

3-29-1963

Notes: Various Themes: Death Be Not Proud, 1963

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DATE 3/29/63 OCCASION _____THEME Death Be Not ProudVery
PersonalDay of
Remembrance
11/25/69

1. About ²⁰ ~~ten~~ years ago a doctor and I were standing beside the bedside of a member of the U. family who was dying of cancer - the nurse had told us that the patient had only a few minutes left - and so I tried once more to brain through the wall of morphine + pain - to say the old magnificent words ~~which~~ which the waiting church whispers to her children as they pass from her waiting to her triumph - words which we ^{most} always say to the dying because again and again I have seen a moment of light ^{flashing} at the very end: "Go forth Christian soul, from this world; in the name of God the Father Who created thee; in the name of Jesus Christ, Who suffered for thee; in the name of the Holy Ghost, poured out upon thee. Angels lead thee into paradise and at thy coming may the Martyrs receive thee and take thee into the holy city Jerusalem. May all the choirs of Angels welcome thee; and mayest thou, with Lazarus and poor, have everlasting rest." Depart in peace!

2. I raised my head and turned to the doctor at my side - to my surprise the ~~was~~ ^{now} tears in his eyes - preachers and doctors as not supposed to cry, especially not at the death-bed

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of the young - what all the resources of theology and science must be marshaled for control - Quinby he said: "This time I am not ashamed of my tears. They are not what you think. They are tears of awe - ^{out of my mind} the whole thing is so sacred - this dying of the young from a disease which we shall live out of these days. It just doesn't make sense - it's stupid & crazy - though I suppose you will try again to make some sense out of it - if you can find any meaning in this, let me know. He turned and left the room. I said nothing because I suddenly remembered a gravestone in New England inscribed ^{despair - tragedy} thus: Mrs. John Edwards aged 18 yrs. 6 mos. 19 days - and beneath it the words: "How many hopes lie buried here!"

3. And now - at first glance - this may be our first ^{initial} thought at the memorial service ^{also for students} for Judy - "how many hopes lie buried here" - in fact, in all these years - when one of our students dies - my first thought is that ^{humanly speaking} this is really the worst time to die - the departed has passed through childhood & adolescence - nurtured by good parents - life has open and beautiful and full - hopes are beginning to become reality - and then the end - seemingly so cruel, so stupid, so senseless - remember David: "O Absalom, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee!"

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4. Is there anything else to say - or shall I drop it here - and let you figure it out for yourself - [Judge's death] the death of children in China - the seeming kingship of Death over our common humanity? let me finish the story with which I began - some months - by a strange combination of circumstances - the date and I were together at dawn on Easter Sunday - with one other friend in a little house in the country - we had decided to have Easter breakfast together - as the sun rose over the Eastern hills we talked about all the things that matter when nothing else matters - the great monosyllables of life - women to a single syllable because they have been on human lips since the beginning of time - life - death - God - time - fear - love - hope - joy - suddenly he referred to our experience in the hospital: "Do you want to talk about that?" Well, I said from your point of view, I really haven't got much. ^{to his death} All I've got is a cross, a dead man - also younger a grave, a stone, than a grave with nobody in it - some wild rumors started by hysterical women - and then - I know you won't believe this - and then the royal command of a King: "Put your hands in my wounds - see my hands, it is I" - really not very much when it's put up against your senses, your close knowledge of death - ^{your mind} but it's everything I've got - My friend looked out of the window for a long time - then he turned & said: "Maybe it's enough - maybe it's enough."

a woman
king but
a king
matters

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5. And that's really all I have when I think of ~~the day~~^{the day} this morning - just took over the "maybe" it was enough for the men and women who took down the Roman empire in His living Name - it was enough for the martyrs as their blood poured into the sand of the Coliseum - it was enough for Jesus of the staidly in the plains: "Jesus, I have not been mistaken" - it was enough for the philosopher travels at the U. in Tarsus who took one long hard look and wrote: "O death, where is thy sting - O grave, where is thy victory" - did they by spelled it out - something that ~~the day~~^{the day} ~~new~~ ^{new} ~~is not~~ better than any one has this morning: "Thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." - When the time comes, remember!

6. And so - our morning prayers [to July] add to all who have gone before us - father, mother, sister, brother, friends must ^{draw} end on a note of defiance - the defiance of John Donne:

defiant

" Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so:
 For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet ^{canst} crest thou wilt kill me.
 One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
 And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt
 die. ---

Death: Sorrow over Jesus enrich Jordan part
 If I still hold closely to Him
 Is He sure to bless