

“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

D. L. MOODY, I. D. SANKEY, P. P. BLISS, REV. JOSEPH COOK,
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ILLUSTRATED.

CHICAGO:

L. T. PALMER & CO.

Philadelphia, WILLIAM FLINT.

St. Louis, SCAMMELL & COMPANY

Springfield, Mass. STAR PUBLISHING CO.

1877.

CONVERSION OF SAUL.

“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me.” ACTS 9:4.

You who were here last night know that I was speaking on the Prodigal Son. Tonight, I want to take up another man for my text —the one we have been speaking about; a much harder case than the prodigal, because he didn't think he needed a Savior. You needn't have talked a great while to that prodigal before you could have convinced him that he needed a Savior. It is easy to reach a prodigal's heart, when he reaches the end of his rope. This man stood high in the estimation of the people; he stood, as it were, at the top round of the ladder, while the prodigal was at the bottom. This man was full of self-righteousness; and if you had tried to pick out a man in Jerusalem as a hopeless case, so far as accepting Jesus of Nazareth as a Savior, you would have picked out Saul. He was the most utterly hopeless case you could have found. I would sooner have thought of the conversion of Pilate than of this man. When they were putting to death the martyrs to the Cross, he had cheered on the murderers; but, in spite of all this, we find the Son of God coming and knocking at his heart, and it was not long before he received him as his Savior. You can see him as he goes to the chief priests of Jerusalem, getting the necessary documents that he might go to Damascus, that he might go to the synagogue there and get all who were calling upon the Lord Jesus Christ cast into prison. He was going to stamp out the teachers of the new gospel. One thing that made him so mad probably was, that when the disciples were turned out of Jerusalem, instead of stopping they went all around and preached. Phillip went down to Samaria, and probably there was a great revival there; and the news had come from Damascus that the preachers had actually reached that place. This man was full of zeal, and full of religion. He was a religious man; and no doubt he could say a prayer as long as any one in Jerusalem. He had kept the laws faithfully, and been an honest and upright man. The people then would never have dreamed of him requiring a Savior. A good many people right here in Chicago would say: “He is good enough. To be sure, he don't believe in Jesus Christ; but he is a good man.” And there's a good many in Chicago who don't believe in him. They think if they pay their debts, and live a moral life, they don't need to be converted. They don't want to call upon him; they want to get Christ and all his teaching out of the way, as this man did. That's what they have been trying to do, for eighteen centuries. He just wanted to stamp it out, with one swoop. So he got the necessary papers, and away he went down to Damascus. Suppose, as he rode out of the gate of Jerusalem on his mission, any one had said to him, “You are going down to prosecute the preachers of Christ; but you'll come back a

preacher yourself.” If a man said this, he would not have had his head on his shoulders five minutes. He would have said, “I hate him; I abhor him; that’s me.” He wants to get Christ and his disciples out of the way. He was no stranger to Christ; he knew his working; for, as Paul said to Agrippa, “This thing was not done in a corner.” He knew all about Christ’s death. Probably he was acquainted with Nicodemus, and the members of the Sanhedrim who were against Christ. Perhaps he was acquainted with Christ’s disciples, and with all their good deeds. Yet he had a perfect hatred for the gospel and its teachers; and he was going down to Damascus, just to have all those Christians put in prison. You see him as he rides out of Jerusalem with his brilliant escort; and away he goes through Samaria, where Philip was. He wouldn’t speak to a Samaritan, however. The Jews detested the Samaritans. The idea of him speaking to an adulterous Samaritan would have been ridiculous to him. So he rode proudly through the nation, with his head raised, breathing slaughter to the children of God. Damascus was about one hundred and thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem; but we are not told how long he took for that journey. Little did he think that nineteen hundred years after, in this country, then wild, there would be thousands of people gathered just to hear the story of his journey down to Damascus. He has arrived at the gates of the city, and he has not got cooled off, as we say. He is still breathing revenge. See him as he stands before that beautiful city. Someone has said that this is the most beautiful city in the world; and we are told that when Mohammed came to it he turned his head away from it, lest the beauty of it would take him from his God. So this young man comes to the city; and he tells us the hour when he reached it. He never forgets the hour, for it was then that Christ met him. He says he “saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun;” he saw the light of heaven, and a glimpse of that light struck him to the ground. And when God speaks to the sinner, that’s where he ought to be. Every man ought to fall on his face. From that light a voice called, “Saul, Saul.” Yes, the Son of God knows his name. Sinner, God knows your name. He knows all about you. He knows the street you live in, the number of your house, because he told Ananias where Saul lived when he went there. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” How the words must have gone down to his soul. He stopped; the words went to his heart. And I find preaching is not attended with much good till men just stop and take the gospel to themselves. May every sinner here tonight hear Christ calling him by name. We want a personal Christ. Well, when the question was put to him, “Why persecutest thou me?” could he give a reason? Is there any sinner can give a reason for persecuting Christ? Oh, why do you persecute Christ? I can imagine some of you saying: “I never persecuted Christ. I have a great many sins; I swear sometimes, sometimes drink; but I always speak respectfully of Christ.” Do

you? Do you never speak disrespectfully of his disciples and God's children? Remember, if you speak disrespectfully of them, you treat him with disrespect. When Christ asked him this question, "Why persecutest thou me?" He might have added: "I lived on the earth thirty years, and I never did you any hurt: I never did you any injury; I never even injured your friends: I came into the world to bless you. Why persecutest thou me?" Why, my friends, all the blessings you ever got came from him, why can't you live for him; why do you go on hating Christ? Is there a man in this assembly who can give a reason why he don't love him? Is there any reason to be found, in the wide wide world, why men and women should not love Christ?

I remember hearing of a Sabbath-school teacher who had led every one of her children to Christ. She was a faithful teacher. Then she tried to get her children to go out and bring other children into the school. One day, one of them came and said she had been trying to get the children of a family to come to the school; but the father was an infidel, and he wouldn't allow it. "What is an infidel?" asked the child. She had never heard of an infidel before. The teacher went on to tell her what an infidel was; and she was perfectly shocked. A few mornings after the girl happened to be going past a post office on her way to school; and she saw the infidel father coming out. She went up to him and said, "Why don't you love Jesus?" If it had been a man who had said that to him, probably he would have knocked him down. He looked at her, and walked on. A second time she put the question "Why don't you love Jesus?" He put out his hand and put her gently away from him, when, on looking down, he saw her tears. "Please, sir, tell me why you don't love Jesus?" He pushed her aside, and away he went. When he got to his office, he couldn't get this question out of his mind. All the letters seemed to read, "Why don't you love Jesus?" All the men in his place of business seemed to say, "Why don't you love Jesus?" When he tried to write, his pen seemed to shape the word, "Why don't you love Jesus?" He couldn't rest, and on the street he went to mingle with the business men; but he seemed to hear a voice continually asking him, "Why don't you love Jesus?" He thought, when night came and he got home with his family, he would forget it; but he couldn't. He complained that he wasn't well, and went to bed. But when he laid his head on the pillow that voice kept whispering, "Why don't you love Jesus?" He couldn't sleep. By and by, about midnight, he got up and said: "I will get a Bible, and find where Christ contradicts himself; and then I'll have a reason." And he turned to the book of John. My friends, if you want a reason for not loving Christ, don't turn to John. He knew him too long. I don't believe a man can read the gospel of John without being turned to Christ. Well, he read it through, and found no reason why he shouldn't love him; but he found

many reasons why he should. He read this book, and before morning he was on his knees; and the question put by that little child led to his conversion. My friends, if you make up your minds not to go to sleep tonight without a good reason why you shouldn't love him, you will love him. There is no reason, as I said before, in the wide, wide world, why you shouldn't love Christ. Go down to the dark corners of the earth—even to hell; and ask them there if they can give you any reason for not loving Christ. My friends, the lost spirits can give you no reason. Neither in earth, nor in hell, can any reason be found for not loving him. Tonight, put this question to yourselves, "What keeps me from coming to Christ?" "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Oh, may the question go down to our hearts tonight, and may you not sleep till you can look up and say: Christ is my Savior; he is my Redeemer;" and until you can see your title clear, for one of those mansions he has gone to prepare.

When this question was put to Saul, "Why persecutest thou me?" He supplemented it by saying, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The thought I want to call attention to is this, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." You and I would not have had any compassion upon Saul, if we had been in Christ's place. We would have said, the hardship is upon the poor Christians in Damascus. But the Lord saw differently. He said, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." In those days, when they didn't drive their camels with whips, they had a piece of stick with a sharp piece of steel at the end called a prick, and it was applied to the animal. A lady said to me some time ago, "It is easy to sin, but it is hard to do right;" or, in other words, it is hard to serve God, and easy to serve the devil. I think you will find hundreds of people in Chicago who think this way. There is not a lie which ever came from hell so deceptive as this. It is as false as any lie the devil ever uttered. We want to drive that lie back where it came from. My friends, it is not true, God is not a hard master; he is a lenient one. What did Christ say to Saul? "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." There is a period at which the sinner arrives when he sees the truth of this. How many men have said to me, "Mr. Moody, the way of the transgressor is pretty hard." It is a common expression. I have been with men in court and in prison, who have said this. It is not a hard thing to serve God, if you are born of God; but, my friends, it is a hard thing to serve Satan. The way of sin grows darker and harder to a man, the longer he is in it. Before I came down, I took up a paper, and the first thing I saw was an account of a Boston man who had forged, and it closed by saying his path was a hard, flinty one.

Now, take up any class of sinners in Chicago. We've representatives here tonight. Take the harlot. Do you think her life is an easy one? It is very short. The average one is seven years. Just look at her as she comes up to

the city from the home where she has left sisters and a mother, as pure as the morning air. She came down to the city, and is now in a low brothel. Sometimes her mind goes back to the pure home where her mother prayed for her; where she used to lay down her head on that mother's bosom, and she used to press the sweet face of her child to her own. She remembers when she went to Sunday-school; remembers when her mother tried to teach her to serve God, and now she is an exile. She don't want to go home. She is full of shame. She looks into the future, and sees darkness before her. In a few short years, she dies the death of a harlot; and she is laid away in an unknown grave. All the flattery of her lovers, is hollow and false. Is her life a happy one? Ask a harlot tonight, and she will tell you the way of the transgressor is hard; and then ask the pure and virtuous if Christ is a hard master.

Go ask that drunkard if his way is an easy one. Why, there was a man whom I knew who was an inveterate drinker. He had a wife and children. He thought he could stop whenever he felt inclined; but he went the ways of most moderate drinkers. I had not been gone more than three years; and when I returned, I found that the mother had gone down to her grave with a broken heart, and that man was the murderer of the wife of his bosom. Those children have all been taken away from him; and he is now walking up and down those streets homeless. But four years ago he had a beautiful and a happy home, with his wife and children around him. They are gone; probably he will never see them again. Perhaps he has come in here tonight. If he has, I ask him: Is not the way of the transgressor hard? Is it not hard to fight against Him? Do not go against your Maker. Don't believe the devil's lies; don't think God is a hard master. If you persist in wrong-doing, you will find out the truth of what was said to Saul, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Look again at that rum-seller. When we talk to him he laughs at us. He tells us there is no hell, no future; there is no retribution. I've got one man in my mind now, who ruined nearly all the sons in his neighborhood. Mothers and fathers went to him, and begged him not to sell their children liquor. He told them it was his business to sell liquor; and he was going to sell liquor to every one who came. The place was a blot upon the place, as dark as hell. But that man had a father's heart. He had a son; he didn't worship God, but he worshiped that boy. He didn't remember that whatsoever a man soweth so shall he reap. My friends, they generally reap what they sow. It may not come soon; but the retribution will come. If you ruin other men's sons, some other man will ruin yours. Bear in mind, God is a God of equity; God is a God of justice. He is not going to allow you to ruin men, and then escape yourself. If we go against his laws, we suffer. Time rolled on, and that young man became a slave to drink; and his life became such a

burden to him that he put a revolver to his head and blew his brains out. The father lived a few years; but his life was as bitter as gall, and then he went down to his grave in sorrow. Ah, my friends, "It is hard to kick against the pricks." You may go out of the Tabernacle laughing at everything I say; but it is true as the God in heaven, that the day of retribution will come. It is only a question of time.

See that false-hearted libertine! The day is coming when he will reap what he is sowing. He may not be called to reap it in this world; but he will be brought up before the bar of heaven, and there the harvest will be seen. These men, who have got smooth, oily tongues, go into society and play their part, and still walk around. If a poor woman falls, she's ruled out; but these false-hearted libertines still go up and down the world. The eyes of justice may not find them out. They think themselves secure; but they are deceiving themselves. By and by, the God of heaven will summon them to give an account. They say then that God will not punish them; but the decree of heaven has gone forth, "Whatsoever a man soweth so shall he reap."

One week ago, I preached on the text, "Christ came to heal the broken-hearted." I told you, just before I came down, that I had received a letter from a broken-hearted wife. Her husband one night came in, to her surprise, and said he was a defaulter and must fly; and he went, she knew not where. He forsook her and two children. It was a pitiful letter; and the wail of that poor woman seems to ring in my ears yet. That night, up in that gallery, was a man whose heart began to beat when I told the story, thinking it was him I meant, till I came to the two children. When I got through, I found that he had taken money which did not belong to him, intending to replace it; but he failed to do so, and fled. He said: "I have a beautiful wife and three children; but I had to leave her and come to Chicago, where I have been hiding. The Governor of the State has offered a reward for me." My friends, a week ago this poor fellow found out the truth of this text. He was in great agony. He felt as if he could not carry the burden; and he said: "Mr. Moody, I want you to pray with me. Ask God for mercy for me." And down we went on our knees. I don't know if ever I felt so deeply for a man in my life. He asked me if I thought he should go back. I told him to ask the Lord; and we prayed over it. That was Sunday evening, and I asked him to meet me on the Monday evening. He told me how hard it was to go back to that town and give himself up, and disgrace his wife and children. They would give him ten years. Monday came, and he met me, and said: "Mr. Moody, I have prayed over this matter, and I think that Christ has forgiven me; but I don't belong to myself. I must go back and give myself up. I expect to be sent to the penitentiary; but I must go." He asked me to pray for his wife and children, and he went off. He will be there now, in the hands of justice. My friends, don't say the way of the transgressor is not hard. It is

hard to fight against sin; but it is a thousand times harder to die without hope. Will you not just accept Christ? Take Christ as your hope, your life, your truth.