Bellwicdenment

EXPIRATION

NOW I LAY ME DOWN TO SLEEP; I PRAY THEE, LORD, MY SOUL TO KEEP. IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE, I PRAY THEE LORD MY SOUL TO TAKE..... THE GOODNIGHT PRAYER FOR THE HEBREW PEOPLE COMES FROM PSALM 31: IN YOU, O LORD, I HAVE TAKEN REFUGE.... INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT. WE HAVE FINALLY COME TO THE END OF THE OBSCENE HORROR OF THE CRUCIFIXION / THE STRANGE NOONDAY DARKNESS / THE SENSE OF TERROR / IT ALL HUNG LIKE A GIGANTIC PALL OVER THE UNIVERSE. PICTURE THIS IN YOUR MIND'S EYE NO BIRDS SANG IN THE OLIVE TREES IN GETHSEMANE / NO WOLF HOWLED ON THE PLAINS OF JUDEA / EVERYONE WALKED THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM WITH A GREAT SENSE WONDER & FEAR. [WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?] THE TIDES OF TIME SURGED UPWARD FROM THE CROSS! IN THE GREAT HALLS OF HEAVEN THE CHERUBIM & THE SERAPHIM LISTEN INTENTLY FOR THE LAST LINE OF THE GREAT DRAMA OF THE WORLD'S REDEMPTION & ATONEMENT..... YES! HE'S COMING HOME!!!! THE LONG ADVENTURE IS OVER! LISTEN, LISTEN TO HIS PRAYER: FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMEND I SPIRIT. THE LILIES OF HEAVEN BEND IN ADORATION AS HE COMES. THE CHOIRS OF ETERNITY STAND SILENT. THE ONLY SOUND IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH IS THE RENDING OF THE VEIL BEFORE THE HOLY OF HOLIES. THE DIVIDING WALL OF HOSTILITY BETWEEN A FALLEN HUMANITY AND THE HOLY GOD IS ABOLISHED. REDEMPTION IS COMPLETED! SIN IS FORGIVEN! IT IS THE COMING HOME OF A MAN WHO HAD WALKED THE WAY OF GOD AS NO OTHER MAN HAD EVER DONE. IT IS THE COMING HOME OF THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD. AS HE CAME HOME, ALL HE HAD TO SHOW FOR THE 33 YEARS HE SPENT LOVING A WORLD THAT HATED HIM / THAT CROWNED HIM WITH THORNS / SPIT ON HIM / SCOURGED HIM / NAILED HIM TO THE CROSS / THE LONG HOURS OF BLOODY AGONY ---- THE ONLY THING HE HAD TO SHOW FOR IT WAS ONE POOR THIEF. AND YET, WHEN HE CAME HOME ALL THE MORNING STARS STARTED TO SING TOGETHER AND ALL THE ANGELS OF HEAVEN SHOUTED FOR JOY BECAUSE THEY SAW THIS ONE SOUL WHO HAD CRIED OUT, LORD REMEMBER ME WHEN YOU COME INTO YOUR KINGDOM – THIS ONE SOUL WAS JUST THE FIRST IN A LONG PROCESSION OF MEN & WOMEN WHO WOULD STORM THE GATES OF HEAVEN WITH HIS BLOOD ON THEIR SOULS / HIS FORGIVENESS IN THEIR HEARTS / HIS PRAISE & THANKSGIVING ON THEIR LIPS.

AS YOU LEAVE HERE TODAY, ONCE MORE YOU WILL BE EXPOSED TO THE WORLD'S STORMS & HIGH WINDS / THE WORLD'S HATRED & GREED & SELF-SEEKING --- & YOU WILL BE CRUSHED BENEATH THAT IN YOUR HEART THE ETERNAL SURRENDER OF YOUR SAVIOR / THE SURRENDER WHICH IS ABLE TO SAY, FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT.

FOR THE SUPREME EVENT OF DEATH, LIFE FURNISHES NO REHEARSALS. WE CAN ONLY LEARN FROM HIM WHO WENT THROUGH THE GATES OF DEATH FOR US..... SHAKESPEARE LET MACBETH LOOK AT DEATH & SAY: OUT, OUT, BRIEF CANDLE! LIFE'S BUT A WALKING SHADOW, A POOR PLAYER .... A TALE TOLD BY AN IDIOT....SIGNIFYING NOTHING. GOETHE SAW DEATH & CRIED: LIGHT, MORE LIGHT! ANATOLE FRANCE LOOKED AT DEATH & SAID, DRAW THE CURTAIN, THE FARCE IS PLAYED OUT! ..... BUT HERE JESUS SEES DEATH AS A GATE! / A DOOR / A BEGINNING – NOT AN END!.... IT WAS NOVEMBER 11 / ARMISTICE DAY / FOLLOWING WORLD WAR I, TWO MEN WERE STANDING IN LONDON WAITING FOR THE TOLLING OF BIG BEN IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO HAD DIED DURING THE WAR ..... THE AIR WAS ALIVE WITH THE MEMORY OF THEIR DEAR DEAD. .... THE LIPS OF THE CLERGYMEN MOVED IN PRAYER. FINALLY ONE OF THE MEN SAID TO THE OTHER, DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE IN LIFE AFTER DEATH? HIS COMPANION NODDED, YES. THE OTHER MAN WHISPERED: YOURS MUST BE A WONDERFUL RELIGION..... IT IS.....