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## "ABIDING AND DEPARTING"

"I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account." Phil. 1: 23-24

I. Abiding on this earth we must consider its claims upon us. And as we do, we think:

1. The joys of life. Without controversy, heaven is better than this world. The soul expands in freer air. Days of trials, of infirmity, are past. Conflict, trouble, discord, temptation are left behind. We are now in a world which was made good, and marred as it is, still had its sacred joys, its purity, its divine ministeries, its blessed discipline, its dignity, worth and beauty. Life is not so sad, so desolate, that we need be impatient to break with it.

2. As we think of abiding here on earth, we think about the needs of the world. The poor ask for alms; the weeping whom we may comfort; the erring whom we may lead. We are forced to ask ourselves are not the world in need of all the good people upon it.

3. The purpose of life. Neither life here, nor life to come is alone desirable. Life here is to be esteemed of great value, to be guarded with care, and used with diligence. St. Paul showed his estimate of life by the pains he took to preserve it. This world is a field in which we are to do our first works for God. Here we are trained. While we are here we can honor God more by doing His will than by begging for release.

II. Heaven and its attractions.

We have presented one side of the case; but there is another to be considered. The spiritual life awaiting the children of God is higher and surer than the life on this earth. Our treasure is to be laid up in heaven, our hope to be within the veil. Home is to be above; rest is there. The children of God will be united where the sadness of parting is never known, and the redeemed shall be forever with the Lord.

If a non-christian like Socrates could say, "I entertain a good hope that something awaits those who die, and that it'll be for better for the good than the evil," What should be the confidence of us who can say: "For we know.. we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!"

With such a blessed promise we have no call to be distressed if we are summoned speedily away.

### III. Death and its work upon us.

"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes" that is not death. Even what there is in that is not final, for the resurrection ransoms the body from the grave. Death is for more a going on than any going back. Yet it is too solemn an event to be sought when it passes on the body, the time of making ready for another world is ended.

But if we are Christ's death ushers us into such grand scenes that we should not be found reluctant to depart or unsubmitive when our friends enter the glory.

Our sins—our poor life which shrivels before the judgment of God's great! "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Yet, if we be Christ's we bear not our sins with us to that reckoning." Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? The faithful disciple goes to be with Him who had been loved, trusted, sewed. The early Christian would not write death, or make its sign upon the tomb of the brotherhood. They wrote, "In Christ," "In peace," "Victorious in Christ," etc. Christ sends His messenger to bring us to Himself.