

The Warning Neglected

A Sermon

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“He heard the sound of the trumpet and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him.” Ezekiel 33:5.

In all worldly things men are always enough awake to understand their own interests. There is scarce a merchant who reads the paper who does not read it in some way or other with a view to his own personal concerns. If he finds that by the rise or fall of the markets he will be either a gainer or a loser, that part of the day's news will be the most important to him. In politics, in everything, in fact, that concerns temporal affairs, personal interest usually leads the van. Men will always be looking out for themselves, and personal and home interests will generally engross the major part of their thoughts. But in religion it is otherwise. In religion men love far rather to believe abstract doctrines, and to talk of general truths, than the searching inquiries which examine their own personal interest in it. You will hear many men admire the preacher who deals in generalities, but when he comes to press home searching questions, by-and-by they are offended. If we stand and declare general facts, such as the universal sinnership of mankind, or the need of a Saviour, they will give an assent to our doctrine, and possibly they may retire greatly delighted with the discourse, because it has not affected them; but how often will our audience gnash their teeth, and go away in a rage, because, like the Pharisees with Jesus, they perceive, concerning a faithful minister, that he spoke of *them*. And yet, my brethren, how foolish this is. If in all other matters we like personalities—if in everything else we look to our own concerns, how much more should we do so in religion? for surely every man must give an account for himself at the day of judgment. We must die alone; we must rise at the day of resurrection one by one, and each one for himself must appear before the bar of God; and each one must either have said to him, as an individual, “Come ye blessed;” or else he must be appalled with the thundering sentence, “Depart, ye cursed.” If there were such a thing as national salvation; if it could be possible that we could be saved in the gross and in the bulk, that so, like the sheaves of corn, the few weeds that may grow with the stubble, would be gathered in for the sake of the wheat, then, indeed, it might not be so foolish for us to neglect our own personal interests; but if the sheep must, every one of them, pass under the hand of him that telleth them, if every man must stand in his own person before God, to be tried for his own acts—by everything that is rational, by everything that conscience would dictate, and self-interest would command, let us each of us look to our own selves, that we be not deceived, and that we find not ourselves, at last, miserably cast away.

Now, this morning, by God's help, I shall labour to be personal, and whilst I pray for the rich assistance of the Divine Spirit, I will also ask one thing of each person here present—I would ask of every Christian that he would lift up a prayer to God, that the service may be blessed; and I ask of every other person that he will please to understand that I am preaching *to him*, and *at him*; and if there be anything that is personal and pertinent to his own case, I beseech him, as for life and death, to let it have its full weight with him, and not begin to think of his neighbour, to whom perhaps it may be even more pertinent, but whose business certainly does not concern him.

The text is a solemn one—“He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning: his blood shall be upon him.” The first head is this—*the warning was all that could be desired*—“he heard the sound of the trumpet.” Secondly, *the excuses for not attending to the startling warning are all of*

them both frivolous and wicked: and therefore, in the third place, the consequences of inattention must be terrible, because man's blood must then be on his own head.

I. First, then, The warning was all that could be desired. When in time of war an army is attacked in the night, and cut off and destroyed whilst asleep, if it were impossible for them to be aware of the attack, and if they had used all diligence in placing their sentinels, but nevertheless the foe were so wary as to destroy them, we should weep; we should attach no blame to anyone, but should deeply regret, and should give to that host our fullest pity. But if, on the other hand, they had posted their sentinels, and the sentinels were wide awake, and gave to the sleepy soldiers every warning that could be desired, but nevertheless the army were cut off, although we might for common humanity regret the loss thereof, yet at the same time we should be obliged to say, if they were foolish enough to sleep when the sentinels had warned them; if they folded their arms in presumptuous sloth, after they had had sufficient and timely notice of the progress of their bloodthirsty enemy, then in their dying, we cannot pity them: their blood must rest upon their own heads. So it is with you. If men perish under an unfaithful ministry, and have not been sufficiently warned to escape from the wrath to come, the Christian may pity them, yea, and me thinks, even when they stand before the bar of God, although the fact of their not having been warned will not fully excuse them, yet it will go far to diminish their eternal miseries, which otherwise might have fallen upon their heads; for we know it is more tolerable for unwarned Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than it is for any city, or any nation that has had the Gospel proclaimed in its ears. My brethren, it on the other hand, we have been warned, if our ministers have been faithful, if they have aroused our conscience, and have constantly and earnestly called our attention to the fact of the wrath to come, if we have not attended to their message, if we have despised the voice of God, if we have turned a deaf ear to their earnest exhortations, if we perish, we shall die warned—die under the sound of the Gospel, and our damnation must be an unpitied one, for our blood must fall upon our own heads. Permit me then, to try, if I can, to enlarge upon this thought, that the warning has been in the case of many of you, all that could have been needed.

In the first place, the warnings of the ministry have been to most of you warnings that have been *heard*—“He heard the sound of the trumpet.” In far off lands the trumpet sound of warning is not heard. Alas! there are myriads of our fellow creatures who have never been warned by God's ambassadors, who know not that wrath abideth on them, and who do not yet understand the only way and method of salvation. In your case it is very different. You have heard the Word of God preached to you. You cannot say, when you come before God, “Lord, I knew no better.” There is not a man or a woman within this place who will dare then to plead ignorance. And moreover, you have not only heard with your ears, but some of you have been obliged to hear it in your consciences. I have before me many of my hearers whom I have had the pleasure of seeing now for some years. It has not been once or twice, but many a time, I have seen the tear guttering your cheeks when I have spoken earnestly, faithfully, and affectionately to you. I have seen your whole soul moved within you; and yet, to my sorrow, you are now what you were: your goodness has been as the early cloud and as the morning dew that passeth away. You have heard the Gospel. You wept under it, and you loved the sound of it, and you came again, and wept again, and many marvelled that you did weep, but the greatest marvel was, that after having wept so well, you wiped away your tears so easily. Oh, yes, God is my witness, there are some of you not an inch nearer heaven, but ye have sealed your own damnation doubly sure, unless ye repent: for ye have heard the Gospel, ye have despised prophesyings, ye have rejected the counsel of God against yourselves; and, therefore, when you shall die ye must die pitied by your friends, but at the same time with your blood on your own heads.

The trumpet was not only *heard*, but more than that, *its warning was understood*. When the man supposed in the text heard the trumpet, he understood by it that the enemy was at hand, and yet he

took not warning. Now, my brethren, in your case, the sound of the Gospel warning has been understood. A thousand faults your minister may have, but there is one fault from which he is entirely free, and that is, he is free from all attempts to use fine language in the expression of his thoughts; ye are all my witnesses, that if there be a Saxon word or a homely phrase, a sentence that is rough and market-like, that will tell you the truth, I always use that first. I can say solemnly, as in the sight of God, that I never went out of my pulpit, except with the firm belief, that whatever might have happened, I was perfectly understood. I had sought at least so to gather wise words, that no man might mistake my meaning; gnash his teeth he might, but he could not say, "The preacher was misty and cloudy, talking to me of metaphysics, beyond my comprehension;" has been obliged to say, "Well, I know what he meant, he spoke plainly enough to me." Well, sirs, then if it be so, and if ye have heard warnings that ye could understand, so much the more guilty are ye, if ye are living this day in rejection of them. If I have preached to you in a style above comprehension, then on my head must be your blood, because I ought to have made you understand; but if I come down to men of low estate, and pick even vulgar phrases to suit common people, then if you understood the warning, and if ye then risked it, mark you, my hands are clean of your blood. If ye be damned, I am innocent of your damnation; for I have told you plainly, that except ye repent, ye must perish, and that except ye put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is for you no hope of salvation.

Again, this trumpet sound was *startling*. The trumpet's sound is ever considered to be the most startling in the world. 'Tis that which shall be used on the resurrection morning to startle the myriads of sleepers and make them rise from their tombs. Ay, and ye have had a startling ministry. Ye have sat, some of you, under ministers that might have made the devil himself tremble, so earnest have they been; and they have made you tremble sometimes, so much, that you could not sleep. The hair of your head was well nigh moved to stand upright. They spake as though they ne'er might speak again: as dying men to dying men. They spoke as if they had been in hell, and knew the vengeance of the Almighty, and anon, they spoke as if they had entered into the heart of Jesus, and read his love to sinners. They had brows of brass; they knew not how to flinch. They laid your iniquity bare before your face, and with rough language that was unmistakeable, they made you feel that there was a man there who told you all things that ever you did. They so declared it, that you could not help feeling under it. You always retained a veneration for that minister, because you felt that he at least was honest with you; and you have sometimes thought that you would even go and hear him again, because there at least your soul was moved, and you were made to hear the truth. Yes, you have had a startling ministry, some of you. Then, sirs, if ye have heard the cry of fire, if ye are burned in your beds, your charred ashes shall not accuse me. If I have warned you that he that believeth not must be damned, if you are damned, your miserable souls shall not accuse me. If I have startled you sometimes from your slumbers, and made your balls and your pleasure parties uneasy, because I have sometimes warned you of these things, then, sirs, if after all you put away these warnings, and you reject these counsels, you will be obliged to say, "My blood is on my own head."

In many of your cases the warning has been *very frequent*. If the man heard the trumpet sound once and did not regard it, possibly we might excuse him; but how many of my audience have heard the trumpet sound of the gospel very frequently. There you are, young man. You have had many years of a pious mother's teaching, many years of a pious minister's exhortations. Waggon loads of sermons have been exhausted upon you. You have had many sharp providences, many terrible sicknesses. Often when the death bell has tolled for your friend, your conscience has been aroused. To you warnings are not unusual things; they are very common. Oh! my hearers, if a man should hear the gospel but once, his blood would be upon his own head for rejecting it; but of how much sorer punishment shall you be thought worthy who have heard it many and many a time. Ah! I may well weep, when I think how many sermons you have listened to, many of you, how many times

you have been cut to the heart. A hundred times every year you have gone up to the house of God, and far oftener than that, and you have just added a hundred billets to the eternal pile. A hundred times the trumpet has sounded in your ears, and a hundred times you have turned away to sin again, to despise Christ, to neglect your eternal interests, and to pursue the pleasures and the concerns of this world. Oh! how mad this is, how mad! Oh, sirs, if a man had but once poured out his heart before you concerning your eternal interests, and if he had spoken to you earnestly, and you had rejected his message, then, even then, ye had been guilty. But what shall we say to you upon whom the shafts of the Almighty have been exhausted? Oh, what shall be done unto this barren ground that hath been watered with shower after shower, and that hath been quickened with sunshine after sunshine? What shall be done unto him who being often rebuked, still hardeneth his neck? Shall he not be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy, and shall it not then be said, "His blood lieth at his own door, his guilt is on his own head?"

And I would just have you recollect one thing more. This warning that you have had so often, has come to you *in time*. "Ah," said an infidel once, "God never regards man. If there be a God, he would never take notice of men." Said a Christian minister, who was sitting opposite to him in the carriage, "The day may come, sir, when you will learn the truth of what you have just said." "I do not understand your allusion, sir," said he. "Well, sir, the day may come, when you may call, and he will refuse; when you may stretch out your hands, and he will not regard you, but as he has said in the book of Proverbs, so will he do, 'Because I called, and ye refused; because I stretched out my hands, and no man regarded, I also will mock at your calamity, I will laugh when your fear cometh.'" But oh, sirs, your warning has not come too late. You are not warned on a sick bed, at the eleventh hour, when there is but a bare possibility of salvation, but you are warned in time, you are warned to-day, you have been warned for these many years that are now past. If God should send a preacher to the damned in hell, that were an unnecessary addition to their misery. Surely, if one could go and preach the gospel through the fields of Gehenna, and tell them of a Saviour they had despised, and of a gospel that is now beyond their reach, that were taunting poor souls with a vain attempt to increase their unutterable woe; but O my brethren, to preach the gospel now is to preach in a hopeful period; for "now is the accepted time: now is the day of salvation." Warn the boatman before he enters the current, and then, if he is swept down the rapids, he destroys himself. Warn the man before he drinks the cup of poison, tell him it is deadly: and then, if he drinks it, his death lies at his own door. And so, let us warn you before you depart this life; let us preach to you while as yet your bones are full of marrow, and the sinews of your joints are not loosed. We have then warned you in time, and so much the more shall your guilt be increased, because the warning was timely; it was frequent, it was earnest, it was appropriate, it was arousing, it was continually given to you, and yet you sought not to escape from the wrath to come.

And so even this morning would I say to you, if ye perish, my skirts are free from your blood; if ye are damned, it is not for want of calling after, nor for want of praying for, nor for want of weeping over. Your blood must be on your own heads; for the warning is all that is needed.

II. And now we come to the second point. Men make excuses why they do not attend to the gospel warning, but these excuses are all frivolous and wicked. I will just go over one or two of the excuses that people make. Some of them say, "Well, I did not attend to the warning, because I did not believe there was any necessity for it." Ah! You were told that after death there was a judgment, and you did not believe there was any necessity that you should be prepared for that judgment. You were told that by the works of the law there shall no flesh living be justified, and that only through Christ can sinners be saved; and you did not think there was any necessity for Christ. Well sir, you ought to have thought there was a necessity. You know there was a necessity in your inner consciousness. You talked very large things when you stood up as an unbeliever, a professed unbeliever: but you know there was a still small voice that while you spake belied your tongue. You

are well aware that in the silent watches of the night you have often trembled; in a storm at sea you have been on your knees to pray to a God whom on the land you have laughed at; and when you have been sick nigh unto death, you have said, "Lord, have mercy upon me;" and so you have prayed, that you have believed it after all. But if you did not believe it, you ought to have believed it. There was enough in reason to have taught you that there was an hereafter; the Book of God's revelation was plain enough to have taught it to you, and if you have rejected God's Book, and rejected the voice of reason and of conscience, your blood is on your own head. Your excuse is idle. It is worse than that, it is profane and wicked, and still on your own head be your everlasting torment.

"But," cries another, "I did not like the trumpet. I did not like the Gospel that was preached." Says one, "I did not like certain doctrines in the Bible. I thought the minister preached too harsh doctrines sometimes, I did not agree with the Gospel; I thought the Gospel ought to have been altered, and not to have been just what it was." You did not like the trumpet, did you? Well, but God made the trumpet, God made the Gospel; and inasmuch as ye did not like what God made, it is an idle excuse. What was that to you what the trumpet was, so long as it warned you? And surely, if it had been time of war, and you had heard a trumpet sounded to warn you of the coming of the enemy, you would not have sat still, and said, "Now I believe that is a brass trumpet, I would like to have had it made of silver." No, but the sound would have been enough for you, and up you would have been to escape from the danger. And so it must be now with you. It is an idle pretence that you did not like it. You ought to have liked it, for God made the Gospel what it is.

But you say, "I did not like the man that blew it." Well, if you did not like one messenger of God, there are many in this city. Could you not find one you did like? You did not like one man's manner: it was too theatrical; you did not like another's: it was too doctrinal; you did not like another's: it was too practical—there are plenty of them, you may take which you do like, but if God has sent the men, and told them how to blow, and if they blow to the best of their ability, it is all in vain for you to reject their warnings, because they do not blow the way you like. Ah, my brethren, we do not find fault with the way a man speaks, if we are in a house that is on fire. If the man calls, "Fire! Fire!" we are not particular what note he takes, we do not think what a harsh voice he has got. You would think any one a fool, a confounded fool, who should lie in his bed, to be burned, because he said he did not like the way the man cried, "Fire." Why his business was to have been out of bed and down the stairs at once, as soon as he heard it.

But another says, "I did not like the man himself; I did not like the minister; I did not like the man that blew the trumpet; I could hear him preach very well, but I had a personal dislike to him, and so I did not take any notice of what the trumpet said." Verily, God will say to thee at last, "Thou fool, what hadst thou to do with that man; to his own master he stands or falls; thy business was with thyself." What would you think of a man? A man has fallen overboard from a ship, and when he is drowning, some sailor throws him a rope, and there it is. Well he says, in the first place, "I do not like that rope; I don't think that rope was made at the best manufactory; there is some tar on it too, I do not like it; and in the next place, I do not like that sailor that threw the rope over, I am sure he is not a kind-hearted man, I do not like the look of him at all;" and then comes a gurgle and a groan, and down he is at the bottom of the sea; and when he was drowned, they said, that it served him right, if he would not lay hold of the rope, but would be making such foolish and absurd objections, when it was a matter of life and death. Then on his own head be his blood. And so shall it be with you at last. You are so busy with criticising the minister, and his style, and his doctrine, that your own soul perishes. Remember you may get into hell by criticism, but you will never criticise your soul out of it. You may there make the most you can of it. You may be there and say, "I did not like the minister, I did not like his manner, I did not like his matter;" but all your

dislikings will not get one drop of water to cool your burning tongue, nor serve to mitigate the unalleviated torments of that world of agony.

There are many other people who say, "Ah, well, I did none of those things, but I had a notion that the trumpet sound ought to be blown to everybody else, but not to me." Ah! that is a very common notion. "All men think all men mortal, but themselves," said a good poet; and all men think all men need the Gospel, but not themselves. Let each of us recollect that the Gospel has a message to each one of us. What saith the Gospel to *thee* my hearer? What saith the Word to *thee*? Forget thy neighbours, and ask this question. Doth it condemn *thee*? or doth it assure *thee* of *thy* pardon? for recollect, all thou hast to do in the hearing of the Word, is to hear with thine own ears for thine own soul, and it will be idle for any one to say "I did not think it applied to me," when we know that it is to be preached to every creature under heaven, and therefore there must be something in it for every creature or else it would not be preached to every creature.

Well, says another, "But I was so busy, I had so much to do, that I could not possibly attend to my soul's concerns. What will you say of the man who had so much to do that he could not get out of the burning house, but was burnt to ashes? What will you say of the man that had so much to do, that when he was dying, he had not time to send for a physician? Why, you will say, then he ought not to have had so much to do. And if any man in the world has a business which causes him to lose his own soul for want of time, let him lay this question to his heart, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" But it is false—it is false—men have got time. It is the want of will, not want of way. You have time, sir, have you not, despite all your business, to spend in pleasure? You have time to read your newspaper—have you no time to read your Bible? You have time to sing a song—have you no time to pray a prayer? Why, you know when farmer Brown met farmer Smith in the market one day, he said to him, "Farmer Smith, I can't think how it is you find time for hunting. Why, man, what with sowing and mowing and reaping and ploughing, and all that, my time is so fully occupied on my farm, that I have no time for hunting." "Ah," said he, "Brown, if you liked hunting as much as I do, if you could not find time, you'd make it." And so it is with religion, the reason why men cannot find time for it is, because they do not like it well enough. If they liked it, they would find time. And besides, what time does it want? What time does it require? Can I not pray to God over my ledger? Can I not snatch a text at my very breakfast, and think over it all day? May I not even when I am busy in the affairs of the world, be thinking of my soul, and casting myself upon a Redeemer's blood and atonement? It wants no time. There may be some time required; some time for my private devotions, and for communion with Christ, but when I grow in grace, I shall think it right to have more and more time, the more I can possibly get, the happier I shall be, and I shall never make the excuse that I have no time.

"Well," says another, "but I thought I had time enough; you do not want me, sir, to be religious in my youth, do you? I am a lad, and may I not have a little frolic and sow my wild oats as well as anybody else?" Well—yes, yes; but at the same time the best place for frolic that I know of, is where a Christian lives; the finest happiness in all the world is the happiness of a child of God. You may have your pleasures—oh, yes! you shall have them doubled and trebled, if you are a Christian. You shall not have things that worldlings call pleasures, but you shall have some that are a thousand times better. But only look at that sorrowful picture. There, far away in the dark gulf of woe, lies a young man, and he cries. "Ah! I meant to have repented when I was out of my apprenticeship, and I died before my time was up." "Ah!" says another by his side, "and I thought, whilst I was a journeyman, that when I came to be a master, I would then think of the things of Christ, but I died before I had got money enough to start for myself." And then a merchant behind wails with bitter woe, and says, "Ah! I thought I would be religious when I had got enough to retire on, and live in the country; then I should have time to think of God, when I had got all my children married out, and my concerns settled about me, but here I am shut up in hell; and now what are all my delays

worth, and what is all the time I gained for all the paltry pleasures in the world? Now I have lost my soul over them.” We experience great vexation if we are unpunctual in many places; but we cannot conceive what must be the horror and dismay of men who find themselves too late in the next world! Ah! friends, if I knew there was one here who said, “I shall repent next Wednesday.” I would have him feel in a dreadful state till that Wednesday came; for what if he should die? Oh! what if he should die! Would his promise of a Wednesday’s repentance save him from a Thursday damnation?

Ah, these are all idle excuses. Men make not such when their bodily life is concerned. Would God that we were wise, that we would not make such pitiful pretences to apology, when our soul, our own soul, is the matter at stake. If they take not warning, whatever their excuse, their blood must be upon their own head.

III. And now, I come most solemnly to conclude with all the power of earnestness; the warning has been sufficient, the excuse for not attending to it has been proved profane; then the last thought is “His blood shall be on his own head.” Briefly thus—he shall perish; he shall perish *certainly*; he shall perish *inexcusably*. He shall *perish*. And what does that mean? There is no human mind, however capacious, that can ever guess the thought of a soul eternally cast away from God. The wrath to come is as inexpressible as the glory that shall be revealed hereafter. Our Saviour laboured for words with which to express the horrors of a future state to the ungodly. You remember he talked of worms that die not, and fires that are never quenched, of a pit without a bottom, of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the outer darkness. No preacher was ever so loving as Christ, but no man ever spoke so horribly about hell; and yet even when the Saviour had said his best and said his worst, he had not told us what are the horrors of a future state. Ye have seen sicknesses, ye have heard the shrieks of men and women when their pangs have been upon them. We, at least, have stood by the bed-sides even of some dear to us, and we have seen to what an extent agony may be carried in the human body; but none of us know how much the body is capable of suffering. Certainly the body will have to suffer for ever—“He is able to cast both body and soul into hell.” We have heard of exquisite torments, but we have never dreamt of any like unto this. Again, we have seen something of the miseries of the soul. Have we never marked the man that we used to know in our childhood who was depressed in spirits. All that ever could be done for him never could evoke a smile from him—never did the light of cheerfulness light up his eye—he was mournfully depressed. Ay, and it was my unhappy lot to live with one who was not only depressed in spirits, but whose mind had gone so far amiss, that it did brood fancies so mournful and dismal, that the very sight of him was enough to turn the sunlight of summer into the very darkness of a dreary winter. He had nothing to say but dark, groaning words. His thoughts always had a sombre appearance about them. It was midnight in his soul—a darkness that might be felt. Have you never seen yourselves what power the mind has over us to make us full of misery? Ah, brethren and sisters, if ye could go to many of our asylums, and to our sick wards—ay, and dying beds, too, you might know what acute anguish the mind may feel. And remember that the mind, as well as the mortal frame, is to endure damnation. Yes, we must not shirk that word, the Scripture saith it, and we must use it. Oh! men and women, except we repent, except we do each of us cry for mercy to him that is able to save, we must perish. All that is meant by that word “hell,” must be realized in me, except I be a believer; and so all that is meant by “Depart, ye cursed,” must be thine, unless thou dost turn unto God with full purpose of heart.

But again, he that turneth not at the rebuke of the minister shall die, and he shall die *certainly*. This is not a matter of perhaps or chance. The things we preach, and that are taught in Scripture, are matters of solemn certainty. It may be that death is that bourne from which no traveller returns, but it is not true that we know nothing of it. It is as certain as that there are men, and a world in which they live, that there is another world to come, and that if they die impenitent, that world will be to them one of misery. And mark you—there is no chance of escape, die without Christ, and there is

no gate out of which you can escape—for ever, oh, for ever lost, and not one hope of mercy—cast away, and not one outlet for escape, not one solitary chance of ransom. Oh, if there were hope that in the world to come, men might escape, we need not be so earnest; but since once lost, lost for aye—once cast away, cast away without hope, without any prospect of a hope, we must be earnest. Oh, my God, when I remember that I have to-day some here present who in all probability must be dead before next Sabbath, I must be earnest. Out of so large an assembly, the chances are that we shall not all of us be found pilgrims in this world within another seven days. It is not only possible, but probable that some one out of this vast audience will have been launched upon a world unknown. Shall it be myself, and shall I sail to the port of bliss, or must I sail over fiery waves for ever, lost, shipwrecked, stranded, on the rocks of woe? Soul, which shall it be with thee? It may be, thou shalt die, my grey-headed hearer, or thou young lad, thou boy, thou mayest die—I know not which nor can we tell—God only knoweth. Then let each one ask himself. Am I prepared, should I be called to die? Yes, you may die where you are, on the benches where you are sitting—you may now die—and whither would you go? for recollect that whither ye go, ye go for ever. Oh! eternity—eternity—eternity must I climb thy topless steeps for ever, and never reach the summit, and must my path be ever misery or joy? Oh! eternity, thou depth without a bottom, thou sea without a shore, must I sail over thy boundless waves for ever in one undeviating track—and must I either plough through seas of bliss, or else be driven by the stormy winds of vengeance, over gulfs of misery? “Then what am I?” “My soul awake and an impartial survey take.” Am I prepared? Am I prepared? Am I prepared? For prepared or not, death admits of no delay, and if he is at my door, he will take me where I must go for ever, prepared or not.

Now, the last thing is, *the sinner will perish*—he will perish certainly, but last of all, he will perish *without excuse*—his blood shall be on his own head. When a man is bankrupt, if he can say, “It is not through reckless trading—it has been entirely through the dishonesty of one I trusted that I am what I am;” he takes some consolation, and he says, “I cannot help it.” But oh, my hearers, if you make bankrupts of your own souls, after you have been warned, then your own eternal bankruptcy shall lie at your own door. Should never so great a misfortune come upon us, if we can trace it to the providence of God, we bear it cheerfully; but if we have inflicted it upon ourselves, then how fearful is it! And let every man remember that if he perish after having heard the Gospel, he will be his own murderer. Sinner, thou wilt drive the dagger into thine heart thyself. If thou despisest the Gospel, thou art preparing fuel for thine own bed of flames, thou art hammering out the chain for thine own everlasting binding; and when damned, thy mournful reflection will be this:—I have damned myself, I cast myself into this pit; for I rejected the Gospel; I despised the message; I trod under foot the Son of Man; I would have none of his rebukes. I despised his Sabbaths; I would not hearken to his exhortations, and now I perish by mine own hand, the miserable suicide of my own soul.

And now a sweet reflection strikes me. A good writer says, “There are, doubtless, spots in the world that would be barren for ever, if we recollected what had happened there.” Says he, “I was once in St. Paul’s cathedral, just under the dome, and a friend just touched me gently, and said, ‘Do you see that little chisel mark?’ and I said ‘Yes.’ He said ‘That is where a man threw himself down, and there he fell, and was dashed to atoms.’” The writer says, “We all started aside from that little spot, where a fellow creature’s blood had been shed. It seemed an awful place when we remembered that.” Now, there is many a street, there is many a way-side, there is many a house of God, where men have taken the last decision, and damned their own souls. I doubt not, there are some here this morning, standing or sitting, to whom the voice of conscience says, “Decide for God,” and now Satan and the evil heart together are saying, “Reject the message; laugh it off; forget it: take a ticket for the theatre to-morrow: do not let this man alarm us: it is his very profession to talk to us like this; let us go away, and laugh it off; and let us spend the rest of this day in

merriment.” Yes, that is the last warning thou wilt ever have. It is so with some of you. There are some of you that will this hour decide to damn yourselves, and you will look for ever throughout eternity, to that place under the gallery of the Surrey Music Hall, and you will say, “Alas! woe was the day I heard that man. I was half impressed—almost he persuaded me to be a Christian, but I decided for hell.” And that will be a solemn spot to angels where you are standing, or where you are sitting, for angels will say to one another, “Stand aside; that is a spot where a man ruined his own soul for ever and ever.” But the sweet thought is, that there are some places just the reverse.

Why, you are sitting, my friend, this morning, on a spot where some three weeks ago one sat who was converted to God; and that place where you are sitting you ought to venerate, for in that place there sat one who was one of the chiefest of sinners like yourself, and there the Gospel message met him. And far back there, behind the door, many a soul has been brought to Christ. Many a piece of good news have I heard from some in yonder upper gallery. “I could not see your face, sir, all the sermon through, but the arrow of the Lord found its way round the corner, and reached my heart notwithstanding that, and I was saved.” Ah, well, may God so bless this place, that every seat of it this day may be solemnized by his own grace, and a spot to be remembered in your future history by reason of the beginning of your blessedness, the dawn of your salvation. “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved.” This is the gospel we are told to preach to every creature—“He that believeth, and is immersed, shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned.”