

Salvation by Grace

an address on Luke 23: 39-43

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The occasion was unique. It was just the moment for God to make manifest His grace. Man's iniquity was complete. And when all classes, the high and the low, were alike implicated in pouring scorn upon God and His Son, it was of no use to be drawing distinctions. To the Son of God it was due that His Father should show the efficacy of His blood for any - the immediate and abiding value of His blood.

The moment gave a striking opportunity; for there hung a man openly a sinner, a criminal, a malefactor, of the darkest dye. Indeed there were two; and we have no ground whatever for supposing that he who repented and believed was less a criminal than the man who died in impenitent rebellion against God. Still less is there any ground to suppose that the man who then confessed the Saviour had been under previous process, or that any deep work had been going on in his soul before he hung upon the cross. Scripture, as far as it speaks, is distinctly against such a thought. Matthew and Mark speak of the robbers railing upon Him, not of one only but of both. We know that men try to get rid of this, and would make out the one to be something not so bad as his fellow. A good deal has actually been made of the fact that they were not thieves, but robbers! Is it not extraordinary that men should think there was any difference to signify? A thief may be a sneaking robber, and a robber a bold thief; but one would think that when sin is weighed in the presence of God, it is not very much worth talking of the difference between them. For one thing is very clear — that they were both suffering as robbers. That is, they were not merely dishonest men, purloining what was not their own, but they accompanied it as usual with boldness rather than treachery, with violence or even murder. Barabbas certainly did so; and these at any rate were both of them robbers.

The difference between them does not lie there at all; and they would have been no better or worse if they had been thieves and not robbers. We must not lose ourselves by letting slip the grand truth of the grace of God through Christ toward the lost. But there was an expression produced not merely in the feelings, but in the conscience, of one of these robbers; and we can well understand that the wonderful spectacle of the Holy Sufferer, which had impressed Pilate when He was not in the depth of His sufferings but only in the outer circle of them, should have deeply impressed the dying man. Even such a hardened soul as Pilate, accustomed to condemn so many to death, and historically known to have been a man of desperate character, and most unscrupulous — even he had his feelings, and shrank (I do not say with really righteous indignation) from the suggestion of the priests. He morally condemned them, and evidently felt how false they were, and hypocritical, and bloodthirsty. He wanted to let Jesus off, not wishing to add one more crime to the long list of his life's villainies.

But there was more than this, and quite different from it, dawning on one of the robbers; and what brought it out was the continued railing of his fellow. "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." The conviction evidently pierced the soul of the penitent robber that here was a Man who differed not so much externally as morally and essentially.

No circumstances made such a difference. Education, religion — as people call it, or whatever they like — none of these things made the difference. The robber had heard Him, for faith cometh by hearing, not by seeing. It was not the sight of Jesus, for thousands saw the same thing that he saw; but

he heard the Holy Victim for sin on the cross say, "Father, forgive them." One may not say that these were the words to sink so deep into his soul; but how calculated they were to go right through the conscience of the man, and to act on his heart!

So it is written "There is forgiveness . . . that Thou mayest be feared." Yes, "forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared!" (Ps. 130: 4) not fear of being lost merely, that he knew. No Jew could be without more or less knowing the danger of ruin if a man die in his sins. But "there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." And here was that most solemn moment, when never were so many, not merely of the rabble but of the greatest in the land, and those that occupied officially the highest religious places, animated with one implacable desire for the destruction of this most holy Man! and this most holy Man uttered not one word of judgment, but at that awful crisis pleaded that His Father would forgive them! A new light dawned upon the dying robber. Samuel did not so pray, nor David, nor Solomon. Who ever before? You must wait for Christ that you may have such a prayer: then only is everything in perfection.

It was the proof of this perfection of the Lord Jesus, along with His wonderful words, His looking for and counting upon mercy for others, which touched the heart of the robber. Who could He be? There was but One Person conceivable. The woman of Samaria, although she was utterly dark and ignorant, knew quite well that "when the Messiah cometh, He will tell us all things." Every Jew of course knew that. Now this poor crucified robber sits in judgment on himself, and wholly refuses the railing in which he had up to that moment himself participated.

"Dost not *thou* fear God?" said he. *He* feared God then. He is astonished at the other robber. He cannot tell why the words that had won his own soul to God had not won his fellow. "Dost thou not fear God, seeing that thou art in the same condemnation?" They were all alike crucified but oh, how different each! The Messiah crucified, hardened, unbelieving, robbers crucified. But in one, as he hung upon the cross, there was such a new-born sense of grace that it produced "fear of God," horror of sin, faithful dealing with it, reproving his fellow with whom he had joined, no more dreading a retort, nor afraid of being asked — "Who are you? what do you pretend to? Why, you have been railing too!" What then produced such an entire change of feeling in the man? Faith. Yes, it always produces repentance when it is itself genuine. Faith makes a man willing to see sin as he never saw it before, and makes him see it because God is revealed to him. We never can see sin, except through the cross of Christ, in the light of God. It was Christ crucified Who brought the light of God into the man's conscience. How exceeding sinful must his sins be to bring down the Son of God to die for them!

The very effort to please God makes a conscientious renewed man feel his inability; and sin becomes increasingly sinful. There is nothing that brings out the hideousness of sin so deeply, and with such abhorrence, without destroying confidence before God, as the grace of Christ. Does law this in measure? Christ does it far better than law, as was the case with this poor robber. It was not law but Christ that made him thus judge himself, and form a sound estimate of the sin of his fellow. "Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly." His conscience was purged. When a man has a purged conscience, he can afford to confess his sins. He can tell all out exactly now, even to men. He had been with God in the secret of his heart. It might be only just before, but he had been with God. No man is ever true before men that is not true before God; and truth before God must come previously to truth before men. It was the Lord Jesus that stripped him of all the disguises of his soul. It was His grace to the guilty that gave him confidence to make a clean breast to God, no longer hiding his sins, but assured that God would receive Him by the blood of Jesus.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven: whose sin is covered." But he is not a blessed

man who covers his own transgressions; and such is the way of the unbelieving man. The believer has God to cover him, and God covers his sins with the blood of His own Son. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from every sin." Such was the real secret of this converted robber; and now he takes all the shame to himself. He owns his guilt, and says to his fellow, "And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Who told him so? He had never heard it from the lips of man. On the contrary, men had been condemning Christ; not least those who paid mock honour. Pilate would have let Him off. Herod found nothing to call for death. It was the chief priests — the High Priest of all — the religious heads of God's ancient people, who would crucify the Lord Jesus; and the voices of the crowd gave their loud approval. Had public opinion been his guide, had he listened to the great men of the nation, he would have come to a different conclusion. Just apply it to yourself. Are you not influenced by today's opinion? Are you not prejudiced by what great men think? Evidently, you must see, man does not change. The world is just the same world substantially as it was then. There may be superficial changes; but the world, as such, is the same.

It was in Jerusalem, in the city of solemnities, in the midst of the ancient people of God, of those who had the law and the prophets, where these events occurred. There was not then for Jews a single idol in Jerusalem. I dare say the Roman soldiers, as their manner was, worshipped their standards; they may have had some of their little gods in the castle or elsewhere. Ah! possibly you may have got some little idols in Montrose. At any rate they are to be found in most places throughout this country. What is worshipping a wafer? That is a little enough God, to be sure. Think of angels, saints, the Virgin, the crucifix, or any relic of that kind! It is of no use saying that people do not worship them. There is a great deal more worshipping of Mary than of the true God in the Roman Catholic body; and it is in vain to tell me that they are not professing Christians. They are; and this makes it truly awful; real idolatry among professing Christians!

I do not wish to allow an unkind thought about them, and I have not one. There is no Roman Catholic in the world I would not serve as far as I could for God's glory, without the cheat of torturing or burning heretics, and calling it an act of faith and God's service. One could not be expected to join them in what he believes to be wrong: for why should one do wrong for any person under the sun? But to do good to them — or even for that matter to a Turk or a Jew — surely such is the business of a Christian man in this world; to magnify the Lord Jesus in well-doing to others, and in bringing the truth to bear upon them. But take care to do so in a loving way, and not so as to hinder the very truth you desire to commend to their consciences. Such was the way the Lord Jesus took with this poor man. For is it not absolutely certain that there is not a single sheep ever brought to God that the Lord Jesus does not personally pursue? does He not go after till He finds it? does He not lay it on His shoulders, and bring it home rejoicing?

Would you like to have the Lord Jesus laying you upon His shoulders, and bringing you home with joy? Why not now — this night? Why not have the blessed Saviour your Saviour, and know it? You may tell me Oh, but the man was in such danger! It was no wonder he turned to God. May I say that if you were crucified, you would not think it a nice time for conversion? You do not know what it is to be in the agonies of the cross. It was perhaps the most cruel and shameful form of torture, one reserved for slaves only. But then it was, while the man was suffering such agonies, that the Lord Jesus won his soul to God.

But this also let me point out to you; people of every sort think this quite an exceptional case. It is altogether a mistake. Granted that there is a grandeur and simplicity about it that exactly suits the cross of the Lord Jesus; but I maintain that the way whereby the man was brought to God is that in which you must be brought to Him: not of course by the outward agony, but by the word of the Lord; by the

Holy Ghost applying the word to your conscience, and by your submission to it as "the grace of God that bringeth salvation." It is no use to say it has not appeared to you. The grace that bringeth salvation hath appeared to "all men." It is not meant that all men have seen it. A man may plunge his head into a dark cave and cannot see the sun shine; but the sun shines over the rest of the world for all that. There are men that do not see the sun. It may be that they are blind, and there is such a thing as moral blindness; and above all there may be a wilful turning away from God. But still the true light already shines.

The Lord Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man (or, everything). This does not mean that every one will be saved. But every man ought to have that grace presented to his soul. It is true that the church of God has not been faithful; that the servants of the Lord have not done their duty. Even very real Christians are too often content with doing a little now and again, instead of all living only and always for Christ.

The Lord's charge was that the gospel should be preached to the whole creation. Thus nobody should be shut out from the bright light of the gospel — no class so bad that they are excepted. And just as there were these two men on either side of the Lord Jesus, so there are always two classes in the world now — those who believe, and those who refuse. On which side are you? Have you been won to God through hearing the blessed word of Jesus? "He that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life eternal." The law of Moses would not suffice. It could not give life. How could law set free? "He that heareth My word." Now, this is what one poor robber did, as the other did not. Yet physically both heard. Externally one robber was just as near as the other. And you too have been just as near the gospel. Have you heard with your soul? Have you taken those words as good for you, sufficient and valid for salvation? The converted robber believed the word. He heard the word of Christ, he believed God that sent Him — gave Him credit for truth, as well as for love, in sending the Saviour of sinners; and he reaped the blessing.

And look at his testimony. He could give the lie to all the world; for all the world had said that Jesus was a malefactor, and treated Him as such in the most gross and shameless manner. Alas! we do not find that even the two robbers were hurried to death in the way that Jesus was. Then His trial was one of the most scandalous transactions of its kind. They rose early in the morning to do their bad work, and rushed it through as if their very salvation depended upon their injustice to that Blessed One. It was done by the Sanhedrim — the highest council in Israel. But what an awful thing this world is without Christ! Take care that you are not arrayed against Him, and on the side of the devil.

Has Satan insinuated into the heart of any of you to refuse the Saviour tonight? This is as great an insult as you can do Him. Now He is seeking to bless you. Now He is appealing to your souls. He wants you to rest upon His precious blood, just as the poor robber did. Oh, beware of turning away from Him! Remember those solemn words of the Apostle Paul, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" One of the robbers did neglect, the other did not. Many a one has said he would not like to be with a robber in heaven. Would you prefer to be the other in hell? This is what it comes to. With one or other of the robbers you must be. Nobody can help that. If you were a king, you could not avoid it: but what folly of men to refuse to be saved on the only ground on which men can be saved — God's absolute, sovereign, grace in Christ!

But it is not grace without righteousness. Where is the righteousness? It is God's in Christ. In yourselves you are not righteous. I know few in this hall; but I do know this of every one of you, that there is no righteousness here that could stand in the presence of God. Where is it? In Christ Jesus only. Oh! to have the righteousness of God by faith of Christ, to have righteousness fit for the throne of God.

That righteousness is ours if we believe in Him, for "God made to be sin for us Him who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Have you, then, got it, or are you content to live without it? Without it you must be judged; and if you are judged, you are lost for ever. Do you deserve to be saved? Dare you say so?

There are two things in Scripture — judgment and salvation. The people that are judged are not saved; and the people that are saved are not judged. It is not that these do not tell out all that they have done here below. Every person must do that — saved or lost. Every man must out with what he has done in the body, and out with it to one Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Judge, not God the Father. All judgment is committed to the Son. It was the Son who was insulted; it is the Son who is to judge. Men turned upon the Son of God because He became man; but He as man will judge all mankind. All emperors, kings, and commanders — all the mighty men that have ever lived — must bow down before that one Man. So must you; no man so obscure, no man so hidden in the crowd of this world, as to escape. If a man be buried in the deepest abyss of ocean, it must give him up — Hades give up his spirit, and the ocean give up his body. For we must all stand to tell out all our lives to the Saviour. But if you have not got Him as Saviour, you will meet Him as Judge.

Those who believe have Him now as a Saviour; and when they tell all out, they will do so to One who loves them with perfect love, to One who shows them the secrets of their heart, to One who explains every difficulty. We shall know then as we are known. We shall assuredly learn, from that wonderful transaction before the throne of the Lord Jesus, the depth of His love, the extent of His goodness toward us, and our own inexcusableness. We shall then see perfectly how nothing but His work could have saved us.

But if you refuse Him now as Saviour, then His unsparing judgment will fall upon your guilty heads — spirit, soul, and body. For every man has got all this complex being. It is a mistake to suppose that it is only believers who have got spirits as well as souls. All this is merely the description of a man. The believer has a new man, which is another thing. He has in Christ a new life, a divine nature. The spirit, the soul, the body, are characteristics of men, no matter where they are or what they are. And there is the solemnity of it. If man had only a body of flesh and blood, or if he had only an animal soul, we could understand his carelessness; for a merely animal soul will never appear in the resurrection. Precisely, because MAN alone, of all animals on the earth, has got a reasonable soul, a soul that came from the inbreathing of God — therefore it is that he only is to rise, as his spirit returns to God who gave it. Brutes do not rise — man must. But those who are Christ's will rise in all His beauty and glory; and those that are not Christ's must rise to be judged, not merely to give account. The believer will have to give an account, but not as a criminal. A criminal has to give an account, no doubt, or at any rate an account is taken of what he has done; and he is judged. The believer is not judged. The words quoted show this, particularly as given in the Revised Version of John 5: 24, as many knew it long before.

I refer to it now, not that I have a very high opinion of that revision, but it is often right. "He that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me hath life eternal, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." Our old version had "condemnation;" and many of us used to say that it was not exact, and the Revisers imply so too. "He that heareth My word . . . cometh not into judgment." How blessed! There would be no sense in judging a man who is already saved. Till a man is saved, he is under judgment; and when he is saved, he is taken out of judgment. Only theologians talk of putting him into the dock again. The whole thought is a mistake. The believer is justified while in this world. Where is the sense of *his* being judged afterward? Would it not be a denial of his being now saved? The mistake arises from nature always denying grace.

Do you know how it is that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, people are mistaken about the teaching of the Bible? It is because, being not right about the gospel, they are not sound as to the first foundation. Everybody knows that if a foundation is faulty, the building is sure to have cracks in it, and is not to be trusted anywhere. May grace keep one from fault-finding! But I do want Christians to understand how it is that they are not more happy. Is it not for the same reason that poor anxious souls are kept, for years, perhaps, in misery and doubt? It is for want of seeing the fulness of the grace of God that meets them in our Lord Jesus. Scripture knows no such thought as that people should wait for weeks, or months, or years before knowing themselves saved. You have only to read the Acts of the Apostles and see men that knew nothing at all before, who were saved the same hour. Look, for instance, at the gaoler at Philippi, or at the Ethiopian treasurer of Queen Candace. It does not matter where you turn, to Jew or Greek, they were through faith blessed at once.

Why should it not be so now? Must there not be some strange barrier in your way? some hindrance of Satan, that keeps genuine souls from entering into peace for months, or even years? And the worst of it is, that when people do enter, they dread lest they should deceive themselves. It is curious enough that in the two hymns we sung to night I was really embarrassed; because they both take for granted that the Christian must die, that the tongue shall be silent in the grave. Both are assumptions, although the authors of them were excellent persons — John Newton the writer of the one, and W. Cowper of the other. They were both of them, beyond a doubt, true saints of the Lord; but the truth should be dearer than either.

Now just look at the grave departure from Scripture. I ought never to assume, as a Christian, that I am going to die, but rather to be waiting for Christ. One may die, of course, as is perfectly true; but I ought not to speak as if I must die, as both hymns do. I was rather hard put to it to find a hymn one could sing; and I just refer to it to show how adulterated the truth is in reference to the question. Do you think people do not lose by it? Of course they do. What is the remedy? The grace and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ as set forth in the gospel. We know that many say this is dangerous! The truth of God dangerous! The grace of God dangerous! just reflect for a moment, and you will see how excessively false and evil such a notion is. Nay, it is rebellion against the grace of God, as God has revealed it in His word.

Look again at this man. I have shown the blessed testimony he bore to the Lord Jesus as the Holy One who had done nothing amiss. Surely he must have been more than man to have done nothing amiss. But then the dying robber does not rest there. He turns to our Lord, and strikingly pleads, "Remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom" — not exactly "into," but "in Thy kingdom." This is a remarkable point, because our Lord does not go into His kingdom there. He comes in His kingdom from heaven; He receives a kingdom from God and comes back. It is given Him by God before He comes, as is shown in the parable, where it is said that "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return."

Is it not a marvellous thing that the robber should know the truth better than our authorised translators? They made the mistake of thinking He had come into this kingdom there. The robber knew more about the kingdom than they. He, no doubt, had heard the Prophets read — had heard of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, and all His angels with Him; and he asked to be remembered of the Lord. When you consider how the robber had lived up to that time, what a favour it was for him to ask of Christ "Remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom!" That the Lord Jesus in that august moment, when claims of the countless interests of the kingdom over all the earth rested upon Him, should remember the new-born one, the poor converted robber! For him personally to be remembered by the King of kings and Lord of lords at that moment, you would say, was a bold request.

Yes, but the Lord Jesus loves the boldness that confides in Him. What you have to guard against is just the contrary — the bravado of unbelief. Oh, think of this!

People talk about the presumption of believers. It were wiser to warn them of the presumptuous sin of unbelief. Is it not truly presumptuous to think that *they* ever make a title to the skies, or a title to Christ's kingdom comparable with His grace? You never can have so good a title as the robber had unless you receive his title. There is but one title good. The title of grace is perfect; and this is Christ: Christ in all His worth, Christ in His perfection, Christ in all the power of His redemption. Is that your title? If so, blessed are you: you have got the same title as the converted robber; you cannot have a better; you may easily have a worse. All else is good for nothing. There are some Christians who consider it the way of wisdom and prudence to mix a little bit of self with grace. The more they do so, the weaker they are, the less happy. And so they deserve; for they dishonour Christ, by marring grace, and darkening the truth.

What a deliverance to have done with self! What self-abandonment to have only grace, and nothing but grace, and all grace! Such was the case with this poor man. He saw he could look in the Lord's face, and say to Him, "Remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." And the Lord did not reply, "What! you talk about that. You may think yourself well off to be just the soul borne with, as it were, in heaven." The Lord will not have one in heaven save like Himself. He will not allow a person there with a single token of shame about him. They are to be resplendent every one in the beauty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I remember seeing a curious mistake in a tract by one of our brethren; for you must not suppose we want to maintain that they do not make mistakes. "The Broken Crown" was the point of the tract. But seriously, in heaven there are no broken crowns — nothing of the sort. When Christ takes saints to heaven, they are crowned: no broken crowns are there, nor men in robes that are not the best robes. Yea, the best robe is given here. What is the best robe? Christ. Put on Christ, no robe so good as He. Be true to Christ. It is impossible to have Christ, and not have the best robe. This is the truth of the figure; and the man that had not on the wedding garment was one who dared to come in his own righteousness. So that, when the robber begged the Lord to remember him when He came in His kingdom, he was thoroughly within the just petitions to Christ. He was there, if I may so say, swimming in that blessed sea of love in which he was made to find his true bliss. He was at home there, at ease there, breathing freely there. He was buoyed up and made strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; yea, he was as good as preaching from that cross to every creature, and showing what faith in it can do for a poor guilty sinner.

Is this to be your portion now? I call on you not to believe half the gospel, nor to seek and find a little something for your soul. I want you to see that Christ does not give in such fashion at all. It is not His way to give a little now and a little again. The crumbs that fall from His table are turned into richer and still richer blessing. He gives better than the whole loaf of man. He was asked, "Remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom." What is the answer? It is in accordance with a blessed principle of God, that, whatever faith asks, grace gives yet more. The Lord knew well that the boldness of the man's faith was to be eclipsed by the fulness of God's grace. His grace must needs always be greater than any faith on man's part. The man asked a very great thing — to be remembered when the Lord comes in His kingdom. His heart was filled with assurance that even at such a moment He would be able to remember him; but the Lord lets him know He was going to do far more. "Verily," said Jesus unto him, "I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

This is surely more than to be remembered in the kingdom. You will not suspect me of running

down the kingdom, or of willingness to depreciate the day of the Lord. You know that one loves often and publicly to insist on it, and on its great importance. You will not think, therefore, that slight of it is meant. But this I do say, that, great as may be the glory of the kingdom when our Lord Jesus comes, to be with Christ in Paradise is even more and better. The two blessings go together, and therefore it is not at all a question of setting the one against the other. But there is this difference. The kingdom will be an outward display when the Lord will give five cities to one servant and ten to another. It will be a day of rewards for service, for fidelity, when every labourer shall receive according to his labour. But to be with Christ in Paradise means the fulness of grace; and beyond doubt, great as is the importance of the kingdom, the privilege to a sinner saved of being with Christ in the presence of God is one that nothing can exceed or equal.

Blessed be God, when the kingdom comes, we shall not lose our communion with Christ in Paradise. We shall eat of the tree of life in the Paradise of God; and this will be in the days of the kingdom. We shall be remembered, not one forgotten, when Christ comes in His kingdom, and we shall reign with Him. It remains that Christ is Himself more precious than what He gives one, and that to be with Christ is even better than to sit upon a throne in His kingdom. This is all glorious; but to be with Christ, when we remember what Christ is, to be there the object of His love, to be able then perfectly to behold *His* glory, is a deeper privilege than to be crowned in the kingdom. Yet it was what the thief entered into that day. And what force there was in being there "today!" All the thoughts of gradual preparation here, all theory of waiting dimly in another world, every form of purgatory — I do not mean only of a Roman Catholic pattern, for many a Protestant has got a quasi-purgatory of his own — all these things are completely dissipated to the winds. Here was a man in himself black enough to be kept out for ever doubtless: none the less was he to be with Christ that day in Paradise, perfectly purged by His blood for the intimate presence of God.

What a comfort this ought to be to any of you who have fears that you are not fit for heaven! For it is meant for you that believe as much as for the penitent on the cross. Have you not Christ too? Are you not resting on grace? Is it a different measure to you from what it was to the dying robber? If it be the same way of faith to you as to him, is it not really the same portion with Christ in Paradise? Hence death, when you look at it thus, is no longer to be regarded as an enemy. Assuredly death is the last enemy apart from Christ: is it really so to the man who possesses Christ? To him death is in truth only a servant to open the door, and let him in to be with Christ. Is this an enemy's work? Death is yours who believe, as all things are.

May God then bless His own word. May He bring home the testimony rendered to Christ and Christ's blood tonight; and may you see what a joy it is to wait for Christ to come in His kingdom, and, above all, what it is to have a portion with Christ by faith wholly superior to death, so that if Christ were to come to-morrow you would never die in any sense. For "we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with archangel's voice, and with trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we the living that remain shall be caught up together with them in [the] clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." You see that "we" ought to be expecting Christ, not death. The "we" in that day ought, and the "we" in this day ought, and the "we" in every day ought, to be so. If death comes when we are looking for Christ, that will not at all disappoint us. Death will only be our usher into the presence of the Lord; then instead of waiting for the Lord on earth, you will wait with the Lord in heaven which is far better. It is a good thing to be waiting for the Lord on the earth; but it is a better thing to be waiting with the Lord in heaven — to come when he comes — to reign when He reigns — but above all to be with Him now, or

by and by, and for ever, in Paradise. Amen.

W.K.