

5th Port 15

Light in the Darkness

— For those who mourn.



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HOW often in times of Bereavement and Sorrow we hear heart-broken utterances such as came from the lips of Martha and Mary when they lost their loved brother from that happy home in Bethany. Doubts and fears come flooding in upon our reason and the "ifs" assail us as they did those sorrowing sisters—"Lord if Thou hadst been here our brother had not died".

Have we not all experienced these doubts in times of trial and grief, when a loved one has been taken and we wonder why? We blame ourselves and wish we had taken some extra precaution, if some other means had been used that precious life may have been spared.

Dear Reader, if you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and God as your Father, you will realise there are no "ifs" with the child of God. This is no chance happening that has come to you but is one of the "all things" that work together for good to those who love God.

God is Love, and all His actions and dealings with His own are the outcome of that Love and Wisdom that never errs.

He takes His own, just when He wills, and who has a greater right? He has made us, and He has bought us, and the price of possession was paid on Cavalry. God so loved us that He gave His son to die on that Cross in our stead. If His love was so great as to give Heaven's greatest gift, His own beloved Son, as a sacrifice for our sin, can you doubt that it is that same Love that is over all our pathway here. We take joy and gladness from His hand, and can we not take grief and sadness from that same hand of love? Oh, do not think He has forgotten to be gracious.

"Not now, but in the coming years,
It may be in the better land,
We'll read the meaning of our tears
And then some day we'll understand."

We find in sickness, pain, in bereavement how little we understand God. Some souls find Him in the sunshine, when life is full of happiness and cheer, but more often we have to pass through the cloud of adversity to hear His voice. Pain and suffering find a large place in God's economy, as it is often His call to bring to Himself, and to an understanding of His heart of love. Let us not miss that gift of love because it is veiled in pain, and we only see it through a mist of tears.

He takes away your loved one because in His all wise love He sees He must, and if you accept the loss and sorrow as you accept the gain and joy in life, He will give you that priceless gift, **Himself**, as Comforter. "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you"—(John 14:18.)

Perhaps you do not know this One who longs to comfort you. Oh, do not try to drift through life without Him. Turn to Him now in your hour of sorrow, for He is the great comforter. Your nearest and dearest friend may not be able to enter into your grief and comfort you, but Jesus can; He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief—(Is. 53). He was alone in His dark hour, when He was betrayed into the hands of cruel men. His disciples forsook Him and fled. He knew what it was to be

alone in His grief in Gethsemane, when His holy soul shrank from bearing our load of sin on the Cross. They could not watch and pray with Him one hour, for He found them asleep. He looked for comforters but found none — yet He waits to comfort you.

Read in John 14 of the many Mansions that He has gone to prepare for His own. Read of the peace of heart that He gives, that the world knows nothing of, and claim that peace and comfort that comes through believing in Jesus.

When Mary was receiving sympathy from her friends in her home at Bethany, Scripture says, in John 11:29, she arose hastily and went out and they said "She goeth to the grave to weep there". But where did she go? Not to the grave of death, but to the Lord of Life! So to-day I would seek to turn your thoughts away from death — to Jesus, who said "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me tho' he were dead yet shall he live". (John 11:25).

So do not think of your loved one as lying in a cold grave, for death is not spoken of the soul, but of this mortal body which is but the tenement of the soul. The real self does not die. "It is not death to die

— To leave this weary road, And with the ransomed ones on high, To be at home with God."

That precious soul, if trusting in Christ as their Saviour, is at Home with God — asleep in Jesus awaiting that resurrection morning when the dead in Christ shall rise and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air — read 2 Thess. 14-18, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him".

The soul returns to God who gave it (Eccles. 3:21 and 12:7), and as we know God is in Heaven, so the one who knows Jesus as their Saviour goes straight to Him too. Scripture calls the Christian's passing — sleep — sleep in Jesus. Death can never enter Heaven for in Rev. 21 and 22 we read, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain", and there shall be no night there. In that City Bright there will be no need of the sun to shine in it, for the glory of God and the Lamb is the Light thereof. What a bright prospect for the Child of God! What a scene of joy and happiness! What a hope!

It is possible for you to be in the enjoyment of all these blessings, to have this hope in your heart now by coming to Jesus. Just now you

feel that the light has gone out of your life and the future seems clothed in darkness. Martha and Mary felt like that when they lost their brother, but they knew what a Friend they had in Jesus and they sent for Him — their intimate Friend! What a comfort it was to them to have the sympathy of Jesus, for He wept with them! What a wondrous sight! The Creator of Heaven and earth entered into their sorrows and wept! His humanity was shown in those tear drops and His Godhead was revealed in that power that raised Lazarus from the dead!

Oh, Reader, do not leave that scene of Bethany before thinking of Jesus as weeping for you. In that scene of death He had the bereaved of all times before His mind and He longs to comfort your sad heart.

Do not be content with an outward form of religion that knows about the Saviour. Let yours be the faith that appropriates Christ as your Saviour, and you will have Him as Guide, Counsellor and Friend to brighten a future which now may seem so dark. He can turn your mourning into a calm peace and trust in Him. He will give you "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness". Is. 61:3.

As a closing word, let me say that the sting of death is removed for the Christian; for them it is the beginning of an endless life absent from the body — present with the Lord, awaiting that Resurrection morning when we too shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and so be ever with Him. So I would ask you not to sorrow—

"As those who hopeless weep;
For He who gave hath taken,
And He who takes can keep".

May you be able to trust where you cannot trace. Bye and bye we will bless the hand that guided, and bless the heart that planned every step of our pathway down here. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face:

"The dark threads are as needful
In the skilful weaver's hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned".

To have God in your sorrow is to have consolation, for the rays of His love will bring a gleam of light amidst the darkness. There are many

sorrowing hearts in the world today. Family ties are being severed as a result of this conflict of nations, and as we read of husbands, brothers, sons, friends being killed and wounded we realise that we are living in solemn times and our only hope is in God and in Him only is our salvation.

Can you, my reader, say "The Lord is my Salvation"? Salvation is not an experience, a religion nor a condition, but Faith in a **Person** — and that Person our Lord Jesus Christ, and believing in Him you will have a **Life** that is everlasting, a **Love** that is unchangeable, and a **Peace** that passeth all understanding. May you know what it is to turn to Him who said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." (John 14:6.)

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