

A special "Instruction in Faith, and the Way of Salvation to prepare believers to die willingly" (as found in the back of our Psalter).

Introduction

The "Consolation of the Sick and instruction in faith and the way of salvation, to prepare believers to die willingly," dates from 1571 and was prepared originally by the Rev. Cornelius Van Hille. It has proven to be of considerable value to God's people, especially in "passing through the valley." The version here given was published in 1767 by the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of New York, which also sponsored the translation of the doctrinal standards and liturgy. These translations were gone over by committees of our Church and approved by the Synod of 1912.

— Introduction from the 1926/1927 edition of the Psalter, by Henry Beets.

In Adam all Die

Since Adam was created just and good, that is to say, holy, righteous and immortal, and dominion given him over all the creatures which God had created; and whereas he did not long remain in this state, but has through the subtilty of the devil and his own rebellion fallen from this excellent glory, whereby he hath brought upon us the misery of temporal and eternal death—this is the original sin of which David speaks in the 51st Psalm, saying, *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me* (Ps. 51:5). In like manner Paul saith to the Romans, *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned* (Rom. 5:12). For as soon as Adam was thus fallen, he immediately came under a certain curse, as we read in Genesis, where God saith, *Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life...; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return* (Gen. 3:17, 19). Whence we certainly know that all things which receive life must once die. This David clearly testifies, saying, *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?* (Ps. 89:48). For Solomon saith, *The living know that they shall die* (Eccl. 9:5). *For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come* (Heb. 13:14). And to the Hebrews, *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment* (Heb. 9:27). For as the Scripture saith: *We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again* (2 Sam. 14:14); for our days (saith Job) are like the days of an hireling, and *swifter than a post* (Job 9:25). And we pass away (saith David) like a stream, yea, like a leaf which the wind driveth away, and a withered stalk and a garment moth-eaten. For *then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit unto God*

who gave it (Eccl. 12:7); as Job saith, We are ashes and must return to ashes. Likewise James saith that man's life *is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away* (James 4:14). Yea, our time passeth away as a cloud and is consumed like a mist, and vanisheth as a shadow. And Peter also saith (quoting from Isaiah), *For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away* (1 Pet. 1:24). Again Jesus Syrach saith: This is the old covenant, you must die—the one today and the other tomorrow, like as green leaves upon a tree, some fall off, and others grow again. Thus it goeth with mankind, some die and some are born. As Solomon saith, *To every thing there is a season ... a time to be born, and a time to die* (Eccl. 3:1, 2).

And this time is in the hands of the Lord, as Job saith, man hath his appointed time, *The number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass* (Job 14:5); which Paul also saith, that God *hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation* (Acts 17:26). And David saith, *Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and my age is as nothing before thee* (Ps. 39:5). How vain are all men who live so unconcerned! For our days *are swifter than a weaver's shuttle* (Job 7:6), and *swifter than a post* (Job 9:25). Moreover, we are here only pilgrims and strangers for a short time (Heb. 11:13). *For the days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away* (Ps. 90:10). And when we live long, we live a hundred years. As drops of water are to the sea, so are our years to eternity. And Peter saith, *that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day* (2 Pet. 3:8); even so are our years to eternity.

Whereas then we must all die according to Holy Scripture, who would not earnestly wish for death when we behold in what state and ruin we are plunged through Adam, namely, in all unrighteousness, misery, and trouble; inasmuch that we are wicked, and inclined to wickedness from our very infancy. For as Paul saith, we *were by nature the children of wrath* (Eph. 2:3), *and unto every good work reprobate* (Tit.1:16), having nothing of ourselves but sin. And David also saith, *There is none that doeth good... They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy* (Ps. 14:1, 3). *For the good that I would I do not* (Rom. 7:19), by reason of sin that dwelleth in us. Of this inherent sin, David witnesseth, that we are conceived and born in sin (Ps. 51), and proceed in the same. For the inclination of men's hearts is to evil from their youth.

Christ's Deliverance

Since we thus lie under the wrath of God and in the shadow of death, yea, in hell and damnation, therefore Christ the Light of the world appeared unto us, and the Sun of

Righteousness is risen: *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification* (Rom. 4:25), and hath also quickened us when we were dead in sin, and hath forgiven us our sins, and *blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us* (Col. 2:14), and took it out of the way, and nailed it on the cross; whereby He hath triumphed over all our enemies, as death, Satan, hell, and the curse of the law, as God hath spoken by the prophet Hosea, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. 15:55, 57), who hath also (according to the promise of God) bruised the head of the devil, in whose power we were kept captives by reason of the transgressions of sin.

God, to the end that He might deliver us therefrom, hath given us His dearest pledge, namely, His only beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased, and commands us to hear Him whom He hath given for a propitiation and a ransom. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life* (John 3:16). Also *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him* (1 John 4:9). *And this is life eternal, saith Christ, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent* (John 17:3). He is the true Messiah, who came into the world in the fullness of time, true God to crush the power of the devil; and true man to be our Mediator before God, that He might deliver those who were captive under the law. He is that Lamb without blemish that was wounded and offered for our transgressions to be a propitiation for all our sins, as Isaiah clearly testifies. And He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich, for He hath given unto us all His goods, all His benefits, all His righteousness, merits, and holiness (2 Cor. 8). Therefore we must embrace Him in faith, and be thankful to Him with love and obedience. And who would not love Him who first loved us, in that when we were yet His enemies, He delivered and reconciled us; how much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life? (Rom. 5:10). For how can one have greater love than to *lay down his life for his friends?* (John 15:13)—which Christ as a good Shepherd has done, who hath been obedient to His Father unto death, *even the death of the cross* (Phil. 2:8), and *was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man* (Heb. 2:9). Also He is the true Samaritan who hath poured oil and wine in our wounds (Luke 10:34), that is to say, He hath poured out His precious blood for our sins, and bought us with such a precious price. For we are not (saith Peter) redeemed with gold or silver (1 Pet. 1:18), *but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot* (1 Pet. 1:19). For we are not redeemed by the blood of goats or calves, *but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us* (Heb. 9:12). *Who hath delivered us from*

the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13, 14).

Since we certainly know this, that we only obtain eternal salvation without our merits (for we have none, wherefore we are unprofitable servants), through the death and resurrection of Christ, we must *therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16)*. And since we always stand in need of help, we must go unto Him; for He saith, by the prophet David, *Call upon me in the day of trouble: and I will deliver thee (Ps. 50:15)*. And although a mother might forsake her child, yet will I never forsake thee, as Christ Himself saith in the gospel: *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ...and ye shall find rest unto your souls (Matt. 11:28, 29)*. To whom else should we go? He has the words of eternal life (John 6:68), and life is made manifest in Him. He is that heavenly manna which eternally satisfies our souls, that heavenly bread of which he that eateth through faith shall never hunger, and whosoever drinketh of His blood shall never thirst.

The Living Water

Again Christ saith by the apostle John, *Let him that is athirst come. And ... take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17)*. *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water (John 7:38)*, which are the operations of the Holy Ghost. Whosoever drinketh of that living water shall never thirst, for *the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14)*. As God hath said by the prophet Isaiah, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price (Is. 55:1)*. Therefore let us go to this fountain for our refreshment, and not to broken wells which contain no water. For *of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 1:16, 17)*.

He is the true Mediator who stands between God and us to be our Advocate against all our accusers: For there is *one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5)*. *For this cause he is also the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15)*. *Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:25)*, with which the apostle John agreeing, saith, *If any man sin, we have an*

advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:1, 2), namely, for all peoples and nations of the whole world who sincerely repent and turn themselves to God. For the Lamb was slain from the beginning of the world for believers, as Christ himself saith, that Abraham saw His day and was glad (John 8:56).

Thus we see *that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). For God is not only the God of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also, namely He is a God who justifies the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith (Rom. 3:29, 30), for He hath justified us by faith without the deeds of the law, after which manner David also speaks, that salvation is only come unto the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, where he saith, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity (Ps. 32:1, 2).*

Justified by Faith

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access into the holy place (Rom. 5:1, 2) by His blood, whereby He hath made peace between God and us; for He is our true peace, wherefore we have nothing to fear. For Paul saith, If God be for us, who can be against us? ...Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword (Rom. 8:31, 33-35)? Therefore, though we have the daily actual and other sins remaining in us, we must not despair. For the prophet Isaiah saith, Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Is. 1:18). And this is done through Jesus Christ, who hath washed away our sins by His blood, of which baptism is a sign; and the Lord's Supper is a token unto us that we are redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ once offered on the cross, that He might deliver us from the wrath to come and all iniquity; and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Tit. 2:14), by which the Lord may be praised.

We then, knowing for certain that we are reconciled to God by Jesus Christ, ought (according to the Word of God) to have an earnest desire of being delivered from this mortal body, by which we must come to that glorious inheritance of all the children of God which is prepared for us in heaven. This, Paul, that chosen vessel of God, desired when he saith, *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this*

death (Rom. 7:24)? Moreover he saith, *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God ... eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven* (2 Cor. 5:1, 2); and *We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; therefore we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord* (2 Cor. 5:6, 8). Again Paul saith, *We know that the whole creation groaneth with us. And not only they, but we ourselves groan within ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit ... waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body* (Rom. 8:22, 23). And since we are pilgrims and strangers, who would not desire to be at home in his native country? For here we walk in absence, and in faith, but not in sight. *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face* (1 Cor. 13:12), as He is. Who would not long after this sight, since we see that the holy men of God have craved after it? As we read in the 42nd Psalm, *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God! My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?* (Ps. 42:1-3). This unutterable, glorious sight of God is so great (as the prophet saith), *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him* (1 Cor. 2:9; Is. 64:4). Again David saith, *For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness* (Ps. 84:10). *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! ...Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee* (Ps. 84:1, 4). And *they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light* (Ps. 36:8, 9). This is the delightful mansion of which Christ spake by John, *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also* (John 14:2, 3), namely, in the new Jerusalem, *which has no need of the sun, neither of the moon ... for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof* (Rev. 21:23). There God will wipe all tears away from our eyes, and death shall be no more, which is the last enemy that God will trample under His feet. There God hath prepared a glorious wedding, where we shall sit at the table of the Lord, together with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And blessed are they who are called to this wedding or supper.

The Wedding Supper

We cannot come to this supper by any other means than through death; therefore Paul saith, *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain* (Phil. 1:21). And as soon as the faithful depart from hence, they enter into eternal rest, as Christ saith, *Where I am,*

there shall also my servant be (John 12:26). Again, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24), which is also plainly to be observed in the malefactor, when he prayed and said, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Upon which Christ answered him, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise (Luke 23:42, 43). Therefore Paul justly said (agreeable to this), I desire to depart, and to be with Christ (Phil. 1:23). Solomon likewise saith that dust must return to the earth as it was: and the spirit ... unto God who gave it (Eccl. 12:7), which also evidently appears in the example of Enoch and Elias, who were both taken up into heaven where our citizenship and conversation is, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body (Phil. 3:20, 21).

And we cannot arrive to this state of glory unless through much tribulation, of which Jesus Syrach elegantly speaks: My son (saith he), if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation: In which thou shalt also rejoice—thou who hast for a short time mourned with much temptation. *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (1 Pet. 5:10).* Again Paul saith, If so be that we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified together. *For the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8:17, 18).* For our affliction is temporal and light, but *worketh an eternal and exceeding weight of glory (2 Cor. 4:17).* And David said, *Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning (Ps. 30:5).* Therefore rejoice, *that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy (1 Pet. 4:13).* Christ hath also *suffered without the gate. Let us also go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach (Heb. 13:12, 13).* *For herein hath Christ left us an example, that we should follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:21).* Again Peter saith, *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin (1 Pet. 4:1).* Moreover the apostle James also saith, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations (James 1:2).* And Paul likewise saith, *We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed (Rom. 5:3-5).* For which reason we must not despise the chastening of the Lord, when we are rebuked of Him; *for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,* which may be seen at large in the 12th chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. *Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (James 5:8).* Take also the prophets *for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure, for we have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord,* who have left us an example of perseverance (James 5:10, 11). For

we see that Christ, for the suffering of death, hath been crowned with never fading honor (Heb. 2:9). Therefore Christ also saith, *He that endureth to the end shall be saved* (Matt. 10:22). And the apostle Paul saith, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing* (2 Tim. 4:7, 8). Likewise James saith, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him* (James 1:12).

Our Crown

To obtain this crown of righteousness, we must manfully fight against all our enemies who attack us on all sides; particularly against the wiles of the devil, against which put on the whole armour of God, with which you will be able to withstand the devil and all his might. Peter, speaking of this fight, saith that *the devil walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith* (1 Pet. 5:8, 9), and he will flee from you. This victory and resistance we have of God through Christ, who tramples the devil under our feet, in whose power and bonds we were bound. He is the prince of this world whom Christ hath cast out; and we have likewise through Him obtained the victory, and are also through faith made partakers of Him. He is the old serpent who seeks to devour us, who did devour our first parents, and who still bites us in the heel, wherefore he is called a murderer from the beginning.

Therefore we must be diligently on our guard against his wiles, as Peter saith, *Be sober and watch unto prayer* (1 Pet. 4:7). For as Christ saith, We know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Lord will come (Matt. 25:13). But this ye know, *that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched.... Be ye ready therefore also: for the Son of Man will come at an hour when we watch not* (Luke 12:39, 40), but begin to beat our fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards; then the Lord will come, and cut us in sunder, and our portion will be with the hypocrites (Luke 12:45, 46); there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth; there the worm never dieth, *and the fire is not quenched* (Mark 9:44). For we certainly know that *the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night* (2 Pet. 3:10); when we shall say, *Peace and safety* (1 Thess. 5:3), then sudden destruction will come upon us, as travail upon a woman with child. Therefore *take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare* (or as lightning which comes suddenly) *shall it come on us all. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man* (Luke 21:34-36).

But this worthiness to stand before the Son of Man consists in a pure, undefiled, and immovable faith, which worketh through love, by which we receive and embrace Christ with all His merits and benefits, which faith we must show by a pure life, as James saith. And of this purity Christ speaks by Matthew, *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God* (Matt. 5:8). And the principal purity lies in the heart, for as Christ saith, *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man* (Matt. 15:19, 20). Therefore the fruits of the Spirit follow, which are, *love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness*, chastity, righteousness, and truth (Gal. 5:22, 23). Therefore, unless we are born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). Yea, as Christ saith, Except ye repent and become as children (to wit in sin) ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (Mark 10:14). There shall nothing enter into it *that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie* (Rev. 21:27), as Paul likewise clearly testifieth.

The law of God requires this perfection of us, as it is written, Cursed is every one who doth not keep the whole law; as James also saith, *Whosoever offendeth in one point, he is guilty of all* (James 2:10). Again, whosoever doeth the law, shall live by it. But we do not keep the least commandment perfectly. As the wise man saith, When we imagine to have done we only begin (and in case we did do it, we only do our duty), wherefore we are by the law condemned in God's righteous judgment. For this we have a sure remedy and cure, namely, Christ who hath redeemed us (as Paul saith) *from the curse of the law* (Gal. 3:13), and hath satisfied the righteousness of God for us, making reconciliation; and who hath broken down the wall which was between us, namely, the law contained in ordinances, and forgiven us our sins, and torn the handwriting of them, and nailed it to the cross. For this great love of Christ, we ought also to love Him, and to be thankful to Him with good works, and verily to believe in Him for the gift of these excellent benefits: *For he that cometh to God must believe ... that he is a rewarder of them that ... seek him* (Heb. 11:6), *for the just shall live by his faith* (Hab. 2:4). *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law* (Rom. 3:28). And although we suffer a little with Christ, we must not despair, for we see that Christ Himself, when He was smitten for our sins, did not smite again, but suffered patiently (Heb. 2:9-18).

And if the ungodly live in great prosperity, as David and the prophets testify, we must not marvel, neither stumble, but comfort ourselves, being assured that their end is everlasting death. He lets them go as sheep to the slaughter; therefore it is not to be wondered at that the faithful meet with still more crosses in comparison to the glorious joy which is prepared for them, and on the contrary, that the ungodly have still more prosperity than they have, in comparison to the dreadful damnation which

attends them. Therefore if the trial of believers is not alike, so neither shall the resurrection of the dead be alike.

Resurrection

And in this we have great comfort, that all believers will rise at the last day; of which Paul reasoning saith, *If the dead rise not, then is Christ not risen ... then is our preaching vain ... and we are found false witnesses of God* (1 Cor. 15:13-15). The manner of our resurrection we may read in the 37th chapter of Ezekiel, how that we shall rise with flesh and bones. And Job also saith, *I know that my redeemer liveth, and will hereafter raise me up out of the earth, and that I shall be covered with my skin, and in my own flesh see God* (Job 19:25, 26). Likewise the prophet Isaiah saith that the earth and the sea shall give up the dead which have slept in them, for Christ is the resurrection, the first of them that slept. *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air* (1 Thes. 4:13-17), where we must appear before the judgment seat of Christ; where every one will receive *according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad* (2 Cor. 5:10). Then Christ will separate the sheep from the goats, and the sheep will be set on His right hand, who shall hear the delightful voice, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world* (Matt. 25:34). There we shall stand with greater confidence against those who have distressed us. Then we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father; there we shall come to the hope of an innumerable company of angels. There we shall reign from eternity to eternity, Amen.

Blessed are they whose names are written in the Book of Life.