

THE LAMB—THE LIGHT

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”
Revelation 21:23.*

TO the lover of Jesus, it is very pleasant to observe how the Lord Jesus Christ has always stood foremost in glory from before the foundation of the world, and will do so as long as eternity shall last. If we look back by faith to the time of the creation, we find our Lord with His Father as One brought up with Him. “When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep.” He was that wisdom who was never absent from the Father’s counsels in the great work of creation, whether it was the birth of angels or the making of worlds of men. One of the first events ever recorded in Scripture history is, “When He brings in the first-begotten into the world, He says, Let all the angels of God worship Him.” Such words were never spoken of any *creature*, but only of Him who is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, glorious forever—the first-born of every creature, the Head of the household of God, the express image of His person, and the fullness of His glory. In the earliest periods of which we possess any knowledge, Jesus Christ stood exalted far above all principalities, and powers, and every name that is named. When human history dawns, and the history of God’s Church commences, you still find Christ preminent. All the types of the early Church are only to be opened up by Him as the key. It would have been nothing to be of the seed of Israel, if it had not been for the promise of the Shiloh that was to come; it would have been in vain that the sacrifices were offered in the wilderness, that the ark abode between the curtains, or that the golden pot which had the manna was covered with the mercy seat, if there had not been a real signification of Christ in all these.

The religion of the Jew would have been very emptiness if it had not been for Christ, who is the substance of the former shadows. Run on to the period of the prophets, and in all their prophesying do you not see additional glimpses of the glory of Christ? When they mount to the greatest heights of eloquence, do they not speak of Him? Whenever their soul is carried up, as in a chariot of fire, is not the mantle left behind them a word telling of the glory of Jesus? They could never glow with fervent heat except concerning Him. Even when they denounced the judgments of God, they paused between the crashes of God’s thunder to let some drops of mercy fall on man in words of promise concerning Him who was to come! It is always Christ from the opening leaf of Genesis to the closing note of Malachi—Christ, Christ, Christ—and nothing but Christ! It is very delightful, brethren, when we come to such a text as this, to observe that what was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. In that millennial state of which the text speaks, Jesus Christ is to be the light thereof, and all its glory is to proceed from Him; and if the text speaks concerning heaven and the blessedness hereafter, all its light, and blessings, and glory stream from Him—“The Lamb is the light thereof.” If we read the text and think of its connection with us today, we must confess that all our joy and peace flow from the same fountain! Jesus Christ is the Sun of Righteousness to us as well as to the saints above.

I shall try, then—though I am conscious of my feebleness to handle so great a matter—I shall try as best I can to extol the Lord Jesus, first of all, in the excellence of His glory *in the millennial state*. Next, *in heaven*, and then, thirdly, *in the condition of every heavenly-minded man who is on his way to paradise*—in all these cases, “The Lamb is the light thereof.”

I. First, then, a few words concerning THE MILLENNIAL PERIOD.

We are not given to prophesying in this place. There are some of our brothers who delight much in them. Perhaps it is well that there should be some who should devote their time and thoughts to that portion of God’s Word which abounds in mysteries; but for our part, we have been so engaged in seeking to

win souls, and in endeavoring to contend with the common errors of the day, that we have scarcely ventured to land upon the rock of Patmos, or to peer into the dark recesses of Daniel and Ezekiel. Yet this much we have ever learned most clearly—that on this earth, where sin and Satan gained victory over God through the fall of man, Christ is to achieve a complete triumph over all His foes—not on another battlefield, but on this. The fight is not over. It commenced by Satan’s attack upon our mother, Eve; and Christ has never left the field from that day until now. The fight has lasted thousands of years; it grows sterner every day, it is not over; and it never shall be over until the serpent’s head is effectually bruised, and Christ Jesus shall have gotten unto Himself a perfect victory. Do not think the Lord will allow Satan to have even as much as one battle to call his own. In the great campaign, when the history shall be written, it shall be said, “The Lord reigns.” All along the line, He has gotten the victory. There shall be victory in every place and spot; and the conquest of Jesus shall be complete and perfect. We believe, then, that in this very earth, where superstition has set up its idols, Jesus Christ shall be adored. Here, where blasphemy has defiled human lips, songs of praise shall rise from islands of the sea, and from the dwellers among the rocks. In this very country, among those very men who became the tools of Satan, and whose dwelling places were dens of mischief, there shall be found instruments of righteousness, lips to praise God, and occasions of eternal glory unto the Most High. O Satan, you may boast of what you have done, and you may think your scepter still secure, but He comes, even He who rides upon the white horse of victory; and when He comes, you shall not stand against Him, for the two-edged sword, which goes out of His mouth, shall drive you and your hosts back to the place from where you came. Let us rejoice that Scripture is so clear and so explicit upon this great doctrine of the future triumph of Christ over the whole world!

We are not bound to enter into any particulars concerning what form that triumph shall assume. We believe that the Jews will be converted, and that they will be restored to their own land. We believe that Jerusalem will be the central metropolis of Christ’s kingdom; we also believe that all the nations shall walk in the light of the glorious city which shall be built at Jerusalem. We expect that the glory which shall have its center there shall spread over the whole world, covering it as with a sea of holiness, happiness, and delight. For this we look with joyful expectation. During that period, the Lord Himself, by His glorious presence, shall set aside the outward rites of His sanctuary. “The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it.” Perhaps sun and moon, here, are intended those ordinary means of enlightenment which the Church now needs. We need the Lord’s Supper to remind us of the body and blood of Christ; but when Christ comes, there will be no Lord’s Suppers, for it is written, “Do this until He comes.” And when He comes, then, will be the final period of the remembrance-token, because the person of Christ will be in our midst. Neither will you need ministers any longer, any more than men need candles when the sun rises. They shall not say one to another, “Know the Lord: for all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest.” There may be even in that period certain solemn assemblies and Sundays, but they will not be of the same kind as we have now; for the whole earth will be a temple, every day will be a Sunday, the avocations of men will all be priestly, they shall be a nation of priests—distinctly so, and they shall, day without night, serve God in His temple, so that everything to which they set their hand shall be a part of the song which shall go up to the Most High. Oh, blessed day! Would God it had dawned, when these temples should be left, because the whole world should be a temple for God. But whatever may be the splendors of that day—and truly here is a temptation to let our imagination revel—however bright may be the walls set with precious stones, however splendid the gates which are of one pearl, whatever may be the magnificence set forth by the “streets of gold,” this we know, that the sum and substance, the light and glory of the whole will be the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, “For the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is its light.”

Now, I want the Christian to meditate over this. In the highest, holiest, and happiest era that shall ever dawn upon this poor earth, Christ is to be her light! When she puts on her wedding garment, and adorns herself as a bride is adorned with jewels, Christ is to be her glory and her beauty! There shall be no earrings in her ears made with other gold than that which comes from His mine of love; there shall be no crown set upon her brow fashioned by any other hand than His hands of wisdom and of grace. She sits to reign, but it shall be upon *His* throne; she feeds, but it shall be upon His bread; she triumphs, but it shall be because of the might which always belongs to Him who is the Rock of Ages! Come, then, Christian, contemplate for a moment your beloved Lord. Jesus, in a millennial age, shall be the light and the glory of the city of the new Jerusalem. Observe then, that Jesus makes the light of the millennium

because *His presence will be that which distinguishes that age from the present*. That age is to be akin to paradise. God first made paradise upon earth, and paradise God will last make. Satan destroyed it; and God will never have defeated His enemy until He has reestablished paradise—until once again a new Eden shall bless the eyes of God’s creatures! Now, the very glory and privilege of Eden, I take to be, not the river which flowed through it with its four branches, nor that it came from the land of Havilah which has dust of gold—I do not think the glory of Eden lays in its grassy walks, or in the boughs bending with luscious fruit—but its glory lays in this, that the “Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day.” Here was Adam’s highest privilege, that he had companionship with the Most High. In those days, angels sweetly sang that the tabernacle of God was with man, and that He did dwell among them. Brethren, the paradise which is to be regained for us will have this for its essential and distinguishing mark, that the Lord shall dwell among us! This is the name by which the city is to be called—Jehovah Sham-mah, The Lord Is There. It is true we have the presence of Christ in the Church now—“Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” We have the promise of His constant indwelling—“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” But still, that is vicariously by His Spirit, but soon He is to be personally with us. That very man, who once died upon Calvary, is to live here! He—that same Jesus—who was taken up from us, shall come in like manner as He was taken up from the gazers of Galilee. Rejoice, rejoice, beloved, that He comes, actually and really comes; and this shall be the joy of that age, that He is among His saints, and dwells in them, with them, and talks and walks in their midst.

The presence of Christ it is which will be the means of the peace of the age. In that sense, Christ will be the light of it, for *He* is our peace. It will be through His presence that the lion shall eat straw like an ox that the leopard shall lie down with the kid. It will not be because men have had more enlightenment, and have learned better through advancing civilization, that they shall beat their swords into plowshares. It is notorious that the more civilized nations become, the more terrible are their instruments of destruction; and when they do go to war, the bloodier and protracted their wars become. I venture to say, that if in a thousand years’ time Christ shall not come, if war were to break out, where we now fight for 10 or 20 years we shall have the venomous hatred of one another and the means of carrying on a war for a century. Instead of advancing in peacefulness, I do fear the world has gone back. We certainly cannot boast now of living in calm days of peace. But Christ’s presence shall change the hearts of men. Then, spontaneously at sight of the great Prince of Peace, they shall cast away their armor and their weapons of war, and shall learn war no more. In that sense then, because His presence will be the cause of that happy period, He is the light of it.

Again, Christ’s presence is to that period *its special instruction*. They shall need no candle, neither light of the sun, nor of the moon. Why? Because Christ’s presence will be sufficiently instructive to the sons of men. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes, superstition will not need an earnest testimony to confute it—it will hide its head. Idolatry will not need the missionary to preach against it—the idols He shall utterly abolish, and shall cast them to the moles and to the bats. Men and women, at the sight of Christ, and at the knowledge that He is reigning gloriously upon earth, will give up their unbelief. The Jew will recognize the Son of David, and the Gentile will rejoice to worship Him who was once slain as the King of the Jews. The presence of Christ shall do more for the enlightenment of His Church than the teaching of all her officers and ministers in all ages. She shall then, in the sight of her Lord, come to a fullness of knowledge and have a perfect understanding of God’s Word.

Once again, Christ will be the light of that period *in the sense of being its glory*. Oh, it is the glory of the Christian now to think that Christ reigns in heaven! In this we boast in every season of depression and when we are downcast—that He is exalted and sits at the right hand of the Father. But the glory of that age shall be that Christ is come, that He sits upon the throne of David, as well as upon the throne of God; that His enemies bow before Him and lick the dust. Think, my brethren, of the splendor of that time, when from every nation and land they shall bring Him tribute, when praises shall ascend from every land, when the streets of that city shall be thronged every day with adoring worshippers, when He shall ride forth conquering and to conquer, and His saints shall follow Him upon white horses! We sometimes have high days, and holidays, when kings and princes go abroad, and the streets are full, and people crowd even to the chimney pots to see them as they ride along. But what shall it be to see King Jesus crowned with the crown which His mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals? What a contrast between the procession winding its way along the streets of Jerusalem, along the *Via Dolorosa*, up

to the mount of execution—what a contrast, I say! Then, women followed Him and wept, but now, men will follow Him and shout for joy—then, He carried His cross, but now, He shall ride in state—then, His enemies mocked Him and gloated their eyes with His sufferings; but *now*, His enemies shall be put to confusion and covered with shame, and upon Himself shall His crown flourish! Then, it was the hour of darkness and the time of the prince of the pit, but now, it shall be the day of light and the victory of Emmanuel, and the sounding of His praise both on earth and in heaven! Contemplate this thought; and though I speak of it so feebly, yet it may ravish your hearts with transport that Christ is the sun of that long-expected, that blessed day, that Christ shall be the highest mountain of all the hills of joy, the widest river of all the streams of delight, that whatever there may be of magnificence and of triumph, Christ shall be the center and soul of it all! Oh, to be present and to see Him in His own light, the King of kings, and Lord of lords!

II. And now, we will turn our thoughts another way from the millennial period to THE STATE OF THE GLORIFIED IN HEAVEN ITSELF. “The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it.”

The inhabitants of the better world are *independent of creature comforts*. Let us think that over for a minute. We have no reason to believe that they daily pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” Their bodies shall dwell in perpetual youth. They shall have no need of raiment; their white robes shall never wear out, neither shall they ever be defiled. Having food and raiment on earth, we are content, but in heaven, “They toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Yet the fields yield them neither flax nor any other material for clothing, neither do the acres of heaven yield them bread. They are satisfied by leaning upon God, needing not the creature for support. They need no medicine to heal their disease, “For the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick.” They need no sleep to recruit their fatigue, and although sleep is sweet and balmy—God’s own medicine—yet they rest not day nor night, but unweariedly praise Him in His temple.

They need no social ties in Heaven. We need here the associations of friendship and of family love, but they are neither married nor are given in marriage there. Whatever comfort they may derive from association with their fellows is something extra and beyond. They do not need any—their God is enough. They shall need no teachers there; they shall doubtless commune with one another concerning the things of God, and tell one another the strange things which the Lord has worked for them, but they shall not need this by way of instruction. They shall all be taught of the Lord, for in heaven, “The glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” There is an utter independence in heaven, then, of all the creatures. No sun and no moon are needed—no, no creatures whatever! Here, we lean upon the friendly arm, but there, they lean upon their Beloved and upon Him alone. Here, we must have the help of our companions, but there, they find all they need in Christ alone. Here, we look to the meat which perishes, and to the raiment which decays before the moth, but there, they find everything in God. We have to use a bucket to get water from the well, but there they drink from the wellhead and put their lips down to the living water. Here, the angels bring us blessings, but we shall need no messengers from heaven then. They need no Gabriels there to bring their love-notes from God, for there, they see *Him* face to face. Oh, what a blessed time shall that be, when we shall have mounted above every second cause, and shall hang upon the bare arm of God! What a glorious hour when God, and not His creatures, God, and not His works, but God *Himself*, Christ *Himself* shall be our daily joy!—

*“Plunged in the Godhead’s deepest sea,
And lost in His immensity.”*

Our souls shall then have attained the perfection of bliss.

While in heaven, it is clear that the glorified are quite independent of creature aid—*do not forget that they are entirely dependent for their joy upon Jesus Christ*. He is their sole spiritual light. They have nothing else in heaven to give them perfect satisfaction but He. The language here used, “The Lamb is the light thereof,” may be read in two or three ways. By your patience, let us so read it.

In heaven, Jesus is the light in the sense of *joy*, for light is always in Scripture the emblem of joy. Darkness betokens sorrow, but the rising of the sun indicates the return of holy joy. Christ is the joy of heaven. Do they rejoice in golden harps, in palm branches, and white robes? They may do so, but they only rejoice in these things as love gifts from *Him*. Their joy is compounded by this—“Jesus chose us, Jesus loved us, Jesus bought us, Jesus washed us, Jesus robed us, Jesus kept us, Jesus glorified us; here we are, entirely through the Lord Jesus—through Him alone.” Each one of these thoughts shall be to

them like a cluster from the vines of Eshcol. Why, I think there is an eternal source of joy in that one thought, “Jesus bought me with His blood.” Oh, to sit on the mountains of heaven and look across to the lowly hill of Calvary, and see the Savior bleed! What emotions of joy shall stir the depths of our soul, when we reflect that, there upon the bloody tree, He counted not His life dear unto Him that He might redeem us unto God!—

*“Calvary’s summit shall I trace,
View the heights and depths of grace,
Count the purple drops and say,
‘Thus my sins were washed away.’”*

In glory, they think of the character and person of Jesus, and these are wells of delight to them. Thus they muse—Jesus is eternal God; His enemies reviled Him, but still, He is God. Jesus became the virgin’s Child; Jesus lived a life of holiness, and Jesus died; but see what triumph springs from His condescension and His shame—He rises, He ascends, and leads captivity captive; He scatters gifts among men; He reigns over earth, and hell, and heaven; King of kings, and Lord of lords. “The government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (NKJV) When I have listened to Handel’s music in “The Messiah,” where that great musician wakes every instrument to praise the name of Jesus, I have felt ready to die with excess of delight that such music should ever have been composed by mortal man to the honor of our great Messiah; but what will be the music of celestial choirs? How would such hearts as ours burst, and such souls as ours leap out of their bodies, if they could but know while here, such joys as celestials know above! But, beloved, our faculties shall be strengthened, our capacities shall be enlarged, our whole being shall be expanded, and thus, we shall be able to bear the full swell of seraphic music, and join in it without fainting from delight, while they sing of the glory of the Son of Man—the Son of God! Christ is the light of heaven, then, because He is the substance of its joy.

Light may be viewed in another sense. Light is the cause of *beauty*. That is obvious to you all. Take the light away, and there is no beauty anywhere. The fairest woman charms the eye no more than a heap of ashes when the sun has departed. Your garden may be bright with many colored flowers, but when the sun goes down, you cannot know them from the grass which borders them. You look upon the trees, all fair with the greenness of summer—but when the sun goes down, they are all hung in black. Without light, no radiance flashes from the sapphire, no peaceful ray proceeds from the pearl. There is nothing of beauty left when light is gone. Light is the mother of beauty. In such sense, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light of Heaven—that is to say, all the beauty of the saints above comes from God incarnate—their excellence, their joy, their triumph, their glory, their ecstatic bliss all spring from Him. As planets, they reflect the light of the Sun of Righteousness; they live as beams proceeding from the central orb, as streams leaping from the eternal fountain. If He withdrew, they would die; if His glory were veiled, their glory would expire. Think of this, Christian, and I am sure you will be reminded how true this is beneath the sky, as well as above, that if light is the mother of beauty, Christ is the light! There is nothing good, nor lovely, nor gracious about any one of us except as we get it from Christ, and from Christ Jesus alone. “The Lamb is the light thereof.”

Another meaning of light in Scripture is *knowledge*. Ignorance is darkness. Now, in heaven they need no candle, nor light of the sun, because they receive light enough from Christ—Christ being the fountain of all they know. I think it is Dr. Dick who speaks about the enjoyments of heaven consisting very likely in going from star to star, and viewing the works of God in different portions of His universe, admiring the anatomy of living creatures, studying geology, ferrying across the waves of ether, and voyaging from world to world. I do not believe in such a heaven for a moment! I do not conceive it a worthy employment for immortal spirits, and, if there were nothing else to make me think so, the text would be enough. “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it.” There is no need of the works of God to give instruction to its inhabitants, “For the glory of God did lighten it. “The glory, not of God’s works, but of God’s Son, is their glorious light”—

*“The spacious earth and spreading flood
Proclaim the wise and powerful God;
And Your rich glories from afar
Sparkle in every rolling star.
But in His looks a glory stands,
The noblest labor of Your hands;*

*The pleasing luster of His eyes
Outshines the wonders of the skies!"*

They need no light of the sun and moon where Jesus is. However well the sun and moon may tell of God, we shall not need them from day to day to send forth their light throughout all the earth, and their word unto the end of the world, for the glory of Christ will teach us all we wish to learn; and beholding the unveiled glory of God will be far better than prying into the works of nature, even though we had an angel's power of discovery. We shall know more of Christ in five minutes, when we get to heaven, than we shall know in all our years on earth. Dr. Owen was a master of theology, but the smallest child who goes to heaven from a Sunday school knows more of Christ after being in heaven five minutes, than Dr. Owen did. John Calvin searched very deep, and Augustine seemed to come to the very door of the great secret; but Augustine and Calvin would be but children on the first form there—I mean if they knew no more than on earth. Oh, what manifestations of God there will be! Dark dealings of providence, which you never understood before, will then be seen without the light of a candle or of the sun. Many doctrines puzzled you, and you could not find the clue to the labyrinth of mystery; but there, all will be simple and plain, so that the wayfaring man may run and understand it. You have had many experiences and tossing to and fro, and you have felt your ignorance, your corruption and weakness; but there, you shall see to the very bottom of human nature, you shall understand the poisonous of man's depravity, and the heights of God's sovereignty, the marvels of His electing love and the magnificence of His divine power by which He has made us to be partakers of the divine nature—

*“There you shall see and hear, and know
All you desired or wished below,
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.”*

And this knowledge, I say, shall not come from any inferior agent, but from the Lord God who shall be your glory, and from Jesus Christ Himself, who shall teach you all truth of God.

I must not dwell longer on this point except to say this one thing, that light also means *manifestation*. “Everyone who does evil hates the light neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he who does truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are worked in God.” Light manifests. In this world, it does not yet appear how great we must be made. God's people are a hidden people—their life is hid with Christ in God. They possess God's secret, and that secret other men cannot discover. Christ in heaven is the great revealer of God's mind; and when He gets His people there, He will touch them with the wand of His own love, and change them into the image of His manifested glory. They were poor and wretched, but what a transformation! Their rags drop off and they are acknowledged as princes. They were stained with sin and infirmity, but one touch of His finger, and they are bright as the sun and clear as crystal—transformed even as He was upon Mount Tabor—whiter than any fuller can make them. They were ignorant and weak on earth, but when He shall teach them, they shall know even as they are known. They were buried in dishonor, but they are raised in glory; they were sown in the grave in weakness, but they are raised in power; they were carried away by the hands of remorseless death, but they arise to immortality and life. Oh, what a manifestation! Light is sown for the righteous, and Christ is the sacred rain that brings the harvest above ground. The righteous are always pearls, but they are hidden, as it were, in the oyster now, and Christ brings them forth. They were always diamonds, they were far away in the Golconda of sin; but Christ has fetched them up from the deep mines. They were always stars, but they were hidden behind the clouds; Christ, like a swift wind, has blown the clouds away, and now they shine like stars in the firmament forever and ever. In this sense, Christ is the light of heaven, because it is through Him that the true and real character of all the saints has been manifested.

Come, my soul, take wing a moment—it is not far for you to fly—mount and walk the golden streets, and as you walk, you shall see nothing but Jesus glorified! Come up to the throne, and you shall see Christ on it. Sit down and listen to the song—Christ is the theme! Go to the banquet—Christ is the meat! Mingle with the dancers—Christ is their joy! Make you one in their great assemblies, and Christ is the God they worship—

*“‘Worthy the Lamb who died,’ they cry,
‘To be exalted thus’—
‘Worthy the Lamb,’ our lips reply,
‘For He was slain for us.’”*

III. Let us turn to our last thought; and here I hope we can speak experientially, whereas on the other two points, we could only speak by faith in the promise of God. **THE HEAVENLY MAN'S STATE MAY BE SET FORTH IN THESE WORDS.**

First, then, even on earth, *the heavenly man's joy does not depend upon the creature.* Brethren, in a certain sense, we can say today that “The city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it.” We love and prize the happy brightness which the sun scatters upon us; as for the moon, who does not admire the fair moonlight when the waves are silvered, and silent nature wears the plumage of the dove? But we do not need the sun or the moon; we can do without them, for the Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing beneath His wings. There are brethren here, this morning, who are very happy, and yet it is long since they saw the sun. Shut up in perpetual night, through blindness, they need not the light of the sun nor of the moon, for the Lord God is their glory—Christ is their light! If our eyes should be put out, we could say, “Farewell, sweet light, farewell, bright sun and moon—we prize you well, but we can do without you—Christ Jesus is to us as the light of seven days.”

As we can do without these two most eminent creatures, so we can be happy without other earthly blessings. Our dear friends are very precious to us—we love our wife and children, our parents and our friends—but we do not need them. May God spare them to us! But if they were taken, it does not come to a matter of absolute need, for you know, beloved, there is many a Christian who has been bereft of all, and he thought, as the props were taken away one after another, that he should die of very grief. But he did not die—his faith surmounted every wave, and he still rejoices in his God! I know that at the thought of those dear ones who are taken from you, the floodgates of your grief are drawn up, but still I hope you will not be so false to Christ as to deny what I now say—that His presence can make amends for all losses, that the smile of His face will make a paradise so sweet, that no sorrow or sighing shall be heard in it—

*“You, at all times will I bless;
Having You, I all possess!
How can I bereaved be,
Since I cannot part with Thee?”*

It is a very happy thing to be placed in circumstances where one knows no lack of bread—to have a house, a comfortable home, and sufficient monies for our family is very pleasant—but O dear friends, if it comes to actual need, the Christian does not need this! He needs no sun nor moon even here! Look at the chosen sons of poverty—they toil from morning to night and never get a single inch beyond, living from hand to mouth, they are happy! Ah, some of them infinitely happier than the rich man with all his sumptuous fares, and the fine linen with which he wraps himself. Why there have been men reduced to all but beggary who have rejoiced far more in their poverty than others in their wealth—we have seen some of God's saints in the workhouse, or lingering in a dark ill-furnished alms room—and we have heard them speak as joyously about God and their state as if they were dwelling in mansions or palaces! Yes, many a poor child of God has learned to sing—

*“I would not change my blessed estate
For all the world calls good or great!
And while my faith can keep her hold,
I envy not the sinner's gold!”*

For “This city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it, for the glory of God does lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Health, too—who can prize it enough? When stretched upon the bed of sickness, then we begin to know how priceless a gift a sound body was! But ah, the Christian, though he loves health, can do without it. I have heard of Christians who have been blind, and who have been bedridden and have not stirred from their bed for many years, who could scarcely lift their hands through paralysis, and who never had stood upon their feet for many years, through some stroke of God's hand, yet they have delighted themselves in the Lord! They have laid there ill-nursed, ill-cared for—simply living to illustrate to what degree a mortal man may become a mass of suffering and a prodigy of grief, and yet, as I have sometimes stood by such bedsides, I have heard more rapturous expressions concerning present joy and future prospects, than from God's strongest saints in their healthiest hours! The dying girl, when consumption has paled her cheek and taken the flesh from off her poor aching bones, has nevertheless appeared in a sacred majesty of might which showed me that she needed no moon nor sun to lighten her, no health nor strength to give her spirits—for the presence of Christ made her conqueror in the extremity

of weakness, and victorious in the grim presence of death itself! The Christian, then, dear friends, leans upon the arm of God—he has pressed through the crowd of creatures—he has bid them all retire that he might live nearer to his all-sufficient Lord! And if, when he has reached his Lord, the creatures turn their backs and go away, he says, “There, you may all go; I have *Him* now; I embrace Him now; He has kissed me with the kisses of His lips; you may spit on me and you will; now *He* has spoken softly to me, you may curse me if you please. Now that He has told me I am His, and He is mine, even my father and mother may forsake me, for the Lord has taken me up.” Yes, the heavenly man, even before he gets to heaven has no need of the sun nor of the moon, for the glory of God does lighten him.

We finish by observing that such a man, however, has great need of Christ—he cannot get on without Christ. O beloved, if the sun were struck from the spheres, what a poor, dark, dreary world this would be. We would go groping about, longing for the grave; but that would be nothing compared with our misery if Christ were taken away! O Christian, what would you do without a Savior? We would be of all men the most miserable—we who have once known Him! Ah, you who do not know Christ, you can get on pretty well without Him, like a poor slave who has never known liberty, and rests content in bondage. The bird in its cage which never flew over the fields, which has been born in the cage, can be pretty easy; but after we have once stretched our wings, and once know what liberty means, we cannot be shut out from our Lord. As the dove mourns itself to death when its mate is taken away, so would we if Christ were gone. We can do without light, without friendship, without life—but we cannot live without our Savior! Oh, to be without Christ, my soul, what would you do in the world without Him, in the midst of its temptations and its cares? What would you do in the morning without Him, when you wake up and look forward to the day’s battle? What would you do if He did not put His hand upon you, and say, “Fear not, I am with you”? And what would you do at night, when you come home jaded and weary, if there were no prayer, no door of access between you and Christ? What would we do without Christ in our trials, our sicknesses? What would we do when we come to die with no one to make our dying bed feel soft as downy pillows? Oh, if the infidel’s laugh has truth in it, it may well ring bitterly in our ears, for it were a bitter truth to us. No Christ? Then to die is dreadful, indeed! To have such high hopes, and to have them all blasted; high, loud boasts, and to have our mouths stopped forever! But, beloved, we need not suppose such a thing, for we know that our Redeemer lives, and we know that He never forsakes the work of His own hand! Married as He is to our souls, He will never sue for divorce against any one of His dear people, but He will hold and bless us till we die; and we on our part will confess of our spiritual life that the Lamb is the light thereof. Of every day and every night, of every joy and every sorrow, the Lamb has been, until now, our light, and shall be till we die.

If this is so, how dark is the case of those who do not know the Lamb! In what misery and ignorance do you grope who do not know the Savior! Would you know Christ, would you have the happiness of resting upon His bosom? Trust Him, then, for whoever trusts Him is saved. To trust Christ is that saving faith which brings the soul out of condemnation. “He who believes on Him is not condemned.” Trust, guilty as you are, trust to His atonement, and it shall wash you! Trust to His power—it shall prevail for you! Trust to His wisdom—it shall protect you! Trust to His heart—it shall love you, world without end! Amen.

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