

Luke 16, 19-31.

The average person has a peculiar interest in knowing what will happen in the future. We frequently hear the statement made, I wonder where I will be and what I will be doing by ~~that~~ that time, and other similar expressions. Man is interested ~~with~~ knowing what might occur to him in the future. Now the same thing holds true ~~with~~ regard to eternity. Not infrequently does man ask about eternity, not infrequently does he express his thoughts of wonder about what might be his lot and condition in eternity. Even unchurched and otherwise irreligious persons will occupy their minds with all sorts of speculations and suppositions regarding their state and condition in the hereafter. Nor is this anything so strange and out of the natural order of things. We know that man has still a natural knowledge of the Law of G written in his heart. Tho this knowledge is very meager and insufficient, yet it is sufficient to tell every one, that there is an eternity, that there is a life after death. So it does not surprise us at all that people who are entirely unlearned, will often show a strange interest in the condition of their soul after death. They want to know about the future.

In order to satisfy this inward craving ~~of~~ of knowing about the future most men employ means of their own selection. Poets have left their imagination run, and have depicted what their fancy dictated concerning the mysteries of the future world. And just in our day, we so frequently find articles in the newspapers and magazines which give some individuals' idea of the future. For that reason it is so important for the parent to choose such reading material for himself and his family, which will not fill your mind with all sorts of agnostic ideas, and will not cause an immature or weak mind to doubt the truths regarding eternity. There is still another way which is commonly used in seeking what the future has in store for one, and that is thru what is known as spiritualism. Spiritualism has also gotten a strong foothold in our own country. According to figures given by a noted spiritualist, more than five million dollars has been spent annually in New York alone on spiritualistic work. This spiritualism is however all a ruse. There is a strong movement under way at the present time to combat spiritualism and to show up its foolishness as being entirely untrue. Permit me to quote a statement which appeared in one of our church papers of last month, of a man who for eleven years was a great personage in the spiritualistic realm. Nino Pecararo made this public statement which was published in the Chicago Tribune, "I'm ~~never~~ never seen a ghost and don't believe any one else ever has. I'm sick and tired of giving seances (se-sans... a meeting of spiritualists to receive spirit communications) and having spiritualism reap the profit. When ghosts appear at my seances, they are ~~thru~~ Nino Pecararo in the flesh." That should suffice to give us the truth in the matter. It is oftentimes surprising to us that such movements as spiritualism and others find such great followings. It is surely true what Luther said on one occasion, that "The world wants to be humbugged". Whenever a new idea about the future is spread, we find many people eager to grasp it, since they want to find some way to ease their conscience into believing that there is no eternity of woe and sadness for the unbelievers. But, if all of these things are false and merely the result of the vain imagination, ~~these things~~ *still human conception of the future life* still leave man's soul and conscience in a state of unrest and darkness. Human reason, be it ever so highly developed by education and research, does not know anything about the future life.

Now you will ask, is it then possible to know anything about the future, about eternity? Yes, we X'tians have something to which we may go for our information regarding the future, regarding eternity, something which is far more reliable than any cunningly devised fables of men, and that is the W of the infallible G. And among the many passages of Scr which give us light on this subject we find also our today's text. Here X himself speaks regarding eternity, and draws aside the veil, giving us a glimpse into the future life of mankind. It is a very short lesson, yet sufficient to show us the entire truth regarding the matter. Let us then learn ever better this important lesson, considering;

THE BIBLE, THE ONLY RELIABLE REVELATION REGARDING THE FUTURE LIFE.  
It pictures to us, 1. The true nature of ~~these~~ conditions in the future life.  
and 2. It teaches us the correct attitude concerning the life to come.

(T) The story which our text contains is a very commonly known one, and we need therefore not go into detail regarding the matters which are evident, and perhaps more of secondary importance. The aim and purpose of this text is to give us a clear description and revelation of the future life.

The first thing which we wish to note is the fact that our T tells us of only two places in eternity, Abraham's bosom, or heaven, and hell. Nothing is said whatsoever about a place in which the souls of men must first be cleansed or purged before they can enter into heaven. Notice the brief and yet so clear way in which the LJ describes the death of Lazarus and his entry into heaven when he says, v. 22. He did not have to enter into a purgatory first in which he might be prepared for heaven. Our text also wards off the other false idea which we find so often in our day, namely, that the soul of man passes into a state of lifelessness after death, that it lingers in a dormant state until the day of judgment. If that were the case, it would have been impossible for the LJ to say in our T, that Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

There are again others who advocate the false idea that there is only one place in eternity, only heaven, and that all that is necessary for one to get there is to die. They try to soothe their seared conscience by making themselves believe that death might have some saving qualities. But that too is contrary to our T when X says, v. 22, 23a.

Let us also see what our T tells us regarding the character of these two places in eternity, heaven and hell. Again the words of X are as clear as the noon day sun. He tells us that ~~Ab~~ Lazarus was taken into Abraham's bosom. So inexpressibly wonderful is the bliss of heaven that human language cannot even remotely describe its glories, and therefore this ~~a~~ circumscription is used, the bosom of Abraham, for he was the father of all the faithful who, during his stay here on earth without a friend was now joyfully received into his eternal home of bliss and joy where he found place by the side of Abraham, leaning against his bosom. Thus Lazarus was united in heaven with Abraham and all the faithful believers in X.

T. 23. Now he is comforted. During his short stay here on earth, Lazarus had met with many trials. He was a poor beggar, and consequently had to live in very unenviable circumstances. Our T tells us that his body was filled with sores and sickness from poverty and exposure. Besides that he also realized his sinfulness, which in turn gave him much grief. But now in heaven he was comforted. He had overcome all temptations, trials, and enticements; he had no more inclination to sin. In short, he was delivered from all evil.

But there is also another place described in our T, namely hell. We must not turn away from what is told us about it, ghastly as it is. We are often criticised and told that we should rather not speak about such dreadful a place as hell and its torments, because it causes alarm in the hearts of people. But, my friend, would I as your pastor dare to withhold this doctrine of hell from you? At the time of my ordination I pledged to preach the entire word of G, with all its teachings, and therefore it would be hypocrisy on my part not to warn the souls entrusted to my care against the dangers of eternal perdition. Dreadful tho' it may seem to us, we must be warned against hell and its torments.

What does our T tell us about hell? v. 23. Notice X says torments. He uses the plural in his description. The torments to which X refers are such which human tongue cannot adequately describe. There will be intense suffering of body and soul. Excruciating suffering within and without. Shame, disgrace, contempt, hatred of one another. The condemned will be utterly forsaken of G, and what will make it worse, they will be able to see the blessed in heaven as we are told of the rich man in our T, and yet be deprived of all their blessings. Thus they are forever stricken from the book of G. And tho' they will plead to G and the blessed in heaven for aid, tho' they will experience remorse over their condition, yet they will not receive help, for there is a great gulf fixed be-

tween heaven and hell to forever separate the occupants of either place. Let us then be warned against the sins of unbelief which will result in the eternal condemnation of our souls in hell—the place of eternal torments. It would be utterly vain for us to look toward the future and know about eternity without having made preparations to escape et hell-life and inherit heaven. Hence the Bible also teaches us the correct attitude which should be taken toward ~~et~~ the future life.

## II.

The rich man of whom we are told in our T took a wrong attitude toward eternity. In fact, it seems as tho he did not give it any serious consideration whatsoever. He was rich and lived in luxuries, and to him life consisted in the enjoyment of his material blessings without thought for the future. Not that he was a criminal or wicked man in the accepted sense of the word, but he lived for this present world only. Oh, what a picture of conditions as we find them in our day also. How many people in our own fair city, <sup>but for their life only. How many are, untraced, unrepentant</sup> have any connection with a church, and how many of such who claim church connection go there for the purpose of preparing themselves for eternity. Is it not a fact that most of the people have not time for a church-going. Even ~~one~~ hour on the Sunday morning for their soul is too much. Why, that would deprive them of enjoying their life to the fullest extent. That would hinder them from taking the trips which they had planned. And especially during the summer months, they find it all too cumbersome to hear the word of G, offering just all kinds of excuses. But, <sup>can</sup> your soul afford to take a vacation? What if the L should treat you as you <sup>you</sup> treat him? What if he would withhold his support from you for every reason, valid or invalid? That is what the rich man of our T did. With what result? Eternally lost.

But which is the only correct attitude toward eternity, the future life? 29-31. After the rich man had been refused a help from Lazarus, even so much as a drop of cool water, the rich man pleaded with Abraham that he should send Lazarus back to his five brothers and warn them against the dreadful lot of et perdition. But Abraham assured him that if they would not listen to Moses and the Prophets, it would not be of any use to send Lazarus to warn them. There we have the proper attitude shown us which we should take over against the future life. In this world we should hear Moses and the Prophets, in other words, eagerly hear and learn all the W of G, all that Scr teaches us. And this must be a believing hearing. Not a dead formalism, but we must also live and act according to what we have heard from the Bible. Then we will be prepared to enter the future life of et joy and happiness.

Let us then all heed the solemn warning issued from our T this morning, for we all are in need of exhortation to take the right attitude over against the life to come. It is not an insignificant matter, but a matter of greatest importance. We do not know when the L will call us into eternity, and how foolish therefore for us to imagine that altho we <sup>may</sup> have walked the broad path which leads to et perdition, yet the L should give us et life. No, acc to our deeds and life, so our eternity. Let us also learn to diligently use our means of grace, the Gos and Sacrs so that we ~~we~~ too will be numbered among those who in the life to come will be with Lazarus and Abraham and all the faithful. To this end help us dear heavenly Father.

AMEN.