

A SERMON FOR SPRING NO. 436

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 23, 1862,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“My Beloved spoke and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one and come way. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth her green figs and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one and come away.”
Song of Solomon 2:10-13.

THE things which are seen are types of the things which are not seen. The works of creation are pictures to the children of God of the secret mysteries of Divine Grace. God's Truths are the apples of gold and the visible creatures are the baskets of silver. The very seasons of the year find their parallel in the little world of man within. We have our winter—dreary howling winter—when the north wind of the Law rushes forth against us, when every hope is nipped, when all the seeds of joy lie buried beneath the dark clods of despair, when our soul is fast fettered like a river bound with ice, without waves of joy, or flowings of thanksgiving.

Thanks be unto God, the soft south wind breathes upon our soul and at once the waters of desire are set free, the spring of love comes on, flowers of hope appear in our hearts, the trees of faith put forth their young shoots, the tone of the singing of birds comes in our hearts, and we have joy and peace in believing through the Lord Jesus Christ. That happy springtide is followed in the Believer by a rich summer, when his Graces, like fragrant flowers, are in full bloom, loading the air with perfume. And fruits of the Spirit like citrons and pomegranates swell into their full proportion in the genial warmth of the Sun of Righteousness.

Then comes the Believer's autumn, when his fruits grow ripe and his fields are ready for the harvest. The time has come when his Lord shall gather together his “pleasant fruits,” and store them in Heaven. The feast of ingathering is at hand—the time when the year shall begin anew, an unchanging year, like the years of the right hand of the Most High in Heaven. Now, Beloved, each particular season has its duty. The husbandman finds that there is a time to plow, a time to sow, a time to reap. There is a season for vintage and a period for the pruning of the vine. There is a month for the planting of herbs and for the ingathering of seeds.

To everything there is a time and a purpose, and every season has its special labor. It seems, from the text, that whenever it is springtide in our hearts, then Christ's voice may be heard saying, “Arise, My love, My fair one and come away.” Whenever we have been delivered from a dreary winter of temptation or affliction, or tribulation—whenever the fair spring of hope comes upon us and our joys begin to multiply, then we should hear the Master bidding us seek after something higher and better. And we should go forth in His strength to love Him more and serve Him more diligently than ever before.

This I take to be the Truth of God taught in the text, and it shall be the subject of this morning's discourse. And to any with whom the time of the singing of birds is come, in whom the flowers appear—to any such I hope the Master may speak till their souls shall say, “My Beloved spoke and said unto me, rise up, My love, My fair one and come away.” I shall use the general principle in illustration of four or five different cases.

I. First, with regard to THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF CHRIST. In looking upon her history, with only half an eye, you can plainly perceive that she has had her ebbs and flows. Often it seemed as if her tide retired—ungodliness, heresy, error prevailed. But she has had her flood tide when once again the glorious waves have rolled in, covering with their triumphant righteousness the sands of ignorance and evil. The history of Christ's Church is a varied year of many seasons. She has had her high and noble processions of victory. She has had her sorrowful congregations of mourners during times of disaster and apparent defeat.

Commencing with the life of Christ, what a smiling spring it was for the world when the Holy Spirit was poured out in *Pentecost*. Then might the saints sing with sweet accord—

*“The Jewish wintry state is gone,
The mists are fled, the spring comes on.
The sacred turtle dove we hear,
Proclaim the new, the joyful year.
The immortal vine of heavenly root,
Blossoms and buds and gives her fruit;
Lo, we are come to taste the wine,
Our souls rejoice and bless the vine.”*

The winter was over and past—that long season in which the Jewish state lay dead, when the frosts of Phariseeism had bound up all spiritual life. The rain was over and gone, the black clouds of wrath had emptied themselves upon the Savior’s head. Thunder and tempest and storm—all dark and terrible things—were gone forever.

The flowers appeared on the earth—three thousand in one day blossomed forth, baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fair promises created for beauty and delight sprang up and with their blessed fulfillment, clothed the earth in a royal garment of many colors. The time of the singing birds was come, for they praised God day and night, eating their bread with joy and singleness of heart. The voice of the turtle was heard, for the Spirit—that hallowed dove from Heaven—descended with tongues of fire upon the Apostles and the Gospel was preached in every land.

Then had earth one of her joyous Sabbaths. The fig tree put forth her green figs. In every land there were some converts. The dwellers in Mesopotamia, Medes, Parthians, Elamites—some of all—were converted to God, and the tender grapes of newborn piety and zeal gave forth a sweet smell before God. Then it was that Christ spoke in words which made the heart of His Church burn like coals of juniper—My Fellow, My Friend, My Beautiful, arise and come your way.”

The bride arose, charmed by the heavenly voice of her Spouse. She girt on her beautiful garments and for some hundred years or more, she did come away. She came away from her narrowness of spirit and she preached to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ—she came away from her attachment to the State and she dared to confess that Christ’s kingdom was not of this world. She came away from her earthly hopes and comforts, for, “they counted not their lives dear unto them that they might win Christ and be found in Him.”

She came away from all ease and rest of body, for they labored more and more abundantly, making herself sacrifices for Christ. Her Apostles landed on every shore. Her confessors were found among people of every tongue. Her martyrs kindled a light in the midst of lands afflicted with the midnight of heathen darkness. No place trod by foot of man was left unvisited by the heralds of God, the heroic sons of the Church. “Go forth into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” was ringing in their ears like a clarion sounding the war charge. And they obeyed it like soldiers who had been men of war from their youth.

Those were brave days of old, when with a word, the saints of God could overcome a thousand foes—that word the faithful promise of a gracious God. Alas, alas, that season passed away! The Church grew dull and sleepy. She left her Lord. She turned aside. She leaned upon an arm of flesh, courting the endowments of earthly kingdoms. Then there came a long and dreary winter, the dark ages of the world, the darker ages of the Church. At last the time of love returned, when God again visited His people and raised up for them new Apostles, new martyrs, new confessors.

Switzerland, France, Germany, Bohemia, the Low Countries, England, and Scotland had all their men of God who spoke with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The time of Luther and Calvin and Melancthon and of Knox was come—Heaven’s sunny days—when once again the frost should give way to approaching summer. Then it was that men could say once again, “The winter is passed, priest-craft has lost its power, the rain is over and gone. False doctrines shall no more be as tempests to the Church. The flowers appear on the earth—little Churches—plants of God’s right hand planting, are springing up everywhere.”

The time of the singing of birds was come. Luther’s hymns were sung by plowmen in every field. The Psalms translated were scattered among all people—carried on the wings of angels, and the Church sang aloud unto God, her strength—and entered into His courts with the voice of thanksgiving, in such sort as she had not hoped for during her long and weary winter’s night. In every cottage and under every roof, from the peasant’s hut, to the prince’s palace, the

singing of birds was come. Then peace came to the people and joy in the Lord, for the voice of the turtle was heard delighting hill and valley, grove and field, with the love-notes of Gospel Grace.

Then fruits of righteousness were brought forth, the Church was “an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits,” camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense. Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices. And a sweet savor of faith and love went up to Heaven and God rejoiced therein. Then the Master sweetly cried—

*“Rise up, My love, My fair one; come away,
Soar on the wings of your victorious faith
Above the realms of darkness and sin!”*

But she did not hear the voice, or she heard it but partially. Satan and his wiles prevailed. The little foxes spoiled the vines and devoured the tender grapes. Corruption, like a strong man armed, held the spouse and she came not forth at her Beloved’s call. In England she would not come away—she hugged the arm of flesh. She laid hold upon the protection of the State—she would not venture upon the bare promise of her Lord. O that she had left dignities, and endowments, and laws to worldly corporations—and had rested on her Husband’s love alone!

Alas for our divisions at this time! What are they but the bitter result of the departure of our fathers from the chastity of simple dependence such as Jesus loves? In other lands she confined herself too much within her own limits, sent forth few missionaries, labored not for the conversion of the outcasts of Israel. She would not come away, and so the Reformation never took place. It commenced, but it ceased—and the Churches, many of them—remain to this day half reformed, in a transition state, somewhere between truth and error.

As the Lutheran Church and the Established Church of England at the present day—too good to be rejected, too evil to be wholly received. Having such a savor of godliness that they are Christ’s but having such a mixture of Popery that their garments are not clean. Oh, would to God that the Church could then have heard her Master’s voice, “Rise up My love, My fair one and come away.”

And now, Brethren, in these days we have had another season of refreshing. God has been pleased to pour out His Spirit upon men again. Perhaps the late revivals have almost rivaled Pentecost—certainly in the number of souls ingathered they may bear rigid comparison with that feast of first fruits. I suppose that in the north of Ireland, in Wales, in America, and in many parts of our own country, there have been worked more conversions than took place at the descent of the Holy Spirit. The Lord’s people are alive, and in earnest, and all our agencies are quickened with new energy.

The time of the singing of birds is come, though there are some harsh, croaking ravens still left. The flowers appear on the earth, though much unmelted snow still covers the pastures. Thank God, the winter is over and passed to a great extent, though there are some pulpits and Churches as frost-bound as ever. We thank God that the rain is over and gone, though there are still some who laugh at the people of God and would destroy all true doctrine. We live in happier days than those which have passed. We may speak of these times as the good old times wherein time is older than ever it was and, I think, better than it has been for many a day.

And what now? Why, Jesus says, “Rise up My love, My fair one and come away.” To each denomination of His Church He sends this message, “Come away.” He seems to speak to Episcopacy and say, “Come away. Cut out of the liturgy that which is not according to My mind, leave the State, be free.” He speaks to the Calvinist and says, “Come away—be no more dead and cold as you have been. Let not your sons hold the Truth of God in unrighteousness.” He speaks to each denomination according to its need, but to the same command, “Rise up and come away. Leave deadness, and coldness, and wrong-doing, and hardness, and harshness, and bitterness of spirit. Leave idleness, and slothfulness and lukewarmness—rise up and come away.

“Come away to preach the Gospel among the heathen. Come away to reform the masses of this wicked city. Come away from your little heartedness, from your coldness of spirit. Come away—the land is before you—go up and possess it.” Come away, your Master waits to aid you—strike! He will strike with you. Build! He will be the great master Builder—plow! He Himself shall break the clods! Arise and thresh the mountains, for He shall make you a sharp threshing instrument, having ties, and the mountains shall be beaten small until the wind shall scatter them like chaff, and you shall rejoice in the Lord. Rise up, people of God, in this season of revival and come away! Why do you sleep? Arise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.

II. Methinks the text has a very SPECIAL VOICE TO US AS A CHURCH. We must use the Scripture widely but yet personally. While we know its reference to the universal Church, we must not forget its special application to ourselves. We, too, have had a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The day was with this Church in the olden times, when we were diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

We could not meet more than twenty in a place and sometimes not more than five, without fine and persecution. Then the Church had its elders, who could meet the few in private houses—and cheer their hearts, bidding them abide in patience, waiting till better times might come. Then God sent them a pastor after his own heart, Benjamin Rider, who fed them with knowledge and understanding, and gathered together the scattered sheep during the times of peace.

Then there followed him a man worthy to be pastor of this Church—one who had sat in the stocks at Aylesbury, had seen his books burned by the common hangman before his face, and who counted not even his life dear unto him that he might win Christ. That man was Benjamin Keach, the opener of the parables and expositor of metaphors. On old Horselydown, then a great common, a large house was built where he preached the Word and his hearers were very many.

The flowers then appeared on the earth and the time of the singing of birds was come to this Church. He passed away and slept with his fathers and was followed by Dr. Gill, the laborious commentator. And for some time during his sound and solid ministry it was a good and profitable season, and the Church was multiplied and built up. But again, even under his ministry the ranks were thinned and the host grew small. There was doctrine in perfection but more power from on High was needed.

After a space of fifty years or more of Dr. Gill's ministry, God sent Dr. Rippon and once more the flowers appeared upon the earth, and the Church multiplied exceedingly, bringing forth fruit unto God. And out of her there went many preachers who testified of the Truth of God that was in Jesus and were the parents of Churches which still flourish. Then the good old man, full of years and of good works, was carried to his Home—and there came others who taught the Church and ingathered many souls—but they were not to the full extent successors of the men who went before them, for they tarried but a little season.

They did much good, but were not such builders as those were who had gone before. Then came a time of utter deadness. The officers mourned. There was strife and division. There became empty pews where once there had been full congregations. They looked about them to find one who might fill the place and bring together the scattered multitude. But they looked, and looked in vain, and despondency and despair fell upon some hearts with regard to this Church. But the Lord had mercy on them and in a very short space, through His Providence and Grace, the winter was passed and the rain was over and gone.

The time of singing of birds was come again. There were multitudes to sing God's praises. The voice of the turtle was heard in our land. All was peace and unity and affection and love. Then came the first ripe fruits. Many were added to the Church. Then the vines gave forth a sweet smell. Converts came, till we have often said, "Who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows?" Often has this Church asked the question, "Who has begotten me these?" And now these eight years, by God's Grace, we have had a season, not of spasmodic revival, but of constant progress.

We have had a glad period of abundant increase in which there has been as many converts as we could receive. Every officer of the Church has had his hands full in seeing enquirers, and we have only had time to stop, now and then, and take breath and say, "What has God worked?" The time came when we erected this house, because no other place was large enough for us. And still God continues with us, till our Church meetings are not sufficient for the reception of converts. And we know not how large a proportion of this assembly are Believers in Christ, because time fails to hear the cases of conversion.

Well, what ought we to do? I hear the Master saying, "Rise up, My love, My fair one and come away." I hear Jesus speaking to this Church, and saying, "Where much is given, there much shall be required." Serve not the Lord as other Churches, but yet more abundantly. As He has given you showers of love, so give Him your fertile fields. Let us rejoice with thanksgiving. Let this Church feel that she ought to be more dedicated to Christ than others. That her members should be more holy, loving, living nearer to God. That they should be more devoted, filled with more zeal, more fervency, doing more for Christ, praying more for sinners, laboring more for the conversion of the world.

And let us be asking ourselves what can we do, as a Church, that shall be more than we have ever thought of doing—inasmuch as He feeds us with the bread of Heaven, multiplies our numbers, keeps us in perfect concord, and makes us a happy people? Let us be a peculiar people, zealous for good works, showing forth His glory among the sons of men. It is a solemn responsibility to rest on any man's mind to be the pastor of such a Church as this, numbering very nearly two thousand in Church fellowship.

I suppose such a Baptist Church has never existed before. If we are found to be cowards in this day of battle, woe unto us! If we are unfaithful to our charge and trust, woe unto us! If we sleep when we might do so much, surely will the Master say, "I will take the candlestick out of its place and quench their light in darkness. Laodicea is neither cold nor hot but lukewarm, I will spew her out of my mouth."

And there shall come a dark day for us, with Ichabod on the forefront of our House of Prayer, and darkness in our souls, and bitterness and remorse in our spirits, because we served not Christ while we might. I will cry aloud to you and spare not to admonish and encourage you, my Brethren and comrades, in the conflict for Truth. Men, Brethren and fathers. Young men, maidens and mothers in Israel, shall any of us draw back now? O Lord, after You have so richly blessed us, shall we be ungrateful and become indifferent towards Your good cause and work?

Who knows but You, O God, have brought us to the kingdom for such a time as this? Oh, we beseech You, send down Your holy fire on every heart, and the tongue of flame on every head, that everyone of us may be missionaries for Christ, earnest teachers of the Truth as it is in Jesus!

I leave these thoughts with you. You can feel them better than I can express them. And I can better feel their might than I can make you feel it. O God! Teach us what our responsibility is, and give us Divine Grace that we may discharge our duty in Your sight.

III. WHEN THE TIME OF THE BRIDAL OF THE SOUL HAS ARRIVED TO EACH CONVICTED SINNER, THEN ALSO THERE ARE SPECIAL DUTIES.

Can you not remember, dearly Beloved, that day of days, that best and brightest of hours, when first you saw the Lord, lost your burden, received the roll of promise, rejoiced in full salvation, and went on your way in peace? My soul can never forget that day. Dying, all but dead, diseased, pained, chained, scourged, bound in fetters of iron, in darkness and the shadow of death, Jesus appeared unto me.

My eyes looked to Him. The disease was healed, the pains removed, chains were snapped, prison doors were opened, darkness gave place to light. What delight filled my soul! What mirth, what ecstasy, what sound of music and dancing, what soaring towards Heaven, what height and depths of ineffable delight! Scarce since then have we known joys which surpassed the rapture of that first hour.

Oh, do you not remember it, dear Brothers and Sisters? And was it not a spring time to you? The winter was passed. It had been so long, so dreary—those months of unanswered prayer, those nights of weeping, those days of watching. The rain was over and gone. The mutterings of Sinai's thunders were hushed. The flashings of its lightning were no more perceived. God was beheld as reconciled unto you. The Law threatened no vengeance. Justice demanded no punishment.

Then the flowers appeared in our hearts. Hope, love, peace, patience, sprung up from the sod. The snow drop of pure holiness, the crocus of golden faith, the daffodil lily of love all decked the garden of the soul. The time of the singing birds was come, all that is within us magnified the holy name of our forgiving God. Our soul's exclamation was—

*"I will praise You every day,
Now Your anger's turned away;
Comfortable thoughts arise,
From the bleeding Sacrifice.
Jesus is become at length,
My salvation and my strength;
And His praises shall prolong,
While I live my pleasant song."*

Every meal seemed now to be a sacrament. Our clothes were vestments. The common utensils of our trade were "holiness to the Lord." We went out abroad into the world to see everywhere tokens for good. We went forth with joy and were led forth with praise. The mountains and the hills broke forth before us into singing, and all the trees of the fields did clap their hands. It was, indeed, a happy, a bright, and a glorious season!

Do I speak to some who are passing through that spring-tide now? Young Convert, young Believer, in the dawn of your piety, Jesus says, “Rise up, My love, My fair one and come away.” He asks you to come out from the world and make a profession of your faith in Him *now*—do not put it off. It is the best time to profess your faith while you are young, while as yet to you the days come not, nor the days draw near, when you shall say, “I have no pleasure in them.”

Make haste and delay not to keep His commandments. Arise and be baptized. Come out from among the world, be separate and touch not the unclean thing. Follow Christ in this perverse generation, that you may hear Him say at the last, “Of you I am not ashamed, for you were not ashamed of Me in the day when I was despised and rejected of men.” In this, your early time, dedicate yourselves to God. If you do not draw up a form and subscribe it with your hand, yet draw it up in your heart and subscribe it with your soul—“Lord, I am wholly Yours—all I am and all I have, I would devote to You. You have bought me with Your blood. Lord, take me into Your service—You have put away all Your wrath and given my spirit rest. Let me spend myself and be spent—in life and in death let me be consecrated to You.”

Make no reserves. Come altogether away from selfishness—from anything which would divide your chaste and pure love to Christ—your soul’s Husband. Rise up and come away. In this, the beginning of your spiritual life, the young dawn of marvelous light, come away from your old habits. Avoid the very appearance of evil. Come away from old friendships which may tempt you back to the flesh pots of Egypt. Leave all these things. Come away to higher flights of spirituality than your fathers as yet have known. Come away to private communion. Be much alone in prayer.

Come away—be diligent in the study of God’s Word. Come away, shut the doors of your chamber and talk with your Lord Jesus and have close and intimate dealing with Him. I know I speak to some young babes in Divine Grace, beginners in our Israel. Oh, take care that you begin aright by coming right away from the world, by being strictly obedient to every Divine command, by making your dedication perfect, complete, unreserved, sincere, spotless—

*“While from your newly-sprouted vines
Whose grapes are young and tender, choice and rich,
The flavor comes forth—Beloved one, rise!
Rise from this visible engrossing scene,
And with affections linked to things above,
Where Christ, your treasure is, be soaring still!”*

IV. But in the next place our text deserves to be used in another light. It may be that you and I have had winters of dark trouble, succeeded by soft *springs of deliverance*.

We will not enlarge much on our sorrows, but some of us have been to the gates of death and, as we thought then, into the very jaws of Hell. We have had our Gethesmanes, when our souls have been exceedingly sorrowful—nothing could comfort us, we were like the fool who abhorred all manner of meat. Nothing came with any consolation to our aching hearts. At last the Comforter came to us and all our troubles were dissipated. A new season came, the time of the singing of birds was once more in our hearts.

We did not chatter any more like the swallow or the crane, but we began to sing as the nightingale, even with the thorn in our breast. We learned to mount to Heaven as the lark, singing all the way. The great temporal affliction which had crushed us was suddenly removed and the strong temptation of Satan was taken off from us. The deep depression of spirit which had threatened to drive us to insanity was all of a sudden lifted and we became elastic in heart and once again as David, danced before the Ark, singing songs of deliverance!

I address some who this morning are looking back to such seasons. You have just reached the realm of sunlight, and you can look back upon long leagues of shadow and cloud through which you have had to march. The valley of the shadow of death you have just traversed—you can well remember the horrible pit and the miry clay. We can still hear the rushing as of the wings and feet of crowded miseries. We can still remember the terrible shadow of confusion. But we have come through it—through it all, by God’s Grace—the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, and we can rejoice now in Covenant faithfulness and renewed loving kindness.

Now we have our assurance back again. And Christ is near us and we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. Well, then, what are we to do? Why, the Master says to us, “Rise up and come away.” Now is the time when we should mount up to be nearer to Him. Now that the day dawns, and the shadows flee away, let us seek our Beloved amid the beds of spices and by the lilies where He feeds. I would we had more in the Church—more in this Church,

like Madame Guyon, who loved the Lord as that woman did—who had much forgiven. Or like Mrs. Rowe, who in England was what Madame Guyon was in France.

Or like Dr. Hawker, or like Samuel Rutherford, who could pant and long and sigh for nearer fellowship with Christ. If there is ever a season when we ought to follow hard after the Lord and not be content until we have embraced Him, it is when we have come up from the wilderness, leaning upon our Beloved. Then should the chaste virgins sing with joyous heart concerning Him to whom they are espoused—

*“What is this vain, this visionary scene
Of mortal things to me? My thoughts aspire
Beyond the narrow bounds of rolling spheres.
The world is crucified and dead to me,
And I am dead to all its empty shows.
But, oh, for YOU unbounded wishes warm
My panting soul and call forth all her powers.
Whatever can raise desire or give delight,
Or with full joy replenish every wish,
Is found in You, You infinite abyss of ecstasy and life!”*

Each Believer should be thirsting for God, for the living God—and longing to put his lip to the Wellhead of eternal life—to follow the Savior and say, “Oh, that You were as my Brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother, when I should find You without, I would kiss you, yes, I should not be despised. I would lead You and bring You into my mother’s house, who would instruct me: I would cause You to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate. His left hand should be under my head and His right hand should embrace me.

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you stir not up, nor awaken my love, until He pleases. Who is this that comes up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved? I raised you up under the apple tree: there your mother brought you forth. There she brought you forth that bore you.”

Oh, that the Believer would never be content with having drops and sips of love, but long for the full feast. O my soul thirsts to drink deep of that cup which never can be drained and to eat of all the dainties of that table which boundless love has furnished. I am persuaded that you and I are content to live on pence when we might live on pounds. That we eat dry crusts when we might taste the ambrosial meat of angels. That we are content to wear rags when we might put on kings’ robes. That we go out with tears upon our faces when we might anoint them with fresh oil.

I am convinced that many a Believer lives in the cottage of doubt when he might live in the mansion of faith. We are poor starving things when we might be fed. We are weak when we might be mighty, feeble when we might be as the giants before God—and all because we will not hear the Master say, “Rise up My love, My fair one and come away.”

Now, Brethren, is the time with you after your season of trouble, to renew your dedication vow to God. Now, Beloved, you should rise up from worldliness and come away from sloth, from the love of this world, from unbelief. What enchants you to make you sit still where you are? What delights you to make you as you now are? Come away! There is a higher life! There are better things to live for and better ways of seeking them. Aspire! Let your high ambition be unsatisfied with what you have already learned and know. Not as though you had already attained, either were already perfect.

This one thing do—press forward to the things that are before. Rise, Soul, greatly Beloved, and enter into your Master’s rest. I cannot get my words this morning as I would have them. But if these lips had language, I would seek by every motive of gratitude for the mercies you are enjoying, by every sensation of thankfulness which your heart can experience for Divine Grace received, to make you now say, “Jesus, I give myself up to You this day, to be filled with Your love. And I renounce all other desires but the desire to be used in Your service, that I may glorify You.”

Then, methinks there may go out of this place this morning many young men, and old men, too. Many youths and maidens, determined to be doing something for Christ. I well remember preaching a sermon one Sunday morning which stirred up some Brethren to the midnight meeting movement and much good was done, by God’s Grace. What if some new thought should pass through some newly quickened spirit and you should think of some fresh invention for glorifying Christ at this good hour? Is there no Mary here who has an alabaster box at home unbroken? Will she not today break it over the Master’s head?

Is there no Zaccheus here who will today receive Christ into his house, constrained by Divine love? Oh, by the darkness that has gone, and by the brightness that has come, live lovingly towards Christ! Oh, by the fears that have been hushed, by the pains that have been removed, by the joy you now experience, and by the delights which He has promised you, I beseech you, cling to Him and seek to serve Him! Go into the world to bring in His lost sheep, to look after His hidden ones, to restore to Him that lost piece of money for which He has lit the candle and desires you to sweep the house.

O Christian Brothers and Sisters, it is an angel's work I have attempted now, and mortal lips fail. But I beg you, if there is any heart of mercy, if there is any consolation in Christ Jesus, "if you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God." Lay not up your treasure upon earth where thieves break through and steal. But lay up your treasure in Heaven—for where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also.

If you love my Master, serve Him—if you do not, if you owe Him nothing, oh, if you owe Him nothing and have had no favor from Him—then I beg you to seek mercy. But if you have found it. If you know it—oh, for His love's sake *love Him!* This dying world needs Your help, my Lord! This wicked sinful world needs Your aid. Up and be doing! The battle is raging furiously. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! Guards up, and at them! Do you sleep, Sirs? Sleep when now the shots are flying thick as hail and the foemen are rallying for the last charge in the world's mighty Armageddon?

Up! For the defiant standard of Hell waves proudly in the breeze. Do you say you are feeble? He is your strength. Do you say you are few? It is not by many nor by few that God works. Do you say, "I am obscure?" God wants not the notoriety and fame of men. Up, men, women, and children in Christ! Up! Be no more at ease in Zion, but serve God while it is called today, for the war needs every hand, and the conflict calls for every heart. And night comes, when no man can fight or work.

V. And now, last of all, the time is coming to us all when we shall die upon our beds. Oh, long-expected day, hasten and come! The best thing a Christian can do is to die and be with Christ which is far better.

Well, when we shall lie upon our deathbeds, panting out our life, we shall remember that then the winter is past forever. No more of this world's trials and troubles. "The rain is over and gone." No more stormy doubts, no more dark days of affliction. "The flowers appear on the earth." Christ is giving to the dying saints some of the foretastes of Heaven. The angels are throwing over the walls some of the flowers of Paradise. We have come to the land Beulah. We sit down in beds of spices and can almost see the Celestial City on the hilltops, on the other side of the narrow stream of death.

"The time of the singing of the birds is come." Angelic songs are heard in the sick chamber. The heart sings, too, and midnight melodies cheer the quiet entrance of the grave. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me." Those are sweet birds which sing in the groves by the side of the river Jordan. Now it is that "the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Calm, peaceful and quiet, the soul rests in the consciousness that there is no condemnation to him that is in Christ Jesus. Now does "the fig tree put forth her green figs."

The first fruits of Heaven are plucked and eaten while we are on earth. Now do the very vines of Heaven give forth a smell that can be perceived by love. Look forward to your death, you that are Believers in Christ, with great joy! Expect it as your spring tide of life, the time when your real summer shall come and your winter shall be over forever—

*"One distant glimpse my eager passion fires!
Jesus! To You my longing soul aspires!
When shall I hear Your voice divinely say,
Rise up My love, My fair one come away?
Come meet your Savior bright and glorious
Over sin and death and Hell victorious."*

May God grant that the people who fear His name may be stirred up this morning, if not by my words, yet by the Words of my text and by the influences of God's Spirit. And may you who have never had sweet seasons from the presence of God, seek Christ and He will be found of you. And by His Grace, may we all meet in the land where winters of sin and sorrow shall be all unknown. Amen.

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