

“THE GOSPEL AWAKENING.”

COMPRISING THE

SERMONS AND ADDRESSES,

Prayer Meeting Talks and Bible Readings,

OF THE

GREAT REVIVAL MEETINGS,

CONDUCTED BY

MOODY AND SANKEY,

IN THE CITIES OF

Philadelphia, New York, Chicago and Boston,

WITH THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE

CHRISTIAN CONVENTIONS OF MINISTERS AND LAYMEN.

From Verbatim Reports by our own Phonographer, and those of the New York Tribune, Chicago Inter-Ocean, Boston Journal and Boston Globe.

ALSO THE LIVES OF

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REPENTANCE.

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” ACTS 17:30.

I want to call your attention to a text you will find in the 17th chapter of Acts, 30th verse: “But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” You will see tonight that I have for my text a command, and not only a command, but it is a command to all in this hall tonight. And now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Not only here in New York, but everywhere. I have had some fault found with me since I have been in New York, because I have not preached repentance. I want to tell you one thing; if you do not repent, you will never see the kingdom of God. There will be no unrepentant sinners in heaven. An unrepentant sinner to God cannot love him. If a man does not repent, there is no hope for him in the world to come. Now repentance is not a godly sorrow for sin. I find a great many in the inquiry-room who are mourning, because they have not got this godly sorrow for sin, that they have heard of. In other words, they are anxious to be anxious. They think if they only had more repentance, more godly sorrow for sin, they could come to Christ. No one that is not a Christian has godly sorrow for sin. You must have it before you can be a Christian. Repentance is a change of mind. Repentance is turning right about. In the Old Testament it is, “Repent, repent, for why will ye die?” In the New Testament it is, “Repent and be born again.” Some one said man was born, turned away from God, and he must repent and turn back to him before he can be received. When John the Baptist repented, the word of God came to him in the wilderness. It burst upon him like the flashing of a meteor. His cry was, “Repent, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.” When Christ was baptized, he took up the wilderness cry, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” When he sent out the seventy disciples, two by two, he told them to go into all the towns and villages and proclaim this message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” But they turned away from him; they rejected him; they took the Lord of glory and crucified him, for they wanted him to have his kingdom on earth. Then he said, as many as would receive him, he would set up his kingdom in their hearts, and that is what he is doing now, setting up his kingdom in your hearts. There is not a man nor woman here tonight but he wants to set up his kingdom in your heart. If you will repent of sin and come to God, he will set up his kingdom in your hearts this very night.

I will tell you why you need to repent. Because you have false ideas of God. You cannot find an unconverted person in the world that has not a false idea of God. He thinks God is his worst enemy, and that the devil is his friend. Sinners are running away from their best friend in running away from God. Therefore you must change your mind about God before you repent. Instead of Satan being your friend and God being your enemy, just reverse your belief; and, instead of following Satan and serving him, you want to turn right around tonight and take the Lord of Glory; and his kingdom will be set up in your hearts. A great many think they cannot repent because they have not got this sorrow that they talk about. They think they must be wrought up in a high state of feeling before they can repent. But feelings are not repentance. A great many persons feel; but their feelings drive them into remorse and despair. I thought of that at the Young Men's Association Hall meeting yesterday. They were talking among the inquirers, and one or two thought they did not feel enough. One of them exclaimed, "I am lost; there is no hope for me;" and left the meeting. Her fear that she could not be saved gave her too much feeling. And that is the way Satan works. He makes you have too much feeling, or else not enough. All this is man's idea. With the command for all men to repent comes the power. God is not unjust. He does not come and say to all men, "Repent;" and not give them the power to do it. You can turn to him and live, if you will. He sets before us life and death. We are free agents; we are to choose. If we will turn to God, we will live. If we refuse to turn to him and reject him, we must die.

I want to warn you about this one thing—fear. Fear is not repentance. I do not have much hope of scaring men into the kingdom of God. If you could scare them in, they would be out again as quickly as you got them in. How many men I have met who professed religion, and thought they had true repentance, when some sudden accident happened—on the railroad, for instance, or out at sea. You know how men on shipboard will be converted. In fifteen minutes the whole crew will be down on their knees, crying to God. Fifteen minutes before they were cursing and blaspheming; but there came up a terrible gale, and they think the ship is going to sink, and all these men turn pious instantly. This is fear; this is not repentance. A great many men make professions on their dying beds; but when the danger of death no longer threatens, and they get well again, they get up and forget all about their conversions. That is fear; that is not what we want. Instead of waiting to be worked up to a certain pitch of alarm, we want cool, calm calculation. It is making up your mind that you will change company, that you will turn from sin and leave the world, and turn to God. And he will receive every one who does so come to him. Any man can repent here tonight; and

the Lord is willing to receive and save every one that will. If Nineveh repented, that wicked city, I do not know why New York cannot repent. I am sure if it does, the Lord God will have mercy. If a man truly repents and comes to God for mercy, he will get it. He delights in mercy; and he will have mercy upon every one who turns from his or her sins to him.

But there are a good many that are not sincere. "They do not really repent in their hearts. God can read the heart, and knows whether repentance is in the heart or in the head. It is with the heart that man must believe; for I may have sin in my heart, and make professions with my lips. I may believe in him with my head, but not in my heart. It is the heart God wants. For instance, take the son of David, take Absalom. You know after he murdered his brother he went off into a foreign country and was gone two years; and then they managed to get him back to Jerusalem. When he came back, the king refused to see him; but Absalom wanted to bring about a reconciliation. So he sent for Joab once or twice, but Joab would not come. So he set Joab's barn on fire one day, and Joab, hearing of it, came at once; and he said to Absalom, "Why, what did you do it for?" "Because I wanted you to come here, and I knew that would bring you. I want you to go to the king, my father, and tell him I am here. He has already refused to see me, but I want you to take word to him that I want him to come and examine me; and if he does not find any fault in me, I want him to receive me into court and into society again." Now that was not repentance, A good many come to God in just that way, saying: "Lord, I would have you examine me, and if you find no fault in me, take me." But there is no humility or repentance in that. And that father very foolishly forgave that son; he did not want forgiveness. He did not even ask for it. There was no repentance in him. He never confessed that he had sinned, and asked for mercy; but he came and said, "If you can find no fault in me." So David reinstated him, and the result was that Absalom drove him from his throne; and if God should let an unrepentant sinner enter heaven, there would be war there: he would dethrone the Almighty, if he could. There is one thing you cannot do, unrepentant sinner: you cannot go into the kingdom of God. You can come here; you can get into church; but you will never get into the kingdom of God without repentance.

God is very merciful; he is full of love, and he can pardon me. Well, you can go on in that faith, in that delusion if you like; but God says that if you don't repent you must die. God is true; he does not say that which is false. You can make light of it, young man or young woman, if you wish to, but the time is coming when, if you have not repented, there will not be much hope for you. You must be faithful; you must banish everything that is not good and holy.

Talk about God being merciful, and pardoning a man, whether he wants to be pardoned or not! A man must have a new heart, and know that he is a sinner, and seek for the love of God, before he will be pardoned. Suppose the Governor of a State—suppose the Governor of New York was so merciful and tender-hearted that he could not bear to have anyone in prison. A man is accused of murder; he is brought to trial; he is convicted and sentenced to death. While being led to the scaffold, the Governor meets him with a full pardon. He lets him out, and not only lets him out, but also those imprisoned at Sing Sing and Albany—lets everybody out; cannot bear to have any one in prison; how long would he be Governor, do you suppose? Why, you could not live in this State if there was to be no punishment annexed to sin. Every one would be a law unto himself; and every and all kinds of wickedness would be alive and seething in this community. If these wicked men could not get along in society, how could unrepentant sinners get along in heaven? A man who does not like to repent, but loves his sin, to him heaven would be a hell; he wouldn't care about heaven at all. If you don't repent, then there is no hope for you. Not only that, but how can God forgive a man if he doesn't want to be forgiven? Suppose your child were to tell you a lie, and you were to tell him that you would forgive him, if he asked to be forgiven; then suppose he did not ask or care about it, how would you forgive him? David fell lower than Cain. The former not only committed murder, but also adultery. But Cain did not ask to be forgiven, and David did; and he was forgiven. That is the great difference between them. You cannot find a place in the Bible that states that Cain asked to be forgiven. If he had, God would have forgiven him. God is willing to forgive every one who truly and honestly and sincerely wants to repent and lead a new life. The only time that God is represented as running is in the parable of the Prodigal Son. He is represented as running to receive the repentant sinner. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," we are told. But a man must repent before he is forgiven. If we do not repent, then the forgiveness would be of no use, as we would go right back again to our sins. It would be a false peace—a reconciliation that would not last. When a man turns against sin—against the world—then God is ready to forgive him. I never knew a man who has truly repented of his sin and turned away from it, that ever desired to go back to it. He may fall, it is true; but he will rise again. Satan may have him down, but he can't keep him down. He may wander off into the world away from the fold; but the world cannot keep him. There are a great many men who think that when they leave the world and become Christians that they will be in sorrow. Did you ever see a man sorry that turned to God? I never did. You may imagine the Prodigal sitting there opposite to the old man; all at once tears begin to

trickle down the young man's cheek. "What is the matter, my son?" says his father. "Oh! I was afraid I should go back into that foreign land again." "But you cannot conceive of such an idea, my boy." Of course, there was no danger of his going again to the husks and the hard, half-starved life he had then just left. So if you come to your father and say, "Father, I have sinned;" and if you truly repent and turn your back upon sin and the world and are reconciled to God, you won't want to go back again to the swine and the evils of your former life.

And I want to call your attention to this, that God commands all men *now* to repent; right here, right now, this dark and stormy night. But Satan comes along and whispers to you, "Put it off. Yes, defer it; there is plenty of time yet; don't be in a hurry about it." He knows if he can get you to put it off till tomorrow, that tomorrow never comes. And why will men put off this repentance until tomorrow, and day after day, in the way they do? Is it because they love sin so much? Is it because they want to have their own way? Why, it is very much like Pharaoh, when he had the plague of the frogs. He could not take a step but that he put his foot down on a frog. There were frogs in his bed-room, in his sitting-room. They got into his kneading-troughs. Cut a loaf of bread, and a frog would be found in it. It was frog, frog, frog. At last it annoyed him so he was compelled to send for Moses. And Moses said to him, When shall I ask the Lord to take them away? I remember well the first time I read that. I of course thought that Pharaoh, in answer to that question, would have said, "Now, now," with all his might, and with all the earnestness of which he was capable. Did he say that? Why, no; he said, "Tomorrow." He wanted the frogs all night. You laugh at that. Yet you want to hold on to your sins just as long as you are able. Well, are these sins so sweet that you like them so? Like them, then, if you want to; but you hear what God says—he commands you to repent and leave them.

Many of you would be shocked if I were to accuse you of swearing. Yet this command is as binding as that which prohibits the taking of God's name in vain. How can you say there is time enough to repent? How long do you know you are alive? Is it a time to repent in your dying hour? Are there many that truly repent then? I believe that God can have mercy in the dying hour and save people and I know that many are saved then but where one is saved, there are hundreds that go into the grave without God and without hope. They defer it too long; they put it off until it is too late. It is fear that seizes them then. The truth is that a good many make strong intentions when they are sick; but when they get well they go back at once to their old professions, and deny the Lord of Glory, and go straight to their besetting sins. So, it was not their repentance, but alarm. Death comes and

looks them in the face and they get alarmed; they are afraid to meet death; they get frightened. They make many vows, and many professions to lead a new and godly life; but when they get well, all these good intentions pass away like a morning cloud. I believe I am talking to some tonight who, when God had chastened them severely, promised and vowed that should they get well they would serve him, and love him, and honor him, and obey him, and follow him. Yet here they are this very night denying him, and slighting him, and scorning him, and fighting against him. They don't turn to him with all their heart.

I tell you, my friends, that ninety-nine out of every hundred die unexpectedly. Death is an unexpected visitor; he comes upon them suddenly and yet they are not ready. How many say: "I will put it off a little longer, there is time enough yet; and if I should become sick, I can repent on my dying bed." Will you offer God your wasted life? Is that the true treatment? Is that what God should expect from us? Is it noble? Is it manly? Is it right for us just to go on serving Satan, living for ourselves and the world, and just turn our backs upon him? The minute is coming when we have crossed the line. Take the pitiful steamer, the Atlantic, that was wrecked off the coast of Newfoundland three years ago, this month. There it was in the fog; it had been in the fog three days, and just plying along toward the shore and toward the rocks. There was just one moment when they could have stopped and reversed their engines, and saved the steamer; and there was one moment when it was too late. There was one moment when it crossed the line, and five hundred souls went down to a watery grave. There is a crisis in every man's life when he can stop. You can just stop tonight, and say: "By the grace of God, I will stop tonight, and I will just turn my face toward God." There isn't anything to hinder you; you can tonight just change your company; leave the world and join God's people.

But some people say, "I don't know what it is to repent." Let me give an illustration. I am not a politician; but in this country we have two parties. Supposing I belong to the Republican party, and there is an election coming on next Monday, and I have been a Republican for twenty years; and I am thoroughly convinced tonight that if the Republican party succeeds it will be ruin to the country. I am very patriotic and love my country; and I believe if the Democratic party succeeds it will be salvation to the country. How long does it take me to turn to the other party? It doesn't take me a minute; and I not only turn myself, but I try to induce every man I know to do the same thing. You are on the wrong side of the question; you can't have two masters; you can't be for God and mammon; you can't be for God and the devil, at the same time. Whose side are you on tonight, young man? Who claims you tonight? That young man says, "Jesus." Thank God for

that. If you are on the wrong one, rise like a man and say, "By the grace of God, I will go over on the Lord's side." You know that God has doomed this world to destruction; and if you stay in the world, it is sure ruin to you. You know if you belong to the other party, the Democrats would be glad to see you, and just so with the Republicans—don't think that they will give you so warm a welcome as the Lord. That is repentance. Right about face. You have been on the devil's side long enough; come right out tonight, and come on to the Lord's side.

Suppose I am to go down to Boston tonight; and I go down to the Union depot and say to a man I see there, "Can you tell me is this train going to Boston?" and the man says, "Yes;" and I go and get on board the train. And Mr. Dodge comes right along and says, "Where are you going?" I say, "I am going to Boston;" and Mr. Dodge says: "Well, you are on the wrong train; that train is going to Albany." "But Mr. Dodge, I am quite sure I am right; I asked a railroad man here, and he told me this was the train." And Mr. Dodge says: "Moody, I know all about these trains; I have lived here forty years, and go up and down on these trains every day;" and at last Mr. Dodge convinces me I am on the wrong train. That is conviction, not conversion. But if I don't remain on that train, but just get into the other train, that is repentance. Oh, tonight, say that you will, just by the grace of God, come right over on the Lord's side, and turn your face toward God, and he will bless you. Now it is the hardest thing for a man to become a Christian, and it is the easiest. You may think that is a paradox: very hard until he makes up his mind, and very easy when he has made up his mind. I have a little nephew, who took a Bible he saw lying on the table and threw it on the floor. His mother said to him, "Go and pick up uncle's Bible." He said he didn't want to. His mother said: "I didn't ask you whether you wanted to or not; go and pick it up." Then the little fellow said, "I won't." His mother said, "Why, Charlie, who taught you that naughty word?" when she found out that he not only knew what it meant, but he meant every word he said. The mother says: "Charlie, I never heard you talk so before. If you don't go and pick up uncle's Bible, I shall punish you." And the little fellow says, "I won't do it." She told him again, if he didn't pick up the Bible she would punish him, and he would have to pick it up too. Then he said he couldn't. I suppose he thought he couldn't; he didn't want to. That is the trouble with men; they don't want to come. Christ says, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." It is not because men can't come to God; it is because they won't. The little fellow looked at it as though he would like to do it, but he couldn't. At last he just got down on the floor and got both his arms around the book and tried, and said he couldn't. Now the mother says: "Charlie, do you pick up that book or I shall punish you, and you will have

to pick it up too.” I felt very much interested; for I knew if she didn’t break his will, he would break her heart eventually. At last she broke the little fellow’s will; and the minute his will was broke, he picked up the book just as easy as that.

When a man makes up his mind, he will accept God just as easy. God commands you today to repent. Bear in mind that God commands you to repent. Don’t flatter yourselves you have never broken God’s commandments. If you go out of that door without turning to him, you have done so; because here is a commandment direct from God. God commands all men now everywhere to repent; because he has appointed a day when he will judge the world in righteousness. If you go on to the bar of God without repentance and without turning from sin, sinner, there will be no hope for you.

I felt very much interested the other night at the young men’s meeting. A young man said he left London and got into this city three weeks ago. His mother was a very earnest Christian, had been praying for him; and he always told her that he didn’t want her to talk with him about Christianity, for he had no desire to become a Christian. He left home to get rid of her entreaties. As he was leaving home, his mother said to him: “Bear in mind that my prayers will follow you, and you will find God in America.” I suppose the young man was like the young man in the Scriptures, who, when his father told him to go into his vineyard and work, said he wouldn’t go, and afterwards changed his mind and went. And this young man began to repent, and when he got into New York he left the boat and came right up to the Hippodrome, and says he found God waiting for him right here. He just repented, and just received his mother’s God. Sinner, God is waiting for you. Are you willing to come to him? Is there any one who will repent and will return to God?

A man got up one morning and saw the sun shining into his room, and lifted up his heart to God and said: “Let thy love shine into my heart;” and he found God. Why? Because he turned his face towards the Sun of Righteousness. The trouble is, you have got your back towards God; you are running away from him. Ask for light, and it will come. God will never refuse you. Oh, tonight be wise—this dark, rainy, stormy night, repent of your sins and turn to God. Let us ask God tonight to turn our souls to him. Now, if you have really a desire for salvation, you can find it, just as that Englishman found it. God has been here all through the meeting, waiting with his arms stretched out, ready to welcome you.

A young man related this experience to me: “When my father died, my mother became more anxious than ever about my salvation. Sometimes she came and put her arms around me and wept over me; and I would push her

away, and say there was time enough. I heard one night a voice in my mother's chamber, crying to God for her boy, 'O God! save my boy.' At last I could not stand it any longer. I made up my mind I would not become a Christian, and I ran away. It was a long time before I heard from that mother, except indirectly; for she did not know where I was. I did not want her to know, because I knew she would come for me if she knew. After a while I heard that my mother was sick, and I thought I would go to her. On my way from the station to my home, I had to pass the cemetery. I stopped to take a look at my father's grave. It was a moonlight night, and the graves were very distinct; but by the side of my father's grave was a fresh one. The sod was loose as if only laid that day. Then I knew I had lost my mother. The thought struck me, 'Who will pray for me, now that my mother and father are gone?' I passed that sad night by their graves; and though I feel that God has answered my prayers and forgiven my sin, I never can forgive myself for bringing sorrow to my mother's heart."

Young man, you can repent tonight, and go home and cheer your mother's heart by turning to God.