There is no possibility of avoiding an interview with God. Other beings you may avoid if you wish. Criminals naturally secrete themselves sometimes from the officers of justice, 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-Magnetio Telegraph has so facilitated the intercourse of Nations, and even the Photographic Art has been made subservient to the purposes of Justice by revealing to strangers the life-like resemblance of the fugitive, so that he may take the wings of Steam and Cross.
the wing 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
and 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 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 established 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 P.

Now I know that when the passage selected as my text is read by men ordinarily, it conveys no other idea than that preparation is needed by us to meet God in death and judgment, and nothing can be conceived more important than such an exhortation, nor can anything be conceived of so solemn as that meeting with God as implied in the hour of death, or the judgment of the great Day.
But there is a universal propensity in us all to postpone 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 imperious man practices upon this system of procrastination, when he says to God’s Holy Spirit “go thy way” as meaning, (if he mean anything) that he will go on in earthly pursuits how so ever sinful, just because they are pleasant, and that he will manage to have things arrange, (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. We meet God in all the events of common life. What if God planted 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 delight, with children, and troops of friends; giving you light in your dwelling and peace around your hearth-stone; or, what if He crown the aspirations of the young with joyful realization of
cherished hopes, and the outlook of life is only one long unchanging vista of joy and peace; or What if he meet you by the lowering cloud of dark Providences, coming in as the shadowy form of bereavement, plucking from the charmed circle of home some lovely flower upon which your isolated 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 and His claims, and by disappointment 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 Sun shine 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 expec-
tations 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 and 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, no ear heard your words, then it was that God met you by His Holy Spirit or by His Providence, and not only saw, it heard, the deed and word, but there was not a thought in your mind but, Co! The Lord knew it altogether. And remember that He was not simply to take record for a coming judgment, but His designs 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 spring of your enjoyment were dried up and woe lay heavily upon your heart, then God was reprobating trebuking 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 quest 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 of sinners.
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 unless 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 confronted by His Providence, and Conscience gave voice to His Word? Were you prepared to meet Him? Were you glad to meet Him? Also, 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 necks, though
often reproved," forgetting that they incur the threat 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, and idolatry, notwithstanding all these warnings, judgments, and respite, 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,
not as one
(as one
(11) day but who was
about to denomine sentence, and to execute right-
eous 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 occur-
rences 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:
of the nearest portion
the floods that desolated nearly 1/2 of 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 Pest destroyed 600.

Was it Chance or Fate, or some impersonal

of caprice

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, nitro-glycerine, & 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 calamities visitations of pestilence upon man and beast, such as were experienced in this city, that men instead of becoming more subdued and penitent turned unto God in humiliation and 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 and outbreaking 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 and Truth as proclaim-
ed 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 morning cloud &
the morning 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 replanting, yet no sooner were they gladdened by a prospect of another abundant harvest than the unlooked occurrence of disastrous flood 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 countless 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?
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 "lures 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 tread of all men, that God is saying to us by these solemn and extraordinary 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 and in sorrow, in prosperity and in adversity, in sickness and 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, 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 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 above us who stretches out the heavens, in their own 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, and to realize His existence not as an angry Sovereign, a Righteous Judge...
but as a gracious, loving and tender "Father in whom Compassions flow." That sentence, "Thou God best 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 remembrance of His watchful Providence over her in the extremity of her distress. So 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 meeting 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 (in all the Universe) of our race. There is not wealth enough to buy Death to let you alone; there is not influence among the great enough to override Him; there is not wisdom among the physicians, wise enough to escape Him; there is not eloquence enough in all the Orators to persuade Him; there is not power enough in the mightiest giants or the
most formidale 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 consterna-
tion revealing in dying utterances of hopeless despair the destiny that awaits them in the regions of unutterable woe. Others in stem, moveless, mute, stony insensi-
bility, hoping for nothing, caring for nothing, fearing nothing, believing nothing, defiantly yield to their inevitable doom. These varied methods of meeting God in death, take their coloring from the manner in which they
have passed 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 deathbed 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. "We must all appear before the judg-
ment seat of Christ;" "that everyone 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
thrones were 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 he 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 necessity of preparation, and 2. The mode of preparation.