

## **A QUEST FOR SOULS**

Comprising all the Sermons Preached and Prayers  
Offered in a Series of Gospel Meetings, Held  
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by George W. Truett, D. D.  
Pastor First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

Compiled and Edited by

J. B. Cranfill, LL. D.

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### **TWENTY-FOUR**

#### **NIGHT SERVICE, JUNE 24, 1917**

##### **PRELIMINARY REMARKS.**

This vast press of people will co-operate, I am glad to believe, to the utmost of your power, to turn this last service to the best profit. And since it is the last service of these brief meetings, I should like to be indulged to make two or three general remarks. The first is an expression of very keen regret that I cannot at this time, midsummer though it is, tarry for several weeks in daily special meetings, with these two beloved pastors and their noble congregations, whose guest I have been these several days. Duty that I cannot in conscience put aside makes it impossible for me to tarry longer than this evening service. I shall cherish the very gracious invitations pressed upon me to come again for an extended meeting, and shall most gladly avail myself of that invitation at the earliest time that duty will allow. Meetings in a modern city like this should be continued for weeks and weeks, that the attention of the pressing throngs of people may be awakened and called to the highest things.

I would also be indulged in the expression of profoundest gratitude again to the two churches and their pastors, who have been so considerate of the visiting preacher, and to the many others outside of these two congregations, who have been so courteous and beautiful in their cooperation. How it has touched all our hearts that the great daily papers of Fort Worth have, without stint, given themselves to setting forth the great things of religion during these passing days. GOD bless them, I pray, and crown them with constantly increasing usefulness!

I would earnestly add this further word: Though the public meetings close this evening, yet I pray, and am very glad to believe, that the work and influence of these meetings shall go graciously and powerfully on, in lives all about you, with the days and weeks and months and years before you.

The most earnest word that I can speak would I speak to these mature and older Christians.

Take this occasion, as parents, and as teachers, and as neighbors, and as friends and acquaintances, to help the people all about you in the higher and better way. There are many during these days who have become Christians, through GOD's grace. They need to take their places with the people of GOD in His church. You are to counsel, cheer and help them now. I beg you to remember it. It is a tragedy for a Christian not to be in the church with the people of GOD. All about you there are timid, untaught, young Christians, young people who have recently made their decision for CHRIST. Very glad, indeed, was I to hear that numbers, a week ago to-day, took their places in the churches, and still others again this morning. So I pray that it may continue to be in the immediate future, after a noble fashion. Help the young Christian now, timid and shrinking, and greatly in need of counsel. Help that Christian, who, for one cause or another, has been bewitched away from the right path. Something came to trouble him. Something came to turn his feet away from the right road. Something came, maybe, to make his heart bitter. Something came to raise questions that have perplexed and hurt the heart. Oh, now, I pray you, my fellow Christians, help that Christian!

And then, there are all about you undecided men and women, and young people, who have come near the kingdom these days. That expression of CHRIST, I have no doubt, applies to many of them: "**Notwithstanding, be sure of this, that the kingdom of God has come nigh unto you.**" These hesitating ones need your best help - the boy, the girl, the young man or woman, the Father, the mother, the citizen, the neighbor, all about you. The right word needs to be said now, and said in the right temper, that these may see how sane it is, how wise it is, how glorious it is, to be friends and followers of CHRIST.

## **THE PASSING OF RELIGIOUS OPPORTUNITY**

Text: "**And when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes:**" - Luke 19:41, 42.

And now, as I come to the message of this evening, and look over this vast throng, I find my heart touched with the most compassionate interest for the people. There is nothing in the world that so appeals to me as a human face. And what a vast press of faces look up into my face in this gathering of thousands of people. Oh, how I covet you everyone for CHRIST JESUS! What tragedy is comparable to the tragedy of a wasted life! JESUS not only would save the soul, bringing you home to Heaven at last - JESUS would save your life here and now, in the flesh, in the earth, and have you positioned properly now.

I lift up my voice to beg you, for your own sake, Oh, soul, not yet openly positioned for CHRIST, and then for the sake of lives you shall daily touch, to give heed and face faithfully this biggest question of all - your own right relation to CHRIST JESUS.

I would speak this evening on this exceedingly solemn theme: "*The Passing of Religious Opportunity.*" It is suggested by this solemn text, from the nineteenth chapter of Luke: "**And when He was come near, He beheld the city**" - the city of Jerusalem - "**and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known**" - or if thou hadst recognized - "**the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.**"

The text suggests the solemn word that I am to leave with you - the passing of religious opportunity.

Tears are always touching - genuine and sincere tears. You are of a strange make-up if you should see the genuine tears of a little child, and not be moved by that sight. And how moving is the sight of the tears of a strong man, no matter what the emotion that grips the heart!

Here in our text we have a picture of the Saviour, our Divine Lord, sobbing out His great heart, as He looks over the city, His own country's fair city, the city of Jerusalem. There must have been a compelling reason why JESUS thus wept, as He looked over the city. There was such a reason, and the text, with its context, faithfully indicates what that reason was. The reason was that many of the people in that city of Jerusalem had allowed their religious opportunity to go by unimproved. They had neglected it.

The things of light and leading and love from GOD had all been overlooked. JESUS had taught and had called, but they had gone on unheeding, and so His compassionate heart overflowed through His eyes, and we have here the picture of Him sobbing over the fact of the passing of religious opportunity.

Isn't that a fearful possibility in a human life, that religious opportunity, gracious and precious, may come and may go by, and may be returnless forevermore?

Satan does not care if men and women come to the house of GOD, and to public services such as these, and are attentive and serious and deeply moved, if only they will let the religious opportunity pass, and be unimproved. Oh, dreadful possibility, that religious opportunity may come and pass by, and the highest things of the soul be lost and forfeited forever!

JESUS, who visited the earth once in the flesh, visits men and women yet, not in His flesh, as of old, but in the person and by the power of His own Divine Spirit. He himself told us that when He went away He would send that Spirit, to teach of the things that He said and says, and show them to the children of men.

JESUS says: "**It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.**" The great work of GOD the HOLY SPIRIT in the world is to comfort and counsel GOD's people, and to bring to bear conviction upon the human judgment and conscience, that by such light and conviction sinners may be turned into the upper and better way.

Mark: you this, my men and women. Every inclination that the soul has to come to GOD, every longing in your spirit to be right with GOD, and to be forgiven of Him, and to be saved by Him, is the direct drawing, the direct work, of GOD's good Spirit on the human heart.

The desire to be right with GOD does not come from the human flesh. The desire to be right with GOD, to have one's sins forgiven, to be saved, is the direct drawing of the good Spirit of GOD himself. And remember this, I pray you, that no rational soul shall ever come to GOD unless the Divine Spirit shall draw him, shall counsel him, shall convict him of need, and shall himself

work that desire to come in the human heart. JESUS yet visits men in the person and power of His Spirit. How does He visit them? He comes in early life probably to most people, with the call of Heaven, the call of grace, the call of salvation. One of the serious questions for parents and teachers is, How early do our children reach the age of personal accountability, and when do they reach the line of accountability, so that they must personally pass on these questions of right and wrong, of GOD's light and counsel?

Where and when do they reach that line? Blessed is the teaching that our little ones, dying before they reach that line of personal accountability to GOD, are taken to His home above, through the riches of His own mercy and grace.

We are not anxious about our little ones who die before they can personally pass on these big questions of repentance and faith and coming to GOD. All is well with them. Ye parents, be not disturbed at that point. Our concern is, How old are children when they reach the line of personal accountability, where, if they die unrepentant and unbelieving, they shall die like the adult who dies unrepentant and unbelieving? Very early in life, evidently, GOD's Spirit comes to many of our children, counseling and calling them in the better and upper way.

And then very many are the ways which GOD employs to counsel and call men and women into the upward way.

One of GOD's mightiest ways is to call the people by the right kind of preaching. *There can be no substitutes for the right kind of preaching.*

The Bible tells us so. "**Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. How shall the people hear without a preacher?**"

The Bible tells us that "**it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.**"

He did not say "by foolish preaching." There is untold harm done by foolish preaching. He said: "**It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching**" - by as simple a thing as preaching, by the method of preaching, by a man saved by grace as I am saved, and as these honored men about me are saved, and called by GOD's Spirit thus to witness for CHRIST. It pleased GOD by as simple a thing as this, for a man saved by GOD's grace and set apart by His SPIRIT to be a preacher, to stand up and call to his fellow-men: "**Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.**"

How marvelous is GOD's way of turning men and women into the upward way, by preaching!

But preaching is not His only method. GOD has many methods to call the people into the upward way!

How great is the message and the blessing of the right kind of a teacher, and the right kind of a writer! How much GOD employs such to bless the world!

**And how marvelous is GOD's employment of the modest mother, shrinking and timid, but who puts the serious things of GOD and His truth into the deepest hearts of her little ones who rest on her breast, and who kneel beside her, as she teaches them to lisp the name of JESUS! How marvelous that instrumentality, the instrumentality of the parent, to bring people in the right way! How marvelous the instrumentality of the friend, who goes out in the right spirit and seeks to turn his friend into the upward way! How GOD blesses a simple thing like that! How marvelous are GOD's providences, some of them white-robed, and some of them veiled in black, to turn us and bestir us, and give us to think, and, thinking, to turn to the upward way! And above all and through all, how wonderful is the work of CHRIST's great witness in the world, namely, the HOLY SPIRIT, as this Holy Spirit takes of the things of CHRIST, and brings them to bear on men's minds, and consciences. Many are GOD's messengers for the calling of the people unto himself.**

Now, our text points for us, to-night, the exceedingly solemn truth that the visits of GOD, in the person of the Divine Spirit, may be resisted.

In the case of these men and women of old, in the city of Jerusalem, where JESUS lived and loved, where He preached and prayed, where He wept and died, there many resisted His heavenly influences, and put them all away, and went the downward way. So we are confronted to-night with that awful possibility in human life, that a rational, responsible, human being can say yes or say no to the call of GOD. *The highest dignity of human life is that human life must choose whether you will be for GOD or against Him.* Along with that highest dignity of human life, in which you are allowed to say yes or no to GOD, and consequent upon it at the same time is the very gravest danger. While you and I may say yes or say no to JESUS, the awful peril is that, though He brings to bear in His own multiform and wonderful way His light and love, His counsel and goodness, summoning us to come the right road - the fearful possibility is that we will rise up and resist it all, and miss the upward way.

**One thing is sure: GOD the loving Father is never at fault that a sinner is lost. Listen to His solemn appeal: "As I live" - and He swears by himself, for He can swear by no higher - "as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." And then GOD himself exhorts: "Turn ye! Turn ye! Why will ye die?"**

It is, indeed, inflexibly certain that JESUS is never at fault that a sinner is lost. See Him here in our text, as He stands weeping over the city of Jerusalem, in which were many people who had turned aside His counsel and missed the road to Heaven, and listen to Him as He says: "**Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.**"

JESUS is never at fault that a soul rational and responsible misses the way of light and life and salvation.

But our text brings us on to a still more serious truth, and that truth is that there is an end to GOD's visits to rational, accountable human beings.

When does such end come?

I shall make answer to that in two remarks. Mark it, I pray you, Oh, my fellow-men and my gentle sisters, listening so deferentially to what the minister says - mark it well.

**If you should go down into your grave, unrepentant and unbelieving, the battle for your soul is forever lost. Destiny eternal is settled this side of death.**

**"As the tree falls, so shall it lie."** JESUS finally turned upon some men who carped and caviled at His words, and said: **"Ye shall die in your sins."**

That will be the outcome of it all.

And then He added: **"Whither I go, ye cannot come."**

Destiny for the soul is determined this side the grave. CHRIST's words have no meaning, if that is not correct, and the man is a trifler, a trickster with words, if he should essay to offer a rational human soul hope beyond the grave, if such man shall die in his sins. This side the grave is determined the big question of whether Heaven is to be your home, or whether it is to be the dark world of waste and night, the name of which is hell. Your destiny for the one or the other place will be decided before you reach death and are laid in the grave. Oh, how serious is that!

And since death comes with unexpectedness, times without count, and since there are ten thousand gates to death, and since the easiest thing in all the world is just to die, and since the coming of death is more uncertain than the morning cloud, and since death is transitory and illusory, and the time of its coming is known only to GOD, how speedily should every rational human being say: "While I have my wits about me, while my mind is clear, while duty comes knocking at the door of my heart, while need is urgent, while danger is consciously imminent and apparent, now I will decide the biggest question of all, calmly and gloriously, by making my surrender to CHRIST."

I was preaching in a distant community some months ago, to a throng of thousands, like these thousands here to-night, and one man was seen to be greatly interested, and an earnest Christian standing near him went over to him, and ventured to whisper a word to him, while the last song was being sung. Men and women and children came down the aisles, saying: "The battle is decided. We will surrender to CHRIST."

This Christian man said to the interested man: "You are interested and serious now; you should now end all delay, and publicly make known your surrender to CHRIST."

He said: "No, I will see that man to-morrow. I will talk with him to-morrow. I will find him at his room in the hotel to-morrow, and I will have it out with him. I will not settle it to-night."

But when the morning came, in one sharp stroke, with a strange burning that often comes to human life, he was plunged into unconsciousness, and before noonday went away into eternity. Oh, rational, responsible human beings, I summon you, I charge you, I pray you, settle first things first, the supreme things, the one supreme thing, in the day of your health, with your wits

about you, calmly, quietly, thoughtfully, grandly, settle this supreme matter while you may.

There is the other answer to be given to the fact that there is an end to GOD's visits to men. JESUS was looking over a city which He had sought to help, but many had failed of His help, and JESUS was sobbing out His heart, as in effect He said: "Light is gone and opportunity has passed."

They were yet alive, and were yet in health. They went about their tasks. But JESUS said: "Religious opportunity, that came, and was clear and strong, has been refused, and now it passes."

Opportunity of any sort pauses at one's door, but if that opportunity be not taken hold of, it passes and is returnless. "The mill will never grind again with water that has passed." These men and women had heard and had seen and had felt and had known, and they put away the great claims and counsels of JESUS; which leads me to say that my' judgment is fixed deeply from an experience of twenty-odd years in dealing with men and in studying the Word of GOD, that there is no peril comparable to the peril of resisting religious light and opportunity when they come to the human soul.

And when opportunity passes, how tearful is the state of such soul! And when it does pass, how is that fearful tragedy brought about? *The trouble about dealing rightly with religious opportunity and religious right and religious privilege is that men and women in thus dealing lightly, sin against knowledge.* If the religion of JESUS CHRIST be worth a straw, it is worth more than the material world. One soul outranks in value the material universe. Now, to deal lightly with the call of JESUS and the death of JESUS for such soul, is to sin after a most terrible fashion. Men hear and feel and intend and know, and yet put religious calls away, and consequently go the downward way.

Nor is that all.

*Men who resist GOD's call and counsel, sin presumptuously.* When they are spoken with candidly and faithfully about the great claims of CHRIST, they make answer: "Yes, I grant it all, but I will risk it. I will presume. I will wait. I will defer. I will delay." And they loiter on until the little boat takes the fateful plunge over the rapids, and opportunity is forfeited forever.

*Moreover, when men thus sin against light, they sin with the will.* The human will is the initial spring of action. Men hear and know and feel and intend and desire, and yet they delay. They sin against the will, and that involves premeditation and decision. Men hear CHRIST's call, and their judgments and consciences and moral natures say yes. But they go on and say: "Not yet. I will not have CHRIST to reign over me yet."

They go on and say, like one of old said: "**Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season I will call for Thee.**" And in that way light darkens, and convictions fade, and religious opportunity passes.

*Still again, when men sin against GOD's clear call to repentance and faith, they sin against GOD's Spirit,* who takes of these great truths and binds them on men's judgments . and

consciences.

When men rise up and say: "Though I know it is right, and though I feel its weight and power, yet I will put it all away," men are sinning against GOD's great messenger, even GOD's HOLY SPIRIT, who is wooing and counseling and convicting and drawing, that the people may come to CHRIST and be saved.

And this Divine Spirit, in His wooing power, is GOD's first, last and supreme messenger to turn the world to CHRIST JESUS.

**If men sin against GOD the loving Father, as they do, there is JESUS, the offered Saviour, who is men's proffered helper, if they will only have Him. If men put JESUS away, the HOLY SPIRIT patiently calls and counsels and woos, and they feel it and know it, that GOD is striving with them. If men put this HOLY SPIRIT away and say: "I put light and duty and GOD's call out of my thoughts," by such definite resolve and effort, they are sinning against GOD's last great court, His HOLY SPIRIT, who would turn sinful men and women toward the Father's house of light and love and life. And just there is the peril of all perils. Oh, there is no peril like the peril of the human soul which feels and says: "I ought to follow CHRIST, but I will not now!" There is no peril so serious as that.**

Years ago I was preaching in one of our cities on that solemn text: "**Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit,**" and I was making the point that a man may so resist light and counsel from GOD, that light will at last turn to darkness; that a man may so trifle with conviction of a course that he ought to take, until the conviction gets fainter and feebler, and at last he seems to have no conviction at all.

I was making the point that somewhere in its fight against GOD, the human soul may put away these highest matters, until at last they seem to have no weight, no meaning, no appeal at all. And no sooner had I said that, than a man in the audience, perhaps forty-five years of age, with the gray beginning to tinge his hair, stood in the audience and said: "Preacher man, you are describing my case."

I said: "Not consciously; I do not even know you; I am discussing the Word of GOD."

"Very well," he said, "but that is my case; you are describing my case, and if you do not mind," he said, "I will tell you a little about it."

I said: "I will be pleased to let you tell us. Maybe we can help you. I want to, if I can."

He said: "Years ago, when I was a young man, I had often heard and felt, concerning religion; I had often been counseled and called, I had often trembled and resolved, but I kept putting the matter off. I kept saying: 'To-morrow.' I kept saying: 'By and by.' And at last, there came a powerful appeal from GOD's man one day, where all of my mind and conscience and heart and will were aroused beyond words, and I felt: 'This is the supreme crisis. This is the hour epochal for my soul.'

Other men went down the aisles to make known their surrender to CHRIST, but I held out



against it all, and by and by I summoned myself and said, down in my soul: 'I will not follow GOD until it suits me. It does not suit me at all just now, and I will put it off,' though I trembled through it all, like the aspen leaf."

And then he looked at me sadly a moment or two and said: "Preacher man, that day I went over the line. That day I passed the day of grace. That day my soul died, and your teaching as to the peril there is in resisting GOD's Spirit applies, sir, to my own poor case."

Quickly did I adjourn the service, and then I sought him out, and for two long hours I brought to bear, as best I could, the glorious invitations of JESUS to sinful men, no matter what their sin or doubt or fear or difficulty. For two hours, I brought to bear these promises and calls of JESUS on this man, and yet he heard me through it all, and said: "Sir, I have had no response at all for years. I have crossed the line, and I know that I have crossed it."

I cannot discuss the philosophy, the psychology, the deep meaning of this case. I do not know it. I am simply making the point that somewhere the human soul may resist GOD and His love and light and heavenly leading, so late, so far, so long, that light turns into darkness, and convictions fade, and the highest things are missed and lost. There comes again the old-time hymn, emphasizing this same point of the danger of putting away religious light, religious calls for the human soul, the danger of putting them off until tomorrow.

Let us ponder again the solemn lines:

There is a time, I know not when,  
A place, I know not where,  
Which marks the destiny of men  
To Heaven or despair.

There is a line by us not seen,  
Which crosses every path:  
The hidden boundary between  
GOD's patience and His wrath.

To cross that limit is to die,  
To die, as if by stealth.  
It may not pale the beaming eye,  
Nor quench the glowing health.

The conscience may be still at ease,  
The spirits light and gay.  
That which is pleasing still may please,  
And care be thrust away. .

But on that forehead GOD hath set  
Indelibly a mark,  
By man unseen, for man as yet  
Is blind and in the dark.

And still the doomed man's path below  
May bloom like Eden bloomed.  
He did not, does not, will not know,  
Nor feel that he is doomed.

He feels, he sees, that all is well,  
His every fear is calmed.  
He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell,  
Not only doomed, but damned.

Oh, where is that mysterious bourn.  
By which each path is crossed,  
Beyond which GOD himself hath sworn  
That he who goes is lost?

How long may men go on in sin,  
How long will GOD forbear?  
Where does hope end, and where begin  
The confines of despair?

One answer from those skies is sent.  
"Ye who from GOD depart,  
While it is called to-day, repent,  
And harden not your heart."

My fellow-men,

- if there be interest,
- if there be an awakening,
- if there be concern,
- if there be a wish, however faint,
- if there be a longing, however feeble and fluttering,
- if it makes its cry in your heart, if it be there, to be right with GOD, to have your sins forgiven, to be saved, if I were in your place I would to-night make my surrender to CHRIST.

If I had to go through fire and through flame to make that surrender; for if a man passes his day of grace, and when the battle for the soul is finally lost, then spiritual things, this text tells us, are hidden from the eyes of such soul and life. JESUS said: "Oh, men of Jerusalem, who have let your religious opportunity be forfeited and lost, now these religious truths and matters are hidden from your eyes." Hidden! No light now!

Have you ever been through Mammoth Cave, that wonderful, subterranean cavern yonder in Kentucky? If you have been through there, the guide has shown you fish in those subterranean waters whose eyes look like other eyes in other fish, and yet the guide goes on to tell you that these fish have been so long in the darkness of those underground waters that they cannot see at all.

One awful truth stands out from the teaching of this text and many other teachings of JESUS

elsewhere in the Bible - that a man can put away religious light so long, so late, so far, so terribly, that at last he may not see at all.

As men fight the call and counsels and pleadings of GOD for their souls, they come to the place where feeling grows less and less with every appeal that is made. Less and less does the heart respond, if truth is heard and felt and granted, and yet set aside and put away. It is an awful sentence, there in the Bible, about the conscience being seared as with a hot iron, so that at last the human soul reaches the place, in its conscience, where it is past feeling.

If the doctor is summoned to his patient, and the family and the patient explain to the doctor when he comes that the patient has no feeling in part of the body, that part of the body being utterly unresponsive, the doctor shakes his head ominously, for that sign - no feeling is the precursor of serious trouble.

I have been many a time with the great-hearted cattlemen in the West - glorious, mighty men! For years I have rejoiced to be with them in their camp-meetings, and many of them have I seen as they yielded their lives to JESUS. No true, nobler men have I ever met in the world than these. I have been out there and have seen them, after the meetings and before, as they would have the cattle rounded up for branding, and I have seen them put the hot branding-iron on the cattle, and I have heard the cattle moan and low and have seen them flinch under that hot branding-iron. And then the cattle are released, when the hot iron has burned the brand, and you may go back a few weeks later, and take that same branded place, and pick such branded place with knife or pin, and yet the beast cares little for it now. That branded place is now past feeling. Oh, the peril that the human soul shall be desensitized, if a man hears and knows and feels the call of GOD, but says: "I will put it all away until some indefinite future."

It follows, my fellow-men, that the most serious thing in this world is the resistance of the religious light that comes to you. The most serious thing in the world is the putting away of light and feeling when GOD's Gospel is preached, and the soul is sought after, and the soul hears and trembles and feels, and yet puts it all away. That is the most serious and presumptuous risk ever taken by the human soul.

I am coming to say a most serious closing word, namely: There comes a last visit the human soul.

When is that visit? Certainly, no man is wise enough to know. But there comes a last visit from GOD, seeking for a rational human soul. When is that visit? Will it be this year? Will it be this month? Will it be this week? Will GOD's last visit for an intelligent, an awakened, responsive soul to come to Him, be to-night? GOD alone knows. No man can tell. But when we consider the possibilities of such startling fact, then we may well long for our every face to be in the dust of prayer to GOD, that no rational human soul in this place to-night shall be willing to go on, when everything is at stake, and put GOD's call away into some vague, indefinite hour of the indeterminate future!

Oh, man or woman or child, in this vast assemblage to-night, wrong with GOD, I summon you, if you have any degree of desire to be saved, I summon you, act on that desire, act on that light, and make your surrender to CHRIST. Mark it! Mark it!

The great issue confronts you, and what is that issue? You have to make a choice between JESUS and Satan. One or the other is the Master of every rational human soul. Which shall your choice be?

You must make a choice between two lives - a life on the right side, or a life on the wrong side. Which should be your choice?

You must make a choice between two deaths - the death of peace and triumph, because of JESUS, or the death of waste and fearful terror, because you have put JESUS away. Which death would you die?

You must make a choice between one of two positions, when you stand at the judgment bar of CHRIST. One of two positions there shall be yours. He will have us to pass to His right hand, because we trusted Him here, or we will turn away to His left hand, because we let the day of opportunity go by unimproved. Which shall your choice be? It is a choice between one of two worlds after this world.

Out yonder is the world of love and life and peace and hope and knowledge and holiness and ever - increasing blessedness, the name of which is Heaven; and out yonder is the world of sin and waste and failure and defeat and remorse, the name of which is hell. We must here, with our wits about us, make our choice. Oh, soul, since there is so much at stake - your soul, your life, your all - ought not this most important of all matters, this Sunday night, to have your wisest choice?

And, remember, whatever may be your difficulties, JESUS is Master of any case.

Do you tell me: "Sir, my difficulties are terrible, beyond human speech?" I do not mind that. I am not given pause by that. Though your sins be as scarlet, if you will surrender to CHRIST, He will save you. Though your doubts are like the stars for number, if you will surrender to CHRIST, He will save you. Though your temptations are fiery with the hot breath from the pit below, if you will surrender to CHRIST, He will save you.

Though you tell me: "Sir, I cannot see through it, I can not understand it, I cannot reason it out, yet, sir, I want to be saved," I answer you back in a moment, that if you will surrender to CHRIST, saying: "Lord JESUS, I cannot see through it. I am frail, I am weak, I am unworthy, I am sinful, I am tempted and temptable, yet I will wholly give up to CHRIST, who died for sinners," CHRIST will take you and save you this very hour.

What do you say, then, about the incomparable issue?

Oh, the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of Christian men and women here, who want to join the preacher in prayer for those that are not right with GOD, that such may hasten to be right with GOD, without further risk or presumption, to be right with GOD - the vast army of Christians that want to join the preacher in prayer for you!

I will show you that they do. Everyone here, who has made definite surrender of himself to JESUS to be his Saviour, and now takes up the preacher's sermon, and would pass it on to all the people who have not decided for CHRIST, and who also would unite with the preacher in the

prayer to GOD that He may now be merciful to the people, every Christian that says: "That is my case, sir," lift your hand high, that the people may see you thus witness for CHRIST.

I thank you! I believe the angels look upon it, moved in spirit, as they see it.

I have a moment more to detain you before we sing our closing hymn and go our way. I am here to ask - in this last moment, when I would give my heart's blood to help you, and GOD knows I speak the truth - I would give my heart's blood to help you, and am giving it right now - in this last moment, I am coming to ask every man, woman and child, a professor of religion once, a church member once, and maybe yet, but all wrong with GOD, and sadly drifting and backslidden, and neglecting duty, and also to ask every person not in the church, not decided, not forgiven, not saved, not a Christian, every person here who says: "I am wrong with GOD, and I know it; but, sir, I tell you truly that I want to be right with GOD before it is too late; I want to be right with GOD before my soul's opportunity goes by and is lost, and I want you who pray to pray that I may be right with GOD before it is too late;" every soul that says, "That is my desire," will now lift your hand, and we will offer our most fervent prayer for you. Oh, it is an appealing sight to see so many hands!

My brother men and gentle women, and boys and girls, settle the great matter right now, I pray you, and settle it right by being for CHRIST forever. I am not willing to part from you, never to meet you all again until we meet at the judgment bar of GOD - I am not willing to part from you without pleading, yea, beseeching that here and now every soul that says: "I have sadly drifted as a Christian; my life is marred and miserable from backslidings, but I will renew my vows to-night with GOD; I will come back and surrender afresh to CHRIST" - I am not willing to go without asking you to come and take my hand, in this public pledge of your honest surrender to JESUS.

Nor am I willing to let these men and women and children go, who are not saved, not ready to die, not ready to live, not ready for any world - I am not ready to let you go, without begging that right now you will stop and say: "I will this hour make my surrender to CHRIST. Here, with my heart's highest resolve, in Fort Worth, I publicly register my verdict. It is yes for CHRIST. Lord JESUS, to-night, through the darkness, and with all my limitations, and sins, and doubts, and hesitation, I will surrender my case to CHRIST. I will now register my verdict."

If that is your heart's decision, come and take my hand. Oh, GOD of all grace, give the people to act like they ought, and as they will wish they had, when they stand before CHRIST at last! For His great name's sake!

They are going to sing that simple song, "JESUS is tenderly calling Thee home, calling to-day, calling to-day," and the great press of people will stand in a minute, as quietly as you can stand, until we finish this singing, without anyone leaving, unless you must, so that we may help in these last moments, every interested person here, to the limit of our power to help.

And I am asking anew, as we sing this simple Gospel song:

Where is the backslidden Christian, who says: "I will register publicly my verdict; I am going to renew my vows right now with CHRIST, and surrender myself afresh to Him?"

And where is the man, or the woman, the boy or the girl, that answers: "No; that is not my case. I never have given my verdict, never have made my surrender, but I will make it right now?" It is difficult for you to come, but I am going to ask you to do a difficult thing, and that is, to come, as difficult as it is, through this vast press of people. I am asking you to come and take my hand, and then pass back to your pew, as they sing these stanzas.

Everybody will rise to sing. You will begin with that stanza, "JESUS is pleading." Isn't that true? You have heard Him today. "**To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart.**" You have heard Him. You said so, with your uplifted hand, a moment ago. Satan does not care that you now are interested, if you will only delay. He does not care, if you will just postpone your decision until some other time.

{The first and second stanzas were sung, while numbers came forward.}

Yonder, to the great Northwest, a young civil engineer went to construct a bridge across a mountain chasm, and after weeks and months, with his group of helpers, he had almost finished the bridge at the close of a certain day.

He said to his men: "Come back men, after supper, and we will finish it in about an hour, and I will pay you a day's wages for the extra hour."

"No," they said, "we have made other arrangements."

He said: "Come back, and I will give you two days' wages."

They said: "No; but why do you urge it?"

He said: "If a great storm should come down to-night on the mountains, it would sweep this unfinished bridge away. We have not quite secured the bridge."

But they went their way, saying: "It won't rain in months."

But the clouds were filled with rain that very night and emptied their floods upon the mountains, and the floods came down, resistless in their power, and swept the unfinished bridge utterly away. Oh, men and women, that is a parable and picture of the soul that knows and wishes, and yet presumes and delays and waits.

As I was leaving Washington City, some time ago, I stood in one of the depots there, and saw a strange mark on the wall, and I asked a policeman what it meant, and he said at once: "You are a stranger?"

"Yes."

"That is the death mark for President Garfield, who was standing right here when he received the bullet from the man who took his life, and this singular mark is put here on the wall to indicate the place where he met his death."

Oh, to-night, I wonder if, standing there, or there, or sitting here, or somewhere under the sound of my voice - I wonder if some soul, hearing and feeling and interested, says: "Not to-day; by and by; not yet," and shall go away, and this shall be the place and the time of the death mark for your human spirit. GOD forbid, and I pray it from my deepest heart!

Does the man and woman say, and the child: "I am ready to burn the bridges, to cast the die, to cross the Rubicon. I am ready to cut the cables. I am ready to night to register publicly my surrender to CHRIST?" Come then, as they sing earnestly this third stanza now.

(The third stanza was sung, and numbers came forward,)

These men and women who have come have done as they ought, when they pressed forward here, with the aisles thronged, even from the outskirts of the great press, and some from beyond the tent. Great sight, these numbers that have come. But not all have come. Listen!

Why do you wait, dear brother,  
Oh, why do you tarry so long?  
Your Saviour is waiting to give you  
A place in His sanctified throng.

Listen again:

What do you hope, dear brother (or sister),  
To gain by a further delay?  
There's no one to save you but JESUS,  
There's no other way but His way.

Listen yet once again:

Do you not feel, dear brother,  
His SPIRIT now striving within?  
Oh, why not accept His salvation  
And throw off thy burden of sin?

Oh, my friends, a multitude have come - strong men, gentle women, and two or three of these blessed children - a multitude!

Have all the men come who ought to come?

And the women? Have all the boys and girls come who ought to come? Do others say: "I am coming. I shall not simply stop with 'almost;' I will be altogether persuaded. I will act up to the light I have, to the last limit of all I know to-night? JESUS tells me, whatever my case is, my need, my doubt, my sin, my wandering, my waste, my difficulty, my temptation, if I will surrender to Him honestly, He will forgive me and save me. I will make that surrender."

(The last stanza was sung, during which still others came forward.)

You see, my Christian friends, all these people who have come forward, and you saw those who

came in the Chamber of Commerce auditorium to-day, and the others who came from day to day. I beseech you to do your duty by them all. And you who have come to CHRIST to-night, numbers and numbers of you, go now and live for CHRIST. Take your place with CHRIST's people promptly, and be faithful members in His church. And you who have not yet come to CHRIST, but are almost persuaded, Oh, before you give yourselves to sleep to-night, I beseech you to make the surrender of yourselves for time and eternity to the great good Saviour!

Yonder on the battlefield at Gettysburg, when the awful conflict had passed, an army surgeon came back, looking for the wounded and suffering, if haply he might help them, and he saw the dead on every side. As he rode along he saw a poor fellow lying in a trench. The surgeon reined up his horse, but thought: "I need not dismount; this poor fellow is gone."

And then he saw a smile play about the man's face as he lay there in the trench.

The surgeon then dismounted and got down in the trench beside the dying man, and every minute or two, he said that smile would play about the dying soldier's face, and he would whisper one little word.

The word was, "Here!"

Presently, the army surgeon shook the man and rallied him back from the gates of death for a minute, and said: "Comrade, what do you mean by saying, 'Here?'"

And the dying fellow answered: "Oh, Doctor, they are calling the roll up in Heaven, and I was just answering to my name, 'Here!'"

Oh, men and women and children, with my last sentence, I beseech you, as this call comes to-night from the great Saviour to you, answer Him, and say: "Lord JESUS, I decide, and receive Thee as my personal Saviour and Master, and by thy grace I am going from this Sunday night with Thee, forever!"

### **THE CLOSING PRAYER.**

And now, as the people go, we give GOD our devoutest thanks for His grace and favor upon us His hour, and on the afternoon hour, and on these recent blessed days. For all the mercies and blessings of these glorious days, we give GOD all the praise. Every dust of the glory shall be His. Many have found CHRIST these days, and have confessed Him. To GOD be all the praise! Others, we hope, are already trusting Him in secret, and, if so, may they speedily confess Him! May all those who have found Him be led of Thee to take their places in thy church, with GOD's own people, to live as they ought for Him, from this June month, even until GOD calls them to the Father's house above. And, Oh, may Christians drifting, whatever the cause, and lapsed church members, whatever the cause, be rallied now all through this vast expanding city, to CHRIST's cause and church and holy service.

Oh, may there be a gracious visitation from JESUS to every house in all this city. May JESUS this very Sunday night visit every house, from the fairest mansion to the humblest hovel in all the city. Yea, may JESUS knock at the door of every heart in the city, bringing the breath of



GOD, goodness and mercy to every life. And may we all be true to Him at the post where He would have us live and labor, even until the earthly day is done, and then may we go to be like Him, and to be with Him, in the Father's house above, forevermore.

And now, as the people go, may the blessing of the triune GOD, even of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. be granted you all and each, to bless you, and guide you, and keep you in the right way, to-day and to-morrow, and throughout GOD's vast beyond, forever. We pray it all in JESUS' name. Amen.

~ end of book ~