

Life and Incorruptibility

2 Timothy 1: 10.

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The truth contained in this verse has been spoken of as "that condition of eternal life which puts the soul and the body beyond death and its power" (J.N.D). Eternal life in the soul, and incorruptibility in the body. What a magnificent revelation of the glorious purpose eternally enshrined in the heart of the blessed God, the knowledge of which reaches us "by the glad tidings," shining in its matchless brilliance in this scene of death and corruption, and filling the hearts of believers with the sense of present victory, causing their affections to respond in living praises to Him who has called us "according to His own purpose and grace."

Sadly must we admit how corrupt this world is; all spheres are affected and hence disintegration marks all — for the word (corrupt) contains the thought of "decay and pining away." Early in the history of men we read: "And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for *all flesh* had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said . . . the end of *all flesh* has come before me" (Genesis 6: 12, 13). Again at the end of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt the whole land had become corrupt and God's judgment fell upon it. Sodom, too, in the corruption of its ways brought upon itself the unsparing judgment of God. Of Great Babylon, that city of religious iniquity and moral degradation, it is said, "her sins have been heaped on one another" or "joined together" (Revelation 18: 5). It suggests the idea of a cancerous growth ending in utter corruption. The wrath of God Almighty will be poured upon that wicked system; in the meanwhile God's people are urged "Come out of her, My people." Paul in writing to Timothy speaks of "men corrupted in mind," but happily adds "they shall not advance farther." Thus we conclude that the whole position is known to our God, who will eventually deal with it in righteousness and in power.

God Himself is spoken of as "the incorruptible God." What absolute assurance the knowledge of this imparts to the soul. "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and who is to come." Every attribute of the blessed God is to be seen in relation to the holiness of His nature. Thus every promise, every act of love, every movement in grace, every dispensing of mercy, is in absolute accord with His nature and in relation to His eternal purpose. His Name is "the SAME;" He abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself; with Him there is "no variation nor shadow of turning." Neither the corruptness of man nor the power of death are able to divert His will. His way is perfect, whether in the Sanctuary or in the sea; His principles are unchanging; His word is stable; His every promise "Yea, and Amen" in Christ. From "eternity to eternity" He is God; and the moment is coming when the whole earth will be full of His glory, every mark of death and corruption will have gone for ever — "Death shall not exist any more;" He will dwell with men — their God.

"All taint of sin shall be removed,
All evil done away;
And we shall dwell with God's Beloved,
Through God's eternal day."

He dwells in the high and holy place, and to enjoy intimacy with Him, which is His own blessed desire, we must, in responsive affection to Himself, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, refuse all that

this corrupt scene would engage us with, for "without holiness shall no man see the Lord."

It is from this blessed God that the gospel which brings "life and incorruptibility to light" comes . . . "the gospel is of God," and it is against the sombre background of a world marked by corruptibility and its consequent disintegration, that the light of "life and incorruptibility" is introduced. The theme of this gospel is "the Man Christ Jesus," the One to whom Psalm 16 refers as not seeing corruption. The several references in the Acts to this blessed truth seem to indicate with what delight the Holy Spirit calls attention to the uniqueness of this precious Man, contrasting Him with the "corruptible man" (Romans 1: 23), the features of which were seen even in David himself (Acts 13: 36). Precious, glorious Saviour! His conception holy; His life absolutely sinless — not only was He without blemish, but He contracted no spot in His pathway — He "by the eternal Spirit offered Himself spotless to God." Impeccable in life and no odour of corruption in death! Blessed, holy Lord! He is the anti-type of the acacia wood — that *durable* wood of the wilderness. No breakdown or failure in Him! He *endured* the "contradiction of sinners against Himself" in His lifetime; He *endured* the cross." Spotless, holy, sinless, incorruptible, He remains "Jesus Christ the Same yesterday, and today, and for ever." Perfection perfect in its height — but seen in Christ *alone*.

His precious blood is, by inference, said to be incorruptible — "Ye were not redeemed with *corruptible* things . . . but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1: 18, 19). That precious blood, the price of our redemption, is not subject, as silver and gold are, to deterioration or changing values — it abides in all its intrinsic preciousness. Thus the redemption it secures is eternal, and our relationship with the blessed God is assured for ever. But at *what a cost!* "For the redemption of their soul is costly and it must be given up for ever." That precious, spotless life was laid down in death. Gladly do we sing from our hearts, "Precious, precious blood of Jesus," as we anticipate the song of Revelation 5, "Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing." What a galaxy of glories — and how worthy He is of all!

That precious, holy, sinless pathway of Christ was unique to Himself, He trod it alone, yet ever in communion with His Father; but in the life which He has taken up in resurrection He delights to associate His own with Himself. Among the many choice blessings which are ours as linked with Him, Peter introduces us to that which is incorruptible. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His great mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance" (1 Peter 1: 3, 4). Peter knew the corruption of the flesh, it had manifested itself in denial of his Lord; and thankfully he turns to the blessed God as he realizes the link he has with that same blessed Lord in a sphere where breakdown is unknown. Peter was writing to those who had been connected with a nation of whom the prophets say over and over again, "They have corrupted themselves." "They have *deeply* corrupted themselves" (Hosea 9: 9), and in consequence scattering and breakdown marked them; they could not enjoy their earthly inheritance. *Corrupted* and as a "valley . . . full of *dead* bones" is the present state of that favoured nation. With what joy these believers would embrace the glad tidings which assured them of an inheritance in a resurrection realm marked by "life and incorruptibility."

Beloved brethren, we are surrounded by the moral death of the Sardis position and the awful corruption of Thyatira. In such conditions may the blessed Lord engage our hearts with Himself as out from among the dead, thus enabling us to enjoy practically and continually, the "living hope" and the "incorruptible inheritance" which, through grace, are ours as linked with Himself in that resurrection scene.

The apostle Paul speaks of "an incorruptible crown," contrasting it with the unenduring, decaying rewards of this world. How quickly the glamour of earthly glory and attainment fades! But to the faithful servant, however unnoticed and lowly his service may be, the "well done" of his Lord is that which cannot be marred by the corruption of the world, nor can it be touched by the power of death. Like the One who gives it — it is marked by incorruptibility. Let us seek grace ever to be found amongst those who "love His appearing."

Finally — the moment is fast approaching when we, as believers, will be beyond the reach of corruption in the fullest and most absolute sense. We still have bodies liable to death and corruption, and we are still linked with a scene where these things abound. But in that glorious resurrection chapter — 1 Corinthians 15 — Paul says, "For this corruptible must needs put on incorruptibility, and this mortal put on immortality." Spirit, soul and body perfect, we shall be able to join in the triumphant cry — "Death has been swallowed up in victory." The atmosphere of that triumphant moment is to be enjoyed now, even as we tread our pathways in a world of moral death and decay — our "lives are hid with the Christ in God" and we are already "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ."

The practical result of these truths having their right place in our hearts and lives would be that we should "love one another out of a pure heart fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the living and abiding word of God (1 Peter 1: 23). Grace with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption (Ephesians 6: 24).