

“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

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THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

“God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.” LUKE 18:11. “God be merciful to me a sinner.” LUKE 18:13.

In this first parable, we are told that men ought to pray always and everywhere; that prayer should not be left to a few in the churches, but all men ought to pray. He gives us a picture, so that we may understand in what spirit we ought to pray. Two men went up to the temple—one to pray to himself, and the other to pray to God; and I think it will be safe to divide the audience into two bodies, and put them under these two heads. I think, however, whether we divide the audience or not, we come under these two heads—those who have the spirit of the Publican, and those who have the spirit of the Pharisee. You can find that the whole community may be divided into these two classes. The spirit of the prodigal and the spirit of an elder brother are still in the world; the spirits of Cain and Abel are still in the world, and these two are representative men. One of them trusted in his own righteousness, and the other didn't have any trust in it; and I say I think all men will come under these two heads. They have either given up all their self-righteousness—renounced it all and turned their back upon it—or else they are clinging to their own righteousness; and you will find that these self-righteous men, who are always clinging to their own righteousness, are continually measuring themselves by their neighbors. “I thank God that I am not as other men are.” That was the spirit of that Pharisee, and that is the spirit today of one class in this community; and the other class comes under the head of this other man.

Now let us look at the man Christ pictured first. It is evident that he was full of egotism, full of conceit, full of pride; and I believe, as I have said before on this platform, that is one of the greatest enemies the Son of God has today; and I believe it keeps more men from the kingdom of God than anything else. Pride can grow on any soil, in any climate; no place is too hot for it, and no place is too cold for its growth. How much misery has it caused in this world! How many men here are kept from salvation by pride? Why, it sprung up into heaven, and for it Lucifer was cast out; by pride, Nebuchadnezzar lost his throne. As he walked through Babylon he cried, “Is not this great Babylon which I have built?” and he was hurled from his throne. How many men who have become drunkards, who are all broken up—will gone, health gone—and yet are just as full of pride as the sun is of light. It won't let them come to Christ and be saved.

A great many live like this Pharisee—only in the form of religion; they don't want the wheat, only the husk; they don't want the kernel, only the

shell. How many men are there in Chicago who are just living on empty form? They say their prayers, but they don't mean anything. Why this Pharisee said plenty of prayers; but how did he pray? He prayed with himself. He might as well pray to this post. He didn't pray to God, who knew his heart a thousand times better than he did himself. He thought he knew himself. He forgot that he was as a sepulcher, full of dead men's bones; forgot that his heart was rotten, corrupt, and vile, and he comes and spreads out his hands and looks up to heaven. Why the very angels in heaven veil their faces before God as they cry, "Holy, holy, holy." But this Pharisee comes into the temple and spreads out his hands, and says: "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are; I fast twice a week." He set before God what he had done in comparison with other men, and was striking a balance and making out God to be his debtor, as thousands in Chicago are doing today; and then he says, "I give one-tenth of all I possess." I suppose, if he was living in Chicago now, and we had gone to him and asked him for a donation to put up this Tabernacle, he would have said: "Well, I think it will do good; yes, I think it will—it may reach the vagabonds and outcasts—I don't need it, of course—but if it will reach that class, it will do good. I will give \$50, especially if you can get it in the morning papers; if you can have it announced, 'John Jones gave \$50 to build the Tabernacle.'" That's the way some of the people give donations to God's cause; they give in a patronizing way; but in this manner God won't accept it. If your heart doesn't go with your gift, God will not accept it. This Pharisee says: "I give one-tenth of all I have; I keep up the services in the temple; I fast twice a week." He fasted twice a week, although once was only called for; and he thought because of this he was far above other men. A great many people nowadays think, because they don't eat meat, only fish, on Fridays, they deserve great credit; although they go on sinning all the week. Look at this prayer; there's no confession there. He had got so bad, and the devil had so covered up his sins, that he was above confession.

The first thing we have to do, when we come to God, is to confess. If there is any sin clustering around the heart, bear in mind we can have no communion with God. It is because we have sin about our hearts, that our prayers don't go any higher than our head. We cannot get God's favor, if we have any iniquity in our heart. People like the Pharisee, have only been educated to pray. If they didn't pray every night, their conscience would trouble them, and they would get out of bed and say their prayers, but the moment they get off their knees, perhaps you may hear them swearing. A man may just as well get a string of beads and pray to them; it would do him as much good. This Pharisee's prayer showed no spirit of contrition; there was no petition; he didn't ask anything from God. That is a queer kind

of prayer. "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterous, or even as this poor publican." Not a petition in his prayer. It was a prayerless prayer; it was downright mockery. But how many men have just got into that cradle, and been rocked to sleep by the devil. A short time ago I said to a man, "Are you a Christian?" "Of course I am; I say my prayers every night." "But do you ever pray?" "Didn't I tell you I prayed?" he answered. "But do you ever pray?" "Why, of course I do; haven't I said so?" was his reply. I found that he prayed, but he only went through the form, and after a little, I found that he had been in the habit of swearing! "How is this?" I asked; "swearing and praying! Do your prayers ever go any higher than your head?" "Well," he replied, "I have sometimes thought that they didn't." My friends, if you are not in communion with God, your prayers are but forms; you are living in formalism, and your prayers will go no higher than your head. How many people in this assembly just go through the form? They cannot rest unless they say their prayers. How many there are with whom it is only a matter of education.

But this man trusted in his own righteousness; he ignored the mercy of God, the love of Jesus Christ. He was measuring himself by his own rule. Now, if you want to measure yourself, do it by God's law, by God's requirements. A great many people have a rule of their own by which they measure themselves, and by that rule are perfectly ready and willing to forgive themselves. So it was with this Pharisee. The idea of coming to God and asking his forgiveness never enters his mind. While talking to a man—one of those Pharisees—some time ago about God and his need of Christ, he said: "I can do without Christ; I don't want him; I'm ready to stand before God any time." That man was trusting in his own righteousness. There are a good many in Chicago like this man; They think they can get on without Christ, without a mediator. Now take a good look at this man. You know I have an idea that the Bible is like an album. I go into a man's house, and, while waiting for him, I take up an album from a table and open it. I look at a picture. "Why, that looks like a man I know." I turn over and look at another. "Well, I know that man." By and by I come upon another. "Why, that man looks like my brother." I am getting pretty near home. I keep turning over the leaves. "Well, I declare, there is a man who lives in the street I do; why, he is my next-door neighbor. And then I come upon another, and I see myself. My friends, if you read your Bibles you will find your own pictures there. It will just describe you. Now it may be there is some Pharisee here tonight; if there is, let him turn to the 3d chapter of John, and see what Christ said to the Pharisee: "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, no doubt, was one of the fairest specimens of a man in Jerusalem in those days; yet he had to

be born again, else he couldn't see the kingdom of God. But you may say: "I am not a Pharisee; I am a poor, miserable sinner, too bad to come to him." Well, turn to the woman of Samaria, and see what he said to her.

See what a difference there was between that Publican and that Pharisee. There was as great a distance between them as between the sun and the moon. One was in the very highest station, and the other occupied the very worst. One had only himself and his sins to bring to God; and the other was trying to bring in his position and his aristocracy. I tell you, when a man gets a true sight of himself, all his position and station and excellences drop. See this prayer: "I thank God," "I am not," "I fast," "I give," "I possess." Why, if he had delivered a long prayer, and it had been put into the printers' hands, they would have had to send out for some "I's." "I thank God," "I," "I," "I." When a man prays, not with himself, but to God, he does not exalt himself, he doesn't pass a eulogy upon himself. He falls flat down in the dust before God. In that prayer you don't find him thanking God for what he had done for him. It was a heartless, prayerless prayer—merely a form. I hope the day will come when formal prayers will be a thing of the past. I think the reason why we cannot get more people out to the meetings is, because we have too many formal prayers in the churches. These formal Christians get up like this Pharisee, and thank God they are better than other men; but when a man gets a look at himself, he comes in the spirit of the Publican. You see this man standing praying with himself; but God could not give him anything. He was too full of egotism, too full of himself; there was no religion in it. God could not bless him.

Now, for a moment, take a look at that poor Publican. Just give his prayer your attention. There was no capital "I" there, no exalting of himself—"God be merciful to this Pharisee; God be merciful to the other people who have injured me; God be merciful to the church members, who have not been true to their belief." Was that his prayer? Thank God, he got to himself! "God be merciful to me, a sinner." It was very short. He had got his eye upon himself; he saw that his heart was vile; he could not lift his eyes to heaven; but, thank God, he could lift his heart to heaven. There is not a poor Publican in the audience tonight but can send up this prayer. No matter what your past life has been—no matter if it has been as black as hell—if you but send up the prayer it will be heard. He didn't buy his own righteousness; and God heard his prayer. Spurgeon, speaking of that publican, said he had the soundest theology of any man in all England. He came before God, struck his hand on his heart, and cried: "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

There was a man at one of our meetings in New York City, who was moved by the Spirit of God. He said: "I am going home, and I am not going

to sleep tonight till Christ takes away my sin; if I have to stay up all night and pray, I'll do it." He had a good distance to walk, and as he went along he thought: "Why can't I pray now as I go along, instead of waiting to go home?" But he did not know a prayer. His mother had taught him to pray; but it was so long since he had uttered a prayer that he had forgotten. However, the publican's prayer came to his mind. Everybody can say this prayer. That man in the gallery yonder, that young lady over there, "God be merciful to me a sinner." May God write it on your hearts tonight. If you forget the sermon, don't forget that prayer. It is a very short prayer, and it has brought joy—salvation—to many a soul. Well, this prayer came to the man, and he began, "God be merciful to me a —;" but before he got to 'sinner', God blessed him. He got up in the young converts' meeting, and told us, as he said those words the light of eternal truth broke upon his soul—the light from the celestial regions of glory broke upon him; and when we left New York, he was walking in the righteousness of God.

In a meeting recently, a man got up. I didn't know him at first. When I was here, he was a rumseller, and broke up his business and went to the mountains. This is how it happened. When I was here before, he opened a saloon and a grand billiard hall. It was one of the most magnificent billiard halls on the West side, all elegantly gilded and frescoed. For the opening he sent me an invitation to be present, which I accepted, and went around before he opened it. I saw the partners, and asked them if they would allow me to bring a friend. They asked me who it was. "Well, it isn't necessary to tell who it is; but I never go without him." They began to mistrust me. "Who is it?" they again inquired. "Well, I'll come with him; and if I see anything wrong, I'll ask him to forgive you." "Come," said they, "We don't want any praying." "You've given me an invitation, and I am coming." "But if you come, you needn't pray." "Well," said I, "I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll compromise the matter; and if you don't want me to come and pray for you then, let me pray for both of you now;" which they agreed to. It turned out that one of them had a praying mother; and the prayer touched his heart, and the other had a mother in heaven. I asked God to bless their souls, and just to break their business to pieces. In a few months, their business did go all to pieces. The man who got up in the prayer meeting told me a story that touched my soul. He said with his business he hadn't prospered; he failed, and went away to the Rocky Mountains. Life became a burden to him, and he made up his mind that he would go to some part of the Mountains and put an end to his days. He took a knife with him, which he proposed driving into his heart. He sought a part of the Mountains to kill himself. He had the knife ready to plunge into his heart, when he heard a voice—it was the voice of his mother. He remembered her

words when she was dying, even though he was a boy then. He heard her say, "Johnny, if ever you get into trouble, pray to God." That knife dropped from his hand, and he asked God to be merciful to him. He was accepted, and he came back to Chicago and lifted up his voice to him. He may be in this Tabernacle, tonight. Just the moment he cried for mercy, he got it. If you only cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," he will hear you. Is there anything to hinder you from doing this tonight? Is there anything to hinder any man, woman or child in this hall tonight from sending up this prayer. What a glorious thing it would be if every soul in this hall would but lift up their hearts with the prayer, "God be merciful to me, a sinner."

Now, a man asked me the other day: "How is it that a man who has lived an ungodly life can come in here and be saved all at once?" Why God so loves the sinner that he is willing to give them salvation instantly. He wants to save every one now in Chicago. The trouble is that we don't want God to be merciful; we don't want his forgiveness. God is full of compassion and love. It is the spirit of the devil that makes you believe the sins committed during the past twenty years cannot be forgiven tonight. My friends, won't you try him? But I will take you who believe this way, upon your own ground. Here is a father down here. He is full of self-righteousness; he is a Pharisee. He has a boy, whom he has not seen for twenty years. Well, as he goes home tonight, his servants tell him, "Your absent son has returned." "What!" he exclaims, "my absent boy Johnny here—in this house?" "Yes," he is down in the kitchen; we wanted him to go into the parlor, but he wouldn't; he said the kitchen was good enough for him." He tells those servants to take him to his son; and for a moment the boy looks at him; "Father, father," he cries, "I have been bad; I haven't done a good act in twenty years; I have been very unkind to you; but, father, won't you forgive me?" Say, father, wouldn't you forgive him? Wouldn't you? I would like to see a man in Chicago who would not. I can give you a little experience of my own family. Before I was four years old, the first thing I remember was the death of my father. He had been unfortunate in business and failed. Soon after his death, the creditors came in and took everything. My mother was left with a large family of children. One calamity after another swept over the entire household. Twins were added to the family, and my mother was taken sick. The eldest boy was fifteen years of age, and to him my mother looked as a stay in her calamity; but all at once that boy became a wanderer. He had been reading some of the trashy novels, and the belief had seized him that he had only to go away and make a fortune. Away he went. I can remember how eagerly she used to look for tidings of that boy; how she used to send us to the post-office to see if there was a letter from him, and recollect how we used to come back with the sad news, "No let-

ter.” I remember how in the evenings we would sit beside her in the New England home, and we would talk about our father; but the moment the name of that boy was mentioned, she would hush us into silence. Some nights, when the wind was very high, and the house, which was upon a hill, would tremble at every gust, the voice of my mother was raised in prayer for that wanderer who had treated her so unkindly. I used to think she loved him more than all the rest of us put together; and I believe she did. On a Thanksgiving day—you know that is a family day in New England—she used to set a chair for him, thinking he would return home. Her family grew up, and her boys left home. When I got so that I could write, I sent letters all over the country, but could find no trace of him. One day, while in Boston, the news reached me that he had returned. While in that city I remember how I used to look for him in every store—he had a mark on his face; but I never got any trace. One day while my mother was sitting at the door, a stranger was seen coming toward the house; and when he came to the door, he stopped. My mother didn’t know her boy. He stood there with folded arms, and a great beard flowing down his breast, his tears trickling down his face. When my mother saw those tears, she cried, “Oh, it’s my lost son,” and entreated him to come in. But he stood still. “No, mother,” he said, “I will not come in till I hear first you have forgiven me.” Do you believe she was not willing to forgive him? Do you think she was likely to keep him long standing there? She rushed to the threshold and threw her arms around him, and breathed forgiveness. Ah, sinner, if you but ask God to be merciful to you, a sinner; ask him for forgiveness, although your life has been bad; ask him for mercy, and he will not keep you long waiting for an answer. May that be the cry of every lost soul in this Tabernacle tonight. “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” Now, do you want to have mercy? Say, young man, will you ask him tonight? Young lady, will this be your cry tonight, “God; be merciful to me, a sinner?” May the love of God break every obdurate heart here tonight, and may this be the cry of every sinner. Don’t have so much pride; don’t have the spirit of the Pharisee—that’s the spirit that keeps you from entering the inquiry-room and coming to the God of love, the God of compassion, the God of mercy, of peace, of joy, of everlasting happiness. Let every man and woman in this assemblage, out of Christ, take the place of this Publican, and go into the inquiry-room.