

Now, A Sermon for Young Men and Young Women

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon urges young men and women to abandon the dangerous delay of repentance and embrace the immediacy of salvation, emphasizing that both eternal destiny and present relationship with God demand urgent attention.

Scripture: Ezekiel 12:27, Hebrews 3:15, Matthew 25:10, John 14:3, Luke 17:26-27, Isaiah 1:2-3, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Urgency of Salvation", "Repentance and Conversion"

Description

In this stirring sermon, C.H. Spurgeon addresses young men and women with a compelling call to immediate repentance and faith in Christ. He challenges the common excuse that salvation can be postponed to a later time, emphasizing the brevity and uncertainty of life. Spurgeon also reminds listeners of the certainty of Christ's return and the present demands of God's justice and love. This message is both a warning and an invitation to embrace the Gospel without delay.

Transcript

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

"Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of the times that are far off" Ezekiel 12:27.

ONE would have thought that if the glorious Lord condescended to send His servants to speak to men of the way of salvation, all mankind would delight to hear the message. We should naturally conclude that the people would immediately run together in eager crowds to catch every word—and would at once be obedient to the heavenly command. But, alas, it has not been so! Man's opposition to God is too deep, too stubborn for that. The Prophets of old were compelled to cry, "Who has believed our report?" and the servants of God in later times found themselves face to face with a stiff-necked generation who resisted the Holy Spirit as their fathers did.

Men display great ingenuity in making excuses for rejecting the message of God's love. They display marvelous skill, not in seeking salvation, but in fashioning reasons for refusing it. They are dexterous in avoiding Divine Grace and in securing their own ruin. They hold up, first, this shield and then the other to ward off the gracious arrows of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which are only meant to slay the deadly sins

which lurk in their bosoms. The evil argument which is mentioned in the text has been used from Ezekiel's day right down to the present moment, and it has served Satan's turn in tens of thousands of cases. By its means men have delayed themselves into Hell.

The sons of men, when they hear of the great Atonement made upon the Cross by the Lord Jesus, and are bid to lay hold upon eternal life in Him, still say concerning the Gospel, "The vision that he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of times that are far off." That is to say, they pretend that the matters of which we speak are not of immediate importance, and may safely be postponed. They imagine that religion is for the weakness of the dying and the infirmity of the aged, but not for healthy men and women.

They meet our pressing invitation, "All things are now ready, come to the supper," with the reply, "Religion is meant to prepare us for eternity, but we are far off from it as yet, and are still in the heyday of our being. There is plenty of time for those dreary preparations for death. Your religion smells of the vault and the worm. Let us be merry while we may. There will be room for more serious considerations when we have enjoyed life a little, or have become established in business, or can retire to live upon our savings. Religion is for the sere and yellow leaf of the year's fall, when life is fading, but not for the opening hours of spring, when the birds are pairing and the primroses smiling upon the returning sun. You prophesy of things that are for many days to come, and of times that are far off."

Very few young people may have said as much as this, but that is the secret thought of many. And with this they resist the admonition of the Holy Spirit, who says, "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." They put off the day of conversion as if it were a day of tempest and terror, and not, as it really is, a day most calm, most bright—the marriage of the soul with Heaven. Let every unconverted person remember that God knows what his excuse is for turning a deaf ear to the voice of a dying Savior's love! You may not have spoken it to yourself so as to put it into words. You might not even dare to do so, lest your conscience should be too much startled—but God knows it all.

He sees the hollowness, the folly and the wickedness of your excuses. He is not deceived by your vain words, but makes short work with your apologies for delay. Remember the parables of our Lord and note that when the man of one talent professed to think his Master a hard man, He took him at his word and out of his own mouth condemned him! And in the case of the invited guests who pleaded their farms and their merchandise as excuses, no weight was attached to what they said, but the sentence went forth, "None of these men that are bidden shall taste of My supper." God knows

the frivolity of your plea for delay. He knows that you, yourself, are doubtful about it, and dare not stand to it so as to give it anything like a solemn consideration.

Very hard do you try to deceive yourself into an easy state of conscience concerning it, but in your inmost soul you are ashamed of your own falsehoods. My business at this time is, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to deal with your consciences and to convince you even more thoroughly that delay is unjustifiable, for the Gospel has present demands upon you, and you must not say, "The vision that he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of the times that are far off."

I. For, first, granted for a moment that the message we bring to you has most to do with the future state, yet, even then, the day is not far off—neither is there so great a distance between now and then that you can afford to wait. Suppose that you are spared for threescore years and ten! Young man, suppose that God spares you in your sins till the snows of many winters shall whiten your head? Young woman,

suppose that your now youthful countenance shall still escape the grave until wrinkles are upon your brow? Still, how short will your life be! You, perhaps, think 70 years a long period, but those who are 70, in looking back, will tell you that their age is as an hand's breadth!

I, who am but 40, feel at this time that every year flies more swiftly than the last! And months and weeks are contracted into twinkling of the eyes. The older one grows, the shorter one's life appears. I do not wonder that Jacob said, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been," for he spoke as an extremely old man. Man is short-lived compared with his surroundings—he comes into the world and goes out of it—as a meteor flashes through yonder skies which have remained the same for ages. Listen to the brook which murmurs as it flows and the meditative ear will hear it warble—

"Men may come and men may go, But I go on forever."

Look at yonder venerable oak, which has, for 500 years, battled with the winds—what an infant one seems when reclining beneath its shade! Stand by some giant rock which has confronted the tempests of the ages and you feel like the insect of an hour! There are persons here tonight of 70 years of age who look back to the days of their boyhood as if they were but yesterday! Ask them, and they will tell you that their life seems to have been little more than a wink of the eye— it has gone like a dream, or a lightning's flash—

"What is life? 'tis but a vapor, Soon it vanishes away."

Therefore do not say, "These things are for a far-off time." for even if we could guarantee to you the whole length of human existence, it is but a span.

And there comes upon the heels of this a reflection never to be forgotten—that not one man among us can promise himself, with anything like certainty, that he shall ever see threescore years and ten! We may survive and by reason of strength we may creep up to fourscore years—yet not one of us can be sure that he shall do so—the most of us will assuredly be gone long before that age. No, we cannot promise that we shall see half that length of time! You young men and women cannot be certain that you shall reach middle life. Let me check myself! What am I talking of? You cannot be certain that you will see this year out and hear the bells ring in a new year! Yes, close upon you as tomorrow is, boast not yourselves of it, for it may never come. Or, should it come, you know not what it may bring forth to you—perhaps a coffin or a shroud.

Yes, and this very night, when you close your eyes and rest your head upon your pillow, reckon not too surely that you shall ever again look on that familiar chamber, or go forth from it to the pursuits of life. It is clear, then, that the things which make for your peace are not matters for a far-off time. The frailty of life makes them necessities of this very hour. You are not far from your grave—you are nearer to it than when this discourse began. Some of you are far nearer than you think. To some, this rejection comes with remarkable emphasis, for your occupation has enough of danger about it, every day, to furnish Death with a hundred roads to convey you to his prison in the sepulcher! Can you look through a newspaper without meeting with the words, "total," or, "sudden death"?

Traveling has many dangers and even to cross the street is perilous. Men die at home and many, when engaged about their lawful callings, are met by death. How true is this of those who go down to the sea in ships, or descend into the heart of the earth in mines! But, indeed, no occupations are secure from death—a needle can kill as well as a sword—a scald, a burn, a fall may end our lives quite as readily as a

pestilence or a battle. Does your business lead you to climb a

ladder? It is not a very perilous matter, but have you never heard of one who missed his footing and fell, never to rise again? You work amidst the materials of a rising building—have you never heard of stones that have fallen and have crushed the workers?—

"Dangers stand thick through all the ground

To push us to the tomb,

And fierce diseases wait around

To hurry mortals home."

Notwithstanding all that can be done by sanitary laws, fevers are not unknown and deadly strokes which fell men to the ground in an instant, as a butcher slays an ox, are not uncommon. Death has already removed many of your former companions. You have ridden into the battle of life like the soldiers in the charge at Balaclava. And, young as you are in this warfare, you have seen saddles emptied right and left around you. You survive, but death has grazed you. The arrow of destruction has gone whizzing by your ear to find another mark! Have you never wondered why it spared you? Among this congregation there are persons of delicate constitution. It grieves me to see so many fair daughters of our land with the mark of consumption upon their cheeks.

Full well I know that lurid flame upon the countenance and that strange luster of the eyes—signs of exhausting fires feeding upon life and consuming it too soon! Young men and women, many of you, from the condition of your bodily frames, can only struggle on till middle life—and scarcely that—for beyond 30 or 40 you cannot survive. I fear that some of you have, even in walking to this place, felt a suspicious weariness which argues exhaustion and decline. How can you say, when we talk to you about preparing to die, that we are talking about things that are far off? Dear Souls, do not be so foolish! I implore you, let these warnings lead you to decision! Far be it from me to cause you needless alarm, but is it needless? I am sure I love you too well to distress you without cause—and is there not cause enough?

Come now, I press you most affectionately, answer me and say, does not your own reason tell you that my anxiety for you is not misplaced? Ought you not, at once, lay to heart your Redeemer's call and obey your Savior's appeal? The time is short! Catch the moments as they fly and hasten to be blessed. Remember also, once again, that even if you knew that you should escape from accident and fever and sudden death, yet there is one grand event that we too often forget, which may put an end to your day of mercy all of a sudden. Have you never heard of that Jesus Christ of Nazareth who was crucified on Calvary, died on the Cross, and was laid in the tomb? Do you not know that He rose again the third day? And that after He had spent a little while with His disciples, He took them to the top of the Mount of Olives and there, before their eyes, ascended into Heaven, a cloud hiding Him from their view?

Have you forgotten the words of the angels, who said, "This same Jesus who is taken up from you into Heaven shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into Heaven"? Jesus will certainly come a second time to judge the world! Of that day and of that hour knows no man—no, not the angels of God! He will come as a thief in the night to an ungodly world! They shall be eating and drinking, and marrying and giving in marriage just as they were when Noah entered into the ark—and they knew not until the Flood came and swept them all away! In a moment—we cannot tell when! Perhaps it may be before the next

words escape my lips—a sound far louder than any mortal voice will be heard above the clamors of worldly traffic—yes, and above the roaring of the sea.

That sound as of a trumpet will proclaim the day of the Son of Man. "Behold, the Bridegroom comes: go you out to meet Him," will sound throughout the Church. And to the world there will ring out this clarion note, "Behold, He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they, also, which crucified Him." Jesus may come tonight! If He were to do so, would you, then, tell me that I am talking of far-off things? Did not Jesus say, "Behold, I come quickly!" and has not His Church been saying, "Even so, come Lord Jesus"? His tarrying may be long to us, but to God it will be brief. We are to stand hourly watching and daily waiting for the coming of the Lord from Heaven! Oh, I pray you do not say that the Lord delays His coming, for that was the language of the wicked servant who was cut in pieces, and it is the mark of the mockers of the last days, that they say, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

Be you not mockers, lest your bands be made strong, but listen to the undoubted voice of prophecy and of the Word of God, "Behold, I come quickly." "Be you, also, ready, for in such an hour as you think not the Son of Man comes." Now, then, it is clear enough that even if the Gospel message did concern only our life in another world, yet still it is unwise for men to say, "The vision is for many days to come, and he prophesies of the times that are far off."

II. But, secondly, I have to remind you that our message really deals with the present. The blessings of the Gospel have as much to do with this present life as with existence beyond the tomb. For observe, first, we are sent to plead with you, young men and women, and tenderly to remind you that you are, at this hour, acting unjustly and unkindly towards your God. He made you and you do not serve Him. He has kept you alive and you are not obedient to Him. He has sent the Word of His Gospel to you and you have not received it. He has sent His only begotten Son and you have despised Him. This injustice is a thing of the present—and the appeal we make to you about it is that in all reason such conduct should come to an end. Oh, may God's Holy Spirit help you to end it!

If I feel that I have done any man an injustice, I am eager to set it right. I would not wait till tomorrow. I wish to make amends with him at once. Yes, and even when I have forgotten to render assistance to some needy widow, I chide myself and feel uneasy till I have attended to the matter. Do you not feel the same? Would you willfully wrong or neglect another? I feel sure you would not! How is it, then, that you can be content to be unjust to God? Cruel to the dear Lover of the souls of men? And antagonistic to the loving pleadings of the Holy Spirit? That first chapter of Isaiah—you remember it, how striking it is! Why, if men had hearts that were at all tender it would break them! Read it—"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me. The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know; My people do not consider."

It is the wail of God Himself over man's unkindness to his Maker! Young man of honor, young man of integrity, does nothing speak to your conscience in this? "Will a man rob God?" You would not rob your employer! You would not like to be thought unfaithful or dishonest towards man! And yet your God, your God, your God—is He to be treated so basely, notwithstanding all His goodness? As Jesus said, "For which of these works do you stone Me?" So does Jehovah say, "I have made you. I have kept the breath in your nostrils. I have fed you all your life and for which of all these good things do you live without Me, and neglect Me, and perhaps even curse My name? For which of these do you sin with a high hand against My sacred Law?"

Now, can you think it right to remain in so wantonly unjust a course of life as this? Can it be right to continue to wrong your God and grieve His matchless love? Provoke Him no more, I pray you! Let conscience lead you to feel that you have dealt ill with the Lord. Come to Him for forgiveness and change of heart! O Spirit of God, make this appeal to be felt by these beloved young men and women! Again, our message has to do with the present, for we would affectionately remind you that you are now at enmity with your best Friend—the Friend to whose love you owe everything! You have grieved Him and are, without cause, His enemy! Can you bear this thought? I know a little child who had done something wrong and her kind father talked to her, and at last, as a punishment, he said to her in a very sad voice, "I cannot kiss you tonight, for you have grieved me very much."

That broke her little heart. Though not a stroke had been laid upon her, she saw sorrow in her dear father's face and she could not endure it. She pleaded and wept and pleaded again to be forgiven. It was thought wise to withhold the kiss, and she was sent to bed, for she had been very wrong. But there was no sleep for those weeping eyes and when mother went up to that little one's chamber she heard frequent sobs and sighs, and a sorrowful little voice said, "I was very, very naughty, but pray forgive me, and ask dear Father to give me a kiss." She loved her father and she could not bear that he should be grieved.

Child of mercy. Erring child of the great Father of spirits, can you bear to live forever at enmity with the loving Father? "Would He forgive me?" you ask. What makes you ask the question? Is it that you do not know how good He is? Has He not portrayed Himself as meeting His prodigal son and falling upon his neck and kissing him? Before the child had reached the Father, the Father had reached the child! The Father was eager to forgive, and therefore, when the son was yet a great way off his Father saw him and ran, and had compassion. Say no longer that we are talking of things of a far-off time! It is not so. I am speaking of that which, I pray, may be true to you tonight, that you may not remain enemies to God even another hour, but now may become His dear repenting children and fly into your tender Father's arms!

I have to remind you, however, of much more than this, namely, that you are this night in danger. On account of your treatment of God and your remaining an enemy to Him, He will surely visit you in justice and punish you for your transgressions. He is a just God and every sin committed is noted in His book—there it stands recorded for His Judgment Day. The danger you are in is that you may, this moment, go down into the Pit—and while sitting in that pew may bow your head in death and appear before your Maker in an instant—to receive the just reward of your sins. We

come to tell you that there is immediate pardon for all the sins of those who will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—and that if you will believe in Jesus, your sins, which are many—are all forgiven you!

Don't you know the story (you have heard it many times) that the Lord Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all who trust Him, and suffered, in their place, the penalty due to their sins? He was our Substitute, and as such He died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. He laid down His life for us, that "whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Will you refuse the salvation so dearly purchased but so freely presented? Will you not accept it here and now? Can you bear the burden of your sins? Are you content to abide for a single hour in peril of eternal punishment? Can you bear to be slipping down into the open jaws of Hell as you now are? Remember, God's patience will not last forever! You have provoked Him long enough!

All things are weary of you. The very earth on which you stand groans beneath the indignity of bearing a sinner upon its surface! So long as you are an enemy to God, the stones of the field are against you and

all creation threatens you. It is a wonder that you do not sink at once to destruction! For this cause we would have you pardoned now and made free from Divine wrath now. The peril is immediate! May the Lord grant that the rescue may be so. Do I hear you ask, "But may pardon be had at once? Is Jesus Christ a present Savior? We thought that we might, perhaps, find Him when we came to die, or might obtain a hope of mercy after living a long life of seeking."

It is not so. Free Grace proclaims immediate salvation from sin and misery! Whoever looks to Jesus at this very moment shall have his sins forgiven! At the instant he believes in the Lord Jesus, the sinner shall cease to be in danger of the fires of Hell. The moment a man turns his eyes of faith to Jesus Christ he is saved from the wrath to come. It is present salvation that we preach to you—and the present comfort of that present salvation, too! Many other reasons tend to make this weighty matter exceedingly pressing. And among them is this—there is a disease in your heart, the disease of sin—and it needs immediate cure.

I do not hear persons say, if they discover an incipient disease in their systems, that they will wait a while till the evil is more fully developed, and will then resort to a physician. The most of us have sense enough to try to check disease at once. Young man, you have a leprosy upon you! Young woman, you have a dreadful malady within your heart! Do you not desire to be healed now? Jesus can give you immediate healing if you believe in Him. Will you hesitate to be made whole? Do you love your mortal malady? Is hideous sin so dear to you? O that you would cry to be saved immediately, then Jesus will hear you! His Spirit will descend upon you and cleanse you. He will give you a new heart and a right spirit, yes, and make you whole from this time forward and forever! Can you wish to have so great a blessing postponed? Surely a sick man can never be cured too soon.

The Gospel which we preach to you will also bring you present blessings. In addition to present pardon and present justification, it will give you present regeneration, present adoption, present sanctification, present access to God, present peace through believing and present help in time of trouble! And it will make you, even for this life, doubly happy. It will be wisdom for your way, strength for your conviction and comfort for your sorrow. If I had to die like a dog I would still wish to be a Christian. If there were no hereafter—though the supposition is not to be tolerated—yet let me live for and with Jesus, my beloved Lord! Balaam chose the righteous man's death. I choose it, too. But quite as much do I choose the righteous man's life, for to have the love of God in the heart, to have peace with God, to be able to look up to Heaven with confidence and talk to my heavenly Father in childlike trustfulness is a present joy and comfort worth more than worlds!

Young men and women, in preaching the Gospel to you, we are preaching that which is good for this life as well as for the life to come. If you believe in Jesus you will be saved now, on the spot, and you will now enjoy the unchanging favor of God, so that you will go your way, from now on, not to live as others do, but as the chosen of God, beloved with special love, enriched with special blessings, to rejoice every day till you are taken up to dwell where Jesus is. Present salvation is the burden of the Lord's message to you and therefore it is not true, but infamously false, that the vision is for many days to come, and the prophecy for times that are far off.

Is there not reason in my pleadings? If so, yield to them! Can you answer these arguments? If not, I pray you cease delaying. Again would I implore the Holy Spirit to lead you to an immediate decision.

III. My third point is that I shall not deny, but I shall glory, rather, in admitting that the Gospel has to do with the future. Albeit, that it is not exclusively a Revelation for far-off times, yet it is filled with glorious hopes and bright

prospects concerning things to come. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has to do with the whole of a young person life. If you receive Jesus Christ you will not merely have Him tonight, but that faith by which you receive Him will operate upon your whole existence throughout time and eternity.

Dear young Friends, if you are saved while yet you are young, you will find religion to be a great preventive of sin. What a blessing it is not to have been daubed with the slime of Sodom—never to have had our bones broken by actual vice! Many who have been saved from a life of crime will, nevertheless, be spiritual cripples for life! To be snatched out of the vortex of vice is cause for great gratitude, but to have been kept out of it is better! It is doubly well, if the Grace of God comes upon us while we are still untainted by the pollution of the world, and have not gone into excess of riot. Before dissolute habits have undermined the constitution and self-indulgence has degraded the mind—it is, above all things, well to have the heart renewed! Prevention is better than cure, and Grace gives both.

Thank God that you are still young—pray earnestly that you may now receive Divine Grace to cleanse your way by taking heed, according to His Word. Grace will also act as a preservative as well as a preventive. The good thing which God will put in you will keep you. I bless God I have not to preach a temporary salvation to you at this time. That which charmed me about the Gospel when I was a lad was its power to preserve from sinning. I saw some of my school companions who had been highly commended for their character. They were a little older than myself and became sad offenders when they left home. I used to hear sad stories of their evil actions when they had gone to London to be apprenticed, or to take positions in large establishments.

And I reasoned, thus, with myself—"When I leave my father's house I shall be tempted, too, and I have the same heart that they have. Indeed, I have not been even as good as they have been. The probabilities are, therefore, that I shall plunge into sin as they have done." I felt horrified with that. I could not bear that I should cause my mother to shed tears over a dissolute son, or break my father's heart with debauchery. The thought could not be endured and when I heard that whoever believed in the Lord Jesus Christ should be saved, I understood that he would be saved from sinning, and I laid hold upon Jesus to preserve me from sin—and He has done it! I committed my character to Christ and He has preserved me to this day. And I believe He will not let me go. I recommend to you, young men and women, a character-insurance in the form of believing in Jesus Christ!

Dear young woman, may that modest cheek of yours never need to blush for shameful deeds. May your delicate purity of feeling never be lost through gross defiling sin—but remember, it may be so unless the Lord keeps you. I commend to you the blessed preserving power of faith in Christ Jesus which will secure for you the Holy Spirit to dwell in you and abide in you, and sanctify you all your days. I know I speak to some who shudder at the thought of vice. Trained as you have been by Christian parents and under the holiest influences, you would rather die than act as some who disgrace their father's name. I know you would. But you must not trust your own hearts. You may yet become as bad as others or worse than they unless your natures are renewed—and only Jesus Christ can do that—by the power of the Holy Spirit. Whoever believes in Him has passed from death unto life. He shall not live in sin, but he shall be preserved in holiness even to the end.

My dear young Friends, if God shall be pleased to change your hearts tonight, as I pray He may, you will be prepared for the future. You have not fully entered into the battle of life. You have your way to make, your professions and trades to choose. You, young women, are still under the parental wing. You have domestic relationships to form. Now, consider how well prepared you will be for life's work and service if you give your hearts to Jesus. Young man, you will be the right man to enter a large establishment—with the Grace of God in your heart you will be a blessing there. Though surrounded by her snares in this wicked city, the strange woman will hunt in vain for your precious life. And other vices will be unable to pollute you.

Young woman, you will have wisdom to choose for your life's companion no mere fop and fool, but one who loves the Lord as you will do—with whom you may hope to spend happy and holy days! You will have placed within yourself resources of joy and pleasure which will never fail. There will be a well of Living Water within you which will supply you with joy and comfort and consolation—even amid trial and distress. You will be prepared for whatever is to come. A young Christian is fit to be made an emperor or a servant, if God shall call him to either post. If you want the best materials for a model prince, or a model peasant, you shall find it in the child of God! Only, mark you, the man who is a

child of God is less likely to sink into utter destitution because he will be saved from the vices of extravagance and idleness which are the frequent causes of poverty.

And, probably, on the other hand, he is less likely to become a prince, for seldom has God lifted His own children to places so perilous. You will be ready, young man, for any future, if your heart is right with God. And know when I think of you, and of what the Lord may make of you, I feel an intense respect, as well as love, for you. I hope none of us will be lacking in respect to old age—it is honorable and it is to be esteemed and revered—but I feel frequently inclined to do homage to our youth. When a celebrated tutor entered his schoolroom, he always took off his hat to his boys, because, he said, he did not know which of them might yet turn out to be a poet, a bishop, a lord chancellor, or a prime minister!

When I look at young men and women, I feel much the same, for I do not know what they are to be. I may be addressing, tonight, a Livingstone, or a Moffat! I may be speaking, tonight, to a John Howard, or a Wilberforce! I may be addressing a Mrs. Judson, or an Elizabeth Fry! I may be speaking to some whom God will kindle into great lights to bless the sons of men for many a day, and afterwards to shine as the stars forever and ever. But you cannot shine if you are not lighted. You cannot bless God and bless the sons of men unless God first blesses you. Unregenerate, you are useless! Born again, you will be born for usefulness. But while you are unconverted your usefulness is being lost. I will not insinuate that I expect everyone here to become famous. It is not even desirable. But I do know this—that everyone whose heart shall be given to Jesus will be so useful and so necessary to the Church and to the world, that this world without them would lack a benefactor—and Heaven's company would be incomplete unless they joined its ranks.

Oh, the value of a redeemed soul! The importance of a young life! I wish I could multiply myself into a thousand bodies that I might come round and take the hand of every young person here, as he or she shall leave the Tabernacle, and say, "By the preciousness of your life, by the hallowed uses to which you may be put, by the good that you may do and by the glory you may bring to God, do not think of pardon and Grace as things of the future, but now, even NOW, lay hold of them, and they will become to you the great power by which you shall benefit your generation and go down to the grave with honor."

When I grow gray, if God shall spare me—may I see around me some of you with whom I speak today—who shall be some 20 years younger than myself, of whom I shall say, "My former deacons and elders are either very old or have gone home to Heaven. The dear men of God who were with me when I was 40 years of age have passed away. But those whom I preached to on that night in March, 1874, have come to fill their places! Those dear Sisters who used to conduct the classes, teach the school and manage the various societies for the poor, have gone and we have followed them to their graves and wept over them. But here come their daughters to fill their places."

I pray that names honored in our Churches may never die out from our midst. May the fathers live, again, in their children! It may not be my honor to be succeeded in this pulpit by one of my own sons, greatly as I would rejoice if it might be so, but at least I hope they will be here in this Church to serve their father's God and to be regarded with affection by you for the sake of him who spent his life in your midst. I pray that all my honored Brothers may have sons and daughters in the Church—yes, from generation to generation may there be those in our assemblies of whom it shall be said—"These are of the old stock—they keep up the old name."

Brothers and Sisters of my own age, we shall soon die. God grant us to die at our posts! The standard-bearer will fall and in his last embrace he will press the standard to his heart, for it is dearer than life to him. But courage, my Brethren, our sons will urge on the sacred war and carry on the good old cause to victory. What do you say, dear Ones? Do not your hearts say, "Amen"? Young men, will you not take up the bloodstained banner when we shall go our ways? Sons and daughters of the faithful, will you desert your fathers' God? Oh, will it be that He whom we love shall be despised by you? Will you turn your back on the Christ who was All in All to us? No. It cannot be! Be of good cheer, Abraham— Isaac shall succeed you! Jacob shall rise up to serve your God! Jacob shall live to see his son Joseph, and even to bless Ephraim and Manasseh—and so from generation to generation shall the Lord be praised!

Thus far concerning this life. But now let me remind you, dear young Friends, that if your hearts are given to Christ you need not tremble about the end of life. You may look forward to it with hope. It will come. Thank God, it will come! Have you never wished that you could ride to Heaven in a chariot of fire, like Elijah? I did, once, till I reflected that if a chariot of fire should come for me I should be more afraid to get into it than to lie down and die upon my bed! And of the two, one might prefer to die, for to die in the Lord is to be made like our glorious Head! I see no joy in the hope of

escaping death. Jesus died, and so let me die! On His dear face the seal of death was set, so let it be on mine, that I may talk of resurrection as they cannot who shall be changed at His coming.

You need not be afraid to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Young people, whether you die in youth or old age, if you are resting in Jesus you shall sit upon the banks of Jordan singing. As our friends sang last night—

"Never mind the river."

The parting song will be sweet, but oh, the Glory! Oh, the Glory! I will not try to paint it. Who can? The judgment will come, but you will not tremble at it! On the right hand shall you stand, for who can condemn those for whom Christ has died? The conflagration of the globe will come. The elements shall melt with fervent heat, but you will not tremble, for you shall be caught up together with the Lord in the air—and so shall you be forever with the Lord! Hell shall swallow up the unjust—they shall go down alive into the pit—but you shall not tremble for that, for you are redeemed by the precious blood!

The millennial Glory, whatever that may be, and the reign with Christ, and the triumph over death and Hell. And the giving up of the kingdom to God, even the Father, when God shall be All in All, and eternity with all its infinite Glory—these shall be all yours! If you had to go through Hell to reach this Glory, it would be worth the cost! But you have not to do any such thing! You have only to believe in Jesus and even faith is the Lord's own gracious gift. "Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth." This is the Gospel. Look! Look! Look! 'Tis but a look. Look, bleary-eyed Soul, you who can scarcely see for ignorance! Look! You whose eyes are swimming in tears! Look! You who see Hell before you! Look! You who are sinking into the jaws of Perdition!

Look you ends of the earth, that are farthest gone in sin, if such are here! You who are plunged deep in iniquity— look! 'Tis Jesus on the Cross you are bid to look at—yes, Jesus at the right hand of God—the crucified Son of Man exalted at the right hand of the Father! Look unto Him, and be you saved, for He is God, and besides Him there is none else. God grant you to look to Jesus, even now, for His name's sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke 18:1-23. HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—95 (VER. II), 497, 492.

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