cast away by the angels and the redeemed" - "Wicked men will be cast away by devils and themselves" - heading: "The Application of this Truth" points: - "Godly people should learn to be as earnest as Paul to keep their bodies under subjection" - "Ungodly people should cleave close to God to avoid being cast away" faq: - q: "What does it mean to be a castaway?" a: "To be a castaway means to be separated from God, Christ, and the Spirit, and to be punished with everlasting destruction." - q: "Why does Paul seek the kingdom of heaven with such anxiety?" a: "Paul seeks the kingdom of heaven with anxiety because he fears being a castaway and losing his salvation." - q: "What is the connection between a wicked life and hell?" a: "There is an indissoluble connection between a wicked life and hell, and those who live wickedly will be cast away from God." - q: "How can we avoid being cast away?" a: "We can avoid being cast away by cleaving close to God and living a righteous life." - q: "What is the ultimate fate of those who are cast away?" a: "Those who are cast away will be punished with everlasting destruction and will be separated from God, Christ, and the Spirit forever." quotes: - "There is a day coming when every unconverted man in his congregation would rid himself of himself if he could." - "You will then understand that the law of God is unalterable. You will then understand that God and you are enemies." - "And oh, my brethren, your affections that are now so pleasant to you, they will be your torment." applicationPoints: - "We should seek the kingdom of heaven with anxiety and care, lest we be cast away." - "We should cleave close to God and live a righteous life to avoid being cast away." - "We should understand the connection between a wicked life and hell, and strive to live a holy life." keywords: - "castaway" - "hell" - "salvation" - "anxiety" - "fear" - "wickedness" - "God" - "Christ" - "Spirit" - "separation" ---

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For more messages, log on to our website, www.SermonIndex.com. Now, here's today's program. A sermon by Robert Murray McChain. The Mental Agonies of Hell.

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, by any means, when I approach to others, I myself should be a castaway. First Corinthians 9, 27. First, observe.

The manner in which Paul sought the kingdom of heaven. Verse 26. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I not as one that beats the air.

Although Paul wrote these words, he had a full assurance of heavenly love. It was many years after his conversion on his way to Damascus, and I am sure if anyone had assurance of his conversion, it was the Apostle Paul. I am in a straight betwixt the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.

Philippians 1, 23. We are confident, I say, in willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. Second Corinthians 5, 28.

And you remember that sweet saying, There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness. Second Timothy 4, 8. Yet for all that, Paul sought the kingdom of heaven as if he had been running a race. He was as anxious seeking it after his conversion as he had been before it.

There are many people who, after conversion, sit down as it were all over. They think they need do no more, but it was not so with Paul. The second thing I desire you to notice from these words is one important effort Paul made.

It was this, I keep under my body and bring it into subjection. Paul had noticed it in the Grecian games, and men who ran and wrestled were temperate in all things. Now Paul said, This is what I will do in running my race.

There are some Christians, I fear, who will not do so much for an incorruptible crown as the Grecian racer did for a corruptible one. The children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. Luke 16, 8. There is too much pampering of the body, and then Satan gets the advantage.

There is a third truth I wish you to notice. The reason of Paul's anxiety and care was that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. I have told you, brethren, already, that Paul had a very clear sight of his conversion.

He knew that he was in Christ, and that none could pluck him out of his hand. Yet for all that, Paul was afraid lest he should be a castaway. Paul knew that, though he was a minister, yet if he gave way to the flesh, if he lived after the flesh, he would be a castaway.

He knew that many who seemed Christ's had yet fallen away. Judas he knew was a castaway. Paul felt that which I have sometimes expressed to you, if he lived after the flesh, he would die.

Paul knew quite well that there is an indissoluble connection between a wicked life and hell, and oh, it was this that made him temperate in all things. At present I mean to speak to you principally on the meaning of the word castaway. In some previous times I have spoken to you on the subject of an eternal hell, on the worms that never die, and the fire that is never quenched, but there is one part of the subject I have passed over, namely, the mental agonies of hell, and that is a castaway.

The word castaway is supposed to be taken from workers of metals. You know there is part of the metal which comes out of the furnace which is called droth, which is of no manner of use, and is cast away. The same word is sometimes translated reprobate.

Those of you in this congregation who will be cast away will be found to be but droth. Reprobate silver shall men call them, Jeremiah 6, verse 30. I will show you first that wicked men will be cast away from Christ.

It is written, Depart from me ye cursed, Matthew 25, 41. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thessalonians 1, verse 9. I say that those in this congregation who shall be found on that day to be impenitent shall be cast away. They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

Unconverted men in this world are often very near Christ. Christ often comes to the door of unconverted men. Behold, I stand at the door and knock, Revelation 3, verse 20.

Yet he sometimes comes so near that he stretches out his hands. All day long have I stretched out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people. Romans 10, verse 21.

Yea, I believe that sometimes you feel Christ is near. I believe that sometimes you feel that Christ is knocking on your door. But, O, it will be a change in that day.

Christ will say, Depart from me. Christ will no more seek your soul. Christ will no more knock at your door.

Christ will no more stretch out his hands all day long to you. You will never hear his voice more calling on you to turn. You will never get one offer more of Christ.

You will be cast away. Christ is a way to the Father. But the door will then be shut against you forever and ever.

And the shutting of the door will echo through all the caverns of hell. The wicked and impenitent in this congregation will be cast away from God. In one sense, the wicked will never be away from God because God feels heaven, earth, and hell.

Job says, Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. And it is said in Proverbs 15, verse 1, Hell and destruction are before the Lord. In one sense, then, the wicked will never be away from God.

It was he that kindled hell. The breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it, Isaiah 10, 33. But still it is true, you will be cast away from God.

You will be cast away from the relative enjoyments of God. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. God says to believers, I will be their God and they shall be my people, 2 Corinthians 6, 16.

He said to Abraham, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward, Genesis 15, 1. Asaph sings, God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever, Psalm 73, 26. Ah, this is a portion of believers. We can look up to heaven and say, This God is our God forever and ever.

Psalm 48, 14. God said to the Levites, Thou shalt have no inheritance among them. I am thy inheritance, Numbers 18, 20.

But that will not be the case with those in this congregation who will be cast away. You will be cast away from the fruition of God. The attributes of God will minister no joy to you.

It is true, you cannot get far enough away from God now. You cannot bear to be left alone with God for five minutes. But oh, it will be hell for all that to be separated from him.

It will be the hell of hells to be separated from God. You will not only be cast away from God, but from the favor of God. It is said, In thy favor is life.

Ah, child of God, say, what would you sell this favor of God for? Ah, the favor of God can lighten up the pale cheek of the dying saint with terrific brightness and can make him rejoice even on the scaffold and the stake. But sinner, you will be cast away from the favor of God. God will send you nothing but the black cloud of his frown forever and ever.

And you will be cast away from the blessing of God. God makes everything blessed to us. Our friends are blessed to us.

Our food and our raiment are blessed by him. But he can make these things minister no blessedness, even though we be in possession of them. And this will be the case with those of you who will be cast

away.

God will take away all blessedness from you. I come to show you, brethren, that the wicked will be cast away by the Spirit. It is the Spirit that is the author of joy in the unconverted, and it is he that keeps them from sin.

There are three ways by which God the Spirit keeps wicked men from sin. He does so by ordinances. He makes them a band on their wickedness.

Family worship is a great band on the wicked. The ordinance of the preached word is a great means of keeping men from open acts of wickedness. You have the terror of the law and the sweet winning invitations of the gospel to keep you from sin, though they may not save you.

And again, brethren, the Spirit works very much through providence. You may notice that a wicked man would go further into sin were he not restrained by providence. God brings poverty so that he is not able to go into those expensive vices that he would otherwise do.

And God lays sickness on him or on his child, which keeps him from sin. Now these things are all owing to the restrained grace of God. There is a third way, that is, by convictions.

I believe there are none here who have not had some convictions of sin. Now God makes use of these convictions in order to restrain you. He keeps you back from going into those fearful debaucheries into which you would otherwise fall.

But, O brethren, do you remember the scripture, My spirit shall not always strive with man, Genesis 6, verse 3. He is striving with you now, but there is a time coming when he will no more strive with you. It may not be during your life, yet it will be immediately at death. All my friends, you will have no ordinances in hell.

There will be no family worship in hell. There will be no singing praises in hell. There will be no preaching in hell.

Some of you will ruin your service now, but you will have none in hell. And there will be no more providences in hell. There will be no sickness in hell.

And there will be no more convictions in hell. The Spirit will not strive with you in hell. O then, brethren, what an awful state you will be in when the Spirit casts you away.

Read the first chapter of Romans and see what a man becomes when God the Spirit gives him over. Think what your families would become if the Spirit were to give them over. What a town this would be if the Spirit were to give it over.

What murders, wickedness, and so on would you hear of before tomorrow? I know of a godly man in London who, every morning, thanks God for restraining the wicked. And often at the breakfast table I have heard him say, Where would we have been this morning if God had not restrained the wicked? But, O, when you will go away from this world, the Spirit will give you over to your own heart's lusts. Then you will blaspheme God.

Then you will have no more any fear of losing your character. And, O, that will be misery. It is an evil thing and a bitter to sin against God.

Jeremiah 2.19 It is not only evil, but bitter. The way of transgressors is hard. Proverbs 13.15 You say stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

Proverbs 9.17 But you will find out that sin is the hardest master. It is an evil thing and a bitter. And you will find that the very sin you wore beneath your tongue now is a sweet morsel, will yet be your curse.

The lust of drink and passion will rage within you, and that forever. All your lusts that are now pent up in your little bosom will burst out like a volcano, and there will be nothing to subdue them. Were there no lake of fire, that would be hell enough.

To be a castaway is to be cast away from all God's holy creatures. Now the state of wicked men is awful, but there are some pleasant ingredients in the cup. All God's holy creatures are anxious about you.

The angels are anxious about you. If they are present here, it is to watch if a tear fall from your eye or a prayer falter on your lips. And all regaining men take an interest in you.

We know that we were once as you are. David says, Rivers of water run down my eyes because they keep not thy law. Psalm 119.136 And it is the same with God's children now.

I believe there is not a child of God in this place that does not weep for you. And my brethren, Christ has pity for men and women. And then ministers pity you and seek your conversion.

But oh, how different it will be when the day of grace is over. You will be cast away by the angels. They will pity you no more.

They will know that the number of the elect is sealed. The redeemed will no more pity you. They will see you enter into the eternal fire.

And they will not put up one prayer for you. And ministers will give up pleading for you when Christ casts you away. We cannot hold you.

When he casts you away, you will not have our invitation anymore. Alas, brethren, I believe that even the devil will cast you away. Ah, it is true, he gives you now many a sweet word.

He says, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But oh, then the devil himself will not bear your company. You will be cast away even by your friends.

If you are beside them in hell, they will cast you from them. Oh, none in heaven or hell will pity you. This is to be lost.

This is to be a cast away. I have just one word more. It is the complete misery of the unconverted.

You will be cast away by yourself. I believe this is what suicide tries to do in this world. They try to cast themselves away from themselves.

And therefore, it is said of the damned, They will seek death, but it will flee from them. You know, dear friends, that unconverted men are often very complacent in this world. Your money gives you a great deal of pleasure.

And your friends and acquaintances gives you pleasure. But oh, that will not always be the case. There is a day coming when every unconverted man in his congregation would rid himself of himself if he could.

You will then understand that the law of God is unalterable. You will then understand that God and you are enemies. Your understanding will be a torment to you.

You will eternally hate what God loves and eternally love what God hates. And then your conscience will be like a hungry lion as soon as that day God's vice-regent in the soul will cry out and will not be quiet. And oh, my brethren, your affections that are now so pleasant to you, they will be your torment.

I believe that even hell will not take affections out of your heart. But ah, that will be your torment. Often you hear a wicked man say, I am a good father, I love my children.

But ah, if they are in hell, it will be your torment that you brought them there. Or if they are in heaven, it will be your torment that they will have no pity for you. And brethren, your memory that is now so sweet to you will be the worst of all.

You will remember your sins of sin. You will remember your misspent Sabbath. You will remember your lying lips.

You will remember your minister's voice warning and intruding you to be saved. Memory will sting like an adder. Oh, brethren, I believe you will loathe yourselves.

You will try to tear that memory out of your bosom even if it were possible. Oh, you will exclaim, would that the whole soul would go out of being. This is to be lost.

You will be cast away by God. You will be cast away by Christ. You will be cast away by the Spirit.

You will be cast away by all God's holy creatures. You will be cast away by devils. You will be cast away by yourself.

And now, my brethren, I would apply this to yourselves. Those of you who are godly, learn to be as earnest as Paul was to keep under the body and bring it into subjection. And those of you who are ungodly, those of you who are ungodly men under my ministry, oh, if I had a voice that could reach your inmost soul, I would use it.

You think I am exaggerating this, but ah, you little know who can endure the power of thy wrath. I have not mentioned the furnace of fire. I have not spoken of God's raining snares, fire and brimstone on the wicked, but ah, if there were no bodily agonies, what will the mental agonies of hell be? But oh, whence these two meet, what will it be? Oh, what will it be to have all the wrath of God poured out on your soul and body and yet never to annihilate you? Ah, then you will know what it is to be a castaway.

And if you would not be a castaway, cleave close to God. Finally, dear brothers and sisters, learn from this the love of Christ to you and me. He bore all that is contained in being a castaway in order that we might be saved.

Ah, poor sinner, Jesus is willing to rescue you. Many of you are old. Many of you will die before the year is done.

Come then to Christ, for oh, soon it will be too late. Soon the door will be shut forever. May God bless His own word.

Amen. Robert Murray McChain preached on the Sabbath forenoon the 15th of January, 1842, narrated by Tom Sullivan. The soul winner.

What is it to win a soul? I propose, dear brethren, if God shall enable me to give you a short course of lectures under the general head of the soul winner. Soul winning is the chief business of the Christian minister. Indeed, it should be the main pursuit of every true believer.

We should each say with Simon Peter I go a fishing, and with Paul our aim should be that I might by all means save some. We shall commence our discourses upon this subject by considering the question what is it to win a soul? This may be instructively answered by describing what it is not. We do not regard it to be soul winning to steal members out of churches already established and train them to utter our particular shibboleth.

We aim rather at bringing souls to Christ than at making conflicts to our synagogue. There are chief stealers abroad concerning whom I will say nothing except that they are not brethren, or at least they do not act in a brotherly fashion. To their own master they must stand or fall.

We count it utter meanness to build up our own houses with the ruins of our neighbors' mansions. We infinitely prefer to quarry for ourselves. I hope we all sympathize in the large-hearted spirit of Dr. Chalmers who, when it was said that such and such an effort would not be beneficial to the special interests of the free church of Scotland, although it might promote the general religion of the land, said, What is a free church compared with the Christian good of the people of Scotland? What indeed is any church or what are all the churches put together as mere organizations as they stand in conflict with the moral and spiritual advantage of the nation if they impede the kingdom of Christ? It is because God blesses men through the churches that we desire to see them prosper, and not merely for the sake of the churches themselves.

There is such a thing as selfishness in our eagerness for the aggrandizement of our own party, and from this evil spirit may grace deliver us. The increase of the kingdom is more to be desired than the growth of a clan. We would do a great deal to make a paedobaptist brother into a baptist, for we value our Lord's ordinance.

We would labor earnestly to raise a believer in salvation by free will into a believer in salvation by grace, for we long to see all religious teaching built upon the solid rock of truth and not upon the sand of imagination. But at the same time our grand object is not the revision of opinions but the regeneration of natures. We would bring men to Christ and not to our peculiar views of Christianity.

Our first care must be that the sheep should be gathered to the Great Shepherd. There will be time enough afterwards to secure them for our various folds, to make proselytes as a suitable labor for Pharisees, to beget men into God as the honorable aim of ministers of Christ. In the next place we do not consider soul winning to be accomplished by hurriedly inscribing more names upon our church wall in order to show a good increase at the end of the year.

This is easily done if there are brethren who use great pains, not to say arts, to effect it. But if it be regarded as the alpha and omega of a minister's efforts the result will be deplorable. By all means let us bring true converts into the church for it is a part of our work to teach them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded them.

But still this is to be done to disciples and not to mere professors, and if care be not used we may do more harm than good at this point. To introduce unconverted persons to the church is to weaken and degrade it, and therefore an apparent gain may be a real loss. I am not among those who decry statistics, nor do I consider that they are productive of all manner of evil, for they do much good if they are accurate, and if men use them lawfully.

It is a good thing for people to see the nakedness of the land through statistics of decrees that they may be driven on their knees before the Lord to seek prosperity. And on the other hand it is by no means an evil thing for workers to be encouraged by having some account of results set before them. I should be very sorry if the practice of adding up and deducting and giving in the net result were to be abandoned for it must be right to know our numerical condition.

It has been noticed that those who object to the process are often brethren whose unsatisfactory reports should somewhat humiliate them. This is not always so, but it is suspiciously frequent. I heard of a report of a church the other day in which the minister, who is well known to have reduced his congregation to nothing, somewhat cleverly wrote, Our church is looking up.

When he was questioned with regard to this statement he replied, Everybody knows that the church is on its back and it cannot do anything else but look up. When churches are looking up in that way their pastors generally say that statistics are very delusive things and that you cannot tabulate the work of the Spirit and calculate the prosperity of a church by figures. The fact is you can reckon very correctly if the figures are honest and if all circumstances are taken into consideration if there is no increase.

You may calculate with considerable accuracy that there is not much being done and if there is clear decrease among a growing population you may reckon that the prayers of the people and the preaching of the minister are not of the most powerful kind. But still, all hurry to get members into the church is most mischievous both to the church and to the supposed converts. I remember very well several young men who were of a good moral character and religiously hopeful but instead of searching their hearts and aiming at their real conversion the pastor never gave them any rest until he had persuaded them to make a profession.

He thought that they would be under more bonds to holy things if they professed religion and he felt quite safe in pressing them for they were so hopeful. He imagined that to discourage them by vigilant examination might drive them away and so to secure them he made them hypocrites. These young men are at the present time much further off from the church of God than they would have been if they had been affronted by being kept in their proper places and warned that they were not converted to God.

It is a serious injury to a person to receive him into the number of the faithful unless there is good reason to believe that he is really regenerate. I am sure it is so for I speak after careful observation. Some of the most glaring sinners known to me were once members of a church and were, as I believe, led to make a profession by undue pressure well meant but ill judged.

Do not therefore consider that soul winning is or can be secured by the multiplication of baptisms and the swelling of the size of your church what may these dispatches from the battlefield. Last night fourteen souls were under conviction fifteen were justified and eight received full sanctification. I am worried of this public bragging this counting of unhatched chickens this exhibition of doubtful spoils.

Lay aside such numberings of the people such idle pretense of certifying in half a minute that which will need the testing of a lifetime. Hope for the best that in your highest excitements be reasonable. Inquiry rooms are all very well but if they lead to idle boastings they will grieve the Holy Spirit and work abounding evil.

Nor is it soul winning dear friends, merely to create excitement. Excitement will accompany every great movement. We might justly question whether the movement is earnest and powerful if it was quiet and serene as a drawing room Bible reading.

You cannot very well blast great rocks without the sound of explosions nor fight a battle and keep everybody as quiet as a mouse. On a dry day a carriage is not moving much along the road unless there is some noise and dust. Friction and stir are the natural result of force and motion.

So when the Spirit of God is abroad and men's minds are stirred, there must and will be certain visible signs of the movement, although these must never be confounded with the movement itself. If people imagine that to make a dust is the object aimed at by the rolling of a carriage they can take a broom and very soon raise as much dust as fifty coaches but they will be committing a nuisance rather than conferring a benefit. Excitement is as incidental as the dust, but it is not for one moment to be aimed at.

When the woman swept her house she did it to find her money and not for the sake of raising a cloud. Do not aim at sensation and effect. Flowing tears and strained eyes, sobs and outcries, crowded after meetings, and all kinds of confusions may occur and may be borne with as concomitants of genuine feeling.

But pray do not plan their production. It very often happens that the converse that are born in excitement die when the excitement is over. They are like certain insects which are the product of an exceedingly warm day and die when the sun goes down.

Certain converse live like salamanders in the fire, but they expire at a reasonable temperature. I delight not in a religion which needs or creates a hot head. Give me the godliness which flourishes upon Calvary rather than upon Vesuvius.

The utmost zeal for Christ is consistent with common sense and reason. Raving, ranting, and fanaticism are products of another zeal which is not according to knowledge. We would prepare men for the chamber of communion and not for the padded room at bedlam.

No one is more sorry than I that such a caution as this should be needful, but remembering the vagaries of certain wild revivalists I cannot say less and I might say a great deal more. What is the real winning of a soul for God? So far as this is done by instrumentality, what are the processes by which a soul is led to God and to salvation? I take it that one of its main operations consists in instructing a man that he may know the truth of God. Instruction by the gospel is the commencement of a real work upon men's minds.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Teaching begins the work and crowns it too.

The gospel according to Isaiah is, Incline your ear and come unto me, here in your soul shall live. It is ours, then, to give men something worth their hearing, in fact, to instruct them. We are sent to evangelize or to preach the gospel to every creature, and that is not done unless we teach them the great truths of

revelation.

The gospel is good news. To listen to some preachers you would imagine that the gospel was a pinch of sacred snuff to make them wake up, or a bottle of ardent spirits to excite their brains. It is nothing of the kind.

It is news. There is information in it. There is instruction in it concerning matters which men need to know and statements in it calculated to bless those who hear it.

It is not a magical incantation or a charm whose force consists in the collection of sounds. It is a revelation of facts and truths which require knowledge and belief. The gospel is a reasonable system and it appeals to men's understanding.

It is a matter of thought and consideration and it appeals to the conscience and the reflecting powers. If we do not teach men something we may shout, Believe! Believe! Believe! But what are they to believe? Each exhortation requires a corresponding instruction or it will mean nothing. Escape from what? This requires for its answer the doctrine of the punishment of sin.

Fly, but wither. Then you must preach Christ and his wounds. Yea, and declare doctrine of atonement by sacrifice.

Repent of what? Here you must answer such questions as What is sin? What is the evil of sin? What are the consequences of sin? Be converted. But what is it to be converted? By what power can we be converted? What from? What to? The field of instruction is wide if men are to be made to know the truth which saves. Does the soul be without knowledge? It is not good, and it is ours as the Lord's instruments to make men so to know the truth that they may believe it and feel its power.

We are not to try and save men in the dark, but in the power of the Holy Ghost we are to seek to turn them from darkness to light. Do not believe, dear friends, that when you go into revival meetings or special evangelistic services you are to leave out the doctrines of the gospel, for you are then to proclaim the doctrines of grace rather more than less. Teach gospel doctrines clearly, affectionately, simply, and plainly, and especially those truths which have a present and practical bearing upon man's condition and God's grace.

Some enthusiasts would seem to have imbibed the notion that as soon as a minister addresses the unconverted he should deliberately contradict his usual doctrinal discourses because it is supposed that there will be no conversions if he preaches the whole counsel of God. It just comes to this, brethren, it is supposed that we are to conceal truth and utter a half-falsehood in order to save souls. We are to speak the truth in God's people because they will not hear anything else.

But we are to weedle sinners into faith by exaggerating one part of the truth and hiding the rest until a more convenient season. This is a strange theory and yet many endorse it. According to them, we may preach the redemption of a chosen number to God's people but universal redemption must be our doctrine when we speak with the outside world.

We are to tell believers that salvation is all of grace but sinners are to be spoken with as if they were to save themselves. We are to inform Christians that God the Holy Spirit alone can convert but when we talk with the unsaved the Holy Ghost is scarcely to be named. We have not so learned Christ.

Thus others have done let them be our beacons and not our examples. He who sent us to win souls neither permits us to invent falsehoods or to suppress truth. His work can be done without such suspicious methods.

Perhaps some of you will reply, but still God is blessed to have statements and wild assertions. Be not quite so sure. I venture to assert that God does not bless falsehood.

He may bless a truth which is mixed up with error, but much more a blessing would have come if the preaching had been more in accordance with his own word. I cannot admit that the Lord blesses evangelistic Jesuitism and the suppression of truth is not too harshly named when I so describe it. The withholding of the doctrine of the total depravity of man has wrought serious mischief to many who have listened to a certain kind of preaching.

These people do not get a true healing because they do not know the disease under which they are suffering. They are never truly clothed because nothing is done toward stripping them. In many ministries there is not enough of probing the heart than arousing the conscience by the revelation of man's alienation from God and by the declaration of the selfishness and the wickedness of such a state.

Men need to be told that except divine grace shall bring them out of their enmity to God they must eternally perish and they must be reminded of the sovereignty of God that he is not obliged to bring them out of this state that he would be right and just if he left them in such a condition that they have no merit to plead before him and no claims upon him but that if they are to be saved it must be by grace and by grace alone. The preacher's work is to throw sinners down in utter helplessness that they may be compelled to look up to him alone who can help them. To try to win a soul for Christ by keeping that soul in ignorance of any truth is contrary to the mind of the spirit and to endeavor to save men by mere claptrap or excitement or oratorical display is as foolish as to hope to hold an angel with a bird line or lure a star with music.

The best attraction in the gospel is its purity. The weapon with which the Lord conquers men is the truth as it is in Jesus. The gospel will be found equal to every emergency, an arrow which can pierce the hardest heart, a bomb which will heal the deadliest wound.

Preach it and preach nothing else. Rely implicitly upon the old old gospel. You need no other nets when you fish for men.

Those your master has given you are strong enough for the great fishes and have meshes fine enough to hold the little ones. Spread these nets and know others and you need not fear the fulfillment of his word. I will make you fishers of men.

Secondly, to win a soul it is necessary not only to instruct our hearer and make him know the truth but to impress him so that he may feel it. A purely didactic ministry which should always appeal to the understanding and should leave the emotions untouched would certainly be a limping ministry. The legs of the lame are not equal says Solomon and the unequal legs of some ministries cripple them.

We have seen such a one limping about with a long doctrinal leg but a very short emotional leg. It is a horrible thing for a man to be so doctrinal that he can speak cruelly of the doom of the wicked so that if he does not actually praise God for it, it costs him no anguish of heart to think of the ruins of millions of our race. This is horrible.

I hate to hear the tears of the Lord proclaimed by men whose hard visages, harsh tones, and unfeeling spirit betray a sort of doctrinal desiccation. All the milk of human kindness is dried out of them. Having no feeling himself such a preacher creates none and the people sit and listen while he keeps to dry lifeless statements until they come to value him for being sound and they themselves come to be sound too and I need not add sound to sleep also or what life they have spent in sniffing out heresy and making earnest men offenders for a word.

Into the Spirit may we never be baptized. Whatever I believe or do not believe, the command to love my neighbor as myself still retains its claim upon me and God forbid that any views or opinions should so contract my soul and harden my heart as to make me forget this law of love. The love of God is first, but this by no means lessens the obligation of love to man.

In fact the first command includes the second. We are to seek our neighbor's conversion because we love him and we are to speak to him in loving terms of God's loving gospel because our heart desires his eternal good. A sinner has a heart as well as a head.

A sinner has emotions as well as thoughts and we must appeal to both. A sinner will never be converted until his emotions are stirred. Unless he feels sorrow for sin and unless he has some measure of joy in the reception of the word, you cannot have much hope of him.

The truth must soak into the soul and dye it with its own color. The word must be like a strong wind sweeping through the whole heart and swaying the whole man, even as a field of ripening corn weighs in the summer breeze. Religion without emotion is religion without life.

But still we must find how these emotions are caused. Do not play upon the mind by exciting feelings which are not spiritual. Some preachers are very fond of introducing funerals and dying children into their discourses and they make the people weep through sheer natural affection.

This may lead up to something better, but in itself what is its value? What is the good of opening up a mother's grief or a widow's sorrows? I do not believe that our merciful Lord has sent us to make men weep over their departed relatives by digging anew their graves and rehearsing past scenes of bereavement and woe. Why should he? It is granted that you may profitably employ the deathbed of a departing Christian or of a dying sinner for proof of the rest of faith in the one case and the terror of conscience in the other, but it is out of a fact proved and not out of the illustration itself that the good must arise. Natural grief is of no service in itself.

Indeed, we look upon it as a distraction from higher thoughts and as a prize too great to exact from tender hearts, unless we can repay them by engrafting lasting spiritual impressions upon the stock of natural affection. It was a very splendid oration, full of pathos, as one who heard it. Yes, but what is the practical outcome of this pathos? A young preacher once remarked, Were you not greatly struck to see so large a congregation weeping? Yes, it is judicious, friend, but I was more struck with the reflection that they probably would have wept more at a play.

Exactly so, and the weeping in both cases may be equally valueless. I saw a girl on board a steamboat reading a book and crying as if her heart would break, but when I glanced at the volume I saw that it was one of those silly yellow-covered novels which load our railway book stalls. Her tears were a sheer waste of moisture, and so are those which are produced by mere pulpit tell-telling and deathbed painting.

If humans will weep over their sins and after Jesus, let their tears flow in rivers. But if the object of their sorrow is merely natural and not at all spiritual, what good is done by setting them weeping? There might be some virtue in making people joyful, for there is sorrow enough in the world, and the more we can promote cheerfulness, the better, but what is the use of creating needless misery? What right have you to go through the world precking everybody with your lancet just to show your skill in surgery? A true physician only makes incisions in order to effect cures, and a wise minister only excites painful emotions in men's minds with the distinct object of blessing their souls. You and I must continue to drive at men's hearts till they are broken, and then we must go on preaching Christ crucified till their hearts are bound up, and when this is accomplished we must continue to proclaim the gospel till their whole nature is brought into subjection to the gospel of Christ.

Even in these preliminaries you will be made to feel the need of the Holy Ghost to work with you and by you, but this need will still be more evident when we advance a step further and speak of the new birth itself in which the Holy Spirit works in a style and manner most divine. I have already insisted upon instruction and impression as most needful to soul winning, but these are not all. They are, indeed, only means to the desired end.

A far greater work must be done before a man is saved. A wonder of divine grace must be wrought upon the soul, far transcending anything which can be accomplished by the power of man. Of all whom we would faint when for Jesus it is true, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.

The Holy Ghost must work regeneration in the objects of our love, or they never can become possessors of eternal happiness. They must be quickened into a new life, and they must become new creatures in Christ Jesus. The same energy which accomplishes resurrection and creation must put forth all its power upon them.

Nothing short of this can meet the case. They must be born again from above. This might seem at first sight to put human instrumentality together out of the field, but on turning to the Scriptures we find nothing to justify such an inference and much of quite an opposite tendency.

There we certainly find the Lord to be all in all, but we find no hint that the use of means must therefore be dispensed with. The Lord Supreme Majesty in power is seen all the more gloriously because he works by means. He is so great that he is not afraid to put honor upon the instruments he employs by speaking of them in high terms and imputing to them great influence.

It is certainly possible to say too little of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, I fear this is one of the crying sins of the age, but yet that infallible word, which always rightly balances truth while it magnifies the Holy Ghost, does not speak lightly of the men by whom he works. God does not think his own honor to be so questionable that it can only be maintained by decrying the human agent.

There are two passages in the epistles which, when put together, have often amazed me. Paul compares himself both to a father and to a mother in the matter of the new birth. He says of one convert, whom I have begotten in my bonds, and of a whole church, he says, my little children of whom I travail in birth, until Christ be formed in you.

This is going very far, indeed much further than modern orthodoxy would permit the most useful minister to venture, and yet it is language sanctioned, yea, dictated by the Spirit of God himself, and therefore it is not to be criticized. Such mysterious power does God infuse into the instrumentality which he ordains that

we are called laborers together with God, and this at once the source of our responsibility and the ground of our hope. Regeneration, or the new birth, works a change in the whole nature of man, and so far as we can judge, its essence lies in the implantation and creation of a new principle within the man.

The Holy Ghost creates in us a new, heavenly and immortal nature, which is known in Scripture as the Spirit by way of distinction from the soul. Our theory of regeneration is that man in his fallen nature consists only of body and soul, and that when he is regenerated there is created in him a new and higher nature. The Spirit, which is a spark from the everlasting fire of God's life and love, this falls into the heart and abides there, and makes its receiver a partaker of the divine nature.

Then forward a man consists of three parts, body, soul, and spirit, and the Spirit is the reigning power of the three. You will all remember that memorable chapter upon the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15, where the distinction is well brought out in the original, and may even be perceived in our version. The passage rendered, It is sown a natural body, and so on might be read, it is sown a soulish body, it is raised a spiritual body.

There is a soulish body, and there is a spiritual body, and so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Albeit that was not first, which is spiritual, but that which is soulish, and afterward that which is spiritual. We are first in a natural or soulish stage of being, like the first Adam, and then in regeneration we enter into a new condition, and we become possessors of the life-giving Spirit.

Without this Spirit no man can see or enter the kingdom of heaven. It must therefore be our intense desire that the Holy Spirit should visit our ears and create them anew, that He would come down upon these dry bones and breathe eternal life into the dead in sin. Till this is done they can never receive the truth, for the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for their foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.

The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. A new and heavenly mind must be created by omnipotence, or the man must abide in death. You see then that we have before us a mighty work, for which we are of ourselves totally incapable.

No minister living can save a soul, nor can all of us together, nor all the saints on earth or in heaven work regeneration in a single person. The whole business on our part is the height of absurdity, unless we regard ourselves as used by the Holy Ghost and filled with His power. On the other hand, the marvels of regeneration which attend our ministry are the best seals and witnesses of our commission.

Whereas the apostles could appeal to the miracles of Christ and to those which they wrought in His name, we appeal to the miracles of the Holy Ghost, which are as divine and as real as those of our Lord Himself. These miracles are the creation of a new life in the human bosom, and the total change of the whole being of those upon whom the Spirit descends. As this God-begotten spiritual life in men is a mystery, we shall speak to more practical effect if we dwell upon the signs following and accompanying it.

For these are the things we must aim at. First, regeneration will be shown in conviction of sin, this we believe to be an indispensable mark of the Spirit's work. The new life as it enters the heart causes intense inward pain as one of its first effects.

Though nowadays we hear of persons being healed before they have been wounded and brought into a certainty of justification without ever having lamented their condemnation, we are very dubious as to the value of such healings and justifying. The style of things is not according to the truth. God never clothes men until He has first stripped them, nor does He quicken them by the gospel till first they are slain by the law.

When you meet with persons in whom there is no trace of conviction of sin, you may be quite sure that they have not been wrought upon by the Holy Spirit. For when He has come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. When the Spirit of the Lord breathes on us, He withers all the glory of man, which is but as a flower of the grass, and then He reveals a higher and abiding glory.

Do not be astonished if you find this conviction of sin to be very acute and alarming. But on the other hand, do not condemn those in whom it is less intense. For so long as sin is mourned over, confessed, forsaken, and abhorred, you have an evident fruit of the Spirit.

Much of the horror and unbelief which goes with conviction is not of the Spirit of God, but comes of Satan or corrupt nature. Yet there must be true and deep conviction of sin, and this a preacher must labor to produce. For where this is not felt, a new birth has not taken place.

Equally certain is it that the true conversion may be known by the exhibition of a simple faith in Jesus Christ. You know not that I speak unto you of that, for you yourselves are fully persuaded of it. The production of faith is the very center of the target at which you aim.

The proof to you that you have won the man's soul for Jesus is never before you, till he is done with himself in his own merits, and is closed in with Christ. Great care must be taken that this faith is exercised upon Christ for a complete salvation, and not for a part of it. Numbers of persons think that the Lord Jesus is available for the pardon of past sin, but they cannot trust Him for the preservation in the future.

They trust for years past, but not for years to come, whereas no such subdivision of salvation is ever spoken of in Scripture as the work of Christ. Either He bore all our sins, or none, and He either saves us once for all, or not at all. His death can never be repeated, and it must have made expiation for the future sin of believers, or they are lost, since no further atonement can be supposed, and future sin is certain to be committed.

Blessed be His name! By Him all the believers are justified from all things. Salvation by grace is eternal salvation. Sinners must commit their souls to the keeping of Christ to all eternity.

How else are they saved? Men! Alas, according to the teaching of some, believers are only saved in part, and for the rest must depend upon their future endeavors. Is this the gospel? I trow not. Jimmy Wine's faith trusts the whole Christ for the whole of salvation.

Is it any wonder that many converts fall away when in fact they were never taught to exercise faith in Jesus for eternal salvation, but only for temporary conversion? A faulty exhibition of Christ begets a faulty faith, and when this pines away in its own imbecility, who is to blame for it? According to their faith, so it is unto them. The preterm possessor of a partial faith must unitedly bear the blame of the failure when their poor mutilated trust comes to a breakdown. I would more earnestly insist upon this, because a semi-legal way of believing is so common.

We must urge the trembling sinner to trust wholly in the Spirit, and be made perfect by the flesh. He will surely walk by faith as to the past, and then by works as to the future, and this will be fatal. True faith in Jesus receives eternal life and sees perfect salvation in Him, whose one sacrifice is sanctified to people of God once for all.

The sense of being saved, completely saved in Christ Jesus, is not, as some suppose, a source of carnal security in the enemy of holy zeal, but the very reverse. Delivered from the fear which makes the salvation of self a more immediate object than salvation from self, and inspired by holy gratitude to his Redeemer, the regenerated man becomes capable of virtue, and is filled with an enthusiasm for God's glory. While trembling under a sense of insecurity, a man gives his chief thought to his own interests, but planted firmly on the rock of ages, he has time and heart to utter the new song which the Lord has put into his mouth, and then is his moral salvation complete, for self is no longer the Lord of his being.

Rest not content till you see clear evidence in your converts of a simple, sincere, and decided faith in the Lord Jesus. Together with undivided faith in Jesus Christ, there must also be unfeigned repentance of sin. Repentance is an old-fashioned word, not much used by modern revivalists.

Oh, said a minister to me one day, it only means a change of mind. This was thought to be a profound observation. Only a change of mind, but what a change! A change of mind with regard to everything.

Instead of saying it is only a change of mind, it seems to me more truthful to say it is a great and deep change, even a change of the mind itself. But whatever the literal Greek word may mean, repentance is no trifle. You will not find a better definition of it than the one given in the children's hymn.

Repentance is to leave the sins we loved before, and show that we in earnest grieve by doing so no more. True conversion is in all men attended by a sense of sin which we have spoken of under the head of conviction. By a sorrow for sin, or holy grief at having committed it.

By a hatred of sin, which proves that its dominion is ended. And by a practical turning from sin, which shows that the life within the soul is operating upon the life without. True belief and true repentance are twins, and would be idle to attempt to say which is born first.

All the spokes of a wheel move at once when the wheel moves, and so all the graces commence action when regeneration is wrought by the Holy Ghost. Repentance, however, there must be. No sinner looks to the Savior with a dry eye or a hard heart.

Aim therefore at heart-breaking and bringing home condemnation to the conscience, and weaning the mind from sin. And be not content till the whole mind is deeply and vitally changed in reference to sin. Another proof of the conquest of a soul for Christ will be found in a real change of life.

If a man does not live differently from what he did before, both at home and abroad, his repentance needs to be repented of, and his conversion is a fiction. Not only action and language, but spirit and temper must be changed. But, says someone, grace is often grafted on a crab stock.

I know it is, but what is the fruit of the grafting? The fruit will be like the graft, and not after the nature of the original stem. But, says another, I have an awful temper, and all of a sudden it overcomes me. My anger is soon over, and I feel very penitent.

Though I cannot control myself, I am quite sure I am a Christian. Not so fast, my friend, or I may answer that I am quite as sure the other way. What is the use of your soon cooling, if in two or three moments you scald all around you? If a man stabs me in a fury, it will not heal my wound to see him grieving over his madness.

Hasty temper must be conquered, and the whole man must be renewed, or conversion will be questionable. We are not to hold up a modified holiness before our people and say, You will be all right if you reach that standard. The Scripture says, He that commits sin is of the devil.

Abiding under the power of any known sin is a mark of our being servants of sin. For his servants you are, to whom you obey. I do not learn the boasts of a man who harbors within himself the love of any transgression.

He may feel what he likes, and believe what he likes. He is steeled in the gull of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, while a single sin rules his heart and life. True regeneration implants the hatred of all evil, and where one's sin is delighted in, the evidence is fatal to a sound hope.

A man need not take a dozen poisons to destroy his life, one is quite sufficient. There must be a harmony between the life and the profession. A Christian professes to renounce sin, and if he does not do so, his very name is an imposture.

A drunken man came up to Roland Hill one day, and said, I am one of your converts, Mr. Hill. I dare say you are, replied that shrewd and sensible preacher, but you are none of the Lords, for you would not be drunk. To this practical task we must bring all our work.

In our converts we must also see true prayer, which is a vital breath of godliness. If there is no prayer, you may be quite sure the soul is dead. We are not to urge men to pray as though it were the great gospel duty, and the one prescribed way of salvation for our chief message is belief on the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is easy to put prayer into its wrong place, and make it out to be a kind of work by which men are to live, but this you will, I trust, most carefully avoid. Faith is a great gospel grace, but still we cannot forget that true faith always prays, and when a man professes faith in the Lord Jesus, and yet does not cry to the Lord daily, we dare not believe in his faith or his conversion. The Holy Ghost's evidence by which he convinced Ananias of Paul's conversion was not, behold he talks loudly of his joys and feelings, but behold he prayeth.

And that prayer was earnest, heartbroken confession and supplication. O to see the sure evidence in all who profess to be our converts. There must also be a willingness to obey the Lord in all his commandments.

It is a shameful thing for a man to profess discipleship and yet refuse to learn his Lord's will upon certain points, or even dare to decline obedience when that will is known. How can a man be a disciple of Christ when he openly lives in disobedience to him? If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows his Lord's will, but does not mean to attend to it, you are not to pamper his presumption, but it is your duty to assure him that he is not saved. Has not the Lord said, He that taketh not up his cross and cometh after me cannot be my disciple? Mistakes as to what the Lord's will may be are to be tenderly corrected.

But anything like willful disobedience is fatal. To tolerate it would be treason to him that sent us. Our prayer is that you have been blessed and encouraged by this sermon.

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