

On the Approach of Death

by Thomas Reade

The sermon emphasizes the importance of preparing to meet God through faith in the Atonement of Christ and the exercise of faith in the hope of glory.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 31:14, Psalm 116:15, Romans 8:16, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Philippians 1:21, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Hebrews 9:27, Hebrews 12:29, 1 John 5:13, Revelation 22:20

Topics: "Mortality And Faith", "Eternal Salvation"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches on the approaching reality of death, emphasizing the importance of being prepared to meet God. He highlights the brevity of life, the certainty of death, and the necessity of faith in Jesus for salvation. Reade urges believers to examine their hearts, seek reconciliation with God, and live in anticipation of eternity. He underscores the significance of faith in Christ, the purification of the soul through trials, and the joy of meeting God in heaven.

Transcript

61. ON THE APPROACH OF DEATH

"Behold, your days approach that you must die." Deut. 31:14

The longest life, and the most useful one too, must draw to its close, for "death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." Though Moses was forbidden to enter into the earthly, he was not excluded from the heavenly rest. The time drew near when he must die. This event did not take him by surprise. The Lord said unto Moses, "Behold, the days approach that you must die." We cannot expect such a divine intimation. Yet still, enough is revealed in the word of God, and sufficient evidence is afforded to teach us, that "there is but a step between us and death." "For what is our life? It is even a vapor, which appears for a little time, and then vanishes away?"

Nothing discovers our fallen state more than insensibility to eternal things, a neglect of the gospel, an unwearied search for happiness among the creatures, instead of from God, the Fountain of Living Water. While thousands of professing Christians are busying themselves for futurity, Death levels his dart, and lays the worldling in the dust. How solemn was the message to Hezekiah "Thus says the Lord, Set your house in order; for you shall die, and not live." How happy was its effect upon his mind. "Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord." His prayer was heard, and fifteen years were added to his life. "This year you shall die," said Jeremiah to the false Prophet Hananiah, "because you

have taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year, in the seventh month."

The Scriptures abound with warnings and encouragements. "This year you shall die." Then let me feel and act as if I knew it were so ordered by him, in whose hands my breath is, and who has appointed my time upon earth after the good pleasure of his will. My stay upon earth cannot be long. My sand is running quickly down. My shadow is lengthening apace, which proves that the sun is fast declining. Soon will the evening shades overspread me, and the night of death hide me from the eye of man.

How important, oh! how all-important is the question- Am I prepared to die? Have I fled for refuge to Jesus, the sinner's friend? Do I believe with the heart unto righteousness? Have I the witness in myself that I am born of God? Is my heart renewed after the divine image, in righteousness and true holiness? Have I received the Spirit of adoption- a loving, filial, obedient, thankful, humble spirit, enabling me to cry, Abba, Father, through a lively faith in Christ my Savior? For thus says Paul; "you are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." If I truly believe in Christ, I have the Spirit of Christ, and I am a child of God. Then all the promises of God in Christ Jesus, to me are yes, and amen, sure and certain, and shall all have their blessed fulfillment in my salvation, and the display of the divine glory. Then I may exercise the assurance of faith, and hope; yes, the full assurance of these graces of the Spirit, if I have only a true and lively faith in the Son of God, a faith, working by love, purifying the heart, overcoming the world, and bringing the invisible glories of heaven, as realities before the mind; for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

O! what a glorious and glorifying grace is faith in a crucified Redeemer. With these gospel views and with the inward experience of the grace of God, who would not welcome the words; "Behold, the days approach that you must die." It is as if our heavenly Father should say, "my beloved child, you have wandered long enough in this desert land. I have fed you with the true Bread from heaven, and refreshed you with water from the smitten Rock, Christ Jesus. I have given you my ordinances and statutes. I have proved you by manifold trials, that you might know what was in your heart. In the midst of all your wanderings and rebellions, your haltings and complainings, I did not forsake you. I chastised you with the rod of affliction. I brought you low by deep repentance. I led you into the valley of humiliation. I hid my face from you for a little moment. I caused you to loathe yourself, to cry for mercy, to seek my face. And then, when your heart was broken and contrite, looking unto Jesus, and pleading, by earnest faith, the merit of his blood; I caused the beams of my grace to shine into your soul. I gave you a token of reconciliation, a Spirit of adoption. I enabled you to sing for joy, and to go on with increasing vigor in the ways of truth and righteousness. Now, your journey is nearly ended; my messenger is sent to convey you home, to bring you to your Father's house, where are many mansions, where your Savior has prepared a place for you, and where you shall be eternally blessed in his presence. Come, for all things are ready. Prepare to meet your God. Enter into the joy of your Lord. Doubt not my love. Fear not the enemy, for Christ and heaven are yours!

Oh! blessed Lord! grant that this sweet call may be impressed on my heart. May I live under the daily influence of your love, and when I hear you say, "Surely I come quickly; Amen;" may my joyful heart respond, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

How solemn, how awakening should be the voice which speaks to me through the Scriptures of truth;

"PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD."

Oh! that I may not only listen to, but obey, through grace, this voice of the Spirit, speaking to my heart and conscience; for thus says the Lord, "Hear the rod, and who has appointed it." The dispensations of God have a voice; they speak either in mercy or in judgment. Lord make me conversant with death. Let me not shrink from looking into the grave, sanctified as it is, through the body of Jesus. If my body rests in the hope of rising to a joyful resurrection, the grave will indeed be a place of repose from sins and sorrows, and the storms of life. But this cannot be, unless I am a believer of Jesus; for it is only those who sleep in Jesus that God will bring with him.

This glorious rising cannot take place except my body be now the temple of the Holy Spirit; for God will quicken our mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwells in us. Oh, that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith; that the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, may take up his abode within me. Then I shall have light, and love, and peace, and joy, and all the other blessings flowing from the Covenant of Grace.

"The sting of death is sin." It is sin which arms death with terrors. How dreadful is death to a soul, awakened to its consequences, at the period of dissolution. Agonies, inconceivably great, rend the soul, while writhing under the serpent's sting- unpardoned sin!

How sweetly serene is the penitent believer in Jesus, while standing on the brink of Jordan, in the hope of a joyful admission into the celestial Canaan. He dreads not the cold stream which rolls between him and the abodes of bliss. The hope of glory sustains him. Death comes as a messenger of mercy, divested of every evil, to conduct him out of time into eternity, to bring him into the presence of God his Savior.

Oh! the blessedness of faith in the Atonement of Christ. It affords a firm foundation on which the soul can repose, amid the swellings of Jordan. Lord enable me truly to believe. Faith is your gift. To You do I look, and on You would I wait, for this precious gift of grace.

"PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD."

Almighty Savior, do in mercy prepare my soul for a joyful meeting. Wash me from all my sins through your cleansing blood. Clothe me with your righteousness. Make me pure within. Give me the victory over sin, Satan, and the world. Enable me daily to come to You; to draw fresh supplies out of your fullness, until I reach the Fountain-head of blessedness, even your own self in your everlasting kingdom.

"PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD."

Oh! may the solemn sound ever vibrate in my ears, and reach my inmost soul. The call is from above. It is God himself who speaks. O may I listen to his voice; bow in deep humiliation before the Cross, and, looking by faith to Him who hung upon it, receive a free and full forgiveness. "God is a consuming fire." The wicked, like stubble, shall be consumed, as in a moment, by the wrath of incensed justice.

"God is a consuming fire." The redeemed sinner is as gold. He loses nothing in the flame but the dross. Lord convert my soul. Make me as the precious gold, which becomes the purer by being in the furnace. Oh! may every affliction, every tribulation, endured in the body, tend, through your love, to the purification of my soul; that when I hasten to meet you at your call in the eternal world, I may be found a new creature, a vessel of mercy, fitted, by the Spirit, for the Master's use.

"PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD."

Lord! may I joyfully accept your gracious invitation. May I come in the fullness of faith and hope, looking for, and hastening unto, the coming of the day of God. Why should I linger here? Why should I wish to remain a pilgrim in a world of woe? O my soul! stretch out your wings. Prepare for your flight. Fix your eyes upon the Sun of Righteousness; and, like the eagle, soar aloft beyond the shadows of this lower world. Angels beckon you away. Dear departed friends invite you to join their blessed company before the throne. A world of glory opens to your view. Fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, are at God's right hand.

Eternity is impressed upon the bliss of heaven. It is the royal signature, which cannot be effaced. Oh! then, why so backward to enter into the joy of your Lord? Why so unwilling to drop your chains, and enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God? Does it not arise from the workings of unbelief? a latent love for earthly things? Lord remove this evil leaven from my heart. Complete your work of mercy on my soul. Seal me by your Spirit. Unite me to Yourself; and then, with the joy of faith, and with a heart of love, I shall hear Your blessed call; "PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD."

Gently, my Savior, let me down,
To slumber in the arms of death;
I rest my soul on You alone,
E'en until my last expiring breath.
Death's dreadful sting has lost its power;
A ransomed sinner, saved by grace,
Lives but to die, and die no more,
Unveiled to see Your blissful face.
O Soon will the storm of life be o'er,
And I shall enter endless rest;
There, shall I live, to sin no more,
And bless Your name, forever blessed.
Dear Savior! let Your will be done;
Like yielding clay, I humbly lie;
May every murmuring thought be gone,
Most peacefully resigned to die.
Bid me possess sweet peace within,
Let child-like patience keep my heart;
Then shall I feel my heaven begin,

Before my spirit hence depart.
Yes! and a brighter heaven still,
Awaits my soul, through His rich grace,
Who shall His word of Truth reveal,
Until called to sing His endless praise.
Hasten your chariot, God of Love,
And fetch me from this world of woe;
I long to reach those joys above,
And bid farewell to all below.
There shall my raptured spirit raise,
Still louder notes than angels sing;
High glories to Immanuel's grace,
My God, my Savior, and my King.

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