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God's Word to a Hesitating Church

Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. (7:1)

“Death Swallowed up in Victory”

Sept 28, 2014

Sermon Text: 2 Cor 5

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor 15:35-58

Introduction-

I am sure that these Corinthians, in their Greek culture, had been exposed to all kinds of notions about death. For one thing, the Greeks as I understand it believed in a kind of dualism that said that physical substance is inferior in its

very essence to that which is spirit. This led to all kinds of sinful error:

- You could indulge your body pretty much however you wanted and it didn't matter. Paul works to straighten them out in 1 Corinthians on this point.
- This thinking was an enemy of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Remember how those philosophers on Mars Hill mocked Paul when he announced the physical resurrection of the body (see Acts 17)
- It led really to a denial of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and thus rejected the gospel. (see 1 Cor 15)
- It turns “heaven” into a non-corporeal, non-physical, and really *unreal* realm where disembodied spirits float around. The church still has much of this kind of dualistic thinking in it which we must soundly reject.

Heaven is Eden restored. Heaven is the New Creation, a real new Earth and universe freed from the curse. It is a place of real people with real bodies, and if you deny this in your thinking then you are going to cling to THIS present life and earth as if it were superior to what the Lord has prepared for us.

Here then in chapter 5 of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, this same topic comes up. He has been speaking of his suffering for the sake of the gospel. Remember what we saw in chapter 4 –

2 Corinthians 4:7-14 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. (8) We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; (9) persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; (10) always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. (11) For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. (12) So death is at work in us, but life in you. (13) Since we have the same spirit of faith according to

what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, (14) knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

See it? Many people who claim to be Christians today are stuck in this present life, in this present world, acting as if this life is the only life and as a result they fear death and do all that they can to cling to this present world. We do not want to be stuck in that kind of wrong thinking. While death is still an enemy and still carries the grief of separation for a time, the Christian's dying day is his best day. Our future is our real life. The resurrection day is coming.

These are the things that gave Paul his hope in spite of his suffering. Listen now as he points us to the resurrection once again:

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, (3) if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. (4) For while we are still in

this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. (5) He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. (6) So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, (7) for we walk by faith, not by sight. (8) Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. (9) So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. (10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Notice the first few verses again. Paul is continuing with this matter of an eternal perspective of this present life:

2 Corinthians 5:1-10 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling,

Let's just briefly for now consider the many important contrasts here in regard to the Christian. Which is to say, in regard to YOUR life if you are a Christian:

This Life **Glory (N.C.)**

Tent	Building
Temporal	Eternal
Earth	Heaven (N.C.)
Groaning	Real Life
Away	At Home

You see the thing lived out in Abraham for example:

Hebrews 11:8-10 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. (9) By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (10) For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.

The Corinthians, like us, were prone to seeing things through an earthly lens. That is why they were in such trouble. They evaluated Paul with the wrong filter. *They were thinking and living as if THIS present life were the end goal!* So when they saw Paul suffering, in

weakness, not enjoying a huge following and so on, they distanced themselves from him.

Which brings us to our own thinking, does it not? Your body is wearing out. Take care of it the best you can, dress it with the best clothes, eat the healthiest food, use the right medicines, style your hair and use just the right cosmetics, the fact remains – your body is wearing out. The body that you have right now is what the Bible calls “corruptible.” Given to corruption. That is, decay. Deterioration. Your body is – mortal. Temporal. *It is a tent.*

Tents don’t last all that long. Take the best care of them you want, they tear and they are given to mildew. They have a rather short term purpose – to camp out in. That is what this life is for the Christian. We are *camped out* in this present fallen creation. Abraham knew it. He saw the new creation with the eyes of faith so he didn’t put down foundations here as if the land he walked on in his earthly life was the reward and inheritance promised him. No. He knew his reward was on the new earth in the new creation.

In Christ you have a building created by God that is eternal. It is not this present earth. I think Paul is

specifically referring here to your resurrection body, though I suspect he also has the new earth in view as well.

Your *tent* is decaying, wearing out, and in the case of many Christians – it is destroyed (as Paul’s most likely was via execution). So in this body, we groan. We desire to put on our permanent home at the resurrection. Christians grow increasingly homesick in other words. Less and less attached to this present world and life. We increase in the conviction that this world and this life are passing away, and we would much rather be absent from here and at home with the Lord. In many ways this is really a test of whether a person truly is in Christ or not. Where is their heart’s real affection? This world and their new iPhone, or our home with Christ?

And so, we do not grieve like worldlings in the face of death.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (13) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. (14) For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. (15) For this we declare to you by a word from the

Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (18) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Listen to these excerpts from Thomas Brooks' sermon on the believer's dying day. Here is his theme:

A believer's last day is his best day! His dying-day is better than his birthday! This will be a very sweet and useful point to all believers.

I might by many other arguments demonstrate this truth to you—but let these suffice; because I would not willingly keep you longer from the **PRACTICAL APPLICATION** of the point—application being the life of all teaching.

1. Never mourn immoderately at the death of any believer, let them be the most excellent and useful who ever lived. Death is not the death of the

man—but the death of his sin. Death is to them the greatest gain; and it speaks out much selfishness in us to be more absorbed with the gain and benefit which redounds to us by their lives, than with the happiness and glory that redounds to them by their deaths. In the primitive times, when God had passed the sentence of death upon their dearest comforts, Christians behaved at a more high, sweet, and noble rate than now-a-days they do.

Remember this—death does that in a moment, which no graces, no duties, nor any ordinances could do for a man all his lifetime! Death frees a man from those diseases, corruptions, temptations, etc., that no duties, nor graces, nor ordinances could do.

That is the first use, let us not mourn immoderately for any believer's death.

2. Do not fear death. Compose your spirits; say not of death as that wicked prince said to the prophet, "Have you found me, O my enemy?" 1 Kings 21:20—but rather long for it, not to be rid of troubles—but that the soul may be taken up to a more clear and full enjoyment of God. Your dying-day is your best day.

Good *Jacob* dies with a sweet composed spirit; he calls for his children, and blesses and kisses them, and gathers up his feet into his bed,

and dies. *Moses*, that morning that the messenger came to him, and told him he must die, he goes up the hill, sees the land of Canaan at a distance, and dies. Joseph built his sepulcher in his own garden. Believers, your dying-day is your best day. Oh, then, be not afraid of death, and that you may not, remember that it is not such a slight matter as some make it, to be unwilling to die. There is much reproach cast upon God, by believers being unwilling to die. You talk much of God, heaven, and glory, etc.—and yet when you should come to go and share in this glory, you shrug and say, "Spare me a little while!" Is not this a reproach to the God of glory? But that this counsel may stick upon you, remember these five things—

[1.] Christ's death is a meritorious death. Can a believer think upon the death of Christ as meriting peace with God, pardon of sin, justification, glorification—and yet be afraid to die? What! is the death of Christ thus meritorious, and shall we still be unwilling to depart?

[2.] Is not death a sword in your Father's hand? It is true, a sword in a *madman's* hand, or in an *enemy's* hand, might make one tremble—but when the sword is in the *father's* hands, the child does not fear. Grant that death is a sword—yet why should the child fear and be afraid,

when it is in the father's hand—who will be sure to handle it so as he shall not be hurt or harmed by it.

[3.] Remember that Christ's death is a death-conquering death. Christ has taken away the sting of death—so that it cannot hurt you. His death is a death-sanctifying and a death-sweetening death. He has by his death sanctified and sweetened death to us.

Death is a fall that came by a fall. To die is to be no more unhappy, if we consider death aright. "Oh," says one, "that I could see death, not as it was—but as you, Lord, have now made it!" Death is the greatest monarch and the most ancient king of the world. "Death reigned from Adam to Moses," says Paul. Oh! but the Lord Jesus has, as it were, disarmed death, and triumphed over death. He has taken away its sting, so that it cannot sting us, and we may play with it, and put it into our bosoms, as we may a snake whose sting is pulled out. The apostle, upon this consideration, challenges death, and out-braves death, and bids death do his worst, "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:55-57

[4.] Did not Christ willingly leave his Father's bosom for your sake? Did he not willingly die for you? Did Christ plead thus, These robes are too good for me to leave off, this crown too glorious for me to lay aside, I am too great to suffer for such a people? No! He readily leaves his Father's bosom, he lays down his crown, and puts off his robes, and suffers a cursed, cruel, and ignominious death. Ah, souls, you should reason thus, "Did Christ die for me that I might live with him? I will not therefore desire to live long away from him." All men go willingly to see him whom they love; and shall I be unwilling to die, that I may see him whom my soul loves? Shall Christ lay aside all his glory and pomp, and marry a poor soul that had neither portion nor loveliness; and shall this soul be unwilling to go home to such a husband? Oh think of it, you souls who are unwilling to die!

Present life is not life—but the way to life; for when we cease to be men, we begin to be as angels. They are only creatures of inferior nature who are pleased with the present. Man is a future creature. The eye of his soul looks ahead. The *laborer* hastens from his work to his bed, the *mariner* rows hard to gain the port, the *traveler* is glad when he is near his inn; so should saints when they are near death, because then they are near heaven, they are near their eternal home!

[5.] Are you not complete in Christ? Why should a believer be afraid to die, who stands complete before God in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus? If we should appear in our own righteousness, in our own duties, it would be dreadful to think of dying—but a believer is complete in him. "You are complete in him," Col. 2:10. In Rev. 14:4-5, they are said to be "without fault before the throne of God;" and in Cant. 4:7, "All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no flaw in you." A believer, when he dies, he appears before God in the righteousness of Christ. All the spots and blemishes of his soul are covered with the righteousness of Christ, which is a matchless, spotless, peerless righteousness. Christ's spouse has perfection of beauty; she is all "glorious within" and without, she is spotless and blameless, she is the fairest among women, that she may be a fit mate for him who is fairer than all the children of men, Psalm 45:2. The saints are as that tree of paradise, Gen. 3—fair to his eye, and pleasant to his palate. The saints are as Absalom, in whom there was no blemish from head to foot. Think of these things to sweeten your last changes, and to make you long to be in the bosom of Christ.

[6.] Sixthly, Consider that the saints' dying-day is to them the Lord's pay-day. Every prayer shall then have its

answer; all hungerings and thirstings shall be filled and satisfied; every sigh, groan, and tear that has fallen from the saints' eyes shall then be recompensed. Then they shall be paid and recompensed for all public service, and all family service, and all closet service. Then a crown shall be set upon their heads, and glorious robes put upon their backs, and golden scepters put into their hands; their dying-day being the Lord's payday, they shall hear the Lord saying to them, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into your Master's joy," Mat. 15:21. In that day they shall find that God is not like Antiochus, who promised often—but seldom gave. No! Then God will make good all those golden and glorious promises that he has made to them, especially these which are here cited. [Rev. 2:10, 3:4, 12, 22, and 7:16-17.] Now God will give them gold for brass, and silver for iron, felicity for misery, plenty for poverty, honor for dishonor, freedom for bondage, heaven for earth, an immortal crown for a mortal crown!

[7.] Seventhly, Consider this—the way to glory is by misery; the way to life is by death. In this world we are all *Benonis*—the sons of sorrow. The way to heaven is by Weeping-cross. Christ's passion-week was before his ascension-day; none passes to paradise but by burning seraphim; we cannot go out of Egypt but through the Red Sea;

the children of Israel came to Jerusalem through the valley of tears, and crossed the swift river of Jordan before they came to the sweet waters of Siloam. [A man will easily swallow a bitter pill—to get health. The physician helps us with painful remedies—and yet we reward him for it.] There is no passing into paradise but under the flaming sword of this angel—death! There is no coming to that glorious city above, but through this difficult, dark, dirty lane of death. No wiping all tears from your eyes—but with your winding-sheet, which should make you entertain death, not as a foe—but as a friend; not as a stranger—but as a guest that you had long looked for, and welcome death as more blessed than your birth. [Death to a believer is the gate of heaven; it is the door of life. It conveys us out of the wilderness into Canaan, out of a troublesome sea into a quiet haven, John 14:1-3.] Every man is willing to go to his home, though the way which leads to it be ever so dark, dirty, or dangerous; and shall believers be unwilling to go to their homes, because they are to go through a dark entry to those glorious, lightsome, and eternal mansions that Christ has prepared for them? Surely not!

NOTE: I include the following 8th point from Brooks here primarily as an example of the common failure by Christian ministers to yield in their

thinking to a kind of Greek dualism. I don't think Brooks was a dualist, and certainly he believed in the resurrection of the body, but notice that in this next section he fails to emphasize the resurrection as quickly as I would have preferred he should, leaving us at least for a short time with a ghostly, spirit, vapory notion of heaven. The Apostle Paul on the other hand is very clear that we are to understand that our souls without the resurrection body are "naked" – and long to be clothed with that new and immortal building from God-

2 Corinthians 5:1-4 For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2) For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, (3) if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. (4) For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened--not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

[8.] Eighthly, Consider that while we are in this world, our weak and imperfect and diseased *bodies* cast chains, and fetters, restraints,

hindrances, and impediments upon the soul, that the soul is hindered from many high and noble actings. In heaven, the soul works clearer, and understands better, and discourses wiser, and rejoices louder, and loves nobler, and desires purer, and hopes stronger than it can do here. The soul is now encaged in a body, and while it is in this body of clay, it cannot act like herself. It is like a caged bird, whose nature is to soar aloft towards the place whence she came. When the soul is upon the wings for heaven, the body like a lump of lead pulls it down to the earth, etc.

Now the soul cannot look out at the *eyes* but it will be infected, nor hear by the *ears* but it will be distracted, nor smell at the *nostrils* and not be tainted, taste by the *tongue* and not be allured, and touch by the *hand* and not be defiled. Every sense and member is too ready upon every occasion and temptation, to betray the soul; which should make us willing to die and to long for that day wherein our bodies shall be glorified. The Greeks call the body the soul's chain, the soul's sepulcher.

[Now Brooks gets back on track]-

Ah, believers! it will be but shortly, before those bodies of yours, which are now like a picture out of frame, or a house out of repair, which are now

deformed and diseased, etc., shall be agile and nimble, swift and facile in their motion. For clarity and brightness they shall be like Christ's body when it was transfigured, Mat. 17:2; they shall be very amiable and beautiful, they shall be unchangeable and immortal. Here our bodies are still dying. It is more proper to ask when we shall make an end of dying, than to ask when we shall die. Death is a worm which is always feeding at the root of our lives, which should make death more desirable than life.

[9.] Ninthly, Dwell much upon the readiness and willingness of other saints to die. Good old Simeon having first laid Christ in his heart, and then taking him up in his arms, he sings, "Lord, now let you your servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation!" Luke 2:28-30. I have lived enough—I now have my life; I have longed enough—I now have my love; I have seen enough—I now have my sight; I have served enough—I now have my reward; I have sorrowed enough—I now have my joy.

Just so, the believing Corinthians, 2 Cor. 5:4, 8, they groaned earnestly to be clothed with their house which is from heaven; they groaned that mortality might be swallowed up of life, and "that they might be absent from the body, and present with the Lord." Just so, Paul desires earnestly

"to depart, and to be with Christ, which is best of all," Phil. 1:23. Just so, those in Peter, "they look for and hasten the coming of the day of God," 2 Pet. 3:12. They are said to hasten the day of God, in respect of their earnest desires after it, and in respect of their preparations for it. Just so, the souls under the altar cry, "How long, Lord, how long?" etc., Rev. 6:9-10.

Ah, Christians! if the exceeding willingness of the saints to die will not make you willing to die, what will?

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, Consider this—that the Lord will not leave you—but be with you in that dying hour. "Even 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," says the psalmist, Psalm 23:4. Just so, the apostle, Heb. 13:5, "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." There are five negatives in the Greek, to assure God's people that he will never forsake them; five times in Scripture is this precious promise renewed, that we may press it until we have pressed the sweetness out of it. Though God may seem to leave you, you may be confident he will never forsake you. Why should that man be afraid of death, who may be always

confident of the presence of the Lord
of life?

3. The next use shall be to stir you all up to prepare and fit you for your dying-day. Ah, Christians! what is your whole life—but a day to fit for the hour of death? What is your great business in this world—but to prepare and fit for the eternal world? It was a sad speech of Caesar Borgia, who being on his deathbed said, "When I lived, I provided for everything but death! Now I must die, and am unprovided to die." Ah, Christians! you have need every day to pray with Moses, "Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom," Psalm 90:12; and to follow the counsel of the prophet Jeremiah, "Give glory to the Lord your God before he brings the darkness, before your feet stumble on the darkening hills. You hope for light, but he will turn it to thick darkness and change it to deep gloom," Jer. 13:16.

Old age is the dark mountain which makes a broad way narrow, and a plain way cragged. It is a high point of heavenly wisdom to consider our latter end: "Oh, that they were wise, that that understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Deut. 23:19. Jerusalem paid dearly for forgetting her latter end. Jerusalem's filthiness was in her skirts, because she

remembered not her latter end, therefore she was dreadfully brought down.

To provoke you to prepare and fit for a dying-day, consider seriously these following things—

(1.) He who prepares not for his dying-day, runs the hazard of losing his immortal soul.

Though true repentance is never too late—yet late repentance is seldom true.

"He who is not ready to repent today, will be less ready tomorrow; his *understanding* will be more dark, his *heart* more hard, his *will* more crooked, his *affections* more distempered, his *conscience* more benumbed," Bede tells a story of a certain great man who was admonished in his sickness to repent, who answered, "That he would not repent now, for if he should recover, his companions would laugh at him;" but, growing sicker and sicker, he then told them it was too late to repent—"For now," said he, "I am judged and condemned." It is the greatest wisdom in the world to do that every day, which a man would do on a dying-day, and to **be afraid to live in such a state, as a man would be afraid to die in.** Ah, souls! you are afraid

to *die* in such and such sins; and will you not be afraid to *live* in those sins?

(2.) Again, The certainty of death, should cause you to prepare for death. When we would affirm anything to be infallibly true, we say, "As sure as death." "It is appointed," says the apostle, "unto men once to die—but after this the judgment!" Heb. 9:27. [Psalm 89:48; Job 30:23; Eccles. 12:5.] "Once," implies two things—
[1.] A certainty--it shall be;
[2.] A singularity--it will be but once.

"What man lives—who shall not see death?" says the psalmist; that is, no man lives and shall not see death. In Job the *grave* is called "the house appointed for all the living." The learned call death, "our long home," where men must abide for a long time, even until the resurrection. To live without fear of death—is to die living! To labor not to die—is labor in vain. Death has for its motto, "I yield to none!" It is decreed that all must die. Every man's death-day is his doom's-day.

The Jews have a saying: "In the graveyard are to be seen skulls of all sizes;" that is, death comes on the young as well as the old; the lot is fallen upon all, and therefore all must die. All men are made of one mold and matter, "Dust you are, and unto dust you shall return," Gen. 3:19. "All have

sinned, are fallen short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23; and therefore death must pass upon all.

(3.) The uncertainty of the time of your death, should cause you with open mouth to be in a constant readiness and preparedness for death. No man knows when he shall die, nor what kind of death he shall die—whether a natural or a violent death. Augustus died in a compliment, Tiberius died in a deception, Galba died with a sentence, Vespasian died with a jest! Zeuxes died laughing at the picture of an old woman, which he drew with his own hand! Sophocles was choked with the pit in a grape! ...Bibulus, a Roman general, while riding in triumph in all his glory—a tile fell from a house in the street, and beat out his brains!

(4.) Consider, in the last place—That it is a solemn thing to die. Death is a solemn parting of two near friends—soul and body. Remember, all other preparations are to no purpose, if a man is not prepared to die. What will it avail a man to prepare this and that for his children, kindred, or friends, etc., when he has made no preparations for his soul, for his eternal well-being? **As death leaves you—so judgment shall find you! As the judgment finds you—so shall eternity keep you!** If death takes you before you expect it, and before you are prepared for it, it

will be the more terrible to you; it will cause your countenance to be changed, your thoughts to be troubled, your loins to be loosed, and your knees to be dashed one against another. Oh the hell of horrors and terrors which attend those souls who have their greatest work to do when they come to die! Therefore, as you love your souls—and as you would be happy in death—and everlastingly blessed after death—prepare for death!

See that you build upon nothing below Christ! See that you have a real interest in Christ; see that you die daily to sin, to the world, and to your own righteousness. See that conscience is always waking, speaking, and tender. See that Christ be your Lord and Master. See that all reckonings stand right between the Lord and your souls. See that you are fruitful, faithful, and watchful—and then your dying-day shall be to you as the day of harvest to the *farmer*, as the day of deliverance to the *prisoner*, as the day of coronation to the *king*, and as the day of marriage to the *bride*. Your dying-day shall be a day of *triumph* and *exaltation*, a day of *freedom* and *consolation*, a day of *rest* and *satisfaction*! Then the Lord Jesus shall be as honey in the mouth, ointment in the nostrils, music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart.

4. The last use then is this—If a believer's last day is his best day,

then by the rule of contraries—a wicked man's last day must be his worst day, for he must there face judgment with all the sins of his life. Death shall put an end to all the benefits and comforts that now you enjoy. Now you must say, "Honors, friends, pleasures, riches, credit, etc., farewell forever! I shall never have one more happy moment! I shall never be merry again! My sun is set, my glass is out, my hopes fail, my heart fails; all offers of grace are past, the Spirit will never more strive with me, free grace will never more move me, the brazen serpent shall never more be held forth! Death will be an inlet to judgment, yes, to an eternity of misery!

What the voice of God was to Adam upon eating the forbidden fruit; what the coming of the flood was to the profane men of the old world; what the waters of the Red Sea were to Pharaoh and his army; what the fire from heaven was to the captains who came up against Elijah; what the burning furnace was to those who cast in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—the same will be the day of death to profane wicked souls.

Ah, sinners! my prayer for you shall be, that the Lord would awaken you, and set up a choice light in your souls, that you may see where you are, and what you are; that he would grant you

to break off your sins by repentance, and give you a saving interest in himself; so that "for you to live may be Christ, and to die may be gain," Phil. 1:21; that in life and death Christ may be advantage to you; and that death may be the funeral of all your sins and sorrows, and an inlet to all that joy and pleasure, that blessedness and happiness—which is at God's right hand!