

# LIFE BEYOND DEATH

by Ray C. Stedman

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Let us talk about life beyond death. Surely there is not a person here who has not at some time thought about what happens to him when he dies. You cannot live very long without at least having fleeting thoughts and questions about it. Each of us is aware of the mystery of death. We cannot escape it, for it confronts us on every side. It is important, therefore, to examine a subject like this from time to time, though some people try to ignore the whole subject of death.

If you have ever visited the Hearst Castle, near San Luis Obispo, and have seen that magnificent building and its beautiful grounds and have heard the story of the Hearst family, you will remember that the guests who visited that castle were given one rule. They were absolutely forbidden to break this rule upon pain of immediate exclusion from the castle. To do so meant they were never again allowed entrance to the grounds. That rule was that no one should, in Mr. Hearst's presence, utter the word *death*. He tried to ignore death, to exclude it from his thinking. But, as always happens to men like that, death caught up with him one day. He himself died, and the castle passed into the hands of the state. All that was once his is no longer even in the possession of his family.

It is foolish, of course, to try to ignore death. As Robert Browning put it in one of the most striking passages he ever wrote:

Just when we're safest  
There's a sunset touch,  
A fancy from a flower bell,  
Someone's death,  
A chorus ending from Euripides,  
And that's enough for fifty hopes or fears,  
The Grand Perhaps!

What did he mean? Well, he meant that we spend much of our time trying to forget about God that just when we think we have got everything taken care of, all our plans are made, and we have excluded him from our thinking, then something happens to intrude. We see a sunset, and it reminds us of the ending of life. Or we see the beauty of a flower, and know that in a little while it will be crushed. Or someone's actual death occurs, and we are forced to face up to the issue of life and death. And that, he says, arouses a bevy of hopes and fears within us which he calls, "The Grand Perhaps." That may well be the best title of all for this study of life beyond death.

Recent attention has been called to this subject by articles that appeared in *Look* magazine based upon a book recently written by Bishop James Pike. In these articles Bishop Pike recounts for us his experiences with his son, who later committed suicide.

It is a tragic story, one of the most pathetic I have ever read. It is the story of how the bishop's son tried to lose himself in the hallucinations of LSD, gradually becoming what is called today "an acid-head." He tried to break the habit, but found that he could not. His father took him to Cambridge, England, where together they tried to work this all out. But all he could do to help his son was to sit with him during his wild "trips" and watch the steady deterioration of his son's mind and heart, until alone, in a hotel room in New York City, the boy took his own life.

The bishop goes on to recount the experiences that followed when, upon his return to England, he found himself confronted with certain unexplainable phenomena which all related somehow to his son. Though he

was reluctant to admit it to himself, he concluded that these were what many called "psychic experiences." He felt that perhaps he was in touch with the spirit of his dead son who was trying to communicate with him. This led, as often happens in cases of this type, to seances, visits to mediums, and attempts to break through the barrier of death and communicate with those who have gone beyond.

There have been many who have sought to explore this whole subject of life beyond death through such dangerous devices. I use that adjective because the Bible warns that these are highly dangerous methods of conducting psychic research. Consistently, in both the Old Testament and the New, the Bible declares that one is playing with fire when he dallies with the occult world. It is not because he is apt to stumble on knowledge which no one else has, but because he is exposing himself unwittingly to control by, or the outright possession of, demonic spirits, wicked spirits. The Bible explains these experiences as not being truly communications with the dead, but rather encounters with deceitful spirits impersonating the dead. Such spirits, having available to them information about the dead, pretend to be the spirit of a dead person in order that they may establish ultimate control over an individual's life. When we see these matters in the light of Scripture, we can see how pathetic indeed is the bishop's search. What a revelation of the utter bankruptcy of liberal theology is indicated when this bishop of the church has nothing more to offer his searching, desperate son in his terrible plight than a word of good advice, and a steadying hand, and now he himself is being misled into contact with the occult world.

There have, of course, been other guesses as to what happens after death. There are those who tell us the whole matter is made clear by the teaching of reincarnation -- that, having once lived on this earth, it is possible to come back and live again in another body and in another place. There has been much "evidence" advanced to prove that this is indeed the case. But, once again, we are dealing with impersonating, deceitful spirits who have no compunction whatsoever about deceiving those investigating these kinds of experiences, making them believe that they are in contact with reincarnate persons when they are not at all. If we take the Bible at all seriously we will not get involved with this kind of thing because it is exceedingly dangerous. We are tempting powers greater than ourselves.

But the wonderful thing is that we do not need to do this. The Christian has what Peter calls, "a more sure word of prophecy, which shines as a light in a dark place," {cf, 2 Pet 2:19}.

I like that description. Have you ever been in a dark place and wished that someone would turn on a flashlight, or even light a match? Perhaps someone did, and what a comfort it was to see a light shining in a dark place.

Now that is what the Word of God is as regards this whole realm of communication with the dead. There are several passages of Scripture that deal with the subject, and one of the most striking is found in Second Corinthians 5:1-10:

**For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling, so that by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. {2 Cor 5:1-4 RSV}**

That is a wonderful word, a word that makes clear certain facts about life beyond death for a believer in Jesus Christ. Notice how it begins. It is striking, is it not? "We know..." "We know," says the Apostle Paul. There is nothing uncertain about it at all. As Christians we know a number of things that non-Christians cannot know.

Not long ago a man approached me about this matter of the note of certainty in Christian faith. He challenged this, saying that the only proper approach to life is to view everything as uncertain, you cannot depend upon anything for sure, everything is tentative and we must be prepared to find that we have been wrong about many things, therefore we must not say that we are sure about anything. We discussed this at some length, until finally I said to him, "Well, you seem to me to be rather sure about this whole idea that there is nothing sure."

He acknowledged that he did have a sense of conviction about his declaration.

I said, "Since, by your own logic, it is obvious that you may be wrong, and I have reason to believe that you are, then I prefer not to approach life on that basis."

You never read this kind of nonsense about uncertainty in the New Testament. The declaration of Jesus Christ was that he had come to tell us the truth, that we might know. Again and again the Apostle John rings the changes on this, saying, "We know... These things are written that you might know," etc. Paul says here, "We know" certain things about life beyond death.

Well, what things do we know?

First, says Paul, we know that we now live in a tent -- "if this earthly tent be destroyed." Twice he calls the present body a tent and sees it as only a temporary dwelling place. Once I visited a family who were waiting for their new house to be finished, and they were living temporarily in a tent in the back yard. It was not very comfortable. They were just getting by, but they were doing it with the realization that this was but a temporary arrangement and soon they would be in their real house. That is what Paul says is the case with us in the present body -- we live in a tent.

It is immediately evident from this that there is a difference between the spirit and the body. We are the spirit; the body is merely the dwelling place, the tent, in which that spirit is now temporarily living. I have pointed out many times that this is a universal truth, instinctively understood by all -- until they are educated beyond their intelligence, and then they start denying it. Until then everyone knows this to be true; even children do.

I have often told the story of the time, years ago, when one of my daughters crawled into bed with me one morning. I kept my eyes shut and, as children will, she tried to wake me up by poking and punching me and trying to get me to open my eyes. Finally, she crawled up and sat right on my chest and, reaching down, pried open my eyelid. Then she leaned over and said, "Are you in there, Daddy?"

You know, I have often thought how true it is that even a baby understands that man is more than an animated piece of beefsteak. He is a spirit, dwelling in a body. But it is a temporary arrangement at best.

Furthermore, you will notice that part of this certain knowledge that the apostle has is that in this tent we now groan and sigh. Do you ever listen to yourself when you get up in the morning? It is pretty evident that the apostle is right, isn't it? Yes, we do groan and sigh. There is the groan of present experience. The tent is beginning to sag. The stakes are loosening and the pegs are growing wobbly. We discover that things are not going along as they once were. Every now and then, especially after we have been exercising strenuously, we find these words to be literally true -- we groan.

Some time ago I ran across a droll comment that makes this clear. It is headed, *It's Later Than You Think*, and it goes this way:

Everything is farther than it used to be. It's twice as far from my house to the station now, and they've added a hill which I've just noticed. The trains leave sooner, too, but I've given up running for them because they go faster than they used to. Seems to me they're making staircases steeper than in the old days. And have you noticed the small print they're using lately? Newspapers are getting farther and farther away when I hold them. I have to squint to make out the news. Now it's ridiculous to suggest that a person my age needs glasses, but it's the only way I can find out what's going on without someone reading aloud to me. And that isn't much help because everybody seems to speak in such a low voice I can scarcely hear them.

Times are changing. The material in my clothes, I notice, shrinks in certain places. Shoelaces are so short they're next to impossible to reach. And even the weather is changing. It's getting colder in winter and the summers are much hotter than they used to be. People are changing, too. For one thing, they're younger than they used to be when I was their age. On the other hand, people my own age are so much older than I am.

I ran into my roommate the other night, and he had changed so much he didn't recognize me. "You've put on

weight, Bob," I said. "It's this modern food," Bob replied, "it seems to be more fattening." I got to thinking about poor Bob this morning while I was shaving. Stopping for a moment, I looked at my own reflection in the mirror. You know, they don't use the same kind of glass in mirrors, anymore.

Yes, in this tent we groan. There is the groan of present experience, and there is also the sigh of expectancy. Says the apostle, "While we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." That is the sigh of future expectancy. We know that life is only temporary. We sense that there is coming a time when this earthly tent shall be destroyed. We all face it, don't we? Despite the advances that have been made in medical science and the remarkable things that medicine has done, it is still true that the death rate remains exactly what it has been for centuries: a flat 100%. This earthly tent must be destroyed. But the apostle says, "We know that we have a house waiting for us, eternal in the heavens." An eternal house is waiting. It is for this we sigh.

This introduces a subject that is of great interest, and yet also of great controversy. There are many guesses as to what this heavenly house is, this eternal house, "not made with hands." Some have thought that perhaps it is the same thing as mentioned in John 14, where Jesus refers to "mansions." In the King James Version he says, "In my Father's house are many mansions... I go to prepare a place for you," {John 14:2 KJV}. I personally do believe that there is a tie between these two passages and that they are referring to the same thing. But I do not think it is a building. I do not take the word *mansions* literally, as though there are going to be buildings waiting for us in heaven. Perhaps there may be, and if you choose to read it that way, it is all right with me, but I personally do not think it is true. I do not think Jesus is referring to buildings, but to bodies. And also, that is what Paul is talking about here. It seems clear, from the parallelism of this passage, that he is referring to a body. If he could describe our present body as a tent, then is it not fitting that he should describe the resurrection body as a house? A tent is temporary; a house is permanent. We will move from the temporary to the permanent; from the tent to the house eternal in the heavens. So I think it is highly likely that he is suggesting us here that what we have waiting for us is a resurrection body.

Now immediately this poses a problem for some. They say, "Well, if this is the resurrection body, then what do we live in while we are waiting for the resurrection?" The resurrection, we read in the Scriptures, is linked with the return of Jesus Christ. The dead in Christ do not rise until he returns for his own, and it may be years before that happens. Certainly, in the case of many of God's saints, it has already been centuries. What has happened to them? What do they live in when they die? In order to answer that problem some have suggested that God would provide for us a kind of intermediate body; a temporary body that would do us until the resurrection occurs and we get this present body back, refurbished, refinished, and glorified, an eternal body.

I have great respect for those who have taught this. In fact, even my beloved teacher, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, held this idea. But I have personally found no support for it in Scripture. There is nothing that refers to an intermediate body anywhere; it is purely a supposition designed to explain what seems to be a puzzling passage. Rather than suggesting that, if we compare this passage with what Paul says in First Corinthians 15, it will be immediately clear that he has in view the resurrection body. Notice what he says here in Verse 4:

**For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. {2 Cor 5:4 RSV}**

Now turn back to First Corinthians 15, the great resurrection chapter. In Verse 51 the apostle says,

**Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. {1 Cor 15:51-52 RSV}**

Clearly, he is talking about the resurrection body here. Then he goes on to say, in Verse 53:

**For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:  
"Death is swallowed up in victory." {1 Cor 15:53-54 RSV}**

The interesting thing here is that the word for *clothed* in Second Corinthians 5 ("that we would be further clothed,") is exactly the same word in Greek as that which is translated in First Corinthians 15:53 *put on* ("this perishable must put on the imperishable,") i.e., this perishable body of ours must be clothed upon with imperishable life, and this mortal nature must be clothed with immortality. "Then," he says, "death is swallowed up in victory." That is exactly what he is saying here in Second Corinthians 5, "that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." So it is clear that we have here a parallel passage.

But that brings us back to our original problem: What are we going to live in during this intervening period between our death and the resurrection of the body at the Lord's return? The solution to it is that we need to understand more clearly the differences between time and eternity.

The reason why we get into difficulty over this is because we project into eternity the attitudes and relationships of time. It is amazing how we do this quite unthinkingly. We still think of heaven as a kind of continuation in every way of this life. Now, it has similarities, there is no question about that. There are many things which will be very similar indeed to our present life, of this I am sure. Friendships will be continuing, relationships will be extended, we will recognize one another, we will have memories of things on earth, these are clear. But it is wrong to project into eternity the conditions of time, and one of the conditions of time is sequence of events.

Down here we must wait patiently for things to run their chronological course; but we need not do this in eternity. As best we can understand this whole matter of eternity (and Dr. Einstein has surely helped us a great deal in this with his concepts of space and time), eternity is *now*, one great *now*, where things happen, not so much in sequence, chronologically, but according to our spiritual readiness. (You will have to think a bit to follow me now. It may strain you, but you can groan about it afterwards.) Remember that in eternity there is no such thing as "now." That is why God, who is an eternal Being, sees the future as clearly as the past. It is not because he must wait for things to happen; for him they have already happened. Everything that is ever going to happen has already happened, in God's eyes, and it will also for us in eternity.

I do think there is a sequence of experience in eternity, but it is not based on chronology; it is based upon spiritual readiness. You will notice that there are certain passages of Scripture that seem to support this. For instance, how do you explain the statement in Revelation about the Lord Jesus, where he is called "The Lamb of God, slain from before the foundation of the world"? {cf, Rev 13:8}. The cross occurred at a moment in history; we can date it. We know precisely when the Lamb of God was slain. Yet the Bible says it occurred before the foundation of the world.

What do you do with that passage? How can you explain how a historical event, which occurred at a certain spot on earth, in the biblical reckoning is said to have occurred before the earth was even made?

Well, if you are projecting all the thoughts and relationships of time into eternity, you are bound to have great difficulty with this. But if you remember that in eternity all things are present at one time, then of course it is no problem.

Take another example. In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul says that we are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. How do you explain that? Well, only when you see eternity as not a succession of events in chronological sequence, but as relating to us in a different way, can you explain it.

There is another passage in Hebrews that has always intrigued me. At the close of Chapter 11, after listing the great saints of the past, Abraham, Moses, David, Jacob, Joseph, and others, the writer says of them "apart from us they shall not be made perfect," {Heb 11:40b RSV}. Well, what does that mean? Surely it hints at some event or experience in which all of God's people enter into the experience of perfection at once. It is not in sequences, not separated by chronology, but all at once.

Let me see if I can make clear what I am getting at. I believe this suggests that when a believer in Jesus Christ dies, he at once experiences the coming of Christ for his church. He steps out of time into eternity, and since, as far as his spiritual readiness is concerned, the next event for him is the coming of the Lord, that is what he

experiences. The moment he dies he must awaken with the consciousness, "I've made it! I thought there might still be some time between my death and the coming of the Lord, but isn't it an amazing coincidence? He came just as I died!" And, what is more amazing, in the experience of that believer, he does not leave anyone behind. All his loved ones, who know Christ, are there too. Even those who, in time, stand beside his grave and weep and go home to empty homes are, in his experience, with him in glory. Furthermore, since there is no time in eternity, he discovers that, to his amazement, just as he reaches heaven, so does Adam. He is raised all at once -- because they together experience this great event of the coming of the Lord for his own. Thus it is true, as Hebrews says, "that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

Does that stimulate your thinking a bit? Does it turn the gears a bit? It ought to.

So much of our problem with the Bible lies in us, not in it. What a challenging book this is, and how amazing it is. How far it reaches out beyond the experience of men and reveals things that men, as they plod along in their earthly career, must uncover only painfully and slowly. Men think they have made tremendous advances in knowledge, only to discover that the Bible said it all along. They have only discovered what it meant; that is all.

I must press on, but there are some wonderful things to think about here.

Now there is a problem passage in this connection, in Revelation 6:9-11. John, there, is shown an amazing scene.

**When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne; they cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth?" Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been. {Rev 6:9-11 RSV }**

"Ah," someone says, "then there is a sense of time in eternity." Here are these souls who had once lived on earth but were killed for their testimony. John sees them in heaven, and what does he hear them cry? "How long, O Lord? How much longer must we wait before we are avenged at last?" And the Lord says, "Just a little longer. Only be patient until others add the testimony of their lives to yours, and then join you through the gateway of martyrdom. Just wait a bit!"

How do we explain that? It is explained by the fact that these martyred souls are obviously identifying with the conditions of earth. They are in eternity, yes; they have stepped into eternal relationships, but they are concerned about what is happening on earth. On earth there is always the awareness of time, of delay, and of waiting, and since John is still on earth their expression of concern must be voiced in the language of time.

Perhaps this indicates a further condition of the eternal experience -- that those who have stepped out of time into eternity can also step back in again if they desire to. In the life to come this may be the way we will experience the workings of God in the past. We might be able (this is fancy, I admit, but I think there is some justification for it) to choose a period in history which we would like to explore and step back into that time, living through its events, invisibly, behind the scenes, observing all that happened. Thus time would remain as a kind of volume in the library of God, a reference book into which any of his creatures may look to discover how God worked in history and thus to learn more about him. Now that is pure fancy. Do not quote that as scripture, but to me, that is the explanation of this passage.

Now, as we come back to Second Corinthians 5, we learn that Paul is longing for this event. It is not a morbid desire on his part to get out of his body. He is not anxious to leave, for he says, "Not that I want to be unclothed..." No, no. "It is rather," he says, "that I simply desire to be further clothed. I want to move on into the full experience of life, as God has promised it. I'm tired," he says in effect, "of being limited by this body. There are times when I long to be free and enter into the fullness of the resurrection body."

There is much I could enter into here, by way of speculation, but I do not wish to take time for it now. But I would point this out: One of the things we are learning down here, in this body, is how to manage the resurrection body. That will be a body fully subject to the spirit. How many times must you say, when someone invites you to do something, "Well, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." You mean, "I wish I could; I'd love to do it, as far as my desire is concerned, but I find my body unable to respond -- the flesh is weak." But in the resurrection body this will not be true; there the body will be equal to the demands of the spirit. Anything we want to do, we will find we are able to do. What a glorious experience that will be!

Do you know how I know that is true? It is for the same reason Paul can say with authority, "We know." His certainty comes not only from revelation, but remember that at the close of this very letter he tells of an experience he had. In the 12th chapter he says he was "caught up to the third heaven" {2 Cor 12:2b RSV} to the throne room of God, into the very presence of God. Twice he says, "I cannot tell you what it was like, it is not lawful for me to do so. That is, you wouldn't understand my description, right now. But I can tell you this: I could not tell whether I was in the body or out of it. If I was in the body it was so responsive to me that I couldn't feel it, and if I was out of the body, I didn't miss it," {cf, 2 Cor 12:3-4}. Surely that is describing an experience of liberty so intense and marvelous that he felt his spirit was incapable of doing anything. I tell you, a vast and exciting panorama opens when you think about a verse like that.

But now, look at the present situation. He goes on to say (Verse 5),

**He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.**

**So we are always of good courage; we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. We are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. {2 Cor 5:5-8 RSV}**

That is the present situation. In view of the certainty of this coming glory, says Paul twice, our present life should be marked with courage. "We are of good courage." Surely that means more than merely stiffening the upper lip; it means, rather, that he is full of encouragement. He is joyful, expectant, full of good courage.

There are two reasons given for it:

1. First, because we have the Holy Spirit as a guarantee. God is preparing us for this great life ahead. He is getting us ready. He is teaching us how to walk by faith, and not by sight, so that we will be able to handle the resurrection body when we get it. To encourage our spirits during this present time, he has given us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that the resurrection will happen. How does the presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts serve as a guarantee? In two ways:
  - o There is, first of all, the Holy Spirit's past experience along this line. In Chapter 4, Verse 14, Paul says, "knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also ..." {2 Cor 4:14a RSV}. The Holy Spirit has already done this once. He knows how to do it, for he raised the Lord Jesus. So we have a guarantee that he can perform this feat with us.
  - o Second, there is his present ministry in our daily life. Look at Verse 16, of Chapter 4:

**So we do not lose heart [that is the same word, "we are of good courage"].  
Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being  
renewed every day. {2 Cor 4:16 RSV}**

The Spirit has not only effected a resurrection with the body, as in the case of Jesus, but he has been doing it with our spirits every day since we have become Christian; renewing us, freshening us, resurrecting us so we do not get discouraged or downcast in spirit. He knows how to bring us to life again, to renew us daily as we rest upon the power of the indwelling life of God.

2. The second reason for being of good courage is that some day, Paul says, we are going home. Notice how he puts it. This is beautiful, I think. He says, "we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from God." "But," he goes on to say, "we would rather be away from the body and at

home with the Lord." Did you catch that? We Christians keep talking about "going home to be with the Lord," but have you noticed that you are already "at home" when you are in the body? In other words, you will never get away from home. We are at home right now in the body. We feel at ease, we feel relaxed about our bodies. We like this physical life, it is comfortable, we do not particularly want to leave it. But when we do, we will find that we will be just as much "at home" there, just as much at home as we were in the body. It is still "home" -- it will be no different in that respect.

It is this concept that really marks the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament view of death. In the Old Testament days the saints of God wanted to stay, but were willing to go. But in the New Testament the apostle says, "We would rather be at home with the Lord." We are willing to stay, but wanting to go.

That brings us to the final thing he has to say, in Verses 9 and 10. These reveal the eternal issue that we must always be concerned with:

**So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. {2 Cor 5:9 RSV}**

Whether we are down here or up there, it makes no difference; one thing must always be characteristic of us: we make it our aim to please him. Our motivation then follows.

**For we most all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body. {2 Cor 5:10 RSV}**

What constitutes good or evil? It is made clear in Verse 9: Good is what pleases God. Our aim must be to please him, for what pleases him is good. When we stand at the judgment seat of Christ and all our life is evaluated for us, we will see that only what is done by Christ can be called "good," for his is the only life that pleases God. Evil is what displeases God. What is the ingredient that marks a thing as either good or evil? What essential ingredient must there be to please God? "Without faith it is impossible to please him," {Heb 11:6a}. Faith is the response of an obedient heart to God's word. It is acting according to what God says. Without that it is impossible to please him. I do not care if you are trying to be religious or not; if all your trying does not include the element of responding to the Word of God, then you are not pleasing him. You may be very sincere about it, but you are exceedingly displeasing to God. Faith is acting on the basis of the written word and in dependence on the indwelling power of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without that element of faith, motivating and undergirding each activity of life, the most sincere action or attitude is unacceptable to God, and constitutes "evil."

One of these days you will stand before the judgment seat of Christ who, not in anger but in truth, will examine your life. No matter how much approbation you receive from others for the way you have acted, the only thing that will count in that day is what he says about you. In that day all that will be of value will be what you have done in response to his word, in obedience to what he has said. Thus you will have lived by faith and not by sight.

And the wonderful secret is, that all eternity is to be lived on that basis. It will not be by your feelings, or because of apparent circumstances, but by what God says is true. That is faith. That determines the value of your life and mine.

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