

# A Foretaste of Eternal Life

by W.R. Inge

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*The sermon argues that it is possible for the soul to gaze into eternity while still in the body, and that this experience is highly valued by God.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 46:10, Matthew 6:33, John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 2:9, Colossians 3:2

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Spiritual Clarity"

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## Description

W.R. Inge delves into the possibility of the soul, while still in the body, reaching a state where it can glimpse eternity and experience a taste of eternal life and blessedness. He acknowledges the challenges of being preoccupied with earthly matters and the need for the soul to be pure, stripped of all distractions, and completely separated from worldly influences to achieve such a profound connection with God. Despite the skepticism of many, Inge highlights St. Dionysius' belief that it is indeed attainable in the present life through forsaking the senses and entering into union with the divine. He emphasizes that even a single moment of this spiritual clarity surpasses all earthly achievements and leads to finding the kingdom of heaven and eternal life on earth.

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## Transcript

Some have asked whether it is possible for the soul, while it is still in the body, to reach so great a height as to gaze into eternity, and receive a foretaste of eternal life and blessedness. This is commonly denied; and in a sense the denial is true. For indeed it cannot come about, so long as the soul is occupied with the body, and the things which minister to the body and belong to it, and to time and created things, and is disturbed and troubled and distracted by them.

For the soul that would mount to such a state, must be quite pure, entirely stripped and bare of all images; it must be wholly separate from all creatures, and above all from itself. Many think that this is impossible in this present life. But St Dionysius claims that it is possible, as we find from his words in his letter to Timothy, where he says: "In order to behold the hidden things of God, thou shalt forsake sense and the things of the flesh, and all that can be perceived by the senses, and all that reason can bring forth by her own power, and all things created and uncreated which reason can know and comprehend, and thou shalt stand upon an utter abandonment of thyself, as if thou knewest none of those things which I have mentioned, and thou shalt enter into union with Him who is, and who is above all existence and knowledge."

If he did not think this to be possible in this present time, why did he teach it and urge it upon us in this present time? But you ought to know that a master has said, about this passage of St Dionysius, that it is possible, and may come to a man so often that he may become accustomed to it, and be able to gaze into eternity whenever he will. And a single one of these glances is better, worthier, higher, and more pleasing to God than all that the creature can do as a creature. He who has attained to it asks for nothing more, for he has found the kingdom of heaven and eternal life here on earth. viii.

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