

A DOOR OPENED IN HEAVEN

NO. 887

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“After this I looked and, behold, a door was opened in heaven.”
Revelation 4:1.

HOW highly favored was the apostle John! While his Master was on earth he was the favored disciple, permitted to lean his head upon His bosom as a token of the most familiar and loving communion. After our Lord had ascended, He had the same heart towards John, and finding him alone amidst the wild rocks of Patmos, He visited him on the Lord’s-Day, and revealed Himself to him in a most glorious manner. Brothers and sisters, if heaven should offer any one thing which we might choose—if ever the Lord should appear to us as He did to Solomon, and say, “Ask what you will, and it shall be given you,” be it ours to request that we may enjoy the closest possible fellowship with the Well-Beloved! If we might choose our portion among the sons of men, we could not select a happier, a holier, a more honorable lot than to abide in hallowed fellowship with Jesus, even as did the beloved disciple! Remember, John has not this privilege reserved unto himself; the innermost circle of fellowship is not for the seer of Patmos alone; there is room upon the bosom of Christ for other heads than his! The innermost heart of Jesus is large enough to hold more than one beloved! Despair not of gaining the choicest place! It is not easy to ascend into the hill of the Lord, and to stand in His holy place, but if you are pure in heart; if you are fervent in spirit; if you are purged from earthly dross, and if you surrender yourself as a chaste virgin unto Christ, you may—even *you* may yet attain unto this rare and choice privilege of abiding in Christ, and enjoying without ceasing His love shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit!

Leaving John, however, to whom the door in heaven was so remarkably opened that his vision of the spiritual world excelled all others, we will content ourselves with gathering up the crumbs from his table while we muse upon one of the descriptions which fell from his pen. John says, “A door was opened in heaven,” and I believe the first meaning of the statement is that he was permitted to gaze into the secret and mysterious spirit-land, and to behold things which have not at any other time been seen by mortal eyes. That, I think, is the first meaning; yet, if we append another sense to it, we shall not be departing from the truth, even if we depart from the immediate context. We shall regard this door opened in heaven in three ways. First, there is *a door of communion* between God and man; secondly and more closely the meaning of the text, *a door of observation* has been opened with regard to the glories of the saints; and thirdly, by-and-by, to each of us there will be *a door of entrance* opened, by which we shall enter in through the golden gate into the city.

I. First, then, a DOOR OF COMMUNION has been opened in heaven.

The angels fell. Far back in the ancient ages, Lucifer, the son of the morning, rebelled against his liege Lord, and led a multitude of subordinate spirits to revolt. These, having proved to be traitors, were expelled from heaven, hurled like lightning from the battlements of glory down into the depths of woe; for them no door was opened in heaven; mysterious as is the fact, it is nevertheless clear that no mercy was shown to fallen angels. He who will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion, allowed those once bright and illustrious spirits who had revolted, to continue in their revolt without a proclamation of pardon to suggest repentance; He allowed them to continue in their revolt, delivered unto chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. Man also, soon after his creation, broke his Maker’s law, placing himself thereby, in the same position as the fallen angels; man had no greater claim upon God’s mercy than the devils! No, if anything, if any claim could be, he had less, seeing the restoration of so insignificant a being was far less important than the rekindling of the stars of heaven, while his destruction would be far less loss than the overthrow of

the angelic spirits. Yet the Lord in His sovereignty, for reasons that He knows, but which He has not revealed to us, was pleased to look upon the sons of men with singular favor, determining that in them His grace should be revealed. The devils, as vessels of His wrath, are reserved unto Judgment—but the sons of men, as vessels of His mercy, are prepared for glory! Against angels who kept not their first estate, heaven is shut up; but for *men*, a door is opened in heaven! Here is matchless grace, combined with absolute sovereignty, furnishing us with a display of election upon the largest scale—against the truth of which none can raise debate, for whatever objectors may affirm against the choice of some men, and not of others, they cannot deny but that God has chosen men rather than angels; neither can they explain any more than we can, the reason why the Savior took not up angels, but took up the seed of Abraham. Beyond all question, it is to the praise of divine grace that we are able to declare that for the human race a door is opened in heaven!

A door of communion was virtually opened in the covenant of grace when the sacred persons of the divine Trinity entered into solemn league and compact, so that the chosen should be redeemed, that an offering should be presented by which sin should be atoned for, and God's broken law should be vindicated. In that covenant council chamber where the sacred Three combined to plan the salvation of the chosen, a door was virtually opened in heaven, and it was through that door that the saints who lived and died *before* the coming of Christ passed into their rest. It was this door which was at the head of the ladder which Jacob saw—through which the angels ascended and descended—keeping up communion between God and man! Blessed be God, the effect of the Savior's blood reached backward as well as forward! Before it was shed, the anticipation of the blood-shedding availed with God for the salvation of His people.

But, dear brothers and sisters, the door was actually and evidently opened when our Lord Jesus came down to the sons of men to sojourn in their flesh. What? Does the Infinite veil Himself in an infant's form? Does the pure and holy God dwell here on earth among unholy men? Does God speak through those lips of tenderness, and does God's light beam through those eyes of love? It is even so! The Son of Mary was the Son of God, and He that suffered, He that bore our sicknesses, He upon whom our sins were laid, was no other than God over all! The Word which was God, and was in the beginning with God, was made flesh and tabernacled among us! Surely there was a door opened in heaven, then, for if the Godhead comes into actual union with manhood, man and God are no more divided by bars and gates! It cannot be impossible that manhood should go up to God, seeing God has come down to man! If God condescends thus, it must be with a motive, and a reason, and there is hope for poor humanity! There are stars in the darkness of our fallen state! Immanuel, God with us, the virgin's child, the Son of the Highest, is He among us? Then a door is indeed opened in heaven! The angels knew this, for through the open door they came trooping forth with songs of joy and gladness, hailing the birth of the Prince of Peace; and doubtless the spirits of the just, as they peered through the opened lattice, were glad to behold the union of earth with heaven.

But the door, dear brothers and sisters, was not opened, even then, effectually and completely, for Christ, when He came into the world, had to stand, though in Himself pure and holy, in the position of a *sinner*. "The Lord has laid upon Him the iniquity of us all." Now, where sin is, there is a shutting out from God, and Christ was officially, as our substitute, shut out as long as sin laid upon Him. When the transgression of His people was laid on Him, and He was numbered with the transgressors, the veil hung down before even Him. But oh, remember well how bravely He removed that which hindered! He came up to the cross with the lead of sin upon Him, a lead that would have staggered all the angels, and bowed a universe of human beings to the lowest hell! Up to that cross He came, and there He bore the consequences of His people's guilt; the transgressions of His people were laid on Him, and for those iniquities was He struck—but He bore all the strikes, He drank the cup of His Father's wrath to the dregs, and shouting, "It is finished!" He took the great veil that hung up between earth and heaven, and with one gigantic pull He tore it from top to bottom, never to be put together again, to make an open way between God and man! The veil is torn in two. Heaven is laid open to all believers.

But though our Lord Himself, to prove how He had torn that veil, passed through it up to the most holy place, as to His soul, yet you will remember, beloved, that He left His body behind Him! That holy

thing slumbered in the grave, where it could not see corruption; it was not taken up into the excellent glory, but remained here for 40 days. Then, when the appointed weeks were finished, Jesus once again entered heaven—this time taking possession of it for our bodies as well as for our souls! How wondrously David foretold the glorious opening of the gates, when he sang the ascent of the illustrious hero! He rose amid attending angels, ascending not in phantom form, but in a real body, and as He neared the heavenly portals, holy angels sang, “Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in!” When on their hinges of diamond, those pearly gates revolved, and Jesus entered, then, once and for all and forever the door was opened in heaven, by which the chosen people shall all of them ascend into the joy of their Lord! At this very hour, as if to show us that He opens, and no man shuts, we see the door most certainly open because He has promised to come again, and therefore the door cannot be shut, for He is coming quickly. His promise rings in our ears, “Behold, I come as a thief! Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments.” Yes, blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb! Yet again He says, “Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me.” Expect Him then, and as you expect Him, learn that a door is still open in heaven!

Beloved, there is no little comfort in the belief that heaven’s gates are opened, because then our prayers, broken-winged as they are, shall enter there; though they seem as if they could not mount because of a clogging weight of sorrow, yet shall they enter through that door! Our sighs and tears shall pass. There is no boom across the harbor’s mouth; our poor half-shipwrecked prayers shall safely sail into the haven; the ports of glory are not blockaded—we have access by Jesus Christ unto the Father, and there is free trade with heaven for poor broken-hearted sinners. Here is consolation because our songs, also, shall reach the truth of God through the opened door! How delightful it is to sing God’s praise alone, but much more in company when all our hearts and voices keep tune together in sacred melodies of adoration! But what must our songs be compared with the chorus of the 10,000 times ten thousands! We might fear that ours would be unable to scale the walls of the New Jerusalem, but lo, a door is opened for their entrance! Moreover, there is access for sinners to God—Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost; you are not shut out of your Father’s house, poor prodigal; the door is opened; you have not to stand and knock by the month together with processes of repentance, and reformation, for a door is opened! Christ is that door! If you come to Christ you have come to God! If you trust in Jesus you are saved! The door to the ark was wide enough to admit the largest beasts as well as the tiniest animals, and the door into God’s mercy is wide enough to let in the greatest sinner as well as the more refined moralist. He who comes to Christ, comes to heaven! He is sure of heaven who is sure of Christ! Let me cheer everyone here who fears that the gate is barred against him—the door is still open! While there is life, there is hope; you cannot climb to heaven, and see if your name is left off the roll—therefore don’t think it is! You cannot turn to the list of souls who will perish forever—therefore don’t think that your name is among them! But since the silver trumpet rings out the invitation—“Come, laboring and heavy laden! Come to Christ, and He will give you rest!” accept the invitation, and you shall find that the God who in mercy gave the invitation, gave you power to comply with it, and gave you the will to accept it—and He will, by no means, cast you out!

II. Now we must turn to the second view of the text, which is the proper one from its context. “A door was opened in heaven,” it was A DOOR OF OBSERVATION.

It is very little that we can know of the future state, but we may be quite sure that we know as much as is good for us. We ought to be as content with that which is not revealed as with that which is, for if God wills us not to know, we ought to be satisfied not to know. Depend on it, He has told us all about heaven that is necessary to bring us there—and if he had revealed more, it would have served rather for the gratification of our curiosity than for the increase of our grace. Yet, beloved, much concerning heaven, much, I mean *comparatively*, may be guessed by spiritual men. There are times when, to all who love the Lord, doors are opened in heaven through which they can, by spiritual illumination, see somewhat of the city of the Great King.

And first, a door is opened in heaven whenever we are elevated by the help of God’s Spirit to high and ravishing thoughts of the glory of God. Sometimes by investigating the works of nature, we obtain a

glimpse of the infinite; more often by beholding the grace and mercy revealed in Jesus Christ, our hearts are warmed towards that blessed One who made us, who sustains us, who redeemed us, to whom we owe all things. My brothers and sisters, what joy have we felt in the thought of His presence! It has been bliss to feel that our Father is with us when we are alone, covering us with His feathers in danger, hiding us in peace beneath His shield and buckler in times of alarm; how delightful has it been to serve Him, to have a consciousness of doing Him some service, poor and imperfect as it is! I think I know of no delight on earth that is higher than that of knowing that you are really, with all your heart, adoringly serving God! And what a delight it is, dear brothers and sisters, when you can feel in your own soul that you are reconciled to God, that there is no opposition between your desires, and God's will, or if there should be, yet not in your heart of hearts, for your soul desires to be perfectly at one with Him who made it. How glad we feel when God is glorified; how happy when His saints are honoring His name; what a hallowed thrill shoots through us when another sinner is embraced within the arms of divine mercy! Oh, to see God's kingdom come and His will done on earth as it is in heaven! Brothers and sisters, if we might but see this, our prayers would be ended—there is nothing more that we could need if we could once see the whole earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord! This is our greatest joy beneath the sky—to know the Lord to be present, to feel that we are one with Him, to catch some glimpses of His glory, and to see that glory appreciated among the sons of men, while we are helping to spread it abroad. Now, if it is so happy a thing to obtain some gleaming of the glory, what will it be when we shall be near to Him, and shall behold Him face to face? What will be our joy when everything that now separates us from God shall be taken away—when inbred sin that mars our fellowship shall be utterly rooted up; when, instead of a little casual and imperfect service, we shall serve Him day and night in His temple? What will be our joy when we shall no longer behold sin rampant, but shall see universal Holiness all around? When there shall be no idle words to vex our ears, no cursing without, and no thought of sin within to molest us? When the hymn of His glory shall forever make glad our ears, and our tongue shall joyously help to swell the strain world without end? Why, beloved, we have true views of heaven when our soul is blessed with nearness of access to her Father and her God. The unspiritual know not this. If I talked to them of harps, and streets of gold, and palms of victory, they might admire the imagery, but of the inner meaning they would know nothing. Yet, there are your harps, and there your palms, and there your songs, and there your white robes—the beholding of the glory of the Lord and being transformed into it! To be made like unto your God in purity and true holiness—this is heaven indeed!

A door is opened in heaven, secondly, whenever the meditative spirit is able to perceive *Christ Jesus* with some degree of clearness. It is true we see Him here as in a glass, darkly, but that sight, dark and dim as it is, is transporting to our souls. Do you not know what it is to sit under His shadow with great delight, and to find His fruit sweet to your taste? The first day you knew Christ, and He spoke your pardon to you, why it was a marriage day to your soul! Since then He has opened to you coffers containing priceless treasures; He has taken you into the inner rooms of His treasury where the richest and best blessings are stored up, and thus your sense of Christ's excellence has been a growing one. You thought Him good at first, but now you know Him to be better than the best; now He is "the chief among 10,000, and the altogether lovely." I am sure beloved nothing can so carry you out of yourself, above your cares and your present troubles as to feel that your beloved is yours, and that you are His. Why, your spirit, like David, dances before the ark of the Lord when the full beauties of a precious Christ are perceived by your heart! Imagine, then, what must it be to see the Redeemer face to face! To hear but the King's silver trumpets sounding in the distance makes the heart to dance, but what must it be to *see* the King in His beauty in the streets of His own metropolis, where He rides forth in constant triumph? Have you not known the day when a word from Him would have made your spirits like the chariots of Amminadab? What will be our ecstasy when you hear not afterwards, but listen *continually* to Him whose lips are like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh? A stray kiss of those lips has ravished you beyond description, but what will it be when those cheeks that are as beds of spices, as sweet flowers, shall forever be near you—when the full marriage of your soul with the royal spouse shall become indeed, to your ineffable delight? Perhaps this is a door through which you have often gazed. If so, take not away your eyes, brothers and sisters; take not away your eyes! But through this window of agate, through this gate of

carbuncle, gaze forever at the person of your blessed Lord, for in Him you may see heaven fully revealed.

We sometimes get a door opened in heaven when we enjoy *the work of the Holy Spirit* in our souls. The Holy Spirit has breathed over our hearts, and turned tumult and storm into profound peace, like the peace of God's own self. He has given us more than quiet rest; He has filled us with high and exulting thoughts of God until whether we were in the body or out of the body we could not tell; and then there has come with these great thoughts a flush of joy, as though a well of honey had sprung up at our feet, as though soft breezes from the celestial beds of spices were fanning our cheeks; we then knew that we were one with Christ by indissoluble, vital union—we grasped the promise, we knew it to be true; we were sure that all covenant blessings were our own! The spirit of sonship was within us! We cried, "Abba, Father!" Faith rejoiced exceedingly. Bright-eyed hope laughed for joy. Love tuned her harp. The Holy Spirit made a paradise within our hearts, and He Himself walked in the garden of our soul in the cool of the day. Right well do some of us know what the Holy Spirit can do for us; we have felt His joy not only in prosperous moments, but in our very darkest times when our troubles have been multiplied, and griefs have threatened to overwhelm us. Now, if such it is to enjoy the presence of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, what must it be to dwell in the land where we shall never vex Him with our sins? Where we shall never quench His sacred influences with our negligence? Where we shall never miss the delightful, sensible conscious enjoyment of His love shed abroad in our souls? Ah, if we could always be as we sometimes are! I find it comparatively easy to climb the hilltop, but the difficulty is to *abide* there, for we slide down to the valley again so easily! But in glory we shall forever sit on the top of Amana with our forehead bathed in the light that streams from an unsetting sun, filled with all the fullness of God, and that forever and ever! O you who know anything of the blessed Spirit, there is a door opened in heaven for you in His gracious operation—look through it and rejoice at what you see!

Further, brothers and sisters, a door is often opened in heaven in *the joys of Christian worship*. As I was reading over and over again yesterday the 42nd Psalm, I could not but note how David dotes on the sunny memories of sacred seasons when he went with the multitude with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude that kept holy day; he remembered the times when he went up to the house of the Lord in the company of his people. It is not always a delightful thing to go to a place of worship, for some places are very much used for sleeping in, and in some others it might be better to be asleep than awake! Many services are so dull that men attend them as a stern duty; they find no pleasure in them. But where there is unity, harmony, heartiness, zeal, where the song rolls up with mighty peals like thunder, where the gospel is preached affectionately and faithfully, and the Holy Spirit bedews the whole like the dews that fell on Hermon—oh, it is sweet to be there! Do you not feel, sometimes, your Sundays to be the most blessed portions of your life below the skies? And the assemblies of God's people—what are they to you? Are they not the house of God, and the very gate of heaven! Yes, and if it is sweet today, to mingle with Christians in their praise and prayer, when we are so soon to separate and go our way, how passing sweet that place must be where the saints meet in *eternal* sessions of worship; where the King is always with them; where there is never a dreary service; where the song never, never, never ceases; where no discord mars it, and no harp is hung upon the willows—

*"There no tongue can silent be,
All shall join the harmony!"*

Why, if there were no other door in heaven than these blessed Sunday gatherings, and the sweet enjoyments of the assemblies of the saints, surely this would be enough to make us long to be there!

Another door is opened in heaven in *the fellowship which we enjoy with the saints on earth*. "They who feared the Lord spoke often one to another," and thus they obtained one of the most delightful joys to be had this side of the golden gate! Though we love all the saints, have we not some who are our peculiars, to whom we take the doors of our heart right off their hinges, and say to them, "Come in, for in sympathy and experience I am one with you; come in and converse with me"? Beloved, if common Christian communion is very sweet, and I know that as church members we have found it so, how much sweeter it will be to meet with the more eminent of the saints! What meetings heaven will see! I imagine Saul meeting Stephen; he aided the persecutors who stoned the martyred Stephen, and yet out of the

ashes of a Stephen there springs a Paul! What a grip of the hand they will give each other on the other side of Jordan! When holy bright spirits meet, why, I would far sooner watch their salutations than the passing of the moons of Jupiter! It will be grand to see these celestial bodies casting their shadows, as it were, for a while about each other, as they come into the closest contact in the skies. And do you not delight to think that you shall meet the apostles? That you shall meet David and Abraham? That you shall have communion with Luther and Calvin, Wesley and Whitefield, and men of whom the world was not worthy? *Some have doubted whether there will be recognition in heaven; but there is no room for doubt, for it is called, "my Father's house."* And shall not the family be known to each other? We are to "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob," and we shall therefore, know these patriarchal saints. We shall not sit down with men in iron masks, and see none but great unknowns, but we shall, "know even as we are known." Doubtless even before the body rises, there will be marks and peculiarities of constitution about disembodied spirits by which we shall be able to detect them, and shall hold happy, intelligent communion with them. Ah, well, you gray-headed saints, your best friends have gone before you, and the thought of seeing them may well make you long to be on the wing! Your dearest ones are on the other side of Jordan; they went to their heritage a long while ago; they abide in the land of the living, while you still linger in the land of the dying. Press forward! Let immortal fingers beckon you towards the dwelling places of the saints in the land of the hereafter! How the prospect of future communion ought to make the saints love one another, because ours is no earthly love which must end at the grave; our union and communion in Christ will outlast both sun and moon; our love in Christ Jesus will not ripen in another world, then be dissolved like that of merely carnal relationship; we need not be afraid of having too much of it; how kindly affectionate we ought to be to one another; we are to live together in heaven, so never let us quarrel on earth. I read a story the other day of an elder of a Scottish church, who at the elders' meeting had angrily disputed with his minister until he almost broke his heart. The night after, he had a dream which so impressed him that his wife said to him in the morning, "You look very sad, Jan; what is the matter wi' you?" "And well I am," said he, "for I have dreamed that I had hard words with our minister, and he went home and died, and soon after I died, too; and I dreamed that I went up to heaven, and when I got to the gate, out came the minister and put out his hands to welcome me, saying, 'Come along, Jan, there's nae strife up here, I'm so glad to see you.'" So the elder went down to the minister's house to beg his pardon, and found in very truth that he was dead! He was so struck by the blow that within two weeks he followed his pastor to the skies, and I should not wonder but what his minister did meet him and say, "Come along, Jan, there's nae strife up here." Brothers and sisters, why should there be strife below? Let us love each other, and by the fact that we are co-heirs of that blessed inheritance, let us dwell together as partakers of a common life, and soon to be partakers of a common heaven.

Beloved, I think I may add a door has often been opened in heaven to us *at the communion table*. Astronomers select the best spots for observatories; they like elevated places which are free from traffic, so that their instruments may not quiver with the rumbling of wheels; they prefer also, to be away from the smoke of manufacturing towns, that they may discern the orbs of heaven more clearly. Surely, if any one place is fit to be an observatory for a heaven-mind than another, it is the table of communion—

***"I have been there, and still will go,
It is like a little heaven below."***

Christ may hide Himself from His people in preaching, as He did from His disciple on the road to Emmaus, but *He made Himself known unto them in the breaking of bread!* Prize much the solemn breaking of bread. That ordinance has been perverted; it has been caricatured and profaned, and therefore some tender Christians scarcely value it at its right account. To those who will use it rightly, examining themselves, and so coming to that table, it is indeed, a divine observatory—a place of calm retirement from the world. The elements of bread and wine become the lenses of a far-seeing telescope through which we behold the Savior, and I say again, if there is one spot of earth clear from the smoke of care, it is the table where saints have fellowship with their Lord! A door is often opened in heaven at this banquet, when His banner over us is love; and if it is so sweet to enjoy the emblem, what must it be to live with Christ Himself, and drink the new wine with Him in the kingdom of our Father?

Another door that is opened in heaven is *the delights of knowledge*. It is a charming thing to know of earthly science, but it is more delightful by far to know *spiritual* truth. The philosopher rejoices as he tracks some mysterious law of Nature to its source, and discovers immature principles of matter as they nestle beneath a long hidden mystery; but to hunt out a gospel truth, to track the real meaning of a text of Scripture, to get some fresh light upon one of the offices of the Redeemer, to see a precious type stand out with a fresh meaning, to get to know Him, and the power of His resurrection *experimentally*—to have the truth of God engraved upon the soul as though by the finger of God, oh, this is happiness! It is certainly one of the greatest delights of the Christian to sit at the feet of Jesus with Mary, and learn of Him—to be educated in the college of Corpus Christi, and to find the *schola crucis* to be *schola lucis*, because of the light which streams from the cross! But, brothers and sisters, if the little knowledge we gain here is so sweet, what will our knowledge be when the intellect shall be expanded, when the mental eye shall be clarified, and when truths of God shall be perceived not through a veil of mist and cloud, but in full meridian light? If the dawn is bright, what will the midday be? If today our little travels in the domains of revelation have so enriched us, how rich shall we be when, like Columbus, we spread the sail for the unknown land, traversing seas of knowledge never navigated before? What will it be, beloved, to make discoveries of the glory of Christ, and then to make known to the principalities and powers, in the heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God in the person of the Well-Beloved? There is a door opened in heaven to every thoughtful, studious reader of the word, and to every experienced Christian; if you are learning of Christ, the joy of knowledge gives you some idea of heaven!

Another door of heaven may be found in the *sweets of victory*. I mean not the world's victory, where there are garments rolled in blood, and wringing of hands, and wounds and death; I refer to victory over sin, self, and Satan! How grand a thing to get a passion down, and hold it by the throat, strangling it despite its struggles; it is fine work to hang up some old sin as an accursed thing before the Lord, just as they hung up the Canaanite kings before the face of the sun; or if you cannot quite kill the lust, it is honorable work to roll a great stone at the cave's mouth, and shut in the wretches till the evening comes when they shall meet their doom. It is a joyous thing when under temptation you are kept from falling as you did on a former occasion, and so are made conquerors over a weakness which was your curse in past years! It is a noble thing to be made strong through the blood of the Lamb so as to overcome sin! The delights of holiness are as deep as they are pure; to be acquiring by divine grace, spiritual strength, is no mean blessing, but what will it be to be in heaven when every sin shall be conquered, when Satan himself shall be under our feet? Ah, if I once have him under my foot, how will I exult and rejoice over that old dragon who has tormented the saints of God these many years! Let us once but see sin and hell led captives, how will we sing hosanna to the Lord mighty in battle and how will we exult and rejoice as we participate in His victory! It is coming! The victory is surely coming! We shall stand upon the mountain's brow with Him, and chant the song of victory! At the battle of Dunbar, when Cromwell and his men fought up hill, and step by step achieved the victory, their watchword was the Lord of hosts, and they marched to the battle singing—

*“O Lord our God, arise and let
My enemies scattered be,
And let all them that do You hate
Before Your presence flee.”*

When they had won the day, the grand old leader, saint and soldier in one, bade his men halt and sing with him; and there they poured forth a Psalm with such lusty music that the old German Ocean might well have clapped its hands in chorus, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously!” But what a song will that be when we, the followers of Christ, having long fought up hill, wrestling against sin, shall at last see death and hell overcome, and with our Leader standing in our midst, shall raise the last great hallelujah to God and the Lamb, which hallelujah shall roll on forever and ever! God grant us each to be there! Each little victory here helps us to see as through a door to the grand ultimate triumph which may God hasten in His own time.

III. I might thus have continued, but time fails altogether. And therefore I must only add two or three sentences concerning THE DOOR OF ENTRANCE.

A door will soon be opened in heaven for each one of us who have believed in Christ Jesus. Christian, the message will soon come to you, “The Master is come, and calls for you.” Ready-to-Halt, the post will come to town for you with the token, “The golden bowl is broken, and the silver cord is loosed.” Father Honest must find it true that the daughters of music shall be brought low, and Valiant-for-Truth must learn that the pitcher is broken at the fountain. Gird up then, your loins for the last time, and go down to the river with courage! It flows, as some say, cold and icy as death at the foot of the celestial hill; remember, however, it will be deeper or shallower to you according to your faith, and if your faith can keep from staggering, you shall pass through that stream dry-shod, and in the river’s midst you shall sing the loudest song of all your life! You shall then be nearer to heaven, and heaven shall flood your spirit, and drown out death! Soon, I say, that door will open. Surely you do not want to postpone the day. What is there amiss between you and your Husband that you wish to tarry away from Him? What? Do you love to be an exile from your own country? Do you love to be banished from the “city that has foundations,” of which you are a citizen? Surely, if your spirit is as it should be, you will say—

*“Like a bairn to its mither, a wee birdie to its nest,
I would gladly be gauging home to my Savior’s breast;
For He gathers in His bosom witless, worthless lambs like me,
And He carries them Himself to His ain countrie.”*

Beloved, never try to forget your departure! Thoughts of mortality are incessant with me, but, alas, sometimes they are painful, and I chide myself that it ever should be painful to think of being where Jesus is! No, no, it is not that! It is that naughty doubt and fear that flits across my soul and darkens it; for it must be bliss to be with Jesus, and therefore it must be a secondary bliss to *think* of being where He is! It is greatly wise to talk about our last hours; it is well to often perform in meditation a rehearsal of the coronation scene—when the crown shall be on our head, and the palm in our hand! Anticipate, I pray you, the glory which is surely yours if you are in Christ! But O, make sure that you are in Christ! Get two grips of Him! Hold Him by a strong, but humble confidence! Fling away all other hopes; they are vanity! Bind yourself to His dear cross, the one plank on which you can swim to glory! Never mariner was drowned on that—

*“None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good!”*

God bless you for the Redeemer’s sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—REVELATION 5 & 7:9-17.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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