

“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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THE YOKE OF JESUS.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” MATTHEW 11:29, 30.

There is a very common excuse, that it is a very hard thing to be a Christian. How many times I have heard that in the last four weeks! “I would like to be a Christian; but it is a very hard thing to be a Christian.” Now think of that, that the Lord is a hard master and the devil is an easy one; for we are serving one or the other; there is no such thing as being neutral. A man cannot serve God and mammon. We must be serving the prince of darkness, or the Lord Jesus Christ, There is no such thing as a man being on both sides, at the same time. Is it true that the Lord is a hard master, and the devil an easy one? It seems to me that the ones who can testify in this matter are those who have served both masters. I have yet to find the first man or woman, that ever served the Lord Jesus, that came with the testimony that he is a hard master. I have yet to find the man that has served the devil that does not testify that he is a hard master. The way of the transgressor is hard.

You go to New York, and as you go down to the Tombs you will find that, after the men have been tried in the police court, they are taken right out of the court and into the Tombs over a little iron bridge, having an iron railing. On one side of the bridge is written, in letters of iron, “The way of the transgressor is hard;” on the other side it is called the “Bridge of Sighs.” Over that bridge, hundreds of young men pass every year. You ask them if they haven’t found the way of the transgressor hard. Go down to yonder prison, and ask that man whose days are blasted for this life, who has broken the hearts of all his friends and disgraced them, if he hasn’t found the way of the transgressor hard. Go and ask that child of God, who has been serving Christ twenty or thirty years, whether he is a hard master. He will tell you that his yoke is easy and his burden light. I don’t believe there was a greater lie ever came out of hell than that God is a hard master, and the devil an easy one. “The way of the transgressor is hard.” And all the men who are serving the devil faithfully will say that they find the way hard. You take the most faithful follower that Satan has in Boston today, and bring him on to this platform; and he will tell you that he has found that broad way a hard way; it has been dark; he has had the lashings of conscience, and it has been terribly dark and gloomy; and he will testify that he has found the way of the transgressor hard. Then go and find the most eminent saint of God there is in Boston, and you will see heaven beaming forth on his countenance and eternity flashing in his eye, and his face light up as

he talks about his master; and he will testify that the Lord Jesus has been an easy master, and the devil a hard one.

My dear friend, it is a truth, God is not a hard master. Don't let those young people think it is a hard thing to serve God. When Christ is in the heart, it is their delight and pleasure to follow him, and to work for him, and to be with him; so don't go off with that delusion that it is a hard thing to serve God. I will tell you where you have made a mistake. You have tried to serve God in the flesh, before you have been born of the Spirit, and you have failed; and you have tried and failed, and you have kept trying and kept failing, until by and by you have given up, with a sigh, exclaiming, "Oh, it is a hard thing to be a Christian!" It is not only a hard thing, but it is impossible for any one to serve God in the flesh. I would as soon tell a man to leap over the moon as to serve God before he has been born of the Spirit. "The natural man is not subject to the law of God." The natural man is at war with God; there is a conflict going on between him and God; he is at enmity against God; but when the Lord Jesus comes into the heart, and we have been born of the Spirit, and have passed from death into life and become heirs of eternal life, then his yoke is easy. In fact, the yoke doesn't gall at all.

When we were in Glasgow, there was a lady said to me: "I wish you would pray for my husband. I am very anxious for him;" and we prayed for him. He was a large business man; and in the course of a week he came into the meetings, and that text was brought out, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light," wherein Christ invites the world to himself. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find peace for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Well, the man said, "I will try and see if his yoke is easy." He went home and told his wife he was going to become a Christian; and he tried to pray with her that night. The next day she came to me in great distress and said her husband had tried and failed. He thought the Bible could not be true; because the yoke was not easy, and the burden was not light. I said, "Perhaps he has got the yoke on before he becomes converted; and if he has, it will crush him to the earth." I had an interview with him, and told him he must be born of the Spirit before he could wear that yoke; and I preached Christ unto him, and he received the Son of God as his Savior. He just opened the door of his heart; and the Son of God came in and took possession of that heart; when he surrendered himself up it was in every corner of his heart, and the Lord went there with eternal life. He had a large factory in Glasgow, and wanted us to go there and preach to his men.

It is a pretty good sign a man is converted when he wants others converted. We went to the factory, and that business man went into the inquiry-

room and took his seat right by the side of some of his employees and talked with them; and when we left Glasgow there wasn't a happier man of all our acquaintance there. He found his yoke was easy and his burden light, when his heart was right with God. When you receive Christ, you will find that the yoke will be easy and God will not be a hard master. And wherever you find a Christian having a hard time of it, he is trying to serve God and the world too; he has not surrendered up the whole heart to God, he is trying to see how much of the world he can have and serve Christ; all the time he is having a conflict and battle. But wherever the heart is surrendered wholly to God, I testify to it that the yoke is easy and the burden is light.

But then there are a great many young people, the moment you talk to them about accepting the invitation to this feast and speak about the inquiry-room, go out as if they had been struck with a plague; they think that to be Christians is the most gloomy thing in the world. That was my trouble, I thought if I was going to die of consumption or some miserable disease, and when I found I could not live any longer, I would accept Jesus Christ and then get into Heaven. That is the way I used to argue when I was younger; but I was deceived by Satan. I thought Christians had to put on a long face and walk straight through the world, and not look to the right hand nor to the left. That is another of Satan's lies; and there are a great many people who would rather believe a lie than the truth. Does it make a man gloomy to be pardoned of all his sins? People are not very gloomy when they go to a feast. The gospel is a feast. God wants you to come to him, and invites you to the marriage supper of his only Son. Don't think it is gloomy to accept of this invitation, and that you have to put on a long face all your days. You will never know what true peace is until you know God; and then you will have peace that will flow like a river. Oh, may God help you today to accept of this invitation, and to say: "Yes, I will accept of this invitation; and by the grace of God, I will be at the marriage feast of the Lamb." There is nothing to hinder you but your own will. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." It is not because people cannot come. Do you think God sends out an invitation for you to come to that feast, and does not give you the power to come? With the invitation, God gives you the power to accept of it. And let me say again, don't give that excuse that it is going to make you gloomy, and that you have to give up all the pleasures of this world. We have all the treasures of heaven, when we have accepted that invitation.

There is another excuse very common. People say, "I don't know that he will receive me. Who has he invited when these three men refused to come? He said, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come." Go into the cellars and garrets, bring the drunkards, thieves and

vagabonds; all of them in fact, don't slight any, but go and invite them all to the feast; and, my friends, don't think for a moment that he will not receive you. If you have accepted that invitation, if you will come, he will receive you. If you have got a son and he has been a wanderer on the face of the earth, when that boy comes back and confesses his wanderings don't you forgive him? If he comes back and confesses his sins, are you not ready to forgive him? And if there is one here today who has wandered away from the fold, return to God and he will forgive you freely, and let you sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. You need not be afraid but that God will receive all who will come. He will receive you, just as you are; and don't let Satan make you believe that he will cast any one out, or turn any one away, because they are too bad. Do you think that he will commence down here now, after he has been receiving sinners for 1900 years; and that he will begin with you, because you have a bad character, and because your life has been bad? If you are ready to turn to him, he will receive you.

Don't let Satan make you believe God will not receive you, if you come. He will receive every one who comes. I don't care how far you have wandered—how black your life has been; if you will only come home today, the Lord will give you a welcome. Make no more excuses; say with the prodigal, "I will return; I will be at the feast, God helping me; and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God." Oh, may God bring many in this assembly to that feast.