

Afflictions of the Righteous and the Wicked Contrasted

by Charles Finney

The afflictions of the righteous are light and short, while those of the wicked are heavy and enduring, and ultimately lead to eternal damnation.

Scripture: Psalm 73:1, 2 Corinthians 4:17

Topics: "Afflictions", "Righteous vs. Wicked"

Description

Charles Finney contrasts the afflictions of the righteous and the wicked, emphasizing that while the righteous endure light and momentary troubles that lead to eternal glory, the wicked face heavy burdens that only increase their future sorrows. He highlights that the sufferings of the righteous are light compared to what they deserve and are short-lived compared to eternity, serving as means of grace that prepare them for glory. In contrast, the wicked's joys are fleeting and their afflictions are heavy, leading to eternal damnation. Finney encourages believers to reflect on this contrast to foster gratitude for salvation and a deeper concern for the lost. Ultimately, he calls for Christians to actively seek to rescue those in peril from their impending doom.

Transcript

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."--2 Cor. 4:17. Read also Psalm 73.

Few things are more interesting than to contemplate the contrast every where drawn in the Bible between the righteous and the wicked. No man can thoroughly study this contrast without being greatly affected by it. Throughout the Bible we find this contrast drawn in the strongest colors respecting their character, their afflictions, their joys, their entire earthly course, and their final destiny. It is my design in this discourse to notice some particulars.

Our text from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians speaks of the righteous. It affirms that their afflictions are light, are transient, and productive of augmented glory. We have another passage of similar import which asserts that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

The Bible throughout holds language directly opposite to this respecting the wicked.

But I am first to give a few particulars respecting the case of the righteous.

I. They have afflictions. This is asserted and implied throughout the Bible. And the whole course of God's providence in every age teaches the same things. The best saints are chastened. Affliction is not excluded from their cup because of their piety. Their afflictions may be in themselves as painful--may be as frequent and as long protracted as those which befall the wicked.

The book of Job shows that formerly this fact was greatly misunderstood. In those times of comparative darkness, when the light of written revelation had scarcely begun to fall upon the nations, some men, even some good men, seemed not to have understood the meaning of the divine dispensation towards the righteous.

But I have several specific points of remark to make respecting the afflictions of the righteous.

1. They are light. Paul calls it--"Our light affliction." This, you will observe, is a term of comparison. We need therefore to inquire with what our afflictions are to be compared in order to be reasonably deemed light.

Obviously the afflictions of the righteous are light compared with what they know and feel that themselves deserve. This is one of the considerations which make their afflictions seem, in their own view, to be light.

Their afflictions are not said to be light compared with those of the wicked. But they are light and every real saint feels them to be so compared with what himself deserves.

Again, they are light compared with what Christ suffered in working out our salvation. Whenever we think of Christ's circumstances, apprehending in some measure his trials from being rejected of his people, from the unbelief and fickleness of his professed friends, from the wickedness and coming ruin of his nation, which he could neither remedy nor avert; from the malice of his murderers, and from his position as our sacrifice;--when, I say, we duly apprehend such points as these, we always see that all our own utmost afflictions are light compared with his. I have never yet seen a Christian who did not feel this when reminded of the sufferings endured by Christ in his earthly afflictions.

Again, these afflictions are light when compared with those that await the wicked. Compared with those, they are too small to admit of being estimated as any thing at all. They are less than the fine dust of the balance.

In the same view, these afflictions of the righteous are light compared with what they themselves must have suffered if Christ had not suffered in their stead, and if they should not by the discipline of suffering here be so purified that God can take them to heaven at death. It is well for all Christians to consider both these points;--namely: how the sufferings of Christ have saved them from the terrible necessity of ever lasting anguish, and also how the moral discipline of suffering here may perform a most important and indispensable agency in preparing the soul for exemption from all further suffering in a world of peace and joy. Then you will see how light your afflictions are compared with what they might have been, and indeed must have been if God had forborne to adopt the great remedial system.

2. I must pass to remark that these afflictions of the righteous are short. They are short compared with eternity; short compared with what we deserve that they should be; short compared with the measureless duration of the sufferings of the wicked. Let their duration be compared with any of these points, and you cannot fail to see that they are indeed but for a moment.

3. All these afflictions of the righteous are in respect to them means of grace. So the apostle implies. In his view they "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." They do this only as they serve to prepare the soul for glory;--by no means because they merit a reward of glory. But in their disciplinary character and results, they work for the Christian a weight of glory which infinitely exceeds all the weight of the afflictions themselves.

4. The perceived design and tendency of these afflictions rob them of their sting. When the people of God see this design and this tendency, they feel more like embracing and kissing the rod than like repelling it. Indeed it usually happens that they can testify after the scene of trial is past,--"It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." And often, while passing through the very furnace, the conviction that the hand of their own Father is in it; that it is designed for their good, and if they will fall in with this kind design, it cannot fail to do them infinite good--these thoughts serve to sustain them so that not so much as the smell of fire is on them. Or to change the figure, these thoughts, dropped as an anodyne into the cup of their sorrows, transform what else had been gall and wormwood, to the sweetness of honey.

5. A consciousness of their own ill-desert serves to inspire patience and submission. Let the Christian only realize this, and he will cry out--all these afflictions are nothing compared to what I have deserved at the hand of God. I cannot murmur. All this is no suffering at all when seen in the light of my deservings.

6. The fact that they are so short makes them appear so light.

With almost universal application it may be said of the afflictions of the righteous--"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." A night of unbroken sorrow may appear long--but soon the morning comes in its joy, the night of anguish is forgotten. What Christian does not know this? Where is the Christian who has not had this written out in his own experience? Hence, under the heaviest pressure of affliction, he can still expostulate with his own despondencies--"Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me; hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God."

I can well recollect that before my own conversion I was deeply struck with this, that Christians were the only persons in the world who had any reason to be joyful. I could easily see that they had consolations which none others had. I saw that nothing could possibly befall them which could ultimately be an evil. All things I saw must work good and nothing but good for them. Reading such passages as our text, showed me plainly that all was well for them, and that they alone, of all men on the earth had a legitimate right to be joyful.

The opposite I saw must be true in every instance in the case of the wicked. All these thoughts passed often through my mind while in my law office. Even then I could not help thinking intensely on these points, nor could I help seeing the force and the bearing of earthly afflictions to curse the wicked and to bless and not harm the righteous. In this state of my mind, I did not perhaps quite envy Christians their lot, but I felt that none but they had any reason to be cheerful. The sinner, I plainly saw, had no business to be cheerful. Nothing could benefit his condition and prospects but to howl and mourn in most hopeless anguish. Nothing but ill was on him; nothing but ill yet more awful was before him.

Nor in my case did those views result from a state of melancholy or depression of spirits. I never had any tendencies of that sort. These convictions were the result of sober and intense thought. I studied the great questions of the Christian religion intensely, and I could not fail of being deeply impressed with the mighty

contrast between the state of the righteous even in this world, and that of the wicked.

My situation in regard to early religious instruction, was rather peculiar. I heard no preaching but the strongest form of Old Schoolism, and had to grope my way along through all its absurdities, and think out all my religious opinions in the very face of all the preaching I heard in my earliest years. This led me to think deeply and thoroughly upon the great points of the Christian life. Hence when I saw a sinner in his sins I could see nothing cheerful in his case. All was full of gloom. But a Christian--what if he does suffer now? All will soon be well. His sufferings are soon over. Who can help seeing this? It seems to me now--as it did then, quite impossible for any thinking man to avoid thinking on this subject, and if he thinks at all how can he fail of being struck with the immense contrast between the case of the righteous and that of the wicked?

7. The joys of the saints are only the beginning of heaven. The Bible does not represent them as being short, like their sorrows; but represents their joys as long and their grief as short. Their joys are enduring, deep, full, fadeless; not light and fleeting as are those of the sinner.

II. I pass in the next place to remark that precisely the opposite in every respect is said in the Bible of the sinner. To show this I will read you the 73d Psalm. I select this, not because it is more striking or more decisive than many other passages in the Bible on the same subject; but because it brings out more distinctly the very truths I wish to lay before you.

It appears that before the volume of written revelation was filled up, and before men had learned to interpret the providences of God, as now in the light of revelation we are enabled to do, some men were greatly perplexed with the course of divine providence towards the righteous and the wicked. Such seems to have been for a time the case with the writer of this 73d Psalm. "Truly," he says, "truly God is good to Israel;"--"truly"--as if the conviction had just now become fixed in his mind, and he had just learned this fact, so long obscured in darkness,--"truly God is good to such as are of a clean heart.

But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped." What was the matter? He proceeds at once to tell us. "For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men." He evidently speaks not of all wicked men, for some of them have trouble as other men have; but he speaks of the prosperous classes--of those who seem during much of their life to have all that heart can wish.

"Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens; and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return thither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?

Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency." It is all in vain he says for me to have washed my hands from sin, and to have denied myself its pleasures, for I have been sorely plagued notwithstanding--more sorely even than most of these wicked men;--"for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." But at this point he checks himself;--it strikes his mind that to talk in this strain will be a stumbling-block to God's people; it will throw them into the same state of perplexity and repining; and he sees instantly that this will not answer; what then shall I do, says he?

"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;" I was yet more painfully perplexed; I dared not speak out my feelings least I should offend the generation of God's children. And yet my heart was hot within me, and how could I refrain from speaking out the deep, burning perplexities of my soul? "It was too painful for me until I went into the sanctuary of God;" I knew not how to solve this mystery, that I should have so many troubles and the wicked so few--"until I went to the sanctuary, then I understood their end."

"Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment; they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh, so O Lord, when thou awakest thou shalt despise their image. Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee." I was stupid as a beast; why did I not understand before this that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and that their richest joys terminate almost in a twinkling, in everlasting desolation and anguish?

"Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." "Thou shalt guide me"--what a blessing to have the infinitely wise God for a guide! "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish, thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee. But it is good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works."

We see now that if sinners are joyful, the Bible represents their joy as only for a moment. I might quote passages almost without number to prove this. But there is no need that I should.

On the other hand, the Bible shows that when Christians are afflicted it is but for a moment, and that their afflictions are light also. O how light compared with the full lot of the wicked!

But what of the wicked man? Is he joyful? Yes, he has a feverish excitement and he calls it joy, but it cannot last; it vanishes away ere he has done quaffing off the mere foam of his pleasure-cup. Light too are all his joys--light as air; in their very nature they never can be solid and substantial; they are as the chaff which the wind drives away. Sinner, you know there is nothing in them worthy of the name of joy. You know they are vain, false, fickle, unsatisfactory; the first breath of adversity scatters them all; disappointment has hidden her sting beneath their fairest flowers. You have known all this in your own sad experience, and yet you are loath to admit it, and more loath still to act as if it were true.

Again the sinner's joys are only the means of aggravating his future sorrows. Instead of being as in the case of the righteous an antepast of heaven, they are a prelude to hell. Every joy of the sinner in this world is a fruit of God's mercy, and every such mercy abused, will be prolific in wrath and torments in the world of retribution. God will visit for all those abused mercies.

Then, moreover, those joys of earth will be food for thought in that world of tormenting self-reflections. Conscious guilt for mercies abused will harrow up the soul of the lost sinner with unutterable pangs.

Yet again, every sinner knows that his good things are the opposite of what he deserves. The sweet consciousness of integrity and of deserving well at the hand of God, he never has, or can have. He knows that all in his case is ill-desert--desert of utter and unmingled sorrows.

Once more. In the hour of trial, how great the contrast between the afflictions of the wicked and those of the righteous! The wicked man under his afflictions can only say--if his eyes are open--These are only the beginnings of my sorrow. I have only just begun to drink the bitter cup, the dregs of which are to be my portion forever and ever.

Yes, the wicked must bear their sufferings in this life, comfortless and unsustained. No Christian's hope gladdens and cheers their heart. No solace can they have in the bitter hour. Faith in Christ is, with them, entirely out of the question; they can think of Christ only as the being whose blood they have trampled under foot--whose mediation for sinners they have set at naught; and now they can hear Him say only this--"Because I have called and ye refused, therefore when ye call I will not answer." It avails nothing to speak to them of Jesus. The name soothes not their aching bosoms; it only harrows up their souls with more bitter self-reproaches, and keener despair. No hope have they;--certainly no good hope through grace: for they have set all grace at naught.

Thus the very opposite things are true of their afflictions which are true in the case of the righteous. While the afflictions of the righteous are light because of his buoyant, trusting, submissive, peaceful state of mind; the afflictions of the wicked are heavy because of his wicked state of mind. He has no power to resist and bear up under them.

Suppose an ungodly man is visited with bereavement. His property is torn away. Alas, it is his all; and what has he more? This was his God, and now it is gone, perhaps forever. It leaves him no good to enjoy. The Christian too may lose all his property in a twinkling; but then his Father in heaven is infinitely rich, and he need not fear lest he come to want. His great treasure remains untouched by the fires or the floods of earth. He can have a thousand angels to minister to his wants if he needs their aid, and his Father sees it best to send them.

Suppose the sinner is bereaved of some dear friend, a parent or a bosom companion, or a child of his strong and tender love. The blow comes down upon him with unmitigated weight. He has no Savior, no hope, no consolation--no being in the universe able to save, to whom he can flee.

These sorrows are heavy because they are enduring. They intermit only for a brief space and then another avalanche rolls over him again, crushing all his fondest hopes and spreading desolation all around him. And then the thought must flash across his mind--These are only the beginning of sorrows. I am bereaved here;--O how much more bereaved when every friend shall be torn away! Bereavement makes me wretched now--what shall I be hereafter?

There is another point of most solemn import. The wicked man's afflictions, instead of working for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, will only work in his case a far more exceeding and eternal weight of damnation. For all these afflictions are only appliances on the part of God to reclaim the sinner from sinning and bring him to Jesus for salvation. If he resists them all, they cannot fail to aggravate his final doom. Hence the more thorough and searching his trials, the greater his guilt, and the more heavy his final punishment. Hence we see that the more he suffers here--supposing him to resist the design of God to reclaim him by these trials, the more must he suffer hereafter as a punishment for his deeper guilt.

The reverse of this we know is true of the Christian as the more he suffers here the more he enjoys hereafter.

It is most striking to notice here that while all things joyful or sad work together for good to the Christian, all things, whether prosperous or adverse--joyous or afflictive, work together for ill to the sinner. The more he enjoys here, the more miserable he must be hereafter; and the more he suffers here, the more he must suffer hereafter. If there is in this an apparent paradox, it is still true, and you will instantly see its truth when you come to see the relation of the whole course of God's providence here towards the sinner, to this sinner's final doom. All God's providences are means of trial to the sinner, and if he abuses them all, and resists their influence, they cannot fail to work for him a deeper damnation.

Alas, the guilty course and the fearful end of the sinner! Instead of being able to say, with the Christian--welcome afflictions; welcome pains and trials and bereavements; welcome even the cross itself;--he can only say--Woe is me;--these heavy afflictions that make me weary of life now, are working for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of damnation! Nothing for me here but bitterness, and a vain pursuit of hollow pleasures, all working for me a more dire damnation for my everlasting portion!

REMARKS.

1. If we would understand the Bible we must attain a position from which we shall see things as the inspired writers saw them. They estimated all things in the light of eternity. When they speak of earthly things, they compare them with eternity, and deem them long or short--valuable or valueless, as they are estimated in this scale of comparison. And why should they not? If we are to exist forever, there is surely no other rational way of estimating the value of whatever shall affect our entire well-being. Our happiness or misery in the next world is a part of the whole sum of our good or ill in existence as much as the portion which falls to us in this world.

Hence if earthly scenes and interests are brief and but for a moment compared with eternity, let them be called and deemed light and of small account. So the sacred writers seemed to regard them.

Many have fallen into serious errors in consequence of not understanding this. When the apostles speak of its being only a step to the day of judgment, some have supposed their real meaning to be that Christ's second advent was really just about to occur. But it is by no means certain that this was their real meaning. Minds so deeply impressed as theirs were, with the solemn realities of eternity are wont to view eternal scenes as very near at hand. The intervention of earthly scenes and events between--events in which their mind takes no interest--is scarcely thought of.

Now we need to be in such a state of mind as theirs in order to understand their language. Then we shall estimate all earthly things in the near view of the solemn realities of the eternal world.

2. Afflictions are light or otherwise, very much according to the state of mind in which they are experienced. In one state, a mere trifle will appear heavy; in another state the same trial will seem scarce worth regarding. The mind sustained of God can sustain almost any thing God shall lay upon it; but when a man has all his own burdens to carry alone, and can scarcely bear the burden of his own wounded spirit and rebellious, repining heart, how can he bear the superadded weight of affliction?

3. It is often exceedingly interesting to contemplate the afflictions of the righteous. When we see the afflicted soul sustained triumphantly by grace, and consider also how these light afflictions must educe a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, we see it a most blessed thing to be afflicted. O it is a joyful scene. Their state of mind is such that they scarcely feel the pain of their afflictions. They know themselves to be blessed, and their souls sometimes exult in scenes of deep affliction with exceeding joy.

They have so much of God in their souls;--God takes occasion by means of the affliction to make such peculiar manifestations of his glory and his goodness to their souls that they may well exult in the precious good of being afflicted.

You may have heard it said of one of the daughters of Pres. Edwards, that while a husband whom she tenderly loved lay a corpse in the house, her joy was so great that she sought some secret place to give it vent lest it should be misconstrued by those who could not appreciate the abounding consolations of the great joy with which God was pleased to fill her soul. Now what was this? How shall we account for it? But one rational account can be given. The Lord was pleased to make this affliction in her case a sort of conductor along which the electric fires of his own love and presence reached and filled her soul. She became so filled with the joys of the Spirit that she could not be sensible to the bitterness of grief.

Now another woman in a different state of mind would have hung over that lifeless body--would have bathed it with her bitter tear; would have given way to inconsolable grief. Why? Because, in her state of mind, the consolations and joys of God are wanting.

Payson, you may recollect, said near the close of his life--"Since I have given up my will, I have never in a single instance been disappointed." You need only be in a state in which you have no will but God's--then all will be well with you. Form no purpose except on this condition--"If the Lord will, I shall do this or that." Let a man get into this permanent state of mind, and where is he? Where he never can be disappointed. However his plans may issue, all seems well to him, because he wishes nothing otherwise than God would have it, and God's ways can never be frustrated. As a man once said of the weather when asked what he thought the weather would be--"Just such as pleases me," said he. But how could he know this? What does this mean? The answer is easy. Said he, "It will be such weather as pleases God, I know, and whatever pleases God will perfectly please me." Thus, beloved, if you are only weaned thoroughly from your own wills, and molded into sweet submission to the will of God, every thing will go just right. However much the course of divine Providence may seem to frustrate your plans and threaten mischief to your interests, you can say, "This pleases my Heavenly Father, and therefore I know it is best, and it shall please me."

I very distinctly recollect attending a funeral in a case where a man had lost a most beloved wife by a sudden death. But O, there was such a smile on his countenance, a smile so calm, so resigned, so sweet, so like heaven--I never can forget it. Such a countenance as his;--it seemed to betoken any thing else but affliction. Why? His heart was with God.

But while this is all joyful and interesting; on the contrary all is agonizing when you come to see the wicked under affliction. Alas! they have no consolation. I once witnessed a funeral scene in New York. A most ungodly man died leaving two ungodly daughters fatherless. Their mother had died before, and they felt themselves thrown upon a blank world, orphans. They wept and wailed enough to move a heart of stone. Their tears and cries were agonizing. I felt unutterable anguish as I saw their forlorn, despairing grief. But I could do little else than stand and weep. I talked to them of Jesus, but they had no Jesus. This name, so dear to the Christian heart, had no charms to them. They did not know him. They had never learned to trust him;--they had never made him their friend. Alas! they had no friend in the universe. Their father had gone to hell, and they were following on in the same path. O, it was enough to tear a man's heart all to pieces to witness such a scene! I could not help crying out, O, were they only Christians! O, if they only had Jesus for their friend!

But these are only the beginning of sorrows. These are only the first tastings of that bitter cup which to all eternity they must drink to its dregs. These are only the first drops of that awful, rising, gathering hail storm, about to overwhelm them in its wide wasting ruin. If you have ever seen the awful tornado, rolling up in its mountain masses of cloud and hail from the west, roaring, crashing, sweeping along;--now its first drops fall--it is coming, coming--even these first drops thrill through the quick pulse and the beating heart of the houseless, naked wanderer--ah how can he bear that rushing avalanche of storm!

To the sinner in this world--the few drops of affliction cut him down; he cannot stand before these few small drops;--how can he stand when God shall make bare his awful arm and clothe it with majesty to visit wrath upon the guilty according to their deeds? O sinner, how can thy heart endure, or thy hands be strong in the day when God shall deal with thee? The first drops crush you down; you cannot bear even the first small drop, but sink and wail out under even these;--what next? Next comes the solid hail--hear it roar. O that crash--as if it would tear the world in pieces! The first drops scattered in this world scald and scathe him--ah surely he never can endure in that dread day when the storms of Jehovah's wrath shall begin to beat forever on his guilty spirit!

When I have seen sinners under conviction, gnawing their very tongues literally as I have seen it--drawing blood, I have cried out in the inward anguish of my soul--If this is conviction, what is hell? O my soul, WHAT IS HELL? No hope;--no hope, no end, no escape;--O, if there were only some way of escape--or some end though after myriads of ages had rolled away in the agonies of the second death;--then it would not be all utter, hopeless despair. These thoughts of final relief might come as the elixir of life to bring at least a few drops of comfort; but no! hell has no hopes for its doomed ones;--it has no balm for the wounded spirits of its guilty, self-ruined victims. Every thought in every sinner's mind there, is only the fire and the gall of hell upon the dark malign spirits of that prison-house of despair!

Finally, brethren, let me say, it is exceedingly useful to us to contemplate this contrast between the earthly state of the righteous and of the wicked. Let Christians do this often and thoroughly. I have found it exceedingly useful to me to do it. It quickens the deep sympathies of my heart for my dying fellowmen and calls forth gushing gratitude for the mercies of gospel salvation. It is sometimes an evil to dwell too long and too exclusively upon the Christian's hope and the Christian's heaven, and neglect to dwell upon the bitter doom of the wicked. O, we must not forget their awful state! Our business here is to pull them out of those fires. Then let our hearts feel their awful peril. Let us often follow out this striking, heart-affecting contrast between the righteous and the wicked. If ministers would often do this, carrying out this contrast in all its great and striking points, O how would both they and their churches travail in birth for souls, and be filled with unutterable emotions of benevolent solicitude for the souls of the perishing!

Brethren, do you satisfy yourselves with the dainties of the Christian life and live to eat rather than to labor and toil? Do you come up here to this sanctuary to regale yourselves with spiritual manna, and give no crumbs to those who must starve in the agonies of the second death? Do you lose sight of the sorrows of the wicked, and quite forget their case? Do you--can you forget their awful afflictions here and hereafter--so heavy, so enduring, so fearful? O! can you let these things pass from your minds, and live on as if all were well? Beloved, you must one day give account for souls--for souls saved or lost.

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