

Loving Memorials: Beyond the Valley of the Shadows by Thomas H. Timmons, Pentecostal Publishing Company, Louisville, Kentucky, 1914.

PROLOGUE

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A noteworthy writer of the Nineteenth Century, in a formal treatise on the value of biography, says: "Our finest literature is found in the Book of the Dead." The best approved expressions and the ripest sentiments of the great and learned nations of the East are embodied in their writings of the departed. Heroism, martial and moral, is described in terms intensive. In fact, all history is a gathering and a garnering of the sheaves of the "Reaper called Death."

An analysis of these statements shows that their truth rests in the fact of that eloquent and challenging silence which death always brings. The grave is the common level of human beings; in a large sense, contention and strife are ended there. There is no longer any voluntary warfare with those whose hearts have ceased to beat and whose bosoms have ceased to heave. Furthermore, the equation of dissolution, vast and unrelenting, commends itself to our love and veneration. "The touch of the vanished hand, and the sound of the voice that is still," leave the most vivid recollections of gratitude and affection.

Again there is compensation, even a just measurement, superinduced by the fact of death. As the darkness reveals the stars whose beams were lost in the resplendent light of day, so the gems of kindness and virtue shine out when the sun of life is set.

No matter how much we may feel our sense of incompetence or shrink from the responsibility there comes a time when the living must sit in assize upon the departed. At such a time the good impulses of the living and the equally commendable qualities of the dead coalesce. Youth and beauty, wealth and poverty, infancy and old age, lie down equally in the dust.

The writings embodied in this volume are of the most delicate and sacred character. The author has employed the unusual and very attractive method of assembling the diverse memorial's of age, youth, childhood and infancy, and so treats and relates them as to develop and present the valuable lessons of simplicity, patience, courage and hope. The portraits are none of fancy, but all of life—unfeigned, blood-warmed life. The story is told in effective prose. To use the author's own language, not only has he "given details, including names, relationships, age, experience, sickness and death, but in very many paragraphs, doctrines and principles and motives and obligations are presented in such forms as to become tangible and available to all who may read and ponder these etchings." The recital is limpid, and as we trace it the narrative becomes an ardent exhortation and a true ideal. We are constantly reminded of the call, "To be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise."

The author reveals a threefold purpose in these writings, first, to assuage the grief of the bereaved; second, to inspire faith in Him who came to bring life and immortality to light; third, to point the reader to a far-away dawn when we shall smile upon the troubled past and wonder that we had ever wept at all.

Thus are drawn in unaffected liveliness the pictures of those who have disappeared from mortal vision. The spirit of faith in immortality and the future life breathes in every paragraph of this volume. "Loving Memorials" will command a sympathetic reading, and the effect will be tranquilizing and wholesome.