

All Rights Reserved By HDM For This Digital Publication
Copyright 1995 Holiness Data Ministry

Duplication of this CD by any means is forbidden, and
copies of individual files must be made in accordance with
the restrictions stated in the B4Ucopy.txt file on this CD.

* * * * *

SELECTED SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS
From The Writings of Absalom Backas (A.B.) Earle
And The Writings of J. Wilbur Chapman

* * * * *

Digital Edition 04/13/95
By Holiness Data Ministry

* * * * *

A-TOPICS

TOPIC: Acknowledgment Of The Son
SUBTOPIC: Necessary To Salvation
TITLE: I Cannot Believe

During our meeting in San Jose, California, a gentleman in high standing in the city, who had raised a college by his own merits, came to my room, by the request of his wife, to converse with me on the subject of religion. He said:

"I will state to you my sentiments, then you can give me such advice as you think proper. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, but do not and cannot believe in the Son, that is in Jesus. Now sir, what am I to do."

"What are you to do? You are to be lost forever unless there can be a change," I replied.

"You make out that I am in a bad condition," he said.

"You are in a bad condition," I replied. "You say you believe in God the Father, and he says, 'There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.' So that there can be no possible hope in your case unless there can be a change in your views."

"Well, sir, I can never believe in the Son of God," he replied again.

I said again to him, "that must settle the question forever if it is so. For the Father has no blood to shed for you and "without the shedding of blood there can be no remission."

I asked him if he would kneel down and pray with me.

"Yes," he said, "I will pray to the Father, I know no Son."

But what a chilly prayer. After a little further conversation, I said:

"Your case is not hopeless. Will you give me your hand and pledge of honor that you will not knowingly grieve the Holy Spirit from you?"

"I pledge you that I will not knowingly resist the Spirit."

I said, "My dear sir, I can pray for you now and believe the Spirit will show you Jesus."

In about three days he kneeled in a large assembly and offered this prayer:

"O Lord, I promised that I would not resist the Holy Spirit, and he has melted me all down and I have a glimpse of Jesus."

I felt sure the full-orbed day would soon rise to his view. In a few days after this, he stood in the midst of a great crowd and made this statement:

"Ten days ago I stood upon a platform of infidelity, now I have sweetly embraced Jesus as my Saviour." While it is true that no man can find or come to Christ, except by the Holy Spirit, it is equally true that we can resist him, and be lost forever. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Aim

SUBTOPIC: To Glorify God In All

TITLE: Aim-Taking

Did you ever see a company of soldiers going through their exercises? Well, if you have, you will remember that, after their muskets are loaded, the officer who is exercising them calls out, "Make ready--take aim--fire."

The aim of each soldier is the thing which he tries to hit when he fires his gun.

When soldiers are engaged in what is called target-shooting, or firing at a mark, they have a large board set up at some distance from them. The surface of this board is painted all over in black and white rings or circles. In the center of the board is a small black circle, sometimes called the bull's-eye. Every soldier, as he takes aim, tries to hit the bull's-eye, or black circle, in the center of the board. The aim of the soldier is that which he tries to hit with his gun.

And in the same way we use the word aim as referring to anything a person undertakes to do. If a new scholar enters your class in school, and says to himself, as he enters "Now I am going to be the head of this class," and if he begins to study his lessons with great diligence and care, so

as to get above the others, then you may say the aim of that scholar is to be the head of the class. The aim of Christopher Columbus was to discover a shorter way to India. The aim of Sir John Franklin and his companions, who perished in the Arctic regions, was to find out a passage by sea from the Pacific to the Atlantic ocean. The aim of Dr Kane, in his voyage to the north, was to find out what had become of Sir John Franklin. The aim of Dr. Livingstone in his long journey through Africa, was to find out the best way of carrying the gospel into the interior of that vast country.

There are a great many aims that people set before them in this world. Some aim to get great riches; others to get a great name; and others to enjoy great pleasure. But St. Paul tells us of an aim that is much better than all these. He says, "And whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do do all to the glory of God." -- Richard Newton -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Altar-Going

SUBTOPIC: Must Be Willing To Go

TITLE: Anything But That

The presiding judge of a district in which I once held a meeting, became deeply convicted of sin, and privately asked Christians to pray for him, but through pride and prejudice he had become very much opposed to kneeling at a Methodist altar; the meetings in that place were held in a Methodist church.

He attended the meetings, but usually sat in the back part of the house. Once or twice he rose for prayer, but would not go to the altar for prayer. He asked one of the ministers if he could not be converted without kneeling at a Methodist altar, and of course was told he could. Still he found no peace, although he sought it carefully with tears.

So deeply did he feel his sins, that he sent out at midnight for a minister he knew to pray with and for him; and they both prayed earnestly, the judge knowing Jesus could, and believing he would, receive him without his going to the altar; that the place he occupied made no difference. That this was true, the result showed; but it also showed that he could not be accepted by Christ until he was willing to go to that despised altar.

At that midnight hour, while the pastor and judge were pleading for the salvation of the latter, he seemed to throw himself upon the Saviour, saying, " Jesus, take me just as I am." In the judgment of the pastor he found the sought-for peace.

The next day two of the pastors came to me and said: "We think the judge is converted, and will let the congregation know it this evening, if you give him an opportunity."

I said I would give him a good opportunity to speak; but was sure he was not converted, and could not be until he was willing to kneel at a Methodist altar.

In the evening, after the sermon, I said, "If there is one present who thinks God has forgiven his sins, we would like to hear that one speak a few words."

All eyes were turned towards the judge; but he had nothing to say. We then bowed in prayer, the judge kneeling in the aisle, and praying for himself as a lost sinner--this time giving up all, and feeling willing to go even to the spot to which he had so often refused to go.

After this season of prayer he arose, and, turning to me, said:

"Mr. Earle, I am now willing to go anywhere. I have found Jesus precious. I am willing to kneel at a Methodist altar, or do anything Christ wishes."

I replied, "We do not want you at this altar if your will is given up; it was only necessary that you be willing to kneel here."

He then gave clear testimony before all that he had found no peace until he was willing to go to that altar; but the moment he yielded his will he found peace, without actually going there.

This case shows the necessity of a full surrender of the will before conversion, and also all the importance that can be attached to "measures."

Many anxious persons suppose they have given up all until the will is tested by some simple thing which has no virtue in itself, but shows whether the individual is in complete submission to God or not.

I think it is well, sometimes, to ask the inquirers to meet Christians in another room, to stop after meeting for conversation, or something of the kind, without adopting any set of measures: let the occasion and circumstances suggest their own measures, or none at all, according to the judgment of the person conducting the services.

I find measures, as they are called, that seem very objectionable in a time of coldness in religion are looked at quite differently by the same persons, when the heart is weighed down with earnest desire for the salvation of souls. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Anxiety

SUBTOPIC: Hurtful

TITLE: Anxiety Hurtful

And what does your anxiety do? It does not empty tomorrow, brother, of its sorrow; but, ah! it empties today of its strength. It does not make you escape the evil, it makes you unfit to cope with it when it comes. It does not bless tomorrow, and it robs today. For every day has its own burden. God gives us power to bear all the sorrows of His making; but he does not give us the power to bear the sorrows of our own making, which the anticipation of sorrow most assuredly is. -- Ian Maclaren -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Armor Of God

SUBTOPIC: Can't Be Pierced By Satan's Darts

TITLE: A Safe Armor

I am told that Emperor Napoleon once went to a very skillful workman, and inquired of him if he could make a bullet-proof jacket or under garment, one that he himself would feel safe to wear as a protection against bullets. The workman assured him he could make just such a garment; one he would feel entirely safe to wear himself. The Emperor engaged him to make the article, requesting him to take time, and see that it was bullet-proof.

The workman took much time and pains in its construction. The jacket was finished, and the Emperor notified that it was ready for him. Napoleon, after carefully examining it, asked the maker if he still felt sure a bullet could not pierce it. The workman said he was sure no bullet could penetrate it; that he himself would feel entirely safe with it on in a shower of bullets. The Emperor asked him to put it on, that he might examine it more fully. The maker put the jacket on himself, that the Emperor might see how finely it fitted and protected the body.

After a careful examination of its make-up and apparent safety, Napoleon stepped back a few feet, and drew his pistol on the man, who cried out:

"Don't try it on me!"

But the Emperor said:

"You told me it was perfectly safe," and fired. The armor proved itself bullet-proof.

So Christ has made an armor that renders its wearer perfectly safe against all the fiery darts that may be hurled against it. Christ has tried it on. He was led out into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. For forty days and nights Satan tried to pierce this armor, but broke all his arrows on it. It could not be penetrated. It was thoroughly tested on Christ, that all who put it on might feel safe.

Each soldier of Christ is told, at his start, to "put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." This armor covers the Christian's loins, his breast, his feet, and is a complete shield to his whole being against any temptation or trial he may encounter. Christ was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin."

Let me say, then, to all who feel a little timid about the Christian's armor, that it has been tested by our "Captain" and thousands of his soldiers, and has never yet been pierced by our enemy's bullets.

Let us all learn a lesson from this incident of the Emperor, to put on and trust the Christian armor. It has been tested. Trust it in life. Trust it in death. Then you go up, and hear the Master say: "Well done." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

B-TOPICS

TOPIC: Bearing The Burdens Of Others
SUBTOPIC: Should Be Instinctive In Christians
TITLE: Bearing Others' Burdens

It is related of Leonardo da Vinci, that in his boyhood when he saw caged birds exposed for sale on the streets of Florence, he would buy them and set them free. It was a rare trait in a boy, and spoke of a noble heart full of genuine sympathy. As we go about the streets, we find many caged birds which we may set free, imprisoned joys that we may liberate, by the power that is in us of helping others. Naturalists say that the stork, having most tenderly fed its young, will sail under them when they first attempt to fly, and, if they begin to fall, will bear them up and support them; and that, when one stork is wounded by the sportsman, the able ones gather about it, put their wings under it, and try to carry it away. These instincts in the bird teach us the lesson of helpfulness. We should come up close to those who are in any way overburdened or weak or faint, and putting our own strength underneath them, help them along; and when another fellow-being is wounded or crushed whether by sorrow or by sin, it is our duty to gather about him, and try to lift him up, and save him. There is scarcely a limit to our possibilities of helpfulness in these ways. -- Miller -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Beauty Of This World
SUBTOPIC: Inseparable From Death
TITLE: Do You Die Here?

Whether all of the angels have yet had the privilege of visiting this world, and looking about over its rivers and seas, its mountains and valleys, and its great variety of beauties, and understanding its revolution among other worlds, or not, I do not know.

I know when this world was dedicated, many of them attended and sung together at the dedicatory service. These saw it launched, and shouted with great joy. But there may be millions of them who have never had time to see this planet yet.

Many years ago I heard the fiction of an angel visiting this world, and looking at its beauties, and wondering at what he saw, and becoming greatly delighted with the scenery about him. The flowing rivers and restless seas, the high mountains towering up toward heaven in their grandeur, the deep, wide spread valleys and their great productions, the trees and flowers all seemed so beautiful and wonderful that he was almost inclined to make his home here, until he was passing a graveyard. Seeing so many monuments and little mounds, he inquired what it meant. He was told:

"There is where we bury our friends when they die."

He started with the greatest astonishment, exclaiming:

"Die, die! Do you die here?"

"Yes we all have to die in this world."

"Then I do not wish to stay here. If all have to die let me go to that world where they do not die."

What a discount to every blessing in this world that we must so soon die and leave it all. What an argument for seeking a country where there is no death. Let us lay up our treasure there. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Beethoven

SUBTOPIC: Last Moments Of

TITLE: Beethoven's Last Moments

The little sketch of Beethoven's last moments given in The Evangelist of November 11th, so interested me that I desire to give you a little different account of the same incident. It gives the same facts, with the different view of another writer. It is from Harper's Monthly, July, 1854, by an unknown author. The story is full of deepest pathos connected with one of the greatest of musical geni the world has ever known. I hope you will give it a place in your Music Department.--J. H. Vance, Erie, Pa.

He had but one happy moment in his life and that killed him! He lived in poverty, driven into solitude by the contempt of the world and by the natural bent of a disposition rendered almost savage, by the injustice of his contemporaries. But he wrought the sublimest music of which man or angel ever dreamed!

Beethoven had but one friend and that was Hummel. But he had quarreled with him, and for a long time they had ceased to meet. To crown his misfortunes he became completely deaf. Then Beethoven retired to Baden, where he lived isolated and sad, in a small house that hardly sufficed for his necessities ... In the midst of his solitude a letter arrived, which brought him back, despite himself, to the affairs of the world, where new griefs awaited him. A nephew whom he had brought up and to whom he was attached by the good offices he had performed for the youth, wrote to implore his uncle's presence in Vienna. He had become implicated in some disastrous business from which his elder relative alone could release him.

Beethoven set off upon the journey and, compelled by the economy of necessity, accomplished a part of the journey on foot. One evening he stopped before the gate of a small mean-looking house and solicited shelter. He had already several leagues to traverse before reaching Vienna, and his strength would not allow him to continue any longer on the road. They received him with hospitality, and after partaking of their simple supper he was installed in the master's chair by the fire-place.

When the table was cleared, the father of the family arose and opened an old claverin (the primitive piano mentioned in The Evangelist). The three sons each took a violin and the mother and daughter each occupied themselves with some domestic work. The father gave the key note, and all four began playing with that unity and precision, that innate genius which is peculiar only to the German people. It seemed that they were deeply interested in what they played, for their whole souls were in their instruments. The two women desisted from their occupation to listen, and their gentle countenances impressed the emotions of their hearts. To observe all this was the only share

that Beethoven could take in all that was passing, for he could not hear a single note. He could only judge of their performance by the movements of the executants, and the fire that animated their features. When they had finished they shook each other's hands, as if to congratulate each other on a community of happiness, and the young girl threw herself weeping into her mother's arms! Then they appeared to consult together, and resumed their instruments. This time their enthusiasm reached its height, their eyes were filled with tears, and the color mounted to their cheeks!

"My friends," said Beethoven, "I am very unhappy that I can take no part in the delight which you experience, for I also love music. But as you see, I am so deaf I cannot hear any sound. Let me read this music which produces in you such sweet and lively emotions."

He took the music in his hand; his eyes grew dim, his breath came short and fast, then he dropped the music and burst into tears! Those peasants had been playing the Allegretto of Beethoven's Symphony in A!

The whole family surrounded him with signs of curiosity and surprise. For some moments his convulsive sobs impeded his utterance. Then he raised his hand and said: "I am Beethoven;" and they uncovered their heads and bowed before him in respectful silence! Beethoven extended his hands to them, and they clasped them, kissed, wept over them! (Imagine that scene!) For they knew that they had among them a man who was greater than a king! Beethoven held out his arms and embraced them all, father mother, young girl and her three brothers!

All at once he arose, and sitting down to the claverin signed to the young men to take up their violins and himself performed the piano part of this chef d'auvre. The performers were alike inspired! Never was music more divine or better executed! Half the night passed away thus and the peasants listened. Those were the last notes of the man!

The father compelled him to accept his own bed, but during the night Beethoven was restless and fevered. He arose; he needed air, he went forth with naked feet into the country. All nature was inhaling a majestic harmony, the winds sighed through the branches of the trees, and moaned along the avenues, and glades of the wood. He remained some time wandering in the cool dews of the morning, but when he returned to the house he was seized with an icy-chill. They sent to Vienna for a physician. Dropsy of the chest was found to have declared itself, and in two days despite every care and skill, the doctor said Beethoven must die. And in truth life was every instant fast ebbing away.

As he lay upon his bed pale and suffering, a man entered. It was Hummel, his old and only friend. He had heard of the illness of Beethoven, and came to him with money and succor. But it was too late. Beethoven was speechless and a grateful smile was all he had to bestow upon his friend. Hummel, by means of an acoustic instrument, enabled Beethoven to hear a few words of his compassion and regret.

Beethoven seemed reanimated, his eyes shone, he struggled for utterance and gasped: "Is it not true, Hummel, that I have some talent after all?"

Those were his last words. His eyes grew fixed, his mouth fell open and his spirit passed away. They buried him in the little cemetery of Doblin. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Bible

SUBTOPIC: Jesus, The Key To Understanding It

TITLE: Secret Of Bible Study

Prof. W. G. Moorhead of Xenia Theological Seminary, told me that one day he was returning to his home from one of his journeys, and wanted to take with him some present for his children. He decided at last that the present should be a dissected map. When he gave it to his two girls he said, "Now if you can put this together you will know more of geography than if you studied a book." They worked very patiently, but at last one of them rose to her feet, saying, "I cannot put it together," and said the great Bible teacher, "it was an awful jumble." They had a part of North America in South America, and other mistakes quite as serious were made. Suddenly, however, the larger who was still on her knees, discovered that the other side of one piece of the map was a man's hand. Curiosity prompted her to turn over the other piece and there was a part of his face, and then her fingers working rapidly she turned over every piece of the man, and called to her sister saying, "Come back, there is a man on the other side, let us put the man together first," and almost instantly, said the father, the figure of the man was completed, and when the map was turned over every river and lake, every mountain and plain was in the proper place. And this said Dr. Moorhead, is the secret of Bible study. Put the man, Christ Jesus, together first. Jesus in Genesis is the same as Jesus in the Revelation. The fact is there is one name that binds the book together. Learn the meaning of that name, and you have gotten hold of the power of the Bible. -- J. W. C. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Bible

SUBTOPIC: Reading It Is Not Enough

TITLE: Bible Reading Not Enough

Bible reading is not enough--with the open page in your hand, my friend, you may go to hell! I noticed the other day on the roadside a signpost with on it the words, "To Edinburgh 7 miles." For Edinburgh was I bound and here was the welcome instruction from the dumb signboard. What would you think if I, footsore and weary and eager to be in your bonny city, had mounted that signboard, straddled stride legs upon it, and given the "Hech me!" of contentment and resolution to stick on its top? You would come by, and salute me first, as usual, about the weather; then Scotchman-like, it would be about the whither! "Oh, I'm going to Edinburgh." "To Edinburgh? What are you doing up there then?" "Why, can't you read? Read, read and see." "To Edinburgh 7 miles." "Yes, isn't it grand to be here? On this signpost that speaks this blessed speech!" Well, you begin to feel eerie-sort and slip by and you report to the policeman that there's a queer-looking chap squatting on the roadside signpost seven miles from Edinburgh, and you're sure he must have escaped from Morningside Asylum! Ay, you would think rightly, and do rightly in that case, but oh! dear, dear soul, examine yourself, are you in your Bible-reading and resting just as silly and insane? Are you straddled on the signpost to Calvary? Are you content with your chapter and chapter and chapter that but point you "Behold the Lamb of God"? Are you resting in your daily portion, your family-worship? Have you used this Bible just for what it was meant for--to direct

you to the Christ, the A and Z of it? Have you arrived at the signalled salvation? Are you converted, born again of this water of the word, and of this spirit of the person? Are you a Christian, Christ's one.? -- J. W. C. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Bible

SUBTOPIC: The Only Way To Read It

TITLE: The Bible And The Effectuated

Do you remember the story of the blind girl whose friends gave her a Bible with raised letters? You know she lost the acuteness of touch in the ends of the fingers, and so she could not read the book; but she would take it to another friend, that that friend might get the sweet messages that had made her heart burn. And then it was that its sweetness was revealed in a new light. As she was carrying it over to the home of her friend, it was like giving up her best friend, and she raised it to her lips to kiss it once, and when the Bible touched her lips, she felt on her lips the words, "The Gospel according to Saint Mark." I have found that when I read with the mind only, I get nothing compared with what I receive when I put my heart up against it. I can feel the throbbing of the heart of the infinite God. Have you learned it.? -- J. W. C. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Bibles For The Poor

SUBTOPIC: By Which To Be Remembered

TITLE: "To Remember Me By"

I have read an incident in a paper, lately, that deeply moved my heart, and caused me to feel that it ought to be read by every one, as an incentive to do more for the poor and destitute, and is well calculated to afford us pleasure in reviewing our lives from the Better Country. The incident is this:

A beautiful girl of ten years was dying. The family had gathered about her couch, the father almost distracted, the whole family bathed in tears, for she was the pet of the household. How could they give her up? The father had fallen upon his knees near her pillow, sobbing aloud at the thought of her leaving them, and could hardly say, "Thy will be done."

The little girl opened her eyes, and looking about upon the weeping ones that stood around her, said:

"Papa, dear papa?"

"What, my dear Lillian, do you want of me?"

"Papa," she answered, in faint, broken accents, "how much do I cost you every year?"

Her father tried to hush her, for fear she would be worse if she talked. But she was so anxious to do good to poor children that she again faintly said:

"Please, papa, how much do I cost you?"

The father, to soothe his dying child, said:

"Well my dear Lillian, perhaps two or three hundred dollars. But, my darling, what did you want to know that for?"

"Because, papa, I thought may be you would lay it out this year for Bibles for poor children to remember me by."

The father replied:

"I will, yes, I will, this year, and every year, as long as I live, that my dear Lillian may speak to thousands of poor children by these Bibles, that they may give themselves to Christ, and you meet them all in heaven, and they and you have something to remember each other by."

Let me ask the reader of this incident what are you going to leave behind to be remembered by?

May I not ask you all to do as this little girl did? Leave something to be remembered by. Do something each day worthy of remembrance. Jesus says, "The poor ye have with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good."

In this way we may make to ourselves friends that "will receive us into everlasting habitations." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Burden Of Prayer Removed
SUBTOPIC: For Those Who Cross The Deadline
TITLE: No More Prayer For Him

A trustee in the Baptist society, and officer in the city government in one of the cities where I was holding a meeting, attended the meeting a few days, and was powerfully convicted of his lost condition. I think fully twenty Christians in the meeting were really burdened in prayer for his conversion. There seemed to be groanings that could not be uttered, for him. My own heart was so burdened for his conversion that I went to my room, and wrote him a kind letter, pointing out the way to Christ. But before I took the letter from my room, I lost all burden for him. I kept the letter until I could see the twenty who felt so deeply for him, as the letter would be of no service to him if he had sinned away the day of grace, and grieved away the Holy Spirit.

I found, as far as I could learn, that all the burden of prayer had been taken from every one of those Christians about the same hour, so I did not send him the letter, but carefully watched the results.

He went from the meeting, and took the intoxicating cup, and then would use profane language. But the Spirit strove with him again, and again he would take the cup, until the Spirit took his flight.

Then none of us could pray for him. God has said. "There is a sin unto death. I do not say that ye shall pray for it." No one can have a spirit of prayer for one who has committed this sin.

This man stretched a bar of iron across the door of his pew, turned over the curtain, and labeled it, cursed the society of which he was a trustee, said he would have nothing more to do with them.

I followed him for six years in his downward career. He took larger draughts of intoxicating drink, lost his position as a city officer. His family could not live with him. He became a vagabond, and finally committed suicide.

Oh, that all would be very careful not to grieve the Holy Spirit! -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Business As A Christian
SUBTOPIC: Possible, If Not Sinful
TITLE: Could I Do Business?

Could I go on with my business if I become a Christian? That would depend on what your business is. If you are engaged in a wicked business, you would have to give it up. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." To be a faithful Christian never interferes with any lawful business or pleasure, on the sea or on the land.

I heard of one of New York's largest merchants, with a multitude of employees, yet, meet him where you would, he was always ready to converse on the subject of religion. He seemed filled with the love of Christ. They thought no one could enjoy religion as he claimed to, and perform the amount of work he did. So they went to his store, and watched him. Whenever the clock struck, he would withdraw into another room for a moment or two. They managed to see what he did in that room. He would drop on his knee for a moment, and thank God that he had kept him another hour, and ask grace for the next hour. When asked about it, he said:

"Why, brethren, I serve God by the hour, and by his grace I mean to serve him by the half hour pretty soon."

Could he go on with his business, and yet be a faithful Christian?

I met the professors and students in Knox College in Illinois, while holding a meeting in that town, and said to them:

"I always wanted to stop any man when I heard him asking persons to give up all for religion, and request him to explain himself. Did he mean that that husband and wife should separate? Not at all. Should a student give up his studies to be a Christian? No. Should business men give up lawful, honorable business to serve the Lord? Not in the least. What, then, does the Saviour require me to give up, to be his obedient, happy child? Not one proper thing. Christ never asked me to give up one thing except what was sinful. The fulness of Christ's love was never designed to make one real pleasure less."

The students took hold of this thought, and the president wrote me nearly every one of them had either become a Christian, or had asked to be prayed for that they might be.

So that the "joy of the Lord" is the Christian's strength. Christ only wishes to take from us what is sinful, and would hinder our highest enjoyment here, and our eternal happiness beyond. Will you be a Christian then? If not, why? -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

C-TOPICS

TOPIC: Children

SUBTOPIC: Leading Parents To Christ

TITLE: My Two Dollars

At the close of a series of meetings in Springfield, Mass., a mother handed me a little girl's picture wrapped in two one-dollar bills, at the same time relating the following touching incident:

Her only child, at the age of six years, gave her heart to the Saviour, giving, as the pastor with whom I was laboring said, the clearest evidence of conversion.

At once she went to her mother and said, "Ma, I have given my heart to Jesus and he has received me; now, won't you give your heart to him?" (The parents were both unconverted at the time). The mother replied, "I hope I shall some time, dear Mary." The little girl said, "Do it now, ma," and urged the mother, with all her childlike earnestness, to give herself to the Saviour then.

Finding she could not prevail in that way, she sought to secure a promise from her mother, feeling sure she would do what she promised; for her parents had made it a point never to make her a promise without carefully fulfilling it. So time after time she would say, "Promise me, ma;" and the mother would reply, "I do not like to promise you, Mary, for fear I shall not fulfill."

This request was urged at times for nearly six years, and finally the little petitioner had to die to secure the promise.

Several times during her sickness the parents came to her bedside to see her die, saying to her "You are dying now, dear Mary." But she would say, "No, ma, I can't die till you promise me." Still her mother was unwilling to make the promise, lest it should not be kept. She intended to give her heart to Jesus some time, but was unwilling to do it "now."

Mary grew worse, and finally had uttered her last word on earth: her mother was never again to hear that earnest entreaty, "Promise me, ma."

But the little one's spirit lingered, as if it were detained by the angel sent to lead her mother to Jesus, that the long-sought promise might be heard before it took its flight.

The weeping mother stood watching the countenance of the dying child, who seemed to say, by her look, "Ma, promise me, and let me go to Jesus." There was a great struggle in her heart as she said to herself, "Why do I not promise this child? I mean to give my heart to Jesus, why not now? If I do not promise her now, I never can."

The Spirit inclined her heart to yield. She roused her child, and said, "Mary, I will give my heart to Jesus." This was the last bolt to be drawn; her heart was now open, and Jesus entered at once, and she felt the joy and peace of sins forgiven.

This change was so marked, she felt constrained to tell the good news to her child, that she might bear it with her when she went to live with Jesus; so, calling her attention once more, she said, "Mary, I have given my heart to Jesus, and he is my Saviour now."

For six years Mary had been praying to God and pleading with her mother for these words; and now, as they fell upon her ear, a peaceful smile lighted up her face, and, no longer able to speak, she raised her little, pale hand, and pointing upward, seemed to say, "Ma, we shall meet up there." Her life's work was done, and her spirit returned to Him who gave it.

The mother's heart was full of peace, though her loved one had gone. She now felt very anxious that her husband should have this blessing which she found in Christ.

The parents went into the room where the remains were resting, to look upon the face of her who slept so sweetly in death, when the mother said, "Husband, I promised our little Mary that I would give my heart to Jesus, and he has received me. Now, won't you promise?"

The Holy Spirit was there. The strong man resisted for a while, then yielded his will, and taking the little cold hand in his, kneeled and said, "Jesus, I will try to seek thee."

The child's remains were laid in the grave. The parents were found in the house of prayer--the mother happy in Jesus, and the father soon having some evidence of love to Christ.

When I closed my labors in Springfield, Dr. Ide said to his congregation, "I hope you will all give brother Earle some token of your regard for his services before he leaves. As this mother heard these words, she said she could, as it were, see her little Mary's hand pointing down from heaven, and hear her sweet voice saying, "Ma, give him my two one-dollars."

Those two one-dollars I have now, wrapped around the picture of that dear child, and wherever I go, little Mary will speak for the Saviour.

Reader, is there not some loved one now pointing down from heaven and saying to you, "Give your heart to Jesus?" Are you loving some earthly object more than Jesus? God may sever that tie--may take away your little Mary, or Willie, or some dear friend. Will you not come to Jesus, without such a warning? -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Children
SUBTOPIC: Old Enough To Be Saved
TITLE: Children Are Old Enough

I have no sympathy with the idea that our children have to grow up before they are converted. Once I saw a lady with three daughters at her side, and I stepped up to her and asked her if she was a Christian.

"Yes, sir."

Then I asked the oldest daughter if she was a Christian. The chin began to quiver, and the tears came into her eyes, and she said:

"I wish I was."

The mother looked very angrily at me and said, "I don't want you to speak to my children on that subject. They don't understand." And in great rage she took them away from me. One daughter was fourteen years old, one twelve, and the other ten, but they were not old enough to be talked to about religion! Let them drift into the world and plunge into worldly amusements, and then see how hard it is to reach them. Many a mother is mourning today because her boy has gone beyond her reach, and will not allow her to pray with him. She may pray for him, but he will not let her pray or talk with him. In those early days when his mind was tender and young, she might have led him to Christ. Bring them in. "Suffer the little children to come unto me."

Is there a prayerless father reading this? May God let the arrow go down into your soul! Make up your mind that, God helping you, you will get the children converted. God's order is to the father first, but if he isn't true to his duty, then the mother should be true, and save the children from the wreck. Now is the time to do it while you have them under your roof. Exert your parental influence over them. -- J. W. C. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Children
SUBTOPIC: Used Of God To Win Their Parents
TITLE: Won By His Child

A tender incident; one that illustrates the truth of Christ's word, "A little child shall lead them."

A saloon-keeper of considerable note had an only daughter, named Eva. The father almost idolized this child. She was very lovely. He would often take her into his saloon, to show her to his company. His life seemed bound up in this child. He would gratify, as far as possible, every wish of his Eva, of whom he was becoming very proud.

When she was about six years old, a Christian temperance woman came into that place and formed a Children's Temperance Society. Eva was invited to attend the meeting, and became a member. Her father, proud of having her noticed, gave his consent, thinking she was too young to be influenced by what might be said about his business.

The lady conducting the services asked the children to bow their heads while she asked God to bless them. Eva had never heard a prayer before. It seemed very strange to her, and made a lasting impression on her mind.

After returning home, she at once began her lifework, which was to terminate in a few weeks. She went at once to her father, and said:

"Papa, it is wrong to sell rum; it makes people bad."

He was pleased to see that she remembered so much that she had heard in the meeting, and so did not keep her from attending them. Eva, though so young, had evidently given her heart to the Saviour.

A few weeks after giving herself to Christ, she was taken very sick. Her father watched over her day and night with the tenderest care. How could he have the pride and idol of his heart taken away? She would often look up in his face so earnestly, and say:

"Papa, don't sell any more rum, because it is wrong."

Still his saloon was open.

She was fast fading away. Death was about to liberate the soul of little Eva. Just then, with her face almost angelic, she looked up in her father's face, and said:

"Papa, dear papa, won't you promise me that you won't sell any more rum?"

The father, almost overcome with emotion, replied:

"Yes, Eva dear, I will promise you anything if you will only get well. How can I live without you!"

She asked him to go and shut up his saloon right away, that she could "tell Jesus what he had done."

He was too much affected to speak, but left the room. In a short time he returned, and said:

"My darling, I have shut up my saloon, so that no one can come in."

He then promised his child he would never sell another drop of liquor, and would throw away all there was in his saloon.

Eva was very happy about her father's decision, and for some time was very quiet. After a while she opened her eyes, and looking about the room, on them all, with her face beaming with the love of Christ, said:

"I am going to live with Jesus very soon, and I do want my papa and mamma there too. Papa, will you promise to give your heart to him and do all he wants you to, and then come and live with him?"

The father was silent. He did not like to promise anything he was not sure he could fulfill. His weeping wife said:

"Oh, George, do grant your dying child's request. I have promised to meet her in heaven, and I want you should."

At last, in broken accents, he said:

"I promise what you wish, my darling child. I will seek your Saviour with all my heart, and serve him the rest of my life, and hope to meet you in heaven."

Eva had accomplished her mission. Her work was ended, and she fell asleep. She went away with the angels to her happy home above, to welcome her father and mother when they come to meet her there.

Why would not these parents come to Jesus without this severe trial? Reader, will it be necessary for God to deal in a similar way with you, to bring you to heaven? -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Christ
SUBTOPIC: Joint-Heirs With
TITLE: Joint Heirs With Christ

A dying judge, the day before his departure to be with Christ, said to his pastor, "Do you know enough about law to understand what is meant by joint-tenancy?"

"No," was the reply. "I know nothing about law, I know a little about grace, and that satisfies me."

"Well," he said, "if you and I were joint-tenants on a farm, I could not say to you: That is your hill of corn, and this is mine; that is your stalk of wheat, and this is mine; that is your blade of grass, and this is mine; but we should share and share alike in everything on the place. I have just been lying here, and thinking with unspeakable joy, that Jesus Christ has nothing apart from me, that everything he has is mine, and we will share and share alike through all eternity." -- J. W . C. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Christ Jesus
SUBTOPIC: The Only Saviour
TITLE: Some Other Way

Among those who were most deeply convicted of their lost condition, in our meetings in Portland, Oregon, was a lady in high standing. She came to my room bathed in tears, under a deep sense of her lost condition, crying out in the language of the jailor:

"Sir, what must I do to be saved?"

I at once replied, "I can tell you just what to do. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

"Oh, sir," she said, "I must be saved in some other way than that. My father died rejecting Jesus Christ and I cannot embrace anything that does not take my father to heaven. You must tell me of some other way."

"My dear madam," I said, "there is no other way. Your Heavenly Father says, 'There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.' Also 'without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sins.' The Father has no blood. The Holy Spirit has no blood. The angels have no blood, however friendly and anxious they may feel for lost men. And your blood and mine is poisoned by sin, so that if you or your father reject Christ there is no help for you.

Oh, how bitterly the poor woman wept. Still exclaiming, "there must be some other way."

What a scene to witness, a convicted sinner crying out under a load of sin:

"I must be saved, but I cannot embrace Jesus, because it would shut my dear father out of heaven. Dear sir, can't my sins be washed out some other way?"

"No other way," I said.

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."

For a while it seemed a hopeless case. I finally told her of the conversion of a Mr. McCall, converted after he was drowned. It was this:

"McCall was swimming in deep water and in a cramp or in some way went to the bottom, and filled with water, and while lying on the gravel under water in a perfectly conscious state sought and found forgiveness of his sins through Christ. He was taken out of the water and appliances made and life restored. As soon as he could speak he said to his friends, 'After I filled with water and went to the bottom, while lying on the gravel, I saw everything clearly, and conscious of my sins, I gave myself to Christ and felt that I was forgiven and accepted of him.' I knew this man for many years after this wonderful conversion. He lived a faithful Christian life, and died a triumphant death."

I related this incident to this anxious soul, who listened with intense interest.

I then asked if she knew her father did not see his mistake and repent and embrace the rejected Saviour, after he was too far gone to tell her? She calmly replied:

"I don't know, do I?"

I then asked her if she would leave her father there and embrace Christ as her only hope. The Spirit seemed to show her Christ as her Saviour, and gave her power to believe on him as her Saviour.

She wiped her tears, and looking up with a heavenly smile on her face, said:

"Oh, sir, I can trust Jesus now, and I feel that my sins are washed away in his blood."

I felt paid for a life of toil in being permitted, through the Divine Spirit, to so present Christ to this lost one that she could believe on him. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Coldness

SUBTOPIC: Because Joy Of Salvation Lacking

TITLE: The Minister's Fault

An incident in my own experience, some twenty years ago, taught me a lesson I shall never forget. I commenced a series of meetings in a town in New York, with the Congregational and Baptist churches united. I thought myself fully prepared for the work, and entered into it looking for immediate and large results.

My first aim was to preach so as to lead the churches nearer to Christ. Accordingly I prepared five sermons for Christians, as clear and pointed as I knew how to make them. The first four had no apparent effect. I wondered at it. The fifth was prepared with a scorpion in the lash; it was a severe one, and the last harsh sermon I have preached, and the last I ever expect to preach; but this too was powerless.

I then went to my closet, and there on my knees asked Jesus what could be the difficulty with those Christians. It did not enter my mind that the trouble could be anywhere else than among them. I had preached with tears in my eyes, and been anxious to see a revival, and had no thought but that the preacher was in a right state. But there in my closet God revealed to me my own heart, showing me that the difficulty was with myself, and not with the church; I found myself as cold as those I was trying to benefit. My tears, even in the pulpit, had been like water running from the top of a cake of ice when the warm rays of the sun are falling upon its surface, but which becomes hard and cold again as soon as the sun goes down.

I told the Congregational pastor of what I had discovered, and asked him the condition of his own heart. He frankly confessed that he was in the same state as myself. We prayed together several times. I felt that I could not live in that state and accomplish much. Accordingly I went home and shut myself in my room, resolved to spend the night in prayer, if necessary. Oh, the struggle of that night! Hour after hour I wrestled alone with God. My heart had been full of

coldness, and I not aware of it. No wonder the churches had not come up to the work! I renewedly and repeatedly gave myself to the Saviour, determined not to let the angel depart until my heart was filled and melted with the love of Jesus. Towards morning the victory came. The ice was all broken, melted, and carried away; the warmth and glow of my "first love" filled my heart; the current of feeling was changed and deepened; the joy of salvation was restored.

In the morning I went out, took the unconverted by the hand, and said the same things as on day previous; but now they were melted to tears over their sin and danger.

I prepared and preached another sermon to the churches -- no lash, nothing harsh about it. They broke down, confessed their own need of a special preparation of heart, and gave themselves anew to the work, which from that hour went forward rapidly and successfully.

Thus I learned the necessity of having my heart filled with the love of Christ, if I would see the salvation of the Lord follow my labors.

Since then I have spoken kindly of ministers who do not see the conversions for which they labor. Yet I am convinced, and more and more every year, that generally the fault is in the minister's own heart, coldness, growing out of the absence of the joy of salvation.

Let me ask any minister that reads this incident, if he has tarried as long in that "upper room," as he should.

When he has power with God he will have with men, to lead them to the Saviour. Nothing he can do will be a substitute for the fullness of Christ's love in his own heart. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Communion With God

SUBTOPIC: No Desire For Indicative

TITLE: Pleasure In Selfish Prayer

I once asked a lady whose character seemed as spotless as it is possible to be in this life, who said she had always enjoyed secret prayer, if there was a friend in the world whose society she enjoyed when she wanted nothing of that friend except to be in his presence, no personal or selfish end in view, nothing wanted except to enjoy being in his society. She said:

"There is just such a friend, in whose society and presence I spend hours of the greatest pleasure, simply because I love him."

I inquired if she felt the same or equal pleasure in the closet or in communion with God; whether she had seasons for secret praise to God, when nothing was wanted except to be in his presence, to praise him for his purity and holiness.

She replied:

I see my heart, sir. I see myself a lost sinner.

My pleasure in prayer has been all selfishness, no love for holiness. Although I have lived a moral life, and enjoyed secret prayer, it has been only when I wanted some favor from God, not because I loved his purity, and desired to be in his presence. I see that my heart has been dead in its affections towards God all this time; I see the need of being born again, of a new heart."

I have seldom seen a more earnest seeker than this lady. It was not a change in her outward life she sought, this was apparently without blemish, but a change in her affections toward the holiness of God.

There is nothing in our fallen nature, which, if cultivated in the best possible manner, would bring our hearts, or affections, into union with holiness and purity. If unregenerate men were taken into heaven itself, and if it were possible to live in the society of the pure and the holy for ages, even this would not bring love to God and holiness into the soul. "Ye must be born again," would still remain true. Being in heaven among the redeemed would not bring life into the dead affections.

I heard of a man who was a profane swearer, a rejecter of offered mercy, who could not sleep until he had repeated aloud the prayer his mother taught him when a child, "Now I lay me down to sleep."

Having repeated this simple prayer, he was so far satisfied that he could go quietly to sleep. If we were in the habit of going to a rich man for favors, even if we really disliked him, yet, if he received us kindly, and granted our requests, we should feel a kind of satisfaction in going for those favors, although we had no love for the man. So we may find a certain satisfaction in prayer, a degree of pleasure, it may be, in going to God for what we think we want.

This is a very different thing from feeling a real pleasure in simply being in God's presence to praise him for his holiness and purity, when we want nothing in particular, to have seasons for secret praise.

Let me ask the reader whether the pleasure you feel in secret prayer is only when you want something in particular of him, and so may be entirely selfish pleasure, or do you, at least, have seasons when you want simply to praise God for his purity and holiness, finding real pleasure in being in his presence, because you love him? -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Concern For A Soul

SUBTOPIC: More Persuasive Than All Arguments

TITLE: Unanswerable Argument

The most effectual, unanswerable argument with which to meet infidelity is intense desire for men's salvation, or, as Paul expresses it, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

Infidelity stands trembling in the presence of soul-travail. It is an unanswerable argument.

An incident occurred a number of years ago that illustrates the real power of this argument. A man of great ability and reading supposed himself invulnerable to any argument Christians could bring in favor of Christianity. Able ministers had endeavored to convince him, but he would laugh them down. A very able, pious lawyer had been sent to reason with him, but it was all of no avail, until a humble Christian satisfied him he was "greatly concerned for his salvation."

I will give his experience in his own language, as related by himself in a prayer-meeting:

"I stand," said Mr. R_____, "to tell you the story of my conversion."

His lips trembled slightly as he spoke, and his bosom heaved with suppressed emotion.

"I am as a brand plucked out of the burning. The change in me is an astonishment to myself, and all brought about by the grace of God and that unanswerable argument. It was a cold morning in January, and I had just begun my labor at the anvil in my shop, when I looked out, and saw Mr. B_____ approaching. He dismounted quickly, and entered.

"As he drew near, I saw he was agitated. His look was full of earnestness. His eyes were bedimmed with tears. He took me by the hand. His breast heaved with emotion, and with indescribable tenderness he said:

" 'Mr. R_____, I am greatly concerned for your salvation greatly concerned for your salvation,' and he burst into tears.

"He stood with my hand grasped in his. He struggled to regain self-possession. He often essayed to speak, but not a word could he utter, and finding that he could say no more, he turned, went out of the shop, got on his horse, and rode slowly away.

" 'Greatly concerned for my salvation!' said I, audibly, and I stood, and forgot to bring my hammer down. There I stood with it upraised--'greatly concerned for my salvation!'

I went to my house. My poor, pious wife, whom I had always ridiculed for her religion, exclaimed:

" 'Why, Mr. R_____, what is the matter with you?'

" 'Matter enough,' said I, filled with agony, and overwhelmed with a sense of sin. 'Old Mr. B_____ has ridden two miles this cold morning to tell me he was greatly concerned for my salvation. What shall I do? What shall I do?'

" 'I do not know what you can do,' said my astonished wife. 'I do not know what better you can do than to get on your horse, and go and see him. He can give you better counsel than I, and tell you what you must do to be saved.'

"I mounted my horse, and pursued after him. I found him alone in that same little room where he had spent the night in prayer for my poor soul, where he had shed many tears over such a reprobate as I, and had besought God to have mercy upon me.

" 'I am come,' said I to him, 'to tell you that I am greatly concerned for my own salvation.'

" 'Praised be God!' said the aged man. 'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief,' and he began at that same Scripture, and preached to me Jesus. On that same floor we knelt, and together we prayed, and we did not separate that day till God spoke peace to my soul.

"I have often been requested to look at the evidence of the truth of religion, but, blessed be God, I have evidence for its truth here," laying his hand upon his heart, "which nothing can gainsay or resist. I have often been led to look at this and that argument for the truth of Christianity; but I could overturn, and, as I thought, completely demolish and annihilate them all. But I stand here, tonight, thankful to acknowledge that God sent an argument to my conscience and heart which could not be answered or resisted, when a weeping Christian came to tell me how greatly concerned he was for my salvation. God taught him that argument when he spent the night before him in prayer for my soul."

If we would lead men to the Saviour, let us satisfy them that we see and feel their danger; that alone before God we are "greatly concerned for their salvation." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Conscience

SUBTOPIC: Troubled By Secret Sins

TITLE: Secret Sins

Secret sins, laid upon an enlightened, active conscience, unforgiven, are a source of great pain and suffering. David said, "My sin is ever before me." An incident occurred in one of our meetings, that strikingly illustrates this truth.

A gentleman in high standing in the community where he lived, belonging in a family in high social position, not a blot on his reputation, strictly honest before men as far as was known, yet one thing greatly troubled him. He asked the privilege of seeing me alone. When alone, he said:

"I desire to become a Christian, but I have a thousand dollars that don't belong to me, which I took from a man two years ago. I cannot keep it. I will come out with a public confession, or anything else you advise me to do."

I asked him if any one charged him with it or mistrusted him. He replied:

"No, sir, I don't suppose any one has the least idea that I am mean enough to do such a thing. But I did it, and can't live so. The man who lost it is a personal friend of mine. None but God and myself know anything about it."

I asked him if he was able to return it to the man.

"I am," he said, "but I have had it two years, and that is worth eight per cent."

"Well, that would be eleven hundred and sixty dollars. Can you pay that amount?"

"I can," he said.

That day the man who had lost the money received eleven hundred and sixty dollars ... This man who had taken the money, then gave himself to Christ, and the last I knew of him he was an active Christian.

Memory is just as active now as before, but the sting is gone, so that it is no longer a guilty memory. Christ's blood put out the fire in his bosom, and he has peace. There must be an application of the justifying righteousness of Christ to the soul, or his sin, in all its guilt, weighing him down, would be "ever before him." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Consecration

SUBTOPIC: As A Blood-Bought Slave

TITLE: The Precious Blood

In the heart of Africa, it is related by an Englishman that a slave procession passed by, and the king called out a poor slave who displeased him in some little way, ordered his men to put their arrows to their bowstrings and avenge the offense with his blood. He went up to the native chief and begged for the poor slave's life, offered him a great deal of money and costly bribes, but the chief turned to him and said: "I don't want ivory, or slaves, or gold; I can go against yonder tribe and capture their stores and their villages; I want no favors from the white man; all I want is blood." Then he ordered one of his men to pull his bow-string and discharge an arrow at the heart of the poor slave. The young man, with the instinct of a moment threw himself in front and held up his arm, and the next moment the arrow was quivering in the flesh of his own arm. The black man was astonished. Then he pulled the arrow from his arm, and the blood flowed, and he said to the chief: "Here is blood; here is my blood; I give it for this poor slave, and I claim his life." The native had never seen such a spectacle before, and he was completely overcome by it. He gave the slave to the white man. He said: "Yes, white man has bought him with his blood, and he shall be his." In a moment the poor slave threw himself at the feet of his deliverer, tears flowing down his face, and said: "O, white man, you have bought Lebe with your blood; Lebe" (for that was his name) "shall be your slave forever and ever," and ever after he could not make him take his liberty; wherever he went poor Lebe was beside him; no drudgery was too hard, no task too hopeless. He was bound by the mercy of his deliverer as his consecrated servant. O, friends, if a poor savage heart can thus be bound by the wound of a stranger's arm, what should you and I say for those deeper wounds in those two living hands and feet and the heart that was opened by the spear? If we believe that we are redeemed, how can we but be consecrated to him. -- J. W. C. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Conversion

SUBTOPIC: Of An Entire Sunday School Class
TITLE: How I Came To Give Up Business

The way God led me out of business into Christian work was as follows:

I had never lost sight of Jesus Christ since the first night I met him in the store at Boston. But for years I was only a nominal Christian, really believing that I could not work for God. No one had ever asked me to do anything.

When I went to Chicago, I hired five pews in a church, and used to go out on the street and pick up young men and fill these pews. I never spoke to those young men about their souls; that was the work of the elders, I thought. After working for some time like that, I started a mission Sabbath school. I thought numbers were everything, and so I worked for numbers. When the attendance ran below one thousand, it troubled me; and when it ran to twelve or fifteen hundred, I was elated. Still none were converted; there was no harvest. Then God opened my eyes.

There was a class of young ladies in the school, who were without exception the most frivolous set of girls I ever met. One Sunday the teacher was ill, and I took that class. They laughed in my face and I felt like opening the door and telling them all to get out and never come back.

That week the teacher of the class came into the store where I worked. He was pale and looked very ill.

"What is the trouble?" I asked.

"I have had another hemorrhage of my lungs. The doctor says I cannot live on Lake Michigan, so I am going to New York state. I suppose I am going home to die."

He seemed greatly troubled, and when I asked him the reason, he replied:

"Well, I have never led any of my class to Christ. I really believe I have done the girls more harm than good."

I had never heard anyone talk like that before, and it set me thinking. After awhile I said: "Suppose you go and tell them how you feel. I will go with you in a carriage, if you want to go."

He consented, and we started out together. It was one of the best journeys I ever had on earth. We went to the house of one of the girls, called for her, and the teacher talked to her about her soul. There was no laughing then! Tears stood in her eyes before long. After he had explained the way of life, he suggested that we have prayer. He asked me to pray. True, I had never done such a thing in my life as to pray God to convert a young lady there and then. But we prayed, and God answered our prayer.

We went to other houses. He would go upstairs, and be all out of breath, and he would tell the girls what he had come for. It wasn't long before they broke down and sought salvation. When

his strength gave out, I took him back to his lodgings. The next day we went out again. At the end of ten days he came to the store with his face literally shining.

"Mr. Moody," he said, "the last one of my class has yielded herself to Christ."

I tell you, we had a time of rejoicing. He had to leave the next night, so I called his class together that night for a prayer-meeting, and there God kindled a fire in my soul that has never gone out. The height of my ambition had been to be a successful merchant, and if I had known that meeting was going to take that ambition out of me, I might not have gone. But how many times I have thanked God since for that meeting!

The dying teacher sat in the midst of his class, and talked with them, and read the 14th chapter of John. We tried to sing "Blest be the tie that binds," after which we knelt down to prayer. I was just rising from my knees, when one of the class began to pray for her dying teacher. Another prayed, and another, and before we rose the whole class had prayed. As I went out I said to myself: "Oh, God let me die rather than lose the blessing I have received tonight!"

The next evening I went to the depot to say good-bye to that teacher. Just before the train started, one of the class came, and before long, without any prearrangement, they were all there. What a meeting that was! We tried to sing, but we broke down. The last we saw of that dying teacher, he was standing on the platform of the car, his finger pointing upward, telling that class to meet him in heaven. I didn't know what this was going to cost me. I was disqualified for business; it had become distasteful to me. I had got a taste of another world, and cared no more for making money. For some days after, the greatest struggle of my life took place. Should I give up business and give myself to Christian work, or should I not? I have never regretted my choice. Oh, the luxury of leading some one out of the darkness of this world into the glory-light and liberty of the Gospel! -- D. L. Moody -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Conversion

SUBTOPIC: Through His Child's Death

TITLE: Never Again

I was holding meetings in a beautiful town in New York, and for some reason there was a special interest felt for a Mr. Brown, who lived about a mile off. One Christian would go and ask him to attend the meeting, then another, but he would say to them all:

"I don't want religion. I have everything want."

He did not wish them to trouble themselves about him. He should not attend the meetings. He had a dear little girl; her name was Josephine. He would take her in his arms, and caress her, and say:

"This is enough for me."

But God knew how to get Mr. Brown to meeting. He took Josephine, and put her in a coffin. I preached a funeral sermon at the house, from the words, "Suffer little children to come unto me."

If you want your children to be tenderly cared for, and have every possible advantage, let them come and live with me, Christ says.

After the services were closed, we all wanted to see the corpse. So the coffin was placed upon a stand in the yard that all might see. The father determined to be the last. He stood looking for a long time at the beautiful face of his Josephine, and when asked if the coffin could be closed, said:

"You must not close this coffin!"

And finally he cried aloud:

"She will never call me father again! She will never call me father again!" and repeated it, I think, a dozen times, until we were all convulsed with weeping.

At last the coffin was closed, and I went to the grave, and returned to the house with the family. As we sat in the parlor, Mr. Brown saw something of little Josephine's. (If you ever buried a dear one, you know there is a coat, or hat, or doll, or something to remind you that a dear one is gone.) He walked the floor, crying out as before:

"She will never call me father again."

I finally said:

"Mr. Brown, be calm, and hear me. You say she will never call you father again. I am not sure of that. Little Josephine is now walking the golden streets, and perhaps saying:

"I wish my dear father was here."

"And if you should be converted, and go to heaven, the very first hand that grasps yours, and the first voice you hear may be your little Josephine's, saying:

" 'O my dear father, have you come to live in heaven?' "

God blessed these words; he became calm and thoughtful.

It was not long before he said:

"I will seek Jesus, I will."

He sought Christ, and as soon as he found him he commenced preaching the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

The last I knew of Mr. Brown he was preaching the gospel, and little Josephine waiting his arrival at the golden gates. Why would he not come before little Josephine was taken, while she could kneel by his side?

Why won't you come, dear friends, until God shall take some dear one from you, or you come wading through some deep affliction to Christ? Come just as you are. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Crossing The Deadline

SUBTOPIC: By Grieving Away The Holy Spirit

TITLE: Hating God

I met a very affecting scene in Philadelphia a few years ago. I went into the Mt. Vernon Hotel, and while waiting for a friend to come from his room, a merchant had turned out a glass of strong drink, and stood over it, uttering a stream of the most blasphemous oaths. He was not intoxicated, did not drink while I was in the room.

While I stood by the door waiting for this friend, this merchant recognized me, called me by name, gave me his name, and asked me if I remembered holding a series of meetings in _____, New York, fifteen years ago, and if I remembered leaving a young man on the end of the front seat very anxious about his soul. I remembered the meeting, but did not remember about the young man. He said:

"I am that young man, and was very anxious to become a Christian. But you bade us good-by, and left. That night I went home, and looked the matter all over, and said, if I became a Christian, I must give up the drinking saloons and card tables. What had I better do? I finally said, 'I will not become a Christian. Holy Spirit, leave me.' And he did leave me. From that time I have perfectly hated God. For fifteen years I have not had a desire to become a Christian. I am a merchant purchasing goods; now I am going on with my business, yet I know, when I get through, hell is my portion."

I said:

"My dear sir, don't say it, even if you think so. You hurt my feelings. A man not more than forty years of age going to perdition, hating God!"

He said:

"I do not blame you, sir."

I was so pained by his talk I remained standing by that door for two hours, trying to find some tender place in his heart, but without success. I finally took his hand in both of mine, and said:

"I must go, and I want you to promise me that at a given hour (that I named), when you get home, you will kneel in your closet, and I will be in mine in prayer for you."

He replied:

"I will not. I will not bow my knees to God. I know better. I hate God."

I let go of his hand, and as I went down the street I said:

"Oh, that I had stayed one night more! He might have decided differently."

Then I saw the force and truth of those wonderful lines of Dr. Alexander:

"There is a line, by us unseen,
That crosses every path,
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and his wrath.

To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth;
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Nor pale the glow of health."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published
in 1888

* * * * *

D-TOPICS

TOPIC: Dancing

SUBTOPIC: An Insulting Sport

TITLE: The Heathen Idea Of A Ball

Nothing is less intelligible to a high-bred mandarin than the desire of foreign females to be introduced to him. At Hong Kong, when English ladies were brought to see the ex-commissioner, Yeh, he turned away and refused to look at them, and on their departure expressed his annoyance and disgust. He was invited at Calcutta to a ball given by the governor of Bengal. Inquiring what was meant, he was told by his Chinese secretary that a ball was a sport in which "men turned themselves round, holding the waists and turning round the wives of other men," on which he asked whether the invitation was meant for an insult. There was an amusing scene at Canton, when Chinese ladies were for the first time introduced to some of our British fair the Chinese kept for some minutes tremblingly in the distance, afraid to approach, when one was heard to say to another, "They do not look so very barbarous after all," and they moved a little forward to meet their guests; "Surely they have learned how to behave themselves. Is it not wonderful?" and a third

voice replied, "Yes, but you know they have been for some time in Canton!" -- Cornhill -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Death Of Christ

SUBTOPIC: Our Loving Substitute

TITLE: Died For Him

In the History of Persia a very tender incident is related. Twelve men had been robbed and murdered under the very walls of the city. The King resolved that the crime should be traced out and all concerned in it put to death.

After a long search the guilty ones were found and their guilt established beyond a doubt. The King had sworn ... that they should be put to death.

The sentence had been passed and the day of their execution come.

Great efforts had been made to procure a pardon for the prisoners, but it was impossible, although they in some ways belonged to a branch of the King's family.

Among the men to be executed was a young man of great promise, scarcely twenty years of age. His very appearance drew universal interest and sympathy to him. Men and women were in tears, crying out, "can't this young man be pardoned?" But no way was seen. He was to be executed in a few hours. Just then a tender scene was witnessed; the father of this young man came rushing forward and was admitted to an interview with the King. He addressed the monarch in words something like these:

"You have sworn ... that these men should die, and it is just they should, but I who am not guilty, come here to ask a great favor; it is that I may die in my son's place. He is young and just betrothed in marriage, and has hardly tasted the sweets of existence. Oh, sir, be merciful! and let me be executed in his place. Let my son live to taste of the waters and till the ground of his ancestors! I will meet the just demands of the law for him. I know he is guilty and deserves it all, but I love him and will cheerfully die for him."

The monarch was deeply moved by the father's appeal but could not pardon without a suitable substitute, and so accepted this kind, loving father in the place of the son.

The son, wild and almost distracted with grief, plead with the king to reverse his decree to accept his father, and to inflict on him the doom he justly merited and save the life of his aged and innocent father. All hearts were melted at the scene. But the son was spared while the innocent father met the just demands of the law, and was executed instead of the son, and so the law of the kingdom of Persia was magnified and made honorable.

This father's love to the son was wonderful, but our Heavenly Father "commendeth his love to us" that while we were yet sinners, enemies, in open opposition to him, in giving his son to die for us. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And Jesus, knowing all he would suffer, freely

offered himself for us, saying, "Father, here am I, send me." This was love beyond degree; it has no parallel. How can any one treat it indifferently.

"So strange, so boundless was the love
That pitied dying men;
The Father sent his equal Son
To give them life again."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published
in 1888

TOPIC: Death Of The Saved/The Unsaved
SUBTOPIC: Which Would You Prefer?
TITLE: Which Death?

I was called to see a young lady die who was all ready to go, and what a privilege it was to witness such a scene! She had disposed of the various articles that she called her own, and with a clear, bright evidence that she was Christ's child, she waited the time of her departure.

As I entered the room, she looked up, her face radiant with the love of God, and said:

"If any one had told me a month ago I would be as happy as this in death, I could not have believed it. I would not change places with a king."

As the supreme moment arrived (her father, a physician, bending over her), she asked:

"How long before I can go?"

"About three minutes, my daughter, and you will be gone," was the answer.

She extended her limbs, placed her hands across her breast, as she wished them to remain when cold and stiff; a heavenly smile covered her face, as if, like Stephen, she saw heaven open, and the bright ones waiting to welcome her. In this way she passed away. We all could say, as never before:

"Ah, lovely appearance of death,
No sight upon earth is so fair."

About this time another young lady sent for a minister with whom I was holding meetings. He went in great haste to her home. As he went into her room, he found the young lady's mother wringing her hands in great distress. She cried out:

"Do, Mr. Purintan, pray for Jerusha; she is dying.

He kneeled near her bed, and tried and tried again to utter words in prayer, and could not. After struggling for awhile with this strange feeling, he rose from his knees. God has said, "There is a sin unto death; I do not say you shall pray for it." He could not pray for her.

Said the young lady:

"Mr. Purintan, I knew you could not pray for me. It is too late. I did not send for you to pray for me, but that I might send a message of solemn warning to certain friends, whom she named.

After delivering this terrible message, she turned her face toward the wall, and continued to repeat the words, "Too late! Too late!" until she was dead.

I mention these two cases to ask you, dear friends, for a candid answer to the question:

"Which of these two deaths would you prefer to die?"

Can you not honestly say, with one of old, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?"

If so, why not begin today, if you have not already, to live the life of a true Christian? If you live the faithful Christian's life, you surely will die his death. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

F-TOPICS

TOPIC: Faith Unto Salvation

SUBTOPIC: Life-long Hindrances To

TITLE: An Unconscious Christian

I met a Captain Newland, who, evidently had been regenerated, born again, forty years before I knew him. Yet he was entirely unconscious of it. He said he prayed for forty years for conviction for sin. He had never half seen his sins, as he believed. And how could he be converted until he was convicted more than he had ever been? When the church had communion, he would sit to one side, and look on, and often say, "How I wish I was worthy to be one of them!" How he wanted to observe the ordinances, if he could only experience religion!

No society he enjoyed as he did the society of God's people; yet he had no idea that he was a Christian. In this state he had lived on all these years.

I finally asked him if there had never been a time in earlier life that he had thought at that time it was possible he had been born again. He thought not. He would give worlds, if he had them, if he could become a Christian.

I then related to him my weak Christian experience. That I could not tell when the Holy Spirit took possession of my heart; that I had gone alone a great many times, and prayed for a deeper sense of my sins; that I would often find myself trying to sing almost as soon as I got off of my knees. I would go back and pray again for conviction, but could never have it as I desired.

I finally discovered one little ray of evidence of a change. It was this. I knew I felt different towards those that acted like Christians. I wanted to be with them, and hear them speak of their experience. I read in the Scriptures: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren " (that is, experienced Christians). I knew I loved a Christian as well as I knew I loved my mother. No matter when or how it came into my heart, it was there. With this little ray I joined the church, and started in the service of Christ. Now my hope is clear and bright.

He looked at me with surprise.

"Do you think you are a Christian?" he said. "I have had all you speak of."

Finding that his church home would be among the Baptists, if anywhere, I recommended him to go with me to the church at their next church meeting, and tell the church just how he had felt, and what he had done during all these years, and I would be present, and charge the church to vote in his case just as they were willing to meet at the Judgment.

"If you will do that, I will go," he said.

The church voted unanimously to receive him. They then told him they were as ready to receive him twenty years ago as they had been that day.

As the church had no pastor, I baptized him. He went to work actively in Christ's cause. Soon he became a deacon in that church, and I had much rather have his hope to meet God with than many a self-confident professor.

Going over the country as I have, I have found a great many men and women in the same state--"unconscious Christians," I could feel, as it were, a spiritual pulse beating in their bosoms, yet they feel no evidence of regeneration. Like Lazarus, after Christ restored him to life, his heart beating, his blood coursing, yet he had no light. The napkin was about his eyes. "Loose him," said the Saviour, "and let him go."

So I have found a multitude who only needed to have the napkin taken off, and all was light. They are unconscious Christians. Others have evidence of the conversion of these persons, but they are not satisfied themselves, and need help. Let me say to Christians who have light, ascertain, if you can, if there are those among you in this state of doubt and darkness. "Loose him, and let him go." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Faithfulness

SUBTOPIC: To Warn

TITLE: A Brave Girl

Six years ago Miss Shelley won a gold medal from the Iowa Legislature, "and a wealth of admiration from all who read of her act of heroism." The facts are these. In a fearful thunder-storm and a torrent of falling rain, she looked out of her window in the darkness of the night, and by the vivid flashes of lightning shining on the scene, she saw that a railroad bridge near her home had been swept away by the storm. Just then she saw the headlight of a locomotive swiftly approaching the spot where the bridge had just been swept away, and plunge into the abyss below. She lighted her lantern, and alone, amidst the thunder and lightning and storm, she crept up a rocky steep, and with her clothes torn to rags, and lacerated flesh, she reached the rails, and on her hands and knees crept out to the last tie of the fallen bridge, swung her lantern back and forth over the abyss, until she heard the faint voice of an engineer, who, though in the greatest peril himself, cried to her to go quickly and give the alarm, to save an express train which was then coming towards that perilous spot, and some help, also, to rescue him.

She started for the nearest station, which was a mile away. To reach that station, she had to cross a high trestle bridge of five hundred feet in length. She had gone but a few steps when a fearful gust of wind put out her lantern, which she threw away, knowing she could not relight it in the storm. So she dropped upon her hands and knees, and crept along from tie to tie over the trestle. Her way was lighted only by frequent flashes of lightning. After crossing the bridge, she hastened along the rails by the flashes of lightning to the station, and with what strength she had left told her story, and then fell in a dead faint at the station-agent's feet.

Help went quickly to the poor engineer's rescue, and telegrams flew up and down the line, notifying all that the bridge was gone. While Miss Shelley lay yet unconscious, the express train came rushing into the depot.

When the passengers learned what perils the brave girl had passed through to save them, and saw her still lying in an unconscious state, they took her up tenderly, and bathed her torn and bleeding limbs, and soon brought her back to consciousness. Oh, how the scene beggars description, as the men and women gather about this brave girl of sixteen, looking upon her pale face, her torn and bleeding form. As they think how she went through all this to save their lives, words are too weak and lean to express the deep gratitude of their hearts. They laid a substantial expression of their appreciation at her feet. Then, as the best they could do, they embalmed her memory in their warmest affections, while the world placed a wreath of lasting honor on her brow. And Kate Shelley, living or dying, with her approving conscience, can say:

"I did what I could."

What an example to all Christians, who see so clearly the dark abyss just a step before unconverted men, and they rushing with great speed towards it. Let us swing the lamp of truth before them, and cry, with great earnestness:

"Danger ahead! Bridge gone! No crossing but through the bleeding victim of Calvary!"

May we all learn a lesson of sacrifice and effort to save others, from this incident, that, in the coming day, Christ may say of us:

"They have done what they could."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Feeling

SUBTOPIC: Not Necessary To Seeking Salvation

TITLE: On His Judgment

A very interesting lawyer rose in a large meeting I was holding in New York, and said:

"Mr. Earle, would you advise a man to come to that front seat for prayer, without any feeling? I have not a particle of feeling on the subject of religion, any more than I have had for fifteen years. I would not be ashamed of it if I was a Christian. It would be the proudest moment of my life, sir. If you advise me to come purely on my judgment, I will come."

He came, and kneeled with us, and while kneeling, said to himself:

"I never did a thing nearer right than to kneel before God, my Maker."

A gentle desire began to come into his heart, which he cherished, and soon saw himself a lost sinner, and gave himself to Christ, and became a happy, active Christian, and for more than thirty years has been an able minister of the Gospel.

How much better for men to come to Christ on an enlightened judgment than on their feelings or emotions. I have known a great many to start in the same way, and such persons hardly ever backslide.

Let me ask all whose eyes may rest on this page, to act on their judgment, and come to the Saviour without one hour's delay. Come as you think you would if you had the deepest feeling on the subject. Make out a deed of yourself to Christ. Sign, seal, and deliver it. Then ask for the evidence of your acceptance. God will meet you a great way off, and bless you. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

G-TOPICS

TOPIC: Giving To Missions

SUBTOPIC: A Promise Finally Kept

TITLE: Measures In Revivals

A number of years ago, in a series of meetings in Boston, I was preaching in Tremont Temple to a large assembly on "dealing kindly and truly with Christ." At the close of the sermon I asked all who would undertake to do it as they understood kind treatment, to rise up, when nearly every one sitting rose to their feet.

I then asked all who had not been able to get seats, and had been standing during the services, to raise up their right hand, and nearly all who were standing raised up their hands. Among them was a stranger from Washington Territory, who raised his hand. This brought his promises to God for the last ten years vividly to his mind.

He sent to me at the close, asking if I would see a stranger at my room the next day.

When I met him he said:

"Ten years ago I promised the Lord, if I was prospered in business, I would give liberally to the cause of missions. I have been prospered, and have not fulfilled my vow. But last night, by raising my hand in your meeting, I promised to be true to Christ, and dare not violate my promise any longer.

"How much do you mean to give?" I asked.

"Not less than three thousand dollars," he replied.

I took him to our mission rooms, where he gave his check for eight hundred dollars, and took our missionary, Lyman Jewett, to support, then opened a correspondence with him in the foreign field. The next year he sent ten hundred dollars to Brother Jewett. I learn he has since left quite a tract of land and a considerable sum of money with the Foreign Mission Board. All this can be traced to that simple act of raising his hand in that meeting.

It was a simple measure, adopted to get men to commit themselves to do what they believed was right. The act of raising his hand had no merit in itself, but to induce an immediate action. For ten years he had prayed over this question, and promised that some time he would do it, but was never ready to act. Now he had pledged, and must perform. I have found a multitude during the last fifty years in the same condition as this man, needing something like this to bring them to a decision, and enable them to take a stand for Christ and his cause. I think I have been thanked a thousand times for taking some such expression, helping hesitating individuals to a decision, although they were often displeased with it at first, yet thanked me for it afterwards.

And yet we need great wisdom in leading men to Christ to use the best measures (as they may be called) to secure the object. I think it well sometimes to ask inquirers to meet Christians in another room, to stop after meeting for conversation, or something of the kind, without adopting any set of measures. Let the occasion and circumstances suggest their own measures, or none at all, according to the judgment of the person conducting the services. I find "a diversity of operations" even by the Holy Spirit. Do the best we can, we shall no doubt make more or less mistakes. But let us be as careful of each other as we can. Perhaps this incident will do some persons good. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Gospel Truth

SUBTOPIC: Its Preventive Power

TITLE: Power Of Truth

In one of the States the Legislature had appointed one of their number to purchase the furniture for a large college. This member found two places where he could obtain the same furniture, yet one of them charged nearly a thousand dollars more than the other, but would give this extra amount to the purchaser. This member concluded to give the extra price, and enrich himself that amount. He had not yet removed the furniture.

One Sabbath he attended our meeting. The sermon was on the "unpardonable sin." I showed, as clearly as I could, "What that sin is;" "What persons can commit it;" "How it shows itself after it has been committed," and "Why it cannot be forgiven." In the light of this sermon this man saw his peril, and returned to his room. The next day he told in the public assembly he had fought the enemy all night, but had gained the victory. He then stated the particulars of this purchase, and that he should not accept the extra amount, nor remove the furniture with any extra cost to the State.

Well may the apostle say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation."

What a mighty instrument is God's Word, accompanied by the Spirit! What but the Word and Spirit could have produced this effect on this man! -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Grace And Light

SUBTOPIC: Given As Needed

TITLE: On The First Step

Find a great many persons unwilling to start in the Christian life, fearing they will not hold out. Others, who have really passed from death unto life, are trembling, and hardly dare to take a step forward, lest they shall go back.

A few years ago, while I was troubled in the some way, I visited Bunker Hill Monument. I really got a fine lesson from it. After paying the small fee to the man who has the care of the monument, he gave me a small lamp to light my steps. I took the lamp, and stepped inside on the stone floor, and as the winding stone stairs are inside, I looked far up its rugged steep, and at once called the attention of the man in charge to my small lamp. I said:

"This won't do. It don't light a quarter of the steps. Look up there."

He smiled at my want of thought, and said to me:

"You are not up there yet. Why do you want it lighted there until you get there? Is it not bright enough on the first step where you want to put your foot?"

"Oh, I see, I see! It is all right. My lamp is large enough. I only need one step lighted at a time."

So I started on, taking one step at a time, my lamp lighting each step as I went upward, until it had lighted every one of the two hundred and ninety-five steps.

Then I began to inquire how much love to Christ I needed to start with. Like the little lamp shining on each step as I advanced, so I needed enough love to take the first step in the Christian journey. Christ said, "After this manner pray you, Give us day by day our daily bread." Not enough today to live on for a month, and so live on hard tack or sweet bread most of the time.

I meet many Christians who say they fear they have not dying grace. I tell them I know I have not. I do not want it. What would I do with dying grace? It would be in my way until I need it. I do not wear my overcoat through the hot weather of July and August, so as to be sure to have it in the winter.

So, with my little lamp, I have been stepping along in the Christian path for fifty-seven years, and expect it to light my steps into and through the valley of the shadow of death. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Growth

SUBTOPIC: Of Christian Character

TITLE: A Ripe Christian Character

A ripe Christian character is simply a life in which all Christian virtues and graces have become fixed and solidified into permanence as established habits. It costs no struggle to do right, because what has been done so long, under the influence of grace in the heart, has become part of the regenerated nature. The bird sings not to be heard but because the song is in its heart, and must be expressed. It sings just as sweetly in the depths of the wood with no ear to listen, as by the crowded thoroughfare. Beethoven did not sing for fame, but to give utterance to the glorious music that filled his soul. The face of Moses did not shine to convince the people of his holiness, but because he had dwelt so long in the presence of God that it could not but shine. Truest, ripest Christian life flows out of a full heart--a heart so filled with Christ that it requires no effort to live well, and to scatter the sweetness of grace and love.

It must be remembered, however, that all goodness in living begins first obeying rules, in keeping commandments. Mozart and Mendelssohn began with running scales and striking chords, and with painful finger-exercises the noblest Christian began with the simplest obedience. The way to become skillful is to do things over and over until we can do them perfectly, and without thought or effort. The way to become able to do great things, is to do our little things with endless repetition, and with increasing dexterity and carefulness. The way to grow into Christlikeness of character, is to watch ourselves in the minutest things of thought and word and act, until our powers are trained to go almost without watching in the lines of moral right and holy beauty. To become prayerful, we must learn to pray by the clock, at fixed times. It is fine ideal talk to say that our devotions should be like the bird's song, warbling out anywhere and at any time with sweet unrestraint; but in plain truth, to depend upon such impulses as guides to praying, would soon lead to no praying at all. This may do for heavenly life; but we have not gotten into heaven yet, and until we do we need to pray by habit. So of all religious life. We only grow into patience by being as patient as we can, daily and hourly, and in smallest matters, ever learning to be more and more

patient until we reach the highest possible culture in that line. We can only become unselfish wherever we have an opportunity, until our life grows into the permanent beauty of unselfishness. We can only grow better by striving ever to be better than we already are, and by climbing step by step toward the radiant heights of excellence. -- Miller -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Guilty Remembrance
SUBTOPIC: In The Lake Of Fire
TITLE: Could Not Quench It

Last evening the members of Neptune Engine Company, No. 7, of Brooklyn, attended in a body the Second Baptist church, on Leonard street, to listen to a sermon by Rev. A. B. Earle. As the announcement was made public, the attendance at the church was so great that nearly half that came could not get inside.

"The services were opened by prayer, followed by singing, after which Mr. Earle delivered his discourse. He spoke in a plain but earnest manner, engaging the deep attention of his audience.

The text selected was from Mark ix: 44 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' He said he should call their attention more particularly to the latter clause of the text. He thought nothing would grieve them more than to meet with a fire which they could not put out; they would go home sorrowful at heart should such an event happen to them. They had often met and subdued this enemy--fire; they had always quenched it; but he should speak to them of a fire which could never be quenched.

"He then divided his text into two parts; first, What the worm is that dieth not, and why it does not die; second, What the fire is that is not quenched, and why it is not quenched.

"The worm that never dies is guilty memory,--the remembrance of past guilt. Memory is like a living, gnawing worm, producing a restless pain in the soul, as a gnawing worm would do in the vitals of the body. Impressions once made upon the mind can never be effaced. A name once heard or mentioned, though forgotten for a time, will return in after years when circumstances shall recall it. Incidents of childhood carry their recollection to the grave. Memory is active when all else is still. In moments of peril the memory is more vivid and active, and thoughts of the past crowd upon the brain with inconceivable rapidity.

"Instances are often related of men in peril, by sea or land, who have seen the events of former days; recalled by memory; words and deeds they had thought forgotten have returned to them; their past life has seemed to come before their mental vision with startling reality. When the soul shall have dropped its fetters, and passed beyond the restraints of flesh, memory will still be fresh and active. This memory which tenants the body during life, and clings to the spirit hereafter, is the gnawing of the deathless worm. This worm draws all its nourishment from this world.

"He cited as an instance of the activity of memory, and its effects, the case of a prisoner who was removed from one prison to another, where the treatment was better. The man said he did

not like the new prison as well as the old one, although he did not have to work as hard, had better food and kinder keepers; but in the new prison the convicts were not allowed to speak to each other; and in this terrible silence his memory was ever active--it was all think, think, think. So it will be hereafter: we shall be constantly thinking. We should therefore be careful how we store the memory, since its recollections will ever be present with us.

"In the second part of his discourse he considered the fire that can never be quenched.

"They might believe that no fire could break out in the city which, by their skill and activity, they could not put out; and their fellow-citizens, confident in their ability, went to their repose, feeling that by the vigilance, tact, and energy of the firemen their lives and property were secure. But there is a fire that cannot be quenched: it is remorse, or the realization of our sin in the dark world of despair. The Saviour says it is better to have but one eye than to be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

"The fire of God's wrath is the sinner's realization of his wickedness, and a guilty remembrance of the past. The reason this fire cannot be quenched is, there is nothing there with which to quench it. Suppose a building was wrapped in flames, and the firemen brought their engines to the spot, but could find no water; they would be powerless, however good their intentions. So with the fire of God's wrath--the guilty remembrance in the world of despair; there will be nothing with which to put it out; there is nothing here that can quench it but the blood of Jesus.

"He called their attention to the heroic fireman, young Sperry, of New Haven, who went into a burning building to save a child supposed to be there, and lost his own life. He felt assured there was not one among that company whom he addressed but would rush, as Sperry did, into the flames to save a fellow-creature's life. So if he (the speaker), by rushing into the flames of perdition, could drag a brother out of the fire, how readily would he do it.

An Indian, who had been converted, was asked by a white man to describe how religion came to him. He led the white man out to the woods, and gathering some dry leaves, arranged them in a circle, and put a little worm in the centre of it. He then set the leaves on fire. The worm sought escape, first on one side, then on another, but there was no way out; so, drawing itself again to the centre of the circle, it sank into a numb and listless state. The Indian then lifted the worm from the fire with his fingers, and said, "This is the way God saved me! Jesus plucked me out of the flames.' So nothing but the hand of God can save any one; nothing but the blood of Jesus can quench the fires of a guilty soul.

"To be saved we must be born again. Some people suppose they would be happy if they could get to heaven. They are mistaken; they could not be happy there, unless this fire within them had been quenched here. A guilty soul in heaven would be like a convicted murderer pardoned at the last moment by the governor of a state. He is now a free man, and the law cannot touch him. He returns to his home and his family. His wife welcomes him back with joy, and his children gather around him. still he cannot be happy: consciousness of guilt haunts him. The governor may pardon, but cannot justify. Remorse preys upon him, and he feels that he cannot stay in that happy home--it is no place for him while blood is on his soul.

"The preacher then drew a metaphor, strikingly applicable to his hearers, illustrating the free agency of man in his own salvation.

"Suppose the exterior of a building was constructed of fireproof materials; fire could not reach it on the outside, and it could be opened only from the inside. Suppose this building should; take fire from the inside, and you knew there was a citizen within, liable to perish in the flames. You would go there with your engine, and seek to save him; but you could not reach the flames from the outside, and could do nothing unless the man opened the door. If he would be saved, he must open the door, and that speedily, for the flames were gathering closer around him each minute. So it is with each of us--every man holds the key of the door to his own heart. Jesus says to every one, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if you will open the door, I will come in and save you.'

"There is a fountain filled with blood that will extinguish this fire, and it will be poured upon the guilty soul if the door is opened; for the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. But when we pass out of this world this blood cannot be obtained, and the fire cannot be quenched." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

H-TOPICS

TOPIC:Heroism

SUBTOPIC: Of Children

TITLE:Heroism Of Children

The heroism of childhood is remarkable. Every week the newspapers tell of some child's self-sacrifice that is almost beyond belief, were it not substantiated by facts. Even very young children do many brave acts that older persons would shrink from. A short time since a young lad sat reading a new book which had just come out, entitled "Under Dewey at Manila." He was exceedingly interested in the story of those brave heroes and said to his mother who was in the next room, "O, mother, how I wish I could be a hero!"

A very short time afterwards he heard his mother scream and rushing to the kitchen found her enveloped in flames. He tried to save her, and his presence of mind enabled him to do so, but he was so badly burned that he died from the effects of his burns. The daily papers wrote up the case, and the reading public in the great city of New York spoke of that boy's bravery in giving his own life for his mother's, and then like other notable instances of such courage, it passed out of thought and gave place to newer startling facts.

But that young lad was as true a hero as those he had been reading about in the line of battle and we are sorry that the item regarding the sad affair has been lost so that we cannot at this writing give the name of the boy. It is pathetic to see the devotion of the children of the poor to their parents and sisters and brothers.

In front of one of the large stores in the city at holiday time a little boy stopped to look at the show windows. He was wheeling his baby brother out for an airing and stopped in the crowd with the baby carriage. The little caretaker was feasting his eyes on the pretty things in the window which would make many children happy at Christmas time. All at once he heard the voice of a lady say, "That child in the carriage looks as if he were dead." The boy turned and looking at the face of what he thought was his sleeping brother, saw a look he had never seen there before. A crowd gathered and a policeman came up and said, "The child is dead. Take him home," and the little heartbroken brother, amid his sobs, took the little dead baby home, the policeman and some of the kindhearted people going with him.

In the tenement house where they lived it was learned that the baby had been ill, but he seemed so much better that morning that the mother thought it would do him good to get out into the sunshine and fresh air and had taken that opportunity to go away from home to work that she might earn a little extra money. It was pitiful to see the older brother's great grief when he found the little baby he loved so much was really dead. He was afraid he had not done as he ought, perhaps he had kept it out too long in the cold air.

The homecoming of that afflicted mother was indeed a sad one. But she said to the older brother, "Don't cry so, dear. You were always good to the baby and always willing to give up your own fun to take care of him." We do not realize as we should the struggles and heroism of these children of the tenements. -- J. W. C. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Holy Spirit

SUBTOPIC: Convicts The World Of Sin

TITLE: World Convicted

An incident occurred in one of our meetings in California that illustrates the truth of Christ's promise, "He shall convince (convict) the world." That is, that all men should be more or less convicted by the Holy Spirit of sin.

A Congregationalist deacon came all the way from Portland, Oregon, to San Francisco, from there to Sacramento, then to the city of Marysville, for an evangelist for Oregon, bringing this word:

"Our whole state seems under conviction for sin. The young people in our day-school are so convicted that they sit weeping in school hours, or come to the teachers, asking them to pray for them. This state of feeling seems to exist all over the state, and we want you to help us; and I must not go back without you.

The deacon remained until I had preached more than thirty times. I found this deep sense of sin at Portland, Oregon City, and Salem, and was told it was the same in all parts of the state. The Spirit was on all the face of the deep. Men everywhere felt they needed a Saviour.

The Governor and his Council sent me a written request to hold a series of four days meetings at the county seats; that they would send a large tent that should be put up at each county

seat as fast as it should be needed, and handbills put up ten miles in each direction in advance of the meeting, at their expense.

Men everywhere feel the need of something the world does not give them. If we pull a drunkard out of the ditch, there is an arrow of conviction in his bosom. So that the Holy Spirit is in advance of all human efforts to save men. Christ has promised (and always does it) to go before his disciples, and with them, to seek and save that which is lost. "Lo, I am with you even to the end of the world." In all my labors over the country, for fifty-seven years, I have been sure to find Christ, by the Holy Spirit, in advance of me, "convicting the world of sin."

What an encouragement for all who have "a mind to work." And how this rebukes the excuse so many make that "no one cares for my soul." Everything animate and inanimate seems under a contribution to prevent the loss of a soul.

If this incident comes to the notice of any who are not doing all they can to lead men to Christ, let me ask you to renew your consecration, and thrust in your sharp sickle, and help more than ever to reap the great ripe harvest which is so fully prepared at your hand,

"Then come with your sickles, ye sons of men,
And gather together the golden grain;
The reapers are few, and the work is great,
And much will be lost should the harvest wait"

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Homes Built Spiritually Safe
SUBTOPIC: Above The Serpent's Easy Reach
TITLE: Build High

A lady sat at her window a bright, balmy spring morning. The sun was out without a cloud, the blooming flowers were sending forth their fragrance to perfume and bless the earth, and the birds sang their songs of gladness as they went forth to their daily toil. Soon the lady saw that a little worker had chosen a rosebush for its home and was very busy bringing in sticks and hair and feathers and other material to make its house.

"Ah, you pretty little creature," said the lady, "you are building too low. Soon the destroyer will come and break up your sweet home."

And so it was. The days passed by; the nest was finished, and then there were eggs in the nest, and then four great big mouths were open whenever the low chirp of the mother announced that she had something for them to eat.

One day the lady sat by the window sewing Suddenly she heard the cry of the birds, in the deepest distress, and she looked out to see what was the matter. There was a great snake that had crawled up and was devouring the helpless little ones, while just above them the poor heartbroken

mother fluttered about in the wildest distraction. But it was too late; her children were gone, and her home was left desolate, a sad reminder of her folly in building so near the ground.

So I think it is with people who have no higher ambition than earthly pleasures, wealth or honors. They build too low. Their heart's home is in easy reach of death and the devil, and depend upon it the destroyer will come, soon or late. -- H. M. Wharton -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Hopeless At Death

SUBTOPIC: The Young Can Be

TITLE: I've No Hope

I was just sitting down at my own table, at twelve o'clock, one day, when one of my neighbors came in greatly excited, and said to me:

"I wish you would go over to my house as soon as you can. I fear my son Charles is dying, and I desire very much to know how he feels."

I did not stay to dine, but hurried to the house, and it was well I did for the young man was dead in thirty minutes after I reached the house.

I found him sitting in a large arm rocking chair, dying with a putrid sore throat. He could breathe easier in that position. I saw that death was upon him, and if I said anything to him I must do it at once. I very mildly asked him this question:

"Charley, if it should please your Heavenly Father to call you away pretty soon, do you think you have a good hope?"

He struggled with this terrible disease (the putrid sore throat) for a moment, determined to let me know how he felt, and finally got out these words:

"Won't you pray that God will have mercy on my soul?"

I said, "I will Charles."

After a few words pointing out the way to Christ (for I had to be very brief, death was doing his work so rapidly) I said to the neighbors in the room:

"Will you all kneel down with me whether you are Christians or not, and help me pray for this dear young man."

They did kneel down with me, and oh, how we begged of God for Christ's sake to save Charles if possible, even in this extremity; to pluck him as a brand from the burning. We could hear his strange voice during the prayer:

"O God, have mercy on my soul."

When we rose from our knees, his sobbing mother put her arms around his neck and her wet face upon his, bathing it with her tears, as if to get the comforting words, said:

"Charles, don't you think you will meet us in heaven?"

His reply was, "No, mother, I've no hope."

Turning his dying eyes on me, he said:

"Won't you pray that God will have mercy on my soul."

Although I had just risen from my knees, I said:

"I will Charley. Come neighbors, kneel down with me again and help me pray."

Oh, what a moment it was, while we plead once more that if possible, God would save Charley.

When we arose from our knees the second time, death was so near that I assisted in laying him upon the bed. While we stood over him in his death struggles, his poor mother, said:

"Let me come, I must speak to him once more." She spread her arms over him, putting her wet face upon his again as if determined to get the comforting words, and said:

"Charles, don't you think you will meet us in heaven?"

"No, mother, no, I've no hope."

These were the last words that dropped from his lips. He gasped a few times, and was gone. May God save any of you from witnessing such a scene.

The family threw their arms around each other and sobbed aloud. When I tried to speak a word of comfort to them, they cried:

"No sir, we can't have it so."

But it was so. I think they continued this sobbing for a full half hour.

When they became calm enough so that I could, I kneeled and prayed with them, and for them, that God would sustain and comfort them.

As I left that house, and went towards my home, and looked up into the open heavens, I said:

"Jesus, I will be a better minister; wherever I go I will plead with young men, to seek thee while they may."

I do entreat every one who may read this incident, if you have not already done it, not to delay one hour in securing the salvation of your soul.

"The Spirit calls today,
Yield to his power,
Oh, grieve him not away,
Tis mercy's hour."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

I-TOPICS

TOPIC: Increase

SUBTOPIC: By Letting God Use What One Has

TITLE: Borrowing Vessels

Almost any one will sell you goods they have to part with, if you can pay for them, but few will lend you, if you are poor. There is a beautiful incident illustrating this in the fourth chapter of the second book of Kings, and also full of rich instruction.

A good minister had died, evidently in middle life, leaving his family not only poor, but in debt. Perhaps his salary was too small to support them. Or, perhaps the parish had neglected to pay what they had promised. Or, worse yet, the minister or his wife, or both of them, did not know how to economize. There was evidently a fault somewhere. For "they that preach the gospel shall live of the gospel." It was sad enough for the wife and two children to be left alone and very poor. But to have bills come in for goods she knew they had used, which she was utterly unable to pay, was very crushing to her in her deep affliction. These creditors also told her that, if there was no other way to pay them, they should sell her half-grown-up sons' time until their dues were paid.

In her deep trial she went to the prophet Elisha for counsel and help. He inquired how much she could pay, or just what she had in her house. She told him, "Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil" This she was carefully keeping, no doubt, against the day of extreme need.

The Divine directions were that she should go out through all the neighborhood, and borrow empty vessels such as were then used, and would hold oil. Not partly filled vessels, but empty ones. Now, if she borrows, the neighbors must have confidence in her. She was to bring these vessels to her own house. God gave her favor in the eyes of these acquaintances, and perhaps none refused her. She soon filled her house with these vessels. Her success was far greater than she could reasonably expect.

She was now to call her sons into the house, and shut the door upon them all. Instead of Elisha's doing it for her, she must take up her pot of oil, and pour out into all the vessels she had borrowed, at least until the oil stayed. So she poured out, and the boys brought the vessels to her, and carried them away. Her oil, like unused religion, was stiff and candied, and did not run very freely at first. But at last it got warm, and ran freely. Like our feeble love to Christ, it was multiplied and greatly increased by being poured out. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." With the oil running more freely than at first, she said to her sons, "Bring another vessel." But every vessel in the house was full, and the oil stayed.

Enough of the oil was then sold, and all her debts paid, dollar for dollar, and plenty left for her and her sons to live on. She could now meet her creditors with pleasure, looking them all in the face, God was honored by it, and her sons could remain under her influence and care, and sing with their mother a sweet doxology of praise for what God had done for them.

Let us learn from this incident to increase our ability and means of doing good by using what little we have. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Intercessory Prayer
SUBTOPIC: Used Of God Mightily
TITLE: Power With God

"Thou hast power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

There is an old translation that gives this passage a beautiful rendering, "Because thou hast power with God, thou hast with men."

An incident occurred in Wales, that illustrates this passage. At the close of an evening meeting, the Welsh pastor requested all Christians who were willing, to name some person they would go home and pray for as much of the night as they chose. After each one had named the person they would go home and pray for, the meeting was dismissed. When a pious hired girl came down the aisle weeping, saying:

"Pastor, you haven't given me any one to pray for; I want some one."

He asked her who she was acquainted with that she might take. She was living with a wealthy, unconverted husband and wife. The pastor asked how she would like to take her mistress. She replied, that will do. She is very kind to me, I will take her.

She returned home, and instead of going to her room, she went to a small room in the chamber, and closing the door, kneeled down, and hour after hour continued to offer just this prayer:

"O God, my mistress is very kind, have mercy on her soul."

The husband and wife had retired and were asleep. But about midnight the wife waked up in great distress about her soul. Said to her husband:

"I never saw myself such a sinner before. O I am such a sinner. I must have some one pray for me; you will have to go out and get a Christian to pray for me."

The husband said, "My wife, it is midnight, can't you wait until morning?"

But she was in such distress she could not wait.

The husband perfectly kind and willing to go, said:

"Where shall I go to find a Christian at this hour?"

It finally occurred to him that some one had said their hired girl was a Christian. The wife said:

"Yes, she is a good Christian. I had not thought of her, we will go to her room."

They went to her room but she wasn't there and the bed had not been touched. He inquired if she might not be in another room in the house. The wife said:

"She has occasionally slept in a room in the chamber, we will go and see."

They went to this room and before they opened the door they heard her say:

"O God, my mistress is very kind to me, have mercy on her soul."

The wife said, "Here is the reason I could not sleep; here is the reason I felt I was such a sinner."

They opened the door and the wife threw herself in on her knees, by the side of her hired girl. She had power over her mistress when she had with God. So it will be with all Christians. They will have power over wicked men, to lead them to Christ, if they first have power to move God. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

J-TOPICS

TOPIC: Joy Of The Lord Restored
SUBTOPIC: Its Saving Influence On Others
TITLE: Angelic Face

An incident occurred in one of our meetings near Boston, that taught me a great lesson in leading souls to Christ. I can never lose sight of it.

A lady connected with one of the city churches, but residing in that place, found she was not the humble, happy Christian she once was. She came to me, asking how she might obtain anew the joy of salvation; she felt she loved Jesus, but so faintly that the warmth and power of that love were gone. The conflict was long and severe. On one occasion, she said to me:

"My husband has become skeptical. He rejects the Bible. It is of no use to speak to him. I have scarcely any hope of his being converted. But, oh, that I could enjoy the Saviour's love as I used to!"

At length the desire of her heart was granted, and all the joy of her first love to Jesus was restored to her.

And now, though she had been a Christian, and a kind, careful wife and mother, she seemed almost like another person. The false representations of religion were ended. Its sweetness and happiness shone in every feature of her face, gave melody to the tones of her voice, and added a new charm to all she did.

She went about the house singing the songs of Zion. Anything that was not sinful, that would make her husband happier and her home pleasanter, she cheerfully performed, saying but little, however, about the change in her feelings; she did not need to, it was so apparent. Her husband saw it, and compared her present state with her past. Somehow this led him to look into his own heart. The conviction was forced upon him that religion was a reality, and one he could not do without.

Some four days after this change in his wife, I called on him, to learn why he rejected the Bible and religion. I asked him to be frank with me, and tell me if he had no desire to be a Christian.

He replied:

"Mr. Earle, I have said nothing about it to my wife; but, sir, I feel I am a lost sinner, and if you will pray for me, I will kneel down with you right here."

And, pointing to his wife, who was at that moment passing through the room, with the tears on her bright face, he continued:

"That woman, my own dear wife, has had more power over me for a few days past than everything else put together. She has been a professor of religion for years, but I knew she did not enjoy religion, and I said if that was all there was in religion, I did not want it. But for the last few days she has looked and acted almost like an angel; and, sir, I cannot stand it; there is a power in her sweet, happy face that melts my heart I cannot withstand the attraction of such a religion."

And all this because the joy of salvation was restored to the heart of that Christian wife! Oh, the power of Christ's love when it burns and glows in the heart!

And perhaps some pious wife who reads these pages, has gone alone to the table of our Lord for many long years, just because her love to Jesus has been feeble and faint, and consequently her representation of religion unattractive and false.

Some of these parents have not seen their children converted, for no other reason than that they have not had the joy of salvation filling their hearts and running over in their lives; they are Christ's own redeemed ones, but do not live as becomes his family, every member of which ought to be a wellspring of joy, pouring streams of gladness into every heart within reach. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Judgment To Come

SUBTOPIC: Thought Of Should Bring Sober Preparation

TITLE: Sounding The Trumpet

An incident occurred in the Royal Family in Hungary that illustrates, in some degree, the call we shall all have soon, to appear before the judgment seat of Christ. This was the incident.

The King of Hungary had become deeply concerned about his salvation. He saw himself justly condemned before God for his sins. He could make no atonement for them, and might hear the trumpet call at any moment to come to judgment, and he was unprepared. He knew he must be condemned unless he had a deliverer. He manifested great concern for his personal salvation.

His whole court saw his anxiety. His own brother, a gay, worldly man, trifled with his feelings and the whole subject of religion, and indicated that he had no fears, and desired the king to be cheerful, and dismiss the subject from his mind.

The king, to convince his brother that they both had great cause for alarm while out of Christ, caused the death trumpet to be sounded at his brother's door in the dead hour of night.

The custom of the country was, that if the executioner came, and sounded the trumpet before any man's door, he was presently led to execution. This gay brother heard this death trumpet at his door, and saw the executioner, who said:

"Be ready."

The brother sprang from his bed, and rushed into the presence of the king to plead for mercy and forgiveness.

The king said:

"Alas, brother, if the sight of my executioner is so dreadful to you, shall not I, who have so greatly offended God, fear to be brought before the judgment seat of Christ. Have I not the greatest excuse for anxiety? Shall we not both seek the atoning blood of Christ at once? If the sounding of an earthly executioner's trumpet is so dreadful, how will the trumpet-call from the high court of heaven sound to one unprepared?"

As the day of judgment was the question of great alarm with the King of Hungary, perhaps the reader of this incident would like to have me answer a few questions, before I leave it, about that great day.

"Does the Judgment take place as soon as we die?"

I answer, there are two reasons why it cannot take place until time ends. The first reason is, there is no Judge to judge any one yet. Christ, who is appointed the Judge of all, is otherwise engaged, and will be until the end of time. No pardon could come to us but for the mediatorial work of Christ. When that is finished, Christ will leave the mediatorial seat, put on the robes of judgment, then say to the appointed angel:

"Now sound your mighty trumpet. The great court is opened."

Then, and not till then, shall we stand before the judgment of Christ. The resurrected body will join the spirit again.

If you ask me where are the dead, I answer, the saints are in heaven, without their bodies (their bodies are yet with us), yet in a State of sweet, active, conscious rest, praising God. I shall expect to join them in less than five minutes after my body dies.

Death will make no change in our characters. We shall be eternally what we were at death. "He that is righteous will be righteous still, and he that is filthy will be filthy still." Like the fallen angels, the wicked will be in a state of conscious condemnation, and each receive the final sentence at the great judgment day, when time ends.

The other reason why the judgment has not, and can not, take place until the end of time, is, no one can tell how much good or how much evil he has done until time ends. God intends that we all shall see and understand this. Has John Bunyan's influence ended? How is it with Albert Barnes and Wesley, with Scott, and Henry, and Clark, and Judson, and thousands more? Their influence is widening out every day. Many just get ready to do good when they die. They get the leaven in the meal, and leave it to leaven the whole. I thank God that we may go on doing good after we die until time ends.

The wicked will leave their influence, their books and example behind at death, and go on doing evil until the end of time, and be held responsible for it until the judgment day. It is a fearful thing to live or die without Christ for our advocate and Saviour.

The judgment day will give universal satisfaction. No one will say, "God has been partial. I have not had justice done me."

The case of the two thieves crucified with our Redeemer will give us a miniature view of the whole scene.

I will suppose the one converted after he was nailed to the cross was the worst one, the ringleader; the other vile enough, but not as bad as the one converted.

The judgment day will satisfy both of them. As they enter the court room, one in his blood and guilt, and the other in his white robe, then, in the presence of assembled worlds, the books are opened, and both thieves confess that they have committed murder and sedition, and deserve a low place in perdition. Another book is then opened, and God shows both of them that he gave his Son to die for them, and that they had been often urged to accept Christ as their only hope; that one of them, and that one the worst of the two, accepted, and the other rejected him. The unconverted thief will then see it, and say:

"I see, I see, oh, I see it all now! I do not perish because I am worse than my brother thief. And he is not here in a white robe because he was better than I was. I understand now that God had but one way by which he could save either of us, and my brother thief (the vilest man I ever knew), accepted that one way, and I rejected it. I see now that it is too late, and that God can render me no help. The means of grace are all ended, and no Mediator now."

All will be satisfied that God has done what he could to save them. No one will be lost because he was the chief of sinners, or saved because he was so good, and not much of a sinner. The one was saved because he accepted of a finished salvation, and the other lost because he rejected it.

This is salvation and heaven through Christ alone. Oh, how this will glorify God before the eyes of an intelligent universe!

Let me ask you, my dear reader, to accept Christ as your Saviour at once. Won't you bow your head now, and, with the best faith you have, say,

Jesus, I accept thee as my Saviour," and begin to serve him from this hour?" -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

K-TOPICS

TOPIC: Kind Words

SUBTOPIC: The Power Of

TITLE: A Kind Word

I was holding meetings in Washington D. C., a man having an office under the government, had commenced gambling and drinking, and finally lost his office, and property, and character. While in this condition, his wife, a high spirited woman, made an excuse to visit some friends far away, but her real purpose was never to return. When the husband learned this he fully resolved to commit suicide. He felt that there was nothing left for him, no friends, no property, office lost, character gone, his wife had left him never to return. He had fixed upon eleven o'clock, A. M. as the hour to commit this dreadful deed. He had written, I suppose, a farewell letter for his wife, and started for the spot where he was to end his career.

When passing the church where I was holding meetings which were then in session, he met a lady he was acquainted with and handed her the letter to mail. This lady thought she read in his face this desperate purpose, and put the question to him. He would not lie then, as he intended to be dead inside of an hour, but said:

"See that the letter goes."

With great urgency he consented to go into the church with her and take a seat, just to get rid of her, intending to go out as soon as she was seated, and carry out his purpose.

Some one sent a penciled note to me that this man intended to kill himself in about thirty minutes. As I had a moment before preaching, I went down the aisle and said to this man:

"I see you are a stranger, give me your hand," and shaking his hand heartily I said:

"I am glad to see you. Come again."

I said no more but went on with the meeting.

He declared to me afterward that those few gentle words, and grasp of his hand, disarmed him of his purpose. He said if there is one man that will speak kindly to me I believe I will not commit suicide.

He attended our meetings and became a Christian, joined that church and went to work in Christ's cause.

A year after, I met him, well clothed and an active Sabbath-school teacher. His wife had returned to him, he had his office back and was a great worker in the church and a happy man.

"A few gentle words or an action of love,
Had cheered his sad heart bereft."

Reader will you not go out after the fallen ones today, and every day you have opportunity.
Singing as you go,

"Down in the bleeding heart,
Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart,
Wakened by kindness;
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Kneeling To Christ

SUBTOPIC: Done Signifying Total Surrender

TITLE: Signing With His Knee

Among those who sought Christ in New London, was one of Connecticut's ablest lawyers, who prided himself on his intelligence and rare eloquence. He had no confidence in what are called measures, yet he was very anxious about his soul's salvation.

In a large meeting I proposed instead of an inquiry meeting, or coming near the pulpit for prayer, that every person who was able should kneel down by the seat they occupied. That each person who kneeled should put his or her honor and veracity in the act as far as they knew. That it should be fully understood between themselves and God that when their knees touched the floor it should be the token of a full surrender of their wills to God, never to be taken back, as far as knowledge went, just as far as they understood themselves. That no one should kneel this time except those who meant it as a token of a full surrender.

This would be signing the deed with their knee. This lawyer began to move his foot slowly and after a great struggle his knee reached the floor.

He declared the moment his knee reached the floor, with his veracity in the act, he felt the witness in his heart that he was born again.

This action of the will unbolted the door of the heart so that the Spirit entered and imparted life to the dead affections.

Reader, if you have not already done it, will you promptly "go and do likewise." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

L-TOPICS

TOPIC: Lacking From One's Life

SUBTOPIC: Discovery Of What Is

TITLE: The Need Of Christ

It is said that Ole Bull and John Ericsson met for the first time in the city of New York, and the great musician said to his new found friend, "Come around and hear me play tonight." The invitation was not accepted. It was given the second time and again was not accepted. The third time Ole Bull said if you do not come and hear me play I will come and play for you, and John Ericsson said, "Do not bring your violin into my shop for I do not care for music." But the next day Ole Bull was there and he said, "There is something the matter with my violin," and they talked about tones and semi-tones and fibres of wood, and then he said, I will show how it is." He strung up the instrument, drew the bow across the strings and began to play. In a little while the building was filled with waves of harmony. The men left their work and gathered about the great musician. John Ericsson rose from his desk, stood for a moment in the outer circle, then came close to Ole Bull and listened to every note that came from the violin. At last the player drew his bow across the strings for the last time and stopped, the men turned back again to their work; not so John

Erricson. With tears streaming down his checks he said, "Play on, play on, I never knew what was lacking in my life before." This it is with many a man who thought he knew the needs of his soul, and sought to be satisfied with honor, and wealth, and power, but only Christ call satisfy, and until we learn this and claim him we shall be devoid of peace. -- J. W. C. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Lost In Darkness

SUBTOPIC: When The Light Was Extinguished

TITLE: His Lamp Went Out

A striking incident was given me while laboring on the Pacific coast. A deep cave had been discovered that, so far as was known, had never been explored. But one man, determined to have the exclusive honor of exploring the interior of the cave, procured a small hand lamp and a large ball of twine, and went to the cave alone, and fastening one end of the twine securely to some firm substance outside, took his lamp and ball of twine and entered the cave, climbing over rugged rocks and through deep, damp passages, unwinding his ball as he went. He felt sure if his lamp went out he could find his way back by the twine.

In this way he had gone a long way into the cave, having several times passed through small openings, until he reached a large, beautiful room in the cave. This room was adorned with rare and beautiful curiosities.

As far as could be ascertained, the man meant to bring out some of these curiosities. So setting down his lamp and putting his ball of twine by the side of it, he had gone some distance to break off a specimen, to bring out to his friends.

While he was doing this his lamp tipped over and went out. He at once left whatever he was endeavoring to obtain, to find his lamp and twine. He knew his life depended on his finding his lamp and twine. His tracks could be seen where he had crept in total darkness back and forth in search of his lamp, but it was all in vain. His lamp once out his death was certain. If any one ever started for a given window, in a very dark night, perhaps reaching just the opposite window, you can imagine how difficult was the situation of this poor man in the dark cave.

Long weary hours and weary days and nights, he searched as best he could for his lamp and twine, still in vain. Oh what thoughts of home and dear ones. What self reproach over his folly in not having some one with him, but it was too late then. He must die alone unwept. At last the struggle was over. Exhausted and worn he laid down and died. And as no one knew he was there, it was a long time before his body was found and returned to the dear ones.

So it is with unconverted men, they have a little light, in having some desire to become a Christian. The Holy Spirit, though often grieved and insulted by their rejection of his gracious calls, still shines, although it may be faintly, upon their darkness and would lead them out to hope and heaven. As in the cave when the light went out, the thread was lost, so when the Spirit leaves, the silken thread of desire is lost and they are in a dark cave without a guide to lead them out. Then their bitter cry will be, "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

"Too late! too late! will be the cry,
Jesus of Nazareth has passed by."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

M-TOPICS

TOPIC: Meet Again

SUBTOPIC: A Hymn Of Benediction

TITLE: Final Words Of "Incidents"

Oh, if, in that day, I can hear the Master say, "Well done," I shall be satisfied! Let me say to all who have heard me preach, or who may read these pages, "Meet me there."

I close this book of incidents by placing on the last page my favorite hymn, taken from my new hymn book, "Sought-Out Songs." This hymn expresses my prayer and benediction for all who remember me.

"God be with you till we meet again;
By his counsels, guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you,
God be with you till we meet again.

"God be with you till we meet again,
Neath his wings securely hide you;
Daily manna still divide you,
God be with you till we meet again.

"God be with you till we meet again;
When life's perils thick confound you,
Put his arms unfailing round you,
God be with you till we meet again.

"God be with you till we meet again,
Keep love's banner floating o'er you;
Smite death's threat'ning wave before you,
God be with you till we meet again."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

N-TOPICS

TOPIC: Now Is The Accepted Time
SUBTOPIC: Not An Hour From Now
TITLE: All For Jesus

One of my very best hearers in a meeting in New York, was Post Master Wilkinson. He was very anxious to become a Christian, but could not be prevailed upon to make any movement until the last day, and the last hour of the meetings. He would neither rise for prayers nor go into the inquiry meeting, or kneel with us, yet he was greatly convicted of his sins.

But the last hour of the meetings, I asked those who could do nothing more and yet desired religion to raise up their hand. As Mr. Wilkinson began to raise his hand, he rose to his feet, and stretched up his hand high. This act had so affected him that he came near us at the desk, and wished to settle the question there.

We knelt and prayed with and for him, and at once he found peace. It was now four o'clock, P. M., and I must leave in thirty minutes. Mr. Wilkinson put his name on my blank book and said, as he left me: "All the rest of my life for Jesus."

He left the room and had just forty-five minutes of life for Jesus, no more, and went into eternity. I thought then and feel the same now, that I would urge each one to seek Christ at once. You may not have forty-five minutes for Jesus. I speak to every one whose eye rests on this page.
-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Now Is The Accepted Time
SUBTOPIC: Not Three Days From Now
TITLE: Beginning Young

When Christ was twelve years old, he said to his parents, "I must be about my Father's business."

In the winter of 1860, while I was holding a meeting near Boston, a girl about twelve years old, came into my room with tears on her face, and said:

"Mr. Earle, I came up here to give my heart to Jesus. I feel that I am a great sinner. Will you pray for me?"

I said, "I will pray for you, and I can pray in faith if you see that you are a sinner; for Jesus died for sinners."

After pointing out the way of salvation, I asked her if she would kneel down by my side and pray for herself, and, as far as she knew, give herself to Jesus, to be his forever.

She said, "I will; for I am a great sinner."

Could one so young, and kind to everybody, be a great sinner? Yes, because she had rejected the Saviour until she was twelve years old; and when the Holy Spirit had knocked at the door of her heart, she had said, "No, not yet. Go thy way for this time."

We kneeled down, and after I had prayed, she said:

"Jesus, take me just as I am. I give myself to thee forever. I will love and serve thee all my life."

The door of her heart was now open, and Jesus entered and took possession. The tears were gone from her face, which was now covered with smiles. And I believe holy angels in that room witnessed the transfer of her heart to Jesus, and then went back to heaven to join in songs of thanksgiving; for "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

Ella then went down stairs, her face beaming with joy as she thought of her new relation to Jesus, and said to her mother:

"I have given myself to Jesus, and he has received me. Oh, I am so happy!"

Little did we think that in a few days she would be walking the "golden streets" with the blood-washed throng.

Like the Redeemer, who, when at her age, said to his mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" she seemed to long to be doing good. Reader, will you do the same, now? -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

O-TOPICS

TOPIC: Opportunities

SUBTOPIC: Used Profitably

TITLE: A Boy Who Worked Up

One day many years ago a bright boy found employment in a photograph gallery in Nashville, Tenn. His wages were small, but he took good care of them, and in course of time he had saved up a snug little sum of money. One day a friend, less thrifty than he, came to him with a long face, and asked for a loan of money, offering a book as security. Although the other knew there was little probability of his ever being repaid, he could not refuse the request.

"Here is the money; keep your book and repay me when you can."

The grateful lad went away in such haste that he left the book behind. The kind youth examined the volume with curiosity. It was a work on astronomy, by Dick, and it so fascinated him that he sat up all night studying it. He had never read anything which so filled him with delight. He

determined to learn all that he could about the wonders of the heavens. He began thenceforth to read everything he could obtain relating to astronomy.

The next step was to buy a small spy-glass, and night after night he spent most of the hours on the roof of his house studying the stars. He secured, second hand, the tube of a larger spy-glass, into which he fitted an eye-piece, and sent to Philadelphia for an object glass. By and by he obtained a five-inch glass, which, as you know, is an instrument of considerable size.

Meanwhile he worked faithfully in the shop of the photographer; but his nights brought him rare delight, for he never wearied of tracing out the wonders and marvels of the worlds around us. With the aid of his large spy-glass he discovered two comets before they were seen by any of the professional astronomers, whose superior instruments were continually scanning the heavens in search of the celestial wanderers. This exploit, you may well suppose, made the boy famous. He was invited by the professors in Vanderbilt University to go thither and see what he could do with their six-inch telescope. In the course of following four years he discovered six comets. He was next engaged by the Lick observatory. With the aid of its magnificent instrument he discovered eight comets, and last summer astonished the world by discovering the fifth satellite of Jupiter. He invented a new method of photographing the nebulae in the milky way, and has shown an originality approaching genius in his work in star photography.

Perhaps you have already guessed the name of this famous astronomer, which is Prof. E. E. Barnard (now in charge of the Yerkes observatory of Chicago University), and this is the story of how he worked up. -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Opportunity

SUBTOPIC: To Speak A Word In Season

TITLE: Watching For Opportunity

While holding a meeting at the Capital of North Carolina, a door was opened which in a very simple way resulted in the conversion of the Governor of the State, and his wife. It was this:

During the progress of the meeting, some fifty converts were received into the church. The church met one afternoon to hear their experience. Among these converts were the Governor's daughters. When they asked their father's consent to join this church, he was not only willing, but said to them:

"Your mother and myself will attend and hear your reason for believing yourselves Christians."

The pastor asked all those who intended to join that church to come near the pulpit for the convenience of the church. I noticed when these daughters passed out of the pew as requested, the Governor rose to his feet and passed them out very pleasantly. The pastor, during the examination of these converts, asked me if I had any question to ask them. I said I will ask the governor a question, which was this:

"I noticed, Governor, when your daughters passed out of the pew to come forward, you passed them out pleasantly. Do you give your daughters to Christ and this church, heartily?"

He rose to his feet and made an expressive bow, and said:

"I do, sir."

This was the arrow that reached his heart. He had given his daughters to Christ and the church heartily, but where were their father and mother. That night, while looking over the matter alone before God, he resolved to go into a room alone and settle his account with God before he slept. He went into the room and closed his door, and found that Christ had met every demand against him. He bowed before God and felt the evidence of pardon and justification. The great work was done.

The next morning as we prayed with his wife she gave herself to Christ, and the father and mother followed the example of their daughters, and all became members of that church.

Ten years after, I was there again and found the Governor an active worker, and one of the main pillars in that church. This was the open door entered, and the results.

Let me ask every one who reads this, to be fully prepared and watch your opportunity, and effectual doors will open for you to enter and do much good.

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

P-TOPICS

TOPIC: Peace With God

SUBTOPIC: Desire For Salvation Recognized

TITLE: No Desire

In Maine I was sent for to visit a young lady who was dying, and thought she had no desire to become a Christian. She was educated for the medical practice, and when about ready to enter upon her chosen profession, her lungs failed, and she died. She could only whisper when I visited her. One of the pastors had just called, but she did not wish to see him, as she had no desire, as she thought, to become a Christian.

Although she knew she must die, yet her heart was so hard she said she did not wish to converse on the subject of religion. In this state she was passing into eternity.

The result, however, showed that she had a real desire to become a Christian. As the Spirit convicts the world, I suppose there is more or less conviction for sin and desire for religion in every heart.

I sat down near her bed, and after a few words of inquiry, taking out of my pocket a pencil and paper, I said:

"Julia, if an angel out of heaven sat where I do, with a deed written with the blood of Christ, leaving only a blank with room for your name, and the seal of blood opposite the blank, holding a pen in his hand dipped in Christ's blood, should say, 'Miss _____ if you will write your full name in this blank, with this pen, you shall belong to Christ forever,' would you write your name there? Do you think you would hesitate?"

(I wish you all could have seen that pale, death-stricken face at that moment.) She saw the point. She saw, in the light of the figure, that she did desire to become a Christian. This satisfied her that the desire was in her heart. She whispered, with what little strength she had:

"I would."

I said:

"Julia, are you satisfied that you have some desire to become a Christian?"

"I am," she replied.

I then asked her if she would like to have me kneel down and offer a short prayer for her. She said:

"I would."

"Will you give yourself to Christ as far as you know, as far as you understand yourself, while I am praying? You say, if by signing that deed you could belong to Christ forever, you would do it. Now, will you, instead of signing the deed, silently say, 'Here, Lord, I do give myself to thee; 'tis all that I can do?'"

"I will," she said.

I knelt down, and while praying I felt the evidence of an answer. The whole room seemed filled with the Divine Spirit.

After prayer I asked:

"Did you give yourself to Christ while I was praying, as far as you know?"

She replied:

"I did."

Her answer was, with great firmness.

"Will you ever take it back?"

"Never."

When I left that room, I said to her:

"If you never take that back, I shall walk the golden streets with you."

The young lady lingered for a few days, and continued to whisper till the last minute of her life:

"Peace, peace, peace."

What she needed was to know how to give herself up as far as she had light, and be persuaded to do it.

Let me ask the reader of this incident, if an angel held such a deed and pen as I have just described to you, assuring you, if you would sign your full name to it, you should belong to Christ forever, would you sign it? Do you think you would? Is this not desire and feeling enough to warrant an immediate action? Will you not do as this young lady did, and be Christ's forever, and kneeling alone, say:

"Here, Lord, I do give myself to thee,
'Tis; all that I can do"

And never take this gift of yourself to the Saviour back. Pray differently after this, "Jesus, let me know that I am accepted." Press your suit for an answer to the prayer for this evidence. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Perseverance

SUBTOPIC: Pays, Quitting Robs

TITLE: A Smouldering Fire

In one of the British Provinces, a meeting had been in progress for nearly four weeks. Six or eight churches had worked together heartily and yet but little had been developed. I was pressed beyond measure to come to their assistance, and did go and preached twice.

It was evident from the first meeting that much had been done, and yet the work was like a smouldering fire that needed a draft opened.

I staid but one day, and yet in that one day not less than one hundred and fifty men and women were brought into Christ's kingdom, and afterwards united with the churches.

I speak of this to show how near to a great blessing a meeting, or church, or an individual may come and yet not obtain it.

A man in the early gold fever, in California, had taken up a claim, and satisfying himself where a gold lode or vein was located, commenced drilling, and continued until he had spent all his own money and all his wife had, and all he had credit to borrow, and yet the rich treasure he sought was not reached.

Becoming disheartened, he left his drill in the rock, went to his house and killed his wife and daughter, and then himself. After his death, friends pulled his drill from the rock loaded with rich gold. Had he pulled his drill out once more, this great wealth had been his. So with those seeking the pearl of great price, just at the point of success, they fail for the want of one effort more, one stroke more, one step further. While on the other hand, like the meeting alluded to, that one more effort is made and the great blessing is secured.

Friends, pray again, and if the blessing does not come, yet like Christ, pray three hours, "Saying the same words." Or, like Jacob, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Power From On High
SUBTOPIC: After An All-Night Of Prayer
TITLE: Night Of Prayer

While holding a meeting in Kingsboro, the field of good Dr. Yales' labors, all Christians were urged to seek more power with God, that they might have power with men. Among those who determined to "tarry in the upper room at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high," was the consecrated pastor.

After the ordinary means had failed to give him what he believed he ought to possess, he went into his study, and without laying off his clothes, continued in earnest prayer until called to breakfast in the morning. As he passed me, he simply said, in a very subdued, tender tone of voice:

"Brother, he's come; he's come."

He went with us to church, and as soon as meeting was opened, he arose, all subdued and tender, and asked two of his elders to come forward and kneel and pray for him, and after that he would pray for his church. But nearly his whole church rose in mass, and kneeled around their pastor. The scene that followed beggars description. The Spirit fell in melting, subduing power upon all in the house. Oh, the tears, the confessions, and yet the joy that filled that house! That day but little secular business was done, even among the unconverted. The town seemed like a boiling pot. Men entered each other's shops, but could not work. At night the strongest, as well as the weakest, rushed into the inquiry meeting, filling the house, the unconverted praying with and for each other. The plowing and sowing had been so thoroughly done by Dr. Yale in his long years of pastoral work there, that all seemed to know what to do to be saved, and only needed the Spirit's

power to rest upon them to lead them to immediate action. I think but few persons were left out of the fold, within a reasonable distance of that centre.

This wonderful result could be traced largely to that night of prayer on the part of the pastor; not to wonderful preaching or measures.

I write this to ask the pastors and churches if here may not be found the secret of their weakness and want of power with men to lead them to Christ. They have not power with God.

Not because they are immoral, or unfaithful, or unsound, but because they have not tarried in that upper room until they were endued with power from on high. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Prayer Challenge

SUBTOPIC: Accepted And Successful

TITLE: Try It On Me

We were in the midst of an interesting series of meetings in New York. Among those attending from no promising motives was Mr. Olin, a lawyer of marked ability and influence in the town.

One evening, at the close of the sermon, when an opportunity was given for remarks, Mr. Olin rose, and, in a bold and defiant tone, said:

"Mr. Earle, I have heard you speak repeatedly in these meetings of the 'power of prayer,' and I don't believe a word of it; but if you want to try a hard case, take me."

I said, "Mr. Olin, if you will come to the front seat, we will pray for you now."

He replied, "I will do nothing of the kind; but if you have 'power in prayer,' try it on me.

Before closing the meeting, I requested all who were willing, to go to their closets at a given hour, and pray earnestly for Mr. Olin; and I requested him to remember at that hour that we were praying for him.

The second or third evening after this, Mr. Olin rose in our meeting, and urged us to pray for him. I asked him if he would come forward and let us pray with him. He said:

"Yes, anywhere, if God will only have mercy on so great a sinner."

In a few days he was a rejoicing Christian, and soon after sold his law books, and became a preacher of the gospel. He is now a presiding elder in the Methodist church. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Preparation To Die

SUBTOPIC: Now, Or Never

TITLE: Lift Your Thumb

This incident I used at the close of a sermon in "Union Hall," in San Francisco, California. About four thousand were present, and it was believed five hundred men and women asked us to pray for them that they might be saved.

I think I feel as the nurse did, in the hospital, with his thumb on the great artery, while a wounded soldier arranged his matters to die.

After a severe battle, a soldier had his arm amputated very near his body. The veins had been taken up, and he seemed to be doing well; but on one occasion, as the nurse was dressing his wounds, the blood began to flow freely. The nurse held the vein with his thumb, and sent for a physician, who, on entering the room, said, "It is well, my brave fellow, that it was not the large artery--I can take this up." A short time after, the blood flowed more freely than before, and the skilful nurse, placing his thumb this time on the large artery, which had broken open, sent again for the physician.

After a careful examination of the whole matter, it was decided that the artery could not be taken up without removing the thumb of the nurse; and if his thumb was removed, the soldier must die immediately.

It only remained for the brave man to make immediate arrangements for death. About three hours were employed in sending messages to loved ones, and in arranging his effects before he left the world. When this was done--the nurse still holding the vein, and knowing that death would follow in three minutes after lifting his thumb--the brave but dying soldier said, "Now, kind nurse, you can take off your thumb: I must go. Farewell to all."

Now came the severe trial to the nurse--how could he lift his thumb under such circumstances! The accumulated blood already rendered it difficult to hold the artery; so, turning his eye from the soldier, he lifted his thumb, and in three minutes death had done its work.

I think I feel very much as this nurse did--fearing, as I do, that with many in this congregation the crisis has come when you are to decide where you will spend eternity. I fear this is for some of you the line

"That marks the destiny of men
For glory or despair."

As the nurse felt that he could not lift his thumb, and yet must, so with me now--How can I close this sermon, and end this entreaty, without knowing that you will not grieve the Spirit away this time?

Let me ask the Recording Angel to hold his pen, while each one of you in this hall decides the question--whether you will cherish what little desire you have to become Christ's, what little of the Holy Spirit's influence still lingers about your heart, or say, "Go thy way for this time," which may be forever!

But I must not linger. Let me request every person in the hall--whether professor of religion or not--who intends to cherish what desire he has to serve God, to rise on his feet.

Thank God, nearly every one present has risen! May God help us all to keep our resolution, for Jesus' sake. Amen. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Prodigal Son Parable

SUBTOPIC: Paraphrased

TITLE: He Came To Himself

Many years ago a wealthy family, consisting of parents and children, lived in peace and contentment together until one of the sons thought he could do better if he could get away from the influence of home. That he could make more money and be more of a man. So he asked his father if he was willing to give him his share of the family patrimony that might fall to him after the father's death. The father, in the kindness of his heart, divided his property and gave this younger son his full share of his estate, that is, all that would naturally belong to this son after the father's death.

This son fitted himself out with what was needed for a long journey. He gathered all his means in shape for travelling, and kissing his parents and the family, said good by, and started.

He was now a wealthy, finely dressed young man. Loved and respected, no doubt, by all who knew him, perhaps envied by many because of his means and position among men.

No doubt he intended to live a correct life, amass wealth, and be a man of honor among men. But the tempter met him, and little by little he yielded, until he became loose in his habits, and riotous in living, and soon found his property and character and his self-respect all gone, and he in a land of strangers, and not respected by any one. He was now glad to engage in the lowest calling for a living. Hungry, and ragged, and lonely, he began to review his strange career. Oh, the self-reproach and tears of repentance over his wicked and profligate life:--Why did I leave my father's house. How strangely I have wandered and fallen. What can I do; I surely shall perish here, but who will take me in or care for such a wretch as I am.

I remember my father's prayers and my mother's tender love. The hired help at my father's house have every luxury and comfort, and here I am bloated with wine, and debased, and in sin. Is there no help or hope for me?

My mother would be polluted were she to kiss me, my father would be disgraced to call me his son. And yet I see no hope for me but in my father's house. O God, can I be saved from all this? What shall I say before thee? I have heard that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners, and that is me. And again, "though your sins be scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "If ye be willing and obedient ye shall eat the good of the land." Is it possible that such a lost one as I am, who deserves the frowns of God and the disapprobation of men forever, can lay hold of such promises as these? It is even so. Oh,

how wonderful! "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." I will ask my father to make me as one of his hired servants.

The wandering son did this. He went home in rags a true penitent, to take the humblest place in his father's house; but how was he received.

No doubt the parents had long been praying and hoping for his return. Long before the son reached his father's house, the father lifted up his eyes and recognized the step of his long lost son, and the next minute he found himself running to meet his boy. Who can describe the father's joy as he threw his arms around him and kissed and embraced him, exclaiming:

"Oh my son, my son; can this be my own dear youngest son."

The son is trying to say, "Father, I have sinned" -----

But the father says:

"My son, don't talk about that now but come home, and let your mother and the family embrace you."

Though he was barefoot and in rags, yet he was greeted as a son still beloved. How the joy bells rang out. How soon he was washed and dressed in the best robe, shoes on his feet and rings on his hands.

A sumptuous dinner was soon in readiness and a thankful jubilee enjoyed. The son they feared was dead was yet alive and at home. Who that reads this incident does not feel and partake of the joy of that home.

How beautifully this whole scene illustrates the boundless love of God, to wretched, fallen man. When man was not only estranged, but in open rebellion against his Heavenly Father, he sent his only-begotten Son into the far country, to seek, and if possible, induce him to return home.

The bells of heaven ring louder and longer over the return of one lost soul than over any other event that transpires on earth. Let me ask any one who reads this tender, touching incident (if you have not already done it) to adopt the language of this lost son, "I will arise and go to my Father and say, I have sinned and am no more worthy to be called thy Son."

"Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast him out." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Protected

SUBTOPIC: Under The Shadow Of His Wings

TITLE: Wonderful Protection

"Hide me under the shadow of thy wings." Psalms 17:8.

A party of Northern tourists formed part of a large company gathered on the deck of an excursion steamer that was moving slowly down the historic Potomac one beautiful evening in the summer of 1881. A gentleman, who has since gained a national reputation as an evangelist of song, had been delighting the party with his happy rendering of many familiar hymns, the last being the sweet petition so dear to every Christian heart,

"Jesus, lover of my soul"

The singer gave the first two verses with much feeling, and a peculiar emphasis upon the concluding lines that thrilled every heart. A hush had fallen upon the listeners that was not broken for some seconds after the musical notes had died away. Then a gentleman made his way from the outskirts of the crowd to the side of the singer, and accosted him with:

"Beg your pardon, stranger, but were you actively engaged in the late war?"

"Yes, sir," the man of song answered, courteously; "I fought under General Grant."

"Well," the first speaker continued with something like a sigh, "I did my fighting on the other side, and think, indeed am quite sure, I was very near you one bright night eighteen years ago this very month. It was much such a night as this. If I am not mistaken, you were on guard duty. We of the South had sharp business on hand, and you were one of the enemy. I crept near your post of duty, my murderous weapon in my hand; the shadow hid me. As you paced back and forth you were humming the tune of the hymn you have just sung I raised my gun and aimed at your heart, and I had been selected by our commander for the work because I was a sure shot. Then out upon the night rang the words:

"Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of thy wing."

Your prayer was answered. I could not fire after that and there was no attack made upon your camp that night. I felt sure, when I heard you sing this evening, that you were the man whose life I was spared from taking."

The singer grasped the hand of the Southerner and said with much emotion:

"I remember the night very well, and distinctly the feeling of depression and loneliness with which I went forth to my duty. I knew my post was one of great danger, and I was more dejected than I remember to have been at any other time during the service. I paced my lonely beat, thinking of home and friends and all that life holds dear. Then the thought of God's care for all that he has created in his own image; and I sang the prayer of my heart, and ceased to feel alone. How the prayer was answered I never knew until this evening. My Heavenly Father thought best to keep the knowledge from me for eighteen years. How much of his goodness to us we shall be ignorant of until it is revealed by the light of eternity! 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' has been a favorite hymn; now it will be inexpressibly dear." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

R-TOPICS

TOPIC: Repentance

SUBTOPIC: Its Value

TITLE: The Most Precious Thing

I read a story, a long time ago, having in it a moral that pleased me. It represented our heavenly Father as telling a man, if he would bring up to the gate of heaven the most precious thing that could be found in this world, it would gain his admittance into heaven.

"Then I am sure of heaven," he said. "I know what the most precious thing in the world is."

He went to a mint where the best specimens of gold could be found, and obtaining the purest piece possible, flew up to the gates of pearl, sure that heaven would be opened to him, but found the gates closed and bolted against him. He was told that was not the most precious thing; that their streets are paved with gold, as it were transparent glass.

He came again. This time he obtained the most exquisitely beautiful specimen of jewelry; nothing richer or more beautiful on earth of its kind. He carried this up, but found the door still shut against him. He was told that no one used jewelry there. It was really of no value in heaven. He must go again.

This time he was walking on the beach, under the shade of beautiful trees, thinking over what that most precious thing could be, when his attention was attracted to a beautiful little child lying on the grass under the shade of these trees, with its innocent face upturned towards heaven, in a sweet sleep. Just then a robber came to this little child, and stood over it for a moment, apparently in deep thoughtfulness, gazing on its innocent face, the child unconscious of any danger. The robber, reviewing his own life in his guilt and wickedness, and contrasting it with the innocence of that little child, drew a deep sigh of regret and sorrow over his life of sin, when a tear of penitence dropped from his eye. The man in search of earth's most precious thing, caught this tear, and flew up to heaven's gate with it, when he found the gates thrown wide open to him, with a hearty welcome from the heavenly ones, saying:

"Yes, you have brought the most precious thing that can be found on earth the Tear of Repentance."

So, dear friend, if your bosom sighs over a life of sin, and the tear of penitence moistens your cheeks, do not wipe it away, or hide it, but let it dry on your face, for no earthly jewelry could so adorn your person. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Revival

SUBTOPIC: Compared To Lazarus' Resurrection

TITLE: Callesth For Thee

This Bethany house and family, situated not quite two miles out of Jerusalem, was one of Christ's pleasant homes, where he could sleep and rest. I think their old parents were dead, and had left the homestead to this one son and two daughters. The Saviour had often visited that home, and loved the brother and the two sisters, and they loved him. They, no doubt, had one particular room they called Christ's room, and one place at their table they called Christ's place. Although he was the God-man, equal with the Father, yet he seemed like one of their own family.

But it happened then, as it often does now, when death enters a family, he takes the one that it is the hardest to part with. Death came for the only man in the family. But I think the sisters were not much alarmed as long as they knew Christ was within a few hours' walk of them. They believed he would come and heal him. But he grew worse, and they sent a messenger after Christ, with a love message, "Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick."

Lazarus grew worse, and sank down rapidly. I imagine Mary said, "Martha, look down the road, and see if Christ is not coming. Do look again; he is dying." When our friends are sick, and the doctor delays, minutes seem hours. And, by the way, any thing but a slow doctor. Lazarus died, and Christ had not come yet. They carried him out and buried him the same evening. You all know how a home appears after a funeral. There is a coat and a hat, a doll and a plaything, to remind you that a dear one is gone. Just such a home that was.

The night came on, and Christ had not come. Three days passed, and he had not come yet. Mary's heart was crushed. Finally they heard that Christ was within a few hours' walk of them. Martha went alone after Jesus, but Mary sat still in the house. Christ's talk with Martha so changed and cheered her feelings that she went back after Mary, and said to her, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." Martha appeared and spoke so differently, her tone of voice and countenance all so changed, that Mary rose at once and went, although she thought she would not.

I often use this tender and impressive incident in this way, by analogy, that the circumstances connected with Lazarus being raised from the dead are like the circumstances in a revival.

First, they sent for Jesus, but did not go. So, in a revival, there is often an undue reliance on foreign help.

Second, only part of the family went first. Mary was not going to do a thing. So, in a revival, only part of the church start first. The rest, like Mary, do not intend to go into the work.

Third, Martha got her own heart warm, then she could talk with effect with Mary. So, in a revival, a few go first, and get their hearts warm, then go after Mary or the rest.

Fourth, when Mary and Martha both went, the whole neighborhood turned out. So, in a revival, when Christians get their hearts warm, the community about them are aroused and turn out.

Fifth, they had a weeping, groaning time before Lazarus was raised. So, in a revival, Christians weep between the porch and the altar.

Sixth, they had to remove the stone before Lazarus could come forth. So, in a revival, stumbling blocks must be removed.

Seventh, when they had done what they could, they could stand still and see God's salvation. So in a revival.

Eighth, Lazarus came forth bound with grave-clothes, and must be loosed. So, in a revival, men are converted, but need help from the church.

Ninth, that miracle raised in Bethany a monument to Christ's divinity. So does a healthy revival in any place.

Let all Christians learn by this incident and analogy how to work in leading men to Christ. "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

S-TOPICS

TOPIC: Saved

SUBTOPIC: By Obeying, Trusting, Totally

TITLE: Lost In The Act

The Psalmist says, "He brought me up, also, out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock."

I heard of an incident in Scotland very much like the Prophet Jeremiah's being taken out of a deep pit of mire and clay by having ropes and old clothes let down to him, Jeremiah tying the ropes about his body, and the thirty men, sent for the purpose, drawing him up. (Jer. 38.)

The incident in Scotland was this. Three boys, nearly grown to manhood, went into the woods back of their father's house. In these woods was a very deep gulf. One of the boys proposed to see how deep into the gulf they could descend; the other two agreed to go as deep as the leader would. All three agreed to this. They started, the leader going first. They slid down from rock to rock a long way into the gulf, apparently, without thinking how they would get back. They became intensely excited to get as low down as possible. They saw one rock far below, which the leader--determined to reach if he could. So, taking hold of an overhanging rock with both hands, he swung himself under this rock, and dropped upon the rock below. The other two let themselves down in the same way. They now discovered that the rock on which they stood overhung a very deep chasm, and that they could not return by their own strength, and no one could come to their assistance. They saw no way but to die in this gulf. Long, weary hours they heard only the echo of their own fruitless cries. They had time to think over their madness and folly.

Their father missed them, and raised the whole neighborhood, and searched the woods for his sons. They looked all along the edge of the gulf, if possibly they might find a hat or coat, or some evidence that they had fallen into the gulf. At last they heard the cry of the boys, and knew about where they were.

The father had, no doubt, read the thirty-eighth chapter of Jeremiah, and said at once;

"I can get my boys."

He procured long, strong ropes, and fastening one end of these ropes firmly at the top, let the other end down into the gulf. But the overhanging rock threw the rope beyond the reach of the boys. They vibrated or swung the rope so that it swung within the reach of the boys. I have called their names George and John and Benjamin. George caught the rope first, and was told to put it around his body, and tie a hard knot, one that he could not untie himself in a hurry. They assured him the rope was strong, and they had plenty of help. But George could not be prevailed upon to tie a hard knot, but to tie it so that, if he was afraid, he could untie it in an instant, but did not think he would. So they drew slowly upon the rope until George's feet were out on the rock as far as he could go without swinging off. He feared to swing off over the chasm, and untied the knot to throw himself back with his brothers; but he had waited too long, was too far over, so went down into the chasm, and was lost in the very act of being saved.

John took the rope next, but notwithstanding the death of George, and the assurances of his father that it would be entirely safe to tie a hard knot, and swing off, he would not tie a hard knot, but did not believe he would untie it, but left it so that he could, John tried to trust, but just as he was about to swing off and be saved, he untied the loose knot to throw himself back by the side of Benjamin. He, too, had waited too long, and was lost just as he was about to be saved.

Benjamin next took the rope, and putting it around his body, said:

"I will do anything you tell me."

This time a hard knot was tied, and Benjamin swung off where he could not help himself. Just what his father wanted him to do. His father knew then he had him safe. I imagine, as he went up his rugged way, Benjamin said:

"Father, I cannot help myself at all."

"No, my son, don't take hold of a twig or rock; just trust me."

Just as God says to us, "Only believe."

Soon Benjamin was on the rocks above, safe in his father's arms, and poor George and John might have been there too, if they had only tied a hard knot.

So God says to all who would be brought out of the horrible pit. Tie a hard knot, and swing off on the cord of Christ's love. "Only trust him, only trust him," and you too will say, "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit."

In the city of New York, while relating this incident, a sea captain present, a profane swearer, sprang to his feet in the public assembly, and said, with great earnestness:

"Give me hold of that rope, sir; give me hold of that rope!"

The scene was a very thrilling one; everybody seemed touched by it. The meeting was soon dismissed.

I had further conversation and prayer with the captain that night, but he hesitated about tying a hard knot, and becoming a Christian, for this reason. He had always made his men on the vessel obey him by swearing at them, and if he became a Christian, he could not swear at his men. And for a whole day he held that rope (so to speak), unwilling to give it up, and yet feared his men would not obey him, if he gave himself to Christ. At last he said to me:

"I will tie a hard knot. I will become a Christian, if I give up my vessel."

After giving himself to Christ, he went on board his vessel, called all his men about him, and told them he had become a Christian, that there would be no more swearing on their vessel. They had prayers on board, instead of profanity; his men obeyed him much better. He ran two trips to a foreign port and back. On the second trip he was taken sick on his way back, reached New York too sick to be taken from his vessel, and died, triumphant in Christ, in his stateroom. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Saviour's Sacrificial Death

SUBTOPIC: Evokes Adoration, Consecration

TITLE: Kissing His Feet

A very tender, suggestive sight can be seen in Greenwood cemetery. It is the monument of a noble fireman, with his fireman's cap and trumpet, and a little babe in his arms.

The occasion of the monument was this:

In one of those terrible fires in New York, that often burn whole blocks, several families had been burned out. It was supposed that every one had been taken from the burning building, when a half frantic mother cried at the door:

"My darling child is in the building."

She was about to rush into the flames to rescue her babe, when this fireman cried:

"You cannot get your child."

She said, "I must have my child."

The fireman's heart was moved for the mother and he said:

"I will get your child."

At the risk of his life, he went up through the fire to the room, and sure enough there was the little unharmed babe, unconscious of its danger. He took it in his arms to bring it to his mother, and had gone but a short distance, when he discovered that the floor had fallen in. Then he knew he must die, there was no escape for him. A quick thought struck him, "Can't I save this child, if I must die? I will try." So tossing the child through the fire and smoke (as he knew about where the men were), strange to tell the child was caught and saved, while the fireman went down among the falling timber and fire, and lost his life.

"Would any one blame that child if it went every opportunity that offered, and got down on its knees and kissed and kissed again the cold marble feet of the fireman, and looking up in his face should say:

"He saved me, but he lost his life in doing it."

So who is there among us who would not go to the bleeding feet of our Saviour and kiss them, and looking up in his face, say:

"He saved me, but he lost his life in doing it."

"All for Jesus I all for Jesus,
All my being's ransomed powers,
All my thoughts, and words, and doings,
All my days, and all my hours."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Sealed

SUBTOPIC: No Good Reason For Not Being

TITLE: Why Are You Not Sealed?

A beautiful incident occurred in our meetings on Fifth Avenue, New York, that is full of tender memories. I spoke a few minutes to the large Sabbath School before preaching in the morning, and found a very great religious interest through the whole school. All seemed bathed in tears. Among those who wept freely was a bright boy about seven years old, the son of a Broadway silk merchant. This boy was very angry at himself for weeping, and angry at me for being the cause of his weeping.

When the morning services commenced, he took a seat with his father in the pew, and as soon as I commenced reading the Scriptures, he put his fingers in his ears, and refused to remove them for some time. His father asked him why he did so.

"Because, papa, he made us all cry in Sunday School. I don't want to cry."

After a while he looked about, and found the congregation were not weeping, so he ventured to take his fingers out of his ears. Just at that moment I was reading from the seventh of Revelation the account of the angel putting a seal upon the foreheads of all those that wept over the sins of the people. I paused for an instant while reading this, and asked all in the church if they would be willing, then and there, before leaving their seats, to be sealed for heaven. And putting my finger on my forehead, I asked again:

"Would each one of you be willing to go out of this house with a plain, visible seal on your forehead, so that any one looking upon your forehead, would say 'There is a Christian. See the seal.' Would any of you want to hide your face? Do you ever go where you would not go if you had a plain, visible seal on your forehead?"

The boy was so interested with this thought that he whispered to his father:

"What is a Christian, papa?"

The father said:

"I suppose, Charley, it is one that loves and serves the Lord."

Charley replied:

"Why are you not a Christian, papa? I don't see any seal on your forehead."

The father bowed his head, and was deeply moved by Charley's inquiry, for he knew he ought to be a Christian. He declared, afterward, that he thought he could hardly have felt worse if a pistol had been pulled off on him. The effect was so great upon him that he immediately resolved to become a Christian, but not in a protracted meeting. He would wait until Mr. Earle had gone.

That Sunday afternoon he took his usual ride in Central Park, but almost every man he met, he was looking up under his hat for that seal on his forehead.

That evening he came to church so deeply convicted of his lost condition that, as soon as an opportunity was offered, he left his pew, and kneeled in front of the desk for prayer. The pastor kneeled with him, and before he rose from his knees he gave himself to Christ, and soon became an active member of that church, and, I trust, is "sealed for the courts above."

Let me ask all who read this incident, the question Charley asked his father, "Why are you not a Christian?" Is there a seal on your forehead? If not, will you not ask the angel to seal you at once for your heavenly home? "Having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Service

SUBTOPIC: Pledged In Gratitude
TITLE: Could Never Repay Him

During a terrible storm at sea that threatened every moment to carry the ship to the bottom, one of the ship's crew was doing something on the deck when a great sea struck the ship and went fairly over the deck, striking this man with great force, disabling him and carrying him into the mad waters.

Although he was a good swimmer, he was so disabled that he could only keep above water. They saw him lifting up his imploring hands through the white foam, signifying his desire for help. But the Captain said, "Don't lower a boat, for no small boat can live in this sea, in this terrific storm. We cannot save the man. The most we can do is to save the ship."

The vessel was bearing farther and farther from the helpless man. Once more they saw his imploring hands come up among the white caps further off, which moved all hearts that witnessed it. Still the Captain said a small boat must not be lowered, as it could not live a moment among these wild billows.

But one man who was an expert swimmer, was so moved by the imploring signals of the drowning man, that he threw off his loose garments, saying:

"I will save that man, or die with him."

So plunging into the surging deep, he struggled so bravely with the mad waters, that he reached the poor man just as his strength had gone; he had given up and was filling with water, and sinking down unconscious. He grasped him, and strange to tell, he brought him so near the ship that a small boat was lowered, and both men were taken up and laid down upon the deck. The one that had been swept overboard, entirely unconscious and his deliverer nearly so. Appliances were used and both were brought to consciousness.

As soon as the rescued man opened his eyes and found he was not in the ocean, his first words were:

"Who saved me?"

He was pointed to his deliverer still lying on the deck in his wet clothes. He crept to his deliverer, and putting his arms around his feet, and in the most tender and heart moving tone of voice cried out:

"I'm your servant, I'm your servant."

He felt that he could never do enough for him.

Let me ask all who read this incident, would you not put your arms about the bleeding feet of your great Deliverer and say from a full heart:

"Jesus, I'm your servant, I'm your servant. Ask anything of me, Jesus, and I will do it the best I can." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Sin Business

SUBTOPIC: Desire To Get Out Of

TITLE: Great Worth

While I was holding meetings at Carson, the capital of Nevada, a man came one hundred and eighty miles through the terrible sand roads, from the city of Austin, bringing a written request, signed by ninety-nine of its citizens, asking me to come to their city, and preach Christ to them. These sinners had raised money, and sent this request, although they kept a dance hall on one corner of the street, and card-playing table on another corner, and a drinking establishment on another. They sent me this word:

"We are not satisfied with this business, or this way of living, but do not know what else to do. But if you will come and hold a meeting with us, we will quit all this business, and attend the meeting."

Why was this desire in the hearts of these men? Why this dissatisfied feeling, when they were living wicked lives, and pursuing this wicked business? Was it not because man is a noble being, though fallen, and it may be a wreck, yet he is a wreck of dignity, a creature of great worth.

"Man has a soul of vast desires,
He burns within with restless fires."

I thought then, and think so still, if I could be the humble instrument in saving one such soul, I could afford to die. The joy-bells of heaven would ring louder and longer over such an event than over all the victories of the battlefield, or any other earthly achievement.

I suppose, out of 1,500,000,000 of our race, not one person can be found who is really happy, in the true sense, without being born again, and having the "love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost."

In view of the lofty, godlike desires found in every human bosom, and the vast capabilities of the soul, how weighty and appropriate those words of Jesus: "What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Oh, what worth! What vast capabilities! -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Singing

SUBTOPIC: Power Of

TITLE: The Power Of Song

An incident occurred in our meetings in Vermont that illustrates the saving influence of singing. Our meeting was held in a large hall, with the several churches united. One evening we were singing that beautiful hymn, "Waiting and Watching for Me." As we came to the chorus, "Will

any one there at the beautiful gate be waiting and watching for me," just at that moment a man in the street was passing the hall, and the song went out through the windows, and reached his ears. He stood still as if arrested.

"Will any one there be waiting and watching for me at that beautiful gate?" he said to himself. "Perhaps my mother is waiting there for me."

Although he had not been in a religious meeting in fourteen years, he felt drawn in to hear more such singing. God met him, and convicted him of his sins. He finally became a Christian, and dated his start to that hymn. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Soldiers In The Lord's Army
SUBTOPIC: The Greater Opportunity Of Being
TITLE: A Grandfather's Blessing

When General Grant was nigh unto death, he dictated a formal letter "To the President of the United States," asking that his namesake and grandson, Ulysses III, be appointed to a cadetship at West Point upon application. Col. Frederick D. Grant, the young lad's father, recently took the priceless missive to Washington and personally delivered it to President McKinley with an endorsement from the warrior's comrade, General Sherman. General Grant's original letter, with General Sherman's endorsement across the bottom of the page, furnishes a unique souvenir for the war archives at Washington, which will be treasured as a sacred memento. It goes without saying that the appointment will be made. There are multitudes of young men whose fathers and grandfathers were famous soldiers of Jesus Christ who would, if they could, direct their children and grandchildren into the same noble and joyous service. Any young man who envies this youthful scion of an honored family may well congratulate himself upon the opportunity of becoming a "good soldier of Jesus Christ." -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Soul-Winning
SUBTOPIC: Valued Above Money-Making
TITLE: How I Came To Give Up Business

The way God led me out of business into Christian work was as follows:

I had never lost sight of Jesus Christ since the first night I met him in the store at Boston. But for years I was only a nominal Christian, really believing that I could not work for God. No one had ever asked me to do anything.

When I went to Chicago, I hired five pews in a church, and used to go out on the street and pick up young men and fill these pews. I never spoke to those young men about their souls; that was the work of the elders, I thought. After working for some time like that, I started a mission Sabbath school. I thought numbers were everything, and so I worked for numbers. When the attendance ran below one thousand, it troubled me; and when it ran to twelve or fifteen hundred, I was elated. Still none were converted; there was no harvest. Then God opened my eyes.

There was a class of young ladies in the school, who were without exception the most frivolous set of girls I ever met. One Sunday the teacher was ill, and I took that class. They laughed in my face and I felt like opening the door and telling them all to get out and never come back.

That week the teacher of the class came into the store where I worked. He was pale and looked very ill.

"What is the trouble?" I asked.

"I have had another hemorrhage of my lungs. The doctor says I cannot live on Lake Michigan, so I am going to New York state. I suppose I am going home to die."

He seemed greatly troubled, and when I asked him the reason, he replied:

"Well, I have never led any of my class to Christ. I really believe I have done the girls more harm than good."

I had never heard anyone talk like that before, and it set me thinking. After awhile I said: "Suppose you go and tell them how you feel. I will go with you in a carriage, if you want to go."

He consented, and we started out together. It was one of the best journeys I ever had on earth. We went to the house of one of the girls, called for her, and the teacher talked to her about her soul. There was no laughing then! Tears stood in her eyes before long. After he had explained the way of life, he suggested that we have prayer. He asked me to pray. True, I had never done such a thing in my life as to pray God to convert a young lady there and then. But we prayed, and God answered our prayer.

We went to other houses. He would go upstairs, and be all out of breath, and he would tell the girls what he had come for. It wasn't long before they broke down and sought salvation. When his strength gave out, I took him back to his lodgings. The next day we went out again. At the end of ten days he came to the store with his face literally shining.

"Mr. Moody," he said, "the last one of my class has yielded herself to Christ."

I tell you, we had a time of rejoicing. He had to leave the next night, so I called his class together that night for a prayer-meeting, and there God kindled a fire in my soul that has never gone out. The height of my ambition had been to be a successful merchant, and if I had known that meeting was going to take that ambition out of me, I might not have gone. But how many times I have thanked God since for that meeting!

The dying teacher sat in the midst of his class, and talked with them, and read the 14th chapter of John. We tried to sing "Blest be the tie that binds," after which we knelt down to prayer. I was just rising from my knees, when one of the class began to pray for her dying teacher. Another prayed, and another, and before we rose the whole class had prayed. As I went out I said to myself: "Oh, God let me die rather than lose the blessing I have received tonight!"

The next evening I went to the depot to say good-bye to that teacher. Just before the train started, one of the class came, and before long, without any prearrangement, they were all there. What a meeting that was! We tried to sing, but we broke down. The last we saw of that dying teacher, he was standing on the platform of the car, his finger pointing upward, telling that class to meet him in heaven. I didn't know what this was going to cost me. I was disqualified for business; it had become distasteful to me. I had got a taste of another world, and cared no more for making money. For some days after, the greatest struggle of my life took place. Should I give up business and give myself to Christian work, or should I not? I have never regretted my choice. Oh, the luxury of leading some one out of the darkness of this world into the glory-light and liberty of the Gospel! -- D. L. Moody -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Standing Up For Jesus

SUBTOPIC: Compared With Stand Of 3 Hebrew Children

TITLE: Stand Up For Jesus

Among the last words of the dying Dr. Tyng was this beautiful motto, "Stand up for Jesus." They should be written in letters of gold, and placed in a silver frame in every home.

It may be easy to "stand up for Jesus" among his friends, but to stand up for him and defend him among his enemies sometimes requires great courage. I will give an instance that illustrates this statement.

Three Christian young men, finely educated, and consecrated to Christ and his cause, who held high government offices, were commanded to attend the dedication of a great "image," or idol, which the king had made. This idol was about ninety feet high, and nine feet broad, covered with gold. When everything was in readiness, the king, with absolute power in his hands, caused it to be proclaimed to every one in that vast assembly, that when certain instruments of music sounded, every man should bow before that "image," but if, for any reason, any one should refuse, he should be thrust alive into a burning, fiery furnace. This would be a trial of the faith and courage of these Christian young men.

Will they now give up, and bow before this image, or "stand up for Jesus," and trust all in God's hands? Human prudence would say to them, "What harm will it do to get on your face before this image, and pretend to worship it?" But God says, "Thou shalt worship no God but me." The young men decided to be true to God, whatever might be the consequences. When the music sounded, all but these three fell down before this image. There they stood, in the dignity of the Christian character. All eyes turn towards them in pity.

"Foolish young men?" was the cry. "Your religion has brought you into trouble."

But, dear friends, when religion brings a man into trouble, it always brings him out. When Satan brings a man into trouble, he always leaves him there. Some difference!

After the king knew the young men understood the penalty of refusing, and still persisted, he ordered the furnace heated hotter than ever before, and the three young men were bound in their coats and hats, and thrown into it. The king, perhaps, called his cabinet together, and said to them:

"These were very fine men and fine officers. I never saw a wrong thing in them before. I am sorry to lose them, but must be obeyed."

After a little, the king, with his counsellors, I suppose, went to the furnace, perhaps to see the cinders of those foolish Christians. But, instead of this, they saw four men walking loose in the fiery furnace, and Jesus was one of them. They called them out, and lifting their hats, found that the smell of fire was not upon their garments, nor a hair of their heads singed. What a change in the king's mind about their God and their religion. They stood up for Jesus.

The king then made a decree, "that every people, nation, and language which speak anything amiss against the God" of these men, "shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill, because there is no other God that can deliver after that sort."

By this one act of "standing up for Jesus" among his enemies, in meekness and fear, these three Christian young men not only glorified God among all nations, but built for themselves a memorial that will last, not only through all time, but one that will endure forever in heaven.

Let me ask all who read these pages, to adopt as your motto, wherever you go, in business, in pleasure, in youth, or old age, living or dying, "I will stand up for Jesus." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

U-TOPICS

TOPIC: Unconditional Surrender

SUBTOPIC: Followed By Salvation

TITLE: No Conditions

Among the deeply anxious inquirers in one of my meetings in New York was one of the professors in a college. For weeks he earnestly sought to become a Christian, but to no avail. We all wondered what could be in his way. I asked him if he kept back anything, or if he knew of any sin he was unwilling to give up. He knew of nothing.

After a long search we found his difficulty. It was this. He had fully decided that no one should know his feelings until he was sure himself he was a Christian. We asked him if he would go into the inquiry meeting, or rise, or go forward for prayer. He said no. We asked him if he would like to have us pray for him.

"Do just as you please," would be his reply.

And yet, as soon as he could reach his room alone, he would shut his door, and plead to become a Christian. He would remind God of his direction to enter his closet and shut the door and pray. He did this for forty days. But no light. He believed he could find Christ without letting any one know his feelings, or asking them to pray for him. This was true; but he could not find Christ

until he was willing to ask others to pray for him. He had a condition, and that was that he would not ask any one to pray for him until he knew he was a Christian. He could not be converted in the closet or out of it, until this condition was given up. So he struggled on for a long time without peace. At last he was led to ask if it was possible that it was because he was unwilling to ask any one to pray for him. He was honest and sincere, and thought he was doing right. He finally said:

"If this condition is in the way, I will give it up," and left his room to do what he had said he would never do, and that was to get some one to pray with and for him, and only got to the foot of the stairs before he found great peace and light. It was then an unconditional surrender. All conditions must be abandoned before conversion. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Union With Christ

SUBTOPIC: Its Quiet, Yet Vital Linkage

TITLE: The Circle Must Not Be Broken That Keeps Us In Relation To Christ.

I have seen a heavy piece of solid iron hanging on another, not welded, not linked, not glued to the spot, and yet it cleaved with such tenacity as to bear, not only its own weight, but mine too, if I chose to seize it and hang upon it. A wire charged with an electric current is in contact with its mass, and hence its adhesion. Cut that wire through, or remove it by a hair's breadth, and the piece of iron drops dead to the ground, like any other unsupported weight. A stream of life from the Lord, in contact with a human spirit, keeps that spirit cleaving to the Lord so firmly that no power on earth or in hell can wrench the two asunder. From Christ the mysterious life-stream flows, through the being of a disciple it spreads, and to the Lord it returns again. In that circle the feeblest Christian is held safely, but if the circle be broken, the dependent spirit instantly drops off.

The electric wire is the spinal cord of civilization. Wherever now we may wander the electric wire runs by our side and murmurs the music of great joy. Familiarity is said to breed contempt, but it seems impossible to become familiar with this ethereal cord which binds together the ends of the earth, and places any one locality in immediate correspondence with all other localities and peoples. It seems a fairy thing belonging to the region of romance rather than a tangible fact of this everyday world. And yet it is very real, and, as we say, go where we will, greets our gaze, being the most suggestive thing in the landscape, whatever else the landscape may contain. Not in ponderous masses of steel, but in a delicate needle do we become conscious of the existence and set of the great magnetic currents which silently modify the world; and not in the more noisy and obstructive events and institutions of society do we become conscious of the master forces which shape the character of the nations and determine their destiny, but rather in the trembling string which runs along the hillside, spans the streets, surprises us in solitary places, and which, in fact seems omnipresent, never being long out of our ken. Vast and delightful is the significance of the metallic film. It is the symbol of the unity of the nations. Not only do we behold it in our utmost wanderings, but we know it extends to regions we may not penetrate--mountain paths searched by the eagle's burning eye, ocean depths unseen, unsounded, snowy wastes, desert solitudes. It girdles and intersects the whole earth. If the orator, dwelling on the community of nations, wishes to concentrate his great argument in a single image, he points to the electric wire, and the rudest audience perceives at a glance the force and grandeur of the illustration. It is, however, not only the symbol, it is also the organ of the unity of the nations.

On this wire do we specially practically realize the unanimity of the various climates and nationalities. As the silver cord in our physical organization binds together hand and foot and eye, and gives the sense of unity and community amongst the many different organs and powers of the one complex system, a sense of unity which is immediately lost if that cord be seriously injured or broken, so the electric wire, pulsing with messages from a thousand different quarters, transmitting to great centers of sensation the facts pleasing or painful, concerning the various people of the wide, wide world, ascertains graphically the unity of the race. No cord of silver, no thread of silk, no bond of gold, was ever half so significant as that common wire by the modern roadside traversed evermore by the vital spark of the universal human life. It translates sublime theory into sublime fact, and sets forth in practical form the unity of the many-tongued earth, the identity of the apparently conflicting interests of all peoples.--William Arnot -- From "Present Day Parables" by J. Wilbur Chapman

TOPIC: Unpardonable Sin

SUBTOPIC: Mistakenly Thought Committed

TITLE: In Despair

When I was in Portland, Oregon, a merchant attended our meeting with not the slightest idea of ever becoming a Christian. He stated to me that for the last ten years he had felt entirely certain that he had committed the "unpardonable sin," and that nothing that could be said or done could possibly bring a ray of hope to him.

He was engaged in a large mercantile business, and very active in it, yet certain that hell was his portion when life terminated. Think of a man in his family and business circles for ten long years, shut up in this prison of despair.

On Sunday, I preached in the great City Hall, on the sin that can never be forgiven. This man was present.

In the sermon, I answered four questions. First, what is this sin; second, who can commit it; third, how it shows itself after it has been committed; fourth, why it cannot be forgiven.

That this sin is not murder, nor theft, nor drunkenness, nor falsehood, but a wilful and continued rejection of the gospel of Christ. Not one act of a man's life, but a repetition of the same thing until he is a sinner let alone. To continue to say, no, no, to the calls of the gospel and strivings of the Holy Spirit, until not one desire is left in his heart to become a Christian. That with the commission of this sin the desire to seek Christ dies out in his bosom.

That when he has fully reached this sin he is never gloomy, never cast down as the effect of this sin. He never enjoyed life better, sleeps well, works well. He has no conviction for sin now, but on the contrary,

"The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirits light and gay;
That which is pleasing still may please,

And care be thrust away."

I showed as clearly as I could that the most moral person in the world, who deliberately said no, to the call and invitations of the gospel of Christ, was in equal danger with the immoral, as the moral had more light than the immoral, and hence the danger of grieving the Spirit.

As I pursued this course of reasoning, it flashed across this despairing man's mind that it was barely possible that he had not committed this sin. After the sermon he sought an interview with me alone.

After listening to an account of his experience and reasons for believing himself a doomed sinner, I saw clearly that the Holy Spirit was then striving with him, and that he only needed light on the nature of that sin. I finally said to him:

"I will not take your sins on me, but I will take the unpardonable part of them on me (I know better); this sin never shows itself in this way in one instance. I can pray in faith for you if you will give yourself to Christ as far as you know."

We kneeled and prayed. What a scene followed. He seemed to wake up as from a ten years, dream. The spell was broken, Christ stood forth before his mind's gaze, all radiant with love as his Saviour. He felt the witness of his acceptance, and oh, such joy as beamed in his face. Such manifest expressions of gratitude to me that I had come six thousand miles to show him Christ. I felt then and do now a thousand times paid for the whole journey and work, on the Pacific Coast. I wished then and do now that I could fly to every man on earth who fears, as did this man, that he has committed this sin, and speak the same words to him. But let me caution every one not to say no to calls of the Gospel again. There is the last call and the last opportunity. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Used Of God

SUBTOPIC: Young Converts

TITLE: On A Woodpile

While I was holding a series of union meetings in Manchester, N. H., in the early part of 1864, a boy, about fifteen years of age, who was living with a gentlemen ten or twelve miles from the city, came to visit his widowed mother, and attended our meetings.

The second evening of his attendance he decided to give himself to the Saviour. This he did, and at once became an earnest worker in the Master's service.

Soon after this, the gentleman with whom he was living came to the city, and desired him to go back with him.

"No, he said, "I cannot go while these meetings continue."

No wonder he felt so. The whole city and region around were being moved by the power of the Spirit; scores and hundreds were under conviction for sin, and, as the fruit of the work, it was thought as many as fifteen hundred were converted.

But his mother advised him to return, telling him he could carry the Saviour with him. This placed the matter in a new light, and after looking it all over, he said:

"Yes, I can carry the Saviour with me; I will go."

With this feeling he returned to his home in the country, where he soon had an opportunity of knowing and showing to others whether or not he had brought the Saviour with him. In the course of the day he went out to split some wood, and while he was thus engaged, several of his young associates, among whom he was a favorite, hearing the sound of his axe, gathered around the woodpile where he was at work. And there, standing on that woodpile, and holding his axe in his hand, this boy delivered a message for Jesus, which has already been the means of bringing hundreds into the church of Christ.

The boys began at once to question him.

"We hear there is a great revival at Manchester. Is it true?"

"It is so, boys," was the reply, "and I have given myself to Jesus, and wish you would give yourselves to him."

They did not need long arguments and repeated appeals to move their young hearts, but responded at once to his invitation, saying:

"We wish we were Christians."

He then asked them to go and get as many of their companions as they could, and come to his room, and they would have a meeting that evening.

At the appointed time a large number of boys came to his room. Our young brother said to them:

"I will do just as Mr. Earle does at Manchester."

He then read from the Word of God, and prayed with them. After this he said:

Mr. Earle says, at Manchester, if any would like to have Christians pray for them, he would like to have them rise; so, if you would like to have me pray for you, I wish you would let me know."

Nearly all desired him to pray for them, and many of them prayed for themselves, in that first meeting. God was perfecting praise out of those young lips.

At the close of this meeting they agreed to meet again on the following evening.

A larger number were present at the second meeting, among them a business man, who came to listen to the boys. God's Spirit moved upon his heart, and he was soon converted.

The work thus begun continued to widen until it had gone among all the churches in the village, and several of the adjoining villages, and over three hundred were soon gathered into the churches in that vicinity,--all this, apparently, the fruit of that boy's sermon on the woodpile.

But this was not all. About six months after leaving Manchester, I was in a printing-office in Boston, and there found this same boy setting type. I asked him if he was learning the printer's trade. The reply is well worthy of record. Said he:

"Mr. Earle, my father is dead, and my mother is poor; I am trying to earn money, that I may get an education, and preach the gospel."

This moved my heart. I thought how many rich men have money enough and to spare, while this boy is working hard to earn a few dollars to prepare himself to preach Christ. Then and there I said:

"Jesus, I will do more for thy cause than I have been doing."

I left him to labor on long enough to satisfy himself that it was not excitement. A few months after, I called there again, and finding he could leave at any time, said to him:

"Go home at once, and ask your mother to arrange your clothes; go to school, and prepare for the work of the ministry, and send your bills to me; be prudent and careful in your expenses, and I will see to your wants, although it may require a sacrifice on my part." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

W-TOPICS

TOPIC: Will Perfectly Surrendered

SUBTOPIC: Brings Long-Delayed Salvation

TITLE: Holding A Straw

I found a business man in Albany, who said he had been earnestly seeking Christ for fifteen years, yet to no avail. He was holding to a straw. It was this. He had said he would never go to an anxious seat to become a Christian He believed one seat was as good as another. And so he prayed earnestly, and sought for fifteen long years to become a Christian, but had not succeeded.

The difficulty was not in a particular seat, but in his will. There was one thing he would not do, yet it would not have been sinful for him to have done that thing. He found that the will held as firmly upon a straw as it could upon a mountain; that he could not have his way about the least

thing, and become a Christian. There must be an unconditional surrender of the will to God, before God can get full possession of the dead affections of the heart, to quicken them into life.

This man would go into an inquiry meeting; he would rise in a large meeting, and ask Christians to pray for him. He knew of no sin in his life that he had not given up, and wondered why he could not find peace.

At last I asked him to leave the seat he then occupied in a large meeting, and come and kneel with me near the pulpit. This was the very thing he had said he would never do. His pride and will rose in a desperate struggle. Should he do, at the invitation of a stranger, what he had said he would never do? Could there be any virtue in a particular seat? (The result showed him the seat had nothing to do with his conversion.) The difficulty was in his will. At last he said:

"I will give up, and do what I have refused to do for fifteen years."

He started to come to a front seat, and before he had gone half way to that seat, he felt in his heart that his sins were gone, and that he was "a new creature in Christ Jesus." It was not the measure, but the will in the way. He might have sought Christ fifteen years longer, and died without becoming a Christian, if he had not given up that one condition. The will was holding to a mere straw.

When I was leaving he called to urge me to tell every one about him, and entreat them not to lose their souls by doing as he had done for fifteen years. -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Word Of God
SUBTOPIC: Defended By
TITLE: God's Revolver

A number of years ago an incident occurred which greatly endeared the Bible to me, and caused me to feel safe without any carnal weapon.

All in a moment I found myself surrounded by six men demanding my purse. I was where I could not defend myself or obtain help from man. I confess to a strange palpitation in my heart. It seemed clear that my purse or life must go. At that instant something seemed to say:

"Tell them who you are."

With much difficulty I said to them:

"I am a minister of Jesus Christ. My business is to preach Christ wherever I go, and you know you are making a demand upon me that you cannot meet at the judgment seat of Christ."

After a little I distinctly heard one of them say:

"Let him go."

Then I knew God's revolver had taken effect. I now became calm, and pointed them to the Judgment-seat, where they must meet me and this whole transaction. Strange to tell, they were silent for a little, then one by one went away, and left me alone. This was plainly the effect of preaching to them the great Day of Judgment, accompanied by the Divine Spirit.

I can never forget my feelings as I walked away from the spot, seeing "Jesus only" with me. I seemed to grasp the "Bible" with a new love and confidence, and silently said:

"I shall never need any other revolver than this."

"For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword." What an illustration of this was that moment before me. The Bible is the Spirit's sword. "The excellency of the power is of God, not of us." For fifty-seven years in which I have been preaching "the Word," I have witnessed its power over hardened, as well as moral, men, in bringing them to repentance, and causing them to forsake their sins.

In view of this wonderful deliverance, I would recommend all ministers to preach more simply "the Word," and all men to embrace and obey it. Let us scatter it everywhere. Let us put this mighty weapon into every man's hands, and let us all rest and trust more fully in it. Martin Luther says:

"And though this world, with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us."

-- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

TOPIC: Word Of God

SUBTOPIC: Effective In Spite Of The Messenger

TITLE: The Spirit's Sword

The "Word" is the " Spirit's sword," whatever the motive of the preacher. "Some, indeed, preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some of good will. The one, not sincerely; the other, of love. What then? Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

The meaning of this is, whoever carries or preaches the Word of God, carries or handles "the sword of the Spirit." And the Spirit always goes with the "Word," and more or less gives it power. And this accounts for a fact that otherwise would stagger us, that bad men have preached the gospel from bad motives, and yet men have been soundly converted under their preaching, while the preacher has gone to perdition.

I once read an incident that illustrates this. An avowed infidel, a real scoffer at religion, a native of Sweden, had occasion to go from one port to another in the Baltic Sea. On reaching a certain point, the vessel on which he expected to sail had left, so he took passage on a fishing boat

going the same way. These fishermen took him to a small island, which was the headquarters of a company of pirates.

He had told the fishermen, through fear of being murdered, that he was a minister. As they reached the island, it was agreed that he should preach a sermon Sunday. This was a great trial to the infidel, as he knew but little of the Scriptures, and did not believe in their inspiration. But as he had told them he was a minister, he now feared they would kill him if he did not preach. So preach he must, and do the best he could, and appear sincere. He spent a sleepless night. What could he say?

When the hour came for preaching, he found these wicked men assembled. A seat was arranged for him, a table with a Bible on it. He feared death if he refused, but how could he preach when he did not believe the Bible? They all sat in silence for some time.. At length these words came to his mind: "Verily there is a reward for the righteous, and verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth." As he delivered these words, other passages came to his mind. He spoke of the rewards of the righteous, the judgments of the wicked; the necessity of repentance, and the great importance of a change of life.

The matchless love of God, although it was spoken by an infidel, through fear of being killed if he did not, had such an effect upon the minds of these wretched men, that they were melted into tears. This melted him so that he became like a little child.

The next day these pirates fitted out a vessel, and carried him to the place he wished to reach.

He did not preach Christ from envy, but from fear. But Christ was preached, and the Holy Spirit used his own sword, and produced this wonderful effect. Not because the preacher was good, or intended to do good. Many an unconverted man has had a good deal of success in the ministry without any good motive in preaching. Success in the ministry does not necessarily prove the minister a Christian man, but that the "Word" is the "Spirit's sword." -- A. B. Earle, From: "Incidents Used ... In His Meetings," published in 1888

* * * * *

THE END