

In Your Hands

God is sovereign over our lives. Who decided that we should exist? He did. Who chose where and when we should be born? He did. And who determined when and how we should die? God alone did! From the beginning to the end, our life is completely in His hands. "In Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them" (Psalm 139:16).

The thought of God's sovereign rule is a tremendous comfort to the believer. We live in an uncertain and dangerous world; our bodies are getting older and weaker, and eventually we will come to the end of our earthly pilgrimage. Yet nothing is haphazard. God is in perfect control of all things, even the minute and insignificant details. If a sparrow does not fall to the ground apart from God's will, surely the Father takes care of every one of His children.

In the face of death, we naturally grieve for having to leave our loved ones and everything we cherish. Moreover, conscious of our own sinfulness and unworthiness, we fear the judgment to come. Therefore, when death approaches, the Christian turns his eyes to the King sitting on the throne, the Father in heaven.

He prays for healing, confident that God is able to restore his health once more, just as He had healed him several times before through medical and other means. Nevertheless, he *prays* – he does not *demand*. His attitude is like Jesus' at Gethsemane, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). He can take both "yes" and "no" for an answer because he has learned to be submissive to the Lord's will.

The Christian is grateful for the multitude of gifts God had given him over the years, especially the love and care of family and friends. Nonetheless, the believer readily accepts from his master both good and adversity: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Willingly he lets go of everything when God calls him home.

Not so the unbeliever -- he resents God's dominion for he wants to do whatever he likes without any thought of his Maker. The unbeliever wants to live independently and in defiance of God. How pathetic! God's throne is not shaken by the rebellion of puny creatures. God will most certainly fulfill His eternal plan. "The LORD has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom" (Proverbs 16:4). Reality will catch up with the unbeliever and he will certainly receive the terrible retribution in the everlasting fire of hell.

On the other hand, the believer abides under the shadow of the Almighty. In life, he had learned to pray, "Your will be done." At the moment of death he repeats the same prayer. "Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth" (Psalm 31:5). I sincerely hope that this prayer expresses our attitude of joyful submission and confident trust in God. There is no other worthy way to live...or die.