

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE

NO. 710

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*“And I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth
 and the Heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.”
 Revelation 20:11.*

MANY of the visions which John saw are very obscure, and although a man who is assured of his own salvation may possibly be justified in spending his days in endeavoring to interpret them, yet I am sure of this, that it will not be a profitable task for unconverted persons. They have no time to spare for speculations, for they have not yet made sure of positive certainties. *They* need not dive into difficulties, for they have not yet laid a foundation of simplicities by faith in Christ Jesus. Better far to meditate upon the Atonement than to be guessing at the little horn, and better far to know the Lord Jesus in His power to save, than to fabricate an ingenious theory upon the number of the beast. But *this* particular vision is so instructive, so unattended by serious difficulties, that I may invite all here present to consider it, and the more so because it has to do with matters which concern our own eternal prospects. It may be, if God the Holy Spirit shall illuminate the eyes of our faith to look and see that “Great White Throne and Him who sat upon it,” that we may reap so much benefit from the sight as forever to make the arches of Heaven ring with gratitude that we were brought in this world to look at the “Great White Throne,” for by so doing we shall not be afraid to look upon it in the day when the Judge shall sit, and the quick and dead shall stand before Him.

I shall, first, *endeavor to explain what John saw*; and then, in the second place, *I shall try to set forth the effect which I think would be produced by this sight if the eyes of our faith should now be fixed on it.*

I. First, then, I have to call your very earnest attention to WHAT JOHN SAW. It was a scene of the Last Day—that wondrous day whose coming none can tell—

*“For, as a thief unheard, unseen, it steals
 Through night’s dark shade.”*

When the eagle-eyed seer of Patmos, being in the Spirit, looked aloft into the heavens, *he saw a throne*, from which I gather that there is a throne of moral government over the sons of men, and that He who sits upon it presides over all the inhabitants of this world. There is a throne whose dominion reaches from Adam in Paradise down to “the last man,” whoever he may be. We are not without a Governor, Lawgiver, and Judge. This world is not left so that men may do in it as they will, without a legislator, without an avenger, without One to give reward or to inflict punishment. The sinner, in his blindness looks, but he sees no throne; and therefore he cries, “I will live as I like, for there is none to call me to account.” But John, with illuminated eyes, distinctly saw a throne, and a personal Ruler upon it who sat there to call His subjects to account. When our faith looks through the glass of Revelation it sees a throne too. It were well for us if we felt more fully the influence of that ever-present throne. That “the Lord reigns” is true, Believer, tonight, and true at all times. There is a throne where sits the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible; the world is governed by laws made and kept in force by an intelligent Lawgiver. There is a moral Governor. Men are accountable, and will be brought to account at the Last Great Day, when they shall all be either rewarded or punished. “I saw a Great White Throne.” How this invests the actions of men with solemnity! If we were left to do exactly as we willed without being called to account for it, it were wise, even then, to be virtuous, for rest assured it is best for ourselves that we should be good, and it is in itself malady enough to be evil. But we are not so left. There is a Law laid down, which involves a penalty to break. There is a Lawgiver who looks down and sees every action of man, and who does not allow one single word or deed to be omitted from His notebook. That Governor is armed with power; He is soon coming to hold His assize, and every responsible agent upon the face of the earth must appear at His bar and receive, as we are told, “according to the deeds done in the body, whether they are good or whether they are evil.” Let it, then, be gathered from the text that there is in very deed a

personal and real moral Governor of the world, an efficient and suitable Ruler, not a mere name, not a myth, not an empty office, but a Person who sits on the throne, who judges right, and who will carry out that judgment before long.

Now, Brothers and Sisters, we know that this moral Governor is God Himself, who has an undisputed *right* to reign and rule. Some thrones have no right to be, and to revolt from them is patriotism; but the best lover of his race delights the most in the monarchy of Heaven. Doubtless there are dynasties which are tyrannies, and governors who are despots; but none may dispute the right of God to sit upon His throne, or wish that another hand held the scepter. He created all, and shall He not judge all? He had a right, as Creator, to lay down His Laws, and, as those Laws are the very pattern of everything that is good and true, He has, therefore, because of this an eternal right to govern, in addition to the right which belonged to Him as Creator. He is the Judge of all, who must do right from a necessity of His Nature. Who else, then, should sit upon the throne, and who shall dare to claim to do so? He may cast down the gauntlet to all His creatures, and say, "I am God, and beside Me there is none else." If He reveals the thunder of His Power, His creatures must silently admit that He is Lord alone. None can venture to say that this throne is not founded upon right. Moreover, there are some thrones on which kings, however right, are deficient in *might*, but this is not the case with the King of kings. We constantly see little princes whose crowns fit their heads so badly that they cannot keep them on their brows; but our God has invincible might as well as infallible right. Who shall meet Him in battle? Shall the stubble defy the fire, or shall the wax make war with the flame? Jehovah can easily swallow up His enemies when they set themselves in battle array against Him. "Behold, He touches the hills, and they smoke; He looks upon the mountains, and they tremble; He breaks Leviathan in pieces in the depths of the sea. The winds are His chariots, and the tempests are His messengers. At His bidding there is day, and at His will night covers the earth. Who shall stay His hand, or say unto Him, "What are You doing?" His throne is founded in right and supported by might. You have Justice and Truth to settle it, but you have Omnipotence and Wisdom to be its guards, so that it cannot be moved.

In addition to this, His throne is one *from the power of which none can escape*. The sapphire throne of God, at this moment, is revealed in Heaven where adoring angels cast their crowns before it; and its power is felt on earth, where the works of Creation praise the Lord. Even those who do not acknowledge the Divine Government are compelled to feel it, for He does as He wills, not only among the angels in Heaven, but among the inhabitants of this lower world. Hell feels the terror of that throne. Those chains of fire, those unutterable pangs, are the awful shadow of the throne of Deity; as God looks down upon the lost, the torment that flashes through their souls darts from His *Holiness*, which cannot endure their sins. The influence of that throne, then, is found in every world where spirits dwell, and in the realms of inanimate nature it bears rule. Every leaf that fades in the trackless forest trembles at the Almighty's bidding, and every coral insect that dwells in the unfathomable depths of the sea feels and acknowledges the Presence of the All-Present King. So, then, my Brothers and Sisters, if such is the throne which John saw, see how impossible it will be for you to escape from its judgment when the Great Day of Assize shall be proclaimed, and the Judge shall issue His summons bidding you appear. To where can the enemies of God flee? If up to Heaven their high-flown impudence could carry them, His right hand of Holiness would hurl them from there, or, if under Hell's most profound wave they dive, to seek a sheltering grave, His left hand would pluck them out of the fire to expose them to the *fiercer* light of His Countenance!

Nowhere is there a refuge from the Most High. The morning beams cannot convey the fugitive so swiftly as the Almighty Pursuer could follow him; neither can the mysterious lightning flash, which annihilates time and space, journey so rapidly as to escape His far-reaching hand. "If I mount up to Heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Hell, You are there." It was said of the Roman empire under the Caesars that the whole world was only one great prison for Caesar, for if any man offended the emperor it was impossible for him to escape. If he crossed the Alps, could not Caesar find him in Gaul? If he sought to hide himself in the Indies, even the swarthy monarchs there knew the power of the Roman armies, so that they would give no shelter to a man who had incurred imperial vengeance. And yet, perhaps, a fugitive from Rome might have prolonged his miserable life by hiding in the dens and caves of the earth. But oh, Sinner, there is no hiding from God. The mountains cannot cover you from Him, even if they would, neither can the rocks conceal you. See, then, at the very outset, how this throne should awe our minds with terror. Founded in right, sustained by might, and universal in its dominion, look and see the throne which John of old beheld.

This, however, is but the beginning of the vision. The text tells us that it was a "*white throne*," and I would call your attention to that. "I saw a Great White Throne." Why white? Does not this indicate its immaculate purity? There is no

other white throne, I fear, to be found. The throne of our own happy land, I believe, is as white and as pure as any throne might well be on earth, but there have been years, even in the annals of that throne, when it was stained with blood, and not many reigns back it was black with debauchery. Not always was it the throne of excellence and purity, and even now, though our throne possesses a lustrous purity, rare enough among earthly thrones, yet in the sight of God there must be in everything that is earthly something that is impure, and therefore the throne is not white to Him. As for many other thrones that are still existing, we know that with them all is not white; this is neither the day nor the hour for us to call the princes to the bar of God, but there are some of them who will have much to answer for, because in their schemes of aggrandizement they took no account of the blood which would be shed, or of the rights which would be violated. Principle seldom moves the royal mind, but the knavish law of policy is the basis of king-craft; a policy worthy of highwaymen and burglars, and some kings are little. On the continent of Europe there are not a few thrones which I might describe as either black, or crimson, as I think of the depravity of the conduct of the monarch, or of the blood through which he has waded his way to dominion.

But this is a Great White Throne, a throne of hallowed monarchy that is not stained with blood nor defiled with injustice. Why, then, is it white for purity? Is it not because the King who sits on it is Pure? Listen to the thrice sacred hymn of the cherubic band and the seraphic choir, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.” Creatures who are perfectly spotless, themselves, unceasingly reverence and adore the yet superior Holiness of the Great King. He is too great to need to be unjust, and He is too good to be unkind. This King has done no wrong, and can do no wrong—and He is the only King of whom this can be said without fiction. He who sits on this white throne is Himself the Essence of Holiness, Justice, Truth, and Love. O fairest of all thrones, who would not be a willing subject of your peerless government?

Moreover, the throne is pure because *the Law the Judge dispenses is perfect*. There is no fault in the Statute Book of God. When the Lord shall come to judge the earth, there will be found no decree that bears too harshly upon any of His creatures. “The statutes of the Lord are right.” They are true and altogether righteous. That Book of the Ten Commandments in which you find a summary of the Divine Will, who can improve it? Who can find anything in excess in it, or point out anything that is wanting? “The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul,” and well may that be a white throne from which there emanates such a Law. But you know that with a good law and a good lawgiver, yet sometimes the throne may make mistakes, and it may be stained by ignorance, if not by willful injustice. But the sentence which shall go forth from this Great White Throne shall be so consistent with justice that even the condemned culprit himself must give his unwilling assent to it. “They stood speechless,” it is said; speechless because they could neither bear the sentence nor in any way question it. It is a white throne since never was a verdict delivered from it of which the culprit had a right to complain. Perhaps there are some here who view this as a matter of hope, but to ungodly persons it will be the very reverse. Oh Sinner, if you had to be judged before an impure tribunal, you might, perhaps, escape; if the King were not holy, unholiness might, perhaps, go unpunished; if the Law were not perfect, offenses might be condoned; or if the sentence were not just, you might, through partiality, escape. But where everything is so pure and white—

*“Careless sinner,
What will become of you?”*

I have thought, too, that perhaps this throne is said to be a white throne to indicate that it will be *eminently conspicuous*. You will have noticed that a white object can be seen from a very great distance. You may have observed, perhaps, on the Welsh mountains, a white cottage far away, standing out conspicuously, for the Welsh like to make their cottages intensely white, so that though you would not have perceived it, had it been left of a stone color, you see it at once, for the bright whitewashed walls catch your eye. I suppose that a marksman would prefer a white object to aim at before almost any other color. And this Great White Throne will be so conspicuous that all the millions who were dead, but who shall rise at the sound of the last trumpet, shall all see it, nor shall it be possible for a single eye to close itself against the sight! We *will* see it; it shall be so striking a sight that none of us will be able to prevent its coming before us; “every eye shall see Him.” Possibly it is called a white throne because of its being such a *convincing contrast to all the colors of this sinful human life*. There stand the crowd, and there is the Great White Throne. What can make them see their blackness more thoroughly than to stand there in contrast with the perfections of the Law, and the Judge before whom they are standing? Perhaps that throne, all glistening, will reflect each man’s character. As each unforgiven man shall look at that white throne, its dazzling whiteness will overcome him, and cover him with confusion and with terror

when he sees his own defilement in contrast with it. “O God!” he says, “how can I bear to be judged by such a One as You are? I could face the judgment seat of my fellows, for I could see imperfections in my judges, but I cannot face You, You dread Supreme, for the awful whiteness of Your Throne, and the terrible splendor of Your Holiness utterly overcome me. Who am I, sinner as I am, that I should dare to stand before that Great White Throne!”

The next word that is used by way of adjective is “*great*.” It was a “*Great White Throne*.” You scarcely need me to tell you that it is called a Great White Throne because of *the greatness of Him who sits upon it*. Speak of the greatness of Solomon? He was but a petty prince. Speak of the throne of the Mogul or his Celestial Majesty of China, or of the thrones of Rome and Greece before which multitudes of beings assembled? They are nothing, mere representatives of associations of the grasshoppers of the world, who are as nothing in the sight of the Lord Jehovah. A throne filled by a mortal is but a shadow of dominion. This will be a great throne because on it will sit the great God of Earth, and Heaven, and Hell—the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, who shall judge the world in righteousness, and His people with equity. Brothers and Sisters, you will see that this will be a “Great White Throne” when we remember *the culprits who will be brought before it*; not a handful of criminals, but millions upon millions, “multitudes, multitudes, in the Valley of Decision,” and these not all of the lesser sort, not serfs and slaves alone whose miserable bodies rested from their oppressors in the silent grave; but the great ones of the earth shall be there; not alone the down-trod serf who toiled for nothing, and felt it sweet to die, but his tyrant master who fattened on his unrewarded toils shall be there; not alone the multitudes who marched to battle at their master’s bidding, and who fell beneath the shot and the shell, but the Emperors and Kings who planned the conflict shall be there; crowned heads no greater than heads uncrowned.

Men who were demigods among their fellows shall mix with their slaves, and be made as vile as they! What a marvelous procession! With what awe the imagination of it strikes the heart! What a pompous appearing! Aha! Aha! You downtrodden multitudes, the great Leveler has put you all upon the same footing now! Death laid you in one equal grave, and now Judgment finds you standing at one equal bar to receive the sentence of One who fears no king, and dreads no tyrant, who has no respect of persons, but who deals justice alike to all! Can you picture the sight? Land and sea are covered with the living who once were dead. Hell is empty, and the grave has lost its victims! What a sight will that be! Xerxes on his throne with a million marching before him must have beheld a grand spectacle, but what will this be? No flaunting banner, but the ensigns of eternal majesty. No gaudy courtiers, but assembled angels! No sound of drum nor roar of cannon, but the blast of the archangel’s trumpet, and the harps of ten thousand times ten thousand holy ones. There will be unrivalled splendor it is true, but not that of heraldry and war; mere tinsel and gewgaw shall have all departed, and in their place there shall be the splendor of the flashing lightning, and the deep bass of the thunder. Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, with all His angels with Him shall descend, the pomp of Heaven being revealed among the sons of men.

It will be a *Great White Throne* because of *the matters that will be tried there*. It will be no mere quarrel about a suit in Chancery, or an estate in jeopardy. Our *souls* will have to be tried there; our future, not for an age, not for one single century, but forever and forever. Upon those balances shall hang Heaven and Hell; to the right shall be distributed triumph without end, to the left destruction and confusion without a pause, and the destiny of every man and woman shall be positively declared from that tremendous Throne! Can you perceive the greatness of it? You must measure Heaven; you must fathom Hell, you must compass eternity, but until you can do this you cannot know the greatness of this *Great White Throne*; great, last of all, because throughout eternity there shall always be a looking back to the transactions of that day. That day shall be unto you, you Saints, “the beginning of days,” when He shall say, “Come, you blessed of My Father.” And that day shall be to you who perish the beginning of days too; just as that famous night of old in Egypt, when the first-born were spared in every house where the lamb had shed its blood, was the first of days to Israel, but to Egypt the night when the first-born felt the avenging angel’s sword was a dread beginning of nights forever. Many a mother reckoned from that night when the Destroyer came, and so shall you reckon throughout a dread eternity from the day when you see this *Great White Throne*!

Turn not away your eyes from the magnificent spectacle till you have seen the glorious Person mentioned in the words, “*And Him that sat on it*.” I wonder whether anything I have said has made you solemnly think of the great day. I am afraid I cannot speak so as to get at your hearts, and if not, I had better be silent; but do now for a moment think upon Him who sat upon the Great White Throne. The most fitting One in all the world will sit upon that Throne. It will

be God, but listen, it will also be Man. “He shall judge the world by this Man, Christ Jesus, according to my Gospel,” says the Apostle. The Judge has to be God. Who but God were fit to judge so many, and to judge so exactly? The Throne is too great for any but for Him of whom it is written, “Your Throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is Your scepter.” Christ Jesus, the Son of God, will judge, and He will judge as Man as well as God; and how fitting it is that it should be so! As Man He knows our infirmities, He understands our hearts, and we cannot object to this, that our Judge should be Himself like we are. Who better could judge righteous judgment than One who is “bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh”? And then, there is this fitness about it; He is not only God and Man, but He is *the* Man, the Man of men, of all men the most manly, the type and pattern of manhood. He will be the test in His own Person, for if a man is like Christ, that man is right, but if a man is otherwise than Christ-like, that man deserves to be condemned. That wondrous Judge needs only look upon His own Character to read the Law, and to review His own actions to discern whether other men’s actions are right or wrong.

The thoughts of many hearts were revealed by Christ on earth, and that same Christ shall make an open exhibition of men at the Last Great Day. He shall judge them, He shall discern their spirits, He shall find out the joints and the marrow of their being; the thoughts and intents of the heart He shall lay bare. Even you, Believer, will pass the test before Him; let no man deceive you with the delusion that you will not be judged—the sheep appeared before the great dividing Shepherd as well as the goats, those who used their talents were called to account as well as he who buried his pound, and the disciples themselves were warned that their idle words would bring them into judgment. Nor need you fear a public trial. Innocence courts the light. You are not saved by being allowed to be smuggled into Heaven untested and unproved, but you will, in the Righteousness of Jesus, pass the solemn test with joy. It may not be at the same moment as the wicked that the righteous shall be judged (I shall not contend for particulars), but I am clear that they will be judged, and that the blood and Righteousness of Jesus are provided for this very cause, that they may find mercy of the Lord in *that* day. O Sinner! It is far otherwise with you, for your ruin is sure when the testing time comes. There will be no witnesses needed to convict you, for the Judge knows all. The Christ whom you despised will judge you, the Savior whose mercy you trampled on, in the fountain of whose blood you would not wash, the despised and rejected of men—it is He who shall judge righteous judgment to you, and what will He say but this, “As for these, My enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, cut them in pieces before My eyes!”

II. I need a few minutes—and I have but too few left—TO DRAW THE INFERENCES WHICH FLOW FROM SUCH A SIGHT AS THIS, and so turn the vision to practical account.

Believer in Christ, a word in your ear. Can you see the Great White Throne, and Him who sits upon it? I think I see it now. Then *let me search myself*. Whatever profession I may make, I shall have to face that Great White Throne. I have passed the Elders; I have been approved by the pastor; I stand accepted by the Church; but that Great White Throne is not passed yet. I have borne a reputable character among my fellow Christians; I have been asked to pray in public, and my prayers have been much admired, but I have not yet been weighed in the last balances, and what if I should be found wanting! Brother Christian, Sister Christian, what about your private prayers? Can you live in neglect of the closet, and yet remember that your prayers will be tried before the Great White Throne? Is your Bible left unread in private? Is your religion nothing but a public show and sham? Remember the Great White Throne, for mere pretense will not pass there.

Christian, what about your heart and your treasure? Are you a mere money-hunter? Do you live as others live? Is your delight in the fleeting present? Do you have dealings with the Throne of Heaven? Have you a stony heart towards Divine things? Have you little love to Christ? Do you make an empty profession, and nothing more? Oh, think of that Great White Throne, that Great White Throne! Why, there are some of you, who, when I preach a stirring sermon, feel afraid to come again to hear me. Ah, but if you are afraid of my voice, how will you bear *His* voice who shall speak in tones of thunder? Do searching sermons seem to go through you like a blast of the north wind, chilling your very marrow and curdling your blood? Oh, but what must it be to stand before that dread tribunal? Are you doubting now? What will you do then? Can you not bear a little self-examination? How will you bear that God-examination? If the scales of earth tell you that you are lacking, what message will the scales of Heaven give you? I do warn you, fellow professors, speaking to you as I desire to speak now to my own heart, “Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be reprobates?”

Having spoken a word to the Christian, I should like to say to every one of you, *in remembrance of this Great White Throne, shun hypocrisy*. Are you tempted to be baptized though you are not a Believer, in order to please parents and friends? Beware of that Great White Throne, and think how your insult to God will look at that Last Great Day! Are you persuaded to put on the cloak of religion because it will help your business, or make you seem respectable? Beware, you hypocrite, beware of that Great White Throne; for of all the terrors that shall come forth from it, there shall be none more severe than those which shall scathe the mere professor who made a profession of religion for gain. If you must be damned, be damned any way than as a hypocrite; for they deserve the deepest Hell who for gain make a profession of godliness. The ruin of By-Ends and Hypocrisy will be just indeed. O you high-flying professors, whose wings are fastened on with wax, beware of the sun which will surely pour its heat upon you, for fearful will be your fall from so great a height!

But there are some of you who say, "I do not make any profession of religion." Still my text has a word to you. Still *I want you to judge your actions by that Last Great Day*. O Sir, how about that night of sin? "No," you say, "never mind it; bring it not to my mind." It shall be brought to your remembrance, and that deed of sin shall be published far wider than upon the housetops, proclaimed to all the multitudes who have ever lived since the first man, and your infamy shall become a byword and a proverb among all created beings. What do you think of this, you secret sinners? Ah, young man, you have commenced by stealing, but you will go on to be a downright thief. It is known, Sir, and, "be sure your sin will find you out." Young woman, you have begun to dally with sin, and you think none has seen you, but the most Mighty One has seen your acts and heard your words; there is no curtain between Him and your sin. He sees you clearly, and what will you do with these sins of yours that you think have been concealed? "It was many years ago," you tell me. Yes, but though buried these many years to you, they are all alive to *Him*, for everything is present to the All-Seeing God; and your forgotten deeds shall one day stand out present to you, also. My Hearers, I implore you, do nothing which you would not do if you thought God saw you, for He does see you. Oh, look at your actions in the light of the Judgment. Oh, that secret drinking of yours, how will that look when God reveals it? That private lust of yours which nobody knows of; how would you dare to do it if you remembered that God knows it? Young man, it is a secret, a fearful secret, and you would not whisper it in anyone's ear; but it shall be whispered—no, it shall be *thundered* out before the world! I pray you, Friend, think of this! There is an Observer who takes notes of all that we do, and will publish all to an assembled universe.

And as for us all, are we ready to meet that Last Great Day? I had many things to say to you, but I cannot keep you to say them now, lest you grow weary; but if tonight the trumpet should be sounded, what would be your state of mind? Suppose that now every ear in this place should be startled with a blast most loud and dread, and a voice were heard—

*"Come to judgment,
Come to judgment, come away"?*

Supposing some of you could hide in the vaults and in the foundations, would not many of you rush to the concealment? How few of us might go down these aisles walking steadily into the open air and saying, "I am not afraid of judgment, for 'there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.'" Brothers and Sisters, I hope there are some of us who could go gladly to that Judgment Seat, even if we had to traverse the jaws of Death to reach it. I hope there are some of us who can sing in our hearts—

*"Bold shall I stand in that great day
For who anything to my charge shall lay?
While, through Your blood, absolved I am
From sin's tremendous curse and blame."*

It might put many of us much about to say that. It is easy to speak of full Assurance, but, believe me, it is not quite so easy to have it in earnest in trying times. If some of you get the finger-ache your confidence oozes out at your joints, and if you have but a little sickness you think, "Ah, it may be cholera, what shall I do?" If you cannot bear to die, how, then, will you bear to live forever? Could you not look Death in the face without a shudder—then how will you endure the Judgment? Could you gaze upon Death, and feel that he is your friend and not your foe? Could you put a skull upon your dressing table as a reminder that you will die? Oh, it may well take the bravest of you to do this, and the only sure way is to come as we are to Jesus, with no righteousness of our own to trust to, but finding all in Him! When William Carey was about to die, he ordered to have put upon his tombstone this verse—

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ’s kind arms I fall.
He is my Strength, my Righteousness,
My Jesus, and my All.”*

I would like to wake up in Eternity with such a verse as that in my mind, as I wish to go to sleep in this world with such a hope as that in my heart—

*“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the Cross I cling.”*

Ah, I am talking about what some of us will know more of, perhaps, before this week is over. I am speaking now upon themes which you think are a long way off, but a moment may bring them near. A thousand years is a long time, but how soon it flies! One almost seems, in reading English history, to go back and shake hands with William the Conqueror; a few lives soon bring us even to the flood. You who are getting on to be 40 years old, and especially you who are 60 or seventy, must feel how fast time flies. I only seem to preach a sermon one Sunday in time to get ready for the next. Time flies with such a whirl that no express train can overtake it, and even the lightning flash seems to lag behind it. We shall soon be at the Great White Throne; we shall soon be at the judgment bar of God. Oh, let us be getting ready for it. Let us not live so much in this present, which is but a dream—an empty show—but let us live in the real, substantial future. Oh that I could reach some heart here tonight! I have a notion that I am speaking to someone here who will not have another warning. I am sure that with such throngs as crowd here Sunday after Sunday, I never preach to the same congregation twice. There are always some here who are dead between one Sunday and another. Out of such masses as these it must be so according to the ordinary computation.

Who among you will it be who will die this week? Oh, ponder the question well! Who among you will dwell with the devouring flames? Who among you will abide with everlasting burnings? If I knew you I would gladly bedew you with tears! If I knew you who are to die this week, I would gladly come and kneel down at your side, and implore you to think of eternal things. But I do not know you, and therefore by the living God I do implore you all to fly to Jesus by faith. These are no trifles, Sirs, are they? If they are, I am but a sorry trifler, and you may go your ways and laugh at me; but if they are true and real, it becomes me to be in earnest, and much more does it become you to be in earnest. “Prepare to meet your God!” He comes! Prepare now! “Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation!” The gates of Mercy are not closed. Your sin is not unpardonable. You may yet find mercy. Christ invites you. His blood cries to you—

*“Come and welcome,
Come and welcome,
Sinner, come.”*

Oh, may the Holy Spirit put life into these poor words of mine, and may the Lord help you to come now. The way to come, you know, is just to trust in Christ. It is all done when you trust in Christ, throw yourselves right on Him, having nothing else to trust to. See now, my whole weight leans on the front of this platform. Should this rail give way, I fall. Lean on Christ just in that way—

*“Venture on Him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude.”*

If you can get a grip of the Cross, and stand there beneath the crimson canopy of the Atonement, God Himself cannot smite you, and the Last Great Day shall dawn upon you with splendor and delight, and not with gloom and terror.

I must send you away, but not until all Believers present have given you an invitation to return to the Lord Jesus. To do this we will sing the following verses—

*“Return, O wanderer, to your home.
Your Father calls for you!
No longer now an exile roam
In guilt and misery,
Return, return!
Return, O wanderer, to your home,
‘Tis Jesus calls for you!
The Spirit and the bride say,*

*Come!
Oh now for refuge flee;
Return, return.
Return, O wanderer, to your home,
'Tis madness to delay!
There are no pardons in the tomb,
And brief is Mercy's day.
Return! Return!"*

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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