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“THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

SERMONS

DELIVERED AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE,

BY

ARTHUR T. PIERSON, D.D.

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“He fastened it with *Nails* that it should not be moved.”—Isaiah^{xli.} 7.

“NAILS.”

BY

PASTOR HORNE.



*Cheerfully yours,
John Horne.*

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"NAILS."

These "Nails" appeared at intervals in the columns of the *Ayrshire Post* under the heading of "Jottings from Pastor Horne's Sermons." They are now put together in this form. The title is suggested by the saying of Solomon, "The words of the wise are as *Nails*" (Eccl. xii., 11). Our Lord was fastened to the Cross with nails; may these "Nails" fasten every reader there!

When the Tay Bridge went down it was no matter whether a man was a first-class or a third-class passenger; and when the Judgment takes place the rich and poor alike will stand the same chance.

We experience many sudden and unexpected turns in life, and the same spot is swiftly desecrated and consecrated. In the Garden, Jesus met with His Father, His disciples, and His enemies. All on the same spot, and the events following on the heels of each other.

Do you complain that God has hidden His face from you, and are you therefore afraid that you are no longer His? Ah, but He hid His face from a Greater than you. Jesus was His Son surely, and yet God hid His face from Him on the cross.

If a joiner attempt to work in a shop at night, without light, he is likely to do much mischief and no work. You may be "doing the best you can," my friend; but if you are working in the dark you are doing the worst you can. Light first; work afterwards.

Circumstances may sometimes favour evil-workers; and success, in itself considered, is no evidence of right or wrong. Jonah found a vessel going to Tarshish, and if men want to flee from God's calls there are usually plenty of ships waiting for them.

Jesus said that if a man gained the whole world but lost his soul he would make a bad bargain, and he died on the Cross amid indescribable agonies to prove that statement to be correct.

It seems a feature of the present-day pulpit to break down the rigid distinctions of God's Word, and smooth over its expressive phraseology. How seldom, for instance, do we hear the word "Hell" used. It is either spoken of as "Hades" or "the place where God has forgotten to be gracious," or some oiled phrase after that sort. But why not use the translated word "Hell," as given to us? Why? *Because it is too expressive!* There is no need to give it undue prominence, but it ought to have its rightful place and attention. Cowardly preachers will go a mile out of their way to dodge that word!

Boys, in trying to swim, are careful to keep one foot on the bottom: they fear to trust the water. This will never do, friend; you must trust Jesus entirely. He will buoy you up; let go!

You say you have no time to serve God, my brother. Nonsense! Just give Him the time you are giving to the Devil, and your difficulty will vanish.

To shut the door when the thief is in the house, with the intention of keeping other thieves out, is well and good; but hadn't you better get that thief out? To resolve to live a moral life from to-day is doubtless a good resolution; but what about your past sin—the thief who is already in the house? Out with him, and then lock the door!

Many treat the wrath to come as though it were a scarecrow set up by preachers to frighten people; but when God lets loose His thunders and lightnings, and makes the earth reel with His tread, these folks will get that notion shaken out of them somewhat quickly.

The Cross is life to all—with *one* exception! It was *death* to Him!

While a pair of boots were being cleaned one day, I heard one of them complaining very loudly at being scrubbed and brushed so severely. "Hush," replied the other boot, "we are being polished." Dear Christian friend, take the lesson with you—God's brush, while it rubs unpleasantry, polishes.

Sometimes in our dreams we imagine ourselves going over a precipice. We try to pull up, but invisible hands are pushing us, and as we feel ourselves going into the abyss we wake with a start. But, that dream is yet to be an awful reality to those who die unsaved, and there will be no waking from it! As you near the precipice of eternity you will shrink back, but over you must go—into darkness without limit! Oh, soul, wake up while you may!

I have seen a child get into a tub and then try to lift himself in it. This is the sinner trying to lift himself to heaven by his own efforts. Poor man, the sun will set upon you and leave you in darkness!

"Come down from the Cross and we will believe Thee," cried the Scribes and Pharisees. This is the cry of modern theologians. Christ is received as a Teacher and an Example, but He is rejected as a Substitute. But He did not come down—*nor will He!*

Many are afraid of God's justice. I rejoice in it, because I know that, having complied with God's conditions, He is too just to punish Christ and me for the same sin.

As the free, fresh air and smiling landscape to the man who is privileged to walk out after a long illness, so is pardon to the soul burdened by sin: an inexpressible relief is experienced and the world seems new.

The inexpressible misery of sin lies in the fact that it is stronger than we are. Doctors have been known to indulge in opium, laudanum, and such things, with the full knowledge of their deadly nature; some drunkards curse publicans and their dram-shops—and no wonder!—yet still are compelled to give way to the insatiable thirst which pursues them like a blood-hound. Herein lies human depravity.

You say, my refined brother, that your sense of justice revolts against the idea that there should be a hell? I say, in reply, that my sense of justice revolts against the idea that there *shouldn't* be a hell. In the name of justice—and reason, too—I object to the idea that Nero and Paul, Herod and Jesus, Judas and John should be mixed up together. The assumption is revolting on the face of it.

Some children, when they buy sweets, retire into a corner and selfishly devour the parcel themselves; others search out their companions, and distribute the sweets among them. This is exactly how different Christians act with their religion.

Jesus is called the "Sun" because nothing can take His place! We would have no fire, warmth, or life without the sun.

"Herod feared John." Why? Because he was a bad man and John was a good man. Ungodly men fear the presence of godly people. I see this every day. Sometimes when I meet a man who is unsaved, and who knows me, he suddenly thinks he must see what time it is or imagines he sees something interesting in a shop window. Some sinners would rather climb a hedge than meet a "revival" or a parson. The sight of a tract gives them the shivers.

A dance cost John the Baptist his head, and he is not the only one who has lost his head by dancing! The influence and associations of dancing have taken away many a man's head and heart and home. Whirling makes one light-headed in more senses than one.

Christianity requires the entire man. A part of yourself is useless. An arm, attached to the body, is powerful—separated, it is powerless. Any part disconnected from the heart is useless. Religion must have all of you or none of you.

A force misguided is lost. Energy is valueless without prudence. Steam and electricity are the leading forces in the natural world, but the one is useless and the other destructive unless reined in. Force must be harnessed.

Debt burdens honest minds. When the man who was felling trees with Elisha lost his axe-head he cried, "Alas, it was borrowed." His thought was not the loss of the axe or the waste of time consequent upon its loss, but that it wasn't his own. Would to God that this man became the representative of all professing Christians!

Every Christian has secured the degree of B.A. (Born Again) at Calvary College.

We pray to the Lord to "show us ourselves," and then we are in a mighty huff because somebody calls and gives us a thorough raking up! We do not see in that scolding an answer to our own prayer.

It is customary for some preachers, when speaking of the word "fire" in connection with Hell, to affirm that it is figurative and not literal. This is done to tone down the harshness of a literal interpretation; but to my mind it makes the case worse instead of better, for a figure is never so great as the reality it represents, and if "fire" is only a *figure* of Hell torments what must the reality it represents be! Christ Himself used the word "fire," and I think we cannot do better than follow His example, and leave it to Himself to determine its meaning when the proper time arrives.

We talk of "speaking the truth and shaming the Devil;" but if some folks spoke the truth it would not shame the Devil so much as it would surprise him!

The evidence to some people that they are saved is that "they feel better," "they are so happy," and so on. Bosh—all bosh! This is salvation by feelings. I go to the prison and see a man in a cell pulling oakum and whistling merrily. "Well, prisoner," I say, "how are you?" "Who are you calling a prisoner?" he asks. "*I'm* not a prisoner, because I feel so happy." Is he not a prisoner, then? We must have more than happy feelings for the ground of our salvation—we must be "justified by faith."

"Profession without possession" would be tolerated nowhere but in religion. If a man put out a signboard intimating that he is a bookseller, but has not a book in his shop—nothing but empty shelves—we would certainly think him "off the jump;" but when another intimates that he is a Christian, though we know he is nothing of the kind, we take it in tolerably good part. I suppose this is because there are so many of us all at the same trick!

Not long ago I saw in a museum some instruments of the slave trade in the shape of handcuffs, shackles, and whips. They are harmless now, and are placed there as relics of an unworthy past. I am living in the hope that the whisky bottle will soon be placed beside these, a relic of barbarous ages!

We shudder when we read of a fellow-mortal having had the sentence of death passed upon him, but I announce that every person in this audience is under sentence of death! All, all—from platform to doorstep—under sentence of death! Doomed to die! Ere long the black executioner will be alongside of us! Make ready for the scaffold!

Crowds of people seem to be much in love with a religion of the shroud, the coffin, and the cemetery. God save us from that religion! By all means, I want religion when I come to die; but I want a religion that will also fit me for life's warfare!

Everybody in his own line—the baker for bread, the iron-monger for nails, the watchmaker for jewellery, and—Christ for salvation.

“Blessed are the *peacemakers*” is often, I fear, read, “Blessed are the *piecemakers*.”

Activity is the sign and proof of life. After a fight in the Coliseum, a man went round the arena with a red-hot iron touching all the bodies which were scattered about. If one stirred at the touch of the iron, he was still alive; if not, he was dead. I come to-day with the hot iron of God’s Word, and touch each one, desiring to use the same test—motion the proof of life. If you are not active, you are dead.

Everything in its place. The sun suits us beautifully ninety-five millions of miles off, but it would hardly do to have it in our drawing-room; and, a candle may do all very well in the house, but to have it ninety-five millions of miles off would be laughable. If you are a sun, shine as such; if only a candle, then do a candle’s shining. Little and much have both to be given account of.

The influence of a godly man is incalculable. When the king of Syria found himself thwarted in his battle undertakings, he enquired what traitor in his camp revealed his designs. “Which of us is for the king of Israel?” he asks, and the splendid answer is, “None, my lord, O king, but Elisha the prophet.” One holy man may turn the tide of battle.

Keep together—cattle fatten when in a company, I have been told.

Jonah must go overboard before there can be a calm—sacrifice, that is, is essential to peace. Get your sins, therefore, every one of them, and *overboard with them!* Then the calm will come, but not before.

The Egyptians, Grecians, and Romans had laws compelling idlers to work—all who would not work were forced to leave their cities. If a law of this kind were adopted by the churches, what a clearance there would be!

A railway ticket may be valueless enough in itself, but it represents a good deal, and the man who travels without it is sure to find his mistake. Faith is in itself a simple-enough act, but it represents a great deal, and woe to the man who tries to get to heaven without it.

The gospel is like a violin: the older it is, and the oftener it is used, the sweeter does its music become.

Every man is a king, ruling over the vast and far-reaching dominion of his own nature. His feelings, ambitions, desires, thoughts, and passions are his numerous subjects, and he must either master them or be mastered by them. It must be either monarchy or anarchy.

May the Lord put you on to the turn-table, my friend, and wheel you right round! End for end—that’s conversion!

We are fortunate enough to be told that our theology is out of sympathy with our progressive times: regeneration, eternal punishment, election, and such truths are disappearing, we are informed, for the age has got too wise for them. The man who believes them will be unpopular, and must fail. Forsooth! Was Jesus in touch with his *His* times? Did *He* try to minimize His teaching because it was opposed to that of the Scribes, Pharisees, philosophers, &c.? Ah, that daring Young Man ran counter to His times, but He has won a splendid victory! If "the times" have swerved from God's Word, we are here to make them swerve back again!

Once on a day ministers were reformers of mankind: now-a-days they are largely painters and decorators. If you pay them well, they will lay on the brush until you will hardly know yourself. God save us from the paint-pot! What we need is *regeneration*!

How is it that you can talk with men about politics, the weather, and so on, without rebuke, but as soon as you introduce religion you are snubbed? It is the old cry still. "Away with him." Times change, but not men.

I have read that it was once a practice in the army to sew the shape of a black heart upon the tunics of those who were traitors, and that the soldiers who shot them aimed at that mark. If this were introduced among the "Soldiers of the Cross," a considerable number of these black shapes would be required. Would *you* need one?

An egg on end is not easily broken: you may clasp your hands firmly over its ends and try to break it, but you will fail; but nothing is more easily broken if you take it off the perpendicular. This is Christian-like. Stand straight and you will carry a much heavier load than if you cringe. God's men are "upright."

I cannot explain to you the relation of sunshine and flower, but I know that if you cover up the flower from the sunshine it will lose its colour and wither. Even so, I cannot explain the connection of the Holy Spirit with my soul, but I know that without His influence I am weak. The one is as real to me as the other.

The crowd of mockers is still around the Cross; and, as of yore, Pharisees, elders, and chief priests are prominent. Strange that those who think themselves the most religious should be furthest from it!

Whenever a man dies an eviction takes place: the tenant is evicted in order that the house may be taken down.

Art requires poverty or despair to bring it out and develop it. Turner said to an amateur painter who was a nobleman, "My lord, you want nothing but *poverty* to make you a very excellent painter." As with art, so with religion—trials develop it.

Speak in earnest and you will immediately be set down as "sensational." The Devil has a queer vocabulary. If you are dead, he calls you "decent;" if you are alive, he calls you "fanatical." A publican who destroys is "respectable," a preacher who saves is a "fool." Read his utterances as you read dreams—oppositely. His dictionary is published gratis and hence a good many people possess it.

Opposites produce each other. Black, cold coal gives light and heat; poison, taken in certain quantities, gives health; trial brings triumph; the lion's carcass becomes a honey store.

A child is more familiar with its father than with any other. As a test of your religion, may I ask, Are you familiar with your Father? Do you often speak to Him? Therein lies a test of sonship, and it is a good one.

We live by reiteration: reiteration of the pulse-heat, breathing, eating, walking, sleeping, &c. Woe to us if the splendid monotony of these be broken! As in the physical so in the spiritual, we live by reiteration, reiteration of old and familiar truths. We shall outgrow our need of reiteration in the spiritual world when we outgrow it in the physical, not before.

In passing over a field we sometimes upturn a stone with our foot, and find it peopled beneath with creeping things, which scamper in all directions amid the grass when thus revealed. This is a picture of the human heart: while it is undisturbed the sins of it are not seen; but when the Word of God removes the stone, what a revelation!

"Jesus!" Suggestive word! The word "Bannockburn" is a picture, and as soon as it is uttered we see before our mind's eye the swaying masses of fighters, and we seem to hear the rattling of mixing steel. And when we utter the name of Jesus we instinctively think of Gethsemane, the Prætorium, the Cross. It is a word of tender significance, o'ershaded with holy memories. Let us put off our shoes—we tread holy ground.

Pointed preaching is not relished by some people. The Jews sought to kill our Lord when "they knew that He had spoken the parable against *them*." We pray God to make the minister faithful, and then we make a door-scraper of him because he hits ourselves.

You cannot work for God if you are burdened with cares. If you went to battle with your household furniture on your back you would not have much pith left for the fight. Leave your cares with God.

We throw off our old garments and boots because we outgrow them, but many professing Christians never seem to outgrow their old prayers and experiences.

Some folks use their religion as they use their umbrella—take it out for use on a rainy day and throw it into a corner when the weather clears.

"The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner." Thus is it ever—unpopular principles, rejected methods, and despised men become the corner stones of the world's greatest movements. He who accomplished a work transcending all others in magnitude and issue was "rejected and despised of men."

The tap through which God's mercies flow is low down. You require to go on your knees to get at it.

Beware of that humility which is only physical, which makes a man go with his head to one side, like a walking weeping willow. True humility is united to robust manliness. Both were beautifully blended in our Master. Mock humility is like many a window cushion: it is beautifully embroidered outside, but—stuffed with straw!

The more of God's work you do the easier it will be. It is easier to swim in deep water than in shallow.

If you play with nettles, they will sting you; if you grasp them boldly, they are harmless. This is sin.

Temptation is not in our circumstances so much as in our sins. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, but He was also tempted on the pinnacle of the temple. The devil tried depression and then elevation. If you are poor, do not imagine that you would be free from temptation if you were rich; if you are rich, do not imagine that you would escape by being poor. Do not blame your crosses for your sins. The devil can follow you wherever you go.

Next to faith in God, have confidence in your own resources. My creed is that of the old Viking—"I believe in God and my battle-axe."

When a man gets thoroughly converted, his head is converted as well as his heart. Some seem to imagine that though they cannot *act* as they like, they can *think* as they like; and, starting here, many ministers have departed from the Gospel in its simplicity and power. I hold that a Christian man is no more at liberty to think as he likes than to act as he likes—he ought to think and act upon the lines and within the grooves of God's word.

The popular Jesus allows His disciples to do as they please, and to indulge in worldly pleasures. I do not know him. My Jesus is of quite a different stamp. *He* says, "If any man will come after *Me*, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow *Me*."

You can hold a farthing so near your eye as to cover the sun; and you can so look at a trifle as to make it hide great principles. This is to be righteous overmuch.

After feeding fighting comes. When David had partaken of the shew-bread (1st Sam. xxi.), he immediately thereafter asked if there was a sword about the place. We are fed to fight.

If there are no sermons in Hell I fear it isn't for want of ministers!

You cannot set aside God's physical laws. Gravitation will follow you wherever you go. You cannot sail in a ship whose specific gravity is greater than water. God's spiritual laws are equally unbreakable. "Ye *must* be born again." No fool would trifle with the former; many who think themselves anything but fools trifle with the latter.

Pulling against God is very wearysome work. The mariners tried to land without sacrificing Jonah, "but they could not." It won't do to try and pull your boat against God, for He will give the tides and winds charge concerning you to keep you from reaching land.

The swiftest horse cannot run away from his tail, and the smartest sinner cannot run away from his sins.

When our first parents fell they sewed fig leaves together to hide their nakedness, but they did not confess their sin. They were more anxious to be respectable than to be pardoned. How true to nineteenth century life!

We require a few strokes of Hezekiah's hammer in our days. He "brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made." Why? "For unto these days the children of Israel did burn incense unto it." Many in our day would have been awfully shocked had they been there. How sham-piety would have rebelled against the destruction of such a relic, but Hezekiah's religion was above tallow candles, flower pots, and images. *True* devotion, being spiritual, is not helped by such material mediators. The more direct spiritual contact is, the healthier and holier it is.

To fret over little is the way to get more to fret over. I have heard a mother say to a peevish child, "If you don't stop crying I'll give you something worth crying for," and the consequent smack of her hand told what she meant. Avoid fretting over trifles, then, lest the Lord send you something heavier.

God always keeps a full cupboard, and it is our own fault if we are like greyhounds.

Straight talk is not always relished, but it is always healthy. *Strike* the match if you wish to set it ablaze.

James says that when a person is sick he should "*call* for the elders of the church," but many people never saw that passage. They remain in the house on Sabbath "just to see if anybody will miss them," and then verge on swearing because the minister isn't in on Monday morning to see them.

A neglected cold has been the death of many, and a sin trifled with has been the death of many more.

The curse of much Christian work is too much independence—men preferring to have a meeting of their own, though only attended by two old women and a bairn, rather than be helpers in a meeting of five or six hundred.

A great mind does not make a good character, any more than a beautiful cup determines the value of tea. Shelly, Voltaire, and Burns had gigantic minds, but worthless characters. Intellectualism without spirituality is a painted harlot.

The ass possesses the largest ears of ordinary animals, and yet is the stupidest. Herein he is a type of those Christians who hear much, but profit little.

A rich man, if he chooses, can do more good than a poor man. Even so, an educated man is likely to do more good than an ignorant man.

God is the most tolerant Being in the universe. He is more tolerant with us, though high above us, than we are with one another. Did you ever think of this ?

Paul is stoned, given up for dead, and thrown out of the city; but he quietly gets on to his feet again and re-enters it. God's warriors are not easily killed. They are like india-rubber balls—the harder you strike them down the higher up they rise.

“They called Barnabas Jupiter and Paul Mercurius.” High-flown names these, and no doubt intended for an honour, but Paul's spirit rejects them with scorn. “Vanities !” he cries. If the apostles had allowed themselves to be made gods, they would have been worshipped ; but because they chose to remain plain preachers, they were stoned.

Baby is king in the house, because weakest ; and God tends his weakest children with greatest care. God is the grandest nurse in the universe. “As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.”

You can't get into Heaven with the world on your back. God was careful to make the door too narrow for such hypocrisy.

If you go to your draper or grocer he will try to button-hole you into making purchases, even if you have no desire to buy—indeed, he glories in making a sale to a stiff customer. The hawkker at your door will take the same liberty ; and why, in the name of common sense, should people kick up their heels because we button-hole them to accept salvation ? By what law are we excluded from doing in our churches what tradesmen do in their shops ?

Some folks sing lustily in the church on Sabbath that³

“Although the earth remove

We will not be afraid,”

and when the first thunder-storm comes they are in terror until it is over, forgetting even that there is a God !

If you cannot spend a penny well, do not imagine that God will trust you with a pound. Use well what you have, and *then* you will be trusted with more. Napoleon never would have made a good general if he had not first been a good private.

Not brilliant sermons, but the power of the Spirit converts men and produces life. A thousand electric lights in a cornfield would not make the corn grow, if the sun were absent.

Never shirk attention to God's house and work because of apprehended trouble. Jesus instituted the Supper with the sound of His accusers' voices in His ears and the shadow of the Cross over Him.

Don't wash the blood from the body of Christ, under pretence of refinement. A bloodless Christ is a useless Christ to *sinner*s. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission."

Let us not indulge in that which will trip up others. It may be all very fine for a youngster to polish a slide on the pavement, but the pleasure is not enjoyed by the old man who measures his length thereon with unparliamentary gestures and exclamations.

The way to overcome sin is to fight it. "Resist the devil and he will flee." A Yankee desired to give up the use of tobacco, and, unlike some who fancy that if they put it out of sight they put it out of mind, he carried a cake in his pocket, taking it out every time he felt inclined to use it and thus addressing it:—"Well, I am a man; you are nothing but weed, and hanged if you'll manage me!" This is the courageous course. Unless a sin is fought and slain it will continue to live.

Do not expect an increase of spiritual power if there are sins in your life—obstacles must be cleared away. You would not expect to fill a bottle very quickly if the cork remained in it. Draw the cork, brother! A plant under a tub is not very likely to thrive. Take off the tub and give it a chance!

Housewives know that if a brass article is left unpolished for a long time, it takes hard work to brighten it again; but if it gets a "dicht" in the passing every day, it costs no trouble to keep it bright. This is so with your soul—leave off praying, and it will take longer to brighten it again; keep at it, and all is right.

You give yourself no trouble about the great worlds wheeling above you; you are not anxious as to whether or not the earth will perform its daily round correctly—these great concerns you contentedly leave in the hands of God; and yet you are depressed about some little trouble of yours, as though God were not capable of looking after *that!* This, surely, is being anxious overmuch.

If your dog has done anything wrong, and you chastise him, he crouches at your feet guiltily; if you then pat him, and speak kindly to him, he springs about you barking in conscious forgiveness. Even a dog knows the joy of pardon. As with your dog, so with you—forgiveness brings happiness.

Be *railway* Christians—bridge every river, blast every rock, fill up every valley, tunnel every mountain, and speed ahead on your triumphant way!

I say, "Make the best of both worlds." That is to say, get "Godliness, which is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." That is the safest way of making the best of both worlds!

The other day an old woman apologized for asking me into her humble dwelling. "Keep yourself at ease," I said, "my Master was born in a stable."

There are two ways of meeting trouble. One way is to wait gloomily and tremblingly until it fastens upon us; the other way is to stand up and fight it. Don't lie down and let the events of life trample over you; up and at them!

"Love is blind," we say. It is so. Once fall in love with a branch of work, and you will be blind to obstacles. What we want to make us more heroic in the rescue of our fellows is to fall thoroughly in love with them.

Jesus was born in a manger, in order that the humblest might approach Him. Had he been born in a *palace* some of us would hardly know how to shape after we had rung the bell.

Nothing is more needed to-day in Christian work than prudence in thinking and steadiness in acting. We are like so many Christmas crackers—we go off in a few jumps and flashes, and then die out.

The death of Jesus was no ordinary death. He shrank from it. Many of His followers faced death joyfully, yet He found it a heavy concern to die. Why? Because, along with His own pain, He bore God's indignation against sin.

We are living in a fast age. Everything is hurried together: we are cherry-builders, running up houses in a few days. This spirit has entered into religious work, and the result is that we are blockaded with superficial conversions and bankrupt Christians. Avoid a Cheap-Jack religion. One good conversion is worth twenty doubtful ones.

Trouble is like a tempest on the sea—it casts up all the mire and dirt, and has a cleansing effect; but it also casts up many a "find" which would lie undiscovered in a calm.

A blind miser went to an optician to have his eye-sight restored. When he could see with one eye he said that was enough and there was no use spending more money. Ah, how many one-eyed Christians there are!—men half converted, half worldly, half out with sin and half in with it, one eye seeing and the other blind! God save us from such a half-and-half Christianity!

The Christian whose work depends upon his own moods or the moods of others is like a sailing vessel, subject to winds and tides; but he who leans only upon God and His Spirit is like a steamer, which can speed against both.

The odour of whisky is the smell of brimstone!

It is a scientific fact that life can only be got from life. Experiments have demonstrated that no amount of encouragement will coax dead matter to germinate life. This, although some people have not yet learned it, is also a spiritual fact. No amount of dead works can produce life. Life can only be got from Him who said, "I am the life."

You must not look for sin in your heart as you would look for a ghost in the house at midnight—fearing lest you find one, and starting back frightened at every tread of your own footsteps. Look for it as you would look for a sovereign.

A certain artist painted a picture of the Last Supper, and put such elaborate cups upon the table that they attracted more attention than the face of the Master, upon which he had spent his best skill. Finding this, he took his brush and put plain cups in the place of the elaborate ones. Let me speak so plainly, therefore, that no word or metaphor of mine may get more of your attention than the Master whom I desire to set forth.

My text is Rom. vi. 22, and, like a weathervane, it has four points. The letters on the weathervane suggested our word "news" (*North, East, West, South*), and as I come with Gospel news I shall make the four letters of the weathervane to head the four points of my text. I.—N. Notable News for the Needy—"free from sin." Relief from sin is possible. II.—E. Earnest Employment for Everybody—"servants to God." Service for the unemployed. III.—W. Warning Words for the Wise—"fruit unto holiness." A holy life is the proof of a sincere profession. IV.—S. Something Substantial for Somebody—"everlasting life." Who will have it?

Many people seem to think that a nod to the Lord at the gates of heaven will be quite sufficient to gain admission. As if He would be honoured by *their* company!

Naaman rigged himself out with chariot and horses, thinking himself somebody, and, when he reached the prophet's house, he discovered himself to be nobody; the centurian came humbly, thinking himself nobody, and, when the Master immortalised him, he turned out to be somebody. Take a hint and be wise. Better kneel and succeed than soar and fail.

Here is one of Christ's descriptions of hell:—"Cast out"—severance from heaven; "outer darkness"—hopelessness; "weeping and gnashing of teeth"—agony. Christ never trifled with the sacred anxieties of men, and therefore I accept His words in all their unwelcome literalness.

I once read of a publican who had a missionary box on his counter, and every one who uttered an oath was fined a penny—to send the gospel to the heathen! Why should it seem more ridiculous for the publican thus to spread the gospel than for those who have received it to spread his vile business? The one is as inconsistent as the other.

It is the Gospel that saves men, not the flowers we deck it with.

"We shall sit down with Abraham," &c. There is the smell of a feast about these words. Who was ever invited to "sit down" to empty plates? Everything the resurrected, regenerated nature can desire will be on the table. God's "spread" will be faultless!

Have clear, distinct ideas. Blurred ideas weaken the character, produce faithlessness, and defeat definite results. Clear conceptions are the basis of successful effort.

The Pharisees gave their alms "that they might be seen of men." This sham is still alive. If you make a voluntary collection at a church door, you will get a certain sum; but if you wait until the people are in, and then pass round the plate, you will get twice as much. Why?

Our Master marks out "the heathen" as those who are eminent for "much speaking" in prayer. Avoid such heathenish company!

When a ship goes on fire or begins to sink, men and women rush hither and thither in intense earnestness and anxiety to be saved. Etiquette is entirely forgotten. Why this anxiety? Because their danger is real. And I tell you if I could unveil to you the reality of eternal judgment and death, people would start up all over the Temple and cry for mercy. Oh, how my heart would rejoice at such a welcome breach of order!

Some people are so mighty high in their own esteem that I often think they must surely use a ladder to get up to themselves!

Christians are God's "servants." How would you like your servant to work for you only when it pleased herself, to have dinner ready to suit her own convenience, and to walk out for a stroll whenever it entered her head? I guess you would quickly request her to bundle up and go. But do not many treat God in this way? Are *you* one of them?

The fact that a man lives in a cracked clay hut does not demonstrate that he is unhappy; indeed, I have often seen the spirit grow more youthful and joyous as the body became old and rickety with years. A happy tenant may live in a tumble-down house.

As you leave the Temple door to-night you will find two vessels waiting for you—one painted black, with the symbol of cross-bones at the mast-head; the other painted with gold and the symbol of the Cross on high. Into which of the two will you go? The price to you is the same in each case—decision.

If I could secure the Crown jewels by giving up my purse, I would gladly make the exchange. I would lose my purse, did you say? Certainly; but see how much I would gain. Now, away with your good works, and have salvation. A loss, you say? Yes; but what a gain! Have a clearance sale, my brother, and let everything go "dirt cheap;" then let Jesus into your heart. He must have all your heart or none of it.

The blinded heathen, rather than give in to the absurdity that there is *no* God, will set up a wooden one.

When the photographer succeeds in getting the outline of your person on the negative, he retires to his dark-room in order to "develop" it. God, also, has His dark-room—the dark-room of trial—where He often carries His children in order that the outline which they have received of His Son may be "developed."

Do not read your Bible indiscriminately. Read it systematically, if you desire to profit. An old woman, an out-door worker, was one night very tired. She thought she would shut her eyes, ask the Lord to guide her, then open the Bible and read the verse her finger landed at. Her first venture led her to the text, "And Judas went and hanged himself." She thought this was not a text of direction and guidance, which she was seeking, and she tried again, with this result, "Go thou and do likewise." How edifying! Such reading is not likely to fill the soul with "marrow and fatness."

We meet Paul one day, and he is groaning under the power of sin, and crying, "Who shall deliver me?" We meet him another day, and he is exulting, "I can do all things!" Well, Paul, tell us your secret. "I can do all things *through Christ which strengtheneth me.*" Let us make a note of the discovery.

Fears are mostly like ghosts in what we call a "haunted" house: if you lie trembling in bed, at the midnight hour, they will seem terribly real; but if you will take the candle and look for them, you will find that they have no existence.

If you cannot be a sun, be a "ha'penny dip." God made the glow-worm to shine as well as the stars.

The reason why a plant grows up against the law of gravitation while a stone cannot is that there is life in the plant. Take the hint.

I am saved because God crossed me. God's invitations of mercy came to my heart as the angels to Sodom, but I treated them as the Sodomites treated the angels—rejected them. Had *He* not saved me I never would have been saved.

When we were boys we read in "Gulliver's Travels" that Gulliver laughed at the Pigmies trying to tie him to the ground with their thread; but by and by they encircled him with so many strings that he was unable to rise. This is sin—we can shake it off up to a certain point, beyond that it masters us. Let us break loose while we may!

There is a word in the Bible the letters of which are woven out of sunbeams—it is the word "forgiven." It is crammed with music! Have you discovered this, dear sir?

By your profession of Christianity you state that you have adopted a new set of principles and powers. You have now the powers of prayer, the Holy Spirit, God's presence and Almightyness, and the power of a spiritual life. With such forces within your reach, what have you accomplished, my brother? If you are a Christian you are better and stronger than you were before; if you are no stronger now than formerly, why do you say you are a Christian?

Some people are greatly alarmed at the prospect of death—how they will shape when they have to go into the grave; but I tell you, my brother, it is of mightier concern to know how you will shape *when you get out of it!*