

Mr. 9-80 A.M.

"HELP FOR THE DERAILED"

Prov. 23:35

How do we help people who are on the wrong track? What about those who have gone astray and have been derailed!

It is a sad sight to look at a train with several cars derailed, a mass of steel, helpless, destruction has rendered them hopeless. The derailed car must have assistance. If it is to be of service again some power must lift it back on the rail.

The train is made up, the cars are laden with goods destined for distant cities. This expressive equipment and cargo has a schedule and is directed to the right rails. Now the train speeds across land but alas, a broken section of track is hit, the cross ties are rotten, the rail gives to the weight of the unusual burden and the cars are thrown off balance, in seconds there is a crash and many cars are derailed. How are we to get this train moving again?

By telling the men to move the engine up, no! Unless the cars are on the rail, there is no hope. What a tragedy when a train is derailed.

Solomon in the text I have chosen sketches the mental operations of one who having stepped aside from the path of clean living, desires to return. He is thinking about those who have gotten on the wrong track or have gone astray and been derailed.

With a wish for something better, he says, "when shall I awake? When shall I come out of this horrid nightmare of iniquity? Here is a man seized upon by a habit and being forced down hill by his passions, he cries out: "I will seek it yet again. I will try it once more."

There are thousands of warnings pointing out the dangers and perils of life --

telling men here is the right rail -- here are the papers with orders -- here is where the rocks and mountains are, the quicksands.

A magician gave a performance in the schoolhouse. Everyone in the village was there. He used people from the audience for his tricks and provided amusements for all. He asked the village half-wit if he could borrow his watch. He loaned the watch. By slip of hand, the magician put the watch in his pocket, and slipped a piece of lead into a small leather pouch. He made it appear that the watch was in the leather pouch. He held the pouch to his ear and cried out "this watch has stopped". He threw the pouch on the floor. He stomped it. He beat it with a hammer. All the while the poor boy was pleading "Don't break my watch." It was all in fun, but how many times in life has the Devil in like manner tricked you? He has been our enemy and has derailed many in the world today.

You have already gone astray-- how are you going to get back on the right rail? I hope there are many who are ready to hear this message, you have suffered agony of soul long enough.

If you compared yourself with what you were 5 or 10 years ago, do you now cry out in bondage?

There are some who feel they are beyond help and God cannot get them back on track. I want to say to you there is a glorious and a triumphant hope for you yet.

I want to sound the trumpet of Gospel deliverance.

The church is ready to spread a welcome at your return. Heaven would rejoice at your return.

There are many of you that would like to return to God today. But you say,

there are some obstacles in my way, I don't think I can get back on track, there are so many things blocking my way.

Let me speak to you about some of these things -- the things that prevent you from getting back on track with God.

I. THE FORCE OF MORAL GRAVITATION

There are natural laws which keep and bring things down to the earth. Anything you throw in the air, a pencil or hymn book, you drop it, and it goes down, never up or sideways.

There is a corresponding moral gravitation. In other words, it is easier to go down than it is to go up; it is easier to do wrong than it is to do right.

Remember when you were a child. You had friends. Some of them were good, some were bad. Which most affected you?

Recall some of the anecdotes or jokes that you have heard in the past 5 or 10 years -- some of them were pure and some of them impure. Which the more easily sticks to your memory?

During the years of your life you have formed certain courses of conduct -- some of them good - some of them bad. To which style of habit did you the more easily yield?

My friends, we have to take a moment of self-inspection to find out that there is in all our souls a force of moral gravitation.

But that gravitation may be resisted. Just as you may pick up from the earth something and hold it in your hand toward Heaven, just so by the power of God's grace, a soul fallen may be lifted toward peace, toward pardon, and toward Heaven.

II. THE POWER OF EVIL HABITS

There are some who say it is very easy to give up evil habits. I do not believe this.

Here is a man or woman given to intoxication. He knows he is a disgrace to his family, he is destroying his property, ruining his body, mind, and soul.

If that person could easily give up that habit, would he not do so?

The fact that he does not give it up proves it is hard to give it up.

Solomon gives a striking picture of this great curse. In a few strokes of his pen he tells of its painful and pitiable consequences.

V. 20 - The victim of this vice is held in contempt by sober men.

V. 21 - The drunkard is brought down to poverty.

V. 29 - Dissipation brings physical deterioration. It tells by his personal appearance.

Also, he becomes contentious. His power of control is turned to quarreling and he no longer has command of his tongue.

V. 33 - Impurity. The saddest departures are made from the path of purity and honour. He is derailed on the road of ruin.

V. 34 - The Drunkard is seen by his loved ones and friends as one sinking and falling. His reputation, his health, and his character is perishing. He acts like one who would make a bed on the waves or the top of a mast.

V. 32 - Stings, making a wound, puncturing - filling the body with poison. The penalty is bodily torture.

V. 35 - Bitter bondage. When shall I awake? He has been in a long sleep, the evil habit is still there craving to be exercised. However, he feels humiliation and loss, he desires to escape, he strives to free the cords of his sins. "The sight of a Drunkard is a better sermon against vice than the best that was ever preached on the subject," so spoke Augustine.

We are speaking of the power of this habit. It is very easy to sail down stream, the tide carrying you with great force; but suppose you turn the boat up stream, is it so easy then to row it?

As long as we yield to the evil indignations in our hearts, and our bad habits, we are sailing down stream; but the moment we try to turn, we put our boat in the rapids just above Niagara, and try to row up stream.

^{up} Take a man given to the habit of using tobacco, as many of you do! And let him resolve to stop, and he finds it very difficult. DeWitt Talmage said "I quit the habit and seventeen years later, he still battled it." "I would as soon to put my right hand in the fire, as to indulge in it one more time."

Why, because it is a terrific struggle to get over.

Let a physician advise a person to give up the use of tobacco. That person goes around not knowing what to do with himself, he cannot add up a line of figures, he cannot sleep nights, it seems as if the world has turned upside down. He feels his life is ruined. He is now fretful, restless, and a complete fidget!

What power it has and now it has rolled a wave of woe over him.

He has tried to stop smoking. After a while he says, "I am going to do as I please. The Doctor doesn't understand my case. I am going back to my old habit."

And he returns, and the world now seems to be an attractive place to live.

We all know in our experience, that habit is a task master; as long as we obey it, it does not chastise us; but let us resist and we find we are to be lashed with whips, and bound with ship cable, and thrown off the track, derailed.

In the war 1812, a ship set on fire just above Niagara Falls, and then cut loose from its moorings, it came on down through the night and tossed over the falls. It was said to have been a scene brilliant beyond all description.

The point is, there are thousands of men on fire of evil habit, coming down through the rapids and through the awful night of temptation towards the eternal plunge.

Oh! How hard it is to arrest them. God only can arrest them. God only can arrest them.

Suppose a man after 5, 10, or 20 years of evil doing resolves to do right! Why, all the forces of darkness are allied against him. He cannot sleep nights. He

gets down on his knees in the midnight and cries "God help me!" He bites his lip. He grinds his teeth. He clenches his fist in a determination of purpose. He dare not look at the bottles in a wine store. It is a hand to hand fight with this merciless habit. When he thinks he is free it pounces back like a pack of hounds tearing away at the flanks of a poor fox.

In Paris there is a sculptured representation of the God of revelry. He is riding a panther at full leap. Oh, how suggestive. Let everyone who is riding on bad habits understand he is riding to death!

How many there are who resolve on a better life and say "when shall I awake?"

But, seized on by their old habits cry, "I will try it once more, I will seek it yet again."

Years ago, Princeton students were skating. The ice was very thin, warning had been given about the air hole. They were warned to leave the place.

But one young man, cried out one more round. He swept around and went down. He was brought out a corpse. There are thousands losing their souls in that way. It is one more round.

III. SOCIETY REPULSES THE DERAILED

You say, "I desire to reform and will shake off my old associates, I will find Christian companionship."

You appear at the church door some Sabbath day and the usher greets you with a strange look and says "Why you here, you are the last man on earth I ever expected to see at church. Come in, take a seat in the back pew."

Instead of saying "Good Morning, I'm glad you are here. Come, I will give you a first rate seat, right up by the pulpit."

You decide to attend prayer meeting and someone else says, "glad to see you, the dying thief was saved and I suppose there is mercy for you."

You are disgusted, chilled, and resolved never to enter the house of God again. Society and the church does not give you a warm grip of the hand. How few Christians understand how much force and Gospel there is in a good, honest hand shake.

Sometimes when you need encouragement the hand shake of a Christian is just what you need.

Those coming from evil courses of conduct, often run into repulsions.

There are people a few blocks of this church in Chesapeake who may find vast deserts of indifference between them and the house of God.

The fact is we try to keep respectability though hundreds perish. Christ sat with Publicans and sinners.

We drive up to our church in one car alone. It is not that you are any better but because the mercy of God has protected you. We are so concerned about non-essentials in religion. We must encourage people to join Christ and start for Heaven.

I want you to know there are all kinds of difficulties in the way of those derailed.

Solomon gives some advice.

V. 17. Do not envy sinners - stake your life upon fear of the Lord all the day long.

1. First, throw yourself on God.

Are you derailed today? Go to God earnestly and tell him these habits you have, and ask him if there is help, ask him in his love to give it to you.

Do not go with a long rig-a-ma-roll made up of "ohs", "ahs", "commands", "thank you's", and "amens".

Go to God and cry for help! Help! Help! And if you are too weak to cry for help -- (just look and live.)

Battle of Antietam, Preacher went into hospital after the battle and said to a man "where are you hurt? -- No answer, but held up his arm, swollen and splintered."

When a man is wounded in soul, he can just hold up the wound. The mountains may depart but God says "I will never fail you." "As I live saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

During the Depression the wife said to the husband "cut the slices thin", or there will not be enough to go all around for the children. Cut the slices thin."

Thank God there is a full loaf for every one that wants it. Bread and enough to spare.

The Master St. Hospital in Philadelphia was opened during the Civil War.
A telegram read there will be 300 wounded men tonight, be ready to care for them.
They came from every part of the land. One soldier, they had one question, how
to take off the rags in a gentle way and put on the bandage.

When a derailed soul comes to God, healing for his wounds, pardon for his guilt
is most important. Men must give up bad companions or give up Heaven. It is not
10 bad habits that destroy a man, it is one.

What chance is there for the young man halting in front of the tavern with
evil, old companions?

Throw yourself upon God.

2. Second, seek Christian advice.

Every Christian is bound to help you. He will listen to your struggle
and stand beside you with prayer.

Gather up all the energies of body, mind, and soul - and declare this day that
evil habits are past.

Half and half will not work -- it must be a waterloo. Shrink back and you are
lost. Press on and you are saved.

Your struggle with sin is a death struggle. It will require the Rock of Ages
-- Victory in Jesus.

Give your heart to God -- what good news. Mother then can answer the question
"Where is my wandering child tonight?" Her answer will be "in no bad place". We have

trusted them to God."

The proudest moment in any body's life is when he gains the victory and tells his parents.

There is no balm powerful enough to heal the derailed heart, unless that heart is yielded to God.

Harold Begbie told the story of old barn drunk in London. The child of drunken parents, born in drink, declared actually to be born drunk. His parents in childhood gave him drink. Civilization produced this man.

He lived in a den, with a dog, cat and rabbits plus Guinea pigs.

Through the Salvation Army efforts God took the uncleanness away. People called it a miracle.

God is waiting to perform a miracle today! Would you like for him to work one in your life? Have you been derailed? Are you a member of His church and faithfully serving Christ? Christ died for your sins on a cross and he is waiting for you to receive Him.

Our invitation is to you, profess Christ, transfer your letter, cease your backsliding, God wants to put you back on the track now!