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# THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

VOLUME XXIII ISSUE 8      AUGUST 20, 1999

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## *A Special Edition*

# Some Thoughts For The Journey Into The Valley Of The Shadow Of Death

## A Word Of Explanation

*This edition of The Baptist Heritage is a booklet previously printed by this church. This article is intended to help individuals through their time of grief. While this will not be a present need in the life of every individual receiving this mailing, it will be a certain need of all on some future day. Perhaps, while not presently, personally needing the message, you may well have a friend facing such a difficult time. This booklet may be the help they need. If you can use additional copies, we will be pleased to provide them without charge.*

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## A Final Note

Dear Reader,

If this booklet has proven a blessing to you, we would love to know. Also, please write us if you have any suggestions as to how to make this booklet better.

If you have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour through this message, we will gladly give you, without any obligation or cost, materials to help you with your new life in Christ.

You may also contact The Heritage Baptist Church of Pensacola with prayer requests or spiritual questions at any time.

Additional copies of this booklet may be obtained by contacting the church. These will be sent without charge as the Lord continues to supply.

The Heritage Baptist Church of Pensacola  
850-944-5545  
2200 West Michigan Avenue  
Pensacola, Florida 32526-2379

*May the Gracious God of Heaven  
meet your needs today  
and those needs  
for all of the tomorrows  
yet to be in your life  
and that greatest of needs  
for that wondrous  
TOMORROW,  
which is  
THE LIFE YET TO BE,  
through His Son,  
our Saviour,  
the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Before His Throne,*

Jerald L. Manley, Pastor

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# *When Sorrow Comes*

### Why Should I Fear

Why should I fear the darkest hour,  
 Or tremble at the tempter's power?  
 Jesus vouchsafes\* to be my Tower.  
 Tho' hot the fight, why quit the field,  
 Why must I either flee or yield,  
 Since Jesus is my Mighty Shield?  
 When creature comforts fade and die,  
 Worldings may weep, but why should I?  
 Jesus still lives, and still is nigh.  
 Tho' all the flocks and herds were dead,  
 My soul a famine need not dread,  
 For Jesus is my Living Bread.  
 I know not what may soon betide,  
 Or how my wants shall be supplied;  
 But Jesus knows, and will provide.  
 Tho' sin would fill me with distress,  
 The Throne of Grace I dare address,  
 For Jesus is my Righteousness.  
 Though faint my prayers, and cold my love,  
 My steadfast hope shall not remove,  
 While Jesus intercedes above.  
 Against me earth and hell shall combine,  
 But on my side is Power Divine:  
 Jesus is all, and He is Mine.

—John Newton

\*vouchsafes—"to be gracious enough to condescend so as to give a promise, with the Promisor Himself as the Guaranty of the fulfillment of the promise"

When our stormy voyage is o'er?  
 Shall we meet and cast the anchor  
 By the bright celestial shore?  
 Shall we meet in yonder city,  
 Where the tow'ers of crystal shine?  
 Where the walls are all of jasper,  
 Built by workmanship divine.  
 Where the music of the ransomed  
 Rolls Its harmony around  
 And creation swells the chorus  
 With its sweet melodious sound.  
 Shall we meet there many a loved one  
 That was torn from our embrace?  
 Shall we listen to their voices,  
 And behold them face to face?  
 Shall we meet with Christ our Saviour,  
 When He comes to claim His own?  
 Shall we know His blessed favor,  
 And sit down nearby His throne?  
 —Elihu Rice

Most certainly, we will meet beyond the river—if you receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, Who promised,

*"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man (person) cometh unto the Father but my Me; and, him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out."  
 The Gospel of John 14: 6; 6:37*

I will not forget thee, nor fail thee, nor grieve;  
 I will not forsake thee; I never will leave."  
 Not yesterday's load we are called on to bear,  
 Nor the morrow's uncertain and shadowy care;  
 Why should we look forward or back with dismay?  
 Our needs, as our mercies are but for the day.  
 One day at a time, and the day is His day;  
 He hath numbered its hours,  
 through they haste or delay.  
 His grace is sufficient; we walk not alone;  
 As the day, so the strength  
 that He giveth His own.

---Annie Johnston Flint

My prayer concerning you on this day is that you will find both the sufficiency of help and the security of hope that Christ Jesus alone can give.

Now, I must leave you with a question. Actually, it is the single most important question that you will ever be asked. I acknowledge that it is a very personal inquiry; however it must be so, because you are the only person on the face of the entire earth that knows the answer. Will I see you in Heaven?

#### Shall We Meet?

Shall we met beyond the river,  
 Where the surges cease to roll?  
 Where in all the bright forever,  
 Sorrow ne'er shall press the soul?  
 Shall we meet beyond the river,

To  
 Dr. William Warren Clark  
 My Friend and the Pastor of  
 The First Baptist Church  
 of Bridgeview, Illinois

Brother Bill, with whom I have walked into this valley so many times, first requested that this message be placed in booklet form.

## Amazing Grace

Amazing Grace! (How sweet the sound!)  
 That saved a wretch like me;  
 I once was lost, but now am found;  
 Was blind, but now I see.  
 'Twas grace that called my heart at first;  
 By grace thus far I've come,  
 And grace will help me through the worst,  
 And lead me safely home.  
 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
 And grace my fears relieved;  
 How precious did that grace appear  
 The hour I first believed.  
 Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
 I have already come;  
 'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
 And grace will lead me home.  
 The Lord has promised good to me;  
 His Word my hope secures;  
 He will my shield and portion be  
 As long as life endures.  
 Weak is the effort of my heart,  
 And cold my warmest thought;  
 But when I see Thee as Thou art  
 I'll praise Thee as I ought.  
 'Till then I would Thy love proclaim  
 With every fleeting breath,  
 And may the music of Thy name  
 Refresh my soul in death.  
 And when this flesh and heat shall fail,  
 And mortal life shall cease,  
 I shall possess within the veil  
 A life of joy and peace.  
 This earth shall soon dissolve like snow;  
 The sun forbear to shine;  
 But God, Who called me here below,  
 Will be forever mine.  
 When I've been there ten thousand years,  
 Bright shining as the sun,  
 I've no less days to sing God's praise  
 Than when I first begun.

—John Newton

and separated from God by my sins and could never by my own efforts bridge the great gulf between God and me. I ceased trying to save myself and I received the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. I do not trust in my baptism, nor my church membership, nor good works—whether done or planned—to purchase Heaven for me. My faith is completely in the One Who loved me and gave Himself for me—the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, as a child of God, I may face today as I do all of the other days—one day at a time.

## ONE DAY AT A TIME

One day at a time with its failures and fears,  
 With its hurts and mistakes,  
 with its weakness and tears,  
 With its portion of pain and its burden of care;  
 One day at a time we must meet and must bear.  
 One day at a time to be patient and strong;  
 To be calm under trial and sweet under wrong;  
 Then its toiling shall pass and  
 its sorrow shall cease;  
 It shall darken and die,  
 and the night shall bring peace.  
 One day at a time—but the day is so long,  
 And the heart is not brave,  
 and the soul is not strong,  
 O Thou pitiful Christ, be Thou near all the way;  
 Give courage and patience  
 and strength for the day.  
 Swift cometh His answer, so clear and so sweet;  
 "Yea, I will be with thee; thy troubles to meet;

he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

And so, we continue to live, you and I, on this particular day, waiting for a day exactly as this day to arrive for each of us. We each have the same opportunity that both David and Paul had: the opportunity to prepare to face that day of personal death unafraid.

#### THE CLOCK OF LIFE

The clock of life is wound but once,  
And no man has the power  
To tell just when the hands will stop  
At Late or early hour.  
Now is the only time you own,  
Live, love, toil with a will,  
Place no faith in tomorrow, for,  
The clock may then be still.

(Author Unknown)

I have prepared for the day that is coming for me because I realized that I was spiritually lost

#### A PERSONAL WORD BEFORE YOU READ FURTHER

*I have been where you now are. Nearly forty years ago, as I started the life of a preacher, I quickly realized that a pastor is most needed by his people when the shadows fall and the sorrows come. Any apparent Sunday Morning brilliance pales quickly in the dimness of the death bed and the funeral parlor. Something more tangible than transparent theory or transcendent theology is required when standing in the presence of death.*

*Over these years I have had the privilege of being with my people as they bore the pain of their losses. Standing at the bedside of saints leaving this world to enter The Better Land, sitting with those left behind to tread this vale of tears, seeing mothers hold their babies for the last time, sorrowing with children whose Dad or Mom was taken, supporting husbands and wives whose spouses are dead, I have been there. I have led caskets of all sizes to their graves—from those sheltering tiny newborns to those holding those who were nearing the century mark. I have also been there as my own family members died and were buried.*

*I have not yet become an expert; but I do know what you face and how you feel because I have been where you now are, and I know THE ONE WHO made the difference for me and for my people. This booklet is written for the express purpose of helping you as you grieve with the death of a loved one by showing you how to find that difference.*

Pastor Jerald L. Manley  
Pensacola 1996

### Hope Beyond The Grave

My soul, this curious house of clay,  
 Thy present frail abode,  
 Must quickly fall to worms a prey,  
 Canst thou, by faith, survey with joy  
 The change before it come?  
 And say, "Let death this house destroy,  
 I have a heavenly home!"  
 The Saviour, Whom I then shall see  
 With new admiring eyes,  
 Already has prepared for me  
 A mansion in the skies.  
 I feel this mud-walled cottage shake,  
 And long to see it fall;  
 That I my willing flight may take  
 To Him Who is my ALL.  
 Burdened and groaning then no more,  
 My rescued soul shall sing,  
 As up the shining path, I soar,  
 "Death, thou hast lost thy sting."  
 Dear Saviour, help us now to seek,  
 And know thy grace's power;  
 That we may all this language speak,  
 Before the dying hour.

—John Newton

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. 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 also that love his appearing.

And, the Apostle tells us exactly how he had prepared to die:

### 2 Timothy 1:12

For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

He prepared by believing, not doing or trying, but believing. This was a very particular belief. Paul spoke of a "WHOM" that he believed in not a "WHAT" that he believed about. Preparation for dying and the judgment to follow is found only in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Only by asking for His forgiveness can one really understand or appreciate what David knew:

### Psalms 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul:



eousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The Epistle of Second Timothy records the Apostle Paul declaring that he was facing death and that he was ready to die.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

## Facing the Loss of a Loved One

You and I are called today from our homes and our occupations. Work and leisure alike cease, for neither holds any importance for us on this day. Yesterday and tomorrow blend as though one and are forgotten on this day. For this seemingly unending time called today, our lives slow, and nearly stop, as we assemble in one place for one purpose. We have gathered from near and we have come from far; but we are drawn together, needing to be here, in this place on this day; though we are most unwilling to do so.

A day such as this particular day confronts us all as a day of memories. It is impossible that such a day as this day be otherwise; this must be a day of recalling and of remembering. Though unbidden, even unwanted, always unalterable, sudden rushes of memories will come throughout this day and linger for many days afterwards. Today, our memories will surge and fall like the relentless restless waves of the sea.

Some of our memories will be of those good days, those grand days, those great days: days that are now gone forever; but days that are retained by the mind and rehearsed by the heart so that the long ago and the now far distant years seem to have been but a mere yesternight's sleep ago. Bright blissful days shining with the bounty of blessings and beauty will be recalled; days that are a pleasure and comfort to recollect.

Yet, as always on such a day as this, there are other remembrances today. The memory will recall some scenes of sadness, of sorrow, of suffering. Days of darkness, a dismal, dreaded darkness, will also return, marching before the eyes of our minds, bringing the dreary music of depression and dejection to our hearts.

A day such as this day always brings reviews of words and deeds—words spoken which were words of laughter, of love, of longing—deeds done, deeds of goodness, of generosity, of graciousness. Today brings warm thoughts, kind memories and good remembrances of those worthy times now gone, and, forever gone, except as they are kept

him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 5:24

Verily, verily, I say unto you, 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.

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ is the sincere volitional acceptance (1) that a Saviour is needed, (2) that a Saviour has been provided, and (3) that "calling upon" the Saviour applies Christ's redemptive blood to one's personal sin-guilt. Salvation, simply stated, is believing that "Christ died for us."

Romans 10:1-13

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the right-

## Romans 4:25

Who was delivered for our offenses,  
and was raised again for our justifica-  
tion.

He died to pay fully the penalty—the full  
penalty of our sins.

## Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the  
gift of God is eternal life through Jesus  
Christ our Lord.

He rose from the dead to show that the debt  
of our sin was adequately, sufficiently, and en-  
tirely paid by His blood and that the payment was  
accepted of God as the complete, final, and there-  
for the only, acceptable atonement for sin. This  
means that salvation—the forgiveness of sin and  
the gift of eternal life—are received by placing our  
faith in this vicarious substitutionary death of Je-  
sus Christ. He died, as though He were us, for us.

## John 14:1-6

Let not your heart be troubled: ye be-  
lieve in God, believe also in me. 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. And if I  
go and prepare a place for you, I will  
come again, and receive you unto my-  
self; that where I am, there ye may be  
also. And whither I go ye know, and  
the way ye know. Thomas saith unto

and guarded, stored and sealed, treasured by your  
heart and mind as if they were among the richest  
of all your possessions.

Yet a day such as this day also contains, for  
it cannot be otherwise, tormenting troublesome  
tragic memories of words and deeds. There are  
kind gracious words that should have been said,  
could have been so easily said, that were perhaps  
even planned to be said, and which today we wish  
so desperately could even now be said, but words  
that will forever remain unsaid. There are good  
generous deeds which ought to have been done  
and could have been done and done so simply, but  
deeds that can now never be done. Today, those  
words and deeds have been forever removed be-  
yond the realm of possibility.

This is so, just as there are deluging disturb-  
ing distressing memories of certain words that  
ought never to have been spoken, but that must,  
however bitter the memory, remain as uttered,  
carved indelibly on the mind, and deeds which ad-  
mittedly ought not to have been done, but which  
were done, and now, no matter how much regret-  
ted, no matter how many the tears, deeds which  
will never be undone.

Today, all of those dreams and plans and  
purposes, deeds and acts and intentions, words  
and comments and thoughts, whether good or  
bad, are forever over, completed, finished, done  
and only these memories remain. They remain  
whether we desire them to do so or not and they  
must be faced.

For the unpleasant upsetting memories and the guilty disquieted heart, there is but one remedy, and that is, the pathway of confession. Confession, not to a human, but to God, in Whom, and only in Whom, there is to be found the comfort of the balm of forgiveness. It may be that you need to forgive the person even though he or she is now beyond your voice and to ask the merciful and understanding God of Heaven to cleanse your bitter heart of these hurts; still, it might be you who needs to confess your wrong and ask the gracious and compassionate God of Mercy to forgive your sin and to purge your guilty conscience.

Oh, but for those pleasant and precious memories which you have, I plead with you to hold them dear. Guard them as you would a token, a trophy, a treasure. They will be the currency of encouragement in the trying valley days lying ahead, through which you must surely walk; and you will be able to spend them there and then without the fear of ever exhausting the supply and going broke.

Above all else, you must face the truth today: this one for whom we gather is gone. The loved one, the relative, the friend, the co-worker, the neighbor is gone; but the touch lingers. The person is gone; but the presence endures. That touch and that presence do continue and they shall remain ever present, through the memory.

This day is also a time of very mixed, and seemingly irreconcilable, inconsistent, and incompatible feelings. You will feel hurt over the taking,

through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The love that God has for us moved Him to send His Own Son to be the Substitute for us. Jesus Christ took upon Himself the guilt of our sin and paid its full penalty.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

The judgment of God, rightly deserved by all of us, was administered instead on Jesus Christ, the God-appointed Sinless Substitute Sacrifice.

1 Peter 2:24

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

delayed or postponed. Both appointments, death and judgment, will be kept and kept precisely on schedule. The sovereign authority and power of the God of Heaven guarantees it. He is wise enough and strong enough so that He can, not only make these appointments, but He can, and He will, also insure that they are both unfailingly kept.

While death and judgment are real and will be faced, neither death nor judgment needs to be feared. Our passage from the book of Hebrews, which was cited earlier, reads in its entirety:

Hebrews 9:27-28

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

When the Lord Jesus Christ came the first time, born in Bethlehem and crucified in Jerusalem, He was offered as the Sin-bearer, the Sacrifice for sin.

John 3:16-18

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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world

sorrow over the dying, and anger over the losing. You may have regret from the past, fear for the future, and confusion in the present. You may have a sense of relief that the pain, the hurting and the waiting is finished; yet you may hold a strong bitter resentment that the person is gone, even feel some rebellion of heart in that God could have prevented all of this, but did not intervene.

Most likely, you would confess that all of these emotions are present to some degree. And, you need to realize that all of these feelings, though conflicting and confusing, are completely normal. To have this turmoil of heart and mind and soul is not strange, it is normal. It is natural. It is to be expected. It is to be accepted.

It is normal to be resentful and normal to be relieved. Yes, it really is; and, it is normal to feel both emotions at the same time! Certainly there is relief--the suffering is finished--the waiting is over. Death releases from all that. Resentment is not unlikely and surely possible also. Why did death come now? How could this be God's will? Why did death take this one and leave me? Why was this one taken from me? How can I go on? How will I ever pay all this debt? All these thoughts and many more have or will come. Rest assured that these are all normal responses.

So with hurt mingled with hope, relief mixed with resentment, even sorrow merging with joy, you are in the very midst of this day. This day may have come totally unexpectedly and com-

pletely unannounced. This event may have shattered your every anticipation so that you feel so very unprepared. However, you may have known for months that such a day was coming and, as best you could, you may have tried to prepare. But, dear friend, there is no way adequately or fully to prepare for this day. This day arrives with such a force and a finality that it is beyond our feeble finite capacity to fully anticipate.

Dear Friend, I assure you from years of observation and of personal experience, that there is no way to prepare adequately or fully to face this particular day. The finality of this day separates and severs it from all other days. Try as you and I may, long for the ability as we will, nothing prepares us completely and fully in advance for an absolute earthly farewell. The harshness of that cannot be softened.

As the family and friends gather and as the flowers and tributes surround, I want you to know and be assured of some simple truths. Please believe that I want to be a friend and to help you bear this burden by sharing your grief in these moments.

If you will let me, I can be of help to you. I can help--not because I am such a wise man or because I know all the answers--I can be a help only because I myself have personally been helped and comforted in such an hour exactly as this hour you now face. More importantly, I know how I was helped; most importantly, I know WHO helped me.

When such an hour as this arrived for me to

guide and tend,  
Were crown and summit of all life attains,  
Rewards so small, would scarce repay  
the battle life sustains  
--if life were all.

Were there no faith that on another shore  
Beyond the distance of this life's utmost scope  
Lay Beulah lands, where joy reigns ever more,  
Surpassing all things that hearts may hope.  
Beneath life's pall it were not well,  
for these vain years to grope

--If life were all.

If life were all, and amid its wild alarms  
No cross, no blood shone through its awful years,  
If through its darkness no outstretched arms,  
Beckoned the woeful forsake his fears,  
O, cup of gall; life would not be worth its  
flood-tide of tears

--If life were all.

(Author unknown)

Yes, there is more to life than merely the living. There is also more to death than just the dying. At the end of life, beyond death, one must face the Creator and Judge. The Scriptures plainly state, "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

There are two absolutely certain and unchangeable appointments that await every person: Death and Judgment. As surely as we live, we shall die. As surely as we die, we shall be judged. Neither appointment can be missed. Neither can be

So Friend, though you may question and doubt, though you may even feel a sense of bitterness, you need to hear and you need to believe that God cares. He understands your grief and your questions. You see, whether or not you believe it, or even care if it really is so, the God of Heaven loves you and He cares for you. His love and His care extend even to a day such as this. It is, however, only when you accept this truth as fact that the benefit follows. Until then, you will carry your burden all alone, and do so unnecessarily.

Realize also, that as time continues, a day such as this very day awaits both you and me. Life does not, on this earth, go on unendingly for any person. The rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish, the young and the old—all face this day. It is an absolute of life that, if the Lord's return does not intervene, there will come a day when both you and I shall have said our final "good-byes," a day when our families and our friends will gather as we have today, and a day when flowers will be sent for us and tributes will be expressed about us. There will come an ending to our earthly life for each of us. It will happen and you and I need to prepare to face such a day for ourselves.

#### *If Life Were All*

If life were all, and death its certain end,  
If nothing lured the soul to higher aims,  
If what we cherish here and guard and

face, I found I had a Friend Who supplied all of the strength, the courage, and the grace that I lacked and so desperately needed. The events and emotions that I could not prepare myself to confront, this One enabled me, not to change, but to challenge by my faith and to overcome by His grace. He sustained me not only in that hour but through that day and through all the days that have followed after. It is of this One that I speak.

#### *When Sorrow Comes*

When Sorrow comes, as come it must,  
In God a man must put his trust.  
There is no power immortal speech  
The anguish of his soul to reach,  
No voice, however sweet and low,  
Can comfort him or ease the blow.  
He cannot from his fellow men  
Take strength that will sustain him then.  
With all that kindly hands will do,  
And all that love may offer, too,  
He must believe that throughout the test  
That God has willed it for the best.  
We who would be his friends are dumb;  
Words from our lips but feebly come;  
We feel, as we extend our hands,  
That only *God can* understand  
And truly knows the reason why  
*This friend of ours* must die.  
We realize how helpless then  
Are all the gifts of mortal men.  
No words which we have power to say



NEEDS

Can take the sting of grief away--  
 That *God Who* marks the sparrow's fall  
 Must comfort and sustain us all.  
 When *sorrows come*, as come *they* must,  
 In God a man must place his trust.  
 With all the wealth which he may own,  
 He cannot meet *this* test alone,  
 And only he may stand serene  
 Who has a faith on which to lean.

--Edgar A. Guest

(The italicized words represent all, I think, of my  
 penciled changes over the years of use in funerals.)

My absolute unshakable confidence in the  
 concern and the compassion of God comes from  
 these many years of watching Him meet needs,  
 provide comfort, carry burdens, and give faith. I  
 have seen Him send light in the darkness and give  
 peace in the battle and restore a song in the  
 stormy night.

No man, no philosophy, no theory could do  
 what I personally have experienced and what I  
 have so often observed being done for others, nor  
 could a merely man-conceived creed do these  
 things. No religion, no church, no cleric could give  
 what I have witnessed. Only the God of Heaven is  
 able to do such things. He can and He has; and  
 better still, He will, on this very day, do them for  
 you. An old hymn, too seldom sung, expresses this  
 fact.

### GOD UNDERSTANDS

God understands your sorrow,

CORRECTION

He sees the falling tear,  
 And whispers, "I am with Thee,"  
 So falter not, nor fear.  
 God understands your heartache,  
 He knows the bitter pain:  
 So trust Him in this darkness,  
 You cannot trust in vain.  
 God understands your weakness,  
 He knows the Tempter's power  
 And He will walk beside you,  
 No matter how dark the hour.  
 He understands your longing,  
 Your deepest grief He shares:  
 So let Him bear this burden,  
 For God understands, and cares.

(Author Unknown)

While many could testify to the truthfulness  
 of the song, I have a more certain witness to offer  
 you than my own experience or that of others, I  
 have the infallible, inerrant, inspired word of God,  
 the Bible. This precious Book provides us with  
 many promises of God's sure care and certain  
 love. For instance, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself  
 declared: "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy  
 laden and I will give you rest." The Apostle Peter  
 wrote that we could and should "cast all your care  
 upon Him for He careth for you." Kind David, the  
 psalmist of Israel wrote of such a day as this in  
 Psalm 23, "Yea, though I walk through the valley  
 of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for  
 Thou art with me."

NEEDS CORRECTION