

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

CHEER FOR DESPONDENCY.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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“Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.”—Proverbs xxvii. 1.*

WHAT a great mercy it is that we do not know “what a day may bring forth”! We are often thankful for knowledge, but in this case we may be particularly grateful for ignorance. It is the glory of God, we are told, to conceal a thing, and it most certainly is for the happiness of mankind that he should conceal their future. Supposing that bright lines were written for us in the book of destiny, and that we could read those bright lines now, and be sure of them, we should probably loiter away our time until we arrived at them, and should have no heart for the present. If, on the other hand, we knew that there were dark days of trouble in store for us, and had a presentiment and full conviction as to when they would come, probably the thought of them would overshadow the present, so that the joys which we now drink would be left untasted by reason of our nervous fears as to the distant future. To know the good might lead us to presumption, to know the evil might tempt us to despair. Happy for us is it that our eyes cannot penetrate the thick veil which God hangs between us and to-morrow, that we cannot see beyond the spot where we now are, and that, in a certain sense, we are utterly ignorant as to the details of the future. We may, indeed, be thankful for our ignorance.

Although, however, we do not know what a day may bring forth, though we cannot see into what I may call “the immediate future”, yet we have reason to be thankful that we do know

* Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, upon the whole verse, is No. 94 in *The New Park Street Pulpit*, “To-morrow.”

something about what is to come, and that we do know what is in the far-reaching future. We differ from the brutes in this respect. When, two or three nights in the week, I pass on my way home a flock of sheep, or a little herd of bullocks, all going down to the butcher's, travelling in the cold, bright moonlight towards the slaughter-house, I feel thankful that they do not know where they are going, for what would be their misery if they knew anything about death? The lamb's thoughts are in the fold, and all unconscious of the shambles; it licks the hand that smites it, not knowing of its coming speedy death. It is the happiness of the brute not to know the future.

But, in our case, we know that we must die; and if it were not for the hope of the resurrection and of the hereafter, this knowledge would distinguish us from the brutes only by giving us greater misery. There must be an intention on God's part for us to live in a future state, or else he would, out of mere benevolence, have left us ignorant of the fact of death. If he had not meant our souls to begin to prepare for another and a better existence, he would have kept us ignorant even of the fact that this one will pass away; but, having given us an intellect and a mind which, both from observation and inward consciousness, must know that death will come, we believe that he would have us prepare for that which will follow, and look out for that which is beyond. We do know the future in its great rough outlines. We know that, if the Lord cometh not first, we shall die; we know that our soul shall live for ever in happiness or in woe; and that, according to whether we are found in Christ or without Christ, our eternal portion shall be one of never-ending agony or of ceaseless bliss. We may be thankful that we do know this, so that we may be prepared for it; but, still,—to return to that with which we started,—we may be thankful also that we do not really know the great future in its details, that it is shut from our eye lest it should have an evil influence upon our life.

Now, Solomon, in the Book of Proverbs, applied the truth that we know not about to-morrow, to the boaster, the man who said, "To-morrow I will go into such a city, and buy, and sell, and get gain, and then go to another city, and get more gain, and then, when I have amassed so much wealth, I will say, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" Solomon seems to come in, and put his hand upon the man's shoulders, and to say, virtually, "Thou fool, thou knowest nothing about all this; thou dost not know what shall be on the morrow; thy goods may never come to thee, or thou mayest not be here to trade with these goods at all; so thou buildest a castle in the air; thou thinkest thy fancies are true; thou art as one that dreams of a feast, and wakes to find himself hungry! How canst thou be so foolish?" Solomon dwells upon the text very solemnly, and says, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

I do not intend, however, to use the text with this object to-night. It struck me that, as Solomon uses it here with one

design, it might be very properly used for another; that, as he intends to shame our growing pride and certainty of prosperity, so it might be used especially to cheer those who have a tendency to gloom, and to shed a ray of light into the thick darkness of their fear.

I. It will, first, comfort THOSE WHO ARE FEARING AND TREMBLING CONCERNING SOME EVIL WHICH IS YET TO COME.

My friend, thou art afraid to-night; thou canst not enjoy anything thou hast because of this terrible and fearful shadow which has come across thy path of an evil which thou sayest is coming to-morrow, or in one or two months' time, or even in six months. Now, at least, thou art not quite certain that it will come, for thou knowest not what may be on the morrow. Thou art as alarmed and as afraid as if thou wert quite certain that it would appear. But it is not so, "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth," and *since it is uncertain whether it shall be or not*, hadst thou not better leave thy sorrow till it is certain; and, meanwhile, leave the uncertain matter in the hand of God, whose divine purposes will be wise and good in the end, and will be even seen to be so? At the very least, slender as the comfort may be, yet still there is comfort in the fact that thou knowest not what may be on the morrow.

Let us just expand this thought a little to those of you who are fearing about to-morrow. We very often fear what never will occur. I think that the major part of our troubles are not those which God sends us, but those which we invent for ourselves. As the poet speaks of some who—

"Feel a thousand deaths in fearing one,"—

so there are many who feel a thousand troubles in fearing one trouble, which trouble, perhaps, never will have any existence except in the workshop of their own misty brain. It is an ill task for a child to whip himself; it might be good for him to feel the whip from his father's hand, but it is of little service when the child applies it himself. And yet, very often, the strokes which we dread never do come from God's hand at all, but are the pure inventions of our own imagination and our own unbelief working together. There are more who have to howl under the lash of unbelief than there are who have to weep under the gentle rod of God's providential dispensation. Now, why shouldst thou go about to fill thy pillow with thorns grown in thine own garden? Why so busy, good sir, about gathering nettles with which to strew thine own bed? There are clouds enough without thy thinking that every little atom of mist will surely bring a tempest. There are difficulties enough on the road to heaven without thy taking up stones to throw into thine own path to make thine own road more rough than there was any need that it should be. Thou knowest not what may be on the morrow. Thy fears are absurd. Perhaps thy neighbour knows they are absurd, but certainly thou oughtest to know it is so. Dost thou not know that the trouble thou art

dreading God can utterly avert? Perhaps to-morrow morning there will come a letter which will entirely change the face of the matter. A friend may interpose where least thou couldst expect one, or difficulties which were like mountains may be cast into the depths of the sea. "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth," and the trouble which thou so much darest may never occur at all.

Moreover, dost thou not know that, even *if the trouble should come, God has a way of overruling it?* So that even thou, poor trembler, shalt stand by, and see the salvation of God, and wonder at two things,—thine own unbelief and God's faithfulness. Thou sayest that the sea is before thee, that the mountains are on either hand, and that the foe is behind thee, but thou knowest not what shall be on the morrow. Thy God shall lead thee through the depths of the sea, and put such a song into thy mouth as thou never couldst have known if there had been no sea, and no Pharaoh, and no mountains to shut thee in. These trials of thine shall be the wine-press out of which shall come the wine of consolation to thee. This furnace shall rob thee of nothing but thy dross, which thou wilt be glad to be rid of, but thy pure gold shall not be diminished by so much as a drachm, but shall only be the purer after it all. The trouble, then, may not come to thee at all, or if it come it may be overruled.

And there is one thing more; supposing the trial does come, *thy God has promised that, as thy days, so shall thy strength be.* Hath he not said it many times in his Word, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"? He never did promise thee freedom from trouble. He speaks of rivers, and of thy going through them; he speaks of fires, and of thy passing through them; but he has added, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." What matters it to thee, then, whether there be fire or not if thou be not burned? What matters it to thee whether there are floods or not if thou be not drowned? As long as thou escapest with spiritual life and health, and comest up out of all thy trials the better for them, thou mayest rejoice in tribulations. Thank God when thy temptations abound, and be glad, when he putteth thee into the furnace, because of the blessing which thou art sure to receive from it. So then, since thou knowest not what may be on the morrow, take thou heart, thou fearing one, and put thy fears away. Do as thou hast been bidden, delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee. He will never suffer the righteous to be moved. Did not David say, speaking by the Holy Ghost, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all"? I charge thee, therefore, to be of good comfort, since thou knowest not what may be on the morrow. This is the message to fearful saints.

II. But now we will use the text to another class of Christians, whose painful position really deserves more pity than that of those

who only invent their fears, or who are troubled about the future. I mean THOSE WHO ARE AT THE PRESENT MOMENT DISCONSOLATE THROUGH IMMEDIATE DISTRESS AND PRESENT AFFLICTION.

We little know, my brethren, when we gather here, how many cases of distress may be assembled in this house at any one time. Verily the poor have not ceased out of the land. The poor we have always with us, and some of the poor, too, who need to have other mouths to speak for them, since from their very independence of spirit and their Christian character they are slow to speak for themselves. There may be a trouble in my neighbour's heart which is almost bursting it while I am sitting peacefully still enjoying the Word. We should remember those who are in bonds, as bound with them; and sympathize with those who are troubled as being ourselves also in the body.

It will not be a waste of time, then, if I say *to you who are troubled about worldly matters*, that there is comfort for you in this passage. "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Thou sayest, "It is all over with me; I will give up in despair." No, friend, do not do so for one day longer, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth; and if to-morrow bring thee not deliverance, hope on at least for one day more, for "thou knowest not what *a day* may bring forth." And I would keep on with the same tale till the last day of life. At least for one day more there is no room for despair. You cannot conclude that God has forsaken you, or that providence has utterly turned against you. At least you know not what may be on the morrow, so wait till you have seen that day out. Give not up yourself a hopeless victim to despair till you have seen what to-morrow may bring you.

What unexpected turns there have been in the lives of those who have trusted in God! You who are trusting in yourselves may help yourselves as best you can, but you who are trusting in God have ample reasons to expect that God will come to your assistance. It is yours to watch, and yours to work as if everything depended upon you, but it is yours also to remember that everything does not depend upon you. Sometimes God has come in to help his servants so exactly at what we call "the nick of time" that they have hardly been able to believe their own senses. "Strange!" they say, "it is like a miracle," and so, indeed, it is; for the difference between the old dispensation and the new is that God used to work his wonders by suspending the laws of nature, whereas now he does greater things than this, inasmuch as he achieves his purposes quite as marvellously, and lets the laws of nature remain as they are. He does not make the ravens bring his people bread and meat, but he lets them have their bread and their meat when they need them.

God does not nowadays make the manna drop down from heaven; no doubt some people would like him to do so, but still he brings the manna for all that; there is the bread, and there is the raiment, and therewith should the Christian be content. He supplies his people's needs by ordinary means, and herein is he to be wondered at and to be adored. Look up, then. Wipe away

that tear. Do not talk for a moment of murmuring against God. Do not go home with that sorry tale to your wife and children, and tell them that God is not faithful to you. Wait till to-morrow, at any rate, for "thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

And to *you who are disconsolate about spiritual things* I might quote the same text. You say, "Ah! I have been hearing the Word very long, and all that I have got from it is a sense of sin, or hardly that. Oh how I wish that God would bless the Word to my soul! I am longing to be saved! What would I not give to be a Christian, a true and sincere Christian, one in whom the Spirit of God has wrought a new heart and a right spirit? Oh!" you say, "I have sought it by listening to the Word, and I have sought it in earnest prayer; but months have passed, and I have made no advance; I have no more hope now than I had long ago; I seem as far off the attainment of eternal life as I was when first I heard the Word; nay, if possible, I am still further off; the Word has been a savour of death unto death to me, and not a savour of life unto life." Well, my dear friend, do not give up listening to the Word; do not give up treading the courts of the Lord's house; for, if thou hast hitherto got no blessing, yet, being in the way, the Lord may meet with thee, for thou knowest not what may be on the morrow.

How many years those poor creatures waited round the pool when they expected that an angel would, at a certain season, come and trouble the water! There they waited, and though they were disappointed scores of times by others stepping in before them, yet, seeing it was the only hope they had, they waited still. Now, it is in the use of the means that *you* are likely to get a blessing. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Do not, therefore, be persuaded to cease hearing, for thou knowest not what may be on the morrow. The very next sermon thou shalt hear may be the means of thine enlightenment. The very next address at the prayer-meeting may give thee encouragement. The very next time the gospel trumpet sounds, thou mayest obtain thy liberty, and what a blessing will that liberty be! When thou dost find it, thou wilt say it was well worth waiting for.

Let me add another exhortation, do not give up praying. It is a common device of Satan to say to the seeking soul, "The Lord will never hear you; you are one of the reprobate; he has never written your name in the Book of Life." Soul, pray as long as you have breath. Let it be your firm resolve to remain at the throne of grace; say to yourself,—

"If I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there."

It is not said that the gate of mercy will open at the first knock. If it were, there would be no room for the virtue of importunity. But the Lord, who delights in our importunity, encourages us with the promise that one day the gate will be opened. "Ask, and *it shall be given you*; seek, and *ye shall find*; knock, and *it shall be*

opened unto you." And who knows how soon this may be? Why, before you close your eyes to-night, you may be able to look to Christ crucified, and find joy and peace in believing. Instead of the weeping prayer at the bedside, there may be a happy prayer of another kind; not with tears of sorrow, but with tears of holy joy, to think that the Lord has enlightened your darkness, that you have looked unto Christ, and now your face is not ashamed? Why should it not be so to-night? Why should it not be so on the morrow? God grant, poor disconsolate one, that it may be so very speedily!

At any rate, wilt thou let me repeat the advice I have already given? Since thou canst not know that God will not hear thee; since it never was revealed to any man, and never will be, that God will not regard his cry; if thou canst get no further than the king of Nineveh did, yet go on, and, "who can tell" what may be, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth? I will tell thee one thing, and thou mayest take it as being God's own truth; if thou goest to Christ empty-handed, guilty, yet willing to take all thy salvation from him as a free gift, and if thou castest thyself upon him, I will tell thee what the day will bring forth. It will bring forth eternal life to thee,—salvation, joy, and peace. It will bring forth adoption, for thou shalt be received into the divine family. It will bring forth to thee the foretaste of the heaven which God has prepared for his people. Thou shalt know a blessed day here that shall be a foretaste of a never-ending day hereafter, a day that shall be as one of the days of heaven upon earth.

I wish that the Lord would bless these words of mine to disconsolate ones. I think there may be some here who may be sustained for a while, and kept up by what I have said; but it will be better still if they shall now be filled with a desperate resolve to cast themselves at the foot of the cross; then, little do they know what the day will bring forth! They cannot imagine the joy they shall have, nor the peace they shall receive. The pardon which Christ shall give them is far more rich than they have thought it could be, and the success with which their prayers shall be crowned is far more marvellous than even their best hopes have conceived. "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

III. Now, thirdly, turning this time, not to those who are fearing the future, nor yet to those who are disconsolate about present affliction, I thought of addressing a few words to THOSE WHO ARE TOLLWORN IN THE MASTER'S SERVICE.

I can scarcely sympathize, as I could wish to do, with those who have worked for Christ unsuccessfully. To say, "Master, I have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing," has never been my lot, and therefore I can only speak from what I suppose to be the feeling of unsuccessful men. For these many years I have been preaching the gospel in this great London, and I know not that at any time God has blessed us more than he is blessing us now, neither can I even say that at any time he has blessed us less, for it seems as if he has always been giving us more than we can receive, and blessing the Word exceeding abundantly above

what we asked or even thought. There is room for nothing in my case but gratitude and encouragement, for humble dependence upon God for the future, and adoring joy for the past and the present.

But what hard work it must be for a minister or a Sunday-school teacher to go on preaching and labouring positively without success, or with so little that it is only like a cluster here and there upon the topmost bough! I can imagine such brethren and sisters feeling that they can speak no more in the name of the Lord; and, as they weep over their failure, saying, with Isaiah, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" I should not wonder but that my text may whisper in their ears a comfortable thought, "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

Do not cease from thy labour, dear brother! Thou art fainting to-day, but *to-morrow thou mayest arise with new strength*; or feeling as if thou wert but weakness itself in the morning, though thou mayest hardly know how it came about, in the evening thou mayest be happy and cheerful. The divine presence may overshadow thy heart, and drive thy fears away, consoling thee in thy distress, and making thee feel as if it were well to be God's servant even if one had no present reward.

And what if, coming at the back of this, *thou shouldst find thyself, next time thou goest to thy work, discharging it with unusual zest, and with new power*? What if the pulpit, instead of being, as it has been, a prison to thee, should suddenly come to be a palace? What if, instead of there being a mere bush in the wilderness, God should dwell in the bush, and make it all ablaze, like that unconsumed burning bush which Moses saw? What if the stammering tongue should suddenly be unloosed, and the cold heart be all aglow with divine enthusiasm? What if the poor tongue of clay should suddenly become a tongue of fire? What a change it would be! Ah! but "thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

And what if, whilst thou art thyself thus quickened, *there should fall a like spirit upon the people*, upon the children in the class, upon the hearers in the house of prayer? What if, instead of the dull, leaden eyes, which looked as if death itself were gazing from them,—what if, instead of stony and motionless hearers, there should suddenly be a holy sensitiveness given to the people,—what wouldst thou say to that? Yet why should there not be? Sometimes, such grace comes all at once. The rock has been long smitten, yet it would not break; but, on a sudden, there has come a blow of the hammer, and that, perhaps, not so hard as many that have fallen before, but it has hit the rock in the right place, and lo! the mass of stone flies to shivers! "Oh!" you say, "I could keep on at my work if I thought that this would happen." Keep on at your work, then, brother, for you do not know what will come next. Pray for great things, and you may then expect them. You may not make sure of such blessing, of course, if you have not prayed for it; but, having sought it, why should it not come?

I believe all Sunday-school teachers find that, sometimes, such

sudden meltings come over their classes, and ministers often realize that, on a sudden, they scarcely know how, there is a change in the very aspect of their hearers, so that it is quite a different thing to preach. I am very conscious of the difference there is between the various congregations I address. Almost every day, and sometimes twice a day, I am preaching. Occasionally it is dreadful misery because, say what we will, we know we have not a sympathizing audience. We feel as though we were dragging a plough over the rough ground; but when we feel that the Spirit of God is there, then we realize that we are sowing the good seed, that it is falling on good ground, and we expect the joyful sheaves which are to be our reward. And yet, brethren, we are as much the servants of God when we are doing the one thing as when we are doing the other, and are as much in his service when we are unsuccessful as when we are successful. We are not responsible to God for the souls that are saved, but we are responsible for the gospel that we preach, and for the way in which we preach it. And "who can tell" whether those of us who have been least successful may not suddenly exchange our heavy toil for the most delightful service, for we know not what a day may bring forth?

And how dost thou know, my brother, what may yet happen? Thou wert saying, this morning, "It is a dark age for the church." Well, so it is. You were saying, "I believe it is quite a crisis." So it is. Every year, in fact, seems to be a crisis. "Ah!" you say, "but there are peculiar dangers now." No doubt there are, and I think the oldest man here recollects that there were peculiar dangers when he was a boy; there always have been, and always will be, peculiar dangers. But if there is danger from this revival of Ritualism,—and no doubt there is,—yet, who among us can tell what a day may bring forth? Are we certain that God will not yet turn back the tide of Romanizing error? Are we sure that he has not a man somewhere, or even fifty men, who shall be the instruments of accomplishing this? Has it not often occurred that the very men who have been the hottest advocates of a certain system have afterwards been the greatest enemies of that system? The Christian Church could never have expected to get an apostle from among the Pharisees, and, least of all, could they have supposed that they would find in Saul of Tarsus, the blood-thirsty persecutor, the great apostle of the Gentiles, not one whit behind the very chiefest of the twelve. You and I do not know what God has in store. There may be somewhere at this very moment a man, unknown to you, who is reading the Word, and, as he reads it, he may, like the monk Luther, get such light through the reading that he, who once helped to build up, will be the instrument in God's hand to destroy. I am getting more and more hopeful about these matters. I entertain the most sanguine expectation that the God who has put his enemies to rout in years gone by will do it now once again; and instead of sitting down in anything like heaviness of spirit, or oppression of heart, I would speak hopefully, and have you, my brethren, feel hopefully, for we do not know what a day may bring forth.

Suddenly, the whole current of the public mind may be turned. *There may come a great tide of conversions*, which shall be the strength and the joy of the Christian Church. On a sudden, slumbering churches may awake, gracious revivals may come upon the land, the holy fire may once again descend from heaven. The Christian Church may start up to find that the God who answered by fire is still in her midst. The mourning Christian may put off his ashes and sackcloth, and put on his beautiful array, and a shout of joy may go up, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" where you and I expected to hear nothing but "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Let us, then, if we are working for the Master, instead of growing tired with service, hear him say to us, "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." Let us, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord. You know not how soon you shall see this success, for you know not what a day may bring forth. I hope every city missionary who hears me, every Bible-woman, every minister, every tract-distributor, every Sunday-school teacher, will try and look this very sweet thought in the face. Expect that God is going to do great things, and he will do them, for he does very much according to his people's expectations. According to your faith shall it be done unto you.

IV. I will now say a few words, in the fourth place, to THOSE WHO ARE DISPIRITED IN PRAYER, to some who have been engaged in special supplication for some object, but who up till now have received no answer, and are ready to give up praying. Let me encourage such to persevere by repeating to them the words of Solomon, "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

There is a story I have often heard told by our Methodist friends of a woman who had long prayed for her husband. She resolved that she would pray for him every day a certain number of times, I think it was for ten years; and that, after that, she would pray no longer, supposing that, if her prayer were not heard by that time, it would be an intimation that God did not intend to grant the blessing. I do not think she was right in setting any limit to God at all, or that she had any right so to act. However, on this occasion, God winked at his servant's infirmity, and, so the story goes,—and I do not doubt its correctness,—on the day on which she was to cease from prayer her husband suddenly turned thoughtful, and asked her the question which she had so longed to hear from him, "What must I do to be saved?" I am sure that those who have watched over their success in prayer will have met with cases quite as startling as that,—things which your neighbour would not believe if you were to tell him, but which you treasure up amongst those inward experiences which are true to you, however improbable they may seem to other people. You know, dear friends, that you have obtained answers to prayer, very singular ones, and have obtained them very promptly and very punctually. You have had your prayers met just as an honest merchant meets his bills, at the appointed time. On the expected day God has met with you,

and given you what you wanted, and what you sought for, just at the very time you needed it.

But now I will suppose that you are tried thus. That dear child of yours, instead of hopefully rewarding your prayers, seems to be going from bad to worse. Perhaps, dear brother, it is your son, and I know there are many such cases; the devil has told you that it is no use to pray for him, for God will never hear you. Or else, good sister, it is your brother, and your prayer for him has been incessant; indeed, it has been a constant burden on your mind. Now, in such cases, I charge you, I earnestly entreat you never to listen to the malicious insinuation of Satan that "you may as well leave off praying, for you will not be heard," for, at the very least, and I am now putting it on the very lowest ground possible, "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." You cannot tell but that the hard heart may yet be softened, and the rebellious will be subdued. You would be surprised to go home and find your son converted, would you not? Well, but such things have occurred. You would be surprised if your wife came in, some Sunday evening, and said, "I have been hearing So-and-so, and God has met with me." Yet why should it not be so? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Is his arm shortened that it cannot save? Is his ear heavy that it cannot hear? Even if you should die without seeing your children converted, or your dear ones brought in, you do not know, even then, what a day may bring forth. They may be converted after you are dead; and it will tend, possibly, to swell the joy of heaven when you shall see them, after years of wandering, brought to follow their father, their father whom in life they despised, but whom after he was gone they came to imitate. Persevere in prayer, Christian. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." Praying breath is never spent in vain. Still besiege the throne. The city may hold out for a while, but prayer should capture it. Beleaguer the throne of grace; it is to be taken. Never raise the siege until you get the blessing: the blessing shall certainly be yours.

V. And now I cannot talk longer on this matter, so I will close with just another thought to THOSE OF US WHO ARE CHEERFUL AND HAPPY.

I hope there are many of us who are neither afraid and fretting about the future, nor depressed about the present, neither worn out with toil in the Master's service, nor dispirited in prayer. There are some of us to whom the Lord is so gracious that our cup runneth over. Now, we may just put another drop on the top of the full cup. Dear friend, "thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." It may perhaps bring forth to you and to me our last day. What a blessed day that would be,—our last day! Our dying day! No, do not call it so, but the day of our translation, the day of our great change, the day of our being taken up, the day of our being carried away in the fiery chariot to be for ever with the Lord!

Thou knowest not but what this may be thy case to-morrow. Oh, what joy! I am doubting and fearing to-day, but I may see his

face to-morrow, and see it so as never to lose sight of it again. From my poor tenement of poverty I am going to the mansions of eternal blessedness. From the sick-bed, where I have tossed in pain, I shall mount to everlasting joy. The streets of gold may be trodden to-morrow, and the palm branch of victory may be waved to-morrow, the streets trodden by these weary feet, and the palm branch waved by these toil-worn hands—to-morrow! Yes, to-morrow the chants of angels may be in your ears, and the swell of celestial music may make glad your soul. To-morrow you may see the beatific vision, and may behold the King in his beauty in the land that is very far off. I do like to live in the constant anticipation of being "with Christ, which is far better." Do not put it off, Christian, as though it were far away. If we had to wait a hundred years they would soon pass, like a watch in the night; but we shall not live so long as that. We may be with our Lord to-morrow. We may sup here on earth, and breakfast in heaven. We may breakfast on earth, and hear Christ say, "Come and dine," or we may go from our communion table here to the great supper of the Lamb above, to be *with him for ever*.

This is the best of it. When somebody said to a Christian minister, "I suppose you are on the wrong side of fifty?" "No," he said, "thank God, I am on the right side of fifty, for I am sixty, and am therefore nearer heaven." Old age should never be looked upon with dismay by us; it should be our joy. If our hearts were right in this matter, instead of being at all afraid at the thought of parting from this life, we should say,—

"Ah me! ah me that I
In Kedar's tents here stay!
No place like this on high!
Thither, Lord! guide my way.
O happy place!
When shall I be,
My God, with thee,
And see thy face?"

I have not time to say much to others here who are not concerned in these sweet themes, but I will at least say this. *Let the careless and thoughtless here remember that they do not know what a day may bring forth.* To-morrow it may not be that grand party to which you are intending to go; to-morrow it may not be that sweet sin of which your evil nature is thinking. To-morrow may see you on a sick-bed, to-morrow may see you on your dying bed. To-morrow, worst of all, may see you in hell! O sinner, what a state to live in, to be in daily jeopardy of eternal ruin, to have the wrath of God, who is always angry with the wicked, abiding on you; and not to know but that to-morrow you may be where you can find no escape, no hope, no comfort! To-morrow in eternity! To-morrow banished from his presence for ever! To-morrow to have that awful sentence thrilling in your soul, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."