

In the Last Days.

As we grow old, how softly, slowly close
The doors of sense, and shut us from
The world.
Like tender petals of some ling'ring rose
That, of a frosty night, have inward
curled!

Dim as the figures in a dream now past
Those glittering shows that stirred our
youthful hearts,
Poor, hurrying shadows in a misty glass,
Each but a moment seen ere it departs.

Nor sight, nor sound, nor taste of earth's
delights
Can longer please; these things are past
and gone,
The soul will put her quiet house to rights
And in the upper chamber watch the
dawn.

—James Buckham.

On Grumblers.

BY P. S. HENSON, D. D.

In heaven there are no grumblers,
and that makes heaven. In hell there
is nothing else, and that makes hell.
In this world things are greatly mixed
thorns and flowers, thanksgiving and
complaining, with a large proportion
of the latter. The Englishman is said
to be the champion grumbler of the
world especially when he comes to
America; then he writes his grumblings
out and prints them in a book and
sends them over to us and we grumble
back to him. I remember some time
ago to have heard of an Englishman
traveling in this country in company
with an American friend. He could not
find anything to his liking. "The water
was beastly, don't you know," the roads
untravelable, the food indigestible, the
waiters uncivil, the landlord exorbitant,
the manners of the people were crude and
rude.

It was just at the time when we
were having extraordinary sunsets,
when long after the sun went down
there lingered in the western sky a
glow of almost preternatural beauty,
so that some people feared it was the
foretokening of the end of the world.

The American pointed his English
friend one evening to that sky. "Now
look at that, old boy. You talk of
the orient, of sunset skies in classic
lands, but where in the world did you
ever see so fine a sky as that?" The
Englishman looked at it a moment
and said: "Well don't you think it
is just a little overdone?" The Lord
himself could not please him when he
came to paint a sunset.

But this is not peculiar to an Englishman. It is characteristic of universal
humanity. The first man that ever
appeared on earth began to grumble
because there was just one tree in
all the world that he could not eat of,
and that grumbling cost him paradise,
and every child of Adam is just like
his father. The first thing a baby
does when he opens his eyes on this
new world is to strike out with both
hands and feet and howl his protest
against his environment. Nobody likes
his business, I care not what it is. It
may be he is a dry goods merchant.
He tells you there was a time when a
man could make a fortune selling dry
goods, but now the competition is so
close that nobody can make money out
of it. But he keeps a good house and
fine horses and goes to Chautauqua
every summer. Yet he is losing money
all the time. What a lot he must
have had to start with.

If there is any place on earth where
the voice of the grumbler ought not
to be heard it is in the sanctuary of
the home, but that is where it is heard
most loudly. When a man is at his
place of business he has to be a gentleman,
but when he goes to his own home
he has not got to be anything in particular,
and so he lets out the pent-up
fury of the day. He comes in like a
howling cyclone. "What's the reason
dinner isn't ready? What's the matter
with that beefsteak? It isn't fit for
a dog. I'll go to a hash-house." Poor
little woman. She has been waiting
all day for him to come home. She
has had her troubles, and has been
wishing for sympathy. That is the
kind she gets. The tears are swelling
in her eyes, she has a great lump in her
throat that she can't swallow, and she
wishes she were dead and you too,
especially you.

Somebody says we need wide-awake
men. There is more need for fast
asleep men. This world is going mad
for the want of sleep. Every now and
then I get too cross for anybody to
live with, and I know what is the matter.
What I need is sleep, and then
I wake up and I am as beautiful as a
May morning. Cultivate a good conscience—a conscience void of offense
toward God and man. And cultivate
the habit of being thankful for small
favors, think how many things you
have to be thankful for, and think how
many things you would not like to
have. In itself that was not a bad
prayer of the Pharisee, "I thank thee
that I am not as other men are," if he
had not been so stuck on himself.

When I see a man who is crippled or
blind I extend to him my brotherly
sympathy, and thank God that I can
walk and see.

Then get in the habit of looking for
sweetness and light. They get what
they look for. Here is a bee in the
neighborhood of Chicago. There are
a great many things to smell of in
Chicago; stockyards, our unspeakable
rivers (though St. Louis is doing most
of the smelling now), a lot of decayed
aldermen, though there are not so
many of them as there were. A bee
has no nose for things like these, but
a mile away is a rose with honey in its
heart, and he makes a beeline for the
rose, covers himself with honey and
returns to his hive. He got what he
went for. Here is a buzzard. There
are thousands of flower gardens in and
about Chicago, but a buzzard has no
nose for flowers; but a mile away is a
dead rat, and so he goes for that. Now
if you want to smell a rose, you just
want to find a rose; and if you want
to smell a rat you can commonly find
that, but excuse me. Look for sweetness
and light and you will find it
every day and everywhere. Paul and
Silas found it in the dungeon at midnight.

Let me give you one more prescription.
If you want to be cured of
grumbling, go to work.—The Standard.

The Unended Sermon.

REV. ROBERT F. Y. PIERCE, D. D.

Many a weary minister has drawn a
sigh of relief when the sermon has
been delivered and the Sabbath service
ended. Why should he not feel a great
sense of relief? Toward the ministries of that day
has been directed the energies of his life,
and the activities of his mind and heart.
Of course, with the multitudes
of his ministerial brethren, he enjoys
the preaching of the Word, especially
when back of his sermon has been
many hours of patient, persistent,
prayerful study; and in the delivery
of the message he has had much liberty
and the conscious presence of the Holy
Spirit.

But when the Sabbath day has ended,
and renewed pastoral cares are
thronging his busy life, seldom more
than a passing thought is given to the
sermon which custom stamps as "aged"
when once it is delivered. Sometimes
the anxious pastor feels encouraged
when a thoughtful and appreciative
listener speaks a kind word of helpfulness
and cheer, but usually the
"notes" are hushed and placed among
the aged minstrelsy, or gently laid
aside with the thread-bare and out
grown.

Yet the sermon power-delivered and
prayer-directed is not ended. The
singer may sleep, but the songs roll
on forever. As the scattered seed on
well-tilled fields will bring a harvest,
so surely will the word from the
sacred desk be transmuted into life.
Perhaps the preacher may forget the
spoken words, but his sermon never
dies. Before him sat the aged saint,
who was edified; she prayed for her
minister and his message that Sabbath
day when she first saw the light; she
remembered him in her preparations
for the sanctuary, and when he gave
the text she prayed for the presence
and the power of God to be with
preacher and with people. She received
that for which she prayed, and while
the message came, the Spirit and the
Word made her heart to glow
with new hopes and joys. She went
from the temple under the inspiration
of the sermon, henceforth to walk in
Beulah land.

With heart bowed down, the sorrowing
came for consolation; with Christian
sympathy the minister poured
from God's chalice the comforts of the
Gospel until the shadows lifted from
those weary hearts, and they left the
temple with the peace of God, knowing
that "He doeth all things well"

Yonder sat the discouraged one.
Disappointments, trials, and the many
tangled threads of life had made a
weariness of the flesh, until life itself
seemed a burden. But the clouds
were lifted, and, as the preacher spoke
the helpful words, God hung a bow
of hope across the sky of the once discouraged
man.

The tempted one was in the congregation,
and almost yielding to the siren's voice of evil.
But God touched the preacher and the warning
words were spoken which saved a soul
and life.

Heartsick and homesick, the wanderer
sat in the temple shadows. With
broken life and saddened heart he
thought of mother, home, and days
for ever gone. No cheering words,
perhaps no friendly hand to welcome
him to the house of God; alone, unknown,
like driftwood on the wave,
this human wreck drifted toward the
current which should bear him toward
heaven. Strange how sweetly came
the words of tenderness and sympathy
for the erring ones, and the

preacher's loving counsels led the
prodigal child back to manhood and to
God.

Other hearts felt the consciousness
of sin and guilt, and lost ones heard
the messages of love and mercy, until
salvation's joys rolled in upon the congregation,
and all could sing with mingled
tears and songs, "Praise God from
whom all blessings flow."

Out from the sanctuary moved the
congregation, but the preacher's words
transmuted into life, and will never
die.—Sunday School Chronicle.

Opposed To Everything.

A friend called our attention to the
fact that Sanballat wanted to hold consultation
with Nehemiah in the plain of O-no. That is the place where
more people stay to-day than in any other.
They are always protesting, throwing
doubt on grand undertakings; and while
you are in the mountain of O-yes, they spend
their time on the plain of O-no. In the harness
of society, they are breeching straps, good
for nothing but to hold back. You propose
to call a minister. All the indications are
that he is the right man. Nine-tenths of the
congregation are united in his favor. The
matter is put to vote. The vast majority
say, "Aye!" the handful of opponents
respond, "Oh, no!" You propose to build a church.
About the site, the choice of architects, the
plan, the plumbing, and the day of dedication,
there is almost a unanimity. You hope that
the crooked sticks will always lie still, and that
the congregation will move in solid phalanx.
But not so. Sanballat sends for Nehemiah,
proposing to meet him on the plain of O-no.
Some men were born backward, and have
been going that way ever since. Opposition
to everything has become chronic. The only
way they feel comfortable is when harnessed
with the face toward the whistle-tree, and
the back toward the end of the shafts. They
may set down their name in the hotel register
as living in Boston, Chicago, Savannah,
or Washington, but they really have been
spending all their life upon the plain of O-no.
There let them be buried, with their faces
toward the west, for in that way they will
lie more comfortable, as other people are
buried with their faces toward the east. Do
not impose upon them by putting them in the
majority. Oh, no!—Christian Herald.

Slow Progress in Overcoming Faults.

There is nothing that weighs more
heavily upon a right-minded man than the
progress he makes in overcoming his faults.
Here we are at twenty with the faults of
childhood upon us; peevish, ungovernable,
insatiable; at thirty with the faults of youth;
vain, inconsiderate, pleasure-loving; at forty
still wearing the badges of early folly;
proud, passionate, sensual; at fifty or sixty,
but not yet wise with the experience of life;
selfish still, unsympathetic, ambitious, full of
conscious weakness and, perhaps, with an ill-
repressed brood of evil habits and the characteristic
vice of age—avarice. Yet all the while we
may have been striving after the good, curbing
the evil, keeping our faces heavenward; all the
while aiming to fear God and keep his commandments;
never at any time wholly giving up the strife
after ideal excellent. This, after all, is the
tragic feature of life; that it is linked with
no such failure in character; that it is given for
wisdom, and yet we are not wise; for goodness,
and we are not good; for overcoming evil, and
evil remains; for patience and sympathy and self-
command and love, and yet we are fretful and
hard and weak and selfish. This makes the
bitterness of death, and calls out the cry:
Vanity of vanities; all is vanity!—Dr. Munger.

Worry as a Success-Killer.

Perhaps there is nothing else so utterly
foolish and unprofitable as a habit of worrying.
It saps the nervous energy and robs us of the strength
and vitality necessary for the real work of life.
It makes existence a burden and weariness,
instead of a perpetual joy and blessing, as it
should be. Poise and serenity are necessary to
the complete development of character and true
success. The man who worries is never self-centered,
never perfectly balanced, never at his best; for
every moment of mental anxiety takes away
vitality and push, and robs him of manhood
and power.

Worrying indicates a lack of confidence
in our strength; it shows that we are unbalanced,
and we do not lay hold of the universal energy
which leaves no doubt, no uncertainty. The man
who does not worry, who believes in himself,
touches the wires of infinite power. Never doubting,
never hesitating, he is constantly reinforced from

the Omnipotence that creates planets and
suns.

The habit of worrying is largely a physical
infirmity; it is an evidence of lack of harmony
in the mental system. The well-poised soul,
the self-centered man, never wobbles or hesitates.
The infinite balance wheel preserves him from
all shocks, and all accident or uncertainty.

Enough vital energy has been wasted in
useless worry to run all the affairs of the
world.—Success.

Manners When at Church.

No, your manners in church are very bad.
And shall I tell to whom you are rude? To
God himself. You have no right to saunter
lazily up the aisle in the house dedicated to him.

You have no right whatever to move about,
arranging, stroking, and straightening your
gown; your manners should be quiet and in good
order.

You have no right, during the time the hymn
is sung, to carefully observe the bonnets and
wraps of the congregation.

You have no right to discuss the sermon as you
walk down the aisle. The preacher has done his
best, and in the name of God, and you have no
right to criticize him.

You wonder if you have committed all these
sins—and you do not believe you have. My dear
friend, think it over, and you will find one or two
may be laid at your door. Only little faults,
only little rudenesses—but to the King of kings!

Every time we consent to sin the curtain
drops and the warm rays from heaven are cut off
from our hearts. And then comes frost.—Ex.

Look Upward.

It is wise for us to look at the dangers,
to be fully aware of the perils, to be tremblingly
conscious of our own weakness; but it is folly and
faithlessness to look at the danger so exclusively,
or to feel our own weakness so keenly, as that
either one or the other or both of them combined,
shall obscure to our sight the far greater and
confident-giving trust of the knowledge, the sympathy,
and the extended protecting hand of our Brother
and Lord. We belong to him if we have yielded
our hearts to him, and he will not "suffer his
holy one to see corruption," here and hereafter.

If you look down from the narrow ledge of the
Alpine arête, to the thousand feet of precipice
on either side of the two or three inches where
you have your footing you will get giddy and fall.
If you look up you will walk steadily. Do not
ignore the danger, nor presumptuously forget your
own weakness; but "when I said my foot
slippeth, thy mercy held me up." Recognize the
slippery ice and the feeble foot and couple with
them the other thought, "the Lord knoweth them
that are his."—Alexander McLaren.

Converted by One Verse.

Some twelve years a learned Coolin Brahman,
who was then an ordained Presbyterian minister
in India, paid a visit to the Bible House. In the
course of most instructive conversation, he was
asked what first drew his attention to Christianity.
He said that while waiting to see a gentleman at
whose house he had called, he took up a book lying
on the table, and turned to the opening page. The
first words instantly arrested his attention: "In the
beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
Being familiar with the Hindu Cosmogony, so
prolonged, abstruse, and wearisome, the brevity,
dignity, and self-evident truth of this assertion so
impressed him that he at once procured a Bible and
read it carefully, with the ultimate result that he
became a whole-hearted and avowed believer both
in the Written and in the Living Word.—Bible Society
Reporter.

Sympathy.

Sympathy is a form of Christian service. It is not a
favor granted by one and received by another; it is
action by which one life enters into another's life,
takes up a portion of the burden and shares the joy
or success, becomes for the time being a part of that
life and contributes to it some of its own strength.
It does not weaken the individuality of the life it
helps; rather strengthens it. It does not lessen its
responsibilities; it helps to bear them. By relieving
the tension it gives opportunity for development,
by companionship gives new courage and fresh
ability for advance when the assisting presence is
withdrawn.

There is no success in all this world which is so to be
dreaded as the success of getting away from God's
purpose for us.—Robert E. Speer.

Devotion to Duty

In devotion to duty you have the great secret of life; for, important and precious as is the cultivation of your intelligence, and bringing of all your powers of thought and action up to the highest level that you are several gifts permit, there is one thing in which you are all alike; there is one thing in which the pearl of great price the treasure in life and the security in death, is laid open to you all alike, be your attainments more or less limited be your talents more or less conspicuous. If you have devotion to duty for the guide of your daily course, nothing can ultimately go wrong.—Gladstone.

WHAT MAKES YOU COUGH.

Did you ever wonder just what it is that makes you cough? In a general way it is understood to be an involuntary effort of nature to eject something from the breath-pipe. As a matter of fact, merely a slight throat inflammation caused by a cold will cause a cough to start, the more you cough the more you want to cough. If you allay the inflammation in the throat your cough will stop.

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