

The New Park Street Pulpit

TENDER WORDS OF TERRIBLE APPREHENSION!

A Sermon

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AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”—Psalm ix. 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 did not warn the sinner, and who 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 expatiate 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 be 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 thunder-shocks the sound of that still voice of him, who albeit he did not cry nor lift up his voice in the streets, 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 spake 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 come* a thing about which men can afford to sport or idly dream? Foreshadows have fallen on our path, from which we dismally recoil. Ye 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 be regardless of its trumpet-tongued warning. That dread sentence in our text ought to ring like a death knell in your ears, if ye be 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 condign punishment for such serious offences. 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 fulness; 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 endeavour, as God's servant, to *charge this sin upon the consciences of men*; secondly, to *unmask the real reasons for this forgetfulness of God*; thirdly, to *refute such excuses as 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 be 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. Ye who have faith in Christ, lift up your souls and pray, "O Lord, send home thy arrow in the heart that is forgetful of thee."

Sinner! I charge thee with forgetting God, for sure I am, thou forgettest his *infinite majesty*. Dost thou know what it is to be overawed with a sense of the glory of God? Hast thou 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 splendour of the Persian Court, so are you just as little subdued and overawed by the splendour 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, 'tis but a spasm; the spirit of your heart is not adoration of his majesty, but forgetfulness of his glory.

Remember, too, oh sinner, that thou hast forgotten God in his *mercies*. Day after day thou hast fed at the table of his bounty; he has supplied thy means of livelihood, and thou hast lacked nothing; but how seldom hast thou ever thought of thanking him. Thou hast ascribed thy wealth to thine own prudence; thy competence to thine own industry. If thou hast a god at all, that god is thy strong self. Thou thankest thyself for the clothes that are upon thy back, and for the meat which cheers thy spirit; and all this while thou knowest not that the breath in thy nostrils cometh from him; that without him there were no marrow in thy bones—no power in thy nerves—without him thou wouldst fall back to thy mother dust, and crumble to the earth which brought thee forth. Why, thou dost not praise him! Thou hast songs for thy lusts, but none for thy God. Thou hast praise for thine earthly friends, and thanks for those who help thee here; but he is as much forgotten by thee as he is by the beasts that perish. Thou callest not thy family about thee; thou sayest not unto thy little ones, "Come, bless thy father's God." Thou liftest not holy hands over thy table, thanking God for every mercy that is thereon; but thou livest as though these things came to thee by chance. God is not in all thy thoughts; and though he draws thy curtain every night, and sheds light upon thee every day: though it is his earth upon which thou treadest; his air of which thou breathest; his water of which thou must drink—yet he is as much forgotten by thee as though he were dead, and had ceased to be.

Consider how constantly thou dost forget his *laws*. When there is an action proposed to thee, how seldom dost thou pause and say, "Is this right in the sight of God?" Thou art careful of the laws of men, but the laws of God are waste

paper to thee. Thou wouldst not cheat thy neighbour; thou wouldst not rob thy companion; but how often will men rob God! Men who are scrupulously honest in giving to man his due, and in "rendering unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar'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 goeth 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 be 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 of everyone 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 be 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; careful to shut to 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 eye; he is everywhere and seeth 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 eye 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*, peradventure not in *any* of your thoughts.

And, O sinner! how forgetful thou hast been of God's *justice*! How seldom dost thou set before thine eyes—

"The pomp of that tremendous day, when he with clouds shall come."

Thou sinnest as though sin were a thing of to-day, and would not be thought of to-morrow. Thou goest to thy follies and thy pleasures as though God had no book of remembrance in which to write down thy sins, and no tablets of brass on which to engrave, as with an iron pen, all thy 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 now are. 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 avengeth 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, and it would be very little of a mistake either, it were 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 be 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, thou who forgettest God. I tell thee that the reason of thy forgetfulness of him is as great a sin as the forgetfulness itself, for in the first place, thou dost not remember him because *the thought of him makes thee afraid*. Thou knowest that thou hast offended him; thou art conscious that thou canst not meet him with joy and peace, and, therefore, thou art like Adam, when he hid himself among the trees of the garden, and God hath need to cry unto thee, “Adam, where art thou?” If thou hadst not sinned, nothing would give thee greater delight than the society of God as the Father from whom thou didst derive thy being. And if thy sin were now washed away, and thy heart renewed by the Spirit, instead of dreading the thought of God it would be full of delight to thee; thou wouldst say “As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, 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 gaol, 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 saith 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. ’Tis so with you; you shut your eyes upon a doom which is certain. ’Twere 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. Thou darest God, oh sinner! and, therefore, it is that thou forgettest him.

Besides, *the thought of God is irksome to thee*. It affords thee no joy. Were I to make thee sit down for ten minutes, and think of nothing but God, thou wouldst impatiently look at the clock till the ten minutes were passed. Even now, though I speak in earnest, thou wouldst rather I were speaking upon some other theme. Thy heart revolts. Thou sayest, “Why should I think of God? It will not make my heart dance within me, nor my eyes sparkle.” And why? Because thou dost not love God; we seek the company of those whom we love, and if thou didst love God, thou wouldst like to hear of him; thy spirit would long to get nearer and nearer to him, and thy desire would be to be like him, and at last to see him face to face. Thou lovest not God. ’Tis a solemn charge to bring against thee; but as long as thou forgettest him, I cannot help accusing thee.

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*. Say you, “I cannot go to the theatre 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, thou knowest thou couldst not practice the arts of thy trade, if thou didst always keep God before thine eyes. Thou art conscious that the two things will not suit each other. Thou art quite certain that these are two principles that will no more mix than fire and water, or light and darkness. So thou preferrest thy sins before God; thou lovest the lusts of the flesh, and the delights thereof, the sins of this world, and the reward thereof, better than thou lovest him who made thee, and who, if thou lovest him, will take thee up to dwell with himself for ever. 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 be true let them have full weight with you ; and who knoweth 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," say you, "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. Thou canst remember that one of the first sounds thine ear ever heard was the name of Jesus. One of the first sights thine infant eye ever beheld was thy mother, with her lips moving in silent prayer while tears were falling upon thy infant brow ; she was praying then that thou mightest be dedicated to God. Dost thou remember that family-meeting which was held each morning, when the big Bible was opened and thy father read from holy scripture the words of truth ! Hast thou forgotten the prayers which he then put up for *thee*, when he said, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee ! Oh Lord, save the kindred of thy 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 grey hairs are on your head, and your children are grown up too, and, perhaps, the grandchild may sit upon your knee, but 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, "Sire, thou who didst bring me forth, my blood is on thy head ;" nor canst thou look on her that bare thee, 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 ?

Or, may be, 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 striven 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 thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee ;" or else with the harshness but honesty of Ahab you have said, "Hast thou found me, O mine 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 centre 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 thou fixed, and abide hard and fast near to God this week ?" Didst thou ever charge thy spirit, saying, "Keep the Lord always before thee, and set him at thy right hand ?" Whatever you have tried at, you have never even made the attempt to think on God. How then do you know that it is hard work ? And if it be 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 thereof, it sits so sweetly upon your shoulder, 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 too glad to carry. I charge this on you, that you do wilfully and wickedly forget the Lord your God; for if it were not wilful 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 would clap their hands in adoration. Besides, go to your own house—look into the eye of your child; sit down to 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. Doth he not fill heaven and earth, and is he not everywhere. Surely if you forget *him* you are without excuse.

What warnings moreover 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 thunder-clap 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 in, 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 you, not only once but twice? Has consumption begun its deadly work with thee, fair maid? 'Tis God's solemn voice to thee—"Prepare to meet thy God." Has some disease taken a deep root in thy frame, O strong man! Has the Physician warned thee that it may carry thee off and that right suddenly? Has he said, thy heart is so diseased that thou mayest fall dead in the streets? God has spoken to thee. Shall the Eternal find thee turn a deaf ear. Oh! no; I conjure 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 thereunto. 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.

Thou who hast forgotten God! thou art standing self-condemned and convicted this morning! I have two arguments to ply thee with—two great truths which I would force home upon thy 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 thee by the *terror of the law*; "Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the law, we persuade men." Thou wilt soon be forced to remember God; thou shalt lie upon thy 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 thee. The remembrance which might be sweet to thee now, shall be as gravel-stones in thy mouth then, to break thy teeth in sunder. Thou shalt lie upon thy bed and toss from side-to-side with a pain which physic cannot cure. Thou shalt 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 wilt thou be able to forget him at the day of judgment, when thy soul shall come up

from the place of its separate existence, when thy body shall spring up from the grave, and the two shall be re-united. Thou wilt see the Lord, whom thou hast despised, sitting upon a throne of glory, and what wouldst thou give if thou couldst shut thine eyes then, or if thou hadst never shut thine eyes upon him before. How wilt thou 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 lightnings 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!" 'Tis the voice of mercy to-day. "*Son, remember!*"—it shall be the voice of judgment to-morrow. *Son, remember! Son, remember! Son, remember* the invitations neglected; *son, remember* the warnings despised; *son, remember* that solemn Sabbath-day, when the minister preached,

"As though he ne'er might preach again, a dying man to dying men."

"*Son, remember*" the open Word of God, remember thy mother's prayers, thy father's exhortations. Son, remember thine oaths, thy blasphemies, thy sins, thy follies, thy laughings at the Word, thy despisings of Christ. It will tear your hearts asunder only to look back, with that sounding ever in your ears—"Son remember, son remember." I conjure 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 fool-hardy; 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 do not 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, sure I might reach your hearts. Ah but unless the sacred Spirit be here, vain are the most earnest entreaties, vain the sternest attacks against the barricades and bulwarks of a hard and iron heart. Oh, Lord, do thou the sinner turn, and by the terrors of the law drive him to thyself!

But now to use perhaps a more forcible argument. God send it home.

By the mercies of God, sinner, I conjure thee to forget him no more. He is not a hard taskmaster, or an austere God. His own words are, "As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, 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 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 thee—that hope lies not in anything that is in thee, but in Christ Jesus. "Whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Whosoever seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." If thou shalt come to thyself this morning as the prodigal did in the midst of the swine, and if thou shalt say—"I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son;'" then, sinner, God will rejoice to see thee come to him. He will have eyes of mercy for thee to see thee afar off; he will have feet of mercy to run and meet thee; he will have arms of mercy to receive thee; he will have kisses of mercy to cheer thee; he will have depths of mercy to wash thee; garments of mercy in which to clothe thee; jewels of mercy with which to adorn thee; and feasts of mercy and music of mercy wherewith to make thee glad. If I to-day 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 bowels yearn 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, who with tears in his eyes should say 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 will hear my prayer ?"

In the name of God our Father I plead with you. As vile as any of you have I been, but I know I am forgiven. I bear him witness he hath 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 ! but sinner, if thou only knowest what it is thou wantest, and hast a desire to find it, thou shalt find it. I compare thee 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 was, she had written on a piece of paper, the word "Guildford," and she held it up and began to ask in French the road. She had met with some one 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, thou shalt surely find Christ though thou knowest not how to find him. He will say to thee, "Whom seekest thou ?" and thou wilt say,—"I seek Jesus," and he will say,—"I that speak unto thee am he." I am much mistaken this morning, if he who speaks in your heart is not the very Jesus whom thou seekest. His speaking in thy heart is a token of his love. Trust him, believe in him, and thou shalt be saved:

There is a story told concerning Thomas à 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, to-day thou knowest little perhaps of religion, but thou knowest the name of Jesus. Take up the cry and go to-day, and as thou goest along the streets, say in thy heart, "Jesus ! Jesus ! Jesus !" and when thou art in thy chamber say it still, "Jesus ! Jesus ! Jesus !" continue thy cry, and it shall reach the ear for which it is meant. If thy relations laugh, say, "Ah, I did not call for you ;" if thy friends say that thou art 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 for ever and ever. God add his own blessing for Jesus' sake. Amen.