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"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

Lessons from

"THE TITANIC"

Catastrophe.

An Address (revised) at

61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate.

21st April, 1912.

by

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LESSONS from "THE TITANIC" Catastrophe.

An Address by Mr. P. W. Heward.

At 61, Upton Lane, Forest Gate.

21st April, 1912.

(In connection with the usual
Prayer Meeting.)

This is a difficult subject to which to refer particularly when one realises on a Lord's Day evening that it occurred just a week ago. One feels the solemnity always of referring to that which involves death and eternity; but may I just at the outset, before dealing with the special points that are on my heart and mind say how I fully feel with any of God's dear people, that God speaks by these catastrophes. God, speaks to the world as well as to His own; and further I am fully of one mind that the Lord's people should praise Him if any are at all concerned about their souls through it, and should pray for those who have passed through terrible experiences and are rescued, and for the bereaved ones, as well as for those who are likely to be indirectly influenced.

But I do not think that we can finish with these thoughts. God has a vast number of lessons to teach us, some of which I hope to deal with to-morrow evening, but this evening the special thought on my mind is the solemnity of the event in its consequences causing a revelation of the character of man. You remember that in the days of the Lord Jesus when the

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tower of Siloam fell the thought was at once "Those were special sinners that they suffered such things". But the Lord Jesus corrected it, and He did not say "Oh they are all right" but He said "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish". The tendency then was to imagine that apparent judgments were for special wickedness, now it is to magnify those included therein. Such is man.

Returning to Luke 13, I feel that this is the nature of the preaching which God desires His people to use at the time of such a catastrophe as this; although this is the preaching which must produce a certain amount of opposition from religious professing Christendom. "Ye shall all likewise perish" is just the opposite to the present day view of a great catastrophe; and while speaking of it as a catastrophe may I suggest to the Lord's people that they should not make use of the word "disaster". It is really connected with forms of heathenism. The term "catastrophe" is far more suitable. It is a word that occurs in Scripture in connection with the manifestation of God's power. It seems to me that as children of God we need to be kept standing outside the present day standpoint in speaking of catastrophes. You know very well that I feel, as I am sure every one of you feels, that God is the God of infinite grace and that He can save whom He will at the last moment, if need be, to fulfil that wonderful purpose of grace, and that no names in the Lamb's Book of Life may be erased. So that when speaking of this I do not want to

primarily deal with those who are immediately involved. Their future which has now become their present, God knows, and the Judge of all the earth shall do right. We can leave everything in God's hands; but it is for us to seek to learn lessons by the grace of God from all these things.

I said that everything seemed to point out the sad failure of man. Yes, dear friends, it does; for though there has been an acknowledgement among men during the last few days of the language of Scripture, - though there has been an acknowledgment of the power of God in nature, there is not the acknowledgment of God in Christ. There is not the acknowledgment of God in connection with salvation. There is not the acknowledgment of God in connection with judgment. The papers and people generally are concerned about the fact of death. Are not we concerned about the afterward of death? Death itself is a small thing whether it be after long suffering on a sick bed and after repeated warning or whether it be suddenly in the midst of a prosperous and healthy life. Death is a small thing of itself. There is the AFTERWARD. Men are taken up with the thought of death because those who die lose the things of this world. We are taken up with the thought of death because the men who die are ushered into another world. The loss of earth's riches and earth's pleasures, and earth's enjoyments, and earth's life, seem the great thought with most. To us that is the smallest thought. What is the FUTURE? And this has not been recognised at the present time.

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Now to recognise God without recognising the future is not a true recognition of God. It is easy to appear religious for a little while, but unless there is the recognition of the wrath of God and a true repentance, such religion is an abomination before God and only adds sin to sin.

Moreover, the present day concern seems to me peculiarly saddening when one realises it is so affected merely by what one sees, or what one hears "out of the ordinary". People are concerned about the loss of the "Titanic" with its hundreds of souls; but since that loss hundreds upon hundreds more have gone into a doom eternal. Surely we are not simply influenced by sights and circumstances that affect men, and only when we simply look at great events! My friends, while we are talking together, souls are falling into eternal judgment. This spasmodic excitement and enthusiasm is just a sad sign of the times. The child of God looks at facts as they are in God's sight, and he remembers that hundreds of times the number of these who went down on that ship have since gone into a lost eternity; and, in view of such solemn facts, life becomes more solemn and all the things of earth become increasingly slipping out of one's grip. They are only held as opportunities to please the Lord - at least so they should be. Oh that we held true realities as realities, and looked at things from God's standpoint.

In connection with the present day exaltation of man one has striking illustrations in the record of heroism.

Do not misunderstand me. I believe that one expects to find at the present day some regard for traits of character even in unsaved men, nor would I wish that people should simply think of their own lives and disregard others. Heroism and care for others are well, as far as they go. The exaltation is a mistake. But that is not the only serious point. A man's heroism though it may be a mark of a useful earthly character, becomes oftentimes a cause of almost sorrow to a child of God, when it is in face of death. A child of God can be a hero in view of death but if an unsaved man is a hero in view of death, it shows he does not realise what is after death. If souls are brought to realise a doomed eternity, and what judgment means, the very boasted heroism is brought low, and that which is the glory of a nation brings home to the child of God that eternity is not realised, and that the solemn facts thereof are blotted out from the minds of men.

The peculiarly saddening part of all, as well as the worst, is linked with the UNITARIAN hymn which was connected with the sinking of the "Titanic"; - a hymn of the most daring defiance of the work of Christ; putting aside His wonderful salvation and assuming men are near to God by nature, and only need to be brought nearer, and that it is their cross and not HIS that saves. The hymn "Nearer my God to Thee" is ^a the most fearful attack on the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. It ^{ignores} the fact that man by nature is far off from God and can only be made nigh by the blood of Christ.

That souls can be saved in unlikely circumstances is blessedly true. I am not dealing with the fact of those who have passed away primarily, but the exaltation of that hymn now (which I suppose will be sung in many places of worship so called - in this land) is another daring insult to the way of Atonement. As I have mentioned to some of the Lord's people before, I can dream of nothing more terrible than to go into eternity approaching God apart from the blood of Christ. To dare to go to God, to dare to say prayers, to dare to look into eternity without Christ - that religion is a climax of irreligion. It adds sin to sin and the glorification of it is fearfully dangerous.

And thus the result of this warning from God seems to be that men are turning it round to put Christ on one side still, and to think that everything is all right at the last moment, in every case. An event is thus being misused to increase the hypocrisy of the day, and to lead men to a two-fold deadness; for, remember, as it was in the days of the Lord Jesus so is it now, He said, When the unclean spirit was gone out of the man the swept and garnished house became worse afterwards. Let a nation put a little religion into its newspapers and speak of God and exalt God apparently for a little while, if all this is without Christ it will simply drop down to a deadness in which a seven-fold demon power will have a more demonstrative hold until that nation, like Capernaum, which was exalted to heaven, shall be

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thrust down to hell.

These things appear to a child of God and must affect his relationship in all the circumstances by which ^{he} is surrounded. It is well that we, as among the people of God should consider these things because the conversation around will affect us in these matters, and we shall need to be careful lest we be led astray and unintentionally dishonour Him Whose Name we bear.

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