

## **TENDER WORDS OF TERRIBLE APPREHENSION!**

### **NO. 344**

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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

*“The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all the nations that forget God.”  
Psalm 9:17.*

MANY of God’s ministers have been accused of taking pleasure in preaching upon this terrible subject of “the wrath to come.” We were, indeed, strange beings if so doleful a subject could afford us any comfort. I should count myself to be infinitely less than a man if it did not cause me more pain in delivering myself of the impending sentence of condemnation, than it can possibly cause my Hearers in the listening to it. God’s ministers, I can assure you, if they feel it to be often their solemn duty, feel it always to be a heavy burden to speak of the terrors of the Law.

To preach Christ is our delight. To uplift His Cross is the joy of our heart. Our Master is our witness—we love to blow the silver trumpet and we have blown it with all our might. But knowing the terror of the Lord, these solemn things lie upon our conscience. And while it is hard to preach of them, it were harder still to bear the doom which must rest upon the silent minister. The unfaithful watchman, who does not warn the sinner, must, therefore, eternally bear the sinner’s blood upon his head, because he warned him not.

Think not, this morning, that I am about to speak upon the terrors of the world to come. I shall not do so. I shall but open the subject by making one or two remarks which may, in some measure, shield us from the enmity of those who accuse us of harshness of spirit when we lay bare these predicted woes. You must confess, my dear Hearers, that Jesus Christ was the most tender-hearted of men. Never was there one of so sympathetic a disposition. But not all the Prophets put together—though some of them as stern as Elijah, though many of them seemed commissioned expressly to dwell upon terrible things in righteousness—not all of them put together can equal in thunderclaps the sound of that still voice of Him, who albeit He did not cry nor lift up His voice in the street, spoke more of Hell and the wrath to come than any that preceded Him.

The loving lips of Jesus have furnished us with the greatest revelations of God’s vengeance against iniquity. None ever spoke with such terrible emphasis. No preacher ever used figures of such glaring horror, as did Jesus Christ the Son of Man, the friend of Publicans and sinners. Let me remind you that the wrath of God and the judgment of the Day of the Lord cannot be a trifling matter. How emphatically are we told in Scripture, that, it is “a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Upon such a subject we cannot afford to trifle. Besides, the mystery of Calvary indicates to us that sin must deserve at God’s hand a terrible penalty.

Did Jesus suffer so bitterly to save men and will not the unsaved endure bitterness indeed? Must the eternal and holy Son of God, upon whom sin was only an imputed thing—must He bleed and die and offer up His life, with His soul exceedingly heavy even unto death—and is the world to become a thing about which men can afford to sport or idly dream? Foreshadows have fallen on our path, from which we dismally recoil. You know that sin, even in this world, is a tormentor of unequalled cruelty. How miserable are some men when they are chased by conscience, when the furies of sin have been let loose upon them even in this world!

Some of you may know, if you are not given up to hardness of heart, what it is to be conscious of guilt and to be hunted about in every place, whether you sleep or whether you wake, with a consciousness of your transgression. Many a man has hurried himself to a premature grave, has sought to end his misery by the knife or by the halter, not because he was enduring Hell but only of the present penalty of sin. What, then, must be “the wrath to come”?

Again, I say, it cannot be a theme at which any but fools would presume to jest, nor can it be such that we can, any of us, afford to disregard its trumpet-tongued warning. That dread sentence in our text ought to ring like a death knell in your ears, if you are among the wicked. “The wicked shall be cast into Hell”—the drunkard, the swearer, the fornicator and such like shall receive their well-deserved portion in the bottomless pit. God will not treat them with leniency. He

will not wink at their follies. He will not pass over their sins, as though they were but mistakes, or little errors. He will mete out punishment for such serious offenses.

But observe the companions of the wicked, those who are to be the sharers with these profane ones in their eternal punishment. They are such as forget God. If I mistake not, I am addressing a very large number of those who forget God. It may be I have a few here of the outwardly wicked. Let them hear the text in all its fullness. But, doubtless, I have many hundreds who come under the second description—they forget God. Oh, let them feel the full force of such a text as this. They must be companions hereafter with those whom they would not associate with now. They must have the destiny of men, whom perhaps they now look down upon with contempt—they must be cast into Hell with the wicked, with those who are infidels in the sight of God and demoralized among men.

Now, this morning, I shall first endeavor, as God's servant, to charge this sin upon the conscience of men. Secondly, to unmask the real reasons for this forgetfulness of God. Thirdly, to refute such excuses any heart may make. And then, come lovingly and earnestly to persuade you to repentance of this sin.

### I. First, let me CHARGE THIS SIN UPON YOU.

I wish not now to preach to you in the mass, but to each man as an individual. You can each judge in your own conscience how far what I say is applicable to you. If the fear of God and the love of Jesus are in your hearts, these accusations belong not to you. Occupy yourself with earnestly praying that the Word may go where the reproof is needed—that the arrow may reach its mark. You who have faith in Christ, lift up your souls and pray, "O Lord, send home Your arrow in the heart that is forgetful of You."

Sinner! I charge you with forgetting God—for sure I am you forget His infinite majesty. Do you know what it is to be overawed with a sense of the glory of God? Have you ever thought of Him, before whom the angels veil their faces with their wings and solemnly cry, "Holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts"? Why, you know very well that the glory of God is to you as much a mere matter of speculation, as the glory of some great eastern prince. As you are never affected with the splendor of the Persian Court, so are you just as little subdued and overawed by the splendor of the King of Heaven.

Do you not walk about this world as though God had no Throne, or as if the Throne of the universe were entirely vacant? To Him you give no songs. Before Him you offer no prayers. To Him you have made no confession of your littleness and unto Him you have ascribed no songs of praise for His greatness. You are unconscious of His majesty. The thought never strikes you, it never humbles you, never casts you down. If now and then, when you behold the starry heavens, you are a little subdued by the power which the mighty works of God will certainly have upon your intellect—if sometimes in the midst of thunder and lightning your spirit bows before the awful majesty of God—these are but as fits and starts in the slumber of your habitual forgetfulness. This is not your abiding condition of soul, it is but a spasm. The spirit of your heart is not adoration of His majesty, but forgetfulness of His glory.

Remember, too, oh Sinner, that you have forgotten God in His mercies. Day after day you have fed at the table of His bounty. He has supplied your means of livelihood. You have lacked nothing. But how seldom have you ever thought of thanking Him? You have ascribed your wealth to your own prudence. Your competence to your own industry. If you have a god at all, that god is your strong self. You thank yourself for the clothes that are upon your back and for the meat which cheers your spirit. And all this while you know not that the breath in your nostrils comes from Him.

You know not without Him there were no marrow in your bones—no power in your nerves. Without Him you would fall back to your mother dust and crumble to the earth which brought you forth. Why, you do not praise Him! You have songs for your lusts, but none for your God. You have praise for your earthly friends and thanks for those who help you here. But He is as much forgotten by you as He is by the beasts that perish. You call not your family about you, you say not unto your little ones, "Come, bless your father's God."

You lift not holy hands over your table, thanking God for every mercy that is there. You live as though these things came to you by chance. God is not in all your thoughts. And though He draws your curtain every night and sheds light upon you every day—though it is His earth upon which you tread, His air which you breathe, His water which you must drink—yet He is as much forgotten by you as though He were dead and had ceased to be.

Consider how constantly you forget his Laws. When there is an action proposed to you, how seldom do you pause and say, "Is this right in the sight of God?" You are careful of the laws of men, but the Laws of God are waste paper to you. You would not cheat your neighbor. You would not rob your companion. But how often will men rob God! Men

who are scrupulously honest in giving to man his due and in “rendering unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s,” give not, “unto God that which is God’s.”

Man is proud and self-willed. He loves to be his own master and to have his own way and he cries, “Let me break His bands asunder and cast away His cords from me.” He finds that the easiest way to do this is to ignore the fact that God ever made laws—or that He is the world’s moral governor—or that He will reward and punish. So the sinner goes on in his iniquity. God is not in all his thoughts. I charge this home upon many, many of you now present. Look to your own heart and see if the accusation is not just. Surely many of you must plead guilty to it. You forget His majesty, as though He were not “King of kings and Lord of lords.” You forget His mercies, as though He were not the giver of every good and perfect gift. And you forget His Laws, as though He had not a right to your service—as though His service were not freedom, and obedience to His Laws a delight. The wicked forget God.

And oh how often do you forget His Presence, too! In the midst of a crowd, you are conscious every one of you, of the presence of man, but perhaps this very moment you are ignoring the fact that God is here. In your shop on the morrow how carefully you will take heed that your conduct is circumspect if the eye of your fellow man is observant of you. But before the Presence of God, with the Eternal eye upon you, you can presume to practice the paltry tricks of trade, or to do that which you would not have revealed to mortals for all the world.

You are careful to shut the door and draw the curtain and hide yourselves in secret from men—strangely forgetting that when the curtain is drawn and the door is shut, God is there, still. No walls can shut Him out. No darkness can conceal the deed from His eyes. He is everywhere and sees us in all things. Why, my Hearers, we are all guilty in this respect, in a measure. We forget the actual Presence and the overlooking eyes of God. We talk as we dare not talk if we were thinking that He heard us. We act as we would not act if we were conscious that God was there. We indulge in thoughts which we should cast out if we could but bear in perpetual remembrance the abiding Presence of God, the Judge of the whole earth.

Forgetting God is so common a sin that the Believer, himself, needs to repent of it and ask to have it forgiven, while the unbeliever may solemnly confess this to be his crying sin, a piece of guilt in respect to which he dare not profess innocence—God is not in all, perhaps not in *any* of your thoughts.

And, O sinner! How forgetful you have been of God’s justice! How seldom do you set before your eyes—

*“The pomp of that tremendous day,  
When He with clouds shall come.”*

You sin as though sin were a thing of today and would not be thought of tomorrow. You go to your follies and your pleasures as though God had no book of remembrance in which to write down your sins and no tablets of brass on which to engrave, as with an iron pen, all your iniquities.

Why, if sin were but a mistake, if iniquity never could be punished, if Hell had resolved itself into a few dying embers, if the Throne of God were shaken—if the balances were dashed from His hand, if His sword had grown blunt, men could not be more callous, or more careless than they are now! What is it but forgetfulness of God, who has sworn that He will by no means clear the guilty? What is it but obliviousness of the fact that God avenges and that He will surely give to every transgression its just recompense of reward? What is it but this, that leads men to sin with both hands greedily and to go on in their iniquities as quietly and as peaceably as though they were serving God with all their hearts and hoping to stand before Him accepted in their own righteousness?

If a heathen were to come and walk among us, would he ever suspect us of having a God at all? In the old days of the Spaniards, when the Spaniards had invaded Mexico, a large number of Indians had fled to Cuba for shelter. One of them, the chief of the tribe, gathering together his companions, assured them that the Spaniards’ god was gold and having a chest of it, he thought that it would be best for them to propitiate the Spaniards god that they might be no more subject to the Spaniards’ cruelty.

They accordingly offered sacrifice before this box of gold and danced around it till they had wearied themselves, and then fearing the presence of so great a god in their midst, they cast it into the depths of the sea that it might not in future disturb them even if they had made a mistake in their prayers. Sensible heathens those! Very sensible heathens, indeed! For surely, if they should walk through London among many men, they might make the same mistake but it would be a very little mistake—it would be as near the truth as possible. Their wealth, their substance, their worldly business, as it

were, painted on their retina—always before their eyes—but the God to whom they build their temples, being behind their backs, utterly and entirely forgotten!

Why, Sirs, if God were taken away—if there were no God—it would be but a very little loss to some of you. You would not be like Micah of old, who, when the sons of Dan stole his seraphim, ran after them crying, “They have taken away my gods.” No, surely, you love not the true God, as much as He loved the false one. Were God taken away, you might clap your hands for very joy, for you would say, “He was never a Person whom I esteemed. I never had any reverence for Him. I can do better without a God than I could do with one, I can feel vastly more comfortable in my course of life without God to pry into all my ways, weigh all my actions and declare that He will award to me, at last, a recompense for all my sins.”

I charge home, then, upon your consciences this guilt, that you belong to the number of those who forget God. If it is not so with you, thank God and rejoice before Him. But if you do forget God, let this great trumpet sound in your ears like the trump of the day of doom, “The wicked shall be turned into Hell and all the nations that forget God.”

## II. Now I want to UNMASK THE REASONS OF THIS FORGETFULNESS OF GOD.

Sinner, you who forget God, I tell you that the reason of your forgetfulness of Him is as great a sin as the forgetfulness itself! In the first place, you do not remember Him because the thought of Him makes you afraid. You know that you have offended Him, you are conscious that you can not meet Him with joy and peace and, therefore, you are like Adam, when he hid himself among the trees of the garden and God has need to cry unto you, “Adam, where are you?” If you had not sinned, nothing would give you greater delight than the society of God as the Father from whom you did derive your being. And if your sin were now washed away and your heart renewed by the Spirit, instead of dreading the thought of God, it would be full of delight to you.

You would say, “As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after You, O God. When shall I come and appear before God?” It is your *sin* that makes you dread the Presence of your Judge. He who knows that he is innocent, though he may lay in jail, longs for the day when the sessions shall come round, or when the assizes shall be held. And if he hears the trumpet in the street proclaiming that the judge has come, he is glad, for says he—“Now shall I have deliverance.” But the guilty man always dreads the eye of the judge. But is this wise on your part? Remember, while you forget Him He does not forget you.

You may cover your head, but you cannot escape by merely hiding from yourself the thought of your doom. The foolish ostrich when driven by the hunter buries its head in the sand and fancies it is safe, whereas it is all the more certain to meet with death. It is so with you. You shut your eyes upon a doom which is certain. It were greatly wise if you would but open your eyes. It were the most prudent act that you could do—instead of shunning your God—to sit down solemnly and think of Him.

Let His justice impress your heart. Let His mercy encourage you to seek His face. And His love, working in your spirit, shall renew your soul. Forgetfulness of God is profound folly, but remembrance of God is to the soul her highest wisdom. You dread God, oh Sinner! and therefore, it is why you forget Him.

Besides, the thought of God is irksome to you. It affords you no joy. Were I to make you sit down for ten minutes and think of nothing but God, you would impatiently look at the clock till the ten minutes were passed. Even now, though I speak in earnest, you would rather I were speaking upon some other theme. Your heart revolts. You say, “Why should I think of God? It will not make my heart dance within me, nor my eyes sparkle.” And why? Because you do not love God. We seek the company of those whom we love and if you did love God, you would like to hear of Him. Your spirit would long to get nearer and nearer to Him and your desire would be to be like He, and at last to see Him face to face. You love not God. It is a solemn charge to bring against you. But as long as you forget Him, I cannot help accusing you.

Yet another sin underlies the fact that you do not like to have God in your thoughts. Your real reason is because you find that thinking of God and going on in sin, are two things that are incompatible with one another. You say, “I cannot go to the theater and carry God in my heart with me there. I cannot sit down at the ale-house with the profane and have a thought of God’s Presence with me there. It is not easy for me to go to any haunt of vice or sin and still carry with me the recollection of the Omniscient eye.”

No, Sinner, dishonest in business, you know you could not practice the arts of your trade if you did always keep God before your eyes. You are conscious that the two things will not suit each other. You are quite certain that these are two principles that will no more mix than fire and water, or light and darkness. So you prefer your sins, before God. You love the lusts of the flesh and the delights thereof—the sins of this world and the reward thereof—better than you love Him who made you and who, if you love Him, will take you up to dwell with Himself forever.

Sin once hated, God is loved—but sin loved, God is abhorred. When a man knows that he has been stealing something and has a parcel of goods about him which is not his own, he will take care not to go on the same side of the street with the policeman. And when a man has been doing something wrong, he is quite certain not to go near his God, for he wishes not to be discovered—he desires not to be detected. He is like Adam in his nakedness, he would sew fig leaves together and run from the Presence of God, because he knows that he is naked and cannot stand before his Maker's face.

These are solemn considerations. Let them sink deep into your heart. Steel not your conscience against them. If they are true let them have full weight with you and who knows, while I thus speak but the arrows of conviction may be piercing your heart? And what are they? Are they not gracious weapons by which God slays us first, in order that He may afterwards renew us with the Divine life?

**III. Oh, that I could SLAY EVERY EXCUSE WHICH ANY OF YOU MAY BRING FOR FORGETFULNESS OF GOD!**

“But,” you say, “is not a man excusable for forgetting God if he has not had enough in early youth to impress God upon his memory?” Ah, Sir, then some among you in this respect are inexcusable, indeed. You can remember that one of the first sounds your ears ever heard was the name of Jesus. One of the first sights your infant eyes ever beheld was your mother, with her lips moving in silent prayer while tears were falling upon your infant brow.

She was praying, then, that you might be dedicated to God. Do you remember that family meeting which was held each morning, when the big Bible was opened and your father read from Holy Scripture the Words of Truth! Have you forgotten the prayers which he then put up for you, when he said, “Oh that Ishmael might live before You! Oh Lord, save the kindred of Your servant. May they all be bound up in the bundle of life with the seal of the Lord my God.”

Have you forgotten your mother's personal appeal to you! The Bible in which she wrote your name with that prayer—and you little knew how well she meant that prayer—that prayer in the beginning of the book, that you might know Him whom that Bible had revealed? Have you forgotten that earnest charge your father gave you when you first came to London to be bound apprentice, or to take a situation in some large shop—how he conjured you by the living God not to be led astray?—Not to fall into sin?

And now gray hairs are on your head and *your* children are grown up, too, and perhaps, the grandchild may sit upon your knee and your father's prayers have not dwindled from your memory. Nor have your mother's tears been utterly blotted out. I say, if you remember not God, you cannot plead the excuse of the heathen, even if they are without excuse—for God is to be seen in the visible world—you are without any cloak for your sin, for you have had the name, the Person, the Being of God represented to you by those who could best reach your heart and best enlist your attention.

If some of you—and I may be speaking to such—if some of you have ceased to attend the House of God—if you have given up even the outward observances of religion, at least let this be on your mind—that in the Last Great Day you cannot look your father in the face and say, “Sir, you who did bring me forth, my blood is on your head.” Nor can you look on her that bare you and say to her—“Woman, I curse the breast on which I hung, because the heart beneath it yielded no sympathy for my eternal state and never beat with anxious prayers that I might be saved.” I strip you of this excuse—what other have you now to make?

Maybe you tell me that to think of God always and not to forget Him is very hard. Be it so, but let me ask you—have you ever made the attempt? Have you ever tried to think of God? No. You know that instead thereof you have often strived to thrust the thought out of doors. And when it has come into your heart you have looked upon it as an intruder and you have either said to it with the politeness of Felix, “Go your way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will send for you.” Or else with the harshness but honesty of Ahab you have said, “Have you found me, O my enemy?”

You know right well that you do not check yourself in the middle of a speech with the thought—“But I am forgetting God.” You do not correct yourself in the very center of an action and turn from it because you are conscious that you are permitting the Word of God to slip from your memory. No, Sir, you have tried to remember a thousand things, but you never tried to remember your God! You make memoranda of your business. Take out from your pocket that little ivory tablet now and see how the engagements for the next week are scored there that they may not be forgotten.

Do you ever make any such memoranda with regard to God? Did you ever say to your soul, “My Soul, be fixed and abide hard and fast near to God this week”? Did you ever charge your spirit, saying, “Keep the Lord always before you and set Him at your right hand”? Whatever you have tried, you have never even made the attempt to think of God. How, then, do you know that it is hard work? And if it is hard, what excuse is it for you when you have not even made the attempt?

But, further, you tell me that you cannot—but even if you could not, you are still guilty, for I put it thus to you—Did you ever weep because you had forgotten God? Though you have found it hard to remember him, the least thing you could have done would be to have been sorry because you could not do it. Did you ever charge your eyes to weep because you have forgotten Him who gives them light? Did you ever bid your heart dissolve with anguish because it would not cleave to Him who made it beat? Oh no, Sirs, you know that sin is sweet to you and forgetfulness of God is a dainty morsel to you and you roll it under your tongue.

Oh, were it bitter to you, then indeed, you would soon be cured of it. If once forgetfulness of God became a burden and a plague, then you would seek grace that you might escape it. But instead it sits so sweetly upon your shoulders—it is not like a chain of iron but rather like a chain of gold. It is not like a yoke, but like a pleasant burden which you are only too glad to carry. I charge this on you, that you do willfully and wickedly forget the Lord your God. For if it were not willful and wicked you would repent and be sorry that you had forgotten Him.

Oh Sirs! Vain are your excuses—while in forgetting God you have, indeed, to strain yourselves and divert your attention to do it. If you would but let the world speak to you it would make you remember Him. There is not a star in the sky which would not look out of Heaven and whisper to you—“Man, remember Him who lives above the skies.” There is not a blade of grass in the meadows which would not speak to you and say, “Consider, consider the God who has made you as the grass and before whom you must soon wither away.” Oh, if you would only hear, the very mountains and the hills would break out before you—preaching to you of their God—and the very trees of the field clapping their hands in adoration.

Besides, go to your own house—look into the eyes of your child, sit down at your table—eat your bread and that which God has added thereunto. Go to your bed and dream—wake up and find yourself alive and see if all these things do not tell you of God. Why, God’s name is printed on every part of your habitation, God’s name is written on the very streets along which you walk. Does He not fill Heaven and earth and is He not everywhere? Surely if you forget Him you are without excuse.

What warnings some of you have had! You have been at sea and the timbers of the ship have creaked and she seemed to be as an egg-shell in a giant’s hand. And then you thought you would never forget God again. When the thunderclap made you deaf for a moment with horror and the lightning flash seemed to blind you with dismay, you thought, then, that you could never forget God. Remember too, that little room and the fever, think of the street you live on and the cholera as it stopped at door after door and it passed you by.

Think, I pray you, of the many times you have been exposed to instant or sudden death and say—has not God spoken to me, not only once but twice? Has consumption begun its deadly work with you, fair maid? It is God’s solemn voice to you—“Prepare to meet your God.” Has some disease taken a deep root in your frame, O strong man? Has the physician warned you that it may carry you off and that, right suddenly? Has he said your heart is so diseased that you may fall dead in the streets? God has spoken to you. Shall the Eternal find you turn a deaf ear?

Oh, no, I bid you now, however much you have forgotten Him—forget now all the world besides and think of Him. Better to have no memory and no thought for the most important things of time, than to give all your attention to this present world of shadows and to forget the world of substances and the God who gives solemnity to them. God bless these my words and pluck your excuses away from you and rend them in pieces before your eyes.

**IV.** May God now give you a heart to listen while I seek to PERSUADE YOU TO REPENTANCE. This is my closing task.

You who have forgotten God! You are standing self-condemned and convicted this morning! I have two arguments to ply you with—two great Truths of God which I would force home upon your conscience. But, alas, it is not I who can do it. Only God the Holy Spirit can bless the Word. Well, forgetter of God, I would first plead with you by the tenor of the Law—“Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Law, we persuade men.” You will soon be forced to remember God. You shall lie upon your dying bed and the thought of a God so long neglected, whose Gospel has been rejected, whose Son has been defied, shall then be as gall unto you. The remembrance which might be sweet to you now, shall be as gravel in your mouth, then, to break your teeth in sunder.

You shall lie upon your bed and toss from side to side with a pain which medicine cannot cure. You shall know anguish to which even sleep itself can give no respite. Many such have I seen, and fearful has been the sight—men whom nothing could pacify, whose pain drugs could not allay, whose peace utterly departed. Their bodies and souls seemed as if they were rent in pieces of lions—as if they were set on fire of Hell before their time.

Nor will you be able to forget Him at the Day of Judgment, when your soul shall come up from the place of its separate existence, when your body shall spring up from the grave and the two shall be re-united. You will see the Lord, whom you have despised, sitting upon His Throne of Glory and what would you give if you could shut your eyes then, or if you had never shut your eyes upon Him before? Then will you say, “Would to God I had now a time of respite. Would that mercy could again be proclaimed to me. That there was still found some minister of Christ, some open Bible, some sanctuary, some space for repentance, some pleading terms, some praying ground on which I might yet stand hopefully before my God!”

But, no! All through the time of the preparation of that judgment, the trumpet waxing exceeding loud and long, shall ring destruction in your ears. The black darkness shall blot out hope from you and the ever-flashing lightning shall slay your pride and your pretensions. And when the sentence is pronounced—when Christ has discharged the awful volleys of His wrath against you—you will not be able to forget Him then. In Hell the thought of God shall be as a dagger in your soul—a viper nestling in your bosom, poisoning the fountains of your life and sending hot venom through all your veins.

“Son, remember!” That was the cry of Abraham from Heaven and doubtless an awful cry to Dives in Hell—“Son, remember!” It is the voice of mercy today. “Son, remember!”—it shall be the voice of judgment tomorrow. Son, remember! Son, remember! Son, remember the invitations neglected. Son, remember the warnings despised. Son, remember that solemn Sabbath, when the minister preached, “As though he never might preach again, a dying man to dying men.”

“Son, remember,” the open Word of God—remember your mother’s prayers—your father’s exhortations. Son, remember yours oaths, your blasphemies, your sins, your follies, your laughing at the Word, your despising of Christ. It will tear your hearts asunder only to look back, with that sounding ever in your ears—“Son remember, Son remember.” I bid you then, by the terrors of the Law, to repent of this great sin of having forgotten God. Oh, Spirit of God, grant repentance now! Will you make your bed in Hell, will you abide with everlasting burnings? I pray you be not foolhardy—there are other ways of being a fool besides damning your soul.

Come, dress in motley attire, paint your face and play the clown if you must be a fool, but damn not your soul to prove yourself full of folly. Dash your head against a wall—spend your money for that which is not bread. Hurl your purse into the sea, but don’t destroy yourself. Is there no happiness in this world except the happiness of entailing eternal torment? Oh, could I plead with you as my heart longs to do. Could I speak to you as my Master would speak if He were here this morning, surely I might reach your hearts! Ah, but unless the sacred Spirit is here, vain are the most earnest entreaties, vain the sternest attacks against the barricades and bulwarks of a hard and iron heart. Oh, Lord, turn the sinner and by the terrors of the Law drive him to Yourself!

But now to use perhaps a more forcible argument. God send it home. By the mercies of God, Sinner, I bid you to forget Him no more. He is not a hard Taskmaster, or an austere God. His own words are, “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live.” He is stern—justly so. He is severe—He must be so. To be judge of all the earth He must do right. But this is the day of Divine Grace, this is the

time of mercy. You are not shut up in Hell. The gates of the grave have not yet enclosed you. The iron door is not fast bolted yet. There is hope—hope even for the negligent—hope for the despiser of Christ.

And let me tell you—that hope lies not in anything that is in you, but in Christ Jesus. “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” “Whoever seeks finds and to him that knocks it shall be opened.” If you shall come to yourself this morning, as the prodigal did in the midst of the swine, and if you shall say—“I will arise and go to my Father and will say unto Him, ‘Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before You and am no more worthy to be called Your son’ ”—then, Sinner, God will rejoice to see you come to Him. He will have eyes of mercy for you to see you afar off. He will have feet of mercy to run and meet you. He will have arms of mercy to receive you.

He will have kisses of mercy to cheer you, He will have depths of mercy to wash you. He will have garments of mercy in which to clothe you—jewels of mercy with which to adorn you. And feasts of mercy and music of mercy to make you glad. If I, today, had made my father angry with me. If I had left his house voluntarily and spent his substance, I might be afraid to come back to my father’s house. “Lo,” I might say, “he will never forgive me, I fear he is a stern man.” But if a messenger should come from him and say to me, “Young man, your father’s heart yearns to press you to his bosom, he does not wish you to be a stranger to him any longer. He bade me tell you to come to him just as you were—rags and ulcers, sores and filth—just as you are”

Why, I think I can say that the sight of my father’s messenger, especially if it were my own brother, with tears in his eyes saying to me, “Brother, come back, come back, our father loves us still. I was like you once and father received me—come and he will do the same for you.” I think I would put my unreluctant hand into his and say, “My Brother, I will go with you to my father’s house and I will fall upon my knees and confess my folly and my fault and perhaps he will admit my plea. Perhaps he will hear my prayer.”

In the name of God our Father I plead with you. As vile as any of you have been, I have been—but I know I am forgiven. I bear Him witness He has blotted out my sins. He will do the like with you. Is there no Brother here who will say, “I’ll go with you to Jesus—at His Cross I’ll bow and at my Father’s face offer my prayer”?

Two little parables by way of further encouragement and I have done. There may be one here who says, “Sir, I don’t know how to pray. I don’t know how to find my way to Christ, for I have learned the language of sin so well that I cannot speak the language of grace.” Oh, Sinner, if you only know what it is you want and have a desire to find it, you shall find it. I compare you to a woman whom I met last Friday. We were walking up the lane near where I live and there was a poor woman who accosted us.

She spoke in French. This poor soul had some children at Guildford—she was wanting to find her way to them, but did not know a single word of English. She had knocked at the doors of all the gentlemen’s houses down the lane, and of course the servants could do nothing for her, for they could not understand a word she said. So she went from one place to another and at last she did not know what would become of her.

She had some thirty miles to walk—she did not mind that—but then, she did not know which way to go. So I suppose she had made up her mind she would ask everybody. All she knew, she had written on a piece of paper—the word “Guildford.” And she held it up and began to ask in French on the road. She had met with someone who could tell her the path and beautifully did she express her distress. She said she felt like a poor little bird who was hunted about and did not know how to find her way to the nest. She poured a thousand blessings on us when we told her the way.

And I thought—how much this is like the sinner when he wants to find the way to Heaven. All he knows is, he wants Christ. That is all he knows—but where to get to Him and how to find Him—he does not know. And he knocks at one door and then at another door. And perhaps the minister at the place of worship does not understand the language of human sympathy. He cannot understand the sinner’s need, for there are many servants in my Master’s house, I am sorry to say, who do not understand the language of a sinner’s cry.

Oh, Sinner, you shall surely find Christ, though you know not how to find Him. He will say to you, “Whom do you seek?” and you will say, “I seek Jesus,” and He will say—“I that speak unto you am He.” I am much mistaken this morning, if He who speaks in your heart is not the very Jesus whom you seek. His speaking in your heart is a token of His love. Trust Him, believe in Him and you shall be saved.

There is a story told concerning Thomas a’Becket—a story connected with his parentage. His father was a Saxon gentleman, who went into the crusades and was taken prisoner by the Saracens. While a prisoner among the Saracens, a

Turkish lady loved him and when he was set free and returned to England, she took an opportunity of escaping from her father's house—took ship and came to England. But she knew not where to find him she loved. All she knew about him was, that his name was Gilbert. She determined to go through all the streets of England, crying out the name of Gilbert, till she had found him.

She came to London, first, and passing every street, persons were surprised to see an Eastern maiden, attired in her Eastern costume, crying, "Gilbert, Gilbert, Gilbert!" And so she passed from town to town, till one day as she pronounced the name, the ear for which it was intended caught the sound and they became happy and blessed.

And so, Sinner, today you know little perhaps of religion, but you know the name of Jesus. Take up the cry and go today, and as you go along the streets, say in your heart, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" When you are in your chamber say it still, "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" Continue your cry and it shall reach the ear for which it is meant. If your relations laugh, say, "Ah, I did not call for you." If your friends say that you are mad, reply, "Ah, it may seem so. The riddle is always foolish till you know the meaning of it."

But if you should cry, "Jesus," till Jesus shall answer you, oh happy shall it be! There shall be a marriage between Him and your soul and you, with Him, shall sit down at the marriage supper in the glory of the Father and dwell with Him forever and ever. God add His own blessing for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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