

## Earth, With Its Dark and Dreadful Ills

Alice Cary (1820–1871)

Earth, with its dark and dreadful ill,  
Recedes and fades away;  
Lift up your heads, ye heavenly hills,  
Ye gates of death, give way!

My soul is full of whispered song;  
My blindness is my sight;  
The shadows that I feared so long  
Are all alive with light.

The while my pulses faintly beat  
My faith doth so abound,  
I feel grow firm beneath my feet  
The green, immortal ground.

That faith to me a courage gives,  
Low as the grave to go;  
I know that my Redeemer lives;  
That I shall live, I know.

The palace walls I almost see,  
Where dwells my Lord and King;  
O grave, where is thy victory?  
O death, where is thy sting?

September 19, 2025

## ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

### *In the Nick of Time*

#### How Should We Respond?

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As I write, a week has passed since a Leftist activist assassinated Charlie Kirk. It has become clear that the assassin's motivation was the effectiveness with which Kirk advocated his views. His opponents found that they could not answer him. Nor could they cancel or deplatform him. Finally, one of them killed him.

Kirk was assassinated for nothing more than the beliefs that he defended. Some of Kirk's beliefs—such as American exceptionalism—were purely political. Others, while political, were also moral, biblical, and Christian. Those are the beliefs for which he was killed. On those issues, his message was the Christian message, aimed to address moral issues that have become politicized in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Over the past week, voices on the Left have celebrated Kirk's death. Many have expressed the view that he deserved what he got. These expressions serve a useful purpose. They show us how a significant part of the Left views Christians. They want us dead, just as they wanted Kirk dead. If they cannot kill us, then they will try to deplatform us, to get us fired, or to just scare us into shutting up. If we speak up, they will attack our livelihood, our community standing, and our opportunities to speak. If they can't have us dead, then they want us canceled and muzzled.

None of this is new. For years, Leftists have monitored what we say and write, looking for slips and ambiguous statements that they can use against us. They want to present us in the worst possible light. They take our words out of context and twist them. Failing all else, they flatly lie about us. If they cannot kill us, then they will assassinate our characters.

They are trying to dehumanize and even demonize us. In their eyes, we are already "other." When we speak biblical truth, they call us Fascists, Nazis, and Hitlers. They see us as a disease, an infestation that must be neutralized.

As conflict with the Left has ballooned, some Christians have tried to de-escalate it by ceding as much ground as possible. They have absorbed Leftist language, paid homage to Leftist categories, and sought Leftist approval. The Kirk assassination makes it clear that those tactics have failed. The Left



*In the Nick of Time* is published by Central Baptist Theological Seminary.

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has opened a full-scale war against Christians. We no longer de-escalate the conflict if we ever could. It is time for all faithful believers to fight.

But we fight on the Bible's terms, not the Left's. The Left sniffs out the slightest provocations to instigate "mostly peaceful" riots. They burn down cities, loot stores, and issue panicked appeals for liberty-restricting legislation. As we now see, they also assassinate their opponents. We must not do those things—any of them. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but they are mighty for casting down false systems of thought (1 Cor 10:3–6). We fight, not to suppress our enemies, but to win them to truth. This is the war that Charlie Kirk fought, and he fought it effectively.

So what should we do? How shall we fight this war?

First, we must wake up to the fact that we occupy a battlefield. Jesus never promised ease in this life. He said that people would insult us, persecute us, and lie about us (Matt 5:11–12). Paul promised that all those who live godly in Christ Jesus would suffer persecution (2 Tim 3:12). We are called to suffer for the name of our Lord (1 Pet 1:6–8). Let us not run from persecution. Let us embrace it.

Second, we must know what the truth is, and we must speak it with boldness. We must clearly state the way of salvation. We must also articulate the Bible's answers to the moral deviations that harry our civilization. We must not shrink from speaking these truths simply because some of them have become political issues. We are called to expose the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph 5:11), even if it costs us friends, jobs, and even lawfare. Most of all, we should never speak what we know to be false (Eph 4:25).

Third, we must act with moderation, reasonability, and forbearance (Phil 4:5). Our convictions must not turn us into angry people. We should answer arguments with reasons and evidence, not by attacking our opponents. Our responsibility is not to own the libs, but to exhibit the character of Christ. We should listen, even to those who are wrong. Insofar as we can, we should show them kindness. This is what Charlie Kirk did so well.

Fourth, even as we seek to be reasonable, we must prepare for the unreasonable. The Left prefers to beat its opponents into submission. If you take anything like a public stand for righteousness, prepare to have your inbox flooded with preposterous emails. Prepare for complaints to be made to your employer. Prepare for people who will try to use the legal system to shut you up and to make you pay. Do not be surprised when these things happen to you.

Fifth, we ought to prepare to support those who are paying the price. The Left is at war with us, and they want to hurt us. Some of us will be slandered. Some will lose their platforms. Some will lose their jobs. Some will lose their freedom. Some, like Kirk, might lose their lives. No one who suf-

fers for righteousness' sake should have to stand alone. Make an encouraging call. Write a support check. Defend someone's reputation. None of us knows who will be singled out, but we should all know that a multitude of saints will always stand with us.

Finally, we must love our enemies. We must bless and do good to them, just as God does to His enemies. We must pray for them and bring the gospel to them as persuasively as we can.

Charlie Kirk was one of a kind. There will not be another. But the work he did was not Kirk's work, it was Christ's.

Think how the 1<sup>st</sup> Century church must have felt when Nero killed Paul. Yet the work kept going after Paul was dead. Indeed, Paul's death may have advanced God's work more than his life did. It emboldened Christians and gave them a model to live by.

Now is not the time for either despair or ease. Christ's enemies have declared war upon us. It is time to fight back with the whole armor of God. Pastors, if you have been silent on the moral issues of the day, now is the time to speak up. Young women, people will listen when you model and defend biblical womanhood. If you want a husband, then look for a man of God who is willing to fight battles for you. Young men, this is your hour. Put your armor on, take up the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith, and face the enemy. He wants to destroy you and those whom you love. Resist him in the name of the Lord.



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This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.

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