

OLD AGE



Lafayette.

By BISHOP MONTGOMERY

OLD AGE
RETIREMENT AND
THE LAST MESSENGER

BY THE RIGHT REV.

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OLD AGE

I

OLD AGE

HOW slowly it comes. Others note it long ere we. Then one day we overhear some one say as he looks our way, 'A nice old man.' But the shock, if it is one, should pass in a moment. It is just as good to be old as to be young. Better indeed. Youth, middle life, old age, are three classes in our earthly school as we train for eternity. Fresh duties certainly come as we rise; for we rise from class to class, we do not descend. Then as to our faults: I do not know that our besetting sins ever leave us, nor our chief temptations. But they change their position. Some that were once less powerful gain more force, and vice versa. One prayer, I think, gradually changes a word

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as we age: 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' into, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to be?' If there is truth in what I have said, then for old age to repine is a very bad fault—bad for us, bad for others. On the contrary, let us give the impression that we have risen in our school and are learning fresh lessons and are called to teach them to others; more, however, by character than by action.

This little book therefore, you will see, is in no sense written in a minor key; but it is about the joys of old age, its duties and its blessings.

So I begin. We aged folk are of course deeply affected by *memory*. None of it is useless. The early years become better remembered. The recurring impression, I think, is wonder; and it affects us in all sorts of directions. With most of us, I hope, a thread is at length visible uniting all the changes and chances: no accidents, all ordained for a soul on its way to life eternal. And probably you reflect how amazingly different has been the journey of life from what you once expected. Compare the dreams of youth and what you are to-day. East may not differ more

from West than the long past with the present. Perhaps also, on looking back, you can put your finger on one day, one hour, one minute, possibly sixty years ago, when all the future of a good life depended upon a quick decision, upon saying 'yes' or 'no.' It may have taken years to discover the issues of that act; a parting of the ways. God's angel took you by the hand.

On the other hand, do not let any of us talk of ambitions quenched. Let us confess that we have not been worthy of God's patience and His goodness. Some years ago I found among my father's papers (he was a statesman in India) a sheet telling of his feelings as he looked back; how poor were his natural abilities, how ignorant of the world when he left home, and how wonderful had been the goodness of God in promoting him to high places, though he had felt unworthy to rise to each higher grade as it came; also how he had been sheltered when others had fallen. I think this is no uncommon experience.

Wonder grows also as we gaze on the difference between the lot of some and of others. Some with all the chances,

others with few or even none. So terribly unequal; at times we are tempted to say so unfair. Those of us who have been richly blessed have a 'sore heart' over such problems, and most of all in old age, when life's journey has come nearly to an end. The longing grows that we would give anything and do anything to equalize the lot of mankind, giving all an equal chance.

Then we go deeper. We know better than once we did the love, mercy, wisdom, and justice of God; and the end of life does not terminate with time. Even if we have come to fourscore years and more, life in this world is so short; compared with the eternities behind us and in front of us it is as nothing. Vastly important, yes, but only an episode. For those who have had few chances here, have not their very burdens and sorrows prepared them for places in the eternities greater, nobler, than we who so far have had less strenuous discipline here? I would love to believe it. Many of us have not been worthy of our blessings. It is the aged who more than any feel for the sorrows and troubles of others.

Again, our years bring with them an

intenser feeling about good and about evil. Holy awe for the one, horror for the other. No one, I think, has made us realize this better than Richard Church, Dean of S. Paul's. I wish his works were still read. It was John Morley, I think, who said of him that he was 'the finest embodiment of nineteenth-century Christianity.' So deep, so wise a teacher that one would be unhappy if one ever dared disagree with anything he had said. Well, it is surely one of the duties of the aged to exalt holiness and to hate evil. It is, so it seems, natural for us to believe in the 'evil one,' since personality is force. On this dread subject I am impelled to go a step further. When evil unites itself to genius, imagination, emotion, we who have lived long and seen much, shiver and are afraid. Was not Tennyson right when he characterized evil poetry and fiction as 'procuress of the lords of hell'?

Years ago Dean Stanley, preaching thankfully of the example of Dickens in this respect, said, 'Those whom sermons never reach, whom history fails to arrest, are reached and arrested by the fictitious characters, the stirring plot, of the suc-

cessful novelist. It is this which makes a wicked novel more detestable than almost any other form of wicked words and deeds.' I do not think that language is too strong.

I have not spoken of our sense of our own sins, and why the conviction of them has not crushed us. I can do it best by saying that on my study table there stands a drawing illustrating a short poem by Archbishop William Alexander, entitled, 'Repentance and Faith.' It says all.

There was a ship, one eve autumnal, onward
 Steered o'er an ocean lake ;
 Steered by some strong hand ever as if sunward :
 Behind, an angry wake.
 Before there stretched a sea that grew intenser,
 With silver fire far spread,
 Up to a hill mist-gloried, like a censer
 With smoke encompassed :
 It seemed as if two seas met brink to brink
 A silver flood beyond a lake of ink.

And as that ship went up the waters stately,
 Upon her topmasts tall
 I saw two sails, whereof the one was greatly
 Dark as a funeral pall :

But oh ! the next's pure whiteness who shall utter ?
 Like a shell-snowy strand,
 Or when a sunbeam falleth through the shutter
 On a dead baby's hand ;
 But both alike across the surging sea
 Helped to the haven where the barque would be.

And as that soul went onward, sweetly speeding
 Unto its home and light,
 Repentance made it sorrowful exceeding,
 Faith made it wondrous bright—
 Repentance dark with shadowy recollections
 And longings unsufficed,
 Faith white and pure with sunniest affections,
 Full from the Face of Christ.
 But both across the sun-besilvered tide
 Helped to the haven where the heart would ride.

II

RETIREMENT

COMES the day when there begins what I may call 'the withdrawal of talents.' God gave us them, He has watched their use or misuse. Vital force, bodily activity, five senses, imagination, emotion, passions. Life's pages have their record. How many are left you now? Of those that remain, what is their condition? We have recognized S. Paul's 'body of our humiliation,' for our disabilities increase, and some are distressful to others. For example, deafness; and we thank God for Leviticus xix. 14: 'Thou shalt not curse the deaf.' It is best, indeed, not to expect to hear conversation and to be happy without it. Perhaps the Divine Voice becomes clearer in consequence; well content we may be.

But from loss to gain. Serenity is one gain surely. Conscience does not give it

because it is keener, but the sense of pardon and mercy do. Also, life is like a river. A torrent at first, then come reaches broad and deep. Torrents have their uses, and I suppose we look back ruefully, perhaps also humorously, at our torrential days. Well, they are past. Now to-day, controversy has lost interest for us. A necessity of course for some, not for us. Perhaps the young had better not see too much of every side of a question. For us, our own convictions probably are immeasurably deepened in regard to things that matter. No storms can now shake them. Troubles domestic, national, political, we take them to Him Who 'sitteth upon the water flood.'

I found among my father's papers another page telling how in Mutiny days in India it was his habit to lay everything before God at early dawn, asking for His guidance; then he was at peace. It is the last word which comes hardest. *Noli aemulari*, 'Fret not.' Age has not done its work, however, if we do not think more kindly of those who differ from us, and of their opinions. Like Samuel in retirement at Ramah, let us chiefly pray. If you

have held high place, nothing will induce you of course to interfere in any way whatever with your successor. You may be sorely tempted, but you will not forget that any such attempt would be unworthy of the dignity and nobility of old age. I remember Dean Stanley once saying to me, 'If ever I am a bishop I shall devote a principal part of my first charge to the duty of successors to predecessors and of predecessors to their successors.'

And of course no aged men are pessimists. They know too much of the ways of God and have no doubt about His victory. Hope is put specially into our charge. Father Congreve in his *Treasures of Hope for the Evening of Life* quotes the sage of old, 'Hope, the tender nurse of old age,' and beautifully adds his share to that truth. Hope abides for us because faith abides, and love; no pessimism, and I should like to add, no scorn. Did our Lord ever express scorn? More in place for us, as we survey mankind's progress, is pity and compassion.

Deeper still: intimacy. I mean, with God in Christ.

Strange indeed would it be if the child

of God, blessed with all means of access given in His Church, going out into the world with the cross on his brow, supported by the presence of God for fourscore or more years, has not gained intimacy, inspired not only with awe and reverence, but with love and with *friendship* which the Master Himself claims from us. I do not know whether any promise He has made stirs the heart so deep as this. Can anything draw us as that? Intimacy is really possible, and to none so assured as those old in years. I wonder also whether it is the case that love for the Holy Spirit is also a gift of old age. He, the 'third Person,' becomes no longer shadowy, but Personal. I know not whether it is a coincidence or not, but it is a fact that 'love of the Holy Spirit' meaning love for Him does not occur in the New Testament. Romans xv. 30 refers to His love for us. There is another analogous coincidence, about hope. That word does not occur in the four Gospels. In the first of these two points, perhaps it was left by the Lord to Him Whom He would send from the Father to assure us in due time that the Spirit is personal.

The aged have intimate communion with Him as with the Son, as with the Father. However it may be, Whomever we commune with, it is well to conclude with 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.'

But again, what effect has resignation of your life-work had upon you? In this matter I feel most for the Civil servant, or business man, who has for fifty years left home at 9 a.m. to return at 5 p.m. Has he hobbies? a grave matter if he has not. I have been told by one who ought to know that in the whole British Civil Service, at all events in our islands, not more than some thirty-four per cent ever live to draw a pension. Their one occupation gone, and life goes. No hobbies. For such there is no saying with joy, 'At last I can prosecute what I have given my few leisure hours to, my life-long hobby.' Unless he can say that, it may be hard on the home: the depressed pensioner seems lost. Perhaps now at length he may have to test the truth of an old saying: 'Is he a Christian?' 'I don't know; I haven't seen him at home.' I have even known a clergyman, one of the most devoted and spiritual of men, seriously downcast and

extremely unhappy after retirement from a very important and noble position. But this must be very rare among those who have rightly claimed to have exercised, not a profession, but a vocation. Of course we cannot expect to have received from John Bunyan everything in the way of life-like portraits of men and women. He has not given us, I wish he had, the life of godly men and women who lived for years retired beside the river with their own work still to do.

III

THE RETIRED CLERGY

IF you are a layman do not neglect this paragraph. We are still human beings. Moreover, we should like you to note how we criticize ourselves. Remember we know only too well that the devil has special temptations for those in Holy Orders; and indeed for all religious persons. Dean Church's sermon on 'The Imperfections of Religious Men' in his volume of *University and Cathedral Sermons* ought to be printed in letters of gold.

We the clergy do not of course speak of our profession. It is our vocation. Specially called of God to our office, we can never in a full sense retire. Those who read the command given us in the Priest's Ordinal will see that our service on earth ends only with our last breath, a service which is indeed 'perfect freedom.' My dream of late years has been, in order

to make our position clear, to see an association formed, an *Association of the retired and pensioned clergy of the Church*. There must be a directing Head of course, and how wise, tender, and understanding he must be. Such an association would surely be a blessing to devoted priests. They want of course to do all they can still. There is no putting off of their armour, no feeling 'that no man hath hired us.' It would save some, very few of course, but some few, from sinking back. As things are at present I have heard what is amazing if true, that, in one great watering place there are a hundred retired clergy, in another centre sixty. Some doing all they can; surely not all, and simply from lack of direction. I imagine how the head of such an association would consult with a priest who was retiring or pensioned. Where should he now live? Health has to be considered, but also the Church; in some cases there would be no doubt; or could he settle where his presence would save a noble priest from certain breakdown. The very fact that there is a priest living in the parish who can help is enough to support a heavy burden. I

need not enlarge further. I dream of all the retired still doing what they can, and with great gladness. Let there be one such association for the British Isles. Many a parish could give house rent for such service.

Our clerical shortcomings. How retrospect humbles us. No petition in the Litany is more welcome in declining years than the last: our 'sins, negligences, and ignorances.' I wish we could add 'our stupidities.' Our youth, so eager and confident, reformers of the ways of our old-fashioned predecessors. And they probably looked as tenderly at us, as to a young man in a hurry. Perhaps we do the same to-day. I imagine we often used to hurt the old worshippers: sudden changes of ritual, the new method forced on them, new postures in the service. We didn't first consult the elders when we had no parish council. We were long at our private prayers at the altar in the early morning when some of the faithful young or old had not overmuch time or vitality.

Well, even if we had not won that grace long ago we now know much better how humbled we are by our stupidities. Oh!

dear, the small weekday congregation, 'Anything will do for them.' We did not realize the presences who were listening.

One great blessing certainly comes in retirement. We turn with joy to read books we have longed to devour, but the years passed and we had no time. We have more leisure now for the best and purest poetry. Every man has his own tastes in this. In my own case I find it difficult to be adequately thankful to Francis Turner Palgrave for his two *Golden Treasuries* general and sacred, and for his wonderful notes on the poems. We may now add to them the noble anthology published by the S.P.C.K., *The Sundays of Man's Life*.

Retirement also in another way helps us. We may now have a fortnight or a month's notice of a sermon to be preached, and we can give all the days to turning over the subject, reading round it, giving our best at last. I can also chronicle another blessing: there is quiet, unhurried visiting the few crippled and aged folk living near us. We can visit them as friends, exchanging life's experiences with those whom we now get to know so

well. How good for the parish priest also to be sure of one white head at his Communions. Another talent sure to have been taken away is the capacity for taking long walks. The hills, the long days visiting, beautiful field paths, these are glorious memories at any rate. Now the garden knows us, which perhaps we somewhat despised. Not now. The Lord God walks in it at all seasons. We now note things, the birds, the trees, winter and summer equally beautiful always. Indeed, the leafless tree is become our approaching symbol: at rest. Hush: it sleeps: and we learn the lesson. Sleep and awaking. Years ago I remember seeing the late Archbishop Trench pulling himself up the stairs in the Athenaeum, and seeing Dean Farrar standing and waiting for him, he said in his deep voice, 'Farrar, we learn at last to put into practice what we have been teaching to others.' For myself I recalled his poems, his solid contributions to the Faith, and also his powerful physique when he was a young man.

Letters. I hope you have that gift. Some haven't. Those who have can in old age make their letters great means of

grace. You can indeed often write more deeply than you can speak when face to face with old friends and more especially with the younger generation.

For the rest—Have you done great things? Now is your time to do the little things, anything that helps, anything that eases the strain on the household. Why not make yourself responsible to go to the post office and the shops if they will permit it? Again, has it been the custom in your family for members of it to write their reminiscences? Not for publication but as a family possession. As the years pass these become valuable to the historian.

I keep to the last the more important work—*Prayer*. Intercessory prayer, all prayers, the world lies before us. Each is called to do that work: for the village, the town, the diocese, the Empire, the Church at home and abroad, the living and the dead. We need not make a burden of it. We can converse with Him Whom we have come to know, in the garden, in the quiet church on the weekday, in our room, and about all that is in our heart.

A last phase. There is one last phase upon which I cannot enter because I have

not the experience. For many of us there comes the day when growing infirmities confine us to the house, to the one room, to our bed. I have heard it called for the man of God, 'the last retreat.' I have no knowledge here, but I stand in reverence. I know that here at last the child of God may be entering the last class, the top class of our earthly school, perhaps the most useful of its lessons ere this body of our humiliation has run its course. Perchance they lose some great thing who have not had that experience. Some of the noblest and best lived for years in such seclusion; pain their comrade. Some of them have said that so they had learnt of God to an extent only thus to be attained; some secret was then gained known only to God and to them. Such discipline, if it comes to us, will surely be accompanied by spiritual growth: we shall learn to be more than content. Perhaps also feeble, bed-ridden old age provides lessons of great worth for those who tend and nurse. Freely accepting that charge, they nearly always also protest it is really no burden. Indeed, perhaps the due performance of that duty becomes a guardian angel shield-

ing from evil times. The destroying angel sees love at work, and passes on.

In the end death changes its face, becoming the last and not least blest messenger from the Lord God. On this subject I do not think John Bunyan will ever be displaced from being supreme. I believe that in the end of the story of Christian, he was trying his wings, and only came to full beauty in the story of Christiana. What a gallery is there!—the passing of Valiant, Mr. Fearing, Mr. Standfast, old Honest, Ready to Halt, Despondency, Much Afraid, Feeble Minded, Christiana. I wish he had added Greatheart. We may well thank God for Bunyan's unmerited sufferings, imprisonments, persecutions, if only by such means the Master extracted the best, the very best, for generations of His people.

Let me add to their utterances a few real words written by aged men of God as they waited beside the river. They are given by Father Congreve in the book from which I have quoted already. I hope they may induce you to get the volume. 'The earth is forsaking us, happy the soul that has wings. Our generation vanishes,

and we hang on still like the few dead leaves at the tip of the tree's branches that the first gust of wind will presently whirl away. At our age everything warns us of our departure. So dear friend, we will be beforehand with it. Let us so give up ourselves to the true Life, that when death comes for us, it shall find us gone.'

Another: 'For me more than for you, old age has come. May I tell you? I feel so young inwardly; so young that it is almost like childhood.'

There is indeed possible for us a very beautiful second childhood.

Another writes: 'Dear friend, old age is no longer coming to me; it has come, and with its body-guard of pains. Those about me are unwilling to see in them warnings of my going hence. I say nothing, but inwardly I am as a bird on a branch; I shall not need two calls before I take wing. Patience, dear friend, evening is coming on, and the Master stands at the door; soon He will knock, and neither you nor I will keep Him waiting before we open to Him. . . . I am no longer on earth, but like a traveller who has packed up his luggage, and is waiting

for his carriage. Perhaps I shall have to wait some years for it, who knows? Anyhow, I shall not unpack my luggage.'

As we also wait does not our heart burn within us at times with the desire to strike a few more blows in the Great Cause? Fortunately our help is not in the least indispensable. Moreover, looking backward, how great a comfort it is to know that our heavenly Father has not disdained for His work instruments so imperfect as we have been, in order to show forth more perfectly the glory of Him 'Who hasteth not, neither is weary.'

The Church lives on; it cannot die, it will be witnessing of Him when He comes. As for our wills, He knows they are His.

The late Miss Soulsby sent me the following prayer. I wish I knew the name of the author.

A PRAYER FOR OLD AGE

written by a lady of ninety

'O FATHER of mercies and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need, I come to Thee for help to meet the trials of advancing years. Look graciously upon

me, and the more the outward man decays strengthen me the more continually with Thy grace in the inner man. Give me courage and patience to bear the infirmities, privations, sorrows, and loneliness of old age. Help me to fight successfully its temptations to be exacting, selfish, unreasonable, irritable, and complaining. Preserve my mental faculties unimpaired to the end. Keep my heart and affections warm so that I may never fail to sympathize with the joys, sorrows, and interests of others, and to be deeply grateful for the love and forbearance of those around me. And as it is Thy pleasure to prolong my days beyond the usual time, enable me by Thy grace to employ every hour of my lengthened life more entirely in Thy service, in making those around me happy and doing good in my generation. And so fit and prepare me against the hour of death that I may be able to face it fearlessly, trusting in Thy promise to be with me as I pass through its dark valley; so that, departing in peace, my soul may be received into Thy everlasting kingdom, through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Amen.'

IV

THE LAST MESSENGER

IF you are young, even very young, do not pass the following pages by. It is written indeed as much for you, if not more than for your elders. You will find no gloom. I am going to try and show you that death, for a disciple of the Lord, is no enemy. Far from it. Our Lord does not say much about death, beyond that it is sleep: that means re-creation, and also waking again refreshed for more work. He so completely opened the door into life immortal that death was just a door. Beyond it, He Himself waiting, and the reception. Think of it! He taught the spiritual life of course as our heritage. 'That life is not broken in reality, only in seeming,' by death.

Old Simeon in the Temple with the divine Babe in his arms utters the prayer which has ever touched the hearts of us

all. In it he is a sentinel; he has been waiting so long at his post, he is so tired. May he not now lay down his arms and rest in sleep? That is death, naught else to those who believe in Jesus.

But of course death is a tremendous event, the greatest in earthly life. As I look back on life, however, I now see other events which surely help us to prepare for the last of them. For example, the arrival at one's first boarding school, never having left home before, and the departure of father and mother; left alone. One's First Communion, Marriage, Ordination, Consecration as Bishop. At the time, each of these was a tremendous thing, I wish I could find a stronger word. I really believe death may be for us no more tremendous, since our best Friend 'prepares' us all along our days.

Death just the last stage in our homeward journey.

But again. Is there any special length of life ordained for us on earth? The Psalmist was an aged man and spoke of seventy or eighty years; but is there any length, short or long, in reality, except the will of God? I think the answer de-

pends upon whom we consider death to be. I have no doubt myself that he is God's Messenger. Then whenever he comes it is well. He is not a punisher of sin. Our Lord never even hints at that. All our knowledge of life on earth is in the same direction. All animated creation dies.

But I think S. Paul takes us a step further and teaches us that the form in which death comes to sinful man is the result of sin, but not mere death itself. No; when the Lord's messenger comes our course is completed, whatever our age. All who died in the Great War had completed their course. I need not tell you that you can of course ask many questions on this subject to which we can only answer, 'We don't know.' But the Lord's disciple walks by the light he has, and that light says, all things are ordered by God. There are no accidents. When an event has happened, then we know God's will. Yes, walk by the light He has given us, and do not be dismayed by the dark clouds or the endless mysteries.

On the other hand, you often hear professedly Christian people talk of a 'life

cut short in its prime'; or, 'such great promise quenched'; 'what a calamity it is'; 'it makes one rebel'; 'can there be a God Who cares?'; and suchlike. One is not surprised, but is it really Christian? The Lord's earthly life, fully, perfectly complete, ended at thirty-three. So I ask, did the devil send that messenger, or accident, or our heavenly Father?

Perhaps a scene in a hospital may touch us till tears of sympathetic tenderness flow; the hour when the wise surgeon comes to the bedside of a girl, young in years, beautiful in character, with fine abilities and noble parents, and such hopes for years to come. There she lies suffering from a fell disease. There is no hope, no operation possible. Let me imagine what that noble surgeon says. 'No earthly skill, my dear, can avail. So we want you to prepare for the advent of Another, the Great Physician and Surgeon—the wisest and tenderest of all. It means a major operation. But He has never made a mistake nor ever failed in His purpose. He will take you in hand and will be absolutely successful, and you will be restored to perfect health. We want you to prepare

for His coming.' I have been led to this parable by the feeling that death may be just that major operation. For us who are 'in Christ' (let us say it in deep humility) it is bound to do what is God's will. The divine Surgeon has never failed. But of course such a coming fills our weak nature with awe. A most tremendous moment, courage is needed. Since the Surgeon is our best and dearest Friend Who gave His life for us, and knows our life through and through, we may well be content. Awe and a great reverence and stillness and waiting, all that. Of course Christian people differ in their attitude at that dread hour. You remember what that great man, Charles Kingsley, said on his death-bed when asked what were his feelings. He answered, 'Intense curiosity.' For myself it is awe, reverence, waiting, trust.

Watts's 'Love and Death.' The most beautiful picture of the coming of Christian death is surely Watts's 'Love and Death.' Nothing seems wanting. Artists often depict more even than they themselves may apprehend. At any rate let me tell what I see. Death and the child defending a closed door. That is the

scene. It is human love fighting for the dearest and best; the babe, the child, the wife, the parent. Must the breadwinner depart, or the incomparable mother, leaving the young children? No, no. Shut and bolt and lock the door. Stand before it, wrestle with the enemy. But it is no enemy, it is the messenger of the Lord. He is not vexed, he understands what human love is, how divine, how hearts may break. Could we but see death's face we should understand what divine compassion and understanding is. But this is beyond the artist's skill. He does not attempt it. All he can give is the back view of that messenger, and the folds of his cloak. These indeed suffice to help us imagine what that hidden face may be. Canvas and paint and skill and Christian vision gives us comfort indeed.

Greatly daring, I have imagined yet another picture by the same artist. That messenger comes once more. This time the door is not closed; in front of it is a woman middle-aged; tears stream down her face. She does not oppose, she asks, Must it be? May not the cup pass? Is it certainly the Lord's will? It is for

those who are left awhile to grieve upon earth that she asks, not for one for whom the message comes. I like to think that the response of the herald may tell of the *need of the Lord*. He needs all sorts to 'follow Him whithersoever He goeth.' Babes, young men and maidens, the able and the simple; we must not grudge them to Him for work for which they have been preparing here, all too short a time we think. We do not know (with reverence) His necessity. The time of separation seems so long for the young, so short for the old, so very short.

One last word, with bowed head. The thoughts, the anticipations of Christ's people are manifold. So many have passed on whom we long to meet again, for love's sake, out of gratitude. Many of our own generation, and of our best loved; a greater number probably of those whose written words have been beacon lights for us; a great company. It fills that future beyond the door with bright hopes. But all that pales before the deepest of all longings. 'One there is beyond all others.' It is not unreal language on the part of the aged to long for the vision of Him, to ask

when they may hope to see Him to Whom they owe everything upon earth, Whose names as revealed in Scripture they repeat with growing intensity—their best, dearest, truest, life-long Friend, Support, Comforter; the revealer of the Father, the sender of the Spirit. To see Him face to face, to fall down before Him—— If the messenger's advent means that, and it surely ought, then he is an angel. Then the departure from this earth of ours is but to enter the home for which we have been being prepared all through the years.

Farewell, farewell.