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Death Defeated and Defied: A Message of Comfort, Consolation, and Cheer

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Death Defeated

and Defied

A Message of Comfort, Consolation and Cheer

By R. A. Torrey

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THE BIOLA BOOK ROOM
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OR He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death. . . . .

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption,
and this mortal shall have put 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 giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. 15:25, 26, 51-58.

“Our Saviour Christ Jesus ... abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Tim. 1:10.

“Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Heb. 2:14, 15.

“But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.” Phil. 1:23, 24.

“For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed, we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Now He that wrought us for this very thing is God,
Who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Being therefore, always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith, not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord.” 2 Cor. 5:1-8.

“But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” 1 Thess. 4:13-18.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Cor. 1:3, 4.
Our subject this morning is, Death Defeated and Defied.

Let us look to begin with at seven passages of Scripture, in which we find set forth the Christian view of that much dreaded and unnecessarily dreaded experience which men call death. We look first at a few verses from that wonderful chapter in the Word of God, in which our Lord Jesus Christ's own victory over death, and the victory over death of every believer in Christ, is most fully set forth. 1 Cor. 15:25, 26, 51-58.

"For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death . . . . Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be
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changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put 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 giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Here we are told of our Lord Jesus Christ’s complete victory over death and

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the consequent complete victory over death of all who are in Christ, and in view of that victory that Jesus Christ won over death and of our victory in Him, the Apostle Paul looks this dread enemy who has made so many strong men cower, straight in the eye, and hurls defiance in his face, exclaiming, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?” And so we too may calmly, yes, exultantly, look this dread monster Death straight in the eye triumphantly crying, “O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?”

I never before had felt this so profoundly as I did a week ago Tuesday when I received a telegram from my son-in-law reading, “Margaret (our youngest child) has developed peritonitis. Doctor thinks end is near.” Her mother and I prayed together and sent this reply, “Telegrams received Sunday and Tuesday. We are
praying and trusting God and desiring His will be done.” Then I went to my room to be alone with God and it became clear to me that it was not the will of God that our daughter remain with us many days more, and these “God-breathed” words of Paul, “O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?” came surging into my heart, filling it with an inexpressible sense of joy and triumph, and I arose and wrote another telegram (which I did not send) reading, “Good-night, Margaret. The morning soon cometh. Jesus is coming. Father and Mother.” Then we calmly awaited the word that came two days later, “Margaret has gone home.” Death has lost all its terrors for me and mine.

Now turn to 2 Tim. 1:10:

“Our Saviour Christ Jesus . . . abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Death is in itself, a dreadful thing; but Jesus Christ by His death and by His resurrection has abolished it, made it inoperative. It no longer exists for the believer in Jesus Christ. It is most emphatically one of the “has beens” for the believer in Jesus Christ.

Many years ago while Mr. Moody was still living, he came to my house one morning at Northfield and said, “Irene (his beloved little granddaughter) has passed away, and Will wishes you to conduct the funeral,” and then he added, “Torrey, let us make this a time for giving a testimony for the resurrection. Let the service be triumphant.” It was a triumphant service. It was held on the lawn in front of Mr. Moody’s house amid all the beauties of Northfield. Dr. A. T. Pierson and Rev. Campbell Morgan spoke and then I spoke. All three addresses were as Mr. Moody suggested full, not of gloom, but of the triumph of the resur-
rection of Christ and of our coming resurrection in Him. I rose to close the service and Mr. Moody, rising on the balcony of the second story of his house back of me, said, "Mr. Torrey, I wish to say a word." He truly loved that grandchild. I do not know that I ever knew another grandfather who so intensely and tenderly loved a grandchild as he loved her, but his voice rang out clear and strong with a testimony for the resurrection and of joy in Jesus Christ in this hour of trial, and then he said, "We shall meet again in the morning." He spoke these words also, "Some day you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody is dead. Don't you believe a word of it. When the papers say he is dead, he will be more alive than he is now."

Now turn to Heb. 2:14-15:

"Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought (or, render inoperative) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

The thought of death has filled men with terror throughout all the centuries. "The fear of death" has cast a darker shadow over the lives of men than almost any other thing, but the intelligent believer in Christ is completely delivered from this fear. Death has no terrors whatever for the one who believes in Jesus Christ and who reads, and believes His Bible. He can look at death as calmly and triumphantly as Mr. Moody did in the few hours immediately preceding his own home going. A few weeks ago I came across a letter that I wrote Mrs. Torrey on December 24th, 1899,
from Northfield, whither I had hurried in response to a summons there occasioned by Mr. Moody's homegoing. Let me read you part of it, especially the part that tells how fearlessly and joyously and triumphantly Mr. Moody faced his departure from his earthly home to his eternal and heavenly home.

East Northfield, Mass.
Will's House,
Dec. 24, 1899.

My —:

All is triumph and rejoicing and hope here. It began with Ambert, who met me at the train. I met Fitt next, and he is way up in the clouds. Paul went in with Fitt and me to see his father. He lies on the sofa in the room over the study just as natural as can be. He simply seems to be asleep, just as he used to lie on the sofa in his room at the Institute. Fitt said, "It has knocked the bottom out of death." Paul stood by quiet and smiling. Mrs. Fitt is more quiet. To my remark how glorious it all was, she answered, 'Yes, if he had only taken us all with him.' I did not speak then of the work that there was for them to do here. Mrs. Will Moody is very bright. Will is heartsick but also rejoicing. We had a long and joyful talk. Mrs. Moody, I have not seen yet as she got up late, but she too is bearing up. She told Mr. Scofield yesterday that it was the rounding up of his life.

Let me tell you something of his last hours. I think he knew since Wednesday night that the end was near, and Thursday several lost hope. Friday morning about seven-thirty Will was dozing by the fire and heard his father talking in a low tone. He slipped to the bed and his father's eyes were closed, and he heard him saying, "This is bliss. Earth is receding, but heaven is opening. God
is calling me.” “No, no, father, you are dreaming.” “No! I am not dreaming: I have been within the gates: I have seen the children’s faces.” Later he mentioned Irene and Dwight by name. Will called the family. About eight-fifteen he had a relapse. Will says, He passed through the death struggle then. His pulse seemed to cease. Dr. Wood came in and administered nitro-glycerine. He said feebly as he came to, “No pain, no valley. Is this death? It isn’t bad. It is sweet.” Later he said again and again, “It is so beautiful.” Later as he became quite strong he looked around and said, “What’s this? Have I been in a trance? This is my coronation day. I have long looked forward to it. It is glorious!” Then he said, “It is strange. It is December 22. August 22nd Irene died in this very room.” He also said, “I have often thought I would make my will. I have not any money to leave you, but work.

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I will give the Institute to Percy and Emma. And Will, I’ll give Mt. Hermon to you and the seminary to Paul. Ambert will look after things and help you all.” Turning to his brother George, he said, “George, your work is nearly ended. You won’t be long after me.” Mrs. Fitt said, “What about mother?” “She is like Eve, she is mother of us all.” Presently Mr. Moody said, “I feel much better. Why may not God perform a miracle and raise me up?” Then turning to Dr. Wood, “Doctor, the first thing is to dismiss you. If God is going to perform a miracle let Him do it His Own way. Send for Dr. Scofield and have him pray for me.” Then he insisted that they take the stones away from his chest, and said, “I will get up.” Dr. Wood protested, but he arose and walked over to his chair. He grew weak and said, “Will, kneel down and pray.” Will says, “I could not pray for him to get well.” Will’s prayer
is, "We don't want to call father back if it is not Thy will, if he is going to be laid aside." Instantly his father had a fainting spell. Dr. Wood wanted to inject nitro-glycerine again, and Mr. Moody yielded, and also consented to go back to bed. At another time he said, "Don't call me back. God is calling me and I want to go." Mrs. Fitt said, "Father, we can't spare you." He answered, "I am not going to throw my life away. If God has more work for me to do I am not going to die." He said again, "If God is calling I must be up and going." As it drew near the end Mrs. Moody bowed her head and he saw her. He straightened himself out in bed and looking at her said, "This is dreadful hard for you. You have always dreaded a shock. Brace yourself for it." Early in the morning before the collapse he had said to her while they were alone, "Mama, you have been a good wife to me." As it drew very near the end the doctor wanted to give him another injection and he said, "Doctor, is this right? It makes the strain very long and hard for the family?" Then he dropped peacefully away. They all say that the last four hours were wonderful, and take all the sting out of the experience."

Further on in the letter I told how the children of the town would have their Christmas exercises and presents the next day in the Church, as usual, and further on still, I say, "I expect tomorrow to be one of the happiest Christmases I ever spent. When I got up this morning and looked out of the window I said, 'Northfield is beautiful as ever, but the light is gone.' Then the answer came, 'No! The light has not gone: God is the Light of this place.'"

Ah, for a believer in Jesus Christ, there is nothing to fear, but everything to welcome, in what men call death.
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Now turn to what Paul says about his own fast approaching death in Phil. 1:23, 24:

“But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.”

For himself Paul desired death, that is, “To depart and be with Christ,” for that was “very far better;” but (not for anything that earthly life could bring him of joy, or of achievement or of glory but because they needed him) he generously chose to stay here a little while longer, and have his own greater joy of being with the Lord Jesus postponed for their sake.

What death means to the believer in the time between our departure from this earthly body and our getting our glorified resurrection body at the return of the Lord Jesus is set forth very fully in 2 Cor. 5:1-8:

“For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life. Now He that wrought us for this very thing is God, Who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord (for we walk by faith not by sight); we are of good
courage, I say, and are willing rather
to be absent from the body, and to be
at home with the Lord."

Here we see that the state of final and
full blessedness when we shall have a re-
demed body as well as a redeemed and
triumphant and joyous spirit, awaits the
return of our Lord Jesus to this earth;
but that in the meantime, as soon as we
leave this body and it is laid away to await
the coming of our Lord, our already de-
demed spirits instantly depart to be with
Christ in unutterable blessedness, we are
"absent from the body" but "at home
with the Lord."

The thought of the full glory that
awaits us, the glory of our bodies as well
as the glory of our spirits, at the return of
the Lord Jesus, is more fully set forth in
1 Thess. 4:13-18:

"But we would not have you ignor-
ant, brethren, concerning them that fall
asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the
rest who have no hope. For if we
believe that Jesus died and rose again,
even so them also that are fallen asleep
in Jesus will God bring with Him.
For this we say unto you by the word
of the Lord, that we that are alive, that
are left unto the coming of the Lord,
shall in no wise precede them that are
fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself
shall descend from heaven, with a
shout, with the voice of the archangel,
and with the trump of God: and the
dead in Christ shall rise first; then we
that are alive, that are left, shall to-
gether with them be caught up in the
clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and
so shall we ever be with the Lord.
Wherefore comfort one another with
these words."

Now let me read you our last text.
2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

"Blessed be the God and Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of
mercy and God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

What a wonderful name for God this is, "The Father of mercies (better translated, the Father of compassions) and God of all comfort." This "FATHER OF COMPASSIONS AND GOD OF ALL COMFORT" has so fully and wonderfully comforted us in our present "affliction" that I had a great longing to comfort any others who might be "in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

Death is in itself an enemy, a mighty, for centuries through the world, slaying dark and terrible enemy. He has stalked his thousands, millions and billions. No man was able to stand before him. He has desolated countless homes and broken billions of hearts, but for the Christian he is a completely defeated enemy; he is an utterly conquered, destroyed and abolished enemy, conquered, abolished and destroyed by Jesus Christ, the Mighty Son of God, in His atoning death on the cross, in which He "despoiled the principalities and the powers (that is, the principalities and powers of darkness), and made a showing of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15), and "through death brought to nought (or, rendered inoperative) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14), and by His resurrection, in which death was "swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54); and now every believer in Jesus Christ and in the Bible can look this hideous monster right in the eye and shout, "O Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?"
1. WHAT DOES DEATH END FOR BELIEVER?

It is said by many in these days of materialism and blinded vision in which we are living, that “death ends all.” No, death does not end all, for the believer it ends nothing that is worth keeping. But Death does end much. WHAT DOES DEATH END FOR THE BELIEVER?

1. In the first place, Death ends all sickness for the believer, and ends it forever. When our loved ones fall sick we take them to God in prayer, and ask Him to heal them, and we do well so to do. In His Own Word He bids us to do that. (Jas. 5:14). And oftentimes, whenever it is wisest and best to heal them, whenever it is well, as determined by His infinite love and omniscient wisdom, to heal them, He gives us to offer “the prayer of faith” and “The Lord raises them up” (Jas. 5:15), it may be to years of strong and healthful and effective service, but only to again “fall sick of the sickness whereof they die” (2 Kings 13:14). But oftentimes for reasons that we do not as yet understand, and do not need to understand (and, if we are wise and trustful, do not ask to understand), but which our infinitely wise and loving Father, “the Father of compassions and God of all comfort” perfectly understands (and that is enough) God does not give to us to offer “the prayer of faith,” and they, as men say, “die,” but as God says, “fall asleep,” and we lay away their bodies to await a better resurrection (that is, a better raising up), but our loved ones themselves, leaving these tenements of clay, “the earthly house of our tabernacle (or, tent)”, “depart to be with Christ,” never to be sick again; and our prayer after all is answered in a far better way as far as they are concerned, than if their bodies had been healed and thus the old house
or tent in which they had lived had been temporarily repaired. Yes, death ends all sickness forever for the believer in Jesus Christ. Our loved ones who have fallen “asleep in Jesus” will never, never, never be sick again. Thank God! For them it is true already that God has wiped “away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away.” (Rev. 21:4.)

2. In the second place, Death ends all pain for the believer in Jesus Christ, and ends it forever. This we see in the verse just quoted, “Neither shall there be pain any more.” Many of us have seen our loved ones not only very sick but in very great pain. Oh, how we have suffered as we saw them suffer; but, if they have “fallen asleep in Jesus,” there will never be another twinge of pain, no, not one. The aching head, the quivering nerves, the tortured members of one kind and another are at rest, and at rest forever. Praise God! Pain has its uses, very beneficent uses morally, spiritually and intellectually, and sometimes even physically; but, for all that, thank God when it ends! and for our loved ones who have “fallen asleep in Jesus” it has ended forever. And for us who have not as yet “shuffled off this mortal coil” and still at times suffer excruciating physical torments; if we are believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, when the time comes that we quit this present “earthly house of our tabernacle,” when we, as men say, “die,” all pain will be over and over forever. Why then should we fear death, if we believe what this God-breathed Book teaches us about the Resurrection? Why should we not shout with Paul of old, “Death is swallowed up in victory. O
Death, where is thy victory? O Death, where is thy sting?"

Happy day,
Yes, thrice happy day,
When we shall quit this tenement
of clay,
And hie ourselves away,
To be forever with the Lord.

But happier day yet when He Himself shall come to raise the sleeping clay and transform it into His Own image, physically and spiritually, and when even these mortal bodies shall have "put on immortality," and "this corruptible shall have put on incorruption," (1 Cor. 15:51-53), when the body that is "sown in weakness" shall be "raised in power," and when the body that is "sown in dishonor" shall be "raised in glory" (1 Cor. 15:42, 43), when the Lord Jesus Himself shall come from heaven and "fashion anew the body of our humiliation (that is our earthly body) that it may be con-

formed to the body of His glory according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself." (Phil. 3:21.)

3. In the third place, **Death ends all weakness for the believer in Jesus Christ, and ends it forever.** As we watch our loved ones suffer and fade away like the fair lilies, it is not only their sickness and their pain that racks our hearts, but their weakness, especially if they have been persons of unusual vigor, energy and activity. But thank God, death ends all weakness for our loved ones who have "fallen asleep in Jesus." They have at once an energy and vitality and a power to accomplish all they will that they never had in their most vital days on earth, and when He comes (and He is coming soon), then we shall have a body like His Own, a body of limitless energy, a body that never wearies, a body that will instantly
carry into execution every purpose of our will. The night of the next day after word came to us that our daughter had gone home, when my wife came into my room where I was working that she might say good night, as we bowed together in prayer, and as I said to our God and Father that we thanked Him that Margaret’s pain was all over, my wife broke in and said, “Yes, and she is well too.” It had never impressed me in just that way before, and when she had gone I went and knelt down, and, looking up into the face of the “Father of compassions and God of all comfort,” I said, “I thank Thee, Heavenly Father, that our prayer is answered, though not as we had hoped, but in a far better way, and Margaret is well, and well forever. And all pain is gone, and gone forever.” And then I thought of those long, weary months that we watched her fade away, and I added, “And all weakness is gone, and gone forever.” Praise God!

4. In the fourth place, Death ends all defeat and failure, all disappointment and sorrow, for the believer in Jesus Christ, and ends them forever. For the believer in Jesus Christ, defeat and failure, disappointment and sorrow of all kinds, belong entirely to this present life. Over there all is victory.

5. In the fifth place, Death ends all death for the believer in Jesus Christ, and ends it forever. Death itself ends death. Jesus Christ “By (His own) death brought to nought (or, rendered inoperative) him that had the power of death” (Heb. 2:14), and for the believer the death of the body is deliverance from all death. There is indeed a “second death” for the one who has rejected Jesus Christ, but for the believer in Jesus Christ there is no further death, but life everlasting, life
that never ends; and, when He comes, a body also that shall never die. As God puts it in the next to the last chapter in the Bible, "Death shall be no more" (Rev. 21:4). Death is indeed for the believer a conquered enemy and becomes itself the end of all death. On the back of our conquered enemy we shall ride, or rather soar, into eternal glory.

II. WHAT DEATH BEGINS FOR, OR BRINGS TO, THE BELIEVER IN JESUS CHRIST.

But death not only ends many things that have been a burden and sorrow, but it also begins many things, or brings many things, that are glad and glorious.

WHAT DOES DEATH BEGIN FOR THE BELIEVER OR BRING TO THE BELIEVER?

We have not time to answer at length, but just a few words.

1. First of all, Death brings radiant joy for the believer in Jesus Christ. Our loved ones have known many bright and radiant days here, but they are nothing to the joy they knew the moment the eyes of the body closed upon this fair and beautiful world and the eyes of the spirit opened upon the beauty of His face, and they were "satisfied with beholding His form" (Ps. 17:15 R.V.).
which is very far better.” The intimacy and fulness of that personal communion with Christ that our loved ones who “fall asleep in Jesus” enjoy the moment their spirits leave their bodies, we cannot fathom nor understand. We can only know it is so, and rejoice that it is so. Would we call them back? Not for one moment. We shall not hear their voices for a few days, but they hear His; and we also shall very soon.

3. In the third place, Death brings to the believer in Jesus Christ a real likeness to Himself. It is when He comes again that we shall be fully like Him, physically, morally, spiritually and intellectually. As we read in Phil. 3:20, 21:

“For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His

glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself.”

And in 1 John 3:2:

“Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is.”

But it is because “we shall see Him as He is” that we shall become “like Him” when our Lord Jesus comes, and as soon as our spirits leave their bodies behind, to await the Resurrection, they themselves “depart to be with Christ,” and they behold Him and therefore they must become like Him. They were much like Him in many ways while they were here with us, but they are immeasurably more like Him now. A little daughter aged nine years and twelve days, left our home to go to be
with Christ the year before Mr. Moody passed away, and Mr. Moody telegraphed me, "Elizabeth's prayer is answered. She is very beautiful." What he referred to was this: Some years before at Northfield, Dr. Teunis Hamlin of Washington had preached a sermon in which he had told of the effect of believing in Christ upon the beauty of the human face. The sermon when repeated to our little Elizabeth had made a deep impression upon her mind, and when she prayed that night she said, "God, make me very beautiful and send Margaret as a foreign missionary." And so Mr. Moody telegraphed, "Elizabeth's prayer is answered. She is very beautiful."

III. WHAT DOES DEATH DO FOR THOSE OF US WHO ARE LEFT BEHIND?

Now just a few words concerning WHAT DEATH, WHEN IT COMES TO OUR LOVED ONES, DOES FOR US WHO, FOR A LITTLE WHILE, ARE LEFT BEHIND.

1. First of all, Death brings us joy in contemplation of the joy that comes to those we love. Death is not loss but gain for them; and, unless our love for them is very selfish, we would not have them back here with us. Nay, rather, we rejoice in their joy in being with Him.

2. In the second place, The Death of our loved ones brings to us who believe in Jesus Christ and believe in this Book, deliverance from worldly ambitions and worldliness in all its forms. How transient, illusive, unsubstantial and not
worth while all the world has to offer seems when some loved one, especially some loved one in the fulness of their youthful strength and hope, is cut down and departs to be with Christ. In the last ten days God’s words to us in Col. 3:1-4 have sung themselves in my heart as never before:

“If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory.”

And 1 Jno. 2:17 has new meaning and force:

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

3. Just one more thing, What the Death of our loved ones ought to do for us if we really believe in the Resurrection, it ought to lead us to give ourselves to God’s work as never before, for the “night cometh, when no man can work,” and “The morning cometh” also. This is Paul’s last word as he brings to a close that wonderful setting forth of the truth regarding Jesus Christ’s resurrection, and our own in 1 Cor. 15:58. Listen to the last verse in the chapter:

I care not for this world’s wealth, or praise, or ease, or pleasure in these days; for my loved one has gone to meet the King, and I too am going to meet Him soon, or else better yet, He is coming to meet me. Do not talk to me of what this world can do for me, I have something infinitely better, and this “world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”
"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, *always abounding in the work of the Lord,* forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord."

While we rejoice in the joy of our loved ones, yet we must not spend our time dreaming about that, except in so far as it fills our hearts with gratitude to God, and fills us with "the joy of the Lord which is our strength" (Neh. 8:10), and sends us forth to wear ourselves out in bringing others to believe the glorious truth that robs death of all its terrors, and enables us to see death "swallowed up in victory," and enables us to cry, "Oh Death, where is thy victory? Oh Death, where is thy sting?"