

Three Colloquies

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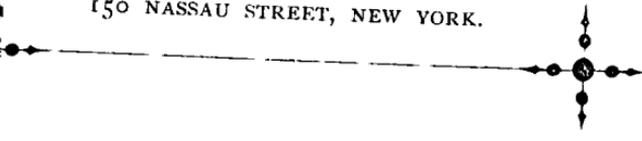
VITAL MATTERS IN RELIGION,

BETWEEN

D. L. MOODY and DR. WM. S. PLUMER.

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,

150 NASSAU STREET, NEW YORK.





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FIRST COLLOQUY:

ON CONVICTION AND CONVERSION.

PHILADELPHIA, DEC. 31, 1873.

It was near midnight. The close of the year 1873 and the opening of the centennial year were at hand. The Dépôt church in Philadelphia was crowded. Twelve thousand persons sat listening intently to the words of the earnest evangelist, from the text, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The appeal had come home with power to many who now longed for words of personal counsel, or who were burdened with anxious doubt. Mr. Moody proposed to turn the whole meeting into an inquiry

collected



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meeting, and calling the Rev. Dr. Plumer of South Carolina to the pulpit, he plied him with questions in his own peculiar way. In reply, every word was spoken with distinctness and with deep feeling, as if under a sense of weighty responsibility in thus witnessing for the Lord. The questions and answers as given are reported in substance by Mr. Moody.

MR. MOODY. Dr. Plumer, we often speak of "conviction." What is conviction?

DR. PLUMER. Conviction is a clear persuasion that a thing is true. Religious conviction is a clear, settled persuasion of five things: *First:* That I am ignorant, and need instruction. *Second:* That I am guilty, and deserve wrath and need pardon. *Third:* That my heart is vile, and must be renewed. *Fourth:* That my condition is miserable; I am "wretched and miserable and poor." *Fifth:* That I am helpless; I am without strength; I cannot save myself; I cannot think a good thought without divine grace.

MR. MOODY. What is the use of conviction?

DR. PLUMER. The use of conviction is not to

punish a man for his sins; nor is it to make him any better. The devils in hell have been under awful conviction for a long time, and not one of them is any better. The sole object of conviction is to shut up the soul to the faith of Jesus. The sole object of conviction is to bring the sinner to accept salvation by atoning blood.

MR. MOODY. Is any given amount of distress necessary to genuine conviction?

DR. PLUMER. Lydia seems to have had no distress—we read of none. God opened her heart, and she attended to the things spoken by Paul; but the jailor of Philippi would probably not have accepted Christ without some alarm. If you will accept the Son of God, you need have no trouble; there is nothing in mere trouble that sanctifies the soul.

MR. MOODY. Well, Doctor, what is conversion?

DR. PLUMER. Glory be to God, there is such a thing as conversion. If there was not, everlasting chains and darkness would be our doom. To be converted is to turn from self, self-will, self-righteousness, all self-confidence, and from sin in every shape, and to be turned to Christ. The

turning-point in a man's conversion is his acceptance of Jesus Christ; then he closes in with Christ and gives Him all his confidence.

MR. MOODY. Why must a sinner come to Christ for salvation?

DR. PLUMER. Because there is salvation in none else. All the angels in heaven and all the saints in heaven and earth cannot save one sinner. He must come to the Saviour. I will tell you why. Here are quintillions of tons of atmospheric air; why does not that support life without your respiring it? You must breathe it, or you die. For the same reason you must make Christ yours, or you perish, notwithstanding what he has done. The sight of a river will never quench thirst, and the sight of food will never satisfy hunger. You must come to Christ, and make his salvation yours.

MR. MOODY. Can a man be saved here to-night, before twelve o'clock—saved at once?

DR. PLUMER. Why not? In my Bible I read of three thousand men gathered together one morning—all of them murderers—their hands stained with the blood of the Son of God. Thus

they met in the morning, and before night they were all baptized members of Christ. God added to the church in those days such as should be saved. If you are ever saved, there must be a moment when you accept Christ and renounce the world.

MR. MOODY. What is repentance?

DR. PLUMER. It is turning to God with abhorrence of sin, and cleaving to Christ with purpose of obedience. A man truly repents of his sins when he does not commit the sins he has repented of; therefore saving repentance always terminates in purity of life and reformation. A thorough change of heart is followed by a thorough change of character.

MR. MOODY. How can I know that I am saved?

DR. PLUMER. From the fact that God is true and says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "Let God be true and every man a liar." If I accept Jesus Christ, therefore, it is not Mr. Moody's word, nor Mr. Sankey's word, nor Dr. Newton's word, it is the word of the living God on which I rest. His name is

Amen. He is faithfulness itself. He cannot lie. He never deceives.

MR. MOODY. What if I have not faith enough?

DR. PLUMER. Glory be to God, if I can touch the hem of my Saviour's garment I shall be saved. A little faith is as truly faith as a great deal of faith. A little coal of fire in the ashes is as truly fire as the glowing heat of a furnace. Jesus says not, If you have great faith you will be saved, but "He that believeth shall be saved." Oh, come and trust him fully. Give him all your confidence, and if your faith is not as strong as it ought to be, cry, as did the disciples, "Lord, increase our faith."

MR. MOODY. But I do n't know that I have the right kind of faith.

DR. PLUMER. Very probably you are not able to analyze your faith and say whether it is exactly of the right kind. The thief upon the cross did not say, "If I had a little more faith, or a little better faith, I would ask thee to remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He offered his prayer with the faith he had, and Christ accepted him. You must have

faith in God through grace, and then your faith must have works to prove it to be of the right kind.

MR. MOODY. I don't feel that I love Christ enough.

DR. PLUMER. And you never will. To all eternity you never will love him as much as he deserves to be loved.

"Had I ten thousand thousand tongues,
Not one should silent be;
Had I ten thousand thousand hearts,
I'd give them all to thee."

MR. MOODY. When the temptation comes, it is so much stronger than my resolution, that I yield. What shall I do?

DR. PLUMER. Look to Jesus. He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Christ can give us the strength of giants. Jesus is the best Master and the best Friend in the universe. Glory be to his name for ever.

Soon after the close of this colloquy the bell struck twelve, when Mr. Moody said, "I wish you all a happy New-Year."

Dr. Plumer cried, "I wish you all a happy ETERNITY."

SECOND COLLOQUY:

ON THE NATURE OF SAVING FAITH.

NEW YORK, MARCH 30, 1876.

THE great Convention of March 29 and 30, 1876, at the Hippodrome, in New York, had just closed. Most of the members still remained. At eight o'clock the house was filled, every seat being occupied, and hundreds standing. MR. MOODY, followed by DR. PLUMER, of South Carolina, entered. The usual devotional exercises were held. MR. MOODY then arose and said: "The exercises of this evening will vary from those commonly had at this hour. I shall not preach, but shall call on DR. PLUMER to answer many questions of great importance; these questions relate to the way of life. DR. PLUMER has long been studying the Word of God. Will he please take the stand?"

MR. MOODY: DR. PLUMER, I am living in the world, with eternity before me. I am accountable to God; I have broken his law. What must I do to be saved?

DR. PLUMER: There is but one safe answer to that question. It sounds out from the jail at

Philippi: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. That is the substance of all the Scriptures on this subject, summed up in a few words.

MR. MOODY: Is faith in Christ essential to salvation?

DR. PLUMER: So says the Lord Jesus Christ: "He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18.

MR. MOODY: Many in the inquiry-room tell us that we are making too much of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

DR. PLUMER: If they mean that we are making too much of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, that cannot be so; for He is All in All; the First and the Last; the Author and Finisher of Salvation; the one Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. If they mean that we are making too much of faith itself, that cannot be so unless we go beyond the Scriptures. The words *faith* and *believe* occur in the New Testament about five hundred times; and in a large number of cases salvation is clearly connected with believing. Jesus taught us this when asked, "What shall we do that we

might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent;" and, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." John 6:28, 29; 8:24.

MR. MOODY: Does our faith in Christ, or our want of faith, decide our relations to God the Father?

DR. PLUMER: The Scriptures so affirm: "Who-soever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father;" "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son;" "He that hateth me, hateth my Father also." 1 John 2:23; 2 John 9; John 15:23. No man can refuse to confess that Christ, the Son of God, is come in the flesh, without denying and dishonoring God the Father.

MR. MOODY: Is true faith wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost alone?

DR. PLUMER: Paul says: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, *faith*," and so on; and, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Gal. 5:22; 1 Cor. 12:3. Elsewhere he says, "Faith is of the operation of

God;" and John says, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God."

MR. MOODY: Is there no substitute for faith in Christ Jesus?

DR. PLUMER: None whatever. The want of faith mars everything. I remember John Calvin thus puts it: "The annihilation of faith is the abolition of the promises." Many Scriptures justify this remark. In the great commission given by Christ to the preachers of His Gospel, he says: "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16. These words are awful, and they are true: "He that believeth not shall be damned," so says the Son of God, our final judge.

MR. MOODY: What is that faith which saves the soul?

DR. PLUMER: Because faith is a simple and not a complex act, it is not easy to explain it. Some things are clear respecting it. Believing on Christ, believing in Christ, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, are all phrases found in

the New Testament, and all teach the same thing. True faith receives the divine testimony respecting our Saviour. It is a cordial belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, is come in the flesh, and has died—the just for the unjust—that he might bring us to God. It is a hearty persuasion that Jesus Christ is the sole and sufficient cause of salvation to lost men. Jesus Christ offers to save us, and faith consists in taking him at his word. It accepts the truth as it is in Jesus. Reliance on the person and finished work of the Redeemer is of the essence of faith. By this faith we receive Christ himself, John 1 : 12 ; and rest on him alone for salvation, Acts 15 : 11 ; by it all believers are one in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3 : 28 ; by it they all receive of his fulness, Eph. 3 : 19 ; by it sinners are justified, Romans 5 : 1 ; it purifies the heart, Acts 15 : 9 ; it works by love, Gal. 5 : 6 ; it overcomes the world, 1 John 5 : 5 ; it quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked, Eph. 6 : 16 ; it is very much an exercise of the heart, Romans 10 : 10 ; and yet it is most reasonable. If in any case it is right to receive human testimony, it is in every case

right unhesitatingly to accept the witness of God.

MR. MOODY : Can faith be explained by the sense of feeling ?

DR. PLUMER : The Scriptures call on men to seek after God, "if haply they might feel after him and find him," Acts 17 : 27. See that blind man groping his way at noon. There is light enough, but his eyeballs are sightless. He is in earnest, but he sees not how or where to go. Thus Bartimeus heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. He said to himself, "Now is my time." So he started. Perhaps he stumbled, possibly he fell ; but he was soon up and at it again. And as he went, he cried : "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Some tried to silence him, but he cried so much the more, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." He held on his way as best he could, till he found the Saviour and got the blessing.

MR. MOODY : Is the sense of *taste* ever used in the Bible to illustrate faith ?

DR. PLUMER : Several times. Hear the prophet David, "O taste and see that the Lord is good ; blessed is the man that trusteth in him,"

Psalm 34:8. The meaning is, "Make trial of this way; let experience resolve your doubts." One may read and hear much on the excellence of honey, but he will better know its sweetness by tasting it than by all descriptions given of it. Those who have tasted have certain knowledge; they *see* that the Lord is gracious and the Saviour precious; they know whereof they affirm. The deaf never admire music, the blind are not charmed with the rainbow, because they have no experience in these things. The man that comes to Christ and tastes his love, *sees* that the Lord is gracious.

MR. MOODY: Is faith ever spoken of as *hearing* the Gospel message?

DR. PLUMER: Many a time. "Incline your ear," saith God. "Hear, and your soul shall live." And Jesus himself says, "He that is of God heareth God's words." And he often said when on earth, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Indeed, Christ loved such language so much, that sixty years after he was glorified in heaven, he sent seven epistles to as many churches, in each of which he says, "He that

hath an ear, let him hear." O perishing men, hear the glad tidings, and your souls shall live.

MR. MOODY: Is faith in Christ the same thing as *looking* to Christ? So much is said in Scripture about looking, that we should like to hear what is the difference between faith and *looking*.

DR. PLUMER: From the days of Moses, *looking* seems to have been used to express *faith*. For their sins, God sent among the Israelites venomous serpents. These bit many, and much people of Israel died. By God's direction, Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole, so that the people might see it. The message sent through the camp was, "Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." It is not a stretch of the imagination to suppose that one may have come to his brother's tent, and said, "There is good news. A remedy is provided for this dreadful poison. By God's command, Moses has put a brazen serpent on a pole, and if any one will look at that he shall be healed." Perhaps the bitten man was far gone. He may have said, "I fear it is too late; I am almost blind; I am already half dead. How can

I look? I cannot live." But the other bids him to be of good cheer, helps him to the door of his tent, and directs his eyes to the weather-beaten tabernacle and to the figure on the pole. Soon the poisoned man says, "I think I do see something glistening in the sun. Yes, I see it; I feel better; I am well! Oh, how strange! Glory be to God!" From that day, looking has fitly expressed faith. By the evangelical prophet the Saviour says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." Isa. 45:22. And the Son of God himself says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14, 15. Let the dying sinner, let every dying sinner, look to Jesus Christ and live.

MR. MOODY: Can people look to Christ to-night and be saved?

DR. PLUMER: All God's commands on this point require present and prompt obedience. Do not trifle with God. The bitten Israelite

did not first take a dose of medicine, and then look. There is no remedy for sin but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

MR. MOODY: How else do the Scriptures teach us the nature of the act of faith which saves the soul?

DR. PLUMER: They call Jesus the living bread, which came down from heaven, and invite men to eat and to live. John 6:51. They speak of salvation as the water of life, and call on us to drink. John 4:14; 7:37; Rev. 22:17. They speak of receiving Christ. Col. 2:6; Luke 19:6. They speak of fleeing for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, Heb. 6:18, as the manslayer fled to his city of refuge.

MR. MOODY: Are we ever commanded anywhere in Scripture to embrace Christ?

DR. PLUMER: Not in precisely those words; but the command is there in other terms: "Kiss the Son." In western Asia it was common for persons who had been at variance, after the settlement of their difficulties, to come together and kiss. The father kissed his prodigal son upon his return. This custom has been introduced into western Europe. General

McComb told me that he was once called to settle a difficulty between two officers of the French navy. Having heard the story of each, he made up his mind on the matter, and announced his decision to the parties; then at his bidding they embraced and kissed each other. This was a final settlement.

Now there is a sad separation and alienation between Christ and the sinner. We greatly misunderstand Him, but He does not misunderstand us. He knows how vile and guilty and wicked we are. He calls. He offers terms of peace. They suit us exactly. Shall we longer refuse them? Ye dying sinners, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Psalm 2:12. Even a drop of his wrath falling into a guilty conscience, will put any man on earth into torment like the torment of the damned.

MR. MOODY: Does faith express *trust* in the Redeemer?

DR. PLUMER: Paul uses the very phrase: "Trusted in Christ." Ephes. 1:12. Where he says: "I know whom I have believed," the margin reads: "I know whom I have *trusted*." In

the Old Testament the verb *rely* is found three times, and in each case it has the meaning of believe. Dr. CHALMERS once called on a woman who was near death. She had a sense of her sins, but was in darkness about the way of salvation. In various ways he tried to lead her to right views of the gospel, but all in vain; at length he used a word in the Scottish dialect. When one walks across a ditch on a plank, he *lippens* to the plank—he trusts his entire weight upon it. So the doctor set before her the Redeemer and his grace, and said to the sick, "Canna ye lippen to him?" She replied: "Is that what ye mean? I canna lippen to ony else." O let men trust in Christ!

MR. MOODY: In believing, do we make a surrender to Christ?

DR. PLUMER: Certainly. The word *surrender* may be taken as the act of a hostile army. Rebels against a just authority should throw down their arms. Perhaps by a surrender you mean the making of a deposit. Thus Paul had that very idea when he said, "I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have com-

mitted to him." 2 Tim. I : 12. Literally it is, "He is able to keep my deposit." As if he had said, "I have deposited my soul, my eternal all, my immortal interests, with Christ, and I am persuaded that he will keep them all safe; there I leave them. He will not fail or deceive me." When we give up our valuables to men, they often disappoint us; but when we intrust our souls to Christ we are dealing with the Son of God, who is both able and willing to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him.

MR. MOODY: If a sinner prays heartily for mercy through Christ, is that an act of faith?

DR. PLUMER: The prophet Joel, speaking of Gospel times, says, "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Peter quotes these words as applicable to his hearers on the day of Pentecost. Paul repeats them in his epistle to the Romans as applicable to all men. In Joel, the Hebrew word for *Lord* is *Jehovah*. In applying this name to Christ, the apostles declared that Jesus is divine. Thus they establish his divinity; for Jehovah is the incommunicable name of God. Yes, our Saviour is Jehovah, is

Lord of all, Lord of glory, Immanuel, God with us, the true God, over all God blessed for ever. Let men in true faith call on his holy name, and they shall be saved.

MR. MOODY: I am sometimes told that I have no right to advise people to *come to Christ*; is that Scripture?

DR. PLUMER: There is nothing in the Bible to countenance such an idea. When the Lord Jesus came, early in his ministry he said to the toiling, distressed, and weary thousands on the plains of Judea, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." Afterward he complained of many, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." Coming to Christ, and coming to God by Christ, are phrases expressing the same act of the soul. Come! Oh come to Christ!

MR. MOODY: But they say Christ is now in heaven, and we cannot come to him, because he is where we cannot come to him.

DR. PLUMER: Let Paul answer: "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead;) but what saith it?

The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach: that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. 10:6-10.

MR. MOODY: Then what is it to come to Christ?

DR. PLUMER: The phrase "Come to Christ," is never found in Scripture until Christ came to earth in person. When he appeared, then there was a fitness in the thing. To come to Christ is to have such a state of mind and heart as would lead one to apply to him in person for grace and mercy if he were here on earth. Had he sent his ministers here to say that he was over on Broadway, and would grant mercy to all who should come to him and sincerely ask him for eternal life, would you go to him? Well, I have a better message than that. You need not go to Broadway. Jesus is with us. Hear him: "I walk in the midst of the golden candle-

sticks;" "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." So that if any soul will now and here apply to the Lord Jesus for salvation, on the terms of free grace, he shall live for ever. Oh, is not that good news? Who will joyfully accept it?

MR. MOODY: But how must I come to Christ?

DR. PLUMER. Come just as you are—poor, lost, guilty, miserable, helpless—having no merit of your own, all your righteousness being filthy rags, and your goodness as the morning cloud and the early dew. Come, turning to God with abhorrence of sin in every form, and cleaving to the infinite merits of the Redeemer with an unflinching purpose of leading a holy life in obedience to God's law.

MR. MOODY: A man came to me the other night, and told me that he came to Christ, and Christ would not receive him.

DR. PLUMER: Surely that man was mistaken. Jesus says he will not cast one out: "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." In the Greek it is a double negative: "I will not; no, I will not, cast him out!" There is

his word. Then you have his practice. It is not his custom to reject sinners that come to him for mercy. Nay, he never rejected one. Where is a single case? He welcomed the vilest publicans and sinners, poured salvation on a dying thief, and prayed for his own murderers. Since he left this world for his throne in glory, he has trodden to hell many a cruel tyrant and many a bloody persecutor who refused his grace and hounded his people; but, glory be to God! Jesus has never trampled on a broken heart, and he never will.

MR. MOODY: Is it a sin for those who are not Christians not to come to Christ to-night?

DR. PLUMER: Certainly; the neglect or refusal to accept Christ is *the* sin of men in Gospel lands. "He that believeth not hath made God a liar;" that is, he is doing all he can by example to destroy confidence in God's moral character for truth and honor. In the same way unbelief impugns God's wisdom, power, and grace, as set forth in the whole scheme of salvation. Besides, unbelief is a sin against the remedy. Christ said: "When the Spirit shall come he

will reprove the world of sin, because *they believe not on me.*"

MR. MOODY: There was a man in the inquiry-room the other night who quoted the words, "Many will seek to enter in and shall not be able." How would you answer him?

DR. PLUMER: Those awful words are in the Bible and are true. But let us see the connection in which they are spoken: "Strive [agonize] to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able; when once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall say unto you, I know you not whence you are." Oh, yes; it will then be too late; ye will not then be able to enter in, the door will then be shut. But that sad state of things is not yet upon us. Hear the Saviour in the last book of the Bible. "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Rev. 3: 8. O sinners, *sinners*, SINNERS, enter in and be for ever blessed!

DR. PLUMER continued: This great matter must be attended to at once. "Behold, now is

the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." I would not for all this world advise or encourage any soul to put off repentance and salvation even for an hour. Eternity is at hand. The judge standeth before the door.

"A point of time, a moment's space,
Removes me to yon heavenly place,
Or, shuts me up in hell!"

"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary:
Saviour divine,
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my guilt away,
Oh let me from this day
Be wholly thine."

THIRD COLLOQUY:

ON REPENTANCE.

AUGUSTA, GA., MAY 1876.

MR. MOODY: When I was in England, an eminent minister of the Established Church said he thought my statement of the doctrine of repentance superficial. I would like to have clearer and deeper views on this and some other points of truth. Dr. Plumer, does not the Bible say much, and should we not often speak, of repentance?

DR. PLUMER: In various ways the word of God mentions repentance scores of times. Since the fall in Eden, all mere men are sinners, and so repentance is always a timely theme. Paul puts it among the first "principles of the doctrine of Christ." Heb. 6: 1. Surely we should often think of this matter, and press it on the attention of others.

MR. MOODY: Does repentance belong exclusively to the religion of fallen creatures?

DR. PLUMER: Among unfallen creatures there is no room for repentance. The angels in heaven never repent. They have nothing to repent of.

Till man sinned, he never sighed, he never wept. Neither God nor his conscience laid anything to his charge.

MR. MOODY: Is the duty of repentance taught by the light of nature without the Bible?

DR. PLUMER: Some have said it was, at least thus far, that when one does wrong he ought to regret it. But the light of nature never teaches what is the right kind of repentance, nor does it aid us in repenting, nor does it give us any assurance that repentance is even pleasing to God.

MR. MOODY: Is true repentance a gift of God?

DR. PLUMER: Surely it is, for Jesus Christ is by his Father "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. When the early church heard of the triumphs of the cross, they said, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." Acts 11:18. The same is taught in 2 Tim. 2:25. See also Ezek. 11:19; 36:26. In his great psalm on repentance, David more than once acknowledges his entire dependence on the Holy Spirit. Psalms

51:11, 12. All really good motions, feelings, and purposes come from that blessed Agent. Zech. 4:6.

MR. MOODY: Was the doctrine of repentance known and understood among the patriarchs?

DR. PLUMER: Job was one of the patriarchs, and one of the best of them, and he says to God, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job 42:5, 6. Who can doubt that just views of God and of sin did in the same way affect Abel, Enoch, and Noah?

MR. MOODY: Was repentance required under the whole Mosaic dispensation?

DR. PLUMER: Yes; there is much said of it. We have seven penitential psalms, the *sixth, thirty-second, thirty-eighth, fifty-first, one hundred and second, one hundred and thirtieth, and one hundred and forty-third*, all written during that dispensation, and at least five of them by David himself. More than once, by God's command, the great prophet of the river Chebar calls on

Israel to "repent and turn." Ezek. 14:6; 18:30.

MR. MOODY: Was repentance preached by Christ's forerunner?

DR. PLUMER: The sum and substance of the preaching of John the Baptist was: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 3:2. This was his message to all classes.

MR. MOODY: During his personal ministry did our Lord and his disciples preach repentance?

DR. PLUMER: In Mark 1:14, 15, we read, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Afterwards he urgently said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3, 5. So when he first sent forth his apostles, "they went out and preached that men should repent." Mark 6:12.

MR. MOODY: After his resurrection, what did Christ enjoin on this subject?

DR. PLUMER: "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name

among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:47.

MR. MOODY: Did they understand and obey him?

DR. PLUMER: On the day of Pentecost the cry was, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38. The whole history of the apostles shows that they held up this truth wherever they went.

MR. MOODY: Is true repentance always connected with saving faith?

DR. PLUMER: No two graces are more intimately related. They are several times mentioned in the same verse of Scripture: Matt. 21:32; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21. It was a figurative but beautiful explanation of faith given by a writer of the seventeenth century: "Repentance is the tear which stands in the eye of faith as it beholds Christ on the cross." This is Scriptural: "They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced"—there is faith; and "they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his

only son"—there is repentance. Zech. 12:10. Oh, should not our hearts bleed as often as we think of Christ bleeding for us?

MR. MOODY: In what sense are repentance and faith conditions of salvation?

DR. PLUMER: Conditions are of two kinds. There are meritorious conditions. The blood and obedience of Jesus Christ are the meritorious condition of a sinner's salvation. Christ's righteousness admits of no addition. It cannot be made more glorious. It lacks nothing. Then there are conditions without which certain good things will avail us nothing. If the beggar will not take and eat the food and receive and drink the milk offered him, he must die. Yet by partaking of them he surely does not pay for them, nor merit them. So by repentance and faith we are made partakers of the unsearchable riches of Christ, but we do not thus merit eternal life.

MR. MOODY: Which comes first, faith or repentance?

DR. PLUMER: I like the answer given to that question by William Tennent: "I care not

which comes first, so they come." Dr. Wardlaw says, "The two are inseparable." Andrew Fuller says, "Such is the connection between repentance and faith in the Scriptures, that the one commonly supposes the other." If any man is certainly without either, he is surely destitute of both.

MR. MOODY: Is there any way of purifying and reforming a sinful nature without true repentance?

DR. PLUMER: No one has ever told us of any. God's word says nothing of it. Wicked men know nothing of it. When they have sinned beyond repentance, they abandon themselves to despair and to ruin. And when their comrades have gone to great lengths, and trembling takes hold upon them, they cry, "What is that to us? See thou to that." When despair fastens its fell fangs in the soul, or hellish pride leads it to defy God, it is undone. The love of sin cannot be cured till its baseness is seen and felt. Whether men are good or bad, by a law of their nature their desires and habits grow stronger and more firmly fixed. Sinners have never been brought

to love holiness but by genuine repentance. Where is the case?

MR. MOODY: Is there any good definition of repentance?

DR. PLUMER: Really good definitions are very rare. The Bible itself does not claim to contain one perfect definition. Many definitions are darker than the thing defined. Still Dr. Wardlaw quotes a definition of repentance which he thinks is "complete." I am very much inclined to agree with him. Here it is: "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience." If in this definition anything is either wanting or redundant, I fail to see it.

MR. MOODY: Does the word of God speak well of that brokenness of heart which belongs to evangelical repentance?

DR. PLUMER: It does. Hear the prophet David: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psa. 51:17. Hear the word of

God by the son of Amoz: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Again, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Isa. 57:15; 66:2.

MR. MOODY: Is repentance any satisfaction for sin? does it make any atonement?

DR. PLUMER: None whatever. "Without the shedding of *blood* there is no remission." Even the tears of the Son of God did not make an end of transgression. Not until he poured out his soul unto death did he say, "It is finished." A true penitent is in a right state of mind to receive the comfort of a gracious pardon. In an opposite state of mind he would reject it. But in repentance, however sincere and genuine, there is nothing to satisfy Divine justice. What God's law demands is obedience, not tears, nor shame. Charnock says, "Bare grief for an

offence is not a compensation for an injury done to man, much less for an affront offered to God." If repentance itself takes away our just liability to punishment, the law has no adequate penalty, and one may commit the most flagitious crimes, and persevere in wickedness till the end of his days, and then without any satisfaction to Divine justice, escape the due reward of his evil deeds by a repentance which does not prove its ingenuousness by accepting the one only effectual offering ever made for sin. "The law demanded not repentance, because it gave not liberty to sin." No human government has ever proclaimed its readiness to remit any penalty upon mere repentance. Such an act would destroy society. And shall the Judge of all the earth throw open the door of iniquity by adopting such a course? The reason why the penitent sinner is forgiven is not that his tears atone, but because he accepts the great sacrifice of Calvary, and lays the hand of his faith on the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

MR. MOODY: Is there a repentance that avails and a repentance that is unavailing?

DR. PLUMER: So says God's word. It speaks of "repentance unto life," Acts 11:18, and of repentance unto death; of a godly sorrow that worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, and of a sorrow of the world that worketh death. 2 Cor. 7:10.

MR. MOODY: Can the difference between these kinds of repentance be so stated that plain people may understand it?

DR. PLUMER: Surely those who love the truth can see that there is a marked difference between grief for *sin* and grief for the *consequences* of sin; between sorrow for having *done* evil, and sorrow for being about to *suffer* evil. The true penitent regrets that he *deserves* punishment; he whose repentance is spurious regrets that he must *undergo* punishment. The former laments that he has *done* evil; the latter that he has *incurred* evil. The one is grieved for his *crimes*; the other for his *detection* and *exposure*. The one is troubled for his *offences*; the other for his *losses*. One hates himself because he is a *criminal*; the other dislikes the Scripture which has fairly made him a *convict*. The one approves the very

law which condemns him; the other esteems that law severe and grievous, and so takes sides with God's worst enemies. The true penitent bewails all known sins; original sin, Psa. 51:5, and countless actual sins, Job 9:3; Psa. 40:12; 143:2. He whose repentance is not genuine is commonly but little concerned about his many sins, though one or a few acts of his life may greatly disturb him. In the eyes of the one, sin is the sum of all that is vile. Dr. Leonard Woods says: The penitent "is convinced that there is nothing on earth or in hell worse than to be a sinner." The other regards sin as a trifle, especially if it is secret or against God only. The one has hope; the other inclines to despair, as did Judas. Matt. 27:3-5. The one steadfastly turns from sin; the other sins on, or, if for a time he seems to reform, he soon returns to his sins as the dog returns to his vomit. The sorrow for sin in the one is habitual; in the other it is transient. True repentance is "towards God." Acts 20:21. David's grief for his sin was chiefly as it was "against God." Psa. 51:4. Saul's view of his sin was chiefly as it was

against David. 1 Sam. 26:21. Surely these are great and clear points of difference between these two kinds of repentance.

MR. MOODY: What is the difference between penitence and repentance?

DR. PLUMER: Sometimes these words are used interchangeably, as having the same import. But commonly penitence expresses the state of one who, having repented, continues to have a meek and contrite spirit. In this sense penitence may last for ever. Will not the heart of the sinner saved by grace always be lowly, chastened, and contrite, as often as he shall look upon Christ, and especially as often as Christ shall look upon him? Repentance has been already defined, and is the beginning of a penitent state. It is sorrow for sin, producing newness of life.

MR. MOODY: What is the difference between penance and repentance?

DR. PLUMER: In the Roman-catholic church penance is a sacrament. It consists of punishments, voluntarily inflicted, or imposed by the

authority of the church. Acts of penance consist of fastings, fines, alms, repeating prayers, wearing rough under-garments, flagellations, and other methods of dishonoring the body, all prescribed by man. Repentance is required by God, and always implies a right state of mind, a great change in one's views of sin, and an abhorrence of all iniquity.

MR. MOODY: Many speak of legal repentance and of evangelical repentance. What is the difference?

DR. PLUMER: Legal repentance is not saving; evangelical repentance is saving. In legal repentance one draws his chief motives from the law and its curse, or from the disgrace or punishment brought on by sin. In evangelical repentance the motives are chiefly drawn from the gospel and from the cross of Christ. In the former, terror prevails; in the latter, the mild and winning aspects of God's character draw the soul. No apprehension of guilt and no amount of terror, however just, promise a good result till the sinner is willing to be saved by the rich grace of God in Christ Jesus. Thus the spirit of rebellion against God is broken by love.

MR. MOODY: Can he who has no clear view of his own sinfulness truly repent?

DR. PLUMER: What has he to repent of? He may be sad, he may be terrified, he may deplore his mistakes or his misfortunes; but how can he repent of sin unless he knows it to be justly chargeable to him and deserving of God's displeasure? It should also be stated that mere knowledge of our sin and misery may exist where there is no genuine repentance. It was *after* they were pricked in their hearts, and cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" that Peter called on his convicted hearers to repent. They saw that they had sinned, and so had something to be sorry for. Still they were not true penitents till they obeyed the gospel. Men cannot repent of actions which they do not see to be sinful. David was for a long time much perturbed respecting his bad conduct; but he never repented of it till, by the prophet Nathan, God convinced him of his sin.

MR. MOODY: Does humility always accompany true repentance, or may a true penitent still be proud in spirit?

DR. PLUMER: The true penitent says, "Be-

hold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." Job 40:4. "O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee." Psal. 69:5. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. One may be alarmed or distressed at thoughts of his past life; but so long as he is proud in heart, he is an offence to the Most High. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4:6.

MR. MOODY: Will a true penitent confess his sins to God?

DR. PLUMER: Why should he not? How can he refrain from it? Whoever refuses to tell God the worst he knows of his case, will find labor and sorrow. Psal. 32:3-5. The smothered agonies of conscious guilt are like the fires of hell. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Prov. 28:13. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. Those who would have the joy of pardon must not shun the shame of confession.

MR. MOODY: Do you say that true penitents are ashamed of their sins?

DR. PLUMER: David was. Psal. 40:12. So was Daniel. Dan. 9:7, 8. And so was Ezra. Ezra 9:6. God said it should be so whenever he should show mercy to Israel. Ezek. 36:31, 32. This shame lasts, and even strengthens after good hope springs up in the soul: "I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." Ezek. 16:62, 63. This shame amounts to self-loathing. Ezek. 6:9; 20:43,

MR. MOODY: Well, what is the effect of all these exercises of the soul?

DR. PLUMER: They lead to an abhorrence of sin in every form. Psalm 66:18; 97:10; 119:104, 128. They make the love of holiness vigorous. Psal. 119:97, 109; Rom. 7:12, 22. They induce thorough and permanent amendment of life. He that stole steals no more. He

that liéd lies no more. The churl becomes liberal. The profane man learns to pray. "If I have done iniquity, I will do no môre." Job 34:32. Every one thus changed does "works meet for repentance," Acts 26:20; that is, works which prove his repentance sincere.

MR. MOODY: What are the prevailing motives in producing this great change?

DR. PLUMER: First comes the just and awful authority of Jehovah. "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." He hath spoken. Let all flesh hear. He could not have spoken more solemnly. Hear him through. "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts 17:30, 31. "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Jer. 22:29. Hear, obey, repent. Nothing is more just than that a dependent creature should promptly bow to God's awful authority.

Then there is a just sense of the evil and

heinousness of sin. If it is seen to be soul-destroying and "exceeding sinful." The worst thing one can say of any act is, that it is *exceeding sinful*. If sin is not seen to be evil, really odious, who will turn from it? It is because the sow loves the mire that she wallows in it. The cleanly sheep loves it not, and, if found in it, is always uncomfortable and in distress.

Then right views of the kindness and forbearance of God have much power over the soul: the goodness of God leadeth to repentance. Rom. 2:4. Men cannot be frightened out of their sins. Not even the terrors of hell ever caused a man heartily to renounce his sins. God's plan is to draw us "with cords of a man, with bands of love," (Hos. 11:4,) that is, with influences suited to our nature.

Then the view the soul is enabled to take of the love and sufferings of Christ completes the list of prevailing motives. This mightily moves the will and determines the choice. The evil of sin and the grace of Christ wondrously appear, when one sees the mighty Redeemer bearing the sins of many, and treading the wine-

press of his Father's wrath alone. Here are love and pity, meekness and mercy, without a parallel.

MR. MOODY: Such being the motives, what is the energy that produces repentance?

DR. PLUMER: The efficacious cause of repentance is the might of the Most High, even "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." Eph. 1:19, 20.

MR. MOODY: Will such repentance still avail?

DR. PLUMER: Hear God's word: "Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3:19. Could language be clearer? Who could ask for more?

MR. MOODY: Does our blessed Saviour deal very gently with penitent souls and broken hearts?

DR. PLUMER: So teach the Scriptures. Here is a sample: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break; and the smoking

flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged." Isa. 42:2-4. The same thing is taught elsewhere. And Paul says: "We have not a high priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Again: "In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God." Heb. 4:15; 2:17. THE MOST APPROACHABLE PERSON IN THE UNIVERSE IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

MR. MOODY: But is it not said of Esau that "he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears"?

DR. PLUMER: Those very words are found in the New Testament. Heb. 12:17. The meaning is that Esau found no way of bringing his *father* so to repent, or so to change *his* mind, as to recall the blessing he had given to Jacob. The place of repentance was sought in Isaac, not in Esau. See the narrative in Gen. 27:30-40. It is not said that Esau desired to repent of his own wickedness; but it is said that he found no

way of changing his father Isaac's mind in the bestowment of the great family blessing.

MR. MOODY: But when must I repent?

DR. PLUMER: The Bible has but one reply to that momentous question. It is, now, *now*, NOW, NOW. Calvin says: "We often see that those who are continually saying in jest that repentance will come early enough when they are breathing their last, yet when it comes to that cry out repeatedly amid their dreadful torments that the season for obtaining grace is past; for they are doomed to destruction because they sought God too late."

I was once asked, Which is the most solemn and awful text in the Bible? I have thought much of it. I am not yet decided. But surely these are very affecting words of the weeping prophet: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jer. 8:20. There was a harvest, there was a summer, and we might have been saved. Others were saved. But we, oh we are NOT SAVED.