

Because I Live, Ye Shall Live Also

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I have a text for the morning sermon. I turn to John 14. Our Lord spoke of His going away and said, yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more but ye see Me. Then follows a sentence which is complete in itself. You could put a period after me and make it a capital B and you'd have a sentence standing alone, one of the greatest utterances in the entire Bible: because I live, ye shall live also.

Now centuries ago, many centuries ago, possibly as long ago as before Moses' time, there had lived a fine old man. He hadn't always been old. He had grown up as all do. But now he's in perhaps late middle life and he is a man deeply troubled and in great physical pain. And with a shadow of impending death hanging over him, as he thought then, he was giving to the world's oldest and toughest question, a lot of earnest thought. And he asked a question. This question was serious and utterly sincere. Nothing academic here, because upon the answer to this question, rests, not this or that school of thought. But upon the answer to this question rests all the values of light. If it is answered, yes, it changes the whole complexion of our lives. If it is answered, no, it throws a gloomy shadow that can only deepen across our life. The question he asked was, if a man die, shall he live again? And the man who asked the question was the celebrated citizen of Ur, the man named Job.

Now, this old man of God was in trouble, I say, and deeply worried and physically in pain. And he pondered this question and ask it out loud. If a man die, shall he live again? And there was no answer given except more talk which contained no answer.

Now, there is another question which has never been asked for very obvious reasons. It is the exact opposite of the one Job asked. It is, if a man lives, shall he die. Now, nobody's ever asked that question seriously. If a man lives, shall he die? Nobody's ever asked that. From Adam, if Adam asked it, it's not recorded, but nobody ever could have asked it seriously. He would have had to be insincere ever to ask the question, the opposite of, if a man dies shall he live? If a man lives, shall he die? And why was this latter question never asked? Because we do not in sincerity ask the obvious. We know the answer to the question, if a man lives, shall he die? We know the answer to that question in long, sad experience.

There lived in the United States a couple of centuries ago an amazing young man. He was 18 years old when he pondered on the same question that Job had pondered on, and he wrote what was

called, A View of Death. And in that he says these words to comfort those who may be expecting to go the way of all the earth. He said in effect, don't worry too much about it, because when you go, thou shalt lie down with patriarchs of the infant world with kings and the powerful of the earth, the wise and the good, fair forms and whori fears of ages passed, all in one mighty sepulcher.

The golden sun, said this amazing young teenager, the golden sun, the planets and all the infinite host of heaven are shining on the sad abodes of death through the still lapse of ages. All that tread the globe are about a handful to the tribes that slumber in its bosom. And millions in these solitude since first the flight of years began, have laid them down in their last sleep, the dead rein there alone. That was written out of experience, an experience over thousands of years which has never varied. Nobody asked if the sun rises, will it set because of centuries of observation, unvaried and always, always alike. The sun rises and sets and rises and sets. We can count on it. Nobody questions this.

So, a man may ask, if a man die shall he live again, but nobody asks if a man lives, shall he die, because I say the experience has proved and accords with what the Bible teaches, that it's appointed unto man once to die. Shall he live again?

Now we know that he will die, because that's demonstrated hourly. But on the other side, there is no answer. The dead do not come back to say, yes, we live again. They have not come back. They do not come back. They maintain a long, unbroken silence. And not all the pleading and coaxing can get one word out of those who are gone. But because we want to believe, because men want to believe they will live after they die, we have invented every kind of reasoning.

Oh, 399 years before the birth of Christ, there lay on a cot in an Athenian prison, a fine old Greek philosopher by the name of Socrates. He had been condemned to death by the Athenian court because of his teachings, and there were gathered around him in his last hour, his friends. There was Fado and Simmias and Cebes and Apollodorus and Crito and a number of others coming and going. And they were asking the old man questions, for he was one of the profoundness thinkers the world ever knew. And they said, Socrates, you're going to leave us. Where are you going? Or, are you going anyplace? Are you just closing your eyes and going back to the dust to be born round in earth's diurnal motion with rocks and trees and stones, or what are you going thing to do?

Well, Socrates began to talk, and as he did, he talked long-windingly and gave his reasons for believing that he was going to live again. And one of his chief arguments was what they call recollection. He said, the reason I know I'm going to live again is that I have lived before. He said, I lived before, and everything that I have learned now during this present lifetime is simply a recollection of what I learned before. Reincarnation, they call that in the Far East, but the Greeks called it recollection. He said, learning is recollecting.

And he said, don't you remember, notice that when something is told you that you hadn't heard before, how instead of sounding strange to you, it sounds strangely familiar? He said, it's because you have a deep racial memory. You knew that before; you're finding it out again. He didn't tell us what kind of God it would be who would put a man in the world to reincarnate him and teach him over and over and over and over again, the same thing.

But that he went out and into the next world, believing that he was going to live again. But philosophers have been wrong so often, that I, for my part, can't possibly accept Socrates' argument. There was no proof, no demonstration. Nobody came back and entered the dark place and said, I am here to tell you they do come back. Men do live again. Nobody was answering the old, old question that Job has asked, if a man die, shall he live again, but we can all submit our reasons. We all submit them you know. But they don't come back to confirm them.

If I were pressed, if I were being pressed by some studious young man who would come to my study and urge upon me and say, would you give me your reasons for believing in immortality in the future life? I could think of reasons. I have dreamed out the reasons many long years I've spent, and I would give reasons. But not one of those reasons would be valid, and not one of them could be proved and not one of them could have any demonstrated proof offered for them.

When I listen to a great something, say, like the Messiah. When I hear a performance of that, and I stand along with the others, all struck while they sing the Hallelujah Chorus, something in my heart says and cries out that says God is the man that can do that. A man that could compose, couldn't go out like a candle. He couldn't snuff out like a falling star. He must exist on. He must live on. And then my reason would carry me on to say we who stand breathless to listen to this thing being sung and can appreciate and enjoy it, we can't die either. That's what reason would tell me. But reason is wrong so often, I don't dare trust it.

So, I say this to you, don't count on anything if you have no better proof than the philosophers. Socrates could be wrong. Don't count on anything if you have no better proof for it than that of the poets. Poets can be wrong and very often are.

But within the last 100 years or so in the Western world, there has arisen a weird group of dark ladies, with a few gentlemen thrown in, who undertake to get us in touch with the other world. They call them spiritists. And something will happen like this, a businessman, a fine, intelligent, jovial man; a good sense of humor and well educated and prosperous, successful, suddenly slumps over his desk and dies of a heart attack. His wife is heartbroken. She has no hope. He had none. So she goes off to the witch of Endor and pays \$50 to some weird sister to get her in touch with her husband. And the weird sister goes into some kind of trance and foams at the mouth and turns pale and pretty soon, the grief-stricken and now delighted widow hears her husband speaking back from the other world.

But you know, here's the strange thing. I've read a lot of those reports of those seances. That's what the plural is, that where they talk back from the other world. And they always make a man sound like an idiot. Have you ever noticed that? He may have been a perfectly intelligent man. He may have had a good education, loved good music, loved good literature, had a good library and been literate and able to make himself understood in the best circles, but as soon as he dies and his wife goes to a spiritist, he talks like a mumbling, jumbling idiot. Always, it's the same. That in itself would cancel it out for me. I don't think a man would be dumber after he's dead than he was before he died. I can't see how he'd get that way.

I remember one time in a bookstore seeing a book that was supposed to have been written by the spirit of Shakespeare. One of these weird sisters got in tune with Shakespeare's spirit. But Shakespeare wrote himself some more sonnets. And he wrote them through the mouth or through the pen of this weird sister and she wrote them down and published them. I saw the book.

Well now, I happen to have read Shakespeare a little now and again and have read and mulled over and memorized his sonnets, a good many of them, so when I came to this, you could only smile. And out of the weeds of her own subconscious, she had raked the old dead leaves, the tattered bits of what she'd remembered and wrote them down as sonnets and said Shakespeare was talking back from the other world. Shakespeare would have been ashamed of it. He would never have allowed it to be printed. She was a victim of her own subconscious.

So, if you don't count on anything, I say don't count on anything the spiritists say. Don't count on anything anybody says unless they can offer proof. If a man die, shall he live? I don't know, but if a man live, I know he will die. But if he dies, is he going to live? No proof. Nobody's ever come back and said, here I am. Yes, it's so.

But listen now. We go back to our text. There lived a Man. That Man was born as no other man was ever born. That Man was born by what the theologians call the Virgin birth. The shadow of the Holy Spirit shall be, of the Holy One, shall be upon thee and the Spirit shall overshadow thee, and that Holy Thing which is born of thee shall be called the Son of God, born without human father of a virgin mother. Born in Bethlehem of Judea in those days of Herod the king.

And when He was born, they came from heaven above to celebrate. They came from the Far East riding their camels to celebrate. The shepherds came in off the fields to celebrate. Something had happened in history, something different from anything that had ever happened before. And they called his name Jesus. And that Man grew to manhood and began to do a work such as none other had ever done. He did a work of healing and opening eyes of the blind, unstopping deaf ears, stilling waves, rebuking winds, walked a complete Victor and Master in the world. And He spake as no other man spake.

So, even after the passing of nearly 2000 years, His teachings rate higher than the teachings of any other religionist that has ever lived. This Man was different from any other man. And when He died, He died as no other Man died. For every man has died for his own sin, but He says, which of you convicteth Me of sin? And his whole life showed that there was no sin there.

This Lord Jesus was different from other men. After He had died and been completely and clear dead, and it was known that He was dead. And He was taken stiff down from the cross, rigor mortis in every cell of that sacred body. They wrapped Him up and laid Him in a tomb, and there He stayed three days. And then He appeared after His decease and His resurrection and revealed Himself to Mary and Peter and the 500 brethren and to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. In other words, God took out of the hands of reason the question of whether if a man died, he shall live again.

He knew that if you can give a reason in favor of something, somebody else can give her a reason against it. He knew that if this school of thought says yes, this school of thought can cancel it out by saying no. He knew that. So, He took the matter of a future life out of the hands of human reason. He canceled out the human brain and said, you don't have to cudgel your brain and ask yourself questions. You don't have to invite the considered opinion of the wise and the great of the century. I will demonstrate it to you.

And so, this Man walked out of the grave alive. He had said, because I live ye shall also live. And if He had broken down in the first part of the sentence, we'd have broken down in the last part of it. He said, I'll live and you'll live. And because I live, you live. But if He hadn't lived, we couldn't live. But He did live and now we can live.

And so, our hope of immortality rests not upon reason. It rests not upon the gracious and kindly thinking of a Socrates. It rests not upon the weird efforts of a spirit that is to penetrate the veil and bring back messages from another world. It rests upon demonstration. He did rise. He did come out of the grave. He did stand up tall and strong and alive forevermore. He did speak to His disciples. He did send the Holy Ghost down in confirmation of His resurrection. He did. And that same Holy Spirit is alive in the world today. And red and yellow, black and white around the world this very hour when I'm talking are united in the Spirit of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one Father, one hope, one atonement, and one glorious future.

And before He died, He foretold His resurrection and did exactly what He had foretold. He did exactly what He had foretold. He also told and foretold that men should live again. The human mind is caught between hope and fear, hope that we may and fear that we will not. But Jesus Christ said, don't worry your head about it. Let not your heart be troubled. He knew their troubled hearts and their worry about immortality in the future. Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God.

Why do we always go to take that text to a funeral? That text is like cut flowers always at a funeral. And so, we hesitate from using it because it's attended all the funerals since Jesus said it. Let not your heart be troubled. Why was he saying that? Because he was going away from them and he was going the only way men can go. He was going by the way of death and the tomb. But He was coming back again, and said, do you believe in God, believe also in Me. And nineteen verses later said, because I live ye shall live also. And He foretold that His friends should rise again. He told them he'd meet them again. He said, I'll see you. I'll go before you and I'll see you and I will prepare a place for you and kept throwing into their minds, as they were able to take it, little bits of glorious truth, telling them and foretelling and predicting. And then He died and rose and fulfilled His part of it. And don't you think if He fulfilled His part of it, He'll fulfill our part of it? I think so. And he said, because I live ye shall live also.

So, He is our demonstrated proof. My dear friend, your hope of immortality rests with Jesus Christ. It rests with Him, syncs with Him, rises with Him, lives with Him, or dies with Him. For nobody else has ever done what He did, no other teacher, no other teacher. Oh, I know, Zoroaster was a great teacher. Zoroaster died and nobody ever claimed he rose again. So, all that he taught never was demonstrated, and it can't be demonstrated, because he never came back to demonstrate.

I talked, as I said last week, I talked in Toledo a week before last to an educated Hindu who came to see me. He heard me preach five times, he come to hear me. I took it as something that he would and he did and brought his prayer books with him with his gods, and explained to me with great tenderness, it was Krishna, his God. Where's Krishna? Buddha, where's Buddha? They all died and they all stayed there. Where's Mrs. Eddie? Where's Joseph Smith? Where are they. They're all gone.

I remember back there years ago, that when the tribes of Israel were in the wilderness, and God was getting them sorted out and getting some order out of the chaos, that the Exodus, he said, now, the Levites, would be the priestly tribe. And he said the Aaronic tribe, the Aaronic family is going to be the high priestly family. And some of them got angry and said, why should ye sons of Aaron, why should you take so much upon you? Why should you make priests out of the Aaronic family and not out of the rest of us, of Judah and the rest, Dan and Gad.

So, God said, Moses, have every one of the tribes of Israel cut off a rod. Let them go to a tree and cut off a piece of the tree, a branch, a rod, trim it, trim it, trim it all off, and then put it here in the holy box. And then the next day, go get them. Mark them first so there'll be identified and the one that blooms, that's the high priestly tribe, the high priestly family. So, everybody cut himself a rod, and they took it and put it in that holy place. They waited with taugth nerves to see what the morning would bring. And the next morning they went and reverently opened it and looked, and lo, eleven rods lay cold and lifeless. And one rod had burst into bloom with flowers and that settled it. The one that can die and live is the high priests.

Jesus Christ stood among men. There had been Moses and Isaiah and David and Jeremiah and Solomon and all the rest of them. Now He comes. And they say, who does He think He is? He talks bigger than Moses talks. He makes David sound small. He outtalks Isaiah. Who does he think He is? And God said, put them all in the grave together, put them all down in the grave and whoever comes out and blooms and blossoms and is fragrant in the morning, that will be my Christ. And on that morning, only one man came forth. Moses still lay in the dust. And Isaiah with all his silver tongue, still laying the dust. And David with his harp still lay in the dust. But the son of God walked in the garden and said, Mary, and she shouted back, Rabboni. She knew He had come out.

So, God Almighty has caused his high priests to bloom and bring forth fruit and fragrance and demonstrated who He is, and that the whole world can know that if a man die, he'll live again. Live again not in theory. Live again not because it can be proved by science or by philosophy. We live again because a man did live again; because the rod of Aaron blossomed and brought forth through truth.

I live, ye shall live also. And He said, I ascend to my Father and your Father. And we are even as He. This verse, our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, our light affliction. Paul, what's the matter, our light affliction? Don't you know that some of the Christians you're writing to have lost everything? Don't you know they've lost property. They've lost their family ties. Their wives or husbands or children have walked out on them, these Christians. He said that it's all right. It's a light affliction. It's nothing compared with what Jesus endured. Which is but for a moment.

But Paul, don't you know, Bunyan was in jail 14 years. You yourself in jail many years all told. And look, He says, ah, but it's but for a moment. It's but for the moment. You see everything is relative. And when you sit 14 years in prison over it against eternity with God. Why, I think your memory would hold it. I don't suppose John Bunyan even can remember Bedford Jail now. You know, little things that happen only last two or three minutes, you tend to forget them. And what's 14 years in Bedford Jail along with an eternity at the right hand of God?

And those light afflictions work for us far more in exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Because I live, ye shall live also.

Let me read to you a hymn as I close. Jesus lives and so shall I. Death thy sting is gone forever. Jesus lives and nothing now from my Savior's love can sever. Jesus lives no longer now can thy terror death appall me. Jesus lives and well I know from the dead He will recall me. Jesus lives to Him the throne over all the world is given. I shall go where he is gone, live and reign with Him in Heaven. Jesus lives my heart knows well, not from me His love can sever. Life nor death nor

powers of hell. tear me from His keeping ever. Jesus is my confidence. Because I live, ye shall live also.