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"Prepare to meet thy God." Amos, 4:12.

There is no possibility of avoiding an interview with God. Other beings you may avoid if you wish. Criminals naturally secrete themselves from the officers of justice, ^{sometimes} by fleeing to the uttermost parts of the earth; and formerly it was a comparatively easy matter to escape detection. But in our day Science has so wonderfully increased the knowledge of men, and by the aid of the Electro-Magnetic Telegraph has so facilitated the intercourse of nations, and even the Photographic Art has been made ^{so} subservient to the purposes of Justice by revealing to strangers the life like resemblance of the fugitive, ^{that} and though he may take the wings of steam and cross

(the wings of lightning outstrip his speed and)
the continent or the ocean, he often meets,
at the end of his journey or his voyage,
an unexpected reception at the hands of
the officer of Justice, notified of his
approach by the electric message from
the scene of his crime. It is by the aid of
such wonderful discoveries as these that
man has been gifted with a certain kind
of ubiquity, or everywhereness, and time
& distance have both alike been almost
reduced to nothing.

But there is a limit to man's power of
rapid transit, and universal presence.

Man has nothing in his attributes that
corresponds to God's Omnipresence.

And, indeed, how it ~~was~~ ^{is possible} that a Being

can be everywhere present and at all times,
surpasses our capacity even to conceive.

Yet we do receive it as a well estab-
lished truth, and it is to the child of
God, a source of infinite joy to know
this is one among His attributes - that
God is present everywhere. Read 139 Ps.

Now I know that when the passage selected as my
text is read by men ordinarily, it conveys no other
idea than that ~~the~~ preparation is needed by us
to meet God in Death and judgment; and
nothing can be conceived more important, ^{or}
than such an exhortation, nor can any
thing be conceived of ~~more~~ ^{so} ~~more~~ solemn as
~~more~~ that meeting with God ~~as~~ ~~is~~ implied in
the hour of death, or the judgment of the great Day.

But there is a universal propensity in us all to post-pone the consideration of spiritual matters, and especially to have certain set times to attend to such concerns, and in the intervals allotted to our temporal affairs, to dismiss the thought of God, until the time comes for us to meet Him. The impenitent man practises upon this system of procrastination, when he says to God's Holy Spirit "Go thy way" &c. meaning, (if he mean anything,) that he will go on in earthly pursuits however sinful, just because they are pleasant, and that he will manage to have things arranged, (he does not know nor care how,) so as to settle up his accounts finally when he will be compelled to meet God in death. He

forgets that he cannot choose a time for meeting
 God, just when it suits his own convenience;
 that God is not confined to the hour of death,
 or, the day of judgment as times of meeting men.
 I. We meet God in all the events of common life.
 What if God plant Himself in your very pathway
 of life, and in the most unexpected manner,
 and at a most unexpected time, pour out His
 beneficence upon you in the form of a sudden
 increase of your temporal prosperity; or what
 if He meet you by blasting with sudden loss
 your pecuniary ventures; What if He bless
 you with the home circle of pure delights, "wife
 children, and troops of friends;" giving you light
 in your dwelling and peace around your
 hearth-stone; or, what if he crown the aspira-
 tions of the young with joyous realization of

cherished hopes, and ~~the~~ outlook of Life is ^{apparently} only
one long unchanging vista of joy and peace;
or, ~~if~~ what if He meet you by the lowering cloud
of dark Providences, coming in ~~in~~ the shadowy form
of bereavement, plucking from the charmed circle
of home some lovely flower upon which your
idolatrous affections are placed, and from which
your intensest happiness is derived; what if
He meet the young, the careless, the giddy and
the gay in the midst of all their thoughtlessness
of Him & His claims, and by disappoint-
ment of expectations, by failure of hopes,
by treachery of pretended friends, by losses
and estrangement of affection on the part
of those you regarded as devoted to you, by any
and all such every day occurrences, is it

not true that God is in all this? Has He not met you in the blessings of life - your daily bread, & your deliverance from evil? Has He not met you in the hour of grief desolation and gloom that has shed its dark cloud over your household? Has He not met you in the Sunshine of earthly joy, and the hour of your highest success? Has He not met you too in the bitterness of your blasted hopes, and in the failure of your plans for future earthly prosperity, when one by one you have seen your expectations die out in darkness, and have felt the iron of despair enter your very soul? God is in all this. God is in every thing. God positively appoints, or designedly permits every event.

Yes, God has already met you elsewhere also! In the
lone hours of your withdrawal from the presence
of your best & dearest friends, when the nature
of your pursuits was such as would not
bear the look of Society at large, when you
were ashamed to let the light of Day shine
upon you, and shrouded yourself & your deeds
in midnight gloom, when you blessed yourself
with the thought that no eye saw you, ^{deeds} no ear
heard your words, then it was that God met you
by His Holy Spirit or by His Providence, and not only
saw, & heard, the deed & word, but there was not a thought
in your mind but, lo! The Lord knew it altogether.
And remember that He was not ^{there} ~~simply~~ simply to
take record for a coming judgment, but His de-
sign in thus meeting you at such times and

(Arrest you in your downward march and to) in such places, was to win you to His love & service.

When joy crowned your days, when your cup was running over, when peace filled all your soul, this was God's gift, and His goodness was intended to lead you to repentance, and when sorrow fell on your path, and the springs of your enjoyment were dried up and woe lay heavily upon your heart, then God was reproving & rebuking you to correct your wanderings and restore you to Himself. When He met you in those dark scenes of sin and folly His voice was "What doest thou here?" "Come back, Come back, my son." "If sinners entice thee consent thou not?" "Go not in the way of evil men, enter not into the path ~~the~~ ~~the~~

of the wicked; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it,
and pass away. For they sleep not except they have
done mischief; and their sleep is taken away un-
less they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread
of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence."

Now the question that comes up for answer is How
did you meet Him, when you were thus con-
fronted by His Providence, and Conscience
gave voice to His Word? Were you pre-
pared to meet Him? Were you glad to meet
Him? Alas, not every time is God welcomed
when He comes to meet men "in the paths
of worldliness and vanity, pointing kindly
to the coming wrath, and warning them
from that wrath to flee." They avoid Him.
They hush conscience. They harden their neck, though

often reproved," forgetting that they incur the threatened risk of being "suddenly destroyed and that without remedy."

And if any think that the hour of Death and the Day of Judgment are the only times when we may expect to meet God, such may find in the context of this passage a refutation of this thought. The Israelites had been so rebellious, idolatrous, and corrupt, that God had visited them with famine, drought, locusts, and dreadful pestilences; by the incursions of the Assyrians and other enemies, as well as by innumerable evils of various kinds, but as "they persisted in impenitence rebellion + idolatry, notwithstanding all these warnings, judgments, and respites, the Lord was determined to bring upon them the

Calamities which had been before predicted."

So He warned them to "prepare to meet their God" as their offended Judge and Adversary, "as one (not at death, and the judgment Day), who was about to denounce sentence, and to execute righteous vengeance upon them by the Assyrian armies."

But if we do not meet God in all the events of common life, how are we to explain the wondrous occurrences of our own times? Who is this that comes along in the terrific Earthquakes of California, & South America? Who rides upon the wings of the tornadoes that destroyed millions of property & 944 lives in Asia, Europe and America? Who directed the floods that desolated nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of ^{of the richest portion} France, caused the loss of hundreds of lives, & threw out thousands into the cold world without homes or help," & who sent

the overflow of the Danube into Pesth & destroyed 600?

Was it Chance or Fate, or some impersonal ^{Saw.} ~~force~~
~~of nature~~ that, in New Grenada, Asia Minor,
 the Islands & Mexico, whelmed in death over
 20,000 by Earthquakes? How was it that in
 the wreck of 11 magnificent Steamships near
 1000 lives were lost? Three hundred & four lives
 by 35 fires; by Explosions by fire damp, boilers, gun-
 powder, fireworks, nitroglycerine, & chemicals
 over 200; Famine too has swept away
 20,000 in Asia Minor; and in the Fiji islands
 50,000 people are said to have perished by measles
 and other diseases. But now explain if you
 can the extraordinary occurrences that have
 taken place recently in our own country.
 I know that infidel Scientists may be ready

to give some explanation of them upon natural law. But I ask if natural Law or any other form of Law can act without some Law Executive? Was it by natural Law, that after a succession of disastrous years of commercial panic, agricultural failures, and calamitous visitations of pestilence upon man & beast, such as were experienced in this city, that men instead of becoming more subdued and penitent ~~and~~ turning unto God in humiliation & sorrow for sin, — instead of "the inhabitants learning righteousness when the judgments of God were abroad in the land;" — actually rushed to the farthest extreme of violence & outbrealking wickedness, as witnessed in the very winter that succeeded the summer of the Pestilence here; Can the Scientist

explain all this by natural or physical Law?

Then when the Holy Spirit in great power was sent into our midst, and vast multitudes were gathered night after night to listen to the message of Divine Love & Truth as proclaimed by God's servants in simplicity and Godly sincerity, for weeks in succession, where are the vast fruits in conversion of sinners now to be found? Alas, their goodness is like the ~~early~~ ^{morning} cloud & the ~~morning~~ ^{early} dew; - it passeth away." And after all this, and the goodness of God manifested to the whole land in the fruitful seasons upon the thirsty soil, and filling the hearts of all with gladness & joy in the anticipation of returning prosperi-

ly, but (it is to be feared) with little of gratitude
or, humbling sense of dependence upon God,
Can you wonder that God's patience has found
its limit, and that suddenly in some parts of
the country the destructive grasshopper swept
away the labor of the Agriculturist? But mark
the goodness of God in the fact that these
ravages were so early as to admit of re-
planting, & yet no sooner were they gladdened
by a prospect of another abundant harvest than
the unwonted occurrence of disastrous floods
in July & August put an end to all the possibility
of any crop at all. Is this all chance, or physical
Law? Our time, too, hurries on apace, and soon
the inevitable destruction of our great staple & the
grain for the sustenance of our people, which

but a few days since presented the appearance of a yield unparalleled in the history of the country, as it waved in magnificent luxuriance along the banks of our great river, will add its melancholy contribution to the record of disaster by which uncounted millions of property are to be destroyed, and calamity to the Commercial world that can be hardly be estimated, is to befall the country just beginning to emerge from a long and dreary night of gloom and ruin. Now I ask again is all this just by Chance, or by the inevitable process of physical Law? If by the latter only, then the wise Scientist who claims to understand all these laws, sh?

have pointed out the danger in time to warn us
to provide against it. But it came upon the
wisest in as sudden and unexpected a manner
as it did upon the most ignorant. No, No,
my brethren, all these things have come upon
us by the wise Providence of that Being who
"rules in the armies of Heaven, and does his
pleasure among the inhabitants of Earth."
who "taketh the wise in their own craftiness;"
and by whom it comes to pass that, "the counsel of
the froward is carried headlong." Let it be now
fully realized by all the inhabitants of this
land, let it be known & read of all men, that
God is saying to us by these solemn and extra-
ordinary visitations "Prepare to meet thy
God!"

My object is ill-understood now, if my hearers do not feel satisfied that we need a preparation to meet God at other times than at the time of death and the Day of Judgment. It is God's will that we should meet Him at all times and in all places, by day and by night, at home and abroad, on the land and on the sea, in solitude and in Society, on the sabbath and during the week, in the closet as well as in the Sanctuary, in joy + in sorrow, in prosperity and in adversity, in sickness + in health, in life as well as in death. He would have us live ever under His eye; to feel that it is the breath of God that breathes upon us ⁱⁿ the gentle breeze of the summer morning of peace, no less than that it is the footsteps

of the dreadful God marching upon the
Storm in vengeance. ~~we are~~ " We are
ready enough to tremble at the thunder
of His voice, or to shrink from the anger
of the Lightning's flash, to acknowledge that
it is God that rides upon the whirlwind
and directs the storm, But we must not
fail to realize that it is the same Being
who stretches out the heavens ^{above us}, in their sweet
serenity, and carpets the Earth with its
mantle of green, and opens His hand to
supply the wants of every living thing,
and crowns the year with His goodness.

So would God have us cultivate a tender and
close intimacy with Him, & to realize His ex-
istence not as an angry Sovereign, & a Righteous Judge

but as a gracious, loving and tender "Father in whom Compassions flow." That ~~inspiration~~ ^{Sentence} "Thou God seekest me," ~~He designed~~ was suggested to Hagar in the Wilderness, not as a caution to guard her against any violation of God's laws, so much as a grateful memento of His watchful Providence over her in the extremity of her distress. To let it be with us all along life's pathway, believing with a constant, habitual, childlike trustfulness that God's eye of tender compassion is ever upon us for good, and that we are called upon to meet Him with grateful recognition of His mercies, and to bow in filial acquiescence to His Wise and Holy Will in all things.

Yet while this truth cannot be too earnestly insisted upon, that we are to meet God as present everywhere, it derives its mightiest forcefulness from the very fact that its realization constitutes the very best preparation to meet Him,

II. In Death. Men may and the majority do manage to neglect all intercourse with God during the progress of life. They live upon His sufferance, subsist upon His bounty, enjoy His sunshine & rain, breathe His air, sleep under His wing of protection, and no word of thanks, no song of praise, no deed of service, no labor for His glory is ever tendered in return. But most of men are conscious of God's presence come to

meet them in Death. This is the hour, this the
 messenger, that calls them inevitably to a meet-
 ing with God. Many places may be avoided,
 by you that others have been compelled to
 visit; many messengers have called for
 others that have never called for you; many
 meetings others have to attend, from which
 you have been exempted. But this place,
this messenger, this meeting neither you, nor
 any other creature can avoid. It is for all
 of our race. There is not wealth enough ^(in all the Universe) to bribe
 Death to let you alone; there is not influence
 among the great enough to overrule Him; there is not wisdom
 among the physicians ^{enough} to escape Him; there is not eloquence
 + skill enough in all the Orators to persuade Him; there
 is not power enough in the mightiest giants or the

most formidable army to resist Him. Hence men have to go when the summons comes whether willing or reluctant; whether ready or unprepared. Some yield joyfully "having a desire to depart and be with Jesus which is far better." Others in frantic agony of soul and body, go in terror and consternation revealing in dying utterances of hopeless despair the destiny that awaits them in the regions of unutterable woe. Others in stern, moveless, mute, stony insensibility, hoping for nothing, caring for nothing, fearing nothing, believing nothing, defiantly yielding to their inevitable doom. These varied methods of meeting God in death, take their coloring from the manner in which they

have ^{passed} ~~spent~~ the time of their sojourning here" in life.

He who has realized God habitually day by day, lived as under God's eye, walked before Him in all

His ordinances & commandments blameless, relying upon God's grace & Holy Spirit to aid him, is prepared to meet God in death without fear,

and to leave earth "with joy and not with grief."

While the thoughtless and the lovers of this world most commonly

die in terror and fright, and cannot collect

their distracted thoughts calmly to consider the

subject of death & Eternity, but pass to their doom

in dismay and hopelessness. So the hardened

criminal comes to his death, and having been

all his life pursuing the course of violence and

infamy in which he has ripened his soul for

an Eternity of woe, dies and makes no sign,

save the mute eloquence of a death bed of defiance.

III. I close with simply directing your thoughts to the Scriptural statement as to the other meeting with God - I mean, "the Judgment of the great Day."

"It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment." "Whom all must appear before the judgment ~~seat~~ ~~of~~ ~~God~~ seat of Christ;" "that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad." "So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God." "Our God shall come and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the Heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people." "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool: His

throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as
 burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth
 from before Him; thousands, thousands ministered
 unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood
 before Him: the judgment was set and the books
 were opened." And I saw a great white throne, and
 Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and
 the heaven fled away; and there was found no
 place for them. And I saw the dead small and
 great stand before God: and the books were
 opened; and another book was opened which
 is the book of life: and the dead were judged
 out of those things which were written in the
 books according to their works."

The subject is not exhausted. I propose to conclude this
 evening with a discussion of two points viz: 1. The necessi-
 ty & nature of preparation, and 2. The mode of preparation.