

means to quicken tenderer love. How much the more is this true of him, who himself is love and who by putting a cloud between us and his Majesty, leads us up to the higher and far richer enjoyments of love.

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### “HIS WAYS ARE EVERLASTING”

With the passing of another year another boundary-line in life is drawn. A new year is brought into the course of time. It was 1903, and so it continued for months and weeks and days. It became 1904, and involuntarily we ask what it shall bring us. Whether the year will outlive us or whether we shall outlive it. This of itself on the threshold of the new year makes us to look up to our Father who is in heaven, and ask little but trust much, to lay the hand on the mouth and as a weaned child quietly to wait what He will bring upon us, and upon our beloveds.

The goings of the age are his, declares the prophet (Hab. 3:6 Dutch Version.) God counts and reckons with centuries, as on the dial of the clock it is done with hours and minutes. We are the little, needy ones who count with the tenth part of a penny. God bathes himself as it were in the great eternities. There is no comparison between our and God's reckoning of time. With God it is the ever-flowing fountain of the eternal; with us the dripping of the moments is heard in the ticking of the clock. While waiting for it, five single minutes seem sometimes unbearably long.

This vast difference between us and God should

never be lost from sight. It is so wide that we can not possibly explain the connection between our time and God's eternity, though we know that there must be such a relation, and that there is. When we die in Christ we shall enter upon an eternity of everlasting joys, but even this shall never be to us the eternity of God. Though we shall live eternally, we have had a beginning, but God never. "Before the mountains were brought forth, (Ps. 90) from everlasting to everlasting thou art God." And this never applies to man. But, however incalculably vast the difference may be, between us who live by hours, and God who disposes of the goings of the ages, it is grace, that God divides for us the portion of life, which we spend between the cradle and the grave, into parts of years and days, and that he subdivides these parts into hours and minutes whereby our otherwise short life obtains breadth, extension of duration and richness of scope, which makes us bathe ourselves in the little pond of our brief years as in an ocean.

We did not invent time, and its division into years and days; these are ours by God's appointment. "And the evening and the morning were the first day," is the creative word that appointed this order and division of time for us, before man had appeared on earth. Sun and moon, the rotation of the earth, and the pulsebeat of the blood in our veins, have been made with the view of solving human life into minutes and seconds. And by this wondrous means, wonderful in simplicity of appointment, Divine grace and mercy have created for us, and about us, a wealth of life in the past, now in the present,

and presently in the future, whereby our short life appears to be almost endlessly long and great. Even the single year that is past seemed so long, that only a few of its significant days are clearly remembered, and the new year just begun makes an impression as though it could never end.

Our God moreover, whose are the goings of the age, has not only beautifully divided human life, and thereby mightily enlarged it to our idea, but he also pervades it continually with his faithfulness and Fatherly care. From week to week, and from day to day his mercy and love are over us, new every morning and scintillating with new brightness every evening. From hour to hour he goeth before us on the way. In the subdivisions of the hours into minutes and seconds the pulse-beat of the blood in the heart is his work, and he notices every desire of the heart, that goeth out after him. He is the Father of the everlasting ages, who from sheer grace divides, for the sake of enrichment, the life of his child even into smallest parts, and pervades each division and subdivision with his grace to keep us and to protect us.

If God has so divided our life and entered it with his grace, we should reach out from this time-divided life after the goings of the age, and elevate ourselves to the levels of the eternal. In Revelation 10:6 we read that the angel who stood upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever . . . . that there should be time no longer. Time is a form of existence given us by grace, but it is unreal; eternity alone is real. Our destiny lies in eternity and only from the viewpoint of eternity can human existence, life

and destiny be understood. Whatever the year of life may be, it is never understood from itself. Before God, all of human life, with all its years, forms one plan, one end, one whole. This plan, of our life did not begin at birth but traces its lines back to the life of parents and grandparents. In the forward direction this plan does not end with death, but extends across death and grave into the ages of eternity. It may even be said that although we might live 70 or 80 years, this part of life, lived on the earth shrinks into almost nothing by the side of the tens of thousands of years that await us in eternity. All of earthly life is nothing but riding down the line to the first station, where the real journey through the tablelands of eternity begins.

Not to see this plainly and clearly, is the main cause of discouragement which frequently overtakes people in their passage through this brief, earthly life. For a year of life can never be understood by itself, and must be viewed in connection with life in the hereafter, because it is so and not otherwise before God, and can not be explained in any other way. He who moulds and forms and prepares us for eternity is the Lord. In his works upon the heart, in his forming of the person, as well as in his preparing of the spirit within us for eternity, the goings of the age are also his. The standard here is not what would give us pleasure and love for a moment; but what governs his appointments of our life is what we are to become in the course of centuries. On this long way he leads us now through dark and deep places, and again through sunshine on the mountains of his holiness, but

his plan and appointment always accompanies us. And not what would smile on us this year, but what *must* happen with us, for the accomplishment of his plan regarding us, determines what the year will bring. And why it must be so and not otherwise we can not understand now, but we will in the hereafter. He who forgets this has no peace. He who with all his soul enters into the eternal activity of God, rests, whatever comes, in the Father's faithfulness.

If within the narrow confines of time we reckon by the day and the week, and the heart turns bitter every time things go wrong and bring nothing but disappointment, we become the prey of uneasiness and gloom. Then complaint becomes unceasing, and the habit of seeing all things black overwhelms us. Then there is no heroism of faith, no inspiration to face destiny and no joy in God. Thousands and thousands spend all their days in cold indifference or in hopeless endeavor. They are but a play-ball before the wind of the day and sink far below the dignity of man. Does not the prophet say, Eccles. 3:11 that God hath set eternity in the heart? This but means that God has given us power from amid the whirling time-flakes all around us to lift ourselves up to the sure levels of the eternal.

With eternity set in the heart let every child of God bravely face the newly-opening year. He knows that the God whom he worships owns the goings of the age, and therefore disposes and appoints human life purely in accordance with the claims of eternity. He prays that he may have peace and joy, for the heart craves happiness. But if the year must bring him periods when

God puts him into the smelting-furnace, or adds finer cuttings to the diamond of the soul, though his eyes may glisten with tears, he will nobly bear up in the strength of faith; for he knows it is necessary for his good; that it can not be otherwise; and that if it were otherwise, his life would forever be a failure. It is hard to undergo a painful operation, but the patient willingly submits, and pays large sums of money to the operator, because he knows this drastic treatment alone could save him. This states the case of God's child before his Father who is in heaven. Not he, but God alone must know, what is indispensable and necessary for him this year, and what in view of his permanent formation it must bring him. And in case it appears that this year such a Divine operation is necessary for him, he will not murmur, neither will he complain, but he will submit himself willingly to God, yea, though the waves of sorrow should rise ever so high, he will rejoice in God, knowing that everything God doeth, must needs be done, for the sake of God's honor and his own highest good.

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**"PRAISE HIM WITH STRINGED INSTRUMENTS AND ORGANS."**

The Scripture is most urgent in pressing and driving the soul to God. It enjoins the supreme command of sobriety and purity. It urges us not to walk proudly but humbly. It is no less inexorable in its warnings that we guard ourselves in every way against the killing power of money, and that we sanctify our wealth