

"This is the victory . . . our faith"

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As we stand by this open grave, I am deeply thankful to our God for the light He has given to us in the New Testament concerning the death of a believer. I am about to read to you three questions which occur in the book of Job, the answers to which our dear brother had in his soul long before he was called to leave this world. It was because he had the answers to these questions that he looked so calmly on death; this we well know, having heard him speak so often in relation to it.

The first question is in Job 9: 2, "I know it is so of a truth; but *how should man be just with God?*" This first question does not deal with death, and should anyone await death in order to find the answer, he would never find it at all. After death it will be too late; it is while we have life we need to find the solution to that question for ourselves. Our dear brother had the solution in his soul for nearly seventy years in this world. Here it is in Galatians 3: 11, "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident; for, *the just shall live by faith*". There is the answer clear and plain, for the only way in which a man can be right with God is not by his own works, but by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. His death in meeting the righteous claims of God is the only way whereby we can be just with God. Our dear brother many years ago trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour and the answer to the question, "How should man be just with God" was sealed to his soul by the Holy Spirit of God. Is there anyone who has not found the solution to that question for himself? We urge you to seek that solution, and you will find it where our brother found it — by taking the Lord Jesus Christ as your own Saviour. Our brother left this world without a shadow of a doubt that he was right with God, just with God, knowing that the question of his sins had been settled for ever. "The just shall live by faith."

Yet, justified and right with God as he was, he has died; and that presents another question in regard to him, and this we read in Job 14: 10, "But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and *where is he?*" We may well echo that second question for we are not left in any doubt about the answer. For this we turn to 2 Corinthians 5: 8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be *present with the Lord*." That is where our brother is, "WITH THE LORD." I am sure not one of us who know the Lord as our Saviour have the slightest doubt about that. Note the words the apostle uses here, we are "confident" and "willing." Was ever a brother more confident or more willing as to his going to be with Christ? He was longing to be there, and at last his desire has been granted. His attitude was like that of Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He is with Christ, and we can be sure that there he is in the height of bliss. Yet, this is not the end of the path of faith; a very blessed interlude it is, but not the end, and with this in view we have yet a third question and its answer to consider.

"If a man die, *shall he live again?*" Job 14: 14. For the answer to this question we turn to John 11: 25; "Jesus said unto her (Martha) I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, *yet shall he live*." Our brother was a believer, and is now one who believes in Jesus but at the moment is dead as to his body. Soon the moment is coming of which we read, "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as he is," 1 John 3: 2. Our dear brother knew this very well, If for the moment he is absent from the body and present with the Lord, at the return of our Lord he will be once more in his body but in that day it will be a body of glory, like the glorious body of Christ and he, with all the redeemed, will be in heaven with and like Christ for ever. This is the hope and the portion of every believer on our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we leave this body in the care of the Lord till that resurrection morning, we leave it in the sense of the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every one of these questions had long been settled in the heart of our brother, and we would desire today that they might be settled in the heart of everyone standing round this grave. Today we can be sure of being just with God by taking Christ as our Saviour, then if death should be our portion we are sure of being absent from the body and present with the Lord, awaiting that resurrection morning when, soul and body in conformity, we shall be like Christ in glory. That is the end to which we are going, we who believe the gospel. There our brother has gone, he is with the Lord, and we leave this body till the Lord comes to change it and fashion it like His own body of glory. Well may we say, beloved, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."