



Be still.

*“O for a heart like a
glowing coal, and an
eye ever looking full
upon the Lamb!”*

**“THY FACE, LORD,
WILL I SEEK.”
PSALM 27:8**

TIME is SHORT

from “Sermons of Robert Murray M’Cheyne”

“BUT THIS I SAY, BRETHREN, THE TIME IS SHORT: IT REMAINETH, THAT BOTH THEY THAT HAVE WIVES BE AS THOUGH THEY HAD NONE; AND THEY THAT WEEP, AS THOUGH THEY WEPT NOT; AND THEY THAT REJOICE, AS THOUGH THEY REJOICED NOT; AND THEY THAT BUY, AS THOUGH THEY POSSESSED NOT; AND THEY THAT USE THIS WORLD, AS NOT ABUSING IT: FOR THE FASHION OF THIS WORLD PASSETH AWAY.” —1 COR. 7:29-31.

The time a believer has to live in this world is very short.

The whole lifetime is very short. From the cradle to the grave is a short journey: “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.” The half of men die before the age of twenty. Even when men lived for many hundred years, it was but a short life—a moment, compared to eternity. Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died. Men are shortlived, like the grass. “All flesh is as grass;” and the rich and beautiful are like the flower of the field—a little fairer and more delicate. “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it.” (Isa. 40:7.) “For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” (James 4:14.) You know how swiftly a weaver’s shuttle flies; but your life flies more swiftly: “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle.” (Job 7:6.)

How much is already passed away. Most believers spent their first days in sin. Many hearing me gave their best days to sin and the world. Many among you have only the lame, and the torn, and the sick, to give to God. All of you can look on the past as a sleep, or as a tale that is told. The time since I came among you appears to me just like a dream.

What remains is all numbered. All of you hearing me have your Sundays numbered—the number of sermons you are to hear. The last one is already fixed upon. Your years are numbered. To many this is the last year they

shall ever see in this world. Many will celebrate their next new year in glory. The disease is now in the body of many of you that is to lay you in the dust; and your grave is already marked out. In a little while you will be lying quietly there. Yes, dear brethren, “*the time is short.*”

The time of this world’s continuance is short: “The end of all things is at hand”—“the fashion of this world passeth away.” A believer stands on a watchtower—things present are below the feet—things eternal are before his eyes. A little while, brethren, and the day of grace will be over—preaching, praying will be done. Soon we shall give over wrestling with an unbelieving world—soon the number of believers shall be complete, and sky open over our heads, and Christ shall come. His parting cry was: “Surely I come quickly.” Then we shall see him “whom, having not seen, we loved.” A little while, and we shall stand before the great white throne; a little while, and the wicked shall not be—we shall see them going away into everlasting punishment; a little while, and work of eternity shall be begun. We shall be like him—we shall see him day and night in his temple—we shall sing the new song, without sin and without weariness, for ever and ever. In a little moment, brethren, all this shall be: “For a small moment have I hid my face from thee; but with everlasting mercies will I gather thee.”

The believer should learn from this to sit loose to all things under the sun.

Sit loose to the dearest objects of this world: “It remaineth, therefore, that they who have wives be as though they had none.” Marriage

is honourable in all. Husbands should love their wives, even as Christ loved the Church: “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.” Still it must not be idolatry. A married believer should be, in some respects, as if he were unmarried—as if he had no wife. “Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” You cannot be too kind, too gentle, too loving, to the parents whom God has given you; yet be as though you had none. Parents, love your children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; yet feel that the time is short. They are only a loan from the Lord. Be not surprised if he take his own. Esteem your ministers highly in love, for their work’s sake; yet be as if you had none. Lean as entirely on Christ as if you had never seen or heard a minister. Brainerd mentions an instance of one woman, who, after her conversion, was resigned to the divine will in the most tender points: “What if God should take away your husband from you—how do you think you would bear that?” She replied: “He belongs to God, and not to me; he may do with him just what he pleases.” When she longed to die, to be free from sin, she was asked what would become of her infant; she answered, “God will take care of him; he belongs to him—he will take care of him.” Rutherford says: “Build your nest upon no tree here; for you see God has sold the forest to Death, and every tree whereon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may flee and mount up, and build upon the Rock, and dwell in the holes of the Rock.” Set not your

heart on the flowers of this world; for they have all a canker in them. Prize the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley more than all, for he changeth not. Live nearer to Christ than to the saints, so that when they are taken from you, you may have him to lean on still.

Sit loose to the griefs of this world. They that weep should be as though they wept not. This world is a vale of tears. There are always some mourning. No sooner is the tear dried up on one cheek than it trickles down another. No sooner does one widow lay aside her weeds, than another takes them up. Those that are in Christ should weep as though they wept not; “for the time is short.” Do you weep over those that died in the Lord? It is right to weep: “Jesus wept.” Yet weep as though you wept not; “for the time is short.” They are not lost, but gone before. The sun, when it sets, is not lost; it is gone to shine in another hemisphere; and so have they gone to shine in a brighter world. It is self-love that makes you mourn for them; for they are happy. You would not mourn if they were with a distant friend on earth—why do you mourn that they are with the sinner’s Friend? “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. 7:16, 17.) “The time is short;” and you will follow after. A few days and you may be leaning together on the bosom of Jesus; you are nearer them today than you were yesterday. “The time is short;” and you will meet with all the redeemed at the right hand of Christ—we shall mingle our voices in the new song, and wave together the eternal palm! “Weep as though you wept not.”

Do you weep over those that died out of the Lord? Ah! there is deeper cause for weeping here; and yet the time is short, when all this will be explained to you, and you will not be able to shed a tear over the lost. A little while, and you will see Jesus fully glorified, and you will not be able to wish anything different from what has happened. When Aaron lost his two sons, he held his peace.

Do your mourn over bodily pain, and poverty, and sickness, and the troubles of the world? Do not murmur: “The time is short.” If you have believed in Christ, these are all the hell you will ever bear. Think you the dying thief would complain of his pains when he was within a step of paradise? So it is with you. Your hell is dried up, and you have only these two shallow brooks to pass through—sickness and death; and you have a promise that Christ shall do more than meet you—go with you, foot for foot, and bear you in his arms. When we get to the presence of Jesus, all our griefs shall look like children’s griefs: a day in his presence will make you remember your miseries no more. Wherefore take courage, and run with patience.

Sit loose to the enjoyments of this world.

It is quite right for a believer to use the things of this world, and to rejoice in them. None has such a right as the believer has to rejoice and be happy. He has a right to use the bodily comforts of this world—to eat his meat “with gladness and singleness of heart, praising

God.” He has a right to all the joys of home, and kindred, and friendship. It is highly proper that he should enjoy these things. He has a right to all the pure pleasures of mind, of intellect, and imagination; for God has given him all things richly to enjoy. Still, he should “rejoice as though he rejoiced not, and use this world as not abusing it;” for “the time is short.” In a little while, you will be at your Father’s table above, drinking the new wine with Christ. You will meet with all your brothers and sisters in Christ—you will have pure joy in God through ceaseless ages. Do not be much taken with the joys that are here. I have noticed children, when they were going out to a feast, they would eat but sparingly, that they might have a keener appetite for the coming dainties; so, dear friends, you are going to a feast above, do not dull your appetite with earthly joys—sit loosely to them all—look upon them all as fading. As you walk through a flower garden, you never think of lying down, to make your home among its roses; so, pass through the garden of this world’s best joys. Smell the flowers in passing; but do not tarry. Jesus calls you to his banqueting house—there you will feed among the lilies on the mountains of spices. Oh! it ill becomes a child of God to be fond of an earthly banquet, when you are looking to sitting down so soon with Jesus—it ill becomes you to be much taken up with dress and show, when you are so soon to see the face that was crowned with thorns. Brethren, if you are ever so much taken up with any enjoyment that it takes away your love for prayer or for your Bible, or that it would frighten you to hear the cry: “The Bridegroom cometh;” and you would say: Is he coming already? then you are abusing this world. Oh! sit loose to this world’s joy: “The time is short.”

Sit loose to the occupations of the world. It is right for Christians to be diligent in business. I often wonder how unconverted souls can be so busy—how, when you are bustling along, filling up all your time with worldly things, it never occurs to you that there will be none of this in eternity. How can I be so busy for my body, when my poor soul is unprovided for? But those in Christ may well be diligent. (1) They have a good conscience—that oils the wheels. “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.” A light heart makes easy work. (2) They love to honour their Lord. They would not have it said that a believer in Jesus was an idler or a sluggard—the love of Jesus constrains them to all that is lovely. And yet a believer should “buy as though he possessed not;” for “the time is short.” Oh! believers, ye cannot be misers; for you are but stewards. All that you possess here is your Lord’s; and the day is at hand when he will transfer you to take care of another property in a brighter land. You are but servants. It would not do if you were to set your hearts on the things of this lower room; for in a few days the Master is to call you to serve in his own dear presence. Dear believers, be ready to leave your room for the golden harp at a minute’s warning; be ready to leave your desk for the throne of Jesus—your pen for the palm of victory; be ready to leave the market below for the street of the new Jerusalem, where the redeemed shall walk. If you were in a sinking ship, you

would not cling hard to bags of money—you would sit loose to all, and be ready to swim. This world is like a sinking ship, and those who grasp at its possessions will sink with it. Oh! “buy as though you possessed not;” for “the time is short.”

What the unconverted should learn from the shortness of time.

Learn your folly in having lost the past. Although life be very short, it is all saving time. This is the reason for which God has given it to us. The long-suffering of God is intended for our salvation. God gives men time to hear the Gospel—to pray—to get saving conversion. But unconverted souls have wasted all the past. Think how much time you have lost in idleness. How many golden opportunities for prayer, and hearing the Word, and meditation, have you lost! How much time have you spent uselessly in your bed, or in idle talk, or in loitering about your doors! If you saw how short your time is, and how death and hell are pursuing you, you would have fled to Christ; but you have not. Think how much you have spent in sin, at the tavern, or in vain company, or in dances, or in night walking, or in sins of which it is a shame even to speak. God gave you time for saving your soul, and you have spent it in ruining your soul. God gave you time to flee to Christ; and you have spent it in fleeing toward hell. Think how much time you have spent in business, without one thought for eternity. Think how you have lost your best time. Youth is your best time for being saved. Many of you have lost it. Time of awakening—Sunday—holy time—years of Sundays have now gone over many of you. “The harvest is past, the summer is ended; and we are not saved.”

Consider what value they put on time who are not in hell. Once, brethren, they cared as little for it as you—once, they could see their years pass away without caring—once, they could let their Sundays slip away; but now they see their folly. What would they now give, brethren, for such an opportunity as you have this day? What would they give for another year of grace—for another week—for another day? It is probable that some of your friends or companions, now in hell, are wishing they could come back to tell you how precious is an inch of saving time!

Oh! brethren, be wise. “Why stand ye all the day idle?” It has come to the eleventh hour with some—your unconverted head is grey—your feet are tottering. If you saw a man condemned to die, lying in chains, who had but three hours to live; if you saw that man playing at dice, or singing wanton songs, would you not be shocked? You would say he was a hardened wretch. Ah! are there none among you the same? You are condemned already—your days are numbered—you are hanging by a thread over the mouth of hell; and yet you are cutting and slashing at the hand that holds you. In a little moment, brethren, it will all be over. Throughout the never-ending ages of eternity you will remember the few days we spent together. Ah! the remembrance will add fuel to the flame, and be a never-dying worm in your poor soul. “The time is short.” ■



The Maréchale in 1890. Founder of the Salvation Army in France and Switzerland.

Undoubtedly my most inspiring contact with an outstanding Christian on the other side of the world was that with General Booth's eldest daughter, the Maréchale. In our early days in London we were somewhat staggered by the stiffness of the natural English reserve, and it came as a little breeze of blessing to receive a telegram from this aged veteran of Christ, directed from her Devon home, saying, "A cordial welcome awaits you at the Haven." We set out with high hopes for a time of fellowship with this honoured servant of God and were not disappointed.

Her daughter met us at the Newton Abbot railway station and brought us through some delightful English countryside to a little homestead hidden away in the rolling hills below Dartmoor.

For some time after our arrival the conversation was general with two or three young friends who had called in to visit the Maréchale, but there was no sign of the honoured lady herself. Finally, about 5 p.m., she entered the room, dressed in her well-known regimentals, a long dark dress with white sash from right shoulder to left side. She came in singing, and immediately took charge of the gathering, leading us from hymn to hymn and lingering with considerable delight upon the chorus which her brother, Bramwell, had requested on his death bed.

*"And above them all this note shall swell—
My Jesus doeth all things well."*

After half an hour of song, she talked to us earnestly and fervently about her early experiences with the Salvation Army in Paris, saying frequently, "Oh, if you could have been where I have been, and seen what I have seen of the power of God to change the lives of men, you would never doubt Him! I have seen wild, wicked, impure men, bent on breaking up our meetings, changed into soft, lamb-like people. Brokenly they have said to me, "Don't leave us, Maréchale; stay with us. You make angels out of beasts." Incident after incident flowed from her fluent tongue of those heroic days in which she

Memories of the Maréchale

by John Ridley

*"She brought us the Christ, Who is victorious everywhere...
She brought us at the price of tears and sacrifice."
(One speaking for many of her converts.)*

"endured hardness", even to imprisonment for the "Gospel's sake". Never once did she complain of the burden of the cross; rather did she seem to glory in the fact that she had suffered for "the sake of the Name." "I like real conversions," she said. "Conversions which change men. My father used to like those too. Nothing less suited him. I don't know, we rarely seem to get the same conversions today. So many Christians live on in the world as though they had never known the New Birth."

Just before retiring to her room, she turned to the three young people and, looking them straight in the eyes, said, "Now, how many souls have you won of late? Have you been witnessing well for your Lord? Oh, I want you to win souls. Now I want you to be more earnest in this great work for the future."

After a brief word of prayer, which seemed to lead us all into the immediate presence of the

to speak out fearlessly to the people."

Let me give you two other glimpses of her. Travelling on a train in England, a drunken man advanced to her with open arms, suggesting they should dance together. The people became excited and called aloud, "Throw him out!" "No, no!" she replied. "Throw the drink out of him. He is a gentleman and the drink has brought him to this state. We need to deal with the drink and then with him."

Her last words in my hearing were uttered to the footman who helped her into a waiting car at Alderbourne Manor. As she settled down in the corner of the car, she stretched out her hand to say goodbye, and added, "I hope you are saved?" He made some hesitant answer which did not satisfy her. "Oh, be sure you are saved," she said, "I will pray for you." The footman stepped back, the car moved off, she waved to us, and I had taken my last glimpse of one of God's most honoured saints and soldiers. In the book of her life and on an early photograph of herself, which she kindly gave me, she wrote the words: "Go for souls, and go for the worst." There we see the militant Maréchale. The deeper secret of her sainthood is revealed in one of her own beautiful hymns:

*"I will not ask Thee to account to me
For aught Thou dost,
For crosses sore, or paths I cannot see,
But I will trust.
No second causes shall perplex my soul
Or stay from yielding all to Thy control."*

*She told us the secret of her
life was bound up in the
words, "Looking unto Jesus."*

King, she glided out of the room, taking with her that remarkable atmosphere which ever surrounds a valiant "soldier of the Cross."

I saw her on three other occasions during my travels in Great Britain. On each occasion she gave me rich food for thought and seemed to put a spur into my soul. At one time I said to her, "Maréchale, you ought to write your memoirs for the sake of younger Christians," "Oh yes," she replied, "I suppose I should, but you see I am too busy. I want to win souls. I haven't time to do much writing. I am anxious to hold meetings in Newton Abbot. Something must be done for that place. Oh, we must win souls, you know!"

What zeal for 91 years of age!

Once I recall how she opened my heart in prayer with the words, "Oh, Lord Jesus. I feel ashamed to come to You! I should have known You much better by this time and trusted You much more. I am so ashamed of myself." Then I understood why her biographer said: "As a soul-winner she never gave the impression of condescending. She did not need to stoop; by nature and by grace she was meek and lowly in heart."

She told us the secret of her life was bound up in the words, "Looking unto Jesus." Then she urged us in our service to "Shoot to kill," saying, "So many evangelists seem half afraid



*The Maréchale in 1949, aged 91.
Still a warrior for the Captain of Salvation.*

From

Of the Imitation of Christ

Thomas à Kempis

True Comfort Found in God Alone

Whatever I desire or can imagine for my comfort, I look for it hereafter. For if I might alone have all the comforts of the world, and were able to enjoy all the delights thereof (Matt. 16:26), it is certain that they could not long endure.

You cannot be fully comforted (Ps. 77:1, 2), nor have perfect refreshment except in God, the Comforter of the poor and Patron of the humble. Wait a little while, O my soul, wait for the divine promise and you shall have abundance of all good things in Heaven.

If you desire inordinately the things that are present, you shall lose those which are heavenly and eternal. Let temporal things be used, but things eternal desired.

You cannot be satisfied with any temporal good, because you were not created to enjoy these alone.

Although you should possess all created good, yet you could not be happy therewith nor blessed; but in God, who created all things, consists your whole blessedness. Not such as is seen and commended by the foolish lovers of the world, but such as the good and faithful servants of Christ wait for, and of which the spiritual and pure in heart, whose conversation is in Heaven (Phil. 3:20), sometimes have a foretaste.

All human comfort is vain and brief. Blessed and true is the comfort which is received inwardly from the truth.

A devout man bears everywhere with him his own Comforter Jesus, and says unto Him: "Be Thou present with me, O Lord Jesus, in every time and place. Let this be my

consolation, to be cheerfully willing to do without all human comfort. And if Thy consolation be wanting, let Thy will, and just trial of me be unto me as the greatest comfort." "He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever" (Ps. 103:9).

Hope and Trust in God Alone

Lord, what is my confidence which I have in this life? Or what is my greatest comfort out of all things that are seen under Heaven? Is it not Thou, O Lord, my God, of whose mercies there is no number? Where has it ever been well with me without Thee? Or when could it be ill with me, when Thou wert present? I had rather be poor for Thee, than rich without Thee. I rather choose to be a pilgrim on earth with Thee, than without Thee to possess Heaven. Where Thou art, there is Heaven; and where Thou art not, there is death and Hell. Thou art all my desire, and therefore after Thee I sigh and call and earnestly pray. In short there is none whom I can fully trust in, none who can more seasonably help me in my necessities, but only Thou, my God. Thou art my hope, Thou my confidence; Thou art my Comforter, and in all things most faithful.

"All seek their own" (Phil. 2:21). Thou settest forward my salvation and my profit only, and turnest all things to my good. Although Thou exposest me to divers temptations and adversaries, yet Thou orderest all this to my advantage, who art wont to try Thy beloved ones a thousand ways. In which trial of me Thou oughtest no less to be loved and praised, than if Thou

wert filling me full of heavenly consolations. In Thee therefore, O Lord God, I place my whole hope and refuge; on Thee I rest all my tribulation and anguish; for I find all to be weak and inconstant, whatever I behold out of Thee.

For many friends will not profit, nor will strong helpers be able to assist, nor prudent counsellors give a profitable answer, nor the books or the learned afford comfort, nor any precious substance deliver, nor any place, however retired and lovely, give shelter, unless Thou Thyself dost stand by, help, strengthen, console, instruct, and guard us. For without Thee all things that seem to belong to the possession of peace and bliss are nothing, and bring in truth no blessedness at all. Thou therefore art the perfection of all that is good, the height of life, the depth of all that can be spoken; and to hope in Thee above all things is the strongest comfort of Thy servants. To Thee therefore I lift up my eyes; in Thee my God, the Father of mercies, I put my trust.

Bless and sanctify my soul with Thy heavenly blessing, that it may become Thy holy habitation, and the seat of Thine eternal glory; and let nothing be found in this temple of Thy dignity, which shall offend the eyes of Thy majesty.

According to the greatness of Thy goodness and multitude of Thy mercies look upon me (Ps. 51:2), and hear the prayer of Thy poor servant, who is far exiled from Thee "in the land of the shadow of death" (Isa. 9:2). Protect and keep the soul of me the meanest of Thy servants, amid so many dangers of this corruptible life, and by Thy grace accompanying me direct it along the way of peace to its native land of everlasting brightness. •

TWO HEAVENS

A CHRISTIAN may have two Heavens if he will
But let the Lord direct him in His way;

Allow the Lord to guide His mind and will,
To give Him sovereign rights and own His sway.

Arrange his life, take charge of his affairs;
Endow the Lord with all he is possessed;
Bring to Him all his worries and his cares,
So shall he find in Christ a perfect rest.

Upon the Cross He bare the load of sin,
Upon the Throne He bears us on His heart,
And condescends our falt'ring love to win,
And, like a good Physician, heal each smart.

He gives us Heaven on earth; O! matchless grace!
And Heaven in Heaven when we behold His face.

CARES AND PRAYERS

OH, to entwine the thread of prayer around
These cares and woes, the daily, hourly cares,
The hungry wants that fasten on our lives;
And bind them all upon Thy promises—
Then bid our faith launch these together forth
Upon the sea, the sunlit golden sea
Of Thy rich love—Thus making certain voyage
To Thy great heart—Thence surely bringing back
Rich Argosies, full freighted, laden up
With all Thou seest good to give to us:
The precious things of Love, of Light, of Heaven.

Poems by S. TREVOR FRANCIS