

THE GOOD MAN'S LIFE AND DEATH

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A SERMON
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 AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

*“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”
 Philippians 1:21*

HOW ominously these words follow each other in the text—“live,” “die.” There is but a comma between them and surely as it is in the words, so is it in reality. How brief the distance between life and death! In fact there is none. Life is but death's vestibule and our pilgrimage on earth is but a journey to the grave. The pulse that preserves our being beats our death march and the blood which circulates our life is floating it onward to the deeps of death.

Today we see our friends in health—tomorrow we hear of their decease. We clasped the hand of the strong man but yesterday and today we close his eyes. We rode in the chariot of comfort but an hour ago and in a few more hours the last black chariot must convey us to the home of all living. Oh, how closely allied is death to life!

The lamb that sports in the field must soon feel the knife. The ox that lows in the pasture is fattening for the slaughter. Trees do but grow that they may be felled. Yea, and greater things than these feel death. Empires rise and flourish—they flourish but to decay—they rise to fall. How often do we take up the volume of history and read of the rise and fall of empires. We hear of the coronation and the death of kings.

Death is the black servant who rides behind the chariot of life. See life! and death is close behind it. Death reaches far throughout this world and has stamped all terrestrial things with the broad arrow of the grave. Stars die mayhap. It is said that conflagrations have been seen far off in the distant ether and astronomers have marked the funerals of worlds, the decay of those mighty orbs that we had imagined set forever in sockets of silver to glisten as the lamps of eternity.

But blessed be God, there is one place where death is not life's brother, where life reigns alone. “To live,” is not the first syllable which is to be followed by the next, “to die.” There is a land where death-knells are never tolled, where winding-sheets are never woven, where graves are never digged. Blessed land beyond the skies! To reach it we must die. But if after death we obtain a glorious immortality, our text is indeed true—“To die is gain.”

If you would get a fair estimate of the happiness of any man, you must judge him in these two closely connected things—his life and his death. The heathen Solon said, “Call no man happy until he is dead, for you know not what changes may pass upon him in life.” We add to that—Call no man happy until he is dead, because the life that is to come, if that be miserable, shall far outweigh the highest life of happiness that has been enjoyed on earth.

To estimate a man's condition, we must take it in all its length. We must not measure that one thread which reaches from the cradle to the coffin—we must go further. We must go from the coffin to the resurrection and from the resurrection on throughout eternity. To know whether acts are profitable, I must not estimate their effects on me for the hour in which I live, but for the eternity in which I am to exist. I must not weigh matters in the scales of time. I must not calculate by the hours, minutes, and seconds of the clock, but I must count and value things by the ages of eternity.

Come, then, beloved. We have before us the picture of a man—the two sides of whose existence will both of them bear inspection. We have his life, we have his death—we have it said of his life, “to live is

Christ," of his death, "*to die is gain.*" And if the same shall be said of any of you, oh! you may rejoice! You are amongst that thrice happy number whom the Lord has loved and whom He delights to honor.

We shall now divide our text very simply into these two points, *the good man's life and the good man's death.*

I. As to HIS LIFE, we have that briefly described thus—"For me to live is Christ."

The believer did not always live to Christ. When he was first born into this world he was a slave of sin and an heir of wrath, even as others. Though he may have afterwards become the greatest of saints, yet until divine grace has entered his heart, he is "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." He only begins to live to Christ when God the Holy Spirit convicts him of his sin and of his desperate evil nature, and when by divine grace he is brought to see the dying Savior making a propitiation for his guilt.

From that moment when by faith he sees the slaughtered victim of Calvary and casts his whole life on Him—to be saved, to be redeemed, to be preserved, and to be blest by the virtue of His atonement and the greatness of His grace—from that moment the man begins to live to Christ.

And now shall we tell you as briefly as we can what living to Christ means.

It means, first, that *the life of a Christian derives its parentage from Christ.* "For me to live is Christ." The righteous man has two lives. He has one which he inherited from his parents. He looks back to an ancestral race of which he is the branch and he traces his life to the parent stock.

But he has a second life, a spiritual life, a life which is as much above mere mental life, as mental life is above the life of the animal or the plant. And for the source of this spiritual life he looks not to father or mother, nor to priest nor man, nor to himself—but he looks to Christ.

He says, "O Lord Jesus, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, You are my spiritual parent. Unless Your Spirit had breathed into my nostrils the breath of a new, holy and spiritual life, I had been to this day 'dead in trespasses and sins.' I owe my third principle, my spirit, to the implantation of Your grace. I had a body and a soul by my parents. I have received the third principle, the spirit from You, and in You I live, and move, and have my being. My new, my best, my highest, my most heavenly life, is wholly derived from You. To You I ascribe it. My life is hid with Christ in God. It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me."

And so the Christian says, "For me to live is Christ," because for me to live is to live a life whose parentage is not of human origin, but of divine, even of Christ Himself.

Again he intended to say that *Christ was the sustenance of his life*, the food his newborn spirit is fed upon. The believer has three parts to be sustained. The body, which must have its proper nutriment, the soul, which must have knowledge and thought to supply it, and the spirit which must feed on Christ. Without bread I become attenuated to a skeleton and at last I die. Without thought my mind becomes dwarfed, ay, and dwindles itself until I become the idiot with a soul that has life, but little more.

And without Christ my newborn spirit must become a vague shadowy emptiness. It cannot live unless it feeds on that heavenly manna which came down from heaven. Now the Christian can say, "The life that I live is Christ," because Christ is the food on which he feeds and the sustenance of his newborn spirit.

The apostle also meant that *the fashion of his life was Christ.* I suppose that every man living has a model by which he endeavors to shape his life. When we start in life, we generally select some person, or persons, whose combined virtues shall be to us the mirror of perfection. "Now," says Paul, "if you ask me after what fashion I mold my life, and what is the model by which I would sculpture my being, I tell you, it is Christ. I have no fashion, no form, no model by which to shape my being except the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, the true Christian, if he be an upright man, can say the same. Understand, however, what I mean by the word, "*upright.*" An upright man means a straight-up man—a man that does not cringe and bow, and fawn to other men's feet. A man that does not lean for help on other men, but just stands with

his head heavenward, in all the dignity of his independence, leaning nowhere except on the arm of the Omnipotent. Such a man will take Christ alone to be his model and pattern.

This is the very age of conventionalities. People dare not now do a thing unless everybody else does the same. You do not often say, "Is a thing right?" The most you say is, "Does so and so do it?" You have some great personage or other in your family connection, who is looked upon as being the very standard of all propriety. And if he do it, then you think you may safely do it.

And oh! what an outcry there is against a man who dares to be singular, who believes that some of your conventionalities are shackles and chains, and kicks them all to pieces and says, "I am free!" The world is at him in a minute. All the ban-dogs of malice and slander are at him, because he says, "I will not follow your model! I will vindicate the honor of my Master and not take your great masters to be forever my pattern."

Oh! I would to God that every statesman, that every minister, that every Christian were free to hold that his only form and his only fashion for imitation must be the character of Christ. I would that we could scorn all superstitious attachments to the ancient errors of our ancestors.

And whilst some would be forever looking upon age and upon hoary antiquity with veneration, I would we had the courage to look upon a thing, not according to its age, but according to its rightness—and so weigh everything, not by its novelty, or by its antiquity, but by its conformity to Christ Jesus and His holy Gospel—rejecting that which is not, though it be hoary with years, and believing that which is—even though it be but the creature of the day, and saying with earnestness—"For me to live is not to imitate this man or the other, but 'for me to live is Christ.'"

I think, however, that the very center of Paul's idea would be this—*The end of his life is Christ*. You think you see Paul land upon the shores of Philippi. There, by the riverside, were ships gathered and many merchant men. There you would see the merchant busy with his ledger and looking over his cargo, as he paused and put his hand upon his brow and said as he griped his moneybag, "For me to live is gold."

And there you see his humbler clerk, employed in some plainer work, toiling for his master, and he, perspiring with work, mutters between his teeth, "For me to live is to gain a bare subsistence." And there stands for a moment to listen to him, one with a studious face and a sallow countenance, and with a roll full of the mysterious characters of wisdom. "Young man," he says, "for me to live is learning."

"Aha! aha!" says another, who stands by, clothed in mail with a helmet on his head, "I scorn your modes of life—for me to live is glory." But there walks one, a humble tent maker, called Paul. You see the lineaments of the Jew upon his face and he steps into the middle of them all and says, "For me to live is Christ."

Oh! how they smile with contempt upon him and how they scoff at him for having chosen such an object! "For me to live is Christ." And what did he mean! The learned man stopped and said, "Christ! who is He? Is He that foolish, mad fellow, of whom I have heard, who was executed upon Calvary for sedition?"

The meek reply is, "It is He who died, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." "What?" says the Roman soldier, "and do you live for a man who died a slave's death? What glory will you get by fighting His battles?" What profit is there in your preaching, chimes in the trader. Ah! and even the merchant's clerk thought Paul mad, for he said, "How can he feed his family? how will he supply his wants if all he lives for is to honor Christ?"

Ay, but Paul knew what he was at. He was the wiser man of them all. He knew which way was right for heaven and which would end the best. But right or wrong, his soul was wholly possessed with the idea—"For me to live is Christ."

Brothers and sisters, can you say, as professing Christians, that you live up to the idea of the apostle Paul? Can you honestly say that for you to live is Christ? I will tell you my opinion of many of you. You join our churches. You are highly respectable men. You are accepted among us as true and real Christians. But in all honesty and truth I do not believe that for you to live is Christ.

I see many of you whose whole thoughts are engrossed with the things of earth. The mere getting of money, the amassing of wealth, seems to be your only object. I do not deny that you are liberal, I will not dare to say that you are not generous, and that your checkbook does not often bear the mark of some subscription for holy purposes. But I dare to say, after all, that you cannot in honesty say that you live wholly for Christ.

You know that when you go to your shop or your warehouse, you do not think, in doing business, that you are doing it for Christ. You dare not be such a hypocrite as to say so. You must say that you do it for self-aggrandizement and for family advantage. "Well!" says one, "and is that a mean reason?" By no means. Not for you, if you are mean enough to ask that question—but for the Christian it is. He professes to live for Christ. Then how is it that anyone dares to profess to live for his Master and yet does not do so, but lives for mere worldly gain?

Let me speak to many a lady here. You would be shocked if I should deny your Christianity. You move in the highest circles of life and you would be astonished if I should presume to touch your piety, after your many generous donations to religious objects. But I dare to do so. You—what do you do? You rise late enough in the day—you have your carriage out and call to see your friends, or leave your card by way of proxy.

You go to a party in the evening. You talk nonsense and come home and go to bed. And that is your life from the beginning of the year to the end. It is just one regular round. There comes the dinner or the ball, and the conclusion of the day. And then, Amen, so be it, forever. Now you don't live for Christ. I know you go to church regularly or attend at some dissenting chapel, all well and good. I shall not deny your piety, according to the common usage of the term—but I do deny that you have got to anything like the place where Paul stood when he said, "For me to live is Christ."

I, my brethren, know that with much earnest seeking I have failed to realize the fullness of entire devotion to the Lord Jesus. Every minister must sometimes chasten himself and say, "Am I not sometimes a little warped in my utterances? Did I not in some sermon aim to bring out a grand thought, instead of stating a home truth? Have I not kept back some warning that I ought to have uttered, because I feared the face of man?"

Have we not all good need to chasten ourselves, because we must say that we have not lived for Christ as we should have done? And yet there are, I trust, a noble few, the *elite* of God's elect—a few chosen men and women on whose heads there is the crown and diadem of dedication, who can truly say, "I have nothing in this world I cannot give to Christ—I have said it and mean what I have said—

*'Take my soul and body's powers,
All my goods and all my hours,
All I have, and all I am.'*

Take me, Lord and take me forever."

These are the men who make our missionaries. These are the women to make our nurses for the sick, these are they that would dare death for Christ. These are they who would give of their substance to His cause. These are they who would spend and be spent, who would bear ignominy, and scorn, and shame if they could but advance their Master's interest.

How many of this sort have I here this morning? Might I not count many of these benches before I could find a score? Many there are who do in a measure carry out this principle. But who among us is there (I am sure he stands not here in this pulpit) that can dare to say he has lived wholly for Christ, as the apostle did? And yet, till there are more Pauls, and more men dedicated to Christ, we shall never see God's kingdom come, nor shall we hope to see His will done on earth, even as it is in heaven.

Now, this is the true life of a Christian—its source, its sustenance, its fashion, and its end, all gathered up in one word—Christ Jesus. And I must add, its happiness and its glory is all in Christ. But I must detain you no longer.

II. I must go to the second point, THE DEATH OF THE CHRISTIAN.

Alas, alas, that the good should die. Alas, that the righteous should fall! Death, why do you not hew the deadly upas? Why do you not mow the hemlock? Why do you touch the tree beneath whose spreading branches weariness has rest? Why do you touch the flower whose perfume has made glad the earth?

Death, why do you snatch away the excellent of the earth in whom is all our delight? If you would use your axe, use it upon the cumber-grounds, the trees that draw nourishment, but afford no fruit. You might be thanked then. But why will you cut down the cedars, why will you fell the goodly trees of Lebanon?

O Death, why do you not spare the church? Why must the pulpit be hung in black. Why must the missionary station be filled with weeping? Why must the pious family lose its priest and the house its head? O Death, what are you at? Touch not earth's holy things. Your hands are not fit to pollute the Israel of God. Why do you put your hand upon the hearts of the elect?

Oh stay you, stay you. Spare the righteous, Death, and take the bad! But no, it must not be. Death comes and smites the best of us all. The most generous, the most prayerful, the most holy, the most devoted must die. Weep, weep, weep, O church, for you have lost your martyrs. Weep, O church, for you have lost your confessors, your holy men are fallen. Howl, fir tree, for the cedar has fallen, the godly fail, and the righteous are cut off.

But stay awhile. I hear another voice. Say you thus unto the daughter of Judah, spare your weeping. Say you thus unto the Lord's flock, Cease, cease your sorrow. Your martyrs are dead, but they are glorified. Your ministers are gone, but they have ascended up to your Father and to their Father. Your brethren are buried in the grave, but the archangel's trumpet shall awake them, and their spirits are ever now with God.

Hear you the words of the text, by way of consolation, "To die is gain." Not such gain as you wish for, you son of the miser. Not such gain as you are hunting for, you man of covetousness and self-love. A higher and a better gain is that which death brings to a Christian.

My dear friends, when I discoursed upon the former part of the verse, it was all plain. No proof was needed. You believed it, for you saw it clearly. "To live is Christ," has no paradox in it. But "To die is gain," is one of the Gospel riddles which only the Christian can truly understand.

To die is not gain if I look upon the merely visible, to die is loss, it is not gain. Has not the dead man lost his wealth? Though he had piles of riches, can he take anything with him? Has it not been said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither"? "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

And which of all your goods can you take with you? The man had a fair estate and a goodly mansion. He has lost that. He can no more tread those painted halls nor walk those verdant lawns. He had abundance of fame and honor. He has lost that, so far as his own sense of it is concerned, though still the harp string trembles at his name.

He has lost his wealth, and buried though he may be in a costly tomb, yet is he as poor as the beggar who looked upon him in the street in envy. That is not gain, it is loss. And he has lost his friends—he has left behind him a sorrowing wife and children, fatherless, without his guardian care. He has lost the friend of his bosom, the companion of his youth. Friends are there to weep over him, but they cannot cross the river with him. They drop a few tears into his tomb, but with him they must not and cannot go.

And has he not lost all his learning, though he has toiled ever so much to fill his brain with knowledge? What is he now above the servile slave, though he has acquired all knowledge of earthly things? Is it not said,

*"Their memory and their love are lost
Alike unknowing and unknown"?*

Surely death is loss. Has he not lost the songs of the sanctuary and the prayers of the righteous? Has he not lost the solemn assembly and the great gathering of the people? No more shall the promise enchant his ear, no more shall the glad tidings of the Gospel wake his soul to melody. He sleeps in the dust, the Sabbath-bell tolls not for him, the sacramental emblems are spread upon the table, but not for him. He has gone to his grave, he knows not that which shall be after him. There is neither work nor device in the grave, whither we all are hastening. Surely death is loss.

When I look upon you, you clay-cold corpse, and see you just preparing to be the palace of corruption and the carnival for worms, I cannot think that you have gained. When I see that your eye has lost light and your lip has lost its speech, and your ears have lost hearing, and your feet have lost motion, and your heart has lost its joy, and they that look out of the windows are darkened, the grinders have failed, and no sounds of tabret and of harp wake up your joys, O clay-cold corpse, you have lost, lost immeasurably.

And yet my text tells me it is not so. It says, "To die is gain." It looks as if it could not be thus, and certainly it is not, so far as I can see. But put to your eye the telescope of faith, take that magic glass which pierces through the veil that parts us from the unseen. Anoint your eyes with eye salve, and make them so bright that they can pierce the ether and see the unknown worlds.

Come, bathe yourself in this sea of light, and live in holy revelation and belief, and then look, and oh how changed the scene! Here is the corpse, but there the spirit. Here is the clay, but there the soul. Here is the carcass, but there the seraph. He is supremely blest—his death is gain. Come now, what did he lose? I will show that in everything he lost, he gained far more.

He lost his friends, did he? His wife and his children, his brethren in church fellowship, are all left to weep his loss. Yes, he lost them, but my brethren, what did he gain? He gained more friends than he e'er lost. He had lost many in his lifetime, but he meets them all again. Parents, brethren and sisters who had died in youth or age, and passed the stream before him—all salute him on the further brink.

There the mother meets her infant, there the father meets his children, there the venerable patriarch greets his family to the third and fourth generation. There brother clasps brother to his arms, and husband meets with wife, no more to be married or given in marriage, but to live together, like the angels of God.

Some of us have more friends in heaven than in earth. We have more dear relations in glory than we have here. It is not so with all of us, but with some it is so—more have crossed the stream than are left behind. But if it be not so, yet what friends we have to meet us there! Oh, I reckon on the day of death if it were for the mere hope of seeing the bright spirits that are now before the throne, to clasp the hand of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to look into the face of Paul the apostle and grasp the hand of Peter, to sit in flowery fields with Moses and David, to bask in the sunlight of bliss with John and Magdalene. Oh how blest!

The company of poor imperfect saints on earth is good, but how much better the society of the redeemed. Death is no loss to us by way of friends. We leave a few, a little band below, and say to them, "Fear not little flock," and we ascend and meet the armies of the living God, the hosts of His redeemed. "To die is gain." Poor corpse! you have lost your friends on earth—nay, bright spirit—you have received a hundred-fold in heaven.

What else did we say he lost? We said he lost all his estate, all his substance, and his wealth. Ay, but he has gained infinitely more. Though he were rich as Croesus, yet he might well give up his wealth for that which he has attained. Were his fingers bright with pearls and has he lost their brilliancy? The pearly gates of heaven glisten brighter far.

Had he gold in his storehouse? Mark you, the streets of heaven are paved with gold and he is richer far. The mansions of the redeemed are far brighter dwelling places than the mansions of the richest here below. But it is not so with many of you. You are not rich, you are poor. What can you lose by death? You are poor here, you shall be rich there.

Here you suffer toil, there you shall rest forever. Here you earn your bread by the sweat of your brow, but there, no toil. Here wearily you cast yourself upon your bed at the week's end and sigh for the Sabbath—but there Sabbaths have no end. Here you go to the house of God, but you are distracted with worldly cares and thoughts of suffering. But there, there are no groans to mingle with the songs that warble from immortal tongues. Death will be gain to you in point of riches and substance.

And as for the *means of divine grace* which we leave behind—what are they when compared with what we shall have hereafter? Oh, might I die at this hour, I think I would say something like this, “Farewell Sabbaths—I am going to the eternal Sabbath of the redeemed. Farewell minister. I shall need no candle, neither light of the sun, when the Lord God shall give me light and be my life forever and ever.

“Farewell you songs and sonnets of the blessed. Farewell—I shall not need your melodious burst—I shall hear the eternal and unceasing hallelujahs of the beatified. Farewell, you prayers of God's people. My spirit shall hear forever the intercessions of my Lord and join with the noble army of martyrs in crying, ‘O Lord, how long?’

“Farewell, O Zion! Farewell, house of my love, home of my life! Farewell, you temples where God's people sing and pray. Farewell, you tents of Jacob, where they daily burn their offering! I am going to a better Zion than you, to a brighter Jerusalem, to a temple that has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God!”

O my dear friends, in the thought of these things, do we not, some of us, feel as if we could die?

*“E'en now by faith we join our hands
With those that went before,
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
Upon th' eternal shore.*

*“One army of the living God,
At His command we bow,
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.”*

We have not come to the margin yet, but we shall be there soon—we soon expect to die.

And again, one more thought. We said that when men died they lost their knowledge. We correct ourselves. Oh, no, when the righteous die they know infinitely more than they could have known on earth.

*“There shall I see and hear and know
All I desired or wished below;
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.”*

“Here we see through a glass darkly but there face to face.” There, what “eye hath not seen nor ear heard” shall be fully manifest to us. There, riddles shall be unraveled, mysteries made plain, dark texts enlightened, hard providences made to appear wise. The meanest soul in heaven knows more of God than the greatest saint on earth.

The greatest saint on earth may have it said of him, “Nevertheless he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” Not our mightiest divines understand so much of theology as the lambs of the flock of glory. Not the greatest masterminds of earth understand the millionth part of the mighty meanings which have been discovered by souls emancipated from clay. Yes, brethren, “To die is gain.”

Take away, take away that hearse, remove that shroud. Come, put white plumes upon the horse's heads and let gilded trappings hang around them. There, take away that fife, that shrill sounding music

of the death march. Lend me the trumpet and the drum. O hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah. Why weep we the saints to heaven? Why need we lament? They are not dead, they are gone before.

Stop, stop that mourning, refrain your tears, clap your hands, clap your hands.

*“They are supremely blest,
Have done with care and sin and woe.
And with their Savior rest.”*

What! weep! weep! for heads that are crowned with coronals of heaven? Weep, weep for hands that grasp the harps of gold? What, weep for eyes that see the Redeemer? What, weep for hearts that are washed from sin and are throbbing with eternal bliss. What, weep for men who are in the Savior's bosom?

No. Weep for yourselves, that you are here. Weep that the mandate has not come which bids *you* to die. Weep that *you* must tarry. But weep not for them. I see them turning back on you with loving wonder and they exclaim, “Why weepest thou?” What, weep for poverty that it is clothed in riches? What, weep for sickness that it has inherited eternal health? What? Weep for shame, that it is glorified? And weep for sinful mortality, that it has become immaculate?

Oh, weep not, but rejoice. “If you knew what it was that I have said unto you, and where I have gone, you would rejoice with a joy that no man should take from you.” “To die is gain.” Ah, this makes the Christian long to die—makes him say,

*“Oh, that the word were given!
O Lord of Hosts, the wave divide,
And land us all in heaven!”*

And now, friends, does this belong to you all? Can you claim an interest in it? Are you living to Christ? Does Christ live in you? For if not, your death will not be gain. Are you a believer in the Savior? Has your heart been renewed and your conscience washed in the blood of Jesus? If not, my hearer, I weep for you. I will save my tears for lost friends.

There, with this handkerchief I'd staunch my eyes forever for my best beloved that shall die, if those tears could save you. O, when you die, what a day! If the world were hung in sackcloth, it could not express the grief that you would feel. You *die*. O death! O death! How hideous are you to men that are not in Christ!

And yet, my hearer, you shall soon die. Save me your bed of shrieks, your look of gall, your words of bitterness! Oh that you could be saved from the dread hereafter! Oh! the wrath to come! the wrath to come! the wrath to come! who is he that can preach of it? Horrors strike the guilty soul! It quivers upon the verge of death—no, on the verge of hell. It looks over, clutching hard to life, and it hears there the sullen groans, the hollow moans, and shrieks of tortured ghosts, which come up from the pit that is bottomless, and it clutches firmly to life, clasps the physician, and bids him hold, lest he should fall into the pit that burns.

And the spirit looks down and sees all the fiends of everlasting punishments and back it recoils. But die it must. It would barter all it has to gain an hour. But no, the fiend has got its grip and down it must plunge. And who can tell the hideous shriek of a lost soul? It cannot reach heaven. But if it could, it might well be dreamed that it would suspend the melodies of angels, might make even God's redeemed weep, if they could hear the wailings of a damned soul.

Ah! you men and women, you have wept. But if you die unregenerate, there will be no weeping like that—there will be no shriek like that, no wail like that. May God spare us from ever hearing it or uttering it ourselves! Oh, how the grim caverns of Hades startle and how the darkness of night is frightened, when the wail of a lost soul comes up from the ascending flames—whilst it is descending in the pit.

“Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Christ is preached to you. “This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Believe on Him and live, you guilty, vile, perishing. Believe and live.

But this know—that if you reject my message and despise my Master—in that day when He shall judge the world in righteousness by that man, Jesus Christ—I must be a swift witness against you. I have told you—at your soul's peril reject it. Receive my message and you are saved. Reject it—take the responsibility on your own head. Behold, my skirts are clear of your blood. If you be damned, it is not for want of warning. Oh God grant you may not perish.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. 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.