

THE ETERNAL DAY

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A SERMON
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 BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Your sun shall no more go down; neither shall your moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.”
Isaiah 60:20.

ISRAEL of old had the light of God while all the rest of the world sat in darkness; in consequence of receiving moral and spiritual light from God, the nation prospered, and under the smile of heaven it was greatly enriched and multiplied. But, alas, the sun went down, and the moon withdrew itself, for Israel turned aside and followed after idols, and the land was terribly smitten by the hostile sword. Upon her repentance her sun arose again, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, but again they went astray, for the zealous judge, or the godly king, or the pious priest died—and the nation, prone to backsliding, again provoked the Lord and the light of His countenance was withdrawn. This *typical Church of God* abode not continually in the His light; its history was checkered with alternate brightness and gloom, repentance and relapse, prosperity and adversity. What a change from the glory of Solomon to the captivity of Zedekiah! From the temple in its glory, to the city in ruinous heaps! Truly, to those who knew Israel well, this prophecy of Isaiah must have sounded as rare music, and they must have devoutly cried, “Hasten it, O Lord, in our time.” Another dispensation came. Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem, “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.” And the sun shone upon the earth as it had never done before! A *visible church* was called out to walk in the light of God, which church still exists upon the earth, and from the days of Pentecost until now its sun has never altogether gone down, neither has its moon withdrawn herself.

To us, the promise of the text has been fulfilled in a gracious sense, for to the Church of God there has never been an utter suspension of the divine light; the light has not always been equally clear, but it has still been. Somewhere or other God has had a visible church on the earth—if not at Rome, yet in the valleys of Piedmont; not in palaces of bishops, yet in dens and caves of the earth. Yet the visible church has had her dark days; the text has been only true of her comparatively; her sun has gone down in some sense; the long medieval night, with its heavy dampness, hung over the souls of the myriads and chilled them into crouching superstition, until the day when God sent us the Reformation, like a new daybreak! Even now there are tokens of returning night, but may the Lord avert it. Shine out, you stars in the right hand of Jesus, and let your Lord, the Sun of Righteousness shine forth, also, and drive away those Romish bats and owls which are fluttering all around us in the hope that their beloved darkness will return! The history of the church has not been a clear increasing light, like the growth of day from dawn to noon; her glory has, for a while, departed; her candlestick has been removed, and it may be so, yet again. But, beloved there is a church upon the earth which is within the visible church and is its central life. I refer to the *truly* elect, called and justified, which are a *spiritual church*. There are to be found in the visible church in all its sections, a people truly saved in the Lord, not a field of mingled wheat and tares, but all plants of the Lord's right hand planting.

This secret church, this church *mystical*, this true body of our Lord Jesus Christ, may claim to have had this text fulfilled in its experience in a far larger sense. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” There are believers who know the meaning of that text, for from the day when they first believed, they have not ceased to walk in the light of God, though now and then a cloud has crossed their sky, yet, as a rule, no night of backsliding or deadly doubt has come upon them. They have believed fully, and therefore have seen the salvation of God! Their sun has not gone down, for the Lord Jesus Christ has never

hidden His face, and they have rejoiced in an abiding sense of His love. I believe that this is the proper condition of all saints, and if saints were as they should be, it would be fulfilled in them: “Your sun shall no more go down; neither shall your moon withdraw itself; for Jehovah shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.” Oh, what a glad thing it would be if we could attain to this! “Being justified by faith, *we have peace with God*”—not, we “ought” to have it, but, “*we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.*” We have learned to glory in tribulations, also, crying, “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” If we have learned the meaning of the exhortation, “Abide in Me,” and are so abiding, then is our fellowship continual and our course is as the shining light which shines more and more unto the full noontide—

*“Walk in the light! And you shall see
Your darkness fade away,
Because that light on you has shone,
In which is perfect day.”*

Yet even to the spiritual church the text has not been fulfilled in its largest conceivable sense, for I fear that to the most spiritual some darkness comes; their light is sown, but it has not yet sprung up to its full harvest—they still struggle with inward sin; they must still wrestle with outward temptations. At any rate, the days of their mourning are not, in the most unlimited sense, ended, for though faith lifts them above the cares of life, and resignation takes out the sting of affliction, yet in common with the whole creation they groan, being burdened. It is true of the best of saints when they arrive in heaven that “they came out of great tribulation.” God puts even His purest ones into the furnace, and the branch that bears fruit He purges; every son whom He receives He also chastens. For the present our chastisement is not joyous, but grievous. “In the world you shall have tribulation,” is a part of the legacy of our ascended Lord, so that as yet, to the largest extent, we cannot say that the days of our mourning are ended. We must, therefore, refer the text to a *fourth* form of the church. If we see it not at all in the *typical*, just a little in the *visible*, very much in the *spiritual*, we find it *all* in the *church triumphant!* The full triumph of the Church of Christ shall begin in the *millennium*. I am not about to enter into details, but it seems to me that there is to be on earth a New Jerusalem which shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband, and there will be “a new heaven and a new earth, in which dwells righteousness.”

Upon this earth where sin prevailed, righteousness will yet conquer! Where Christ bled, there shall He reign! Where His heel was bruised, shall the same heel crush the dragon’s head. That, however, will be as it were a prelude, a commencement to the full heavenly triumph! I shall, without making any distinction, refer the promise of the text in its fullness to the church in its triumphant condition, whether on earth in the millennial period, or in heaven, world without end. To her this word shall be fulfilled, “Your sun shall no more go down, neither shall your moon withdraw itself: the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended.”

I. Our first point is—THE LIGHT OF THE TRIUMPHANT CHURCH SHALL BE INCESSANT. “Your sun shall no more go down; neither shall your moon withdraw itself.” There will be no intervening nights of darkness, but one long noonday of purity and felicity, “The days of your mourning shall be ended.” And why will this be? Why does heaven’s joy never falter? Why is her purity never defiled? We answer, first, because *the light of heaven is independent of creatures*. As long as there is a sun, it will go down, and as long as there is a moon it will wane. But when the Lord becomes our light, our independence of the secondary agent will lift us up beyond the fear of change!

In this present state everything must change. God does not bestow upon creatures the quality of Immutability, for that belongs to Him, alone. The hardest rocks crumble beneath the tooth of time; even the heavens are waxing old, and must, one day, be put away like a worn-out vesture; and as all that comes out of earth partakes of the soil from which it springs, all created joys wither and decay. From a sun which has its tropics we cannot expect a changeless light; from a moon which waxes and wanes, the light can never long be the same. When we shall rise *above* the creature, and drink in our supplies directly from the changeless all-sufficiency of the Creator, we shall come into perfect, unbroken light! Such is the condition of the perfect saints above. In heaven the saints will need no teacher. When God sends a true preacher, he is a star in God’s right hand, and the church is bound to value his light, which is the

gift of heaven. But we shall need no teachers there; we shall see, not through a glass darkly, but face to face! God shines upon the church through His servants one after another, and as they are removed in the order of providence, and close their useful careers, the church suffers great loss. But up yonder there is only one Pastor, and He never dies—"The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them unto living fountains of waters." No teachers will be laid with tears in the silent grave, for in the glorified church no man needs to say to his fellow, "Know the Lord," for they all know Him from the least unto the greatest!

Up there they need no comforters to succor them in the time of their distress, for God Himself has wiped away all tears from their eyes; He has taken up Lazarus from among the dogs and the dunghills, and laid him in Abraham's bosom! He has lifted up the languishing from their beds of pain to sit among princes in glory! Poor saints will not then, be dependent upon the alms or the consolations of others, though once their generous friends were like sun and moon to them; they need not fear that their comforts shall depart, for the Lord God is their light! The saints are not dependent upon fleeting possessions, or decaying estates—*here* we must have sustenance from without, and we are thankful to God that it comes in our time of need, but bread perishes, wealth takes to itself wings, business decays, prosperity wanes; but in glory saints are independent of all created things! They neither look to angel, cherub, or seraph for support; they have left the streams, for they have reached the fountainhead! The vessels are no more needed, for they lie down and drink at the well, itself, where the crystal water of life bubbles up eternally! They do not send down to Egypt for corn, but dwell in their own Goshen where harvests never fail! They have come unto their God, and what more can we say? O beloved brothers and sisters, this makes the joy of heaven; that God Himself shines upon the blessed ones, and they need no other light; He, Himself, is their all in all! With Him is fullness of joy! At His right hand are pleasures forevermore! Therefore is it that their sun shall no more go down, for they have no sun! And their moon shall not withdraw itself, for they have no moon! "The Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof."

Their light is incessant, secondly, because *it is cleared of all clouding elements*. There is much of consolation in this thought. Here, below, in the Church of God, whatever by God's grace may be our light, errors will arise to cloud it. Evil men come in unawares and distract God's saints with false doctrines, schisms, and heresies; there are none such up yonder! Skeptics assail us with doubts and suspicions; there are none up there! Hypocrites now steal in and pollute our solemn feasts, but no deceiver shall sit down in the banquets of the perfected! Formalists mix with us, and freeze our devotion; hosannas are made to languish because they fall from tongues unconscious of the glow of generous love; but it shall not be so among the church triumphant! It will be no small blessing to the church to be free from the contamination of the outside world, and from the intrusion of false professors; their absence will deliver us from that light discourse which now vexes our ears, and that inconsistency which grieves our hearts. Yes, Satan shall be shut out! The camp of the saints he may *attempt* to attack, but over her ramparts he shall never leap! Those sacred walls, whose 12 foundations are inestimably precious stones, shall exclude forever the accuser of the brethren, the fomentor of discord and sin! There the wicked cease from troubling, and therefore nothing shall make our sun go down, or cause our moon to withdraw itself, and the purity, the peace, the bliss of heaven shall be without cessation!

Remember, yet again, that in the church triumphant *the saints themselves shall be so purified* that nothing in them shall darken their light. Here today Christ changes not, but *we* change, and hence our joy departs; it is not that divine grace ceases to beam forth from the Sun of Righteousness; our eyes gather the scales of worldliness, so that we cannot see it. It shall not be so there! We shall be delivered from the last vestige of inbred sin! Corruption and every result of the fall shall have been effectually removed! Among the saints whom God has privileged to see His face, no worldliness, no coldness of heart, no lethargy, no slothfulness ever intrudes; they are never burdened with heavy cares, nor depressed with the recollection of unforsaken sin. They neglect no duties, they commit no transgressions; they are without fault before the throne of God; they are rendered as pure as God, Himself, by the blood of Christ, and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit!

Truly, as I speak about this, I long to be among them! We cannot, as yet, see afar off, and the plains of heaven are boundless; therefore we shall need far-reaching sight before we can enjoy their beauties,

but our inner sight is being strengthened, the films of sin are being removed, and we shall, before long, have our eyes strengthened to look upon the invisible with unclenching gaze! When we enter the church triumphant, being ourselves without tendency to sin, there will be nothing in us to mar our purity or to spoil our joy! Anticipate this, beloved, with great joy! Notice that the text hints that both the major and the minor necessities of saints will be abundantly supplied. Have you not found, sometimes, that the Lord Jesus Christ has withdrawn Himself from you? Then your *sun* has gone down. You are prospering in business; God gives you all that heart can wish; the moon does not withdraw herself, but the sun has gone, and woe beclouds your spirit. It will never be so in heaven! You shall see your Lord face to face without a veil between, and that eternally! Here, on the other hand, at times Jesus has shone upon you, and as to spiritual things you have been rich; but then earthly trouble has hovered over you—the *moon* has withdrawn. You have been suffering in body, though rejoicing in soul; the head has ached, though the heart has triumphed. You have feasted at the table of God, but poverty has swept your board till you knew not from where your next meal would come. Not often have both sun and moon been as flesh and blood would have them; true, you have been able to do without the moon in the presence of the sun, but you would have both spiritual *and* temporal prosperity.

Now in heaven all the needs of our nature will be completely supplied! The bodies of the saints will be as happy as their souls! Their bodies, I say, for I am referring to the risen ones who have attained to the full triumphs of which I speak. There shall be for spirit, soul, and body, that trinity of our manhood, a triple and all-sufficient supply! Neither shall the sun go down nor will the moon withdraw. Oh, what a happy thing to have a body which will not need to rise on the Sabbath, weary with the week's toil, needing to be dragged along the road to the place of worship, and feeling inclined to sleep in the heavy atmosphere of the crowded assembly! What bliss to be "clothed upon" with a body unlike this load of clay, which far too forcibly reminds us that we dwell in a sinful world! Soon we shall possess a body, light and ethereal, strong and glorious, suitable for the soul, and quick to obey its motions; a body free from every infirmity, delivered from every possibility of pain or weariness; a body in which we shall serve God day and night in His temple, and shall never, never sin! So, you see, beloved, another reason why the sun of the blessed never goes down is because they, themselves, are in all respects filled with an inward and perfect light which is the perpetual *reflection* of the eternal light of Jehovah!

Once more, let it be remembered that *the church triumphant will be delivered from the changes of those seasons which cause the going down of sun and moon*. I do not refer to summer and winter, but to *ecclesiastical* and *temporal* arrangements, such as the Lord's-Day, and times of assembly, and church fellowship. This blessed Sabbath, how rejoiced we are when it comes round! But then towards eventide the Sunday hours grow few, and many a time has the child of God gone up to his chamber and said, "Would God tomorrow were a second Sabbath." We have wished that instead of the weekdays, with their toil and care, we could step from Sunday to Sunday till we climbed into the Sabbath which will never end! It shall be so soon, in the land where—

***"Congregations never break up,
And Sabbaths have no end."***

Here we come together, and are warmed into a hallowed state of mind and would gladly continue in the mount, but we must go down, for other duties call us away. But in glory we shall, all day, charm the celestial plains with joyous song, and never need to scatter or betake ourselves to an inferior calling! Blessed shall the day be when our Sunday sun shall no more go down! Here, too, we have our seasons for communion; we come together at the table, and for my part, I am never happier than when I see before me the emblems of the beloved's broken body, and His blood poured out in infinite love for us. But we cannot always be there; we have to eat with publicans and sinners as well as with the Lord; we glow in fellowship like the Master Himself on Tabor, until our garments seem whiter than any fuller could make them; but we must go down among the ungodly, yet again, to seek their good. We shall not do that, by-and-by; we shall eat bread at the table of the King, and go no more out forever and forever!

It was a glad day for Israel when the trumpets rang out the morning of the Jubilee, for every slave was free, and every debtor found his liabilities discharged! Back came each man's lost inheritance, and the whole nation was glad; with sound of trumpet and of cornet they saluted the rising of the sun on the

first day of that Jubilee year! But the Jubilee year went by, and lands were again mortgaged and forfeited; and slaves fell, again, into slavery; and bankrupts were again seized by their creditors. Ah, beloved we are coming to a Jubilee of which the trumpets shall sound on forever! We shall regain our once forfeited inheritance never to have it encumbered again! We shall snap the fetters which have bound us, never to feel them again! “If the Son makes you free, you shall be free, indeed.” Thus I have shown you that in heaven they are free from that change of seasons which now afflicts the sons of men—and so their sun goes down no more, neither does their moon withdraw itself.

II. Let us change the run of our discourse. The light of the church triumphant has been shown to be unceasing. Now we shall show that **IT IS EVERLASTING**. “The Lord shall be your everlasting light.” This requires no comment. You can see at once why it is so. Why will the perfection and the bliss of the saints triumphant never end? First, because the *God from whom it comes is eternal!* We have explained that this bliss does not arise from the *creature*; if it did, it might end. But arising wholly from the Creator, how can it end? As long as God lives, His people must be happy! When He has perfected them, and taken them up to be where He is, the fountain from which they drink cannot dry, for it is infinitely full and fresh; the sun which gives them light cannot be dimmed, for it is Immutable.

Again, *the covenant by which the saints stand in heaven is a sure one*. There are in it solemn engagements entered into by the eternal God, never to turn away from His love. By two Immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, He has given us strong consolation. Every sin has been put away from the triumphant saint; what, then, can destroy them? For them Christ has discharged all their debts! What, then, can be brought against them? For them an eternal inheritance has been bought by divine blood! How, then, by any possible means, can they lose it? God is forever true, He cannot forsake; God is forever strong, He cannot fail; God is forever loving; He cannot frown upon His people. The Lord must be their everlasting light! Besides, *the guarantee of that covenant can never fail*, seeing it is Christ Himself. “Because I live you shall live also” is the great seal set upon the indentures by which we hold our inheritance in the skies! And till we shall see a dying Christ, till He who has Immortality shall expire, till Christ, the Son of God, very God of very God, shall cease to be, it cannot, by any possibility, come to pass that one child of God shall lose his inheritance! The seal is divine, the security is unquestionable, and, brothers and sisters, there is this to be added, that *those who possess heaven are also, themselves, immortal!*

When we once enter the church triumphant there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, for the former things are passed away! The body was sown in corruption, but it is raised in incorruption! It was liable to disease, death and corruption; the worm could devour it, and the winds scatter its particles; but it shall be raised in perennial youth, free from any tendency to corruption, or any liability to suffer! Oh, happy spirits who, in themselves possess a life enduring as the life of God! The Lord shall be their everlasting light! I leave that point because it needs no enlargement. It rather needs to be thought upon and enjoyed.

III. I want your earnest attention and help, in the third place, while I mention that, according to the text, **THE LIGHT OF THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT SHALL BE BOUNDLESS**. “The Lord shall be your everlasting light.” Now, the Lord is infinite. If He is our Sun, there can be no limit to the light in which we shall receive! But how am I to speak upon an infinite theme? I can only touch the surface of the brook as the swallow does, and then up and away! But I cannot dive into its depths. Only notice this, that if God is to be our light, then *in every separate believer there will be a perfect light of bliss and holiness*. I mean in *you*, beloved! You are aged. You feel, also, that you are full of infirmities and sins. Now, these will all vanish, and that weakened form of yours shall be raised in power! Your ignorance will give place to the light of knowledge, your sin to the light of purity, your sorrow to the light of joy! It does not yet appear what you shall be, but you shall be like your Lord, and you know how bright and lustrous your Lord was when He was on Tabor; and how glorious when He rose from the dead. Such shall you be! You are already a child of God, but soon your glory shall shine forth, and your purity, peace, and happiness shall be seen by all! Yes, this is true of you, you who were sometime darkness, but now are light in the Lord—you shall be flooded with glory! Like the bush in the desert you shall be

aglow with deity! Bush as you are, God Himself shall dwell within you, and your brightness shall be as the sun!

In glory, in addition to your possessing personal light, you will enjoy *the closest possible fellowship with God*. How near a creature can get to the Creator is hard to say, but the sons of God shall be brought as near to God as by any conceivable means a finite being can be brought to the infinite. What delights there will be in such close fellowship! When we have drawn near to God in prayer, we have been so happy we could scarcely have been more so—but what must it be to dwell forever in the divine glory! Men of God have sometimes felt more of joy in His presence than their bodies could bear, and have cried, “Stop, Lord, stop! I cannot bear any more! Remember, I am only an earthen vessel, and if I have more of this I shall die.” Solomon sings of heavenly love-sickness in the Song, “Stay me with flagons, and comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.” The love of Jesus overpowers our souls, and casts them into a swoon of delight! We shall be more capable of its enjoyment soon; you cannot bear more than a sip of heaven now, but you will swim in it by-and-by! When you only get one flash of heaven’s sunlight, you cover your eyes because of the excessive glory; but you will soon live in the blaze of it, like Milton’s angel in the sun! Among the everlasting burnings of Jehovah’s splendor you will walk with undimmed eyes. Can you conceive what it means? Your mind will be enlarged, expanded, made capable of loftier thoughts than now; you will be a grander being—a man, but such a man as the man Jesus Christ is! Even this day your manhood in Him has dominion over all the works of God’s hands, all sheep and oxen, yes, and the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the sea; but then you will more clearly realize the royalty of manhood—you shall be a king to the fullest degree, a king unto God!

That glorious light will give us *the clearest views of gospel truth*. There will be no muddled theology in heaven, nor any doctrine concealed from us, for we shall know even as we are known; with the Lord for our light, we shall see far and deep; mysteries which now perplex us shall be simplicities then! How I long to know more of the covenant of grace; how I long to drink into the grand doctrine of electing love; how would I peer into the mystery of the Trinity, and know something more of the Three in One! Secrets will open up when Jesus applies the key! I suppose that he who has been in heaven but a day knows more of God than he who has been a doctor of divinity for 50 years—the light is so clear in heaven that we shall know even as we are known. Would God we were there! There, no doubt, *we shall also understand more of providence*. Here our sun goes down, sometimes, as to the divine dealings; we cannot make out what He means; the lines are dark and bending; we thought He would have led us by a straight course, but we wind to and fro in the wilderness! You shall see it all soon, brothers and sisters, for what you know not now, you shall know hereafter! All the happiness which knowledge and understanding can bring to intelligent beings shall be at our feet! There *we shall receive the utmost endurable joy*. Think of that bliss in the shape which you like best, for you shall have it! Some have thought the joy of heaven would lie in *knowledge*—they shall have it! Others have rejoiced in the prospect of continued *service*—they shall have it! They shall serve Him day and night in His temple!

I know not if I am idle, but the sweetest thought of heaven to me is rest, and I shall have it, for “there remains, therefore, a rest for the people of God.” Peace! O quiet soul, do you not long for it? You shall have it! Security and a sense of calm! O, tempest-tossed one, you shall have them! Some have wished for strength and power; you shall be raised in power! Fullness, the filling up of every vacuum; you shall have it—you shall be filled with all the fullness of God! I am a long way out of my depth, now, but I am not afraid of sinking! I shall never exaggerate—the joys of heaven are ecstatic, so that if we knew anything of them at this moment we should be like Paul, who said—“Whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, God knows.” Ecstatic—that is standing right out of yourself; that will be your condition; you will get away from yourself altogether, and be “plunged in the Godhead’s deepest sea and lost in His immensity.” It will be rapture, as it were, a snatching away of you; like the chariots of Amminadib, shall be the joys into which you shall be lifted up and borne away! We shall know all about it before long, some of us, so that there is not much need to attempt a premature description. When the Lord is the light, who knows how bright the light will be? When the Lamb is the light, who knows how soft that light will be? And when the Lord is the Lamb, and the Lamb is the Lord, and the Lord and the

Lamb are at once the light, who knows how sweet, how everything that is lovely, that eternal light must be? Break on us; break on us, O infinite splendor, for our hearts would have this cloudland to be up and away, where sacred, high, eternal noon makes up the livelong day!

But patience, my brothers and sisters, patience, for a little time longer! We must wait till our work is done, and then shall we receive the full reward. Let us be encouraged by the prospect of the glory to be revealed in us!

IV. My last point is to be this—THE LIGHT OF THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT IS UNMINGLED, for the text says, “The days of your mourning shall be ended.” Sit down a few minutes and drink down this blessed sentence. “The days of your mourning shall be ended.” What sort of mourning? *The mourning from a persecuted world!* No slander, no imprisonment, no racks, no breaking alive upon the wheel, no consuming amid the flames. What must heaven be to those who ascended through a shower of stones, or were borne aloft by the fiery chariot, as the martyrs from Smithfield’s burning stakes? No more of suffering there! The mourning days of the martyred church shall be ended! There will be no more mourning from *the common trials of life*. No losses, no crosses, no bodily pains, no infirmities of old age, no bereavements, no child taken from the bosom, no husband from the side, no funeral knell, no cruel grave. Let the Lord be praised that not a wave of trouble disturbs yon glassy sea! Then shall we be delivered from all mourning caused by *our inward sin*. We shall look within and find no envy in our hearts, no pride, no rebellion, no lust, and no tendency to evil; then we shall be delivered from all temptation to sin from without. No devil, no insinuating doubts, no corroding cares, no wicked world, no pomp of the eyes, no pride of life, no woes of penury, nor perils of wealth—we shall be delivered from all these!

We shall be delivered from every kind of mourning as to *an absent God*, for we shall never grieve Him again, nor vex His Spirit, nor cause Him to take down the chastening rod! “The days of your mourning shall be ended.” I find that one version reads it, I know not whether correctly or not, “The days of your mourning shall be *recompensed*,” and I say this to those who have to mourn more than others, you *shall* have a recompense; every pain you suffer shall have its reward. “But how can that be?” you ask. Why, dear mourning ones, when you get to heaven, you will see that you were fulfilling the divine purposes as much upon the sick bed as you would have been in the activities of life! You do not understand it now, but you shall then know that the Lord did not grieve you for nothing—and when you see the great results arising from your suffering, you will bless Him, and kiss the pierced feet of Christ, and thank Him for the great privilege of being permitted to suffer! If you are called to suffer as a Christian, you will then see how you “made up that which was behind of the sufferings of Christ, for His body’s sake, that is the church,” for the whole body of Christ must suffer, not the head only, but all the members! And you, in taking a part, help to make up the measure which must be endured by the entire company of the faithful. You will also see how the Spirit of God sanctified your sufferings to you, how they prevented sin, how they led you into a deeper experience, how they prepared you for higher service. And oh, among the sweet notes of praise which you will render to the all-loving Father, this will be one of the sweetest! You will bless Him for every pain, for every groan, for every sickness—and the days of your mourning will be recompensed!

Beloved, what a change this will be for some here present who have, perhaps, very seldom known a day free from depression of spirit or pain of body—to step right away from all this into everlasting, unalloyed delight! Some of us are easily cast down, and we know what it is to grow brain-weary. There, day without night, we shall praise and bless God, and tell the angels of the infinite wisdom of God in Christ Jesus! All this ought to inspire the saints with ardor—this glorious hope should quicken us! We are not far from home. Pilgrims of God, you are getting weary, perhaps, you especially who are advanced in years; now, at this time, the Spirit of God has brought you to the top of a hill from which you can see your expected end. There it lies! Can you see its hills, its valleys covered with milk and honey, and the vine and fig tree under which you shall sit down, and none shall make you afraid? It is a little way further, only a little further; you will be helped all the rest of the road as you have been up till now; those shoes of iron and brass are not worn out, though you have worn them these 50 years; they will last you the few odd miles which you have yet to travel, and though you think it a long way, it is not so. Just

out of sight, beyond that hill, there stand horses of fire, and chariots of fire which your heavenly Father has sent to bear you away! And before you know it, you will be in Christ's arms, fainting away with glory! Before you know it, I say, death will be but a pin's prick—

*“One gentle sigh, your fetter breaks,
We scarce can say you're gone,
Before your ransomed spirit takes
Its mansion near the throne!”*

And the days of your mourning shall be ended!

Great fear should fall upon some in this house that they may never behold this light. I fear, sinners, that some of you will never attain that blissful glory. I will ask you three questions and have done. Are you satisfied with earthly things? Are you content with a sun that must go down, and with a moon that must withdraw itself? Are you saying, “Who will show *us* any good?” Ah, sinners, your boasting is evil, for it will soon pass away; and what will you do in the day when money cannot help you, broad acres cannot bless you, friends cannot cheer you, and you must take the last dread voyage all alone? Woe, woe unto you if you have not a better sun than yonder feeble orb, a better moon than yon waning satellite! I will ask you further, have you light from heaven, yet? Is there any light from God within you? Remember, you cannot enjoy the light of God forever if you do not behold it now. Have you thought of that? Alas, God has not been in all your thoughts! How many live in this world with no more thought of God than dogs and horses have! He is no friend of theirs! They never seek His face! They never do Him honor! If He is their Father, certainly they are strange children, for they never speak with their Father, nor care about Him! Ah, sinners, you need on earth the light from above, or you will never have it in eternity.

Lastly, are you willing to have light from above? Are you willing to receive it? Do you desire it? Will you give up the light of self, and self-complacency, and self-reliance? Will you trust in Jesus? Will you take the Lamb who is the light of heaven, the bleeding Lamb, to be the light and comfort of your souls? Will you see your sin laid on the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world, and trust Him as suffering in your place, to make expiation for your guilt? For, if so, the Lamb will give you pardon *now*, and perfection *hereafter*! He will be to you the Star of Bethlehem today and the Sun of Righteousness forever!

God bless you, brothers and sisters. May we all meet in that land of the light of God! I am speaking to some who will be there before me, though I shall be there before some of you; if there is a possibility of finding one another out, we will do so; and we will remember the happy summer's morning in which we talked together of the light that can never fade! And we will say to one another, “The half was not told us; the poor preacher was but as an owl trying to describe the sun! It was too bright for him, but he did his best.” God bless you. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—ISAIAH 60.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—174, 309, 871.

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