



judgment!" I go upstairs; he knows me and grasps my hand. Tenderly I tell him that he cannot live. My heart is full. I beseech him to give me all his attention. He takes some ice to cool his mouth, that he may better attend to me, and then he is "ready." Ready! with that poor weak body, with that fevered brain, with that wandering attention. Is this a condition in which to transact the business of eternity? But he is "ready." Every moment is precious. His mind may wander again directly.

"Henry," I remarked to him, "I want you just to think of two things—your sin and your Saviour; put all else away except just those two things. Your sin is great—in thought, word, and deed. Conscience will tell you. Try to recollect. You have been sinning since you knew right from wrong; you have forgotten God, refused His invitations, often transgressed against Him; your sins in His sight cry against you for judgment; they are a fearful load, and will press you down to hell."

And then the Saviour, ready to save him—dying to save the lost—willing to receive all who come to Him—a perfect, all-powerful, loving Saviour, blotting out transgressions as a thick cloud. Oh! what a message is this to take to a dying man. What other message could suit such a one as that, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved?"

He takes hold thankfully of the hymn, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," and repeats it after me. "Do you repent of your sins, Henry?" "I do." "Do you believe that Jesus takes your sins away?" "I do." Oh! how the minister's soul clings to a straw in such a case. My reason and experience confess these expressions at such a time to be but straws, and yet I cling to them. They are all that I have.

Then the poor fevered brain wanders again. He rises up and then throws himself down upon his pillow, crying, "It is all darkness!" Poor soul! What is it that is darkness?

"It is all over," said the uncle. "He has passed away without a struggle."

"All over;" far from it; rather all begun. New scenes are opening now upon that soul which has just escaped so silently from the body. What scenes they are, whether light or dark, whether full of joy or agony, I cannot tell. What messengers came to take him hence—whether the ministers of God's awful justice, or the angels of mercy—I know not. I only know that the soul which has just escaped from that body lying before me is now before its God, giving up its account of the deeds done in the body. Did it close by faith with Christ's offer of mercy before it left the body? that is the question now, a question which cannot be answered till I myself stand before the same great throne.

All is not over; a larger longer life has begun, which can never end. Is it, for this soul, truly life, even life eternal? or is it that living death, "where the worm dieth not and the fire is never quenched?" Reader, may these thoughts sink into your heart and mine. We may be nearer to death and judgment than we think we are. The veil that separates time from eternity is very thin, and we may break through it when we least expect it. The moment we do so, a wondrous light will be thrown on all the things of time. How different will they seem to us to what they seem now! Even the minister does not truly realise the vast importance of his work, or the worth of the soul. But the moment we break through that thin veil, we shall see and know it all. Then, if you be not in Christ, what misery will await you—what remorse! How you will hate yourself for throwing away eternal joys, and for laying up for yourself a treasury of wrath which shall never be exhausted!

Do not put off repentance and turning to God. You are not stronger than Henry Dove. Your life is not more secure. Your sickness may be as short as his; nay, your death may come more suddenly. Even if, on your death-bed, you profess repentance and conversion, how untrustworthy these are!

And now I pass out into the open air. It is still early, but what a solemn scene has this day already witnessed. The men are going to their work. The world does not stop, though a soul has just departed. How true it is that in the midst of death we are in life, as well as that "in the midst of life we are in death." The activity, the common work, jars upon my feelings. I speak to the men as I pass. I tell them that the soul is flown. I press upon them the concerns of eternity, and then I come home, to pray for myself and for those that remain, and to make this record that I may be stirred up and reminded in time to come. And may the Holy Spirit impress on every reader the solemn warning of the Saviour's words, "Be ye also ready!"

The time is short! sinners, beware,
Nor trifle time away;
The word of "great salvation" hear
While it is called to-day.

The time is short! ye heedless, slow
To Christ the Lord submit;
To Mercy's golden sceptre bow,
And fall at Jesu's feet.