

THE VOICE FROM HEAVEN

NO. 488

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 23, 1862,
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And I heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither.”
Revelation 11:12.

WHAT may be the particular meaning of the prophecy concerning the witnesses clothed in sackcloth, their death, their resurrection, and their subsequent entrance into heaven, I am unable to guess, nor am I clear that anybody else has hit upon it. Although I do not despise prophesying, I entertain a very intense disgust of those who know nothing about them and yet pretend to be their interpreters. I am free to confess that I have not the key to the book of Revelation and dare not set up to be its expositor.

This, however, is no great matter, for without my venturing upon that line of things, there are quite enough who are always spelling over the apocalyptic mysteries and a sufficient number who believe that they can comprehend them. No branch of literature has more devoted students, and in none are men more successful in refuting one another, or more sure that they have established their own theories by demolishing those of others.

It may be that there are some whose office it is to open sealed books. I know that it is mine to enforce the teachings of the unsealed volume. They may have a call to expound Daniel and Ezekiel, mine is of a much humbler, but I think I may add, of a much more useful character—not so much to foretell the fall of dynasties and the deaths of monarchs, as to deal with matters of vital godliness and with eternal realities, with things that are plainly revealed, which certainly belong unto us and unto our children, I had rather be a sweet savor unto God in souls converted, than explain all the last vials, and I would prefer rather to comprehend the heights and depths of my Great Master’s love, than to count the number of the beast, or calculate the duration of the little horn.

I. Waiving, then, all attempts at explaining the text from its context, I intend to use it as the voice of God to His people. We shall regard it, first of all, as A SUMMONS SENT AT THE APPOINTED HOUR TO EVERY SAINT. When the time shall come, fixed by irreversible decree, there shall be heard “a great voice from heaven” to every believer in Christ, saying, “Come up hither.”

This should be to us—each one of us, if we are in Christ—the *subject of very joyful anticipation*. Instead of dreading the time when we shall leave this world to go to the Father, we should be thirsting and panting for the hour that shall set our soul at liberty, and give our spirit once for all its full discharge from an imprisonment of clay and from the bondage of “the body of this death.”

To some Christians it will not only be joyful in anticipation, but it will be intensely delightful when it arrives. It is not true, as some suppose, that death, when it really appears is necessarily a dreadful and hideous apparition.

*“Death no terrific foe appears,
 An angel’s lovely form he wears,
 A friendly messenger he proves
 To every soul whom Jesus loves.”*

I doubt not, that many believers welcome the kind approach of death as the arrival of their best friend and salute their last hour with intense delight. Witness the saint who has been for years bedridden. She is tossed to and fro as on a sea of pains, never resting at the anchorage of ease. She cries at night, “Would God ’twere morning,” and when the light of day affects her eyes, she longs for the returning

darkness, that she may slumber for a little season and forget her pains. Her bones have worn through her skin by long lying upon a bed made as soft as kindness can render it, but alas, still too hard for so weak and tormented a body. Pangs have shot through her frame as arrows piercing the foe, every vein has been a river flushed with agony and every nerve a telegraph conveying messages of pain to the spirit.

Oh! how welcome shall it be when the voice shall cry from heaven, "Come up hither!" No more weakness now! The joyful spirit shall leave all bodily pain behind, the last tear shall be wiped away by the Divine Father's hand, and she who was a mass of disease and decay shall now become an embodiment of intense delight, full to the brim with satisfaction and infinite pleasure. In that land where JEHOVAH-Rophi reigns, the inhabitant shall no more say, "I am sick."

With what joy will the voice from heaven sound in the ear of the man wearied with labor! The world shall know of some of us when we die that we have not been idle, but we have served our God beyond our strength. He who finds the ministry an easy profession shall find the flames of hell no pleasant resting place. Oh! there may be some of you in whose name I can speak now who have served God with throbbing brow, with palpitating heart, weary in your Master's service, but never weary of it—springing to the collar when the load was far too heavy for your single strength, ready to labor, or ready for fight, never putting off your armor, standing harnessed both by night and day, crying in your Master's name,

*"Is there a foe before whose face
I fear His cause to plead?
Is there a lamb among His flock
I would refuse to feed?"*

The time must come when age shall take away the juvenile vigor, which for a while carried off weariness and you shall be constrained to lament, saying, "When shall the shadows be drawn out? When shall I fulfill as a hireling my day?" Happy for the minister, if in his pulpit he shall hear the voice, "Come up hither," and shall—

*"His body and his charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."*

Happy for you, fellow laborers in the kingdom of Christ and in the tribulation of our common Savior, if just when you think you can do no more, your doing shall be ended and your reward shall come, and your Savior shall say, "Come up hither," and you shall see the glory which you have believed in, upon the earth.

Beloved, with what intense delight will death be hailed by the sons of abject poverty, I mean, "such as are of the household of faith." From shivering in the winter's cold to the brightness of heaven, from the solitude and desolation of friendless poverty to the communion and fellowship of saints made perfect, from the table scantily furnished with hard-earned bread—from famishing and want—from the poor emaciated bones, from the form ready to be bowed down with hunger, from the tongue that cleaves to the mouth with thirst, from crying children and a wailing wife—wailing for bread, crying that they may be fed. Oh! to be snatched away to heaven!

Happy man, to have known so much of ill, that he may know better the sweetness of perfect bliss! Mansions of the blessed, how bright you are in contrast with the peasant's hut! Streets of gold, how you shall make the beggar forget the cold doorstep and dry arch! Paupers become princes, pensioners are peers, and peasants are kings and priests. O land of Goshen, how long before the sons of Israel receive you for an heritage!

And dear friends, I think I ought to add to this—with what seraphic joy must this voice have been heard in the martyrs' ears. In caves and dens of the earth where the holy wander in their sheepskins and goatskins, what holy triumph must this message create! Blandina, tossed in the Roman amphitheatre on the horns of bulls, then seated in her red-hot iron chair and mocked while she is there consumed before

the leering multitude—oh! that voice, “Come up hither!” How it must have cheered her in those horrid agonies which she bore with more than masculine heroism.

The many who have perished on the rack—surely they have seen visions like those of Stephen, who, when the stones were rattling about his ears, saw heaven open and heard the heaven-sent voice, “Come up hither.” The multitude of our ancestors—our venerated predecessors who carried the banner of the cross before our day, who stood on flaming wood and bore the flames with patience, with their bodies consumed by fire till their lower limbs were burnt away, and life just remained within a mass of ashes—oh! the joy with which they would leap into their fiery chariots, drawn by horses of fire straight to heaven, at this omnipotent bidding of the Master, “Come up hither!”

Though yours and mine may never be the lot of protracted sickness, or abject poverty, or excessive labor, or the death of martyrdom, yet let us still believe that if we are true followers of Christ, whenever death shall come, or rather whenever life and immortality shall come, it shall be a joyous and blessed time for us. Seek not of the Most High to delay the time when He shall summon you to the upper chamber, but listen every morning, listen with your heart desiring to hear it. Listen for the royal message which says, “Come up hither.” An ancient singer sweetly words it—

*“I said sometimes with tears,
Ah me! I’m loth to die!
Lord, silence Thou these fears,
My life’s with Thee on high.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Savior see.*

*What means my trembling heart,
To be thus shy of death?
My life and I sha’nt part,
Though I resign my breath.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Savior see.*

*Then welcome harmless grave!
By thee to heaven I’ll go.
My Lord, Thy death shall save
Me from the flames below.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Savior see.”*

To change the note a moment—while this should be the subject of joyous anticipation, it should also be *the object of patient waiting*. God knows best when it is time for us to be bidden to, “Come up hither.”

We must not wish to antedate the period of our departure. I know that strong love will make us cry,

*“O Lord of Hosts the waves divide,
And land us all in heaven,”*

but patience must have her perfect work. I would not wish to die while there is more work to do or more souls to win, more jewels to place in the Redeemer's crown, more glory to be given to His name and more service to be rendered to His church.

When George Whitefield lay sick and wanted to die, his Negro nurse had prayed for him and at last said, "No Massa Whitefield, there is no dying for you. There's many a poor Negro yet to be brought to Christ and you must live," and live he did. You know, when Melancthon lay very sick, Martin Luther said he should not die. And when his prayers began to work a cure, Melancthon said, "Let me die Luther, let me die, leave off your prayers." Luther replied, "No, man, I want you. God's cause wants you and you shall not die yet." And when Melancthon refused to eat or to take the necessary medicine because he hoped to be soon with Christ, Luther threatened him with excommunication if he did not then and there do as he was bidden, for he must not die.

It is not for us by neglect of means, or wanton waste of strength, or reckless zeal, to cut short a life which may be useful. "Do yourself no harm"—the advice of Paul to the jailor—is not at all amiss here. God knows the pace at which time should travel and how long the road of life should be. Why, if it were possible for there to be regrets in heaven, it might be that we did not live longer here to do more good. More sheaves! More jewels! But how, unless there be more work? True, there is the other side of it—that living so briefly we sin the less and our temptations were the fewer—but oh, when we are fully serving God and He is using us to scatter precious seed and reap a hundred-fold, we would even say it is well for us to abide where we are.

An aged Christian, asked whether she would rather die or live, said she would rather it should be as God willed it. "But if you might have your choice, which would you have?" "If I might have my choice," said she, "I would ask God to choose for me, for I should be afraid to choose for myself." So be you ready to stay on this side of Jordan or to cross the flood, just as your Master wills it.

And then another thought. As this, "Come up hither," should excite joyous anticipation, tempered by patient waiting, so, beloved, it should always be to us *a matter of absolute certainty as to its ultimate reception*. I would not give sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eyelids if this were a subject of doubt personally as to whether at the last I should stand among the justified. I can understand a man being in doubt about his interest in Christ, but I cannot understand, and I hope I never may, a man's resting content to be in these doubts. This is a matter about which we need absolute certainty.

Young man yonder! Are you sure that the King will say to you, "Come up hither"? If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart, that call from the divine throne is as certain to meet your ears as that other cry, "Dust you are and unto dust you shall return." He who believes on the Son of God has everlasting life. No "ifs" or "buts" ought to be tolerated in our hearts. I know they will come up like ill weeds, but it is ours to pull them up, heap them together, and set them on fire, as farmers do with the twitch in their furrows. The devil loves us to cast lots at the foot of the cross, but Christ would have us look unto Him and find a sure salvation. No, no, we are not to be put off with guesswork here.

My friend, can you be easy without infallible certainty? What! You may die tonight and be lost forever and can you be happy? No, man, I charge you by the living God, shut not those eyes until you are sure that you shall open them either in earth or heaven! But if there be this fear that you may lift up those eyes in hell, how dare you sleep? How dare you sleep, lest your bed become your tomb and your chamber become the door of Tophet to you?

Oh! brethren in Christ, let us seek to have the seal of God upon us, the infallible witness of the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirits, that we are born of God, that so we may both joyfully hope and quietly wait to see the salvation of God, when the Master says, "Come up hither."

I will add this fourth thought and then proceed. I think very often, besides joyfully anticipating, patiently waiting, and being confidently assured of it, the Christian should *delightfully contemplate it*. Ah! let every Christian now say, "I shall soon be dying—time swiftly speeds away. There is my chamber. I can paint the picture now. They have told me that I am very sick, but they have kept back from me till I asked them plainly the news that I must very speedily die. But now I know it and feel the

sentence of death in myself. Now for the joyous secret. In a few minutes I shall know more of heaven than an assembly of divines could teach me. But how solemn is the scene around me. They are moving quietly about the room, very silently they are catching each word that is uttered—treasuring it up.”

Now saint, you must play the man! Say a good word for your Master! Stir the deeps of Jordan with your bold march of victory, O soldier of Jesus! Make its shelving shores resound with your melodies now! Show them how a Christian can die—now let your full heart overflow with flood tides of glory. Drink up the bitter cup and say, “Death is swallowed up in victory.” But how is this that my mind seems fluttering, as though about to take wing—

*“What is this absorbs me quite—
Steals my senses—shuts my sight—
Drowns my spirit—draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?”*

I cannot see. The film is forming on my eyes—it is the death glaze. A clammy sweat is on my brow, it is the dew from the damps of death. The kind hand of affection has just wiped my forehead and I wish to speak, but there is a throttle in my throat which keeps down the word—this is the monitor to me of the silence of the tomb. I will strive against it—

*“Joyful, with all the strength I have,
My quivering lips shall sing,
‘Where is thy victory, boasting grave?
And where’s the monster’s sting?’”*

The effort has exhausted the dying one. He must fall back again. They prop him up with pillows. Ah! you may prop him up with pillows, but he has a better arm beneath him than that of the fondest friend. Now does his beloved say, “Stay him with apples and comfort him with flagons,” for while sick to death, he is also “sick with love.” His Master makes his bed in his sickness. His left hand is under his head and His right hand does embrace him. The Husband of that chosen soul is now answering the prayer for His presence, which it delighted to offer, saying, “Abide with me.” Now is the poet’s prayer granted to the letter—

*“Hold then, Thy cross before my closing eyes!
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies!
Heaven’s morning breaks and earth’s vain shadows flee—
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me.”*

We cannot paint the last moment. The rapture, the dawning glory, the first young flash of the beatific glory, we must leave all that. On earth, the scene is far more somber and yet not sad—see you yon friend—they gather round. They say, “Yes, he is gone—how placidly he slept! I could not tell the moment when he passed from sleep to death. He is gone.” They weep, but not with hopeless sorrow, for they mourn the body, not the soul. The setting is broken, but the gem is safe. The fold is removed, but the sheep is feeding on the hilltops of glory. Worms devour the clay, but angels welcome the soul. There is general mourning wherever the good man was known, but mark you, it is only in the dark that this sorrow reigns.

Up there in the light, what are they doing? That spirit as it left the body found itself not alone. Angels had come to meet it. Angelic spirits clasped the disembodied spirit in their arms and bore it upward beyond the stars—beyond where the angel in the sun keeps his everlasting watch—beyond, beyond this lower sky, immeasurable leagues. Lo! The pearly gates appear and the azure light of the city of bejeweled walls! The spirit asks, “Is yonder city the fair Jerusalem where they need no candle, neither

light of the sun?" He shall see for himself before long, for they are nearing the Holy City and it is time for the cherub-bearers to begin their choral.

The music breaks from the lips of those that convey the saint to heaven, "Lift up your heads, O you gates and be you lifted up, you everlasting doors, that the blood-bought of the King of glory may come in!" The gates of pearl give way. The joyous crowds of heaven welcome their brother to the seats of immortality.

But what next, I cannot tell. In vain the fancy strives to paint it. Jesus is there and the spirit is in His arms in heaven, where should it be but in the arms of Jesus? O joy! Joy! Joy! Boundless oceans of joy! I shall see Him. I shall see Him. These eyes shall see Him and not another—

*"Shall see Him wear that very flesh
On which my guilt was laid.
His love intense, His merit fresh,
As though but newly slain.*

*These eyes shall see Him in that day
The man that died for me!
And all my rising bones shall say,
Lord, who is like to Thee?"*

I could lose myself while talking upon this subject, for my heart is all on fire. I wander, but I cannot help it. My heart is far away upon the hills with my beloved Lord. What will the bliss of glory be? A surprise, I think, even to those who shall obtain it. We shall scarcely know ourselves when we get to heaven, we shall be so surprised at the difference.

That poor man yonder is to be robed in all the splendors of a king. Come with me and see those bright ones—that son of toil, who rests forever—that child of sin, washed by Jesus and now a companion of the God of heaven. And I, the chief of sinners, singing out His praise. Saul of Tarsus, hymning the music of Calvary. The penitent thief, with his deep bass note, exalting dying love and Magdalene, mounting to the alto notes, for there must be some voices even in heaven, which must sing alone and mount to higher notes where the rest of us cannot reach—the whole together singing, "Unto him that loved us and has washed us from our sins in his blood, unto him be glory forever and ever." Oh that we were there! Oh that we were there! But we must patiently wait the Master's will. It shall not be long ere He shall say, "Come up hither."

II. And now, we shall turn to a second part of the subject. We will take the text this time, not as a summons to depart, but as a WHISPER FROM THE SKIES TO THE BELIEVER'S HEART.

There is a voice that sounds from heaven tonight, not as a peremptory summons, but as a gently-whispered *invitation*, "Come up hither."

The Father seems to say this to every adopted child tonight. We say, "Our Father which art in heaven." The Father's heart desires to have His children round His knees and His love each day beckons us with a tender, "Come up hither." Nor will your Father and my Father ever be content till each of His children shall be in the many mansions above.

And *Jesus* whispers this in your ears tonight too. Harken! Do you not hear Him say, "I will that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory—the glory which You have given me—the glory which I had with you before the world was." Jesus beckons you to the skies, believer.

Lay not hold upon the things of earth. He who is but a lodger in an inn must not live as though he were at home. Keep your tent ready for striking. Be you ever prepared to draw up your anchor, and to sail across the sea and find the better port, for while Jesus beckons, here we have no continuing city. No true wife has rest save in the house of her husband. Where her consort is, there is her home—a home which draws her soul towards it every day.

Jesus, I say, invites us to the skies. He cannot be completely content until He brings His body, the church, into the glory of its Head and conducts His elect spouse to the marriage feast of her Lord. Besides the desires of the Father and the Son, all those who have gone before seem to be leaning over the battlements of heaven tonight and calling, “Courage, brothers! Courage, brothers! Eternal glory awaits you. Fight your way, stem the current, breast the wave, and come up hither. We without you cannot be made perfect—there is no perfect church in heaven till all the chosen saints be there, therefore come up hither.”

They stretch out their hands of fellowship, they look with glistening eyes of strong affection upon us, and again they say, “Come up hither.” Warriors who wear your laurels, you call us to the brow of the hill, where the like triumphs await us. The angels do the same tonight. How they must wonder to see us so careless, so worldly, so hardened! They also beckon us away and cry from their starry seats, “Beloved, you over whom we rejoiced when you were brought as prodigals to your Father’s house, ‘Come up hither,’ for we long to see you. Your story of grace will be a strange and wondrous one—one which angels love to hear—

*‘Stretch your wings, you saints and fly,
Straight to yonder worlds of joy.’*

I have kept my pledge to be short on that point. You can walk in this meditation as in a garden when you are quiet and alone. All nature rings the bell which calls you to the temple above. You may see the stars at night, looking down like the eyes of God upon you and saying, “Come up hither.” The whispers of the wind, as they come in the stillness of the night talk to you and say, “There is another and a better land, come away with us—‘Come up hither.’” Yes, every cloud that sails across the sky may say to you, “Mount up beyond me, into the clear ether which no cloud can dim, behold the sun which I can never hide—the noon which I can never mar. ‘Come up hither.’”

III. I shall need your attention to my third point for a few minutes, for I think these words may be used as A LOVING INVITATION TO UNCONVERTED PERSONS.

There are many spirit voices which cry to them, “Come up hither, come up to heaven.”

I like to see so many crowding here on these dark, cold, wintry days. This huge place is just as crowded as though it were some little vestry. You press upon one another as did the throngs in the days of the Master. God gives a spirit of hearing nowadays in a most wonderful manner and oh, I would that while you are hearing, some living spark of divine fire may fall into your hearts and become the parent of a glowing fire.

If we ask any man whether he desires to go to heaven, he will say, “Yes,” but alas! his desires for heaven are not strong enough to be of practical use. They are such sorry winds, that there is no sailing to heaven with them. Perhaps if we can quicken those desires tonight, God the Spirit may bless our words to the bringing of men into the way of life. Sinner, wanderer, far from God, many voices salute you tonight, albeit you have chosen the paths of the destroyer, there are many who would turn you to the way of peace.

First, *God our Father calls you.* You say, “How?” Sinner, you have had many troubles of late, business goes amiss, you have been out of work, unfortunate, troubled, disappointed. You have tried to get on, but you cannot do it. In your house everything is out of order—somehow or other, whatever you put your hand to—nothing prospers. You are always floundering from one slough into another and you are growing weary of your life.

Do you not know, sinner, this is your Father saying, “Come up hither”? Your portion is not here. Seek another and a better land. You have built your nest on a tree that is marked for the axe and He is pulling your nest down for you that you may build on the rock. I tell you, these troubles are but love-strokes to deliver you from yourself. If you had been left unchastened, I had had little hope for you. Surely then, God would have said, “Let him alone. He will have no portion in the next life, let him have his portion here.”

We have heard of a wife, a godly woman, who for twenty years had been persecuted by a brutal husband—a husband so excessively bad that her faith at last failed her and she ceased to be able to believe that he would ever be converted. But all this while, she was more kind to him than ever. One night, at midnight, in a drunken debauch, he told his friends he had such a wife as no other man had, and if they would go home with him, he would get her up, and she would get a supper for them all, in order to try her temper.

They came and the supper was very soon ready, consisting of such things as she had prepared as well and as rapidly as the occasion would allow, and she waited at the table with as much cheerfulness as if the feast had been held at the proper time. She did not utter a word of complaint. At last, one of the company, more sober than the rest, asked how it was she could always be so kind to such a husband. Seeing that her conduct had made some little impression, she ventured to say to him, “I have done all I can to bring my husband to God and I fear he will never be saved, and therefore his portion must be in hell forever. I will make him as happy as I can while he is *here*, for he has nothing to expect hereafter.”

Now, such is your case tonight. You may get some pleasure here, but you have nothing to expect hereafter. God has been pleased, I said just now, to take your pleasures away. Here, then, I have good hopes that, since He shakes you from the present, you may be driven to the future. God your Father is thus making you uncomfortable, in order that you may seek Him. It is the beckoning of the finger of His love, “Come up hither.”

And you know, those deaths you have had lately, all say, “Come up hither.” You remember when your mother died—that was a saint indeed. Do you remember, John, what she said to you? She said, “I could die happy, if it were not for you and your brother. But O, that I might have a hope that you may yet come to God.” Do you remember, man, how that little daughter of yours, that had been to the Sunday school and died so young, kissed you and said to you, “Father, dear Father, do give up the drunkard’s cup and follow me to heaven. Do not be angry, Father, I am dying. Do not be angry because I said that, Father. Follow me to heaven.”

You have not yielded to that loving entreaty, you are descending into hell. Yet remember, all this was God beckoning to you and saying, “Come up hither.” He has called and you have refused. Take care, lest when *you* call, He should refuse you. Besides, you have had a sickness yourself. If I am not mistaken, I am speaking to the right man now. It is not so long ago since you had a fever, or what was it? It was an accident and everybody said you had a near escape for life, you had time for reflection when you lay in that hospital, or in your own little room. Do you remember what conscience said to you? How it rent away the curtain and made you look at your destiny, until you read in fiery letters these words, “You shall make your bed in hell”?

Oh! how you trembled then. You had no objection to see the minister. You could not laugh then at the Gospel of Christ. You made a great many vows and resolutions, and you have broken them all. You have lied to the Most High. You have perjured yourself to the God of Israel and mocked at the God of mercy and of justice. Beware lest He take you away with a stroke, for then a great ransom shall not deliver you. These things, then, have been beckonings of your Father’s hand to you, saying, “Come up hither.”

But more, *the Lord Jesus Christ* has also beckoned to you to come. You have heard that He made a way to heaven. What does a way mean? Is not a road an invitation to a traveler to walk therein? I have crossed the Alps and have seen the mighty roads which Napoleon made that he might take his cannons into Austria, but how shall we compare the works which men have made through the solid granite and over pathless mountains—mountains that before were pathless—how shall we compare these with the road which Christ has made to heaven through the rocks of justice, over the gulfs of sin, throwing Himself into the gaps, leaping into the chasm to complete the way? Now, the way itself speaks to you. The blood of Christ, which made the way, speaks better things than that of Abel and it says, “Sinner, believe on Christ and you are saved.” By every drop of blood, which streamed in sweat from Him in the Garden, by every drop which poured from His hands and feet, by all the agony which He endured, I do

beseech you—hear the voice which cries, “Go and sin no more.” Trust your soul with Him and you are saved.

But my dear hearer, have patience with me—give me your ear. *The Spirit of God* strives with you and cries, “Come up hither.” The Spirit of God wrote this book and why was this book written? Hear the words of Scripture, “These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing, you might have life through his name.” Here is the book full of promises, perfumed with affection, brimming with love. Oh! wherefore, why will you spurn it and put the voice of mercy from you? Every time you see the Bible, imagine you see written on its cover, “Go up to heaven, seek eternal life.”

Then, there is *the ministry* through which the Spirit of God speaks. I have often prayed my Master to give me a Baxter’s heart to weep for sinners and a Whitefield’s tongue to plead. I have neither, but if I had them, oh! how would I plead with you! But such as I have I give you. As God’s ambassador, I do beseech you, sinner, turn from the error of your ways. “As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him who dies, but would rather that he turn unto me and live.” “Why will you die?” Is hell so pleasant? Is an angry God a trifle? Is sin a thing to be laughed at? Is the right hand of God, when bared in thunder, a thing to be despised? Oh! turn thee. Flee to the refuge. The Spirit bids you fly.

Moreover, does not *your conscience* say the same? Is not there something in your heart tonight which says, “Begin to think about your soul, trust your soul with Christ”? May grace divine constrain you to listen to the still small voice, that you may be saved!

And last of all, *the spirits of your departed friends* cry from heaven to you tonight—that voice which I would you could hear, “Come up hither.” Mother—unconverted woman—you have a baby in heaven, perhaps not one or two, but a family of babes in heaven. You are a mother of angels and those young cherubs cry to you, “Mother, come up here.” But this can never be, unless you repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I know there are some of you who have carried to the tomb the most sainted of relatives. Your hoary-headed father at last went the way of all flesh and from his celestial seat before the eternal throne he cries, “Come up hither.” A sister, sickened by consumption, who has long since left your house for you to mourn her absence, cries, “Come up hither.” I entreat you, you sons of saints in glory. I adjure you, daughter of immortal mothers, despise not now the voice of those who speak from heaven to you. Oh! were they here—could it be possible for them to come here to speak to you tonight, I know the notes of fond affection which would spring from your lips, “There’s my mother.” “There’s my father.”

They cannot come—but I am the spokesman for them. If I cannot speak as *they* might, yet remember, if you are not converted when you hear the Gospel preached, “Neither would you be converted if one rose from the dead.” They could but tell you the Gospel. I do no less. That Gospel is, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” says the Evangelist. To believe is to trust Christ. To be baptized is not baby sprinkling—for *that* there is no warrant, but in the inventions of man.

To be baptized is to be buried with Christ in baptism *after* faith—for that which is done without faith and not done of faith, is contrary to the Lord’s command. Baptism is for believers, not for sinners—like the Lord’s Supper, it is *in* the church, not *out* of it. Believing, you are saved. Baptism does not save you. You are baptized because you are saved. Baptism is the outward recognition of the great inward change, which the Spirit of God has worked.

Believe, then, in Jesus. Flat on your face before His cross, cast yourself now. Then rise thou and say, “Now will I confess His name,” and be united with His church and believe that at last, having confessed Him before men, He may confess me before my Father which is in heaven.

And now, you are going home tonight—I am clear of your blood, remember. I know not how many may be here, but I suppose there are seven thousand people here tonight, who will be without excuse in the day of judgment. I have warned you as best I can. I have pleaded with you. Sinner! Sinner! Your

blood is on your own head if you refuse this great salvation. O, God the Holy Spirit, make them willing in the day of Your power and save them this night and forever, for Your name's sake. Amen.

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.