

THE DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN

NO. 43

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“You shall come to your grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn comes in in his season.”
Job 5:26

WE do not believe all that Job’s friends said. They spoke very often as uninspired men, for we find them saying many things that are not true. And if we read the book of Job through we might say with regard to them, “miserable comforters are you all,” for they did not speak concerning God’s servant, Job, the thing that was right. But nevertheless, they gave utterance to many holy and pious sentences which are well worthy of regard as having come from the lips of three men distinguished in their age for their learning, talent and ability. Three gray-headed sires, who from experience were able to speak what they knew. Their mistakes are not to be wondered at because they had not then that clear, bright, shining light which we enjoy in these modern times.

They had few opportunities to meet together. There were but few Prophets in those days who taught them the things of the kingdom. We only marvel that without the light of the Gospel Revelation they were able to discover so much of the Truth as they did. However I must make a remark concerning this chapter, that I cannot but regard it as being in the man, not so much the utterance of the man—who here speaks—Eliphaz the Temanite—but the very Word of God. Not so much the simple saying of the unwise comforter who upbraided Job as the speech of the Great Comforter who consoles His people and who only utters the thing that is right.

The opinion is justified by the fact that this chapter is quoted by the Apostle Paul. Eliphaz says in the 13th verse, “He takes the wise in their own craftiness.” And we find the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:19 saying, “As it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness”—thus giving sanction to this passage as having been inspired of God—at all events as being most certainly truthful. Most certainly the experience of such a man as Eliphaz is worthy of much regard. And when he, speaking of the general condition of God’s people—that they are hid from the scourge of the tongue, “that they are not afraid of destruction when it comes”—that they laugh at destruction and famine and so on, we may accept his words as being proven by experience and authenticated by inspiration.

“You shall come to your grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn comes in in his season.” Here is a very beautiful comparison, the comparison of the aged Christian—for that I take it lies on the surface of the text—to a shock of corn. Go into the harvest field and you shall see how much the wheat reminds you of the aged believer. How much anxiety has been expended on that field! When the seed first sprung up the farmer dreads lest the worm should bite the tender shoots and the blade should be devoured. Or lest some sharp frost should consume the infant plant and cause it to wither and die. And, then, month after month, as the seasons came, how did he anxiously look towards Heaven and long that the rains might come, or that the genial sunshine might pour out its vivifying floods of light upon the field?

When it has come to somewhat of maturity, how greatly has he feared lest the mildew and blast should shrivel up the precious ears? It stands in the fields now and in some respects he is freed from his anxiety. The months of his travail are over. He has waited patiently for the precious fruits of the soil and now they are there. And so with the gray-headed man. How many years of anxiety have been expended upon him? In his youth how likely did it seem that he might be smitten down by death and yet he has passed safely through youth, manhood and age. What varied accidents have been warded from him? How has the shield of the Providential Keeper been over his head to keep him from the shafts of the pestilence, or from the heavy hand of accident that might have taken his life!?

How many anxieties has he had himself? How many troubles has he passed through? Look upon the hoary-headed veteran! Mark the scars that troubles have inflicted upon his forehead! And see, deep written in his breast the dark mementos of the sharp struggles and trials he has endured! And now his anxieties are somewhat over—he is come very nearly to the haven of rest. A few short years of trial and trouble shall land him on fair Canaan’s coast. We look upon him

with the same pleasure that the farmer regards the wheat, because the anxiety is over and the time of rest is now approaching. Mark how weak the stem has become! How every wind shakes it to and for—it is withered and dried! See how the head hangs down to earth, as if it were about to kiss the dust and show from where it had its origin!

So, mark the aged man—tottering are his steps—the eyes that look out of the windows are darkened, the grinders cease because they are few and the grasshopper has become a burden. Yet even in that weakness there is glory. It is not the weakness of the tender blade—it is the weakness of the full ripe corn. It is a weakness that shows its maturity, it is a weakness that gilds it with glory. Even as the color of the wheat is golden so that it looks more beautiful than when the greenness of its verdure is on it, so the gray-headed man has a crown of glory on his head. He is glorious in his weakness—more than the young man in his strength, or the maiden in her beauty.

Is not a shock of corn a beautiful picture of the state of man, moreover, because very soon it must be taken home? The reaper is coming. Even now I hear the sickle sharpening. The reaper has well edged it and he shall soon cut the corn down. Look! He is coming across the field to reap his harvest. And then, by-and-by, it shall be carried into the barn and safely housed, no more subject to blight, or mildew, or insect, or disease. There it shall be secured where no snow can fall upon it, no winds can molest it. It shall be safe and secure. And joyful shall be the time when harvest home shall be proclaimed and the shock of corn, fully ripe, shall be carried into the farmer's garner.

Such is the aged man. He, too, shall soon be taken home. Death is even now sharpening his sickle and the angels are getting ready their chariot of gold to bear him up to the skies. The barn is built. The house is provided. Soon the great Master shall say, "Bind up the tares in bundles to burn and gather the wheat into My barn."

This morning, we shall consider *the death of Christians in general*. Not of the aged Christian merely for we shall show you that while this text does seem to bear upon the aged Christian, in reality it speaks with a loud voice to every man who is a believer. "You shall come to your grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn comes in in his season."

There are four things we shall mark in the text. First, we shall consider that death is *inevitable*, because it says, "you shall come." Secondly, that death is *acceptable*, because it does not read, "I will make you go to your grave," but "you shall come there." Thirdly that death is always *timely*—"you shall come to your grave in *full age*." Fourthly, that death to the Christian is always *honorable*, for the promise declares to him, "You shall go to your grave in full age, like as a shock of corn comes in in his season."

1. The first remark, namely, that death, even to the Christian, is INEVITABLE, is very trite, simple and common and we need scarcely have made it. But we found it necessary, in order to introduce one or two remarks upon it. How familiar is the thought that all men must die and therefore, what can we say upon it? And yet we blush not to repeat it for while it is a Truth so well known, there is none so much forgotten. While we all believe it in theory and receive it in the brain, how seldom is it impressed on the heart? The sight of death makes us remember it. The tolling of the solemn bell speaks to us of it. We hear the deep-tongued voice of time as the bell tolls the hours and preaches our mortality. But very usually we forget it.

Death is inevitable to all. But I wish to make an observation concerning death and that is, that while it is written, "It is appointed unto all men once to die," yet a time shall come when some Christian men shall not die at all. We know that had Adam never sinned he would not have died, for death is the punishment of sin. And we know that Enoch and Elijah were translated to Heaven without dying. Therefore it does seem to follow that death is not absolutely necessary for a Christian. And, moreover, we are told in Scripture that there are some who shall be "alive and remain," when Jesus Christ shall come. And the Apostle says, "I tell you a mystery—we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

There shall be some who shall be found living, of whom the Apostle says, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord." We know that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom. But it is possible that they may be refined by some spiritual process which shall preclude the necessity of dissolution. Oh, I have thought of that idea very much and I have wondered whether it should not be possible that some of us might be in that happy number who shall not see death. Even if we are not, there is something very cheering in the thought—Christ did so conquer death that He not only delivers the lawful captive out of the prison but He saves a band from the jaws of the monster and leads them by his den unharmed!

He not only resuscitates the dead and puts new life into those that are slain by the fell scythe, but some He actually takes to Heaven by a bye-road. He says to death—"Avaunt, you monster! On these you shall never put your hand! These are chosen men and women. And your cold fingers shall never freeze the current of their soul. I am taking them straight to Heaven without death. I will transport them in their bodies up to Heaven without passing through your gloomy portals, or having been captives in your dreary land of shades." How glorious is the thought that Christ has vanquished death—that some men shall not die.

But you will say to me, "How can that be? For the body has mortality mingled with its very essence." We are told, it is true, by eminent men that there is a necessity in nature that there should be death, since one animal must prey upon another. And even could all animals be taught to give up their prey, they must feed upon plants and so devour certain minute insects which had hidden thereon. Death therefore seems to be the Law of nature. Be it remembered that men have already lived far beyond the present allotted term and it does seem most easy to conceive that the creature which can subsist a thousand years, could exceed that period. But this objection is not valid, since the saints will not live forever in this world, but will be removed to a habitation where Laws of Glory shall supersede Laws of nature.

II. And now comes a sweet thought—that death to the Christian is always ACCEPTABLE—"you shall *come* to your grave." Old Caryl makes this remark on this verse—"A willingness and a cheerfulness to die. You shall *come*, you shall not be dragged or hurried to your grave, as it is said of the foolish rich man in Luke 12, 'This night shall your soul be taken from you.' But you shall come to your grave quietly and smilingly, as it were. You shall go to your grave, as it were, upon your own feet and rather walk than be carried to your sepulcher." The wicked man, when he dies, is driven to his grave, but the Christian *comes* to his grave.

Let me tell you a parable. Behold two men sat together in the same house when Death came to each of them. He said to one, "You shall die." The man looked at him—tears suffused his eyes and tremblingly he said, "O Death, I cannot! I will not die." He sought out a physician and said to him, "I am sick, for Death has looked upon me. His eyes have paled my cheeks and I fear I must depart. Physician, there is my wealth, give me health and let me live." The physician took his wealth but gave him not his health with all his skill. The man changed his physician and tried another and thought that perhaps he might spin out the thread of life a little longer.

But, alas! Death came and said, "I have given you time to try your varied excuses. Come with me. You shall die." And he bound him hand and foot and made him go to that dark land of Hades. As the man went he clutched at every side post by the way, but Death, with iron hands, still pulled him on. There was not a tree that grew along the way but he tried to grasp it, but Death said, "Come on! You are my captive and you shall die." And unwillingly as the laggard schoolboy who goes slowly to school, so did he trace the road with Death. He did not *come* to his grave, but Death fetched him to it—the grave came to him.

But Death said to the other man, "I am come for you." He smilingly replied, "Ah, Death! I know you, I have seen you many a time. I have held communion with you. You are my Master's servant. You have come to fetch me Home. Go, tell my Master I am ready, whenever He pleases. Death, I am ready to go with you." And together they went along the road and held sweet company. Death said to him, "I have worn these skeleton bones to frighten wicked men. But I am not frightful. I will let you see myself. The hand that wrote upon Belshazzar's wall was terrible because no man saw anything but the hand. But," said Death. "I will show you my whole body. Men have only seen my bony hand and have been terrified."

And as they went along, Death ungirded himself to let the Christian see his body and he smiled, for it was the body of an angel. He had wings of cherubs and a body glorious as Gabriel. The Christian said to him, "you are not what I thought you were—I will cheerfully go with you." At last Death touched the believer with his hand—it was even as when the mother does in sport smite her child a moment. The child loves that loving pinch upon the arm, for it is a proof of affection. So did Death put his finger on the man's pulse and stopped it for a moment and the Christian found himself by Death's kind finger changed into a spirit. Yes, found himself brother to the Angels. His body had been etherealized, his soul purified and he himself was in Heaven.

You tell me this is only a parable. But let me give you some facts that shall back it up. I will tell you some of the death-bed savings of dying saints and show you that, to them, Death has been an agreeable visitant of whom they were

not afraid. You will not disbelieve dying men. It were ill to act the hypocrite's part at such a time. When the play is over men will take off the mask—and so with these men when they came to die—they stood out in solemn unclothed reality.

First, let me tell you what Dr. Owen said—that celebrated prince of Calvinists. While his works are to be found, I am not afraid that men shall lack arguments to defend the Gospel of Free Grace. A friend called to tell Dr. Owen that he had put to press his "Meditations on the Glory of Christ." There was a momentary gleam in his languid eye as he answered, "I am glad to hear it. Oh," said he, "the long wished-for time has come at last, in which I shall see that glory in another manner than I have ever done, or was capable of doing in this world."

"But," you may say, "this man was a mere theologian, let us hear a poet speak." George Herbert, after some severe struggles and having requested his wife and nieces, who were weeping in extreme anguish, to leave the room, committed his will to Mr. Woodnott's care. Crying out, he said, "I am ready to die—Lord, forsake me not now, my strength fails. But grant me mercy for the merits of my Lord Jesus. And now, Lord receive my soul." Then he laid himself back and breathed out his life to God. Thus the poet dies. That glorious fancy of his that might have pictured gloomy things if it had pleased was only shed with rapturous sight of angels. As he used to say himself, "Methinks I hear the church bells of Heaven ringing." And methinks he did hear them when he came near the river Jordan.

"But," you will say, "one was a theologian and the other a poet—it might have been all fancy." Now learn what an active man, a missionary, said—Brainard. He said, "I am almost in eternity. I long to be there. My work is done. I have done with all my friends. All the world is now nothing to me. Oh, to be in Heaven to praise and glorify God with His holy angels." That is what Brainard said. He who counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and went among wild untutored Indians to preach the Gospel.

But it is possible you may say, "These were men of ages gone by." Now, you shall have men of modern times. And first, hear what the great and eminent Scotch preacher, Haldane, said. He raised himself a little and distinctly repeated these words, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then we shall appear with Him in glory." He was then asked if he thought he was going home. He answered, "Perhaps not quite yet." Mrs. Haldane affectionately said, "Then you will not leave us very soon." He replied with a smile, "To depart and to be with Christ is far better." On being asked if he felt much peace and happiness, he twice repeated, "Exceeding great and precious promises." He then said, "But I must rise." Mrs. Haldane said, "you are not able to get up." He smiled and answered, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with His likeness." She said, "Is that what rising up you meant?" He replied, "Yes, that is the rising I meant. I must rise!"

And now, what said Howard—the great philanthropist, the man who while possessing true religion and being the most eminent and distinguished of Christians, would from his plain common-sense mode of acting, never be suspected of being a fanatic and an enthusiast? A few days before his death, when the symptoms of his disease began to assume a most alarming appearance, he said to Admiral Priestman, "You endeavor to divert my mind from dwelling on death. But I entertain very different sentiments. Death has no terror for me. I always look forward to it with cheerfulness, if not with pleasure."

But perhaps you may say, "We never knew any of these people. We should like to hear of somebody whom we did know." Well, you shall hear of one whom you have heard me affectionately mention. He was not of our denomination, but he was a very prince in Israel—I refer to Joseph Irons. Many of you heard the sweet and blessed things that proceeded out of his lips and will perhaps be able to verify what is said of him. At intervals he repeated short portions of Scripture and select sentences, such as, "How long, Lord?" "Come, Lord Jesus!" "I long to go home to be at rest." Seeing his dear wife shedding tears, he said, "Do not weep for me. I am waiting for that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

After a pause, to recover his breath, he added, "He that has preserved me thus far, will never leave, or forsake me. Fear not—all is well. Christ is precious. I am going home, for I am a shock of corn fully ripe." Now that is a man you did know, many of you. And it proves the fact that I have asserted, that to a Christian death is acceptable come when it may. I am sure I can say, with many of my Brethren here, that could I now have the greatest favor conferred on me that mortals could desire, I would ask that I might die. I never wish to have the choice given to me. But to die is the happiest thing man can have because it is to lose anxiety, it is to slay care, it is to have the peculiar sleep of the Beloved. To the Christian, then, death must be acceptable.

A Christian has nothing to lose by death. You say he has to lose his friends. I am not so sure of that. Many of you have many more friends in Heaven than on earth. Some Christians have more dearly beloved ones above than below. You

often count your family circle but do you do as that little girl of whom Wordsworth speaks, when she said, “Master, we are seven.” Some of them were dead and gone to Heaven but she would have it that they were all brothers and sisters still. Oh, how many brothers and sisters we have upstairs in the upper room in our Father’s house! How many dear ones linked with us in the ties of relationship, for they are as much our relations now as they were then! Though in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, yet in that great world, who has said that the ties of affection shall be severed, so that we shall not even there claim kindred with one another, as well as kindred with Jesus Christ?

What have we to lose by death? Come when he may, should we not open the door for him? I would love to feel like that woman who said, when she was dying, “I feel like a door on the latch, ready to be opened to let my Lord in.” Is not that a sweet state, to have the house ready, so that it will require no setting in order? When death comes to a wicked man, he finds him moored fast, he snaps his cable and drives his ship to sea. But when he comes to the Christian, he finds him winding up the anchor and he says, “When you have done your work and shipped the anchor, I will take you home.” With sweet breath he blows on him and the ship is wafted gently to Heaven. With no regrets for life, but with angels at the prow, spirits guiding the rudder, sweet songs coming through the cordage and canvass silvered over with light.

III. Then thirdly, the Christian’s death is always TIMELY—“You shall come to your grave in a full age.” “Ah,” says one, “that is not true. Good people do not live longer than others. The most pious man may die in the prime of his youth.” But look at my text. It does not say, you shall come to your grave in old age—but in a “full age.” Well, who knows what a “full age” is? A “full age” is whenever God likes to take His children home. There are some fruits you know that are late in coming to perfection and we do not think their flavor is good till Christmas. Or till they have gone through the frost—while some are fit for table now. All fruits do not get ripe and mellow at the same season. So with Christians. They are at a “full age” when God chooses to take them home. They are at “full age” if they die at twenty-one.

They are not more if they live to be ninety. Some wines can be drunk very soon after the vintage. Others need to be kept. But what does this matter, if when the liquor is broached it is found to have its full flavor? God never broaches His cask till the wine has perfected itself. There are two mercies to a Christian. The first is that he will never die too soon. And the second, that he will never die too late.

First, he will never die *too soon*. Spencer, who blazed out so brilliantly some years ago, preached so wonderfully that many expected that a great light would shine steadily and that many would be guided to Heaven. But then suddenly the light was quenched in darkness and he drowned while yet in his youth. Men wept and said, “Ah, Spencer died too soon.” So it has been sung of Kirk White, the poet, who worked so laboriously at his studies. Like the eagle who finds that the arrow that smote him was winged by a feather from his own body, so was his own study the means of his death. And the poets said he died too soon. It was untrue. He did not die too soon—no Christian ever does.

“But,” say some, “How useful might they have been had they lived.” Ah, but how damaging they might have been! And were it not better to die than to do something afterwards that would disgrace themselves and bring disgrace to the Christian character? Were it not better for them to sleep while their work was going on than to break it down afterwards? We have seen some sad instances of Christian men who have been very useful in God’s cause, but have afterwards had sad falls and have dishonored Christ. Though they were saved and brought back at last, we could almost wish that they had died rather than lived.

You don’t know what might have been the career of these men who were taken away so soon. Are you quite sure they would have done so much good? Might they not have done much evil? Could we have a dream of the future and see what they might have been, we should say, “Ah Lord! let it stop while it is well.” Let him sleep while the music plays, there may be hideous sounds afterwards. We long not to keep awake to hear the dreary notes. The Christian dies well—he does not die too soon.

Again, the Christian never dies *too late*. That old lady there is eighty years old. She sits in a miserable room, shivering before a small fire. She is kept by charity. She is poor and miserable. “What’s the good of her?” says everybody—“She has lived too long. A few years ago she might have been of some use. But now look at her! She can scarcely eat unless her food is put into her mouth. She cannot move. And what good can she be?” Do not you find fault with your Master’s work? He is too good a husbandman to leave His wheat in the field too long and let it shale out. Go and see her and you

will be reproved. Let her speak—she can tell you things you never knew in all your life. Or, if she does not speak at all, her silent un murmuring serenity, her constant submission, teaches you how to bear suffering.

So that there is something you can learn from her yet—say not the old leaf hangs too long on the tree. An insect may yet twist itself therein and fashion it into its habitation. O say not the old sear leaf ought to have been blown off long ago. The time is coming when it shall fall gently on the soil. But it remains to preach to unthinking men the frailty of their lives. Hear what God says to each of us—“You shall come to your grave in full age.” Cholera! You may fly across the land and taint the air—I shall die in a “full age.” I may preach today and as many days as I please in the week, but I shall die at a full age. However ardently I may labor, I shall die at a full age.

Affliction may come to drain my very life’s blood and dry up the very sap and marrow of my being. Ah, but affliction you shall not come too soon—I shall die at a full age. And you waiting man! And you tarrying woman! You are saying, “O Lord, how long? How long? Let me come home.” You shall not be kept from your Beloved Jesus one hour more than is necessary. You shall have Heaven as soon as you are ready for it. Heaven is ready enough for you and your Lord will say, “Come up higher!” when you have arrived at a full age—but never before nor after.

IV. Now the last thing is, that a Christian will die with HONOR. “You shall come to your grave like a shock of corn comes in in his season.” You hear men speak against funeral honors and I certainly do enter my protest against the awful extravagance with which many funerals are conducted and the absurdly stupid fashions that are often introduced. It would be a happy thing if some persons could break through them and if widows were not obliged to spend the money which they need so much themselves upon a needless ceremony which makes death not honorable, but rather despicable.

But methinks that while death should not be flaunted out with gaudy plumes there is such a thing as an honorable funeral which everyone of us may desire to have. We do not wish to be carried away just as a bundle of tares—we would prefer that devout men should carry us to the grave and make much lamentation over us. Some of us have seen funerals that were very like a “harvest home.” I can remember the funeral of a sainted minister under whom I once sat. The pulpit was hung in black and crowds of people came together. And when an aged veteran in the army of Christ rose up to deliver the funeral oration over his remains, there stood a weeping people lamenting that a prince had fallen that day in Israel.

Then, verily, I felt what Mr. Jay must have experienced when he preached the funeral sermon for Rowland Hill, “Howl fir tree, the cedar is fallen,” there was such a melancholy grandeur there. And yet my soul seemed lit up with joy to think it possible that some of us might share in the same affection and that the same tears might be wept over us when we come to die. Ah, my Brethren here, my Brethren in office, my Brethren in this Church—it may somewhat cheer your hearts to know that when you depart your death will be to us a source of the deepest grief and most piercing sorrow. Your burial shall not be that prophesied for Jehoiakim—the burial of an ass, with none to weep over him. But devout men will assemble and say, “Here lies the deacon who for years served his Master so faithfully.” “Here lies the Sunday-School teacher,” will the child say, “who early taught me the Savior’s name.”

And if the minister should fall, methinks a crowd of people following him to the tomb would well give him such a funeral as a shock of corn has when “it comes in in his season.” I believe we ought to pay great respect to the departed saints’ bodies. “The memory of the just is blessed.” And even you little saints in the church, don’t think you will be forgotten when you die. You may have no grave-stone. But the angels will know where you are as well without a grave-stone as with it. There will be some who will weep over you. You will not be hurried away, but will be carried with tears to your grave.

But methinks there are two funerals for every Christian—one, the funeral of the *body*. And the other, the *soul*. Funeral, did I say, of the soul? No, I meant not so. I meant not so. It is a *marriage* of the soul. For as soon as it leaves the body the angel reapers stand ready to carry it away. They may not bring a fiery chariot as they had for Elijah. But they have their broad spreading wings. I rejoice to believe that angels will come as convoys to the soul across the ethereal plains. Lo! Angels at the head support the ascending saint and lovingly they look upon his face as they bear him upwards. And angels at the feet assist in wafting him up yonder through the skies, And as the husbandmen come out from their houses and cry, “A joyous harvest home,” so will the angels come forth from the gates of Heaven and say, “Harvest home! Harvest home! Here is another shock of corn fully ripe gathered into the garner.”

I think the most honorable and glorious thing we shall ever behold, next to Christ’s entrance into Heaven and His glory there, is the entrance of one of God’s people into Heaven. I can suppose it is made a holiday whenever a saint enters

and that is continually—so that they keep perpetual holiday. Oh, methinks there is a shout that comes from Heaven whenever a Christian enters it, louder than the noise of many waters. The thundering acclamations of a universe are drowned as if they were but a whisper in that great shout which all the ransomed raise when they cry, “Another and yet another comes.” And the song is still swelled by increasing voices, as they chant, “Blessed Husbandman, blessed Husbandman, Your wheat is coming home. Shocks of corn fully ripe are gathering into Your garner.”

Well, wait a little, Beloved. In a few years more you and I shall be carried through the ether on the wings of angels. Methinks I die and the angels approach. I am on the wings of cherubs. Oh, how they bear me up—how swiftly and yet how deftly. I have left mortality with all its pains. Oh, how rapid is my flight! Just now I passed the morning star. Far behind me now the planets shine. Oh, how swiftly do I fly and how sweetly! Cherubs! What sweet flight is yours and what kind arms are these I lean upon! And on my way you kiss me with the kisses of love and affection. You call me Brother. Cherubs—am I your Brother? I who just now was captive in a tenement of clay—am I your Brother? “Yes!” they say. Oh, hark! I hear music strangely harmonious!

What sweet sounds come to my ears! I am nearing Paradise. ‘Tis even so. Do not spirits approach with songs of joy? “Yes!” they say. And before they can answer, behold they come—a glorious convoy! I catch a sight of them as they are holding a great review at the gates of Paradise. And ah, there is the golden gate. I enter in. And I see my blessed Lord. I can tell you no more. All else were things unlawful for flesh to utter. My Lord! I am with You—plunged into You—lost in You just as a drop is swallowed in the ocean—as one single tint is lost in the glorious rainbow! Am I lost in You, glorious Jesus? And is my bliss consummated? Is the wedding day come at last?

Have I really put on the marriage garments? And am I Yours? Yes! I am. There is nothing else now for me. In vain your harps, you angels. In vain all else. Leave me a little while. I will know your Heaven by-and-by. Give me some years, yes give me some ages to lean here on this sweet bosom of my Lord. Give me half an eternity and let me bask myself in the sunshine of that one smile. Yes—give me this. Did You speak, Jesus? “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love and now you are Mine! You are with Me.”

Is not this Heaven? I want nothing else. I tell you once again, you blessed spirits, I will see you by-and-by. But with my Lord I will now take my feast of loves. Oh, Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! YOU are Heaven! I want nothing else. I am lost in YOU!

Beloved, is not this to go to “the grave in full age, like as a shock of corn,” fully ripe? The sooner the day shall come, the more we shall rejoice. Oh, tardy wheels of time! Speed on your flight. Oh, angels, from where do you come with haggard wings? Oh, fly through the ether and outstrip the lightning’s flash! Why may I not die? Why do I tarry here? Impatient heart, be quiet a little while. You are not fit for Heaven yet, else you would not be here. You have not done your work, else you would have your rest. Toil on a little longer. There is rest enough in the grave, you shall have it there. On! on!

*“With my scrip on my back and my staff in my hand,
I’ll march on in haste thro’ an enemy’s land.
Though the way may be rough it cannot be long.
So I’ll smooth it with hope and I’ll cheer it with song.”*

My dear Friends, you who are not converted, I have no time to say anything to you this morning. I wish I had. But I pray that all I have said may be yours. Poor Hearts, I am sorry I cannot tell you this is yours now. I would I could preach to everyone of you and say that you all shall be in Heaven. But God knows there are some of you that are on the road to Hell—and do not suppose you will enter Heaven if you go Hell’s road. Nobody would expect, if he proceeded to the north, to arrive at the south. No. God must change your heart. By simple trust in Jesus, if you give yourself up to His mercy, even though the vilest of the vile, you shall sing before His face.

And methinks, poor Sinner, you will say to me as a poor woman did last Wednesday, after I had been preaching—when I believe everybody had been crying—from the least to the greatest and even the preacher in the pulpit. As I went down, I said to one, “Are you chaff or wheat?” And she said, “Ah, I trembled tonight, Sir.” I said to another, “Well, Sister, I hope we shall be in Paradise soon.” And she replied, “You may, Sir.” And I came to another and said, “Well, do you think you will be gathered with the wheat?” And she answered, “One thing I can say—if God ever lets *me* get into Heaven I will praise Him with all my might. I will sing myself away and shall never think I can sing loud enough.”

It reminded me of what an old disciple once said: “If the Lord Jesus does but save me He shall never hear the last of it.” Let us praise God, then, eternally—

*While life, or thought, or being lasts,
Or immortality endures!”*

Now may the Three-in-One God dismiss you with His blessing.

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