

The Death of John the Baptist

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon emphasizes the importance of going to Jesus in times of trouble, whether it be for consolation, renewal of strength, or guidance.

Scripture: Psalm 34:18, Matthew 11:28, Matthew 14:12, John 14:6, Acts 26:9, 2 Thessalonians 2:9

Topics: "Rejection Of God", "Finding Consolation"

Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the analysis of Matthew 14:1-12, highlighting the consequences of rejecting God's truth and the mystery of a perverted conscience in the story of Herod and John the Baptist. The sermon emphasizes the importance of turning to Jesus as the ultimate resource in times of trouble and grief, showcasing how going to Jesus brings consolation, renewal of strength, and a reminder of His eternal presence and promises.

Transcript

(Matt, xiv:1-12.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The cowardice of a had conscience (verses 1-3).--Men who reject the truth of God are sure to be the victims of superstition and error (2 Thess. ii:9-12), and men who do wrong must suffer from an outraged conscience.
2. The mystery of a perverted conscience (verses 3-11).-- Herod was afraid of John the Baptist with a superstitious fear. He was a degraded sensualist. If conscience could be utterly slain, Herod's would have been long since dead within him. But though the conscience may be perverted to any imaginable degree, dwarfed, or misdirected, it is sure to survive in some form. This man was willing enough to murder a righteous man, but not willing to break an unrighteous oath to a dancing woman (comp. Acts xxvi:9-11).
3. The resource of troubled saints, verse 12 (See below).

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

"And went and told Jesus." There was wisdom! Think how absolutely overwhelming was the disaster of John's death to his little company of followers. To become a disciple of John the Baptist meant little in the first flush of his popularity, but to remain his disciple after his biting invective had enraged the religious

authorities, meant utter ostracism. And now he, the last and greatest of the old line of Israel's prophet's, was dead--done to death by the whim of an unclean despot at the request of a dancer! What was left to John's disciples? Why, to take up his dear body and bury it, and to go and tell Jesus. But that was everything. It is not merely that so long as Jesus is left to us no disaster is irremediable. Far more than that: so long as Jesus is left to us, everything is left. To go and tell Jesus is the supreme resource.

It is the resource for consolation. There is a wonderful reticence in the Scripture narratives. We are not told what the Lord said to Simon Peter in that interview on the morning of the resurrection--that talk was too sacred for words. We are not told what Simon told Paul when, fourteen years after his return from Arabia, the great Apostle to the Gentiles went up to Jerusalem to see Peter. Neither are we told what wonderful words of comfort Jesus spake to John's grief-stricken disciples. These things cannot be told. Can you tell what Jesus said when your dearest one lay dead, and you went and told Jesus? No, you cannot.

One feels sure Jesus spoke much of the past. He would remind them how blessed they had been to have such companionship, to know the uplift, the inspiration of such a man's friendship. He would speak of the future, too; telling them that John's work and theirs was not lost, could never be lost. And He would be sure to say a word of heaven and of how they should reknit the old friendship up there, never more to be broken.

To go and tell Jesus is the resource for renewal of strength when hope is faint, and the way seems hard, and the heavens brass. "How can we go on, Master?" John's disciples would ask. "Go on with Me," would be the answer. "Do you not remember how John said, "I am not the Christ?" Here am I--^the Light, the Life, the Truth, the Way--go on with Me."

It would be a poor thing to keep this resource only for the days of bereavement, of sorrow, of discouragement. When hope is high, and the pulse of life strong, and the horizon all aglow; when victory, not defeat; new life, not death, have come, oh, then, too, go and tell Jesus. There is no sharer of joy and peace and power to compare with Jesus.

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