

“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.

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ALSO THE LIVES OF

D. L. MOODY, I. D. SANKEY, P. P. BLISS, REV. JOSEPH COOK,
AND FRANCES E. WILLARD.

BY M. LAIRD SIMONS,

Author of “Companion Articles to the Pictorial Home Bible;” Editor of “Sunday Half-Hours with the Great Preachers;” and “Duyckinck’s Cyclopaedia of American Literature.”

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GRACE.

“For the law is given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” John1:17.

I am going to take, tonight, a subject, rather than a text. I want to talk to you about free grace. I say *free* grace; perhaps I had better drop the word “free,” and say just “Grace.” There is a sermon just in the meaning of the word. It is one of these words that are very little understood at the present time, like the word gospel. There are a great many that are partakers of the Spirit of Christ, or of grace, that don’t know its meaning. I think it is a good idea to go to Webster’s dictionary and look up the meaning of these words that we hear so often, but don’t fully understand. You seldom go into a religious assembly but you hear the word “grace;” and yet I was a partaker of the grace of God for years before I knew what it meant. I could not tell the difference between grace and law. Now grace means unlimited mercy, undeserved favor, or unmerited love. I had a man come to me today to see me, and his plea was that he was not fit to be saved. He said there was no hope for him, because he had sinned all his life, and there was nothing good in him. I was very much gratified to hear him say that. There is hope for that man—and I suppose he is here tonight; and there is hope for any man who thinks there is nothing good in him. That was the lesson Christ tried to teach the Jews—the lesson of grace. But they were trying to prove themselves to be better than other people. They were of the seed of Abraham, and under the Mosaic law, and better than the people about them.

Now let us get at the source of this stream that has been flowing through the world these hundreds of years. You know that men have been trying to find the source of the Nile. Wouldn’t it be as profitable to try to find the source of grace, because this is a stream we are all interested in? I want to call your attention to the 1st chapter of John, the 14th and 17th verses: “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Then the 17th verse: “For the law is given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Then in the 5th chapter of Romans, the 15th verse: “But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if, through the offence of one, many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” There it is called the free gift—it abounded unto many. Then in Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians, the 1st chapter and the 3d verse: “Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ.” Now bear in mind that he is the God of all grace. We wouldn’t know anything about grace, if it wasn’t for Jesus Christ. Men talk about grace, but they don’t know much about it. These bankers, they talk about grace. If you want to borrow a thousand dollars, if you can give good security, they will let you have it, and take your note, and you give your note, and say: “So many

months after date, I promise to pay a thousand dollars.” Then they give you what they call three days’ grace, but they make you pay interest for those three days. That isn’t grace. Then when your note comes due, if you can’t pay but \$950, they would sell everything you have got and make you pay the fifty dollars. Grace is giving the interest, principal and all. I tell you, if you want to get any grace, you must know God. He is the God of all grace. He wants to deal in grace; he wants to deal with that unmerited mercy, undeserved favor, unmerited love; and if God don’t love man until he is worthy of his love, he won’t have time for very much love for him. He is the God of all grace.

Unto whom does he offer grace? I would like to have you turn to your Bibles, to two or three texts; to the 21st chapter of Matthew, the 28th verse: “But what think ye? A certain man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward, he repented, and went. And he came to the second and said likewise. But he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.” Why? Because he loved those publicans and harlots more than he did those Pharisees? No; it was because they wouldn’t repent, because they wouldn’t take grace. They didn’t believe they needed the grace of God. A man who believes that he is lost, is near salvation. Why? Because you haven’t got to work to convince him that he is lost. Now here is a man that said he wouldn’t go, and then he saw he was wrong, and repented, and went; and this man was the man that grace held up. Any man or any woman here tonight who will repent and turn to God, God will save him. It doesn’t make any difference what your life has been in the past. He will turn to any that will turn to him. I was preaching one Sunday in a church where there was a fashionable audience, and after I got through the sermon, I said: “If there are any that would like to tarry a little while, and would like to stay and talk, I would be glad to talk with you.” They all got up, turned around, and went out. I felt as though I was abandoned. When I was going out I saw a man getting behind the furnace. He hadn’t any coat on and he was weeping bitterly. I said, “My friend, what is the trouble?” He said: “You told me tonight that I could be saved; that the grace of God would reach me. You told me that there wasn’t a man so far gone but the grace of God would reach him.” He said: “I am an exile from my family; I have drunk up \$20,000 within the last few months; I have drunk up the coat off my back; and if there is hope for a poor sinner like me, I should like to be saved.” It was just like a cup of refreshment to talk to that man. I didn’t dare give him money, for fear that he would drink it up; but I got him a place to stay that night, took an interest in him, and got him a coat, and six months after that, when I left Chicago for Europe—four months after—that man was one of the most earnest Christian men I knew. The Lord had blessed him wonderfully. He was an active, capable man.

The grace of God can save just such, if they will only repent. I don't care how low he has become, the grace of God can purge him of all sin, and place him among the blessed. In proportion as man is a sinner, much more does the grace of God abound. There isn't a man but that the grace of God will give him the victory, if he will only accept it.

I want you to turn a moment to a passage you will find in the 7th chapter of Mark: "And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid. For a certain woman whose daughter had an unclean spirit heard him, and came and fell at his feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled, for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord; yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." Now, just see how Christ dealt with that woman—a Syro-Phoenician, a Gentile; she didn't belong to the seed of Abraham at all. He came to save his own; but his own received him not. Christ was willing to give to the Jews grace. He dealt in grace with a liberal hand; but those that he was desirous to shower grace upon wouldn't take it. But this woman belonged to a different people—and just hear her story. I wonder what would happen if Christ should come and speak that way now? Suppose he should come into this assembly, and take any woman here and call her a dog. Why, that Syro-Phoenician woman might have said: "Call me a dog! Talk to me like that! Why I know a woman who belongs to the seed of Abraham who lives down near me, and she is the worst and meanest woman in the neighborhood. I am as good as she is any day." She might have gone away without a blessing, if she had not felt her utter destitution and lost condition. But Jesus only said that to her just to try her; and after calling her a dog, she only broke forth into a despairing cry, "Yes, Lord—yes, Lord." Christ had said it was more blessed to give than to receive. She took his place and received his blessing and his commands. She was satisfied to be given only a crumb, as long as he heard her petition. So, instead of giving her a crumb, she got a whole loaf. And so will you get the fullest beneficence of Christ, if you lift your heart up to him. Oh, that many would but just take her place; understand how low and unworthy they are, and cry unto Jesus. If you do, Christ will lift you up and bless you. But then the great trouble is, that people will not confess that they have need of grace. Such miserable Pharisaism is the worst feature of the present time. They think they can get salvation without the grace of God. The old saying is, that when you come to Jesus as a beggar you go away as a prince. Instead of doing that, they feel so self-confident and proud that they come always as princes and go away beggars. If you want the Son of God to deal with you, come as a beggar, and he will have mercy upon you. Look at the

great crowd going up to the Temple; they feel they have strength of themselves, and all pass on, proud and haughty, except one poor man, who smites himself on the breast and says, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

If you want to see the idea that the Jews had as to who was worthy, and how they thought that that kind of worthiness should be rewarded, just take your Bibles and look at the 7th chapter of Luke. It reads there: "Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus they besought him instantly,"—now, just listen—"saying that he was worthy for whom he should do this." Yes, that was the Jews' idea of the reason he should come, because he was "worthy." What made him worthy? "For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." He was not worthy because he was a sinner; oh, no; not at all. But he was worthy because "he hath built us a synagogue." Ha! that was the same old story—the story of the present day. There is a great deal of that now. Give that man the most prominent place in the church; let him have the best pew, and the one furthest up in church, because he is "worthy." He has built the church, perhaps; or he has endowed a seminary. No matter where his money came from. He may have got it gambling in stocks, or doing something else of a like character; but he has given it to us. Oh, yes, he is worthy. He may have made his enormous gains by distilling whiskey, even. Make room for him, he has got a gold ring on; make room for her, she has got a good dress on. So said the Jews: Now, Lord, come at once, for he hath built us a synagogue. Oh, he is worthy! You must not refuse or halt; you must come at once. That was the Jews' idea, and it is the idea of the world today. But how do you expect to get grace that way? The moment you put it on the ground of being worthy of it, then to receive it would not be grace at all. It would only amount to this: that if the Lord should give a man grace because he owed it to him, he would only be paying a debt. Jesus, however, went with them; in this instance, to teach them a lesson. Luke goes on to say: "Then Jesus went with them. And when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof." That is the kind of humility that we want; that is the kind of men we are hunting after—a man that is not worthy. See how quick he will be saved, when he is in that frame of mind. I suppose that someone had run in to tell this centurion that Jesus was approaching the house. And the centurion sent to him to say he was not worthy that he should come unto him; "neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed." This centurion had faith, at any rate. If he thought himself unworthy to come to Jesus, he sent friends; them that he considered better than himself. How common it is to think yourself good, and all other people bad! It

is good to see a man consider himself a poor unworthy man. “God, I didn’t think myself worthy to come unto thee; but say the word, and my servant shall be healed.” Thank God, he had faith! No matter how many sins we have, if we only have faith. In this case, because he had faith, Jesus healed his servant, without coming to him at all. He hadn’t to go to the house to examine his pulse, and see his tongue. Then he didn’t have to write out a prescription, and send him to the drug store. No: he said: “All right; your servant shall live.” “For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marveled.” It is only twice, I think, that Jesus marveled. He marveled at the unbelief of the Jews, and, again, at the faith of the centurion. “And turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, ‘I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.’” Here is a Gentile, he said in effect, here is a man not of the seed of Abraham; and yet what faith he shows! Why, here is a centurion; and he has more faith than the chosen people of God. Jesus granted the petition at once. When he saw a genuine check presented for payment, he cashed it at once. He pays instantly in the gold of heaven, without any hesitation or discount. “And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.” Found him perfectly well, leaping and dancing around the house, praising God. He had been at the point of death one minute; and the next, he had been made perfectly well.

You may be made whole, too, friends. You may even be on the borders of hell; and yet be made an inhabitant of the kingdom of heaven. Think of this, you men that are the slaves of strong drink. You may be mangled and bruised by sin; but the grace of God can save you. He is the God of grace. I hope that grace will flow into your souls tonight. Christ is the sinner’s friend. If you have read your Bibles carefully, you will see that Christ always took the side of the sinner. Of course, he came down on the hypocrites, and well he might. Those haughty Pharisees, he took sides against; but where a poor, miserable, humble penitent sinner came to him for grace, he always found it. You always read that he deals in grace; and tonight he will have mercy upon you that confess your sins to him. If you want to be saved, come right straight to him. He comes to deal in grace; he comes to bless, and why don’t you let him? Let him bless you now. Let him take your sins away now. A man said to me the other night, “I feel I have got to do something.” I said to him: “If this grace is unmerited and free, what are you going to do?” And I warn you tonight, my friends, against trying to work out your own salvation. It really is a question whether it doesn’t keep more people out of the kingdom of God than anything else. When at Newcastle, I was preaching one night, and I said that grace was free; that all were to stop trying to be saved. A woman came down and said to me: “Oh! how wretched I am; I have been trying to be a Christian, and yet you have been telling me tonight not to

try.” “Has that made you wretched?” I asked. “Yes; if I stop trying what will become of me?” I said: “But if grace is free what are you going to do? You cannot get it by working.” She said, “I can’t understand it.” “Well, let me call your attention now to a few passages of Scripture.” I turn to the 2d chapter of Ephesians, and the 8th and 9th verses: “For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God:”—“Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Salvation is a gift from God. If a man worked it out, he would boast of what he had done and say, “Oh, I did it.” A Scotchman once said it took two persons to effect his salvation—“God gave me his grace, and I fought against him.” It is not then for men to work, or they will boast of it; and when a man boasts, you may be sure there is no conversion. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, neither can the leopard change his spots. We do not work to get salvation; but we work it out after we get it. If we are ever saved, it must be by grace alone. If you pay anything for salvation, it ceases to be a gift. But God isn’t down here selling salvation. And what have you to give him, if he was? What do you suppose you would give? Ah, we’re bankrupt. “The gift of God is eternal life;” that’s your hope. “He that climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” Now, who will take salvation tonight? Oh, you may have it, if you will. “To him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace but of death.” The difference between Martha and Mary was, that Martha was trying to do something for the Lord; and Mary was just taking something from him, as a gift. He’ll smile upon you, if you’ll just take grace from him. “It’s to him that worketh not but believeth,” that blessings come. After you get to the Cross, there you may work all you can. If you are lost, you go to hell in the full blaze of the gospel. That grace is free to all—free to every policeman here, every fireman, every usher, every singer, every man, woman and child, every reporter, all of you. What more do you want God to do than he has done? Oh, I hope the grace of God will reach every heart here. Oh, be wise, and open the door of your hearts, and let in the King of glory. You’ll be saved when you believe. It is written: “For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all.” If you are lost, there is one thing you must do; and that is, trample the grace of God under your feet. It won’t be because you can’t be saved, but because you won’t. Young man, will you be saved tonight? It’s a question for you yourself to settle. If we could settle it for you, we would; but you must believe for yourself. Christ said to that poor sinning woman, “Neither do I condemn thee. Go and sin no more.” Oh, sinner, hear those words. Oh, may the grace of God reach your hearts tonight.