

Steeple News

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This Lessons of Time

If history can teach us anything, perhaps it is modesty about who we are and what we are. What seems permanent from the vantage of a single life caught in the present is as transient as the wind that erodes a desert city. Institutions and the people who create them burn bright for a moment and then flicker and fail. Mighty Pharaoh who once strode Egyptian palaces wildly dreaming of conquest is now just bones in the earth. Excessive South American jungles have buried entire cities out of memory. Yes, man has less control here than he wants, far less time than he dreams. He acts his part intensely, believing he is all - and then he is gone.

Even a glimpse of our personal history teaches us how time moves us from who we were. The long days of school that seemed to last forever come and go. When we visit that school again, we have changed. The cheers we hear in the halls are only echoes of the past. The football hero has moved on to sell cars; the prom queen is very wrinkled. Time, which seemed to stand still, did not keep its promise and we look back from the mirror with older eyes than we remembered. The poet Shelly said it this way, "We are as smoke that drifts above the vale, whose ever changing shape the breezes tend."

All of this is not to make us despair but rather, to give perspective. Time in its relentlessness will push us from any heartache. The most intense sorrow, the most agitating anger will soon be but a memory. Life's hurry and impermanence must teach us, too, to be less eager to embrace the current thought, less willing to sell our security for the latest model, less impressed by those who seem high style. Today's styles, gadgets and thoughts will be tomorrow's antiques. The goals we suffer for may in retrospect be just so much trivia. So, in these moments here let us evaluate the pull of the present with a wise distance, let us put our hearts on what will not fade, and finally let us love what we love with more intent. The moment will not come again.

Rev. Hans Lillejord