

Immortality

by William Jennings Bryan

I shall not believe that even now his light is extinguished. If the Father deigns to touch with divine power the cold and pulseless heart of the buried acorn, and make it burst forth from its prison walls, will He leave neglected in the earth the soul of man, who was made in the image of his Creator? If He stoops to give to the rose bush, whose withered blossoms float upon the breeze, the sweet assurance of another springtime, will He withhold the works of hope from the sons of men when the frosts of winter come? If matter, mute and inanimate, though changed by the forces of Nature into a multitude of forms, can never die, will the imperial spirit of man suffer annihilation after it has paid a brief visit, like a royal guest, to this tenement of clay?

Rather let us believe that He, who in His apparent prodigality, wastes not the rain drop, the blade of grass, or the evening's sighing zephyr, but makes them all to carry out His eternal plans, has given immortality to the mortal, and gathered to Himself the generous spirit of our friend.

Instead of mourning, let us look up and address him in the words of the poet:

Thy day has come, not gone;
Thy sun has risen, not set;
Thy life is now beyond
The reach of death or change,
Not ended -- but begun.
O, noble soul! O, gentle heart!
Hail, and farewell.

*-- taken from William Jennings Bryan's eulogy
on a friend & collage in the 53rd congress*

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