

(Copy)

Roxbury, Dec. 10, 1865

157

Samuel May Esq.

Dear and venerated Sir - Your birthday and mine are very near each other; yours on the 4th, and mine on the 10th of the present month. You have exceeded the allotted threescore years and ten by almost another score - being eighty-nine years old. To-day I complete my threescore years. In the cycle of time the gap between us is reduced to a point. It will be my delight to keep as near you as I can in the grand march onward and upward. "Through what new scenes and changes we must pass," in the everlasting future, it is not for us to know; only this - that all the decrees of Heaven are just; all the operations of Nature beneficent, and all the dispensations of Providence wisely ordered. "God is love." Enough! we have found it so here; we shall find it ~~so here~~, we shall find it so hereafter. We have safely trusted him in the present life; we can as safely trust him in the life to come. "In him we live, and move, and have our being" - what more can we ask or desire? And what cause for joy and gratitude that it is so! "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!" Even though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil. What is sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption; what is sown a natural body shall be raised a spiritual body. Will not that prove a marvellous and glorious change?

I feel no desire to be any younger, nor any to hurry forward. My will shall be as God's will, and his time my time. "Whatever is is right", in his appointment, "even though a cross it be." Come health or sickness, come life or death, come joy or bereavement, "he doeth all things well." Such, I doubt not, is your own frame of mind; and so you wait, with tranquillity and trust, to be "clothed upon" with immortal life when what is mortal perishes.

As a husband, father, and citizen, your life has been most exemplary and useful, and you will be gathered to your fathers crowned with honors. Time has touched you gently, indeed; for the instances are few, and far between, where persons have reached your venerable age, with their sight, hearing, and mental faculties so very slightly impaired. It may be your lot to be placed among the centenarians.

I hope not to have lived wholly in vain; yet, if the truth of God has been illustrated and glorified in my anti-slavery career, it redounds not to my credit but to His praise. I feel as much astonished at what has taken place, in the deliverance of the millions held in captivity in our land, as anyone. "It is the Lord's doings, and marvellous in all eyes." Grateful, beyond all power of expression, am I to have been permitted to live to see that year of jubilee, for a sight of which I have so long yearned, and labored, and to some extent suffered.

Your own beloved son, and my most highly esteemed friend, bearing your honored name, — and your cherished nephew, and also one of my dearest friends, Samuel J. May, of Syracuse, — have done much by their labors and testimonies to bring about this joyfal event. None more disinterested, none more devoted, none more valuable, have labored in the vineyard of freedom and humanity. My indebtedness to them, in the way of earnest cooperation and brotherly kindness, is very great. They are sure of a divine reward.

I have just returned from a very pleasant and highly satisfactory western tour as far as the Mississippi river on the one hand, and Lake Michigan on the other. Every where I met with a remarkably courteous and cordial reception.

My dear wife joins me in proffering this token of esteem and reverence, and kindest remembrances to Mrs. May. Yours, for eternal progress,

Samuel May, Esq.
Give our regards to all your children.

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.

Jan. 10. 1865