PITHY SERMONS.

OF

GEORGE H. HEPWORTH

IN THE

SUNDAY "NEW YORK HERALD."

What We Must Have.

Be not afraid, only believe.—Mark, v., 36.

It is an infinite satisfaction to believe in God and in His providence. True religion brings peace of mind and peace of heart. A faith that knows where to go as certainly as does the homing pigeon, and goes there with the assurance that no mistake is possible, exerts an influence over a man's life which gives him courage, endurance and resignation. As a controlling factor in human life nothing that you ever dreamed of will compare with the consciousness that you have a long future ahead and that the angels are guiding your feet in the right path.

Philosophy and science certainly bring great happiness to their students. To probe the secrets of the universe is a very delightful and charming employment, and there is a kind of ecstacy which attends success The regnant and imperial scholarship of the day, whether it defends or attacks our time honored beliefs, is an unalloyed blessing, for truth and cannot be destroyed, while error is only another name for weakness, and the sooner it is forced to abdicate the better. But even scholarship has longings which scholarship itself cannot satisfy. You may roam far, but if you reach the end of the world, and cannot discover what lies beyond, you are restless and discontented. How the universe is governed may be a very important matter to settle, but the greater question is, Who governs it? You may lose yourself in wonder as you contemplate the god-like faculties of the soul, but unless you believe in the continuity of that soul after death your theories are like the rockets whose many colored lights explode in midair and then go out in darkness.

In like manner, it seems to be altogether admiral, when a man, by dint of sheer will, wrings a fortune from niggardly circumstance. Such a man makes the whole world stronger, and his example is an incentive of the oncoming generation. He has found the magic lamp of Aladdin, and by its means can surround himself with the luxuries as well as the comforts of life. It is folly to begrudge him his good luck, for he has earned it and he deserves it. I like to think that the days of miracles are not over, and that we have miracle workers in our own neighborhood. But no one appreciates the fact more keenly than the wealthy man himself that certain desirable things are unpurchasable. There are yearnings which money can no more satisfy than pearls can feed the hungry and diamonds quench our thirst. The rich man's sorrow is like the poor man's sorrow when trouble comes, for what they both want was never yet found in a pocket-book, but in a brain and heart. Not all the wealth that was ever counted can bridge disease or death. A grave is still a grave, though a costly monument marks it, and the tears of the rich flows as freely as those of the poor.

It is not money that we want most of all but a simple childlike faith. With that in your possession you can face events and have a heart for any fate. Without that you are a creature to be pitied, though you have galleries of pictures and Golconda within reach. Men are made out of ideas, and purposes, and a clear conception of their duty and their destiny; not out of gold and silver and bank notes.

There in the room where you need no longer to tread lightly, for there is no fear of waking the sleeper, lies one so dear that you would have given your life for him. But, after all your watching, the summons came and he sped on his way into the unknown. Nothing is left but the poor body, and, precious as it is, you must soon carry it to that God's acre where you will follow in good time. The life has gone out of it, and it has become unresponsive to your caresses. You cry aloud, but the ears are deaf and the eyes will open nevermore. The house is lonely, whether it be hovel or palace, and an awful mystery, like a cloud, envelops you.

Let us stand in the presence of death together while I ask some serious questions. What is the best frame of mind to meet such an emergency as that? What course of thought will convert it into an ennobling influence in your life and enable you to make such use of the experience that you will be a better man in consequence of it? Is it possible for any one, under such circumstances, to feel that what has happened, mysterious and painful as it is, is the best thing that could have happened both for those who are left and for him who has departed?

These are grave matters, and there is not a man in the world who has not had sorrowful occasion to ponder them. An answer can be had, and that answer has a note of triumph in it. Like a sudden bugle blast it tingles the nerves and makes the heart beat quickly.

Religion alone will serve your purpose. You need it and you must have it at such a time. Your wealth, your fame, your social position count for nothing. They afford you no relief, and can furnish you with no consolation. There is one way, and but one, in strength to bear quietly will come to you, and that is through an honest faith.

Believe that behind all things which occur is controlling wisdom, and that this controlling wisdom is itself controlled by love, and you have cast anchor where it will hold in spite of waves and tempests.

The thought that blind chances rules is simply a new horror added to your grief—a fresh note of agony in your requiem to the dead. Doubt is dismal, and earth becomes a kind of infernal region. But with faith that He has done it with pity for you, that you must needs weep, but still done because it was the right thing to do, as you yourself will see by and by, and the whole character of the event is changed.

A man must build on certain ideas as corner stones—on faith in the All Father on His helpfulness in troublous times on the promise of Christ that He would prepare a place for you and yours—or it is useless to build at all, for the first shock will crumble his hopes to ruins. Give a man God to look up to and Heaven to look forward to, and thenceforth he is safe, beyond the reach of harm.

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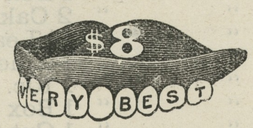

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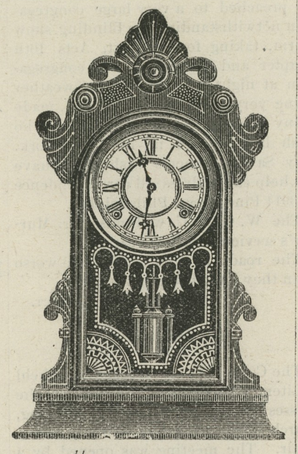

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