


AFTER this, it was noised abroad that Mr. *Valiant-for-truth* was taken with a Summons, by the same *Post* as the other, and had this for a Token that the Summons was true, *That his Pitcher was broken at the Fountain*. When he understood it, he called for his Friends, and told them of it. Then said he, I am going to my Fathers, and though with great difficulty I am got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the Trouble I have been at to arrive where I am. My *Sword*, I give to him that shall succeed me in my Pilgrimage, and my *Courage* and *Skill*, to him that can get it. My *Marks* and *Scars* I carry with me, to be a Witness for me, that I have fought his Battles who now will be my Rewarder. When the Day that he must go hence, was come, many accompanied him to the River side, into which, as he went, he said, *Death, where is thy Sting?* And as he went down deeper, he said, *Grave, where is thy Victory?* So he passed over, and the Trumpets sounded for him on the other side.

The Pilgrim's Progress



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Very good

In Remembrance

OUR Lord does not want us to dwell unduly on either the past or the present. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof", He said. Yet the past becomes a very real and poignant part of our lives tomorrow as we pause to honor those men and women who died that we might live and worship in freedom.

Few among us escape the pain of saying a final, mortal farewell to a loved one. It is a pain that dulls with time but never quite disappears. But in times of remembrance we must constantly guard against self-pitying tears. Those for whom we would weep rest secure. The goodness, the godliness they displayed in their lives can enrich our own. The love that we so sorely wish we could have given to them for a longer time than was allowed is even now being more than repaid by the Source of love.

So as we honor our departed ones on Memorial Day, let us be sure to remember the words of our Saviour when He said, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Matt. 22:32) Those who have gone ahead live, as truly as they live in our memories.

Now let us make of this knowledge a source of quiet confidence and strength to be drawn upon as we go about our own God-appointed tasks this side of the illusion called death—until such time as we are called on to join the beloved inheritors of eternal life.

Greeters for today are Nadine Reining and Grace Webb.

All those who will serve as teachers or helpers in Vacation Bible School are asked to go to a meeting at the Church of God on Thursday, May 30, at 7:30.

Next Sunday is June Jubilee Service, a joint service to be held at the Christian Church. Floyd Bossingham of our church has been asked to be the speaker. It will be at 10:30 on June 2, preceded by Sunday School in all the churches at 9:30.

Our church has received a gift of \$5 in memory of Kemp R. Wirrick for Decoration Day.

Bill and Melinda Reining Smith have a son born unto them, Jeremy Hal, on May 23. Melinda and baby are at Brokaw Hospital, and hope to get home tomorrow.

Besides Melinda and babe in Brokaw Hospital, there is June Sylvester in Brokaw Hospital. Tressie Lee and Odessa McReynolds are at Menronite Hospital. Jean Winstead got out of the hospital on May 23. She and her husband, Gary Winstead now live at 201 E. Boundary, Stanford.

Mrs. Fay Wirrick of Bloomington Manor writes: "I wish to express my thanks for the kindnesses and gifts I've gotten from the church people."

Leota Godby went to Hopedale Hospital May 19, but got home on May 23.

Nadine Reining is teaching the Jr. Hi-Sr. Hi class for three months. Then Harry Frank will be the teacher for 3 months, and then Homer Orr for 3 months after that.

Living Better by Understanding Dying

By ROGER KIMBALL

When I told a friend about "How We Die," Sherwin B. Nuland's new book on what happens to the body as it prepares to check out for good, he said: "It sounds like the perfect analogue to the doomed Clinton health-care plan." Well, it is and it isn't. "How We Die: Reflections on Life's Final Chapter" (Knopf, 278 pages, \$24) certainly has some grisly pages. As Dr. Nuland notes, for all the wonders of modern med-



Bookshelf

"How We Die"

By Sherwin B. Nuland

icine, the goal of "death with dignity" remains disappointingly elusive: "We rarely go gentle into that good night."

But this wise, powerfully written book is not all bad news. There are some painfully graphic passages—about the devastating effects of cancer or AIDS or Alzheimer's disease, for example—that most people will probably skim. Dr. Nuland does not stint on the details. But neither is he gratuitously morbid. Unlike the Clinton health-care plan, death is unavoidable. It cannot be repealed or tabled or voted out of office. Dr. Nuland, a surgeon who has taught for many years at Yale University, seeks to present the hard, "biological and clinical reality" of death. Yet he does so not to frighten but to inoculate us, "to demythologize the process of dying" by honestly describing what it is really like. He also sets the record straight on many issues, large and small. For example, never mind popular belief, hair and nails do not keep growing for varying periods after death.

It may seem odd that death is something we need to learn about. After all, death, like taxes, is one of life's unpleasant certainties. Over the past 50 years or so, medicine has made dazzling advances. But, as Dr. Nuland points out, "modern biomedicine has also contributed to the misguided fancy by which each of us denies the certain advent of our own individual mortality." Dr. Nuland is not himself a religious man, but his book is appropriate Lenten reading, coaxing us to reflect on the fact that all that is born must die. It is one of Dr. Nuland's themes that the triumphs of modern medicine and administration have depersonalized death, rendering it more distant but also more forbidding than it has to be.

"In recent generations," he writes, "we have added something new: We have created the method of modern dying. Modern dying takes place in the modern hospital, where it can be hidden, cleansed of its organic blight, and finally packaged for modern burial." So much the better, you may say: Who wants more organic blight in his life?

But Dr. Nuland's point is that despite its efficiencies, "the method of modern dying" has robbed us of something important: the realization that death is the natural culmination of life. The problem lies partly in the Promethean ambitions that modern medicine shares with all modern technology. "Beyond the curiosity and the problem-solving challenge fundamental to good research," Dr. Nuland observes, "I believe that the fantasy of controlling nature lies at the very basis of modern science."

Patients have benefited greatly but also suffered greatly as a result of that fantasy. Equipped with the arsenal of high-tech medicine, many doctors seem to regard every death as a personal affront, a failure, when in fact many are simply inevitable. Hiding death away in the sanitized cham-

bers of the intensive-care unit is not necessarily a step forward. It can make the process of dying both lonelier and more frightening. Lonelier, because it means that we end our days in a strange room embraced more closely by plastic tubes and monitoring devices than by our loved ones; more frightening because most of us have no idea what to expect. Dr. Nuland hopes that if the "horsemen of death" become "just a bit more familiar, perhaps [they] will also become less frightening."

He also hopes that frank acknowledgment of death will lead us as a society to reconsider some of our health-care priorities. Dr. Nuland is himself one of those "high-tech" doctors who practices at a major research hospital. But when it comes to caring for the dying—when the expensive interventions contrived by modern medicine can no longer heal—he knows that the human touch provides the most effective consolation. "Between the lines of this book," he writes in his conclusion, "lies an unspoken plea for the resurrection of the family doctor." Modern medicine should do all that it can to restore a patient's health; it should also recognize that there comes a point when additional therapy is useless or even counterproductive.

Although the information it contains is very up-to-date, "How We Die" actually belongs to that ancient philosophical genre concerned with the *ars moriendi*, the art of dying. At least since Socrates, philosophers have understood that there is a sense in which death is the measure of life. But it also works the other way. "The greatest dignity to be found in death," Dr. Nuland writes, "is the dignity of the life that preceded it. This is a form of hope we can all achieve, and it is the most abiding of all. Hope resides in the meaning of what our lives have been."

It is well that we recognize and accept our mortality. Only then can we fully get on with the business of living.

I am and I live with deep gratitude and warmest regards

Yours Gerhard

Dying with Dignity?

Gerhard Sauter

We live on the ground of the promise that our self-enclosure will be conquered. Yet we will evade our being alone nevermore. Thus, we may not fade it out from others, we may not wish to withhold it from others by aiming to keep them in the networks of our social relations as long and as intensively as possible. We impart God's blessing to them as they are isolated: the blessing is meant to be an indication of the hope that stands against all hope, which resists our loneliness; it is meant to be an indication to that God, who dignifies us as he lets us live die, and in whom our live is kept, is for us and with us. Thus we are not left alone in the face of death.

The Reverend John Wahlin, a retired American minister, said at a meeting of the Pastoral-Theologian Program of the Center of Theological Inquiry two years ago: „My task was to proclaim the gospel and to help people dying." Of course he had not meant carrying out euthanasia. He wanted to help people to die an authentic humane death, to prepare them for their dying as an event of immensely positive impressiveness and thus to succour them. Such a preparation for death cannot be embarked on early enough, and that was what the minister meant. He did not regard his pastoral work with children, adolescents and adults as low ranking at all, nor did he dedicate himself merely to the seriously ill. Helping to die means at the same time: helping to live.

1. Being Alone

Part of such assistance, such aid is to become aware of that everyone of us will be alone as he or she dies, which is, alone in a particular meaning: no one other person can relieve us of our dying, of one's „own death" (Rainer Maria Rilke).

„The summons of death comes to us all, and no one can die for another. Everyone must fight his or her own battle with death by himself, alone. We can shout into another's ears, but everyone must himself be prepared for the time of death, for I will not be with you then, nor you with me. Therefore everyone must himself know and be armed with the chief things which concern a Christian."¹

Thus Luther begins his Invocavit sermon on March 9, 1522. Exposed to mortal danger, he had come from the comparatively safe Wartburg castle to Wittenberg, because there, the reformation of the church had become out of kilter. To those who were appealing to the Christian liberty in order to enforce amendments in the service, he calls: „Have you forgotten your love for your weaker brothers and sisters? Are you there merely for yourselves, even where your faith and your love are vital? Have you not been confusing Christian freedom with heedless and reckless self-determination? This self-determination can all too easily

¹Martin Luther, Sermons I, in *Luther's Works*, ed. by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehmann, vol. 51, transl. by John W. Doberstein (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 70.

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become irresponsible and do damage, particularly as it aims to bring about salvation, even when and particularly as it aims to attain God's purposes. Now you are not all by yourselves. In the hour of death – yes, then you will be alone, alone to an extent that you cannot even think of now! Then you must account for faith, hope and love. Are you prepared for that, do you know what is vital, are you fit for that, as I need to be today as the preacher of the Word of God? Because I could not preach in any other way, as life and death are at stake!

By thus indicating the scale of responsibility, which any individual has, Luther aims neither to strike fear of death into them nor to stir up mortal fear. Rather, he wants to call the attention to the question *what it means for a Christian to be a person*. Part of this is that his or her naked existence is confronted with death. No one can stand in for or take the place of a dying person. This casts light on that the Christian comes to stand before God just as much and has to authentically account for himself „alone, in front of him alone.“ Because in the hour of death, as one must account for oneself alone, the question arises whether one has lived „for oneself“ or not. This very responsibility does not permit anyone to withdraw to himself or herself: to behave in a solipsistic manner.

Here death is not confused with physical deceasing. Nor is the battle of death equivalent with death-struggle, which will inevitably be lost, „dead-sure.“ Some people are spared that agony, their life seems to fade away, they so to speak ‘breath it out.’ Is the battle of death endured thus? This battle eludes the surveillance of others and their measuring instruments. The battle of death is the battle with the „last enemy“ (1. Corinthians 15:26), a power to which we are exposed powerlessly. There is no such thing as „dealing with death;“ death deals with us, and how it deals with us! It should not be unknown nor alien to us during our lifetime what this hostility is about. „The wages of sin is death.“ (Romans 6:23): This is categorically different from the comprehension that any life inevitably costs death.

By this meditation of one's own dying the sensitivity for irreducible individuality seems to be sharpened to the utmost extent. Blaise Pascal seems to argue on the same line:

“On mourra seul. Il faut donc faire comme si on était seul.” – “One will die alone. Thus one has to act as if one was alone.” (Pensées, Fragment 211)

The context: the admonition not to array one's action with respect to the appraisal of others, for if things come to a head, they cannot help us: they cannot relieve us of what we have become and will no longer be. If we were truly aware of this, Pascal proceeds, then we would be exerting ourselves in the pursuit of truth more than in anything else. We would exert ourselves in exploring the proper evaluation of all things, the prospects and the actions they engender.

Acting *as if* one was alone – and yet we are not truly alone, as long as we do act! Should we really pretend that this was not the case? How would this profit us? Or does Pascal want to point out that the disjunction of acting and dying is a self-deception? Does dying render the scheme „activity/passivity“ absurd? Does dying mean to undergo and to act at the same time? Is dying therefore a suffering action *sui generis* – or could it turn into such an action? Does this, again, cast light on the time in which our acting occurs?

Awareness of one's own dying is most tightly related to the dignity of human beings: not to merely perish.

"Man is but a reed [Isaia 42:3], the feeblest in nature, but he is a thinking reed. [...] A vapor, a drop of water, is sufficient to slay him. But were the universe to crush him, man would still be nobler than which kills him, for he knows that he dies, while the universe knows nothing of the advantage it has over him. Thus our whole dignity consists in thought." (Fragment 347)

„The grandeur of the human being is eminent, for he recognizes himself to be miserable. A tree knows nothing about its misery. Therefore: Only the one who is aware of his misery is miserable; and yet only this is grandeur: recognizing to be miserable.“ (Fragment 397)

Grandeur and misery of the human being originate from one's awareness of one's dying – from being aware of one's dying and simultaneously being unable to know what one's very own dying will be. "So the grandeur and misery of man are fused together in the human reality and experience of death. To deny the indignity of death requires that the dignity of man be refused also."²

How „can“ we die humanely at all? If eminence and misery, awareness and nescience coincide when we die – doesn't this also render any kind of dignity obsolete?

The dignity of dying seems to be restricted to the possibility that us human beings are powerful in the face of death by yet another means, i.e., that anyone of us can say „I will die,“ and that this „I“ even in dying holds a kind of intentionality. „Humane dying“ then demands respect for this being-a-subject. To this the dignity of the dying person is reduced.

How many people nowadays are still granted to die humanely *in this way*? Thousands, even millions of human beings have been „destroyed,“ even today they are being „extinguished“ and „liquidated,“ as it says in inhuman diction. The National Socialists have recorded their victims accurately, yet they wanted to destroy their names and thus take even the last remainder of their dignity. Nowadays, weapons of "mass destruction" exterminate their victims, who die anonymously, deprived of any individuality and dignity.

Because we are deeply terrified in the face of such degradation, we tend to regard the kind of death as humane where the dying person is not merely the object of other people's action, where he or she is not turned into a mere „victim.“ This leads to the conclusion that the dignity of human beings is not to be taken away. In the perspective of ethics, this is conclusive. Yet does it conversely mean that people whose lives are not taken from others by force (or by natural disasters), die „humanely“? If they die like Abraham, who "breathed his

²Paul Ramsey, "The Indignity of 'Death with Dignity'," in *On Moral Medicine: Theological Perspectives in Medical Ethics*, ed. by Stephen E. Lammers and Allen Verhey, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge, U.K., William B. Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 209-222, p. 216.

last and died in a good old age, an old man und full of years, and was gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:8; Luther translates "full of year": "lebenssatt": "saturated with life"), are they then dying a „natural“ death?

In spite of all understandable and respectable efforts to guard against an „unnatural“ dying – needn't we loose our toungue here? At the latest as we must experience dying persons, and perceive how litte they are in power of their statements anymore, regardless of how much they are cared for and how diligently their dignity as human beings is respected!

If I see it right, the concept of a „natural dying befitting a human being,“ which is steered by ethics, directs our attention away from the theological perception of death. This perception, though, should be decisive for a theological anthropology, and then casts a light on our whole concept of the human dignity.

2. Versus Isolation

“There is nobility and dignity in caring for the dying, but not in dying itself”: thus Paul Ramsey³ accurately portrays the gap in the attitude towards the dying that is predominant today. He ascertains that the reason for this is that death is regarded as a natural phenomenon, as an inevitable part of life, not as an enemy in the Biblical sense. Therefore, it has become a custom to speak of “deceasing” or, philosophically more high-sounding, of “finitude.” In contrast, the New Testament speaks in metaphors like the “battle with death,” with the enemy who has been conquered by Christ and is yet our enemy nonetheless, because he contracts with sin. Death befalls us, occurs at us. From the very start we are inferior to it; we are defeated. That is so even if all in us revolts against this submission, because this submission alters us thoroughly and as lastingly as nothing else.

This talk has become rather alien to us, even in the church and in theology. The later hymnbook songs (at least in Germany) no longer speak in there metaphors. – Do we still understand, why Paul speaks about baptism as dying: “When were baptized into union with Christ Jesus we were baptized into his death” (Romans 6:3; cf. Colossians 3:3)? –

Thus, the attention is shifted away from death and to the dying, away from being alone in dying to the loneliness of the dying.

„Humane dying“ is a task that has become crucial because of the isolation which overcomes many who are fatally ill, and because of their submission to the action of others, e.g. physicians, which again leads to a rapid loss of self-determination. The dying person is being acted on, yet not in such a way that he or she would no longer be able to be „himself“ or “herself.”

Ethical criteria: The dignity of the human being must be preserved; it may not be violated. The quest, then, is how much one can burden on another, how much one can bear. This can

³Op. cit. 210.

only be decided individually from person to person, from case to case.

The opportunities [possibilities] of modern medicine to extend life, at times to extent life in an unbearable way, create an ethical dilemma: A life that is being extended at all costs can become unbearable and indeed inhumane. An increasing isolation intensifies this dilemma. This isolation originates because the dying are abandoned. There are many reasons for this: the institution of the family decays, it becomes more and more difficult to take care of the elderly and the ill; then, as the life expectancy has increased, far too much is asked from the relatives.

The answer is: personal accompaniment in dying. Particularly the hospice-movement has made personal accompaniment in dying its task. The movement originated as dying became increasingly undignified. Terminally ill remain in their familiar environment as long as possible, but they can call for professional help at any time. The aim of personal accompaniment in dying is to cushion the inevitable isolation of dying persons as far as possible, not to let leave alone dying persons. By medical means this aim is supported by pain management, though this can move indistinguishably close to euthanasia.

To respect the dying as persons and to attend to them deserves great commendation. I do not wish to question this by any means. Yet it strikes me that this personal accompaniment in dying attempts to ward off the isolation of the dying by keeping them in the social network as long and as intensively as possible.

This casts a spotlight on an anthropologically profoundly altered concept of what it means to be a human being, i.e., being constituted by relations. On the one hand, we have become accustomed to underpin the created yet finite humanity with a network of relations, which we are knitting constantly: a social network that is meant to carry us. Yet, on the other hand, whoever can no longer contribute to the work on this network, is dependent on that others include him, lest he should fall out of the world that is shared by people. This is why suffering, the elderly, and the dying in particular lapse into a coercing loneliness. They neither participate nor are they looked upon as if they did participate. And one of the very reasons for this is that those who are knitting on the network of social relations need more and more time for this. They are indirectly concerned with themselves, as they devote themselves to the interaction with others and most of all express themselves. Therefore, they have less and less time left for those, who cannot communicate themselves, whatever the reason for that might be. But: time is a precious, created good, not an inexhaustible provision; we must economize with our time and with the time of others; time is bound to the finitude of our possibilities. All this is forgotten all too quickly. We have no time, for we are consuming too much time, we are, as it were, wasting time, if we don't sufficiently regard the opportunities to interact in an economical way. Because of our rising need of human kindness, our neighbours draw closer to us, and yet we exclude more and more isolated persons from our social mobility. This isolation of so many persons originates from this. It is an epidemically growing isolation that must be understood as a social disease of our society, not only this society.

Personal accompaniment in dying aims to cope with this isolation by relieving a symptom of this social disease. Can the roots of the disease be tackled thus, or, on the contrary, are they merely rearranged?

In church and theology, the task of personal accompaniment in dying⁴ was adopted by leading trends of pastoral counseling [in Germany called "Beratende Seelsorge"]. Their aim is to attend to the dying on their way as far as possible and to back up other supports: it is an "assistance in dying," which, at a more thorough look, turns out to be aiming at a last, concluding and integrating assistance in life.⁵ The social relationships, which carry all human individuality, should be preserved for as long as possible, even if the dying person is gradually taking leave of them. Therefore, pastoral counselors help people who are dying to prepare for dying, but they do not help them preparing for their death, as they are encouraging them to look back on their lives and bring them into order as much as possible.

This corresponds to the manner in which a catastrophic end of the world is approached today: one anticipates a scenario of the end, in order to enrich possibilities of decision and challenges to action, which help one to cope better with the present. In the same way, looking to death should help one find the way back to life. Once the illusion passes having unrestricted time still at one's disposal, realism returns. This catharsis must not be destroyed by false hope. For this reason, every hope is said to be dangerous if not introducing within the context of life and action, which outlive the death of the individual.

A further symptom: in many areas, petitionary prayers in Protestant church services no longer remember the dead. Prayer for the fate of the dead has never taken place for a long time – for dogmatic reasons that merit closer examination. Leaving that aside, there is a considerable difference between a situation in which a community specifically remembers its dead before God and commends them to him as to the one who has called them to himself, and a situation in which a death is brought to the attention of the community with the announcement that the petitionary prayer will include those close to the deceased but not those who have passed away. Is the conviction behind this something like: "the dead are dead: let us concern ourselves with the living, their mourning and their future"?⁶ Many funeral services treat the matter so; they are essentially there for the sake of those left behind. The

⁴Ulrich H. J. Körtner, *Bedenken, daß wir sterben müssen. Sterben und Tod in Theologie und medizinischer Ethik* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1996). - Martin Honecker, "Sterbebegleitung aus theologischer Sicht," in *Zeitschrift für theologische Ethik* 42 (1996), pp. 19-28. - Articles on "Sterbehilfe und Lebensende" in *Zeitschrift für theologische Ethik* 40 (1996).

⁵Cf. Hans Joachim Thilo, *Beratende Seelsorge* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht: 1971), pp. 195-199, 202-204. - Walter Neidhart, "Seelsorge," in: *Praktisch-Theologisches Handbuch*, ed. by Gert Ott, 2d ed. (Hamburg: Furche, 1975), pp. 526-547, esp. 544f. - Thomas Bonhoeffer, "Sterben - eine Aufgabe des Lebens," in *Wege zum Menschen* 45 (1993), pp. 289-296. - Kurt Lückel, "Das war mein Leben," in *Wege zum Menschen* 45 (1993), pp. 196-215. - In contrast Helmut Tacke, *Glaubenshilfe als Lebenshilfe: Probleme und Chancen heutiger Seelsorge*, 2d. ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979), 251-52. - Manfred Seitz, "Von der Begleitung Sterbender," in *Referate und Beschlüsse der Generalsynode der VELKD in Veitshöchheim 1988*, ed. by Peter Godzik and Jürgen Jeziorowski (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1989), pp. 47-67.

⁶Cf. Manfred Josuttis, "Zwischen den Lebenden und den Toten. Pastoraltheologische Überlegungen zum Leben-Tod-Übergangsfeld," in *Evangelische Theologie* 41 (1981), pp. 29-45; id., *Der Pfarrer ist anders. Aspekte einer zeitgenössischen Pastoraltheologie* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1982), pp. 107-127.

gaps in the net of social reality, caused once again by death and brought to consciousness by the death of a person, should be closed up again as quickly as possible. The concept according to which our world is one giant network has fatal consequences for the dead. For they have fallen out of the network of social relations for all time. They cannot be acted on anymore – one cannot but *sit venia verbo*, “do” something with them. (Relatives now and then speak of “disposal”.) “Nothing can be done about it anymore.”

In the background lies the battle against the concept of immortality as it has dominated the field of German Protestant theology for the last half century (in contrast to English/North American theology, as far as that was determined by philosophy of religion⁷). This conception has continued to take hold within the church, although it should be asked how and to what extent theology has unquestioningly accepted changes in contemporary thought. Three themes should be taken into consideration:

- a) The connection of the doctrine of immortality to the legacy of Greek philosophy and its distinction between soul and body.
- b) Reference to the continued existence of identity, understood as the constitution of human beings and a level of existence that cannot be lost, which is a foundation of hope beyond death.
- c) The disappearance of such hope for most “people of today”.

The first theme (the concept of human self-awareness, substantially removed from physicality and the involvement of the physical form in becoming and passing away) is foreign to the biblical understanding of humanity. Biblical discourse concerning the resurrection of the dead does not speak of a continuing existence of the human self, but of God's new creation. And since hope is in God the creator, who does not allow his creatures to perish, this expectation includes humanity in all its fullness (cf 1 Corinthians 15:35–50).

It is precisely here, however, that careful distinctions are necessary. As much as our creaturely nature is indivisible, the whole may not be reduced to mere “bodiliness” and hence to “worldliness”. If so, it happens normally with the purpose of awakening a concern for the “whole person” diverts so hope away from the search for a vague continuation of the self towards action on behalf of those threatened by death, an involvement that should not cease as long as the self exists. The entire creature is, however, constituted by the unity of God's action in him, not by the death that “closes” life in every sense. Death is the last enemy that must be conquered, so that we can die in the hope of living with Christ.

⁷H.D. Lewis, *The Self and Immortality* (London: Macmillan, 1973). - Idem, *Persons and Life After Death* (London: Macmillan, 1978). - John Hick, *Death and Eternal Life* (New York/Hagerstown/San Francisco/London: Harper & Row / London: Collins, 1976). - Paul Badham and Linda Badham, *Immortality or Extinction?* (London: 1976). - Paul Badham, *Christian Beliefs about Life after Death* (London: Macmillan, 1981). - *Death and Afterlife*, ed. by Stephen T. Davis (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989). - John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1989). - For the point of view of Eastern Orthodox theology, Georges Florovsky, “The “Immortality” of the Soul,” in *Collected Works*, vol. III (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 213–240 and 315–316.

This has nothing in common with anthropological monism – that is, with an understanding of human beings as the interaction of external relationships and the internal processing of those relationships. That is a process closed in itself, which comes to a natural end in death. Monism of this sort not only accords with the criticism aimed by materialism at idealistic dualism, but also with the notion that the “soul” is a secretion of the brain only. Anyone who considers the biblical image of humanity, particularly that found in the Old Testament, must guard against applauding materialistic monism. The nowadays often invoked Old-Testament insistence on the “here and now” has as little to do with such monistic ideas as the hope in resurrection found in the New Testament has to do with the idea of immortality.

3. How do “I” encounter death?

Any conceivable effort not to leave the dying alone in their loneliness, into which they inevitably fall, merits respect, gratitude and support. This applies to the fullest to pastoral care, as well. Still the question must be raised whether it can carry out its decisive task that way. I want to pinpoint this claim: *The dignity of the dying can also be violated if they are not prepared for death.* To be prepared for death bases on the promise of everlasting live. Therefore, preparing for death means to communicate this promise – and, if possible by any means, to make more of an effort than to merely “address the issue.”

In an American publication on “Dignity and Dying” there can be found only one single theological contribution.⁸ The author sees his pastoral task in making the presence of the merciful God accessible by means of his presence at the deathbed, that is, in representing God’s presence. How can it come about that the dying person is not once again experiencing “presence” as that which in point of fact “is” not, because the present hastens from the future into the past (cf. Augustine, *Confessions*)? Could it be that dying is the paradigmatic probe of our experience of presence?

At this point I assume that a theological revision is due, if not overdue. The psychiatrist Joachim Ernst Meyer in Göttingen observed that Protestant patients have an intensified fear of death: They fear their self will so to speak be erased. He attributes this to a deficit in theological doctrine: it gives rise to the impression that death extinguishes all that has ever been experienced.⁹ Could it be that “eschatologene” neuroses have been generated by theological radicalisms (Oscar Cullmann: Resurrection versus immortality; Karl Barth/Eberhard Jüngel: “God as my hereafter”)? If that was so, then the eschatology that lies at the heart would indeed be neurotic.

⁸Dennis P. Holliner, “Congregational Ministry,” in *Dignity and Dying: A Christian Appraisal*, ed. by John F. Kilner, Alene B. Miller, and Edmund D. Pellegrino, Grand Rapids, Mich. (William B. Eerdmans, 1996), pp.232-242.

⁹Joachim Ernst Meyer, *Todesangst und das Todesbewußtsein der Gegenwart* (Berlin/Heidelberg/New York: Springer, 1979), pp. 18-23. - Id., “Psychotherapeutische Fragen an die Theologie,” in *Evangelische Theologie* 41 (1981), pp. 57-65, criticizing Eberhard Jüngel’s *Tod* (Stuttgart: Kreuz Verlag, 1971).

In Roman-Catholic eschatology, hope that extends beyond death is based on the belief that God does not abandon his creature. In Protestant theology, one fears a concept of a continuous consciousness of identity. Instead, one prefers to talk of "new creation." Is this truly an alternative? What is lacking in each of the answers if it is detached from the other?

At this point, the proclamation of what it is to be a human being is the decisive topos.

This quest is formulated in Psalm 8:4 as follows: „What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?“ The quest grounds in the appeal of God, and it appeals to God in His inexhaustible action. God's appeal enables for a quest that is yielded to a YOU in the first place. Yet God's appeal is not restricted to linguistic communication (conf. Psalm 8:3). Rather, it passes in God's election, his choosing and salvaging action: „Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine“ (Isaiah 43:1). Christian theology sees these words in the context of baptism, with which human beings receive their life, which is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3): the baptized believer belongs to God, that is his hope (Romans 6:4.9). If we wish to speak of "dignity," then it neither refers to a marking of particular human beings nor to a marking of humankind in contrast to other living beings; instead, it is the vocation of human beings into the history of God with them. Whoever is being called in such a way is not only unmistakable, but also irreplaceable. I think, starting from here we must consider the category of the individual anew: the individual is one who "has to fight with death for himself": This dignity shows in the utmost threatening of humanity. Our hope depends on that God chooses us and calls us by name. We cannot say when God chooses and redeems, or even when his creating action begins.¹⁰ "You knit me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13): we cannot determine, when humanity begins – that also implies that we cannot exclude any period of time. Human "dignity" is imparted to the human being by God and can thus not be questioned. In other words, dignity consists in the contingency of any person; conf. Martin Luther's explanation of the first article of the Creed in his Small Catechism: "I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul ..." That I am created the way I am and no different, is hard to believe and even harder to conceive. For Philipp Melancthon, this was one of the two theological questions, which he could not answer during his life, and for which he hoped that God could provide with an answer after his death. If the contingency of humanity can no longer be believed, then human dignity can be questioned and violated, particularly if one wants to be different than one is, or if one is meant to be changed.

In suffering and dying no one can act on behalf of another, every person is alone. For that we must prepare ourselves and others.

The loneliness, in which every person remains by himself or herself in suffering and in dying, is to be distinguished from the isolation, which originates from the state of imbalance of the manner in which we form our social reality. Suffering and pain cast us back to ourselves. This limits our empathy for others, too. Strong pain brings about an intense self-

¹⁰Cf. the paper of Kendall Soulen.

awareness of corporality, of the so often promulgated “whole” human being – which is fundamentally distinct from any kind of self-reflection.

Ludwig Wittgenstein: only the “demeanour of pain” is communicable, not the pain itself.¹¹ This is a Biblical insight as well: “The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy.” (Proverbs 14:10) This inner loneliness is to be distinguished from mere introversion! It indicates not the limits of our desire to communicate ourselves, but of the very possibility to communicate. Certain experiences cannot be shared any longer – this aggravates in severe illness and then in dying. Even what is still being said for example in pictures, can communicate only so much.

The loneliness of the piercing pain, the isolation in suffering, the cutting off of “handicapped” and those old persons who can no longer communicate refuses any acting pastoral care. It is the limit of acting as such, that is, of what we usually think yielded action would be like. Are the suffering an exception of the standard “human being”? Or needn’t we rather conceptualize being a human being as a limited redemption from the loneliness of suffering, a redemption that is not granted to all?

“My death” is, when all that remains is what I was – in whatever form. I perish, if all that remains on the battlefield in death is my “having-been-for-oneself.” Then, nothing remains, nothing at all. Could it be that “my death” is the entire and inescapable confrontation with oneself?

One who really accompanies a dying person will be altered thus and will not remain as he or she was. Death is such a powerful occurrence that it alters all who come near it. It becomes more powerful the more it may be experienced in the sign of its being conquered by Jesus Christ. The mercy, which bears through this occurrence, will touch and mature all who are there.

Everyone dies one’s own death, thus far one dies alone, yet death is not a corporal occurrence. Therefore, death alters all who have had to do with the corporality of the one who has died. Maybe death brings about more than our deeds in all.

The death of Jesus has changed the world – our death, too, will change many things: the life of the family, the relatives, all those, who are somehow affected by it. By virtue of the Gospel, death will not have a destructive, but rather a fruitful effect.

Preparing for death is also preparing for that in the face of death, what marks our live –though being concealed from us most of the time – emanates.

Fear of being alone – this is also what lies at the heart of fear of death. Loneliness is being unmasked as *incurvatio in seipsum*.

¹¹Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 89 (no. 244-46).

Dying is the emergency of life. This arises particularly in the death-loneliness.

Martin Luther, "Sermon for preparing for death" (1519)¹²: We conceptualize pictures of death (merciless destruction), of sin (of irreparable failure), of hell (irrecoverable, terminal forlornness) – and all the while we are thinking we needed to confront them, indeed to battle against them. And thus we fall prey to them all the more! Death, sin and hell are pictures from which God's word turns us away. It says to us "that the life of Christ has conquered my death in His death, His obedience has consumed my sin in His suffering, his love has destroyed my hell in his forlornness."¹³

We may look away from ourselves – from our picture of death, of sin, of hell. Not because they are mere illusions, but because they seduce us to overlook Christ. John 3:14f.: the gaze at the Christ who is exalted at the cross grants eternal life.

In Jesus' victory over death God appears solely as he is present in Jesus Christ. That is the promise of eternal life: The presence of Christ will remain in our life.

This is vividly expressed in the first question of the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) and the answer to it: "What is our only consolation in life and in death? That I, with body and soul, do not belong to myself, but to my faithful saviour Jesus Christ ..."

Maybe the suffering person can still be reached by a touch of the hand: A sign for other levels of communication.

Does life equal communication? The dying persons are still communicating, when measuring instruments cannot depict it any more at all. An inquiry of the "definition" of death as brain death!

For many pastoral counselors, the blessing has gained an inestimable significance at this point: The blessing as passing on what God promisingly appoints to us.

The blessing we cannot say to ourselves: it thus marks the character of proclamation. Blessing announces the truth of reality against anything that diverges the two.

With God's blessing we can die, because our future is the arising of life with God: to advance from the narrowness of temptation into the vastness of God.¹⁴ That is why we are not alone in dying. God is watching us and waiting for us.

A further act by means of signs: the communio with the church in the Lord's Supper. In the "Apostle's Creed" and in the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople (381), forgiveness of sins, resurrection of the dead and eternal life (respectively the life of the world to come) are being

¹²In *Luthers Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (WA), ed. J.F.K. Knaake et al. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883ff.), 2:685-697.

¹³Op. cit. 693,9-12.

¹⁴Op. cit. 686,2.7.

named in one breath. Is this merely a list of "last things?" Or is it a meagre yet expressive hint that the forgiveness of sins is a foretaste of eternal life? How often has this forgiveness been announced to us, imparted to us in the Holy Communion! Will we congregate in forgiveness in the face of death, or will we be plagued by the elephant's memory of our neglects and our unfulfilled desires?

With the Communion, we are being incorporated into the body of Christ. The whole Church is present here, even at the bed of the dying person.

The loneliness of suffering is the limit for counseling, which ought not to be surpassed. It cannot arch over loneliness. Yet it can help to prevent the suffering from submerging into isolation by pronouncing the blessing.

The dying of Jesus, His passion as the suffering of God's action is no mere passivity. He is subjected to the action of those who torture Him in a different way than He is subjected to the action of God, to which he concede and into which he surrenders himself. The dying of Jesus crosses out our concepts of activity and passivity.

Pastoral Counselors tell say that the dying are active as they die. It is of crucial importance whether they are treated by others with a kind of dignity, which regards them not as impotent persons, as those who are subjected to the power of death. If a Christian says "I die", then this means that he or she wishes to carry out his or her vocation in a different manner. The theologian Heiko A. Oberman, who has recently deceased, said in the face of his dying that he was about to pass from the one hand of God into the other. The prayer of dying persons and with them will be that this last section of their lives, too, will bear "fruit worthy of repentance." (Matthew 3:8)

Maybe this is the reason why so many of our ancestors prayed to God that He would guard them of a sudden death, which befalls them unready: "From perils by night and perils by day, perils by land and perils by by sea, and from sudden death, Lord, deliver us" (*Anglican Prayer Book*). This prayer might have moved far away, and it might have given way to the quest for a death that likens sleep.

The metaphor of the sleep of death used to have a different meaning, for example in Luther's sermon on John 8:46-59 (1525):

"The Christian sleeps in death and processes to death thus." "For just as he who is falling asleep does not know what is happening to him, and just like he awakens abruptly in the morning: likewise we will resurrect suddenly at Judgement Day, so that we won't know how we got into death and through death."¹⁵

I do not belong to myself – therefore, death does not end with self-confrontation.

¹⁵In *Luthers Werke* (WA)17/II:235,13f.17-20.

This consolation is based on the promise

that God speaks the last word on my life, and that therefore, I am not hopelessly left alone with the judgement that I pass on myself,

that God surveys my life in a different way than I can perceive myself and selectively understand myself, and that by means of his judgment on me his concealed action in my existence is revealed, and that likewise all the incomprehensive interweavings, presuppositions and effects by which my responsibility has been established are revealed, that I recognize (and do not merely believe), that I am created as I am and no different,

that I will recognize how I am being recognized (1. Corinthians 13:12),

that the life I have lived forms an unexpected unity, because it is being carried by the context of the action of God and is interwoven with it, that God's justice emanates from it and that all injustice falls from it, that by virtue of the relation of my suffering to my action it will become translucent that it is true: "it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." (Galatians 2:20)

s moffett/sermons/hopevrls

TWO FUNERALS: HOPE IS EVERLASTING
(I Cor. 15:19-20, 25)

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If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead...and he will reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."

Today we are gathered here to worships God, and to honor Cha Young-Ok, kwensa-nim, beloved mother and faithful servant of her Lord Jesus Christ. I'm not sure that I ever really met her, but I may have seen her when I was a boy, for she graduated from a famous old mission school for women right next to our house, the Pyongyang Women's Higher Bible School. And I think that quite probably my father may have baptized her, for he was the founder of a whole line of churches, like Kosong her family home, spread along the upper Taedong River.

We mourn for her and for the family, but at the same time we give thanks to God that she is alive in a changed and transformed way, safe and at peace in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ whom she loved and served, As I think of her, I remember two funeral services I attended in Korea which I shall never forget. They taught me how seriously Korea's cultural heritage treats the subject of death. And that, in turn, sent me back to the Bible, for it reminded me how seriously our own Christian tradition also treats the subject of death.

So turn with me first to the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (Kolindo chon-so, sip-o jang). I Corinthians 15 is the greatest sermon ever written about death. It teaches two great lessons about death. First, our Christian thoughts about death begin, not with our death, but with the death of Jesus Christ. And secondly, it ends as all our Christian faith must end, with Christ's victory over death. It

begins with the death of Christ; but it ends with His resurrection. That is the way the Word of God talks about death, and that is the way we too, as Christians must think about it in moments like these.

I. First, we must learn to accept the fact of death as good news, not bad news . Note how the Apostle Paul begins his sermon:

"Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you...I handed on to you as of first importance ... that Christ died. [He] died for our sins..." (I Cor. 15:1-2).

When Jesus Christ becomes as much a part of our thoughts about death as the grief we rightly feel about the loss of a loved one, then death is part of the gospel, and gospel means "good news". There is nothing wrong about weeping and sorrow at a memorial service like this, or about feeling a crushing sense of loss and loneliness. That is only human and natural. But there is also nothing wrong about facing up to the hard fact that Mrs. Cha, beloved mother and faithful Christian has really died. That is part of the healing process. We will not see her again in this life. But that is only human and normal. Death is a fact of life. People always die. Every one in this room will die some day. Even Jesus Christ, God's only son, died. Now, some people try to say, "Well, he didn't really die. Jesus is God, and God can't die". But they are wrong. They don't understand the meaning of the doctrine of the trinity. Jesus was not only the Son of God, he was also a real baby born at Bethlehem, and he was a real man who really died on a cross at Calvary. He died as hard and painful a death as anyone can ever die.

It doesn't help anybody to try to hide from the fact of death; to try to pretend that the dead are still physically with us. That will only make it worse. If the death of loved ones is not faced steadily in faith, if it is buried away inside of us, it grows like a cancer. It eats away at our faith. Our hidden fears and worries are the most dangerous. They are the cause of

most depressions.

So Paul comes right out at the beginning of his sermon and reminds us that as Christ died, so we all must die. He says, in verse 19, if your only hope is in the life your are now living in this world, you are going to be miserable. For you are all going to die. "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied". That is what the Bible says.

In a sense, we all begin to die as soon as we are born. Paul didn't know this, but modern science would agree with in a way. Modern science tells us that a million of the cells in your body die every day. If your hope is in this body you now have-- you are running out of hope. But Christians never lose hope. Our hope is everlasting. And that is the second point of this sermon.

II. Paul says that Christ died, and we too must all die, but he calls that good news, not bad news. Why? What is good about death? Well, Paul's sermon which begins with the death of Christ moves straight ahead to tell us that Christ conquered death; he turned death into life. Death itself died, when Christ arose from the dead. By his victory over death, Jesus Christ turns our grief and despair into joy and hope everlasting. "Everlasting Joy" (Young Nak) is more than the name of a famous church; those are words that belong to all Christians everywhere. Our joy is everlasting, because our hope never ends.

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"But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, and he will reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death."

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This is the good news I share with you even as we mourn. Cha Young-Ok kwensa knew the difference between hopeless death, and Christian hope, which is hope beyond death, which is hope everlasting. I spoke of two funerals I remember from my years in Korea--two very different funerals. They illustrate the difference between how Christians and non-Christians feel about death.

One was a funeral of an Andong Kim (Andong Kimsi)--wealthy and famous for its long line of Andong Kim queens of Korea. But it was not a Christian funeral. The wife of the head of the clan had died, and a daughter, who was a friend of ours invited us to the ceremony. The whole hill where she was to be buried was covered with white tents and the mourners were mostly in white clothes. The family wore pale-yellow coarse cloth mourning garments, and the men were in the stiff, high curved hats, like the hats of palace attendant, but made of the same coarse yellow fabric. Our friend--a daughter of the family came up to greet us. We didn't recognize her. She was always so fashionable dressed, so elegant. But now her eyes were red with weeping; her face was daubed with charcoal; her dress torn and tattered to show her grief. In the background there was the wailing of the mourners. We thought--though of course we did not mention it--of Paul's words, "If Christ be not raised, we are of all people most miserabled". And we felt great pity for her. She seemed to have no hope.

Not long before we had been to another funeral in Andong. It was for a woman of the church, who like Cha kwensa, had been a faithful and dearly loved evangelist (chundosa) for most of her life. The people gathered outside the church to take the coffin to the grave. It was all in white, covered with white

paper roses. Then the pastor began to speak.

He said to his people, "You all know, of course, that many people here in Andong think that we Christians don't love our friends or family who have died. One reason they think so is that we don't wail at our funerals, in the Korean tradition. So to let them know that we do love and respect those whom God has taken away from us for awhile, let me ask you to wail for a minute or longer--[and he looked at his watch-- wail to show your grief and love in the Korean way, but then, when I give a sign, stop wailing, and start up a hymn of Christian victory, and let us march to the grave that our beloved friend is still alive, in heaven, with Jesus Christ her Lord. So let us march to the grave rejoicing."

We mourn and we rejoice. That is the Christian way. We grieve for the death of Cha Young Ok, kwensa. But we rejoice, also, because Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again, and our hope is everlasting. Amen.

If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead...and he will reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet."

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He said to his people, "You all know, of course, that many people here in Andong think that we Christians don't love our friends or family who have died. One reason they think so is

that we don't wail at our funerals, in the Korean tradition. So to let them know that we do love and respect those whom God has taken away from us for awhile, let me ask you to wail for a minute or longer--[and he looked at his watch-- wail to show your grief and love in the Korean way, but then, when I give a sign, stop wailing, and start up a hymn of Christian victory, and let us march to the grave that our beloved friend is still alive, in heaven, with Jesus Christ her Lord. So let us march to the grave rejoicing."

We mourn and we rejoice. That is the Christian way. We grieve for the death of Cha Young Ok, kwensa. But we rejoice, also, because Jesus Christ died for our sins, and rose again, and our hope is everlasting. Amen.

Don't Draw Down the Shades

It is a very natural ^{impulse} ~~thing~~ in the presence of death to ~~try to~~ draw down all the ~~window~~ shades, and to speak in gloomy whispers. At times like this we have a tendency to quote even Bible verses in a wounded, ~~reserved~~ kind of way.

"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away", and rather grudgingly we add "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Or we recall ~~even~~ gloomier Scripture passages, "Truly the light is ~~pleasant~~ sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but if a man shall live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the day of darkness.. " ~~Death~~.

But why think of death as "the day of darkness"? Why turn our faces away from it as from something dark and ~~unclean~~. Death is as natural as living. It's normal. Everyone dies; and in a sense we begin to die as soon as we are born. In a deeper sense, in a Christian sense, we also begin to live as soon as we die. We live again. That is as sure as all the promises of God, ^{long ago the prophet said,} ~~who~~ ^{as} ~~the Bible says,~~ ^{God} "turns the shadow of death into the [bright] morning. (Amos 5:8). And Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life."

So ^{there is no need to} ~~don't~~ draw down all the window shades here today. The good Lord doesn't require that kind of gloom, and besides, Herbert Stevens wouldn't want it.

Some of us ^{last} saw Herbert ~~last~~ only a few weeks ago at the funeral of his old friend Glenn Flower. He spoke of his sorrow at Glenn's death, - of how much he was going to miss him. I knew how much Herbert had suffered when those he loved died - a son, a daughter-in-law. That kind of sorrow is natural in the presence of death. But not gloom, or fear - and Herbert was not afraid of death. He was expecting it. ~~But~~ And right there at the funeral his inexpressible sense of humor broke through the sadness. [It was almost uncanny how he anticipated what has actually happened.]

"Sam," he said, if you have to say something at my funeral, tell them "He was a mean and ornery old man, but there's one thing you can say about him, he could have been worse!"

^{No pulling down the shades for Herbert. No gloomy whines.}
"He could have been worse." It's what the Lord says about all of us, visit it when we repent and He forgives. But though Herbert may have been ornery sometimes - who isn't? - no one can tell me he was mean. A mean man could never have enjoyed life as much as he did, or feared death less, or had so many friends.

He did enjoy life, and what a life he had. He grew up with the American West. He was one of the last of the pioneers. Born in old Cheyenne; raised

in a sod house on the Nebraska prairie. He remembered prairie fires sweeping down on the house, and the terrible winter winds. The schoolhouse was also built of sod, and ^xdoubled on Sundays as a Methodist church. As a baby, he recalled, he sometimes had to be taken out of service, ^{and} behind the church for a spanking when he out-shouted the old circuit-riding preacher. Seventy-five years ago, when he was ten, he came farther west, ^{here} to Washington - and then on to the old ranch in Idaho.

There was nothing easy about that life. But it gave him a strength of character, and an integrity that all who knew him respected. It gave him a close-knit family of which he was intensely proud. It gave him more friends than he could count. "I don't have any enemies," he wrote when his family finally persuaded him to write down some of his memories. "I don't have any enemies" - and then that wonderful humor of his broke in again, and he added - "Because I've outlived them all."

No, that wasn't why Herbert Stevens had no enemies. He had no enemies because of the kind of man he was - a man who took you seriously, but made you smile.

That's the way he took life - seriously but always with a smile. And death, too.

It shows up in a hymn he particularly liked.
I was surprised when they told me that one
of his favorites was "Life is like a Mountain Railroad".
Then I thought to myself, "Why it fits him
perfectly. There's a touch of country, of the West
in it - the old West he loved. And there's a broad
~~and~~ humor running all through it. No wonder
he liked it. But ^{as} under his humor there was a
genuine seriousness, So too with the old folk-hymn.
Life is like a mountain railroad, ^{and the track doesn't end} ~~and it ends in death~~
~~yes death - but death is not the end.~~ - at the grave. -

"You will often find obstructions,
Look for storms of wind and rain,
On a fill, or curve or trestle
They will almost ditch your train.
Put your trust alone in Jesus
Never falter, never fail,
Keep your hand upon the throttle
And your eye upon the ~~road~~ rail.
Blessed Saviors, Then will guide us
Till we reach that blissful shore
Where the angels wait to join us
In thy praise forevermore."

Substitute
printed version.

We don't have to pull down the shades at funerals.
We can smile and rejoice, even in our sadness, and say, in
faith with the Psalmist:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures,
He leadeth me beside the still waters

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 ..

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the
days of my life.

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

That is why, with our friend Herbert Stevens,
we can take life seriously, and with a smile.
And death, too, seriously, but with a smile.

Sam Moffett
June 10, 1978

Our Christian faith tells us that death is not ^①
the end. It is a mystery, yes; but the Lord Jesus Christ
shows us a greater mystery, the mystery of eternal life.

"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."

He that believeth in me... "There is the secret of peace,
even in ^{valley of the} shadow.

Of course there is a place for sorrow at every
funeral. When I was very new in the ministry I
thought differently. I thought grief was lack of faith.
That was before I had lost anyone I really loved. Now I
know better; so our hearts go out in sympathy to those
who have loved, and are now alone.

But not alone! For always, round about are
the everlasting arms. And the "cloud of witnesses."

When I heard that Glenn Flower had been
stricken, and had, ^{to all intents & purposes} ~~in reality~~, died ~~to this world~~ in church -
I thought "how fitting." They say it happened when he
was turning around, as he always did, to count how
many there were in church on Sunday. It's a happy
thought to me to think that he's still counting -
and a ^{timely} reminder to us who are left that life goes on,
and our responsibilities to each other, and to our church.
That's how I like to remember Dad - still

counting. He needs no eulogy here. You all know him too well; and ^{how} his whole life was his family, his church, you his friends, and this community he loved so much.

Yes, there is a place for sorrow. But there is a greater place for joy ^{today}. He is with the Lord, and therefore still with us. Still counting. And we have the joy, with him, of having this foretaste, by faith, of the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is joy and peace and comfort in the testimony of the Scriptures: -

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours."

"O death where is thy sting?"

O grave, where is thy victory?"

A RESURRECTION MEDITATION

Christ is risen !
What difference does it make ?
He is not here in flesh,
And yet He lives
In every life that chooses Christ to take \
Into his heart
And dwell with Him
And walk with Him.

Christ is risen ?
Shall I take time to prove
To unbelieving folk
A fact that moves and motivates my life
As can no other truth ?

Shall I strive to convince
A doubting, unbelieving age
Or shall I lay fast hold
On this most vital, potent fact
That Christ is risen,
And meditating,
Ask myself,
What difference does it make ?

Will this day's toil be lighter
For this truth ?
Will this day's words be softer ?
Nay, will the very thoughts I think this hour
Be ordered by the great transforming power
Of Christ—the risen Lord ?

What does it mean to me
That Christ our Lord is
Risen from the dead
And has become of them that slept
The earliest fruit ?

If I shall also live
Because He lives ;
If what I do on earth of good or ill
Shall be projected in
An after-life,
Shall not such promise
Give me pause
And make me ponder
Ere the moments of my days
Be thrown away in ordinariness ?

If I shall live again
After my days on earth are spent,
Then shall I not bethink myself
Before I squander golden hours
Which now are mine ?
Shall I not seize them,
Fill them with an eagerness and zeal
Which would be folly
Were it not
For resurrection hope and faith ?

Our Christ is risen ?
"He is not dead nor sleeping,
He lives on !"
And so I too may live
And grow
And plan my life with Him
For endless days
Of service and of praise !
What does it mean to you
That Christ is risen ?

WILLIAM E. SHAW, Pyeng Yang, Korea

DEATH HATH NO SORROW

It is an easy and a very natural thing, in the presence of death, to draw down all the window shades and to speak in gloomy whispers. We quote Scripture in a wonded, ~~humbly~~ resigned way:

"The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Or we recall even gloomier passages:

"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: But if a man shall live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the day of darkness..."

By why? Why turn our faces from death as from something dark and unclean? The Christian has nothing to fear in death. It is the pagan who says death is the end; the cold flood that carries us from friends and family we loved and from the warm world that was our own.

Christ says to us, death is not the end. It is a mystery, yes; but the Lord Jesus Christ shows us the greater mystery, the mystery of eternal life.

I have stood by the side of a dusty Korean road, watching a funeral procession pass. I have listened to the whining chants, the empty wails of the professional mourners, and have seen the look of hopelessness on the faces of the bereaved. But again, on other occasions, I have stood by the side of the road and watched Christian funeral processions pass. There was sorrow, but no loud clangor, no wild outbursts of grief, no hired mourners. And I saw hope shining through the tears on the faces of the bereaved. For Christians are not afraid of death.

We have not forgotten the victorious declaration of Jesus Christ, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, tho he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "He that believeth in me..." there is the secret of peace, even in the valley of the shadow.

How differently two people can look at death. The pagan sees the pain and the grave. The Christian sees that too, but looks beyond past the grave to the life that is from above--glorious, eternal life.

There is the same contrast in the epitaphs of old Rome. Archaeologists have removed the dust of centuries from the graveyards of the Romans. Upon tombstone after tombstone in pagan grounds was this line: "Farewell, farewell, farewell, forever." That one line holds all the despair and hopelessness of a lost world. But listen to the note of triumph in this epitaph uncovered on a second century Christian tombstone: "Priscilla sleepeth in the Lord. She shall awake!"

It is true! Edith sleepeth in the Lord. She shall awake. She sleeps after giving herself utterly and completely to the service of the Lord. I find it difficult to recall anyone, either in China where I first knew her, or here in Korea, who was so selfless in her devotion to her work. She was lost to herself in the service of others, in the name of Jesus. That is all she seemed to think of. She had so little time for herself. Isn't this what Paul means when he speaks of "the mind of Christ". "Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourself. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.." The words remind me of Edith.

Of course there is a place for sorrow at every funeral. When I was very new in the ministry I thought differently. I thought grief was lack of faith. That was before I had lost anyone I really loved. Now I know better, and our hearts go out in sympathy to those who have loved and lost.

Yes, there is a place for sorrow, but there is also a place for joy, even here in the shadow. The joy of the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ who himself broke the power of death and the tomb. There is joy and peace and comfort in the testimony of the Scriptures:

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from the labours".

And again we cry with Paul:

"O death where is thy sting?
O grave, where is thy victory"

Edith sleepeth in the Lord. She shall awake!

*Spoken at funeral of Edith Galt
June - May 25 1961*

Funeral

(Joan Underwood)

TWO WORLDS

Some of you may remember the fall of 1960. A strong government had fallen; a weak one had taken its place; and there was turmoil everywhere. One of the less pleasant incidents of that chaotic time happened in November. It was the attack on the Bauer and Underwood homes by a mob of violent, excited students and agitators. Horace and Joan were warned. They got away just in time with the children. But the home was savagely wrecked. The next morning Joan called Eileen. "Will you do me a favor," she said. "I can't go back to the house yet. They don't think it wise. Would you go out and look around and let me know how much damage there is.

And, oh yes, if you can find them, I'd like you to bring me two things: my Bible and my pocketbook." Eileen did find them. She was appalled at the senseless destruction--furniture had been hacked, books torn, pictures and dishes broken. But she found the Bible and the pocketbook, and brought back the two things Joan wanted most.

The Christian lives in two worlds, and both are important. "My Bible and my pocketbook". It reminds me of Paul writing to Timothy. He is nearing the end of this life, and he begins to think about the life to come: "As for me..the time is here.. so leave this life. And now the prize of victory is waiting for me, the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me on that Day--and not only to me ~~xxx~~ but to all those who wait with love for him to appear." (1 Tim. 4:6-8). What a wonderful, high noon on which to move into the world to come. But Paul ~~was right on~~ he isn't through with this world yet. "Do your best to come to me soon.. Get Mark and bring him with you because he can help me in the work. When you come, bring my coat that I left in Troas; bring the books ~~xxx~~ too and especially the ones made of parchment." (vs. 9,11,13).

There are the two worlds again. The crown of righteousness the cloak and the books. And the Christian, like Paul, is equally at home in either one. In both, actually, because the Christian lives in both. It is no great shock to move from one to the other. Both are familiar. "My Bible and my pocketbook" Joan Underwood lived firmly and unsentimentally and unashamedly in both worlds, and she is now as much at home in the next one as she was with us in this one.

The last time I saw her at church, ^{that one week} the other night someone was remembering the first time she saw her. It was at Doris Leach's and she was delightfully dancing the Highland Fling.

Both worlds.

There is a rather joyless Christian heresy that only the other world counts. That we should despise this world; separate ourselves from it. The Bible, not the pocketbook; the crown of righteousness, but not the cloak and the books. *Can you imagine Joan reaching out so earnestly for a crown of righteousness that she would give up books?* Christians who separate themselves in this gingerly and self-consciously ~~away~~ from the world end up in little Christian ghettos, meeting with themselves, and talk with themselves,-- talking in large measure in a language only they can understand. Not Joan. That is why, I think, the high school seniors several times paid her the tribute of asking her to speak at Baccalaureate or Commencements--and they don't ask people back they don't like. She was never out of touch with their world. And she spoke a language they understood.

She spoke about loneliness and homesickness, in that last commencement address. Of the sound of pheasants in ~~xxxx~~ the hills, and the colour of the Korean sky. She talked to them straight. She said, if you ever get so lonely and homesick over there in college that you just have to call back home-- don't call collect! Earn enough money to pay for the call yourself, she said. Baby-sit, type, clean offices, anything. But pay for the call.

Then she talked just as straight to the parents. If they do call collect, she said, don't sit there thinking about the telephone bill. Listen. ^{to them} They are "looking for sympathy and attention and you can give neither if you are thinking about money."

What good, Christian common sense that makes in a world like this, and Joan knew the world. She wasn't the daughter of an English businessman, ~~an old Korea hand~~, for nothing. And she knew that it can be a wonderful world, even for non-Christians. The world of the pocketbook, and the world of the mind and the world of good, human family love and affection.

But she also knew that this world is not ^{(always good, and is never} enough. If despising this world is a Christian heresy, ~~denying~~ the other world is an even more tragic mistake. "If in this world only we have hope," said Paul, "then we are of all men most miserable. Our hope is so much blisser, and deeper and happier than the little triumphs and disappointments, the wishes and frustration of life as we know it on earth. "Only the Christian," says Barclay, can be an optimist regarding the world. Only the one can hope to cope with life. And only the Christian can remain death with serenity and equanimity." Bring me my Bible, said Joan--not just the pocketbook. ~~And to see how she had to~~

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award me on that Day..."

In that same Commencement address, Joan spoke of more than collect calls and homesickness and Korean nights and days. She, too, like Paul, spoke of faith and a prize:

"Finally," she said, "I would like to offer ~~for~~ your acceptance my most prized possession. I can only offer it to you, for it is a gift which each one must take for himself.. When you leave here all kinds of faiths and non-faiths will bombard you from all sides ~~in~~... Those of you who profess a firm faith will be ridiculed, you will be laughed at, argued with, even shunned. If your faith is strong, if it is really your own, this opposition will only deepen your reliance on our Lord. If, however, it is merely that handed to you by your parents or a minister wrapped in a package and accepted without being examined, then sometime in this next year you will probably come to a crisis, and you may decide to throw it away. This is your privilege and no one will be there to stop you, but please remember when you discard your faith that your parents sincerely believe in what they profess; that they have tested it; that they have been upheld ~~in~~ and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ sustained through many trials and troubles by this gift they have offered you. So don't throw it on to the rubbish heap, but tuck it away where you can get it out at a time when everything else has failed you, when your burdens are unsupportable and your bewilderment complete.

"To those of you who have no faith, never had one and never want one, there is nothing I can say but that I am sorry. It is to you I hold out my precious gift, my Lord. He will be a friend in your loneliness; He will be a Help in your frustrations, a Guide in your bewilderment, a Rest in your weariness. But you will have to reach out for Him.. The Lord bless you as you leave here and face the world".

Joan knew what she was saying. She had reached, and she had found. And what she said then she could be saying now for this, too, is in a sense the celebration of a commencement, a new beginning for her. "Henceforth there is laid up for her a crown of righteousness.." But she would be thinking of ^{the crown} ~~us~~, not of herself, ~~and~~ she would ~~still~~ be saying "I hold out my precious gift, my Lord.. You'll have to reach for Him. And then, when the time comes, the Lord bless you as you leave here and face Him."

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"To those of you who have no faith, never had one and never want one, there is nothing I can say but that I am sorry. It is to you I hold out my precious gift, my Lord. He will be a Friend in your loneliness; He will be a Help in your frustrations, a Guide in your bewilderment, a Rest in your weariness. But you will have to reach out for Him.. The Lord bless you as you leave here and face the world".

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Prayer: The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. - in this life and in the life to come both now and evermore Amen.

Prayer

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep
your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus

HOPE ("elpis")

"One of the three great pillars of the Christian faith" (Barclay) "Hope is characteristically the Christian virtue and it is something which for the non-Christian is impossible" (B.)

"Remember your former condition, you Gentiles.. you were at that time separate from Christ, strangers to the community of Israel, outside God's covenants and the promise that goes with them. Your world was a world without hope and without God." (Ept. 2:12)

"Only the Christian can be an optimist regarding the world, Only the Christian can hope to cope with life. And only the Christian can regard death with serenity and equanimity."

What is the Christian hope? Let's do a little Bible study with Barclay.

1. It is the hope of the resurrection of the dead. That thought runs consistently all through the NT. (Acts 23:6 26:6; 1 Thes. 4:13; 1 Pet. 1.3; 1 John 3:3; 1 Cor. 15.19)

"Here and now, dear friends, we are God's children; what we shall be has not yet been disclosed ~~to us~~ but we know that when it is disclosed we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope before him purifies himself..." (1 Jn. 3:3)

"If it is for this life only that Christ has given us hope, we of all men are most to be pitied. But the truth is, Christ was raised to life--the first-fruits of the harvest of the dead.." (1 Cor. 15:19-20)

"We wish you not to remain in ignorance, brothers, about those who sleep in death; you should not grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus." (1 Thess. 4:13-14)

"The Christian, says Barclay, "is a man who is on his way, not to death, but to life."

2. It is the hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2). It is the hope that no longer shall we see the glory of God in the cloud and through a glass darkly. It is the certainty that the day will come when we shall see and be clothed with the glory of God.

"Let us exult in the hope of the divine splendor that is to be ours. More than this: let us even

exult in our present sufferings, because we know that suffering trains us to endure, and undurance brings proof that we have stood the test, and this proof is the ground of hope. Such a hope is no mockery, because God's love has flooded our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit..(Rom. 5:2-4)

3. It is the hope of salvation, not only in this world but in the world to come. (II Cor 1:10)

"Safe shall be my going

Secretly armed against all death's endeavour

Safe though all safety's lost; safe where men fall

And if these poor limbs die, safest of all."

- Rupert Brooke

It is the hope of safety amidst the perils of earth, and rescue from the judgment of God. Not in sense of protection from trouble or danger, but of independence of them.

4. It is the hope of eternal life. (Titus 1:2;3:7) In the NY, says Barclay, the word eternal always stresses, not the duration, but the quality of life. Eternal life is the kind of life God lives. The hope of the Christian is that some day he will share the very life of God.

5. It is a hope which is laid up in heaven (Col. 1:5)

"We have heard of the faith you hold in Christ

Jesus and the love you bear towards all God's

people. Both spring from the hope stored up for

you in heaven..."

Hope, then, looks forward to something which is already prepared for the Christian, and that something is not something which is at the mercy of the chances & changes of time. It is in the keeping of God, and therefore it is something which will be the completing of God's design and the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the soul.

Sources of hope:

1. Product of experience. Rom. 5:4

2. Product of Scriptures. Rom. 15:4

3. Comes from the sense of being called. Eph. 1:18

4. Product of the gospel, good news (Col. 1:23)

5. Is dependent on Jesus and His work (Col. 1.27)

Things that happen by hope: (1) Hope comes thru grace

(II Thes. 2:16); (2) Through hope we rejoice (Rom.12:12)

3) We are saved by hope (Rom 8:24) i.e. the hope that God

is as Jesus said he was. (4) Hope keeps the Xn steadfast

(Hep. 3:6) "The Xn hope is not simply a trembling, hesitan

hope that perhaps the promises of God may be true. It is the confident expectation that they cannot be anything else than true

Hop; e

This hope..supports the sould in the greatest afflictions. The Christian's patience is, as it were, his back on which he bears his burdens; and some afflictions are so heavy that he needs a broad one to carry them well. But if hope lay not the pillow of promise between his back and his burden, the least cross will prove unsupportable; therefore it is called "the patience of hope". (Gurnall, 17th c.)

Hope fills the afflicted soul with such inward joy and consolatin that it can laugh while tears are in the eye, sigh and sing all in a breath; it is called the "rejoicing of hope" (Heb. 3:6). Gurnall

As the whole use of the anchor is to hold fast the ship in one sure and certain place, notwithstanding all tempests and waves beating against it, because it entereth into the very bottom of the sea, there taking fast hold; even so the principal use of hope is to enter into the heaven of heavens, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and to hold fast our souls there with Him, notwithstanding all the waves and tempests of Satan, sin and condemnation do beat daily and continually against them. (Cawdray, 1609)

When an anchor is thrown overboard if it floats in the stream it is useless. No anchor is of any use whatsoever..that cannot by it s cable go down to take hold of the firm bottom.... (Beecher)

ivk Baird once preached on

"Things We Like About Death"

Heb. 9:27.

Can't remember much - but I like the thought.

Usually think of death as a sad experience. It is

But we are Christians - We see it differently -

1. Death is an appointment made for us by God. If God has a plan for our lives - he surely has a plan for our deaths. We can leave it to him.

2. Death is universal. It comes to everyone. Would you want it any other way. Suppose some were to die, others to remain. Then every death would really be a separation - a permanent gulf between those who go, & those who don't go.

3. Death is not the end. The Bible's pictures of death are not sad ~~but~~ because they are not final. We walk through the shadowed valley, yes - but the Lord walks with us. And the valley turns out to be the road to his house - and a table is spread - and the cup runneth over.

4. God rejoices at death. Ps. 116:5 "Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints." ^{from our point of view - death is separation from God's viewpoint,} It is a home coming!

5. We can rejoice at death, too. (Phil 1:21) ^{Hebrew} Paul "to die is gain. What I should like is to depart & be with Christ." Why? - The old body gone - 1 Cor. 5:3 "In this present body, we groan." ^{to have} What we want is "to have the new body put on over it, so that our mortal part may be absorbed into life immortal." ^{death + the body - soon in ~~immortal~~ ^{transformation} (1 Cor. 15:52)} raised in glory; ~~soon in weakness~~ raised in power; ~~soon as a~~ We shall be changed - No wonder he rejoiced.

Death Has No SorrowText: I Corinthians 15: 55

When man stands face to face with the mystery of death he is as a little child. [What matter then how many great cities have risen at his command? What matter then how many bridges he has built across the waters?] What matter then his reputation, great or small, and his riches? When the slow step of death checks his swift pace, the works of his hands matter little. They are left behind as dusty toys are left behind when the child becomes a man. Thus saith the Scriptures:

"We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out...The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

A gloomy passage that: it is the resignation of death.

There was once a king, high and lifted up, who ruled over a great country. Kings and princes envied him his power, but none envied him quite so much as a man named Damocles, one of his servants. Day after day this unhappy slave would sigh, "Oh that I were king, then could I smile and be happy." As time went on the great king heard of his unhappy slave, and of his great desire; and the king came to him and said, "Slave, even as thy heart desires, so shall it be. Tomorrow thou art king. For one day thou shalt rule." And it came to pass as the king had said, for on the morrow Damocles the slave, clad in soft silks and fine linen, was led to the high throne. Proudly he looked out, and all bowed before him; and his heart was lifted up. But suddenly, chancing to glance up overhead, he sprang from the throne in affright; for there, suspended directly above the throne by a single hair, swung a sharp, heavy sword. Pale and trembling, Damocles demanded the meaning of the suspended sword. And the great king, who stood at his side, said, "So

it was ordered. It is the price of kingship. Let it remind thee that no king knoweth who plots his death.^{and no king knows the day he must die.} (And) there was no joy in the heart of Damocles as he ruled that day.

There is a sword of Damocles hanging above the head of every man. Its name is Death! [The pale hand of death, says the poet, knocks alike at the door of the king's palace and the poor man's hut. Try as he will to forget it, the gloomy thought of death must recur again and again to every man.] And again the Scriptures say:

→ "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun: But if a man shall live many years, and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.... Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, saith the Preacher."

And that too, is a gloomy verse: it is the inevitability of death.

[True it is that] though we live in the sunshine, we cannot blind our eyes to the dark shadow that lies beyond. But why should we? Why should we seek to escape from reality? Why should we turn our face from death as from something unclean? Why is it that we speak of it in gloomy whispers. The Christian has nothing to fear in death.

But, you say, death is the end; death is a mystery that man can never fathom; death is a cold, cold flood that carries us from the friends we loved and the warm world that was our own. I say to you, death is not the end; it is the beginning. Death is a mystery, yes, but I will show you a greater mystery--the mystery of life.

We are not pagans. I have stood by the side of a dusty road in Korea and watched a heathen funeral procession pass. I have heard the whining chant and empty wails of the professional mourners, and seen the dead hopelessness in the faces of the bereaved. So that is death, I thought, and I was afraid. And again I stood by the side of a dusty road in Korea and watched a Christian funeral pass. There was little

display. The Christians were dressed quite simply in white. There was sorrow, but no loud clangor, no wild outbursts of grief, no hired mourners; and I saw hope shining through the tears on the faces of the bereaved. Then I was no longer afraid of death.

No, we are not pagans. We have not forgotten that victorious declaration of Jesus, "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." "He that believeth in me"--there is the secret of peace in death. The grave has no terrors for him who has put his trust in the Risen Saviour.

How differently two men can look at death. The pagan sees the pain, and the grave, ^{(and} the bleached bones ^{and the worms.)} The Christian sees ~~far~~ past the grave to the life that is beyond ^(--glorious eternal life.) To him death is but the opening and closing of a door. What a contrast between that noisy, drunken heathen funeral in Korea, and the sober, quiet procession of white-clad Christians to the cemetery. We can see the same contrast in the epitaphs of old Rome. Archaeologists have removed the dust of centuries from the graveyards of the Roman conquerors, ^(and deciphered their worn inscriptions.) Upon tombstone after tombstone in the pagan burial grounds was this line ~~inscribed~~: "Farewell, farewell, farewell forever." In that one line is all the despair and hopelessness of a lost world. But listen to the note of triumph in this epitaph uncovered on a second century Christian tombstone. "Priscilla sleepeth in the Lord. She shall awake!" The pagan Roman looked upon death as the end, ^(as) final, irrevocable separation; the Roman Christian saw death as the beginning of a new life.

^{of course} There is a place for sorrow at every funeral. Our hearts go out in sympathy to those who have loved and lost, for no one who loves

deeply can lightly bear the loss of a loved one. Joseph wept for his father Jacob. Jesus' own mother wept on John's shoulder as she beheld her son dying on the cross for the sins of the world. There is no more pitiful story recorded in the Bible than the story of the grief of David for his son Absalom.

Yes, there is a place for sorrow--but there is also a place for Christian joy at the grave. There is joy in the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus who raised Lazarus from the dead, and who himself broke the power of death and the tomb. There is joy, and peace, and comfort in the testimony of the Scriptures:

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labours."

^{you see}
(Thus it is that) we can rejoice with Paul:

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

12 mm.

Let us pray:

The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen.

-1-

Hear the word of God as it is found in John 14:1-6, 25-27

Let us pray:

O Lord our heavenly father, as we pause near the end of a busy day and draw apart to commune with thee, speak thine own peace to our hearts thru Jesus Christ our Lord. Erase from our minds the cares of the day, lift our burdens, quiet our hearts with the assurance that our sins are forgiven through the precious blood of the Saviour; and send thine own Holy Comforter to wipe away all tears from our eyes, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

→ When I Survey

Dr. Allison, pastor of the First Presb. Church, deeply regrets that he is unable to bring you the message tonight as he had planned. His dear wife and life-long companion passed away quietly Monday evening. His loss brings home to us once more the ever-recurring mystery of death ^{that the mystery of death} ~~that~~ ^{that strange paradox of victory in defeat, which} blends joy and sorrow, gloom and exaltation in almost equal portions. ^{It's only the glory and death} When we stand in its presence we are all as little children - half-wondering, half-afraid. All the things we thought important are nothing - left behind as dusty toys are left behind when the child becomes a man. — Thus say the Scriptures:

~~A gloomy passage that~~ "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out.... The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

A gloomy passage that. It speaks of the resignation of death.

Afraid of the Dark?

Text: John 8: 12

Nothing will ever erase from the mind of a man the memory of the long lonely hours he has spent beside the bed of a dying friend. Part of his own life is passing away with the life of his friend. And no words a man may say will be etched so vividly upon the minds of others as his last words on earth. Somehow, the words of dying men assume a strange significance.

Consider the death of Jesus. Hanging there in bloody agony upon the cross he thought not of the awful torment of that hour, but of his mother left alone without her son, and looking down from the cross he beheld her and his beloved disciple, John. "Women, behold thy son," he said. And to John, "Behold thy mother." Again, who caught the spirit of Christ better than Stephen in his dying moments as first martyr of the church. Dragged without the city wall, his body crushed in a hail of stones, he looked out upon that blood-mad mob not in hate, but in love, and lifting his eyes to heaven he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

It is not only in the pages of sacred history that we find men who faced death unafraid and died with immortal words on their lips. What American has not thrilled to the words of Nathan Hale, "I regret that I have but one life to give to my country." And there was majesty as well in the death of William Crittenden, colonel in the Spanish-American War. Captured by Spaniards in Cuba and sentenced to die kneeling with his back to the firing squad, he stood to his feet and refused saying, "An American kneels only to his God."

Yes, the words of dying men are hard to forget: those words of love from the cross, words of forgiveness from the first martyr, words

of high patriotism and courage from the heroes of our country. But as I think of the passing of our friend and brother here, somehow I think not of these, but of the story of the death of O. Henry. O. Henry was not a great Christian, but his death was beautiful. His last words were, "Turn the lamp up, nurse. I'm afraid to go home in the dark." And as he said it, he went home.

"Afraid to go home in the dark--". You know as well as I the picture that calls to mind: a picture of a small boy hurrying home from town after dark. A thin moon is up, shining through the branches of the bare trees, and over to the left the dark road winds past a cemetery. As he passes it, the little lad thrusts his hands deep into his pockets, trying not to think of that graveyard; and he whistles a brave little tune just to prove to his own fast-beating heart that he isn't afraid of the dark.

Isn't that a picture of every man as he faces death? As his life draws to a close, he's marching down a narrow road that grows darker every minute. And try as he will to forget it, every man knows that at the end of his road is the graveyard. So he thrusts his hands into his pockets, and he whistles a tune to show himself he's not afraid to go home in the dark. That's a lovely picture of death, isn't it? Yes, it's beautiful, but there's one thing wrong with it.

And Tennyson gives us a beautiful picture of death in his poem Crossing the Bar:

Sunset and evening star
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark....

That, too, is a beautiful picture of death; and that, too, has one thing wrong with it.

I don't know what the last words of our dear brother were. I don't need to know. He needed to make no deathbed confession that we might know he died in the Lord. His whole life was an open testimony for his Lord and Master. No, I don't know what he said as he died. I know what he might have said. He might have said:

"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..."

And I know what he did not say as he died. I'm very sure he didn't say, as O. Henry said, "I'm afraid to go home in the dark." He didn't say that, I know, because he was not afraid. And he didn't go home in the dark!

O Christians, why have we so little faith? Why are we afraid; why do we try to whistle up our courage as we near the grave. No whistling of our own avails at that moment. We must look for a strength that is greater than our own. Oh, let us open up our souls to the great anthem of comfort and joy from above. Let us learn for ourselves the comfort and strength that is in the Scriptures.

Children of the heavenly Father need not grope their way home in the dark. Have we forgotten that Jesus said:

"I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not
walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

We don't go home in the dark. That was O. Henry's mistake. Jesus, the light of the world, walks with us every step of the way. He is with us

in our sorrows, and in our sufferings. What greater sorrow, what greater suffering was there than the torment of the cross. He enters with us in-
to the very grave itself:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Ma ker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy
Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was
crucified, dead and buried..."

All the way, every day, even to death and burial, we walk in the light
that is Christ Jesus.

A moment ago I read you Tennyson's beautiful poem Crossing
the Bar, but I didn't finish it. "And after that the dark..." he wrote.
But the poet doesn't leave us in the dark! He caught the truth and the
light in his last verse:

For though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

And that is the truth I would leave with you: we are not
going home in the dark. No one needs to go home in the dark. He can
have the light of Jesus flooding his soul. He can see the light of
Jesus' face waiting on the other side for him, if only he will come.
The Scriptures speak true when they say:

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord...The Lord is my
light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?...When I sit in
darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me..who coverest
himself with light as with a garment.....
I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall
not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

MATTHEW, CH. 18, Verses 2, 5, 10, 14:

And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me.

Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

MARK, CH. 10, Verses 13 to 16:

And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.

WORDS OF COMFORT FROM THE PASTOR

At a time like this we all need the comfort that God is able to give us by His spirit. The word "comfort" has lost much of its great meaning today. When we try to comfort each other we usually think of some kind of sentimental effort in which we try to soothe another's distraught emotions, but the word has a larger meaning. It comes from the Latin "cum forte". Any member of our choir will tell you when they sing our forte they sing out loud and clear with great strength so that all may hear the message. The word means "with strength". When we try to comfort each other we then witness to the strength of our faith and the spirit of God breathes into our weakness a strength not our own.

We take great comfort and strength from Jesus emphasis on the importance of little children and on His warning that if we would be of His "Kingdom of Love", we must be trusting and teachable as a little child. We must be able and willing to grow.

We have gathered here tonight in memory of KAREN ANNE WARD who was born into a Christian home, into an atmosphere of love and faith. She was a baptized member of the church of Jesus Christ. We believe that she is still surrounded by faith and love. In the words of Whittier:

"Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust
(Since He who knows our need is just)
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must.
Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play!
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That Life is ever Lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own!

We have not lost her for there is no waste in God's economy. God never takes from us what we need to have. We have an unbroken fellowship of love, for Karen has simply gone into another and more brilliantly lighted room in God's house. He is there and he is here. We cannot follow her just now but we shall when our time has come and we will do so without fear for we have learned that Jesus Christ has abolished death and that what we call physical death is but the gateway, the friendly door from here to there.

We have all been stirred to think and feel more deeply. We must learn to give ourselves and our loved ones this day and everyday into God's safe-keeping. Our faith has been tested. We have been shocked out of our complacency into deeper levels of commitment to God, and to each other. Surely it is true "a little child shall lead them".

HYMN NO. 332 "Lead on, O King Eternal"

BENEDICTION

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our risen Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you, and remain with you always. Amen

POSTLUDE

Faithfully yours
James M. Moffett

MOTHER: MARJORIE K. FLOWER (1876-1991)

Mother was 95 years old but she was still singing the day the Lord took her home. We telephoned the hospital from the East Coast that afternoon. When they picked up the phone in her room we could hear her voice in the background. Some of the family was there, they told us--a grandson with a guitar singing hymns, and a little, red-haired great-granddaughter who wanted them to sing "Silent Night". We heard them singing, and there was Mother's soprano voice again, not quite so steady as it used to be but clear and sweet. How she always loved to sing. It wasn't Christmas yet, but "Silent Night" was the right hymn at the right time, for just a few hours later, as silently and peacefully as the night, mother slipped away into the glorious light of the life everlasting.

It seems fitting that we should be remembering her here in this happy way on the day the Christian Church calls All Saints Day. Because she is and was a saint. She wouldn't want to be called that, but she was. Not a plaster saint, not perfect, but a saint in the New Testament sense, a saint by faith, which is much better than all our faulty stereotypes of what real saints should be like.

You smash the old stereotypes when you remember mother. She loved good food, for example. Aren't saints supposed to fast, almost starve themselves? Not mother. She loved to cook, and she loved to eat what she cooked. For a while we kept telling her, "Not so much salt, mother, not all those rich desserts, or you'll die young". After she passed 80, that advice didn't seem to make much sense.

And she loved pretty things and bright colors. Aren't saints supposed to look drab and colorless, in sackcloth and shapeless garments? Not mother. It didn't bother her at all when her beautiful red hair turned snow white. "Now I can wear red," she said, "it always used to clash with my hair." So she wore red, and she was beautiful in red. But a saint in red?

And oh how she loved to fish. She was well over 80, 85 I think, when she caught the biggest fish of the day in Commencement Bay, and laughed with delight when it was announced over the radio: "85 year-old woman makes the catch of the day!"

And we were proud of her, of course, when she was named Senior Citizen of the Year in Spokane County. But those aren't the things we remember best today. We remember her best as a wonderful Christian woman who loved people, and loved her family, and loved her Lord. No sticky sentiment. She could be refreshingly frank about human faults, about all of us. I married

Eileen, and she said once before we were married, "I'm sorry for Sam. I don't think Eileen knows how to cook". Well, she was wrong for once. Even saints can make mistakes. The Bible saints did.

Her kind of love was just good, honest, old fashioned Christian love. She knew everybody's name, and talked to everybody. Even out in Korea when she visited us once for four months, though she didn't know a word of Korean she kept talking to people. One day in Seoul traffic we stopped at a stop-light and a laborer pulling a heavy cart piled to the sky with all kinds of merchandise pulled up alongside. Mother roled down her window and started talking to him. "Mother," we said, "He doesn't understand what you're saying". But she went on talking to him. "My, that's a heavy load. You must be very tired". And he looked up at the strange, white-haired lady in the car, and smiled back at her, and nodded politely. And she said, "See, he does understand". I think perhaps he did--not the words, but he knew a friend when he saw her smile. She was a great teacher and she loved her students. She started teaching at age 19, at \$60 a month, with a \$5 raise a year, in a school that had run her predecessor out of town. "They won't run me out of town," she said. And they didn't. And 75 years later she could still tell you the names of all the fifteen students in that first one-room schoolhouse. She loved people.

And she loved her family. I'm just a son-in-law, but I called her "Mother", not "mother-in-law", or even Mother Flower. We all did, because she was a mother... and a grandmother, and a great-grandmother, which that generation could't pronounce so they called her "G-G" (for great-grandmother). Four generations. And when you put both sides together, Fraziers and Flowers, they just about fill up half the state of Washington. The family was talking about her last night, remembering. One said, "Remember how we used to pack the kids into the car to drive up to Rockford to Grandma's, and how excited they got trying to be the first to see Rockford around the curves. And how they'd say, "There'll be the cookie jar, and cookies". And there always were. Often still warm from the oven.

But best of all, she loved her Lord. When she sang in church, as soloist, or in a duet or in the choir, she sang not just to the congregation, she was singing as to the Lord. When she taught Sunday School, it was not just for her students, it was for the Lord.

One last remembrance tells it all. When Eileen was about four or five or six years old, she woke up suddenly one night crying. Maybe it was a bad dream; maybe she'd heard about a death in the community. I don't know. But mother heard her sobbing, and came in and sat down on the bed, and just hugged her. "What's wrong, dear," And Eileen said, "I was afraid you

might die, mother". For the first time in her life she was faced with the fact that even mothers can die, and just the thought of it devastated her. Mother just hugged her tighter and said, "Well, that won't happen for a long, long time" (she didn't know how long that would be!) "But don't worry. That's not the worst thing that can happen, dying. The worst thing is if a person lives, but lives in a way that is not pleasing to God who loves us very much. And Eileen went back to sleep.

So now Mother has died. A long, long time later just as she said. But that's not the worst thing. No way. She had lived so long and so beautifully, that it did please God, and he took her to be with him far closer than she had ever been before.

I hope, that when we also die, as we all must some day, those who love us will be able to say as today we say of mother, that we loved people, and loved our families, and loved God, in ways that pleased Him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to whom be all the glory, now and evermore. Amen.

Samuel H. Moffett
Puyallup and Rockford, WA
Nov. 1, 2, 1991

funeral.ser (Rest. sh)

1995

All my memories of David are happy memories. Those wonderful Scots stories. We kept calling him back at Nassau Club for a lunch lecture near Burns Birthday on Scotland and he kept us rolling with laughter. Remember in Pilgrims Progress Christian at the river which flows by the throne of God, "And all the trumpets sounded on the other side." Not harps, trumpets. And for David bagpip

Not all people like cemeteries. I do. No ghosts that's pagan, and we're Christian. And no depression. Grief yes, but not depression. We're Christian. And even the gravestones remind us of a stone that was rolled away, and of the One who rose in triumph from the grave, and who has gone before us as He promised, to prepare a place for us "near to the heart of God".

"There is a place of quiet rest, Near to the heart of God. A place where sin cannot molest, Near... There is a place of full release, Near... A place where all is joy and peace, Near... O Jesus blest Redeemer, Sent from the heart of God.

Hold us who wait before Thee, Near to the heart of God."

- Sam Moffatt

FUNERAL

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F. M. 12.4

Do the Dead Know What is Happening on Earth?

"Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day..."

—ST. JOHN 8:56

There is a well-known story about William Temple when he was Archbishop of Canterbury. He had preached somewhere on the subject of life beyond death; and following the Service he was approached by a woman who told him her husband had passed away about six months before. Then she asked the Archbishop, "Do you think in heaven my husband and I will recognize each other?" Dr. Temple is supposed to have replied, "Madame, don't make God out to be a complete idiot!"—which is to say, we are certainly dead wrong if we imagine God's eternal plans are even less intelligent than our own would be. God made us for *this* life to be unique and complex personalities, which is what makes this life so interesting and exciting. How then could we suppose that when we go on in the next life to something better, it will be something worse?—such as a place where we didn't even recognize each other. Well, people are concerned about that. An article in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL claims that if you are a non-fiction author and want to make a lot of money, write a book about life after death. Jesus must have understood that yearning in the human heart even two thousand years ago. He, Himself, wrote no best-seller, no book at all; but He talked incessantly about the Kingdom of Heaven and what it would be like—it was His theme.

The part of the Bible which is the oldest—that is, which was first put together as a book—is the story of Job. Even Genesis and Exodus were actually written later in time than Job; and there, over two millenia before Christ, the everlasting, never-settled,

always-nagging question originally, for the first time, rears its head: "If a man dies," asks Job, "will he live again?" (Job 14:14) Everybody wants to know that. Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross became famous—we only recognize her name—because she changed her mind on the answer to Job's question, and I quote her; she says, "I no longer believe, as I once did, that death is the end of life. Now I am certain it is not." *We* knew that, you and I; not because we interviewed people, as she did, who almost slipped away, but were, somehow, drawn back; but we know it because God told us. With all respect to Dr. Kubler-Ross, what makes her experience with the dying and the almost-dead any more authentic than the experience of the disciples, twelve people we have known and trusted for a long time, who encountered their own proof of life after death one Easter morning at the garden tomb outside Jerusalem?

Just to stamp the final post-mark on the Christian view about life and death and life eternal, let me direct you to the first little, short, almost abrupt verse Sandy McConnel* read in the morning lesson—St. John, chapter eight, verse fifty-one, just nine words, no word of more than two syllables; Jesus is speaking, and He says, "Anyone who obeys My teachings will never know death." How could it be any clearer than that? When He said it back in old Jerusalem, they reacted with ridicule. They said, "Even the greatest of the patriarchs, Abraham, is dead! All the prophets are dead! Who do you think you are?" Jesus replied, "I am nothing; I am simply telling you the truth about God. As for Abraham," said Jesus, "he rejoiced when he found out I was coming here." (John 8:56) Now that's something to ponder: Abraham, in heaven, still alive, keeps up with the news, knows what's happening on earth, and rejoices when he learns of God's plan to send Christ here. But this sermon is not about Abraham: it is about your mother, your father, your husband, your wife, your child, your friend, your grandparents—whoever you have loved who has died. I would have to say, on the strength of

*An Associate in Ministry at Shadyside Church.

Christ's teaching, especially in the passage we're looking at this morning, anybody who cared about you when here on earth still cares about you, knows about you, and understands the difficult complexities of your life even better than you do—and I mean right now. I believe that's what Jesus teaches.

I have observed the most unexpected emotional reflexes to the hard mysteries of life, the hardest of which, certainly is death. Here's a father I have known whose twenty-one-year-old son had a motorcycle accident; it's been four months, the boy is still in a coma, and probably never will awake. And the father's reaction? When asked how does he cope with it, he says, "I don't know, but I will never speak an unkind word about anybody ever again." Why is that his response to his son's slow death? Here's a woman whose husband was always a vigorous athlete, was out jogging one day, as he did every day, age forty-eight; and in the suburban street near their home he dropped over dead. His wife's reaction? When asked how she copes with it, she says, "I don't know, but my heart goes out to everyone carrying a burden, and I have simply got to be a more helpful person than I have been." Why is that her reaction to her husband's sudden death? I have a dear friend, who, whenever we speak of someone now gone, now living the everlasting life, will always say, "You know, he's listening." Yes, I guess I do know that. What else does the Bible mean when it says that we are "surrounded by a cloud of witnesses"? (Hebrews 12:1) Don't you ever feel the presence of someone who has gone ahead? I feel it very strongly in this pulpit. In the vestry where we hang our robes, there is an old gown that belonged to Howard Scharfe,* and another one that belonged to Hugh Thomson· Kerr.* They are literally falling apart; but I won't let them be discarded. You'll think this is silly, but I feel that there is a sort of unction, a presence, in those garments (if only that it reminds me and my colleagues that there is a tradition here for us to know and

*Both former ministers of Shadyside Church.

respect); and two men *whose whole lives* were this Church are watching and listening along with "a cloud of witnesses" who have sat where you are sitting, and have gone on to the farther shore, and are watching and listening. My reaction is, because of them and because they follow what's happening here, I want to do the best I can...like that father whose son is dying, and like that wife whose husband died.

Whatever our religious questions and problems may be, I feel fairly certain that most people are ready to trust the words of Christ. When He says, "Love your neighbors as yourself," almost everyone sees the truth in that. (Matthew 19:19) When He says, "They that live by the sword shall perish by the sword," almost everyone, even grudgingly, will admit that is true. (Matthew 26:52) When He says, "Do unto others as you would have them do to you," almost everyone knows that's the truth, even if we don't measure up to it. (Matthew 7:12) When He says, "In My Father's house are many mansions,"—"many resting places" is the exact translation—almost everyone is skeptical. (John 14:2) Why is that? Why don't we *trust* Him about eternal resting places like we do about other things? Is it because we don't know anything about the life to come? But we do. Jesus talked about it all the time, and in the simplest of language: "Because I live, you will live also," He told us. (John 14:19)

St. Paul's version of the relationship between us, now, and those who have gone on to life eternal, is interesting: He sees it as a kind of "Chariots-Of-Fire" race. We are the runners (this is all in the twelfth chapter of Hebrews); and up in the bleachers are all those who have loved us, and cared about us, and have gone on before us. They are cheering us on, and they are concerned with us when we lag behind or don't think we have the strength to continue; and they are anxious and supportive when we pull ourselves up again and start once more, and they raise an arm, and shout a hurrah! We look up in the stands and realize we are not alone, never alone, but are pulled along by the encouragement of those who have already run and have finished their races.

I think it is Browning, in one of his stories-in-verse, who pictures the great hall of La Scala where Guiseppe Verdi has been called on stage to accept the wild acclaim of the audience at the premier of one of his new operas. He knows, in his own heart, that the opera is not as good as it should be, that it needs much more work; but the audience is excited and non-critical, they are screaming their praise, and Verdi is bowing and throwing them kisses. Then, he happens to look up into the box nearest the stage on his left, and he recognizes sitting there the old master, Rossini, sitting—not standing, not applauding, but sitting with his hands folded in his lap. And Verdi knows, instantly, that he must not eat up any more of this mindless acclamation, because he is unworthy; and he must leave the footlights and get back to his studio, to his piano, to his paper and pen, and vastly improve the new opera! The *expectations* of Rossini, which really count, are higher than the quality of music which was played that night. And don't the *expectations* of the dead influence all of us? I often hear people say, "I don't think he would want me to do that," or, "I think she would like that." My father is dead a long time, over 30 years, but because of what my father was, and what I believe he still expects of me, with all my faults, I think, I am a better man than I might otherwise be. This Church is able to be what it is for many reasons; but one very big reason is the model of leadership and generosity left by people now gone. Almost everything you see inside this room is meant to be a memorial—a memory—of someone who gave to Shadyside in life, and keeps on giving, even from heaven. The reputation this Church has gotten over the last century for its extensive mission giving is not because you and I have dug so deep in our own pockets as it is because our forefathers arranged to go on giving forever. But I will tell you, I am always impressed by the faithfulness with which the office-bearers of Shadyside really try very hard to treat our endowment—both material and spiritual—not as a property asset, but with a careful stewardship which aims to live up to the *expectations* of the dead. I think those people are watching, and are still expecting the best from us.

Jesus says, "When Abraham *saw*, observed, watched, My day, this very day, he rejoiced!" (John 8:56) What if Father Abraham saw, observed, watched our day, this very day? Would he rejoice? Or, never mind Father Abraham; what about your father or mine? Would he be rejoicing about you, and my father about me? They might. It all has to do with how trustworthy or constant we are with the inheritance entrusted to us—and I don't mean money. I mean, that entrusted to us is everything in our world, the archives of everything, built, created, preserved, given, discovered...buildings and roads, forests and seashores, and purple mountain majesties; ideas and libraries, schools and films, sounds and music, and paintings; Churches and beliefs, truths and ways of living, human relationships and love for one another, the faith of Jesus Christ and the grace of God. When the fathers look at us, at our stewardship of all these *incredibly great things*; or when anyone who has worked hard to preserve, and has gone on, looks back at our day; is there rejoicing in heaven?

I have no theories about what heaven is like, except that the Lord says it will be good; and I believe that. One of the so-called "Princeton anecdotes" about Albert Einstein is that Mrs. Einstein was asked if she understood the theory of relativity. She said, "No; but I do understand Albert." It seems to me that is exactly where we are in regard to our ability to fully comprehend heaven or any of the huge, unfathomable promises of God: We don't understand how it can be; but we do understand God. The most popular inquiry about religion from students—grade school, high school, and college—is, what happens after death? I remember when she was little talking to our daughter and some of her friends about heaven. They were fascinated, and they wanted a road map and floor plans; ha, don't we all! But we're not given that kind of information; because *we couldn't contain it, couldn't comprehend it* if we were given it. We don't understand the theory of life after death; but we do know and understand its Inventor; that's even better, and that's enough.

Leslie Weatherhead has a remarkable passage in one of his books. He tells of going to hear a violin recital by Fritz Kreisler; and I want to read you what he says:

After a program of classical music, in response to encore upon encore, Kreisler took his violin and closed his eyes, and played music never written by anyone. I am not a musical person, but it seemed to me as though he said to us, 'If you want more, you can have it. Come away from the shore; you have landed there, and you are content, and I have tried to play a few things for you. But, if you want more, come farther.' And you could hear the sounds of which he spoke—the wind in the trees, and the songs of the birds, and the rushing of a mountain brook, and the murmur of the wind, and the coming of a storm, and the splash of the rain, and the roar of the thunder. Then the storm died away, and again the birds began to sing. When his listeners had been taken into that far country, he went on and on and on, until we almost rose up in our places in the concert hall and begged him to stop, because we felt we were overhearing something which it was not yet time for us to hear...as though we were listening to the angels in the palace of God, as though we were being carried to worship before the throne of God, as though we were sharing the very agony and love and joy of God. (Significance of Silence, p. 233)

Sometimes the cloud of witnesses hints at what is to come, when we join *them* where they are.

LET US PRAY: Father, help us to be worthy of the expectations of all who love us, and especially of Your expectations, in our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

*Sermon preached by The Reverend Dr. Robert Cleveland Holland
in The Shadyside Presbyterian Church
on Sunday, 24 October 1982*

Intercession

FATHER of mercies, and God of all comfort. Look in Thy tender love and compassion, we beseech Thee, on Thy sorrowing servants. Enable them to find in Thee their refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Grant them faith and hope in Him who by death hath conquered death, and by rising again hath opened the gates of everlasting life; even Jesus Christ our Lord.

O God, who healest the broken in heart, and bindest up their wounds: Look down in tender pity and compassion upon Thy servants whose joy has been turned into mourning. Leave them not comfortless, but grant that they may be drawn closer one to another by their common sorrow. As Thou hast given them this new tie to bind them to the world unseen, so grant unto them that where their treasure is, there may their hearts be also. Fill their souls with the light and comfort of Thy presence. Grant unto them such a vision of that life wherein all mysteries shall be revealed, and all tears be wiped away, that they may be able to endure as seeing Thee who art invisible. So dwell with them and be their God, until the day break and the shadows flee away; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Lord of life, who dwellest in eternity, and who hast planted in our hearts the faith and hope which look beyond our mortal life to another, even a heavenly country: We give thanks to Thee this

day for the bright shining light of immortality in Jesus Christ. As He has showed us the blessedness of heaven on earth, and has called us into a kingdom not of this world, so may our life be made ever richer in the things that do not pass away. Raise us up, we pray Thee, in the power of His Spirit, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Prepare us to follow Him, in hope and trust, through all the darkness of the grave into the world of light whither He has led the way, in the sure and certain hope of eternal life; through Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

O Thou who hast ordered this wondrous world and who knowest all things in earth and heaven: So fill our hearts with trust in Thee that by night and by day, at all times and in all seasons, we may without fear commit those who are dear to us to Thy never-failing love for this life and the life to come. *Amen.*

Communion of Saints

O LORD God, the Light of the faithful, the Strength of those who labor, and the Repose of the blessed dead: We give Thee thanks for Thy saints who have witnessed in their lives a good confession, for all the faithful departed, and for those dear to our own hearts who have entered into rest. . . . Grant us grace so to follow their good example that we may be one with them in spirit, and, at the last, together with them, be made partakers of Thine eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS FOR THE CIVIL YEAR

NEW YEAR'S DAY

ETERNAL God, who makest all things new, and abidest for ever the same: Grant us to begin this year in Thy faith, and to continue it in Thy favor; that, being guided in all our doings, and guarded in all our days, we may spend our lives in Thy service, and finally, by Thy grace, attain the glory of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, who art, and wast, and art to come, before whose face the generations rise and pass away: Age after age the living seek Thee and find that of Thy faithfulness there is no end. Our fathers in their pilgrimage walked by Thy guidance, and rested on Thy compassion; still to their children be Thou the cloud by day and the fire by night. Where but in Thee have we a covert from the storm, or shadow from the heat of life? In our manifold temptations, Thou alone knowest and art ever nigh; in sorrow, Thy pity revives the fainting soul; in our prosperity and ease, it is Thy Spirit only that can keep us from pride and keep us humble. O Thou sole Source of peace and righteousness, take now the veil from every heart, and join us in one communion with Thy prophets and saints, who have trusted in Thee and were not ashamed. Not of our worthiness, but of Thy tender mercy, hear our prayer; for the sake of Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

THE CIVIL YEAR

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MEMORIAL DAY

ETERNAL God, Father of our spirits. We rejoice in all who have faithfully lived and triumphantly died. We give Thee thanks for all blessed memories and all enduring hopes; for the ties that bind us to the unseen world; for all the heroic dead who encompass us like a cloud of witnesses. We pray that we who have entered into the heritage of their heroism and self-sacrifice may so honor their memory and so preserve and further their high purposes that the nation which they defended may stand in all coming years for righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. *Amen.*

Lord God of Hosts, in whom our fathers trusted: We give Thee thanks for all Thy servants who have laid down their lives in the service of our country. Unite all the people of this nation in a holy purpose to defend the freedom and brotherhood for which they lived and died. Grant, we beseech Thee, that the liberty they bequeathed unto us may be continued to our children and our children's children, and that the power of the Gospel may here abound, to the blessing of all the nations of the earth, and to Thine eternal glory; through Jesus Christ Thy Son our Lord. *Amen.*

INDEPENDENCE DAY

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly beseech Thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of Thy favor and glad to do Thy will.

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Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance; and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one happy people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in Thy name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to Thy law, we may show forth Thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble suffer not our trust in Thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Lord God of our fathers, who hast granted unto our country freedom, and established sovereignty by the people's will: We thank Thee for those whom Thou hast raised up for our nation, to defend our liberty, preserve our union, and maintain law and order within our borders. Ever give unto the republic wise and fearless leaders and commanders in every time of need. Enlighten and direct the multitudes whom Thou hast ordained in power, that their counsels may be filled with knowledge and equity, and the whole commonwealth be preserved in peace, unity, strength, and honor. Take under Thy governance and protection Thy servants, the President, the governors of the states, the lawgivers, the judges, and all who are entrusted with authority; so defending them from all evil and enriching them with all good that the people may prosper in freedom be-

neath an equal law, and our nation may magnify Thy name in all the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

LABOR DAY

ALMIGHTY Father, who by Thy Son Jesus Christ hast sanctified labor to the welfare of mankind: Prosper, we pray Thee, the industries of this land, and all those who are engaged therein; that, shielded in all their temptations and dangers, and receiving a due reward of their labors, they may praise Thee by living according to Thy will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, who in Thy providence hast appointed to every man his work: We humbly beseech Thee to put away all strife and contention between those who are engaged in the labors of industry and those who employ their labor. Deliver them from all greed and covetousness, and grant that they, seeking only that which is just and equal, may live and work in brotherly union and concord, to Thy glory, their own well-being, and the prosperity of their country; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, Thou mightiest Worker of the universe, Source of all strength, and Author of all unity: We pray Thee for our brothers the industrial workers of the nation. As their work binds them together in toil and danger, may their hearts be knit together in a strong sense of their common interests and so fulfill the law of Christ by bearing the common burdens. Grant the organizations of labor quiet patience and prudence in all

Thee for all who in school or laboratory, in church or state, in home or industry have sought to fill life with the mind of Christ. We thank Thee for those dear to us, forgotten by the world but still living in our hearts, who rest from their labours, and whose works do follow them. Make this day of memory a day of peace through our faith that they live with us in Thy love. Grant that though dead they may still speak to us, bidding us further every cause of righteousness and truth which they have served, and assuring us that they without us shall not be made perfect. Amen.¹⁷

INDEPENDENCE DAY SUNDAY

Call to Worship

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage (*Psalms 33:12*).

Invocation

O eternal God, through whose mighty power our fathers won their liberties of old: Grant, we beseech Thee, that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain these liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.¹⁸

Scripture Lessons

Psalms: 18:1-20; 33:12-22; 48:1-3, 7-14; 107:1-8; 121:122; 124; 146.

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 4:1-14. Isaiah 26:1-4, 7-8, 12.

New Testament: John 8:31-36. Romans 12:1-13. Galatians 5. I Timothy 2; 3. Hebrews 10:32; 11:16; 12:28. I Peter 2.

National Litany

Leader: O God, our Lord, who hast made us one nation out of many peoples: Amid our diversities of race and class and tradition, unite us in a common love of freedom and in high ambitions.

Response: Help us to establish our land in every righteous way. Maintain our generation in liberty and the struggle for justice and good will.

Leader: O God, remember not the offenses of Thy people; deal not with us after our sins, neither reward us according to our wickedness.

Response: From the love of ease, blindness of heart, and presumptuous pride, save us, O Lord.

Leader: From class hatred, racial antagonisms, the seeking of self advantage and forgetfulness of the general good, save Thy people, O Lord.

Unison: Teach us, O Lord, to cooperate effectively with other nations, to work for the abolition of war, the establishment of international law, and whatever else may pertain to the general good.

Pastor's Independence Day Prayer

Grant us, O God, a vision of our land, fair as she might be; a land of justice, where none shall prey on others; a land of plenty, where vice and poverty shall cease to fester; a land of brotherhood, where success shall be founded on service, and honor be given to worth alone; a land of peace where order need no longer rest on force, but on the love of all for their land, the great mother of the common life and welfare. Hear Thou, O Lord, the silent prayer of all our hearts, as in city, town, and village we pledge our time and strength, and thought to hasten the

peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation (*II Corinthians 5:19, 20; Isaiah 52:7*).

Invocation

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed: Kindle, we pray Thee, in the hearts of all men the true love of peace, and guide with Thy pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nation of the earth; that in tranquility Thy Kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of Thy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.²⁰

Scripture Lessons

Psalms: 46; 67.

Old Testament: Isaiah 2:1-5; 11:1-10; 41:9-14, 17-20.

New Testament: Matthew 26:47-52. John 18:36. Hebrews 12:1-29. James 3:13-18; 4:1-10.

World Order Litany

Leader: O Father of all men, we pray for the realization of brotherhood among the nations, a brotherhood rooted in Thy Fatherhood. May each nation find its own freedom in giving itself to world comradeship, and in rendering service to the good of all.

Response: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Leader: Unite all peoples of the world in an order of peace. Destroy the influences which create bitterness and division. Purge diplomacy and commerce of all that is base and mean, and hasten the day when nation shall not rise up sword against nation, nor learn war any more.

Response: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Leader: O Thou whose service is perfect freedom, look on us, we beseech Thee, the fetters of the hindered races of

earth; deliver them from galling bonds and heal their wounds. May their rights and liberties be protected by the great nations of mankind; and grant that each tribe and people, freed by justice to do justly, and by mercy to be merciful, may find its soul in the unity of love, and do its part in Thy world family.

Response: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Leader: Save the world from unholy ambition, from the lust of power, and from armed enmity among the nations; and prosper those who seek to check the beginnings of discord and to spread the message of good will.

Response: Hear our prayer, O Lord.²¹

Pastor's World Order Prayer

O God, who hast made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, who didst send the Prince of Peace to show us how to live in harmony: Forgive our personal involvement and the seeds of disorder, war, enmity, and selfishness which are in our own hearts.

Surely, Lord, Thou dost grieve over the plight of our world. Surely, the impoverished, thirsting, hungering masses fill Thy heart with despair. Surely Thou dost yearn for a change in the cruel, ruthless, selfish policies which dominate our nations. Surely Thou dost want a demonstration of Thy Spirit and Thy ways in order that good might dispel evil.

Grant us, then, this day, renewed concern. May we see others as they are seen through the tender eyes of Christ. Give us disturbing sympathy for innocent victims of the world's injustices. Displace our selfish smugness with involvement in the world's pain.

O Lord, we need Thy help to do something about the world's true problems, which are our own—the problem of

it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Dedication and Candle-lighting Ceremony

(Parts may be adapted and assigned to various members of the family.)

We dedicate this home to love and understanding. May its joys and sorrows be shared and the individuality of each member appreciated. We light a candle to *Family Love*.

We dedicate this home to work and leisure. May it have gaiety and high fellowship, with kindness in its voices, laughter ringing within its walls. We light a candle to *Happiness*.

We dedicate this home to a friendly life. May its doors open in hospitality and its windows look out with kindness toward other homes. We light a candle to *Friendship*.

We dedicate this home to cooperation. May its duties be performed in love, its furnishings bear witness that the work of others ministers to our comfort, and its table remind us that God works with us for the supply of our daily needs. We light a candle to *Cooperation*.

We dedicate this home to the appreciation of all that is good and true. May the books bring wisdom, the pictures symbolize things beautiful, and the music bring joy and inspiration. We light a candle to *Appreciation*.

We dedicate the time and talents of those who will live here to serve our generation and to help build a world in which every family may have a home of comfort and fellowship. We light a candle to *Christian Service*.

We dedicate this home as a unit in the Church universal, an instrument of the Kingdom of God, a place for worship and Christian training and a threshold to the life eternal. We light a candle to *Spiritual Enrichment*.

As the flames point upward, so our thoughts rise in gratitude to God for this home, and in prayer for His blessing upon it.²⁶

Prayer of Dedication

Lord, bless this dwelling, not for any richness of material nor beauty of design, not for grace of furnishing nor for loveliness of site. For all these we thank Thee. But especially bless this house because here is home; home for son in years of grave decision; home for daughter in spring-time of her life; home for her who weaves the fabric of the family, the repeated tasks of days and nights; home for him who must please and fight and labor to protect, enrich, to train and fit the young; refuge for hard-pressed spirit and pain-filled body; castle behind whose walls all may rest to go out refreshed to fresh achievement.

Let doors be wide enough to welcome all friendly spirits, the table have bread for all hungry mouths, the beds hospitable to the weary, the books appraising of the harvest of the spirit, a home friendly and kind to every neighbor. Here let all gossip cease, all unworthy blame be left unspoken; here may gaiety and seriousness alternate to meet the total needs of life. Here let steadiness replace nervous haste, a sense of mission relieve nagging lust for power. Here let the old, quaint, true, everlasting gospel embrace a family in undying bonds of love, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.²⁶

Thee for all who in school or laboratory, in church or state, in home or industry have sought to fill life with the mind of Christ. We thank Thee for those dear to us, forgotten by the world but still living in our hearts, who rest from their labours, and whose works do follow them. Make the day of memory a day of peace through our faith that they live with us in Thy love. Grant that though dead they may still speak to us, bidding us further every cause of righteousness and truth which they have served, and assuring us that they without us shall not be made perfect. Amen.

INDEPENDENCE DAY SUNDAY

Call to Worship

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the God whom he has chosen as his heritage (*Psalm 33:12*).

Invocation

O eternal God, through whose mighty power our fathers won their liberties of old: Grant, we beseech Thee, O God, we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain these liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.¹⁸

Scripture Lessons

Psalms: 18:1-20; 33:12-22; 48:1-3, 7-14; 107:1-8; 122; 124; 146.

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 4:1-14. Isaiah 26:1-4, 7-12.

New Testament: John 8:31-36. Romans 12:1-13. Galatians 5. I Timothy 2; 3. Hebrews 10:32; 11:16; 12:28. Peter 2.

National Litany

Leader: O God, our Lord, who hast made us one nation out of many peoples: Amid our diversities of race and class and tradition, unite us in a common love of freedom and in high ambitions.

Response: Help us to establish our land in every righteous way. Maintain our generation in liberty and the struggle for justice and good will.

Leader: O God, remember not the offenses of Thy people; deal not with us after our sins, neither reward us according to our wickedness.

Response: From the love of ease, blindness of heart, and presumptuous pride, save us, O Lord.

Leader: From class hatred, racial antagonisms, the seeking of self advantage and forgetfulness of the general good, save Thy people, O Lord.

Unison: Teach us, O Lord, to cooperate effectively with other nations, to work for the abolition of war, the establishment of international law, and whatever else may pertain to the general good.

Pastor's Independence Day Prayer

Grant us, O God, a vision of our land, fair as she might be; a land of justice, where none shall prey on others; a land of plenty, where vice and poverty shall cease to fester; a land of brotherhood, where success shall be founded on service, and honor be given to worth alone; a land of peace where order need no longer rest on force, but on the love of all for their land, the great mother of the common life and welfare. Hear Thou, O Lord, the silent prayer of all our hearts, as in city, town, and village we pledge our time and strength, and thought to hasten the

MEMORIAL DAY SUNDAY

Call to Worship

The righteous live for ever, and in the Lord is their reward and the care of them with the most High. Therefore shall they receive the crown of royal dignity and the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand (*The Wisdom of Solomon 5:15-16*).

Invocation

Eternal God, Father of our spirits: We rejoice in all who have faithfully lived and triumphantly died. We give Thee thanks for all blessed memories and all enduring hopes for the ties that bind us to the unseen world; for all the heroic dead who encompass us like a cloud of witness. We pray that we who have entered into the heritage of their heroism and self-sacrifice may so honor their memory and so preserve and further their high purposes that the nation which they defended may stand in all coming years for righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours. Amen.¹⁵

Scripture Lessons

Psalms: 44:1-4, 6, 7, 20-26; 46; 77:1-20; 137:1-6; 140:1-21.

Old Testament: Isaiah 52:3-12.

New Testament: John 14:1-15. II Timothy 1:1-2; Hebrews 11:17-12:2. I Peter 1. Revelation 7:9-17; 21:1-7; 21:23-22:5.

Memorial Litany

Leader: For the land of our birth, with all its charities and liberties, for all the wonder of our country's story,

Response: We praise Thee, O God.

Leader: For leaders in nation and state, and those who in days past and in these present times have labored for the commonwealth; for those who in all times and places have been true and brave, and in the world's common ways have lived upright lives and ministered to their fellows; for those who served their country in her hour of need, and especially for those who gave even their lives,

Response: We praise Thee, O God.

Unison: O Almighty God and merciful Father, whose nature and whose name is Love: As we give Thee thanks for the courage and the strength vouchsafed to those Thy servants, we would remember before Thee those who mourn them as their kindred. Look in mercy upon them; and as this day brings them memories of those whom they have lost, may it also bring them consolation from Thee, quickening in them the sense of communion with the world unseen, and confirming their assurance of that day when Thou shalt restore to them their own in the very presence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.¹⁶

Pastor's Memorial Day Prayer

God of our fathers, who hast made us the heirs of faithful men of all generations who have given themselves to great endeavors and made life nobler because they have walked its ways: We thank Thee for every memory that enriches life with high ideals and great purposes. We thank Thee for all who have loved this land which we love, who have been eager to establish freedom and justice within our borders, and have given themselves for the fulfillment of their longings. We thank Thee for all who have labored for a friendly world, free from hatred and bitterness, and have spent themselves in their pursuit of peace. We thank

Why was I made to hear Thy voice
And enter while there's room,
While thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?

Let us ask again, what was the meaning and purpose in gathering His own in the guest chamber, before He suffered?

Tired and soiled from the toil of the day, the disciples needed cleansing. The owner of the house had provided the accustomed basin and water and towels for the washing of the feet of the guests; but none of the disciples remembered to offer this humble service. It was because their hearts needed cleansing that their feet went unwashed.

Jesus girded Himself with the towel, and began to wash the feet of the lowly Galileans. And what did He thus reveal to them? That not only their feet, but their hearts needed cleansing—pride and unholy ambition and selfishness needed His cleansing power.

When we gather about the Lord's Table, we need not only His assurance that we are His own, but also His cleansing touch. Hurrying through the hours of the crowded days of the twentieth century, God's people are defiled by the push and shove of the world. We need His cleansing, and we cry out with the psalmist: "Wash me . . . purge me."

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat;
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet,
By faith, for my cleansing I see Thy blood flow:
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

—James Nicholson

We ask again for the meaning and purpose of the Master's call to the guest chamber in the long ago, and He makes it

clear: "Know ye what I have done unto you?" Does not His question point a third lesson?

He knew that the disciples had been quarreling among themselves about first places in His Kingdom, and He knew that with such cancerous thoughts in their hearts, they could not become effective followers.

Thus He chose the guest chamber to teach His disciples the essential truth that when we follow Him, we think not of ourselves, but of others.

Happy the pastor, the church, the denomination that allows Jesus to teach His own the basic lesson of humility, unselfishness and sacrifice; and we learn this lesson best when we are apart with Him, looking at Him, listening to Him.

In my early ministry, a friend said one Saturday afternoon before the Sunday for the Lord's Supper: "I cannot be at the service tomorrow morning. You do not understand, but one of our deacons kept me from getting a promotion, and I cannot sit there and see him serving the Lord's Supper without remembering how he treated me."

Turning to the telephone as soon as the young man left the study, I called the deacon in whose office he worked. The deacon came to the study immediately, and I told him what his employee had said. Surprised and shocked, the deacon asked if I would go with him to see the young man. Within an hour the two men were rejoicing in complete reconciliation. It was easy to unravel the ball, once the deacon explained that he had in his file the letter which urged the young man's promotion, but the home office had decided to send in another young man.

"Pastor," said the young man, "you see now what a great injustice I have done my boss. I ask his forgiveness, and I

tion survived, and many of us give thanks unto God upon every remembrance of the guest chamber, and the blessing of that special room, dedicated to friendship and fellowship. The idea deepened into the thought of maintaining the guest room in one's heart, beautifully expressed by a modern poet, Mary Robinson, in these lines:

There is a temple in my heart;
A temple swept and set apart.

Dwelling for a moment longer on this cherished tradition, I recall in my childhood how we joined as children with our parents in preparation of the guest chamber when the beloved old pastor of our little rural church would be coming for the weekend of his monthly preaching engagement. One boy would fill the woodbox by the fireplace in the guest chamber, and carefully set the kindling, ready for the match. Another boy would gather flowers from the yard and woodland—the particular flowers the pastor most admired. Another boy would claim the privilege of blacking his boots.

Jesus knew about guest chambers, where God's servants might rest and pray. He loved folks who kept house for Him—a guest chamber in the home, and a guest chamber in the heart.

And this unnamed friend in Jerusalem had a guest chamber ready for Jesus, happy to make it available when the Son of God declared: "My time is at hand." Do we have a guest chamber in our homes today—in our hearts today—ready and waiting for Jesus?

But let us move on to the meaning and purpose of that particular guest chamber of which Jesus is speaking in our text, and the meaning and purpose of the guest chamber in

WHERE IS THE GUEST CHAMBER? 81

which we gather about the Lord's Table in our modern meetinghouses. What happened in that guest chamber in Jerusalem?

It was His Table—is His Table, and about His Table, He meets with His own. Let us remember, when we come to the blessed hour of the Lord's Supper, that only the Master has the right to challenge the one who ventures to enter without having on the wedding garment. Paul declares that they eat and drink unworthily who fail to discover the body and blood of Jesus.

Yes, He meets with His own; and He knows His own. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, but He allowed Judas to enter the guest chamber, that he might exclude himself. He did not belong to Jesus, and was miserable in His presence. Judas could not remain in the guest chamber, nor can anyone who has not received the Saviour in repentance, through faith.

When Jesus meets with His own about the communion table, He reveals Himself to us in terms of love. Love is the password to the Lord's Table. "We love him because he first loved us. . . . God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. . . . This is my body which is broken for you. . . . This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. . . . This do in remembrance of me."

And when He meets with His own about the communion table, we ask, with Isaac Watts:

While all our hearts and every tongue
Join to admire the feast,
Each of us cries with thankful heart,
Lord, why am I a guest?

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The golden evening brightens in the west;
 Soon, soon to faithful warriors cometh rest;
 Sweet is the calm of Paradise, the blest.
 Alleluia!¹

(Other appropriate hymn: "When on My Day of Life")

Scripture Reading

"I lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot be moved, he who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore" (Psalm 121).

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35, 37-39).

Prayer:

Almighty God, who art like the sky that bends above us, and surrounds all the earth; who art the true and lasting light which shines even in the times of our shadow and darkness; look upon Thy children with constant mercy, and give us a spirit of understanding promised by Thy dear Son.

When our eyes no longer behold what we have loved, and when we listen for footsteps of those who have gone from our sight and hear them not, we can but turn to Thee.

We thank Thee for this life which has come to its final change. May it still be an inspiration and guide. May these who have been loved by *her*, keep in mind that they must love and serve Thee more because *she* is not here. May they show their love for *her* by doing things *she* loved the best. May they be gentler, kinder, more thoughtful, thus to compensate for *her* loss.

Help us to be grateful for Thine eternal love which summons souls to rest from their labors, and dost permit them at eventide to enter into Thy peace. Amid the changes of this world, make us strong and calm, eager to serve, more inclined to love, and persuade us that neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Hymn: (Optional) "Abide with Me"

(This may be organ music, choral anthem, vocal solo, or spoken)

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
 The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
 When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
 Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
 Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
 Change and decay in all around I see;
 O Thou, who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
 What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
 Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
 Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
 Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;
 Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
 In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.²

Meditation:

THE BEAUTY OF THE SUNSET

Have you ever sat on a hill and watched the sun going down—and has your soul thrilled at the beauty of the sunset? That is what I want you to see in this death today. I like to think of this world as a park filled with gardens and playgrounds, trees and lakes, museums and swimming pools. We are like children privileged to spend a day in the great park. The time we are privileged to spend is not the same in length, in light, nor in beauty. Some days are long and sunlit, others are cloudy and stormy, as in a winter's tale. Some children are able to stay only a few short hours. Some must go home at noon of day while the sun is still shining. Others stay till the sun begins to set in the beauty of the west. For each of us the moment comes when the great nurse, Death, takes us by the hand and quietly says, "It is time to go home, my child; come, come with me." This one has been privileged to live until the shadows of the setting sun had lengthened, and the evening had come; the business of the world was hushed, and the fever of life was over, and work was done. Oh, the beauty of the sunset of a life like this.

I

It is a beautiful death, because it climaxes a wonderful life. One need not eulogize the character of the departed to you who have known *her*—*her* life tells its own story. The friendships expressed here demonstrate *her* influence; *her* family tells something about the quality of life.

Some there are who come to the end of life filled with re-

morse and regret. "Take my wasted years," said one, "and bury them with me." He had misused his life, had furthered no great cause of human welfare, had buried his talents in cheap, selfish security. To such the Master said, "Thou wicked and slothful servant," and instructed that they be cast into outer darkness.

The sweetest words which one could ever hear, the most beautiful benediction that could conclude a life, the most coveted epitaph that could grace one's farewell, would be those words spoken by the Master when He said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The one we honor lived a useful, devoted, unselfish life. The world has been made better for *her* having lived. The Kingdom of Heaven has been strengthened by *her* efforts. Surely, the congratulatory hand of life's all-wise Judge reaches out to the accompaniment, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

II

This is a beautiful death also, because it comes as a friend to old age. I really mean that. We often wish in a childish way that life would never end, and in our rebellious moments we wonder why God created the universe so death comes at all. We feel death is an enemy of life—and not a friend.

But that is not right. It is the knowledge that our years are limited that makes them so precious. Plato was right when he declared that infinite life on this earth for us human beings would not be desirable even if it were possible. Who would want to live a never-ending existence on earth through endless years of struggle and revolution, pain and worry, conflict and labor—with no possibility of escape? Life would

be so monotonous and boring with no heights or depths, without crescendos or diminuendos, with no challenge nor achievement. What drudgery if day would never end, and the sun would never set.

Have you toiled through the hot, sweaty, sweltering day, looking forward to the sunset? Time moved so slowly; it seemed the day would never end. Then, when evening finally came—how welcome, what cool peace and embracing rest; what satisfying release, what a wonderful friend.

This one has lived many years, and death must have come as a friend indeed.

III

Then, this is a beautiful death because there are rays of promise for a better tomorrow.

O happy soul, be thankful now, and rest!
 Heaven is a goodly land;
 And God is love; and those He loves are blest;
 Now thou dost understand
 The least thou hast is better than the best
 That thou didst hope for; now upon thine eyes
 The new life opens fair;
 Before thy feet the blessed journey lies
 Through homelands everywhere;
 And heaven to thee is all a sweet surprise.³

The best is yet to be. Death is not the end; it is only a new beginning. It is going to bed on a cold, black night, and waking with the sun always shining.

Victor Hugo, the French author, wrote, "When I go down to the grave, I can say, like many others, 'I have finished my day's work.' But I cannot say, 'I have finished my life.' My day's work will begin the next morning. The tomb is not

a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes on the twilight, and opens on the dawn."

Rev. Robert J. Burdette, shortly before his death, wrote a personal letter to the editor of an Eastern paper, saying: "I watch the sunset as I look out over the rim of the blue Pacific, and there is no mystery beyond the horizon line, because I know what there is over there. I have been there. I have journeyed in those lands. Over there where the sun is sinking is Japan. That star is rising over China. In that direction lie the Philippines. I know all that. Well, there is another land that I look toward as I watch the sunset. I have never seen it. I have never seen anyone who has been there, but it has a more abiding reality than any of these lands which I know. This land beyond the sunset, this land of immortality, this fair and blessed country of the soul—why, this heaven of ours is the one thing in the world which I know with absolute, unshaken, unchangeable certainty. This I know with a knowledge that is never shadowed by a passing cloud of doubt. I may not always be certain about this world; my geographical locations may sometimes become confused, but the other world—that I know. And as the afternoon sun sinks lower, faith shines more clearly and hope, lifting her voice in a higher key, sings the songs of fruition. My work is about ended, I think. The best of it I have done poorly; any of it I might have done better, but I have done it. And in a fairer land, with finer material, and a better working light, I will do better work."⁴

Sunset and evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the bar,
 When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crossed the bar.⁵

Benediction:

"O Lord, support us all the day long of our troublous life until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in Thy mercy grant us a safe lodging and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen."⁶

Postlude:

"Now the Day Is Over"

XXI

For an Unchurched Person

Prelude:

"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy" (Emmelar)
 "When Thou Art Near"
 "Nearer, My God, to Thee"

Opening Scriptural Sentence:

"Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee" (Isaiah 26:3).

Invocation:

Eternal God, and Heavenly Father, from whom we have come, and to whom our spirits return: help us to wait before Thee with reverent and submissive hearts, that as we listen to the Scriptures beautifully written and meaningfully read, we may be lifted above our darkness and distress into the comfort and peace of Thy presence; through Jesus Christ, the Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading:

"Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me! Thou hast said, 'Seek ye my face.' My heart says to thee, 'Thy face, Lord, do I seek.' Hide not thy face from me. Turn not thy servant away in anger, thou who hast been my help. Cast me not off, forsake me not, O God of my salvation! For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up. Teach me thy way, O Lord; and lead me on a level path because of my enemies" (Psalm 27:7-11).

"But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise as some count slowness, but is forbearing toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives

"Gloria Patri" (Congregation)

Hymn: (Optional) "Blessed Assurance"

(This may be sung by congregation, or as a solo)

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory, divine!
Heir of salvation, purchased of God,
Born of His spirit, washed in His blood.

Chorus:

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour, all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight.
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.¹

Scripture Reading:

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever" (Psalm 23).

"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

"For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' 'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain" (I Corinthians 15:53-58).

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy" (Psalm 103:2-4).

Prayer:

"O God who art the strength of Thy saints and who redeemest the souls of Thy servants: we bless Thy name for all those who have died in the Lord, and who now rest from their labors, having received the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Especially we call to remembrance Thy loving kindness and Thy tender mercies to this Thy servant. For all Thy goodness that withheld not *his* portion in the joys of this earthly life, and for Thy guiding hand along the way of *his* pilgrimage, we give Thee thanks and

praise. Especially we bless Thee for Thy grace that kindled in *his* heart the love of Thy dear name; that enabled *him* to fight the good fight unto the end, and to obtain the victory; yea, to become more than conqueror, through Him that loveth us. We magnify Thy holy name that *his* trials and temptations being ended, sickness and death being passed, with all the dangers and difficulties of this mortal life, *his* spirit is at home in Thy presence, at whose right hand dwelleth eternal peace. And grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that we who rejoice in the triumph of Thy saints may profit by their example, that becoming followers of their faith and patience, we also may enter with them into an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen."²

Meditation:

WHEN DEATH IS PRECIOUS

About A.D. 125 Aristides, the Greek scholar, explaining the success of Christianity, said, "If any righteous man among the Christians passes from the world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God and they escort his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby."

That is the spirit of this day. Sir Edward Jones attended the funeral of Robert Browning in Westminster Abbey, but he didn't like it. He knew this great poet, the virtues of his character, the abiding faith in his soul, the influence of his life, and he said the funeral was too sad and sombre. "I would have given something," he wrote, "for a banner or two to wave, and much more I would have given if a Chorister had come out of the triforium and rent the air with a trumpet."

Through the tears and saddened emotions of this day

should be a joyous optimism, sustained by the faith that "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

The word precious means "of great value, very dear, highly esteemed." To say death is ever very dear, or of great value, or highly esteemed seems unthinkable, the comment of a hard heart, or the expression of a vengeance-seeking enemy. Most of us assume death to be the worst thing that could befall us. Death—we fear it, hide from it, attempt to evade it.

But the Scripture says, "precious, very dear, of great value, highly esteemed in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Man and God look at events in different ways. God's outlook is not the same as man's. God sees the end of things from the beginning, while man sees only in part, through a glass dimly.

Note, however, not all deaths are precious. Some people disappoint God so! They mess up their lives so; they rebel against the Heavenly Father. When such a one dies without change, it grieves the heart of God.

I

Death is precious to God only when it comes to a saint. God longs for the fellowship of His children—and when death comes to them, and they are able to come to His side forever, it is a very dear experience, of great value—precious to Him. The very purpose of creation, of the universe and earthly life, is to develop saints worthy of eternal existence with God. Life is our trial run where we attempt to qualify; death is the promotion. Life is a school; death is the commencement.

A farmer cultivates his field, plants the seed, and eagerly tends it, then awaits the harvest when the kernel shall be

separated from the stalk. The gospel seeds have been planted to grow and develop our souls in Christ's likeness. Death is the harvest time when the soul is separated from the outworn body—it is a time of rejoicing.

How pleased God must be today! I called in a home one evening where the only son had just returned from the front-line battlefields where he had been for nearly a year. From the dangers of that battle front, and the temptations of army life, he came home pure, safe, and sound. What a reunion! What tears of joy were shed! It was a precious homecoming. God is filled with joy as he welcomes a faithful soldier home, safe, unblemished and unharmed from the trials of earthly life.

II

Not only is death precious to God, but also to the saint. This is a day of victory. It is the crowning event of life, entry into the eternal Kingdom. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them [his saints] that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9).

O, it must be wonderful! Paul the Apostle longed to die saying, "For to me . . . to die is gain." He was in flesh only to serve God. An elderly lady said, "I am getting a bit anxious to take that journey."

THE VICTORS

They have triumphed who have died;
They have passed the porches wide,
Leading from the House of Night
To the splendid lawns of light,
They have gone on that far road
Leading to their new abode,
And from curtained casements we
Watch their going wistfully.

They have won, for they have read
The bright secrets of the dead;
And they gain the deep unknown,
Hearing Life's strange undertone.
In the race across the days
They are victors; theirs the praise,
Theirs the glory and the pride—
They have triumphed, having died!³

It is worth working for, planning for, sacrificing for, and laying up treasures for. When you and I die, only one thing matters: not how much money we have, not how many flowers decorate the chancel, not how many people attend, not how many lodges we belonged to—only one thing—what is in your soul? How much of Jesus Christ is there? Are you in harmony with God? *What will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?*

Choral Anthem:

"Hallelujah Chorus"

Benediction:

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work (II Thessalonians 2:16–17 AV).

Postlude:

"I Know That My Redeemer Liveth," from Handel's "Messiah"

"The Heavens Declare His Glory," Beethoven

Subject: Thanks for prayers

Date: Mon, 9 Sep 2002 22:26:00 -0300

From: "Ian S. Robb" <iansrobb@hfx.eastlink.ca>

To: "Current, Marion" <marion32@sympatico.ca>,
"Bayliss, Fred & Olive" <ombfmb@interlog.com>, <rheawhitehead@yahoo.com>,
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"Sue Rice" <surice@sover.net>

CC: "Robb, Michael" <mrobb@ns.sympatico.ca>, "Robb, Joan" <jrobb@dccnet.com>

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your email responses. Today the chief of Neurology explained to us that chances of her full recovery to her previous condition are very small. Even then, she would still have progressive Alzheimer's, and her quality of life would probably be poor.

We are all in God's hands. The way that Rona has surmounted many difficulties, including prolonged separations when Ian was overseas has been an example to us all. She has maintained her sense of humour and her desire to help others through her church and the United Church Women, the Retired Teachers' Association, the Girl Guide movement, the Federation of University Women. Most of all, she has served her family. She has been maintained by her Faith.

It has been said that most people feel they are in the Land of the Living and are headed for the Land of the Dying. For Christians, this situation is reversed.

Thank you all for your prayers and support.

Ian and family

9/9/02 9:45 PM

MARCH 4.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

LOVE not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ~~¶~~ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

We walk by faith, not by sight.—We faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.—An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

COL. 3. 2. 1 John 2. 15.—Mat. 6. 19-21.

2 Cor. 5. 7.—2 Cor. 4. 16-18.—1 Pet. 1. 4.

M

MARCH 4.

He bowed his shoulder to bear.

TAKE, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.—Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.—Aaron held his peace.—It is the LORD; let him do what seemeth him good.

Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee.—Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

GEN. 49. 15. Ja. 5. 10.—1 Cor. 10. 11. Job
2. 10.—Lev. 10. 3.—1 Sam. 3. 18. Ps. 55. 22.
—Is. 53. 4. Mat. 11. 28-30.

EDWARD WILSON WARTER: FUNERAL

Today we are gathered here to pay our last respects to Edward Wilson Warter, beloved husband and father, who died at age 75. My father also died at age 75, and so it is a privilege for me to conduct this service. Edward was a good man, good to his friends, good to his family, a hard worker, baptized a Presbyterian. He was once elected and ordained a Presbyterian elder--and in the Presbyterian church, once an elder always an elder.

We mourn for him and for the family in its loss, but at the same time we give thanks that in the Christian faith, we accept the fact of death, which must come to us all, not as bad news but as good news. The great fact of death is that it is not the end.

In a sense, we all begin to die as soon as we are born. A million cells in our body die every day. If your hope is just in this physical body of yours you are running out of hope every day. But our hope as Christians never runs out. Our hope is everlasting. Jesus Christ died for us, he says, that we might never die. And the proof is his resurrection. By his victory over death, Jesus turns our grief and despair into joy and hope everlasting.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven
There is no place where earath's failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measure of the mind,
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's word,
And our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of the Lord.

During the Korea War a group of refugees managed to escape across the barbed wire and minefields of the 38th parallel into free south Korea. They had lost many friends, many loved ones along the way. But after a time of grieving, the pulled themselves together and found work and put up little shacks for their homes. "But", they said to themselves, "homes for ourselves is not enough. It was God who brought us

through the minefields, and we had a church in North Korea, we must build a house of God, a church again here in the south. And do you know what they named their new church? They called it "The Church of Everlasting Joy". They had lost everything, possessions, families, everything but they had not lost their "everlasting joy". God loves us, and has promised in His Word that in Him we live forever. "The last enemy to be destroyed, the Bible says, is death.

"There is a place of quiet rest, Near to the heart of God,
A place where sin cannot molest, Near to the heart of God.
There is a place of full release, Near to the heart of God,
A place where all is joy and peace, Near to the heart of God.
O Jesus, Blest Redeemer, sent from the heart of God.
Hold us who wait before thee, Near to the heart of God.

- Samuel H. Moffatt
Princeton 1999

Address at the Funeral of Brian Bishop of Edmonton,
Friday October 2nd 1998.

< By the Bishop of London,

God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

It was so very sudden. At 8a.m. Brian telephoned a priest who lived near by to say that he was having some kind of attack. The priest ran to the house and thank God found Brian still conscious. He was able to pray with him and later anoint him and tell him, for us all, before Brian lapsed into unconsciousness that he was much loved and that he was especially loved by the clergy. He died as he would have wished in the midst of his episcopal service.

Later in John Chapter XI from which our gospel is taken there is the staccato verse 35, short but great with meaning - Jesus wept. And those around the Lord said "See how he loved him". Jesus blesses our tears. Tears on such an occasion are natural.

There are so many people here in this Cathedral Church who loved him and will miss him. We all have our own memories.

He was, of course, dedicated to the Catholic tradition in the Church of England and fought hard to preserve it. Before he was a bishop he was a great figure in Synod and wielded considerable influence in its corridors and meeting rooms. But we who knew him cannot recognise the issue obsessed and humourless figure who emerged from the mean-spirited obituary in The Times.

Look at the hymns in this service chosen out of those which he often said he would like sung at his funeral. Full of "amazing love"; "infinite grace"; kindness; sweetness; joy and Jesus. And faith "When I stand in glory I will see his face and there I'll serve my King for ever, in that Holy Place". Here was a believer and I have had a great many letters from people who did not share Brian's views but who deeply respected him as a father in God and were grateful for the

(copy 01.10)

People who are wedded to the old materialist mind-set find it very hard to conceive of life transformed when this particular body has decayed. But now when the mind-set is changing and when we have been given a picture by the scientists and thinkers of our own century of the inner life of the atom, the reality at the heart of life itself as energy organised in fields of information. It becomes easier to conceive how an individual life with all its thoughts and habits projected and all its hopes and loves enacted can be assembled by the divine wisdom into a new pattern and transformed into a new entity.

But you can debate these things for ever and equally intelligent people arrive at different ideas. A highly intelligent lady comes to the Elder Zozima in Dostoevsky's novel *Brothers Karamazov* and enquires about the plausibility of eternal life. The Elder replies that there's no proving eternal life but you can be convinced "by the experience of active love. Strive to love your neighbour actively and indefatigably. In as far as you advance in love, you will grow surer of the reality of God and of the immortality of your soul. This has been tried. This is certain."

This is the way of Jesus Christ and union with him is life in this world and in the world to come. Death hath no dominion over him. There were so many signs in Brian of a life which had gone far in turning into love. We remember the bond between mother and son. The love of the Catholic faith and fellow priests. He acknowledged his own faults with humour but as he is laid to rest in Brookwood in the St Albans Holborn burial plot beside such champions of the Catholic faith as Father Stanton and Father Mackonochie I have no doubt but that he will be swept up into the liturgy in heaven. Give rest O Christ to thy servant with thy saints where sorrow and pain are no more but life everlasting.

pains-taking and self sacrificing way in which he did his work as a bishop. He was a professional in the best sense of the word. He had always read the papers and could go swiftly to the heart of the matter answering his own leading question "What's the clue?".

Years as a parish priest especially in beloved Hoxton where he was received last night at Holy Trinity with full honours and service as a bishop had added rich experience to his innate common sense and he exposed a great deal of humbug and folly with a brisk "It's all a load of nonsense, of course".

He loved Edmonton and its parishes but he loved the clergy and appreciated their work, its difficulties and its privilege, in a special way. It was peculiarly appropriate that almost the last thing he heard on earth was that the clergy loved him as he had loved them.

But too solemn a picture would be a distortion. How we shall miss his fun. One young priest asked him for some advice on becoming a Bishop's Chaplain. "Always beware of clergy with poncey bows on their curtains." As so often you laugh and then see how wise he was.

He liked dedicated clergy, order, irony, and white wine. He disliked brown shoes in the sanctuary, "Wrong shoes" he would hiss; pomposity, unprofessional behaviour; do-it-yourself liturgy and staying awake at post prandial meetings.

Now sound views alone shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven but entry is given to those who love much.

The hope held out to us in Scripture is not that of a resuccitated corpse like that of Lazarus before the resurrection of Jesus Christ but the hope is one of transformation. "the first things have passed away and the one who was seated on the throne said "See I am making all things new".

MARCH 2.

God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

BLESSED be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi.—Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.—The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.

Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

GEN. 41. 52. 2 Cor. 1. 3-5. Mal. 3. 3.—
1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.—2 Tim. 4. 17. 1 Pet. 4. 19.
M

MARCH 2.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

THERE the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; . . . they . . . rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Our friend Lazarus sleepeth. . . . Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.—Ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope. . . . But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

HEB. 4. 9. Job 3. 17, 18. Rev. 14. 13. John 11.
11, 13. 2 Cor. 5. 4.—Rom. 8. 23. Rom. 8. 24, 25.
E

of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace" (II Peter 3: 8-14).

Hymn: (Optional) "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

(This may be organ music, choral anthem, vocal solo, or spoken)

There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word,
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord.¹

Meditation:

BEYOND SORROW

My remarks upon this solemn occasion, when we meet to pay tribute to your loved one, shall be very brief. Brief because words alone do not brighten or tarnish the future—one's life and faith determine his destiny. Brief because at such a time none of us is able to express what he really feels.

Words are inadequate to convey our full measure of sorrow.

Today, we stand face to face with the two great mysteries of the universe—life and death. A few hours ago this body had life; now, although it has the same chemical constituents, life is gone. God alone knows the meaning of life and death.

People quite naturally are saddened by death. Because of our fears, uncertainty, personal loneliness, and lack of faith, we are reluctant for death to invade our circle of friends. That reluctance was expressed by Voltaire who, having spent a life of blasphemy, said to his physician on his deathbed, "I'll give you all my fortune if you'll give me six months to live." The Queen of Scots loved life so much that she cried, "I'll give you all my kingdom for one more minute to live." Life—we love it, cling to it, fight for it. Death—we fear it.

Today, in the midst of such an experience, may we turn to the words of Jesus to His disciples when speaking about His coming death: ". . . you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy" (John 16:20). To be sure, the resurrection turned their fear into faith, their sorrow into joy, and their doubts into certainty. The same can happen to you.

What is life?

Life is a school. Death is the commencement. If we have prepared our spirits well, we will be promoted.

"All the world's a stage," said Shakespeare. We are actors who play our part and disappear. The curtain falls and all is over. If we have played our parts well, the Great Director has a great future in store.

Life is a testing road. The test ended, the road leads into a new state of existence.

Life, says James the Apostle, is a vapor that appeareth for a time and then vanishes away, like a cloud floating through the air, which finally changes to a different form of liquid.

Sir Walter Raleigh called life a journey, like a ship at sea that sails on and on. We see it going, going, going, until it drifts out of sight into another land.

When men go down to the sea in ships
Tis not to the sea they go;
Some isle or pole the mariner's goal.
And thither they sail through calm and gale,
When down to the sea they go.

When souls go down to the sea by ship
And the dark ship's name is Death,
Why mourn and wail at the vanishing sail?
Though outward bound, God's world is round,
And only a ship is Death.

When I go down to the sea by ship,
And Death unfurls her sail,
Weep not for me, for there will be
A living host on another coast
To beckon and cry, "All Hail!"²

Another has said, "Life is a game we play with our fellow men; the rules are stamped in the universe." When the game is over, and:

. . . when the One Great Scorer comes,
To write against your name,
He writes—not that you won or lost—
But how you played the game.³

Furthermore,

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me;
I may not choose the colors,
He knows what they should be;
For He can view the pattern

While I can see it only
On this, the under side.

Sometimes He weaveth sorrow,
Which seems strange to me;
But I will trust His judgment,
And work as faithfully;
'Tis He who fills the shuttle,
He knows just what is best,
So I shall weave in earnest
And leave with Him the rest.

Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why—
The dark threads are as needful
In the weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.⁴

Death, you see, is not an unforeseen accident; not something left out of the scheme of our Creator. Rather it is something well planned and necessary in the sight of God. It is an appointed event that will irresistibly come to you. "He that hath the Son hath [eternal] life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not [eternal] life (I John 5:12, AV). Weep not over this one who passes into the beyond, but see that you are prepared.

Prayer:

O Thou, who wast before all time, and will endure beyond the end of all things; who art more lasting than the rocks which have endured through the generations, or the ancient hills that look down upon thousands of generations, or the sun, moon and stars that shine upon man: we bow reverently before Thee. We know in our deepest thoughts