Lyle Onstad's funeral service for my_mother and grandmother, given to me by Alta Onstad, Bozeman, Nept. '90.

Mrs. Charles Doig

The Christians Happiness in Life and in Death

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Phil. 1:21

Christians in their living and dying, are like other men. They eat and drink and clothe themselves like others. They have their joys and their sorrows as others have. They are found working in all the various callings and stations of life; they are rich and poor, learned and unlearned, experienced and inexperienced, have their merits and defects, their faults, failings, and infirmities, and are influenced by thier surroundings, just like others, who are not Christians.

So also in dying Christians are, to all appearances, like other men. They die young and they die old. They die sudden deaths and they die lingering deaths. The die at home and they die abroad. They die in a conscious state and they die in an unconscious state. In most outward circumstances of living and dying there is no difference between Christians and others.

So Christ also says: "The kingdom of God cometh not by observation; neither shall men say, lo here! or lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you." And Saint Paul says: "The kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." The same is implied in the Apostle's words, which we have chosen for our text on this occasion. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." This peculiar happiness of the Christian in life and death is not to be seen in the outward circumstances of his living and dying. The Apostle says; "Our life is hidden with Christ in God; and living, we live unto the Lord, and dying, we die unto the Lord; so, whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's.

What is the Christians' happiness in life? It is Christ. The Apostle says, not as man, nor as an Apostle, but as a Christian: "For me to live is Christ. That Christ is my life. What happiness. Christ is the Son of God, and He is my life, then so am I the child of God. Christ is holy and righteous in perfect obedience to the Father's will, and He is my life; then so am I holy and righteous before God in Him. Christ is the true God and eternal life and He is my life; then, so am I an heir of life eternal. What happiness!"

The Christian knows as well as anyone else that he is a sinner; but he believes in Christ, who knew no sin, and whom God made to be a sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him; and He is the Christians' life.

He also meant this, that Christ was the whole aim of his life. What happiness in life, to have such an aim! For we thus know that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord. Such a life is not lost; it bears fruit unto eternal life.

You bereaved and mourning friends, let this happiness shine on and in your lives, and under the pressure of your present bereavement it will flow with comfort and consolation, as wine flows from under the press; and the heavier the pressure, the stronger the flow. The happiness of the Christian can stand any pressure in life and is happiness also in death.

What is the Christian's happiness in death? Our text tells us plainly: "To die is gain." dying is winning to Christ. The unbelieving worlding's death is his total loss. Dying is losing to him. He lost his money, his riches, his joys and pleasures, and all his expectations perish with him in death.

The Christians death is all gain. Even his loss in death is gain to the Christian. He loses all pain, all sorrow, all weariness, all weakness, all weeping, all failing, all sinning, all fearing, all death he loses in death. What a happy loss! It is no loss at all; it is gain.

And what the Christian gains in death is all super abundant gain. He gains the crown of righteousness. So shall it be in the dying of a Christian. His life work shall suffer no loss, but gain.

Amen.

Mrs. Doig
February 16, 1943
"The Web of Life"
Job 7:6a

"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle."

Few of us, I suppose have ever seen a weaver at work, either the working of a hand loom or the working of the latest mechanical weaving machine. But never the less we immediately see the lesson for us that Job is trying to teach: that our days here upon the earth are numbered and after they have past, as we look back upon them, they seem to have passed, oh, so swiftly. As the weaver's shuttle goes back and forth so pass our days, one right after the other.

We can not stop time, neither can we speed it up. We must go along with each day, we must continue on our journey through life each night. Whether we work or play, whether we are awake or asleep, whether we worship God or blaspheme, each day brings us twenty-four hours nearer our own graves, nearer to the judgment seat of God.

The manner in which we spend our days is a very good indication of what we think of life as it exists here on earth and also as it exists in the hereafter. Here we are apt to not prize our days until they are nearly over. Children never regret the fact that they are one year older. That those days, whether they were wasted or well spent, will never come again. As we grow older and old, and as we look back over our pasts many times we say, "If I could only live my life over again, how different it would be." Things which we have in abundance we do not prize very highly, we prize highly only that which we have little or nothing of.

Then let us each look back on our days, those which are spent, which will never return to us again, and decide for ourselves whether or not they were well spent.

In so doing we are going to perhaps be some what disgusted with ourselves. How much time we have wasted, how our energies have been misspent! Let us go back to the time when we sat at our mothers knees, when she told us stories of the Bible, how she prayed for us, and with us. Yes, in childhood mother started us out on the right track of life. Did we somewhere along the line permit ourselves to be side tracked, did we head into a dead end, or have we continued on the main line on which mother started us?

Yes, each day is full of opportunity, not only to benefit ourselves in material ways, but to bring us into a closer communion with God through Jesus Christ.

We have said our days are swifter than a weavers shuttle, and our life is somewhat like that shuttle. Each day we spin or add another thread to the web of life. For some of us are only perhaps half through. But in looking over that web, in checking over our weaving, is it smooth and well done or are there gaping holes here and weak spots there? Has each day had its influence for good or evil, for sin or holiness, for God or for Satin? Now is the time to take inventory, now is the time to number our days.

I say all of this with the certainty that what we weave during our life time we are going to be compelled to wear in eternity, and when we stop and think about it eternity is a long time.

There are those poor ignorant individuals who claim that there is no hell, that God is so merciful that He will save all people; would that that were true, but God has said otherwise. Story of Lazarus and the Rich Man:

While some people contradict the Bible in order to salve their own minds and conscience, we do not dare do like wise, because in the end we too would only be the loser.

What we do, what we say, and what we think are all indications whether we are Christians or not. Whatsoever a man soweth, that he must reap. We can't expect to plant oats in a certain field in the spring and expect to harvest corn in the fall. We can't expect likewise live the carefree life of those who philosophy is eat, drink, and be merry, and expect to inherit the Kingdom of God. If we live after the flesh, the natural outcome is eternal death, or punishment! If we live after the spirit, we can certainly know with all of the assurance of God's word that we will inherit eternal life. Friends what kind of a web are you weaving by your life?

On what are we resting our hope of salvation? Are we depending on our own goodness, our own abilities? Are we trusting in these pseudo religious organizations, those who like to think that they have the same power that God has vested only in the Church? Friends place your trust in the Church and in the Word of God. Jesus Christ who shed his blood on the tree of Calvary is the only one who can save us, and in this hour he is our greatest comfort and consolation. The dead in Christ are only asleep, though they are inactive, though they are put out of our midst, Christ will raise them again. I am the resurrection and the life, He that believeth in Me, shall not perish but have eternal life.

Then let it be our sincere desire to conform to the Words of Christ that we too might be like Jesus, that we may be with Him. We must recognize the power of prayer and practice it daily and when the evening shadows fall it is good for us to look at the web we have spun for ourselves that day. If it is a week web, broken here and there with evil and temptation,

permit Christ to mend it; and if at the end of the day we find our web of work smooth and even, give thanks to God and remain in the fellowship with Him.

To you who mourn the loss of dear mother we give you our deepest sympathy. It is said that time heals all wounds and dulls the memory, but Christ is a better healer than time. He is the great physician, cast on Him your burden of sorrow and He will carry your load. May He give you strength and peace in this your hour of trial.

