

THERE IS NO REST IN HELL

~Other Speakers M-R: Remarkable Answers To Prayer:

About ninety years ago, there was in Glasgow a club of gentlemen of the first rank in that city. They met professedly for card-playing, but the members were distinguished by such a fearless excess of profligacy, as to obtain for it the name of "The Hell Club." They gloried in the name they had acquired for themselves, and nothing that could merit it was left untried. Beside their nightly or weekly meetings, they held a grand annual festival, at which each member endeavored to "outdo all his former outdoings" in drunkenness, blasphemy, and licentiousness.

Of all who shone on these occasions, none shone half so brilliantly as Archibald Boyle. But, alas! The light that dazzled in him was not "light from heaven," but from that dread abode which gave name to the vile association which was to prove his ruin-ruin for time and eternity!

Archibald Boyle had been at one time a youth of the richest promise, being possessed of dazzling talents and fascinating manners. No acquirement was too high for his ability; but, unfortunately, there was none too low for his ambition. Educated by a fond and foolishly indulgent mother, he early met in society with members of "The Hell Club." His elegance, wit, gaiety, and versatility of talent, united to the gifts of fortune, made him a most desirable victim for them; and a victim and a slave, glorying in his bondage, he quickly became.

Long ere he was five-and-twenty; he was one of the most accomplished black-guards it could number on its lists. To him, what were heaven, hell or eternity! Words, mere words, that served no purpose, but to point his blasphemous wit, or nerve his execrations! To him, what glory was there, equal to that of hearing himself pronounced "the very life of the club?" Alas! There was none; for as soon as man forgets God, who alone can keep him, his understanding becomes darkened, and he glories in that which is his shame.

Yet, while all within that heart was festering in corruption, he retained all his remarkable beauty of face and person, all his external elegance of manner; and continued an acknowledged favorite in the fairest female society of the day.

One night, on retiring to sleep, after returning from one of the annual meetings of the club, Boyle dreamed that he was still riding, as usual, upon his famous black horse, toward his own house -- then a country seat, embowered by, ancient trees, and situated upon a hill now built over by the most fashionable part of Glasgow and that he was suddenly accosted by some one, whose personal appearance he could not, in the gloom of night, distinctly discern, but who, seizing the reins, said, in a voice apparently accustomed to command: "You must go with me." "And who are you?" exclaimed Boyle, with a volley of blasphemous execrations, while he struggled to disengage his reins from the intruders grasp. "That you will see bye-and-bye," replied the same voice, in a cold, sneering tone, that thrilled through his very heart. Boyle plunged his spurs into the panting sides of his steed.

The noble animal reared; and then suddenly darted forward with a speed that nearly deprived his rider of breath; but in vain, in vain! Fleeter than the wind he flew, the mysterious, half-seen guide, still before him! Agonized by, he knew not what, of indescribable horror and awe, Boyle again furiously spurred the gallant horse. It fiercely reared and plunged; he lost his seat, and expected at the moment to feel himself dashed to the earth. But not so; for he continued to fall - fall - fall -- it appeared to himself with an ever-increasing velocity. At length, this terrific rapidity of motion abated, and, to his amazement and horror, he perceived that this mysterious attendant was close by his side.

"Where," he exclaimed, in the frantic energy of despair, "Where are you taking me? Where am I? Where am I going?" "To hell," replied the same iron voice; and from the depths below, the sound so familiar to his lips was suddenly re-echoed. "To hell," onward, onward they hurried in darkness; rendered more horrible still by the conscious presence of his spectral conductor.

At length, a glimmering light appeared in the distance, and soon increased to a blaze. But as they approached it, in addition to the hideously discordant groans and yells of agony and despair, his ears were assailed with what seemed to be the echoes of frantic revelry. They soon reached an arched entrance, of such stupendous magnificence, that all the grandeur of this world seemed in comparison but as the frail and dingy labors of the mole. Within it, what a scene! Too awful to be described. Multitudes, gnashing their teeth in the hopelessness of mad despair, cursed the day that gave them birth; while memory, recalling opportunities lost and mercies despised, presented to their fevered mental vision the scenes of their past lives.

There fancy stilt pictured to them the young and lovely, moving up and down in the giddy mazes of the midnight dance; the bounding steed, bearing his senseless rider through the excitements of the goaded race; the intemperate, still drawling over the-midnight bowl, the wanton song, or maudlin blasphemy. There the slave of Mammon bemoaned his folly in bartering his soul for useless gold! While the gambler bewailed, alas! Too late, the madness of his choice.

Boyle at length perceived that he was surrounded by those whom he had known on earth, but were some time dead; each one of them betraying his agony at the bitter recollections of the vain pursuits that had engrossed his time here -- time lent to prepare for a far different scene! Suddenly, observing that his unearthly conductor had disappeared, he felt so relieved by his absence, that he ventured to address his former friend, Mrs. D---, whom he saw sitting with eyes fixed in intense earnestness, as she was wont on earth, apparently absorbed at her favorite game of loo. "Ha, Mrs. D----! Delighted to see you; d'ye know a fellow told me tonight he was bringing me to hell! Ha, ha! If this be hell," said he, scoffingly, "what a devilish pleasant place it must be! Ha, ha! Come, now, my good Mrs. D---, for auld langsyne, do just stop for a moment, rest, and -- show me through the pleasures of hell," he was going, with reckless profanity, to add; but, with a shriek that seemed to cleave through his very soul, she exclaimed: "Rest! There is no rest in hell!" and from interminable vaults, voices, as loud as thunder, repeated the awful, the heart-withering sound: "THERE IS NO REST IN HELL"

She hastily unclasped the vest of her gorgeous robe, and displayed to his scared and shuddering eye, a coil of fiery living snakes -- "the worm that never dies"-- the worm accusing conscience, remorse, despair -- wreathing, darting, stinging in her bosom; others followed her example, and in every bosom there was a self-inflicted punishment.

In some, he saw bare and throbbing hearts, on which distilled slow drops, as it were, of fiery molten metal, under which consuming, yet ever unconsumed, they writhed and palpitated in all the impotence of helpless, hopeless agony. And many a scalding drop was a tear of hopeless anguish, wrung by selfish, heartless villainy, from the eye of injured innocence on earth.

In every bosom he saw that which we have no language to describe, no idea horrid enough even to conceive; for in all he saw the full-grown fruit of the fiend-sown seed of evil passions, voluntarily nourished in the human soul, during its mortal pilgrimage here: and in all he saw them lashed and maddened by the serpent-armed hand of Despair; For hell were not hell; If Hope had ever entered there!

And they laughed, for they had laughed on earth at all there is of good and holy. And they sung-profane and blasphemous songs sang they! For they had often done so on earth, at the very hour God claims as his own, the still and midnight hour! And he who, in his vision, walked among them in a mortal frame of flesh and blood, felt how inexpressibly more horrible such sounds could be than ever was the wildest shriek of agony on earth.

"These are the pleasures of hell," again assailed his ear, in the same terrific and interminable roll of unearthly sound.

He rushed away; but as he fled, he saw those whom he knew must have been dead for thousands of years, still absorbed in their recollections of their sinful pleasures on earth, and toiling on through their eternity of woe. The vivid reminiscences of their godlessness on earth inflicted on them the bitterest pang in their doom in hell. He saw Maxwell, the former companion of his own boyish profligacy, borne along in incessant movement, mocked by the creations of his frenzied mind, as if intent on still pursuing the headlong chase.

"Stop, Harry; Stop! Speak to me! Oh, rest one moment! " Scarce had the words been breathed from his faltering lips, when again his terror-stricken ear was stunned with the same wild yell of agony, re-echoed by ten thousand voices: "THERE IS NO REST IN HELL!"

Boyle tried to shut his eyes. He found he could not. He threw himself down, but the pavement of hell, as with a living and instinctive movement, rejected him from its surface; and, forced upon his feet, he found himself compelled to gaze with still increasing intensity of horror, at the ever-changing, yet ever-steady torrent of eternal torment. And this was hell!

The scoffer's jest-the by-word of the profligate! All at once he perceived that his unearthly conductor was once more by his side. "Take me," shrieked Boyle, "take me from this place! By the living God, whose name I have so often outraged, I adjure you; take me from this place.""Can you still name His name?" said the fiend, with a hideous sneer; "go, then; but -- in a year and a day WE meet, to part no more!" Boyle awoke; and he felt as if the last words of the fiend were traced in letters of living fire upon his heart and brain. Unable, from actual

bodily ailment, to leave his bed for several days, the horrid vision had full time to take effect upon his mind; and many were the pangs of tardy remorse and ill-defined terror that beset his vice-stained soul, as he lay in darkness and seclusion, to him so very unusual.

He resolved, utterly and forever, to forsake "The Club." Above all, he determined that nothing on earth should tempt him to join the next annual festival. The companions of his licentiousness soon flocked around him; and finding that his deep dejection of mind did not disappear with his bodily ailment, and that it arose from some cause which disinclined him from seeking or enjoying their accustomed orgies, they became alarmed with the idea of losing "the life of the club," and bound themselves by an oath never to desist till they had discovered what was the matter with him, and had cured him of playing the Methodist. Their alarm as to losing "the life of the club" had been wrought up to the highest pitch, by one of their number declaring that, on unexpectedly entering Boyle's room, he detected him in the act of hastily hiding a book, which he actually believed was the Bible.

Alas! Alas! Had poor Boyle possessed sufficient true moral courage, and dignity of character, not to have hidden the Bible, how different might have been his future! But like many a hopeful youth, he was ashamed to avow his convictions, and to take his stand for God, and his ruin was the result. After a time, one of his compeers, more deeply cunning than the rest, bethought himself of assuming an air of the deepest disgust with the world, the club, and the mode of life they had been pursuing. He affected to seek Boyle's company in a mood of congenial melancholy, and to sympathize in all his feelings. Thus he succeeded in betraying him into a much misplaced confidence as to his dream, and the effect it had produced upon his mind. The result may readily be guessed.

His confidence was betrayed, his feelings of repentance ridiculed; and it will easily be believed, that he who "hid the Bible" had not nerve to stand the indecent jests of his corrupt companions.

We cannot trace the progress, and would not, if we could. Suffice it to say, that, virtuous resolutions once broken-prayers once offered, voluntarily called back by sin from the throne of heaven, all was lost! Yet not lost without such a fell struggle between the convictions of conscience and the spirit of evil, as wrung the color from his young cheek, and made him, ere the year was done, a haggard and gray-haired man. From the annual meeting he shrunk with an instinctive horror, and made up his mind utterly to avoid it.

Well aware of this resolve, his tempters determined he should have no choice. How potent, how active, is the spirit of evil! How feeble is unassisted, Christless, unprayerful man! Boyle found himself, he could not tell how, seated at that table on that very day, where he had sworn to himself a thousand and a thousand times nothing on earth should make him sit.

His ears tingled, and his eyes swam, as he listened to the opening sentence of the president's address: "Gentlemen, this is leap year; therefore, it is a year and a day since our last annual meeting." Every nerve in Boyle's body twanged in agony at the ominous, the well-remembered words. His first impulse was to rise and fly; but then, the sneers! The sneers! How many in this world, as well as poor Boyle, have sold their souls to the dread of a sneer, and dared the wrath of an almighty and eternal God, rather than encounter the sarcastic curl of a fellow-creature's lip?

He was more than ever plied with wine, applause, and every other species of excitement, but in vain. His mirth, his wit, were like lurid flashes from the bosom of a brooding thunder-cloud, that pass and leave it darker than before; and his laugh sounded fiendish, even to the evil ears that heard it.

The night was gloomy, with frequent and fitful gusts of chill and howling wind, as Boyle, with fevered nerves and reeling brain, mounted his horse to return home. The following morning the well-known black steed was found, with saddle and bridle on, quietly grazing on the road-side, about half-way to Boyle's country-house, and a few yards from it lay the stiffened corpse of its master. -- An authentic narrative.