

THE SECOND COMING—A VISION

BY HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

I seemed to be out walking in the streets of New York, and to be conscious of a strange, vague sense of something just declared of which all were speaking with a suppressed air of mysterious voices.

There was a stir of hush—a whispering stillness was around. Groups of men stand at the corners of the street and discuss an impending something, with suppressed voices.

I heard one say to another, "Really coming? What? To-morrow?" And others said, "Yes, to-morrow—on Christmas day he will be here."

It was night. The stars were glittering down with a keen frosty light, the shops glistened in their Christmas array, but the same sense of hushed expectancy pervaded everything. There seemed to be nothing doing, and each person looked wistfully on his neighbor, as if to say, have you heard?

Suddenly, as I walked, an angel form was with me, gliding softly by my side. The face was solemn, serene and calm. Above the forehead was a pale, tremulous, phosphoric radiance of a light purer than any on earth—a light of a quality so different from that of the street lamps that my celestial attendant seemed to move in a sphere alone.

Yet, though I felt awe, I felt a sort of confiding love as I said, "Tell me—is it really true? Is Christ coming?"

"He is," said the angel. "To-morrow he will be here!"

"What joy!" I cried.

"Is it joy?" said the angel. "Alas, to many in this city it is only terror. Come with me."

In a moment I seemed to be standing with him in a parlor of the chief palaces of New York. A stout, florid, bald-headed man was seated at a table covered with papers which he was sorting over with nervous anxiety, muttering to himself as he did so. On a sofa lay a sad-looking, delicate woman, her emaciated hands clasped over a little book. The room was in all its appointments, a witness of boundless wealth.

Gold and silver, and gems and foreign furniture, and costly pictures, and articles of vertu—everything that money could buy was heaped together; and yet the man himself seemed to me to have been neither elevated nor refined by the confluence of all these treasures. He seemed nervous and uneasy. He wiped the sweat from his brow and spoke.

"I don't know, wife, how you feel, but I don't like the news. I don't understand it. It puts a stop to everything that I know anything about."

"O, John," said the woman, turning towards him a face pale and fervent, and clasping her hands, "How can you say so?"

And as she spoke, I could see breaking out above her head a tremulous light like that above the brow of the angel.

"Well, Mary, it's the truth. I don't care if I say it. I don't want to meet—well, I wish that he would put it off! What does he want of me? I'd be willing to make over—well, three millions, to found a hospital, if he'd be satisfied and let me go on. Yes, I'd give three millions—to buy off to-morrow."

"Is he not our best friend?"

"Best friend!" said the man, with a look half of fright, half anger. "Mary, you don't know what you are talking about! You know that I always hated those things. There's no use in it; I can't see into them. In fact, I hate them."

She cast on him a look full of pity. "Cannot I make you see?" she said.

"No, indeed you can't. Why, look here," he added, pointing to the papers, "here is what stands for millions! To-night it's mine, and to-morrow it will be all so much waste paper, and then what have I left? Do you think I can rejoice? I'd give him; I'd give—yes, the whole, not to have him come these hundred years."

She stretched out her thin hand toward him, but he pushed it aside.

"Do you see?" said the angel to me, solemnly, "between him and her there is a great gulf fixed. They have lived in one house with that gulf between them for years. She cannot go to him; he cannot come to her. To-morrow she will rise to Christ as a dew-drop to the sun, and he will call to the mountains and rocks to fall on him—not because Christ hates him, but because he hates Christ."

Again the scene was changed. We stood together in a little low attic, lighted by one lamp—how poor it was—a broken

chair, a rickety table, a bed in the corner, where the little ones were cuddling closely to one another for the warmth.

Poor things, the air was so frosty that their breath congealed upon the bed clothes, as they talked in their soft baby voices

"When mother comes she will bring us some supper," they said. "But I'm so cold!" said the little outsider.

"Get in the middle then," said the other two, "and we'll warm you. Mother promised she'd make a fire when she came, if that man would pay her."

"What a bad man he is," said the oldest boy; he never pays mother if he can help it."

Just then the door opened, and a pale, thin woman came in laden with packages. She laid all down and came to her children's bed, clasping their hands in rapture.

"Joy! joy! children. O, joy, joy! Christ is coming! He will be here to-morrow."

Every little bird in the nest was up, and the little arms around the mother's neck; the children believed at once. They had heard of the good Jesus, he had been their mother's only true friend through many a cold and hungry day, and they doubted not that he was coming.

"O, mother, will he take us? He will, won't he?"

"Yes, yes, my little ones," she said softly, smiling to herself, "He shall gather the lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom."

Suddenly again, as by the slide of a magic lantern, another scene was presented.

We stood in a lonely room, where a woman was sitting with her head bowed forward upon her hands. Alone, forsaken, slandered, she was in bitterness of spirit.

Hard, cruel tongues had spoken her name with vile assertions, and a thoughtless world had believed. There had been a babble of accusations, a crowd to rejoice in iniquity, and a few to pity. She thought herself alone, and she suddenly spoke:

"Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity. I am as a monster unto many, but Thou art my strong refuge."

In a moment the angel touched her.

"My sister," he said, "be of good cheer, Christ will be here to-morrow."

She started up with her hands clasped, her eye bright, her whole form dilated, as she seemed to look into the heavens, and said, with rapture:

"Come, Lord, and judge me, for Thou knowest me altogether. Come, Son of Mary, in thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded. Oh! for the judgment seat of Christ!"

Again I stood in a brilliant room, full of luxuries. Three or four fair women were standing pensively talking with each other.

Their apartment was bedrested with jewelry, laces, silks, velvets, and every fanciful elegance of fashion, but they looked troubled.

"This seems to me really awful," said one of them with a suppressed sigh.

"What troubles me is, I know so little about it."

"Yes," said another, "and it puts a stop so to everything. Of what use will all these be to-morrow?"

There was a poor seamstress in the corner of the room, who now spoke "We shall ever be with the Lord," she said.

"I'm sure I don't know what that can mean," replied the first speaker with a kind of a shudder. "It is really awful."

"Well," said the other, "it seems so sudden—when one never dreamed of any such thing—to change all at once from this to that other life."

"It is enough to be with Him," said the poor woman. "Oh, I have so longed for it!"

"The great gulf," again said the angel. Then again, we stood on the steps of a church. A band of clergymen were together—Roman Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Old School and New School, all hand in hand.

"It's no matter now about these old issues," they said. "He is coming. He will settle all. Ordinations and ordinances, creeds, are but the scaffolding of the edifice. They are the shadows—the substance is Christ!"

And hand in hand they turned their faces when the Christmas morning light began faintly glowing, and I heard them saying together, with one heart and one voice: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"—*Christian Union.*

LOWER CANADIAN DOMINATION.

Strange as it may appear, prior to the Confederation of the Provinces, Lower Canada ruled Upper Canada, and that, too, with a rod of iron. Though Lower Canada had a much smaller population than the Upper provinces, and was infinitely inferior in wealth, education, resources and general intelligence, it had an equal representation, and being a unit, with the aid of a few Upper Canadians, who loved party better than country, it contrived to obtain what legislation it pleased, and to dictate laws and measures to the United Province of Canada. The result was ruinous both to Upper and Lower Canada. In those evil times, the finances of Canada were in a wretched condition, there was always a deficit, jobbing and corruption prevailed to an appalling extent, and public morality received a shock from which it was long in recovering. Nearly every measure forced by Lower Canada upon the United Province, was calculated to cripple or to ruin it. It was during that period that separate schools were forced on the Upper Province. In the Lower Province, the public schools were organized on a purely Roman Catholic basis, and those children who could not attend such denominational schools, were placed at a great disadvantage in regard to educational facilities. It is a pleasant fiction of the advocates of separate schools to tell how the majority in Ontario conceded separate schools to the minority. Nothing of the kind ever took place. The separate school law of Ontario was forced upon her by Quebec, in spite of the remonstrances of the best portion of the people, and that grievous wrong was sanctioned and made perpetual by the British North America Act, because it was only on these terms that Ontario could escape from the galling domination of Quebec. It was like Sinbad the sailor escaping from the clutches of the Old Man of the sea; Ontario had to sacrifice something to get rid of the iron rule of Quebec.

It is another pleasant fiction of the opponents of free schools in this province that Quebec generously conceded separate schools to the Protestant minority of that province. The Catholic majority of Quebec did not so concede separate schools. The schools established by Lower Canada in the day of her power were Catholic denominational schools. The Protestant minority in Quebec had no satisfactory footing whatever in that province prior to Confederation; the concession was necessitated by the desire of the Catholic clergy to perpetuate separate schools in Ontario, and was embodied in the British North America Act. Both of these provinces have now separate schools saddled upon them, and will have, so long as they remain a part of the British Empire, unless, indeed the gradual decline of the separate schools and rapid advance of the non-sectarian schools should yet bring about the absorption of the former.

The same influences which have forced sectarian schools in Ontario are now at work endeavoring to perpetuate the system all over Canada, and to force it upon the Maritime Provinces! Thus the old domination of Lower Canada seeks to extend and perpetuate its influence in provinces in which it was formerly unknown! It is to this end that the free non-sectarian school system of New Brunswick has been so fiercely and persistently attacked both in and out of Parliament, and the most daring attempts made to trample upon the constitutional rights of this province. If our people are prepared to see New Brunswick forever saddled with an objectionable system, dictated by Lower Canada when it ruled the Upper Province, they will, of course, aid those who wish to perpetuate such domination in these free provinces. But if they have no desire for the humiliation and the disgrace involved in being ruled by Lower Canadian ideas, which are prejudicial to the growth and well being of Canada, they will retain that freedom, which if once lost can never be recalled, and take measures to conserve and perpetuate the non-sectarian free common schools of the Maritime Provinces.—*St. John Telegraph.*

The laboring man holds the same relation to the merchant, manufacturer, attorney, physician and minister, that the locomotive does to the train of elegant and well-filled cars. They would stand forever if the engine did not move them.

A good thing for every working man is a seat in church.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

FROM NEWTON, MASS.

Dear Brother,—

The weekly visits of the Messenger are very acceptable, and our hearts have been cheered by the revival intelligence it brings. God has certainly done great things for our churches. Why such abundant blessings should be bestowed can only be explained by remembering the source from which they come. Is it not possible that there is an intimate connection between the Missionary enterprise in which the Provinces have engaged, and this signal display of Divine power? Doubtless more hearts have been stirred with concern for the souls of men, and more prayers offered than ever before. And while Christians have prayed for those in darkness, it is probable that their thoughts have turned to those unsaved in their own families. Prayer and effort would be likely to be followed by such results as have been witnessed. Or God has blessed those whose contributions are carrying the Gospel to Siam by pouring the riches of his grace into their own souls and those of their friends.

In a few weeks we shall leave our beautiful and happy "hill," some to go with the message of salvation to the heathen. Five of the graduating class go to the Foreign field. Our own bro. Stubbart was appointed a few weeks ago to the Chinese Mission, and will go in the Autumn. Bro. Goodspeed goes to Ontario, and bro. Bancroft expects to return to the Province. He is a good man, and any church will be fortunate in obtaining his services. The H. M. Board is making commendable efforts to retain our Provincial students by finding them work for vacation at home. It remains largely with the churches to say whether the young men at Newton shall labor in the Provinces or not. If they are encouraged to do so, they likely will. Till a Theological Institution can be put in operation at home, it is exceedingly desirable that our young men should come to Newton and enjoy the great advantages it affords. And the best way to establish such an Institution is to have our pastors know the benefits of such a course. American Baptists welcome us to their Institution, and exert no influence to keep us here when the course is completed if we wish to return.

Spring, or rather Summer, has burst upon us all at once. Winter seems to have joined hands with Summer. Scarcely had the snow disappeared than the trees were covered with blossoms, and the gardens clothed in their Summer dress.

Yours, &c., JUNIOR.

Newton Centre, Mass., May 20, 1874.

THOROUGH PREPARATION.

The following, copied from the N. Y. Baptist Weekly, by a wise and much esteemed brother—a member of one of our Eastern churches, and forwarded to us for publication, is worthy of earnest consideration, both by students and by those on whom the support of our Collegiate Institutions rests. It was written in reference to the intellectual attainments of the late Senator Sumner:—

Speaking of young students for the Ministry being often tempted to enter immediately on the work of preaching. They go out to preach during their academic or collegiate course; their preaching gives pleasure to the people, and is owned of God. Good, but mistaken brethren, pious, but weak sisters, urge them at once to accept a pastorate. They talk of the waste of time spent in study, loss of opportunity to save souls—they flatter the vanity of the young men—they often ruin them for permanent usefulness. Add to these considerations the fact that the young man's heart is set on some young woman, of goody, goody tendencies, but of little intellectual culture, and you may consider his case as well-nigh hopeless. It is sad to see the ministerial wrecks made by these and like causes. We ought to have done with the nonsense, that a man is not doing God's work when he is cultivating his mind, and multiplying his powers. Talk of saving souls; seldom will a young man have better opportunities of winning men to God than when he is in college. We have generally observed that the young men who are so engaged in saving souls, when they go out during their college course to preach, are least interested in saving the class-

mates, when they come back to their college duties. They are often men whose moral habits and intellectual range gives them but little influence over their unconverted colleagues.

Here are two young men both called of God to preach the Gospel. One leaves his college duties, after two years' work, goes out with a burning desire to save souls, as it is claimed, and begins his pastorate. The other believes he is doing God's work in the faithful performance of the routine duties of the class room. He is graduated from college. In due time he is graduated from the Theological Seminary. Thus enlarged, broadened, ennobled, sanctified, he goes out to do the work of God. Ten years pass. One has gone steadily up,—the other, after remaining stationary for a time, has gone steadily down. The one is a giant, the other a dwarf. No one, in looking at the two men, can doubt which has done most for God and man during these years. Of course there are exceptions, some of them very brilliant exceptions—they are nevertheless exceptions. Pastors should encourage young men to enter on a course of liberal study, and raise up a generation of large-hearted, thoroughly educated and fully consecrated men, who shall make their influence felt in every walk of life.

Religious Intelligence.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE WORK OF GOD IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH IN MONCTON, N. B.

In honor of God's great mercy to us, we feel that his wonderful works should not be lost in silence and forgotten. Moreover, the mercy of God experienced by us is well calculated to encourage any Church whose light may be well nigh extinguished.

In September of 1872 I accepted the pastorate here, but was entirely unacquainted with the real state of the Church, only having spent one Sabbath in the place previous to my removal here.

It soon became apparent that there were but few members living a devoted christian life—spiritual death and sin abounded everywhere. But few would attend prayer and conference meetings, and finally they were entirely suspended. Last November things looked so hopeless I concluded that if it was the will of God I should seek another field of labour; but Providence so hedged up my way that I was compelled to remain here the winter.

Early in January a spirit of prayer and anxiety for the church began to be apparent, which gradually increased, until a meeting was appointed for business and consultation, which resulted in appointing the Deacons a committee to advise with me as to what was best to be done. Four of them visited me, when we agreed to hold special meetings, which were commenced on the 22nd of February.

Brother W. T. Corey came to assist at the commencement. Before the week closed, brethren J. Filmore and Simpson came. In a few days it became evident to me that God had commenced a great work. Church members became quickened; wanderers came home, and simultaneously members of other churches, who had become residents here, came and joined the church, and sinners began to be convicted. About the 10th of March bro. Miles came in the power of the gospel, and spent two days with us. The first five candidates were received and baptised while he was with us.

Brothers Irving, Steele, Gross, Herrit, Bill, Everett, D. W. Crandall, W. A. Crandall, Bancroft and Goldrup have also visited us during the meetings, and preached with power.

The Hon. Judge McCully providentially spent a couple of days with us at the beginning of the meetings, and stirred many hearts by his fervent addresses. We deeply sympathize with him in his present sorrow. May God abundantly bless all those brethren who have helped us in their own souls and homes.

During the month of March, 61 were added to the church, 38 by letter and 23 by baptism. During April, 32 were added, 28 by baptism and 4 by letter. During May, 13 have been added by baptism, making a total addition to the church of 106; and still more are anxiously enquiring the way to Christ. Truly we were brought very low, but the God of Israel has been our help. O, come, let us exalt his name together.

There are yet hundreds of unconverted ones walking about our Zion. Brethren continue to pray that God may continue to manifest his saving power in our midst.

My heart is rejoiced from week to week by the revival intelligence which the Messenger brings from my native Province.

The work in Kempt reminds me of my own experience there 16 years ago. The tidings from Jordan River is also peculiarly interesting to me, as, for the period of eight years, I participated in the joys and sorrows of that church.

Cape Canso was my last pastorate. I thank God that so many there, who put the Saviour off in the last revival, have submitted to him now.

Yours in the gospel,
A. W. BARSS.

Moncton, N. B., May 25th, 1874.

P. S. Candidates have been received for baptism every week since the 1st of March.