

Heaven: Who Is Going There?

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In our study of the Word of God this evening, we come to the final message in this recent series of studies on the Biblical doctrines of heaven and hell. With our Bibles opened before us, we sought first of all to answer two very simple but vital questions. Question number one: what is hell? And question number two: who is going there? And then for several Lord's Day evenings we've been concentrating on another question: what is heaven? And after having answered this question, we come to the equally important question, who, according to the Bible, is going there? And I want to underscore that we are concerned to address the question, who, according to the Bible, is going there? I believe it was an old negro spiritual that had the words, "Ain't everybody talkin' about heaven goin' there." And it isn't everyone who talks about heaven who's going there. Nor is it everyone who is convinced he's going to heaven who will be in heaven. For Jesus said, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord...and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." And so our great and burning concern tonight is to take up the question, who, according to the Bible, is going to heaven? And it is only the Bible that has any right to answer that question, for it is the Bible alone which answers the question, what is heaven? For God alone knows what He has prepared for His own. And it is that same God speaking in Holy Scripture who answers the question, who is going there? And as I have sought to wrestle with that question with my Bible open, looking particularly at passages that explicitly describe the inhabitants of heaven, I have come in my present understanding to believe there are at least four categories of description concerning those who will be in heaven. Now, that does not mean there will be four different classes of people who will be in heaven. They are the one redeemed people of God. But they are described in some of these graphic descriptions of heaven from these four basic perspectives. And we'll take them up as time permits one by one.

First of all, the Scriptures tell us that only those whose names are in the book of life will enter heaven at last. Turn with me please to the book of the Revelation. And if you're familiar at all with that book, you will know that the phrase "the book of life" or "the Lamb's book of life" occurs several times. There are four indisputable references, and then a fifth reference which has a problem of translation. And so we'll stick with the four that are indisputable. In Revelation 3:5, the exalted Lord Himself speaking to the churches says, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Now, according to this passage, it is only those whose names are found in the book of life who will be confessed before the Father in the day of judgment. Here our Lord clearly asserts that there is a people whose names will be confessed before His Father. And He describes them as those whose names are inscribed in the book of life. Now, the circumstances of that confession of our Lord are given to us in greater detail in Revelation 20. Verses 11 and following is a description of the day of judgment. It includes a description of the

general resurrection which goes before and precedes and ushers in the day of judgment. And as John is describing this vision he received of the setting of the great white throne and all of the dead standing in their resurrected bodies in the presence of the Judge, we read in verse 12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life." And if you have the 1901 translation, you'll notice that the words 'the book' are in italics. They are not there in the original. And now in verse 15 we are not left to conjecture or to the pressure of assumed wording, but we read in verse 15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The only ones who will escape the awful, frightening reality of the lake of fire are those whose names in that day are found written in the book of life. And then in chapter 21, we have another reference to the book of life. Here we have a description of the new heavens and the new earth. We have a description of the glorified church as the city of God coming down from God out of heaven. And in this beautiful description just oozing with vivid imagery, we read in verse 27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Words cannot be more simple or clear. Only those written in the book of life shall enter. Well, what precisely is that book? The final clue comes to us in Revelation 17. Here we have a description of those who sell their souls to the powers of darkness; who are prepared to barter their souls for the trinkets of this life and the fleeting pleasures that are afforded by this life. In verse 8, we read: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world...." Here is a picture of all of the living humanity giving itself over to the beast; selling their souls to the beast except those whose names are written in the book of life. And according to this passage, they were written there, not at the time they made a profession of faith, nor even at the time they were vitally, truly united to Jesus Christ but from the foundation of the world. This is beautiful language that finds its parallel in such a passage as Ephesians 1:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace...."

What then is the book of life? It is nothing less than the full roll of God's elect. It is the full roll of all of that multitude out of every kindred, tribe, tongue, and nation from Adam's fallen race upon whom God from eternity set His distinguishing, particular love. And there will be no soul in heaven who is not an elect sinner. And we are not at all embarrassed to use Biblical language with respect to the book of life. God Himself has described it as a book. The inscription of the names found in it are there from the foundation of the world. And so in answer to the question, who is going to heaven according to the Bible? the answer to the book of life passages is only sinners graciously, sovereignly chosen by God in Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world, those upon whom God has set His distinguishing electing love--they and they alone will be found in heaven. Now, what does that say to us in very practical terms? It says this: it matters not if your name is upon a church roll, even Trinity Baptist Church roll. If it is not inscribed in the Lamb's book of life; if you are not an heir of grace; if God has not been pleased to set His sovereign electing love upon

you, you will not be found in heaven. And if you are found in heaven, you will bring forth the top stone on the great arch displaying God's mercy with shoutings of grace, grace, grace unto it. You'll find no one in heaven reaching around and patting himself on the back saying, "You know, I'm so glad I made good use of my free will to get here. I'm so glad I had sense enough to use the prevenient grace given equally to all men. I'm so glad that I made myself to differ. How wonderful it is that I ultimately made the right decision." No such language will be found in heaven. Heaven will be permeated with the language of grace. "Why was I made to hear Thy voice and enter while there's room when thousands make a wretched choice and rather starve than come. 'Twas the same love that spread the feast that sweetly drew me in, else I had still refused to taste and perished in my sin." But someone says, "Yes, the same love that invited me drew me, but why did it draw me and not others." And we're pressed back to the ultimacy of the glory of sovereign electing grace: chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

But then in the second place, according to the Bible, those are going to heaven are only those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb. In Revelation 7:9-10, we read:

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

Here's the vision John had of the vast multitude of the redeemed standing there in their purified state. And notice, they are ascribing the totality of their salvation unto God and the Lamb. They don't say, "Salvation unto Him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb and a little bit reserved because we made good use for free will." They acknowledge that they stand as they stand because they've become the recipients of salvation. And they acknowledge that that salvation in its totality came from Him who sits upon the throne and from the lamb. Then the question is asked further on in the passage beginning with verse 13:

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? And I said unto him, sir, now knowest. And he said to me [here's their descriptive identity], these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God..."

How did they get to that blessed place where they look upon the face of God with joy in this state of perfected sanctification symbolized in their white robes? They have come out of great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. In other words, they have come to heaven by the virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ the Lamb of God having been applied to them in the saving mercy of God. If words mean anything, then surely the passage teaches us that only those who are thus washed in the blood of the Lamb will be found before God and the Lamb in that day. Look at Revelation 22:14-15 for another text which gives us a similar picture: "Blessed [perfectly happy] are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city. Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie." (ASV). Who is it that has a right to come to the tree of life? Who is it that gains entrance to the gates of the

city? Only those who washed their robes. O, how can I state it so none can miss the point? Heaven is not a place for self-made people. Heaven is not the ultimate reward for people who had strength enough in their spiritual arms to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and make it. Heaven is not God's reward for your good bloodlines. Heaven is not God's reward for your determination to get your act together and live a decent, upright, moral, religious life. No, those who go to heaven were at one time vile, polluted, undone, laden with guilt and hell-deservedness. And by the grace of God, they were brought to see that they were indeed laden with guilt and vile and polluted and full of hell-deservedness. They were brought to see that God in mercy so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. And they were through the preaching of the Gospel and the operation of the Holy Spirit brought to see that Jesus Christ in the uniqueness of His person and in the perfection of His work; all that He did in His life and death and resurrection in the gift of the Spirit was perfectly suited to their need as sinners. And somewhere along the line, though they may not be able to point to the day and the hour--that's totally irrelevant--they were brought to a fundamental spiritual posture so beautifully described by our Lord in Luke 18. Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and one a publican. The publican stood off at a distance and would not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven. But he beat upon his breast and said, "God be merciful to me the Sinner." Jesus said, "This man went down to his house justified." Those who are in heaven are those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. They have come before God painfully aware of their native defilement in Adam, their native guiltiness and hell deservedness. And they have come as God through the Gospel applied to their hearts by the Spirit to see Christ's perfect suitability for sinners. They have come to throw the whole weight of their guilty, sin-sick, sin-stained souls upon Christ and Christ alone. And they have, in the language of our passage, had their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. And none will be in heaven; none will have a right to the tree of life; none will have a right to enter in by the gates of that city but those who have washed their robes. And you see, though ultimately the salvation is all of God, God doesn't believe for us. Faith is our activity; repentance is our activity. And the divine method for being washed is for you to come in all your vileness, uncleanness, and hell-deservedness and lay hold of Christ and rest the weight of your soul upon Him. They have washed their robes. It doesn't say God washed them for them. The same group that says, "Salvation to our God; Jesus paid it all; God has done it all"--they are nonetheless conscious that they have fled for refuge in Jesus Christ. My friend, sitting here tonight, let me ask you, do you know anything of what it is to feel the shock and the pain of felt uncleanness and guilt in the presence of a holy God? What lies at the heart of your professed experience of Christianity? Is it that you were captured by some of its noble ideals and good examples, and fascinated and intrigued by the magnificent life of Christ, and emotionally touched and moved by His self-giving love for which He received nothing but spittle and a crown of thorns? Somehow all of that has sort of hooked you and drawn you in. And you feel sort of comfortable amongst people who are acquainted with those perspectives. Is that your Christianity? If it is, my friend, it will never take you to heaven until you have been brought to see that you're a vile, polluted, undone, hell-deserving sinner whose only hope is in that fountain open for sin and uncleanness; until you have fled to Jesus Christ and pleaded for the cleansing of His own precious blood. My friend, mark it, not because this preacher said it, or even because he said it with what appears to you to be a degree of personal conviction. Believe it because God says it. The only ones who are before the throne are those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Jesus

said He doesn't do that for those who don't think they need it. He said, "I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If you can say, by the grace of God, the foundation of my professed Christianity, I confess without reservation is the acceptance of my position as lost, undone, guilty, defiled, hell-deserving, and my only hope for acceptance with God is the blood and righteousness of Christ--my friend, don't ever move from that posture. No matter how much you are enabled to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord Jesus; no matter how much God in mercy may take you on in conformity to Christ, never, never forsake the posture of a guilty, vile, helpless, undone sinner whose only hope is the blood and righteousness of Christ. I'm personally convinced, in light of the language in the book of the Revelation, that that's one of the points God is seeking to underscore for us, that even in heaven it will be the throne of God and of the Lamb. And we will be conscious through all the unending ages of eternity that everything we enjoy in the beatific vision in the face to face communion with God, we enjoy as redeemed sinners--redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. He shall forever be the Lamb in the midst of the throne. We sing about it, don't we?

The bride eyes not her garment, but her dear bridegroom's face.
I will not gaze at glory, but on my King of grace.
Not at the crown He gifteth, but on His pierced hand,
For the Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land.

My friend, would you be at home with that group John saw described in Revelation 7? They are before the throne of God; they've washed their robes; made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and they cry, "Salvation to God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb." Would you be at home with that kind of song? God makes people compatible with the song of heaven here on earth when He gives them to know and feel and own their wretchedness and to see the loveliness and suitability of Jesus as the only Savior of sinners.

But I must hasten, for there is a third category of description. Who will be in heaven, according to the Bible? Only those whose names are written in the book of life; only those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and thirdly, only those who have been morally and ethically renovated and made the holy, obedient subjects of Jesus Christ. Some of you will remember in a previous exposition when we were wrestling with the question, what is heaven? I had occasion to direct your attention to Matthew 5:8 and Hebrews 12:14. We were considering that heaven will be the face to face vision of God. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Follow after holiness, without which, no man shall see the Lord." Now let's bring the spotlight upon the first part of those verses. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they [and they only] shall see God." If heaven is the face to face sight of God, Jesus said only the pure in heart shall see God. In other words, only those who have undergone a moral, ethical renovation that touches the deepest springs of the human personality will go to heaven. The heart is the seat of life. "Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." What you are in your heart is what you are. And Jesus said only those who have undergone this radical, moral, ethical purification will ever see God. It is not enough that you have felt some emotions in the presence of the Biblical doctrines of sin and salvation. Nor is it enough that you have gone through some volitional activity in the presence of the pressures of your own sin and the Gospel. Nor is it enough that you have taken up certain duties and certain patterns of life that appear very "Christian." Here's the issue: has the fountain of your impurity been radically touched by the power of God? "Blessed are the pure in heart." In other

words, in the seat of your being where once you loved yourself and your own ways and your own thoughts and your own ambitions; where once you had an idol shelf on which sat lust and the world and money and things and pride and everything else in that deep sanctuary of the soul, Almighty God has come and done in you what Jesus did in the temple at Jerusalem. He's overturned the tables and driven out the foul beasts: your lusts and your pride and your selfishness and your carnal ambition. And there He has implanted a hunger and a thirst--may I use the word "passion"--to be a holy man or a holy woman. If that hasn't happened to you, my friend, you're no more going to go to heaven than the devil. According to Jesus, you won't go to heaven. And that ought to disturb some of you, because any transformation you've known in conjunction with the Gospel has been altogether too surface. You've simply redirected the streams of your selfishness; redirected the streams of your ambition; redirected the streams of your carnal preoccupation with this life. But of a new heart, you know nothing. You better take it from the lips of Jesus, you're never going to make it to heaven till you get a new heart, not a perfect heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart." And one of the marks of a pure heart is that it mourns the impurities only God knows. It's not content that everyone looks at me and says, "Hey, that guy's got his act together. He's a mature Christian. I mean he's really filled with the Spirit." It doesn't matter to me what men know and think. Only one thing matters: what God knows and sees. That's reality. And when I know that God knows that there's coldness and dryness and the lurking activity of the ghost of my past in terms of lust and pride and ambition--and I'm no stranger to the mourning in secret over those sins. We can't be content to say,

"O well, I haven't brought any big blotches on my reputation. Everyone accepts me as a good Christian with a good standing and all the rest. So what matters? Sure I dabble a little bit with fantasies that are impure, but I'm not laying with another man's wife--so what? O yes, I fantasize with a nice looking guy on the television soap thing, but God knows I'm not unfaithful to my husband--so what? O sure, I dream about the things I'd like to have, but I'm not going out and cheating people and running rough shod over others to get them. What's a little covetousness in my spirit, a little lust in my mind."

I tell you what it is: sin that will take you to hell. That's what it is, and it's time some of you faced it. And if you go to hell simply a respectable professing reformed Baptist, my hands are clean of your blood. You've been told you need a pure heart; you need to follow after the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. And if that holiness is anything, it's a commitment to universal internal as well as external conformity to the will of the Lord God. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). He doesn't purify himself just enough to get by so he doesn't come under church discipline. That's what I fear with too many of you. You'll live just respectably enough that you won't run the risk of church discipline. So what? Your elders don't have the keys to that city--God does! And nobody's getting in who has not been morally and ethically transformed and committed to a course of universal holiness and loving submission to Jesus Christ. That's why there's that beautiful description back in Revelation 7 of the redeemed. We put the spotlight, as it were, upon the fact that they were washed in the blood of the Lamb. Now let's look at the ethical and moral transformation. Notice what it says about them in verse 15: "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." They are very much at home in the presence of the throne on which sits an unrivaled Sovereign. And when He makes known His will, they do it. You see it?

They are before the throne and they serve Him. I personally feel it's language taken from the description of angels who wait before the throne of God to do service to the heirs of salvation. It's that posture of eagerness to know the slightest intimation of the will of their creator God that they might, as it were, fly to the ends of the earth to do it. Now the very spirit that unfallen angels have, by grace, has become mine as a child of God. They are before the throne and they serve Him day and night. And that disposition is either implanted here on earth by grace, or it will never happen in the world to come. Every time a sinner gets a Savior, the Savior gets a servant. It's that simple. And if the Savior doesn't have a willing servant in you, you don't have a Savior in Him. "O, but I trust in His blood." You'll go to hell with that kind of trust. That's the faith of demons. The faith that does not purify the heart is not saving faith. It says in the Word of God, "They purify their hearts by faith." The faith that lays hold of Christ as Savior is the faith in which the heart is purified, purified from the predominant prevailing disposition of self-will and made the loving bonds slave of Jesus Christ. And if that servitude is not practical, it's nothing. Now it's rare that I want to put a P.S. on any one sermon, but you don't know the grace it took to sit in that chair where George is sitting tonight this morning. When Pastor Nichols was pouring out his heart in opening up those passages in Proverbs, you know what I wanted to get up and say? I wanted to get up and say, "Put your hand where your mouth is if you claim to be Christ's servant. And you fathers and mothers go home with the book of Proverbs and get down on your knees and say, 'O God, we're committed to do what those passages say. Give us wisdom to know how, but Lord we're committed.'" You don't need to go to rummage the bookstore for more books on how to do it. You need to get committed and will to do it. And God the Holy Spirit will give you the wisdom as you're committed to do what God says. God says, "Husbands love your wives." That means what it says. And when I as a pastor have to deal with husbands who won't even communicate--they carry on this perpetual torture of non-communication--I frankly wonder how they can be Christians after all the teaching they've had and the examples they've had. If they willfully say, "I don't care. I'm not going to communicate." My friend, if you refuse to obey Ephesians 5:25, you'll go to hell just as much as if you refuse to obey the seventh commandment. O, dear people, do we take seriously what the Book says? Who is going to heaven? Only those who've been morally, ethically renewed and made holy, obedient subjects of Christ. That's why God says in Revelation, "Nothing unclean shall enter."

Well, I must hasten to a conclusion. The fourth line of description in the book of Revelation in particular is that only those who overcome and persevere to the end will enter heaven. We could look at all the overcomer passages in Revelation 2 and 3--let's look at just two of them. Who should know better than the Lord Jesus who's going to heaven? He died to open heaven. We read in Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." If you don't overcome, Jesus will never hold to you the fruit of the tree of life in the paradise of God. Mark it down, overcome, or you'll never make it. Chapter 3 verse 5: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." Chapter 3 verse 12: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name." And then the beautiful summary statement in chapter 21 verse 7. After giving a description of

the new heaven and the new earth, who's going to enter it? Let the Word of God speak, and O may it speak with power: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." But isn't there another class for believers who don't overcome? No, look at verse 8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." You'll either overcome, or you'll burn. And again, I really wonder--and it may be that it's simply something from the fruit of my own pastoral dealings that has left my judgment imbalanced. I pray it's not so, but I acknowledge it may be so. But I really wonder, we who confess our faith in the doctrine of the preservation and the perseverance of the saints, our confidence in the certainty of God's preserving grace, but the necessity of our persevering activity--I really wonder, dear people, if we believe that either we overcome, or we miss heaven. You let a man appear at my door who says, "Look, you kill me, or I'm going to kill you, your wife, your son, and your two daughters." If I believe him, I won't stand there and take a little jab at him with my elbow. I won't just stand there and spar with him. If I really believe it's either him or me, it's a fight to the death. And I go down in a pool of my own blood, or he's going down in a pool of his. But I tell you, there won't be any fooling around. If I sense he's a mad man who's serious, and he says, "You kill me, or I'm going to kill you, your wife, and your kids." I tell you, friends, we're locked in a death struggle. And if you were looking in, everything about it would indicate those two guys are after one another's blood. And, my friend, it's just that way in this business of overcoming. If you, like Bunyan's Christian, are determined to cross the river and enter the celestial city, you don't play games and strike treaties with Apollyon. You don't sit around and have sparing sessions with the things that drag you into the world and spiritual dullness, whether it's your TV programs, your love of this, your love of that. You go hacking and hewing and plucking and casting out. That's the language of the Son of God. "Pluck out right eyes; cut off right hands." In the name of truth, dear people, do you believe that? If you do, then in the name of God, why do you go on encumbered with all of your trinkets; continually feeding the very lust which again and again land you in spiritual dryness and dullness. Then you have a little stirring, a little activity, a few tears, and a few resolves, but in a few months time, you right back where you were. That's not overcoming. That's just sparing. And it's just delaying the time until that one who's committed to your damnation will land you in a pool of your own blood.

Who's going to heaven? Well, as I've tried to open up these passages that describe them, according to these passages, only those whose names are in the book of life; only those who've been washed in the blood of the Lamb; only those who've undergone a moral, ethical renovation and been made the holy subjects of Christ; only those who persevere and overcome. And remember, when they get there, they have one song: salvation to our God and unto the Lamb.

Some of you may go out of here and say, "I've never heard such crazy stuff. That preacher talked like you make it to heaven on your own." I said no such thing. That's heresy. Salvation is all of God, but it's not a salvation that so operates as to carry you there oblivious to the conflicts along the way. The same God who's revealed they've washed their robes and made them white is the God who said in Jesus Christ, "He that overcomes, I will give the right to partake of the tree of life." There's no contradiction. There's a beautiful synthesis. If I'm enabled to overcome, it's because I've been morally and ethically renovated by the Spirit. And if I've been morally and ethically renovated, it's because I've come in the way of repentance and faith. I've

taken my posture as a guilty, helpless, undone sinner and gone out of myself to Jesus Christ alone for salvation and grace. And if I've done that, it's because God set His love upon me in eternity. You see the beautiful synthesis? The overcomers trace their overcoming all the way back to God's sovereign electing grace, grace that marked them out and gave them to the Lamb, grace that in time brought them to see their need of the Lamb and to go out of themselves and to trust the Lamb and wash their robes and make them white. And that same grace gave them a new heart and gave them a desire to be holy men and women and gave that passion to be like the one who is the object of his trust. And His face and His fellowship and His ways and His people were so precious that they were willing to fight and hack and hew and be overcomers at any cost so that at last they could stand in His presence with all the multitudes of the redeemed and sing that song before the throne of God and of the Lamb: salvation unto our God and unto the Lamb. Will you be amongst them? O, my friend, I ask you, will you be amongst them? But you say, "I don't know if I'm elect." My friend, there's only one way you can read your election, and that's by taking your place as a guilty sinner and run to Christ. Now you dare to say, "I don't know that I'm a sinner." Your own conscience condemns you in the question. You know you're a sinner. "Well, I don't know if Christ is available to me." He is. He says, "Come, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." O, my sinner friend, come. My deceived professing Christian friend, come. And dear child of God, press on, press on. A few more years shall roll, and we shall be home at last. And every tear and every struggle--all the hacking, all the hewing--it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. "One look at His dear face, all sorrow will erase, so bravely run the race till we see Christ." What else matters? Answer me, what else matters, but that we should look upon His face? God grant that we shall come to spiritual sobriety and see that nothing else really does matter.

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