

# “THE GOSPEL AWAKENING.”

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SERMONS AND ADDRESSES,

Prayer Meeting Talks and Bible Readings,

OF THE

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CONDUCTED BY

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IN THE CITIES OF

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WITH THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE

CHRISTIAN CONVENTIONS OF MINISTERS AND LAYMEN.

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ALSO THE LIVES OF

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## DEATH OF CHRIST.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5.

Last night I was speaking about the birth of Christ, and there was no room for him. I might have added to that sermon that the world did make room for him at one time, and that was upon the cross. That was the only place they could make room for him—between two thieves. I want to speak about the death of Christ tonight, because it concerns every one of us. He was wounded for our transgressions, not for his own. He did not transgress; if he had, he would have to have died for himself. He was lamb without spot, and thus he became the sinner’s substitute. “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

A few years ago I was going to lecture in Dublin, and I got out a few placards, and on them was printed, “Christ died for our sins.” I said that should be my text. If I could only picture that scene, and make that scene of Calvary real, I would not preach but that one sermon. If that would not break men’s hearts, I do not know what would. We cannot draw that picture as we would like; the world does not know what it means. The suffering of the Son of God we do not know. There is not a man living can tell what the Son of God suffered mentally. I want to take up what he suffered physically; and, oh, that God may help me tonight to make it real!

I remember when our war was going on, if I took up a morning paper and read of a terrible battle—ten thousand men killed—I would lay it down and forget about it. At last I went on to the battle-field, and I helped to bear away the sick and wounded. After I had been over one or two battle-fields, I began to realize what it meant. I could hear the dying groans of the men, and their cry for water. Then when I heard of a battle, the whole thing was stamped upon my mind. So when men take up their Bible, because they have read it from their youth up, they will read this chapter of Isaiah from which my text is taken, foretelling the sufferings of Christ, and lay it down and forget about it. If I tell you how a little child suffered, it will bring tears to your eyes; but if I tell you how the Son of God suffered it does not have the same effect upon you, and you will sometimes go away laughing.

Let us imagine we are living in the days when the Son of God was upon earth—that we are citizens of Jerusalem—that we are there at that memorable feast, and that late one Thursday afternoon, as we are walking down the street, we see thirteen men coming down the same street. We notice every one stops and looks at them. We make inquiries who they are, and we are told, “It is Jesus and his Apostles.” Away they go to the guest chamber, and

soon they are seated around his table. He begins to be exceedingly sorrowful. That night he knew one of them was to swear he never knew him; that the Shepherd was to be smitten, and the sheep were to leave him. He was sorrowful unto death. John was wondering what was making him so sad. At last he told them that one of them that night should betray him. The whole crowd looked startled, and one said, "Lord, is it I?" and another said, "Lord, is it I?" Every one of them began to distrust himself; and at last Judas, that awful traitor, who was already plotting with the chief priest to deliver him up, said, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus gave him to understand that it was. And presently he turned and said, "What thou doest do quickly;" and he got up and left. I do not believe you could find a sadder party than that little party. Judas had seen him perform his mighty miracles. He had been with him when he had fed the multitude in the wilderness. He had been with him when he had wept over Jerusalem. He had been associated with him for three long years. And now Judas gets up and goes out. It was night. I can imagine I hear him as he goes down those stairs. Hark! hear him; step after step, out into the blackness of the darkness of night. He goes off to the Sanhedrim, to the rulers of the Jews. He says to them, "What will you give me?" He sells his Master for thirty pieces of silver. How cheap he sold his birthright. You condemn him; but how many of you are selling him for less? A lady last night wanted to become a Christian, but she would not give up a ball that was to come off on Wednesday night. She would sell her soul for a night in the ball-room. How many would sell him for a night in some drinking saloon? Judas made a bargain. He sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver. I hear the chink of the silver as it is thrown down upon the table. Judas says, "Now give me a band of men, and I will take you to him."

After Judas went out, the sweetest words that ever fell from the lips of any person in this world were spoken by Jesus. It was on that occasion he said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also." And all those sweet words in the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of John were uttered on that occasion, after Judas had left. How Judas lost those heavenly words! While he was away, Christ was engaged in trying to comfort his disciples, instead of them trying to comfort him.

At last he said: "Come, for the time of my departure is at hand." Perhaps it is midnight as they walk down the streets of Jerusalem. He is with them for the last time. He is soon to be taken from them, and be delivered into

the hands of sinful men. I see that little band, as they walk along through the streets of Jerusalem. Away they go over the brook Cedron. And he takes Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, as on the Mount of Transfiguration, and withdraws from them. He throws himself upon his knees. I can hear him pray: "Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." And as he prayed, he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. No one knows the agony he suffered at Gethsemane. He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. Being in agony, he prayed more earnestly; but Peter and John and James fell asleep. After he had prayed some time, an angel was sent from heaven to strengthen him. Then he wakes up his little band of disciples; he looks over across the garden, and he sees a band of men with lanterns, and torches, and weapons, hunting around among the olive trees. He knew whom they were hunting for. He went to this band and said, "Whom seek ye?" There is something mysterious about his voice, and they tremble, and fall flat to the ground as if struck by death. And Jesus asked them again, "Whom seek ye?" They said, "We seek Jesus of Nazareth." But they had not the power to lay a hand upon him. Judas stepped up and kissed him. Judas stepped up to him and kissed him, and then went to damnation. You may be a Sabbath-school teacher, or you may be a deacon in the church, and go to damnation. Judas went right down to death in twenty-four hours. He was lost for time and eternity. Jesus said, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" I should have thought that when Jesus said that, he would have cried out, "Jesus, forgive me!" He betrayed him with a kiss. Judas had said to the soldiers, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: seize him." Those who had fallen on the ground now got up and seized him, and they bound those hands that had so often blessed the people. That is what the prophet tries to bring out: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities." He was now put under arrest, as if he was the worst man living. Peter draws his sword and cuts off the ear of one of the servants of the high priest. The Lord rebuked him, and told him to put up his sword; and he restored the man's ear. No one ever lost anything for Christ. He rebuked his disciples when they wanted to bring fire down upon a town. He came to save men, and not to destroy them. While the soldiers were binding him, he was healing that poor man.

They led him, that night, back to Jerusalem. They led him to Annas, the high priest, and Annas sent him to Caiaphas, who was then the high priest. They brought him into the presence of Caiaphas, and they were so thirsty for his blood that they could not wait until next morning. That night the Sanhedrim summoned seventy of the rulers of the Jews. I imagine I can see them coming from their homes that night. They assemble, and they seek for

false witnesses to come and speak against Christ. They cannot find any two witnesses that would agree. Oh, how hellish that those men should seek false witnesses against Christ! At last they found two men that would agree, and Caiaphas said, "You have heard these witnesses. Art thou the Son of God? art thou the true Messiah?" Jesus saith unto him: "Thou hast said. Nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Caiaphas says: "That is enough: he hath spoken blasphemy. What further need have we of witnesses?" And he said to the seventy rulers, "What think ye?" and they said, "He is guilty of death." I hear that sentence ringing out through that council chamber. Then one goes up and strikes him. Then another spits in his face. Another says, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" Now out in the crowd there is Peter, the man who said, "If all the world forsake thee I will not." There was Peter swearing he never knew him. Judas, when he hears that Christ is in the hands of sinful men, he says to the chief priest: "Here is the money; I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." They say: "What is that to us? see thou to that." He threw it down upon the counter and went out, and put an end to his miserable existence. Peter denied him. There was no one to stand by him that terrible night. And now they keep him until early next morning.

We are told that very early on Friday morning—perhaps at sunrise—the news had been spreading all through Jerusalem that that night the Galilean prophet had been put under arrest; that he had been brought before the Sanhedrim; that he had been found guilty of blasphemy; that he had been found guilty of death; and that they had condemned him to die the death of the cross. But the Romans held the government, and the Jews could not put any one to death without the consent of the Roman government. So he was led to Pilate's court. The news soon spread over the city. The people hear the tidings that the Galilean prophet has been condemned to death, and he was to be taken outside the city and put to death. There is a crowd gathered, and the officers go before to beat back the people. As he goes along the streets, there is a hiss goes up from earth. They bring him before Pilate. The governor looks at him. He has had a great many prisoners before that, but none like this one. Pilate talks with him, and then he goes out and says: "I find no fault with him; I will chastise him and let him go." The Jews say: "If you let him go, you are not Caesar's friend. If you let him go, you will stir up the people and we will have a war here." When Pilate heard he was from Galilee, he said: "Is he a Galilean?" They say: "He is a Nazarene, and he has been living at Capernaum." Pilate did not want to take the responsibility of putting him to death, and he sent him to Herod. And they led him to Herod, who was at Jerusalem at that time. I see the crowd as they go

along through the streets hooting: "Away with him! away with him!" They want to get him out of the way. There is no one to stand up for him. A short time before the crowd cried "Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna to the son of David!" Now there is not one to speak for him. They led him to Herod,—that man who took the life of his forerunner. They blindfold him, and strike him in the face, and say: "Prophecy who it was that struck thee." "But as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth." Then they put a mock robe upon him, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and they cried: "Hail King of the Jews." After they had mocked him, they sent him back to Pilate. Then there is a crowd around him,—a great multitude is pressing through the streets. They would have hanged him there, if there had not been a great many soldiers to guard him. Pilate has to settle the question at last. Pilate talks with him again. Pilate is thoroughly convinced that he is an innocent man. All at once I see a man elbowing himself through the crowd; he brings a note from Pilate's wife. The wife of Pilate says: "Have thou nothing to do with that just person, for I have suffered much in a dream concerning him." And then Pilate tried all the more to release him. Pilate had a thought strike him, and he says: "I will take the most notable prisoner and put him to death; they will rather have this man who takes life put to death than the man who gives life." Perhaps Pilate brought out the two. There is a vast crowd, and Pilate says: "Which shall I release to you? Here is Barabbas a murderer, and here is this Galilean prophet—this Jesus of Nazareth." But the Jews had gone among the crowd and said to them: "The moment Pilate puts the question to you say, Barabbas." So the shout went up, "Barabbas! Barabbas!" And poor governor Pilate was disappointed and he said: "What shall I do with Jesus, that is called Christ?" And they lifted up their voice with one shout of, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" That is the cry. And the poor governor turned and washed his hands, and said, "I am innocent of this just man's blood." And all the people answered and said: "His blood be on us and on our children!" Do you know that only a few years ago a thousand learned Jews met in Paris, and the chairman got up and said the Jews had the honor of killing the Christians' God; and the multitude clapped their hands and endorsed the act of Calvary. Oh, how hellish that a thousand men could boast of this, in the nineteenth century!

Poor Pilate, he washed his hands and said, "I am innocent of this just man's blood," and the people said, "Let his blood be upon us and upon our children." His blood has followed them. They are without a nation; they are without a home; they are without a kingdom. Poor Jews! Oh, what blindness! Oh, what madness! They would not let him be their King. Oh, sinner,

ruin will come upon you if you will not own him as your King. They scourged him. I do not see how a man's heart can be so hard as to hear how Christ was wounded for our transgressions, and not love him. The Roman scourging was to bind a man's wrists together, strip his back bare, and then lash him with a scourge made by taking sharp pieces of steel and braiding them into a lash. This was the scourge used upon the Son of God, blow after blow, cutting through the flesh clear to the bone. Sometimes the scourging lasted fifteen minutes, and the man died. How sad the thought that those stripes were laid upon the back of the Son of God. Isaiah saw the Son of God in that judgment hall, and he said, "With his stripes we are healed." After he had been scourged, instead of pouring oil into those wounds, they put a mock robe upon him, and a crown of thorns. When the Queen of England sits upon her throne, she has a crown upon her head worth millions. Christ had a crown of thorns put on his head, and a reed was put in his hand, and they put some cast-off robe upon him; and they pointed the finger of scorn at him and said, "Hail King of the Jews!" At last some of them take that reed and bring it down over the crown of thorns. Behold him wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him. All this was early in the morning. Now you can see him: he is coming out of the judgment hall. They have taken two other prisoners, and they have made a cross for each one. Now they place the cross upon his shoulders. You ladies wear light crosses of jewelry, but they took a heavy cross, made out of a tree and now you see the Son of God struggling under that cross, He has been scourged, and has lost much of his blood. I can imagine, as he passes along, there is none to deliver him. He gave himself for us all. I can imagine the cross is too heavy for him. We are not told why it was taken from his shoulders, but we must believe it was because he was not able to carry it. They took it from his shoulders, and put it upon the shoulders of a stronger.

Sinner, look at him being led up that hill, his back all bleeding and bare! His disciples have left him. He is forsaken. Now he threads that path alone. The soldiers guard him. They take up that bleeding body of Jesus, and lay him out upon the cross. They fasten each hand to the arms of the cross. A Roman soldier comes up, and he puts a spike into the hand of the innocent Jesus; that hand that had ever blessed the people; that hand that had ever been ready to touch the sick and make them whole. The soldier took nails and drove them into the palms of his hands; and then he put nails in his feet. See him, as with blow after blow he drives them into his feet, and then they take the cross and put it up, with the Son of God hanging between heaven and earth.

Oh, gaze upon that scene! Look into that lovely face; look at that blood

trickling down from his side. And will you turn away and say: "I do not care for him; I see no beauty in him; he is a root out of dry ground?" Is your heart so hard that you see no beauty in him? I beg you tonight to gaze upon him, and look into his face. Hark! He speaks. While the crowd are mocking, he speaks. What does he say? Like the prophets of the old days, he could have called down fire from Heaven and consumed them. Does he call down legions of angels to beat back that crowd? No. He says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Hear his piercing cry of love: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" Then he said, "I thirst." And they refused him a draught of water; but they gave him gall, mixed with vinegar. When he found men athirst down here, he gave them living water. At last he cries again, "It is finished!" I do not know as there were many on earth that heard it; and they that heard it did not understand it. But in the world of life they knew what that meant. It was the shout of the conqueror; it was the shout of victory. Every one in Heaven heard the cry. The angels around the throne heard it. The bells of Heaven rang, and it went pealing through Heaven, "It is finished!" The God-man has died, and all sinners have to do is to look and live. It is eternal life for a look. Undoubtedly, the dark fiends of hell had been gathered there while that was going on. They thought they were going to triumph then. And those dark waves of death and hell came dashing against him. He beat them back. See the tide and wind in the great ocean; when the wind is mad and angry, how the great waves come dashing up against the rock; but it stands firm. They go back and come stealing up against the rock again. So the dark waves of hell seemed to dash up against the Rock of our salvation; but he has beaten them back. He was able to take the billows and let them go rolling over him. At last he shouted, "It is finished!" He triumphed over the powers of darkness. A glorious triumph it was.

But, thanks be to God, we do not worship a dead Savior. I am not going to leave him there tonight. Joseph of Arimathea—where he was when Christ was on trial I do not know, but he is no longer a secret disciple. The death of Christ has brought him out. If Christ has tasted death for us, let us not be ashamed of him. Joseph goes to Pilate, and he went in boldly and begged the body of Jesus. Pilate says, "Is he dead?" "Yes, he is dead." Pilate marveled; he could not believe it. He gave orders to make sure the body was dead, and then he handed it over to Joseph. There is Nicodemus; he had not forgotten that first night when he was with Jesus. There is Joseph of Arimathea; there are the Roman soldiers, and the few women that had gathered around him. I see them there. I see one of the Roman soldiers take his spear, and drive it into the side of the Son of God. He opened the fountain for uncleanness when they drove the spear into his side. They pro-

nounced him dead, and he gave his body to Joseph. It was a cruel hand that drove those nails into his hands and feet, but it was a tender hand that took them out. As they took those nails out, Nicodemus turns to Joseph and says: "That reminds me of the first night when I met him, when he said, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.'" They drew those nails out of his hands and feet; they took down that bruised body and washed it; and wrapped it in fine linen. And if we had been there we would have seen a little funeral procession. He did not have many people to follow him; but no doubt he had legions of angels following him.

They laid him away in Joseph's sepulchre. The governor had given orders that a great stone should be rolled there and sealed, and soldiers were sent there to guard the sepulchre. The enemies of Christ had the sepulchre guarded, and there were sentinals walking around it day and night. Says death, "I hold him in my cold embrace." He held him Friday night; he held him Saturday, and all that night. The next morning, as the sun was coming up behind these Palestine hills, before its rays strike the sepulchre, Gabriel came down from Heaven and rolled away the stone. The moment the angel came, the soldiers fell to the ground as dead men. Then he rolled away that stone. Yes, and those hands that had grown cold in death, began to grow warm, and the Son of God burst asunder the bars of the tomb. And when the disciples got there, they found the angel there; and they found that Jesus had bound death, hand and foot, He conquered death, and bound him hand and foot, and ascended into Heaven; and he calls us from there, that where he is we may be also. He was seen by over five hundred at one time.

Thomas alone did not believe. He was like a good many of our doubting Christians. He said, "Unless I thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe it." I imagine John says to Thomas: "I have got good news for you, Thomas; the Lord has risen." "I don't believe it," says Thomas. He goes along and he meets Peter. Peter says: "Thomas, have you heard that Jesus has risen, and sent a message to me?" "I don't believe it," says Thomas. "But," says Peter, "they tell me it is a fact." "Well, I will not believe it until I thrust my hand into that wound in his side, and into that wound in the palm of his hand." Then after this they were assembled in a large room in Jerusalem, and Thomas was there; and all at once Christ revealed himself, and he said to Thomas: "Reach forth thy hand, and put it into my side." Thomas didn't want any more proof, and he cries out, "My Lord and my God!" His doubts and unbelief were forever swept away.

Thanks be to God, we do not worship a dead Savior. He takes the eleven out of Jerusalem through the valley of Jehosaphat, and comes out to Bethany under a cluster of olive trees. He takes his farewell of them. He gives

them his parting message, and says: "Go to all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." He raised his hand over them and began to bless them. He commenced his teaching with blessing. He had nine blessings in his sermon on the Mount. And now he is going away, and he begins to bless them. While he blesses them, he begins to ascend; and his voice grows fainter and fainter, and at last it dies away in the clouds. At last the clouds receive him out of their sight. The eleven men are gazing. They long for a break in the clouds; they want to see him once more; they look and look, but it is all in vain. I can imagine that up above those clouds, there was a chariot for him from his Father's mansion. I can see him as he steps into that chariot; I can see him as he sweeps on his way where all Heaven is waiting to give him a welcome. "Lift up your heads O ye gates; and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors: and the King of Glory shall come in." He looks back and sees those eleven men. He sees their tears, and he says to two angels: "Go down there and comfort those men, and tell them that I will be back again." The two angels come down and say: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven. This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven."

He is coming back again. Oh, lift up your hearts, for the time of your redemption draweth near! He is coming back again. We do not know the day nor the hour. "Then the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort ye one another with these words." Thank God, that day may come at any moment. Let us be ready. Let us see that we have a glorious hope in Christ, and then let him come; and we shall be forever with the Lord. I beg you do not make light of the Lord Jesus Christ; but just tonight take him into your heart, and he will be your resurrection and your life. And when your hour shall come to be translated to another world, it will be well with you. If we are in Christ, there will be no darkness or sorrow for us.