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A Chosen Witness: A Sermon Preached in St. Stephen's Church in Memory of the Rev. Webster

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A Chosen Witness.

"There came a cloud, and overshadowed them; and they feared as they entered into the cloud."—S. LUKE, ix: 34.

Collect for the Transfiguration.

O God, who on the mount didst reveal to chosen witnesses thine only-begotten Son wonderfully transfigured, in raiment white and glistening; Mercifully grant that we, being delivered from the disquietude of this world, may be permitted to behold the King in his beauty, who with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

That was a day ever to be remembered in all our generations—the 6th of July, in this year of Grace 1898—when, as men passed along our thoroughfares at midday, came forth like handwriting on the wall, the silent but startling announcement that the steamer La Bourgogne had sunk with nearly 600 souls and among them the Rev. WALTER G. WEBSTER of this city. As the chill of these sad tidings struck every heart, it seemed as if the cold, cruel waves of the Northern Atlantic had dashed into the very streets of Providence to claim their victim. That this one name stood in the roll of the dead spread instantaneous desolation over this community. All feel poorer, and the light becomes as darkness as this pure and radiant beam of goodness is withdrawn from shining on this world of ours. A presence, benign and reverend, is no more with us. And we are here without him to speak of him as we can. For we cannot speak of him as he deserves.

It is well for us to be here in his memory. This church was the spiritual home of his latest earthly years. It has been to him the Gate of Heaven. It was the scene of the realization of his dearest
desires and hopes. Here he received the final preparation for the world unseen. Here he was but just now made a priest of the Most High God. Here he offered for the first time and the last, the Holy Sacrifice. And while I stand now to speak as his brother in the priesthood and his friend, I may perhaps be permitted, in personal reminiscence, to say that our friendship bears a certain unearthly character, imparted by this consecrated place. These sacred walls, within which it began, mark also its temporal boundary. Here, above thirteen years ago, we, for the first time, met and spoke, and knew each other, and here on the last June day, in that dim, religious, many-coloured light, which, as frequenters of this church well know, fills it with mysterious and awful beauty at the sunset hour, we parted after Evensong to go our ways; one to plod on still among the shadows, seeing through a glass, darkly; the other to know speedily the meaning of the promise “at Eventide it shall be Light,” and to see “face to face.” These aisles, which years ago were murmuring “Hail,” as we two came together here, are whispering now “Farewell.” But a friendship with such antecedents carries its own pledge of continuance and renewal. The Church stands not merely for “this transitory life,” but for the Life which is abiding, and what is wrought in Her embrace is blest, and we have vision far beyond the grave, and the mourner’s word is one of steadfast hope, “I look for the Resurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to come.”

Of all days, sweet and sacred, which could be more fittingly devoted to such a memory as his of whom we speak than this day of the Transfiguration of the Lord? In that event the Divine Master lifted the veil, and few, that is, three souls, saw, in contrast with the sufferings of Christ, the glory that should follow. The Transfiguration proved a joyful and splendid mystery, but it was not without its terrors. They feared as they entered into the cloud. It was shown to “chosen witnesses.” They went apart with Christ. He led them out of and up above the ways and abodes of men. They were alone with Him at first. And after the over-shadowing cloud, after the voice of the Eternal Father, and the sight of Moses and Elias, they saw no man save Jesus only. Let us think that through the overshadowing cloud of mist, which rose that July morning on the sea, and which to our eyes was but the awful veil of death, and was so full of terror to those who entered it, our Lord was found of our friend and brother, who thus was called into the fellowship of chosen witnesses dwelling at Jesus’ Feet. What matters it that the Transfiguration path was then the mountain height, while now the ocean depth. The Lord, who trod the mountain, walked also on the sea, and its winds and waves obeyed Him. His way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters, and His Footsteps are not known. The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him. He went down into that whirlpool of waters, but was taken up and he sees the Kingdom of God. If the Lord bid him come unto Him upon the water, why complain we of the way? He is with the Lord. And, delivered from the disquietude of this world, his eyes behold the King in His Beauty. His life with us was a beautiful one. By his death it has been made sublime. Jesus has taken him aside, and his life, which we knew, becomes awe-inspiring as we look back upon it, because, in it, as we now can see, was being shaped the call and purpose of God.

WALTER GARDNER WEBSTER, son of Josiah Locke Webster and Helen Mar (Parker) his wife, was born in Providence, on the verge of the Summer of All Saints, October 18th, 1854. He was a true child of the Saints. The 18th of October is the Festival of S. Luke, and if the great Saints nearest Christ have any interest in the lives of those so linked with their own remembrance in all the Church on earth, surely the Evangelist of the Incarnation must have shed a hallowing influence on this nativity. He was born moreover of God-fearing parents into the atmosphere of a Christian home. The piety of that home is well-known in Providence, and all, who know it so well cannot but feel that in it has been made
good the promise that "the generation of the faithful shall be
blessed." This child was made a Christian in Holy Baptism and
was reared in Christian habits. His intellectual education, in-
terrupted by several years of ill-health, was chiefly in the pub-
lic schools. Ever, from his earliest youth, studious, thoughtful,
and a ready learner, his preliminary courses unerringly indicated his later
Academic triumphs. He was always first. Graduating from the High School
in 1874, he entered Brown University the same year, from which he
was graduated in 1878, with the highest honours, being Valedictorian
of his Class. Excelling in all studies, he seems to have displayed
special aptitude for Philosophy, History, and Classics. But one
sentiment is to be found among those who shared the School and
College life of Mr. Webster. Preceptors and fellow-pupils alike
accord him the heartiest tribute of respect and admiration, recog-
izing in him the mind of the true scholar. And with their homage to
his intellectual superiority was joined a profound and affectionate
veneration for his character. He was loved no less than honoured.

On leaving the University, this brilliant young man supposed him-
self destined for the profession of the Law, and for one year pursued
that study in the office of Rollin Mathewson, Esq. But God was
providing otherwise. In 1879 he was offered and accepted a posi-
tion as Classical Instructor in the Providence High School. Here
he remained until June, 1890. These were years of constant
and abundant growth. His scholastic attainments were enlarged
and perfected. Extensive reading embellished his mind, quickened
his taste, stored his memory, and fertilized his reasoning powers,
while in addition he amassed that culture, which the refined and
experienced traveler far and wide acquires. Few who have travelled
so much as he, have so richly profited by it. He visited the old
historic places of the earth, with an eye, a mind and a heart,
ready by nature, grace, and training, to appreciate, to under-
stand, and to interpret. He crossed the ocean many times,
and several of his foreign sojourns were lengthened ones. The
fruit of his research and personal observation he brought
forth freely for the instruction and entertainment of others.
Those, who have listened to his lectures on the Roman Forum,
the Coptic church, and Holy Week in Jerusalem, will never forget
their real learning, lucidity, and charm of diction. The thorough-
ness of Mr. Webster’s scholarship pervaded all his utterances, from
a casual conversation or a brief note, up to the most formal essay,
lecture or sermon. There was a singular completeness about them
all. Everything bore the stamp of accuracy, precision, and
elegance. Whatever he said, on every occasion, whether many words
or few, was a finished saying. There were no loose threads, no
rough edges, no jagged ends about any of his work. But nothing
was laboured or artificial. There was no straining after effect, no
seeking of ostentatious language. He neither spoke nor wrote great
swelling words, but simple, clear and forcible ones. He had the
scholar’s instinct, and the verbal clothing of his thoughts corre-
sponded to the efficient processes of his mind. He had that repre-
sent in everything which is the perfection of expression and the mark of
truest strength. In carriage, manner, voice, he manifested the har-
mony of a finely co-ordinated nature, which is but another name for
the highly educated man. In this University town, Mr. Webster
stood in the constellation of the learned, and the Academic titles
which he wore were felt, in his case, to be literally true. He was
graduated Bachelor of Arts, proceeding Master in due course, and
at the time of his death he had been pursuing for the last year a
post-graduate course in Brown University with a view to a Doctorate.
Another strong testimony to his rank as a scholar is worthy of
mention here. In 1896, the Providence Alumni of Trinity College,
Hartford, united in a formal and earnest request to their Alma Mater
that the degree of Master of Arts, ad eundem, be bestowed on Mr.
Webster in view of his distinguished attainments, and this degree, one
very rarely granted by Trinity College, was accordingly conferred.
The religious and ecclesiastical life of Mr. Webster began among the Methodists. In 1871 he publicly avowed his Christian profession, and was admitted into membership in the congregation worshipping in Mathewson Street. In this large and influential body, he was for many years active and zealous, a youthful leader, looked up to and followed. He poured out upon this field the treasures of his learning, eloquence, and piety. He was a Teacher in the Sunday School, Class Leader, Licensed Exhorter, and Local Preacher, and wherever he taught and preached, men, women, and children listened, heeded, were helped, and gave glory to God. In process of time, Mr. Webster was attracted towards the great Anglican Communion, the ancestral home of the Methodists. He became an occasional, and then an habitual attendant upon the services of this Parish, and finally on Ascension Day, June 3, 1886, he received Confirmation before this Altar from the hands of Bishop Clark. At Easter, 1890, he was elected Vestryman of the Parish, Secretary of the Corporation, and Clerk of the Vestry, which offices he still held at the time of his death. From February, 1888, until his ordination he was a Lay-reader of the Parish licensed by the Bishop. In 1896, he was elected by the Diocese its Lay member of the Missionary Council. He served also for three years as Delegate to the Convocation of Providence, and for four years as Substitute Delegate to the Diocesan Convention. He was also, from 1892 until his death, Warden of our S. Vincent’s Guild for Boys; since 1897 he had been Warden of our S. Augustine’s Guild for Men, and during the last year, Chaplain of S. Barbara’s Guild for Girls.

A change in one’s ecclesiastical position and relations is always of deep interest, but especially so in the case of a man like Mr. Webster. He was not impulsive or illogical. He was not a sentimentalist or an emotionalist. He was in no sense a one-sided man. He was uncommonly free, as you all know if you would testify, from those four very common infirmities of good people, Error, Ignorance, Pride, and Prejudice. His moderation was known unto all men. He was a man of marked deliberation, a man of open, judicial, and impartial mind. When therefore, a man of Mr. Webster’s learning, candour, and philosophic temper takes an ecclesiastical position, which by many is superficially regarded as “extreme,” it shows that such a position at least must have some very strong claims to serious and favourable consideration. It was a remark which Mr. Webster made more than once in giving account of his change, a remark made not only to me, but, as I know, to others also, that to him “the gateway of the Church was the Church’s Ritual.” He had the deep and reverent mind to perceive that Ritual is reasonable, historical, philosophical, and Divine, that it belongs to a vast principle, which the great Dr. Neale called Sacramentality, pervading all God’s Works in Nature, Grace, and Glory, and that the only state from which this principle is absent is that dense and awful darkness known as Chaos. He saw the forms and customs of the Church’s worship as signs of the mysteries of that Church and world unseen with whose angels, archangels and all the company of Heaven we praise God evermore. Of a certain staleness of mind himself, he saw in the stately order of the Church’s worship an evidence of the reality of the Kingdom of God, whose centre is Jesus the Incarnate Son. He realized how that Kingdom, founded by the ascended Lord and embodying the power and application of His Atoning Sacrifice, covers all the Christian centuries, and that it is one with the Mount Zion and with the New Jerusalem. Three distinct sources of knowledge this disciplined mind had availed himself of. He knew the Bible thoroughly. He knew Ecclesiastical History from the Day of Pentecost to our Lord’s Year 1898. And he had seen and examined as an eye-witness the three great aspects of the Catholic Church, Greek, Roman, and Anglican. He had trodden the soil of their countries. He had visited their shrines and holy places. He had really taken a personal survey of the Church throughout the world. He knew the Church of England in its majesty, glory, and antiquity. He had observed and studied the Latin Communion in many lands.
And he had done what few have done. He had penetrated into the remote and hoary East, the birthplace of the Church, and had made a study of that great Oriental Church, which is a standing rebuke, the mightiest known, to the modern claims of Rome, that Greek Church, which is a far more weighty and embarrassing opponent of Rome than all the Protestantism of the Western world put together. Mr. Webster had therefore taken a wide outlook. His conclusion was based on an ample induction. Seeing the Church, as it actually is, as a whole, he escaped the fallacy, happily now every day becoming rarer, of supposing that Catholic was synonymous with Roman. He saw that churches preserving Apostolic Succession, the Catholic Creeds, the Catholic Sacraments, and the traditional supremacy of the Holy Eucharist, were Catholic, though not owning the Papal authority and its new dogmas of recent promulgation.

With such a mind, and after such a survey Mr. Webster was drawn into the communion of the Anglo-Catholic Church. He recognized her as his lawful mother, because the Church of England was the mother of Methodism. What that great society had given him, he was grateful for and he appropriated it. But he felt that there was still much in his mother's house, which was his by legitimate inheritance, and he entered that time-honoured household to add to and complete what Methodism had begun. In returning to the Anglican Church, he felt himself ranged beside that holy and noble priest, John Wesley, who was a staunch upholder of the Sacramental system, and who, with his latest breath maintained his allegiance to the Church of England. Mr. Webster was aware that the epithet "Methodist" when first applied stood almost exactly for what the epithet "Ritualist" does now. With such perceptions, his change of ecclesiastical relations was no violent one. It was inevitable, but it was no hasty or unadvised step. It was the result of prayer, and thought, and study, and waiting upon God, until full conviction came. It is almost needless to point out, what a tower of strength Mr. Webster, with his history and experience, was qualified to be in the cause of Christian unity. He was an eirenicon, a reconciler, a mediator. He understood both sides. He was generous and broad-minded. He knew the strength and the weakness of Protestantism, and he understood how to present Catholic truth to the Protestant mind.

In 1894, Mr. Webster, after long counsel with God and man, entered the General Theological Seminary in New York with a view to taking Holy Orders. And yet, so cautious and scrupulously conscientious was he that for a whole year after entering the Seminary he hesitated to take the preliminary steps, required by Canon, in becoming a candidate for the Priesthood. He took the lowest place. He feared he might not have a vocation. In such a fear he stood alone, for every friend, competent to judge of such matters, so far from the slightest doubt, felt the firmest certitude that if ever a man were called of God to be a priest it was Walter Gardner Webster. Finally in 1895 he was formally admitted by the Bishop of Rhode Island, a Candidate for Holy Orders. In May, 1897, he was graduated from the Seminary with the degree of Bachelor of Sacred Theology, a degree awarded only for a certain high grade of scholarship, and actually conferred only after ordination to the priesthood. This degree Mr. Webster received at the recent Commencement of the Seminary in May last. But he not only reached the grade required for this degree, but surpassed it so far as to have attained the highest standing ever reached by any student in the Seminary history. On Trinity Sunday, June 13, 1897, in S. Chrysostom's Chapel, New York, he received Deacon's Orders from the Bishop of South Carolina, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Capers. On the next Sunday he was with us, and from that time forward served his Diaconate here. At Easter, 1898, he was elected a Curate of this Parish, and on Ascension Day, May 19th last, he was ordained Priest in this Church by the Bishop-Coadjutor of this Diocese. We shall never forget that beautiful service. I am sure it will forever be mirrored distinct and clear in the memories of us all, especially
that pathetic scene afterwards, when so many people, and among them his own family, received the first blessing of his priesthood. How that blessing will be cherished! On the morrow, May 20th, he offered for the first time the Holy Sacrifice. How ardently had he longed to have that honour. With what lowliness of mind had he made himself ready for it in his years of preparation. That hour when he stood at this altar to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, and to consecrate the Body and Blood of Christ, and to plead before the Almighty Father the Merits and Death of His Son Jesus Christ for the remission of our sins and all other benefits of His Passion—that hour was the consummation of his earthly desires. With what joy did he go up to the Holy Altar to rejoice in the Presence of his Lord. His heart was echoing all the time the Psalmist's aspiration: "That I may go unto the Altar of God, even unto the God of my joy and gladness."

On June 30th, he celebrated the Holy Eucharist here for the last time—And thus his priesthood here was finished.

How sweet the memory of what he was! As we linger here, cannot we see him now? There was an innate and hallowed dignity about him which constrained us all unconsciously to revere him. He was a very reverend person, and yet not a formidable one. He was as far as possible from anything like cant or perfunctoriness. He was mild and gentle, and made men think of what Christ must have been like, holy beyond words, yet attractive as none other and speaking as never man spake. We can even now hear in our minds that peculiar solemnity in the tones of our Rev. Father's voice as he read the Holy Scriptures. He read the Bible, in the offices of his ministry, in a "religious manner," like Ezra and his companions of whom it is said, that as the people stood in their place "they read in the book in the Law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

And what an admirable and refreshing preacher he was. How good it was to listen to him, and how we all rejoiced whenever he ascended the pulpit. As a preacher, Mr. Webster had great power. Direct, forcible, and simple, combining accurate Catholic theology with wise personal counsel, free in utterance, unhindered by the use of manuscript, he was well-nigh an ideal preacher. As we look back over the one short year he was with us, with what individuality all his sermons stand out. His preaching here began and ended on the 1st Sunday after Trinity. On June 30th, 1897, he first preached to us at Evensong, from the text: "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," and on June 12th last he spoke his last words from this pulpit, on the Parable of Dives and Lazarus, the rest in Abraham's Bosom, the carrying away of the Soul by angels, and the comfort in Paradise, which he was so very soon to know. We are thankful to have had the sermons he made to us on Thanksgiving Day, on Christmas Day, on the S. Vincent Anniversary, on Good Friday, and on Easter-Eve; the courses upon the "Four Last Things" in Advent, and on "Christian Doctrine and Worship as foreshadowed in the Jewish Ritual," during Lent. The clergy of the Diocese were quick to note the rising of a new pulpit light among us, and from all quarters, in Lent and at other times, came constant requests for his preaching. More than once, while S. Stephen's Parish enjoyed the inspiration and illumination of this remarkable Diaconate, it occurred to people, how Mr. Webster reflected the likeness of our patron saint. He made us think how Stephen was full of faith and power; how men were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake; and how they saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Now within and beyond what met the eyes and fell upon the ears of men, what was there? As pure a heart as ever beat. A saintly life. Dr. Ewer has said in one of his sermons that an essential feature of Sanctity is that it is thorough. It is the same all the way through. Mr. Webster was real. He was the same all the way through. No speck within the fruit. No rift within the lute. It was my lot to know his heart, and it was holy ground. He was one
of those, of whom we read in the Lives of the Saints, in regard to whom it is doubted if they ever committed a mortal sin. He was a man of wonderful humility, and he must have inherited the Beatitude of the Poor in Spirit. His Seminary course was a marked illustration of his spirit. Many men of his years and learning and position, in taking Orders would have shirked from entering a school of youths, and would have read privately for the requisite Canonical Examinations, as it would certainly have been an easy thing for Mr. Webster to have done. But he put himself aside as unworthy of consideration, and felt that the Seminary life and its technical training and association were worth any humbling of himself, which his seminary course would cost him. And so this erudite scholar, in middle life, for years the teacher of others, meekly took his place as a fellow-student among those far his juniors, and whom he could have taught. And he did so cheerfully, without sensitiveness or shamefacedness, submitting himself to every ordinance of the place for the Lord's sake.

At the close of his Seminary studies, he had achieved the honour of being one of the very few to whom was assigned the distinction of delivering theses at the Seminary Commencement. He seemed to feel that his experience and mature acquirements had given him an advantage over some of his younger competitors, and so he declined the honour, and with great delicacy and generosity of feeling allowed it to be enjoyed by another. And what shall I more say? Did we not see in him the living exemplification of Christian charity? Were not all the blessed traits of the Gospel to be found represented in his character? The soft answer, the golden silence, the gentleness, the courtesy of Christ, he showed. In all relations, son, brother, friend, and priest did he not walk before the Lord, perfect?

And God took him. This soul, holy, harmless, undefiled, this chosen witness, was snatched out of this life by a violent death. The circumstances of his passing we perhaps may never know. We cannot doubt that his was, at least in the spirit in which he accepted it, a martyr's death. He had, I know, the martyr-spirit. That spirit is one of self-oblation. I remember—for it made a profound and lasting impression upon me—his saying, a few years ago, that the words of the Canon of the Holy Eucharist, had for him a constantly increasing significance—'here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice unto Thee,' and that he felt moved more and more to realize them and make them true. Whoever shall enter into these words as he did, and make them true, has the spirit of martyrdom. He little thought how their meaning was to be completed and fulfilled in his own case, but offering his all and himself, constantly, as he did, more and more,—for this was the secret of his priesthood and of all his devotion—when that last terrible, supreme moment came, that martyr-spirit rose, we dare not doubt, to the final demand and test. It is a severe proof when at any time, under what we call ordinary circumstances, in the course of Nature, one is called upon to render up his soul to God, Who gave it. Death is the conclusive trial of that Faith in which we profess our belief that we belong to God, as our Maker and our Father. When Death comes gradually, stealing on surely, day after day, until at last the spirit yields almost unconsciously or even welcomes his approach—then, Death in his gentlest and most favourable guise is to be dreaded. But in full health, amid the propitious surroundings which lend tone and zest and anticipation to living, to be, in a moment, brought face to face with Death, and in the full strength of reason and every faculty of mind and body to stand and wait, knowing that in a few minutes, the momentous change from Time to Eternity will be upon one—this is an ordeal which needs more fortitude than human strength can bring. We believe from what we know of Mr. Webster that he found the Grace of God, in which he had always lived, sufficient even for that last trial. Possibly, as a priest, he may have helped others in their agony with word of
Absolution and Benediction. We are morally certain that with one last crowning act of oblation, he offered himself a holocaust, and passed, a living sacrifice, to God.

We see him no more, but let us not for an instant think his life and his usefulness interrupted or cut off. He was reared and ordained, though we were not aware of it, for ministry in another and the unseen world. The priesthood is the one permanent vocation. The priest must always be a priest, because he is united to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ. Just how he discharges his priesthood in that world to come we do not know. It is not improbable that we may enjoy the pastoral love and care of Mr. Webster in that world. Since he died, several souls from this parish have departed hence. It would not be strange if they should find themselves in some way ministered to by their own dear priest. If we knew all he is to others there, we might find that true of him, which Joseph said of his having been sent to Egypt, “God did send me before you to preserve life.”

But one thing we do know of his present life and occupation. He intercedes and supplicates for those still in the flesh. This thought and this belief our dear father and brother would have been most anxious for us to hold concerning himself, and could he have sent us any message as he put off this mortal, it would have been that which Tennyson places on Arthur’s knightly lips, as he departs, “Pray for my soul.” We will. We do. This parish will guard and cherish thy memory, and mindful of what thou art and where thou art will continually utter thy beloved name before thy God and ours!

It is a blessed thought that even our imperfect prayers may add something to the joy and felicity of the Departed. The Intermediate State is a temporary one; a condition of incompleteness awaiting the Resurrection Day. The holiest souls who go from us have much to learn and much progress to make ere that Great Day. Our prayers can help them, and their prayers can help us, and herein, in mutual intercession for one another, consists one part, at least, of the fellowship, the communion of Living and Departed.

It has been a special effort of the present Rector of this Parish to gather up, and keep in view, before the Altar, the Departed, and to lead our people to realize the power and nearness of the unseen ones. We are constantly reciting here, in the presence of our Lord, the names of those, who have gone before us. And in this bede-roll, which we lovingly keep here, one group of names stands by itself; the names of priests, who have been connected with this Parish.

As this last name has been added, we are reminded that Mr. Webster is the only clergyman, so far as ascertained, who has died in this Parish during his term of office in it. Prayer for the Departed is, after all, the truest and most real evidence of regard and honour, because it is the living offering of the heart’s and mind’s affection. We may erect material structures and monuments of various kinds, and it is well that we should do so. But the office of such memorials is mainly to perpetuate the Past, and to recall the fact that the Dead have lived, and to tell what manner of men they were. But unceasing prayer for them not only recalls what they were, but points us on to what and where they now are. It makes them living still. Some memorials unite these two kinds of remembrance, the material and the spiritual—like that noble College of All Souls at Oxford, founded by Archbishop Chichele to commemorate and forever pray for the soldiers who fell in the wars in France under Henry the Fifth of England. To pray for the Dead keeps them as elements of our life in the Present and in the Future. Therefore if we would draw near to our Dead let us pray for him—

“In life our absent friend is far away;
But death may bring our friend exceeding near,”

“The dead may be around us, dear and dead;
The unforgotten dearest dead may be
Watching us with unslumbering eyes and heart
Brimful of words, which cannot yet be said,
Brimful of knowledge they may not impart,
Brimful of love for you and love for me.”
He is with that Lord, Who is the Hope of all the ends of the earth and of them that remain in the broad sea. This is the Festival of Jesus Glorified. The Blessed Lord still draws about Him His chosen witnesses. Such an one, we believe, He has called to Himself, "out of the deep." On that morning, he woke, as we say, to die a desolate and fearful death. But if he could speak to us, would he not verify the Psalmist's word: "If I take the wings of the morning: and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there also shall Thy Hand lead me: and Thy Right Hand shall hold me." For, though he feared as he entered into the cloud, yet as the mists of earth rolled away, when the morning was now come, he sighted land, the Land of the Living, and Jesus stood on the shore.

"No mark along the waste may tell
The place of thy repose;
Yet there is One, Who loved thee well,
And loved by thee, Who knows.
And though now sunk, like Lycidas,
Beneath the watery floor,
Yet His great might That walked the waves
Shall thy dear form restore.

Though years must first pass by, no time
His purpose shall derange,
And in His guardianship thy soul
Shall suffer no sea change.
And when the depths give back their charge,
O may our welcome be
With thine, among Christ's ransomed throngs,
Where there is no more sea!"