

**Robert Emory Golladay**

**The Light in the Window**  
*Funeral Addresses and Outlines*



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# The Light in the Window

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# The Light in the Window

Funeral Addresses and Outlines

By Robert Emory Golladay, A.M. D.D.

AUTHOR OF "SERMONS ON — THE TEN COMMANDMENTS," "THE APOSTLES' CREED," "THE LORD'S PRAYER," "EARTH'S SONG OF REDEMPTION," ETC.

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# Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

Thank you to Rev. Scott A. Kuntz for finding, scanning, and proofreading this rare book. Matthew 9:36-38

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# Preface

IN THE JUDGMENT of the Author, the funeral sermon is one of the most difficult sermons to prepare and deliver. To begin with, there is an emotional strain which is felt by preacher and hearers alike. Jesus was ever and anon saying: "I have compassion." He felt other people's sorrows. He made their burdens His own. When He stood with the bereaved family in Bethany, hard by the grave of Lazarus, He wept. If we do not feel other people's sorrows, if their burdens do not become in some measure our own, we are not ministers after Jesus' heart, and we can never render our best service. A true ministry is a sacrificial ministry. This is costly business. It wears at the very source of life. But any true minister is willing, glad to pay the price.

There should be no perfunctory service at any time or place. Perfunctoriness in a funeral service, or in dealing with the relatives and friends of the deceased, is almost certain to preclude any beneficial results, even though the message be faultless as to content, because this attitude will antagonize those with whom we deal, and close their hearts to the message.

It is possible, as on other occasions, to preach different types of funeral sermons.

As for myself, I have followed the practice of preaching Scriptural funeral sermons; of taking a text and adhering to it; of using only such biographical and incidental matter as may be illustrative, comforting, or otherwise useful.

It is true that the Scriptures contain many texts pertinently applicable to many special instances; such as the death of a child, an old person, death by accident, the death of those engaged in various occupations, those in public station, and the like. It is perfectly permissible to use these, and it is wise often to do this.

Here is a practice which the Author, who has conducted funeral services for nearly seven hundred persons in one congregation, has found useful. I keep a personal record of all my funeral services — the name of the person buried, the date, the place where the service was held, and the text used. Consulting this record, I never use the same text, if otherwise appropriate, in the same church or mortuary chapel, or in the same circle of relatives or friends, within the space of several years. More than once, after a service was begun, I have changed my text and sermon because I saw in the audience those who had been present at a recent burial service. I was able to do this because I generally have the substance of several such texts, with an outline, rather well in mind at all times.

By all means, at a time like this, when people are unusually susceptible, let us give them something worthwhile, something from God's Word, something that will strengthen and encourage for the battle of life, that will comfort those who mourn, that will give new vision and new hope to those who are themselves facing the last great adventure of this earthly life.

In answer to many requests from clergy and publishers, I am offering this little volume of sermons and outlines. If they prove helpful to any overworked, hard-pressed brother, I shall be deeply gratified.

R. E. G.

# 1. The Light In The Window At Eventide

At evening time it shall be light. — Zechariah 14:7

I WANT TO PRESENT to you, and I hope to leave with you, as a permanent mind and soul impression, something of the mental picture this little text presents to my mind.

“At evening time it shall be light.” The mental picture these words set before my mind’s eye may be expressed in these words —

## I. The Text

[A] Our text is simplicity itself. But its context introduces some difficulties. The prophet is evidently speaking of a period of Storm and stress in the life of Israel. Jerusalem was beset, or was about to be beset, by some almost irresistible enemies. Great havoc was going to be wrought. Great suffering would have to be endured. It was going to be a period of catastrophe. So great was this period of perplexity going to be that the prophet says of it, “In that day there shall be no light.”

[B] The difficulty presented is not in realizing the situation pictured but in determining just what period of Israel’s history it is of which the prophet is speaking, and just who the enemies were who were going to bring about this situation.

[C] After all, this makes but little difference. Without any difficulty, we are able to get the lesson. And this is the thing of prime importance. The lesson is this: Life, whether it be that of an individual, a community, or a common-

wealth, has its crises. Sometimes they are of such a nature that man is unable to cope with them successfully, and goes down to defeat; those are times when the prophet's words are most realistically true, "In that day there shall be no light.

How hopeless, how depressing are such days — the days of Valley Forge, for instance, in our own national history; the days of war-torn Europe at the present time. "In that day there shall be no light." How terrible are such days in individual human experience! And especially so if they are life's closing days.

[D] At this point the Lord intervenes through the prophet, and gives Israel a cheering message. It is as if He had said, "There is going to be a dark, a starless night, trying in the extreme; but be of good cheer; quit you like men; the night will pass. It shall be light at evening time."

[E] There is every reason to believe that this word of the prophet, like many other Old Testament passages, had a twofold meaning; that it referred, first of all, to some near historic event; but that it was, fundamentally, Messianic, and referred to the coming of Christ; and that was what the prophet meant when he said, "At evening time it shall be light."

## **II. A Picture**

[A] Against this background, which will help us in our understanding, I want to paint this simple little word picture of the light in the window at eventide.

Dwellers in a modern city, born and bred there, are scarcely in a situation to appreciate fully how much a little light may mean to a person. We are used to the bright lights; our streets are almost as well lighted by night as by day.

[B] My memory goes back to the time when, in the rural, mountainous section of Virginia, the blazing log on the hearth and the tallow candle were the usual sources of light, and when the kerosene lamp was a luxury and a delight.

[C] Then, or now, how cheerful and inviting, to the belated home-comer in the country, where the houses are far apart and the roads dark, is the beckoning light in the window at eventide, set as a beacon to light the way!

It tells of brightness, cheerfulness and peace within. It tells the one homeward bound that those within are thinking of him, solicitous of his well-being, and have placed the light as a guide for him. And it cheers his heart and quickens his pace as he goes on — homeward bound — through the night into the light.

[D] All fixed lights serve somewhat the same purpose. Railroad signal lights, lighthouses set to guide the boats that ply the great waters all have as their purpose to help life on its way safely to its destination.

But of all these, the most appealing is the simple picture of the light in the window at eventide.

### **III. The Evening Of Life**

[A] Now let us proceed a step further. There is a regularly recurring day, which just as regularly fades into eventide and night. So it is with human life. It has its morning, its high noon, and its evening time. I need not argue this point. It is a perpetually self-evidencing fact. Some day, for every mother's son and daughter of us, there will be a westering sun, and then the twilight, and the evening star.

[B] When that day comes, is there going to be a light in the window at eventide?

[1] There is such a light, set by the loving hand of God.

It centers in His Word. It is the light of God's love; the light of His redeeming, forgiving grace; the light of the assurance of God's never failing help.

[2] One of the central rays of this light in the window is the assurance that the next step after what we call the evening of life is the real morning of life.

Life need not go out in darkness. Life does not move on to extinction. After the evening star of the earthly life comes the morning star of the eternal day. Jesus assures us of this in John 8:12.

[3] People often speak of life coming to its end; there is no such thing. They speak of losing, of giving up everything; the truth is they are gaining everything (Phil. 1:21; John 14:1-3).

[C] There are not only intellectual convictions of this but an institutional, experiential evidence of its truth that has more evidential value than all the speculations of all the philosophers and theologians in the world.

Take the example of Simeon. It is one of the sweetest stories in the Holy Record. Simeon was an old, a good, devout man; but there was an empty place in his heart.

There was still something he had not found. He was waiting for God's promised Redeemer, the Light of the world, the Saviour.

Study the story of his coming into the Temple, recognizing the Christ child, and the *Nunc Dimittis* (Luke 2:29-32).

[D] Is there a light in the window for us? It is there, held by the hand of a loving God.

## **IV. The Application**

[A] I have no hesitation in saying: That there was a light in the window for our deceased sister. It was no flickering light, but a steady flame.

[B] I have known our departed sister for almost a generation.

She was faithful. So far as I was able to discern, there was never any question as to the verity, the reality of the things she believed.

[C] She lived her faith in a simple, straightforward, hearty manner. There was no pretentiousness. She was loved and respected by all.

[D] (In the case of a younger person, whose death was sudden, and unexpected: If we allowed our feelings to assert themselves, we should be inclined to say —'s going was untimely. He was scarcely more than in the prime of life.

But we will not say it. God makes no mistakes. And He allows no mistakes to come into the lives of His elect.)

[E] Our sister has followed the light in the window of her Father's house. And now she is at home in the Father's house. Her mortal part has put on immortality; the imperfect has become the perfect; that which here grew aged, and faded, and weakened, has put on the grace, the strength, the symmetry, the beauty of the divine maturity.

[F] Farewell, sister; the light in the window still burns, and we follow on.

## 2. The Christian Soldier's Farewell (Funeral Of A Noted Churchman)

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. — 2 Timothy 4:7, 8

IN ALL AGES death has visited the children of men. As fast as a generation came on the stage of action, the aged reaper with the sickle began to gather his harvest. Of the myriads who have breathed the breath of life, only a few, by direct divine interposition, have escaped the end common to humanity. And these had to experience, in a moment, the change which, ordinarily, takes place in the hour of death and subsequently.

In spite of the frequency and constancy of the visits of this relentless harvester, in spite of the fact that all men know their inevitable end, humanity, as such, has never come to be on familiar terms with death. To the great majority of people, the words of Paul, in some measure, still apply:

“Through fear of death, they are all their life subject to bondage.”

To go no further back, think of the ideas of death and the afterlife entertained by the Greeks, and Romans, and our own forebears of Northern Europe. In all of their concepts there was scarcely a ray of real light or hope.

Death is an enemy. He had no part in God's original plan.



He is an interloper. In spite of all this, there are those who have learned to meet Death face to face, look him squarely in the eye, and do this with cheeks unblanched, with never a tremor of a muscle, without a quaver in the voice. One of the finest examples of this Christian heroism in all history is that of the aged Apostle Paul. And one of the finest expressions of this heroism ever penned is that of our text. Let us seek to learn some of the lessons of our text while we consider —

## **The Christian Soldier's Farewell**

### **1. The Christian Soldier, when he comes to say farewell to the things of earth, is not dismayed by the past; for his record is good.**

Paul, at the time he wrote the words of our text, was an elderly man. His hair had grown thin and white with the passing years. His face was furrowed by the heavy weight of many burdens. His body, never strong, had become enfeebled by imprisonment, the ravages of brutal mistreatment and encroaching disease. But as he stood on life's battlement, beneath the westering sun, and saw the steady advance of the great enemy, he sat down, and, with perfect composure, wrote to his spiritual son: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course."

There was no self-laudation on Paul's part. There was not the smallest spark of self-righteousness in his thoughts.

Unquestionably, no small part of his sublime fearlessness in the face of death was due to his consciousness of right relationships, and of duty well done.

Paul never forgot the hideous nightmare of existence he had spent before the Son of God and man stopped him as he was on his mad errand to Damascus. But that former period, in the truest sense of the word, was a matter of another life to which he had died. That old score was settled. God had

drawn a line through the record of it with a pen dipped in the blood of Jesus.

With respect to his new life, Paul was no idle boaster, no Pharisee. He did not attribute a particle of meritoriousness to anything God had enabled him to do. But Paul had the conception, and it is the Biblical conception, that men have been redeemed in the totality of their being; that not only the soul but the mind, the affections, the body itself, with all its powers, have been redeemed — and redeemed for holiness and service, service to the full limit of ability.

Paul was faithful to this vision. And now, in the evening of life, when the things of earth were receding, and the things of heaven drawing nearer, he was experiencing the truth of Christ's words: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Paul had the consciousness not only that he had fought as a valiant soldier, with courage and loyalty, but that he had fought for the best of causes, the cause of God and God's truth. He knew that his was not a destructive but a constructive warfare. It was not to destroy men's lives but to save them. It was a battle against sin and unrighteousness, for God and righteousness. It was, first of all, against the power of sin within, that it might then be a more effective battle against the dominance of sin without.

I have not a particle of hesitancy in saying that no one can come to his dying hour with that degree of calmness, of fearlessness, of victoriousness, which should mark the end of the redeemed, justified, and saved children of God, who cannot look back over his Christian life, and say: "By the grace of God I have acquitted myself as a child of God should. I have made mistakes, but I did the best I could. I have made mistakes, but I have taken them to Christ to be forgiven and corrected. By the grace of God I have fought a good fight." A man must feel not only that he has come to the end of his life but that, like Christ and Paul, he has come to the end of a finished life.

With perfect propriety, and in all good faith, we may apply these words of the Apostle Paul to the aged Christian warrior in honor to whose memory we have assembled today.

Every Christian man and woman is called to be a soldier of the Cross, has battles to fight for Christ and His kingdom.

But there are times in the history of the kingdom when there is special need for men of consecration to take a leading part in fighting the battles of the Lord.

Our friend came to the scene of action in the church at a time when such men were badly needed. And he was well qualified, by nature and grace, to help do the work which needed so much to be done at the time. In a time of much laxity he became, and remained, a staunch conservative. He had one dominant passion — to glorify God, by glorifying His Word. For this he was willing to fight to the end, and to sacrifice everything. And in the time to come, perhaps even more than in the present, when we do not have the historic perspective which enables men to judge dispassionately, our brother will receive credit, under God, as one of the makers of our present conservative church.

And he was this not only because he was a man of much native ability but still more because he was a man of deep convictions, consecration, piety and character, who impressed others with his convictions.

We are living in a new generation — some might say in another age. This new day has its visions, and its call to consecrated action. It is a day of new alignments, of opposition from many quarters. The movements of today are concentric and not eccentric. Some freely predict that they will ultimately lead to a reconstruction and concentration of forces. God grant that it may be so if it is done in the right spirit, on the right foundation. And it will not be otherwise if the sons of the Church are faithful to the truth for which their fathers fought, and if the leaders in this new day, whether they be called to leadership or assume it, are not only men of ability but, like the best of the fathers, are men with dynamic force of consecrated character.

**II The Christian Soldier, when he says his final farewell, is not unduly moved; for the foundation on which he stands is firm.**

Paul was not only able to say: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course”; he was honestly able to add: “I have kept the faith.” And he was able, truthfully, to say the former only because he could say the latter.

What does this aged Christian warrior mean when he says: “I have kept the faith”? I think this becomes unmistakably clear from the context. Our text is part of an admonition addressed, primarily, to Timothy, Paul’s spiritual son and co-laborer. Paul’s purpose is to tell Timothy that there is a very definite work for him to do.

The aged apostle knew, as few before or since have had occasion to know, the temptation to depart from the simplicity of Gospel truth. Had Paul been willing to be a Jew to the Jew, and a pagan to the pagan, he could have saved himself much trouble and pain. It has ever been much the same. Timothy had the same experience. So Paul says to him, “Preach the word... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” Then Paul goes on to encourage Timothy by citing his own example: “I am an old man. I have been through the fires. I have had many and severe battles to fight for this truth. And my end is now near at hand. And out of experience I can say it is worthwhile, I have kept the faith. I have held to the truth as it is in Christ as my own personal faith. I have held to it in my preaching to others.”

Paul’s battles and scars came as a direct result of his holding to this faith, and proclaiming it to the world. But, in spite of dangers, and wounds which bled and throbbed, he had kept his faith. He was standing now, in the evening of life, and now, as much if not more than ever, his faith was a treasured, a blessed possession. St. Paul did not only have a faith with which to cling to something, but a faith which had something sure to which to cling. A true faith in God is faith in God’s revelation of Himself, His will and His works, in His Word. In the soul of Paul there was a spirit hand, of the Spirit’s creation, and with this hand he clung, with unyielding tenacity, to this truth of God. This is what Paul meant by keeping the faith.

What was the substance of this faith which Paul says he had kept? It was not a vague something, undefined and undefinable. It was a faith in a Some-

body, a living, throbbing, loving Person. It was a Person nearer to him than the air he breathed; more real to him than the temples of the eternal city, or the hills of old Judea. Paul's faith was in Jesus Christ, the Son of God; his Brother, his Friend, his Saviour.

It was Jesus Christ, who had died for his sins, in whose blood he had been cleansed, in fellowship with whom he lived, by whose strength he had been made strong to do and suffer, whose fellowship and blessings made the worth of all other things fade into insignificance; it was faith in Jesus, for whose second appearance and rewards he was patiently, longingly waiting.

This was the foundation on which Paul stood in faith unshaken. It is a firm foundation. It is buttressed by the very throne of God. Its stones are the eternal truths of God. It is cemented by the unfailing love of God. And until God Himself fails, until God's whole kingdom falls into pieces, until the truths of God shall become falsehoods, this foundation cannot fail. Because the apostle stood firmly on this foundation, and had the assurances it gives, the battles raging around him moved him but little. To him, imprisonment, the lacerating lash, felling stones and the executioner's sword were but passing incidents of this sin-afflicted world; indeed, they only increased his longing for the day when he should cross the bar and meet his Pilot face to face.

What the faith of our brother was, what the foundation on which he stood, in the days of virile manhood, you all know. It was proclaimed from many pulpits; it is recorded in many editorials; it is embodied in his books; it is enshrined in the memories of his pupils; but at the close of his eventful life, when he came to say farewell to the things of earth, could he still say: "I have kept the faith"? Was this, to the last, the foundation on which he stood?

Several weeks ago, when he was still in full possession of all his faculties, I, as his pastor, asked him "What you have written, preached, taught, we all know, are these still your convictions? Would you still proclaim the same truths? Are they now your own personal comfort? the ground of your own hope?" Without a moment's hesitation, he replied: "They are." And during all the weeks of his lingering illness, it was his expressed wish that the simplicities of the Gospel message be read to him, that their comfort be applied

to him, and that supplication on that basis be made to the throne of grace. As this was the truth for which he courageously contended in the days of health and strength, so also it was the foundation on which he stood in the hour of death; and it was this that made him fearless in that hour.

Brethren, is it on this foundation that we are standing? With both feet? All other foundations are but shifting sand. They may seem to suffice in the days of health and strength. But they fail, fail utterly, when the great storm breaks. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

### **III. The Christian Soldier, when he comes to say farewell, is cheered by the glorious prospect that awaits him.**

"I have finished by course." I have not merely ended it. I have finished it. I have done all that was expected of me, all that I could do. "I have kept the faith." I have clung to it in every dark hour. And this faith has kept me. "Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only; but unto all them that love His appearing."

Let us think of Paul's going. His worn-out body was not allowed to sink quietly, and with fitting earthly honor, into its last deep sleep. There were no loving hands to minister to his needs, and close his eyes when the light had fled. He was treated as a felon. He was to die by the executioner's hand. But no unworthy fear laid hold of the aged warrior's heart. He almost lost sight of the bloody tragedy, near at hand, in contemplation of the transportingly glorious scene which enchanted him, as it appeared in the distance. He was to be crowned, as some of the contestants in the arena were crowned, in the hour of death; but his was to be not a crown of perishing ivy but a blood-bought crown of righteousness, a crown of eternal life, a crown of imperishable glory, a crown that would give him the right to stand, with all God's redeemed children, by the throne of the Majesty on high.

Think, will you, of how, in the olden days when knighthood was in flower, brave men faced danger and death to win a sovereign smile. We have evidence of the way these men were thrilled when, later, they felt the touch of their sovereign's sword that admitted them into the coveted ranks of knighthood. But what are the insignia of earthly knighthood, what are the crowns bestowed by earthly kings, in comparison to the crown with which the King of kings shall invest those who believe in Him, love Him, serve Him? The things of earth are for today. God's crown is for the endless ages.

For more than fourscore years our brother went in and out among us, as preacher, teacher, writer, teaching ever by precept as well as by example. Now the places that knew him here will know him no more. But he will continue to live even here, in what he did. And we are comforted in his absence, as he was comforted in his going, by the thought that he has gone to receive his crown, the crown of endless life and glory.

As our honored father went, so may we go. Are we keeping the faith? Are we confidently looking forward to the crown? and to the glad reunion of all those who patiently await the Lord's appearing? Then let us not forget that before the crown can be worn, the battle must be fought, the cross endured; and that to obtain the glory we must keep the faith.

# 3. Our Blessed Dead

I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. — Revelation 14:13

THERE ARE MANY PARADOXES in human language and life. To my mind, the greatest apparent contradiction in terms, in mere human ways of thinking, is the inclusion in one sentence of the thought of blessedness and death. “Blessed are the dead.”

Death, dying, dead what dreary, doleful sounds to unenlightened, unspiritual minds! In what dark colors is death often painted! It is called, yes, even in the Scriptures, the last great enemy and the king of terrors. At mention of his name ruddy cheeks grow pale and strong limbs grow weak.

Death is generally regarded as a ruthless tyrant, crushing out man’s dearest hopes, severing the tenderest ties, putting an end to all man’s aspirations and pleasures. That death should be thus viewed is not hard to understand so far as the people of the world are concerned; but it should not be so viewed by Christian people, and is not so regarded by enlightened Christian people.

That death is, in a sense, an enemy, we concede; it is so called in Scripture. It is an interloper. It has no business here. Death is an enemy; but an enemy that has had its fangs drawn, its claws clipped. Death may be a king still, a universal king; but it is a king with power curtailed; a king unhorsed, with broken lance. Death, like many another evil in this world, has God’s hand upon it, and is made to serve God’s purpose for the good of His believing, dutiful children.

Death an enemy? Yes, it may be, in a sense; but it has certainly lost its terrors when the child of God can confidently exclaim, “O death, where is thy



sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Death, in a sense, may still be called an enemy; but it certainly is not the destroyer of all hope when the child of God can look it squarely in the face, and say, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” Death certainly has lost much of its fierce aspect when the child of God can look to the day of its call, and give expression to thoughts like those of Phoebe Cary —

One sweetly solemn thought  
Comes to me o'er and o'er:  
I'm nearer home today  
Than I have been before.

Death cannot be something so terribly fearful and frightful when Christ and heaven have become such realities to men and the infirmities and pains of the present life such a burden that the constant sigh of God's saints is, “How long, O Lord, how long?” And when their constant prayer is, “Come, Lord Jesus, come.”

No, death has ceased to be a real enemy. Its menaces and discomfitures are only for a moment. Indeed, God has made of death a friend and helper in disguise. Otherwise God could not speak, as He does in our text, through His servant, of His “blessed dead.”

In the light of this precious little text, then, let me speak to you today, in the presence of our departed, of —

## **Our Blessed Dead**

### **I. Our blessed dead are blessed in death because they were first blessed in life**

In the early chapters of the first book of the New Testament, among the first recorded utterances of Jesus, we have the beatitudes of the living; the beatitudes of those who are called to go forth and fight the battles which are to end in the victor's crown. We thank God for them. In this last book of the New Testament, and likewise, I think, from the lips of Jesus, at least from one in heaven, we have the beatitude of the dying, the dead: “Blessed are

the dead which die in the Lord.” And with equal gratitude, we thank God for it.

Our beatitude of the dead is not a universal one. Not all the dead are, necessarily, blessed. Those who are not blessed when they die, according to God’s Word, are never blessed.

Our beatitude is for those “who die in the Lord.” Those who are not in the Lord are not blessed in life, whatever their station condition, or attainments may be. And, according to God’s "Word, they are the very reverse of blessed in death.

To die in the Lord — what does it mean? It does not mean merely that God knows of our death; not a sparrow falls to the ground without God’s knowledge. To die in the Lord does not mean simply to be a participant in an imperishable life-principle which pervades all being, so that to cast off one form of being necessitates the assumption of some other form, here or in some other sphere. To die in the Lord does not mean to die in possession of some vague, ill-defined hope of immortality; a hope which is, virtually, as universal as the race. To die in the Lord means something definite; it means to die as a Christian, in the faith of Jesus Christ as one’s personal Saviour; it means to be forgiven, to be washed in the blood of Christ Jesus.

To die in the Lord means, first of all, to have lived in the Lord. We do not die to be in the Lord, and blessed by Him. Those who are going to be blessed in death are those who were in the Lord before death. The period of this living relationship may be a brief hour, a moment, as in the case of Christ’s penitent companion of the Cross; it may be the whole period of a life of threescore and ten years; in any case, it must be a real, intimate, vital relationship — as the branch to the vine, as the hand to the body, as the breath to life.

To live in Christ, and to die in Christ, means to be united to Him in a union and communion so vital that the stream of the life of the Son of God flows through the channels of this mystic bond of union into the life of man, so that there is fulfilled in man’s life that of which Jesus speaks when He says: “I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.”

God's children have found this to be gloriously true; and none on earth are so blessed as they.

This present blessedness of God's people is very real in spite of all the burdens, infirmities and trials of life. The words of our text were spoken at a time when the saints were enduring the fiercest assaults of Satan. To encourage them, the voice from heaven says: "Stand fast, my children. It will not be long. Keep the faith; soon will come the glory." But this does not gainsay, by one iota, the universal testimony of Scripture, and the experience of God's saints, that It is possible in this life, in the midst of poverty and pain, to taste and know that God is good, that His mercy is over all His people; that He makes all things, yes, literally all things, to work together for the good of those who love Him; that it is possible to have foregleams and foretastes of the glory that is to be forever. None in this world are blessed like those who have proved this truth in their lives.

Our blessed dead! Yes, there is no hesitancy, in thought or speech, in applying these words to this departed mother — mother in the family, mother in the church.

And what is there, in all the realm of thought, to comfort and cheer the hearts of those who have said farewell, like the assurance that to those who have gone out from among us, the Lord has said, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." Our blessed dead. This is our comfort today. This is our source of thanksgiving.

## **II. Our blessed dead are blessed because they are freed from their burdens; they are at rest**

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors."

Everywhere in Scripture death is likened to sleep, to the taking of rest in sleep: Of the little daughter of the ruler in Capernaum, Jesus said: "She is

not dead, but sleepeth.” Of Lazarus, four days in the grave, He said: “Our friend Lazarus Sleepeth.” What a beautiful thought! It falls like a benediction on the bereaved heart. And best of all, it is true. Our blessed dead, as to their personalities, their essential selves, are not dead, and never die. It is only the body that sleeps. The soul, our real self, lives on — lives on forever.

“That they may rest from their labors.” How appropriate that word “rest.” In youth we think little of rest. It is needed, of course; but it is not a desideratum. In the morning of life, and, later, in the morning of the day, we go forth with courage and ambition. We feel the call of achievement. We often feel there is no limit to our powers of endurance. But when the sun stands in the western sky, when our strength is well spent, when there is an empty feeling within when our breath becomes labored, and our members respond more and still more reluctantly to the call of the will, when faintness comes over us then we look with longing toward the westering sun; we are glad for the approach of darkness, and the couch whereon we shall find repose.

This is the idea of the word “labor” in our text. It does not mean simply work. It conveys the idea of exhaustion, of having reached the limit of endurance. From this there is to be rescue. In contrast with this term stands the word “rest.”

The word “labor” applies to the life that has grown old, and weary, and weak, and full of suffering. Many a time we have seen plants wilted and drooping from the fierceness of the sun’s rays and the dryness of the earth. That is the idea here as applied to life a life fainting and exhausted by the fierceness of the conflict; a life worn with care, racked with pain.

Of those whose life has been such, if they have lived their life in Christ, is spoken this sweet, comforting beatitude: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord... that they may rest from their labors.”

“That they may rest from their labors.” That does not mean that the blessed dead are translated into a life of inactivity. Oh, no. The Word tells us that the ransomed of the Lord serve Him joyfully day and night in His Temple. It means that the blessed of the Lord have been redeemed from the exhaustion, the laboriousness of labor; that they have come into the emancipated

life; that they have been translated into the tireless, joyously active life, where eternal adventure will lure them on. It means that they have found eternal residence in that glorious land where everlasting spring abides, and where there are never withering flowers; where none of the inhabitants shall ever say, "I am sick"; where all tears are dried.

There is still another thought in the words, "They rest from their labors." Most of the labors of the real child of God are not for the things that perish. His greatest work is to keep in check the enemies of his soul; to build the kingdom of God, around him, but most of all within him; to realize increasingly the Christ-life. Here, too, there are many discouragements. He plants, and waters, and tills; but, instead of fruits and flowers, the weeds persist in growing; the fruit is often imperfect, and never fully satisfying. But here also, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord... Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors."

In death the door of the cage is opened, and the wearily laboring spirit is set free; it is raised above the obscuring fogs; its longings are fulfilled; its hopes are realized; the imperfect is made perfect.

"Our blessed dead!" In our poor language we say, "They have died." We weep for them. What blindness! What littleness of faith! If we but saw clearly, if we could analyze the situation aright, in the light of revelation, we should realize that our tears are for our loss, not their gain. They are the fully blessed — not we; when we have the reasonable assurance that ours are the dead in the Lord, we should rather say: "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

### **III. Our blessed dead are blessed in death because they are crowned with the perfect life**

One of the best corroborative proofs of the blessed immortality of the soul is often seen in the closing days of a true child of God. How often the questions which more or less perplexed them in life and health begin to vanish in the days preceding dissolution. And the great realities of life — God, heaven, Jesus Christ, eternal life — become more real, till they are visible

through a but thinly obscuring veil. How often, before the eyes of these faithful souls have grown entirely dim to the scenes of earth, they are vouchsafed enrapturing visions of the things of heaven! The experience of the martyr Stephen is, in some degree, not altogether isolated or unusual. You remember how, looking up to heaven, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus at the right hand of God.

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth ... that they may rest from their labors’ and their works do follow them.’ When Jesus speaks of His works, He generally does not refer to some isolated act or fact in His life, not even His miracles, but to His life, the sum total of His activities; His revelation of God; His redemptive activity; what He was as well as what He did. This is the way, I think, we are to come to the meaning of the words of our text, “Their works do follow them.” It does not mean, as someone has said, “The glorious retinue of good deeds done on earth.”

These are but records of history. All that we take with us is the life’ the faith, the character out of which these things grew, and that which was wrought into life by the reflex action of doing God’s will.

“Their works do follow them.” This means that their life, their character, abides. Those who, by faith, have lived in the Lord, in fellowship with Him, who in love served Him, were willing to die to be with Him; to these the gates of heaven stand ajar. Jesus is there to meet and greet them; they enter heaven in the spirit of the life of faith and loving service they rendered. “Their works do follow them.”

Our blessed dead! Our blessed dead! This is a glorious thought, but not the place to stop in our thinking. We are not to go to the cemetery thinking, “Here we put away our dead.” Let us not go there, as many do, feeling, “Here rests, under the sod, our loved ones.” Such conduct is of the earth, born of unbelief. The very, least of our dead rests there — the body, the purely material part. And even this, the body, is to be resurrected, reconstructed, glorified, to live forever with the Lord. To die in the Lord means to live henceforth, from now on, forever with the Lord. Jesus said of Lazarus that he was carried into Abraham’s bosom. To his companion in suffering on the Cross Jesus said, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” And in our text He says, “Blessed ... from henceforth.”

The term “our blessed dead,” so far as the last word is concerned, is an accommodation to human forms and limitations of speech. It is much more in accord with the sense of Jesus’ way of viewing things, and describing them, to speak of our departed as the now blessed living ones, in the home on the other side, forever with the Lord, in joy and peace and glory.

I shall not depart from my usual custom, that of preach primarily, to the living.

There is much that could be said by way of eulogy. Mrs. P— was a good wife, a good mother, a good neighbor, a good church member. She was fourscore years of age, and always a Christian — an old-fashioned Christian; a Bible reading, a praying Christian. And she lived what she professed. She believed in teaching God’s Word. And she illustrated it by her example.

For months Mother P— has been an invalid, suffering much pain, but never complaining. Hers has been the oft-repeated prayer, “Come, Lord Jesus.” These things we will cherish while memory holds sway. And they should incite to emulation. Much more, in all modesty, could be said. But, after all, as Christian people, with Christian beliefs and hopes, the one thing that gives comfort today is this: Mother P — died as she lived — in the Lord. This being so, we believe that she is one of the blessed dead. “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”

## 4. The Untroubled Heart

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so; I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. — John 14:1-3

THE EXPECTED has happened. After long, weary, pain. filled days, the weary one is at rest but we are really never prepared for these eventualities.

Friends have gathered around us; they have spoken their words of sympathy; but none are able to say half of what they felt But we need something more authoritative; something that expresses not only a hope, a wish, but that which comes fresh from a central source of authority, and power.

Such we have in the words of Jesus.

I use these words of Jesus as contained in our text rather frequently. Personally, I never tire of them, whether in trouble or not. But I am using them today for a reason; these are the words I read to our brother, and about which we spoke, just the day before he fell asleep.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you

Wonderful, wonderful words! What visions they open up before us! What hopes they awaken! Let us dwell on these words a little while this afternoon. I take for my subject the one naturally suggested by my text

### **The Untroubled Heart**



# I. What does Jesus mean by the untroubled heart?

[A] When Jesus speaks of not letting our hearts be troubled, He implies the possibility of a troubled heart. We do not need to try to prove that such a thing is possible. Everybody knows it. Everybody of any age, of any experience, has, at times, had a troubled heart. Sooner or later it comes, in some form, to everyone (Job 5:7; 14:1).

David, the man of a wide and varied experience, who, in spite of a few very dark blots on his escutcheon, was called a man after God's own heart, yes. David, in the Psalms, speaks sixty-five times of his troubles. And he had some of his most trying ones when he was king.

Strangest of all, we are told that Jesus, the One who says in our text, "Let not your heart be troubled," Himself had a troubled heart. And He was not ashamed of it, and never tried to hide it.

We are told that when He saw the grief of Mary, whose brother, Lazarus, had died, "he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (John 11:33). And at this same time, the Bible says, "He wept." There was an agitation, a pain in the higher region of His inner life.

[B] Again, in the upper room, when Jesus thought of the treachery of Judas, we are told that "he was troubled in spirit" (John 13:21). Trouble is a very real thing. And Jesus, who was a very real man, and knew all human experiences, including all kinds of mistreatment, suffering and death, certainly did not mean, when He said, "Let not your heart be troubled," that we are not to feel trouble, or that, somehow, we are to shut it out of our lives. What, then, does Jesus mean?

[C] I think it will help us to understand Jesus' words about the troubled heart to consider the connection in which He spoke them.

[1] Jesus and His disciples were at the table in the upper room, where the Passover was eaten, and the Lord's Supper instituted, and partaken of the first time.

Here Jesus spoke to them of His going away, of His being separated from them. I do not think they comprehended that He was speaking of Calvary and the Cross. But in recent days He had spoken to them of His death, and I have no doubt that they somehow associated Jesus' going away with death.

They were disturbed, disquieted, distressed. This meant, they thought, the utter failure of all their plans. They were disconsolate.

[D] It was in answer to this state of mind, voiced in Peter's question, John 13:36, that Jesus spoke the words of our text, "Let not your heart be troubled." Now, what does this statement mean?

[1] In effect, this: "Little children," so Jesus called them, "a great crisis is coming into our lives — Mine, and yours. Yet this night you will have a lesson on your own weakness, in Gethsemane. Peter, before the morning light, you, in spite of your boasted strength, will deny that you ever knew Me. Tomorrow, before the sun sets, you will witness Calvary and the Cross, and there will be a temporary eclipse of your faith. Before this time tomorrow evening, some of you will see Me laid away in the grave. And you will think all My plans have failed, that all is lost.

[2] "But, in spite of all this, let Me assure you, all is not lost. In spite of all this, I say, 'Let not your heart be troubled.' There is more than you, at present, see or understand. This is a dark night; but again the day will dawn, and the sun shine; and, instead of tears, there will be gladness; instead of loss, there will be gain — eternal gain.

"Remember that God is God. Nothing can thwart Him or His plans.

"Remember that, in spite of all which in these days seems to contradict it, I am God, and I shall be victorious."

## **II. The secret of the untroubled heart**

[A] When Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled," it was as much as to say: "There are many things you do not understand. Your life, your thinking, are tangled skeins.

"But you believe in God, you believe in His sovereign power, you believe in His fatherly goodness. Do you believe He will ever fail you?"

[B] "I have been with you a long time," says Jesus to these men. "You have had the experience of My power, of My unflagging, unfailing interest in you. But now your thinking about Me, and My plans, and yours, is much befogged. But, in a way, you believe in Me. And when the dark night breaks, as soon it will, a night in which there will not appear to be a star of hope anywhere in the firmament, when all your plans crash hopelessly about you, hold fast to your faith. Remember, I have told you, I am the Son of God. And soon all will be clear why things are as they are.

[C] And when you see that My life has ebbed away on the Cross, and when you see the great stone close Me into the grave in Joseph's garden, remember that this was the heaven-ordained plan by which I was to complete My work for you and the world; this was the heaven-ordained way which I was to go back to My throne and My glory.

[D] "And remember," says Jesus, "that when I get to heaven I shall not sit idly on My throne; I shall be busy, ever busy, preparing places for you, and all those whom God shall give Me."

[E] This is the secret — the only secret of what Jesus means the untroubled heart.

[1] We are human. The frailties of the flesh are with us all. Even we Christian people see only in part We know only in part. We are forever wanting to ask, "Why? How can this and that be?" I cannot answer, and no man can answer, in detail, all the questions a troubled human heart can ask.

[2] Our final refuge must be this: God is God; Jesus Christ is God; God knows, God loves, and God is able to care for His own. And He will care for His own. According to His Word, He makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him.

[3] This is the way, the certain way, the only way by which we can possess what Jesus calls "the untroubled heart."

### **III. Now let us make the application of these words, “Let not your heart be troubled”**

[A] These words had a special application to the apostles in the trying circumstances in which they found themselves. But they are just as applicable to us in our troubles as they were to the twelve. They are meant for every Christian.

[B] A husband and father has been taken from his family.

[1] Death is a terrible thing. It is useless to say otherwise. The Bible calls it an enemy.

[2] But Jesus says to you in the same sense in which He meant it for the twelve, “Let not your heart be troubled.”

Jesus does not say, “Do not feel your troubles.”, He does not say, “Do not sorrow.” But He does say, through His Apostle, “Sorrow not as those who have no hope.” You have ground for sure hope. Your husband and father was a Christian man. He died in the faith.

And Jesus does say to you, and to all of us, “Believe in God, believe in Me.”

[C] Today the sun is hid for you. But remember, when the clouds hang low and dark, the sun still shines. And some day it will break through and shine for you.

[D] And remember again, Jesus says, “I go to prepare a place for you.” To that blessed place, prepared for the people of God, your husband and father has gone. Not in some far distant age, but now. Yes, in that place where suffering, and tears, and death shall never enter.

[E] And remember, once again, this is forever.

[F] And we have no doubts about all this, so far as our departed brother is concerned. He was a Christian, not only in name’ but in truth. His faith was

well founded in the truth of God's Word. He knew what he believed, and why he believed it.

[1] He was a Christian, not only in name, but in fact. He was a Christian on Sunday, he was always in church when there was a service there. Yes, and in Sunday school, also.

[2] And he was a Christian during the week. He did his work as a Christian. He treated other people as a Christian should treat them, dealing truthfully, honestly, and in Christian friendliness.

[3] And we could see the effect of all this in his last days. There was never a murmur on his lips, but perfect resignation to the will of God. An un-eclipsed faith, an unfaltering hope.

[G] Brethren, let us not only rejoice that this was true of our brother who has gone from us. Let us resolve that it shall be true of us also.

Some day we shall face the same situation. May we meet it with the same faith, the same hope, the same peace of mind.

Believe in God. Believe in Christ Jesus. Live close to Him. And it shall be so.

# 5. My Home In Heaven

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. — John 14:1-6

WE AT TIMES hear people speak of favorite Scripture passages. One likes the Twenty-third Psalm. Another particularly enjoys the Forty-eighth Psalm. One likes John 10, the Good Shepherd chapter, and so forth.

This matter of choice depends much on early training, one's particular need at the time, one's frame of mind, emotional condition, and the like.

When one is in deep trouble, when one is perplexed about life — its durability, its destiny, its future state and condition — personally I do not know where I should turn to find a Bible truth more satisfying than the opening verses of John 14. It puts a firm foundation under one's feet; it gives vision to a man's soul; it makes life worth living. It gives one something really worthwhile for which to live.

Let us ponder especially one phase of this wonderful text. My thought dwells especially on verse two, "In My Father's house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you." Let us make our thought personal and realistic, and think of

## My Home In Heaven

### I. Let us consider for a moment, our home on earth

[A] Normal men and women are home lovers, and home builders. This tendency is a natural instinct, divinely implanted. It reveals some of the finest traits in human life.

[B] It is based on the natural desire for protection, safety, perpetuity. Many people will go to almost any degree of effort and sacrifice to obtain and maintain a home, here and now.

We like to have our homes presentable, comfortable, beautiful, if, we can. The true home is a refuge from the strife and dust of conflict.

It is a place of rest and refreshing, where the wounds received in the conflicts of life are soothed and healed under the assuaging influence of domestic interest and affection.

[C] The real home — and not every dwelling, not every house, however pretentious, is a home — is a refuge.

When the horizon is dark with threatening clouds, when there seems to be no way out of the difficulties facing us, and our enemies seem ready to triumph, home, if it is a real home, is the place to which we want to retreat; where hearts are comforted, where strength is revived, and courage renewed.

[D] This is a beautiful picture. There is only one defect in it. It is not permanent. Our homes here, the best of them, are only places of temporary sojourn (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11). The house may remain; but we move on.

[E] This impermanence, and all it implies, is one of the constant sources of our trouble. The end of the way, parting, to mere human thinking, the uncharted, uncertain future, causes us great concern.

[F] Is there any compensation for this outlook? Is there anything certain, worthwhile, to take the place of the home we have to give up here? Yes, the child of God has

## II. A HOME IN HEAVEN

[A] Amid all the uncertainties, and the equally distressing certainties, of life, what would we take in exchange for these words of Jesus, “I go to prepare a place for you”?

Remember, it is the eternal, all-wise, all-powerful Son of God who says this. There can be no question about it.

[B] And note that it is a place which Jesus has gone to prepare for us. Our future life is not going to be merely a condition; we are not going to be absorbed into some kind of universal life-element. We are going to be ourselves, and we are going to have a very real life to live, and a very real place in which to live this life.

[C] Where is it? Well, I have not located it on any map. And Jesus has not given us any specific location. But He says it is in heaven. And heaven is where He has His specific headquarters, where we shall see Him, and be with Him.

[D] “In my Father’s house are many mansions.”

We often wonder what God is going to do with all the people who have lived, and shall live. There is going to be plenty of room. There are probably more planets in space than there are people that have ever lived. There are approximately three trillions of them that are known. I am not suggesting that this is God’s plan; only that there is going to be plenty of room.

[E] Jesus, the compassionate Friend, the ever interested Saviour, is the One who is arranging this place, this home, for us. We can rest assured that it will be perfectly done.

[F] When the home is ready for us, and we are ready for the home, Jesus is coming after us, and will personally escort us to our home (verse 3) and we are going to share Jesus’ own home forever.



[G] We have all had our dream homes, and our dream life. Well, this is not going to be a dream but a blessed reality. The days of wandering, weariness and woe will be past forever. Home at last!

I'm but a stranger here,  
Heav'n is my home.  
Earth is a desert drear,  
Heav'n is my home.

Danger and sorrow stand  
Round me on ev'ry hand;  
Heav'n is my fatherland,  
Heav'n is my home.

What tho' the tempest rage?  
Heav'n is my home!  
Short is my pilgrimage,  
Heav'n is my home!

Time's cold and winery blast  
Soon will be overpast;  
I shall reach home at last,  
Heaven is my home.

[H] How thoughts like these help to comfort and strengthen our hearts at a time like this!

[1] A beloved member of your home, an active, useful, beloved member of our church circle, has been taken from us. I do not minimize our loss, or the feeling of our loss. But our loss is our sister's gain.

She has gone to her homeland. She is at home forevermore with her Father in heaven, with the Christ, in the home prepared for her by His ministry here on earth, and His ministry in heaven.

[2] And Jesus says to us, "Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me."

[I] There is another point, however, which we must consider; else we should not be true to our text, and not true to ourselves. It is the question

### **III. How do we reach our home in heaven?**

[A] All men reach a future life; but not all men reach the home in heaven. And this means eternal failure.

[B] Jesus said to the apostles, to whom He was speaking of the place He was going to prepare for them: 'Whither I go, ye know, and the way ye know.'

But Thomas, speaking for the others, said: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way. (verse 5).

It is true that the disciples believed in God; they believed in Jesus; they believed in heaven. But they were sadly confused about the time and manner of Jesus' departure, and where He was going when He left.

So in verse 6 Jesus simplifies the matter. Jesus does not only show the way. He is the way. And He alone gives strength to follow the way. Jesus not only points to the truth, explains the truth; He is the truth, the very personal embodiment of all saving truth. Jesus does not only tell us where life — spiritual, eternal life — may be found; He is the very fountain of that life; He gives, He sustains it.

[C] This is the way our sister walked, this is the truth she professed, and this is the life she now possesses in its fullness.

[D] My Father's house! The house of His preparation, forever His own special abode, and the eternal home of all His children. Home! Home forever! Those who enter His house will go out of confusion into order, out of failure into success, out of conflict into peace, out of the imperfect into the perfect, out of the transient into the permanent, out of earth into heaven.

[E] This is our comfort and our strength in this hour of earthly parting and of sorrow.

[F] There is no question as to where our sister has gone. This is the faith in which she lived and died. And Jesus will not, He cannot, fail His children.

[G] Some of these days, you and I are going to leave our earthly homes. Are we certain of a home in heaven? We may be as certain of this as of the fact that there is a God in heaven. Jesus is the only way. If we trust Him, follow Him, the blessed issue is certain.

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' Name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

When I shall launch to worlds unseen,  
Oh, may I then be found in Him,  
Dressed in His righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

# 6. The Crowned Life

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. — Revelation 2:10

THIS IS A PRECIOUS LITTLE TEXT; but it becomes even more interesting when we know the story back of it.

It is part of a message sent to the, probably, rather small group of Christians in the ancient city of Smyrna. These people were poor. They had to bear not only the ordinary ills incident to life everywhere but they were actively persecuted; everybody, everything, seemed to be against them.

So severe, so unusual, were the trials through which these people were passing that the sacred writer calls it the work of the Devil.

The Lord meets this condition, not by immediately removing it, but by encouraging them to bear it. He says to these people, in effect, through the apostle: “Never mind; keep up your courage; this will not be for long; be strong; keep up your courage; be faithful; the crown will soon be yours.”

On the basis, then, of this divine exhortation, let us think together about

## The Crowned Life

There are two leading thoughts in our little text: one is an exhortation, an encouragement, the other is a promise.

Let us, then, in the first place think about the exhortation —

### I. “Be thou faithful”

[A] In addressing this message to the Christians in Smyrna, through His inspired apostle, the Lord said: “I know your tribulations.”

This is worth noting. It was not merely a little trouble these people were having. It was severe — trying to the utmost The Lord encourages these people: “I know your troubles,” He says, “and I am not indifferent to your condition. I care. My heart goes out to you. Your burden is Mine.”

[B] We sometimes wonder why the Lord does not intervene, and stop these outrages. There is only one way it can be done: the Lord must destroy all His enemies and the enemies of His children. And the time for this has not yet come. In doing this, as Jesus teaches in the parable of the wheat and the tares, some of the wheat might be destroyed. So the trouble goes on. To make trouble is the delight of the Devil’s children

[C] “So,” says the Lord, “there is just one thing for you to do: be faithful. In spite of all difficulties, hold on, hold out Do not give up; do not despair. The reward will be certain.”

In Smyrna, after nearly two thousand years, there is still a Christian church. One is led to wonder whether this may not be the still visible result of the faithfulness of that first little Christian band.

[D] Faithfulness is a very important factor in every department of life. It is the only way to succeed. One of England’s great commanders once said: “The secret of the success of British arms is not that they are braver than other soldiers, but in this — that they are brave just five minutes longer than many others.”

Success is largely a matter of endurance. Many a man fails because he becomes discouraged and gives up just when success is about to crown his efforts. Especially is patient endurance imperative in the battles of the soul. Faithfulness is one of the crowning virtues of the Christian life.

[E] However, let us not forget that faithfulness, as the word is used in our text, is not only and chiefly a matter of holding on. This is important. But the term “faithful” here means keeping the faith; trusting God, looking to

Christ, resting in His promises, relying wholly on Him for ultimate delivery and reward. And the holding on is to be the result of this faith.

[F] This keeping of the faith, this faithful continuance in the path of duty in spite of difficulties, must be till death. Fifty or sixty years of faithfulness and a final day of unfaithfulness will be fatal.

[G] In our day, and in our land, we do not have the conditions which prevailed in ancient Smyrna. There is no one to tell us that we must not be Christians. And there is no one who will destroy our property or threaten our lives and inflict suffering upon us if we are Christians. But there are still plenty of enemies fighting against all those who want to be true Christians.

The exhortation given to the people of Smyrna so long ago, still stands for us: “Be thou faithful unto death.”

[H] Our departed brother was one of those who remained faithful unto death.

[1] He was not persecuted.

[2] But he did have reverses, and he had bodily afflictions.

[3] And he bore it all patiently; he kept the faith; and he sought perseveringly to live his faith.

[I] Now let us proceed to think of the divine promise —

## **II. The crown of life**

[A] “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” What a precious promise — all the more precious as we come to realize what it means.

[1] If we keep the faith, there is an exceeding great reward; not of merit, but of grace, but of fatherly love, a gift from the Father to His dear children.

[2] This reward is not like so many of life's so-called prizes — apples of Sodom; not like some will-o-the-wisp, ever alluring, forever evading.

[3] This crown of life is absolutely sure. God Himself is the Giver of it. And He never fails to make good His promises.

[B] Now it is time to ask specifically: What is this crown of life? It is not a tinsel crown. It is the crowning of life itself. It is that which makes life royal, kingly.

[1] Paul speaks of it as the crown of righteousness. St. Peter calls it the crown of glory.

[2] The life that is crowned is not simply a life that continues indefinitely. It is a life that has been freed of all its infirmities, all its difficulties; it is a life that has come into its own as God designed it; a life that has been purged, purified, perfected, glorified:

[C] Most of us ought to think a great deal more about this than we do. If we are faithful 'unto death, then we shall have the crown of life forever.

[1] If we thought more about this glorious crown, we should not speak of life and death as we so often do; about life's failures and life's end.

[2] God says that at first we have a weak, imperfect life; then, if we are faithful, when death comes, we shall receive the real life, the endless life, the perfected life.

[3] Let us revise our way of thinking. Let us make it Biblical.

[D] Let us bear in mind that while these words were originally spoken to the Christians of Smyrna, they are for us also. It is a truth that is universal, wherever the conditions are met.

[E] Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," was spoken for our deceased brother.

[1] He was faithful. He kept the faith. To the best of his ability he discharged the duties this faith makes obligatory. And now we are sure he

wears the crown.

[F] “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,” was spoken for us also.

[1] Are we keeping the faith?

[2] Then we may be sure of the crown.



# 7. God Comforts His Pilgrim Children

Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. — Isaiah 43:1-3

THE WORDS OF OUR TEXT are, indeed, wonderful. They were spoken to Israel, the nation, not to an individual; but that which was true of the nation was true of the individuals of the nation.

God had done much for His people, Israel. He had led them, fed them, defended them; He had given them many evidences, blessed experiences, of His presence, power and good pleasure.

The Israelites were an elect nation; “the chosen people,” we call them; but they were human. They had their weaknesses they would forget; they made mistakes; they got into difficulties just as the rest of mankind. But whenever these people turned to the Lord in repentance and faith, He never failed them; He did great things for them. Yes, these people had experienced the deep waters and the raging fires; but the Lord always helped them.

All that was helpful, comforting, strengthening in God’s relationship to Israel is true of His relationship to us. On the basis, then, of our text, let me speak to you in this solemn hour on this thought —

## **God Comforts His Pilgrim Children**

[A] In their early history, Israel was, in a very special sense, a pilgrim people. They were so for many generations.

[B] In a very true sense of the word, we are all pilgrims; we are all on a journey, and have here no permanent abiding place.

I was recently in the home of an aged man. He had been born in the house in which he was still living. He had never been very far away from the old homestead. He expected to die there. Still he was a pilgrim.

[C] There are more than 125,000,600 people in this land of Ours. Where will they be in a hundred years from now? Of those born but yesterday there will be but a little handful. As pilgrim children in a world such as ours

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## **I. We are all bound to have trying experiences**

[A] There is no escaping them. No eminent degree of piety, no amount of service, no position of privilege, no degree of knowledge, no position of honor can guarantee exemption from dangers, troubles, trying experiences. All this is the inevitable result of the conditions of life in which we find ourselves; we are weak; sinful, subject to evil.

[B] Sometime, somewhere, somehow we all have to pass through deep waters, and get scorched by flames. Education is a great help to us; science has done much for human comfort; medical science in the past decades has lengthened the average span of human life materially; but the time comes when all these fail.

Wealth cannot purchase release from the ills that assail. No house can be built with walls thick enough, no locks can be made strong enough, to keep the ills of life on the outside. They come, they multiply, and at last they over whelm

[C] Naturally, these untoward experiences of life awaken apprehension and cause fear; for man at last finds himself helpless against them. But, fortunately, man is not left to his own resources.

## II. God gives us many assurances of comfort

[A] He says, and repeats it, “Fear not.” When God says this it means something. “Fear not: for I am with thee,” (Isaiah 43:5).

God walks with us. His arms are around us. His infinite resources are at our service.

This does not mean that we will not have trials and sufferings. Sometimes they will be like the raging waters and the consuming fires. But it does mean that God will not allow them to destroy us. It does mean that He is ever with us to help us, and at last bring us to our goal. The river shall not engulf us; the fire shall not consume us.

[B] We can depend on this, for God has a vital, permanent, fatherly interest in us.

[1] “I have created thee.” We are His children.

[2] “I have redeemed thee.” At what a cost! This is evidence of His interest.

[3] “I have called thee by thy name.” He knows us — has a personal interest in us.

[4] “Thou art mine.” We are purchased with a great price — the interest of possession.

[C] Is this not sufficient ground for confidence? Is this not enough to give us strength and comfort?

[D] If all this were true of ancient Israel, how much more evidence have we that it is true for us! God did much for ancient Israel; in a sense He has done much more for us.

We have been redeemed in a sense in which ancient Israel knew nothing of redemption. We ought to know God’s love as ancient Israel could not know it — in the face of Christ Jesus. This text is —

### **III. Our comfort in this hour of bereavement**

[A] We have no hesitancy in applying our text to our deceased brother.

[B] He had not only the common ills to which all flesh is heir; he had more than a mere taste of the deep waters and the searing fires.

(Enlarge according to circumstances.)

But our brother was one of those who took to heart the precious truths of our text:

[1] “Fear not!”

[2] “I have redeemed thee.”

[3] “Thou art mine.” Precious promise!

[4] “I am thy Saviour.”

[D] Because of this, we are comforted in our loss, for we know our loss is his gain.

[E] Is the truth of this text our personal comfort?

[1] We are pilgrim children still on the road, and some day we shall come to that last dividing river.

[2] Is God our Father? Jesus our Friend and Saviour? the Holy Spirit our Strengthener and Comforter? the Word of God our Guide in the way of life? Only so can we be fearless, live courageously, and die in peace.

## 8. The Christian's Assured Victory

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans — 8:37-39

WE HAVE come together to pay our respects to a dear departed sister; a beloved friend; a most faithful and efficient worker in our church.

So far as the flesh is concerned, we have come with tears and a heavy heart.

As Christians believers in Christ, we have come with a sense of gratitude, of thankfulness for a triumph in which we have a certain share.

We have come together to show our love for our departed, to pay her a merited tribute of respect. At the same time, we have come to glorify God for His never failing goodness, and to thank Him for what He has done for our sister, and for us.

Death, from the merely natural man's point of view, from all that we can see with the eye of flesh, is failure, going down in defeat. Death topples the crown from the brow of the king; it wrests the scepter from the hand of the potentate in church and state. And this, according to mere human reckoning, is failure.

However, when we take God into account, and take His reasoning into account, death is not failure but victory — earth's last great victory.

At a time like this, then, the Christian's thoughts should be about God: what He has done for us, and what man achieves through Him. So I am going to

— speak to you on this comforting, strengthening thought —

## **The Christian's Assured Victory**

### **I. The Christian's conflict**

[A] We do not all follow the same line of thought; but I cannot read our text or hear the word “victory,” without thinking, in the same breath, of the word “conflict.” This is inherent in the very nature of things in this world, as it is now constituted.

[B] Do you know of any worthwhile victories without conflict? I do not. We have a great country. It did not become great without Conflict, and it cannot retain its greatness without conflict. I am not now thinking of open conflict, the clash of arms. I am thinking of the clash of principles out of which evolve the higher values of life.

[1] This is true of the individual life.

[2] It is true in the business and professional world.

[3] It is true, preeminently true, in man's Christian life; in the gaining and retaining of faith; in the growth of character.

[C] Our beloved sister had her conflicts

[1] We all remember the days when she was in vigorous health, the days of activity.

[2] We recall also the days of lessened vitality, the days of insidiously encroaching disease, the days of heroic on going when there was scarcely strength enough to carry out the mandates of a resolute will.

[3] I remember, too, when she told me that she knew what the end would be, and that it would not be long delayed.

[4] Besides these conflicts, there were, of course, others such as are incident to all human life in this imperfect world.

[D] And now the conflict is over. Our sister lies before us, still, silent, in the embrace of ,what we call death. And can we still speak of victory? Do not these two words, “death” and “victory,” contradict and nullify each other? No, in spite of all conflicts, in spite of death, they do not.

## **II. The Christian is still victorious**

[A] Not by virtue of his own wisdom, strength, or merit, but by virtue of the fact that God is with us, fights for us and with us, and gives us the victory.

[B] Death is not defeat but victory; because only then does the Christian life really come into its own; only then does it lay aside its weakness, its imperfections, and become perfect and glorious; only then does it reach its God-appointed destiny.

[C] The ground of our assurance of final victory is not guesswork; it is not merely a consummation devoutly wished for. The ground of our assurance, as well as the active source of our victory, is —

## **III. The love of God**

[A] Who, or what, shall separate us from the love of Christ?

[1] Nothing in this world; no tribulation; no anguish; no persecution; no peril or sword; no weakness or sin repented of and striven against.

[2] No power of the spirit world, such as angels, or principalities.

[3] God loves us, and this insures that all His resources are enlisted in our favor.

[4] What is the best guarantee of the faithfulness of husband or wife? A genuine love. What is the best guarantee that father or mother, son or

daughter, will discharge their parental, or filial, obligations? A true love.

[B] And remember, the love of God for us is not a mere word, although, on God's part, that would be amply sufficient. To reassure us in our weakness, we may remember that God has abundantly proved His love in deed. He loved us so well that He sent us a Saviour. This Saviour — His own Son — loved us so well that He willingly laid down His life to make our salvation possible. God loves us so well that, in spite of our weaknesses, and oft-repeated failures and this is true of all of us — He daily and richly forgives us.

God loves us so well that He makes all things . yes, all things — work together for our good.

[C] We say of our sister that she is dead; that is, as to the body. But she is not dead in spirit, which is her real self; she is not defeated but victorious now, and forever.

[D] Our attitude, therefore, ought not to be that of those who sorrow without hope. We have a sorrow, naturally. Jesus wept at the death of His friend, Lazarus. But our sorrow, as Christian people, is, mainly, for our own loss. But with it there is a sense of gratitude, of thanksgiving to God. Our sister has been relieved of her burdens. She has been promoted. She is saved, and safe, forever.

Brethren, when we attend a service like this, do we ever have any serious thoughts about that day, so sure to come, when we shall be at the end of our own earthly life?

Are we approaching it with the sense that it is going to be our great day of victory and with the assurance that no powers or experiences of earth, no powers of the spirit world, can separate us from the love of God?



# 9. A Christian Philosophy Of Life

According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I know not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. —  
Philippians 1:20-23

MANY OF YOU, I trust, are sufficiently familiar with the book from which my text is taken to know that these words in Philippians are the words of the great Apostle Paul.

On the basis of these words, among the late utterances of the apostle's life I want to speak to you on what I shall call —

## A Christian Philosophy Of Life

### I. A philosophy of life

[A] Let us not be alarmed at what may seem, at first thought, a rather formidable subject. No really thinking person can for long, avoid this, the biggest subject in the world — life, human life.

And when a man thinks about life, its whence and its whither, its nature, its purpose, how to meet its tasks and difficulties, and what the outcome of it is going to be, and then formulates some working principles with respect to the conduct of life, that man has a philosophy of life. It may not be the highest or best, but he has a philosophy of life. And it will be available to him according to its truth, or untruth.

[B] And let me express it as my humble opinion that the man who does not have a philosophy of life, of life itself, has made the greatest failure of which man is capable. Now let us look for a moment

## II. Paul's philosophy of life

[A] Let me say that of all the men whose names are indelibly inscribed on the pages of the Book of books, or any other book or books, Paul is my hero.

Endowed by nature, it seems, with a frail body; and burdened with physical handicaps, Paul had the indomitable will that carries men to the heights, in spite of handicaps.

[B] Paul had the gifts which would have carried him to the heights in this world had he never been a Christian. I am not thinking now of what men call genius. I have not a very high opinion of what men ordinarily call genius. Unless you call the never satisfied appetite for work genius; the faculty some men have of taking hold of a thing and never letting go; the faculty of taking the ordinary gifts of life and using them to the nth degree; the faculty of wresting success from defeat, unless you call this genius, I have little use for it.

[C] The only philosophy of life some people seem to have is that there is, or that there ought to be, some kind of benign providence that showers the good things of life into the laps of those who do nothing but wait, idly wait, and vainly hope.

[D] St. Paul had a philosophy of life — a philosophy for all of life; life to Paul was a unity.

[1] Paul, we might say, against his will, against what he once considered his better judgment, became a Christian. And then Paul's Christian philosophy colored and determined and gave direction and force to his whole life.

[2] In our text Paul declares: "Christ shall be magnified in my body, in the way I think and plan and deport myself in my work; in my living and my

dying.”

Paul was a tentmaker by trade. And even during his apostolate there were times when he worked at his trade. He was an independent man. He did not want to be an unnecessary burden to anyone.

Paul’s philosophy of life led him to be just as much concerned about honoring God when he worked with his hands making tents as when he stood preaching on Mars’ hill, in the shadow of the Parthenon, or, amid the temples and towers of gilded, perfumed Corinth.

[3] What a different world we should have if more people, yes, even more professing Christian people, had this kind of philosophy of life; if employers and employees, officials of state and others had the holy determination to honor God by the integrity of their work, their service. In honoring God they would honor themselves and humanity.

Too many people draw a clear line of distinction between the sacred and the secular, and keep the two in separate, watertight compartments.

It was reported that a certain recent prominent businessman, who was a rather regular church attendant, said of himself: “When I leave the church, I lock up my religion in the church and forget about it until the following Sunday.” The truth of the matter is that such a man has no vital religion to leave locked up in the church.

[4] Christianity is not a cloistered virtue. It is intended of God to clarify, rectify, stabilize, vitalize and motivate the whole of life.

[E] Paul’s life was one of unusual hardship, of manifold trials, of much suffering; but his philosophy of life put a note of gladness, of rejoicing, of victory into his whole life.

It mattered not what came or how grievous his burden, Paul never pitied himself; he never whined.

At the time he wrote the words of our text he was in prison, chained to a guard, with the sword of Damocles hanging over his head; he did not know

what clay the executioner might appear. If you want to know how, at this very time, he sang the joy note of life, read this little epistle and see.

### **III. Paul's philosophy of life was vital and sustaining. It embraced the whole of life. it leaped the bounds of time and space, and included the land and the life beyond the grave**

[A] To Paul this life was a great and worthwhile thing; and he lived it to the utmost But Paul said, and he believed it, "To die is gain." It is not only the end of trouble; it is a positive gain.

In the West the phrase is often quoted : "Out where the West begins." Beyond the grave is where life really begins, for those who, as St Paul says, live in Christ and die in Christ

[B] St Paul wholeheartedly believed this, as do all to whom the Bible is God's Word and Jesus Christ the last authority in things religious and spiritual.

To St. Paul the grave was not merely a cleft in the ground or a crypt in a mausoleum. It was the way, the direct way to the Father's house on high. And there life was to have its new and perfect second beginning; there all of life's highest aspirations were to be realized. There the adventurous soul would have new worlds to conquer.

[C] St Paul believed this with his whole heart He wagered his whole life on it; it was the groundwork of his whole philosophy of life. And his philosophy of life affected his living and his work.

### **IV. Our departed friend and brother Mr.— had a philosophy of life**

[A] He had a philosophy of life for the here and now.

[1] He was a believer, and practiced the old-fashioned virtues, which, unfortunately, with too many in these days are, indeed, old-fashioned, antiquated, out of date.

[2] He believed that hard work was a law of life. And he lived up to it You know what it did for him.

[3] Generous at the call of need, and in his church, he believed in the old-fashioned principle of thrift. To him the gifts of God of a material character were to be held as a stewardship, to be improved and multiplied for profitable use.

[B] Mr.— had a high sense of justice, of honor, of fair dealing. And this brought him the respect of all.

[C] Mr.—’s philosophy of life, that life itself is a talent to be used and multiplied for use, led him to the forefront in the civic and political life of our city, which is as it should be. If more men of high principle, of impeccable honesty, of unyielding justice took an active part in civic life, we should have a better and more efficient government. Such men are the best asset of any community.

[D] Back of Mr.—’s philosophy of life here and now, interpenetrating it, molding it, controlling it, sublimating it, was his Christian philosophy of life.

In all his interests he was ever a Christian. In all his multiplied business and civic interests he was ever a churchman.

[E] I have known Mr.— for more than forty years, in which days he was a lay synodical official.

For thirty years I have known him intimately. For eighteen years he has been a member of this congregation, much of the time a member of the Church Council. He was always interested in the work of the church, at home and abroad; always a worshiper; always a worker.

In recent years, as some of you know, he did not hear so well; but he still came regularly to church to the last.

[F] Mr.— was a Christian, not only in public, but in private as well. In his home, in his room, he had a well-read, a well-marked Bible from which he gained his information about his philosophy of life and drew his inspiration for it.

[G] Mr.— was an old-fashioned Christian, one who believed that, because of common human imperfection, he needed a Saviour; one who was sure that he had found an all-sufficient Saviour in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and man, who had redeemed him and all men, and whom he took to his heart by faith.

[H] And now our brother, prominent in the life of his city, prominent in the life of his church, in the fullness of years and of honors, has gone out from our midst. We shall see him no more. But we mourn him not as one who is dead. He has gone on to the rest that remains for the people of God. He has won his final victory. He has gone on top the experiences of which Paul speaks. He has experienced the truth of the words, “To die is gain.” He is alive forevermore in glory.

I see men here from every department of our city’s activities. May I be so bold as to ask a question of you? — each one of you? Have you a philosophy of life? — an adequate satisfying, far-reaching philosophy of life? one that will stand the test of the crises of life, and especially that last great common crisis of life?

I trust that you have, and that you have experienced its worth. If not, I beg of you to obtain it. And there is only one place to find it: in the truth of God’s Word; in Jesus Christ.

# 10. The Christian Pilgrim Homeward Bound

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. — Psalm 23:4

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM is one of the best known and best loved compositions in the world.

The whole book of Psalms might be called the Christian world's hymnbook, and the Christian world's prayerbook. And it occupies the same position in the Jewish religious world. The Twenty-third Psalm is one of the pearls of the Psalms. Its piety is the equal of its poetry.

This Psalm of David was written three thousand years ago. The great Temple in Jerusalem is gone; David's palace is gone. Jerusalem itself has been destroyed a half-dozen times. Israel has been scattered all over the world. But this Psalm lives on. And the circle of those encouraged by it is ever widening. It touches human life at a vital spot, the point of deepest need. And it gives strength, courage, hope.

It is said that, in the libraries and languages of the world, there are 224,000 books and booklets on this one little Psalm of only six verses, or one hundred words.

The picture this Psalm calls to mind is that of a country scene — one of peace, plenty and safety: a scene where murmuring streams flow on through verdant meadows, where birds sing, and cattle quietly graze.

The lesson this Psalm wants to teach is that of trust in God and confidence in His guidance and protection. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not

want.” But even in the midst of the most beautiful and quiet country scene, disturbing thoughts enter, and trying experiences come.

Remember! this Psalm was written by David, Israel’s greatest king. And it was written from his own, experience. ’Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." The king on the throne must say this, as well as his lowliest subject. Wealth, power, position . nothing can keep away this visitor. And he is absolutely impartial. He takes the scepter from the hand, and the crown from the brow of the mightiest monarch, as well as the instrument of toil from the hand of the lowliest toiler. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.” The idea here expressed is that of a journey, an adventure in a strange land. I want to preserve this thought; so let ’me speak to you briefly on this subject:

## **The Christian Pilgrim Homeward Bound**

### **I. Do you realize that we are all pilgrims?**

[A] This is one of life’s inevitables. There is no getting around it, no way of escaping it. One may never leave his native community; one may die in the house in which he was born, and never get ten miles away from it in the meanwhile; but he is a pilgrim nevertheless.

He is a pilgrim traveling on from youth to age, traveling on from the changing to the changeless, traveling from time to eternity.

[B] David starts out in this Psalm with the picture of a pleasant scene. In verses 1-3 he tells about the :Good Shepherd, the green pastures and the waters of rest. But already in the fourth verse he speaks of the valley of the shadow of death.

It is today as it was in David’s day. This is life, and there is no changing it. Man’s pilgrimage leads this way. Since history has been written, every man, every woman has gone this way. And there are no set bounds to the duration of this pilgrimage. It may terminate anywhere from infancy to extreme old age.



[C] We know these facts. We know that every day we are moving on. We know that some day this pilgrimage is going to end; and that the faith we have here, and the life we develop here, determines what our life will be forever. But how much do we think of this? and how much are we influenced by it?

[D] Now I want to ask a question. I am asking this question as much of myself as I am of you. The question is this —

## **II. When we get to the end of our pilgrimage here, are we going to be fearless pilgrims?**

[A] David was able to say, “‘Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.’ thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” The general belief is that this Psalm was written by David in his later life. He had many trying experiences: in his own personal life, in his family life, and as a ruler. But in all of this, he had experienced the goodness of his God. And he was able to say, in all honesty, “When I come to my end, I will not be afraid.”

[B] When we think of the end, are we able to say, “I fear no evil”?

[1] I know people differ constitutionally. Some are fearless because they never think, and naturally see no danger.

[2] Some have the fearlessness of the stoic, the man who says, “What cannot be cured must be endured.”

[3] There is also the fearlessness of the child of God.

The Christian pilgrim’s heart may beat fast when he thinks of this matter in a direct personal way; his knees may tremble somewhat as his feet actually draw near to the valley of the shadow, because this, for him, is a new, untried adventure; but he is not really afraid; and for several reasons.

One who can say, out of his own conviction and experience, “The Lord is my shepherd,” and who knows that in every adventure, even in the valley of

the shadow of death, God is with him, that the divine rod and staff support him, will not be really afraid.

And how much truer this ought to be of us than it was of David. He knew God's goodness. He knew something of God's promise to send a Redeemer. But David lived a thousand years before Christ came into the world, gave His life to save us, died on the Cross, arose from the dead triumphantly, and ascended to heaven to rule the world in our interest. The Christian pilgrim is not really afraid of the valley of the shadow of death, because he knows that —

### **III. What we call death is but the opening of the door that admits him to the eternal homeland**

[A] Death! There is no death! That is, no end of human life. Jesus says (John 11:25, 26), "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

There is a death of the body. The house in which we live falls into decay. But of life, the soul, the mind, the will, the affections . all that makes up our personality — there is no death. There is a condition of life which the Bible calls death; but it is not the cessation of life. It is life lived apart from God, confirmed in evil, and lived in hopelessness and misery forever.

[B] David, three thousand years ago thousand years before Christ was born — who has made these things much clearer to us, said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." It is not a real death, only the shadow of it And David knew that he did not stop there. He says, "Though I walk through the valley." And God kept on going with him.

[C] Let us dwell for a moment on this thought: Through death to the homeland. The homeland! We talk about our homes here. We struggle to get them and keep them. But we know, down deep in our hearts we know, that we do not keep them for very long. You know the figures the Bible uses to impress

this. It says life is like a vapor; it is like the flower that blooms in the morning and by evening, or, at most, in a day or two, fades and falls.

But this is only the temporary, physical phase of life. Life itself does not run from life to death; but, for the child of God, from life to a fuller, richer life.

[D] And what a life that is going to be! We have all had our dreams of what we should like life to be; dreams of beauty, perfection, excellence, glory, blessedness. Well, when we get to heaven, the reality is going to be a thousand times more glorious than our dreams.

I am not going to describe this life in any detail. But there is one little passage — I John 3:2 — which gives me a world of satisfaction. Here John tells us that when we get to heaven, we are not only going to see Jesus as He is but — marvelous words — we are going to be like Him.

[E] This it is which, for us Christian people, takes the sting out of death and robs the grave of its victory. Of course, we grieve for the loved ones taken away from us. That is natural. Jesus Himself wept at the grave of His friend Lazarus. But if we have an enlightened Christian faith, our grief is not for those who have left us but for ourselves, who are left as pilgrims in this vale of tears.

[F] Pilgrims homeward bound! That there are many difficulties and dangers in the way, every one recognizes. That our unaided strength is wholly insufficient, God's Word clearly tells us.

Can we, then, be certain of reaching the homeland? Absolutely. How? By putting our hand in the hand of Jesus, the New Testament Good Shepherd, and allowing ourselves to be led by Him.

# 11. The Christian's Twofold Gain

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. — Philippians 1:21

MAN HAS BEEN LIVING with death for thousands of years, but he has never become wholly accustomed to it; he has never lost all his fear of it. Death is, most of the time, viewed with more or less alarm; it is considered an intruder, a destroyer. And there is much of truth in this view.

I am speaking of death now from the viewpoint of the natural man. There are those, however, who succeed in gaining another point of view. It is not the point of view of the stoic, who says, "What cannot be cured must be endured," and seeks to school his spirit to endure with calmness the vicissitudes of life; but it is the point of view of those who have been tutored in the school of Christ, and have come to believe what He taught and exemplified in His own life.

In Jesus' teaching they have found that which comforts and strengthens, which gives a larger, further outlook; which teaches that even in suffering and death there is a rich compensation.

These people have learned that what we call life and death are but two sides of a greater whole; that life goes on after death; that death is but the opening of a door that admits the child of God into a larger, fuller, richer life. On the basis of our little text, let us consider this subject, while I speak to you on this topic —

## The Christian's Twofold Gain

# **I. Let us think of the Christian's gain in this life**

[A] The Bible teaches no essentially gloomy view of life. With perfect truth and clearness it teaches about man's faults, his sufferings and the evil estate to which he may come for eternity. But there is in this teaching no essential gloominess, for its aim is to point the way to better things.

[1] Jesus was no gloomy ascetic. He loved life. He loved God's world. He loved good friends and companionship. He loved to think of life's noble possibilities, rising vista upon vista.

[2] God has given us a life to live here, and we should not be afraid of it or view it with gloomy eyes.

Of course, there are difficulties, burdens, dangers, trials, sufferings, heartaches, and, finally, what we call dissolution.

[3] But there are other things also. God has given us this beautiful, wonderful world to use and enjoy. The Christian may, I say should, make gain of life, as others do. He need not be insensible to distinction and honor. There are friends to be made and companionships to be enjoyed.

[4] However, most of these things have to do, primarily, with the life that now is, and perish with the using, save for what is wrought into the fabric of life itself.

[B] The real gain in life, however, is not merely in the life of the flesh, the everyday life we live. It is not in the use and enjoyment of the good things of this world, however abundant or necessary.

[C] The real gain of life here has come only to those who have learned to know the almost infinite meaning of life; that it is a gift of God; that it is akin to God; that it has an eternal destiny.

[D] The real gain of life here is in the possession only of those who know that life here, at its best, is diseased, disfigured, blinded, bewildered, sinful;

but who know, at the same time, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and man, the new head of a new race, has come to give us a new birth into a new life, with an ever widening, ever clearer vision of the real nature and destiny of life; and that all this becomes ours, here and now, when, by the grace of God, we open our hearts and, by a living faith, take Christ Jesus into our hearts — the very life of our lives.

This is the way we begin, already in this life, to live the endless life.

[E] When a man has this gain of the present life, no adversity, no loss, no pains, no fear of death can rob him of it.

Few men in the world have had more vicissitudes, more pains and losses than St. Paul. At the time he wrote these words he was in prison, expecting the executioner any day; but no man was ever more consistently thankful and joyous. It was because he knew what he had, and what was in store for him.

[F] Our brother, who lies so quietly before us in his last sleep, was one, we are assured, who had this double gain of life here.

[1] He was a successful man of affairs. He was a good citizen, who enjoyed the respect and admiration of his fellow citizens. He was a true, loyal son, husband and father. He loved life, and gleaned much from life.

[2] But he had a greater gain of life here while he lived. He had the sustaining strength and patience and comfort which can be the possession only of those who have a living faith in Jesus as an all-sufficient Saviour, an assured sense of forgiveness and a strengthening vision of the blessings that await them.

He was a loyal churchman; a faithful user of the means of grace, in the house of God and in his home. He faithfully discharged the duties incumbent upon him as a member of the church, and an officer in it. He had an active part in the work of the church at home and abroad. He loved the fellowship of his brethren of the church. He was with us here just two days ago.

Now our brother has gone from us, but his memory is held in loving remembrance. And we are sure, as sure as only Christian men can be, that he has gone on to even better, more glorious things. So let us further consider —

## II. The Christian's gain through death

[A] Here is where mere human understanding balks. Though even here there is a human intuition that tells us the life of a good man does not end, it cannot tell us anything definite about the future.

In the language of mere mortals, we speak of death as the end of things. If is not the end; it is only the real beginning of life. We speak of death as the surrender of everything. The reverse of this is true. Death swings open the door through which the man of God passes to enter upon his eternal inheritance.

[B] Do we not sing —

There is a land of pure delight;  
Where saints immortal reign;  
Eternal day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain.

[C] Has Jesus not said (John 14:1-2) “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many Mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you”?

[D] Has not Paul who was caught up into heaven, and beheld wonders and glories no human lips Can repeat — given us that glorious passage, Romans 8:18-21?

[E] We believe all this. It is an integral part of our Christian faith; but we, need to cultivate this faith, by faithful study . of God's Word, as it deals with this problem — and especially Jesus' own personal verification of its truth.

[F] New, more in particular, what is the gain that comes to Man through death?

[1] He lays aside all his infirmities, all his temptations and difficulties.

[2] He becomes perfect; his mortal becomes immortal; his Corruptible becomes incorruptible; his weakness becomes strength; his marred life becomes glorious; he realizes all his better aspirations, even to becoming like Christ and sharing His glory and blessedness.

[3] And: all this is forever.

[G] To die is gain! Yes we believe this, although, being human, it is often with some fear and trembling. Death! Yes, there is such a thing; but for the Christian it is, only of the body — not of the soul.

This is the death of death,  
To breathe away a breath  
And know the end of strife,  
And taste the deathless life.

[H] I think it is true that for Christian people the bitterness of death is not so much the thought of dying as it is the thought of leaving behind those we love. But let us remember —

A day and we will meet,  
A night and we will greet.

And the reunion will be forever.

[I] To this blessed gain our brother has gone. And the thought of it comforted him in the going, as it comforts us in this hour of parting.

[J] “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

Let us make gain of both worlds. But let us so live in faith that the gain here, however great it may be, will be as nothing to the gain over there; let



us remember always that the gain here is but for a little while; that over there it is forever.

# 12. A Glimpse Of The Heart Of God

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. — John 3:16

THE ANCIENT HEBREWS looked upon the heart as the very center of life; the source and seat of understanding, love, courage, grief, pleasure, etc. One thing is certain: as long as a person's heart is true to you, as long as a person truly loves you, you can depend on him, he will be true to you, he will keep his word to you, he will do all he can for you.

One of the things that are very precious to us Christian people is the assurance of God's disposition toward us; the fact that He loves us, that we are objects of His solicitous care.

Many people, as long as they are in health and strength, and everything goes well with them, are very little concerned about what God thinks of them, or whether He thinks of them at all.

But when people face eternity, most of them change their minds. Then the questions: What does God think of me? What is His disposition toward me? What is He willing to do for me? assume larger proportions, and are of vital importance. Our little text answers all these questions. It gives us what I am pleased to call —

## **A Glimpse Of The Heart Of God**

By a glimpse of the heart of God, I do not mean a mere fleeting, tantalizing vision of God. This little text, directly or by implication, presents about all that is known of God, so far as His relation to humanity is concerned. It presents truths before the magnitude of which angels bow and worship. It

presents all man is able to know. By a glimpse I mean only this, that with man's disjointed thinking, and faulty vision, this is about all we can entertain. Thank God, it is enough. The glimpse this little passage gives us is that —

## **I. The heart of God is a heart of love**

[A] There are many ideas of God; for example, that He is personified Wisdom, Power, etc.; that He is a great king, a tyrant; that He is in all things essentially incomprehensible.

[B] It is true, the mind of man can in no real sense comprehend God. But there is one thing in which God is brought very close to us: He loves us. Love is the only quality or attribute of which the Bible says that God is that thing (1 John 4:16).

[C] And with all the fullness of that love God loved — and still loves — us.

[D] The fullness, the richness, the reality of this love of God for us is shown by what it did for us.

[1] All real love is giving love. Love that is only in word is often a superficial, a cheap love.

[2] The measure of love's giving is the measure of that love.

[3] The measure of God's love is that He gave His best: not the world — He gave us that; not all the good things of the world — He gave us that; but His very best — His only begotten Son.

## **II. Our text shows that God's heart entertains a universal love**

[A] Human love is limited. Men may rise to the heights, but only by the grace of God can they entertain kindly feelings toward all men and really wish them well.

Men may have a rather large circle of friends, toward whom they entertain a special feeling of interest and good will.

But those whom men truly, deeply love are rather few in number. Man is finite, and his capacities are limited.

[B] But God's love is universal. There is no one outside the pale of His love. He loved, and loves, the world of humanity — not only His friends, but His enemies.

### **III. Our text, in its glimpse of the heart of God, shows us the purpose his love had in view**

[A] Human love, because of its imperfection, is often largely selfish; subconsciously the lover thinks more of self, his own happiness than of the one loved.

[B] The desire of all true love is to bless the one loved.

[C] God, in the fullness of His love, desired to give every blessing to His beloved.

[D] He desired to save us from perishing; to give eternal life; to restore God-likeness to man; to give perfection, blessedness and glory to His children.

### **IV. Finally this glimpse of the heart of God shows how the gift of his love is received**

[A] It cannot be purchased, not with all the riches in the world.

[B] It can be obtained by faith alone, simply by accepting the proffered gift.

## **V. Can we not trust such a God —**

[A] With a love like this?

[B] With a gift like this?

[C] With a purpose like this?

[D] In life and in death?

[E] The deceased was one whose life was built on this foundation. (Enlarge as facts justify.)

# **13. God's Love For Us (Another Outline On John 3:16)**

THERE IS MUCH LOVELESSNESS in this old world, much indifference, much coldness, much active hatred, and of how much heartache, how much suffering actively inflicted is it not the cause?

Mortals, though often too proud to own it crave affection; their hearts cry out for it Like a ray of bright, warmth giving sunlight on a cold chilly morning is a message like that of our text: "God so loved the world."

## **God's Love For Us**

### **I. Let us pause to ponder only the opening words of our text, "God so loved"**

[A] Men have many and strange ideas about God and His wisdom, power and greatness. Men have conceived of gods cruel, gods capricious, gods lustful, gods indifferent, gods good natured, but nowhere outside of Christianity do we find the concept that God is a God of love.

[B] So far as the unaided thoughts of men are concerned, this is one of the strangest things in the world.

[C] But it is one of the glories of the Christian religion — "God is love." "God so loved the world." "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

[D] Let us not be afraid to believe that God has that which is the prototype of human love. We are not thereby degrading the divine nature. The spec-

trum shows us that the metals in the sun are identical with the metals in the earth.

[1] Man was created by God, in God's own image. It is perfectly safe and reverent to suppose that the love of God answers to that which we call love in man, save that God's love has no limitations, is perfectly pure, and is not subject to chill and change.

[2] We name a long list of qualities in God which we call His attributes, such as wisdom, power, justice, righteousness, truth and the like. All these things are but the fringe of God's character, the halo around the central orb, the central flame of that which is love.

[E] What encouragement, what consolation, what hope lies at the heart of this demonstrated fact! God is love. And no one is cut off from this hope; for —

## **II. God's love embraces the world**

[A] Man's powers are all limited. And in nothing is his natural power more limited than in the power truly to love. In fact, there is no true love at all save as it is awakened, and nurtured by the Spirit of God. But human love — mere human love — how scarce, how restricted it is!

Think of the world situation today, less than two decades after the close of the World War — that Devil's splurge under the guise of a great humanitarian movement to purge the world of war and make it safe for democracy.

What aspect does the world present? That of a series of armed camps, presided over, largely, by a series of petty tyrants, where the blood purge, the mass execution and the bloody liquidation are the order of the day.

[B] At best, human love, mere human love, moves, is capable of moving, only in a limited circle.

[C] What a glorious contrast does our text present: "God so loved the world"!

God loved the loveless world; the unlovely world; the world that was at enmity with Him (Romans 5:8).

[D] He loved not only the collective world, the world in mass; He loved each one individually, with all the wealth of His love.

[E] One is somewhat at a loss to decide which is the more wonderful truth — the fact that God loves, or the fact that He loves the world.

### **III. The depth, the sincerity of God's love is shown by what it did for us**

[A] It is a generally accepted principle that the sincerity and depth of love may be Judged by what it does or is willing to do, the sacrifices it will make, for the beloved.

[B] This same principle may be applied to God and His love for us. What was He willing to do for us?

God so loved that He gave. All God's giving proves His love. But nothing proves the height and depth, the length and breadth, of His love like this gift — His best gift — His only begotten Son.

[C] And Jesus, who was not only given, sent, but just as truly came, freely and voluntarily. gave Himself into poverty, shame and death for us.

### **IV. The purpose of God's love is to save**

[A] Love desires to bless, to make happy in every possible way. The father's love always seeks the child's highest, ultimate good. Think of the father of the Prodigal Son.

[B] The heart of our Father God was cut to the quick; His children were in danger of being lost.



[1] There is not only a possibility of the world of men perishing; they are bound to perish unless something is done for them, and they accept what is done for them. This is the reason God sent His Son. He came to save us; yes, really to save us, to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, what no man can do for himself.

And this very real, certain danger threatens not only some or a few but all the world.

[2] Jesus came, not only to avert the peril of perishing, but to give a positive blessing — “but have everlasting life.”

[C] The one condition of escaping the universal peril and becoming possessed of the universally provided blessing is —

## **V. Believing what God says, and believing in His gift**

Let us not make a big difficulty out of believing. There are people whom we believe. We take them at their word; we trust their promises and we are at rest. This is exactly what faith, or belief, in God is.

We must believe that God loves us; that God gave His Son, God’s own Son, to become a man, to die for us to take away our sins; and that by believing Him we are rescued from perishing and have eternal life.

This is all there is to it, so far as fundamentals are concerned. God takes care of all else.

[B] We have gathered here this afternoon in the silent presence of a husband, father and brother in the Lord.

[1] His life was built on the solid foundation of the truth of this text.

[2] His life was a consistent illustration of what this text means to a man’s life.

[3] We shall miss our brother, in the home and in the church; but we will not sorrow as those who have no hope. He has but gone on before to the perfect realization of what the love of God means to human life.

# 14. The Gift Of God's Love (Another Outline On John 3:16)

THERE ARE MANY SUBJECTS on which one may profitably speak at a time like this. There are few subjects so rich in thought, that put such a solid foundation under one's feet, specially at a time like this, as that presented by this little text. Let us ponder —

## The Gift Of God's Love

### I. The greatness of it

[A] All good gifts are from God (James 1:17).

[B] This is the greatest Gift of all: His only begotten Son.

[C] And He gave Him, not to occupy a throne here, but to suffer and die.

### II. The universality of it

[A] He did not give Him only for Israel, His own chosen people.

[B] He did not give Him for an elect group to whom He was specially attached.

[C] He gave Him for all lost, perishing mankind.

### III. The purpose of it

[A] The purpose was not to glorify or make a name for the Giver.

[B] The purpose was to save the lost, the perishing.

[C] The purpose was also to grant eternal life and a home with the Giver in heaven to the recipients of the Gift.

## **IV. The condition of receiving the gift and its blessing**

[A] The Gift is not obtained by purchase, were each one a billionaire.

[B] It is not obtained by mere intellectual apprehension.

[C] It becomes ours through simple acceptance by faith.

## **V. The reassurance of it**

[A] When men were all strangers and aliens, unloving and unlovely, God gave this great Gift to men.

[B] Is there, then, anything God will fail to give to those who have accepted this Gift?

[C] Can we not trust our dead to such a God?

[D] Especially can we have assurance because our beloved brother accepted God's great Gift. (Here enlarge, as fitting, on the faith and life of deceased, his faithfulness, etc.)

# 15. Jesus' Prayer For His People

## Scripture Lesson: John 17:1-6, 11-13, 19-23

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory. — John 17:24

THE SCRIPTURE LESSON which I read a moment ago is not one usually used for a service of this nature; and I have selected it for a reason.

Just a few days before her decease, our departed sister asked that this chapter be read to her. These are blessed, glorious thoughts to have on, one's mind and in one's heart when one is walking through the valley of the great shadow.

We are told that the great Spenser three separate times during his last hours asked that this chapter be read to him.

This seventeenth chapter of St. John is a wonderful chapter in a wonderful group of chapters in a wonderful book.

Chapters 13-17 record for us what Jesus said to His disciples in that upper room on Holy Thursday night when His own death was only a few hours distant. And He knew it.

When you are weary, when you are distressed, when your heart aches and life seems empty, get the old Book, go into your room, close the door, and read these chapters. You can read them all in fifteen minutes! I venture to say that when you finish, life will look different, more worthwhile; heaven will seem nearer.

This seventeenth chapter is, in its entirety, a prayer the longest of Jesus' prayers we have on record. It is generally ed Jesus' high-priestly prayer. In it Jesus prays, first, for Himself, then for His disciples, and, finally, for all believers.

Our text is a part of Jesus' prayer for us. Let us look at for a few moments; and while doing so, let us keep this ought in mind —

## **Jesus' Prayer For His Disciples**

### **I. Let us note that Jesus is concerned about us**

[A] We often feel as if no one in the world cares for us, that we are alone, forsaken; left to bear our burdens by ourselves, to fight our own battles.

Usually the situation is not as bad as we think. But if it were true that no one cares. on earth, it is not true in heaven. God cares. Jesus cares. Remember that when Jesus spoke these words within two or three hours He would be betrayed, and He knew it; in ten or twelve hours He would be crucified, and He knew it; but Jesus was not thinking about His own troubles and how He might escape them; He was concerned about His disciples, and about us, and what He could do for us.

[B] It is hard to find a word adequate to express the full degree of Jesus' concern about us. The Authorized Version says, "Father, I will"; Moffat says the same; Goodspeed says, "Father, I wish"; the American Standard (my favorite) says, "Father, I desire." Even if we have difficulty in finding a word that expresses all Jesus meant, we know what He meant. He is expressing a deep, heartfelt prayer for us, a prayer that carries with it all the power of His Godhead to bring to pass what He desires.

[C] How deep-seated, how sincere Jesus' desire for our good is we see in the fact that this is what brought Him down from heaven to labor for us, and to endure for us, and do what He actually did for us.

[D] It is this same heartfelt concern for us that keeps Jesus at work for us still, hard by the throne of the everlasting Father in heaven.

[E] Let us try to realize this truth. Jesus cares. It is true, whatever may be-tide here on earth. Rightly to realize this truth in all its significance has transformed many a life, bringing a peace and a joy earth can neither give nor take away.

## **II. Now what is it Jesus desires for us?**

[A] “Father, I will... that they be with me.” This is Jesus’ desire. It was His desire when He was here on earth. It is His desire now in heaven.

Many people are selfish; they do not wish to share their good things with others, but only with a very limited circle.

It is not so with Jesus. He would like to share all that He has with all people. He will share all He has with all His people.

[B] “That they may be with Me.”

Let us think of John 14:1-3, which is a part of this same conversation with the disciples in the upper room.

[C] That Jesus might make it possible for His people to be with Him and share His heavenly home was the only reason He left His throne of glory, came to earth, humbled Himself, worked for us, died for us; all this was that He might, so to speak, gather us up and take us with Him to heaven.

[D] Let us think of all these things when, because of our burdens and trials, we begin to wonder whether Jesus really cares about us.

## **III. “That they may be with Me.” There is even more than this Jesus’ desire for us**

[A] Jesus says, “That they may behold my glory.” The glory of Jesus, the glory of God — what mortal, stammering tongue can do justice to this thought? Yes, or even angel in heaven?

“Eye hath not seen, etc.” (1 Cor. 2:9). The Spirit of God has given us faint glimpses of it, to entice us on the way.

Paul, after being caught in a trance to behold the glories of God and His heaven, tells us it was not lawful to tell what he had seen (2 Cor. 12:4).

[B] Man can only, with a chaste and enlightened imagination, faintly visualize the kind of home fit for Jesus — the home which He wants to share with us.

[C] Not only, however, shall those whom Jesus receives into His heavenly home behold His glory. In verse 22 He tells us that the glory which the eternal Father gave to Him He gives to His people.

Paul tells us that we shall be glorified with Christ. (Romans 8:17).

[D] I shall not attempt to tell you in what this glory that Jesus is going to share with us consists. But one thing is certain: it will center in a perfect life fitted for a perfect world. One of the most satisfying statements pertaining to this subject is that which this same apostle tells us elsewhere when he says that when we come to be with Jesus in glory “we shall be like him” (1 John 3:2).

[E] How we reach this place where we shall be with Jesus, and not only behold but share His glory, we know. It is simply by taking Jesus as our Saviour, and letting Him lead us.

## **IV. The assurances that Jesus gives us, here, take the sting out of death**

[A] We like to live. It is right that we should. God gave us our life and He intended that it should be a joy.



[B] But as things now are, it is the way of all life, and inevitably so, that life eventually becomes burdensome. Yes, it often becomes extremely trying, to ourselves and to others; and eventually it must be laid down.

[C] But death is not the end of life. It is only the way to life. The house in which we live temporarily, falls into decay; life itself goes on — on to be with Christ.

[D] Mrs. Z— was, for years, a great sufferer. Life had become a burden to her, a burden graciously borne, by the grace of God.

For years she was a member of our church. In the days of her health she was a regular worshiper and a diligent worker.

Now we have every assurance, human and divine, that she has gone to be with her Lord, to behold His glory and to share it.

[E] “Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.” Brethren, sometime every one of us will come to the day when the silver cord will be loosed and the golden bowl broken. Then what? Where do we expect to spend eternity?

Shall it be with Jesus? — sharing His glory? Do we have this hope?

There is only one way. Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). And there is but one way to make Jesus our Saviour: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

# 16. The Other Side Of Death

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. — Matthew 25:34

MANY PEOPLE have defective vision. One of the common defects of vision is shortsightedness. Recently I sat across the table from a younger friend of mine whom I know well. To my great surprise, he told me that if he should take off his glasses he could not recognize a person, not even his best known friend, at that short distance.

Those of us who have normal vision know, theoretically, that such conditions exist; but it is difficult to realize them as a fact of everyday life.

Usually such conditions can be corrected by the use of properly constructed glasses.

Some people have defective vision so far, as physical sight is concerned. All men are likely to have defective intellectual vision with respect to many things.

There are many things we do not understand. There, are many things we all see as through a glass, darkly.

One thing no man understands fully is the twin mystery of life and death. No natural man understands death. He has all kinds of notions, none of which are correct. On this subject he is shortsighted. He sees, though he does not understand, only what takes place here and now.

He needs to have his vision corrected. There is a glass that does this — God's Word. This shows us another side of death, the side Jesus presented.

On the basis of our little text, let us consider what we often overlook —

## The Other Side Of Death

### I. Death is not the end but the beginning of life

[A] Let us not get the idea that death is the end of life. It is the end of only the primary stage of life.

Life does not die. It is only the house in which we live that falls into decay.

Life goes on. Jesus said to the man who was dying on the cross near at hand, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

[B] We speak of death as the time of farewells and of parting.

There are very few of us who do not have as many, or more, relatives and friends on the other side as we have here. And these we shall meet and greet.

It shall be a glad meeting with all those who have gone on before.

[C] Death is not only the real beginning of life; it is the beginning of the real life.

Let me ask you a question. Would you want to live on forever and forever this piecemeal, imperfect life?

If you are young, in good health, with good prospects, surrounded with good friends, and have never had many disappointments, heartaches and burdens, you may say 'yes.'

But if you are older, if you have known losses and crosses, if you have known illness and pain, if you have had disappointment and heartache, I doubt whether you would say 'yes.'" I, for one, would not; if it were left to my choice.

Who is there here who has not dreamed dreams? I do not mean night dreams but daydreams — dreams of better, nobler, more perfect things. Well, a thousand times more than we have ever been able to dream shall be ours. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

At death we lay down our weaknesses, our frailties, our sins, and life becomes perfect, beautiful, glorious; we are restored forever to the image of God.

Go home and ponder this. Death is not the end but the beginning of life. This is the time of preparation for that which comes afterward. And this life determines the life that is to come.

## **II. Death is not loss but gain**

[A] We often hear people speak of the dead as if they were to be pitied; as if they had to give up everything.

[1] Life is a gift of God. We should make the most of every opportunity, here and now, especially in the development of life.

St. Paul was a man who utilized every opportunity for the development of life, but he said... (Phil. 1:21).

[2] If a man was successful in business, and had, let us say, a fine home, people are apt to say, when he dies: “What a pity, think of all these fine things he had to give up!”

But Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).

[3] If a man had a good position, we speak in much the same way. But Jesus says in our text, “Come ... inherit the kingdom.”

We are to reign as princes.

[B] Remember, everything here is transient At best it lasts but a little while thirty, forty, fifty years. Here there is nothing permanent but change. Here we are well today, ill tomorrow; happy today, depressed tomorrow; successful today, unfortunate tomorrow.

There, all is permanent; we shall be beyond the reach of temptation, illness, or change.

### **III. These facts about the other side of death are revelations of God — not man's guesses**

[A] All men always and everywhere, have thought that human life could not end with what we call death. But often their thoughts have been fantastic, incongruous, ill-founded.

[B] We Christians get our facts from God's unfailing Word, concerning which it is said that heaven and earth shall pass away, but this Word never.

We get our teaching from the Lord Jesus Christ, who illustrated much of which we have been speaking by His own life, death and resurrection. Let us accept it as God's revelation, and build on it as such.

[C] But there is more to be said. The other side of death, of which I have been speaking, is not only a revelation of God; it is the gift of God.

[1] No man can win it by himself, by any efforts whatsoever.

[2] It is the gift of God to those who come to Christ, believe in Him, confess their sins to Him, are forgiven by Him who love Him, and follow Him.

[3] The others shall live on forever and forever, also, but theirs will not be the glorious life which I have feebly described.

There are two classes described in this chapter from which our text is taken. To the one class Jesus will say, "Depart, I never knew you." Only to the believing will He say, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom"

## **IV. The other side of death!**

[A] The one into whose silent presence we have come to pa. our last respects now knows the other side of death. He is beyond our reach. We leave him in the hands of God.

[B] We are here in this world today. Not one of us has any guarantee that we shall be here, alive and well, tomorrow. And if we are, we are traveling on, ceaselessly, irresistibly, toward the other side.

Do we ever think about this? I do not mean in a way to make us moody and depressed. If we believe what I have said before, there is no occasion for this; this thought must serve to keep us watching, to inspire us to keep in readiness.

And, remember, there is only one thing that gives us readiness: to have Christ Jesus as Friend and Saviour.

God grant that when we have come to the evening of life, we may hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

# 17. The Rest Awaiting God's People

There is a sabbath-rest, then, reserved still for the people of God. — Hebrews 4:9 (Moffat's Translation)

WE HAVE ASSEMBLED TODAY in solemn mood. The angel of death has visited us. And we are disposed to be quiet and thoughtful.

Disposed to think, let us think profitably; about that which has called us together — death. What does it mean? How should we face it? Is it possible to do so fearlessly, with hope in our hearts?

The only way to think profitably about this, one of the greatest of human problems, is to think God's thoughts after Him as He has revealed them in His Word. If we do so, we shall find not only instruction but that which will comfort and strengthen.

Guided by the little text I have quoted for you, I ask you to consider with me this subject —

## The Rest Awaiting God's People

### I. Let us dwell, for a moment, on the word "rest"

[A] The word rest was looming large in the thoughts of the apostle when he wrote this part of this letter. It occurs eleven times in the immediate context. And in pronominal form, it is used a number of times in addition. Evidently the word rest was precious to the writer, and much in his thoughts.

[B] Rest. There is something soothing in the very sound of the word. It comes as a kind of benediction.

[C] To the toiling thousands of earth's sons and daughters, who must keep at their tasks despite quivering muscles and aching limbs, precious is the thought of eventide, when the demands of exhausted nature may be met in rest, when sleep comes, tired nature's sweet restorer.

[D] But this is not all. There are ills to which all flesh is heir: disappointments, heartaches, sickness, restless days and feverish nights. What a sweet relief when some blessed ministry brings surcease of pain, blessed rest!

[E] Even this is by no means all that is legitimately covered by this word rest. There are problems and ills that have little to do with the body; they have their origin in the mind, the soul.

Many men and women, without ache or pain of body, toss restlessly at night, burdened of soul, with a conscience ill at ease, asking themselves perplexing questions about mistakes that have been made, and wondering what preparation is necessary for that mysterious future toward which we are all hastening with never ceasing tread. One of the greatest problems of life is how to find relief. Rest is the deepest need of the soul.

The rest of soul, which often materially affects the body as well, the rest our text has in mind — the future safety and happiness in heaven — is the most important and precious of all.

[F] Rest to all these troubled hearts means the lifting of the burden, the coming into life of something that gives a sense of security; that imparts strength, courage, hope. How precious, then, is the word rest! May we all find the true rest of God's people, and finding it, treasure it.

[G] Rightly to understand and appreciate our little text, we should know the historic setting to which the apostle refers in the chapter in which our text is found. Let, me, then, remind you, in a few words, of —

## **II. The rest of god's ancient people**



[A] You know something of how God called Abraham, some two thousand years before this letter was written, and had him settled in what came to be known as the Holy Land; where, eventually, his descendants became a great nation and became an important factor in the developments of God's world-plans.

[B] When Abraham's grandsons were stalwart young men, a famine came upon the land, and, to find food, they had to go down into Egypt, where, eventually, they were oppressed and enslaved and became a suffering people. They knew no rest. They longed for rest.

[C] Finally, after some hundreds of years, by the miraculous intervention of God, these people were freed; and, guided through many hardships and dangers, they were brought back and settled in the Holy Land — a restored people of God, at rest in their homeland.

[D] This is the thought coursing through the back of the apostle's mind when he wrote our text. It is an apt picture of human life. We are all pilgrims. We may never travel a hundred miles from our birthplace; but we are., still pilgrims, pilgrims on the journey of life; pilgrims facing many difficulties and dangers; but, if we are children of God, we are pilgrims from earth to heaven.

[E] With this background, we may now, more profitably, proceed with our thought —

### **III. The Rest That Awaits God's People**

[A] This rest of which we speak is in the future; we await it; but before we can ever reach it, there is a rest that we must have here and now.

It is the rest, the inner soul rest, that is the portion of those who are at peace with God. It is the result of the assurance of the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ Jesus. It is the rest of those who have the assurance that a God of grace and power rules over all; and that, in spite of all ills, He is leading us wisely, safely, surely homeward. It is the rest that comes through the assurance that this little span of fitful, burdened, suffering life is not all

there is of life but only the beginning, the disciplinary stage, the prelude to an endless glorious life.

[B] And then, finally, when that which we call death comes knocking at the door, remember, death deals only with the body, the house in which we live; then comes that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

This rest is not a cessation of activity; it is not an endless repose, an unbroken sleep. It is life at rest because it is life in its fullness, life in perfection, life in glory; life, as the Word itself tells us, after the pattern of Christ's own perfect, glorious life; life that moves on in the rhythm of a ceaseless harmony.

[C] Human mind is all too poor to understand fully the nature of this life. Human language is too poor a vehicle to convey adequately even the glimpses the Spirit of God reveals to us of this life.

But we know that this will be a life that has come into its own; a life that flows on in a full steady stream; a life that pulsates in full harmony with all God's plans and enters into a new and glorious participation in them, from all of which it derives fullness of joy.

## **IV. But This Rest Is Only For God's People**

[A] It is for "the people of God," those who know Christ Jesus as Lord and Saviour and have been blessed by Him. "Come, ye blessed."

[B] God would have all enjoy this rest (John 3:16), but some will not accept it (Matthew 23:37).

[C] It was of His followers that Jesus said, "I go and prepare a place for you... that where I am, there ye may be also."

[D] Into this rest we have every assurance our sister has entered. Because of this, we comfort ourselves with the comfort of God's people.

[E] Brethren, we are here, the living among the living. For how long? No one knows. One thing is sure: we are traveling on. At best, it will not be long. Do we know whither we are traveling? Are we sure our faces are set toward the land where remaineth a rest for God's people? There is only one road (John 14:6).

# 18. The Shepherding Christ

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither any man pluck them out, of my hand. — John 10:27, 28

I SHOULD NOT NEED to remind most of you that this tenth chapter of John is called the Good Shepherd chapter.

It is one of the most precious chapters of God's Holy Word. It is full of encouragement. It gives worthwhileness to life. It opens vistas through the clouds. It gives comfort in the days of trouble.

We have gathered this, afternoon for one of those periodic services which come, in every community, every congregation, every family; for which, however long expected, we are never fully prepared.

There is an element of sadness in a service of this kind, naturally, inevitably so. but as Christian people we are not disconsolate. The clouds are dark and hanging low; but they have a silver lining; there are unmistakable rays of light breaking through.

May we see this still more clearly, and believe it still more fully, while we consider anew the thoughts our text presents about —

## The Shepherding Christ

### I. Let us think for a moment of Jesus, our good Shepherd

[A] We have a general idea of what a shepherd is; but only in Syrian and Palestinian lands do we get the Biblical idea of the real shepherd.

Many a time in these countries I have seen the shepherd, bronzed with age and the out-of-doors, leaning for a half hour on his staff, almost as motionless as a statue. But his eyes were on the sheep. Usually they were his own. He often has a name for each one of them, and he calls them by name.

The shepherd's eyes are ever open for any sign of marauding enemies, beast or man, and he will fight and endanger his life in defense of his sheep.

In the evening, the shepherd calls his sheep, and they follow him down the winding path to the watering place, and then to the sheepfold. Often he sleeps near by to protect them during the night.

[B] Twice in our text chapter Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd" — not of the fleeced creatures that browse in the field but of human beings, of men and women, of you and me.

[C] What a precious thought this is!

How many thousands, and tens of thousands, of men and women have found comfort, new courage, new strength, a new sense of security as they repeated the great Shepherd Psalm of the Old Testament, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"!

In this tenth chapter of John we have the New Testament Shepherd Psalm; and it is a hundred times fuller, richer, more satisfying than that sweet Psalm of old. That was a prophecy, this is the fulfillment; this is the reality, that was the shadow.

[D] "I am the good shepherd," says Jesus.

A shepherd is one who guides, one who provides, one who protects, defends. All that the best, most interested shepherd that ever lived was to his flock, that, and a thousand times more, Jesus wants to be to all; that He is to those who believe in Him and follow Him.

He is able to do all this because He is no ordinary human shepherd, however devoted, because He is the Son of God, come down from heaven purposely to shepherd the sons of men.

[E] Do we sometimes wonder how great the interest is which Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has in us? Four times in this chapter He tells us the Good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. We know He did it; and how willingly He did it!

[F] The Good Shepherd tells us that He knows all His sheep (verses 3, 14, 27); knows each one by name; knows us with a personal recognition and with a heart interest.

Does that not mean something to us, that up in high heaven, by the One on the eternal throne, we are ever in the mind of the Son of God? We cannot be wholly insignificant if that is the case. God must attach no small degree of worth to us if we are ever in His active thinking, in His planning thinking.

[G] Let us take up these words, keep them in the center of our consciousness repeat them over and over, assimilate daily manna on which we feed. “The them, make them consciousness, Lord is my Shepherd. Jesus is my Good Shepherd.”

[H] The thought of the Good Shepherd is not wholly complete without the thought of —

## **II. The docile, obedient sheep**

[A] The picture of a shepherd, however well drawn, is incomplete without the flock somewhere near.

[B] The picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd is incomplete without His flock.

[C] Jesus says in His Word that His sheep hear His voice.

[D] They know Him by the revelations He has made of Himself and through their heart's experience of Him.

[E] They follow Him.

[F] All this was true, realistically, beautifully true of our departed sister.

[1] There was not a great deal she could do, save only to be true and faithful. She simply heard God's Word and lived it quietly, unobtrusively, in her rather limited sphere of activity — but oh, how much that means!

While we often cry for workers in the more busy, active spheres, people like our sister are often the joy of a pastor's heart, and I think of the Lord's heart as well.

[2] Whenever I think of Mrs. G.— my memory involuntarily goes back more than a quarter of a century, when she was mothering a near-adult daughter seriously and painfully ill since early childhood.

I also remember when, later, she nursed, for a long period, a painfully afflicted husband.

These are the things that often make or break people's spiritual lives. Mrs. G— stood the test, and grew in spiritual stature. Never did I hear a word of complaint; never one intimation that the Lord had failed in His shepherding. Hers were only words of faith and gratitude.

[3] In her own last illness there was evident the same faith, courage, patience and resignation to the will of God.

[G] Our sister is gone. And now what? Our text does not leave us in doubt. It tells us that she has gone to receive

### **III. The good Shepherd's great gift**

[A] Jesus' shepherding care does not end with this life. If it did, we might call it worthwhile; but to thinking, feeling people, it would still be a poor, tragic thing the most tragic in the world.

[B] Jesus says in our text, "My sheep shall never perish."

That is a brave saying. It covers a great deal of territory. But Jesus has made good.

Oh yes, all kinds of things can happen, and do happen, to our bodies.

Just why, in particular instances, we cannot always tell; but it is all because of that original terrible disease — sin.

But my body is not I, not myself. It is only the house in which I live.

Perishing means eternally losing one's way, and being forever bogged in shame and misery. From this Jesus rescues His sheep.

[C] There is no power in the universe that can snatch one of Jesus' sheep out of His hand. (verse 28c) in this world or in the next.

[D] To these sheep Jesus gives eternal life.

Eternal life!, What mortal, at least in this world, can imagine, much less accurately tell, what it is?

Scientifically, no man has dared define it. But we know in a practical way what life is. Eternal life is not merely eternal duration of life. It is life eternally continuing plus — plus perfection, plus glory, plus perfect happiness — in a perfect home, in fellowship with a perfect God.

[E] This perfect life is the gift of the shepherding Jesus.

[1] It is not an evolutionary process. It is not a self wrought achievement. All the wisdom and power of all men, if concentrated in one man, could not achieve it, either for himself or others.

[2] It is not a purchasable commodity. All the precious metals, all the priceless jewels and the riches of all the Golcondas<sup>1</sup> in the universe combined could not buy it for one soul.

[3] It is the free gift of the love and power of Jesus. It is love touched by the magic hand of Jesus. It is Jesus' gift to the believing soul. It is life endued with Jesus' priceless gifts.



[F] This is the priceless boon to which our sister has gone. She was already a partaker of it here (John 11:26).

[G] Brethren, just one word more. This text was our sister's confirmation text. She accepted it, believed it, lived it. Because of this we could speak of her as we have. Because of this she was strengthened and comforted in life, and we are comforted in her death.

This may not have been our confirmation text, but it is ours just the same if we accept it And if we believe it and live it, as she did, we may live in the same strength and die with the same comfort. God grant it to all of us.

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1. Mines —Ed.↩

# 19. The Star Of Hope In Life's Dark Night

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 8:33-35, 37-39

[A] THERE ARE PEOPLE in the world, preachers and others, who pretend to know everything. They never hesitate. You never hear them acknowledge, “I do not know; I must have time to think, to investigate.”

I admire knowledge. I crave it. But I do not envy these people. They are either prigs, trying to palm themselves off on those whom they take to be uninformed, or they are unaware of their own abysmal ignorance.

As for myself, I frankly confess there are many things I do not know, and many others that I know only in part.

[B] Of all things that come within the scope of our consciousness, there are two that are mysteries supreme — God and man.

[1] I do not mean to say, and would by no means imply, that we cannot be certain of the existence of either. The book of nature, even, makes the existence of God a necessity, and tells us much about Him. My own soul-life, with its glimmering visions and aspirations, makes God a necessity. The book of revelation tells us much more about both God and man. But after

all, what we really understand is to what we do not understand as the reach of my arm to the distance of the farthest fixed star.

[2] Let us consider ourselves. We are human beings. You go about, and I go about, and we are on most familiar terms, each of us, with ourselves and others. But, after all, how much do we really know about ourselves? We take ourselves for granted. We know that we weigh so many pounds, that we occupy so much space, that our physical selves have certain requirements. But how much else do we really know? Biology, physiology, anatomy, psychology and other sciences tell us much about ourselves. But, after all, what we know about our inner, our real selves is little. What is the human mind, in its essence? What is the soul? What is human life? No man has ever given a satisfactory answer; and the greatest, keenest minds tell us there is no prospect, with the light we have, of finding a clear-cut, comprehensive definition. About all we know is what God's Word tells us.

[C] As for me, the two most mysterious moments of human life are those of birth and death.

[1] At the time of birth, the doctor places in the mother's arms a little bundle, a few pounds of finely organized physical substances, which, somehow, has become alive, in which there are set in motion potentialities that may eventuate in a Plato, a Newton, an Augustine, a Luther, a Francis; or, it may be, a Borgia or a Judas. In any event, here is the beginning of a human personality, conscious, and self-conscious, that is destined, by the evidence inherent within, as well as revealed without, to go on forever and ever.

The human mind stands faltering and abashed in the presence of the thesis it formulates, in few words, about itself.

[2] In the end, we stand by the side of those we love. We see the heaving breast grow still; the once active tongue is silenced; the sparkling eye is closed; the light of life goes out; and all that the living can see or touch is the lifeless tenement that was once a man or woman. We call it death. But what is it? What is involved in it? It is, in reality, but little less mysterious than life itself.

A mystery! Yes, a mystery! But, thank the Lord, a mystery enswathed in light — a mystery on which the light of heaven shines, through which Jesus passed victoriously; a mystery filled with hope; a night in which the stars shine, glimmeringly, but steadfastly.

[D] On the basis of this glorious text I have read, let me speak to you concerning —

## **The Star Of Hope In Life's Dark Night**

### **I. The star of hope in life's dark night is God and his love**

[A] Take God out of the world of thought and all is chaos and confusion. To the solution of the mystery then hid beyond the fog-bound shore neither science or philosophy gives us any worthwhile solution, scarcely a hint of one.

In God we have the explanation of the major problems of mundane existence. God explains why the world exists, and why I am here.

[B] But even this does not answer all man's questions; it does not clear away all the obscuring clouds.

[1] I grasp somewhat the thought of a God of infinite wisdom and power, who is responsible for my being here. But when my life and the life of those about whom I am concerned becomes heavily burdened and full of distressing experiences, then my soul is filled with questions. I want to know what God's relationship to me is, why these things come, and what the issue is going to be. Without some kind of satisfactory answer, life is an appalling thing.

[2] But when the Word of God assures me that God is a Father tender and solicitous, that He loves me with a love higher than the highest heaven, deeper than the depths of the sea, and that in love His mighty power causes all the forces of the universe to work for my eternal good; when I know this, then the light begins to break, then a guiding star of hope appears in the sky.

[3] This does not mean that everything at once becomes clear and perfectly understandable. Not at all. There are many things in the apparently tangled skein of life which we still cannot unravel. But we do know that in the end all must be well; for God, almighty God, loves us and is interested in us; the everlasting arms are around us, and all things must work for our good.

[C] When we are inclined to become fainthearted or weak-kneed, let us take down the old Book. There are many precious passages in it. But in a situation like this, I think there is no passage quite the equal of Romans 8, and especially the closing part of it. Let us ask God to let His Spirit lodge these truths deep in our souls: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

[D] Let us remember also that it does not matter much whether or not we constantly have the exultant consciousness of resting in God’s love. Human feeling is a variable thing, depending much on mood and physical condition. We cannot always tell by our own feelings whether or not we have hold of God. The thing of importance is that God assures us that He has hold of us.

Let me no more my comfort draw  
From my frail hold of Thee;  
In this alone rejoice with awe —  
Thy mighty grasp of me.

Thy purpose of eternal good  
Let me but surely know;  
On this I’ll lean, let changing mood  
And feeling come and go.

Glad when Thy sunshine fills my soul,  
Nor lorn when clouds o’ercast,  
Since Thou within Thy sure control  
Of love dost hold me fast.

## **II. The love of God is the star of hope in every dark night because it assures us of God's unfailing assistance in every conflict**

[A] Paul was no shallow optimist. He did not tell people that if they became Christians their path would always be smooth and easy. He knew better. He knew it from his own experience. He knew that sometimes Christianity brings added troubles so far as the body and the physical life are concerned in the here and now.

But Paul, I think, above all others, caught the vision of God's love for His people, His interest in them, and the operation of God's sovereign power, here and now and forever, to secure the spiritual and eternal good of His people. St. Paul understood that divine love that will not let us go. It was one of the fundamental articles of his creed, and he passed it on as a precious legacy to the Church.

[B] Paul would have Christian people 'face life understandingly. Think of the list of things he says may happen, and often do happen. Then what? Should we sit down in despair? say that everything is against us, and give up hope? Not at all. The Lord tells us to cast all our cares on Him, for He cares for us.

He wants us also to get the faith fixed in our hearts that after awhile, yes, just a little while, the clouds will roll away, the trials and difficulties we have had will disappear like mists before the rising sun, and we shall have eternal victory.

[C] Is there any evidence that this is really More than a comforting dream? There is plenty of it — and of indisputable character.

[1] The character of God's love for us is evidenced by the fact that He sent His own Son from heaven to redeem us.

[2] The character of Christ's love for us and His interest in us are evidenced by the fact that He gave His life for us and now spends much of His time

hard by the throne of God, pleading our cause.

[3] Furthermore, God cannot fail us. We are His elect — God’s elect! Ponder it: God’s elect, not self-elect; God’s elect, the special objects of His love, those whose names have been written indelibly forever, in God’s book of life.

[4] The elect of God! Let us not be afraid of this thought. It is very precious.

Election! — an act of God, taken in view of His divine foreknowledge and in view of which He wrote our names in the book of the eternally saved and glorified. And once there, all the princes of the powers of darkness are unable to erase one of those names. There can be no possible case against any of God’s elect. St. Paul sweeps the universe, and cries: “Who? who on earth, who in hell, who in heaven can lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? No one! No one! For Christ died for them and has justified them. And because of this, all God’s believing children are to be more than conquerors in all conflicts.”

[D] Brethren, let us look up, and take heart Most of us have scarcely begun to realize how much God thinks of us, how much He has done for us, how much He stands ready to do for us.

Jesus tells us that we should be foolish, any one of us, to barter our souls away for the universe and all its riches. I think that may be legitimately regarded as God’s estimate of the value of the soul of each one of us.

### **III. The love of God, our star of hope, has provided a cure for the disease and curse of sin**

[A] I hope none of you think lightly of sin. It is a terrible thing. It is the cause of all life’s ills, here and forever.

[B] If we listened to many preachers, especially when they preach funeral sermons, we might conclude that only saints die. The Word of God tells us differently. It says, “If we,” — yes, we Christians, even the best of Christians — “say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Remember, sin is not merely great evils, like murder, theft, adultery and the like. Unbelief, and lovelessness, toward God and man, are among the greatest of sins.

[C] It was because of this fact, and because man, of himself, can do nothing to accomplish his own deliverance, that God gave us a Saviour, who’ died for our sins, and gives us His righteousness, and ’continually pleads our cause at the throne of God.

[D] Brother B— was a Christian man with a real Christian faith. Unless something unusual intervened, he was in his place in church every Sunday, and in his Sunday school class as well. He was interested in every department of the church’s work, at home and abroad.

He was a man with a big heart, a friendly greeting and an engaging smile. He was always looking for something to do to help other people and make them happy. He was a man from whose Christian disposition many of us could learn much to our profit.

[E] And yet, Brother B— was only a poor sinner That is true of the best of you. It is true of me. It is true of the greatest saints that ever lived. But the children of God know what to do about it. Brother B— knew what to do about it. He took it to the Lord, and was forgiven and blessed with the righteousness of Christ, and blessed and kept as an heir of heaven.

[F] Brother, sister, how is it with you? Do you know that the Bible says, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”? Do you acknowledge its truth? You know that you are not perfect; and imperfection is sin; and sin condemns What are you doing about it?

There is only one thing any of us can do that will be of any effect. St John says: “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but



also for the sins of the whole world.” This is man’s only hope. How is it with us? Have we everything settled, and settled right?

[G] Brother B— has left us. We shall miss him, but we shall not complain. We know where he has gone — to that place of which Jesus says, “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”

This is what comforts the Christian in his going. This is what comforts those who remain, when he is gone, and enables them to say —

Even for the dead I will not bind  
My soul to grief; death cannot long divide,  
For is it not as if the rose that climbed  
My garden wall had bloomed the other side?

[H] And, now, before we part, is this the way we look at life? the way we meet life’s difficulties? Are we in the unfailing love of God? taking all our troubles to the Christ? Then we too, shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. God grant it.

# 20. The Death Of A King's Child

And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.  
— 2 Samuel 12:22, 23

THERE ARE A GOOD MANY experiences of life that are more or less common to all people. Good and ill fortune, joy and sorrow, days of hope and days of depression of spirits, health and sickness are more or less common to all men. Some seem to have more trouble than others, but, sooner or later, all have about as much as they can bear.

There is one experience of life that is absolutely universal and impartial; it is death.

Death comes to the rich as well as the poor, to the one in the highest as well as the most humble position; it comes to the learned as well as the unlearned; it comes to the king as well as to the peasant. Death is no respecter of persons.

We have an illustration of this in our text. It tells us the story of the death of a king's child. In studying the lesson, we find that the king's child is not spared any more than any other man's child, and that the king is just as human as any other man. We may learn a good many profitable lessons by pondering for awhile the lesson of our text.

## The Death Of A King's Child

### I. When sickness comes to the king's house

[A] Let us bear well in mind that position, power, wealth, culture and powerful friends cannot keep illness away. Some of the settings may help to alleviate some of the distress incident to illness; but none of them, not all of them together, can keep it away.

We need to bear this in mind. Most of us are inclined, unless we keep ourselves well in hand, to imagine that we have more troubles, and greater troubles, than anyone else. No, all these are common troubles; and they have a common source.

[B] What did the king do when sickness came to his house, and laid low a loved little child?

[1] He did all he could, which was not very much more than you and I can do; for, after all, when we come to the crises of life, man's resources are very limited.

[2] It is not so said in our text, but I am sure that David, for he was the king, made use of every resource that gave any hope of helping his sick babe. But all in vain.

[3] In fact, David, the great king, did a good many things I am afraid many of us men would be ashamed to do, or, at least, to have other men know that we did.

Great king that he was, David fasted, prostrated himself to the earth, wept, prayed. By so doing David did not belittle himself. It was no discredit to his kingship. It was a credit to his true manhood. And I am sure every true man loved him all the more for it.

[C] But it was all in vain. The child died. When any man's, woman's, child's time to die has come, no king, no physician, no priest can stay the hand that smiles.

[D] Let us not forget, this was the king's child — not an ordinary king's child, but the child of the king of God's chosen people; a king who was, in spite of grievous faults, a noble child of God; a king who was, in some respects, a type of Christ.

When trouble comes, let us not think that we are the only ones who have such troubles. Kings have them just as well.

[E] We have been thinking about sickness in the king's house. Let us proceed, and focus our attention on this phase of our subject —

## II. When Death Comes To The King's House

[A] Yes, death comes to the rich man's house, the great man's house, to the king's house, as well as to yours and mine. And he is as helpless when it comes as we are. And he feels it as much as we do. There is sadness, mourning, weeping in the king's house when death comes, as well as in ours.

[B] Let us see how King David acted when death come into his royal mansion.

[1] I have told you that while his child was sick David fasted, wept, prayed.

[2] When the child died, David's servants were afraid to tell him. They said, "If David grieved as he did when the child was ill, how will he not vex himself if we tell him that the child is really dead? He will be beside himself." But David saw them whispering one to another, and he surmised the truth. And they had to tell him. Then David acted, as these men thought, in a strange way (verse 20), and they gently remonstrated with him (verse 21). They probably thought it was not the right thing to do; that it was not showing the proper respect and love for the departed little one.

[3] But David's answer was a very rational and Christian answer (verses 22, 23). David was a child of God. He believed in the righteousness of all God's actions; that He deals, however severely, as a loving father. As a child of God, David would not rebel against His action but would be resigned, submissive to His will.

[4] Above all, David knew that in this world his child would never be restored to him, but that he was on the way to meet his child in that blessed land where parting shall be no more forever.

[5] This was the meaning of David's conduct. It was sane, Christian.

This does not mean that David did not now feel, and continue to feel, his loss. He did, beyond doubt, for David was a man of deep, tender feeling.

### **III. When sickness and death come to our own homes**

[A] There are some things we certainly should do.

[1] Children are a gift of God. We are obligated, by the will of God and by the ties of human relationship, to do all we can for them: in health, not only by providing for their physical needs but by dedicating them to the Lord; in sickness, by doing all that science and skill enable us to do.

[2] Science and skill have done wonders in prolonging the span of human life, especially for our little ones. But while availing ourselves of every human agency and using every material means for our children's welfare, let us not forget that our Father in heaven and the blessed Lord Christ are still the best physicians. If we are Christians, we pray for our children's health. Assuredly we will pray for them when they are ill and in danger of death.

[B] When sickness and death come, there are some things we should not do.

[1] We should not rebel and complain. We should not think that God has forgotten us or ceased to care for us.

[2] Let us bear in mind that there is no father who can and will care for our little ones like the Heavenly Father; no friend like the blessed Saviour.

[3] Think what it means for you to be able to say of your little babe —

Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
Safe on His gentle breast,  
There by His love o'ershaded,  
Safely its soul shall rest.  
Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
Safe from corroding care,  
Safe from the world's temptations,  
Sin cannot harm it there.

[C] Do not forget that it is true of you, as it was true of David, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." And remember, there is but one preparation that will ensure this in a blessed sense.

[D] Father, mother, a little son has been taken from you. That little crib in the room is empty; that little chair by the table is vacant. And worse still, there is an empty spot — a sore spot — in your hearts. We do not minimize your grief. That would be not only unkind but unreasonable. We understand.

But there is much to comfort. This was your child. But it was also God's child. You gave it back to Him in holy baptism. Jesus took it up in His arms and gave it His blessing. And now God has seen fit, in His infinite wisdom and love, to take it back to Himself.

You would have given it all the love of your hearts. He will give it a still better love. You would have cared for it with all possible painstaking interest. He will give it a better care. You would have shielded it from every possible harm. He will shield it from all harm. You would have given it a home, the best you could provide; He will give it a perfect, eternal home.

[E] And now keep in mind the words of David: "He shall not return to us, but we shall go to him." This is certain. The only uncertainty is the time. Be ready for it. And let this little babe that the Lord has taken to Himself be another tie binding you to heaven.

# 21. Light On Life's Dark Problems (Funeral Of A Youth Who Died By Accident)

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. — John 14:1

THE LINES ALONG which intelligent, really believing, deeply devout Christian people think, and in accordance with which they speak to each other in times of storm and stress, when all human foundations seem to be shattered, are often considered foolish by the worldly wise. It not only seems so; we have it on the best of authority that to them it is so (1 Corinthians 1:18).

But it is foolishness only to the unenlightened. We see what they do not see, and know what they do not know.

The men who wrote the word we revere as the revelation of the mind and heart of God were, some of them, strangers to the views of Tarsus and Alexandria and Athens and Rome; but they saw with unerring vision, and wrote with unfailing accuracy the revelations God gave them.

One of these men, looking out on the problems and experiences of life, in the dim distant past, said, "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 57).

Another, an uninspired man, viewing the same situation, said, "Life is an Iliad of woes."

Who that Hires and sees and thinks will dispute these assertions? They are the simple statement of facts.

For Christian people there is a light that breaks through the darkness; beyond the winding, difficult, often obscure road, we see the goal. Combining these two thoughts, let us consider this topic —

## **Light On Life's Dark Problems**

### **I. Let us ponder, briefly, a few of life's dark, perplexing problems**

[A] A little knowledge, a little observation is enough to convince one that he who speaks of life's dark problems is speaking a universal language. This is apparent from Ecclesiastes 2:14; 9:2, 3, where the prophet is speaking of suffering and death.

[B] This universal situation at once raises a question: Why is it? Whence does trouble come? The world has many theories. The Christian has the inspired record. The very fact of the universality of human trouble indicates a common origin. The Word of God describes it (Romans 5:12).

[C] But even this does not exhaust the perplexing elements in the case.

We are God's newborn children. We stand in a changed relationship to our Heavenly Father. We have promises others do not have. And we are inclined to feel that things ought to be different with us. We may be able to answer some of the questions this line of thinking suggests, but not all of them.

[D] Then there are the specially perplexing problems that obtrude themselves into our thinking in a case like this. Why are Christian parents given a child on which to lavish affection, for which to make sacrifices for its education, only to have it snatched out of their hands just when it was blooming into virile, active youth?

Of all the young men around, careless, unconcerned about the real problems of life, why is a promising youth like this, beginning to take life seriously, eagerly, earnestly beginning the study which was to prepare him for the Christian ministry, why is he allowed, as we are accustomed to say in our



human mode of thought, to come to such an untimely end, whereas the others are left?

We who are acquainted with God's Word can give some broad general answers that are helpful; but as to details, I do not hesitate to say that I do not know.

[E] However, let us not blame God for it. God did not do this. We may say that God suffered it. He did not actively cause it.

Neither let us blame this unfortunate youth. It was the result of human inability to foresee contingencies. We might say that it was the result of what older folk might call a lack of caution. But that is a common human frailty.

[F] Just a word to you, fellow students, and other young people in particular. I am certain there is a sense in which this lesson strikes home to you as to few others, save those personally and directly concerned. It is a warning that should not be overlooked concerning the uncertainties of life, even for the young and the strong. And may it bring home to you the divine appeal: "Be ye also ready."

## **II. The light on life's dark problems**

[A] There is so much that I frankly confess I do not know about these things, that I shall keep my feet on the solid ground of a few general principles. I do not know the details — you do not know. But God knows and He cares.

And He does all things well. Somehow, He overrules everything for good to them that love Him.

[B] Jesus had been talking to His disciples about His death, and they were perplexed. And He turned to them, and said: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God." This is the ground on which we must plant our feet.

God is our Father. From our childhood we have been taught to fold our hands and say, “Our Father, who art in heaven.” And He loves us. He is interested in our welfare. He has proved it in a thousand ways. Can He allow anything to befall any of us that will be ultimately hurtful? Banish the thought.

[C] “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” This is another foundation on which we must keep our feet firmly planted. God, as God, sometimes seems far away, rather hard to get hold of. But God in Christ is a historic personage. He lived our life. He shared our experiences. He knows our troubles better than we know them ourselves. He feels them more than we ever can. Think of what He has done for us. Can we think for a moment that He can forget us and cease to care for us?

He says not a hair falls from our heads, not a sparrow from a tree, without His notice. Will He fail to do a thousand times more for us?

[D] “Let not your heart be troubled.” When man says that of himself, it is feeble. When Jesus says it, it ought to mean much. I am sure it does to you.

[E] I did not include it in my text, but you know Jesus also says, “I go to prepare a place for you.” What does that mean? Fundamentally it means that Jesus is concerned about us, that He is making provision for our eternal welfare.

[F] The future of your young son is safe. What is the ground of most of our parental anxiety? Is it not that the future of our children may be safe? that they may be well. placed, secure, happy? This is taken care of for your son by the eternal Son of God Himself.

[G] Brethren bereaved, let me assure you of our profound sympathy. Our hearts go out to you. To unspiritual minds it will sound strange, but we rejoice with you also with that joy which, in spite of your, pain, we know is in the bottom of your hearts — the joy that comes from the assurance that your son is safe, forever safe, in the arms of Jesus.

[H] When Lazarus, the younger and beloved brother of Martha and Mary, died, Jesus came from a far part of the country to be with them. And when

He came, a messenger came to them and said, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

Brethren, the Master is here and calleth for you. Hold converse with Him. He, and not mere man, can give you the true light on life's perplexing problems, and heal your wounds. Let us give due heed to the words of Solomon: "Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth"; and to the words of Jesus: "Therefore be ye also ready."

## 22. The Christian's Twofold Image

As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. —  
1 Cor. 15:49

A SERVICE OF THIS KIND is never an easy task for a minister. He does not want to offend. Yet as a teacher of God's Word, he must have a regard for the truth. He must not deal lightly with things which are eternal issues in human life. He dare not give ungrounded hopes. He ought not even exaggerate.

With a minister in my situation, such a service is more than usually difficult. Having been with you people almost a third of a century, having known many of you intimately during all this time, a service of this kind is very much like rendering it for a member of one's own immediate family.

However, if ever there is a time when a service of this kind becomes comparatively easy, it is in a case like that of Mrs. R—. I have known her for a generation. During all this time she has been one of the faithful of the flock, she was always in her place, in Sunday school and church. For months, when it was a painful task for her to be in her place, she still came, devoutly worshipful.

During all these, years, I have never heard her make a single unkind criticism, and never heard of her doing so.

The Psalmist (35:20) speaks of the "quiet in the land": those who do not thrust themselves forward, who do not seek to be in the limelight, yet are always friendly, sympathetic, approachable. This is a true picture of Mrs. R—.

With this simple, sincere tribute to our departed sister, let us turn now, for our comfort, and encouragement, to the thoughts expressed in the few words of our text, “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” I take for my subject —

## **The Christian’s Twofold Image**

That we may get the best possible understanding of our text, let me remind you of that of which Paul is speaking in this entire chapter, which you may have gathered, in part, from the portion I read a moment ago. He is speaking of death, of the resurrection and of the future eternal life. This chapter is the most wonderful discussion of these subjects to be found anywhere in the Bible, or in any other literature.

It may give us a better idea of what the apostle has in mind in our text if we hear several translations. Moffat renders it thus: “As we have borne the likeness of material man, so we are to bear the likeness of the heavenly man.” A very literal translation reads: “As we bear the image of the one made of dust, we shall also bear the image, or likeness, of the One who is heavenly.”

### **I. What is meant by bearing the image of the earthy?**

[A] Man is a wonderful creature. He is called, so far at least as this world is concerned, the crown of creation. Think of the wonder of the human mind! It pierces, or seeks to pierce, and with no small degree of success, the secrets of the universe. What marvels man has wrought! What greater marvels he may yet work no one can even guess.

Some people, with very little real thought on these subjects, become vain, conceited. But most people do not think enough about these things. They do not ponder the evident mystery to which the mystery of human life points.

[B] The greatest, the most noble thing ever said about man was said long ago, in the earliest chapters of the Book of books, the Bible, It tells us that

God fashioned man of the dust of the earth, that is, of the material elements of the earth on which we live. Men then had the form, the shape, the image of a man; but he was not yet a real man.

He was a lifeless something, as dead as the stone or the clod. But then, we are told, God breathed into this lifeless image of His own breath of life' and man became a living soul, with something of God in him. Man is, therefore, a creature of two worlds, of which fact the best in man bears continual witness.

[C] When man left the hand of God, according to God's own Word, he was perfect; he was the lord of the world in which he was placed, a fit companion for God Himself.

But something happened. Man, somehow — it is beyond full explanation . became dissatisfied, rebellious, disobedient. The close bond which united him with God was severed This was the human birth of sin, and with it came misfortune, suffering, death and decay.

[D] This is what the apostle means when he says that we here bear the image of the earthy.

[1] We have a body in which are the seeds of corruption, of decay (verse 42). The Germans call it *Verweslich*, that which wastes away, perishes.

[2] The image of this earthy body bears the marks of dishonor (verse 43). It becomes marred, disfigured. Its beauty, at least that beauty which consists of grace of line and harmony of form, passes away.

[3] How evident it is that with all man's vaunted strength, his prowess, he at last comes to the extremity of weakness! The prince of athletes at last cannot lift a glass of water to his lips.

[4] Yes, whatever else may be beneath the surface, we have here, beyond question, a natural body — a body of flesh and blood, a physical body adapted to the necessities of the present life. In spite of man's greatness, the marks of the earth, are upon him. He goes the way of all the earth.

[E] This, we say, is the end. Yes, it is an end, but it is not the end. Man's dying day is not man's finishing day. Death is only part of what may be a magnificent whole.

[F] We are Christian people, with a strange new life in us, begotten of the Spirit of God. But we are still men and women of flesh and blood, with ties that bind us to the earth; and we are subject to all the changes, all the physical ills which come to the sons and daughters of men. And we have seen this exemplified in our departed sister.

## **II. What does Paul mean by the image of the heavenly?**

[A] Let us not forget that the whole argument of the apostle in this chapter is that life continues after what we call death. Man lives forever. Ponder that word "FOREVER." There is no running away from life.

[B] What kind of life is it going to be? What is to be our image there?

[1] Instead of a corruptible life, we are to have an incorruptible life, a life that has passed beyond the possibility of change or decay. (Rev. 21:3, 4). Everything in us that was mortal, changing, perishing, shall have passed away forever.

[2] Instead of weakness, our life there shall be in power — a power that far exceeds the utmost that is known here and now.

[3] In that happy land, instead of the image that bears the marks of Weakness, of dishonor, we are going to have the image that bears the marks of honor, of glory. We are going to have a perfect, a glorified life — a life like unto Jesus' life in the resurrected, glorified body (Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

[4] And we shall share in all Christ's glory (John 17:24; Rom. 8:18, 29).

[C] In heaven we are going to have a spiritual body. Flesh and blood, as it is, sinful, decadent, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Do not ask me to define this spiritual body. No one but God knows fully what it is going to be like. The spiritual body is going to be a real body, just as real as our physical body is.

We will have the same personality, be the same self in the spiritual body that we are now developing, but we shall be purged of all dross.

It will be such an identity as exists between the child and the adult into which it grows. It will not be a mere atomistic or numerical identity.

“Spiritual” does not mean ethereal or unreal. “Spiritual” means not only that this body will be under the control of the Spirit, but the Spirit will be its life-principle, the determining element of its being.

[D] It is into this life that our departed sister has entered, perhaps not yet into all the fullness of it. It seems that there will be something added at the resurrection. But into all the essentials of it, now and henceforth, she has sweetly passed.

[E] This is the life Jesus came to prepare for us, and for which He seeks to prepare us, and which can be attained only through Him.

[F] Is this the life for which, by God’s grace, we are preparing? Of which we are assured? Remember, there is but one way.



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Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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- [\*Sermons on the Gospels\* by Matthias Loy](#). and [\*Sermons on the Epistles\* by Matthias Loy](#)

“When you feel your burden of sin weighing heavily upon you, only go to Him... Only those who will not acknowledge their sin and feel

no need of a Savior — only these are rejected. And these are not rejected because the Lord has no pity on them and no desire to deliver them from their wretchedness, but only because they will not come to Him that they might have life. They reject Him, and therefore stand rejected. But those who come to Him, poor and needy and helpless, but trusting in His mercy, He will receive, to comfort and to save.”

- *The Great Gospel* by Simon Peter Long and *The Eternal Epistle* by Simon Peter Long

“I want you to understand that I have never preached opinions from this pulpit; it is not a question of opinion; I have absolutely no right to stand here and give you my opinion, for it is not worth any more than yours; we do not come to church to get opinions; I claim that I can back up every sermon I have preached, with the Word of God, and it is not my opinion nor yours, it is the eternal Word of God, and you will find it so on the Judgment day. I have nothing to take back, and I never will; God does not want me to.”

- *True Christianity* by John Arndt
- *The Sermons of Theophilus Stork: A Devotional Treasure*

“There are many of us who believe; we are convinced; but our souls do not take fire at contact with the truth. Happy he who not only believes, but believes with fire... This energy of belief, this ardor of conviction, made the commonplaces of the Gospel, the old, old story, seem in his [Stork’s] utterance something fresh and irresistibly attractive. Men listened to old truths from his lips as though they were a new revelation. They were new, for they came out of a heart that new coined them and stamped its own impress of vitality upon them as they passed through its experience...” – From the Introduction

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