

this makes me fear the moment of death. I am not fit to be ushered into the presence chamber of my God. I am conscious of the fact that I am covered with sin stains, and my righteousness is but as filthy rags. But while we may not presume upon the mercy and love of God and hope for a death-bed repentance, such as the penitent thief was vouchsafed, yet we must always remember that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday to-day and forever." He who, for love of man, died upon Calvary's Cross, not only by His cross and passion obtained for sinners forgiveness of sins, but merited admission into the rest of Paradise, and afterwards into the deeper bliss of the Heaven beyond. From that time to the present we may see the Saviour drawing nigh to the penitent, sorrowing over the sins of his past life and his dread of the future with this blessed hope-giving, peace-giving message, "Though thou be like unto the dying thief in sin, yet thou shalt be made as white as snow in the Blood of the Lamb, and enter the rest of Paradise, because I have paid the price of sin in My own body on Calvary's cross."

"The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, though vile as he
Wash all my sins away."

In the crucified Saviour, in the stream that flows from Calvary's hill, I see pardon for the past and hope and confidence for the future. During the last few weeks Death has been very busy in our midst, casting a gloom not only over this congregation, but over the whole city. In as many weeks, no less than eight have been called from the Church on earth to the Church in Paradise, and we must feel the uncertainty of life is very real. Perhaps we have been asking ourselves "When and where shall I die? Will it be in the bosom of my family after a long illness; suddenly, in some accident. Will it be soon, while I am in the prime of life, or will it be after I have reached the allotted span of three score years and ten.

"Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the North wind's breath,
And stars to set, but all
Thou hast, all seasons for thine own—
Oh, Death!"

I must die. I cannot be such a fool as not to face that fact, and death will depend entirely upon my manner of life. A life lived with Jesus will mean a passing into the presence of Jesus in Paradise—"To-day thou shalt be in Paradise with Me." And if my life is lived with Jesus and for Jesus, I can live my life quietly and happily. I can spend each day as it goes in confidence, because He has taught me by His Spirit to say, "Whether I live, I live unto the Lord; and whether I die, I die unto the Lord." If my life is lived as in the presence of God, I can live in the quietness that comes from the knowledge of forgiven sins and the hope of the resurrection to eternal life. These are very favorite words of ours, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me." But we must be very careful not to misread them. It is not

Thou *will* be with me, but Thou *art* with me. We have no right to expect that Jesus will be with us in the journey through the shadow of death, if he is not with us now. We must be quite sure of his help and comfort in the present world if we are to expect his help and comfort in the life beyond. When we can trust Him absolutely and entirely for forgiveness for the past, help for the present and comfort in the shadow of death, then, and then only, can we say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Richmond Spencer entered into the rest of Paradise suddenly, on July 9th, and we committed his remains to their last resting place on Wednesday last, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change his vile body that he may be made like unto His glorious body, according to that mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Not without sorrow, not without weeping, that we should see His face no more, but comforted by the promise, "To-day thou shalt be in Paradise with Me," singing joyfully in the midst of grief—

"On the Resurrection morning,
Soul and body meet again;
No more weeping, no more parting,
No more pain.

For a while the tired body
Lies with feet toward the dawn,
Till there breaks the last and greatest
Easter morn."

"For all Thy saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,
Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blessed.
Hallelujah!"

So fully did Christians in the early Church believe that death was a gain to the blessed dead, that they sang hymns of thanksgiving as they bore the remains to their sleeping places. None were buried without singing and rejoicing, but criminals, suicides and excommunicated persons. To the heathen world, of course, death occurs as a great spoiler of all human hopes, but not so the Christian. Christ has brought life and immortality to light, and so, at Christian burials, the wailing of despair, the gloomy thoughts of annihilation are swallowed up in the songs of hope, triumph and victory. At the funeral of William Ewart Gladstone, in Westminster Abbey, a few weeks ago, we saw a model Christian funeral—Christian hope triumphing over heathen despair, holy rites expressive of joy eternal sustaining and cheering the crushed hearts of the survivors, friends and relations joined together in holy communion, beseeching God to give them grace so to follow the example of the blessed dead, that they with them might be partakers of His Heavenly Kingdom.

And here, dear brethren, let me ask you why should Christians, who believe that Paradise means rest and progress for the blessed dead, suffer themselves to be weighed