

Written for this Paper.
PASSING AWAY

The multitudinous changes of life surely must challenge the attention of the most indifferent, particularly that change which is everywhere around, and yet deferred by individual thought, and accepted as more possible or certain for others than for ourselves. This fails to come home when marking that marvelous general procession of human birth and death, which has been uninterrupted from the beginning, and will only cease when all those who have been destined to probation on this earth shall have made that trip from a primal condition to this netter sphere.

We can even look back at our personal observations and experience; can count unnumbered friends and associates who have "jumped the life to come." We see a generation go out into the dark, giving no intimation of their whereabouts or occupation; no voice of sympathy brings good cheer from them, and so far as human knowledge or research goes, the dense curtain of ignorance hides both beginning and end. Myriads have had desire to know, have with tortured feelings, weeping eyes and strained—nay broken, hearts, implored and agonized for the removal of this seal of silence, for the rending of this curtain; for a glimmer of light 'mid this dense and settled gloom; but it has remained as impenetrable and bewildering to thought or science in their highest breadth of human culture, as to the most untutored savage or ages of the past.

Yet with those rare exceptions which some philosophers use to prove the rule, individual life attaining maturity and gazing upon its phenomenon, feels the swelling of an innate force which suggests that death is not the end. That longing, loving being which asserts itself, becomes an all potent—in irresistible argument in favor of continuous life. Indeed it is doubtful whether, properly understood, every laudable, good, progressive aspiration is not only a memory, but a prophecy also of its gratification, in lower manifestations which are claimed as simple instincts, such as hunger, thirst, etc. There is an implied provision adequate thereto so in the higher realms of souls desire that itself is a revealing and an assurance that final gratification must inevitably come. This belongs to the fundamental bases of natural religion; it is the whispering of an unseen but all-pervading spirit, the suggestion of further reply to the crying needs of anxious mentality, and queries almost as numerous as the stars of heaven; for with the increasing complexities of life, its responsibilities and demands, new forms of satisfaction and enjoyment are supplied and the same law surely operates in every department of the economy of God.

Primitive man in innocence and with a narrow earth experience had communion with Deity. Association was not debarred, and even in or after the fall this memory lingered and was transmitted to their generation. But by the flight of time and negligence of law, this became weakened and would have been lost perchance, had not new revealings from time to time

been made, which renewed in part the faith if not the sight of later men who were our progenitors in the flesh. Surely in those almost prehistoric ages there was also a clearer thought of immortality, or rather of a life beyond this, than in later generations. Hence it (as the critics assert) the book of Job is the most ancient of all the books in the Bible, it is very easy to conclude that his expressed idea as to regard to this afterward became as meagre and clouded as the conception of Deity, or but little mention is made in the after records, or until "life and immortality" was brought to light by the Gospel.

However, if the theory is carried, that the Gospel was before the law, then doubtless there was more or less of an understanding of the immortality of the spirit and the resurrection of the body, though the doctrines may appear to have been subordinated or near unknown save to the leading or spirits of that host who were "led out of Egypt by a mighty hand and a stretched out arm;" and it may also be that the seed of Jacob as slaves in Egypt and isolated from their masters, heard little of their widespread thought and faith in the resurrection and glorification of their cherished dead. Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was "a priest of Midian," and Abraham "the father of the faithful" who knew God and something of His purpose in man, was descended from Soem and cotemporary with Me'chisedek, and thus but a few generations removed; so it is quite probable that the Priesthood of Egypt held at least some of the truths possessed by this mighty abelk, and incorporated into their religion, (even while perverting) some sacred truths from this authoritative source.

However obscure the material for just conclusions regarding these thought-waves of antiquity, it is certain that great revealings belonged to the Messianic dispensation, when the Father sent forth His Son "born of a woman," whose whole career and line of teaching, proclaimed the doctrine of pre-existence, of descent from Deity, of human degeneracy, and of creative intent as marred by cumulative violation of law, including the fundamental, irrevocable processes by which restoration could ever come. Revealing all these things, paying the penalty thereof in His being "nailed to the cross," He "broke the bonds of death and hell;" so in His own propria person giving evidence of "the power given unto Him" and handing down to all generations of believers the hitherto unwitnessed, yet startling and triumphant apologetics, including his resurrection and ascension into heaven.

So long as this magnificent triumph was fresh in history and made the basis of Christian faith by living witnesses, so long was it the evidence of Divine universality and the undoubtedly unique proof of the superiority of Christianity over the mysteries of all religions, which under many guises ministered to the cravings of that despoiled sentiment inherited in all mankind; yet perverted by priestcraft, superstition and power, until the most savage, the most barbarous rites became engrafted and established that the prophets declared a universal

wandering from God, which made "the dark places of the earth full of cruelty and abomination."

In our day although nominally Christian, and in its creed holding to "the resurrection of the body, and life eternal," there was and is in the churches (to say nothing of society) an inclination to doubt; the literal resurrection has been assailed equally by science and ignorance, and both, discredited with the churches, the plain assertion of Holy Writ. The old fact had lost its power, the witnesses had fallen asleep, and it is half queried in advanced circles of Christendom whether Jesus really even lived or died. Divine purpose in our day reverted this important glorifying truth, personal manifestation of the Father and His risen and exalted Son, demonstrated again the historic although repudiated fact; and further communication of the Prophet and his associated brethren with several of the old worthies—servants of the living God, placed once more on a basis as irrefragable as Truth the assurance of pre-existence, of all involved in this probation, and if the fulfillment of the prophecies in the deliverance of universal man from the grave, by the power of "a resurrection unto eternal life," with its grades of glory and exaltation, according to the deeds done in the body."

It is because of this that among the Latter-day Saints "that mourning which is without hope is unknown." Their leaders and veterans pass away; families are momentarily disrupted; fathers, worn out, lay down in peace; mothers, having filled the measure of their day, accept a time of rest; early manhood and womanhood when beckoned step out at the signal of undoubted wisdom; infancy is laid in the silent city, and gray hairs welcome the whisper of release, not without sorrow perhaps, not without wishing it might be otherwise, owing to the weakness of the flesh; but all recognizing an overruling hand, learning to bear meekly and patiently the trial and the cross, and asking, nay imploring, that infinite mercy would "give strength equal to their day."

This is not the conclusion of the fatalist, not the heartlessness of the stoic, not the indifference of the unbeliever, not the influence of tradition, not the cajolery of priests; but it is that divine assurance which is begotten of faith and obedience, brought home to the heart by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and established by all experience which waits patiently for that manifestation and consolation which finally enables one to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!" There is included in this faith and confidence, the guaranty of re-association. Friendship formed, social ties and family citations created under legitimate covenant and sealed through the Priesthood of God by the Holy Spirit of promise, are adequate to all affection and righteous ambition, so that the darkest moments, the strangest circumstances, the most unexpected providences, and the apparently most grievous losses, become sanctified and accepted in the spirit of righteous resignation and unflinching trust, and the most sadly bereaved