

**ADVENT ADDRESSES
OR MEDITATIONS ON
THE FOUR LAST THINGS**

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Advent addresses or Meditations on the four last things by F. R. H. H. Noyes

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F. R. H. H. NOYES

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MEDITATIONS

ON

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

BY

REV. F. R. H. H. NOYES, M.A.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

LONDON:

William Skeffington, 163 Piccadilly.

1871.



138. g. 487.

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PREFACE.

The following meditations were given to a small Country congregation and are now published in the hope that they may prove more generally useful.

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DEATH.

I. *The First Death.*

CONSIDER, first, the condition of man in Paradise—his happiness—his perfect contentment—the protection which he enjoyed from all the ills to which flesh is now unhappily heir—the utter absence of all care and anxiety for the future. Night after night he lay down after his communion with God in the cool of the evening with a sense of security such as no man has ever enjoyed since the day that sin and death entered into the world. Day after day he rose to his work and to his labour (the work which God had given him to do of tilling the grateful soil and of caring for God's creatures) without one thought of difficulties or dangers to be encountered. All was peace.

Contrast this sense of perfect security with the condition to which man was reduced after the fall. Expelled from the Park of God—cut off from the Tree of Life—driven into the wild waste places of the outer world to make his own living—finding new and

undreamt of difficulties at every step—the very lower creation itself refusing any longer to render a willing obedience to one who had been disobedient to their common Creator, but above all with the horrible dread of the as yet unexecuted sentence hanging over him, “*In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” He had pretended to disbelieve it once, he had said to himself in the moment of temptation that it was impossible that to eat just one apple could make such a change in the nature of his existence, just as we sometimes wilfully shut our eyes to the certain consequences of our fault in the intensity of our longing to gratify some unholy wish or passion. But no sooner was the crime committed than he felt the truth of the sentence within him. Shame and fear, sentiments hitherto foreign to his nature, and precursors of the awful change that was working in him, took possession of his soul. He knew that he was naked, he hid himself from the presence of God. True day followed day and the sentence still remained unexecuted, but it hung over his head like the fabled sword of Damocles. He had lost for ever the sense of unbroken security which he once possessed. Night after night as he lay down to rest, worn out with unwonted toil in the sweat of his brow, he knew not whether the dreaded messenger might not strike him as he lay. Day after day as he went forth to

contend with the thorns and the thistles which he had himself provoked, he knew not what unknown dangers might bring upon him the fulfilment of the threat. And he could not forget if he would. Daily he felt within himself symptoms which told him of the working of God's law within him, and of the change in the condition of his existence. Pain and weariness—sickness and disease—the slowly advancing marks of old age—all hitherto unknown to him, told him too plainly that he was not what he used to be, and warned him of the approach of the dreaded foe. The exact manner of his coming he knew not. Was the lightning flash to be the messenger of the wrath of God? or was he to be the victim of some fierce beast of prey who no longer owned his former sovereignty? or were the powers which he possessed to waste away in lengthened decay until his enfeebled nature had no longer the power to resist the approach of the enemy?

Years went by—years of toil and sorrow—years which if they were marked by a regret which failed to recall the past, were not without bright beams of hope to light up the darkness of the future, in the recollection of the promise which in that hour of "strangely considerate anger" God had given the guilty pair. Years went by, and still the Angel of Death came not. Would he ever come? Is it possible