

## Christian Retirement

Part 76

By [Thomas Reade](#)

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### ON THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE SAINTS

The book of Revelation contains not only the most important prophecies respecting the church of Christ, to the end of time; but also unfolds to us the happy and glorified state of true believers in the heavenly world. The apostle John saw a door opened in heaven; and scenes of the most solemn, grand, and delightful nature were presented to his view. "Oh, blessed Savior! you who are the light and glory of the heavenly world, take away the scales of unbelief and ignorance from my eyes, and enable me to look through the veil, and contemplate with delight those joys which are prepared for your people, that my affections may be fixed upon things above, where you sit at the right hand of God."

From the book of Revelation I find what graces of the Spirit accompany the believer to the celestial Canaan. Love, joy, peace, gratitude, humility, adoring awe, and an ineffable delight in the triumphs and glories of Jesus, form part of that felicity which the redeemed experience in the presence of God and the Lamb.

The seed is sown, and the bud is formed here; but the flower expands, and the sacred fruits ripen under the eternal beams of the Sun of righteousness. The more my soul is filled with these graces, the more shall I be assimilated to the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven.

Pride can find no entrance into heaven. There, the saints are all humility. Boasting is forever excluded. They are filled with that charity which boasts not itself, is not puffed up. They sing unceasing praises to him who washed them from their sins in his own blood. Casting their crowns before the throne, in token of their own unworthiness, they cry, "Worthy is the Lamb." Every motion to pride is the effect of the fall. The whole scheme of redemption is calculated to humble the sinner, while it exalts the glory of Jehovah Jesus and promotes the sanctification of every believing soul.

From the interesting vision vouchsafed to the apostle as recorded in the 7th chapter, I learn that the blessings of salvation are not confined to any particular age or nation; for multitudes out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and having palms in their hands.

Jesus, therefore, may justly be called "the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world;" once typified by the lamb, sacrificed every morning and evening on the Jewish altar; and symbolically represented by "a lamb slain" in the apocalyptic vision.

I here behold the amazing honor which Jesus puts upon his people. The apostle saw three circles round about the throne; and, wonderful to contemplate! those blessed angels who never sinned, composed the outer circle! No envy or jealousy lurks in their holy bosoms. It is only on this polluted earth, that such unhallowed fires are found to burn. Oh! that every unholy flame may be quenched in my soul.

Blessed Jesus, impress your sacred precepts on my heart. Weave them into the very texture of my soul. You have said by your apostle, "be clothed with humility." Oh! make me humble; and, under an abiding consciousness of my own unworthiness, may I ever esteem you above all created beings, and my fellow sinners better than myself.

The Christian's life is affectingly described by the Elder, who spoke to John. The words are few, but comprehensive. "These are they who came out of great tribulation." Yes! those who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. It is through much tribulation that we enter the kingdom. This tribulation is both inward and outward.

Outward trials may vary in different periods of the world. In our days, we are privileged to worship the God of our salvation under the protection of a mild and paternal government, not making us afraid. There have been ages, and those not a few, when believers, of whom the world was not worthy, were compelled to seek an asylum in mountains, and dens, and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. The danger, with respect to Christians, now is, lest outward prosperity and the absence of persecution should produce inward languor and spiritual decay.

The graces of the Spirit generally thrive best in tempestuous seasons, when the saints are driven, as it were, to their place of refuge, by the brandishing sword of tyranny or superstition. But God is all-sufficient, who can impart grace equal to the day either of ease or trouble.

In every age, the believer will experience inward trials arising from his own heart, and the busy temptations of Satan. He will find himself surrounded with snares

and dangers, whether he be in outward prosperity, or adversity. Hence he will always stand in need of watchfulness and prayer. Like David, however, he may "encourage himself in the Lord his God," since all things shall work together for good, while, in the exercise of faith and love, he labors in patience to possess his soul.

From this sublime vision I learn, that salvation is all of grace. The blood of Jesus freely and gratuitously poured out upon the cross, is the sole procuring cause of eternal salvation. The soul of the heavenly saint, once guilty and polluted, was pardoned and purified through faith in the atonement of Jesus. On this account, and on this only, does he stand before the throne of God. All human righteousness is forever excluded. He that glories, must glory in the Lord. None will ever be admitted into the presence of God, but those whose robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

None will ever be admitted to sing the praises of self. All the redeemed unite in one grand everlasting chorus; "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." The employment of redeemed saints is also described in this glorious vision. "They shall serve God day and night in his temple." Idleness is not happiness. The rest of heaven is not inaction; for "absence of occupation is not rest." Activity characterizes the heavenly world. Here, we are soon wearied, even in the sweetest seasons of devotion. The spirit is often willing, when the flesh is weak. But in heaven, the believer shall serve God without weariness and distraction. Here on earth, we often groan, being burdened; and at the close of a blessed sabbath, have to mourn over a dead and lukewarm heart. But in heaven, the soul shall be filled with ecstasy and delight, while serving the eternal Jehovah day and night in his temple.

Oh! the happy state of that glorious world, where sin and its baneful influence shall molest the ransomed soul no more!

How awfully do those people deceive themselves, who hope for happiness in heaven, while averse to holy meditation and praise! The disposition of the saints in light must now be wrought in every believing soul. The exercise of heavenly graces forms the beauty and happiness of the saints on earth, as well as their qualification for the enjoyment of the heavenly felicity.

What tongue can describe the blessedness contained in these few words; "He that sits upon the throne, shall dwell among them." When Jesus manifests himself to his people but for a short period, he makes their delighted spirits like "the chariots of Amminadab." They are borne aloft upon the wings of fervent love yes, like Elijah, they are carried to heaven in a chariot of fire. But for Jesus to dwell among them, and that forever and ever; Oh ! what heart can conceive the unutterable bliss! Here, indwelling sin often grieves the Holy Visitant, and

quenches the sacred flame; but in heaven it is not so. "Lord, fit and prepare me for this glorious state, crucify every wrong desire, and make me a humble follower of the Lamb."

In heaven, the believer will be removed out of the reach of evil. Those happy souls, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, "shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore; neither shall the sun beat on them, nor any heat." "God himself shall be with them, and be their God. He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

The ransomed host who stand upon Mount Zion as conquerors through the blood of the Lamb, shall be admitted to the enjoyment of the highest good. They shall eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. "They shall eat of the hidden manna; and receive a white stone, in which is written a new name, which no man knows, only he who receives it." "They shall be clothed with white clothing, and their names shall not be blotted out of the book of life." "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of water." "They shall inherit all things," and "reign with Christ forever and ever." Such is the blessedness of the saints. To this blessedness, the Spirit and the Bride say, "come—and let him that hears say, come; and let him that is athirst, come; and whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

"Almighty Redeemer! make me willing to receive with joy and gratitude these rich blessings of your grace; so dearly purchased, and so freely offered. Impart your whole self to my longing soul; and enable me to give my whole self to you. Oh! grant that I may possess you as my present and eternal portion. With inextinguishable desire may I seek your face and favor. Never let me rest in outward forms, nor in any of your appointed means of grace; but, ever bearing the blessed end in view, may I labor to apprehend that for which also I am apprehended by your grace, until I attain at length the prize of the high calling of God, even eternal life, through the exceeding riches of your love and mercy. You have said, 'surely I come quickly'; amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus."

Though billows of sorrow should roll,  
And surround me on every side;  
Yet you can the tempest control,  
My Savior my Refuge, and Guide.

Your smile makes the soul to expand,  
And graces celestial to grow;  
With rapture I gaze on the land,  
Where pleasures Incessantly flow.

It is there my dear Savior resides,

In fullness of glory and grace  
And there the pure river that glides  
Through regions of joy and of peace.

The life-yielding tree there shall spread  
Its branches luxuriantly round;  
The saints robed in white shall be fed  
With fruits from Emanuel's ground.

How deep is the mystery of grace,  
The theme of bright seraphs above;  
To see the sweet beams of his face,  
To dwell in the essence of love!

My Father! your nature is love;  
In Jesus, your image I view;  
Oh may I behold him above,  
And praise him eternally too.

May this my delight ever be,  
On earth his rich grace to record;  
And when from these temples set free,  
With joy ascend up to the Lord.

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