

GOD'S TOMORROW

INTRODUCTION

1. Life is a Journey into Day.
 - a. II Cor. 5:4 "For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

There Is No Death!
What Seems So Is Transition
Is But A Suburb of the Life Elysian
Whose Portal We call Death.
-- Longfellow

2. God intended much more than can be realized in a few years in one short lifetime.

Henry Sloane Coffin wrote:

"In these three score and ten years, longer or shorter, who of us succeeds in more than commencing to share the Father's purpose, commencing to be sympathetic, responsive and responsible, commencing to enter on life with God? And the commencement is so enriching that we cry out to go on. Men and women who do not interpret life as Jesus did, who have no interest in His God and His plans . . . may conceivably content themselves with what earth offers them. But even they . . . have moments when friendship seems too big a thing to be explored in any period of mortal years, moments when vision fascinates them with a prospect of a kindlier world too different from ours to be expected within their lifetime and too captivating not to fill them with an eagerness to share in it, moments when love opens up for them a height, breadth, length, and depth in some other soul and in their own which makes them feel they were not meant to die. And when beside these natural human experiences we enter into Jesus' friendship for men, into His vision of the world that should be, into his experience of the love of God, then it is impossible for us to content ourselves with earth's brief term, and such confinement becomes unthinkable. These cravings [are] the response of our spirits to God's will that we should share with Him His ageless life."

I. OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS LIMITED AND INCOMPLETE.

- A. John 17:3 "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

- B. I Cor. 13:12 "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."
- C. I John 4:8, 16 "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. ... And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."
- D. Eph. 2:7 "That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

J. Robert Watt writes:

"Just as at birth we are released from the body which contains us, so at death we are released from this body which contains our Spirit, and it becomes not death, but a birth into something higher.

- E. I Tim. 5:8: "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."
- F. II Cor. 5:1-5 "For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee."

"Death is not a Wall beyond which we cannot go,
But a door - A door into a larger, fuller life."

Near the end of his life, Thomas Carlyle wrote:

"The older I get, and I am now standing on the brink of eternity, the more there comes back to me the first question and answer from the catechism I learned as a child: "What is the chief end of man? To glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."

The assurance of endless life to come gives meaning to our present years. Life as we now experience it could not be truly satisfying without the assurance that, as Longfellow wrote in the old familiar lines:

Life is earnest, life is real,
And the grave is not its goal.
"Dust thou art, to dust returneth,"
Was not spoken of the soul.

Because the grave is not its goal, life has meaning and purpose, even with all the problems, disappointments, and sorrows that may attend it.

II. WE CAN LIVE DAY BY DAY IN QUIET CONFIDENCE.

So shall it be at last in that bright morning
When I shall wake and earth's shadows flee,
That in that hour, fairer than daylight dawning,
Shall rise the joyful thought, I am with Thee!

When we fly on a cloudy day when the overcast is heavy and dark, as the plane flies upward from the ground toward the thick layer of clouds, the heavy billows appear ominous and foreboding. As we enter the cloud bank, all seems dark and the way unknown. But when the plane rises above the clouds, the golden light of the sun suddenly bursts upon us and the clouds - bathed in sunlight - are white and beautiful.

Death is a way unknown to us, and as we journey toward it, often it appears ominous and foreboding. In the experience of it, death may momentarily seem a plunge into the dark unknown. But in the love of God, the darkness will be only for a fleeting moment, and we shall quickly move out into the glorious light beyond and find ourselves safe Home in God's Tomorrow.

- A. John 14:1-2 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."
- B. Job 26:7-9 "He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. He binds up the water in His thick clouds, yet the clouds are not broken under it. He covers the face of His throne, and spreads His cloud over it."
- C. Rev. 21:3-4 "And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

- D. Rev. 22:1-2 "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."
- E. Ps. 16:11 "You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore."
- F. Ps. 87:3,7 "Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God! Selah. ... Both the singers and the players on instruments say, "All my springs are in you."

III. HEAVEN IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE "PUT DOWN ROOTS" AND STAY.

- A. Heb. 13:14 "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come."
- B. Heb. 11:10 "For he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."
 - 1. The variety of activities in Heaven must be great.
- C. Matt. 8:11 "And I say to you that many will come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."

William H.H. Murray wrote many years ago, "heaven ... is not peopled with ghosts and spectres, shadows and outlines of being, but with persons and forms palpable to the apprehension. Its multitudes are actual, its society natural, its language audible, its companionships real, its loves distinct, its activities energetic, its life intelligent, its glory discernible. Its union is not that of sameness, but of variety brought into moral harmony by the great law of love, like notes which, in themselves distinct and different, when combined make sweet music. Death will not level and annul those countless differences of mind and heart which make us individual here. Heaven, in all the mode and manner of expression, will abound with personality."

IV. A NEW JERUSALEM WILL BE THE CAPITOL OF HEAVEN.

- A. Ps. 102:25-28 "Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, all of them will grow old like a garment, like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You

are the same, and Your years will have no end. The children of Your servants will continue, and their descendants will be established before You."

- B. II Peter 3:10-13 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells."
- C. Rev. 21:1-3 "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God."
- D. Isa. 46:9-11 "Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,' calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass, I have purposed it; I will also do it."

We hear Whittier's aspiration:

No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
Nor street of shining gold.
Some humble door among thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
Where flows forever through heaven's green expansions
The river of thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.

--John greenleaf Whittier, At Last

V. HOWEVER LONG THE PRESENT AGE CONTINUES - THE OUTCOME HAS ALREADY BEEN DECIDED.

- A. Rev. 1:18 "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

In the dark of our night there shines a light,
Though the heart knows the pangs of sorrow.
For Faith still clings, and Hope still springs,
And Love still sings of joyful things
As we journey toward God's Tomorrow.
--John Oxenham's *God's Tomorrow*

- B. Rev. 11:15 "And the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"

- C. Psalm 19:1-4 "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

"History is not a road that leads to nowhere, as some have imagined. God has a purpose and goal in history. The outcome of history was appointed by God before creation, and nothing that happens in the course of events can change it: history will end with the triumph of the kingdom of God."

- D. Luke 24:44-47 "And He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' Then He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. And He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'"

- E. I John 4:9-10 "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

He took our sins and our sorrows,
He made them his very own.
He bore the burden to Calvary,
And suffered and died alone.
--Charles Gabriel, *My Saviour's Love*

VI. HEAVEN IS OUR ASSURED HOME.

- A. Rom. 8:31-39 "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written:

'For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.'

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"I know not when I go or where
From this familiar scene;
But Christ is here, and he is there,
And all the way between.
And when I leave this life I know
For the Life as yet unknown,
Though late I stay, or soon I go,
I shall not go alone."

B. By faith we know what the end will be:

1. The early Christians lived in a hostile world.
2. Their faith was severely tested:
 - a. They remembered that all that matters is yet to come, and is certain and secure in the love and faithfulness of God.
 - b. They saw through it to another world.

C. Eternity is my strong city.

Somewhere beyond - I know not where,
Beneath what fair unclouded skies;
I only know beyond - somewhere,
The Land of Fulfilled Promise lies.

I hear the call, I see the light -
A sure clear gleam upon the way;
And up the steep, across the night,
I go to meet the certain Day.

--God's Tomorrow ...