

Devotional Thoughts :: Death awaits

Death awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/2/16 8:10

Our brother suggested isolating this from another posting (https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id14697&forum34) The life and letters of John Angel I James and after some contemplation and humbling of that show of false humility, thought it best to carry this on here... It does need it's own isolation and devotion.

Devotion

DEVOTION, n.

1. The state of being dedicated, consecrated, or solemnly set apart for a particular purpose.
2. A solemn attention to the Supreme Being in worship; a yielding of the heart and affections to God, with reverence, faith and piety, in religious duties, particularly in prayer and meditation; devoutness.
3. External worship; acts of religion; performance of religious duties.

As I passed by and beheld your devotions. Acts 17.

4. Prayer to the Supreme Being. A Christian will be regular in his morning and evening devotions.
5. An act of reverence, respect or ceremony.
6. Ardent love or affection; attachment manifested by constant attention; as, the duke was distinguished by his devotion to the king, and to the interest of the nation.
7. Earnestness; ardor; eagerness.

He seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him.

8. Disposal; power of disposing of; state of dependence.

Arundel castle would keep that rich corner of the country at his majestys devotion.

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Have asked our brother to copy over the same replies from the above link as well as they pertain to death. And pray as well that the letters and thoughts of John Angell James are well attended to on their own, a man of great insight and honest extraction.

**Re: Death awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/2/16 8:12**

**SORROW FOR THE DEATH OF FRIENDS**

By John Angell James, on the death of his wife

"Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. Praise the name of the Lord! (Job 1:21)

"See, I am the only God! There are no others. I kill, and I make alive! I wound, and I heal, and no one

can rescue you from My power!" Deuteronomy 32:39

I hope I shall not be thought by any to be indelicately obtruding my personal sorrows upon public attention. I allude to the situation in which I am placed by a mysterious but all-wise Providence. If I refer to the event that has now befallen me, it is not to move your sympathy, for this has already flowed towards me in full tide, and in every variety of soothing attentions, both before and since the stroke of separation; and for which I thus publicly return you my sincere gratitude—but it is for a still higher and holier purpose, to promote your spiritual welfare. If the ordinary afflictions of life should be improved by us for our good, surely the deeper sorrows of the grave should be eminently conducive to our soul's present and eternal welfare. When it is not possible for us to derive any further benefit from the life of our friends, we should be tremblingly solicitous to receive it from their death. When their own vital selves are no longer before us in all the beautiful form and activity of a holy example, and nothing remains of them but their tomb and their memory—we should render these precious remains subservient to our spiritual improvement. This is the best, the only compensation for their loss.

When a holy and beloved object of our affection is removed by death, we ought to sorrow. Humanity demands it, and Christianity, in the person of the weeping Jesus, allows it. The man without a tear, is a savage or a Stoic—but not a Christian. God intends when he bestows his gifts—that they should be received with smiles of gratitude; and when he recalls them—that they should be surrendered with "drops of sacred grief." Sorrow is an affection implanted by the Creator in the soul, for wise and beneficent purposes; and it ought not to be ruthlessly torn up by the roots—but directed in its exercise by reason and piety. The work of grace, though it is above nature—is not against it. The man who tells me not to weep at the grave, insults me, mocks me, and wishes to degrade me. I do weep. I must weep. I cannot help it. God requires me to do so—and has opened a fountain of tears in my nature for that purpose. And it is the silent, pure, unsophisticated testimony of my heart to the excellence of the gift he gave in mercy; and in mercy, no doubt, as well as judgment, has recalled.

Without sorrow we would not improve by his correcting hand; chastened grief is like the gentle shower, falling first upon the earth to prepare it for the seed, and then upon the seed to cause it to germinate. Wild, clamorous, passionate sorrow is like the thunder shower of inundation—which carries away soil and seed together. Can we lose the company of one whose presence was the light and charm of our dwelling, whose society was the source of our most valuable and most highly valued earthly comfort; whose love, ever new and fresh, was presented daily to us in full cup by her own hand; who cheered us with her conversation; bore with our infirmities; solved our doubts; disclosed to us in difficulty the path of duty; and quickened us by her example—is it possible, I say, to lose such a friend—and not sorrow?

But, then, though we mourn—we must not murmur. We may sorrow—but not with the passionate and uncontrolled grief of the heathen, who have no hope. Our sorrow must flow, deep as we like, but noiseless and still—in the channels of submission. It must be a sorrow so quiet, as to hear all the words of consolation which our heavenly Father utters amidst the gentle strokes of his rod. It must be a sorrow so reverential, as to adore him for the exercise of his prerogative in taking away what and whom he pleases. It must be a sorrow so composed, as to prepare us for doing his will as well as bearing it. It must be a sorrow so meek and gentle, as to justify him in his dispensations. It must be a sorrow so confiding, as to be assured that there is as much love in taking the mercy away—as there was in bestowing it. It must be a sorrow so grateful, as to be thankful for the mercies left, as well as afflicted for the mercies lost. It must be a sorrow so trustful, as to look forward to the future with hope, as well as back upon the past with distress. It must be a sorrow so patient, as to bear all the aggravations that accompany or follow the bereavement with unruffled acquiescence. It must be a sorrow so holy, as to lift the prayer of faith for Divine grace to sanctify the stroke. It must be a sorrow so lasting, as to preserve through all the coming years of life the benefit of that event, which in one solemn moment changed the whole aspect of our earthly existence.

When grief impairs the health and preys upon the constitution, it is "the sorrow of the world which works death;" when it closes the ear to the words of consolation, and the eye to mercies left; when it paralyzes the energies, and benumbs and stupefies the soul, so that incumbent duties, personal and relative, domestic and social, civil and sacred, are neglected, and the soul does nothing but lie down upon the sepulcher to weep; when it refuses to be comforted, even with all the consolation of the gospel—then it is a sorrow unworthy of the honorable name which the Christian bears.

But it is not against too long and too deep a sorrow that some need to be admonished, but against a too short and too superficial sorrow. Nothing promises more, and, too generally, yields less improvement and benefit, than the death of friends. At their decease life loses its charm; society, occupation, and favorite tastes, give up their attraction; the pall that covers their dear remains extends its dark folds over all other things; and every hope is entombed in their grave. Temporal things fade, and are lost amidst the glory and grandeur of eternal things. Invisible realities displace from imagination the

vain shows and shadows of the visible world! The tie that binds us to earth is cut, and our spirit seems set loose to rise to heaven and glory. For a while we hear the voice which comes from the tomb. The edifying and exemplary life; the triumphant death; the kind and pious counsels, and the tender or affectionate farewell of a beloved companion—<sup>for some days or weeks employ our thoughts or engross our conversation. We can talk and think of nothing else, as long as our sorrow remains.</sup>

But, by degrees, the world which seemed dead, corrupted, and loathsome—recovers its life, its health, its attractions, and its power. Time abates the violence of grief; "by degrees new associations are formed, new projects are devised, new pleasures are pursued; the stream of reflection is diverted into other and far different channels; the heart plunges as deeply as ever into worldly hopes and fears; the fondness for what was lately pronounced vanity and vexation of spirit, is revived. Thus the tears shed for departed friends have been shed in vain, and they who were stricken by God and afflicted, hearken no longer to the voice of the rod, and reap no lasting fruit from correction.

It is wisely ordered, I know, that the poignancy of sorrow should be abated by the lapse of time, and that the mind by its elastic power should rise from beneath the first pressure of overwhelming calamity—or else death would smite with paralysis the whole framework of society. Still it must be confessed and lamented, that in too many cases the grief of the mourner is too evanescent, either for a just tribute to the memory of 'departed excellence', or for his own spiritual improvement. If departed spirits could be spectators of what is going on upon earth, and were susceptible of the frailties of their mortal sojourn, it would surprise and grieve them, in some cases, to see how soon the grass grows around their sepulcher, and the foot turns from it into another path! It would check our vanity and curb our expectations of posthumous honor and affection—to think how soon our names will be pronounced without a tear, and our history be forgotten amidst the new objects that rise to occupy our place!

But it is now time to consider the LESSONS to be learned by the death of Christian friends.

1. How dreadful is the nature of SIN! Sin is the parent of death; and death the first-born of sin. What must be the parent—when so hideous and so dreadful is the offspring? Who can have watched the harbingers of death—"the groans, the pains, the dying strife," and have seen all this in the dying Christian too, without being struck with the fearful nature of man's revolt from God? True, "the mortal paleness on the cheek" is associated, almost irradiated, with "a glory from the soul," just as the rays of the sun, falling upon a base and even unsightly object, may conceal its deformity from an observer at a little distance. But death in itself, and by itself—is horrid and revolting! To see all this inflicted, I repeat, upon a Christian, a saint, a child of God, an heir of glory; to see no way even to the kingdom of God, to the realms of immortality—but this dark valley of corruption, earth, and worms—this gives us a most impressive idea of the dreadful nature of sin!

Grace triumphs, I admit. The soul rises superior to its situation, sees the glimpses of glory in that low, dark situation, and echoes amidst the groans of expiring nature the song of the redeemed. Yes, but then this is the victory of faith over death; this is grace triumphing over sin. Take away what grace does—and all that pertains to death itself, is as awful in the most eminent believer, as in the most confirmed and blaspheming infidel. Death, as to its physical effects, cannot change its nature, though, in the death of the Christian, sin and grace, in their effects, are often presented in wondrous conflict and in glorious contrast. How such scenes should enlarge our views of the malignity of sin, and embitter our hearts against it! O sin, sin—what have you done!

2. But what a glorious view does the death of Christians give us of the work of our Lord JESUS Christ, as the great peace-maker with God through the blood of his cross; as the destroyer of death; the Prince of life; the restorer of immortality; the compassionate High Priest of his people; their companion and helper in the mortal conflict; and their conductor to celestial glory! There it is—his mediatorial office; his redeeming work; his soul-saving power; his abounding mercy; not in a sermon, not in a book, no, not even in a verse or page of the New Testament—but in the glorious result and reality, embodied in that dying saint, set forth in that dissolving yet imperishable believer.

Hear the comfortable words that fall from the lips of the departing Christian, as his voice, almost lost in death, still praises God, and sends forth expressions which seem more like the first sounds of the cherubim's song than the last words of mortal man. See the peace which spreads over the countenance, and the sparkle which lights up with joy the eye that is growing dim in death. What is it all? How does this come to pass? Why that tranquility on the verge of the grave—that confidence in the near prospect of meeting a holy God—that voluntary surrender of life—that fearless tread down into the dark valley—that resolute plunge into the vast abyss of eternity—that act of the soul herself in loosening all the ties which bound her to earth, and laying hold of a hand that is lifting her up to the heavens? Why that that longing after hol

iness, as if the atmosphere, not only of the world but of the church, was not pure enough for her to breathe—that reaching after the presence of a glorified Savior—that sweet spirit of ineffable charity, which casts back its smiles on the world it is leaving, and which covets to be in a world of pure unmixed love?

I say, what is this? "O Redeemer of our lost, and sinful, and miserable world—this is your love's redeeming work—the glory of your cross—the fruit of your agonies—the travail of your soul!" Yes, this is true religion—it is faith, hope, love! It is a scene that presents the work of grace on earth, and as much of the work of glory as can be seen on earth. Does it not prove the reality of religion? Is it not an evidence of the truth of the Bible? Is there anything like it, can there be anything like it, in the region of imposture? Is it not—too holy for falsehood; too elevated for delusion; too sober for mere enthusiasm? What a view does it give us of the excellence and power of religion! Never does true piety shine brighter than in such a dark scene as this! Never does it appear stronger than in this scene of weakness! Never does piety appear more beautiful, than when thus surrounded with all that is repulsive in disease and death! Next to a seraph spirit before us in the robes of light and immortality—the dying believer, triumphing by faith and hope over the last enemy—is the brightest specimen of our holy religion!

My dear friends, do not be afraid to die! Trust the Conqueror of death with your soul—not only for 'living duties' but for 'dying agonies'. Seek more and more of that piety for your living scenes, which you saw putting forth its power and beauties amidst the dying scenes of your friends. It is a mistake, and a dangerous error, to suppose that God intentionally reserves the joy and peace of believing, for a death bed. He is willing to give us grace to enjoy all this peace now. It is our own fault that we are not thus blessed as Christians, while engaged in the affairs of life. If faith, and hope, and love—which can do all this for dying saints—and they can do the same things for living ones.

And this is one use we should make of such scenes—to quicken our graces, to shame us for our lukewarmness, to cure us of our worldly-mindedness! Dying saints are patterns, not only for other dying saints, but for living ones. Our exclamation, on witnessing such, should not only be, "Let me die thus," but—"Let me live thus." "Let me be thus holy, thus heavenly now. I cannot wait until I die for this grace—I want it now! I will seek for it now! I must have it now!" And you may.

3. The death of Christian friends should impress us with, even as it shows us—the vanity of the WORLD. All that poetry ever wrote—even the most mournful, beautiful, and pensive of its strains—all that philosophy ever argued—all that morality ever taught, conveys no such view, and is calculated to produce no such impressions, of the emptiness of the world—as the desolate chamber, the vacant place, the deserted chair, the picture of some dear object of our heart's affection. It is at the tomb of that loved, lost friend, the world stands stripped of its false disguise, and is presented to us as a shadow! Gloom now covers everything. Scenes that once pleased, please no more. Favorite walks are shunned, or retrodden only to remind us of the dear companion that once shared their beauties with us. Seasons return, but not to bring with them the delights with which the presence of one beloved object associates them. We go about in the bitterness of our spirit, crying, "Vanity of vanity—all is vanity and vexation of spirit!" We are ready to sigh for death to relieve us from the tedium of existence, and the sense of emptiness!

Be it so! It is all true! The world is empty—and it was intended by God that it should be! The world contains no satisfying bliss! It is a cistern, a broken cistern, which can hold no water. God told us so, but we would not learn this by His word—so now we must learn it by painful experience! If we cannot be taught by 'faith', since we must learn—we are in mercy taught by feeling it to be empty! Oh let us go to the fountain that is full, flowing, open! Let us go to the fountain of living waters! If there is emptiness, nothingness, in the world—there is fullness in God. He makes angels happy; he makes perfect spirits happy; he makes Christ's human nature happy; he makes himself happy—and cannot he make us happy? Is there enough in Him to satisfy millions of millions, and not enough to satisfy us? Let us crucify the world—there is more happiness in a crucified world, than in an idolized one.

How, then, we should die to the world! I know that faith is the consecrated means of gaining this victory. I know that it is amidst the glory of the cross and of heaven—that all the twinkling and artificial lights of this world, like the gaudy luster of a candle, expiring as the sun rises in splendor upon the earth, should fade away and become invisible. I know that one clear, impressive, heart-satisfying view of a crucified and glorified Christ, does more to wean our affections from seen and temporal things, than the bleakest and dreariest aspect of this sublunary scene. But still, it is well to press everything into the work and service of our mortification to seen and temporal things. It is well to feel how much less there is on earth to love. It is well to feel how impoverished and disfigured and unattractive it has become by the removal of that which constituted its loveliest charm; and, therefore, how much less worthy it is of our regard than it was. If our hearts cannot die to the world anywhere else—let them be crucified at the tomb of those we love.

4. From the death of our friends, we learn how important it is to discharge well our duty to those who remain. Perhaps no one ever yet committed to the tomb an object of his dear affection, without some reproach for not having duly appreciated its value while the blessing was possessed—or for not having treated it with sufficient tenderness and attention. The magnitude of our mercies seems to be best seen by the shadows they cast behind them as they retire from us! And our obligations to promote the happiness of our friends are never so well understood—as when the opportunity for discharging them is forever gone. The most sincere, ardent, and unvarying affection, when its object is removed, finds out how much more could have been done for its happiness than was done.

Many and sad are the regrets which we pour out at the sepulcher of our friends—for unrequited proofs of regard, which at the time made little or no impression upon us; for acts of unselfish and devoted service which were received with too much coldness or ingratitude; for duties neglected, which might have been performed; for opportunities to give pleasure, which were allowed to pass by unimproved; for words too sharply spoken, or unkind feelings too hastily indulged. Such injuries, often more imaginary than real, though sometimes true, can never be repaired—and it is the sting of sorrow that they cannot; for the grave has closed over the subject of them. That grave, however, sends forth a warning voice—Go perform every duty in love, in season, and in measure to the friends that remain! Do now what you will certainly wish you had done, when the time for acting is at an end! Perform every office of benevolence, discharge every duty of affection, while it can be performed! Beware of being guilty of that neglect, or of doing that hurt to another, which his death may make it impossible for you to redress. Whatever your hand finds to do for the good of your friend—do it speedily with your might! For your friend may die, and there is no work nor action in the grave. Your tears of regret, your confession of unkindness, your wishes for reparation—will not reach him there!

5. We should curb the selfishness of our sorrow, by rejoicing in the PRESENT FELICITY of our departed friends—and thus make their decease a means of promoting the virtue of unselfish benevolence. They are with the Lord, where they longed to be, and are fully blessed in the enjoyment of his love! Have we not love enough for them, to choose that they should remain in that blissful place where they now are? They have looked on the beauties of the New Jerusalem! They have fallen in humble adoration and ecstatic joy before the throne of God! They have seen the glory of the Lamb! They have eaten the fruit of the tree of life, and drunk from the crystal stream that flows from the living fountains of waters! They are perfect in holiness, happiness, and knowledge! Would we pluck them from such bliss, and imprison them again in our world and in the flesh, merely to solace us, to wipe away the tears from our eyes, and to weep with us when we weep? Let us better discipline our hearts. Let us go up in faith and in imagination to rejoice with them—since they cannot come down to weep with us. This is cultivating the generous, unselfish, and benevolent affections. It is high and difficult virtue; the last triumph of affection; and the profoundest exercise of love!

6. Let us learn the duty of sending our hearts after our friends—to heaven. If their removal has impoverished earth, it has enriched heaven! And though the presence of Christ is the sun of the celestial world, and the Lamb is the glory thereof—yet the apostle speaks with joy of our gathering together unto Jesus, of our coming to the spirits of just men made perfect, and of the joy and crown of rejoicing which our friends will be to us on the day of our Lord. Surely, it will be no small joy to meet those in heaven, whom we loved on earth! And though Christ is the great magnet that draws all holy hearts to paradise, yet even our blessed and glorified friends are not without a certain and legitimate, though inferior influence of the same kind.

7. We should imitate their virtues. It is a lovely propensity of our nature, which leads us to forget the failings of departed friends, and hold fast their excellences. And those whom we were perhaps but too apt to censure while they lived, we are willing to canonize when they are dead. Their decease has invested their character with new beauty; and their virtues appear to us, even as they are presented to us by memory, to have caught and to reflect some of the light of heaven, to which they have ascended. And, indeed, this in many cases is the fact, for we see such a maturity of spiritual graces, such a measure of the beauties of holiness in their last days, as plainly shows that the rays of the excellent glory have fallen upon them before they have emerged from the dark valley. Oh let us follow their footsteps!

When the first tears of sorrow are wiped away from our eyes, through which it is difficult to see anything clearly, and the stupor or the tumult of the mind has subsided into the reflective silence of acquiescence—let us set their pattern before us, and learn what we ought to be, and what we ought to do. Let us, while the recollection of them is fresh, and before the tints of their picture are faded upon the memory—copy into our character all the excellences of their character. Let our

rs not only be a sorrowing, but an imitating love; assured that no remembrance of them is so honorable to their character, or would please them so well—if they could know it in their celestial sphere—as an attempt to resemble them, in all that is worthy of imitation.

8. Let us comply with their holy wishes, and their devout requests. One wish there was, not only cherished in the heart, but expressed with the dying accents of that dear saint who has recently departed from the midst of us, and that was, that her decease might be a dispensation of love to us, in the way of increasing our spiritual attainments. "Give my love to the church—that church I so much love. Tell them to be a pattern and example of holiness to all the churches around." How often, in the privacy and fellowship of grief and prayer in her sick chamber, have I wrestled for this. Amidst what tears and sobs have I implored that her approaching death, might be as life to the church. Shall it not be? Ought we to let so much spiritual wealth be taken from us, without endeavoring to make up the loss by an increase of our own piety? Members of my church, sheep of my flock, souls committed by the Holy Spirit to my spiritual oversight, let us all seek to have the dispensation sanctified for our spiritual good. Let the sepulcher of your pastor's wife unite with his pulpit, to give emphasis to the admonition, "Be holy in every detail of your lives!" You loved her, and you still honor her; gratify her dying wishes. The last wishes of dying friends, you know, and especially such wishes, of such a friend, are sacred—fulfill her parting request, and be a holy people. Let us seek a revival of true piety among us. Let each of us purpose to have the affliction eminently blessed to our own souls. Look regularly at her grave, from which she being dead yet speaks, and says, "Be a pattern of holiness to all the churches around." Be every heart her monument, and this her epitaph.

<http://www.gracegems.org/>

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/2/16 8:13**

Quote:  
-----But, by degrees, the world which seemed dead, corrupted, and loathsome—recovers its life, its health, its attractions, and its power. Time abates the violence of grief; "by degrees new associations are formed, new projects are devised, new pleasures are pursued; the stream of reflection is diverted into other and far different channels; the heart plunges as deeply as ever into worldly hopes and fears; the fondness for what was lately pronounced vanity and vexation of spirit, is revived. Thus the tears shed for departed friends have been shed in vain, and they who were stricken by God and afflicted, hearken no longer to the voice of the rod, and reap no lasting fruit from correction.

It is wisely ordered, I know, that the poignancy of sorrow should be abated by the lapse of time, and that the mind by its elastic power should rise from beneath the first pressure of overwhelming calamity—or else death would smite with paralysis the whole framework of society. Still it must be confessed and lamented, that in too many cases the grief of the mourner is too evanescent, either for a just tribute to the memory of 'departed excellence', or for his own spiritual improvement. If departed spirits could be spectators of what is going on upon earth, and were susceptible of the frailties of their mortal sojourn, it would surprise and grieve them, in some cases, to see how soon the grass grows around their sepulcher, and the foot turns from it into another path! It would check our vanity and curb our expectations of posthumous honor and affection—to think how soon our names will be pronounced without a tear, and our history be forgotten amidst the new objects that rise to occupy our place!

**No!** Fighting this mightily already. Already this world in it's mechanisms and vanity drawing off to *its self*. A couple of days ago had put down these thoughts;

Yesterday, mixed; Confusion, conflicting emotions and when the night had drawn near, a touch, a sense of sadness. This morning, this writing ... Peace. Yes, the peace that passes all understanding. How gracious is the Lord to dictate His own seasons and times. Where it seemed somewhat elusive, it was there, a backdrop, hidden, mingled and yet the motions of the reality being faced left to do their great work. To experience and think, to ponder it all, to take in lasting moments and memories now forever etched I pray.

Death. The sheer clarity it brings. The senses are enlightened. A new boldness and courage over things that formerly might have caused inner conflicts. Fear of man. The peculiar, actual fear of divulging the faith that drives us. It seems rampant enough to make the generalization. Would have to admit my own difficulties in this, strange as they are, reasons being so much more a misrepresentation, despite all that I might understand of the Lord. The great commission being peddled and marketed and made something other, a pitch, a sales pitch at that. "Say this", "Hold this reasoning", "Tote this creed, concept, tag line, denomination". It is all so bankrupt mostly, worthless, ineffectual ... harmful. These things I cannot do with any right conscience, more so without a violent reaction against the falsity and insincerity of it all.

"What is a Christian"? The how, how does one become a Christian. This nobility. This great honor, this mantle that has largely lost its true dignity. It gained and built its own foundation on the very blood and deaths of martyrs. Jesus, Jesus who Christianity is. Our great High Priest, Saviour, Lord. There is no other Name. All things to and for Him. These who loved not their lives to the death, following their Lord, despise and smitten, afflicted, murdered, martyred, killed by the very ones He came to give LIFE.

Death. Death has gone missing from our sincerity. Washed over, sidelined, put out of sight until the occasion brings its reality. It has been my ever drawing to its mysteries, to its high moment, to its very force of argument. Eternal realities, why will we not have them Christian? How many times will we hear the explanation of being tethered to this earth and its vast machinations, its sheer vanity, its displaced priorities. The very things that even the saints argue about, divide over, controversies and extended emotional energy, the damage and peculiar overlooking of glaring omissions in our character and conduct. Death awaits! Why not put this in all our witnessing and preaching and pleading, from the heart, from the gut, from the very spirit and makeup of our being. Reality, honesty demands it does it not? In Spirit and Truth. Will we ever, truly get this to become what we are over something we hold to?

Death. It is beauty for the saved and horror for the lost. Think it not so? The fool says there is no God. And death decides. Your unknown is the very fear that ought to awaken your sleeping conscience that is tethered to the here and now. Think on it. Ponder it deeply to its ultimate and final conclusion. Christian, you as well. Nothing is morbid about death other than to continue on in denying its inevitableness, that is the high morbidity, pretense and denial, some other day.

Through these days past have thought it wise to put down all things that I can as a record, something to come back to, especially after a comment from my Step-son. Perhaps too young in his development to face these things and I have both an understanding and yet a plea, a prayer that he too will come to face it more fully, in fact, the shrinking back that many have on this deep dark open secret is not entirely lost on him. He came across a quote that he brought forth from memory;

*The greatest fear of death is that soon everything will go back to normal.*

That may be something of a paraphrase but, yes! Yes indeed. It certainly doesn't tell the whole story but it struck me with its own profundity. It is why I am taking this all down for future considerations. I do not want things to go back to "normal", curse the thought! We are always 'forgetting' the most important things, this distracted life of duties and business must go on, of course. But where did we ever get such displaced priorities? No. No. No. A thousand times no. Some rising flame of emotion and import due to its proximity? Again no. Oh that this cleared palate and heightened sense of pure clarity would burn continually. Etch it into the fiber of my being Oh Lord.

And you foolish man Mr. Balog have you come back to look upon your own words now this day in the future? Eat your words again brother! Humble yourself I pray. Recall all the things, all the moments, your precious wife kneeling in prayer before your mother's open grave. Recall the love shown you and all through these days. Recall the very dignity carried by your co-worker who you hardly know, present at both the funeral and the grave site. Recall your own words spoken before family, neighbors, loved ones, strangers. You gave great honor and dignity to your mother and to the Lord Jesus. Remember that and recall your unworthiness again this day despite all these things, lest pride find its sinister way in.

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/16 8:15**

More on death...

When we gaze upon the lifeless corpse

(J. C. Philpot, "Light Affliction and Eternal Glory" 1857)

From the cradle to the coffin, affliction and sorrow are the appointed lot of man. He comes into the world with a wailing cry, and he often leaves it with an agonizing groan! Rightly is this earth called "a valley of tears," for it is wet with them in infancy, youth, manhood, and old age. In every land, in every climate, scenes of misery and wretchedness everywhere meet the eye, besides

those deeper griefs and heart-rending sorrows which lie concealed from all observation. So that we may well say of the life of man that, like Ezekiel's scroll, it is "written with lamentations, and mourning and woe."

But this is not all. The scene does not end here!

We see up to death, but we do not see beyond death.

To see a man die without Christ is like standing at a distance, and seeing a man fall from a lofty cliff—we see him fall, but we do not see the crash on the rocks below.

So we see an unsaved man die, but when we gaze upon the lifeless corpse, we do not see how his soul falls with a mighty crash upon the rock of God's eternal justice! When his temporal trials come to a close, his eternal sorrows only begin! After weeks or months of sickness and pain, the pale, cold face may lie in calm repose under the coffin lid; when the soul is only just entering upon an eternity of woe!

But is it all thus dark and gloomy both in life and death? Is heaven always hung with a canopy of black? Are there no beams of light, no rays of gladness, that shine through these dark clouds of affliction, misery, and woe that are spread over the human race?

Yes! there is one point in this dark scene out of which beams of light and rays of glory shine! "God did not appoint us to suffer wrath, but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:9  
"

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All men will persist in thinking all men mortal but themselves.

If there were a great monster in the city of London, which every day ate ten of the inhabitants of London alive, we should be dreadfully miserable, especially if we never knew when it would be our turn to be eaten too.

If we were certain that it would eat all in London by-and-bye, but would only eat ten in a week, we should all tremble as we passed by the huge monster's den, and say—"When will it be my time?" and that would cast a cloud over the whole metropolis, blacker than its usual fog.

But here is a monster, DEATH, which devours its hundreds at its meal; and with its iron tongue the funeral knell keeps crying out for more; its greedy and insatiable throat never being filled; its teeth never being blunted; its ravenous hunger never being stayed.



And here we are, and though it will be our turn by-and-bye  
to be devoured of this great monster, yet how little do we  
think about it!

All men will persist in thinking all men mortal but themselves.

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These vile bodies of ours!

(Bonar, "Coming of the Perfect, Departure of the Imperfect")

"He will take these vile bodies of ours and change  
them into glorious bodies like His own!" Phil. 3:21

Our bodies shared the ruin into which sin brought  
our race. Mortality and corruption took possession  
of them. They became subject to weariness, and  
pain, and disease--in every organ and limb.

The one drop of poison coming from Adam's sin  
has spread itself out and pervaded every part of us.  
The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint.

We begin with pain--and we end with it.

Our flesh, from the cradle to the tomb, is feeble,  
broken, ready to faint--the cause and the inlet  
of a thousand sorrows! It is truly a frail body,  
in which we groan, being burdened; a vile body,  
needing such perpetual care, and food, and  
medicine, and rest--yet, after all, incapable of  
being preserved--which, in spite of all our  
pamperings, is hastening on to the sick-bed,  
and the separation from its guest, the soul.

But look beyond the tomb and see the glory!

This head shall ache no more! These hands and  
feet shall be weary no more! This flesh shall throb  
with anguish no more! God Himself shall wipe  
away all tears from these eyes--and there shall  
be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying!

"He will take these vile bodies of ours and change  
them into glorious bodies like His own!" Phil. 3:21

"For our perishable earthly bodies must be transformed  
into heavenly bodies that will never die!" 1 Cor. 15:53

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We are no longer young

(Letters of J. C. Philpot)

"My life is but a breath." Job 7:7

"My life passes more swiftly than a runner.  
It flees away, filled with tragedy." Job 9:25

My dear friend,  
We are no longer young. Life is, as it were,  
slipping from under our feet. It is a poor life  
to live to sin, self, and the world--but it is  
a blessed life to live unto the Lord.

I never expect to be free from trial, temptation,  
pain, and suffering of one kind or another, while  
in this valley of tears. It will be my mercy if these  
things are sanctified to my soul's eternal good.

I cannot choose my own path, nor would I wish  
to do so, as I am sure it would be a wrong one.

I desire to be led of the Lord Himself into the way  
of peace, and truth, and righteousness--to walk in  
His fear, live to His praise, and die in the sweet  
experience of His love.

I have many enemies, but fear none so much as  
myself. O may I be kept from all evil and all error,  
and do the things which are pleasing in God's sight.

Our days are hastening away swifter than a runner.  
Soon with us it will be time no longer, and therefore  
how we should desire to live to the Lord, and not  
to self!

Yours affectionately in the truth,  
J. C. Philpot, June 20, 1861

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How many more years will I live?

(John MacDuff, "Sunsets on the Hebrew Mountains")

The king said to Barzillai, "Come over with me and  
stay with me in Jerusalem, and I will provide for you."  
But Barzillai answered the king, "How many more  
years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem  
with the king?" 2 Samuel 19:33-34

PLEASURE, shaking in her hands her crowns,

cries, "Come over with me!"

MAMMON, clinking his bags of gold, cries,  
"Come over with me!"

AMBITION, pointing to the hazy mountaintop,  
and her coveted palace gleaming in the sun,  
cries, "Come over with me!"

The day will come when these things will yield  
no pleasure; when they shall be seen in their  
true light, as the empty baubles of an hour!

Oh, what though you may have all that now  
caters to the pride of life . . .  
affluence,  
prosperity,  
success in business,  
"gaining the whole world;" are you imperilling  
or impoverishing your immortal soul?

But Barzillai answered the king, "How many  
more years will I live, that I should go up to  
Jerusalem with the king?" 2 Samuel 19:34

What a solemn question for us all, amid the daily  
occurring proofs of our frailty and mortality. Oh,  
what a motto to bear about with us continually  
amid the wear and tear of life!

YOUNG MAN! with the flash of young hope in your  
eye; existence extending in interminable vista before  
you; pause ever and always on the enchanted highway,  
and put the solemn question to yourself, "How many  
more years will I live?"

MAN OF BUSINESS! in availing yourself of new openings  
in trade, accepting new responsibilities and anxieties,  
involving yourself in new entanglements, have you  
stopped at the threshold and probed yourself with  
the question, "How many more years will I live?"

CHILD OF PLEASURE! plunging into the midst of  
foolish excitement; the whirl of intoxicating gaiety;  
have you ever, in returning, jaded, and weary, and  
worn from the heated ballroom, flung yourself on your  
pillow, and sunk into a feverish dream, with the question  
haunting you, "How many more years will I live?"

FRUITLESS PROFESSOR! who, with the mere form of  
godliness, are yet destitute of every practical active  
Christian virtue; you who have lived a useless life.  
Have you ever seriously pondered the question,  
"How many more years will I live?"

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/16 9:05**

i must confess, that the older i get the more afraid of death i get, i know scriptural and so on i should not be afraid.... not in the sense that i don't know what awaits.. because i do know!

its not the things in the bible i don't understand that is the problem...the things i do understand is the thing that bother me

when i was younger i didn't think about death, i jumped between buildings whit a deadly distance to the ground, back then i didn't value life, and death was something i never thought of.

now redeemed by his blood, i see that death is the first step into eternity, we are here one second on this planet, what do i do whit that second? because its going to end... and probably much much sooner then i planed it to do, maybe today? it is a reality this death..and the reality is it can come now...tomorrow..at any time...

we don't speak about it, we live our liefs as we will never die, we speak we talk we do all things .... but die that is something we will not speak about, we don't even want to think about it, Brother Mikes post got my thinking going,

not so much death scares me as the thought of what i did whit my life i was given... the only thing we can be certain of will after you are born is that you will die!

that God will open my eyes to this matter more, that i will see clearly the time i have left, that he would use my body in the manner it most pleases him this brief second I'm here on earth,

all my "big" problems and complaining disappear when i think of death...all the little things i spend so much time thinking of, use so much energy on...what are they worth when i look death in the face? when i stare into the abyss of eternity? do i live my life everyday as it was my last day alive? do live for the things i claim to believe in... death is a wakeup clock for me....

just my thoughts on death...

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/2/16 9:32**

Quote:  
-----all my "big" problems and complaining disappear when i think of death...all the little things i spend so much time thinking of, use so much energy on...what are they worth when i look death in the face? when i stare into the abyss of eternity? do i live my life everyday as it was my last day alive? do live for the things i claim to believe in... death is a wakeup clock for me....  
-----

Precisely dear brother. This is the great leveler of all things. Our assumptions of others. Our frailties up against theirs. Our tightly held doctrines having the fingers pried open by this demanding factual reality. The big 'of course' in all this... Let me tell all here, I have learned some tremendous lessons in recent days, one of which is how actual you can separate ones theology from the person. In other words I can disagree and will likely continue to disagree with many a construct but will not allow that to determine or distinguish the person that is showing the same love and devotion to the same Lord, even beyond what has been shown me by that very true characteristic.

With this being such a constant as was mentioned prior to recent days to *feel* the full force of it's reality ... Have often contemplated as I pass by a cemetery how I ought to be spending more time walking through there, praying, contemplating, humbling and sobering myself from all the things this world is drawing off of.

How this reality would make us far better saints, more effectual, real. Eternity minded as *fact* not as something of a measuring up to, an elusive concept dislodged by a thousand every day practicalities. When it hit's close to home the perceptions have no other recourse than to submit and take their proper level of importance.

It is amazing to see just how much that seems of so much boasting, controversy, divisiveness, bitterness, pride all the ugly sins hidden behind displaced priorities are made sheer rubbish by this sobering reality.

For all that though there is also a different aspect that can come in when we reach this leveling point; A certain sweetness

s of spirit that is at peace and peaceful, a tension in sorrow laced with precious promise, bittersweet it can be.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/16 14:39**

It is amazing to see just how much that seems of so much boasting, controversy, divisiveness, bitterness, pride all the ugly sins hidden behind displaced priorities are made sheer rubbish by this sobering reality.

For all that though there is also a different aspect that can come in when we reach this leveling point; A certain sweetness of spirit that is at peace and peaceful, a tension in sorrow laced with precious promise, bittersweet it can be.

amen brother

that God would give us a greater vision of time and eternity and greater understanding of these things

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 9:24**

He who trifles with it is a fool!

(J. A. James, "The Practical Believer Delineated")

If the man who trembles at death is a coward; he who trifles with it is a fool! There is a thousand times more rationality in the trembler--than in the trifler!

There is a phenomenon in the rational world well worthy of consideration, inquiry, and solution--the strange and fatal insensibility of men to the grand fact that they are mortal! Since it is infallibly certain that they must and will die--and since death is so solemn an event--how does it happen that so few ever seriously think of it, or really prepare for it?

One would think that so grand and solemn a fact as death, especially viewed in connection with the events which are to immediately follow it--heaven, hell and eternity--along with the uncertainty how soon it may be realized--might operate with an unlimited and altogether overpowering influence upon men's minds and hearts!

But men wish to forget death!

They try to forget it--and alas, too often succeed in accomplishing this fatal oblivion! Yet we can scarcely wonder at this, when we consider what is their spiritual condition--and what death is!

It is the commonness of death, which deprives it of its extreme dreadfulness. If death happened in our world only once in a century, it would be felt like the shock of an earthquake; and would hush the inhabitants of earth into a breathless silence, while the echoes of the knell of the departed soul were reverberating around the globe!

Death is . . .

the moment of destiny;  
the seal of eternity;  
the cessation of probation;  
the commencement of retribution and judgment!

The antecedents of death are dreadful--so are  
the accompaniments--so are the consequences!

To every sense--death is revolting!

To every social affection--death is crucifying!

To reason--death is perplexing!

To everything but saving faith--death is overwhelming

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 9:25**

Zeuxis died laughing at the picture of an old woman

(Thomas Brooks, "Apples of Gold" 1660)

And as the life of man is very short, so it is very uncertain.

Now well--now sick! Alive this hour--and dead the next!

Death does not always give warning beforehand; sometimes  
he gives the mortal blow suddenly; he comes behind with his  
dart, and strikes a man at the heart, before he says, "Have I  
found you, O my enemy?"

Eutychus fell down dead suddenly, Acts 20:9.

Death suddenly arrested David's sons and Job's sons.

Zeuxis died laughing at the picture of an old  
woman which he drew with his own hand!

Sophocles choked to death on the seed in a grape!

Diodorus the logician died for shame that he  
could not answer a witty question.

Joannes Measius, preaching upon the raising of  
the woman of Nain's son from the dead, within  
three hours after died himself!

Ah! death is sudden in his approaches.

Nothing more sure than death!

Nothing more uncertain than life!

Though there is but one way to come into this  
world--yet there is a thousand thousand ways  
to be sent out of this world!

"Prepare to meet your God!" Amos 4:12

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 9:27**

His icy hand?

"Generations come and generations go...." Ecc. 1:4

(David Harsha, "Come to the Savior")

We are all standing on the shores of time, and before us stretches the unfathomable ocean of eternity.

To this vast abyss the millions of earth's inhabitants are fast hastening. Every day that closes, every hour that passes, every moment that flies, is bringing us nearer to it. On its mighty surface every human being must soon embark.

The grave is the home appointed for all living.

Everything passes away.

A great and mighty river, for ages and centuries, has been rolling on, and sweeping away all that ever lived, to the vast abyss of eternity.

From that unknown country none return.

On that devouring ocean, which has swallowed up everything, no vestige appears of the things that were.

Death is the messenger that conducts us into the invisible world; and this messenger may be very near us.

One step more, and his icy hand may be laid upon us....  
to remove us from our dearest friends on earth,  
to dissolve all the attachments of life,  
to hide from us all earthly scenes, and  
to open to our view the solemn realities of an eternal world.

Standing on the Rock of Ages, the believer can look down into the 'gloomy mansion of the grave' with composure and even with triumph.

How blessed then to have the arms of Jesus, the Conqueror of death, upholding our shrinking souls, shielding us from all alarm, sweetening our passage through the dark valley, and conducting us safely through every tempest, and through every billow, into the promised rest above!

To the Christian, death is an unspeakable advantage, as it is the passage from the wilderness of this world, to the heavenly Canaan.

Death is the entrance to our Father's house, in which are the 'many mansions' of glory.

Death delivers him from all the evils incident to humanity.

Death terminates his period of discipline, toil, trial, and conflict.

Death brings him into a state of perfect holiness and happiness before the throne of God in the highest heavens.

Death is numbered among the treasures of a Christian.

Death is his great gain. The last day of his life is to him the opening of immortality.

As soon as death terminates the believer's existence on earth, he enters upon the inheritance of all those exceeding great and precious promises which the Word of God holds forth to him.

He passes at once from the darkness of earth to the light and glory of the celestial world.

He puts off the mortal body, for the home of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

He exchanges this valley of tears and death, for a world from whose blissful mansions all sorrow flees away, and where there shall be no more death.

"For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down; when we die and leave these bodies; we will have a home in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands." 2 Cor. 5:1

He departs to be with Christ; and oh, what sincere follower of the adorable Redeemer, who is now enthroned amid heaven's ineffable glories, would not rather be absent from the body, to be present with Him!

In the hour of death Christ will be your refuge.

His everlasting arms will be underneath you.

His rod and staff will comfort you.

He will be with you until the last; and you shall awake amid the unutterable splendors of heaven, to be forever with the Savior in mansions of light and felicity.

It is the glory of the Christian religion thus to raise the soul above the fear of death. With him all is calm and serene; for his sins are forgiven. He has peace within; joy beams in his countenance. His soul is delighted with joyful prospects beyond the grave. He is filled with strong consolation. The sweet thought of going to his heavenly home now occupies his mind, elevating his views, and cheering his spirit. He thinks of the glories of his



final rest; its fullness of joy; its blessed inhabitants;  
its delightful employments; its never ending pleasures.  
He feels, that while earth is passing from his view,  
the portals of those blessed mansions of light are  
opening for his entrance, and he knows, that in  
yonder home of the redeemed he will die no more.

My heavenly home is bright and fair;  
Nor pain, nor death can enter there.  
Its glittering towers the sun outshine,  
That heavenly mansion shall be mine!

My Father's house is built on high,  
Far, far above the starry sky,  
When from this earthly prison free,  
That heavenly mansion mine shall be!

While here a stranger far from home,  
Affliction's waves may round me foam;  
And though like Lazarus, sick and poor,  
My heavenly mansion is secure!

Let others seek a home below,  
Which flames devour, or waves o'erflow,  
Be mine the happier lot to own,  
A heavenly mansion near the throne!

Then fail this earth, let stars decline,  
And sun and moon refuse to shine;  
All nature sink and cease to be,  
This heavenly mansion stands for me!

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/2/17 11:47**

*There is a phenomenon in the rational world well worthy of consideration, inquiry, and solution--the strange and fatal **insensibility** of men to the grand fact that they are mortal! Since it is infallibly certain that they must and will die--and since death is so solemn an event--how does it happen that so few ever **seriously think** of it, or really prepare for it?*

*One would think that so grand and solemn a fact as death, especially viewed in connection with the events which are to immediately follow it--heaven, hell and eternity--along with the uncertainty how soon it may be realized--might operate with an unlimited and altogether overpowering influence upon men's minds and hearts!*

The very shrinking back, the uncomfortableness of even approaching the bereaved is so telling of this. I recall it well enough before being arrested by the Lord. Much silence is met in response of the bereaved and while that is also understandable to a point there are other things I have noticed of late and have been contemplating.

Why is there no controversy with the bereaved? Who *dares* to pick a fight, have an argument, even attempt to start correcting ones theology. At any other time than this all cordiality goes out the window, any real concern for the suffering soul is beyond forgotten, it is not recalled having no instance of knowing. How different might our perceptions be if we looked at all people with their destiny at hand. How much pride would give way if we saw through different lenses as if everyone

we met has just lost a loved one, as if they were to die this very day?

We, who have the open secret of life, how much death is in our words, and arguments, oneupmanship, so called prophetic utterance, right theology flowing through dirty conduits?

Tossing these bits of thought out in no order or reasoning...

Have had some interesting responses in recent days from some very kind people, offering condolences. Some are quite alarmed perhaps by my answers, have told a few that I am often envious, would much prefer to be where my Ma is, with the Lord, they can have this world, the response is often a gasp, "*Ah, don't say that!*". And it is not with an anger or bitterness in my reply, not at all. The whole matter of appropriateness, of measuring every nanofiber of giving offense or not, all the usual rapid fire considerations of the thought process in 'sharing one's faith' ... It all has changed, it's all become rather different and ... simplistic. Death has brought everything into focus, as I suspected, as I have often contemplated, only to be again and again sidelined or perhaps hoodwinked by the grinding away of this world's daily activities and distractions.

Quote:

-----But men wish to forget death!  
-----

And if there is anything that has been a continually burning it is to make them not forget. Which must start and end with this one. Even amongst ourselves here and for all the known reasons and understandings of things answered and replied to in postings here ... Having been here long enough to know that many an item slides off with little response and that for many reasons, the difficulty of smiting the sheep for their seemingly disinterest, we know from experience that is not helpful nor even warranted, all these things. Still it is a wonder that but one brother has anything to say to such a demanding ... ending that death is.

For us Americans in a collective sort of way, having the hurricanes and flooding and other tragedies of recent years that bring the full frontal assault of death to our consciences are brought back to the one more ... effectual if that is the word I am looking for.

911

That day and those that followed. Sobriety ruled for a time. Even our discombobulated and petty peddling di-partisan government was able to be humbled and struck with the sheer magnitude of the ... *kind* of death that was wrought by way of attack, the surprise and what needed to be said and probably hardly was every truly uttered about that day, about our days as fact and in general ...

We have no control.

The thought hits more often by abstraction, not something we could care to linger on. Acknowledgment, a moment of times gift taken for granted ... later, tomorrow, some other day.

*They try to forget it--and alas, too often succeed  
in accomplishing this fatal oblivion! Yet we can  
scarcely wonder at this, when we consider what  
is their spiritual condition--and what death is!*

The great sheen and gloss of so called reality. It's tangible. It's that which we can touch and feel and move about in. It most certainly is real as real gets. *This world* as scripture is constantly hammering away at our dull minds to recognize up against the unseen and eternal, so far away, so distant. For us, we of the peculiar understanding says this present *world*, this 'reality' it is as difficult as can be to have to deal with the world on its own merits, its own ruler. To gather ourselves, not forsaking the fellowship of one another brings us together more than in a separated class of society. It is that, but it is far more. It cannot as we have often intimated become a 'we/they' construct or we will only continue to divide and subdivide ourselves into more and more clicks. The church is already well on its way of cannibalizing itself. Am trying to go beyond all that ...

When we leave the fellowshiping of ourselves, when we leave the prayer closet and go out to face a hostile world to everything we hold dear, by it's sheer ... disassociation from everything that would be considered 'abstract' and untouchable, *eternity* such a lofty far off in the future notion that for us is an ever present *now*. How do we fare? How do we distinguish one from the other? There is something here I feel needs better clarification, that I want to leave alone and hear others thoughts, see if this can be made better sense of. It is with death itself that brings everything into sharp focus and bridges this gap of two worlds if I may ...

*Death is . . .  
the moment of destiny;  
the seal of eternity;  
the cessation of probation;  
the commencement of retribution and judgment!*

"the cessation of probation"

Most interesting this, *no more* ... testing, or sinning against the Lord, failing Him, failing others. Done. Finished. The probation is ended. Think there is a great deal more here to chew on than we know...

Bouncing around again here ...

*It is the commonness of death, which deprives it of its extreme dreadfulness. If death happened in our world only once in a century, it would be felt like the shock of an earthquake; and would hush the inhabitants of earth into a breathless silence, while the echoes of the knell of the departed soul were reverberating around the globe!*

It did occur to me in prayer shortly after my mothers death this, this daily occurrence and my thought to the Lord was "*Th*is is a constant for You!" Every moment of everyday, in the time it took to write this ... how many?

For us, how succinct are these words!;

*If death happened in our world only once in a century, it would be felt like the shock of an earthquake; and would hush the inhabitants of earth into a breathless silence,*

How true is it with us, we largely concerned with the things that touch our being, our loved ones ... *then* we feel the full brunt of it's force upon us, then we are silent, then we are of a different sobriety. Indeed we may be shocked, shocked out of all kinds of complacencies in our minds, our thoughts, our treatment of each other and others period.

*"like the shock of an earthquake"*

Like 911

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 12:45

Quote:

-----  
crsschk wrote:

Why is there no controversy with the bereaved? Who dares to pick a fight, have an argument, even attempt to start correcting ones theology. At any other time than this all cordiality goes out the window, any real concern for the suffering soul is beyond forgotten, it is not recalled having no instance of knowing. How different might our perceptions be if we looked at all people with their destiny at hand. How much pride would give way if we saw through different lenses as if everyone we met has just lost a loved one, as if they were to die this very day?

-----

this got my mind wandering to the other day, I was riding the buss home, I was listening to a sermon from Corrie ten Boom, I can't recall which one it was. But something she said stuck with me, she said something like today many are discussing and debating doctrines and theology and much other things, they can be needed sometimes, and they are good. But in the concentration camps... where sometimes 700 people died every day, we didn't argue doctrines, we didn't argue about tongues or different things, we asked "Do you believe Jesus died for your sins? Do you believe he forgives all your sins? Do you believe he is the risen son of God? And they said yes to all questions...they prayed together and the next day she saw them walking into the gas chambers to die....

Quote:

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crsschk wrote:

And if there is anything that has been continually burning it is to make them not forget. Which must start and end with this one. Even among ourselves here and for all the known reasons and understandings of things answered and replied to in postings here ... Having been here long enough to know that many an item slides off with little response and that for many reasons, the difficulty of smiting the sheep for their seemingly disinterest, we know from experience that is not helpful nor even warranted, all these things. Still it is a wonder that but one brother has anything to say to such a demanding ... ending that death is

-----

well I'm surprised to see brother we got this thread pretty much to ourselves, I see many others discuss about if we should meet or not, I don't want to say "judge" anyone about teaching a brother what scriptures says or getting a brother right on track with that, that is good. But it is a sad thing to me so much energy on "minors", not that it isn't important some topics.... They are,,,,, its just there are minors and majors... DEATH is a major, I don't know if its because it is of the length of the thread that people don't read through it, but still I see it as a sad thing more people don't respond and think about this subject.

And it is a true statement

But men wish to forget death!

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 13:37

Death: Part I

Thomas Boston

Excerpted from Human Nature in Its Fourfold State.

"For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Job 30:23.

I come now to discourse of man's eternal state, into which he enters by death. Of this entrance, Job takes a solemn serious view, in the words of the text, which contain a general truth, and a particular application of it. The general truth is supposed; namely, that all men must, by death, remove out of this world; they must die. But whither must they go? They must go to the house appointed for all living; to the grave, that darksome, gloomy, solitary house, in the land of forgetfulness. Wherever the body is laid up till the resurrection, thither, as to a dwelling-house, death brings us home. While we are in the body, we are but in a lodging-house, in an inn, on our way homeward. When we come to our grave, we come to our home, our long home, Eccl. 12:5. All living must be inhabitants of this house, good and bad, old and young. Man's life is a stream, running into death's devouring deeps. They who now live in palaces, must quit them, and go home to this house; and they who have not where to lay their heads, shall thus have a house at length. It is appointed for all, by Him whose counsel shall stand. This appointment cannot be shifted; it is a law which mortals cannot transgress. Job's application of this general truth to himself, is expressed in these words: "I know that thou wilt bring me to death," etc. He knew, that he must meet with death; that his soul and body must needs part; that God, who had set the time, would certainly see it kept. Sometimes Job was inviting death to come to him, and carry him home to its house; yes, he was in the hazard of running to it before the time: Job 7:15, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life." But here he considers God would bring him to it; yea, bring him back to it, as the word imports. Whereby he seems to intimate, that we have no life in this world, but as runaways from death, which stretches out its cold arms, to receive us from the womb: but though we do then narrowly escape its clutches, we cannot escape long; we shall be brought back again to it. Job knew this, he had laid it down as a certainty, and was looking for it.

Doctrine. All must die. — Although this doctrine be confirmed by the experience of all former generations, ever since Abel entered into the house appointed for all living, and though the living know that they shall die, yet it is needful to discourse of the certainty of death, that it may be impressed on the mind, and duly considered.

Wherefore consider, 1. "There is an unalterable statute of death," under which men are concluded. "It is appointed unto men once to die," Heb. 9:27. It is laid up for them, as parents lay up for their children: they may look for it, and cannot miss it; seeing God has designed and reserved it for them. There is no peradventure in it; "we must needs die," II Sam. 14:14. Though some men will not hear of death, yet every man must needs see death, Psalm 89:48. Death is a champion all must grapple with: we must enter the lists with it, and it will have the mastery, Eccl. 8:8, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death." They indeed who are found alive at Christ's coming, shall all be changed, I Cor. 15:51. But that change will be equivalent to death, will answer the purposes of it. All other persons must go the common road, the way of all flesh. 2. Let us consult daily observation. Every man "seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and brutish person," Psalm 49:10. There is room enough on this earth for us, notwithstanding the multitudes that were upon it before us. They are gone, to make room for us; as we must depart, to make room for others. It is long since death began to transport men into another world, and vast multitudes are gone thither already: yet the work is going on still; death is carrying off new inhabitants daily, to the house appointed for all living. Who could ever hear the grave say, It is enough! Long has it been getting, but still it asketh. This world is like a great fair or market, where some are coming in, others going out; while the assembly that is in it is confusion, and the most part know not wherefore they are come together; or, like a town situated on the road to a great city, through which some travelers have passed, some are passing, while others are only coming in, Eccl. 1:4, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." Death is an inexorable, irresistible messenger, who cannot be diverted from executing his orders by the force of the mighty, the bribes of the rich, or the entreaties of the poor. It does not revere

nce the hoary head, nor pity the harmless babe. The bold and daring cannot outbrave it; nor can the faint-hearted obtain a discharge in this war. 3. The human body consists of perishing materials, Gen. 3:19, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." The strongest are but brittle earthen vessels, easily broken in shivers. The soul is but meanly housed, while in this mortal body, which is not a house of stone, but a house of clay, the mud walls cannot but molder away; especially seeing the foundation is not on a rock, but in the dust; they are crushed before the moth, though this insect be so tender that the gentle touch of a finger will despatch it, Job 4:19. These principles are like gunpowder; a very small spark lighting on them will set them on fire, and blow up the house: the stone of a raisin, or a hair in milk, having choked men, and laid the house of clay in the dust. If we consider the frame and structure of our bodies, how fearfully and wonderfully we are made; and on how regular and exact a motion of the fluids, and balance of humours, our life depends; and that death has as many doors to enter in by, as the body has pores; and if we compare the soul and body together, we may justly reckon, that there is somewhat more astonishing in our life, than in our death; and that it is more strange to see dust walking up and down on the dust, than lying down in it. Though the lamp of our life be not violently blown out, yet the flame must go out at length for want of oil. What are those distempers and diseases which we are liable to, but death's harbinger, that come to prepare his way? They meet us, as soon as we set our foot on earth, to tell us at our entry, that we do but come into the world to go out again. Nevertheless, some are snatched away in a moment, without being warned by sickness or disease. 4. We have sinful souls, and therefore have dying bodies: death follows sin, as the shadow follows the body. The wicked must die, by virtue of the threatening of the covenant of works, Gen. 2:17, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." And the godly must die too, that as death entered by sin, sin may go out by death. Christ has taken away the sting of death, as to them; though he has not as yet removed death itself. Wherefore, though it fasten on them, as the viper did on Paul's hand, it shall do them no harm: but because the leprosy of sin is in the walls of the house, it must be broken down, and all the materials thereof carried forth. 5. Man's life in this world, according to the Scripture account of it, is but a few degrees removed from death. The Scripture represents it as a vain and empty thing, short in its continuance, and swift in its passing away.

First, Man's life is a vain and empty thing: while it is, it vanishes away; and lo! it is not. Job 7:16, "My days are vanity." If we suspect afflicted Job of partiality in this matter, hear the wise and prosperous Solomon's character of the days of his life, Eccl. 7:15, "All things have I seen in the days of my vanity," that is, my vain days. Moses, who was a very active man, compares our days to a sleep, Psalm 110:5, "They are as a sleep," which is not noticed till it is ended. The resemblance is just: few men have right apprehensions of life, until death awaken them; then we begin to know that we were living. "We spend our years as a tale that is told," ver. 9. When an idle tale is telling it may affect a little; but when it is ended, it is remembered no more: and so is a man forgotten, when the fable of his life is ended. It is as a dream, or vision of the night, in which there is nothing solid; when one awakes, all vanishes; Job 20:8, "He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night." It is but a vain show or image; Psalm 39:6, "Surely every man walketh in a vain show." Man, in this world, is but as it were a walking statue: his life is but an image of life, there is so much of death in it.

If we look on our life, in the several periods of it, we shall find it a heap of vanities. "Childhood and youth are vanity," Ecc. 1:11:10. We come into the world the most helpless of all animals: young birds and beasts can do something for themselves, but infant man is altogether unable to help himself. Our childhood is spent in pitiful trifling pleasures, which become the scorn of our after thoughts. Youth is a flower that soon withereth, a blossom that quickly falls off; it is a space of time in which we are rash, foolish, and inconsiderate, pleasing ourselves with a variety of vanities, and swimming as it were through a flood of them. But ere we are aware it is past; and we are, in middle age, encompassed with a thick cloud of cares, through which we must grope; and finding ourselves beset with pricking thorns of difficulties, through them we must force our way, to accomplish the projects and contrivances of our riper thoughts. The more we solace ourselves in any earthly enjoyment we attain to, the more bitterness do we find in parting with it. Then comes old age, attended with its own train of infirmities, labour, and sorrow, Psalm 90:10, and sets us down next door to the grave. In a word, "All flesh is like grass," Isa. 40:6. Every stage or period in life, is vanity. "Man at his best state," his middle age, when the heat of youth is spent, and the sorrows of old age have not yet overtaken him, "is altogether vanity," Psalm 39:5. — Death carries off some in the bud of childhood, others in the blossom of youth, and others when they are come to their fruit; few are left standing, till, like ripe corn, they forsake the ground: all die one time or other.

Secondly, Man's life is a short thing; it is not only a vanity, but a short-lived vanity. Consider, 1. How the life of man is reckoned in the Scriptures. It was indeed sometimes reckoned by hundreds of years: but no man ever arrived at a thousand, which yet bears no proportion to eternity. Now hundreds are brought down to scores; threescore and ten, or fourscore, is its utmost length, Psalm 90:10. But few men arrive at that length of life. Death does but rarely wait, till men be bowing down, by reason of age, to meet the grave. Yet, as if years were too big a word for such a small thing as the life of man on earth, we find it counted by months, Job 14:5. "The number of his months are with thee." Our course, like that of the moon, is run in a little time: we are always waxing or waning, till we disappear. — But frequently it is reckoned by days;

and these but few, Job 14:1, "Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days." Nay, it is but one day, in Scripture account; and that a hireling's day, who will precisely observe when his day ends, and give over his work, ver. 6, "Till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day." — Yea, the Scripture brings it down to the shortest space of time, and calls it a moment, II Cor. 4:17, "Our light affliction," though it last all our life long, "is but for a moment." Elsewhere it is brought down yet to a lower pitch, farther than which one cannot carry it, Psalm 39:5, "Mine age is as nothing before thee." Agreeably to this, Solomon tells us, Eccl. 3:2, "There is a time to be born, and a time to die"; but makes no mention of a time to live, as if our life were but a skip from the womb to the grave.

2. Consider the various similitudes by which the Scripture represents the shortness of man's life. Hear Hezekiah, Isa. 38:12, "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent; I have cut off like a weaver my life." The shepherd's tent is soon removed; for the flocks must not feed long in one place; such is a man's life on this earth, quickly gone. It is a web which he is incessantly working; he is not idle so much as for one moment: in a short time it is wrought, and then it is cut off. Every breathing is a thread in this web; when the last breath is drawn, the web is woven out; he expires, and then it is cut off, he breathes no more. Man is like grass, and like a flower, Isa. 40:6. "All flesh," even the strongest and most healthy flesh, "is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." The grass is flourishing in the morning; but, being cut down by the mowers, in the evening it is withered: so man sometimes is walking up and down at ease in the morning, and in the evening is lying a corpse, being struck down by a sudden blow, with one or other of death's weapons. The flower, at best, is but a weak and tender thing, of short continuance wherever it grows: but observe, man is not compared to the flower of the garden; but to the flower of the field, which the foot of every beast may tread down at any time. Thus is our life liable to a thousand accidents every day, any of which may cut us off. But though we should escape all these, yet at length this grace withereth, this flower fadeth of itself. It is carried off "as the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away," Job 7:9. It looks big as the morning cloud, which promises great things, and raises the expectation of the husbandman; but the sun riseth, and the cloud is scattered; death comes, and man vanisheth. — The apostle James proposes the question, "What is your life?" chapter 4:14. Hear his answer, "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." It is frail, uncertain, and lasteth not. It is as smoke, which goes out of the chimney, as if it would darken the face of the heavens; but quickly it is scattered, and appears no more: thus goeth man's life, and "where is he?" It is wind, Job 7:7, "O remember that my life is wind." It is but a passing blast, a short puff, "a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again," Psalm 78:39. Our breath is in our nostrils, as if it were always upon the wing to depart; ever passing and repassing, like a traveler, until it go away, not to return till the heavens be no more.

Thirdly, Man's life is a swift thing; not only a passing, but a flying vanity. Have you not observed how swiftly a shadow runs along the ground, in a cloudy and a windy day, suddenly darkening the places beautified before with the beams of the sun, but as suddenly disappearing? Such is the life of man on the earth, for "he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not," Job 14:2. A weaver's shuttle is very swift in its motion; in a moment it is thrown from one side of the web to the other; yet "our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle," chap. 7:6. How quickly is man tossed through time, into eternity! See how Job describes the swiftness of the time of life, chap. 9:25-26. "Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey." He compares his days with a post, a foot-post; a runner, who runs speedily to carry tidings, and will make no stay. But though the past were like Ahiamaaz, who overran Cush, our days would be swifter than he; for they flee away, like a man fleeing for his life before the pursuing enemy; he runs with his utmost vigour, yet our days run as fast as he. But this is not all; even he who is fleeing for his life, cannot run always: he must needs sometimes stand still, lie down, or turn in somewhere, as Sisera did into Jael's tent, to refresh himself: but our time never halts. Therefore it is compared to ships, that can sail night and day without intermission, till they reach their port; and to swift ships, ships of desire, in which men quickly arrive at their desired haven; or ships of pleasure, that sail more swiftly than ships of burden. Yet the wind failing, the ship's course is checked: but our time always runs with a rapid course. Therefore it is compared to the eagle flying; not with his ordinary flight, for that is not sufficient to represent the swiftness of our days; but when he flies upon his prey, which is with an extraordinary swiftness. And thus, even thus, our days flee away.

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 13:39

Death: Part II

Thomas Boston

Having thus discoursed of death, let us improve it in discerning the vanity of the world; in bearing up, with Christian contentment and patience under all troubles and difficulties in it; in mortifying our lusts; in cleaving unto the Lord with full purpose of heart, at all hazards, and in preparing for death's approach.

1. Let us hence, as in a looking-glass, behold the vanity of the world, and of all those things in it, which men so much value and esteem; and therefore set their hearts upon. The rich and the poor are equally intent upon this world; they bow the knee to it; yet it is but a clay god: they court the bulky vanity, and run eagerly to catch this shadow. The rich man is hugg'd to death in its embraces; and the poor man wearies himself in the fruitless pursuit. What wonder if the world's smiles overcome us, when we pursue it so eagerly, even while it frowns upon us! But look into the grave, O man! consider and be wise; listen to the doctrine of death; and learn, that, "hold as fast as thou canst, thou shalt be forced to let go thy hold of the world at length." Though thou load thyself with the fruits of this earth; yet all shall fall off when thou comest to creep into thy hole, the house, under ground, appointed for all living. When death comes, thou must bid an eternal farewell to thy enjoyments in this world: thou must leave thy goods to another; Luke 12:20, "And whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Thy portion of these things shall be very little ere long. If thou lie down on the grass, and stretch thyself at full length, and observe the print of thy body, when thou risest, thou mayest see how much of this earth will fall to thy share at last. It may be thou shalt get a coffin, and a winding-sheet: but thou art not sure of that; many who have had abundance of wealth, yet have not had so much when they took up their new house in the land of silence. But however that be, more you cannot expect. It was a mortifying lesson, which Saladin, when dying, gave to his soldiers. He called for his standard bearer, and ordered him to take his winding sheet upon his pike, and go out to the camp with it, and tell them that of all his conquests, victories, and triumphs, he had nothing now left him, but that piece of linen to wrap his body in for burial. "This world is a false friend," who leaves a man in time of greatest need, and flees from him when he has most to do. When thou art lying on a deathbed, all thy friends and relations cannot rescue thee; all thy substance cannot ransom thee, nor procure thee a reprieve for one day; nay, not for one hour. Yea, the more thou possessest of this world's goods, thy sorrow at death is likely to be the greater; for though one may live more commodiously in a palace than in a cottage, yet he may die more easily in the cottage, where he has very little to make him fond of life.

2. It may serve as a storehouse for Christian contentment and patience under worldly losses and crosses. A close application of the doctrine of death is an excellent remedy against fretting, and gives some ease to a troubled heart. When Job had sustained very great losses, he sat down contented, with this meditation, Job 1:21, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." When Providence brings a mortality or murrain among your cattle, how ready are you to fret and complain! but the serious consideration of your own death, to which you have a notable help from such providential occurrences, may be of use to silence your complaints, and quiet your spirits. Look to "the house appointed for all living," and learn, 1. "That you must abide a more severe thrust than the loss of worldly goods." Do not cry out for a thrust in the leg or arm: for ere long there will be a long home thrust at the heart. — You may lose your dearest relations: the wife may lose her husband, and the husband his wife; the parents may lose their dear children and the children their parents; but if any of these trials happen to you, remember you must lose your own life at last; and "Wherefore doth a living man complain?" Lam. 3:39. It is always profitable to consider, under affliction, that our case might have been worse than it is. Whatever is consumed, or taken from us, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we" ourselves "are not consumed," ver. 22. 2. "It is but for a short space of time that we are in this world." It is but a little that our necessities require in so short a space of time: when death comes, we shall stand in need of none of these things. Why should men rack their heads with cares how to provide for tomorrow; while they know not if they shall then need any thing? Though a man's provision for his journey be nearly spent, he is not disquieted, if he think he is near home. Are you working by candle light, and is there little of your candle left? It may be there is as little sand in your glass; and if so, you have little use for it. 3. "You have matters of great weight that challenge your care." Death is at the door, beware you lose not your souls. If blood break out at one part of the body, they often open a vein in another part of it, to turn the stream of the blood, and to stop it. Thus the Spirit of God sometimes cures men of sorrow for earthly things, by opening the heart-vein to bleed for sin. Did we pursue heavenly things more vigorously when our affairs in this life prosper not, we should thereby gain a double advantage: our worldly sorrow would be diverted, and our best treasure increased. 4. "Crosses of this nature will not last long." The world's smiles and frowns will quickly be buried together in everlasting forgetfulness. Its smiles go away like foam on the water; and its frowns are as a



passing stitch in a man's side. Time flies away with swift wings, and carries our earthly comforts, and crosses too, along with it: neither of them will accompany us into "the house appointed for all living." "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master," Job 3:17-19. Cast a look into eternity, and you will see affliction here is but for a moment. The truth is, our time is so very short, that it will not allow either our joys or griefs to come to perfection. Wherefore, let them "that weep be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not," etc., I Cor. 7:29-31. 5. "Death will put all men on a level." The king and the beggar must dwell in one house, when they come to their journey's end; though their entertainment by the way be very different. "The small and the great are there," Job 3:19. We are all in this world as on a stage; it is no great matter, whether a man act the part of a prince or a peasant, for when they have acted their parts, they must both get behind the curtain, and appear no more. 6. If thou be not in Christ, whatever thy afflictions now be, "troubles a thousand times worse, are abiding thee in another world." Death will turn thy crosses into pure unmixed curses: and then, how gladly wouldst thou return to thy former afflicted state, and purchase it at any rate, were there any possibility of such a return. If thou be in Christ, thou mayest well bear thy cross. Death will put an end to all thy troubles. If a man on a journey be not well accommodated, where he lodges only for a night, he will not trouble himself much about the matter; because he is not to stay there, it is not his home. You are on the road to eternity; let it not disquiet you that you meet with some hardships in the inn of this world. Fret not, because it is not so well with you as with some others. One man travels with a cane in his hand; his fellow traveler, perhaps, has but a common staff or stick: either of them will serve the turn. It is no great matter which of them be yours; both will be laid aside when you come to your journey's end.

It may serve for a bridle, to curb all manner of lusts, particularly those conversant about the body. A serious visit made to cold death, and that solitary mansion, the grave, might be of good use to repress them.

(1.) It may be of use to cause men to cease from their inordinate care for the body; which is to many the bane of their souls. Often do these questions, "What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" leave no room for another of more importance, namely, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" The soul is put on the rack, to answer these mean questions in favor of the body; while its own eternal interests are neglected. But ah! why are men so busy to repair the ruinous cottage; leaving the inhabitant to bleed to death of his wounds, unheeded, unregarded? Why so much care for the body, to the neglect of the concerns of the immortal soul? O be not so anxious for what can only serve your bodies; since, ere long, the clods of cold earth will serve for back and belly too.

(2.) It may abate your pride on account of bodily endowments, which vain man is apt to glory in. Value not yourselves on the blossom of youth; for while you are in your blooming years, you are but ripening for a grave; death gives the fatal stroke, without asking any body's age. Glory not in your strength, it will quickly be gone: the time will soon be, when you shall not be able to turn yourselves on a bed; and you must be carried by your grieving friends to your long home. And what signifies your healthful constitution? Death doth not always enter in soonest where it begins soonest to knock at the door; but makes as great dispatch with some in a few hours, as with others in many years. Value not yourselves on your beauty, which "shall consume in the grave," Psalm 49:14. Remember the change which death makes on the fairest face, Job 14:20, "Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." Death makes the greatest beauty so loathsome, that it must be buried out of sight. Could a looking-glass be used in "the house appointed for all living," it would be a terror to those who now look oftener into their glasses than into their Bibles. And what though the body be gorgeously arrayed? The finest clothes are but badges of our sin and shame; and in a little time will be exchanged for a winding-sheet, when the body will become a feast to the worms.

(3.) It may be a check upon sensuality and fleshly lusts, I Peter 2:11, "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." It is hard to cause wet wood to take fire; and when the fire doth take hold of it, it is soon extinguished. Sensuality makes men most unfit for divine communications, and is an effectual means to quench the Spirit. Intemperance in eating and drinking carries on the ruin of soul and body at once; and hastens death, while it makes the man most unmeet for it. Therefore, "Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares," Luke 21:34. But O how often is the soul struck through with a dart, in gratifying the senses! At these doors destruction enters in. Therefore Job "made a covenant with his eyes," chap. 31:1. "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord, shall fall therein," Prov. 22:14. "Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall," I Cor. 10:12. Beware of lasciviousness; study modesty in your apparel, words, and actions. The ravens of the valley of death will at length pick out the wanton eye: the obscene filthy tongue will at length be quiet, in the land of silence; and grim death, embracing the body in its cold arms, will effectually allay the heat of all fleshly lusts.

(4.) In a word it may check our earthly-mindedness; and at once knock down "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, a

nd the pride of life." Ah! if we must die why are we thus? Why so fond of temporal things; so anxious to get them, so eager in the embraces of them, so mightily touched with the loss of them? Let me, upon a view of "the house appointed for all living," address the worldling in the words of Solomon. Prov. 23:5, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" For riches certainly make themselves wings, "they flee away as an eagle towards heaven." Riches, and all worldly things are but a fair nothing; they are that which is not. They are not what they seem to be: they are but gilded vanities, that deceive the eye. Comparatively, they are not; there is infinitely more of nothingness and not being, than of being, or reality, in the best of them. What is the world and all that is in it, but a fashion, or fair show, such as men make on the stage, a passing show? I Cor. 7:31. Royal pomp is but gaudy show, or appearance, in God's account, Acts 25:23. The best name they get, is good things: but observe it, they are only the wicked man's good things, Luke 16:25, "Thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things," says Abraham, in the parable, to the rich man in hell. Well may the men of the world call these things their goods; for there is no other good in them, about them, nor attending them. — Now, wilt thou set thine eyes upon empty shadows and fancies? Wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly on them, as the word is? Shall men's hearts fly out at their eyes upon them, as a ravenous bird on its prey? if they do, let them know, that at length these shall flee as fast away from them, as their eyes flew upon them: like a flock of fair-feathered birds, that settle on a fool's ground; which, when he runs to catch them as his own, do immediately take wing, fly away, and sitting down on his neighbor's ground, elude his expectation, Luke 12:10, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall these things be?" Though you do not make wings to them, as many do; they make themselves wings, and fly away; not as a tame house-bird, which may be caught again; but as an eagle, which quickly flies out of sight, and cannot be recalled. Forbear thou then to behold these things. O mortal! there is no good reason to be given why thou shouldst set thine eyes upon them. This world is a great inn, in the road to eternity, to which thou art traveling. Thou art attended by those things, as servants belonging to the inn where thou lodgest: they wait upon thee while thou art there; and when thou goest away, they will convey thee to the door. But they are not thine, they will go away with thee; but return to wait on other strangers, as they did on thee.

4. It may serve as a spring of Christian resolution, to cleave to Christ, adhere to his truths, and continue in his ways; whatever we may suffer for so doing. It would much allay the fear of man, that bringeth a snare. "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die?" Isa. 51:12. Look on persecutors as pieces of brittle clay, that shall be dashed in pieces, for then shall you despise them as foes, that are mortal; whose terror to others in the land of the living, shall quickly die with themselves. The serious consideration of the shortness of our time, and the certainty of death, will teach us, that all the advantage which we can make by our apostacy, in time of trial, is not worth the while; it is not worth going out of our way to get it: and what we refuse to forgo for Christ's sake, may be quickly taken from us by death. But we can never lose it so honourably, as for the cause of Christ, and his gospel: for what glory is it, that you give up what you have in the world, when God takes it away from you by death, whether you will or not? This consideration may teach us to undervalue life itself, and choose to forgo it, rather than to sin. The worst that men can do, is to take away that life, which we cannot long keep, though all the world should conspire to help us to retain the spirit. If we refuse to offer it up to God when he calls for it in defence of his honour, he can take it from us another way; as it fared with him, who could not burn for Christ, but was afterwards burnt by an accidental fire in his house.

5. It may serve for a spur to incite us to prepare for death. Consider, 1. Your eternal state will be according to the state in which you die: death will open the doors of heaven or hell to you. As the tree falls, so it shall lie through eternity. If the infant be dead born, the whole world cannot raise it to life again: and if one die out of Christ, in an unregenerate state, there is no more hope of him for ever. 2. Seriously consider what it is to go into another world; a world of spirits, wherewith we are very little acquainted. How frightful is converse with spirits to poor mortals in this life! and how dreadful is the case, when men are hurried away into another world, not knowing but devils may be their companions for ever! Let us then give all diligence to make and advance our acquaintance with the Lord of that world. 3. It is but a short time you have to prepare for death: therefore now or never, seeing the time assigned for preparation will soon be over. Eccl. 9:10, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." How can we be idle, having so great a work to do, and so little time to do it in? But if the time be short, the work of preparation for death, though hard work, will not last long. The shadows of the evening make the labourer work cheerfully; knowing the time to be at hand, when he will be called in from his labour. 4. Much of our short time is over already; and the youngest of us all cannot assure himself, that there is as much of his time to come, as is past. Our life in the world is but a short preface to long eternity; and much of the tale is told. Oh! shall we not double our diligence, when so much of our time is spent, and so little of our great work is done? 5. The present time is flying away: and we cannot bring back time past, it hath taken an eternal farewell of us: there is no kindling the fire again that is burnt to ashes. The time to come is not ours: and we have no assurance of a share in it when it comes. We have nothing we can call ours, but the present moment; and that is flying away. How soon our time may be at an end, we know not. Die we must: but who can tell us when? If death kept one set time for all, we were in no hazard of a surprise: but daily observation shows us, that there is no such thing. Now the flying shadow of our life allows no time for loitering. The rivers run speedily into the

the sea, from whence they came; but not so speedily as man to dust, from whence he came. The stream of time is the swiftest current, and quickly runs out to eternity. 6. If once death carry us off, there is no coming back to mend our matters, Job 14:14, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Dying is a thing we cannot get a trial of; it is what we can only do once, Heb. 9:27, "It is appointed unto men once to die." And that which can be but once done, and yet is of so much importance that our all depends on our doing it right, we have need to use the utmost diligence that we may do it well. Therefore prepare for death.

If you who are unregenerate ask me, what you shall do to prepare for death, that you may die safely; I answer, I have told you already what must be done. Your nature and state must be changed: you must be united to Jesus Christ by faith. Till this be done, you are not capable of other directions, which belongs to a person's dying comfortably.

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 14:03**

Quote:  
----- Death is an inexorable, irresistible messenger, who cannot be diverted from executing his orders by the force of the mighty, the bribes of the rich, or the entreaties of the poor. It does not reverence the hoary head, nor pity the harmless babe. The bold and daring cannot outbrave it; nor can the faint-hearted obtain a discharge in this war.

Quote:  
-----  
Man's life is a short thing; it is not only a vanity, but a short-lived vanity.

Quote:  
-----  
Thirdly, Man's life is a swift thing; not only a passing, but a flying vanity. Have you not observed how swiftly a shadow runs along the ground, in a cloudy and a windy day, suddenly darkening the places beautified before with the beams of the sun, but as suddenly disappearing? Such is the life of man on the earth, for "he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not," Job 14:2.

i don't know brother, i read these men of Gods thought of death, i just came from my kitchen, i watched two of my daughters playing with their mother, one eating and one playing around with a baby doll, i spent much time lately thinking of death, my life and eternal things... I see this two little girls, not even two years old yet so full of life...so running up and down laughing and just being life at its fullest, I'm so blessed, I'm so happy that God has been so good toward me, don't get me wrong I so love them I so love what I have, but in the mist of all, I see the weakness of our sinful bodies,,, a heart can stop beating right now, we might not see tomorrow, what I'm I doing with my time, living a life for Christ is the only life worth living, but I for a second sitting there in my kitchen watching all this LIFE around me, I almost broke in tears... a mixed feeling, booth of gratitude and happiness and gratefulness of what God given me, and a feeling of grief I haven't done the most of the gift! Ohh what time I wasted already! I see it as a mercy from God that he is working so in my heart!

How many men and women? How many have just taken "time out" and just sat down and asked God what he/she should do with our time he has given us...our days are numbered... one day wasted wont come back, ever!

**Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/2/17 14:17**

Quote:  
-----this got my mind wandering to the other day, I was riding the buss home, I was listening to a sermon from Corrie ten boom, I cant recall which one it was. But something she said stuck with me, she said something like today many are discussing and debating doctrines and theology and much other things, they can be needed sometimes, and they are good.  
But in the concentration camps... where sometimes 700 people died every day, we didn't argue doctrines, we didn't argue about tongues or different things, we asked "Do you believe Jesus died for your sins? Do you believe he forgives all your sins? Do you believe he is the risen son of God? And they said yes to all questions...they prayed together and the next day she saw them walking into the gas chambers to die....  
-----

...

Quote:  
-----well I'm surprised to see brother we got this thread pretty much to ourselves, I see many other discuss about if we should eat meat or not, I don't want to say "judge" anyone about teaching a brother what scriptures says or getting a brother right on track with that, that is good. But it is a sad thing to me so much energy on "minors", not that it isn't important some topics.... They are,,,,, its just there are minors and majors... DEATH is a major, I don't know if its because it is of the length of the thread that people don't read through it, but still I see it as a sad thing more people don't respond and think about this subject.  
-----

Could but pray brother that the outcome above would be enough to rattle the senses, what a staggering ... *witness*.

**we asked "Do you believe Jesus died for your sins? Do you believe he forgives all your sins? Do you believe he is the risen son of God? And they said yes to all questions...they prayed together and the next day she saw them walking into the gas chambers to die...."**

Most of us are well acquainted with reading books of a variety of length so that shouldn't be a stumbling block, especially to this ultimate subject matter.

To repeat, it is not to slight nor smite nor any other thing ... But so be it brother, let us carry on with it.

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 14:58**

I'll keep at it brother, I attended a prayer meeting today, one that is held every Saturday in my part of town. The pastor is an older man, he is close to 80, has been saved for almost 60 years, I've never met a man so filled with fire in real life as him, He constantly every day just pours his life out for Christ, A very godly man. Any way I talked to him as I usually do, and with tears in his eyes he looks at me and says....

-Christian my dear brother, some say ohh I(he) have done so much for the Lord in your life, but I wanna tell you, if I could live my life again..... I could have done twice as much if I knew what I know now....

And the tears run down his face

And as for Corrie ten boom's testimony, I just felt ashamed for some discussions I myself part taken in, even those I think "I was right" in, when my motive wasn't even close to where it should have been.

Another thing is when I see what scripture says in light of eternity...what I mean is or what God has shown me is we should read scripture with a light from eternity shining on the pages...reflecting everything to us in the light of the reality that death is coming soon and eternity follows, sometimes I have read the word with all sincerity and all good motives... but do I read it as to be my guide how to get the most out of my life from what God has said...most times no... this thing of death has showed me several things... an example... if I should know for a fact that I was to die next week sometime... would verses in the bible mean more to me then it would otherwise? Would I do the things I so often say "do that later" directly instead? Some asking forgiveness maybe, some go and be with my family or just whatever that is more important in the light of eternity and soon coming death. Would I witness about God's great Mercy's more if I knew the day I was to die? I don't know if I would, but something in me says I would do that....

But then again, I I'm going to die... Lord I need you,  
My words is not enough brother to express everything that is going through me , but do you get a "a sense" of what I'm trying to say?

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/17 15:16**

The day is gently sinking to a close,  
Fainter and yet more faint the sunlight glows:  
O Brightness of Thy Father's glory,  
Thou eternal Light of light, be with us now:  
Where Thou art present darkness cannot be;  
Midnight is glorious noon, O Lord, with Thee.

Our changeful lives are ebbing to an end;  
Onward to darkness and to death we tend;  
O Conqueror of the grave, be Thou our Guide;  
Be Thou our Light in death's dark eventide;  
Then in our mortal hour will be no gloom,  
No sting in death, no terror in the tomb.

Thou, Who in darkness walking didst appear  
Upon the waves, and Thy disciples cheer,  
Come, Lord, in lonesome days, when storms assail,  
And earthly hopes and human succors fail;  
When all is dark, may we behold Thee nigh,  
And hear Thy voice, "Fear not, for it is I."

The weary world is moldering to decay,  
Its glories wane, its pageants fade away:  
In that last sunset, when the stars shall fall,  
May we arise, awakened by Thy call,  
With Thee, O Lord, forever to abide,  
In that blest day which has no eventide.

Chris-to-pher Words-worth

-----  
Days and moments quickly flying  
Blend the living with the dead;  
Soon our bodies will be lying  
Each within its narrow bed.

Soon our souls to God Who gave them  
Will have sped their rapid flight:  
Able now by grace to save them,  
O that, while we can, we might!

Jesus, infinite Redeemer,  
Maker of this mighty frame,  
Teach, O teach us to remember  
What we are, and whence we came.

Whence we came and whither wending,  
Soon we must through darkness go,  
To inherit bliss unending,

Or eternity of woe.

Jesus, merciful Redeemer,  
Rouse dead souls to hear Thy voice;  
Wake, O wake each idle dreamer  
Now to make the eternal choice.

As a shadow, life is fleeting;  
As a vapor so it flies;  
For the old year now retreating  
Pardon grant, and make us wise;

Wise that we our days may number,  
Strive and wrestle with our sin,  
Say not in our work, nor slumber  
Till Thy glorious rest we win.

Soon before the Judge all glorious  
We with all the dead shall stand:  
Savior, over death victorious,  
Place us then on Thy right hand.

EdÅ-ward CasÅ-wall

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/2/18 1:16**

Quote:

-----ill keep at it brother, I attended a prayer meeting today, one that is held every Saturday in my part of town. The pastor is an older man, he is close to 80 , hes been saved for almost 60 years, Ive never meet a man so filled whit fire in real life as him, He constantly every day just pour s his life out for Christ, A very godly man. Any way I talked to him as I usually do, and whit tears in his eyes he looks at me and saysÅ....

-Christian my dear brother, some say ohh I(he) have done so much for the Lord in your life, but I wanna tell you, if I could live my life againÅ..... I could have done twice as much if I knew what I know nowÅ....

And the tears runs down his face

-----

I can't even respond to that brother.

Quote:

-----this thing of death has showed me several thingsÅ... an exampleÅ... if I should know for a fact that I was to die next week sometim eÅ... would verses in the bible mean more to me then it would otherwise? Would I do the things I so often say Å"do that laterÅ" directly instead? Some asking forgiveness maybe, some go and be whit my family or just whatever that is more important in the light of eternity and soon coming death. Would I witness about Gods great Mercy's more if I knew the day I was to die? I donÅ't know if I would, but something in me says I would do thatÅ...

But then again, I l'm going to dieÅ... Lord I need you,  
My words is not enough brother to express everything that is going through me , but do you get Å" a senseÅ" of what I'm trying to say?

-----

I most certainly do. You have brought forth here so many balanced considerations, something that is well needed. We had some pretty good conversations elsewhere here on this, have the links set aside somewhere, perhaps that is also why the puzzlement of silence, perhaps like many things others are yet weighing all this ... At any rate brother, what a great encouragement these all are;

Quote:

-----Death is the entrance to our Father's house,

in which are the 'many mansions' of glory.

Death delivers him from all the evils incident to humanity.

Death terminates his period of discipline, toil, trial, and conflict.

Death brings him into a state of perfect holiness and happiness before the throne of God in the highest heavens.

Death is numbered among the treasures of a Christian.

Death is his great gain. The last day of his life is to him the opening of immortality.

As soon as death terminates the believer's existence on earth, he enters upon the inheritance of all those exceeding great and precious promises which the Word of God holds forth to him.

He passes at once from the darkness of earth to the light and glory of the celestial world.

He puts off the mortal body, for the home of God, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

He exchanges this valley of tears and death, for a world from whose blissful mansions all sorrow flees away, and where there shall be no more death.

"For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down; when we die and leave these bodies; we will have a home in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands." 2 Cor. 5:1

He departs to be with Christ; and oh, what sincere follower of the adorable Redeemer, who is now enthroned amid heaven's ineffable glories, would not rather be absent from the body, to be present with Him!

In the hour of death Christ will be your refuge.

His everlasting arms will be underneath you.

His rod and staff will comfort you.

He will be with you until the last; and you shall awake amid the unutterable splendors of heaven, to be forever with the Savior in mansions of light and felicity.

It is the glory of the Christian religion thus to raise the soul above the fear of death. With him all is calm and serene; for his sins are forgiven. He has peace within; joy beams in his countenance. His soul is delighted with joyful prospects beyond the grave. He is filled with strong consolation. The sweet thought of going to his heavenly home now occupies his mind, elevating his views, and cheering his spirit. He thinks of the glories of his final rest; its fullness of joy; its blessed inhabitants; its delightful employments; its never ending pleasures. He feels, that while earth is passing from his view, the portals of those blessed mansions of light are opening for his entrance, and he knows, that in yonder home of the redeemed he will die no more.

My heavenly home is bright and fair;  
Nor pain, nor death can enter there.  
Its glittering towers the sun outshine,  
That heavenly mansion shall be mine!

My Father's house is built on high,  
Far, far above the starry sky,

When from this earthly prison free,  
That heavenly mansion mine shall be!

While here a stranger far from home,  
Affliction's waves may round me foam;  
And though like Lazarus, sick and poor,  
My heavenly mansion is secure!

Let others seek a home below,  
Which flames devour, or waves o'erflow,  
Be mine the happier lot to own,  
A heavenly mansion near the throne!

Then fail this earth, let stars decline,  
And sun and moon refuse to shine;  
All nature sink and cease to be,  
This heavenly mansion stands for me!

-----

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/2/18 1:35**

Apparently lost the other links but ...

([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic\\_id13048&forum35&post\\_id&refreshGo](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id13048&forum35&post_id&refreshGo)) Writing article on death at Christian College

*(Edit: Take special note of our brother Paul West's contributions here)*

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/2/18 11:45**

I see no one made an "interception" in the thread yet  
I read through most of the thread

-Writing article on death at Christian College-

I must say brother Paul's posts are very deep and full of wisdom, I saw he lives "close" to death, I haven't been around death so much, I don't think I ever seen a dead person, the closest I've been to death, except my own "near death" experiences is my grandmother, she had a stroke and she was very close to death...and in that hospital room...in that area of the hospital where only people that were really close to die, When I sat there looking at my grandmother when she was face to face with death, the atmosphere in that room was so thick one could feel it, all those tubes and hoses sticking out of her, I saw how much we struggle and fight to hang on to life, yet so many struggle and fight not to come to him who is the source of life, even many Christians won't give up the fight sometimes, we so hold on to "this side of life". almost as one can feel the powers of evil and good fighting.... But right there and then it was a strange feeling mixed with much fear and sorrow, and I felt very very "helpless" and out of control of the whole situation, I was not a believer then.

I'm fascinated and yet much filled with fear and trembling about this, I know there is a glory unspeakable to death.... There will be no sin against God no more in my life when I die, what a marvelous thought! That one thing is to me so dear I can't find words to express... we can't understand because the only thing we know of is this cursed body of sin, even after we are born again there still is an enemy, still a fight, stand fast.....



So I can see the glory and the wonderful thing of death, to go and be with Christ for all eternity!

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:14

The world passes away. Everything here in this present world is changing.

"Life is like a painted dream;  
Like the rapid summer stream;  
Like the fleeting meteor's ray;  
Like the shortest winter's day;  
Like the fitful breeze that sighs;  
Like the waning flame that dies;  
Darting, dazzling on the eye;  
Fading in eternity."

A rope of sand, a spider's web, a silken thread, a passing shadow, an ebbing wave, are the most fitting and expressive emblems of all things belonging to this present earthly state. The homes that sheltered us in childhood we leave. The land which gave us birth we leave. The loved ones who encircled our hearths pass away. The friends of early years depart. And the world that was so sunny, and life that was so sweet, is all beclouded and embittered—the whole scenery of existence changed into wintry gloom. Such are the saddening, depressing effects of life's vicissitudes.

But in the midst of all, "this God is our God for ever and ever!" All beings change but God. All things change but heaven. The evolutions of time revolve, the events of earth go onward, but He upon whom all things hang, and by whom all events are shaped and controlled, moves not. "For I am the Lord, I change not." Our affairs may alter. Our circumstances may change. Our relations and friends may depart one by one. Our souls in a single day pass through many fluctuations of spiritual feeling. But He who chose us to be His own, and who has kept us to the present moment, is our covenant God and Father forever and ever, and will never throw us off and cast us away. "For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

Octavius Winslow

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/3/1 8:59**

*Forcing the gaze  
To look again upon  
The face*

*Separate  
From the body*

"... everything returns to normal"

Or to distraction, to hostility and commotion. To worthless controversy, surface level chit-chat  
This great separator of tethered to the earth men and woman, cut loose to eternity...

Such a bother  
To contemplate  
To look at the occurrence  
God's perspective?

Every moment of everyday  
Souls

An endless stream  
Perishing?

~~~~~

Re: - posted by enid, on: 2007/3/1 9:32

Hello,

I noticed others haven't commented, and being one of the 'others', I can understand why.

I feel like an intruder commenting on this thread, even though it is probably one of the most noble and God conscience threads I have ever read on this site.

I haven't read all the posts yet, I like to print them out and take my time to read them. I do that when articles are worthwhile and edifying, which this one is.

Concerning death, I think about it on a regular basis. Not just for myself, but for my family, those at church, my neighbours.

Especially my elderly neighbours who are in their 80's and are not saved.

Death is a gloomy subject for most, even for Christians, who are supposed to be eagerly awaiting His return. Even though people hate the subject of hell, and preachers will not preach on it, and both sinners and saints mock it, it's not the same with death, that's something everyone has to face.

I rebuke myself often for wasting time, only to repeat it again at a later date.

You forget God is watching, and that you have to appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

I'm not one for spending hours in front of the t.v, but is that what I want to be doing when I die? People have been found dead in front of their t.v.

A real fear of God would make us avoid some of the unnecessary situations we get into.

Sorry for the intrusion, I might just return later.

God bless, and thank you.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/1 12:51

welcome enid to the thread, nice to see someone "get involved". Not that it's needed, Brother Balogs writings have got me thinking much about this subject lately, but when reading the last post you posted I must confess, I get "back to normal", I "slided" back... I think it would be a good thing to get up every morning for my own sake and think this thought among the first one... think to myself...well Christian...this day today can be the last one alive, will my actions, my motives behind my actions make a difference in eternity... recently I allowed myself to get involved in some threads I now feel ashamed of, not discussing the topic itself, but my post in the thread wasn't of the "quality" that if I died that day that would have been my last post.... I remember I think Baxter said it first... but Paul Washer says something similar in that "youth" sermon

"I'll preach today as a dying man to dying men and I'll preach as it were the last time I ever was to preach"

and these are from Jonathan Edwards' "resolutions"

9. Resolved, to think much on all occasions of my own dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death.

17. Resolved, that I will live so as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.

19. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if I expected it would not be above an hour, before I should hear the last trumpet.

52. I frequently hear persons in old age say how they would live, if they were to live their lives over again: Resolved, that I will live just so as I can think I shall wish I had done, supposing I live to old age. July 8, 1723.

Another i think of is that i should live my life and never do anything that i wouldn't do if it where my last hour alive....

And as for my participation on SI, never post a post I couldn't lean back in my chair and think is this the last post I ever will post? This haven't been the case lately for me and I feel ashamed. May God help me, I'm grateful he is showing me the things I can improve.

As Mike where saying...back to normal... not quite ... but I see the tremendous danger and how easy it is if not on guard!

Ohh that God would teach me to always be watchful of my actions and thoughts and every word I speak or write.... Even as I ponder the Judgment, what a wretch I I'm! God have mercy on me..

I don't wanna go back to "normal", was it Eward's who prayed stamp eternity on my eyeballs? That he would stamp it on the inside of my eyelids that I would see it every time I close my eyes so I would not forget It....

And another thread Ive spent much time on lately is the Erlo Stegen and the revival among the Zulus thread... there are some "strong" "provoking" statements there... especially one that really got me...

"The early church didn't tolerate sin, they had no room and no time for sin, and dealt with it most severely. We worship God and tolerate sin in our midst! If you pray for Revival, you are asking for something the world doesn't understand. We read the Bible so superficially that we cannot grasp what it is all about."

And also

It was Christmas time when the Revival broke out. "In times of Revival, the Word of God comes alive. It smites us and pierces our heart. The Word of God is like a hammer that breaks the rocks into pieces. It now became clear to me that it wasn't the heathen who were standing in the way of Revival. I could only cry out: 'Lord, there is only one person who hinders Your work, and that is me! Please forgive me!'"

Something else is getting under my skin, anything else then a total surrendered life to God is a totally wasted life!

I need to go pray and meditate some...ill come back

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/1 13:18

With tearful eyes I look around;
Life seems a dark and stormy sea;
Yet, midst the gloom, I hear a sound,
A heavenly whisper, "Come to Me."

It tells me of a place of rest;
It tells me where my soul may flee:
O to the weary, faint, oppressed,
How sweet the bidding, "Come to Me."

When the poor heart with anguish learns
That earthly props resigned must be,
And from each broken cistern turns,
It hears the accents, "Come to Me."

When against sin I strive in vain,
And cannot from its yoke get free,

Sinking beneath the heavy chain,
The words arrest me, "Come to Me."

When nature shudders, loath to part
From all I love, enjoy, and see;
When a faint chill steals o'er my heart,
A sweet voice utters, "Come to Me."

"Come, for all else must fall and die;
Earth is no resting-place for thee;
Heavenward direct thy weeping eye,
I am thy Portion; come to Me."

O voice of mercy! voice of love!
In conflict, grief, and agony,
Support me, cheer me from above,
And gently whisper, "Come to Me."

Re: - posted by Tears_of_joy, on: 2007/3/1 13:47

**O voice of mercy! voice of love!
In conflict, grief, and agony,
Support me, cheer me from above,
And gently whisper, "Come to Me."**

Thank you dear brother for sharing this song. I need it.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/1 15:40

this got me....from J.A James.....i start to like his writings more and more.

The base cares and the petty enjoyments
of the present world

Sin is raging all around us!

Satan is busy in the work of destruction!

Men are dying!

Souls are every moment departing into eternity!

Hell is enlarging her mouth, and multitudes are
continually descending to torments which knows
no mitigation and no end!

Heaven expanding above us!

Hell yawning beneath us!

Eternity opening before us!

How astounding is it sometimes to ourselves, that,
favored with a certain, though distant, view of the
celestial city, living almost within the sight of its
glories and the sound of its music, the base cares
and the petty enjoyments of the present world
should have so much power over us, as to retard us

in our heavenward course, and make us negligent and indolent, heedless and forgetful.

Time is short, life uncertain, death at hand, and immortality is about to swallow up our existence in eternal life—^{or} eternal death!

Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/3/1 16:06

Quote:

-----I feel like an intruder commenting on this thread

A real fear of God would make us avoid some of the unnecessary situations we get into.

Sorry for the intrusion, I might just return later.

Enid, I am glad you did, believe you are correct and pray you do return again later.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/1 16:56

more from James

A bubble that rises, and shines, and bursts!

"Be very careful, then, how you live—^{not} as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Ephesians 5:15-16

Paul implies that a man can give no greater proof of folly, nor more effectually act the part of a fool, than to waste his time. While on the other hand, a just appreciation and right improvement of time are among the brightest displays of true wisdom.

We must value time correctly, and improve it diligently.

Time is the most precious thing in the world. God distributes time miserly—by the moment—and He never promises us another moment! We are to highly value, and diligently to improve the present moment, by the consideration that for anything we know, it may be our last.

Time, when once gone, never returns. Where is yesterday? A moment once lost, is lost forever!

We should never forget that our time is among the talents for which we must give account at the judgment of God. We must be tried not only for what we have done—but for what we neglected to do. Not only for the hours spent in sin—but for those wasted in idleness. Let us beware of wasting time.

It might stir us up to diligence in the improvement of our time, to think how much of it has been already misspent. What days, and weeks, and months, and years, have already been utterly wasted, or exhausted upon trifles totally unworthy of them. They are gone, and nothing remains of them but the guilt of having wasted them. We cannot call them back if we would. Let us learn to value more highly, and to use more kindly, those days which remain.

How much of our time is already gone!—and how little may be yet to come? The sands of our hour-glass may be almost out! Death may be at the door!

When you begin a day, you don't know that you shall end it!
When you lie down, you don't know that you shall rise up!
When you leave your house, you don't know that you shall ever return!

For what is your life? It is even as a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes! Life is a bubble that rises, and shines, and bursts! We know not in any one period of our existence!—but that it may be the last. Surely, surely, we should then improve our time, when we may be holding, for anything we know, the last portion of it in our hands!

You are immortal creatures, and must live forever in torment or in bliss! And certainly you cannot be forming a right estimate of the value of time, nor be rightly employing it, if the soul be forgotten, salvation neglected, and eternity left out of consideration!

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/4 8:25

Zeuxis died laughing at the picture of an old woman

As the life of man is very short, so it is very uncertain.

Now healthy!—now sick! Alive this hour!—and dead the next!

Death does not always give warning beforehand; sometimes he gives the mortal blow suddenly; he comes behind with his dart, and strikes a man at the heart, before he says, "Have I found you, O my enemy?"

Eutychus fell down dead suddenly, Acts 20:9.

Death suddenly arrested David's sons and Job's sons.

Zeuxis died laughing at the picture of an old woman which he drew with his own hand!

Sophocles choked to death on the seed of a grape!

Diodorus the logician died for shame that he could not answer a witty question.

Joannes Measius, preaching upon the raising of

the woman of Nain's son from the dead, within
three hours after died himself!

Ah! death is sudden in his approaches.

Nothing more sure than death!

Nothing more uncertain than life!

Though there is but one way to come into this
world—yet there are a thousand thousand ways
to be sent out of this world!

"Prepare to meet your God!" Amos 4:12

brooks

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/8 3:47

Letter to a mourning, afflicted widow

by Archibald Alexander

My Dear Friend,

What a change in your circumstances and worldly prospects within a short time! A few months ago, you appeared to be carried along in the full tide of prosperity. Everything seemed to smile around you, and probably you had no anticipation of the sad reverse which has occurred. Blessed with health and abundance, happy in the possession and regard of an excellent husband, and in seeing around you lovely and promising children, who were the joy of your heart! But now, alas! you are a bereaved, desolate widow; you have experienced the greatest loss which you could experience of any earthly possession; and, to increase the calamity (for afflictions are apt to come in clusters), another stroke has fallen on you, so that you have sorrow upon sorrow. Under such afflicting circumstances, what can I say to alleviate your distress? I am afraid that I can do no more than to express my tender sympathy. Though far off from the scene of your suffering, I feel for you—I could weep with you. Meddlesome efforts to check the swelling torrent of grief on such occasions are injudicious, and rather tend to aggravate than relieve our misery. Nature must have its course. Tears, if deep-rooted grief does not prevent, furnish almost the only mitigation of which the mourner is susceptible: and what nature demands, God does not forbid. There is no sin in the feelings of lively sorrow which such bereavements produce.

The blessed Savior did indeed forbid the daughters of Jerusalem to weep for Him, because He had undertaken to bear the curse of God for us without alleviation—but He tells them to weep for themselves and their children. He did also exhort the bereaved widow of Nain not to weep; but the reason of this was that He intended immediately to restore to life her only son, then lying dead before her. When our blessed Lord came to Bethany and found the two sisters, Martha and Mary, in a state of deep distress on account of the recent death of their only brother (the support and protector of the family), does He forbid their tears? No! the compassionate Jesus weeps with them! How interesting, how amiable, does the kind of condescension and tender sympathy of the Son of God towards this afflicted family appear!

They had reason to be surprised at His conduct beforehand, because, when they sent for Him, He delayed coming until their brother was dead. His motive for this delay they understood not; but, when He came, they both remarked with sorrowful regret, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother had not died." (John 11:21,32) And when He answered, "Your brother shall rise again," (John 11:23) they still had no other apprehension of His meaning, than that he should arise at the last day. But His benevolent purpose was to restore to them their beloved brother, by raising him from the grave where he had lain four days. But so deeply was His compassionate heart affected by the sight of the tears and distress of His beloved friends, that He not only wept with them—but groaned in His spirit and was troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" (John 11:34) And before He would enter the house to rest Himself after his journey, He must visit the grave of His friend, that He might at once relieve the aching hearts of these pious women.

But no such relief can now be expected. Jesus, the almighty Savior, who is "the resurrection and the life", (John 11:25) no longer sojourns among men. But it should still be a consolation to mourners that, though exalted at the right hand of God, the compassionate Redeemer is accessible, and that His tender sympathy is still retained; "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses." (Heb 4:15) He knows as well what His disciples suffer, as if He were upon earth, and is as able to aid them and to comfort them in all their sorrows. I cannot, then, give you better advice, than to "look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:2)

I know of no consideration which is more effectual to reconcile us to bear with submission our heaviest afflictions, than the contemplation of our divine Redeemer wading through floods of sorrow for our sake; yes, overwhelmed with a weight of distress which pressed Him to the ground in a bloody agony, and caused Him to cry out with an exceeding bitter cry, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; (Matt 26:38) and on the cross to exclaim, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34) "Did Jesus thus suffer, and shall I repine?" He was the Son of God: He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; and yet for our sake, He bore this infinite pressure of grief. This suggests another consideration, which I have always found, when I could feel its force, to have a powerful effect in repressing a murmuring and repining disposition. It is, that we suffer less than we deserve. God afflicts us, it may be, severely; but His strokes are lighter than our sins. If it were not for His unmerited mercy, we should now be in hell.

Add to this, that God does not willingly afflict; He takes no pleasure in the sufferings of any of His creatures, much less in the sorrows of His children; but He chastises them for their real good. Why some are so much more afflicted than others, we do not know; but we do know, "that all things work together for good to those who love God"; (Rom 8:28) and that, although "no chastening for the present is joyous—but grievous, yet afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby". (Heb 12:11) The afflicted mourner finds it hard to believe this promise, and cannot see how it is possible that such a calamity should be of any benefit. But God's Word is to be credited in opposition to our own feelings, and to all appearances. He has ways of working which we do not now understand—but shall know hereafter. He can make our bitterest anguish a beneficial medicine for our diseased souls. Our whole course through this world is intended to be a state of trial and discipline; and therefore it is ordained that "through much tribulation, we must enter the kingdom". (Acts 14:22) And all who are seen standing on Mount Zion, clothed in white robes and palms in their hands, had "come out of great tribulation". (Rev 7:14)

Another consideration of great weight in reconciling us to our lot is the shortness of time, and our nearness to the joys of heaven. When, by faith, we can form some just estimate of this matter, the keenest sufferings and most distressing bereavements sink into insignificance. Who in our times suffer as did the primitive Christians? and yet Paul calls their afflictions light and momentary. And well may we be satisfied to bear them, "for they work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory". (2 Cor 4:17) And again he says, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom 8:18) And it is reasonable to think that "the rest that remains for the people of God", (Heb 4:9) will be enjoyed with a higher zest by those who pass into heaven from a state of affliction, than by others.

I know, indeed, that by this visitation of God your worldly prospects are sadly clouded; and you may feel yourself to be in a deplorably helpless condition. Unaccustomed to manage or preside, you are thrown into distressing perplexity whenever you reflect upon your condition. But I entreat you not to indulge these gloomy forebodings. God has a way by which you and your little family can be supported. He will guide, protect, and bless you, if you confide in Him. You are, indeed, in an unfriendly world, and will frequently meet with selfish and unfeeling men, who will not scruple to take advantage of your ignorance of the affairs of the world; but a "judge of the fatherless and widow is God", and He invites you in a peculiar manner to make Him your refuge. "Leave", says He, "your fatherless children, and I will preserve them alive, and let your widows trust in me." (Jer 49:11) Take shelter under the covert of His wings, and commit yourself entirely into His hand, and He will never leave nor forsake you.

The more you get into the habit of seeing to your own affairs, and transacting your own business, the better it will be for you. Nothing will preserve you more effectually from melancholy and dejection than constant occupation. Females are often found to possess a talent for business which neither they nor others ever suspected. Accept the kind aid of friends—but do not depend upon it. If necessary, engage in some business that will help to support you. Teaching children is a peculiarly suitable employment for a widow who has children of her own to be educated. Widows who reside in towns and cities are often enabled to obtain the means of subsistence by taking genteel boarders. Know exactly what your income is, and be sure to keep within it in your expenses. Debt is ruinous to all, and especially to widows. Take counsel from judicious friends—but seek, in all cases, direction from the Lord.

Be strict in the government of your children. Make them obey you implicitly while they are young, and do not spoil them by indulgence. But I do not recommend severity. Of this, however, you will be in no danger. Inculcate religion upon their minds, and pray much for them. Teach them, when old enough, the loss they have sustained, and impress upon their minds the necessity of sobriety and frugality. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph 6:4)

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/10 14:47

DEATH

"And he died." Genesis 5

This chapter celebrates the victories of DEATH. The conqueror unfolds his standard over a prostrate world. The chieftains of the elder age pass in review. DEATH meets them. They bow before him. Except Enoch, they all fall slain. DEATH plies his sting, and they cannot escape.

Reader! seek profit from this deathful page. The same destroyer still has like power. He tracks your steps. His eye rests on you. His dart is poised. He soon will overtake. His chilly hand will bear you away. Your life will cease. You will be numbered with the dead. The grave will cover you. You will moulder in the dust. The worms will have their food. Others will take your place. Your name will fade. The sun will rise, as before. Nature will still put on her blithesome robe. The birds will sing. The earth will bear her fruits. Man will go forth to toil--to pleasure and to sin. Your absence will make no lasting void. All will go on, as though you had never lived. Come, then, and be familiar with this leveler. Walk daily by his side. Let him be no stranger. Wise acquaintance turns his frowns to smiles. Grace makes this foe a precious friend.

Let us consider the womb which bore this mighty one. Whence came his being? In what cradle was he nursed? Who forged his fearful armor? Who braced him with such indomitable strength? Who gave him chains to bind all Adam's race? Who sent him forth resistless to subdue? At once a negative appears. Death forms no part of man's original. The first fabric had no flaw. It upraised its head grand in enduring life. It held no seed of imperfection or decay. Old age--decrepitude--disease--were not at first born with man's body. Mortality is not his necessary adjunct. Life possesses not in itself the ingredients of decline.

But life depended on a sinless course. It was the comrade of obedience. If disobedience intervened, there must be penalty. The penalty was death. "In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die" Genesis 2:17, Man fell. Transgression soiled him. Mortality ensued. The beauteous frame lost its unfading youth. Dust it was, and now to dust it must return. See then the cause of death. Sin brought in this ruin. The sting--the barbed point--the conquering weapon--the relentless shaft of death, is sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin--and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Rom. 5:12.

Thus the poisonous stream is traced to its true source. The deep roots of the tree are found. The seed is seen, from which the withering crop springs. The culprit is detected and is dragged to light. Sin is the murderer. Sin worked the woe. Piled in one mass the countless dead, from Abel to this hour, and ask, Who slew all these? The clear reply is, sin.

Reader! can you read this, and not abhor the monster. SIN is the cause of all the evil which this earth has seen. It is the parent of all the misery yet to come. No tear bedews the cheek--no sigh rends the heart--no pain gives agony--no anguish gnaws, but sin effectuates all. Sin digs each grave. Sin clothes all mourners with their weeds. It marred a fair creation. It marks your body for dissolution. Take heed, lest it be ruin to your soul.

Let us now analyze more closely the vast tyranny of sin's firstborn--DEATH. See its effects upon that marvelous machine, man's body. It touches. Its touch is ruin. Decomposition instantly ensues. The vital powers wither. Animation is extinct. Motion is fled. The limbs freeze into icy marble. The luster of the sparkling eye is dim. It has no sight. The smell discerns no fragrance. The ear is deaf to melody. We lift the hand--it falls. We pierce the skin--it is insensible to pain. Expression no more brightens in the wan look. The blood no longer flows in warm current. The pulse no longer proclaims vital glow. The "silver cord is loosed, the golden bowl is broken, the pitcher is broken at the fountain, the wheel is broken at the cistern." Eccles. 12:6. Decay invades the frame, and poisons it with effacing finger. The dearest friends shrink from the object of their tenderest love. Its presence cannot be endured. It must be buried out of sight. It must be hidden in kindred dust. Reader! yet a little while, death will turn you to this corruption. "Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live." Isa. 38:1.

See, then, the fruits of sin, and hate it as the origin of all woe. But limit not the thoughts of death to your own body. Take the widest range. View the whole race of man. Death tramples upon all. No station is too high for its assault. It hurls all monarchs from their thrones. No lowly hut escapes its entrance. It tears away the poorest from poverty's hardest bed. No genius can devise exemption. It annihilates the noblest intellect. It bears off the orator--the poet--the most skilled in art and science--the hero from the battle-field--the statesman from the helm of empire. It respects not the hoary head. It strangles the infant at the mother's breast. It slays the bridegroom and the bride--the parent and the child--the merry and the sad. Its sway is universal. Within a century it extinguishes the earth of its inhabitants. Its ever-moving scythe knows no repose. Its sword has no scabbard.

It is, moreover, capricious in its work. When least expected, it is near. Sometimes it tarries long. No one can surely state the time--the place of its destroying-wound. Reader! "set your house in order, for you shall die and not live."

But is this malady without remedy? Is this a night which has no morn? Is there no light behind this cloud? Is there no help? None, if our view be limited to earth. But look off to Jesus. In Him there is all help. He is far mightier than this mighty tyrant. He can recover victims from his grasp. He can snatch the prey from his fangs. He can snap his strongest chains. He can destroy the destroyer. He makes all His followers more than death's conquerors. He plants their feet upon his prostrate neck. He puts a new song into triumphant lips, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" 1 Cor. 15:55. Now in the house of pilgrimage the saints may cry in rapturous confidence, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." verse 57.

This background, black with such blackness, throws into dazzling light the Gospel triumph. But here all language fails. No tongue can speak the glories of our Jesus. No glowing touch can picture His excellence. It were easier for color to outshine the sun--or painter's art to eclipse the sparkling diamond--or voice to surpass the thunder's roar, than for words to celebrate the victory over death. But let us calmly view the work of Jesus, and receive His comfort.

He appears on earth. His path is bright evidence that He is more than man. In the long chain of proof, He exhibits death utterly subdued. The cases, probably, were not few. Enumerating His wonders to John's disciples, He adds, "the dead are raised up." Matt. 11:5. We read, also, that "many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Matt. 27:52-53.

Ponder the instances which are specifically given. The Spirit records them, as a cordial to our faith. May His power put life into the narrative!

JAIRUS had a youthful daughter. At tender age she sickens. While the afflicted father implores help, he hears that death has done its work. Surely now all hope is fled! Jesus replies, "Be not afraid, only believe." Mark 5:36. He adds, "She is not dead, but sleeps." The weepers know that life is gone. They laugh Him to scorn. Jesus reaches the lifeless bed. He takes the stiffened hand. He speaks, "little girl, I say unto you, Arise." Exert yourself, O death. Now, show your power. Retain your victim if you can. Brief is the conflict. Death yields. "Immediately, the little girl arose, and walked." Mark 5:42. Let faith crown the victor. He stands death's conqueror.

Again, when He draws near to NAIN'S gates He meets a mournful train. A young man is carried out, the only son of his mother, and she is a widow. Jesus speaks omnipotently, "Young man, I say unto you, Arise." Luke 7:14. Death cannot hinder. His shackles break. "He who was dead sat up and began to speak." Crown Him again. Death is a stricken captive in His mighty hands.

Once more, LAZARUS is sick and dies. He is carried to his rocky cave. Jesus returns. He commands, "Take away the stone." They remonstrate, that death had preyed upon its victim for four days, and that decay had done its work. Jesus cries loudly, "Lazarus, come forth." Death cannot counteract. The mandate compels obedience. Death relaxes its grasp. "He who was dead came forth." John 11:44. Crown Him again.

These instances confirm the fact, that Jesus is mighty to hurl death from his tyrannic throne--to shatter his fetters--to tread down his power. At His bidding the lifeless live again.

A stronger proof remains. JESUS must die in His people's stead. In all things He must be their substitute--drink their cup--pay their penalty--occupy their place. Therefore He voluntarily yields to death. He bows the head and gives up the spirit. But through death He destroys him that had the power of death. Mark the outcome. If death has prevailing power, let it now be shown. Jesus is within its prison. Let death bar fast the gates--rivet the chains--detain its captive--display supremacy. It fails. It is conspicuously defeated. Jesus holds its boasted prowess in derision. It was not possible that He should

d be held by it. He strides forth from the tomb. He tramples down opposing barriers. He shows Himself again alive by many infallible proofs. Hear the victor's shout, "I am the living one who died. Look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave." Rev. 1:18

Adore Him by His title, LIFE. Life is the opposite to death. They cannot co-exist. Where one appears the other flees. But Jesus proclaims, "I am the resurrection and the life." John 11:25. The Spirit responds, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4. Thus He who is essential life, is life to His believing flock. He graciously repairs all traces of decline. No, His restoration infinitely exceeds the loss. Did sin destroy life in the soul? Are we by nature "dead in trespasses and sins?" He quickens and renews. While we are in our blood, He says unto us, 'Live.'

By His Spirit He imparts new faculties--new energies--new being--new desires. The EYE, once dark, now opened, sees the wonders of the heavenly world--discerns things as they really are--admires God's glory, and the preciousness of Christ--and reads the significance of the Book of books. The EAR, once deaf, now hears the Spirit's call, and drinks in all the glorious promises, and listens to the Shepherd's guiding voice. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life." John 10:27. The FEET, once fast in fetters of insensibility, now alert and active, run in the way of Gospel-rule, and climb unwearied the high hill of Zion, and continue steadfast to the end. The PALATE, once insensible to the Gospel-feast, now has quick relish for the heavenly manna. The blessed ones hunger and thirst after righteousness, and they are filled. Thus, while "the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness." Rom. 8:10. In Christ we spiritually live.

Consider the body. Here Jesus changes death's whole aspect. He dissolves its power. He takes away all icy terror from its sure approach. Death is no more a dreaded foe. It comes as a welcome friend. It is a jewel in the believer's casket. "All things are yours, life and death." It brings tidings that the chariot is ready to convey to endless rest--that the weary pilgrimage is ended--that Jesus is waiting to receive--that the ready mansions are prepared to welcome. Death is no loss to those whose life is Christ. Paul felt the truth, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Phil. 1:21. To depart and to be with Christ is far better. But who can tell what gain? who can measure the length and breadth of the far better! Death opens the cage-door, and the liberated spirit flies to the sight of Jesus. It dissolves the detaining clay, and instantly the spirit is in Paradise. It touches, and its touch is never-ending bliss. Thus Jesus is our Life. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all His benefits." Ps. 103:1.

But the triumph of triumphs is not yet told. The consummating scene comes on speedily. Then will believers raise victorious heads. Their earthly frames will spring forth from their graves. A voice--a mighty voice--the voice of Jesus shall call, and they shall stand again on earth, a living multitude in living bodies. But oh! how changed! All traces of sin, and sin's hideousness, and sin's deformity, and sin's infirmity are forever gone. Corruption--dishonor--weakness disappear. Incorruption--glory--power, reign. The natural body is now spiritual--"When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2. Where is death? It is completely vanquished. It is utterly abolished. It is swallowed up in victory. "Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:14.

Thus believers in resurrection-robcs inherit life--the life of immortality--the life of glory--the life of blessedness in the presence of God and of the Lamb. Who will not love, and bless, and serve this great Redeemer--this glorious Conqueror--our thrice-precious Jesus! How perfect is His work! Its pinnacle cannot be higher. What adorations can we adequately render! Let every breath be praise. Let our few days on earth be wholly a thank-offering. Let our one study be to magnify His name. How little is all life-long service when weighed against the debt! But by the Spirit's help, let all we can do be most gladly done. And while abounding in the work of the Lord, let us ascribe all strength--all pardon--all salvation to free grace! The happiest pilgrimage on earth is living out of self, in Christ, to God--in sight of heaven--in hope of glory--smiling at death, and realizing endless life. Hallelujah! Come Lord Jesus! Amen.

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/11 5:46

Greg posted this in another thread, just thought it fitted right in this thread...

An outlet and an inlet

(Thomas Brooks, "The Crown and Glory of Christianity, or, HOLINESS, the Only Way to Happiness", 1662)

"Death has been swallowed up in victory!" 1 Cor. 15:54

DEATH is an outlet and an inlet to a holy man.

Death is an eternal outlet . . .

to all sins,
to all sorrows,
to all shame,
to all sufferings,
to all afflictions,
to all temptations,
to all oppressions,
to all confusions, and
to all vexations.

Death is an eternal inlet into . . .

the clear, full, and constant enjoyment of God,
the sweetest pleasures,
the purest joys,
the highest delights,
the strongest comforts, and
the most satisfying contentments.

Death is the funeral of all a holy man's sins and miseries--and
the perfection of all his joys, graces, and spiritual excellencies.

Death is not the death of the man--but the death of his sin.

Death is a Christian's discharge from all trouble and misery!

Death came in by sin--and sin goes out by death.

Death cures all diseases--the aching head and the unbelieving
heart; the diseased body and the defiled soul. Death will cure
the holy man of all natural and spiritual distempers.

Death is God's gentle usher to conduct us to heaven.

Death to a holy man, is nothing but the changing of . . .

his grace--into glory,
his faith--into vision,
his hope--into fruition, and
his love--into eternal rapture!

Oh, who would not go through death . . .

to heaven!
to eternal life!
to immortality and glory!

Death, to a Christian, is . . .

a welcome guest,
a happy friend,
a joyful messenger!

"Death has been swallowed up in victory!" 1 Cor. 15:54

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/11 6:49

Solitude Sweetened

by James Meikle, 1730-1799

DEATH

There is a lesson which concerns the whole world, which few of the world lay to heart; and that is—that all men are mortal. The lives of most people, deny the inevitability of death—they live as though they will never die.

I myself confess I must meet with death—but conclude myself immortal for the present, and so don't concern myself with death for the time being—though multitudes drop down around me. Ah! when do I think on death, or suppose its approach near? Many foolish pleasing scenes of life, do I think upon, in my imagination—but how seldom do I think upon the final scene of my death! When do I represent myself to myself, laid on a sick-bed, on a death-bed, with broken groans, cold sweats, trembling joints, languid looks, a failing pulse, and all the signs of death, while friends bewail around me? Or, when do I run through the more solemn and important part of the scene—how, when I leave the world, matters may stand between my soul and God? How I shall appear before the majesty of heaven, and stand in the tremendous judgment? Strange! Is this the practice of one who knows, and sincerely believes—that he must die?

Some wise kings have had their sepulchers hewn out long before their death, that every time they saw them, they might, in the midst of all their pomp and glory, see where they must shortly lie. In this even heathens shame me, of whom some have, by their own orders, had admonishments of their own mortality made to them daily; while others have set the skulls of the deceased at their dinner tables, to moderate their mirth, and remind them of mortality.

When I look abroad in the world—scenes of sorrow are everywhere to be seen. Sometimes both parents taken away from a young family of helpless orphans. At other times, the rising children, the apparent support of their aged and infirm parents, are snatched away from the gray-headed mourners! Who shall quarrel with Omnipotence, whether he cut down the young plants from around the table—or breaks the aged tree from amidst the dependent sprigs?

Indeed, it is hard to persuade 'fond affection' into silence, or to attain to resignation under the loss of a beloved friend. For when my renewed part is prostrate at the throne of the all-wise Disposer, then my corruption is apt to rise in rebellion against the doings of the Most High. But where have I most interest—in my nearest beloved relations, or in God? Is one creature more connected with another creature, by any tie, than the Creator of both? What do I pray for—but that the will of God be done? And yet, if death comes near my family, I take back my word, and would have my will preferred to God's will!

All I am, and have—are God's to dispose of—how and when he pleases! He will never infringe his justice, or forget his compassion and love, even in my afflictions!

Would not I glorify God in my life, and in my death? and why not also in the death of my friends? He glorified himself in their life, therefore they existed; he glorifies himself in their death, therefore they die. Will I pull with God—or against him? Will I tell him that he cannot have my friends yet, for though they have served their generation, yet they have not served my fond affection? An excess of grief here bewrays my lack of love to God, to my relations, and to myself. For if I love God, I will be glad that his will be done with me and those I love—even to death. If I love my friends, I will be happy in their happiness; and if I love my own soul, I will bless God for taking away friends, when they are likely to come too much between myself and my Beloved; and are likely to take too much of my affection away from him who is altogether lovely, and the chief among ten thousand!

Death and life, earth and heaven, time and eternity, the footstool and the throne—are yours, O Sovereign God. Can I then bewail my godly friends, of whose felicity I have the sound hope—that they are brought from death to life, translated from earth to heaven, from time to eternity, and from the footstool to the throne? They are above the reach of sorrow; and, on that account, shall I be below the reach of comfort? Though carnal ties are dissolved in death, yet the spiritual relation never ceases. So it matters not where the spiritual family dwells; for even in heaven they are exalted members of our exalted Head, and I an earthly member of the same exalted Head. Thus, though far scattered, some in this world, some in the other world, yet all shall be convened together in "the general assembly and church of the first born"—free from sin, and free from sorrow!

Almost my anguish would convert to joy, did not streams of briny grief pollute the crystal current, and recall my ponderous loss. But what call I loss? Absence—*not* loss! They are found with God— *dwell in and with God—so in what respects are they lost? Only as I cannot see them. What is my grief—to those who are so happy? And why should I grieve, when I know them to be so happy? If my friend far from home, in a foreign country, informed me that he was in all ways prosperous—I would be happy for him.*

But when my godly friends die, I am sure, not only of their felicity—but of its perpetuity! Whatever my loss be, let me look to God for a supply of all. And since I have do not have them to fondly talk with, let my soliloquy be to God. And as my love cannot penetrate into the decaying sepulcher, to hug their putrefying clay; nor enter eternity to embrace their disembodied soul—let it return and empty itself on God alone.

Now I see the vanity of the world! Death when sent, pities not the life of the poor, nor spares not the rich—but is faithful to his charge, and cannot be put off. My godly friends are happy in leaving me, and going to God; I am happy in losing them, and returning to God. God has broken, as Hezekiah did the brazen serpent—the idol to whom I offered incense, only due to God, and called it a piece of clay. But now may the sweet hopes of a blessed immortality banish the sorrows of present dissolution, and mitigate my grief; the more so as I need not sorrow, like those who have no hope. A little while—and I myself will be no more! Soon my dust shall mingle with theirs, and wait that joyful trumpet—which shall summon every godly slumberer to immortality and bliss!

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/12 14:35

Directions for Grief at the Death of Friends
by Richard Baxter

Direct. IX. Be neither unnaturally senseless at the death of friends, nor excessively dejected or afflicted. To make light of the death of relations and friends, be they good or bad, is a sign of a very vicious nature; that is so much selfish, as not much to regard the lives of others: and he that regards not the lives of his friends is little to be trusted in his lesser concerns. I speak not this of those persons whose temper allows them not to weep: for there may be as deep a regard and sorrow in some that have no tears, as in others that abound with them. But I speak of a mischievous, selfish nature, that is little affected with any one's concerns but its own.

Yet your grief for the death of friends, must be very different both in degree and kind. 1. For ungodly friends you must grieve for their own sakes, because if they died such, they are lost for ever. 2. For your godly friends you must mourn for the sake of yourselves and others, because God has removed such as were blessings to those about them. 3. For choice magistrates, and ministers, and other instruments of public good, your sorrow must be greater, because of the common loss, and the judgment thereby inflicted on the world. 4. For old, tried christians, that have overcome the world, and lived so long till age and weakness make them almost unserviceable to the church, and who groan to be unburdened and to be with Christ, your sorrow should be least, and your joy and thanks for their happiness should be greatest. But especially abhor that nature that secretly is glad of the death of parents, (or little sorrowful,) because that their estates are fallen to you, or you are enriched, or set at liberty by their death. God seldom leaves this sin unrevenged, by some heavy judgments even in this life.

Direct. X. To overcome your inordinate grief for the death of your relations, consider these things following. 1. That excess of sorrow is your sin: and sinning is an ill use to be made of your affliction. 2. That it tends to a great deal more: it unfit you for many duties which you are bound to, as to rejoice in God, and to be thankful for mercies, and cheerful in his love, and praise, and service: and is it a small sin to unfit yourselves for the greatest duties? If you are so troubled at God's disposal of his own, what does your will but rise up against the will of God; as if you grudged at the exercise of his dominion and government, that is, that he is God! Who is wisest, and best, and fittest to dispose of all men's lives? Is it God or you? Would you not have God to be the Lord of all, and to dispose of heaven and earth, and of the lives and crowns of

he greatest princes? If you would not, you would not have him to be God. If you would, is it not unreasonable that you or your friends only should be excepted from his disposal? 4. If your friends are in heaven, how unsuitable is it, for you to be overmuch mourning for them, when they are rapt into the highest joys with Christ; and love should teach you to rejoice with them that rejoice, and not to mourn as those that have no hope. 5. You know not what mercy God showed to your friends, in taking them away from the evil to come, you know not what suffering the land or church is falling into; or at least might have fallen upon themselves; nor what sins they might have been tempted to. But you are sure that heaven is better than earth, and that it is far better for them to be with Christ. 6. You always knew that your friends must die; to grieve that they were mortal, is but to grieve that they were but men. 7. If their mortality or death be grievous to you, you should rejoice that they are arrived at the state of immortality, where they must live indeed and die no more. 8. Remember how quickly you must be with them again. The expectation of living on yourselves, is the cause of your excessive grief for the death of friends. If you looked yourselves to die to-morrow, or within a few weeks, you would less grieve that your friends are gone before you. 9. Remember that the world is not for one generation only; others must have our places when we are gone; God will be served by successive generations, and not only by one. 10. If you are christians indeed, it is the highest of all your desires and hopes to be in heaven; and will you so grieve that your friends are gone thither, where you most desire and hope to be?

Object. All this is reasonable, if my friend were gone to heaven: but he died impenitently, and how should I be comforted for a soul that I have cause to think is damned?

Answ. Their misery must be your grief; but not such a grief as shall deprive you of your greater joys, or disable you for your greater duties. 1. God is fitter than you to judge of the measures of his mercy and his judgments, and you must neither pretend to be more merciful than he, nor to object to his justice. 2. All the works of God are good; and all that is good is amiable; though the misery of the creature be bad to it, yet the works of justice declare the wisdom and holiness of God; and the more perfect we are, the more they will be amiable to us. For, 3. God himself, and Christ, who is the merciful Saviour of the world, approve of the damnation of the finally ungodly. 4. And the saints and angels in heaven do know more of the misery of the souls in hell, than we do; and yet it abates not their joys. And the more perfect any is, the more he is like-minded unto God. 5. How glad and thankful should you be to think that God has delivered yourselves from those eternal flames! The misery of others should excite your thankfulness. 6. And should not the joys of all the saints and angels be your joy, as well as the sufferings of the wicked be your sorrows? But above all, the thoughts of the blessedness and glory of God himself, should overtop all the concerns of the creature with you. If you will mourn more for the thieves and murderers that are hanged, than you will rejoice in the justice, prosperity, and honour of the king, and the welfare of all his faithful subjects, you behave not yourselves as faithful subjects. 7. Shortly you hope to come to heaven: mourn now for the damned, as you shall do then; or at least, let not the difference be too great, when that, and not this, is your perfect state

Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/3/18 9:21

"THE RAIN IS ON THE RIVER"

YOU have been hard hit by heavy tidings of bereavement. The one that you loved as your own life has passed over into that unseen world which, though so near, seems so far. The light has suddenly died out of your heart, and you would be glad if you could know that you would soon be allowed to follow. I hardly dare to speak with you. In such deep waters there is only One who can stem the rushing torrent and restrain you from being swept away. It is recorded that on one occasion when a brother minister had lost his wife to whom he was tenderly attached, the late Dr. Parker called to see him, and on entering the room, without speaking a word, sat down beside his stricken friend and took his hand. After holding it in silence for some time, he rose and as silently departed. They both felt that that sorrow was too deep for speech. It is thus that you feel; yet, stay awhile that I may speak to you the words of God.

When the soul receives a sudden deep cut, with the thin sharp edge of pain, like a soldier suddenly wounded in the fight, who hardly realizes how deeply he is hurt, it is of supreme importance whether it turns to the higher or lower sources of relief. As Dr. Phillips Brooks puts it: If the soul resorts to mere expedients and tricks, the opportunity to rise to a nobler life is lost. It comes out no richer nor greater; nay, it comes out harder, poorer, smaller for its pain. But if it turns to God, the hour of suffering is the turning hour of life. Opportunity opens before it as the ocean opens before one that sails out of a river. Men have done the best and worst, the noblest and the basest things the world has seen, under the pressure of excessive pain. Everything depended on whether they looked to the depths or to the hills for help."

I pray you then to beware when sympathizing friends suggest one of those subterfuges in which your soul may take temporary shelter. You know how they speak. "You must not sit alone and mope; surround yourself with bright young lives,

go into society, seek the diversion of company"; or "Fill up your time with engagements--don't allow yourself time to brood, busy yourself with some occupation that will absorb you, and your pain will wear itself out "; or "Join a party which is making a world-tour; change of scene will make you forget." So people talk; but we know that these expedients will only give a temporary respite. We shall only be playing hide and seek with ourselves, and evading the dogged persistence of remorse which will run us down at last, making our sorrow the deeper because we have been unfaithful to God and to our beloved. The true soul cries out against these suggestions. It does not want comfort that comes by forgetting. It feels that at a new pang will be added to its sorrow, if it can be assured that one day it will be able to forget. Nothing will force it more certainly back into itself, to hug its grief the more tenaciously, than the suggestion that it will cease to grieve. It fears that if it ceased to grieve, it might also have ceased to love. No! your deliverance does not lie in these directions, but in turning to God for His consolations which are infinite in their understanding tenderness.

When addressing the Hebrew Christians, who were passing through awful sorrow, the Holy Spirit, speaking through His servant, said gently and graciously, Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaketh to you--My son! All things come to an end. The general trend of human sorrow sweeps past the doors of all mortal dwellings, and often the overflowing waters inundate their floors. The angel of pain visits every homestead and every heart. But a marvellous difference arises as soon as we see God behind our sorrow and detect His voice speaking unto us as unto children. The man of the world sees no personal will, feels no personal relationship, has no thought that there is One who thinks and cares behind the sudden stroke. But those who sorrow rightly look past the sorrow into the face of the Father and receive the cup from His hand. If you look at your sorrow from the human standpoint only, you will get hard and bitter. Wormwood and gall will be added as ingredients to your suffering. Look beyond it all; dare to believe that the Infinite God, who wants to make of your soul the fairest and noblest possible, has allowed all this to come into your life, permitting it that out of it there may come a refinement, gentleness, sympathy, and strength which would never have revealed themselves if your path had been easy and gay. Do not get bitter! Do not allow yourself to become soured! Do not get cynical and hard! Look up into the face of God, and say: "My God, my Father, I trust Thee." Belief in the Divine Fatherhood makes all the difference. Do not forget the exhortation, which reasoneth with you as with a child!

There are three attitudes that you may adopt towards your Sorrow. You may despise it, and stiffen yourself against it; or you may faint under it, like Hezekiah did, turning his face to the wall, and saying in effect: "It's all up with me--life is too stern, God is too hard, I have lost my faith, I shall give up prayer"; or you may be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live. The last is the true policy of life. You came from God. He is responsible for your existence. He loves you. He has a plan in your life, which He has been working out all these years. You have accepted the good things at His hand; will you not now accept this crushing sorrow, and dare to trust Him still! Notice those words: Be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live. All of us exist, but a comparative few live, and it is only as we get past the outward providence into direct fellowship with the Father of our spirit that we really live. His life comes to us, not so much through hazy feelings or excited emotions, but it pours into the humble soul, the soul that is conquered and broken, the soul that has flung itself at the low foot of the throne in childlike submission to His will.

Do not aim at making submission the result of your feelings. Choose it, it is the better part. Will it, with all the energy of your soul. Utter it aloud, when you are alone, in such words as these, Father, not my will, but Thine be done. Gradually, but certainly and inevitably, a marvellous change will come over you. You will become calm and strong. You will know that through the aperture of your yielded will, the Divine Comforter has entered.

Let your love go freely out to the one from whom you are parted. Do not say I loved but I love. Do not speak of your love in the past tense, but the present. Love is an inseparable part of your nature. To cease to love would mean your death; and there is not the slightest need that either the one or the other of you should fail. If your beloved had gone away for a journey or a voyage, which would occupy months or even years, you would still remain as closely united in the affinities of fond affection as when occupying the same home and in daily contact; why should there be any alteration, now that he has removed to a place and sphere which is ever so much nearer than the Southern Cross, or the Golden Horn, or the Gates of the West? A much-respected minister of religion confided to me recently that every morning he asked our Lord to pass on the message of his dear love to his daughter, who had been the ornament of his home and the stay of his declining years until summoned to higher service. Since then, I have discovered that many send similar messages to those who have passed over. We trust our prayers to Christ: may we not also entrust our love-messages?

It has been proved that those who are in close touch with each other can communicate through telepathy though a continent or ocean should intervene. I have seen two diaries, one kept by the husband and the other by the wife, whilst they were parted for a season, and it was extraordinary to gather from the entries made through the days of absence how aware each was of the happenings in the other's experience. There was hardly need of exchanging letters, so exact was the correspondence. Why should there not be something of the same kind still, where the transmitting soul and the receiver

ng one are in perfect accord, and both of them in Christ, who is always our Mediator and Bond of communion. It must, however, of course be always in our mind not to entangle or burden them with anxieties and cares from which in the order of God's Providence they have been liberated. In these God Himself will be our refuge and strength, our very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed.

One of the most remarkable confirmatory passages of Scripture to the thoughts which I have been expressing is that where we are told that we have come in the Christian dispensation to Mount Zion and to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the just made perfect. The writer does not say ye shall come, as though we should do so at some future day, but you are come. When we approach God and the spirit-world, in thought and desire, we also approach these happy and emancipated spirits whom we have loved and loved, but whose dear presence we have lost awhile.

In the words of another: "We can never be lonely nor forsaken in this life. Shall they forget us, because they are made perfect? Shall they love us less because they now have power to love us more? No trial can isolate us, no sorrow cut us off from the communion of saints. Kneel down, and you are with them; lift up your eyes and the heavenly world, free from all perturbation, hangs serenely overhead. All whom we loved, and all who loved us, whom we still love no less, while they love us yet more, are ever near, because ever in His presence in whom we live and dwell."

Let us learn to comfort others. Paul seemed to rejoice in his sorrow and trials, because in watching how God comforted him he had acquired the art of comforting others; and this at least is one of the vital gains of such pain as you are bearing, that you will be able to comfort others with the comfort with which you have yourself been comforted of God. Writing to a friend, George Eliot said: "For the first pangs there is no comfort. Whatever goodness may surround us, darkness and silence still hang over our pain. But slowly, the clinging companionship with the dead is linked with our living affections and duties; and we begin to feel our sorrow as a solemn initiation, preparing us for that sense of loving, pitying fellowship with the saddest human lot which, I must think, no one, who has tasted it, will deny to be the chief blessedness of our life." Especially to know what the last parting is, seems needful to give the utmost sanctity of tenderness to our relations with each other. Let us be thankful that our sorrow lives in us as an indestructible force, only changing its form, and passing from pain into sympathy, which includes all who suffer.

Now thou may'st give,
The famished food, the prisoner liberty,
Light to the darkened mind, to the lost soul
A place in heaven! Take thou the privilege
With solemn gratitude. Speak as thou art
Upon earth's surface, gloriously exult
To be co-worker with the King of heaven.

Lastly, do not refuse Joy when it comes. It is certain that you can never again be the gay, light-hearted soul of former days. But after a while, the beauty and order of nature, the caresses and laughter of little children, the appeal of duty, the need that others have for your sympathy, will call you back to take fresh interest in life. Even when autumn has fallen on the world, there are days almost like summer. Do not refuse them when they come. Do not refuse to obey the ancient command "to rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Do not think that it is treachery to the departed to allow the rays of glad sunlight to pour into the open casement, or the air to waft in the scent of honeysuckle and mimosa. Would they not, could they speak, urge you to take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord? How often will a little child endeavour to comfort a sorrowing mother by the caress of tiny hands and the pleading little voice, "Don't cry, mother." And may you not hear voices that speak to you from behind the thinnest of veils which is sometimes radiant with the fairest light shining beyond and through it, saying, If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I have come to the Father, and He hath made me most blessed for ever; He has made me full of joy with His countenance.

I see them muster in a gleaming row,
With ever youthful brows that nobler show;
We find in our dull road their shining track.
In every nobler mood
We feel the orient of their spirit glow,
Part of our life's unalterable good,
Of all our saintlier aspiration:
They come transfigured back,
Secure from change in their high hearted ways,

Beautiful evermore, and with the rays
Of morn on their white Shields of Expectation.
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

"Our Sister Death"
F. B. Meyer, B.A.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/3/18 10:28

Quote:

crsschk wrote:
the hour of suffering is the turning hour of life.

Quote:

Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaketh to you--My son! All things come to all. The general trend of human sorrow sweeps past the doors of all mortal dwellings, and often the overflowing waters inundate their floors. The angel of pain visits every homestead and every heart.

Quote:

No trial can isolate us, no sorrow cut us off from the communion of saints. Kneel down, and you are with them; lift up your eyes and the heavenly world , free from all perturbation, hangs serenely overhead. All whom we loved, and all who loved us, whom we still love no less, while they love us yet more , are ever near, because ever in His presence in whom we live and dwell."

Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/4/7 12:11

Pardon the self indulgence here ... Something was registering in my thought's as I once again contemplated all these things before heading off to another funeral ... Am reposting a snippet from another thread that was part of the expression at the time of my mothers recent death. Wanted to have reference to it in the same location and by doing so it raises it up onto the main page again. Many reasons but one is in the difficulty of keeping the sobriety of this tremendous subject before the conscience ... the drag and pull of this life is remarkable.

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Diane and Dian,

Exasperation ... there's a word for us, but even that how this beggarly language fails us. You sisters are precious saints, God love you both.

Have been wanting to make comment on that which Dian (Spitfire) made mention of a number of replies back. When you stood up spiritually as well as actually about that whole matter of the pastors message on getting out of debt and the later seemingly turnabout ... all I could think was, Praise God! What spiritual courage and ... dare I say it, prophetic utterance. Somehow I more convinced these sort of things are more of a particular 'discernment' even if it seems so overtly obvious ... To be honest I did think where were the male voices to challenge this? That is not to say ... sigh ... all these stupid clarifications ... The onus is on the ... *guts*! Yes, you both are correct. But the males in that setting ... All the ramifications towards you that stemmed from that. Not a one to stand up and come along side, let alone...

*And I sought for a man among them*

There is so much here between you two that is just ... timely. Just as this  
([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic\\_id14722&forum45&post\\_id&refreshGo](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id14722&forum45&post_id&refreshGo)) Trust Amid the Silence is. By that I mean, what Dian had mentioned here;

Quote:  
-----Oh, my God. Oh, my God! Oh, God! What to say here? Is there a word for a groan coming up out of the gut? Oh, Precious God. Do we even have a clue? You came to me, Lord, and I didn't recognize you. You came in such a precious way and I didn't know who you were. God help me! I despised the chastening of the Lord. I despised the process of loneliness that is required to really know God! I'm speechless  
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This damnable unbelief (I speak for myself here). Indeed, that which preceded this;

Quote:  
-----This morning as I awoke I was just laying there not wanting to get up (something which happens alot lately). I was remembering back to the days when I bounded out of bed to seek God and wondering what has happened to me. I distinctly heard the Lord speak to me as I lay there. He said, "Anyone who comes to me must believe that I am, and that I am a rewarder of those who diligently seek me." I gasped! I realized that I had fallen into self-pity and unbelief right at that moment.  
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Been there recently ... even this morning, *not feeling up to it*, some forcing against it despite that and yet couldn't quite stomach the silence. On the flip side, yesterday and the morning prior ... mentioned this to Greg, could have upchucked my spirit in heavings and tears, it was the very gut wanting expression, crude words lacking as always. In fact Wednesday morning, the day after finding my mother dead ... Darn words... Need to put a frame of reference around this somehow. Not worldly sorrow, not necessarily 'the emotions'. This might be crude for some but when she died and I thank God He allowed her to be at home, when I kissed her and knew she was gone ... The words were "Aw, Ma", it was sweet and beautiful, my dad was eating his lunch in the kitchen and I just said "Pa, I think shes gone". No outbursts of wild emotions, it was peaceful and with mingled prayers I sat with her for a long time just looking on her, loving, smiling, forgetting all the ... words and verses flowing as a backdrop. Her hands were folded together and I had mine on hers. It is all very surreal in that it was *real*, nothing supernatural, not even those remembered times of the Lords peace in other situations. Would get up and make some calls and come back and do more of the same ... just praying and musing, recall being even envious, telling my Pa how often I have thought of death and escaping all this ...nonsense down here. That I bet she wouldn't dare want to come back to all this and in my Ma's wonderful style would likely say something to the effect of "*They can have it!*" :-)

The thing that really surprised me and got to me was when they came to take her to the funeral home. The sheer ... matter of fact-ness, not because of the coroners, they are doing their job, just something in my *gut* that just ... revolted at it. Maybe I am more old fashioned than I even know. Later on found out that much of our terminology of what a pallor is and later the 'living room' is all tied to how we once used to deal with the dying, where they stayed in the home for the most part up to the burial.

But that Wednesday morning in prayer... "Lord, I *pour out my soul* to you!" Where the words and that the spirit didn't separate from the body in that moment ... my very guts, the marrow of everything wanted ... out! It wasn't any one thing, it wasn't the emotions necessarily ... it just broke forth like a open dam.

Hope this isn't too personal, this whole process is very ... bizarre. Have lost a cousin and friend, others, it is not totally foreign. Yesterday driving home musing and i don't like sometimes the whole programmatic, line upon line ideas of 'the stages' one goes through, however much truth there be in them. It can almost be something that one tries to measure up to subconsciously, "I ought to be feeling this, and that explains that emotion'. The gut is altogether otherwise. Frankly, I was a bit ticked off over the whole thing, over the confusion of emotions, ticked off at death itself. Pissed off at Adam until I thought, yeah it could of been Fred or Bob or however long it might have lasted, Mike Balog would have screwed it all up for sure. Stupid humans, give them the ability to make their own choices, to be able to in essence say no to God.

But I am in no way some stoic over all this. Many tears of sorrow at different times and different ways and certainly more to come. I am hopeful to be able to speak from my gut Saturday at her funeral. To honor her self-sacrificing life with the greatest of dignity and honor she deserves. My folks are very simple people and nobody has ever been so blessed as myself and brother and sister (all adopted mind you) than to have been blessed with such great parents.

My heart goes out to you as well Diane and my prayers. Both of you, your guts in what you convey here and ever so often in other postings, I cannot tell you how appreciative I am of this sharing forth. This all may seem quite far afield from the

area of prophets and prophecy but I think that might largely be all due to the deconstruction of what it has become to be accepted as, strangely enough as so much fortune telling, as a notion of 'title' or a banner for the man, rather than the guttural expressions, not the emotions, not that! The very true things of the Spirit, why that has become such an area of dispute, to put it to this test I just do not understand. There should be no fear, no raised defenses and endless explanations ... If it is the Lord, it is the Lord. Everything else is rubbish and conjecture.

But I still believe that sooner or later we will get to the very ... *guts* of this business if we can just allow ourselves to be put through the process and that will take some guts as well.

By the way, pray for this fool. There is one thing my Ma used to tell me when I was younger; "I don't want a bunch of people weeping at my funeral!" And I want to honor that.

~~~~~  
An explanatory note; This was taken from the thread

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id14379&forum36) To all the Prophets if one wanted to get the greater context. Thanks for allowing this indulgence.~ Mike

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/4/7 14:44

Brother Mike, thank you for opening your heart like this, Truly blessed reading. I have no words to describe what i feel or think, i just wanted to thank you for sharing

Christian

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/4/14 13:38

Death

God, to prevent all escape, hath sown the seeds of death in our very constitution and nature, so that we can as soon run from ourselves, as run from death. We need no feller to come with a hand of violence and hew us down; there is in the tree a worm, which grows out of its own substance, that will destroy it; so in us, those infirmities of nature that will bring us down to the dust.

Â—William Gurnall

Death is only a grim porter to let us into a stately palace.

Â—Richard Sibbes

We spend our years with sighing; it is a valley of tears; but death is the funeral of all our sorrows.

Â—Thomas Watson

Mighty and gracious lords, I will tell you to what your honour shall come; first, ye shall wax old like others, then ye shall fall sick like others, then ye shall die like others, then ye shall be buried like others, then ye shall be consumed like others, then ye shall be judged like others, even like the beggars which cry at your gates: one sickens, the other sickens; one dies, the other dies; one rots, the other rots: look in the grave, and show me which was Dives and which was Lazarus. This is some comfort to the poor, that once he shall be like the rich; one day he shall be as wealthy, and as glorious as a king; one hour of death will make all alike.

Â—Henry Smith

I account this body nothing but a close prison to my soul; and the earth a larger prison to my body. I may not break prison till I be loosed by death; but I will leave it, not unwillingly, when I am loosed.

Â—Joseph Hall

If a man that is desperately sick today, did believe he should arise sound the next morning; or a man today, in despicable poverty, had assurance that he should tomorrow arise a prince: would they be afraid to go to bed....?

—Richard Baxter

Let thy hope of heaven master thy fear of death. Why shouldst thou be afraid to die, who hopest to live by dying!

—William Gurnall

Death is half disarmed when the pleasures and interests of the flesh are first denied.

—Richard Baxter

He may look on death with joy, who can look on forgiveness with faith.

—Thomas Watson

Familiarize the thoughts of the evil day to thy soul; handle this serpent often, walk daily in the serious meditations of it, do not run from them because they are displeasing to flesh, that is the way to increase the terror of it. Do with your souls, when shy of, and scared with the thoughts of affliction or death, as you use to do with your beast that is given to boggle and start as you ride on him; when he flies back and starts at a thing, you do not yield to his fear and go back, that will make him worse another time, but you ride him up close to that which he is afraid of, and in time you break him of that quality. The evil day is not such a fearful thing to thee that art a Christian, as thou shouldst start for it. Bring up thy heart close to it, show thy soul what Christ hath done to take the sting out of it....

—William Gurnall

Pray that thy last days, and last works may be the best; and that when thou comest to die, thou mayest have nothing else to do but die.

—Vavasor Powell

It is well known that when a jailer knocks off a prisoner's fetters, that the constant wearing them hath put him to a great deal less pain than the knocking of them off doth at the present; yet, though every blow go to the very heart of him, he never murmurs at it... because he knows that the pain will be compensated by the ease that he shall afterwards enjoy.

—Nehemiah Rogers

Death is never sudden to a saint; no guest comes unawares to him who keeps a constant table.

—George Swinnock

Lord, be pleased to shake my clay cottage before Thou throwest it down. Make it totter awhile before it doth tumble. Let me be summoned before I am surprised.

—Thomas Fuller

There is an essential difference between the decease of the godly and the death of the ungodly. Death comes to the ungodly man as a penal infliction, but to the righteous as a summons to his Father's palace. To the sinner it is an execution, to the saint an undressing from his sins and infirmities. Death to the wicked is the King of terrors. Death to the saint is the end of terrors, the commencement of glory.

—Charles Spurgeon

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/5/3 6:28

still death is coming to mind, just got back from a weeks stay at the hospital, my baby girl was very sick and when holding this little baby gently shaking her and trying to wake her up so she can eat, but nothing, not even so much as an eye moving or a limp, she was so weak i got very scared, when holding my girl there something inside panicked, something broke, and as she is not so old only a couple of weeks, but i rushed to the ER? and just some weeks back i was here but then because my wife had complications delivering Jasmine, she had preeclampsia? some disease that makes the baby's presence in her mother poisoning the mother, so my wife was very very sick, the doctors only saw three cases in his 30 year career so bad as my wife's. Since i have more children at home i couldn't be with her at the hospital, travelling in prayer at home and in much "fear" over the future and expecting what could happen i tried my best to trust in him, but when i got the phone call two days later that it was time for me to come to the hospital, two days of trying different medications different treatments, nothing worked, my wife's condition just got worse and worse.

I was desperate now, I'm ashamed now but almost as if i accused God, far far from trusting him i was very broken man that went to the hospital, fear of becoming a father of seven with no wife at my side, fearful of losing my wife. crying strong cries from inside of despair of this situation, quoting scriptures from memory such as "Luke 18", and just utterly almost accusing God of not doing something quick enough. How could he allow the situation to go on so far as it had?

looking back on it and on my own actions and behavior I've gotten many answers, and God showed me many things, many priorities are very very wrong in my life, but his mercies are so great, and his love make this hard hearted Scandinavian tear up in his eyes, but at the hospital...

i go into the room and the sight scares me, my wife, but not my wife, my wife is pleasant to the eyes, long black hair and golden brown beautiful sparkling eyes, now....laying there weak and pale with a so high blood pressure i feared much, I've never seen her that weak, as the saying says, you could sense death, could almost touch it. But i knew many many saints where praying, i grabbed her hand and said lets pray...and God answered prayer...

she is well today, and my daughter too, I've learned much, many things God can not teach us from books, even though they are great to read and all good and edifying...something God must teach us direct from life.

and another thing i found was at the "section" my daughter was at, was an all children's hospital, with so many sick children, so much pain so much suffering, i have words in my soul i do not know how to utter.... just that so much is off balance so much is wrong i found some statistics

6,571,497,332 people live on earth

1,200,000,000 people live on \$0.23 a day

2,000,000,000 people have no electricity

80% of people live in substandard housing

1,000,000,000 people are without safe drinking water

Every 16 seconds someone dies of hunger

57,000,000 people died in 2006

10,500,000 of these were children under 5 years old

14,000,000 children were orphaned because of HIV + AIDS

2,000,000 children have died as a direct result of armed conflict in the last ten years

Meanwhile...

\$8,000,000,000.00 spent on cosmetics in the U.S.

\$11,000,000,000.00 spent on ice cream in Europe

\$17,000,000,000.00 spent on pet food in the U.S. and Europe

\$105,000,000,000.00 spent on alcohol in Europe

God is speaking to me.... only one life....

God bless you all and thank you all who prayed for me and my family

Christian

Re: - posted by enid, on: 2007/5/3 6:43

Truly being close to death brings reality into focus.

God is good, even when it seems like He is not listening or the situation gets worse.

But, thank God that He did hear you Christian.

In the West we have things so good we are selfish.

That selfishness has not only filtered into the Church, it has made it's home there.

Sad, but true.

Christians will pay good money to go and see a ball game, a movie, entertainment etc, but will refuse to give the same amount of money to a missionary who is trying to reach the lost.

God help us to have the right perspective.

Thank God that your wife and daughter are now so much better.

Will continue to pray.

God bless.

Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/5/3 9:56

Quote:

-----i have words in my soul i do not know how to utter

They came through loud and clear brother. May the Lord bless and keep you, your family ever before Him.

Much love and ongoing prayers my dear brother.

Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/5/13 23:33

No Fear of Death

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. (Revelation 2:11)

The first death we must endure unless the Lord should suddenly come to His temple. For this let us abide in readiness, awaiting it without fear, since Jesus has transformed death from a dreary cavern into a passage leading to glory.

The thing to be feared is not the first but the second death, not the parting of the soul from the body but the final separation of the entire man from God. This is death indeed. This death kills all peace, joy, happiness, hope. When God is gone, all is gone. Such a death is far worse than ceasing to be: it is existence without the life which makes existence worth the having.

Now, if by God's grace we fight on to the end and conquer in the glorious war, no second death can lay its chill finger up on us, We shall have no fear of death and hell, for we shall receive a crown of life which fadeth not away. How this nerve us for the fight! Eternal life is worth a life's battle. To escape the hurt of the second death is a thing worth struggling for throughout a lifetime.

Lord, give us faith so that we may overcome, and then grant us grace to remain unharmed though sin and Satan dog our heels!

Spurgeon

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/5/14 3:48

Quote:

crsschk wrote:

Eternal life is worth a life's battle. To escape the hurt of the second death is a thing worth struggling for throughout a lifetime.

Spurgeon has a way to fit much truth compressed into small numbers of words..... was it Edwards who prayed -stamp eternity on my eyeballs?

I'd like it stamped inside of my eyelids to see the word for myself evrytime i blink or close my eyes, to never forget....

and its wonderful to know his mercy and grace are sufficient for every new day to fight this fight!

Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/5/30 13:57

It is by faith

(J. A. James, "The Death of Mrs. Sherman" May 28, 1848)

It is by faith, as an operative principle of universal obedience to the gospel of Christ, that the believer "purifies his heart" and adorns his character with "the beauties of holiness," through the power of the Divine Spirit.

It is by faith that he overcomes the world . . .
the dread of its frown,
the desire of its smile,
its evil maxims,
its corrupt principles.

It is by faith that he . . .
quenches the fiery darts of the wicked one,
is delivered from the wiles of the devil,
and bruises the serpent's head.

It is by faith, as a pilgrim and stranger upon earth, he nourishes the desire for, and indulges the expectation of, that country which God has promised to those who love Him.

It is by faith that he rises superior to the love of life, vanquishes the fear of death, and while this monster puts his most horrid form of mischief on--he smiles at his terrors, and, swelling into rapture, exclaims, "**O death, where is your sting!**"

Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/6/1 0:06

Don't Let Me Live Wrong

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. --2 Timothy 4:7-8

For years I have made a practice of writing many of my earnest prayers to God in a little book--a book now well worn. I still turn often to the petitions I recorded in that book. I remind God often of what my prayers have been.

One prayer in the book--and God knows it well by this time, for I pray it often--goes like this:

Oh God, Let me die rather than to go on day by day living wrong. I do not want to become a careless, fleshly old man. I want to be right so that I can die right. Lord, I do not want my life to be extended if it would mean that I should cease to live right and fail in my mission to glorify You all of my days!...

As you will recall from Second Kings 20, the Lord gave Hezekiah a 15-year extension of life. Restored to health and vigor, Hezekiah disgraced himself and dishonored God before he died and was buried.

I would not want an extra 15 years in which to backslide and dishonor my Lord. I would rather go home right now than to live on--if living on was to be a waste of God's time and my own!

Jesus Is Victor! pp. 141-142

"Please, Father, help me to finish well. Amen."

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid2>) A.W. Tozer

Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/6/3 21:50

The One Thing That Matters

1 Kings 16:23-33

The text gives a meagre outline of the reigns of Ahab and his son Ahab, of which perhaps the meagreness is the most significant feature. The only fact told of the father is that he built Samaria, and his whole reign is summed up in the damning sentence that he "walked in the way of Jeroboam."... The reign of Ahab is similarly summarised. His marriage with Jezebel, and the flood of Baal worship which that let loose over the land, are told with horror....

The lessons to be drawn from these severely condensed records, cut down to the bone, as it were, are plain. The first of them is, that when a life is over, the one thing that lasts, or is worth thinking about, is the man's relation to God and His will.... Our lives will all come down to this at last. How did he stand towards God and His will is the final question that will be asked about each of us, and the answer to it is the only thing that concerns the dead—or the living either.... What matters is, whether God will have to record of us what is recorded of these two wretched kings or whether He will recognise that the main drift of our poor lives was to serve Him and do His will. He was a great scholar; he made a huge fortune; he rose to be a peer; she was a noted beauty, a leader of fashion, a queen of society—what will all such epitaphs be worth, if God's finger carves silently below them, "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord"? (Alexander Maclaren, Exposition of Holy Scripture)

(Thanks to pastorfrin for sharing this elsewhere)

Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/6/17 8:46

Fear of Death ~ *Henry Law*

While the Lord delays His coming, death works incessantly. There is no moment when its scythe is idle. We may soon feel its leveling blow. The debt of dying is due from us and all earth-born. "It is appointed unto men once to die."--Heb. 9:27.

Is there no comfort in this thought? Do no bright streaks illumine this horizon? The Christian replies, "Yes! verily, when death is viewed in gospel-light, its brow is clothed in smiles; its icy hand is no more chilly; it is despoiled of terror; its step is friendly; its approach is welcomed." Such is the picture which these pages strive to show. May every word be echo of God's truth!

But at the outset, barriers must be raised, and CAUTIONS duly set. These comforts are not widely strewn, as portion of all mothers' sons. They are not wild flowers of the open field. They are not berries which each passenger may pluck. They are not rays which gild the universe. They are not free as the air, and all-diffusive as the light. They are the heirloom only of the heirs of God.

The present purpose is to give true solace. But no solace finds true place, where God condemns. There is no real peace, where He is not a friend. Death smiles not, when God frowns. It cannot cheer the aliens from grace--the strangers from the covenant of promise. Such have no hope. The hopeless must be comfortless.

It is a fearful thought, that multitudes compose this class. Thronging travelers crowd destruction's broad way. A common feature shows their common state. They never feel the misery of sin--nor see the broken law--nor tremble at the impending curse. No tears of penitence bedew their eyes. No sighs of anguish prove their contrite hearts. They do not flee from the wrath to come. They do not enter salvation's only ark. They do not wash in the cleansing stream. They do not cling to the saving cross. They do not hide in the sheltering wounds of Jesus. They are deaf to the Spirit's voice--the calls of earnest pastors--and all the warnings of the Book of Life. They continue in nature's darkness, and in nature's filth--"dead in trespasses and sins"--"enemies to God by wicked works"--slaves to the devil and bond-slaves of hell. Can such be told to have no fears of death? No! rather let the very mention of death horrify them. Let open graves and funeral-bells affright. To them death comes to dissipate delusion--to give reality to hated truths--to tear away their blinding veils--to end their respite--to consign them to their final doom. It is their long farewell to every ray of hope. To them to die is endless woe. Let them fear it with all fear.

But let not such be heeded with indifference. Who would pass by without a rescuing effort? Who would not strive to check them on the precipice's brink? While space remains the Spirit may give grace. By unexpected means he opens eyes, and softens hearts, and implants faith. The Gospel-net may catch men unawares. Arrows may pierce an unsought mark. Where terrors fail to terrify, the sight of bliss in others may allure. Thus death displayed as friendly to believers may bring others to believe. In this glad hope let death be viewed in Christian light.

It is sweet now to turn to those who are immediately addressed. Grace has made them to differ. Lovely lineaments show their heavenly birth. They have been taught sin's vileness, and its deathful stains. In deepest penitence they have abhorred themselves. They know that endless ruin is the wages of their guilt. Condemned in SELF, they fly to Jesus, as their only hope. They receive His full redemption with adoring hearts. They love their Savior with intensest love. Their new-born lives reflect their Heaven-sent light. They are trees of righteousness "the planting of the Lord." "A royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." To them "to live is Christ." The sequence may not be divorced. To them "to die is gain."--Phil. 1:21.

But often they ignore their joys. They think of death and tremble. It is so now. It has been so of old. The Spirit states the malady and cure. "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death."--Heb. 2:14,15.

Here is rebuke to all such tremblers. Shall Jesus die to bring deliverance, and shall this mercy be frustrated? Shall He by suffering purchase freedom, and shall they refuse the blessing? Shall they entwine again the broken fetters? Shall He extend a cup of joy, and shall they choose the dregs of the cup of trembling?

Surely Christ's death should slay this fear. The proof is obvious. Apply it to your case. You daily gaze on Jesus hanging on the Cross. You doubt not that His death is yours. You glory in Him as your all-expiating surety. You confidently shout,

"I am crucified with Christ."--Gal. 2:20. Your faith, which makes you one with Him, gives interest in His entire work. You believe, then, that there is "no condemnation" for you. You see in every attribute of God a friend adorning you with salvation's robes. You know, that to you the law's thunder was all hushed at Calvary--that the devil cannot touch you--that hell cannot receive you--that your punishment is paid, and paid forever. Death then cannot harm you. It is an enemy which Christ has slain. It is now a phantom which inflicts no hurt--a shadow's shade--the embers of an extinguished earth--a pointless dart--a crushed opponent--a wounded snake. Why then do you fear it?

But let us take a nearer view. Death comes not only as no foe, but as a DELIVERER. It liberates from earth, and all the evils of which earth is the home. Let a few instances demonstrate this blessing. While we are encaged in flesh INBORN CORRUPTIONS are a restless plague. We long to be pure, even as our God is pure. We pant for holiness, as the deer for water-brooks. But an evil fountain sends forth evil streams. The good that we would, we do not; but the evil that we would not do, that we do.--Rom. 7:19. What tears--what groans--what bitterness of heart ensue! How often do we mourn our God offended--our Jesus not glorified--the Spirit vexed! How often do we sigh for wings to fly away to heights above our nature's mire! When will it once be! Death comes, and we are free. Is it reason to fear its rescuing touch?

In our lowly climate TEMPTATIONS are a ceaseless storm. They rage from every side--in every form--at every age. We seek for shelter, but are still exposed. Hence we experience the constant struggle--the fierce fight--the absence of repose--the frequent wounds--the stings of conscience. Death sounds a solution. It ends the strife. It bears to regions far above assaults. It cries, "Comfort, comfort my people." "The warfare is accomplished." How precious is this peace! And shall we dread the herald with this olive branch!

Who can recount the SORROWS which infest this earth? The dismal train is long. No grief is absent. All miseries appear. To be a man is to have fellowship with tears. Humanity is the beaten path of woe. But at the touch of death sorrow and sighing flee away. With the last breath the last tear falls--the last sob wails--the last distress is felt. The Christian knows this well. Shall he then fear the hand which wipes his eyes, and decks him with eternal smiles?

Think, also, of the many PAINS, to which each sense is inlet, and each limb exposed. Hence days bring agony, and nights resound with groans. Who has not nursed beside a tossing bed! But pain expires when the body dies. Hence to fear death is to reject pain's total cure.

Let it be added that this rescue is no transient respite--no momentary pause--no fading garland--no April-shower--no passing meteor--no shadow of a cloud--no lull between the tempest's gusts. On earth the resting traveler may soon be roused. The soldier may unsheath the sleeping sword. Renewed alarm may chase away short peace. But death's deliverance is complete--final--forever. It hides earth's evils in deep grave. They have no resurrection. The epitaph, "No more," proclaims their dissolution. Then fear not death which has no fears behind it.

But look again. Floods of new light break forth. To be unchained is gain. To be EXALTED is far more. Joseph rejoices to escape the prison. The joy is more to sit the next to Pharaoh on the throne. Mark then the bliss to which death's car uplifts.

Here let God's voice alone be heard, and mortal lips be silent. Heed the welcome, "Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."--Matt. 25:34. "Enter into the joy of your Lord."--Matt. 25:21.

Mark some of the DELIGHTS;--"In Your presence is fullness of joy--at Your right hand there are pleasures for evermore."--Ps. 16:11. "The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters--and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."--Rev. 7:17. "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it--for the glory of God lights it--and the Lamb is the light thereof."--Rev. 21:23.

Ponder the HONOR--"To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."--Rev. 3:21. "The glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one, even as We are one."--John 17:22. "It does not yet appear what we shall be--but we know, that when He shall appear we shall be like Him--for we shall see Him as He is."--1 John 3:2. "You shall receive a crown of glory that fades not away."--1 Peter 5:4. "They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads."--Rev. 22:4.

Cont.

Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/6/17 12:23

Continued ...

Scan the DURATION--"So shall we be forever with the Lord."--1 Thess. 4:17.

Such are some jewels from the kingdom's treasury. Such the true sayings of our God--uttered to give strong consolation--given, that we may exult in happy prospect of our heritage. Feast then richly at this table--inhale the sweetness of these fragrant flowers--revel in these luxuriant meadows. But powers strained to the utmost fail to grasp the coming glory. Who can count what exceeds number--or measure an immeasurable space--or fathom depths which have no end--or empty ocean of its countless drops--or span infinity--or overtop the heaven of heavens! But such task were easier far than to conceive what God has prepared for those who love Him.

Death bears the saints to the reality. It is then rightly classed among our treasures. "All things are yours, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come--all are yours."--1 Cor. 3:22. Let us not undervalue the passage to this bliss.

Many thoughts concur to chide away this fear. Mark its blame-worthiness. Our God has largely told us of full joy with Him. Shall we reply, "No! Rather let our days on earth be lengthened--let us still tarry in our homes of clay--not yet--not yet." In such reluctance there is shame. Where is the gratitude for Jesus' work! He has died that we may live with Him. Shall we desire a respite from such bliss! He sends His chariot to give convoy. Shall we shudder, shiver, and draw back! This is to vex the Spirit's love. He tenderly withdraws the veil, and gives enchanting glimpses of the kingdom. He paints the heavenly land as redolent of all delights. He strives to kindle warm desires--to excite us to heave detaining anchors--to cut entangling cords--to unmoor tackling--to spread the willing sail--to court the home-conveying breeze! Shall we decline and hug a sin-polluted shore! This is affront to His alluring teaching.

There is yet further blame in this timidity. It takes part with our deadliest foe. This world is Satan's territory. While we tarry in his confines, it is his joy to worry--to molest--to roll us in his mire. And shall we choose to stay within his toils! It is his anguish when we gain escape. Shall we remain his willing sport, and dread the voice which summons us away! Is this a horror of the monster's touch! Is this desire to tread him under foot!

It is our glorious boast, that the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world.--Gal. 6:14. If this be so, can we still cling to a decaying carcase! Is Egypt left behind! What means then, this lingering love of the flesh-pots--this dread to enter Canaan! Have we escaped the accursed city! What means then this pause--this backward look, and this reluctant step towards the mountains! Let the culprit tremble, when the bell tolls for execution. But let not the prince draw back from coronation--let not the bride turn from the shout, "Behold the Bridegroom comes." Let not the heir shrink from admission to his own castle--let not the Christian dread fulfillment of the word, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."--John 14:3.

Mark next what noble instances rebuke this fear! And here the Bible shall alone instruct. For wisest cause it is not large in death-bed scenes. It tells us how to live and to secure a gainful death. It shows the homeward road, but entrances are sparingly revealed. But still some jewels sparkle in the page. The dying Jacob's chamber is thrown open. We enter and hear blessings flowing from expiring lips. Suddenly the stream is checked, and he triumphantly exclaims, "I have waited for Your salvation, O Lord."--Gen. 49:18. Who trembles when waiting for such blessed hope! The waiting Jacob is no slave of fear.

Mark, also, Simeon bounding to the wished-for goal. "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace according to Your word--for my eyes have seen Your salvation."--Luke 2:29, 30. In peace there is no element of fear. Unruffled streams prove a surrounding calm.

Paul had been caught to Paradise, and the third heaven. How is he reconciled to remain on earth? Not by its love, but by the noble hope of helping others' faith. At last the end arrives. The veteran appears. Surveying the past and eyeing the future, he fearlessly exclaims--"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day--and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."--2 Tim. 4:6-8. The retrospect is calm--the testimony is glad--the assurance is full; the expectation is all of bliss. There is not a reluctant word.

In these examples learn how fearlessly saints die. We are wisely taught to take with us words, and turn unto the Lord.--Heb. 14:2. Our precious Book contains fit utterance for every hour of need--not least so for life's final scene. Let two instan

ces suffice. Words of trust are brought to dying lips. "Into Your hand I commit my spirit, for You have redeemed me, O Lord, You God of truth."--Ps. 31:5. Again, "Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff they comfort me."--Ps. 23:4. The faithful utterance of such holy words is a strong fortress against fear. No limbs can tremble which have such a prop.

You may reply, The haven truly is desired, but tossing waves impede the entrance. Pains and distress are common in last days. Life often ends in pangs of body. Hence apprehensions cannot be dispelled. It is not death, but dying that affrights.

But perhaps such pains may never come. Some suddenly depart and know not until the home is reached. Without one moment's twilight there is day. Others are gently rocked asleep, as infant in a mother's arms. They doze away as on a downy couch. It is unwise to dread what never may arrive. Why think of the huge stone at the tomb's mouth! It may be gone before your steps approach.--Mark 16:3, 4.

But what if nature should dissolve in pain! Are there no promises of compensating help! Is there no aid which makes all burdens light! Is there no presence which annihilates distress! Is there no joy which changes groans to smiles! Is it not promised, "Fear not, for I am with you?" It is true now as when the words first left inspired lips, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you--when you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon you."--Isa. 43:2.

Super-abounding comforts may destroy distress. Stephen's was no painless death. But showers of stones excited no complaint. He kneeled down, and prayed, and fell asleep. He saw his Savior, and forgot himself. Will not this Savior solace you! Time would fail to tell how martyrs have exulted at the stake, and in the fires glorified God.

Think of the agonies of Jesus's death. No pains of body could exceed. Moreover, desertion darkened, and the curse did its dire work. But in the prospect His light step sprang forward. He went before His disciples in the way, "and they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid."--Mark 10:32. "For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame."--Heb. 12:2. Follow Jesus, and bound through intervening pains to promised joy.

Sometimes tender emotions make us cling to earth. Affection gilds our homes with gladness. Its claims are strong and dear. To love and to be loved, is holy pleasure-ground. To think of separation is irrepressible distress. But faith subordinates all feeling to God's will. We may not dread what He decrees!

We apprehend that our departure may entail loss on the survivors. Let us think rather that God can more than compensate. His eye beholds, His hand protects, His bounty feeds the widow and the orphan-home. The house of grace knows not a widow's desolation. "Your Maker is your husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name."--Isa. 54:5. Where God is executor, there is no insolvency. Good legacies will be paid. Weep not then at the thought that others may be destitute. Your place will not be vacant, if supplied by God. Soon too--how soon--all who are one in Christ will follow. Brief is the parting--endless the reunion. But if you live they may precede, and leave you lonely. By dying you escape bereavement's pangs.

Think, also, the friends left here are few when numbered with the friends above. What joys are stored in fellowship with all the ransomed band! Who would not gladly die to intermix with this most glorious company--to see their beauty--to share their rapture--to enlarge their songs--to hold ecstatic communion--to be their fellow citizens! Add the remembrance of cloudless sight of God, and then enraptured wings will spread. The cry will break forth, "My soul thirsts for God--for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God."--Ps. 42:2.

Some feel that, to do work for Christ is their extreme delight. They shrink from death, which seems to end this service. Is it well-founded apprehension that work is limited to mortal life! But the realms of light are no inactive sphere. Is glory linked to dreamy ease? Jesus says, "My Father works hitherto, and I work." Fellow-workers with the Lord on earth are fellow-workers with the Lord forever. They "follow the Lamb wherever He goes." In His employments they are employed. Death may enlarge and multiply activities. "Bless the Lord, all His hosts, you ministers of His that do His pleasure."--Ps. 103:21. Do not think such work is adverse to a state of rest. Rest presupposes weariness--but weariness cannot be known where powers never flag. Eternal freshness never needs repose. Of spiritual bodies we may truly say, "They shall run and not be weary--they shall walk, and not faint."--Isa. 40:31.

Work on earth will not be less or worse because our hands no longer hold the tools. He, who bids us to cease, may give new impulse to new agents. Others more able and more fit may enter in. A vacant post is speedily supplied. It is a remnant of self-seeking which desires to occupy beyond allotted time. We have worked long. To God be all the praise! But it

may be that weary evening may soil the luster of the morning zeal. It is sad when early influence and power wanes, and loving friends deplore, "This life has been too long." Trust God to take us in right time.

Remember, also, life is not really sweet, while love of it predominates. To hold it in loose hand is fully to enjoy. Let then all diligence be used to weaken the roots of undue love to the world. Fruits of the soil, and skill in arts, and growth in grace thrive most when means are sedulously plied. The husbandman who sparely sows will sparely reap. Cultivate therefore the precious graces, which root up inordinate attachment to the world.

FAITH, which unites to Christ, and feeds on redeeming work, holds fast the title-deeds of endless life, and longs for full possession. As faith strengthens, the promised land is the object of increased desire. Seek then advance in this death-conquering grace. Pray, also, that the Spirit's breath may fan HOPE into brighter blaze. Hope ever lives in soul-delighting prospects, and pants to cross the intervening stream. Let LOVE too perfectly pervade the heart. Waters of death cannot quench it. Opposing mountains cannot impede it. It overcomes all interposing hindrances, and yearns for God's immediate presence. Away with little faith, and little hope, and little love. They nurse tormenting fear. Abounding faith--assured hope--perfect love laugh it to scorn.

Soar, also, above the world, and its sordid vanities. Do not rest in a Delilah's lap. "Set your affections on things above." Realize that you are dead to all earth's nothingness. Live, where your life is--high with Christ in God. Indifference to things below will relax all clinging grasps.

In thought, also, anticipate the hour of release. Be not a stranger to your dying hour. Often look death in the face. Often touch its chilly hand. So when it comes, it will not have a stranger-aspect. Who fears a trodden path! Who shrinks from an accustomed act! Who dreads the entrance of a well-known guest! Expectation makes way for welcome.

Above all, let HOLINESS do its perfect work. Let it entirely rule in body, soul, and spirit. Let it be the element in which you live and move--the belt of your loins--the path in which you walk--the sign conspicuous on your brow. It is the parent of 'no fear of death'. One breath of fondled sin obscures the mirror which reflects heaven, and weakens the strength of fearlessness. A guiltless conscience gives the fearless pillow.

May the Spirit's mercy make these reflections a real comfort to you! Live Christ--dwell in the Spirit--walk with God! Then while life lasts you will work cheerfully, with cheerful heart--willing to stay, but feeling that to depart is better--ready to sing, "Lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you everlasting doors," a blood-bought soul comes in. "You heavenly mansions, make him room, for he must stay forever."

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid150>) Henry Law

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/7/19 16:03

Donald Cargill: "This is the most joyful day that ever I saw in my pilgrimage on earth. My joy is now begun, which I see shall never be interrupted."

Luther: "Into your hands I commit my spirit; God of truth, you have redeemed me."

Thomas Holland: "Come, O come, Lord you bright Morning Star! Come, Lord! I desire to be dissolved and to be with Jesus, Jesus, you."

John Flavel: "I know that it will be well with me."

Alexander Henderson: "I am near the end of my race, hastening home, and there was never a school boy more desirous to have the play, than I am to have leave of this world."

Thomas Cartwright: "I have found unutterable comfort and happiness, and God has given me a glimpse of heaven."

John Locke: "O the depth of the riches of the goodness and knowledge of God."

James Evans: "In Jesus I stand."

Augustus Toplady: "I believe God never gave such manifestations of his love to any creature, and allowed him to live."

John Tennent: "Welcome God and Father! Welcome sweet Lord Jesus! Welcome death! Welcome eternity. Amen. Lord Jesus, come, Lord Jesus."

Samuel Finley: "I see the eternal love and goodness of God. I see the love of Jesus. Oh, to be dissolved, and to be with him! I long to be clothed with the complete righteousness of Christ."

Dr. Waddell: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Ralph Erskine: "Victory, victory, victory."

John Wesley: "The best of all is, God in with us."

Felix Neff: "Adieu, adieu. I am departing to our Father in perfect peace. Victory, victory, victory! by Jesus Christ."

Dr. Bogue: "I am looking to that compassionate Savior, whose blood cleanses from all sin."

Dr. Nevins: "Death! Death! Now come, Lord Jesus- Dear Savior."

To Dr. Waugh one said, "You are now in the deep Jordan; have you any doubt that Christ will be with you?" He replied, "Certainly not! Who else? Who else?"

D. H. Gillette: "O that I had strength to shout! I feel so happy. O, the precious Savior; what is the world to me? All its vanity? Give me Jesus. Do not weep for me, I am going home."

Alexander Proudfit: "When will this lingering conflict end? Oh, for a speedy and easy transition! Oh for deliverance from this corruptible body- this body of sin and death! Come, blessed Jesus, dear Savior, come! come! I long to depart."

J. H. Rice: "Mercy is triumphant!"

Dr. Nettleton: "It is fit to trust in the Lord."

Robert Anderson: "Peace! peace! How gracious God is in so making it all peace!"

Elisha Macurdy: "The Savior is all my comfort."

Thomas Cranfield: "A few more sighs, and then— "

Wilberforce Richmond: "The rest which Christ gives is sweet."

Mrs. Hannah More: "Jesus is all in all. God of grace, God of light, God of love: whom have I in heaven but you? It is a glorious thing to die." Her last word was, "Joy."

Mrs. Isabella Graham: "I have no more doubt of going to my Savior, than if I were already in his arms."

(https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id18111&forum45) Passage over Jordan

Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/8/12 11:29

With thanks to our brother (<https://www.sermonindex.net/userinfo.php?uid16021>) hmmhmm

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You will die this year!

(John Angell James, "A New Year's Solemn Warning")

This is what the Lord says: "I am going to remove you from the face of the earth. You will die this year!" Jerem. 28:16

This may be the case with any one of the readers of the present address, and therefore every one of them should



seriously reflect upon such a possibility.

This year you may die--for you must die some time--and that time may as likely come this year as any other.

This year you may die--because you have no revelation from God that you shall not.

This year you may die--because you are ever and everywhere exposed to the causes that take away life.

This year you may die--because life is the most uncertain thing in the world, and you have not the assurance of a single moment beyond the present.

This year you may die--for it is all but certain that many of the readers of this address will die this year --and why not you?

This year you may die, although there is now no indication of approaching death; for many during the past year have been cut off, and many during the present year will die, who may now seem very likely to live--and why not you?

How many, then, are the probabilities that before next new year's day, your place will be vacant in the family, at the scene of your daily occupation, and in the house of God! Ought not this to induce a habit of solemn, pensive, devout, practical, profitable, reflection. Bring home the thought. Take up the supposition, and say, "Yes, it is possible, by no means improbable, that I may die--this year!"

Are you really prepared for your latter end, by being a partaker of genuine faith, the new birth, a holy life, and a heavenly mind? Or are you a mere nominal professor, having a name to live, while you are dead? Do you recognize in yourselves, and do others see in you, the marks of a state of grace? Put the question to your own hearts, ask yourselves, "What am I? Am I a spiritual, heavenly, humble servant of God? Am I really crucified with Christ, dead to the world, ripening for glory? Is there anything heavenly about me? Is my temper sanctified, my walk consistent?"

Is your soul in that state in which you would desire it to be found when death strikes? Are you, in your devotional habits, your temper, your general behavior, as you should be--with eternity so near? Would you desire to die--just as you are now?

How many false professors will be unmasked this year, and appear with astonishment and horror, as self-deceivers, formalists, and hypocrites! How many in reply to the plea, "Lord, Lord, I ate and drank in your presence"--will hear the dreadful response, "Depart from me, I never knew you!" and thus find



there is a way to the bottomless pit--from the fellowship of the church! In whatever state you die this year--that you will be forever! The seal of eternal destiny will be put upon you! Your last words in time, and your first in eternity, might be, "I must be what I am--forever!"

The grand secret is about to be revealed, whether you are a child of God--or a child of the devil! That next moment after death--which imagination in vain attempts to paint, is to arrive--and, waking up in eternity, you will shout with rapture, "I am in heaven!"--or utter with a shriek of despair, and surprise, the dreadful question, "What! Am I in hell forever?"

([http://www.gracegems.org/25/new\\_years\\_solemn\\_warning.htm](http://www.gracegems.org/25/new_years_solemn_warning.htm)) the whole sermon

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/8/27 4:41**

**FOR PREPARATION FOR DEATH**

"O Lord, in the morning I will direct my prayer to You."

"Prepare to meet your God."—Amos 4:12

O eternal, everlasting God—Author of my being—my continual, unwearied Benefactor—I desire to come anew this morning into Your presence, thanking You for Your sparing mercies. Instead of making my last night's pillow a pillow of death, I am again among the living to praise You. Oh that I were enabled to live every day, and to rise every morning, as if it were to be my last, as if my next waking were to be in the morning of immortality!

Lord, how little am I influenced and impressed by the solemn records of death all around me! Friend after friend is departing—the circle of acquaintance is narrowed. The proclamation is ever sounding with fresh emphasis in my ears, "You also be ready;" and yet how prone to disregard the solemn admonitions! how apt to peril my preparation on the peradventures of a dying hour! Blessed God, my prayer is, that I may have my loins girded and my lamp burning. Let me not wait to have my vessel replenished until the voice of the Bridegroom is heard and I am summoned to meet Him. May I now so repose my every confidence in Jesus, that the hour which to the unwary and unwatchful is one of darkness and terror, may be to me the eve of the blessed Sabbath of eternity—the threshold and the portal of a world of endless joy.

Lord, let me feel that "the sting of death is sin"—that, not until I get the blessed sense of all my sins cancelled and forgiven in the blood of the Surety, can I be ready for my departure. "To me to live, may it be Christ," that so "to die" may be great and eternal "gain." Let me be enabled, by faith in death's great Conqueror, to cultivate that holy familiarity with a dying hour, that I may be enabled, when it comes, to fall sweetly "asleep in Jesus," and to hear His voice of love saying, "It is I, don't be afraid."

Look in mercy on the multitudes who are content to live on, unfit and unprepared for their great change. Awaken them to a sense of their guilt and peril. Show them their affecting need of Jesus—that time is wasting and eternity is hastening—that, "as the tree falls, so must it lie."

I pray for the heathen who are perishing for lack of knowledge. Countenance and bless all the efforts of Your Church to disseminate among them the gospel of the grace of God. May Your missionary servants, who have gone with their lives in their hands to the dark places of the earth, experience a peace which the world knows not of. May they have many souls as their glory and joy and crown at the day of Christ's appearing.

Oh give us all grace, in our varied stations and relations in life, to do something for You. Let us not bury or hide our talents; but as members of a ransomed priesthood, may we lay our time, our opportunities, our substance, on Your altar, and seek to "show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light." And all I ask is for Jesus' sake. Amen.

"Cause me to hear Your loving-kindness in the morning, for in You do I trust."

By John MacDuff, 1852.

**Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/8/27 4:44**

by James Meikle, 1730-1799

A prospect of Death

A dispute has long subsisted between my mortal frame and death; and though I have long maintained the struggle with a body subject to disease and pain, I must at last yield to the universal conqueror, and be led to the house appointed for all living. In a little while, the king of terrors will advance toward me, harnessed to slay, and I shall not be able to escape the keen destroyer. But here is the comfort of a Christian—that he may die, and yet not be hurt of the second death. Yes he may go undismayed with him who is the terror of kings—as with a conquered foe—and with cheerfulness view the silent grave. For though his dust rots, yet his hope shall flourish forever. O what an unspeakable privilege is a saving interest in the Son of God, whereby death—which sets the world a trembling—fills the believer's mouth with songs of triumph! Happy would the wicked be—if they were freed from the fears of approaching death. But this advancing day, when he departs, to be with Jesus, kindles joy in the believer's bosom.

Reluctant nature, indeed, may struggle in the last pangs—but opening glories shall scatter every gloom. My relatives may weep about me—but my soul shall be all harmony within. My body may toss and tumble on a death bed—but my hope shall be fixed within the veil. Mourning and weeping may attend my decease—but my departed soul shall soar to an everlasting song. And, while my sad friends inter my lifeless clay, my immortality shall enter into the joy of my Lord.

Such views as these refresh the expectant of glory; and whatever clouds may darken his evening sky, yet his state is secure, and he shall never walk alone, through the dark shadow, the solitary valley of death. The same divine Savior, who has been a cloud and a shadow to him all the days of his life, will also be the shining of a flaming fire to him in the night of his death. Hence death itself, like the cloud of old, when kindly interposed between fleeing Israel and pursuing Egypt, though it be terror and darkness to depraved mortals—yet it is joy, light, and transport to adopted sons.

If, on the approach of the decisive moments, fierce disease will allow my soul so much tranquility as to think; with what delight will I bid the world adieu, how will my joys swell to see myself on the brink of an eternity of glory! And, if I can use my tongue, how shall my dying breath speak of the excellences of my divine Redeemer, and commend religion to the sons of men! How shall I expatiate on the bliss, the entrancing joys found in his presence, even below, when the soul dwells with great delight under his shadow, and eats his fruits, while paradise blooms around him! How shall I also endeavor to set forth a little of that triumphant state that is before the throne!

Then, taking my last, my eternal farewell of all created things, I shall fix my soul on all the boundless bliss, and everlasting glory, that is in his presence; and, while he graciously begins to shed eternal noon about me, shall breathe my soul out among his beams, and rise in his irradiation to the very throne!

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/8/27 14:21**

Some dying sayings of Mary Winslow

"I am so happy! I cannot tell you how happy I am! Not a ruffle, not a cloud."

"I shall enter heaven a poor sinner saved by grace. I seem to have done nothing for the Lord, who has done so much for me."

"I shall soon be with Jesus! I shall see Him face to face. Oh, glorious prospect!"

"Oh, how full His heart is of love I cannot express to you! And if I had millions of tongues, I could not tell you how precious He is at this moment to my soul. I feel His sensible presence. He is near to me; so near, that I feel as if I could embrace Him."

"What a glorious prospect I have in view! Who can picture it? No tongue can tell how I love Jesus; not because it is my duty to love Him, but because I cannot help loving Him. He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely One."

"I am the chief of sinners, but am dear, very dear, to the heart of Jesus, who shed His blood to save me, even me, as if there were not another soul to be saved."

"It is one thing to talk of death: it is quite another thing, when it becomes a reality, to grapple with it."

"How long, Lord, will You keep me in the valley of the shadow of death? Why are Your chariot wheels so long in coming?"

"The gloom has all passed, and I have a full view of the glory that awaits me."

"Lord, I weary, I weary, I weary to be gone. Keep me patient, waiting Your will. I must be perfected through suffering; not one pang too severe, nor one sorrow too much."

"Read to me the precious words of Jesus. Endeavor to keep my mind upon His truth. Christ is the Rock upon which my feet are placed."

"Keep close intimacies with Jesus. We must live upon Christ, and we must die upon Christ."

"Oh, live for eternity! This poor world is passing away; the reality is to come, and a glorious reality it is. How important it is to walk so as to please God in all things!"

"Little faith will bring the soul to heaven; great faith will bring heaven into the soul."

"My first joy in heaven will be to see Jesus!"

"I am passing away, but not a single cloud veils Christ from my view. Language cannot express how happy, happy I am. Words fail to describe the preciousness of Jesus to my soul."

"I am going home! going home! A welcome home. I have not a need, nor care, nor trouble."

"I never so much felt my dependence upon the Holy Spirit as I do now. My first prayer in the morning when I awake is addressed to the Holy Spirit, that He would take possession of my thoughts, my imagination, my heart, my words, throughout the day, directing, controlling, and sanctifying them all."

"If there is a spot upon earth more blessed than another, it is the mercy seat. None can tell the joy that springs from it."

"He would not have me a spoiled child, therefore He has employed the rod; but all His corrections and rebukes have been in love."

"The Holy Spirit ministers to me like a little child. My loving Shepherd cherishes the lambs as well as the sheep; and He will come and take me to Himself. I shall not go alone. I want to go. I want to go."

"Oh, why are His chariot wheels so long in coming? Why does He delay? I am longing to depart, to be with Christ. All is ready."

"Soon I shall be singing His high praises in heaven. Oh, how great His love! How can He love so vile a sinner as I? Yet He loves me. I have nothing of my own goodness to bring in my hand; all, all I cast away."

"What will the music of heaven be!"

Gazing one evening from her bed upon a magnificent sunset, she remarked, "Oh, if the outside of heaven is so beautiful, what must it be within!"

"I long, I weary to be gone; but I would not be impatient."

After a day of extreme languor, she said, "The Lord has fed me today with drops of honey."

"There is a buoyancy, a vitality in the principle of the renewed soul, which, in dying, cannot be depressed. The more the body decays and sinks, the higher it rises to its native heaven."

"I would not be impatient, but I long to end the conflict, and be with Jesus. Oh, how precious He is to my soul!"

"The glory of heaven is Christ."

"Meet me in heaven!" was her dying charge. And then, when her lips were thought forever sealed; lips that had testified so long and so faithfully of Jesus; she exclaimed, with a voice of wondrous energy and power, "A cloudless death! A cloudless death! A cloudless death!" So resplendent was the glory now surrounding her; so sacred and awe-struck the feelings of all who gazed upon the scene; the spot where the last conflict was waging seemed more like the vestibule of heaven than the chamber of death.

While her gathered children were surrounding her dying bed, watching the closing scene, expecting each moment to catch her last sigh, her eyes partly opened, her lips moved, and with a low yet distinct voice she rapidly repeated the words, "I see You! I see You! I see You! I see You!" The unearthly grandeur of the scene transcends all description. We felt

that heaven was opened; that Christ was there; that the eternal world enclosed us. And as her voice grew fainter and fainter, and the words died softly upon her lips, she ceased to move; a holy quiet reigned; a solemn calm ensued; her sanctified spirit was in the bosom of her Lord. From the mental emotion, the soul ecstasy through which she had but just passed; rapt in the vision of her living Lord; there still lingered a luster in the eye, a smile upon the parted lips, and a glow, like that of sunset, upon the countenance, which formed a picture of inimitable beauty and grandeur.

She has reached, at last, the heaven of glory, for which her panting thoughts and heaving heart so yearned. She has looked upon Christ, whom her soul adored with an affection so absorbing and intense. Glories which the human eye could never see; joys which human thought could never conceive, and music such as earth has never heard, have burst upon her astonished blissful spirit. At His feet who died for her, adoringly she casts her crown, exclaiming, "Worthy is the Lamb!"

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful. And now the prize awaits me; the crown of righteousness that the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that great day of his return. And the prize is not just for me but for all who eagerly look forward to his glorious return." 2 Timothy 4:7-8

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs!" Numbers 23:10

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/8/27 15:55**

*While her gathered children were surrounding her dying bed, watching the closing scene, expecting each moment to catch her last sigh, her eyes partly opened, her lips moved, and with a low yet distinct voice she rapidly repeated the words, "I see You! I see You! I see You! I see You!" The unearthly grandeur of the scene transcends all description. We felt that heaven was opened; that Christ was there; that the eternal world enclosed us. And as her voice grew fainter and fainter, and the words died softly upon her lips, she ceased to move; a holy quiet reigned; a solemn calm ensued; her sanctified spirit was in the bosom of her Lord. From the mental emotion, the soul ecstasy through which she had but just passed; rapt in the vision of her living Lord; there still lingered a luster in the eye, a smile upon the parted lips, and a glow, like that of sunset, upon the countenance, which formed a picture of inimitable beauty and grandeur.*

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**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/9/2 4:57**

Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset;  
eternity to the wicked is a night that has no sunrise.

If a wicked man seems to have peace at death,  
it is not from the knowledge of his happiness, but  
from the ignorance of his danger.

-Thomas Watson

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/9/11 6:26**

Maybe this article is not so much on physical death, as many other post in this thread have been, but while reading this it struck me, a Christian don't die when her body dies, not because he or she is going to heaven, but because they already died.

I think this is a very deep subject and I lack words to express what my spirit is "meditating" on, but this death... death to self death to sin death to the world... we are already dead... And he, our Lord he has abolished death... anyway, I felt this article was in good company here for some reason

The Sentence of Death  
by T. Austin-Sparks

"Yea, we ourselves have had the sentence of death within ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves but in God, which raiseth the dead.... Always bearing about in the body the deadness of Jesus that the Life also of Jesus may be manifest in our mortal body" (2 Corinthians 1:9, 4:10).

"The sentence of death in ourselves" - That is the very basis of everything in real spiritual fruitfulness and effectiveness. Of course, here Paul is undoubtedly speaking in the first place about something very serious which had overtaken him... something which had come in the way of a terrible affliction, and he said he despaired of life and had the very sentence of death in himself so that there was no hope whatever for him from any human standpoint - there was no hope according to all human judgments and verdicts. He ought to have died - the very sentence of death was in him - and I do like the way he puts it, it is so richly significant: he uses just the little word THAT, which gives an entirely different complexion to the whole situation. He might have put it: "We had the sentence of death in ourselves and we cannot trust in ourselves"; but he did not put it like that. Of course, that would be quite logical to say, "We had the sentence of death - it was there; and that being the case, we were no good for anything at all, and there was no hope whatever, and therefore we cannot trust ourselves."

But he did not put it that way. "We had the sentence of death in ourselves THAT...." There is purpose in it - there is an object in it - there is something in it as a basic and fundamental principle. He realized that it was not the end but the beginning, with a design that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raiseth the dead... so that the sentence of death was not the end but the beginning of everything. There was a real purpose in this thing.

If you take up the Holy Spirit's teaching in the New Testament, you will find that this has become the foundational principle of all Divine activities and operations: the sentence of death passed upon us and registered in us and working out in us, and all the time another thing doing the work of God, triumphing over this sentence of death in us - this other thing which is in us, working through us, giving us ascendancy over death in Christ, so that the wonderful things of God are manifested by us when there is no accountableness for them in us. The Lord has swept away with one stroke the whole basis of our trust in ourselves - has wiped out forever any hope in ourselves - not to destroy us, not to make everything impossible - but THAT He who raiseth the dead might show the mighty works by this Resurrection Life which is fruitful in us.

Have you noticed... that even Herod, "that old fox," when it was reported to him that the Lord Jesus was doing His many mighty works, said, "This is John the Baptist, risen from the dead; therefore these mighty works are shown"? Risen from the dead - mighty works! How he got that inkling I don't know, but there is this principle in it, that resurrection from the dead implies mighty works - works mightier than those before death.

This is the principle all the way through the Word, that on the ground of a Life wrought in us through the cross by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God is able to achieve and accomplish His supreme purpose. But in order to do it, the sentence

the seed of death must be planted right at the center of our old life to rule it out, so that where we despair of life in ourselves and have no trust in ourselves, we know we cannot of ourselves accomplish anything, there is the mighty Life of God for everything - this that is "Christ in you," the Life of God, the hope of glory.

Now this is only the beginning of things, the basis: if you are going to be effective in the realm where the prince, the Lord of Death holds sway, you cannot be effective by the means and resources in which he has got a stronghold; and he has that in all the resources of our natural life, however fine and splendid they may be from the natural standpoint. The only thing that can be effective in that realm is the Life whereby Jesus conquered death. In order that that Life might have full sway and free course, and the utmost and fullest fruitfulness of that Life as triumphant over death might abound, all that in which the enemy has any hold whatsoever - our natural life - has got to be put out. We must have no trust in ourselves for this work.

Now that immediately defines and delimits the measure of spiritual effectiveness. It is the measure of His Life coming through by the sentence of death being in ourselves.... In all oppositions, adversity, trial, affliction, Paul sees a great advantage for the Life of God - that this "death" is complementary really to the purpose of God - that it is aiding the purpose of God. Paul always looked upon things in that way. He saw that those things which might be reckoned impossible of fruitfulness to God were essential to make that fruitfulness possible. Death itself is not the end of all things, but is the beginning of things where God is concerned.

Now, beloved, we are right up against this whole situation... of dealing with the system of spiritual evil and spiritual death. We have often said of late that we have passed, and are passing more completely, out of the era and time of certain orders of Christian work. I think it is recognized by most spiritually-minded people that the old forms of Christian enterprise - organized religious activity - are breaking down, are failing everywhere. It seems that the thing has been rejected and cannot meet the need.

We have passed into a new time, a new phase which we believe to be that culminating phase in the age when we shall come more directly into conflict with the forces of darkness - with the power of Satan. The Church has been meeting him for a long time through things, and now it is going to meet him face to face; and that is the time and condition into which we are moving now. We are finding that means and old forms and institutions and organizations cannot meet the more direct encounter with the enemy. We are being forced to recognize the need of something more, and that something more is simply the naked Life of God as manifested in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ coming into tremendous contact with the whole system of death and of darkness. That is our position.

Now the movement is to be along this line where the Life of God, unmixed with the resources of men - with human machinery and human drive and human enterprise - the very Life of God has got to be directly, immediately, nakedly manifest in the Church for the last phase of the battle unto the ultimate triumph.

In order that this might be so, there must be this tremendous emphasis of God upon the need for the wiping out of all that which stands in the way of a pure and clear manifestation of His Life, and of the intermingling of those things in which there is death (that is, the natural life of man). All that intermingling has got to be removed, and God is coming to the time - has come to the time - when He is going to have very close accounts with His people, so that you cannot touch the earth, you cannot touch the flesh, you cannot touch the world, you cannot touch anything in which death is, without at once having a check and an arrest put upon your spiritual effectiveness; you have to stand absolutely clear.

Beloved, the principle of Life in your spirit is to be the guiding principle of all your service in the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not mean Life in your surroundings. The Lord may take you to a place where death reigns, but if death reigns in you, you may as well give up the whole thing at once. You may be there, and the Life of God may be in you to meet that situation - to triumph over it; but mark you, if you begin to touch what you call pieces of work for God and there is no Life in your spirit - the thing is dead in your spirit - you have no right there until you get in your spirit the Life of God relative to that thing. Don't touch it, or you will be found in dead works, trying to do something where there is no vital principle at all.

Now note: it is all very well to have a broad view and say, Yes, but the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Life, has come into the world - where death is - in order to save the world; and that Life can be taken as the broad basis upon which we should enter upon any work for the Lord that seems to offer itself or is presented to us.

But that is no criterion. There was a time when the Lord Jesus recognized in His spirit that the living purpose of God was arrested with regard to certain situations, and He had no Life witness there... and He came out.

We believe that that was so in the case of Israel as a nation. He gathered the whole situation up in the incident of the fig tree. Israel was ministered to - witnessed to - for a long time, but the moment came when the curse of God had to fall upon it (what is the curse of God? It is death). From that moment He was cut off from Israel; He had no ministry to Israel as such. He recognized in His spirit that there was death there, and it was no use being sentimental about poor Israel - no use trying to act upon a basis of human sympathy and compassion and having imaginations and mental pictures of what could be done and what might be done; that was an end.

I am only using this by way of illustration, for spiritual effectiveness demands that we should have the witness of LIFE in our spirit. A lot of people hold on and continue in certain realms, certain spheres, certain companies, certain connections; and they are there merely from the standpoint of natural reasoning and argument, sentimentally, traditionally, or somehow thinking that, by staying in, something is going to be done; while in their spirit they know the thing is dead, and they have no Life there.

May that not be the Lord's witness to them that they should serve Him where they have Life - where the witness of Life is in them, and a spirit of promise? If all around is dead but they have Life in themselves, it is all right; but if all around is dead and they have no Life in their ministry, surely something is wrong - the door is closed. It is important that for spiritual effectiveness up to the hilt, the witness of Life in us should be borne.

Of course, we have swept aside in ourselves that which might bring the death - we have stood by the cross and seen that the sentence of death must be in ourselves as such in order to make the Life possible; but if that has been dealt with and we have the sentence of death - we no longer trust in ourselves but put our faith in Him who raiseth the dead, then we have the right to claim and receive the witness of Resurrection Life in ourselves for ministry as the Lord appoints. And the day in which the Lord brings death upon one's spirit in any sphere or kind of ministry, that is the day when one will begin to look to see where the Lord is going to bear the witness of Life for ministry. Now that is important.

I do not know why the Lord should give one such emphasis upon this, but it is no use your going on to do God's work when you have death in your spirit. Nothing will come of it; drop it; and ask the Lord to bring you into a place where you can in your spirit bear witness by Life - the Life whereby Jesus conquered death - to meet the situation as it is around you.

Oh, that God's people had discernment, spiritual discernment! The one cry in our spirit is that His people might be more discerning - be able to discern in their spirit where Life is and where death is. You know how frequently we have tried to do a thing for the Lord - to do a thing with the best motive for the Lord - and inside there has been death. Dead! And yet we have tried to do it - to force it - and there is nothing but waste of energy and waste of time. We have got to get on to the thing that God is doing, for only in this can we have the witness of Life that it is the thing of God and that we shall get through. In order that He might be able to consummate His purpose - gather up His plan and bring it to a mighty, victorious issue in the coming of the Lord, our need is to have Life more abundant... and the spiritual discernment by Life to know where Life is and where death is. You may be doing what you call the work of God and have death in your Spirit; and that very doing of what you call the work of God - because there is death in your spirit - is antagonistic to the purpose of God. You may have Life in your Spirit and death all around, but the fact that you have the witness of Life is both the key and the assurance that something is to be accomplished.

I believe, beloved, that we dare not do a thing unless we have definite witness in our spirit that it is the thing of God to be done through us.... Is God in this; is God in that; has God undertaken it? The answer to that question in your spirit will not be an audible voice; it must ever be the liberty and the freedom and the uprising of His Life in you that gives you a clear way through in your spirit.

The Lord teach us how to be led thus in our spirit by the Holy Spirit that He may bring us to the place where the maximum of spiritual effectiveness is attained. In order that it may be so, we must have "the sentence of death in our selves (our flesh), that we should not trust in ourselves" always bearing "the deadness of the Lord Jesus, that His Life might be manifested."

God only works now on resurrection ground - by Resurrection Life - and this life in us is the basis of the Holy Spirit's operation in revelation and service.

The law of the Spirit is Life (Romans 8:2).



Re: Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/10/13 12:10

**SERMON XV.**

**PROCRASTINATION: OR THE SIN AND FOLLY OF DEPENDING ON FUTURE**

**TIME**

Prov. xxvii.1.

*Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.*

*{Excerpts}*

SECT. V.

Serious Inquiries. Â•

I shall improve this doctrine, by putting you upon examining yourselves, whether you do not boast yourselves of to-morrow, or whether you do not live in such a manner as you would not, were it not that you depend on future time and future opportunity in the world. Would not your behaviour be very different from what it now is, if you every day lived and acted without any dependence on seeing one day more ? You cannot but acknowledge it to be most reasonable, that you should live and act thus. You cannot but own, that you have no good ground of dependence on another day ; and therefore that you cannot act wisely any otherwise than in acting as one who hath no dependence on any such thing. Therefore inquire whether you act wisely and reasonably in this respect.

1. Do you not set your hearts much more on this world, than you would, if you had no dependence on the morrow ? Is not the language of the rich man in the gospel, the secret language of your hearts ? " Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," &c. Is not this the language of your hearts, with respect to what you have gotten already; which makes you place your happiness so much in it? And with respect to what of the world you are seeking and pursuing, is it not with a dependence on enjoying it for a great while, when you shall have obtained it? Are not your lands and other possessions which you have gotten, or are about to get, in your own imagination, yours for a great while ? Would your mind be so filled with thoughts and cares about these things, so much to the exclusion of another world ? Would you lay yourselves under so great disadvantages for your soul's good, by involving yourselves in worldly cares; if you had no dependence on having any thing to do with these things for more than the present day ? If you did not depend on considerable more time in the world, would your inquiry be so much, What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed ? and so little, How shall we make our calling and election sure; how shall we be assured that we are upon a good foundation for another world, and that we are in such a state, that death cannot hurt us ? How shall we be sure that we are ready to appear before the judgment-seat of a heart searching God? Would there be so much of your time spent in laying up treasure on earth— and so little in laying up treasure in heaven that you might have store against the day of death—were it not



that you put death at a distance? Would you be so much raised at your temporal prosperity, and so much sunk when you meet with crosses and disappointments in your worldly affairs, if you did not think that continuance in the world is to be depended on for more days than the present? Let those who very much affect to adorn their bodies in gaudy apparel, inquire whether they would think it worth their while to spend so much time to make themselves fine, and to set themselves forth as gayer than others, if they really had no dependence that their bodies would be preserved one day longer from being clasped in the cold arms of death?

2. Inquire whether you would not much less meddle with the concerns of others, and be much more employed with your own hearts, if each day you had no dependence on living another day. If you were sensible that you had no other day to depend upon than this, you would be sensible that you had great affairs of your own to attend to. You would find a great deal of business at home between God and your own soul; and considering that you cannot depend on another day, it would seem to you that you have but a short time in which to do it, and that therefore you have need to be much engaged. You would say as Christ did, I must work while the day lasts, for the night cometh, wherein no man can work. You would find so much to be done, and so much difficulty in doing it, that you would have little leisure, and little heart to intermeddle with the business of others. Your business would be confined to a much narrower compass. You would have so much to do at home in your closets, and with your own hearts, that you would find no occasion to go abroad for intermeddling business to fill up your time.

But the truth is, men conceive of a great deal of time which they have to be filled up, and hence they want business: they depend on to-morrow, and the day following, and next month, and next year, yea many years to come. When they are young they depend on living to be middle-aged, and when middle-aged they depend on old age, and always put far away the day of death. Let them be young or old, there always seems to them to be a great vacancy between them and death; hence they wander to and fro for business to fill up that vacancy. — Whereas if they were sensible of the uncertainty of life they would, in the first place, make sure of their own business; the business of their own precious immortal souls would be done, before they would attend much to the business of other people. They would have no desire or disposition to concern themselves with every private quarrel which breaks out in the neighbourhood. They would not think it much concerned them to inquire into the matter, and to pass their censure on the affair. They would find something else to do, than to set by the hour together, discussing and censuring the conduct of such and such persons, gathering up or rehearsing the stories which are carried about to the disadvantage of this and that person.

We seldom, if ever, see men who are upon sick-beds, and look upon themselves very dangerously sick, disposed to spend their time in this manner; and the reason is, that they look upon it doubtful, whether they shall live long. They do not so much as others, depend on much time to spare; hence their minds are taken up more about their own souls'

concerns, than about the concerns of others So it would be with persons in health, if their health did not make them depend on a great deal of time in the world.

3. If you each day depend on no other but the present, would you not engage and interest yourselves much less in party designs and schemes, than you are now wont to do ? Among a people divided into two parties, as this town hath been for a long time, there is commonly much done by the partizans in forming schemes of opposition to one another. There is always a strife, who shall get their wills and carry their point. This often engages them, if not in open quarrels, in secret intrigues. That there is so much done in these things, is a certain, evidence that they boast themselves of to-morrow, and put death at a distance.

Men would certainly find themselves very much indisposed to such things, if they were so sensible of the uncertainty of life, as to depend on no other day than the present. It is therefore very proper, that you should examine yourselves in this particular, at this time. If you really depended on no other day than the present, would your hearts be so much engaged in strife between two parties, as they often are ? Would your spirits be so often raised and ruffled. Would you go about with so much prejudice against such and such men : harbouring so much of the old leaven, which so often breaks out in heats of spirit ; and, as an old sore which was skinned over, but not cured, sets to raging, with a touch, which would not have hurt sound flesh ? Commonly in the management of a strife between two parties, there is a great deal of envy. When any who belong to one of the parties seem to prosper, the other party will envy them ; it is a grievous thing to them. So there is also much contempt: when one of the parties gets the ascendant a little over the other, they are ready to make the utmost improvement of it, and to insult the other party. And there is commonly in such cases a great deal of mutual secret reproach. When those of one party get together, then is the time to inveigh against those of the other party, and to set forth their injustice and their fraudulent practices. Then is the time for them to pass their censure on their words and actions. Then is the time to expose their own surmises and suspicions of what the other party intends, what it aims at in such and such things, what the purposes of individuals are, and what they suppose their secret actions are. Then is the time for all that are friends in the cause, and engaged in the same designs, to entertain one another by ridiculing the words and actions of the other party, and to make themselves sport of their folly and disappointments; and much is done at calling one another *Raca* and *fools*, or other names equivelant, if not much more than equivelant. Then is the time to lay their heads together to plot and contrive how they shall manage such an affair so as to disappoint the other party, and obtain their own wills.

Brethren, these things ought not so to be among a Christian people; especially among a people that has made the profession which we have made. Nor would they be so if it were not for your dependance on much future time in the world. If you were so sensible of your continual liableness to death, that every day was the last you depended upon,

these things certainly would not be so. For let us but consider what are the effects of death with respect to such things. It puts an end to party-quarrels. Many men hold these quarrels as long as they live. They begin young, and hold on through many great and sore afflictions and chastisements of Providence. The old sore remains, when the supporters of nature bow, and the eyes grow dim, and the hands tremble with age. But death, when that comes, puts an end to all their quarreling in this world. Death silences the most clamorous, and censorious, and backbiting tongue. When men are dead, they cease to lay schemes against those of another party; death dashes all their schemes, so far as they have any concern in them. Psalm cxlvi. 4. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

When men are dead, they cease to bite and devour others; as it is said to have been of old a proverb among the Egyptians, "Dead men do not bite." There are many who will bite and devour as long as they live, but death tames them. Men could not be quiet or safe by them while alive, but none will be afraid of them when dead. The bodies of those that made such a noise and tumult when alive, when dead, lie as quietly among the graves of their neighbours as any others. Their enemies, of whom they strove to get their wills while alive, get their wills of them when they are dead. Nothing can please their enemies better than to have them out of their way. It suits them, that those who were so troublesome to them, are locked up safe in the close grave, where they will no more stand in their way. — There are no more effects of their pride, their craftiness, their hatred, and envy. Eccles. ix. 6. "Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished."

The time will soon come, when you who have for many years been at times warmly contending one with another, will be very peaceable as to this world. Your dead bodies will probably lie quietly together in the same burying-place. If you do not leave off contending before death, how natural will it be for others to have such thoughts as these, when they see your corpses: What! is this the man who used to be so busy in carrying on the designs of his party? Oh, now, he has done: now he hath no more any part in any of these things; now it doth not at all concern him, who get their wills, or what party is uppermost. We shall hear his voice no more in our *town meetings*. He will not sit any more to reproach and laugh at others. He is gone to appear before his judge, and to receive according to his conduct in life.—The consideration of such things as these would certainly have a mighty effect among us, if we did not put far away the day of death. If all acted every day as not depending on any other day, we should be a peaceable, quiet people.

4. Inquire, whether or no you do not allow yourselves in somethings, and endeavour to flatter yourselves that there is no evil in them, which you would by no means dare to do if you had not a dependence on living till to-morrow. It is very common among men, when they are strongly enticed to some

sinful practice, by their worldly interest, or by their carnal appetites, to pretend that they do not think there is any evil in it; when indeed they know better. Their pretence is only to serve a present turn. And if they expected to have their souls required of them that night, they would by no means dare to persist in the practice. Therefore examine the liberties you take by this test. What would you think of them, if you now should have the following news sent you by some messenger from heaven : John, or Thomas, (or whatever your name be,) this night shall thy soul be required of thee. How would such tidings strike you! How would they alter the face of things! Doubtless your thoughts would be very quick; you would soon begin to reflect on yourselves, and to examine your past and present conduct. And in what colours would the liberties you now take, appear to you in the case now supposed ? Would you then conclude, that there is no evil in them ? Would you not be less bold to go forward and meet death, for having continued in such practices ? Would you dare to commit such acts again before you die, which now you pretend are lawful ? Would not the few hours which you would have to live, be at all the more uncomfortable to you for having done such things ? Would you not presently wish that you had let them alone ? Yea, would they not appear frightful and terrifying to you? If it be thus, it is a sign that the reason why you now allow yourselves in them, and plead for their lawfulness, is, that you put death at a distance, and depend on many other days in the world.

5. Inquire, whether you do not some things on the presumption, that you shall hereafter repent of them. Is not this the very thing which causes you to dare to do some things ? Is it not the very ground on which you venture to gratify your lusts ? Let young people examine all their secret carriage ; what they do alone in the dark and in secret corners. God knoweth, and your own hearts know, though men do not. Put the question impartially to your own consciences; is not this the very thing that gives you courage, that God is very merciful, and that he often of his sovereign mercy gives repentance of great sins, and even wilful sins, and in consequence of repentance forgives ? And so you hope, that one day or other he will do so to you. You intend some time hereafter earnestly to seek ; and you hope you shall be awakened. And if you be very earnest, as you intend to be, you hope you shall be converted, and then you shall be forgiven, and it will be as well as if you had never committed such sins.

If this be the case, consider how you boast of to-morrow, and foolishly depend on future opportunity to repent, as well as foolishly presume on the mercy of God to give you repentance, at the same time that you take a course to provoke God for ever to give you up to a sealed hardness and blindness, and to a most fearful damnation ; not considering that God will glorify his revenging justice, as well as his mercy; nor remembering the sad example of Esau, " who for a morsel of meat sold his birth-right; and afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Heb. xii. 16, 17.

6. Inquire, whether you improve this day as one who doth not depend upon ever having opportunity to keep another Sabbath, or to hear or read another discourse. It appears from what hath been already said, that you have no grounds to depend on any more such opportunities. Now the day is present, and so you are in the better capacity to determine how it is with you. It is but for you to reflect upon yourselves, to look inward, and see how it is with you at this present time. And how is it? Are you as strict and as diligent in keeping this Sabbath, watching your thoughts, keeping your hearts, striving in duties both public and private, and improving ordinances, as might be expected of one who hath no dependence on ever enjoying such an opportunity any more; one who doth not depend on ever setting foot again within the walls of God's house? Do you attend to this address with that care, and desire, and endeavour to improve it for your good, as you would if you did not depend upon it, that your bodies would not be in the grave, and your souls fixed in eternity, in their unalterable state, before the next Sabbath?

7. Are you careful to see to it that the grounds of your hope are good? A man who hath some hope of being in a state of acceptance with God, but is not sure, if he had no dependence on any other day's opportunity of making it sure, would be very strict in examining himself, and searching the grounds of his hope, and would not rest in an uncertainty. He would be very thorough in informing himself what might be depended on as good evidence of an interest in Christ, and what not; and would be exceedingly strict in searching his own heart, to see whether there was any thing in him that comes up to the requisites laid down in the scriptures. If what appears hopeful in him were dim and obscure, he would set himself very earnestly to obtain that which would be more clear and manifest, and would cry earnestly to God for it, and would apply himself to a diligent use of means in order to it. And good reason why; for he depends on no other opportunity to make his calling and election sure, than what he hath today. Inquire, therefore, whether you be thus thorough in examining your hope. And are you thus careful effectually to see to it, that you are on a sure foundation? If not, then you behave yourselves as those that depend on to-morrow.

Jonathan Edwards

Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2007/10/14 9:30

SECT. VI.

*How to spend every day.*

God hath concealed from us the day of our death, without doubt, partly for this end, that we might be excited to be always ready, and might live as those that are always waiting for the coming of their Lord, agreeably to the counsel which Christ gives us, Matt. xxiv. 42, 43, 44; xxv. 13; and, Mark xiii. 32, &c. That watchman is not faithful, who, being set to defend a house from thieves, or a city from an enemy at hand, will at any hour venture to sleep, trusting that the thief or the enemy will not come. Therefore it is expected of the watchman, that he behave himself every hour of the night, as one who doth not depend upon it that the enemy will tarry until the next hour. Now, therefore, let me, in Christ's name, renew the call and counsel of Jesus Christ to you, to watch as those that know not what hour your Lord will come. Let me call upon you who are hitherto in an unrenewed condition. Depend not upon it, that you will not be in hell before to-morrow morning. You have no reason for any such dependance; God hath not promised to keep you from it, or to withhold his wrath so long.

How can you reasonably be easy or quiet for one day, or one night, in such a condition, when you know not but your Lord will come this night ? And if you should then be found as you now are, unregenerate, how unprepared would you be for his coming, and how fearful would be the consequence ! Be exhorted, therefore, for your own sakes, immediately to awake from the sleep of sin, out of sleep, and sleep no more, as not depending on any other day.Â—Let me exhort you to have no dependence on any future time; to keep every Sabbath, and to hear every sermon, as if it were the last. And when you go into your closet, and address yourself to your Father who seeth in secret, do it in no dependence on any future opportunity to perform the same duty. When you that are young go into company for amusement and diversion, consider that it may be the last opportunity of the like nature that ever you may have. In all your dealings with your neighbours, act as if you were never to make another bargain. Behave in your families every day, as though you depended on no other.Â—Here I shall offer you two motives.

1. Consider, if you will hearken to this counsel, how much it will tend to your safety and peace in life and death. It is the way really and truly to be ready for death; yea, to be fit to live or fit to die ; to be ready for affliction and adversity, and for whatever God in his providence shall bring upon you. It is the way to be in, not only an habitual, but actual preparedness for all changes, and particularly for your last change.Â—It is the way to possess your souls in a serene and undisturbed peace, and to enable you to go on with an immovable fortitude of soul, to meet the most frightful changes, to encounter the most formidable enemies, and to be ready with unshaken confidence to triumph over death whenever

you meet him; to have your hearts fixed, trusting in God, as one that stands on a firm foundation, and bath for his habitation the munition of rocks, that is not afraid of evil tidings, but laughs at the fear of the enemy. It will be the way for you to possess that quietness and assurance spoken of, Isa. xxxii. 17. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." Å— The servant who always stands watching, will not be at all surprised at the news that his Lord is coming. This will be the way for you to live above the fear of death. Yea, if heaven and earth should shake; you may stand firm and unshaken, being settled on a rock, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. O how happy are such persons, who have such safety and peace! What a blessed peace is that which arises from such a constant preparation for death! How happy therefore is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing!

2. What dismal calamities and miseries mankind are subject to for want of this, for want of behaving themselves every day, as not depending on any future day! The way of the world is, one day foolishly to depend on another, yea, on many others. And what is the consequence ? Why, the consequence with respect to the greater part of the world is, that they live all their days without any true peace or rest of soul. They are all their lifetime subject to a bondage through fear of death. And when death sensibly approaches, they are put into a terrible fright. They have a dismal view of their past lives ; the ill improvement of their time, and the sins they have been guilty of, stand staring them in the face, and are more frightful to them than so many devils. And when they look forward into that eternity whither they are going, how dismal is the prospect ! O how do their hearts shrink at the thought of it! They go before the judgment-seat of God, as those that are dragged thither, while they would gladly, if they could, hide themselves in the caves and dens of the earth.

And what is worse yet than all the disquietude and terror of conscience in this world ; the consequence of a contrary behaviour, with respect to the bulk of mankind, is their eternal perdition. They flatter themselves that they shall see another day, and then another, and trust to that, until finally most of them are swallowed up in hell, to lament their folly to all eternity in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Å—Consider how it was with all the foolish virgins who trusted to the delay of the bridegroom's coming -, when he came they were surprised, and found unprepared, having no oil in their lamps ; and while they went to buy, those who were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut against them, and they came afterwards crying in vain. *Lord. Lord, open to us.*

Jonathan Edwards

(<http://books.google.com/books?idxASTXQVWECYC&printsectitlepage&dqthe+works+of+president+edwards&psp1>) The Works of President Edwards

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/16 17:36**

Death... this thread probably has that subject covered quite good, yet to call it a "subject" is probably wrong. For a christian, death is nothing more than a busride to eternal glory someone said.

My thoughts are very mixed, and my emotions also, my grandfather died yesterday, and i received the phonecall today. The brutal reality is he went to hell. He died without Christ. The very thought is too much to bare, even as i know so much of what the bible says...

and even yet, the one person who could have shared eternal life with him was me, and i did not. I was not concerned, i did not pray as i ought to have prayed. God has awakened this sleeper today, yet i have a sense i am not as awake as i should be. How much have i said and in my head have believed that people everyday are going to hell... how many times have i grumbled at others for not warned people enough. I have been a hypocrite.

Even as we have responsibility, and each of us have to give an account to God. I feel as i watched someone walk of into an eternal hell, and i did not lift a finger to stop it, and my halfhearted prayers makes me even more of a hypocrite. The agony is very ....dont know how to explain it. This lesson for me to learn, cost my grandfathers soul.

I could have done something, but i didnt.... how i have taken time for granted. How i have looked for tomorrow and how much i will do tomorrow....

how much i will pray tomorrow, how much i will study tomorrow. How i will seek his face tomorrow.

Eternity is now....

“Hell has enlarged herself and filled her dire caves in the presence of the dead service of a prayerless church.” - E.M. Bounds

God forgive and have mercy and change me.  
Teach me to pray Lord

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/1/17 3:15**

What would we think?

(James Meikle, "A Periodic Interview with the King of Terrors" December 20, 1791)

What would we think of those who had lost their nearest and dearest relative, carried off by ruffians--and yet felt no alarm?

What would we think of those who could feast cheerfully at their sumptuous table--while their friends were destitute of all the comforts of life?

What would we think of those who could sleep pleasantly on their downy beds--while their friends were denied the least slumber, by the torturing hand of their cruel foes?

What would we think of those who could quaff and carouse with sparkling wine--while their friends could not procure a drop of water for their scorched tongue?

Now, to apply.



Where are any ruffians--like the infernal fiends?

Where is a state so utterly destitute of all comforts--as the state of damnation?

Where are any tortures--like the torments of hell, and of damned devils?

And where, but in the burning lake, are sufferers so completely miserable--who cannot even get a drop of water to cool their tormented tongue?

And yet the death of those sinners, who lived without God, and died without hope--makes no impression on their surviving friends!

"The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment . . ." Luke 16:22-23

**Death awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/1/17 9:30**

Brother ...

My prayers.

I know that impulse that wishes to come to the rescue with advice and ... God knows what in a time like this.

Quote:

-----The agony is very ....dont know how to explain it.

-----

Yes.

For what it's worth brother, last night praying off to sleep, if that's what it truly was, part of a verse came up;

*...the redemption of their soul is costly...*

Thought on it for awhile, recalling the context;

Psa 49:7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

Quote:

-----God forgive and have mercy and change me.

Teach me to pray Lord

-----

My hippocratic heart cries along with you.

**Re: Death awaits - posted by broclint (), on: 2008/1/21 6:55**

Brothers,

I am so thankful that you have posted this thread. I found it just a couple of days after preaching my pastor's funeral. As I posted on another thread, he had pastored in that one church for over 42 years, the last three years being in very poor health, and in fact not being able to preach for the last 18 months or so. He had been ill many times in the past, but right on down to the very last week of his life, he was still trying to put together a message, still wanting to tell somebody, somehow, the Gospel.

He was one of those who never got over the wonder expressed in Charles Wesley's hymn: "Amazing love, how can it be, that thou my God shouldst die for me".

He could never quite understand those who did not share his passion for Jesus Christ. He could never quite understand why they did not have that same sense of awe and wonder and worship and willingness to serve His master.

I said to some of those at the hospital as we watched him struggling to take those last breaths, that that spirit had so many times dragged that old battered and worn body back into the fight, he had been doing that ever since he was a young man... it was just habitual for him to make it, that worn out body, give all that it could give. He was a spiritual man. He did not live according to the flesh and if there is anything that he demonstrated through these years it was that fact. The Spirit of Christ within him ruled that body. Toward the last when he got to where he could no longer stand he would speak of "these old legs" like he was talking about some trained animal that refused to do what it was supposed to do.

I know that death is immanent for all of us regardless of how long away it is. And I know that regardless of how large a number you subtract from infinity or eternity, you still have eternity left. To serve God for this short life and to have the exceedingly precious promises that we have been given is simply beyond words.

As horrible as death is, and as much grief and sorrow as there is in separation, still:

Psalms 116:15 (KJV) 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

And I have had the privilege in the past few months to watch two precious saints go home and then to celebrate their homegoing.

If you will forgive this long post... the dear sister that died a couple of months ago calmly called all her family one by one and told them that if they ever wanted to see her again they were going to have to get right with God.

And as she was drawing nearer to death and ebbing in and out of sleep, anyone who came to speak to her or to give her medicine or whatever, she would ask, "is it important?" Another phrase that she repeated so frequently was, "it doesn't matter"... Those two themes became the funeral sermon.... "is it important" and "it doesn't matter". That just about sums up 90% of the things that we spend our time with... until and unless we get a very clear understanding of our mortality, and ETERNITY.... the vast unimaginable difference between the two. Death the removal of all illusions, as the Revelation states so clearly:

Revelation 22:11 (NKJV) 11 He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

Thank you again for this thread and also the related one with Paul West. So much to absorb into our innermost being on this site for those who desire truth in the inward parts.

Clint

**Re: Honor - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/1/21 9:08**

Dear brother Clint ...

Am torn between the two having read this morning also  
([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id21790&forum35](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id21790&forum35)) Neither and all that was expressed there.

Let me just say, thank God for short hiatus! Of late there has been an injection here of some fresh blood and though you yourself have been around longer ... something not so imperceptible it is that you have brought to all of us, moe\_mac stated it succinctly;

*"I discern a sweet spirit in you and I think I can amen much of what you didn't say"*

You have added yet another priceless piece to this ongoing and I pray ever attended to section. The earlier mention of preaching his funeral threw me on my face and I am assured that you well gave him the honor due. In fact, I am also sure it was a great honor to do so. Am no preacher but it was quite incredible to just speak before a Catholic audience for my Ma and my Lord, yesterday was her birthday and next month, year one of eternity if I may.

Quote:  
-----And I have had the privilege in the past few months to watch two precious saints go home and then to celebrate their homegoing.  
-----

The *privilege*! There is nothing so endearing than to be in the presence of the long lived saints, the aged wisdom of long tarrying with the Lord and the tremendous, profound even, simplicity expressed in " *is it important*" and " *it doesn't matter*" ...

Brother, I have been greatly challenged and if time permits will put it up elsewhere, but it came from DeVern Fromke in a book I am currently reading, a section on being specific in prayer ...

Jordan, dear brother, will be fine.

My earnest intercession as you take upon this mantle, may the Lord navigate your soul with wisdom and diligence in leading His flock.

**Re: earnest intercession - posted by broclint (), on: 2008/1/23 23:35**

Brother Mike B.

Thank you for your kind words and more thanks for your prayers.

My thoughts tend toward rambling sometimes so forgive if that be the case this time... but just another comment on my late pastor. His record was that he had preached over 7000 sermons in his ministry with several hundreds of converts. I know that of the hundreds that I heard, he never preached the same one twice, constantly getting fresh insights from the Word of God.

You made the comment "am no preacher", but I thought about the ministry that is being done here on this site that has such a potential (and awesome responsibility) for reaching so many people, far more than most "preachers" with the exception of those who preach flesh pleasing platitudes and pack their churches with those who are never truly converted. So in whatever format the truth gets put out... as Paul says, "Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice".

I read earlier your comments regarding your mother, lost mine just a few months before you did and can definitely relate to that "one year of eternity"... of which our short life has no comparisons.

I don't know if many of the folks have read John Donne who wrote so much on death, but his writings would definitely add to this thread. I used one of his quotes in the first funeral I ever preached, "Ask not for whom the bell tolls, the bell tolls for thee".(see below)

After I get Jordan out of the hospital, Lord willing, I will dig up some of those quotes of his that I believe would add to this ever urgent reminder on this thread that we are here for such a short time and then there is ETERNITY. I sincerely believe that the more we contemplate eternity and the fact of how quickly we can be there, a whole lot of the speculations, the futile bickering over pointless points, the self-righteous interruptions of serious threads with petty pedantry will cease or at least will be minimized.

Quote:  
-----No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.  
Neither can we call this a begging of misery, or a borrowing of misery, as though we were not miserable enough of ourselves, but must fetch in more from the next house, in taking upon us the misery of our neighbors. Truly it were an excusable covetousness if we did, for affliction is a treasure, and scarce any man hath enough of it. No man hath affliction enough that is not matured and ripened by and made fit for God by that affliction. If a man carry treasure in bullion, or in a wedge of gold, and have none coined into current money, his treasure will not defray him as he travels. Tribulation is treasure in the nature of it, but it is not current money in the use of it, except we get nearer and nearer our home, heaven, by it. Another man may be sick too, and sick to death, and this affliction may lie in his bowels, as gold in a mine, and be of no use to him; but this bell, that tells me of his affliction, digs out and applies that gold to me: if by this consideration of another's danger I take mine own into contemplation, and so secure myself, by making my recourse to my God, who is our only security.  
*John Donne*

Clint

**Death Awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/1/23 23:56**

Quote:  
-----any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind  
-----

Thank you brother,

You have said much here, more than I have words for at the moment ... Look forward to all that you will bring to this, it is the most grounding matter we can give our attention to. Still musing back over the telling of "The Bet" as I heard it earlier today, perhaps it needs to be added here as well ...

Quote:  
-----I sincerely believe that the more we contemplate eternity and the fact of how quickly we can be there, a whole lot of the speculations, the futile bickering over pointless points, the self-righteous interruptions of serious threads with petty pedantry will cease or at least will be minimized  
-----

The Lord bless you immensely brother, and speedily bring Jordan to health.

**Re: Death Awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/2/3 10:42**

Death is never sudden to a saint; no guest comes unawares to him who keeps a constant table.

Swinnock, George

**Re: Death awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/2/8 23:25**

**Man . . . is of few days, and full of trouble**

It may be of great service to us, before we fall asleep, to remember this mournful fact, for it may lead us to set loose by earthly things. There is nothing very pleasant in the recollection that we are not above the shafts of adversity, but it may humble us and prevent our boasting like the Psalmist in our morning's portion. "My mountain standeth firm: I shall never be moved." It may stay us from taking too deep root in this soil from which we are so soon to be transplanted into the heavenly garden. Let us recollect the frail tenure upon which we hold our temporal mercies. If we would remember that all the trees of earth are marked for the woodman's axe, we should not be so ready to build our nests in them. We should love, but we should love with the love which expects death, and which reckons upon separations. Our dear relations are but loaned to us, and the hour when we must return them to the lender's hand may be even at the door. The like is certainly true of our worldly goods. Do not riches take to themselves wings and fly away? Our health is equally precarious. Frail flowers of the field, we must not reckon upon blooming for ever. There is a time appointed for weakness and sickness, when we shall have to glorify God by suffering, and not by earnest activity. There is no single point in which we can hope to escape from the sharp arrows of affliction; out of our few days there is not one secure from sorrow. Man's life is a cask full of bitter wine; he who looks for joy in it had better seek for honey in an ocean of brine. Beloved reader, set not your affections upon things of earth: but seek those things which are above, for here the moth devoureth, and the thief breaketh through, but there all joys are perpetual and eternal. The path of trouble is the way home. Lord, make this thought a pillow for many a weary head!

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?viewcategory&cid7>) C.H. Spurgeon

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/2/16 14:09**

*Death is the moment of destiny—the seal of eternity—the cessation of probation—the commencement of retribution and judgment! The antecedents of death are dreadful—so are the accompaniments—so are the consequents! To every sense, death is revolting—to every social affection crucifying—to reason perplexing—to everything but saving faith overwhelming. Faith—and faith alone can change death's dreadful aspect, extract its sting, or soften its stroke—and this can. This is faith's last battle, and its brightest triumph. Yes, faith has gone on from conquering—to conquer through life, and now completes the conquest by subduing its last enemy in the dark valley of the shadow of death; and then having achieved its final victory, faith expires like a hero on the field of conflict and glory. Thus ends the great fight of faith. There the shout of victory is heard from the dying believer, when he catches the strain from the lips of his Lord, and like him leaves the scene of contest as a conqueror, exclaiming— "It is finished!"*

J.A James

([http://www.gracegems.org/22/practical\\_believer12.htm](http://www.gracegems.org/22/practical_believer12.htm)) FAITH IN REFERENCE TO DEATH 1852

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/4/30 12:41**

There is an essential difference between the decease of the godly and the death of the ungodly. Death comes to the ungodly man as a penal infliction, but to the righteous as a summons to his Father's palace. To the sinner it is an execution, to the saint an undressing from his sins and infirmities. Death to the wicked is the King of terrors. Death to the saint is the end of terrors, the commencement of glory.

Spurgeon, C. H.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2008/4/30 14:20**

An elderly, quiet widow from our church died a few years ago, and at the eve of her passing I went into her room at the assisted living facility to say goodbye with my wife and pastor and a few other friends. As she lay there in the bed, oxygen tubes coming from her nose, smiling faintly, the presence of the Lord suddenly became so strong that I had to take a knee, as my heart swelled at thought of the eternal bliss this dear woman was about to enter into. for a moment I felt myself deprived, lonely, cold, and at a great disadvantage.

I remembered the verse of the saints' deaths being precious in the sight of God. There indeed is something very precious hidden in the death of a saint, a rapturous awe and a transcending awareness of glory. I have never experienced so precious an intimacy and tangibility of God than at the deathbed of one of His dearly beloved about to see Jesus Christ - at the very threshold of a momentous translation from sickly flesh to the Eternal Kingdom of Light.

Honeyed poison - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/7/28 9:06

(<http://playmp3.sa-media.com/filearea/723081348333/723081348333.mp3>) "An ignorant, profane, soul-flattering clergy" by Thomas Brooks (3 minutes)

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## Honeyed poison

( ([http://www.gracegems.org/Brooks/Thomas\\_Brooks.htm](http://www.gracegems.org/Brooks/Thomas_Brooks.htm)) THOMAS BROOKS, "London's Lamentations" 1670)

O Sirs! in the *grave* it is all the same--to one who has had all, and to another who has had nothing. What folly is it to lay up goods for many years, when we cannot lay up one day for the enjoyment of our goods! Christ, who never miscalled any, calls him "*fool!*" who had much of the world in his hands--but nothing of God in his heart.

All this whole world is not proportionate to the precious soul. All the riches of the Indies cannot pacify conscience, nor secure eternity, nor prevent death, nor bring you off victorious in the day of judgment. Therefore be contented with a little.

All the good things of this world, are but *cold comforts*. They cannot stretch to eternity, they will not go with us into the eternal world. Therefore why should the lack of such things either trouble our thoughts--or break our hearts?

The whole world is but . . .  
a paradise for fools;  
a beautiful but deceitful harlot;  
a *dreamed* sweetness;  
a very ocean of gall.

There is nothing to be found in it, which has not *mutability* and *uncertainty*, *vanity* and *vexation* stamped upon it. And therefore he cannot be truly happy who *enjoys* it; nor can he be miserable who *lacks* it. And why then should not he be contented--who has but a *little* of it? The greatest outward happiness is but **honeyed poison**; and therefore do not mutter or murmur because you have but little of the world.

Keep your lives free from the love of money and *be content with what you have*, because God has said,  
"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."  
Hebrews 13:5

**Re: Honeyed poison - posted by enid, on: 2008/7/28 9:39**

Quote: 'Who had much of the world in his hands--but nothing of God in his heart'

Aren't we derelict indeed if we do not have any of God in us?

Not that 'any' would do us good on the day of our death. We need to have all.

When the word of God tells us it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb 10v31, it truly is.

Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is man's all, Ecclesiastes 12v13.

**Re: Honeyed poison/Thomas Brooks audio - posted by JoanM, on: 2008/7/28 13:44**

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

The Brooks audio gives a voice to the Truth and some relief of the crush and greiving caused by Lakeland that you mentioned elsewhere. This is a keeper.

The background music, Sweet Hour of Prayer directs me. Death awaits. Sharp, two-edged Sword speaking and prayer and I just remembered Ex.32: 25-29 which used to bother me more than it does today. Sorry to mix so many threads. Sin has so permeated... it is Revival (with the saturation of Blood of the Lamb that follows the deep repentance in revival ) or Ruin.

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/8/3 8:58**

Around 125 A.D., a Greek by the name of Aristeides wrote to one of his friends, trying to explain the extraordinary success of the new religion, Christianity. In his letter he said, "If any righteous man among the Christians passes from this world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God, and they accompany his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby."

**Death awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/8/25 8:28**

**Directions for a Peaceful Death**

by Richard Baxter

Comfort is not desirable only as it pleases us, but also as it strengthens us, and helps us in our greatest duties. And when is it more needful than in sickness, and the approach of death? I shall therefore add such directions as are necessary to make our departure comfortable or peaceful at the least, as well as safe.

Direct. I. Because I would make this treatise no longer than I must; in order to overcome the fears of death, and get a cheerful willingness to die, I desire the sick to read over those twenty considerations, and the following directions, which I have laid down in my book of "Self-Denial." And when the fears of death are overcome, the great impediment of their comfort is removed.

Direct. II. Misunderstand not sickness, as if it were a greater evil than it is; but observe how great a mercy it is, that death has so suitable a harbinger or forerunner: that God should do so much before he takes us hence, to wean us from the world, and make us willing to be gone; that the unwilling flesh has the help of pain; and that the senses and appetite languish and decay, which did draw the mind to earthly things: and that we have so loud a call, and so great a help to true repentance and serious preparation! I know to those that have walked very close with God, and are always ready, a sudden death may be a mercy; as we have lately known divers holy ministers and others, that have died either after a sacrament, or in the evening of the Lord's day, or in the midst of some holy exercise, with so little pain, that none about them perceived when they died. But ordinarily it is a mercy to have the flesh brought down and weakened by painful sickness, to help to conquer our natural unwillingness to die.

Direct. III. Remember whose messenger sickness is, and who it is that calls you to die. It is he, that is the Lord of all the world, and gave us the lives which he takes from us; and it is he, that must dispose of angels and men, of princes and kingdoms, of heaven and earth; and therefore there is no reason that such worms as we should desire to be excepted. You cannot deny him to be the disposer of all things, without denying him to be God: it is he that loves us, and never meant



us any harm in any thing that he has done to us; that gave the life of his Son to redeem us; and therefore thinks not life too good for us. Our sickness and death are sent by the same love that sent us a Saviour, and sent us the powerful preachers of his word, and sent us his Spirit, and secretly and sweetly changed our hearts, and knit them to himself in love; which gave us a life of precious mercies for our souls and bodies, and has promised to give us life eternal; and shall we think, that he now intends us any harm? Cannot he turn this also to our good, as he has done many an affliction which we have complained about?

Direct. IV. Look by faith to your dying, buried, risen, ascended, glorified Lord. Nothing will more powerfully overcome both the poison and the fears of death, than the believing thoughts of him that has triumphed over it. Is it terrible as it separates the soul from the body? So it did by our Lord, who yet overcame it. Is it terrible as it lays the body in the grave? So it did by our Saviour; though he saw not corruption, but quickly rose by the power of his Godhead. He died to teach us believably and boldly to submit to death. He was buried, to teach us not overmuch to fear a grave. He rose again to conquer death for us, and to assure those who rise to newness of life, that they shall be raised at last by his power unto glory; and being made partakers of the first resurrection, the second death shall have no power over them. He lives as our head, that we might live by him; and that he might assure all those that are here risen with him, and seek first the things that are above, that though in themselves they are dead, "yet their life is hid with Christ in God; and when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory," Col. 3:1,2,4,5. What a comfortable word is that, John 14:19, "Because I live, you shall live also." Death could not hold the Lord of life; nor can it hold us against his will, who has the "keys of death and hell," Rev. 1:18. He loves every one of his sanctified ones much better than you love an eye, or a hand, or any other member of your body, which you are not willing to lose if you are able to save it. When he ascended, he left us that message full of comfort for his followers, John 20:17, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." Which, with these two following, I would have written before me on my sick bed. "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there also shall my servant be," John 12:26. And, "Verily, I say unto you, to-day shall you be with me in paradise," Luke 23:43. Oh what a joyful thought should it be to a believer, to think when he is dying, that he is going to his Saviour, and that our Lord is risen and gone before us, to prepare a place for us, and take us in season to himself, John 14:2-4. "As you believe in God, believe thus in Christ; and then your hearts will be less troubled," ver. 1. It is not a stranger that we talk of to you; but your Head and Saviour, that loves you better than you love yourselves, whose office it is there to appear continually for you before God, and at last to receive your departing souls; and into his hand it is, that you must then commend them, as Stephen did, Acts 7:59.

Direct. V. Choose out some promises most suitable to your condition, and roll them over and over in your mind, and feed and live on them by faith. A sick man is not (usually) fit to think of very many things; and therefore two or three comfortable promises, to be still before his eyes, may be the most profitable matter of his thoughts; such as those three which I named before. If he be most troubled with the greatness of his sin, let it be such as these. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts 13:39. "For I will be merciful unto their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. 8:12. If it be the weakness of his grace that troubles him, let him choose such passages as these: "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young," Isa. 40:11. "The flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary one to the other; so that you cannot do the things that you would," Gal. 5:17. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak," Matt. 26:41. All that the Father gives me, shall come to me and him that comes to me, I will in no wise cast out," John 6:37. "The apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith," Luke 17:5. If it be the fear of death, and strangeness to the other world, that troubles you, remember the words of Christ before cited, and 2 Cor. 5:1-6,8, "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." "For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better," Phil. 1:23. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yet, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them," Rev. 14:13. "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?" 1 Cor. 15:55. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Acts 7:59. Fix upon some such word or promise, which may support you in your extremity.

Direct. VI. Look up to God, who is the glory of heaven, and the light, and life, and joy of souls, and believe that you are going to see his face, and to live in the perfect, everlasting fruition of his fullest love among the glorified. If it be delectable here to know his works, what will it be to see the cause of all? All creatures in heaven and earth conjoined, can never afford such content and joy to holy souls, as God alone! Oh if we knew him whom we must there behold, how weary should we be of this dungeon of mortality! and how fervently should we long to see his face! The chicken that comes out of the



e shell, or the infant that newly comes out of the womb, into this illuminated world of human converse, receives not such a joyful change, as the soul that is newly loosed from the flesh, and passes from this mortal life to God. One sight of God by a blessed soul, is worth more than all the kingdoms of the earth. It is pleasant to the eyes to behold the sun; but the sun is darkness and useless compared to his glory. "And the city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof," Rev. 21:23. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads: and there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, nor light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever," Rev. 22:3-5. If David in the wilderness so impatiently thirsted to appear before God in his sanctuary at Jerusalem, Psalm 42, then how earnestly should we long to see his glory in the heavenly Jerusalem! The glimpse of his back parts, was as much as Moses might behold, Exod. 34, yet that much put a shining glory upon his face, ver. 9 and 30. The sight that Stephen had when men were ready to stone him, was a delectable sight, Acts 7:55, 56. The glimpse of Christ in his transfiguration ravished the three apostles that beheld it, Matt. 17:2, 6. Paul's vision which rapt him up into the third heavens, did advance him above the rest of mankind! But our beatific sight of the glory of God, will very far excel all this. When our perfected bodies shall have the perfect glorious body of Christ to see, and our perfected souls shall have the God of truth, the most perfect uncreated light to know, what more is a created understanding capable of? And yet this is not the top of our felicity; for the understanding is but the passage to the heart or will, and truth is but subservient to goodness: and therefore though the understanding be capable of no more than the beatific vision, yet the man is capable of more; even of receiving the fullest communications of God's love, and feeling it poured out upon the heart, and living in the returns of perfect love; and in this intercourse of love will be our highest joys, and this is the top of our heavenly felicity. Oh that God would make us foreknow by a lively faith, what it is to behold him in his glory, and to dwell in perfect love and joy, and then death would no more be able to dismay us, nor should we be unwilling of such a blessed change! But having spoken of this so largely in my "Saints' Rest," I must stop here, and refer you thither.

Direct. VII. Look up to the blessed society of angels and saints with Christ, and remember their blessedness and joy, and that you also belong to the same society, and are going to be numbered with them. It will greatly overcome the fears of death, to see by faith the joys of them that have gone before us; and withal to think of their relation to us; as it will encourage a man that is to go beyond sea, if the far greatest part of his dearest friends be gone before him, and he bears of their safe arrival, and of their joy and happiness. Those angels that now see the face of God are our special friends and guardians, and entirely love us, better than any of our friends on earth do! They rejoiced at our conversion, and will rejoice at our glorification; and as they are better, and love us better, so therefore our love should be greater to them, than to any upon earth, and we should more desire to be with them. Those blessed souls that are now with Christ, were once as we are here on earth; they were compassed with temptations, and clogged with flesh, and burdened with sin, and persecuted by the world, and they went out of the world by sickness and death, as we must do; and yet now their tears are wiped away, their pains, and groans, and fears are turned into inexpressible blessedness and joy: and would we not be with them? Is not their company desirable? And their felicity more desirable? The glory of the New Jerusalem is not described to us in vain, Rev. 21 and 22. God will be all in all there to us, as the only sun and glory of that world; and yet we shall have pleasure, not only to see our glorified Redeemer, but also to converse with the heavenly society, and to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and to love and praise him in consort and harmony with all those holy, blessed spirits. And shall we be afraid to follow, where the saints of all generations have gone before us? And shall the company of our best, and most, and happiest friends, be no inducement to us? Though it must be our highest joy to think that we shall dwell with God, and next that we shall see the glory of Christ, Yet is it no small part of my comfort to consider, that I shall follow all those holy persons, whom I once conversed with, that are gone before me; and that I shall dwell with such as Enoch and Elias, and Abraham and Moses, and Job and David, and Peter and John, and Paul and Timothy, and Ignatius and Polycarp, and Cyprian and Nazianzen, and Augustine and Chrysostom and Bernard and Gerson, and Savonarola and Mirandola, and Taulerus and Kempisius, and Melancthon and Alasco, and Calvin and Bucholtzer, and Bullinger and Musculus, and Zanchy and Bucer, and Grynaeus, and Chemnitius and Gerhard, and Chamier and Capellus, and Blondel and Rivet, and Rogers and Bradford, and Hooper and Latimer, and Hildersham and Amesius, and Langley and Nicolls, and Whitaker and Cartwright, and Hooker and Bayne, and Preston and Sibbes, and Perkins and Dod, and Parker and Ball, and Usher and Hall, and Gataker and Bradshaw, and Vines and Ash, and millions more of the family of God.. How few are all the saints on earth, in comparison of those that are now with Christ! And, alas, how weak, and ignorant, and corrupt, how selfish, and contentious, and troublesome, are God's poor infants here in flesh, when above there is nothing but holiness and perfection! If knowledge, or goodness, or any excellency do make the creatures truly amiable, all this is there in the highest degree; but here, alas, how little have we! If the love of God, or the love of us, do make others lovely to us, it is there and not here that these and all perfections flourish. Oh how much now do I find the company of the wise and learned, the godly and sincere, to differ from the company of the ignorant, brutish, the proud and malicious, the false-hearted and ungodly rabble! How sweet is the converse of a holy, wise, experienced christian! Oh then what a place is the New Jerusalem; and how pleasant will it be with saints and angels to see and love and praise

e the Lord.

Direct. VIII. That sickness and death may be comfortable to you, as your passage to eternity, take notice of the seal and earnest of God, even the Spirit of grace which he has put into your heart. That which emboldened Paul and such others to groan after immortality, and to "be most willing to be absent from the body and present with the Lord," was because God himself "wrought or made them for it, and given them the earnest or pledge of his Spirit," 2 Cor. 5:4,5,8. For this is God's mark upon his chosen and justified ones, by which they are "sealed up to the day of their redemption," Eph. 4:33: 1:13, "In whom also after you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." 2 Cor. 1:21, 22, "God has anointed us, and sealed us, and given us the pledge or earnest of his Spirit into our hearts." "This is the ledge or earnest of our inheritance," Eph. 1:14. And what a comfort should it be to us, when we look towards heaven, to find such a pledge of God within us! If you say, I fear I have not this earnest of the Spirit; whence then did your desires of holiness arise. what waned you from the world, and made you place your hopes and happiness above? Whence came your enmity to sin, and opposition to it, and your earnest desires after the glory of God, the prosperity of the gospel, and the good of souls? The very love of holiness and holy persons, and your desires to know God and perfectly love him, do show that heavenly nature or spirit within you, which is your surest evidence for eternal life: for that spirit was sent from heaven, to draw up your hearts, and fit you for it; and God does not give you such natures, and desires, and preparations in vain. This also is called "The witness of the Spirit with (or to) our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. 8:15-17. It witnesses our adoption, by evidencing it; as a seal or pledge gives witness to our title to that which is so confirmed to us. The nature of every thing is suited to its use and end; God would not have given us a heavenly nature or desire, if he had not intended us for heaven.

Direct. IX. Look also to the testimony of a holy life, since grace has employed you in seeking after the heavenly inheritance. It is unlawful and perilous to look after any works or righteousness of your own, so as to set it in whole or in part instead of Christ, or to ascribe to it any honour that is proper to him; as to imagine that you are innocent, or have fulfilled the law, or have made God a compensation by your merits or sufferings, for the sin you have committed; but yet you must judge yourselves on your sick beds as near as you can as God will judge you. And "he will judge every man according to his work;" and will recompense and reward men according to their works. Matt. 25:21,34, &c. "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a little, I will make you ruler over much. Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you —for I was hungry and you fed me," &c.—Heb. 5:9, "He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." Matt. 7:24,25, "Whosoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man that built his house upon a rock—" Rev. 22:11 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gate into the city, for without are dogs," &c. "Thus must you rejoice in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," not only is he was crucified on it for you, but also as you are "crucified by it to the world, and the world to you," Gal. 6:14. He that as a benefactor will give you that glory which you could never deserve of him, on terms of commutative justice, (for so no creature can deserve any thing of God,) will yet, as a righteous governor and judge, deliver it you only on the terms of his paternal, governing, distributive justice; and all shall receive according to what they have done in the body. And therefore you may take comfort in that evangelical righteousness, which consists in your fulfilling the conditions of the new covenant, though you have no legal righteousness, (which consists in innocence, or freedom from the curse of the law,) but only in the merits and sacrifice of Christ. If you are accused as being impenitent, unbelievers, or hypocrites, Christ's righteousness will not justify you from that accusation; but only your repentance, faith, and sincerity (wrought in you by the Spirit of Christ). But if you can but show the evidence of this evangelical righteousness, Christ then will justify you against all the other accusations of guilt that can be charged on you. (Of which more anon.) Seeing therefore the Spirit has given you these evidences, to difference you from the wretched world, and prove your title to eternal life, if you overlook these, you resist your Comforter, and can see no other ground of comfort, than every graceless hypocrite may see. Imitate holy Paul: 2 Cor. 1:12, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world—" 2 Tim. 4:7, 8, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing." To look back and see that in sincerity you have gone the way to heaven, is a just and necessary ground of assurance, that you shall attain it. If you say, But I have been a grievous sinner! I answer, so was Paul that yet rejoiced after in this evidence! Are not those sins repented of and pardoned? If you say, But I cannot look back upon a holy life with comfort, it has been so blotted and uneven! I answer, has it not been sincere, though it was imperfect.? Did you not "first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness?" Matt. 6:33. If you say, My whole life has been ungodly, till now at last that God has humbled me; I answer, it is not the length of time, but the sincerity of your hearts and service, that is your evidence. If you came in it the last hour, if now you are faithfully devoted to God, you may look with comfort on this change at last, though you must look with repentance on your sinful lives.

Direct. X. When you see any of this evidence of your interest in Christ appeal to him to acquit you from all the sin that ca

not be charged on you; for all that believe in him are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. 8:1. Whatever sin a penitent believer has committed, he is not chargeable with it; Christ has undertaken to answer for it, and justify him from it; and therefore look not on it with terror, but with Penitent shame, and believing thankfulness, as that which shall tend to the honour of the Redeemer, and not to the condemnation of the sinner. He has borne our transgressions and we are healed by his stripes.

Direct. XI. Look back upon all the mercies of your lives, and think whence they came and what they signify. Love tokens are to draw your hearts to him that sent them; these are dropped from heaven, to entice you thither! If God has been so good to you on earth, what will he be in glory! If he so blessed you in this wilderness, what will he do in the land of promise! It greatly emboldens my soul to go to that God, that has so tenderly loved me, and so graciously preserved me, and so much abounded in all sorts of mercies to me through all my life. Surely he is good that so delights to do good! And his presence must be sweet, when his distant mercies have been so sweet! What love shall I enjoy when perfection has fitted me for his love, who has tasted of so much in this state of sin and imperfection! The sense of mercy will banish the fears and misgivings of the heart.

Direct. XII. Remember (if you have attained to a declining age) what a competent time you have had already in the world. If you are grieved that you are mortal, you might on that account have grieved all your days; but if it be only that you die so soon, if you have lived well, you have lived long. When I think how many years of mercy I have had, since I was near to death, and since many younger than I are gone, and when I think what abundance of mercy I have had in all that time, candour forbids me to grudge at the season of my death, and makes me almost ashamed to ask for longer life. How long would you stay, before you would be willing to come to God? If he desired our company no more than we do his, and desired our happiness in heaven no more than we desire it ourselves, we should linger here as Lot in Sodom! Must we be snatched away against our wills, and carried by force to our Father's presence?

Direct. XIII. Remember that all mankind are mortal, and you are to go no other way than all that ever came into the world have gone before you (except Enoch and Elias). Yea, the poor brute creatures must die at your pleasure, to satisfy your hunger or delight. Beasts, and birds, and fishes, even many to make one meal, must die for you. And why then should you shrink at the entrance of such a trodden path, which leads you not to hell, as it does the wicked, nor merely to corruption, as it does the brutes: but to live in joy with Christ and his church triumphant?

Direct. XIV. Remember both how vile your body is, and how great an enemy it has proved to your soul; and then you will the more patiently bear its dissolution. It is not your dwelling-house, but your tent or prison, that God is pulling down. And yet even this vile body, when it is corrupted, shall at last be changed "into the likeness of Christ's glorious body, by the working of his irresistible power," Phil. 3:20,21. And it is a flesh that has so rebelled against the spirit, and made your way to heaven so difficult, and put the soul to so many conflicts, that we should more easily submit it to the will of justice, and let it perish for a time, when we are assured that mercy will at last recover it.

Direct. XV. Remember what a world it is that you are to leave, and compare it with that which you are going to; and compare the life which is near an end, with that which you are next to enter upon. Was it not Enoch's reward when he had walked with God, to be taken to him from a polluted world? 1. While you are here, you are yourselves defiled; sin is in your natures, and your graces are all imperfect; sin is in your lives, and your duties are all imperfect; you cannot be free from it one day or hour. And is it not a mercy to be delivered from it? Is it not desirable to you to sin no more? And to be perfect in holiness? To know God and love him as much and more than you can now desire? You are here every day lamenting your darkness, and unbelief, and estrangedness from God, and lack of love to him. How oft have you prayed for a cure of all this! And now would you not have it, when God would give it you? Why has God put that spark of heavenly life in you, but to fight against sin, and make you weary of it? And yet had you rather continue sinning, than have the victory and be with Christ? 2. It is a life of grief as well as sin; and a life of cares, and doubts, and fears! When you are at the worst, you are fearing worse! If it were nothing but the fears of death itself, it should make you the more willing to submit to it, that you might be past those fears. 3. You are daily afflicted with the infirmities of that flesh, which are so unwilling to be dissolved. To satisfy its hunger and thirst, to cover its nakedness, to provide it a habitation, and supply all its wants, what care and labour does it cost you! Its infirmities, sicknesses, and pains, do make you oft weary of yourselves so that you "groan, being burdened," as Paul speaks, 2 Cor. 5:3,4,6. And yet is it not desirable to be with Christ? 4. You are compassed with temptations, and are in continual danger through your weakness: and yet would you not be past the danger? Would you have more of those horrid and odious temptations? 5. You are purposely turned here into a wilderness, among wild beasts; you are as lambs among wolves, and through many tribulations you must enter into heaven. You must deny yourselves, and take up your cross, and forsake all that you have; and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution. In the world you must have trouble: the seed of the serpent must bruise your heel, before God bruise

Satan under your feet! And is such a life as this more desirable than to be with Christ? Are we afraid to land after such storms and tempests? Is a wicked world, a malicious world, a cruel world, an implacable world, more pleasing to us, than the joy of angels, and the sight of Christ, and God himself in the majesty of his glory? Has God on purpose made the world so bitter to us, and permitted it to use us unjustly and cruelly, and all to make us love it less, and to drive home our hearts unto himself? And yet are we so unwilling to be gone?

Direct. XVI. Settle your estates early, that worldly matters may not distract or discompose you. And if God has endowed you with riches, dispose of a due proportion to such pious or charitable uses, in which they may be most serviceable to him that gave them you. Though we should give what we can in the time of life and health, yet many that have but so much as will serve to their necessary maintenance, may well part with that to good uses at their death, which they could not spare in the time of their health: especially they that have no children, or such wicked children, as are like to do hurt with all that is given them above their daily bread.

Direct. XVII. If it may be, get some able, faithful guide and comforter to be with you in your sickness, to counsel you, and resolve your doubts, and pray with you, and discourse of heavenly things, when you are disabled by weakness for such exercises yourselves. Let not carnal persons disturb you with their vain babblings. Though the difference between good company and bad, be very great in the time of health, yet now in sickness it will be more discernible. And though a faithful friend and spiritual pastor be always a great mercy, yet now especially in your last necessity. Therefore make use of them as far as your pain and weakness will permit.

Direct. XVIII. Be fortified against all the temptations of Satan by which he uses to assault men in their extremity: stand it out in the last conflict, and the crown is yours.

(<http://www.puritansermons.com/toc.htm>) Fire and Ice: Puritan and Reformed Writings

**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/8/26 12:25**

"Martyrdom is not a way to die, it is a way to live"

Art Katz

**Death awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/9/14 9:45**

**Crawling along the road of life**

"I desire to depart and be with Christ--which is better by far!" Philippians 1:23

What horrors may beset the carnally-minded, when they think of their death! Yet no prospect affords me such pleasure as that of my **death** and final change! I have exceeding great cause to rejoice, when I compare what I *now* am and suffer--with what I shall *then* enjoy and be!

Now my joys are future, and in expectation--for I walk by faith, and live on hope. But *then* they shall be present, and in possession--for I shall dwell in light, and feed on fruition!

Now I am daily struggling with death and sin--but *then* I shall eternally triumph over both!

Now I toil along a tiresome road--but *then* I shall walk above these skies in the very heavens!

Now my eyes rove from vanity to vanity--but *then* they shall see, yes, fix upon the King of kings in His divinest glory!

Now I dwell among fire-brands, and surrounding sinners daily give me pain--but *then* I shall dwell among the multitudes of the redeemed, with angels and archangels--and not one sinner among all the heavenly multitudes!

Now I often bewail myself as a frail inhabitant of feeble clay--but *then* I shall find myself possessed of all the vigor of immortality--of all the briskness of eternal life!

Now I have foes without, and foes within; the sin of my nature, and the idols of my heart; enemies from earth and hell to grapple with--but *then*, triumphing over every foe, I shall sing the victories of the divine Conqueror, and never cease from

m this matchless, this inexhaustible theme!

Now the cruel hand of death comes among my friends and family, and leaves me like a sparrow on the house-top alone, or mourning in the wilderness--but *then* not one of all the numerous inhabitants shall so much as say, "I am sick," because they are an assembly of sinless ones.

Now my Sun often conceals Himself, so that I go mourning without Him--but *then* in the light of His countenance, in the brightness of His glory, shall I walk on forever!

Now I am crawling along the road of life in company with fellow-worms, who dwell in cottages of clay, and are crushed before the moth--but *then*, dignified with His divine likeness, I shall dwell with the Ancient of days, and enjoy the dearest and most intimate communion with Jehovah and the Lamb forever!

Now my time is wasting away, and I may be very near my latter end--but *then* an endless eternity shall be mine, and my bliss shall be as durable as it is desirable; and as permanent as it is pleasant.

O! then, who would not desire death--which is so pregnant with glory and bliss!

"I desire to depart and be with Christ--which is better by far!" Philippians 1:23

(<http://www.gracegems.org/Meikle/meikle.htm>) James Meikle

**Re: Death awaits - posted by BrokenOne (), on: 2008/11/7 23:23**

From A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life - by William Law

Penitens was a busy, notable tradesman, and very prosperous in his dealings, but died in the thirty-fifth year of his age.

A little before his death, when the doctors had given him over, some of his neighbors came one evening to see him, at which time he spake thus to them:--

I see, my friends, the tender concern you have for me, by the grief that appears in your countenances, and I know the thoughts that you have now about me. You think how melancholy a case it is, to see so young a man, and in such flourishing business, delivered up to death. And perhaps, had I visited any of you in my condition, I should have had the same thoughts of you.

But now, my friends, my thoughts are no more like your thoughts than my condition is like yours.

It is no trouble to me now to think, that I am to die young, or before I have raised an estate.

These things are now sunk into such mere nothings, that I have no name little enough to call them by. For if in a few days or hours, I am to leave this carcass to be buried in the earth, and to find myself either forever happy in the favour of God, or eternally separated from all light and peace, can any words sufficiently express the littleness of everything else?

Is there any dream like the dream of life, which amuses us with the neglect and disregard of these things? Is there any folly like the folly of our manly state, which is too wise and busy, to be at leisure for these reflections?

When we consider death as a misery, we only think of it as a miserable separation from the enjoyments of this life. We seldom mourn over an old man that dies rich, but we lament the young, that are taken away in the progress of their fortune. You yourselves look upon me with pity, not that I am going unprepared to meet the Judge of quick and dead, but that I am to leave a prosperous trade in the flower of my life.

This is the wisdom of our manly thoughts. And yet what folly of the silliest children is so great as this?

For what is there miserable, or dreadful in death, but the consequences of it? When a man is dead, what does anything signify to him, but the state he is then in?

Our poor friend Lepidus died, you know, as he was dressing himself for a feast: do you think it is now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? Feasts, and business, and pleasures, and enjoyments, seem great things to us, whilst we think of nothing else; but as soon as we add death to them, they all sink into an equal littleness; and the soul that is separated from the body no more laments the loss of business, than the losing of a feast.

If I am now going into the joys of God, could there be any reason to grieve, that this happened to me before I was forty years of age? Could it be a sad thing to go to Heaven, before I had made a few more bargains, or stood a little longer behind a counter?

And if I am to go amongst lost spirits, could there be any reason to be content, that this did not happen to me till I was old, and full of riches?

If good Angels were ready to receive my soul, could it be any grief to me, that I was dying upon a poor bed in a garret?

And if God has delivered me up to evil spirits, to be dragged by them to places of torments, could it be any comfort to me, that they found me upon a bed of state?

When you are as near death as I am, you will know that all the different states of life, whether of youth or age, riches or poverty, greatness or meanness, signify no more to you, than whether you die in a poor or stately apartment.

The greatness of those things which follow death makes all that goes before it sink into nothing.

Now that judgment is the next thing that I look for, and everlasting happiness or misery is come so near me, all the enjoyments and prosperities of life seem as vain and insignificant, and to have no more to do with my happiness, than the clothes that I wore before I could speak.

But, my friends, how am I surprised that I have not always had these thoughts? for what is there in the terrors of death, in the vanities of life, or the necessities of piety, but what I might have as easily and fully seen in any part of my life?

What a strange thing is it, that a little health, or the poor business of a shop, should keep us so senseless of these great things, that are coming so fast upon us!

Just as you came in my chamber, I was thinking with myself, what numbers of souls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time, surprised with a summons to the other world; some taken from their shops and farms, others from their sports and pleasures, these at suits of law, those at gaming tables, some on the road, others at their own firesides, and all seized at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frightened at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, designs, and projects, astonished at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort. Their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with deepest convictions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry Judge, the worm that at never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death.

Oh, my friends! bless God that you are not of this number, that you have time and strength to employ yourselves in such works of piety, as may bring you peace at the last.

And take this along with you, that there is nothing but a life of great piety, or a death of great stupidity, that can keep off these apprehensions.

Had I now a thousand worlds, I would give them all for one year more, that I might present unto God one year of such devotion and good works, as I never before so much as intended.

You, perhaps, when you consider that I have lived free from scandal and debauchery, and in the communion of the Church, wonder to see me so full of remorse and self-condemnation at the approach of death. But, alas! what a poor thing is it, to have lived only free from murder, theft, and adultery, which is all that I can say of myself.

You know, indeed, that I have never been reckoned a sot, but you are, at the same time, witnesses, and have been frequent companions of my intemperance, sensuality, and great indulgence. And if I am now going to a judgment, where nothing will be rewarded but good works, I may well be concerned, that though I am no sot, yet I have no Christian sobriety to plead for me.

It is true, I have lived in the communion of the Church, and generally frequented its worship and service on Sundays, wh

en I was neither too idle, or not otherwise disposed of by my business and pleasures. But, then, my conformity to the public worship has been rather a thing of course, than any real intention of doing that which the service of the Church supposes: had it not been so, I had been oftener at Church, more devout when there, and more fearful of ever neglecting it.

But the thing that now surprises me above all wonders is this, that I never had so much as a general intention of living up to the piety of the Gospel. This never so much as entered into my head or my heart. I never once in my life considered whether I was living as the laws of religion direct, or whether my way of life was such, as would procure me the mercy of God at this hour.

And can it be thought that I have kept the Gospel terms of salvation, without ever so much as intending, in any serious and deliberate manner, either to know them, or keep them? Can it be thought that I have pleased God with such a life as He requires, though I have lived without ever considering what He requires, or how much I have performed? How easy a thing would salvation be, if it could fall into my careless hands, who have never had so much serious thought about it, as about any one common bargain that I have made?

In the business of life I have used prudence and reflection. I have done everything by rules and methods. I have been glad to converse with men of experience and judgment, to find out the reasons why some fail and others succeed in any business. I have taken no step in trade but with great care and caution, considering every advantage or danger that attended it. I have always had my eye upon the main end of business, and have studied all the ways and means of being a gainer by all that I undertook.

But what is the reason that I have brought none of these tempers to religion? What is the reason that I, who have so often talked of the necessity of rules, and methods, and diligence, in worldly business, have all this while never once thought of any rules, or methods, or managements, to carry me on in a life of piety?

Do you think anything can astonish and confound a dying man like this? What pain do you think a man must feel, when his conscience lays all this folly to his charge, when it shall show him how regular, exact, and wise he has been in small matters, that are passed away like a dream, and how stupid and senseless he has lived, without any reflection, without any rules, in things of such eternal moment, as no heart can sufficiently conceive them?

Had I only my frailties and imperfections to lament at this time, I should lie here humbly trusting in the mercies of God. But, alas! how can I call a general disregard, and a thorough neglect of all religious improvement, a frailty or imperfection, when it was as much in my power to have been exact, and careful, and diligent in a course of piety, as in the business of my trade?

I could have called in as many helps, have practised as many rules, and been taught as many certain methods of holy living, as of thriving in my shop, had I but so intended, and desired it.

Oh, my friends! a careless life, unconcerned and unattentive to the duties of religion, is so without all excuse, so unworthy of the mercy of God, such a shame to the sense and reason of our minds, that I can hardly conceive a greater punishment, than for a man to be thrown into the state that I am in, to reflect upon it.

Penitens was here going on, but had his mouth stopped by a convulsion, which never suffered him to speak any more. He lay convulsed about twelve hours, and then gave up the ghost.

**Death awaits - posted by crsschk (), on: 2008/11/8 10:54**

Quote:  
-----Our poor friend Lepidus died, you know, as he was dressing himself for a feast: do you think it is now part of his trouble, that he did not live till that entertainment was over? Feasts, and business, and pleasures, and enjoyments, seem great things to us, whilst we think of nothing else; but as soon as we add death to them, they all sink into an equal littleness; and the soul that is separated from the body no more laments the loss of business, than the losing of a feast.  
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Quote:



-----Just as you came in my chamber, I was thinking with myself, what numbers of souls there are now in the world, in my condition at this very time, surprised with a summons to the other world; some taken from their shops and farms, others from their sports and pleasures, these at suits of law, those at gaming tables, some on the road, others at their own firesides, and all seized at an hour when they thought nothing of it; frightened at the approach of death, confounded at the vanity of all their labours, designs, and projects, astonished at the folly of their past lives, and not knowing which way to turn their thoughts, to find any comfort. Their consciences flying in their faces, bringing all their sins to their remembrance, tormenting them with deepest convictions of their own folly, presenting them with the sight of the angry Judge, the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched, the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, and the bitter pains of eternal death.  
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Thank you sister - Timely and greatly challenging, I can but pray that this might force our perspective ... and alter it.

**Re: Death awaits - posted by BrokenOne (), on: 2008/11/30 19:00**

From Pilgrim's Progress

When Mr. Standfast had thus set things in order, and the time being come for him to haste him away, he also went down to the river. Now there was a great calm at that time in the river; wherefore Mr. Standfast, when he was about half-way in, stood a while, and talked with his companions that had waited upon him thither. And he said, This river has been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me; but now methinks I stand easy; my foot is fixed upon that hat on which the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood while Israel went over Jordan. The waters indeed are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the convoy that waits for me on the other side, do lie as a glowing coal at my heart. I see myself now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are ended. I am going to see that head which was crowned with thorns, and that face which was spit upon for me. I have formerly lived by hearsay and faith; but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with him in whose company I delight myself. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of; and wherever I have seen the print of his shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too. His name has been to me as a civet-box; yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His voice to me has been most sweet, and his countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun. His words I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He hath held me, and hath kept me from mine iniquities; yea, my steps hath he strengthened in his way.

Now, while he was thus in discourse, his countenance changed; his strong man bowed under him: and after he had said, Take me, for I come unto thee, he ceased to be seen of them.

**The Dairyman's Daughter ~ Pastor Legh Richmond - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/2/15 9:18**

*(Copied over with thanks to Roniya)*

**PREFACE:**

The Dairyman's Daughter is the true account of the life of Betsey Wallbridge, a young woman who lived on the Isle of Wight, in the English Channel. She died there at an early age, in 1801. Her name, her surroundings, her conversion and death were related with such power, that literally millions of copies were sold prior to 1853 to satisfy the demand, and numbers of men, women, and children were brought to the Lord by this humble means. This small booklet was translated into many languages during the 19th century. It seems to have been signally honored by the Holy Spirit as an instrument to communicate God's truth, with humility and love.

**An Authentic Narrative**

It is a delightful employment to trace and discover the operations of divine grace, as they are manifested in the dispositions and lives of God's real children. It is peculiarly gratifying to observe how frequently, among the poorer classes of mankind, the sunshine of mercy beams upon the heart, and bears witness to the image of Christ, which the Spirit of God has impressed thereupon. Among such, the sincerity and simplicity of the Christian character appear unencumbered, by those fetters to spirituality of mind and conversation which too often prove a great hindrance to those who live in the higher ranks. Many are the difficulties which riches, polished society, worldly importance, and high connections throw in the way of religious profession. Happy indeed it is—and some such happy instances I know—where grace has so strikingly supported its conflict with natural pride, self-importance, the allurements of luxury, ease, and worldly opinions—that the noble and mighty appear adorned with genuine poverty of spirit, self denial, humble-mindedness, and deep spirituality of heart.



But in general, if we want to see religion in its purest character—we must look for it among the poor of this world, who are rich in faith. How often is the poor man's cottage—the palace of God! Many of us can truly declare that we have there learned our most valuable lessons of faith and hope, and there witnessed the most striking demonstrations of the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of God.

The character which the present narrative is designed to introduce to the notice of my readers, is given from real life and circumstance. I first became acquainted with the dairyman's daughter by the reception of a letter, a part of which I transcribe from the original, now before me.

"Dear Sir,

I take the liberty to write to you. Please excuse me, for I have never spoken to you. But I once heard you preach at Arret on church. I believe you are a faithful preacher, to warn sinners to flee from the wrath that will be revealed against all those that live in sin and die impenitent.

"I was much rejoiced to hear of those marks of love and affection which you showed to that poor soldier of the S. D. militia. Surely the love of Christ sent you to that poor man; may that love ever dwell richly in you by faith. May it constrain you to seek the wandering souls of men, with the fervent desire to spend and be spent for His glory.

"Sir, be fervent in prayer with God for the conviction and conversion of sinners. He has promised to answer the prayer of faith, that is put up in His Son's name. 'Ask what you will—and it shall be granted you.' Through faith in Christ we rejoice in hope, and look up in expectation of that time drawing near—when all shall know and fear the Lord, and when a nation shall be born in a day.

"What a happy time, when Christ's kingdom shall come! Then shall His will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Men shall be daily fed with the manna of His love, and delight themselves in the Lord all the day long.

"Sir, I began to write this on Sunday, being detained from attending on public worship. My dear and only sister, living as a servant with Mrs. —, was so ill that I came here to attend in her place, and on her. But now she is no more.

"She expressed a desire to receive the Lord's supper, and commemorate His precious death and sufferings. I told her, as well as I was able, what it was to worthily receive it, what it was to receive Christ into her heart; but as her weakness of body increased, she did not mention it again. She seemed quite resigned before she died. I do hope she has gone from a world of death and sin—to be with God forever.

"My sister expressed a wish that you might bury her. The minister of our parish, where she will be carried, cannot come. She dies on Tuesday morning, and will be buried on Friday or Saturday, whichever is most convenient to you, at three o'clock in the afternoon. Please send an answer by the bearer, to let me know whether you can comply with this request. From your unworthy servant,  
Betsey Wallbridge.

I was much struck with the simple and earnest strain of devotion which the letter breathed. It was but plainly written; but this rather tended to endear the hitherto unknown writer, as it seemed characteristic of the union of humbleness of station with eminence of piety. I felt quite thankful that I was favored with a correspondent of this description; the more so, as such characters were, at that time, very rare in the neighborhood. As soon as it was read, I inquired who was the bearer of it.

"He is waiting at the outside of the gate, sir," was the reply.

I went out to speak to him and saw a venerable old man, whose long hoary hair and deeply wrinkled countenance commanded more than common respect. He was resting his arm and head upon the gate; the tears were streaming down his cheeks. On my approach he made a low bow, and said:

"Sir, I have brought you a letter from my daughter; but I fear you will think us very bold in asking you to take so much trouble."

"By no means," I replied; "I shall be truly glad to oblige you and any of your family in this matter."

I asked him to come into the house, and then said: "What is your occupation?"

"Sir, I have lived most of my days in a little cottage at Â—Â—, six miles from here. I have rented a few acres of ground, and kept a few cows, which, in addition to my day labor, has been my means of supporting and bringing up my family."

"What family have you?"

"A wife, now getting very aged and helpless, two sons, and one daughter; for my other poor dear child is just departed out of this wicked world."

"I hope, for a better."

"I hope so, too. Poor thing, she did not use to take to such good ways as her sister; but I do believe that her sister's manner of talking with her before she died was the means of saving her soul. What a mercy it is to have such a child as mine is! I never thought about my own soul seriously until she, poor girl, begged me to flee from the wrath to come."

"How old are you?"

"Turned seventy, and my wife is older; we are getting old and almost past our labor; but our daughter has left a good place, where she lived in service, on purpose to come home, and take care of us and our little dairy. And a dear, dutiful, affectionate girl she is."

"Was she always so?"

"No, sir! When she was very young, she was all for the world, and pleasure and dress and company. Indeed, we were all very ignorant, and thought, if we took care for this life, and wronged nobody—that we should be sure to go to heaven at last. My daughters were both willful, and, like ourselves, were strangers to the ways of God and the Word of His grace. But the eldest of them went out to service; and some years ago she heard a sermon preached at Â—Â—church, and from that time she became quite an altered creature. She began to read the Bible, and became quite sober and steady. The first time she came home afterwards to see us, she brought us a guinea which she had saved from her wages, and said, as we were getting old, she was sure we would need help; adding, that she did not wish to spend it in fine clothes, as she used to do, only to feed pride and vanity. She would rather show gratitude to her dear father and mother; and this, she said, because Christ had shown such mercy to her."

"We wondered to hear her talk, and took great delight in her company, for her temper and behavior were so humble and kind, she seemed so desirous to do us good both in soul and body, and was so different from what we had ever seen her before, that, careless and ignorant as we had been—we began to think there must be something real in religion, or it never could alter a person so much in a little time."

"Her younger sister, poor soul, used to laugh and ridicule her at that time, and said her head was turned with her new ways. 'No, sister,' she would say, 'not my head—but I hope my heart is turned from the love of sin to the love of God. I wish you may one day see, as I do, the danger and vanity of your present condition.'

"Her poor sister would reply, 'I do not want to hear any of your preaching; I am no worse than other people, and that is enough for me.' 'Well, sister,' Betsey would say, 'if you will not hear me, you cannot hinder me from praying for you, which I do with all my heart.'

"And now, sir, I believe those prayers are answered. For when her sister was taken ill, Betsey went to wait in her place and take care of her. She said a great deal to her about her soul; and the poor girl began to be so deeply affected and sensible of her past sin, and so thankful for her sister's kind behavior, that it gave her great hopes indeed for her sake. When my wife and I went to see her as she lay sick, she told us how grieved and ashamed she was of her past life; but said she had a hope, through grace, that her dear sister's Savior would be her Savior too; for she saw her own sinfulness, felt her own helplessness, and only wished to cast herself upon Christ as her hope and salvation."

"And now, sir, she is gone, and I hope and think her sister's prayers for her conversion to God have been answered. The Lord grant the same for her poor father's and mother's sake likewise."

This conversation was a very pleasing commentary upon the letter which I had received, and made me anxious both to c

omply with the request and to become acquainted with the writer. I promised the good old dairyman I would attend the funeral on Friday, at the appointed hour; and after some more conversation respecting his own state of mind under the present trial, he went away.

He was a sincere old man; his furrowed cheeks, white locks, weeping eyes, bent shoulders, and feeble gait were characteristic of the aged pilgrim; and as he slowly departed, supported by a stick which seemed to have been the companion of many a long year, a train of reflections occurred which I retrace with emotion and pleasure.

At the appointed hour I arrived at the church; and after a little while was summoned to meet, at the churchyard gate, a very decent funeral procession. The aged parents, the elder brother and the sister, with other relatives, formed an affecting group. I was struck with the humble, pious, and pleasing countenance of the young woman from whom I received the letter; it bore the marks of great seriousness without affectation, and of much serenity mingled with a glow of devotion. A circumstance occurred during the burial service which I think it right to mention.

A man of the village, who had hitherto been of a very careless and even profligate character, came into the church through mere curiosity, and with no better purpose than that of a vacant gazing at the ceremony. He came likewise to the grave, and during the burial service his mind received a deep, serious conviction of his sin and danger through some of the expressions contained therein. It was an impression that never wore off, but gradually ripened into the most satisfactory evidence of an entire change, of which I had many and long continued proofs. He always referred to the burial service, and to some particular sentences of it, as the clearly ascertained instrument of bringing him, through grace; to the knowledge of the truth.

The day was therefore one to be remembered. Remembered let it be, by those who love to hear "the short and simple annals of the poor."

Was there not a manifest and happy connection between the circumstance that providentially brought the serious and the careless to the same grave on that day together? How much do they lose, who neglect to trace the leadings of God in providence as links in the chain of His eternal purpose of redemption and grace!

"While infidels may scoff, let us adore."

After the service was concluded, I had a short conversation with the good old couple and their daughter. Her aspect and address were highly interesting. I promised to visit their cottage; and from that time became well acquainted with them. Let us bless the Lord of the poor, and pray continually that the poor may become rich in faith—and the rich be made poor in spirit.

A sweet solemnity often possesses the mind while retracing past fellowship with departed friends. How much is this increased when they were such as lived and died in the Lord! The remembrance of former scenes and conversations with those who, we believe, are now enjoying the uninterrupted happiness of a better world, fills the heart with pleasing sadness, and animates the soul with the hopeful anticipation of a day when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed in the assembling of all his children together, never more to be separated. Whether they were rich or poor, while on earth, it is a matter of trifling consequence; the valuable part of their character is, that they are now kings and priests unto God. In the number of departed believers, with whom I once loved to converse on the grace and glory of the kingdom of God, was the dairyman's daughter. I purpose now to give some further account of her, and hope it may be useful to every reader.

A few days after the funeral of the younger sister, I rode over to visit the family in their own cottage. The principal part of the road lay through old, narrow lanes, beautifully overarched with groves of nut and other trees, which screened the traveler from the rays of the sun, and afforded many interesting objects for admiration in the beautiful flowers, shrubs, and young trees which grew upon the high banks on each side of the road. Many curious rocks, with little streams of water occasionally breaking out of them, varied the recluse scenery, and produced a new, romantic, and pleasing effect.

Here and there, the more distant and rich prospect beyond appeared through gaps and hollow places on the road-side. Lofty hills, with navy signal-posts, and light-houses on their summits, appeared at these intervals; rich cornfields were also visible through some of the open places; and now and then, when the road ascended any hill, the sea, with ships at various distances, opened delightfully upon me. But for the most part, shady seclusion and beauties of a more minute and confined nature gave a character to the journey, and invited contemplation.

They lose much—who are strangers to serious meditation on the wonder and beauties of created nature! How glorious!

y the God of creation shines in His works! Not a tree, or a leaf or flower; not a bird, or insect, but proclaims in glowing language, "God made me!"

As I approached the village where the good old dairyman dwelt, I observed him in a little field, driving a few cows before him toward a hovel which adjoined his cottage. I advanced very near him without his observing me, for his sight was dim. On my calling out to him, he startled at the sound of my voice, but with much gladness of countenance welcomed me, saying, "Bless your heart, sir, I am very glad you are come; we have looked for you every day this week!"

The cottage-door opened, and the daughter came out, followed by her aged and infirm mother. The sight of me naturally brought to recollection the grave at which we had before met. Tears of affection, mingled with the smile of satisfaction with which I was received by these worthy cottagers. I dismounted, and was conducted through a very neat little garden, part of which was shaded by two large, overspreading elm-trees, to the house. Simplicity and cleanliness were manifest within and without.

This, thought I, is a fit residence for piety, peace, and contentment. May I learn a fresh lesson in each, through the blessing of God, on this visit.

"Sir," said the daughter, "we are not worthy that you should come under our roof. We take it very kind that you should come so far to see us."

"My Master," I replied, "came a great deal further to visit us poor sinners. He left the bosom of His Father, laid aside His glory, and came down to this lower world on a visit of mercy and love; and ought not we, if we profess to follow Him, to bear each other's infirmities, and go about doing good as He did?"

The old man now came in, and joined his wife and daughter in giving me a cordial welcome. Our conversation soon turned to the late loss they had sustained; and the pious and sensible disposition of the daughter was peculiarly manifested—as well in what she said to her parents as in what she said to me. I was struck with the good sense and agreeable manner which accompanied her expressions of devotedness to God, and love to Christ for the great mercies which He had bestowed upon her. She seemed anxious to improve the opportunity of my visit to the best purpose, for her own and her parents' sake; yet there was nothing of unfitting forwardness, or conceitedness in her behavior. She united the sincerity and earnestness of the Christian—with the modesty of the female and the dutifulness of the daughter. It was impossible to be in her company—and not observe how truly her temper and conversation adorned the evangelical principles which she professed.

I soon discovered how eager and how successful also she had been in her endeavors to bring her father and mother to the knowledge and experience of the truth. This is a lovely circumstance in the character of a young Christian. If it has pleased God, in the free dispensations of His mercy, to call the child by His grace, while the parents remain still in ignorance and sin, how great is the duty of that child to do what is possible for the conversion of those to whom it owes its birth! Happy is it—when the ties of grace sanctify those of nature.

This aged couple evidently looked upon and spoke of their daughter, as their teacher and admonisher in divine things, while they received from her every token of filial submission and obedience, testified by continual endeavors to serve and assist them to the utmost in the little concerns of the household.

The religion of this young woman was of a highly spiritual character, and of no ordinary attainment. Her views of the divine plan in saving the sinner were clear and scriptural. She spoke much of the joys and sorrows which, in the course of her Christian progress, she had experienced; but she was fully sensible that there is far more in real religion, than mere occasional transition from one frame of mind to another. She believed that the experimental acquaintance of the heart with God, principally consisted in so living upon Christ by faith as to seek to live like Him by love. She knew that the love of God towards the sinner, and the path of duty prescribed to the sinner, are both of an unchangeable nature. In a believing dependence on the one, and an affectionate walk in the other—she sought and found "the peace of God which passes all understanding" (Phil. 4:7), for so He gives His beloved spiritual rest.

She had read but few books besides her Bible; but these few were excellent in their kind, and she spoke of their contents as one who knew their value. In addition to a Bible and Common Prayer-Book, Doddridge's Rise and Progress, Rome's Life, Walk, and Triumph of Faith, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Alleine's Alarm, Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest, a hymn-book, and a few tracts, composed her library.

I observed in her countenance a pale and delicate look, which I afterwards found to be a presage of fatal consumption; and the idea then occurred to me—that she would not live many years. In fact, it pleased God to take her hence about a year and a half after I first saw her.

Time passed on swiftly with this little interesting family; and after having partaken of some plain and wholesome refreshments, and enjoyed a few hours' conversation with them, I found it was necessary for me to return homewards.

"I thank you, sir," said the daughter, "for your Christian kindness to me and my family. I believe the blessing of the Lord has attended your visit, and I hope I have experienced it to be so. My dear father and mother will, I am sure, remember it, and I rejoice in an opportunity, which we have never before enjoyed, of seeing a serious minister under this roof. My Savior has been abundantly good to me in plucking me 'as a brand from the burning,' and showing me the way of life and peace; and I hope it is my heart's desire to live to His glory. But I long to see my dear parents enjoy the comfort and power of religion also."

"I think it evident," I replied, "that the promise is fulfilling in their case; 'It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light'" (Zech. 14:7).

"I believe it," she said, "and praise God for the blessed hope."

"Thank Him, too, that you have been the happy instrument of bringing them to the light."

"I do, sir; yet when I think of my own unworthiness and insufficiency, I rejoice with trembling."

"Sir," said the good old man, "I am sure the Lord will reward you for this kindness. Pray for us that, old as we are, and sinners as we have been—yet He would have mercy upon us at the eleventh hour. Poor Betsey strives hard for our sakes, both in body and soul; she works hard all day to save us trouble and I fear has not strength to support all she does; and then she talks to us, and reads to us, and prays for us, that we may be saved from the wrath to come. Indeed, sir, she's a special child to us!"

"Peace be to you, and all that belong to you."

"Amen, and thank you, dear sir," was echoed from each tongue.

Thus we parted for that time. My returning meditations were sweet, and, I hope, profitable. Many other visits were afterwards made by me to this peaceful cottage, and I always found increasing reason to thank God for the fellowship I enjoyed.

I soon perceived that the health of the daughter was rapidly on the decline. The pale, wasting consumption, which is the Lord's instrument for removing so many thousands every year from the land of the living, made hasty strides on her constitution. The hollow eye, the distressing cough, and the complexion of her face, foretold the approach of death.

I have often thought what a field for usefulness and affectionate attention on the part of ministers and Christian friends, is opened by the frequent attacks and lingering progress of consumptive illness. How many such precious opportunities are daily lost, where Providence seems in so marked a way to afford time and space for serious and godly instruction. Oh how many may it be said, "The way of peace have they not known;" for not one friend came near, to warn them to "flee from the wrath to come."

But the dairyman's daughter was happily made acquainted with the things which belonged to her everlasting peace, before the present disease had taken root in her constitution. In my visit to her, I might be said to receive blessing, rather than to impart it. Her mind was abundantly stored with divine truths and her conversation was truly edifying. The recollection of it still produces a thankful sensation in my heart.

I one day received a short note to the following effect:

"Dear Sir,

I would be very glad, if your convenience will allow, that you would come and see a poor unworthy sinner; my hour-glass is nearly run out, but I hope I can ask Christ to be precious to my soul. Your conversation has often been blessed to me, and I now feel the need of it more than ever.

From your obedient and unworthy servant,  
Betsey Wallbridge."

I obeyed the summons that same afternoon. On my arrival at the dairyman's cottage, his wife opened the door. The tears streamed down her cheeks, as she silently shook her head. Her heart was full. She tried to speak, but could not. I took her by the hand, and said:

"My good friend, all is right—<sup>and</sup> as the Lord of wisdom and mercy directs."

"Oh, my Betsey, my dear girl, is so sick, sir; what shall I do without her? I thought I would have gone first to the grave, but—"

"But the Lord sees good that, before you died yourself, you should behold your child safe home to glory. Is there no mercy in this?"

"Oh, sir, I am very old and weak, and she is a dear child, the staff and prop of a poor old creature, as I am."

As I advanced, I saw Betsey sitting by the fireside, supported in an arm-chair by pillows, with every mark of rapid decline and approaching death. She appeared to me within three or four weeks at the farthest, from her death. A sweet smile of friendly delight enlightened her pale countenance, as she said:

"This is very kind indeed, sir, to come so soon after I sent to you. You find me daily wasting away, and I cannot have long to continue here. My flesh and my heart fail—but God is the strength of my weak heart, and I trust will be my portion forever."

The conversation which follows was occasionally interrupted by her cough and shortness of breath. Her tone of voice was clear, though feeble; her manner solemn and collected; and her eye, though more dim than formerly, by no means lacking in liveliness as she spoke. I had frequently admired the superior language in which she expressed her ideas, as well as the scriptural consistency with which she communicated her thoughts. She had a good natural understanding, and grace, as is generally the case—and had much improved it. On the present occasion, I could not help thinking she was peculiarly favored. The whole strength of grace seemed to be in full exercise.

After taking my seat between the daughter and the mother—the latter fixing her fond eyes upon her child with great anxiety while we were conversing, I said to Betsey:

"I hope you enjoy a sense of the divine presence, and can rest all upon Him who has 'been with you' (1 Chron. 17:8), and has kept 'you in all places where you have gone' (Gen. 28:15), and will bring you into the land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign."

"Sir, I think I can. My mind has lately been sometimes clouded, but I believe it has been partly owing to the great weakness and suffering of my bodily frame, and partly to the envy of my spiritual enemy, who wants to persuade me that Christ has no love for me, and that I have been a self-deceiver."

"And do you give way to his suggestions? Can you doubt, amidst such numerous tokens of past and present mercy?"

"No, sir, I mostly am enabled to preserve a clear evidence of His love. I do not wish to add to my other sins, that of denying His manifest goodness to my soul. I would acknowledge it to His praise and glory."

"What is your view of the state which you were in—before God called you by His grace?"

"Sir, I was a proud, thoughtless girl, fond of dress and finery; I loved the world and the things that are in the world; I worked among worldly people, and never had the happiness of being in a family where godly worship was regarded, and the souls of the children cared for, either by master or mistress. I went once on a Sunday to church, more to see and be seen—than to pray, or hear the word of God. I thought I was quite good enough to be saved, and disliked and often laughed at pious people. I was in great darkness; I knew nothing of the way of salvation; I never prayed, nor was sensible of the dreadful danger of a prayerless state. I wished to maintain the character of a good worker—and was much lifted up in pride, whenever I met with applause. I was tolerably moral and decent in my conduct, from motives of carnal and worldly policy; but I was a stranger to God and Christ. I neglected my soul; and had I died in such a state, hell must, and would

d justly, have been my portion!"

"How long is it since you heard the sermon which you hope, through God's blessing, affected your conversion?"

"About five years ago."

"How was it brought about?"

"It was repeated that a Mr. Å—Å—, who was detained by contrary winds from embarking on board ship, as chaplain, to a distant part of the world, was to preach at Å—Å—church. Many advised me not to go, for fear he should turn my head; as they said he held strange notions. But curiosity, and an opportunity of appearing in a new gown, which I was very proud of, induced me to go. Indeed, sir, I has no better motives than vanity and curiosity. Yet, thus, it pleased the Lord to order it for His own glory.

"I accordingly went to church and saw a great crowd of people collected together. I often think of the contrary states of my mind during the former and latter part of the service. For a while, heedless of the worship of God, I looked around me, and was anxious to attract notice to myself. My dress, like that of too many mirthful, vain, and silly girls Å—was much above my station, and very different from that which becomes an humble sinner who has a modest sense of propriety and decency. The state of my mind was visible enough from the foolish finery of my apparel.

"At length the clergyman gave out his text: 'Be clothed with humility' (1Pet. 5:5). He drew a comparison between the clothing of the body and that of the soul. At a very early part of his discourse I began to feel ashamed of my passion for fine dressing and apparel; but when he came to describe the garment of salvation with which a Christian is clothed, I felt a powerful discovery of the nakedness of my own soul. I saw that I had neither the humility mentioned in the text, nor any one part of the true Christian character. I looked at my mirthful dress, and blushed for shame on account of my pride. I looked at the minister, and he seemed to be as a messenger sent from heaven to open my eyes. I looked at the congregation, and wondered whether anyone else felt as I did. I looked at my heart, and it appeared full of iniquity. I trembled as he spoke, and yet I felt a great drawing of heart to the words he uttered.

"He opened the riches of divine grace in God's method of saving the sinner. I was astonished at what I had been doing all the days of my life. He described the meek, lowly, and humble example of Christ; I felt proud, lofty, vain and self-absorbed. He represented Christ as 'Wisdom;' I felt my ignorance. He held Him forth as 'Righteousness;' I was convinced of my own guilt. He proved Him to be 'Sanctification;' I saw my corruption. He proclaimed Him as 'Redemption;' I felt my slavery to sin and my captivity to Satan (1 Cor. 1:31). He concluded with an animated address to sinners, in which he exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come, to cast off the love of outward ornaments, to put on Christ, and be clothed with true humility (Matt. 3:7, Col 3:8-10, 1 Pet. 5:5).

"From that hour I never lost sight of the value of my soul and the danger of a sinful state. I inwardly blessed God for the sermon, although my mind was in a state of great confusion.

"The preacher had brought forward the ruling passion of my heart, which was pride in outward dress; and by the grace of God it was made instrumental to the awakening of my soul. Happy, sir, would I be if many a poor girl like myself were turned from the love of outward adorning and putting on of fine apparel Å—to seek that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God."

"The greater part of the congregation, unused to such faithful and scriptural sermons, disliked and complained of the severity of the preacher; while a few, as I afterwards found, like myself, were deeply affected, and earnestly wished to hear him again. But he preached there no more."

"From that time I was led, through a course of private prayer, reading, and meditation, to see my lost estate as a sinner, and the great mercy of God, through Jesus Christ in raising sinful dust and ashes Å—to a share in the glorious happiness of heaven! And oh, sir, what a Savior have I found! He is more than I could ask or desire. In His fullness Å—I have found all that my poverty could need; in His bosom Å—I have found a resting place from all sin and sorrow; in His Word Å—I have found strength against doubt and unbelief."

"Were you not soon convinced," said I, "that your salvation must be an act of entire grace on the part of God, wholly independent of your own previous works or deservings?"

"Dear sir, what were my works before I heard that sermon—but evil, carnal, selfish, and ungodly? The thoughts of my heart, from my youth upward—were only evil, and that continually. And my deservings, what were they but the deservings of a fallen, depraved, careless soul that regards neither law nor gospel? Yes, sir, I immediately saw that—if ever I was saved, it must be by the free mercy of God, and that the whole praise and honor of the work would be His, from first to last."

"What change did you perceive in yourself with respect to the world?"

"It appeared all vanity and vexation of spirit. I found it necessary to my peace of mind, to 'come out from among them, and be separate.' I gave myself to prayer; and many a precious hour of secret delight I enjoyed in communion with God. Often I mourned over my sins, and sometime had a great conflict through unbelief, fear, temptation—to return back again to my old ways, and a variety of difficulties which lay in my way. But He who loved me with an everlasting love drew me by His loving kindness, showed me the way of peace, gradually strengthened me in my resolutions of leading a new life, and taught me that, while without Him I could do nothing, I yet might do all things through His strength."

"Did you not find many difficulties in your situation, owing to your change of principle and practice?"

"Yes, sir, every day of my life. I was laughed at by some, scolded at by others, scorned by enemies, and pitied by friends! I was called hypocrite, saint, false deceiver, and many more names, which were meant to render me hateful in the sight of the world. But I esteemed the reproach of the cross an honor. I forgave and prayed for my persecutors, and remembered how very recently, I myself had acted the same towards others. I thought also that Christ endured the hostility of sinners; and as the disciple is not above his Master, I was glad to be in any way conformed to His sufferings."

"Did you not then feel for your relatives at home?"

"Yes, that I did indeed, sir; they were never out of my thoughts. I prayed continually for them, and had a longing desire to do them good. In particular, I felt for my father and mother, as they were getting into old age, and were very ignorant and dark in matters of piety."

"Yes," interrupted her mother, sobbing, "ignorant and dark, sinful and miserable we were until this dear Betsey—this dear Betsey—this dear child, sir—brought Christ Jesus home to her poor father and mother's house."

"No, dearest mother, say rather Christ Jesus brought your poor daughter home to tell you what He had done for her soul; and, I hope, to do the same for yours."

At this moment the dairyman came in with two pails of milk hanging from the yoke on His shoulders. He had stood behind the half-opened door for a few minutes, and heard the last sentences spoken by his wife and daughter.

"Blessing and mercy upon her," said he, "it is very true; she would leave a good place of service on purpose to live with us, that she might help us both in soul and body. Sir, don't she look very ill? I think, sir, we shall not have her here long."

"Leave that to the Lord," said Betsey. "All our times are in His hand, and happy it is, that they are. I am willing to go; are not you willing, my father, to part with me into His hands—who gave me to you at first?"

"Ask me any question in the world but that," said the weeping father.

"I know," said she, "you wish me to be happy."

"I do, I do," answered he: "let the Lord do with you and us—as best pleases Him."

I then asked her on what her present consolations chiefly depended, in the prospect of approaching death.

"Entirely, sir, on my view of Christ. When I look at myself—many sins, infirmities, and imperfections cloud the image of Christ which I want to see in my own heart. But when I look at the Savior Himself—He is altogether lovely—there is not one spot in His countenance, nor one cloud over all His perfections."

"I think of His coming in the flesh, and it reconciles me to my bodily sufferings—for He had them as well as I. I think of His temptations, and believe that He is able to support me when I am tempted. Then I think of His cross, and learn to be



ar my own. I reflect on His death, and long to die unto sin, so that it may no longer have dominion over me. I sometimes think on His resurrection, and trust that He has given me a part in it; for I feel that my affections are set upon things above. Chiefly I take comfort in thinking of Him as at the right hand of the Father—pleading my cause, and rendering acceptable even my feeble prayers, both for myself and, I hope, for my dear friends."

"These are the views which, through mercy, I have of my Savior's goodness; and they have made me wish and strive in my poor way to serve Him, to give myself up to Him and to labor to do my duty in that state of life into which it has pleased Him to call me."

"A thousand times I would have fallen and fainted—if He had not upheld me. I feel that I am nothing without Him—He is all in all."

"Just so far as I can cast my cares upon Him—I find strength to do His will. May He give me grace to trust Him to the last moment. I do not fear death, because I believe He has taken away its sting. And oh, what happiness beyond! Tell me, sir, whether you think I am right. I hope I am under no delusion. I dare not look, for my hope—at anything short of the entire fullness of Christ. When I ask my own heart a question—I am afraid to trust it, for it is treacherous, and has often deceived me. But when I ask Christ—He answers me with promises which strengthen and refresh me, and leaves me no room to doubt His power and will to save me. I am in His hands, and would remain there; and I do believe that He will never leave nor forsake me. I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in me—will carry it on to completion. He loved me and gave Himself for me—and I believe that His gifts and calling are irrevocable. In this hope I live—in this I wish to die."

I looked around me as she was speaking, and thought, "Surely this is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven!" Everything appeared neat, clean, and simple. The afternoon had been rather overcast with dark clouds; but just now the setting sun shone brightly and rather suddenly into the room. It was reflected from three or four rows of bright pewter plates and white earthenware arranged on shelves against the wall; it also gave brilliance to a few prints of sacred subjects which hung there also, and served for monitors of the birth, baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ. A large map of Jerusalem, and an emblem of "the old and new man," completed the decorations on that side of the room. Clean as was the whitewashed wall, it was not cleaner than the rest of the place and its furniture. Seldom had the sun enlightened a house where order and general neatness—those sure attendants of pious and decent poverty—were more conspicuous.

This gleam of setting sunshine was emblematic of the bright and serene close of this young Christian's departing season. One ray happened to be reflected from a little looking-glass upon the face of the young woman. Amidst her pallid and decaying features, there appeared a calm resignation, triumphant confidence, unaffected humility, and tender concern, which fully declared the feelings of her heart.

Some further affectionate conversation and a short prayer, closed this interview.

As I rode home by departing daylight, a solemn tranquility reigned throughout the scene. The gentle lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep just penned in their folds, the humming of the insects of the night, the distant murmur of the sea, the last notes of the birds of day, and the first warblings of the nightingale, broke upon the ear, and served rather to increase than lessen the peaceful serenity of the evening and its corresponding effects of my own mind. It invited and nourished just such meditations as my visit had already inspired. Natural scenery, when viewed in a Christian mirror, frequently affords very beautiful illustrations of divine truth. We are highly favored when we can enjoy them, and at the same time draw near to God in them.

Soon after this I received a hasty summons, to inform me that my young friend was dying. It was brought by a soldier, whose countenance bespoke seriousness, good sense, and piety.

"I am sent, sir, by the father and mother of Betsey Wallbridge, at her own particular request, to say how much they all wish to see you. She is going home, sir—very fast indeed!"

"Have you known her long?" I replied.

"About a month, sir; I love to visit the sick, and hearing of her case from a godly person who lives close by our camp, I went to see her. I bless God that ever I did go. Her conversation has been very profitable to me."

"I rejoice," said I, "to see in you, as I trust, a fellow Christian soldier. Though we differ in our outward regimentals, I hope we serve under the same spiritual Captain. I will go with you."

My horse was soon ready. My military companion walked by my side, and gratified me with very serious and pious conversation. He related some remarkable testimonies of the excellent disposition of the dairyman's daughter, as they appeared from some recent fellowship which he had with her.

"She is a bright diamond, sir," said the soldier, "and will soon shine brighter than any diamond upon earth!"

Conversation charmed the travel, and shortened the apparent time of our journey until we were nearly arrived at the dairyman's cottage.

As we approached it, we became silent. Thoughts of death, eternity, and salvation, inspired by the sight of a house where a dying believer lay—filled my own mind, and, I doubt not, that of my companion also.

No living object yet appeared, except the dairyman's dog, keeping a kind of mute watch at the door; for he did not, as formerly, bark at my approach. He seemed to partake so far of the feelings appropriate to the circumstance of the family, as not to wish to give a harsh alarm. He came forward to the little wicket-gate, then looked back at the house door, as if conscious there was sorrow within. It was as if he wanted to say, "Tread softly over the threshold, as you enter the house of mourning; for my master's heart is full of grief."

A solemn serenity appeared to surround the whole place. It was only interrupted by the breeze passing through the large elm trees which stood near the house, which my imagination indulged itself in thinking were plaintive sighs of sorrow. I gently opened the door; no one appeared, and all was still silent. The soldier followed, and we came to the foot of the stairs.

"They are here," said a voice which I knew to be the father's; "they are here."

I gave him my hand, and said nothing. On entering the room above, I saw the aged mother and her son supporting the much-loved daughter and sister; the son's wife sat weeping in a window-seat, with a child on her lap. I sat down by the bedside. The mother could not weep, but now and then sighed deeply, as she alternately looked at Betsey and at me. The big tear rolled down the brother's cheek, and testified an affectionate regard. The godly old father stood at the foot of the bed, leaning upon the post, and unable to take His eyes off the child, from whom he was so soon to part.

Betsey's eyes were closed, and as yet she perceived me not. But over her face, though pale, sunk, and hollow—the peace of God, which passes all understanding, had cast a triumphant calm.

The soldier, after a short pause, silently reached out his Bible towards me, pointing with his finger at 1 Corinthians 15:55-57. I then broke silence by reading the passage, "O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

At the sound of these words, her eyes opened, and something like a ray of divine light beamed on her countenance, as she said, "Victory, victory! through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

She relapsed again, taking no further notice of anyone present.

"God be praised for the triumph of faith," I said.

"Amen," replied the soldier.

The dairyman's uplifted eye, showed that the Amen was in his heart, though his tongue failed to utter it. A short struggling for breath took place in the dying young woman, which was soon over, and then I said to her:

"My dear friend, do you not feel that you are supported?"

"The Lord deals very gently with me," she replied.

"Are not His promises now very precious to you?"

"They are all yes and amen in Christ Jesus."

"Are you in much bodily pain?"

"So little that I almost forget it."

"How good the Lord is!"

"And how unworthy am I!"

"You are going to see Him as He is."

"I think—I hope—I believe that I am."

She again fell into a short slumber.

Looking at her mother, I said, "What a mercy to have a child so near heaven—as yours is!"

"And what a mercy," she replied in broken accents, "if her poor old mother might but follow her there! But, sir, it is so hard to part—"

"I hope through grace, by faith—you will soon meet, to part no more. It will be but a little while."

"Sir," said the dairyman, "that thought supports me, and the Lord's goodness makes me feel more reconciled than I was."

"Father—mother," said the reviving daughter, "He is good to me; trust Him, praise Him evermore."

"Sir," added she in a faint voice, "I want to thank you for your kindness to me...I want to ask a favor;...you buried my sister...will you do the same for me?"

"All shall be as you wish—if God permits," I replied.

"Thank you, sir, thank you. I have another favor to ask—When I am gone, remember my father and mother. They are old, but I hope the good work is begun in their souls. My prayers are heard. Please come and see them—I cannot speak much, but I want to speak for their sakes. Sir, remember them."

The aged parents now sighed and sobbed aloud, uttering broken sentences, and gained some relief by such an expression of their feelings.

At length I said to Betsey, "Do you experience any doubts or temptations on the subject of your eternal safety?"

"No, sir; the Lord deals very gently with me, and gives me peace."

"What are your views of the dark valley of death, now that you are passing through it?"

"It is not dark."

"Why so?"

"Because my Lord is there—and He is my light and my salvation."

"Have you any fears of more bodily suffering?"

"The Lord deals so gently with me, I can trust Him."

Something of a convulsion came on. When it was past, she said again and again, "The Lord deals very gently with me. Lord, I am yours, save me...Blessed Jesus...Blessed Savior...His blood cleanses from all sin...Who shall separate?...His name is Wonderful...Thanks be to God...He gives us the victory...I, even I, am saved...O grace, mercy, and wonder—Lord, receive my spirit!

"Dear sir...dear father, mother, friends, I am going... but all is well, well, well—"

She relapsed again. We knelt down to prayer: the Lord was in the midst of us, and blessed us. She did not again revive while I remained, nor did she ever speak any more words which could be understood. She slumbered for about ten hours, and at last sweetly fell asleep in the arms of the Lord who had dealt so gently with her.

I left the house an hour after she had ceased to speak. I pressed her hand as I was taking leave and said, "Christ is the resurrection and the life!" (John 11:25).

She gently returned the pressure, but could neither open her eyes nor utter a reply. I never had witnessed a scene so impressive as this before. It completely filled my imagination as I returned home.

"Farewell," thought I, "dear friend, until the morning of an eternal day shall renew our personal fellowship. You were a brand plucked from the burning, that you might become a star shining in the sky of glory. I have seen the light and your good works, and I will therefore glorify our Father who is in heaven. I have seen in your example, what it is to be a sinner freely saved by grace. I have learned from you, as in a living mirror, who it is that begins, continues, and ends the work of faith and love. Jesus is all in all—He will and shall be glorified. He won the crown, and alone deserves to wear it. May no one attempt to rob Him of His glory! He saves, and saves to the uttermost! Farewell, dear sister in the Lord. Your flesh and your heart may fail—but God is the strength of your heart, and shall be your portion forever."

I was soon called to attend the funeral of my friend, who breathed her last shortly after my visit. Many pleasing yet melancholy thoughts were connected with the fulfillment of this task. I retraced the numerous and important conversations which I had held with her. But these could now no longer be held on earth. I reflected on the interesting and improving nature of Christian friendships, whether formed in palaces or in cottages; and felt thankful that I had so long enjoyed that privilege with the subject of this memorial. I indulged a sigh, for a moment, on thinking that I could no longer hear the great truths of Christianity uttered by one who had drunk so deep of the waters of life. But the rising murmur was checked by the animating thought, "She is gone to eternal rest—could I wish to bring her back to this valley of tears?"

As I traveled onward to the house where her remains lay in solemn preparation for the grave, the first sound of a tolling bell struck my ear. It proceeded from a village church in the valley directly beneath the ridge of a high hill, over which I had traveled—it was Betsey's funeral knell. It was a solemn sound, but it seemed to proclaim at once the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord, and the necessity of the living, pondering these things and laying them to heart.

On entering the cottage, I found that several Christian friends, from different parts of the neighborhood, had assembled together to show their last tribute of esteem and regard, to the memory of the dairyman's daughter.

I was requested to go into the chamber, where the relatives and a few other friends were gone to take a last look at the remains of Betsey.

If there is a moment when Christ and salvation, death, judgment, heaven and hell appear more than ever to be momentous subjects of meditation—it is that which brings us to the side of a coffin containing the body of a departed believer.

Betsey's features were altered, but much of her likeness remained. Her father and mother sat at the head, her brother at the foot of the coffin, manifesting their deep and sincere sorrow. The weakness and infirmity of old age, added a character to the parents' grief, which called for much tenderness and compassion.

A kind-looking woman, who had the management of the few simple though solemn ceremonies which the case required, advanced toward me, saying: "Sir, this is rather a sight of joy than of sorrow. Our dear friend Betsey finds it to be so, I have no doubt. She is beyond all sorrow. Do you not think she is, sir?"

"After what I have known and seen and heard," I replied, "I feel the fullest assurance that, while her body remains here, her soul is with her Savior in paradise! She loved Him here, and there she enjoys the pleasures which are at His right hand forevermore!"

"Mercy, mercy upon a poor old creature almost broken down with old age and grief; what shall I do? Betsey's gone—my daughter's dead. Oh, my child, I shall never more see you! God be merciful to me a sinner!" sobbed out the poor mother.

"That last prayer, my dear good woman," said I, "will bring you together again. It is a cry that has brought thousands to glory. It brought your daughter there, and I hope it will bring you there likewise. He will never cast out, any who sincerely come to Him."

"My dear," said the dairyman, breaking the long silence he had maintained, "let us trust God with our child, and let us trust Him with our own selves. The Lord gave—and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord! We are old, and can have but a little farther to travel in our journey, and then—"

He could say no more.

The soldier before mentioned, reached a Bible into my hand, and said, "Perhaps, sir, you would not object to reading a chapter before we go to the church."

I did so; it was the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Job. A sweet tranquility prevailed while I read it. Each minute that was spent in this funeral-chamber seemed to be valuable. I gave a few observations on the chapter, and connected them with the case of our departed sister.

"I am but a poor soldier," said our military friend, "and have nothing of this world's goods beyond my daily subsistence; but I would not exchange my hope of salvation in the next world—for all that this world could bestow without it. What is wealth without grace? Blessed be God, as I march about from one quarter to another, I still find the Lord wherever I go. And thanks be to His holy name, He is here today in the midst of this company of the living and the dead. I feel that it is good to be here."

Some other people present began to take a part in the conversation, in the course of which, the life and experience of the dairyman's daughter were brought forward in a very interesting manner; each friend had something to relate in testimony of her gracious disposition. One distant relative, a young woman under twenty, who had hitherto been a very light and trifling character, appeared to be remarkably impressed by the conversation of that day; and I have since had ground to believe that divine grace then began to influence her, in the choice of that better part which shall not be taken from her.

What a contrast does such a scene as this exhibit, when compared with the dull, formal, unedifying, and often indecent manner in which funeral parties assemble in the house of death!

But the time for departure to the church was now at hand. I went to take my last look at the deceased. There was much written on her countenance: she had evidently departed with a smile. It still remained, and spoke the tranquility of her departing soul. According to the custom of the place, she was decorated with leaves and flowers in the coffin; these indeed were fading flowers—but they remind me of that paradise whose flowers are immortal, and where her never-dying soul is at rest.

I remembered the last words which I had heard her speak, and was instantly struck with the happy thought, that "death was indeed swallowed up in victory!" (1 Cor. 15:54).

As I slowly retired, I said inwardly, "Peace, my honored sister, to your memory—and to my soul, until we meet in a better world."

In a little time the procession formed; it was rendered the more interesting by the consideration of so many who followed the coffin, being people of truly serious and godly character.

After we had advanced about a hundred yards, my meditation was unexpectedly and most agreeably interrupted by the friends who followed the family, beginning to sing a funeral psalm. Nothing could be more sweet or solemn. The well-known effect of the open air in softening and blending the sounds of music, was here peculiarly felt. The road through which we passed was beautiful and romantic; it lay at the foot of a hill, which occasionally echoed the voices of the singers, and seemed to give faint replies to the notes of the mourners. The funeral knell was distinctly heard from the church tower, and greatly increased the effect which this simple and befitting service produced.

I cannot describe the state of my own mind as peculiarly connected with the solemn singing. I never witnessed a similar instance before or since. I was reminded of older times and ancient piety. I wished the practice more frequent. It seems well calculated to excite and cherish devotion and religious affections.

We at length arrived at the church. The service was heard with deep and affectionate attention. When we came to the grave, the hymn which Betsey had selected was sung. All was devout, simple, decent, inspiring. We committed our dear friend's body to the grave—in full hope of a joyful resurrection from the dead.

Thus the veil of separation drawn for a season. She is departed, and no more seen! But she will be seen at the right hand of her Redeemer at the last day, and will again appear to His glory, a miracle of grace and a monument of mercy!

To the READER:

My reader, rich or poor, shall you and I appear there likewise? Are we "clothed with humility" (1 Pet. 5:5), and arrayed in the wedding-garment of a Redeemer's righteousness? Are we turned from idols—to serve the living God? Are we sensible of our own emptiness, flying to a Savior's fullness to obtain grace and strength? Do we live in Him, and on Him, and by Him, and with Him? Is He our all in all? Are we "lost—and found," "dead—and alive again" (Luke 15:24,32)? My poor reader—the dairyman's daughter was a poor girl, and the child of a poor man. Herein you resemble her—but do you resemble her—as she resembled Christ? Are you made rich by faith? Have you a crown laid up for you? Is your heart set upon heavenly riches? If not, read this story once more, and then pray earnestly for like precious faith.

If, through grace, you do love and serve the Redeemer that saved the dairyman's daughter, grace, peace, and mercy be with you. The lines have fallen for you in pleasant places; surely you have a delightful inheritance. Press forward in duty, and wait upon the Lord, possessing your soul in holy patience. You have just been with me to the grave of a departed believer. Now, "as for you, go your way until the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." (Daniel 12:13).

NOTE:

The mother died about six months after her daughter, and I have good reason to believe that God was merciful to her, and took her to Himself. May every converted child thus labor and pray for the salvation of their unconverted parents. The father continued for some time after her, and adorned his old age with a walk and conversation befitting the gospel. I can not doubt that the daughter and both her parents are now met together in "the land of pure delights—where saints immortal reign!"

The grave of the dairyman's daughter is very modest—a mere mound, with a plain slab of stone erected over it. The inscription on the monument reads, In memory of Betsey Wallbridge "the dairyman's daughter" who died May 30, 1801, 31 years of age. "She being dead—yet speaks."

"Let me die the death of the righteous—and let my last end be like his!"

Numbers 23:10

**Re: Death - where is your sting? - posted by BrokenOne (), on: 2009/4/11 6:55**

CHRISTIAN:

Hello, Death, my old enemy. My old slave-master. Have you come to talk to me again? To frighten me?

I am not the person you think I am. I am not the one you used to talk to. Something has happened. Let me ask you a question, Death.

Where is your sting?

DEATH, sneeringly:

My sting is your sin.

CHRISTIAN:

I know that, Death. But that's not what I asked you. I asked, where is your sting? I know what it is. But tell me where it is.

Why are you fidgeting, Death? Why are you looking away? Why are you turning to go? Wait, Death, you have not answered my question. Where is your sting?

Where is, my sin?

What? You have no answer? But, Death, why do you have no answer? How will you terrify me, if you have no answer?

O Death, I will tell you the answer. Where is your sting? Where is my sin? It is hanging on that tree. God made Christ to be sin—my sin. When he died, the penalty of my sin was paid. The power of it was broken. I bear it no more.

Farewell, Death. You need not show up here again to frighten me. God will tell you when to come next time. And when you come, you will be his servant. For me, you will have no sting.

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:55-57)

([http://www.desiringgod.org/Blog/1726\\_a\\_conversation\\_with\\_death\\_on\\_good\\_friday/](http://www.desiringgod.org/Blog/1726_a_conversation_with_death_on_good_friday/)) Source

**Re: reviving a thread to remind us - posted by broclint (), on: 2010/1/2 18:16**

What drastic and marked changes a solitary day can make. Last year on this day of the week I was preaching my oldest brother's funeral, and 364 days from the day of his death his first great grandchild, a boy, was born into his family. All that happens, to us happens within those boundaries we call a year. None of us know what a day may bring forth. We can so easily squander our time, not realizing at all that in the midst of some foolish and frivolous contention over the things that all this temporary world is consumed by, our year, our final year has arrived for us. Even those arguments that we may claim are "for the sake of truth" in view of the certainty of eternity are reduced to what they so many times are in reality... an exercise in futility and a display of the vanity of pride.

This thread, for the sake of the newer members of the SI family, has many precious truths for perusal and consideration. We are all on a very short pilgrimage.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom".

John Newton wrote in one of his songs:

"Time, with an unwearied hand,  
Pushes round the seasons past,  
And in life's frail glass, the sand  
Sinks apace, not long to last:  
Many, well as you or I,  
Who last year assembled thus;  
In their silent graves now lie,  
Graves will open soon for us!"

He closed with this verse:

"Happy souls who fear the Lord  
Time is not too swift for you;  
When your Savior gives the word,  
Glad you'll bid the world adieu:  
Then He'll wipe away your tears,  
Near Himself appoint your place;  
Swifter fly, ye rolling years,  
Lord, we long to see Thy face."

This year like many others has silently marked the death of those precious to some of us... those known to God, unknown to us.

wn and unmourned to the world.

Psalms 116:15 (NKJV)

15 Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints.

Isaiah 57:1-2 (NKJV)

1 The righteous perishes, And no man takes it to heart; Merciful men are taken away, While no one considers That the righteous is taken away from evil.

2 He shall enter into peace; They shall rest in their beds, Each one walking in his uprightness.

Clint

**Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2010/1/3 9:26**

Another poem by John Newton reflecting on the brevity of this life in view of another year:

Time, by moments, steals away,  
First the hour, and then the day;  
Small the daily loss appears,  
Yet it soon amounts to years:  
Thus another year is flown,  
Now it is no more our own  
(If it brought or promised good)  
Than the years before the flood.  
But (may none of us forget)  
It has left us much in debt;  
Favors from the Lord received,  
Sins that have His Spirit grieved;  
Marked by an unerring hand  
In His book recorded stand;  
Who can tell the vast amount,  
Placed to each of our account?  
Happy, the believing soul!  
Christ for you has paid the whole;  
While you own the debt is large,  
You may plead a full discharge:  
But poor careless sinner, say,  
What can you to justice pay?  
Tremble, lest when life is past,  
Into prison you be cast!  
Will you still increase the score?  
Still be careless, as before?  
O, forbid it, gracious Lord,  
Touch their spirits by Thy Word!  
Now, in mercy, to them show  
What a mighty debt they owe!  
All their unbelief subdue,  
Let them find forgiveness too.  
Spared to see another year,  
Let Thy blessing meet us here;  
Come, Thy dying work revive,  
Bid Thy drooping garden thrive:  
Sun of righteousness arise!  
Warm our hearts, and bless our eyes;  
Let our prayer Thy bowels move,  
Make this year a time of love!

And this one:



See! another year is gone!  
Quickly have the seasons passed!  
This we enter now upon  
May to many prove our last.  
Mercy hitherto has spared,  
But have mercies been improved?  
Let us ask, am I prepared  
Should I be this year removed?  
Some we now no longer see,  
Who their mortal race have run;  
Seemed as fair for life as we,  
When the former year begun;  
Some, but who God only knows,  
Who are here assembled now,  
Ere the present year shall close,  
To the stroke of death must bow.  
Life a field of battle is,  
Thousands fall within our view;  
And the next death-bolt that flies,  
May be sent to me or you:  
While we preach, and while we hear,  
Help us, Lord, each one, to think,  
Vast eternity is near,  
I am standing on the brink.  
If from guilt and sin set free,  
By the knowledge of Thy grace;  
Welcome, then, the call will be  
To depart and see Thy face:  
To Thy saints, while here below,  
With new years, new mercies come;  
But the happiest year they know  
Is their last, which leads them home.

Clint

**Re: quotes from the earlier posts on this thread - posted by broclint (), on: 2010/1/3 15:41**

There have been some very profound statements made early on on this thread that are food for thought. Mike (crssck) brought forth some very compelling statements after the death of his mother. It is so very true, that in the face of the stark reality of death... its finality, the permanence of that state where Revelation 22:11 (NKJV)  
11 He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." When that ultimate reality stabs at our heart rather than merely our minds and mouths, there are so many frivolous and foolish arguments, and the sounds of children crying in the marketplace... the "I have piped and you have not danced" statements that fade into the oblivion where they belong.

Here are some excerpts from those early quotes by Mike:

Quote:  
----- There is a phenomenon in the rational world well worthy of consideration, inquiry, and solution--the strange and fatal insensibility of men to the grand fact that they are mortal! Since it is infallibly certain that they must and will die--and since death is so solemn an event--how does it happen that so few ever seriously think of it, or really prepare for it?

One would think that so grand and solemn a fact as death, especially viewed in connection with the events which are to immediately follow it--heaven, hell and eternity--along with the uncertainty how soon it may be realized--might operate with an unlimited and altogether overpowering influence upon men's minds and hearts!

The very shrinking back, the uncomfortableness of even approaching the bereaved is so telling of this. I recall it well enough before being arrested by the Lord. Much silence is met in response of the bereaved and while that is also understandable to a point there are other things I have noticed of late

and have been contemplating.

Why is there no controversy with the bereaved? Who dares to pick a fight, have an argument, even attempt to start correcting ones theology. At any other time than this all cordiality goes out the window, any real concern for the suffering soul is beyond forgotten, it is not recalled having no instance of knowing. How different might our perceptions be if we looked at all people with their destiny at hand. How much pride would give way if we saw through different lenses as if everyone we met has just lost a loved one, as if they were to die this very day?

We, who have the open secret of life, how much death is in our words, and arguments, oneupmanship, so called prophetic utterance, right theology flowing through dirty conduits?

Â...Death has brought everything into focus, as I suspected, as I have often contemplated, only to be again and again sidelined or perhaps hoodwinked by the grinding away of this worlds daily activities and distractionsÂ...

They try to forget it--and alas, too often succeed in accomplishing this fatal oblivion! Yet we can scarcely wonder at this, when we consider what is their spiritual condition--and what death is!

The great sheen and gloss of so called reality. It's tangible. It's that which we can touch and feel and move about in. It most certainly is real as real gets. This world as scripture is constantly hammering away at our dull minds to recognize up against the unseen and eternal, so far away, so distant. For us, we of the peculiar understanding says this present world, this 'reality' it is as difficult as can be to have to deal with the world on it's own merits, it's own ruler. To gather ourselves, not forsaking the fellowship of one another brings us together more than in a separated class of society. It is that, but it is far more. It cannot as we have often intimated become a 'we\they' construct or we will only continue to divide and subdivide ourselves into more and more clicks. The church is already well on it's way of cannibalizing itself. Am trying to go beyond all that ...

When we leave the fellowshiping of ourselves, when we leave the prayer closet and go out to face a hostile world to everything we hold dear, by it's sheer ... disassociation from everything that would be considered 'abstract' and untouchable, eternity such a lofty far off in the future notion that for us is an ever present now. How do we fare? How do we distinguish one from the other? There is something here I feel needs better clarification, that I want to leave alone and hear others thoughts, see if this can be made better sense of. It is with death itself that brings everything into sharp focus and bridges this gap of two worlds if I may ...

Death is . . . the moment of destiny; the seal of eternity; the cessation of probation; the commencement of retribution and judgment!

"the cessation of probation" Most interesting this, no more ... testing, or sinning against the Lord, failing Him, failing others. Done. Finished. The probation is ended. Think there is a great deal more here to chew on than we know...  
Bouncing around again here ...

It is the commonness of death, which deprives it of its extreme dreadfulness. If death happened in our world only once in a century, it would be felt like the shock of an earthquake; and would hush the inhabitants of earth into a breathless silence, while the echoes of the knell of the departed soul were reverberating around the globe!

It did occur to me in prayer shortly after my mother's death this, this daily occurrence and my thought to the Lord was "This is a constant for You!" Every moment of everyday, in the time it took to write this ... how many?

For us, how succinct are these words!

If death happened in our world only once in a century, it would be felt like the shock of an earthquake; and would hush the inhabitants of earth into a breathless silence,  
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**Re: Death awaits - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2010/1/6 3:59**

COMFORT FOR MOURNERS

Henry Law, 1873

Sorrow has crossed the threshold of your home, and sits a downcast inhabitant in your heart. You mourn as one from whom all joy is fled. The saddened countenance--the open fount of tears--the swelling sighs--the shrinking from needless discourse--the pensive musing--clearly prove your burden of distress. This grief must spring from some most crushing cause.

It is so. You drink affliction's bitterest cup. Death has approached with withering power, and one, most tenderly beloved, has fallen. BEREAVEMENT, ever working its relentless work, now touches you. You bow beneath its desolating blow. The form on which you joyed to gaze no longer lives. The voice, so charming to your ear, can never more be heard on earth. A vacant seat tells of a sadder vacancy within. The dear one--dearer far than self--must now be covered in the grave. You mourn with grievous mourning. Who can marvel? Who would restrain?

With weeping friends the Christian ever weeps. Do not think that gracious spirits are unfeeling. Grace tenderly transforms the heart. It makes a dreary waste to bear sweet fruit. It wholly sweetens the inner man. It implants new hopes--new promises.

pects--new affections--new desires: but they are all high--unselfish--heavenly. Its province is to melt, and not to freeze. It is no stoic sternness. It is love going forth in amiable emotion. It never checks the tears of broken-heartedness. Hence be assured your grief is not exclusively your own.

Scripture with melting pathos shows many pictures of the bereaved. It states, but never chides their grief. Mourners pass the sacred page attractive and endearing. We honor, while we sympathize.

There is no eclipse of holy dignity in Abraham, when he "came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her."--Gen. 23:2. Where is the heart which disesteems the agony of Jacob, when, supposing Joseph to be slain by beasts, "he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days." He refused to be comforted; and he said: "For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him."--Gen. 37:34, 35. How many sighs re-echo David's wail: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son! Absalom! Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son! my son!"--2 Sam. 18:33. The blessed Jesus with approving love joins in the tears of Bethany's sad sisters. The Psalmist consecrates the sorrow of an orphan child in the similitude: "I bowed down heavily, as one that mourns for his mother."--Ps. 35:14.

It then would be harsh philosophy--far alien from Christian love--showing no lineaments of the heart of Jesus--crudely ignoring the endearments of domestic life, which could now counsel you to dry your tears, and do revolting violence to man's best instincts. Christian sympathy regards you with much softer mind. "Behold! he mourns," is a key which unlocks the chamber of condolence. The question arises, and will not be put aside--Can access be obtained to that bereaved house? Can any wings convey some words of loving comfort? Without intrusion or disturbing presence, can tender whispers soothe; can quiet entrance be gained; can an unseen finger point to true solace; can the mourner weep alone, and still hear truths strong to minister relief?

These humble pages venture the attempt. Oh! may they come as a reviving shower on the mown grass! May our gracious Jesus, whose office it is "to comfort all that mourn--to appoint unto those who mourn in Zion to give unto them beauty for ashes--the oil of joy for mourning--the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," now show that He is and ever will be, all that this Word portrays. May it be found that He who smites, is near to heal--that the arm which prostrates, is ready to upraise--that this cup of woe is mixed with precious balm--that the valley of grief often leads to pastures of enduring peace! Holy Spirit! give Your smile, and then the sting of suffering is gone.

No comfort can be sound, except God's Scripture is its base. Let, then, the Word be heard. It thus exhorts the stricken: "Hear the rod, and him who has appointed it."--Micah 6: 9. Therefore the rod is graciously ordained. "Affliction comes not forth of the dust, neither does trouble spring out of the ground."--Job 5:6. It is not chance which thus bereaves you. Death has not hurled a random-shaft, which undesignedly has found your dwelling. Your beloved is not borne from you by the tide of casual current. "God's never-failing providence orders all things in heaven and in earth." No sparrow falls to the ground without the counsel of His will. Matt. 10:29.

This arrow flew, then, from a well-poised bow; therefore no rebel thought may swell. Mercy, wisdom, love, are the inscription of this trial. Humble yourself with more than meek submission. Let patient lips, with true sincerity, profess, "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him." Remember Aaron. When the keenest edge of affliction harrowed his very soul, no murmur, no complaint was uttered. Deeply he felt--bitterly he mourned--but "he held his peace."--Lev. 10:3. Emulate the Psalmist's meekness, "I was silent, I opened not my mouth, because You did it."--Ps. 39:9.

When the sun of prosperity is in its zenith, gratitude adores the giving hand. Now under this dark cloud let grateful love still testify: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21. Forbid it that mere formality should breathe the often-repeated prayer: "Your will be done." In this rod read the appointment of your God, the author of your being--the gracious disposer of your every concern--your constant and all-loving Benefactor, and acknowledge, "It is well." The love which gave Christ Jesus to the cross, writes goodness on all minor dealings. Realize that it is His hand which presses you so heavily, and in its very weight you will find elements of comfort. Out of the darkness there will spring up light. Only say, My Father--the Father of all mercies--the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ--the God, whose name is love, thus smites, and heavenly calm will lull the waves of sorrow to repose.

Mark not the appointment only--hear, also, the rod. The rod surely speaks, and its voice is the voice of God. Your trial is not silent. It pleads with heavenly eloquence. Breathe, then, the inward prayer: "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears."--1 Sam. 3:9.

In its approach it may appal, as the loud thunder's clang. It may shake terribly the very center of your heart. But pause, a

and you will hear a still small whisper dealing calmly with your conscience. It calls you apart to quiet meditation. It bids you, while severed from the world's intrusions, to ponder your ways--to consider your state--to hold frank, upright, manly converse with yourself. It presents a mirror, faithfully reflecting self. It asks most pointedly--How stands your soul with God? Do you know Him as your Father in Christ Jesus? Have you received His Son--the gift of gifts--as all your salvation and desire? Have you welcomed Him as bringing redemption on His wings? Has your faith gazed on Him hanging on the accursed tree, and pouring out His soul unto death, that He might thus atone for all your guilt, and cleanse you by His precious blood? Do you trust Him as exhausting to the last drop the cup of wrath so justly due to each of your innumerable sins? Do you bless Him as paying to the uttermost the debt of curse incurred by your transgressions? Do you believe in Him satisfying, as your surety, all the demands of all the holy attributes of God? Have you the happy knowledge that this perfect expiation, makes your every crimson dye whiter than the whitest snow, and levels every mountain of iniquity, until all disappear. Have you put on His pure obedience, as the wedding garment, which decks believers for the courts of heaven? Deeply conscious of your miserable guilt--trembling at the loud threats of vengeance--renouncing all hope in self--have you fled to the all-atoning, all-covering, all-beautifying Jesus? Have you enshrined Him on the throne of your soul, as "made of God unto us, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption?"--1 Cor. 1:30. Do you act loving reliance on the Gospel-message, and personally embrace its glorious hopes? Can you truly aver, O blessed Jesus, thrice-adored Lord, "You know all things;" You know that I have committed my soul to You in full assurance of Your power and willingness to save!

If so, happy is your state. You are one with Christ, and Christ is one with you. No power in heaven or earth can part you from the love of God. In this affliction, He, too, is afflicted. These things all work together for your good. Yet a little while and you shall dwell with God, having His name written on your brow, and "God shall wipe away all tears from your eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying--neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."--Rev.21:4.

Is there not sweetness in the present sorrow which helps you thus to prove the sure foundation of your hopes, and to uplift, more loudly than before, the voice of praise for mercies without bounds? But it may be that, tremblingly, you hesitate. Conscience cannot admit that faith has raised you to this eminence. You fear that you are still a stranger to the Spirit's indwelling and converting presence--an alien to the covenant of grace--not sheltered in the saving ark.

If so, be persuaded. While you thus mourn domestic loss, bemoan your deeper misery. Weep not for the dead alone--weep too for yourself. Death has opened your door. No human means could stay its step. It may relentlessly return with icy hand to tear you hence. You are helpless to withstand. But where, ah! where would it bear you? Hear one warning out of many: "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him."--John 3:36.

But yet you live. Yet you have space, and Jesus is beside you--full of all grace. In this bereavement He seems to stand at the door of your heart and knock. Rev. 3:20. Open immediately. Admit the willing Savior. Fall low on your knees in this your house of death. No longer spurn the mercies of the Cross. Cast yourself into the expanded arms of reconciling love. Arise a living soul. "Awake, you that sleep and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light"--Eph. 5:14. Thus may this present sorrow prove to be God's blessing in the highest!

It may be that your heart, believing in the Lord, is conscious of much recent coldness. The flame which once burned brightly is now sadly dim. The love which warmly beat in every pulse is partially repressed. Your former joys droop as a frost-touched leaf. Close walk with God and His dear Son; and watchful waiting for the Spirit's beckoning hand; and happy study of the Word; and prayer uplifting above earth; and holy converse redolent of heaven, no longer are your pleasure-ground. The cheating world has reassumed some sway. You are not happy. You have tasted Canaan's grapes; therefore all other fruit is tasteless. You have walked with your Lord as in a paradise of joy--other companionship must be a weary blank.

Now, while you bewail your dead, bewail yourself. Depressed in shame, catch the echo of the many calls--the gracious promises--the tender expostulations, which throng around backsliders. "Return, O backsliding Israel, says the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever."--Jer. 3:12. Plead such tender words. Claim them meekly as now become your due. The answer will surpass belief. You will find that while a friend on earth is gone, your Friend in heaven cannot die. You will realize the sweetness of the truth: "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."--Heb. 13:5. Your dead one cannot be restored, but this death may restore your soul.

Your case may yet exceed in wretchedness. While, in your pensive loneliness, you search the tablets of your heart, you may read clear, unanswerable accusations. Some hidden lust may lurk like Achan in the camp. Some evil embers, not yet

et thoroughly extinct, may smoulder. Some sin may still detain you with bewitching cords.

Rich is the mercy which brings this misery to light, and warns of an entangling net, and of a leak imperiling the vessel, and of a precipice before your feet. Be wise. Flee this Delilah's lap. Dash resolutely this poisoned goblet to the ground. Do not let this vampire prey on your life-blood. Loathe yourself in dust and ashes. Confess the aggravations of your guilt, and wrestle for pardon through Christ and the all-expiating cross. When penitence and faith thus plead, they cannot plead in vain. A voice will issue from the mercy-seat: "I have blotted out as a thick cloud your transgressions, and as a cloud your sins."--Isa. 44:22. "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."--Heb. 8:12. You will soon sing with grateful heart: "I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy; for You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities." Ps. 31:7. Thus a friend lost may issue in salvation found, and the void which this bereavement makes, may be filled up by God.

But no delay must intervene. Gain from your present loss may be obtained today. No man may reckon on tomorrow. Fruit, when ripe, not gathered, will decay. The soil which showers soften, soon becomes dry.

Perhaps you think this weeping will be life-long--joys will be buried in this grave--the sun of earthly happiness is set. But the darkest night will have a dawn. Time's hand has art to efface the writing of an iron pen, and to heal the scars which sorrow has infixed. To customary employ you will return; and as you have been, so you may be again. Unless you come forth wholly changed, you will remain more hopelessly the same. The furnace, which refines the ore, hardens the flint. The sun, which melts the snow, converts the clay to stone. Your sorrow brings a blessing or a curse. The warmth which opens flowers, revives the frost-bound adder.

Ponder the dreadful testimony: "They would have none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof."--Prov. 1:30. Remember the solemn admonition: "Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more."--Isa. 1:5. This call may be your last. If you still slumber, you may be left to sleep unto perdition--quiet, undisturbed, forsaken. No second affliction may shake your fatal rest. Nahum 1:9.

It is not written in vain: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."--Gen. 6:3. He was resisted by sinners before the flood. He is resisted oftentimes now. He may be resisted by you this day, even beside a lifeless form.

You have heard, too, of a "reprobate mind." This is no unmeaning sound--no shadow of an unreal form--no figment of imaginary state--no term invented to give groundless terror. It is a sad description of a sadder woe. It is a current drifting to blackness of darkness forever. If no grace mingles with present tears, your mind, now seemingly so soft, may harden into hopeless hardness. Forbid it, gracious God, for Jesus' sake!

Many are prone to lull the mourner with vain fantasies, and bring false opiates to his lips. But these pages heal no wound deceitfully. They show no comforts which are empty sounds. At once they point to Christ, knowing that in Him alone there is salvation and all peace. Receive Him. All consolations follow in His train. He is the fount of solace. Heaven is happiness because He is there; and earth is happiness when He is known.

Your sorrow brings, too, especial hopes. Showers of blessings often fall from such dark clouds. They have this fringe of cheering light: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."--Rev. 3:19. The path, smooth only with unchanging ease, in which no thorns afflict the feet, is not the road familiar to the heirs of life. Through much distress--through a waste wilderness of woe--over huge mountains of affliction--through deep waters of grief--through heated furnaces of trouble--with weeping eye--with agonizing breast the heavenly home is often reached.

Your present anguish, then, is hopeful sign, that hidden purposes of love are ripe. God seems to charge this trouble, as David his captains, eager for the fight. Deal gently for my sake with my son.--2 Sam. 18:5. He thus prunes His vines to multiply the fruit. The knife is sharp, but it removes encumbering boughs. The north wind hardens the stem before the south wind calls forth the buds. The process is not purposeless. These rigid means are now astir to wean you from the world, whose ways are death--to unmask the hollow treachery of creature-charms--to expose the utter vanity of earth's delights. The lesson is now taught, that all is fleeting emptiness apart from God. He, and He only, is unfailing portion--a cup of overflowing joy--a garden in which calm happiness is ever blooming, ever fragrant, ever new.

Often on these wings of sorrow the Spirit flies to make glad the heart. In sable garb He comes the harbinger of saving good. In a grim mask He casts down Satan from His wrongful throne--expels the troops of vile desires--subdues ungodly lusts--establishes the reign of righteousness, and peace, and purity, and holiness, and brings down heaven to abide on earth.

Thus sorrow is the dawn of hope. Unless her only son had died, the widow of Nain might not have beheld her Lord. He meets the mourner following the coffin. When God's mysterious ways are known, death will appear as often used to bring new comforts. Many in heaven will gratefully confess, We would have died in hopeless state, unless death had borne off some friend. But by inflicting death, Christ showed Himself the Prince of life--giving life to lifeless souls, or life more abundantly to those who lived before.

May these blessings now be richly yours! Through your fast-falling tears may heavenly love be seen in heavenly light! May Jesus' presence fill the new made void. And while your happy smiles reflect His saving smile, may you hear the storm-allaying voice: It is I, be not afraid--look unto Me and moderate your grief--cast all your care on Me, and be sustained--receive Me, and be comforted.

And when your secluded days shall end, may you go forth a light to enlighten--a sweet savor to refresh--a mighty power to attract to Christ! May He from this day be your total life! Then when you lie down to die--and die you must, except His coming shall prevent it--may death, which is a Christian treasure (1 Cor. 3:22), be welcomed with no shrinking fear. May you extend a willing hand. The messenger, though black, will bear you to your waiting Lord. You will then learn, what words of man can never teach, how great a Savior is the blessed Jesus; and how salvation infinitely exceeds what hope can paint, or heart conceive, or flesh and blood inherit.

But you must wait until your change shall come. Job 14:14. Take heed that all your waiting days be chastened--savored--hallowed by this grief. The house of mourning is a teaching school. The painful lessons are severely kind. Turn not away--the harshness is but seeming--the profit may endure forever. Distasteful weeds supply the thrifty bee, and give large stores of honey. Juicy berries hang on a prickly briar. Samson found sweets in an unlikely hive. Lasting impressions come from heavy blows.

Lose none of the improvements of the recent scene. You witnessed death accomplishing its work--irresistible--unrestrained--mocking all opposing means. It came and conquered. At its touch the strength declined--the vital powers ebbed--the luster of the eye grew dim--the color faded--the senses laid aside their functions--the fluttering pulse stood still--animation was no more--the heart no longer moved--the spirit fled its tenement of clay--nothing remained, but a stranded wreck--a tenantless abode--an empty casket--a deserted shell. Death displayed its ruthlessness and might. It put forth its barbaric sting and laughed resistance into nothingness.

It is instructive now to ask, How is death armed with this tremendous sway? What furnished, what supplied its weapons? What placed a helpless world beneath its conquering feet? Whence its commission to give the inhabitants of the palace and the hut alike, a banquet to devouring worms?

Now ponder the enlightening reply; SIN is the origin of death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."--Rom. 5:12. Learn that sin slew your friend, and all who ever died. Sin locks earth's offspring in its foul embrace, and so consigns them to the arms of death. Survey the lifeless frames from Abel to this hour--huge is the pile--the whole is piled by sin. It digs all graves--constructs all vaults--peoples each graveyard. In all the tears which have bedewed the dying and the dead--in all the mourning which now racks your heart, and has made earth the home of sighs, behold the work of death through sin. You see it now in your own house. Oh! see it rightly, and you will largely gain.

Profit will not be small, if henceforth you hate sin with deadlier hate. View well the monster in true light--the enemy of God--the enemy of man. It changed fair Eden into a wilderness of thorns, and blackened angels into fiends of hell. Never give truce to such a foe. Cry for the Spirit's help to drive it from each corner of your heart. Unless you slay it, it will be your ruin. Nail it to the Savior's cross. It will fight hard, and struggle long; but cease not the encounter. Take courage. Play the man. The believer can do all things through Christ who strengthens him. Phil. 4:13.

Grace will expand, while, thus abhorring sin, you steel your breast in earnest opposition. This is rich gain. Your sorrow thus yields profit.

But richer gain is near. Look now with more loving gaze on Jesus. He seeks you with most fitting comfort. Of every ill He is consummate remedy. He more than heals each wound--repairs each breach--retrieves each loss. But especially He comes the mourner's healer. He bids you mark His death-subduing work. Behold Him as annulling sin--annihilating death.

He sprinkles sin with His most precious blood, and it is blotted out--no trace remains. He sets His conquering feet upon the power of death, and it is crushed--it lifts no more its head. As you bewail your dead, hear His triumphant shout, "I am He that lives and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."--Rev. 1:18. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in Me, though he dies, yet shall he live; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."--John 11:25, 26. Clasp now to your heart the record, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."--1 Cor. 15:22. Drink the full cup of comfort, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."--1 Thess. 4:14.

Anticipate this promised day, and tears will cease. It speeds apace. It may be very near. The angels may be standing now with wings all ready for descending flight. Earnest expectation listens for "the shout of the Archangel and the trumpet of God." Let faith go forth to meet the conqueror coming in His power. We too, so many as are His, shall bear our part. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory."--Col. 3:4.

"We shall all be changed." How changed! Thought staggers, while it strives to picture. Words fail in utter impotence to tell. But the Spirit's hand uplifts the veil, and we are called to gaze. Amazing glories are portrayed, and the reality will gloriously exceed.

The body crumbles into dust touched by corruption--the prey of loathsomeness--offensive to the shunning sight. But it shall rise--how changed! No flower blooming from its wintry tomb--no bright-winged flutterer bursting from its grub-shroud, can give similitude. It shall rise in incorruption--ever fresh in undecaying beauty--ever shining in immortal luster. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."--1 Cor. 15:49.

"It is sown in dishonor." We hide it as less than worthless in our eyes. We consign it to its native dust--we lay it low, lest it should taint the air. "It shall rise in glory." The brightness of the mid-day sun is black as sackcloth beside its brilliancy. Concentrate all the rays that ever shone, it shall outshine them all. Image our Lord's transfigured glory, the new body shall not be less bright.

"It is sown in weakness." No log can be more impotent. It has no power to stir. Raise the hand--it falls. It shall rise with more than giant-might--girded with strength--clothed with power, as a warrior's panoply. We reckon angels to be strong--one smote in the camp of the Assyrians in a night 185,000. A glorified saint is not inferior in power.

During its fleshly state, the frame was animal--linked to all the littleness, and ills, and clogs, and weights which burden nature. It shall rise wholly spiritual--light--agile as the very air--fleet as the wings of wind. "Though you have lived among the pots, yet shall you be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."--Ps. 68:13. But the power and beauty of the resurrection-robcs cannot be fully known until their clothing be put on.

Where, then, shall death appear? No search can find it. It is wholly and forever gone. It has vanished as the fabric of a dream, or as the morning dew. It is utterly destroyed. It is swallowed up in victory.

Fully drink the comfort of this prospect, and smiles will dry up tears. Uplift your downcast eyes, and watch for the streaks of the approaching day. Think, how brief is death's apparent triumph, how soon its chains will all be severed--and all its captives regain liberty! Go forth in faith, and mark its final abolition. Hear the shout of resurrection multitudes: "O grave, where is your victory! O death, where is your sting!"

Do not your comforts swell as a wide-flowing river, while buoyant on these wings of thought you give due praises to our Lord? His is this victory. His the commanding voice which calls to deathless glory. Give Him full thanks, and happiness will surely brighten. Adore Him and rejoice. Pour out your ardent hearts. It is sweet exercise.

Brief is the time in which your gratitude can be evinced. Waste not another grain. Let thoughts of death and deathlessness quicken your tardy spirit. Then these days of mourning will bring life-long joys. It will be heaven begun to take each step intently riveted on Christ--ever listening for His voice--measuring the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of His salvation--soaring high above the charnel-house of earth--watching for His sure return--inhabiting by faith "the building of God--the house not made with hands--eternal in the heavens;"--2 Cor. 5:1--going forth to join the white-robed multitude whom He shall lead unto living fountains of waters--who shall obtain joy and gladness--and from whom sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

The loss which brings these comforts to your heart should not be regarded as hostile arrow from an adverse bow.

This trial calls you to especial prayer. It is the Spirit's rule. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray."--James 5:13.

Happy affliction which inspirits prayer! Our hearts are prone to cleave to earth--to nestle in soft ease--to shun the effort of wrestling with God. Such indolence is injury, and tends to poverty of soul, and is a barrier to a flood of joys. It is a loving hand which shakes this rest. The rod is kind which drives a truant son to school. Absalom fires the fields of Joab to obtain an interview.--2 Sam. 14:30. The voice of mercy in this trial calls, My son, come hold more close and constant converse with Me. What! if an ear on earth be dead, your gain is vast if you talk more with God. Unlock your care. Pent up vapor may do deadly hurt. Let it fly heavenward. The dove will return with olive-leaf.

Quicken now the art of communion with heaven. Live more above. Then when you, too, go hence, you will but move from God to God. In better place, you will retain like company. Converse of prayer will end in converse of praise. In happier nearness communion will be the same. The grief is gain which thus enlivens prayer.

Here faithfulness must warn that ENEMIES infest the mourner's path. Double the watch on every avenue of Satan's entrance. He now draws near, expectant of admission. He well knows his favorable times. Dark clouds encompass you. You sit alone. In darkness the thief goes forth. The lonely traveler is attacked. Jesus, alone and weak, is tried by all the powers of hell. Job's solitary woe lays bare his breast. The arrow quickly seeks him, "Curse God and die."--Job 2:9. Unnerved by sadness, you will hear the wily whisper, Is this the proof of heavenly love? is this the pressure of a tender hand? are these the dealings of beneficence? surely this sorrow might have been withheld! Thus Satan will strive to inject hard thoughts.

You may not listen or hold par lance. In holy horror turn the back. The sun is not removed when clouds obscure the rays. God seems to leave, that we may seek Him with more speed. It is a noble word, "Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him."--Job 13:15. This gale is rough, but let it drive you to a Father's arms, and it will not be adverse. Win now another victory for unwavering faith, and show its power to trust amid all storms.

You now have precious opportunity. Let it not escape unused. Many eyes observe you. Let them see your shining light and godlike lineaments. Let meek submission--Christ-like patience--unmurmuring acquiescence gild as a halo your bereaved state. Let it be seen how firmly you trust God--how confidently you drink the bitter cup--how lovingly you bow before the rod--how unreservedly you bless the chastening hand. Thus the reality of your experience may convince, where previous arguments have failed. Thus many may be led to say, Surely the anchor is strong which holds the ship in such a storm--the rock is firm which such a billow cannot shake--the joy is true which even now faints not--the help is precious, which can thus sustain. Is there not comfort in the hope that your demeanor may win others to receive the truth of God, and cause some doubting hearts to cry, "This people shall be our people--this God our God--this Savior our Savior--we will now welcome Christ as ours forever!"

You will reap comfort too, if from this grief more Christian ZEAL shall spring. Perhaps hitherto your soul has slept on downy beds of hopes and promises. Precious indeed they are. Their cup is filled to the brim with joy, and we may drink abundantly. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice."--Phil. 4:4. But it is sickly faith which only muses and plucks flowers. Real grace will toil with hands on the plough, and feet in the furrows. Without activity health fails. By motion the limbs and sinews strengthen. By exercise we grow to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

At this moment ask your conscience, whether you are laboring--your lamps burning--your spirits ardent in well-doing. Is it your morning question, "Lord, what will You have me to do?"--Acts 9:6. Rest not until you can reply, "Lord, here am I, send me."--Isa. 6:8. Another cannot indicate your special call. But urgent work is surely at your door. The poor--the sick--the ignorant encircle you. These you may visit--relieve--comfort--teach. A chair awaits you beside dying beds. As deer pant for the water-brooks, so many a broken spirit longs for the tidings which your lips might bring. Haunts of misery and vice invite your steps. With loving words you may arrest the wandering sheep. Timely counsel may rescue many from hell's gates, and pluck brands from eternal burning. Angels have no such privilege.

While then you sorrow, arm yourself for work. And limit not your zeal to home--to family--to parish--to neighborhood--to a native land. Much need is here. More is beyond. Traverse the globe in thought. What deserts of heathen night! What nations, tribes, and peoples, fast locked in chains of death! Perishing masses cry aloud, "Come over and help us."--Acts 16:9. Behold those countless idols--each seems to reproach you for allowing it so long to rule and to deceive.

Do not say that you have no wings to fly to distant climates. Be it so. But you have means to speed heroic champions longing to go forth. You may forego some luxury--deny some cost--restrain some lavish taste, and thus have means to swell missionary funds. You may collect and circulate the gospel message. Your fire may kindle many energies. Your exam



ple may proclaim the Christian duty. Your tongue may tell the heathen need.

Thus your friend's death may be the birthday of new happiness. It is ever true that in activity there is a glow of healthy joy. In the delight of holy work mourners have no time to mourn. Self and distress give place to lively guests.

You will find too that in his toil the Gospel-laborer receives good wages. There is repayment in the thought, "By grace I do my best for Him, who has done all for me. By the Spirit's help I live for Him, who lived and died and lives again, my Savior and my God. His eye is ever on me. So too my eye is ever toward Him. He has my all, who is my all. Poor and scanty is my best service--but such as it is, I place it at His feet, and realize by faith an accepting smile--and foretaste the welcome, Well done, good and faithful servant." May you resolve in your affliction thus to labor--thus to joy--thus to win jewels for your heavenly crown!

This comfort now seeks mourners. May many through it gain conformity to Jesus--our elder Brother--the Man of Sorrows--the acquainted with grief--who drank of the brook by the way, and now lifts up the head.

When the deceased lived 'one with Christ'--when holy walk reflected genuine faith--when pious course proved the indwelling Spirit, a legacy of solid comfort is bequeathed. This should be duly prized. It is the spring of happiest thought. It may be with devoted love--with anxious watching--with ceaseless care to smooth the dying road--with all devices to minister relief, you nursed your loved one to the gate of death. Perhaps looks of love were interchanged, and parting words affectionately breathed. In a moment the spirit winged its flight. The cage was opened, and the bird was gone.

You anxiously inquire, "Where, ah! where is it fled? This earth is left--what is the new home reached? The fleshy house is void, where is the recent inhabitant?" The lifeless clay gives no reply. Reason may guess, and darken counsel with misgivings upon mists of vain surmise. Conjecture may dream dreams. Long labyrinths of thought may puzzle and fatigue, and many wanderings leave you wandering still.

But here the Bible dissipates all doubt, and guides to an enchanting and delightful view. The upraised veil reveals a scene, in which reality of blessedness resides. Open the eye of FAITH and soberly behold. Speculation has no need to lend wings. A faithful record courts attention. Receive its plain message. It is true as the truth of God--bright as the heaven of heavens--resplendent with a blaze of bliss. It fills a cup of comfort to the brim.

Paul is again inspired to speak. Hear and believe. "I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."--Phil 1:23. No doubt can cloud the fact, that to go hence is to join Christ. The saint's departure bears him to the Savior's side.

Again, approach the Cross and listen while the dying speak. Amazing light breaks on the contrite thief. He finds a Savior on the accursed tree. In lively faith he cries, "Lord, remember me, when You come into Your kingdom." There is no pause--no hesitation--no demur--no doubtful answer. At once a sparkling promise is announced--a promise cheering mourners through all time--cheering you in this hour of trial. "Truly I say unto you, Today shall you be with Me in paradise."--Luke 23:42, 43.

What sunbeams shine from Calvary! Amid them bright is the truth, that death conveys believers to the company of Christ. The hour of death is new birth to transcendent life.

Come, listen yet again. Jesus speaks. Mysteriously He communes with the Father. "Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me--for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."--John 17:24. He prays--the prayer is surely heard. He more than prays. He states His will--the will as of Jehovah's fellow. The prayer and will doubly secure a blessed union. Dying believers must then go to Him.

Can you need more? Heaven's signet ring seals this truth.

Blessed announcement! happy tidings! most enrapturing news! most cheering revelation! What joy--what ecstasy--what transport--what delight here sound with trumpet-tongue! All that most ardent hope expected, becomes fruition--all that faintly pictured, is outshone--all that Scripture taught, is fully verified. The faithful pastor--the assuring friend--gave but the faint outline. Jesus--the precious Jesus--the adored Lord of salvation--the wondrous purchaser of wondrous redemption is now seen--seen with no intervening mist--seen not remotely by the telescope of faith--but face to face in all His beauty--all His glory--arrayed in all His majesty--bright in all His smiles of love. There is no dull obscurity--the blissful spirits view

Him as He is. There is no distance--nearness cannot be more near. There is no partial discovery--they know Him, even as they are known. This is no momentary glance--they gaze forever.

Can you repine, while the unfettered spirit thus bathes in an ocean of unfathomable bliss? Think of the recent state. Think of the sure exchange. Do you not hear a voice, 'Weep not for me?' The blessed Jesus seems to touch this chord. Let it now vibrate through your thankful heart. His followers heard, "I go away." They heard and sorrowed. He checks in tone, betokening reproach--"Do you thus show the truth of your affection? This grief is selfishness. Would kindness hold Me back from glory? If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father--for My Father is greater than I." Should you not similarly joy, because another saint has reached the Lord?

With Scripture guidance we may yet advance. It is proved, that eternal union with the Lord is gained. This is the crown of crowns. This is the pinnacle of joy. But this high tree has branches laden with diversity of fruit. We are invited to partake of all. This central light shines in the sky of many stars. We may examine each.

We read, that "he who overcomes, shall no more go out."--Rev. 3:12. There is rich transport in this knowledge of UNCEASING DWELLING. Paradise is really reached. Its threshold is indubitably passed. The soul is truly safe. Salvation verily is won--eternal happiness is a grasped prize--heaven's portals have received a permanent inhabitant. Admitted spirits abide forever.

Ponder this bliss secure from diminishing. While the body held the spirit, fears and tremblings were its daily lot. Timidity often dimmed the Gospel-page, and veiled the promises, and closed the ears to the assuring voice, and raised all phantoms of distracting doubts. Mountains on mountains raised their heights. The way appeared to be both long and steep. Threatening pitfalls and entangling snares beset the path. Satan came forth with all his legion mighty to impede. The thought arose, 'How can this my bark reach the safe haven through foaming billows--against raging winds--amid such rocks--such shoals--such treacherous sands.' David's misgiving brought faintness to the heart. "I shall now perish one day by the hands of Saul."--1 Sam. 27:1.

Where now is this vast host of haunting fears? As smoke before the wind they are dispersed. They are buried deeply, never more to rise. The journey is accomplished--the race is run--the crown of victory is gained--the perils of the voyage are passed--the peaceful haven has received the bark--it floats in waters ruffled by no storm. Safety cannot be more safe. Picture the joy of apprehensions left behind, and certain bliss most tightly grasped. This certainty is real to all the dead in Christ. What solace to surviving friends!

Scripture presents a page of larger joy. It shows the spirit reposing in meadows of sunny rest. REST! how sweet the term to worn-out laborers on earth. But this is the heaven-sent word--"Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth. Yes, says the Spirit, that they may REST from their labors, and their works do follow them."--Rev. 14:13.

Earth to the Christian is a scene of toil. He is a soldier in a warring army. Daily he fights the fight of faith. The foe rests not. His arrows ever fly. Here is the open conflict--there is the secret ambush. One arm must hold the shield of faith--the other must upraise the Spirit's sword. Each day brings battle, and in battle is no rest.

His home, also, is a constant watch-tower, not only from the foe outside, but also from indwelling traitors. The heart swarms with inborn corruptions, each striving to gain sway. The word is sadly true, "The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh--and these are contrary the one to the other, so that you cannot do the things that you would."--Gal. 5:17. There are daily sighs, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." "I delight in the law of God after the inward man--but I find another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members."--Rom. 7:21-23. A sentinel must guard the portals of the lips. Vigilance must keep the feet from evil ways, and turn the eyes from wicked sights, and close the ears to graceless converse. Thus every day is weary watchfulness.

There is, also, the husbandman's employ. The heart is a field requiring constant culture. What fallow ground must be ploughed up! what seed from Scripture must be cast abroad--what tares--what weeds must be uprooted! what budding grapes must be diligently tended! what fences must be raised against destroying beasts! Early and late with agonizing prayer the work must be pushed on. Such is the ceaseless toil. Ease takes not heaven by storm.

But the happy dead now rest. The flesh is left behind--corruptions are deep buried in the grave--evil suggestions can no more disturb--the devil sets no foot in Paradise. This rest cannot be broken. Let us consider and give thanks!

It must not be ignored, that here believers have sweet tastes of rest. There are "green pastures" where the sheep repose. "Still waters" court their feet. Each one can sing, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste."--Canticles 2:3. The precious invitation calls, "Come unto Me, all you who labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."--Matt. 11:28. But this repose of soul consists with outward conflict. It is rest amid incessant tossing of unrest.

True is the testimony, "We who have believed enter into rest."--Heb. 4:3. This rest of faith is real, precious, reviving. Faith sees salvation fully purchased by the work of Christ--redemption earned by His most perfect merits--all sins washed out by His all-expiating blood--all the Church beautiful in His beauty--bright in His righteousness--consummately complete in Him. It marks the fabric towering above heaven, and ceases from all efforts to add needless stones. But faith falls short of sight. It fluctuates--it wavers--it flags--it totters--at times it seems to be inertly dying. But the rest of sight is changeless. It never ebbs--it is the tide in fullest flow. It never wanes--it is the sun in mid-day blaze. It never fades--it is a full-blown flower--ever fresh. Such rest is undisturbed, and undisturbable. The faithful dead have reached it.

Let us draw near to our Gospel-record. These bodies are liable to countless pains. No care of ours, can totally avert. No skill can give sure cure. Afflicted sufferers find no ease by day, and tossings to and fro wear out the hours of night. But pain expires, when the body dies. It is distinctly said, "Neither shall there be any more pain."--Rev. 21:4. And again, "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick--the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."--Isa. 33:24. Keen was your sorrow when perhaps you witnessed pains beyond relief. Will you not now give thanks for those whom malady can no more touch?

Believers, although taught that death is their friend, draw back with shudder from its touch. The blessed Jesus shrunk from the repelling cup. Faith truly tells, that "when they pass through the waters, he will be with them; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow them; when they walk through the fire, they shall not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon them."--Isa. 43:2. But nature is averse to chilly waters and the scorching flame. Thus dread anticipations trouble.

Perhaps you know well these solemn thoughts. Then count them happy who have passed the shadows of the valley. Scripture says, "There shall be no more death."--Rev. 21:4. Reject not this consoling thought.

The godly have most grievous anguish from ungodly men. Such openly oppose--and secretly malign--and cruelly reproach--"The poison of asps is under their lips." The Spirit testifies, "Arise and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted."--Micah 2:10. The Psalmist sighs, "Oh! that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest." Death bears the godly to the realms "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."--Job 3:17.

Shall we not give thanks for those delivered from such harrowing grief? No wicked man will vex again--no evil sound be heard--no calumny give pain. The atmosphere around is heaven's own peace, and purity, and love. Each face is bright with sincere smiles.

It is a Gospel rule, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven."--Acts 14:22. Happy they who have these tribulations in their past! It is so with the blessed dead. But we are warned that coming woes shall terribly exceed what earth has hitherto endured. "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."--Matt. 24:21. Appalling miseries will usher in the Lord's return. But saints at home with Christ are high above these fears. This is the signal mercy promised to Judah's humbled king. "Behold, I will gather you unto your fathers, and you shall be gathered unto your grave in peace, and your eyes shall not see the evil which I will bring upon this place."--2 Kings 22:20.

Mark too the comfort of the word, "The righteous perish, and no man lays it to heart; merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace--they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness."--Isa. 57:1, 2. Consider this. In happy thought behold the blessed company screened in their peaceful Zoar, while earth is unprecedented woe.

But higher ground invites us to ascend, and brighter scenes still court our eyes. The sight of Jesus implies perfection. Are we not taught that to behold Him as He is, we must be like Him?--1 John 3:2. Dissimilarity excludes clear sight. The spirits clearly see Him; therefore perfect likeness must be theirs, and spiritual faculties must be strengthened to the full.

Former vision was obscure. Previous knowledge was the pupil's alphabet. The earthly state was childhood. Now manhood is attained, and tutors teach no more. Spiritual powers are fully ripened. There is union with the "spirits of just men made perfect."--Heb. 12:23.

By them God is now truly known--the mind of Jesus is thoroughly perused--entangled providences are clear--perplexing purposes are no longer a closed book. The open page reveals how He loved--and why He loved, and all the mysteries of redemption's scheme. The significance of each sorrow, trial, and distress is understood. A mirror is presented, which displays in shining light the wisdom and the love which ordered every step of every saint from cradle to the grave. Intelligently the chorus swells, "Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Your ways, O King of saints."--Rev. 15:3. Oh! the transport of gazing on the blaze of all the love of the Triune Deity! Oh! the delight of reading the whole history of each redeemed soul! Such is the joy of Paradise. Can you believe this, and withhold your thanks?

Into this Paradise Paul was caught up. He witnessed more than he might fully tell, but still he tells enough to give the clue to happy contemplation. "He heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."--2 Cor. 7:3. There was no silence. Converse and praise resounded. Words surely prove the interchange of thought, and such communion supposes recognition.

Happy spirits mutually know, and are known. To Jesus doubtless adoring voices mainly turn. But perfect spirits have no limits of knowledge. The child beholds the mother at whose knees the earliest prayer was learned--and from whose lips the precious name of Jesus was first heard. The fond mother renews praise when she smiles on her offspring, washed in the redeeming blood, and saved before the throne forever. The pastor sees a number, more than he dared to hope, won by his teaching to the saving Cross. Converts gladden while faithful teachers claim them as their joy and crown of rejoicing. Heroes of faith, whom ages, climates, and distance parted, now compose one recognizing company. Patriarchs--apostles--prophets, whose writings taught us--whose examples cheered--whose warnings checked, pass in review, while every sight awakens Hallelujahs.

But the pen must pause. Who can conceive the glories of the scene, where all are known, and all are loved by all! where all are blissful in each other's bliss! and all give thanks for universal joy! and one harmonious chorus ascribes salvation to our Triune God! There is no jar in all their praise--no discord in their worship--no jealousy in all their joy. Grace reigns. Pure praise prevails. The only rivalry is rivalry of love. Such is the joy which meets believers when they soar away. Is not the thought now joy to you!

This joy is vast indeed, but it is not complete. It is perfect so far as the spirit parted from the body can rejoice. But the BODY is required to constitute entirety of man. The absence of this essential part makes happiness but partial. Perfect consummation tarries for this reunion. For this, the happy spirits wait. They know this fullness to be sure. They know it to be near. They joy in the prospect, that yet a little while they shall surround their Lord descending to revisit the earth. Then he will call their sleeping bodies from their graves. Then the awakened dust will be arrayed with glory, and spiritual tenements receive their former inhabitants. This is perfection--perfection in glory--perfection without end.

Who will not cry, "We bless You, O God, for the redemption in Christ Jesus! We bless You for all the joys of faith on earth. We bless You for those now living in Your holy service--we bless You for those departed in Your faith and fear--we bless You for all the bliss of disembodied spirits in Your presence--we bless You for the coming consummation of resurrection-life. To Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be glory without end!"

Let mourners say, 'Amen!' and in their mourning they will smile.

**Re: - posted by broclint (), on: 2010/1/6 10:36**

Quote:  
-----Thus sorrow is the dawn of hope. Unless her only son had died, the widow of Nain might not have beheld her Lord. He meets the mourner following the coffin. When God's mysterious ways are known, death will appear as often used to bring new comforts. Many in heaven will gratefully confess, We would have died in hopeless state, unless death had borne off some friend. But by inflicting death, Christ showed Himself the Prince of life--giving life to lifeless souls, or life more abundantly to those who lived before...

It is instructive now to ask, How is death armed with this tremendous sway? What furnished, what supplied its weapons? What placed a helpless world beneath its conquering feet? Whence its commission to give the inhabitants of the palace and the hut alike, a banquet to devouring worms?

Now ponder the enlightening reply; SIN is the origin of death... Profit will not be small, if henceforth you hate sin with deadlier hate. View well the monster in true light--the enemy of God--the enemy of man...

"We shall all be changed." How changed! Thought staggers, while it strives to picture...

Quicken now the art of communion with heaven. Live more above. Then when you, too, go hence, you will but move from God to God.

I would to God that the sobriety that comes into the heart of the thoughtful as they pass by the coffin of the young who “were just having fun” and the blessed old who having endured much chastisement to become precious sorely missed beloved saints, would remain with them until they were totally transformed. That sin would be seen as it really is... the culprit behind all the sorrow, separation, deformity and ugliness... the utter helplessness and emptiness and coldness to the bone that the grief of death can bring. That sorrow is no stranger, even to those who have hope, because even the knowledge that they have passed from death to life, does not take away the agony of separation until our own time comes.

If we could see sin in the light of death constantly, those laden with it would lose all their attractiveness. Death is the death of the root and trunk of sin: pride and rebellion. And if we would live with that knowledge in mind and heart, would it not be a great aid in crucifying them before they are forcibly removed? (edited for clarity)

Clint