



Concise lectures on

HOW TO DIE

the finest art ever man can learn

JEFFERY OPOKU

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Concise Lectures on How to Die
(The finest art ever man can learn)
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Write to Jeffery Opoku
P.O.Box NT 611
Accra, New Town
Ghana.

Tel: (+233) 24-008-2589

Email: jeffery.opoku@yahoo.com
opokujeffery5@gmail.com

Dedicated to the blessed memory of my very good friend and brother, Joshua Osei Akoto who left us to be with the Lord in 2012.

To the blessed memory of a cherished brother Ebenezer Ivan Kwakye, who bid us farewell in 2016 to go be with the Lord.

And to all the saints who have passed on to be a part of the church triumphant.

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PREFACE

If there is one great lesson the church must endeavor to teach its converts and children, then it should be how to die and how to live at the same time. *Ars Moriendi* or better still the Art of Dying is by far the finest and the greatest of all arts ever learnt or taught by man.

It is commonly said that there is pains in death or death is painful. Many who have not even had near death experiences hold it as a very painful object. But I have weighed death very diligently and I see no pains in it, the only pain in death is in its unpreparedness. Its only bitterness is in its unreadiness.

The soul which has adequately made preparation or should we say provision for it will never find it bitter or painful, because it is truly a happy moment and I trust I am being sincere.

The portrait death presents before us is undoubtedly a big one. But often times, we are not very fair in the manner at which we look at this portrait. We allow our eyes to only behold the bad side of its imagery and by that conclude that it is entirely ugly or bad.

When death for example takes a man on a happy day, we say it is evil and monstrous. But when it takes a person in the midst of a hopeless situation, we call it a liberator. And personally, I think we are not being fair to this particular portrait of life.

Let us not forget that the rain that leaves the playing child in sorrows also puts the farmer in celebration. Though the first feels obstructed by it, the latter loves it for the privilege of watering down his flowers and filling his irrigation tank.

Therefore nothing is entirely bad or completely monstrous. Because though a thing may cause havoc at one side, it may

generate happiness at the other end. Therefore nothing, I say, is entirely evil or monstrous.

The death for example which is so much despised by the free man on the street is earnestly sought after by the prisoner with a life sentence. To this prisoner, death represents the whole embodiment of a chamber which has the exclusive right of calling an appeal and taking him away from his chains.

So is the healthy man on the training field. The whole thought about death brings much grief and sorrows to his heart. But to the little boy on the hospital bed, whom medicine cannot cure, death epitomizes the cure for all his ailments and sufferings, wherefore he earnestly longs for it.

So you see, the picture we all have concerning death has to do with the angle from which we look at which is hugely dependent on our present predicament.

But the fact still remains that until we first analyze the personality death presents before us, we all might be quick to judge it as the greatest monster of all times whereas it is not. How can it be a monster the object that has its own fears? For death I say has its own fears too.

I believe we can only pass a better judgment of death if we take the pain to look at its final work or should we say the effect it produces in the end. For there only can we appreciate its work in our midst and by that prepare ourselves to embrace it at all times (whether in pains or in happiness) if not be prepared to feature in its wonderful picture.

The purpose of this book is simply to demystify the ways of death and also teach by reason of concise expositions, the methodology of dying happily and peacefully at all times.

I believe all who in one way or the other are in great fear of death will find great cure for their fear if they take time and pain to wade through the pages of this book in a devotional manner.

Nothing written here is new to the church or the world except in the sense that it came out of prolonged silence and meditations which were illuminated by the Holy Ghost.

And of course, I can say that many who lived before me have presented much insightful and deeper exposés than I have here. Though it might not be powerful enough to kindle light in any mortal soul nor rend the garment of any troubled man, I trust that there may be some who would see the light of Christ at its gentle warmth.

Jeffery Opoku
Accra. November, 2016.

FOREWARD

This elaborate work by Jeffery is indeed one of the revealing in this 21st century. Though Jeff would easily brush that off or refute that, I strongly stand by my claim and my conviction.

I say this because theological titles of this manner are really not for children or should we say youthful persons to experiment with their pen. But the way and manner this young author and evangelist dealt with the subject really comes to confirm that God can use anyone at anytime to carry out his agenda.

This evangelical piece is nothing but the result of his frequent meditations, long hours of silence and constant prayers. It is not a collection of lectures he orally delivered but that which he wrote with his pen in his private study there in the midst of complete silence and sincere devotions.

In this book, Jeff, also known St. Jeffery the Evangelist, takes his time in lecture by lecture to enlighten us on the arts of dying and he does so in a sound theological manner, unveiling the personality of death.

His lectures are often interspersed with hymns, quotations and poetries of some of the ancient church fathers from whom he was much informed of theology.

As part of the lectures, we have also included five of his solemn letters we discovered in his study.

This book is simply a must read for all the sons and daughters of men.

The Publishers

LECTURE 1

GOOD LIFE OR LONG LIFE

Anytime a person dies, we are all very curious to inquire or to know the number of years he or she spent on this earth. Age has always being the point of consideration or should we say the focus of the deaths that occur around us. We look for it all the time in the obituary letters and in the funeral news that are broadcasted on television.

We always look out for the age and when it is pleasing or quite copious in our eyes, we conclude “See how God has bless such a fellow . . .” On the other hand when the age of the deceased person is not very appealing in our eyes, we bow our heads in grief and ask, “What could have taken him away so soon”

Death in the 60’s, 70’s, 80’s and so on are attributed to the blessings of God whilst that in the tens and twenties only excite the sympathy of society and leaves them with a sorrowful wonder. They hardly believe that soul went too soon. They best express their grief in the obituary letters with these captions, “What a shock?”, “Gone too soon” and so on.

The way and manner society and worst of all, the church places premium on longevity baffles me so much. The message of the Bishop even gets more boring when he stands behind the mortal remains of a departed young brother and then begins his sermon by first exhorting the congregation to ask The Lord God of Abraham for long life, along many other frivolous exhortations which I believe are very unnecessary. These, I believe are virtually brought forward to mock the death of young individuals whose demises perhaps are a great incense before the father.

It is said that long life is a blessing but I hold long life as a great vanity. It is a vain thing to desire a long life on this earth and not a very good and a fulfilling one. How long we live on this earth

should not matter if indeed we are pilgrims on earth. What really should matter is how well we live our lives though it be very little.

A day or a month well lived or spent on earth is better off than hundreds of years spent in slothfulness and in useless pleasure.

For all I know, the thirteen years old boy who dies an ardent believer and a true follower of Christ is better off than the ninety-eight years old man who dies believing not in the God of Abraham. The latter had a long but a wasteful life whilst the former had a very short but a fulfilling one. And not stated in too many words, it is the death of the former that the bible describes as precious.

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15).

But rather unfortunately, society holds the death of the former as disgusting and disappointing on most occasions and then appreciates that of the latter. They consider with contempt what the lord holds very precious. It is no doubt that the poison they drank has infatuated their fancies and hence can't see aright.

I for one prefer to only live a day on earth and do exactly as I am instructed of by the Lord than to live hundreds of years chasing after trifles and fooleries.

Time is very valuable and so is life. For this reason, God has not left us any free time or time that we should use at our own discretion. I believe that every hour that passes by is loaded with duties that God has allotted to it with his own hands and for which He will hold us accountable. With this assertion, the man that has a lot of years on his labs has a lot to account to God.

“ . . . For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required”

That is to say that if a man is given much then he will have to account much.

If we should ever desire a thing about life, it should be the God Life and not the Long Life. Our all delighting focus should be on how to do and fulfill the will of God in the little time we have today and not to be in great expectation of numerous years ahead.

One thing remains to be clarified. I never said you should despise long life, neither did I say you should hate it. All I am saying is, there is rather verity in living a God Life than in that Long Life which lacks God's fragrance. How long we live on earth doesn't matter, it is how well we live it even if it is just a day.

“. . . For if length of days be thy portion,” said Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich, “make it not thy expectation.”

“Reckon not upon long life,” says Thomas again, “think every day the last, and live always beyond thy account.”

The quotation continues:

“He that so often surviveth his expectation lives many lives, and will scarce complain of the shortness of his days. Time past is gone like a shadow; make time to come present. Approximate thy latter times by present apprehensions of them: be like a neighbour unto the grave, and think there is but little to come. And since there is something of us that will still live on, join both lives together, and live in one but for the other. He who thus ordereth the purposes of this life, will never be far from the next; and is in some manner already in it, by a happy conformity, and close apprehension of it. And if, as we have elsewhere declared, any have been so happy, as personally to underhand Christian annihilation, ecstasy, evolution, transformation, the kiss of the spouse, and ingression into the divine shadow, according to mystical theology, they have already had an handsome

anticipation of heaven; the world is in a manner over, and the earth in ashes unto them.”

LORD, IT BELONGS NOT TO MY CARE, WHETHER I DIE OR LIVE

By Richard Baxter

LORD, it belongs not to my care,
Whether I die or live;
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.

If life be long I will be glad,
That I may long obey;
If short--yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day?

CHRIST leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
He that unto GOD's kingdom comes,
Must enter by this door.

Come, LORD, when grace has made me meet
Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be!

Then I shall end my sad complaints,
And weary, sinful days;
And join with the triumphant saints,
To sing JEHOVAH's praise.

My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that CHRIST knows all,
And I shall be with Him.

LECTURE 2

OF THE MODE AND LOCATION OF DEATH : DOES IT MATTER?

We saw not long ago the disaster that hit the city of Accra on the 3rd of June, 2015. Over 150 lives were lost that night as some were carried away by flood and others burnt by fire. Many refer to this as the twin disaster due of its two fold nature: it was the only night we saw water and fire in perfect harmony and jubilation.

Upon looking on that incident, many dread to die in such a manner. In just a recent conversation with a sibling with regard to that incident, she also confessed the same fear to me. She told me plainly that, if there is one thing she so much dreads and greatly fears, then it is either to die through fire or water. I must confess that it was also my fear some few months ago, but not now as I write. If it happens to be my lot, I have nothing to do than to joyfully embrace it with immediacy and urgency! All I wish is for the will of the Lord to be done. How and where we die is not as important as where we spend eternity.

I once heard the plea of an old convict who was soliciting for mercy that he be released to go home. All he feared was to die in jail. He lamented sorrowfully and said, "I want to go home and die at home so my children can see my mortal remains and give me a befitting burial. I just do not want to die in this place."

Well, I must confess that I sympathize with this man in his plea but I have a great problem with his reason. Death in jail and death at home is still death. The one is not more honorable than the other neither is the other more befitting than the other. It is still called death in both instances and we should be ready to embrace it which ever way it comes.

The grief and sorrows of many have not being in the substance of death itself. Their deepest fear and sorrows have all being in the mode and location of their death. But that I also say is vanity or should we say a vain imagination or fear. If truly we are pilgrims, then that will not matter the least. All that will matter will be the place we will be spending eternity.

However, if there is one death we all should fear and dread above measure, then it should be death in sin. That is the only kind of death God does not delight in.

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Eze 33:11

But with regards to the death of his saints, the Psalmist records, *“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints”*

LECTURE 3

ON HOLDING THE HOUR OF YOUR DEATH CONTINUALLY BEFORE YOUR EYES

It is very difficult for death to take by surprise the man who holds the hour of his death continually before his eyes. That man will hardly have a thing to fear since the hour of his departure is always impressed on his eyes. Aside death not taking that man by surprise, he also gets the opportunity to mourn his own remains before the final time of his departure.

Personally, I have descended a countless times into the grave with such a practice. I have also had the opportunity to look on my own mortal remains to appreciate my littleness. For if there is one lesson I have taught myself to appreciate, it is how little I am. And we all ought to get it straight that we are indeed very little.

Anytime I sit and set before me that hour of my departure, it gives me an entirely different view of life. It gives me strong motivation not to weigh the flying words of men above their measure. It moves me to the place where the contempt of men on earth does not make me sad. It makes me still and from that stillness, like the psalmist said, I am fed with the knowledge of the Holy.

“Be still and know that I am God . . .” (Psalm 46:10).

Two things remain to be said. First that the man, who holds the hour of his death before him continually, is not the naughty man neither is he the gloomy and austere personality so bitterly satirized in the Hollywood movies. That man may even look happier than his acquaintances. The only problem he has with society by which he is sometimes forced to some weeping sorrow is their pursuit of pleasures and treasures. He has taken those treasures through the fire and they have failed in the crucible: he considers them great vanity. He wants to tell his experience to

others and pour out his heart to some compatible souls who will understand him but no one gives him an ear. So he only bows down his head in pain and bears the grief alone.

The second thing is that he is not the frustrated or the intimidated type. He only learns by such a practice to remove and fix all his confidence and trust in God, thereby retaining his peace.

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3).

Therefore my dear friends, if you would give diligence to this holy practice, you would not fear death that greatly. It would soothe all your sorrows and heal all your grievous wounds.

LECTURE 4

OF THE SEDUCTIVENESS OF TOMORROW

“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.” James 4:13-15

Tomorrow is an uncertain day and all who count on it do so at their own peril. Many in waiting for tomorrow have been taken by death unawares.

Time past and time to come are not;
Time present is our only lot;
O God! henceforth our hearts incline
To seek no other love than thine.
---James Montgomery

Tomorrow is a great seducer and an enticer of men and we have to be careful of her. She always promises people wonderful careers, happy marriages, good business deals, assured salvation and so on but hardly fulfills any.

She specializes in drawing men by enticement. She draws them with her beauty and then hands them over to death. We are all admirers of her beauty. Not the hardened criminal only, but the eloquent preacher who is so much sought after to speak on crusade grounds is also a victim. He also is a secret admirer of tomorrow and a man misled by the contemplations of tomorrow. He steals glances at tomorrow in his mind's eye and then promises himself to deliver an astounding message when the midday service is due.

But how do you know that you shall have to-morrow, my dear friends? Because many have said tomorrow-tomorrow until they finally fell into the hands of death.

TODAY is the best day and NOW is the best moment. It is NOW that you ought in every deed and thought order yourself as though you were to die. An hour time may be too late; if you have anything to do, it should be done NOW.

“. . . behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2).

You ought to discipline yourselves my dear friends. As you experience the morning, you should reflect and consider diligently that it could be that you may not get any where close to the evening. And at evening, you should never boast of tomorrow. If you have anything urgent to do, it has to be TODAY and NOW. Tomorrow is an uncertain gift. It belongs not to all of us but a few. If today you are not ready to die, how shall you be ready tomorrow?

This instruction however does not prevent us from planting works whose impact may be seen tomorrow to benefit the future generation neither does it prevents us from storing foods that would feed us the days ahead. All I am saying is, be discreet in your relationship with tomorrow and do not be enticed by her beauty into slothfulness.

Always thank God when you are fortunate to see a new day. Only do not give way for it to seduce you into slothfulness and fooleries, my dear friends.

O you men with tender years, it is now that you can give and surrender everything over to Christ. Do not schedule any good work in the distant future whereas you are not even sure that you shall have a tomorrow. Let today and now be the moment of your salvation, that death surprises you not with coldness.

THE FLIGHT OF TIME AN INCENTIVE TO RELIGIOUS DILIGENCE.

By James Montgomery

To-day is added to our time,
Yet while we sing, it glides away;
How soon shall we be past our prime;
For where, alas! is yesterday?

Gone--gone into eternity:
There, every day in turn appears;
Tomorrow--O 'twill never be,
If we should live a thousand years!

Our time is all to-day, to-day,
The same, though changed;--and while it flies,
With still small voice the moments say--
"To-day, to-day, be wise, be wise!"

Then wisdom from above impart,
Lord God! send forth Thy light and truth,
To guide our feet, inform our heart,
And make us Christians from our youth

LECTURE 5

ON HOW TO LOOK ON THE PAST IN A MORE DILIGENT MANNER.

We are often admonished by our elders and teachers to forget the past and focus on the future. I find this to be a very great misleading. Many in paying heed to that advice have fallen headlong into the arms of death.

Two events or happenings that should be of great importance to every man is his past and his present; because it is with these two that history is normally written. It is also with these two that judgment is always passed and shall be passed.

The future is always unknown. To sit and count on it is a mark of foolishness. All we have is the past and the present and wisdom demands that we handle them well.

Should Sir Thomas Browne, who only lived some few centuries ago, be allowed to speak amongst us, he would have instructed our generation like he did to the men of his time by spraying these words above our heads - "AMUSE not thyself about the riddles of future things. Study prophecies when they are become histories, and part hovering in their causes."

Those words of his which I never tire quoting continues:

"Eye well things past and present, and let conjectural sagacity suffice for things to come. There is a sober latitude for prescience in contingences of discoverable tempers, whereby discerning heads see sometimes beyond their eyes, and wise men become prophetic. Leave cloudy predictions to their periods, and let appointed seasons have the lot of their accomplishments. 'Tis too early to study such prophecies before they have been long made, before some train of their causes have already taken fire, laying

open in part what lay obscure and before buried unto us. For the voice of prophecies is like that of whispering-places: they who are near, or at a little distance, hear nothing; those at the farthest extremity will understand all. But a retrograde cognition of times past, & things which have already been, is more satisfactory than a suspended knowledge of what is yet unexistent. And the greatest part of time being already wrapt up in things behind us; it's now somewhat late to bait after things before us; for futurity still shortens, and time present sucks in time to come. What is prophetic in one age proves historical in another, and so must hold on unto the last of time; when there will be no room for prediction, when Janus shall loose one face, and the long beard of time shall look like those of David's servants, shorn away upon one side, & when, if the expected Elias should appear, he might say much of what is past, not much of what's to come."

What a word! There is wisdom in that quote, and God is in it.

It is commonly said that there is great harm in looking upon the past, but I see no harm in looking back at the past. It is of great help than harm. The fear of many in looking back at the past is to get discouraged, depressed, broken or shattered. I even heard the story of a woman who committed suicide shortly after she recalled or reviewed a past incidence. All these happen to us because we do not know how well to look on the past. The man who knows how to look upon it well will find it a treasury filled with boundless stores of peace.

"I will now call to mind my past foulness", says St. Augustine, "and the carnal corruptions of my soul; not because I love them, but that I may love Thee, O my God."

"For love of Thy love I do it;" says Augustine again, "reviewing my most wicked ways in the very bitterness of my remembrance, that Thou mayest grow sweet unto me."

What a great secret revealed by the saint to us in his eloquent confession. For there he tells us explicitly, that the purpose for recalling his past life is just to love the lord the more, though its remembrance is bitter. And truly, it is there in the past that a man can count and name his blessings with regards to his present life. There is indeed no harm in reviewing the past.

In this particular lecture, my aim is simple to teach a more lucid and a profitable manner to behold the past; a manner that will advance you unto good works and godly sorrows and not unto evil. A manner that would make God grow sweet unto you as St. Augustine puts it

First of all, my dear friends, if you will ever profit by looking at the past or recalling any past incidence, endeavor only to do so with your understanding. Look on it first with the understanding without attaching any affection or emotion to it. Let the understanding weigh its episode with earnest and mature deliberations before applying the emotions. The emotion should be applied gently. It should also not be permitted to create any moodiness or character in you. Only apply it as a kind of judge who is to give a verdict on the case presented by the understanding. Judge quickly and then pass a verdict, “for if thou wilt judge, you will not be judged”

Do not care if the judgment is harsh. The harshest judgment will profit you the more, it will move you to appeal faster. Make it no problem of yours when your emotions or will does not pass the judgment in your favor; and do not also blame the understanding for not presenting a valid case before the judge, your emotion. As long as the understanding is unbiased, have no problem with the case presentation.

Hold yourself patiently in the box until the emotion exonerates you or pronounces you guilty. If you are pronounced guilty, do not be hurt, only use the present moment, by reason of thoughts and deeds, to render the verdict void. How do you do that? Very

Simple. Throw yourself into the arms of God and repent of whatever evil that was testified against you. Give yourself over to godly sorrows and it will move you to that holy place and profession (the place of penance or repentance). “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:10)

It will move you straight to the place where God will make all things new unto you. When that happens, the hurting past will then become a healing past and the one you passionately regretted will elevate itself to be a memorable one.

I know of many individuals who committed great crimes and injustices in the past, but because they knew how to look back at it, they never found it frustrating or depressing. They only through it drove themselves over to the place of repentances, reconciling with their God.

The past only gets disturbing when it is first embraced with the will or emotion. If the will is moved either to love or hate its episode, the understanding will be unable to form a correct estimate of it because the will or affection disguises it and imprints an incorrect idea. When this is again presented to the will or affection, which is already prepossessed, it redoubles its love and animosity, and pushing it over the wall, is utterly deaf to the voice of reason. A man in such a state will be ginged and excited to commit more folly than he did before. For such a man, it would be better if he had not looked upon it.

LECTURE 6

ON HOW TO LOOK ON THE PAST WHOSE CONTEMPLATION MIGHT LEAD UNTO PRIDE

Again, my dear friends, I will also teach you to handle the past whose episodes makes you proud. When such a past appears before you, and shows you all your good deeds, and virtues and how that all men praise you just fight it by surrendering yourself to Jesus. Through Jesus, you will consider all its adulations as dead venom to your soul and then cast it from you.

LECTURE 7

ON LOOKING UNTO THE FUTURE WHOSE CONTEMPLATIONS WILL ADVANCE THE SOUL

Yes, there is a great deal of foolishness in counting upon the future and I am not afraid to say that again. To go after fortune-tellers and priest to inquire what the future holds for you is no wisdom at all. Many have heard from diviners and fortune-tellers, “the future is bright and you would someday become this and that”, and could not even live an hour or a day after that declaration. Why then do you inquire about such an uncertain future that brings much disappointment and grief? Can’t you see that it only seduces you into inactivity and slothfulness and advances you not?

But if you are so curious to know and behold the future, then I exhort you to only consider and contemplate upon this kind of future: the future pains of hell. If you would seriously meditate upon and consider that eternal pains and immeasurable sorrows of hell, it will advance you unto good works, excellent virtues and holiness. It will also advance you to willingly endure the pains and sufferings that dogs your journey here below. There is great salvation in such meditations and contemplation. The man that looks into such a future would be in earnest to fulfill all righteousness and to secure salvation for his soul.

“They that look into Hell”, said Thomas Traherne, “ here may avoid it hereafter.”

“They that refuse to look into Hell upon earth, to consider the manner of the torments of the damned,” says Thomas again, “shall be forced in Hell, to see all the earth, and remember the felicities which they had when they were living.”

LECTURE 8

ON A MAN'S FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH DEATH ON A DARK NIGHT AND ITS RELENTLESS OPPOSITION TO TAKE HIM INTO TIMELESS SPACE.

[On a dark night in the deep, death meets up with a man after pursuing so ardently after him]

Man: Why follow you so hard after me? Why dost thou pursue me so ardently?

Death: I spotted thee down the valley and I have followed thee to this point. I have come to take thee to the place from whence I came, even to that yonder world where thine other brethrens have passed on to.

Man: How can I follow thee since I know not thee nor where thou comest from. And of which brethren of mine do thou speak of, for they are all with me in mine own house.

Death: I speak not of them that are with thee now in thy house. I speak of them that thou have reckoned lost and gone. I speak of them that are no more with thee; they are they that I have with me in the yonder world.

Man: Who art thou that speaketh unto me? Is it thee O Honorable death?

Death: Yes, tis I that dost speak unto you. And today mine eyes are set on thee.

Man: O thou Honorable death, why hast thou set thine eyes upon me to take me away? Turn thou away from me, I pray thee, for thy terror is already fallen upon me. I have heard of thee by the

hearing of my ears but now do I see thee with mine own eyes. I have heard of how thou didst take mighty men away captive and didst leave their wives widows. I also heard of how thou didst take mothers away from their nursing infants, and left them in sorrows. Tis thee who dost take friends from their loved ones, Yes tis thee. Art they not many the men thou have taken away with thee? Hast thou set thine eyes also upon me? Turn away, I pray thee from me that I may go to my family in peace. Let not thy terror withhold me anymore.

Death: How can I turn from thee O thou mortal, seeing I am the appointed lot of all living; both the rich and the poor, the devout and the sinner, and all they that hast breath in them. Shall I then go away from my own inheritance and from my own heritage? What speaketh thou unto me? Please suffer me not to go with thee for thou have been betrothed unto me this day. The journey is so great and we ought to be going now

Man: I pray thee O thou honorable death, please turn away from me into the city and thou wouldst find men more handsome and intelligent than I; Men that are ready to go with thee. Men that will even run to embrace thee at a distance, way before thou settest hold upon them. Thou wouldst see men that are desperately seeking and longing for thee. They are there in the city now and they patiently seek thee. Them do I entreat thee to turn to, and trouble me not a wretched soul who is so much lost in this great deep and on this dark night.

Death: I wish I could turn away from thee to thy other brethren in the city. I wish I could look away from thy sorrows and tears and hearken unto thy plea but my members wouldn't allow me. The more I try, the more the push me against thee. The lust they have for thee is too strong. All my loins burn with passion for thee. They wouldn't just let me until I have thee in my arms.

Man: Tell me then, tell me, with what shall I quench thy lust, O death? With what shall I appease thy burning loins that they rouse

you not against me? Shall I bribe thee with treasures or shall a thousand maidens be made to satiate thy hurting loins. What wouldst thou accept of me? Tell me and I shall gladly give them for I am a man of great possession, and I have no lack.

Death: Why thinkest thou so vain, O man? For thousand of thy beautiful maidens cannot quench mine hurting loins neither can millions of thy vain treasures move an inch of my rage. My desires and lust transcends that of mortals and they can neither be bribed nor appeased. And if thou carest to know, I have no respect unto the substance of mortals. I shall tell thee more of myself when we start going down the abyss.

Man: Do thou still insist of taking me? Have thou not repented of thy evil seeing I am so much troubled. I pray thee; that thou mayest allow me to bring before thee my good works and merits for I know by them thou shalt spare me this distress.

Death: I am always happy when men declare their works before me. It makes me desire them even more. It fuels my rage even harder and makes me look more monstrous. Shall I not then be happy if thou wilt declare thy own works to me and whisper thy might into my ears?

Man: True art the things that are said concerning thee. Thou maketh neither condescension nor compromise. Thou have always won all thy arguments by putting men to silence and have always won thy fight against mortal by slaying them. And me, What shall become of me? What shall thou do to me? Shall thou also make my wife a widow and my children orphans? Art thou so heartless that thou art not even moved by a woe so pitiful? Shall thou take me away from my loved ones?

Man burst in tears and speaks as *follows*; O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the hands of this monstrous death? Who shall redeem me from its paws for it has overpowered all them that came forward to lend me a hand. He has scared all the mighty men that were drawn to render me help.

O death, shall thou lead me also by the hand as though I were a child to thy far land. Knowest thou not that I bid them that are at home that I will be back. I promised my children I will return with gifts in my hand. Shall I then depart with thee without bidding them farewell? Depart I pray thee from me and come again tomorrow for then shall I be prepared to go with thee. By then would I have put my house in order.

Death: To where shall I depart, O you that trouble me. Knowest thou not that the hour of thy departure is at hand. As my eyes are set on thee so shall I take thee and lead thee gently away. If thou have a good conscience, thou will not fear me that greatly.

Man: Alas! Alas! I am undone, For my separation with mortals is at hand. This day shall the living begin to fear me and I the living. Oh wretched man that I am, I regret and weep over the delightful days I spent following hard after trifles and fooleries. My days have vanished without any profit. How could I have been so prodigal a son to have taken my portion of wealth into that far country of emptiness and gloominess. Why didn't I anticipate this day? Why didn't I prepare so massively for this distant journey. Now has darkness dawn upon me, and I have not enough oil in my lamp to meet the bridegroom, and time wouldn't lend me any. How I wish I have my delightful days before me now; then would I have cherished every time and looked upon every minute as a gift. I would have valued them more preciously and thankfully than a poor boy who has received a toy. Shall I also die like a fowl without wisdom? Shall I perish without understanding? How on earth could I have been so careless to feast my days away. I have always said to God tomorrow – tomorrow till I am fallen into the hands of death. I sold out my salvation for vain things that profiteth not. And now I am undone.

Hear me oh little ones who still have your flaming days ahead of you, I admonish thee to turn thy youth to God, and with Him alone occupy your time, so that what has happened to me does

not happen to you. Trust flattering life no more, redeem time
past, And live each day as if it were thy last.

LIFE AND DEATH
By William Davenant

Frail Life! in which, through mists of human breath
We grope for truth, and make our progress slow,
Because by passion blinded; till, by death
Our passions ending, we begin to know.

O reverend Death! whose looks can soon advise
E'en scornful youth, whilst priests their doctrine waste;
Yet mocks us too; for he does make us wise,
When by his coming our affairs are past.

O harmless Death! whom still the valiant brave,
The wise expect, the sorrowful invite,
And all the good embrace, who know the grave
A short dark passage to eternal light.

LECTURE 9

OF A DISCOURSE BETWEEN A SERVANT AND A DEPARTED SOUL ON A DARK NIGHT.

[On a dark night, a servant journeys into the wilderness in search of wild nuts when he meets up with a departed brother and they hold converse.]

Departed Soul: Man, from whence cometh thou into this great wilderness? What seekest thou here?

Servant: I come from that noble land beyond. I am a native of that great land to the east of this great deep. I came here to hunt for wild nuts for my master for he seeketh them so earnestly.

Departed Soul: But why cometh you all the way here, when many nuts are by the river side where the two footpaths meet. Why travel you so deep into this deep on this dark night. Knowest thou not that no man abideth here.

Servant: True art the things thou saidst, my Lord, but my master bid me come here for the nuts. And shouldst I return home with the ones by the river side, shall not he slay me? For he is a man of little patience.

Departed Soul: Where sayest thou that thou comest from again? Where abideth thee and thy master?

Servant: We do abide in that land to the east of this deep. That land with much magnificence.

Departed Soul: Aaaaah! Art thou a mortal man? Art thou also a native of that East land? Have not thou breath in thy nostrils?

Servant: Yes, old one.

Departed Soul: Then blessed art thou man and blessed is the land of thy nativity. Great indeed art thou that standeth before me and great art thy days.

Servant: Didst not I say I am only a servant on an errand, and thou call me great? Why do thou mock me so hard? Why add you grief to my sorrow? Art thou not moved by my woe seeing I am so far removed from home and my people?

Departed Soul: Far be it from me that I should mock a mortal man, who has time and chance in his hands. Why shouldst I mock a man on earth, who has full possesses of his conscience? Heaven bears me witness that I mock you not, friend. For true art the things I speak of thee. Every man of earth is a great man for there only do men have time to do and undo their evil. There only do men speak to the heavens and are heard.

Immediately he falls to the ground and yells the following words - Oh what a great blessedness it is to live in that great land of the mortals. How sweet and solemn it is to tread upon stones and clay and behold the beauty of all creation. That land is clothed in awe and excellence. It is a land flowing with milk and honey. But what many distractions are there in that land. How I wish I can make my way back into that land and feast my eyes on its felicities again. For then would I rightly estimate my time and undo all my evils. O poor me, why didn't I number my days back there. Why did not I become a worshipper and rightly fulfill my purpose. But now abide I in eternity, and have no time to myself. I even I, abide in sorrows.

Servant: Why art thou so hard on thyself? Why speaketh thou as though thou wert once a native of my land? Tell me, who art thou, and from whence cometh thou also, father?

Departed Soul: I am a man from yonder world. I abideth in that far country to the west of this deep, that country with numerous

inhabitants. There it is I have my abode. But before I took my journey there, I also used to be a native of thy land. I was one of its noble princes, till death took me away from my people and sent me away to that yonder world.

Servant: And what doest thou here in this great wilderness, which separateth the east land from thy far west land. What seekest thou here all alone, hiding in the shrubs?

Departed Soul: Son, I journeyed all the way here to steal glances at the inhabitants of thy land, the east land. I am here to steal glances at its felicities and to mourn the days which I foolishly gave away to fooleries and trifles. For now do I rightly prize the power of that great land.

Servant: Am not I also a native of that great east land? Why speaketh you so well of it as though it were the best of all lands? Knoweth you not that there abideth nothing good over there? Art not the men there troubled with fancy? Are not many sick and weary of their lives there? What is there so special and unique in the east land, that land of mortals, that thou so longeth for it?

Departed Soul: Why doest thou remind me so much of my youth, for such was the voice with which I spake. I never prized anything there. I never valued any of its great treasure especially time. Often times, I would soak myself in wine and run after the fair maidens of my people. But now do I regret those days I feasted away in ignorance. Often times we do not know what we have till we finally part with them.

Oh, that I were to have a new beginning, then would I undo all my folly and then pursue hard after the God of Abraham. Then would I treasure every time that passes by, and then give all my diligence to excel in virtue. Then would I bear my cross so patiently after Christ, and pay obeisance to his word.

Servant: Art not these the promises of all men in distress? Thou dost not move an inch of my pity, for such is the nature of man.

He makes fair promises today, and tomorrow he parts with them. But seeing that thou so desireth the east land, I shall take thee with me back home and restore thee to thy family.

Departed Soul: Why speaketh thou so vain? Knowest thou not that I have been banished away from time and cannot go back to it again? Seest thou not that I'm in great misery? Why art thy consolations so bitter? I wonder how bad an influence thou wilt be to thy mortal friends.

Servant: I mean not to trouble thee, oh thou native of the yonder world, for I only spake the things in my heart. Please pardon me, my father if thou taketh offence in them?

Departed Soul: And why shouldest I be angry at a mortal man who has power in his hands to do and undo.

Servant: Why dost thou keep referring to the living as great and powerful? Why speakest thou so all the time? Do not I have life, yet weak and powerless? Do not I serve another man and his family? Do not I only run errands and cook meals? Tell me, what power is there that thou seest in my hand? Declare thou unto me for thy servant heareth.

Departed Soul: Great indeed art thou but thou so degradeth thyself. Have not you time there in thy hands. Have not you grace in thy arms? Are not days so sweet and mild before thee? Have not you power to loose and bind them that offendeth thee? Have not you a will to make a choice either good or bad? Is it not in the power of thy hand to pursue the affairs of thy heart? Are not these the things that pronounce you great?

Servant: Thou have said nothing special to me? Thou hast declared no wisdom at all. None of my brethren will get excited at these words. The things thou declarest to me are the common lot of all men. The rich and the poor hast them alike. So does the great and the small? It maketh none special.

Departed Soul: Of a truth, thou art indeed a mortal man. For the living always knoweth not what they have till they finally part with them. Such is the plight of you mortals. Thou do not properly prize the things which thou have till thou finally part with them. Exactly so was I few years ago, till I finally gathered my feet into the bed. But now do I regret the tragic loss of those fair moments I spent after trifles. How I wish I were in thy shoes. Then would I have undone my wrongs.

Servant: But sayeth who to you that thou cannot undo thy wrong. The time to do penance has never been too late. You can still repent of thy evil and turn unto God for He is too merciful.

Departed Soul: Shall a dead man repent of his evil? Shall a man of yonder world do penance and pursue after God? Is not that an exclusive right of the living? Why darken you counsel with words without knowledge? Tis only in the land of the living, that prayer is heard not in yonder world. Tis only in the east land that mercy is found and grace obtained. For the dead obtaineth not mercy nor are they merciful.

Servant: Why do thy words penetrate my heart so hard? Why troublest thou my spirit with this wisdom? Meaneth thou to say that the dead obtaineth not mercy nor do penances? Speaketh thou in earnest that grace abideth not in yonder world?

Departed Soul: My son, there in the yonder world, men hast no eloquence to speak nor cry out as thy brethren do in the east land. Men are not pitied as men in thy land are. Tis a place of harvest.

Servant: And what harvest thee there? Pleases declare thou to me, for now are my ears curious to hear thy wisdom.

Departed Soul: The things which we harvest art the things we sowed on earth. Tis in yonder world we harvest the fruit of our

works. For as many as soweth corruption in life, reapeth corruption there. And them also that sowed anger and bitterness, reapeth the same there. I, even I, reapeth the things which I sowed on earth. Though very little were the hatred and envy I sowed in life, I reapeth them in abundance in yonder world. So do I the same for my lust and slothfulness. For wherein a man hast sin, there also is he punished. I was a lover of women and pleasure. Often times, I would chase hard after the fair maidens of my brethren and uncover their nakedness in bed. I would always lie on bed with them throughout the evenings unto the morning delighting myself in sexual pleasure. For a week passeth not that I disvirgin not a maiden. But now do I pay dearly for my evils. Though mustards(little) were the seeds I sowed, the tree that springeth from them proveth to be exceedingly great.

Servant: Oh My father, My father, wilt thou conceal thy doom from me? Why not declare to me the pains which thou suffereth there in the yonder world. Tell me how thou art made to pay for thy lust and evils that I may instruct my tender and youthful heart.

Departed Soul: My son, since I were a man of sexual delight and much wine, I do equally reap what I sowed. For now are my loins set ablaze on unquenchable heat. My loins do hurt crazily for pleasure of which a thousand maiden cannot satiate or appease. Now am I tormented with hunger for sex, of which the maidens of the universe combined cannot bring the slightest relief. Now is my gluttonous throat so desperate for hard wine and flaming liquor of which the breweries of the world at large cannot succor. Now hast the bitterness and injuries swelled up which I never forgave nor pardoned. They do attack me day and night for refusing to let them go on earth. For wherein I have sinned, there also am I troubled.

Servant: Great indeed are thy trouble, Oh my father. See what great tears thou have triggered on my cheeks. Is not thy plight so distressful. Why hast thou made me so sorrowful this night, being a dark night?

Departed Soul: Shall thou be sorrowful for a man of yonder world? Shall thou show pity to he who hast parted with life. Weep thou my son for thyself and for thy brethren at home. For though thou hast time to thyself, thou lettest it slip from thy hands.

Servant: What refrainest thee then from teaching me wisdom? Instruct me then my father, that I also may instruct my brethren at home. For now have thou restored the light I had at birth. For now see I clearly the power which resteth in the hands of mortals.

Departed Soul: If thou sayeth so, then shall I not ask thee again? What is it there thou wieldeth in thy hands?

Servant: Time, my father, Time. Now seest I that there is time in my hands.

Departed Soul: Thou speaketh well my son. Then do I admonish thee to go make good use of thy time. Seek always to occupy thy time in the presence of God for therein art thou bound to fulfill all righteousness. Hold on well unto time for it slippeth from thee as thou playeth. Reckon no time as useless, for they all counteth in the order and sequence of thy salvation. Thou shouldest also know that every little second that passes by thee is loaded with obligations which the Lord has assigned to it with his own hands of which thou shalt be held accountable. My son, thou ought to be wise. Never think that thou looseth time by doing nothing, for verily I say unto you, that thou also looseth time by doing things other than that which thou oughtest to do though it be profitable. I admonish thee to be discreet, my son. Today is what belongeth to thee. To-morrow might not abide for thee.

Servant: Great art the words of wisdom thou declarest unto me. But are there not many in the east land that reckons not unto to the voice of time?

Departed Soul: Wherefore does eternity also not reckon their voice of pains after death.

Servant: Speak thou on to me, my father. Shall not I also learn from thee? Teach me more, I pray thee.

Departed Soul: Then shall I also ask thee again? What seest thou above thy heads?

Servant: The heavens, my father. Tis the heavens I have above my heads.

Departed Soul: And what treadest thou on the ground (that land of mortals)?

Servant: The countless graves of departed brethren of which thou art a part? Such art the things we tread upon on the ground.

Departed Soul: Wherefore art thy warning above and beneath. The heavens do warn thee above so do the countless grave beneath. So with thy right ear, I admonish thee to hearken unto the glad tidings from heaven and with thy left ear, I strongly conjure thee to hearken unto the sorrows that springs from beneath. If thou shalt pay heed to these warnings, thou shall escape the sorrows in yonder world, when time banishes you from life.

Servant: Henceforth shall I hearken to the voice beneath and above. For many a times, I turneth deaf ear to the voice of reason.

Departed Soul: My son, now also shall i caution thee to be watchful. Thou ought to treasure thy days and reckon each morning as a gift from heaven. For now is thy time to pray, now thy time to do penances, now thy time to obtain mercy, now thy time to embrace love, now thy time to confess thy guilt, now thy time to worship and adore God and now thy time to fulfill all thy fair promises. For in death, men doest not these. Tis only in the

land of the living that prayer is heard and sin forgiven. If thou prayeth not today, then I knoweth not when. If thou doeth not penances today, I knoweth not when. NOW is thy time, my son. NOW, I say is the prime time, for in death everything ceases to be as we only clasp our hands over the chest.

Servant: What holy errand have I run today for my master? What blessed night hast this night proven to be? For this day have I met with wisdom and shall not I drink of it till I am full? Shall not I also covet the best gifts? Bid me, my father, bid me. Abideth there anything that shouldst I also know or learn beside these numerous counsels? What say you more, to me?

Departed Soul: My son, always forget not to forgive them that offendeth thee. If a man shall offend thee a thousand times, I conjure thee to forgive him a thousand time. Tell all thy brethren at home to forgive every man his neighbor. Go after peace before thy neighbors bid thee “rest in peace”. Forget not also to be charitable. For the smiles thou putteth on sorrowful cheeks, the strength thou pusheth into rendered hearts, the tenacity thou injecteth into feeble knees, the love thou rendereth to the weaker brethren, the clothes thou dasheth out to naked bodies, the meals thou serveth before the hungry, the alms thou givest out unto beggars, the comfort thou affordest strangers, the pity thou bestoweth upon the aged, the healing thou dispenseth to bruised feet, the motivation thou sendeth out to dull minds and the visits thou payeth to underprivileged homes may all seem unrecognizable and unappreciative. But they will all surface in the evening of the world and then WIN CROWNS FOR YOUR HEAD. So bid I you, that grow not weary of well-doing. Always prepare thyself since thou knoweth not when the hour of thy departure shall be. Just learn wisdom from the misfortune of others and thou shalt be at peace.

Servant: Alas! Alas! For I am undone. The tidings which I hear art great and mighty, and woe is me if I pay not obeisance to them. Shall I then not fall into greater condemnation having heard these

words of wisdom and later forsake them to trifles. Help me O Lord I pray thee, to always regulate my life that death findeth me not unprepared.

Servant goes on to lament - *Oh thou my mortal friends hearest thou not what the man of yonder hast declared? Shall not we hearken unto him being once a native of our land until eternity sent him on a journey to the far west land? Today, knoweth I indeed that, there is power in the hands of the living. This moment knoweth I indeed that the land of the living is the choicest of all lands below here. For How could I have been so foolish to take things so lightly.*

Departed Soul: I leave thee to thyself, my son, for I need return to my home afar. But do not forget to pursue peace before thy neighbors bid thee to rest in peace. For someday, shall thou also join me in yonder world. Go prepare thyself at home, for time abideth not on thy side. Farewell, my son, farewell till we meet again. Aeternum Vale.

YOUTH

By Thomas: Lord Vaux

When I look back, and in myself behold
The wandering ways, that youth could not descry:
And mark'd the fearful course that youth did hold,
And met in mind each step youth stray'd awry;
My knees I bow, and from my heart I call,
O LORD, forget these faults and follies all!

For now I see, how void youth is of skill,
I see also his prime time and his end:
I do confess my faults and all my ill,
And sorrow sore, for that I did offend.
And with a mind repentant of all crimes
Pardon I ask for youth, ten thousand times.

The humble heart hath daunted the proud mind;

Eke wisdom hath given ignorance a fall:
And wit hath taught, that folly could not find,
And age hath youth her subject and her thrall.
Therefore I pray, O LORD of life and truth,
Pardon the faults committed in my youth.

Thou that didst grant the wise king his request:
Thou that in Whale Thy prophet didst preserve:
Thou that forgav'st the wounding of Thy breast:
Thou that didst save the thief in state to sterve:
Thou only GOD, the giver of all grace:
Wipe out of mind the path of youth's vain race

O THAT I HAD WINGS LIKE A DOVE
---Anonymous

O Gracious GOD, O Saviour sweet,
O JESUS, think on me,
And suffer me to kiss Thy feet,
Though late I come to Thee.

Behold, dear LORD, I come to Thee
With sorrow and with shame,
For when Thy bitter wounds I see,
I know I caused the same.

Sweet JESU, who shall lend me wings
Of peace and perfect love,
That I may rise from earthly things
To rest with Thee above?

For sin and sorrow overflow
All earthly things so high,
That I can find no rest below,
But unto Thee I fly.

Wherefore my soul doth loathe the things
Which gave it once delight,

And unto Thee, the King of kings,
Would mount with all her might.

LECTURE 10

OF HOW A MAN OUGHT TO PUT HIS HOUSE IN ORDER IF HE WOULD DIE A HAPPY DEATH.

“... set thy house in order; for you shall die and not live”

Isaiah 38:1

If any man would die a happy death, then he ought to first put his house in order before his final departure. Persons who die without ordering their house oftentimes find death so bitter and rough. They find it so cruel and abusive. But since it is obvious that you and I do not know what that moment of our departure will be, it is of great wisdom to always order our physical house.

What do I mean by that, Daddy? I mean NOW is the time you ought to reconcile the fractures of your family and unite your children, if ever there is any kind of tension among them whatsoever. I mean forgive all those who ever offended or injured you and endeavor to make amends with all the people you injured by moderately asking for their forgiveness.

I mean with a sense of urgency and immediacy, proceed to make your *will* with firmness and insistence and cause your inheritance to descend in their due channel so that the right heirs are not cheated.

I mean get an attorney to document your case of conscience to ensure that the legal heirs are well served and your assets, properly shared as you willed.

I mean, see to it that this is done under the witness of some men you trust and older family relatives who are well known for their prudence and decency.

I mean uncover all your secret accounts and assets to your family by making mention of them in your will and validating each with the necessary receipt and documents.

I mean, you ought to properly distribute them among your family and friends, as you wish and as every man is capable of handling. For why should you die and leave great treasures buried in the earth whilst your friends and family wallow in poverty?

But more importantly, daddy, I think it is best, if you dispense your assets yourself among your family and friends NOW that you have life. Because it gives you the noble privilege to calm down the tensions that will arise thereby. If you will pay earnest heed to this advice, you will clasp your hands to your chest in less pains.

Husbands, what do I mean? I mean if you desire to put your matrimonial home in order before your final departure and die happily, then you ought to repent and confess all your extra-marital affairs to your wife and children and earnestly implore them for forgiveness. I mean bring before your family all the children you have conceived outside your matrimonial home if there be any and persuasively beseech them to accept them also as their own.

Bishop, what do I mean by putting your physical house in order? I mean NOW is the time you ought to develop a succession plan for your church, that there be no tension in the church after your departure.

If we all would die a happy death, then we ought to in every deed and thought order ourselves as though we were to die today. CARPE DIEM. VIVE HODIE. That is to say, Seize the day, Live today and not tomorrow.

LECTURE 11

OF FOLLY AND WISDOM

[Of the discourse of two brethren and of their diverse interpretations of death]

Folly: Friend, knowest thou the time thou shalt die?

Wisdom: Nay, for never man knoweth the time of his departure save God, the Omniscent.

Folly: Why sittest thou then in gloominess and loneliness? Carest thou not to join me in my feasting since man knoweth not the time of his departure? Have not I enough wine in the barrel here and are there not enough maidens here by mine side? Come hither and make thyself happy for life is too short and soon we are gone and forgotten. Cheer up my friend, cheer up and come hither.

Wisdom: Nay, my brother, I shall do no such thing. For why shouldst I defile myself with thee?

Folly: But time glideth away so fast from thee and soon thou shalt pass thy prime age and lose all thy youthful exuberance. Who even knoweth if thou shalt live to see tomorrow. Shouldst thou not then cease upon the present and live as though it were thy last? Why not delight thyself in pleasure as though tomorrow were thy burial? Life is too good but too short and we ought to live it now.

Wisdom: Why dost thou poison thyself so hard with this bitterness? Why hatest thou thy life so much? Please, infuriate not the opportunity of once living for there is a capital end for all men.

Folly: Declare you this to me or to thyself? Art not thou the one that so hatest his life? For why shouldst thou starve thy throat of good wine and thy loins of great pleasure? See how thy members art angry with thee for suppressing their fancies. Knowest thou not that in the grave we sharest not our bed with maidens nor enjoy we the rich nourishments and sweet wines of life? Today is the time we ought to make ourselves happy since death abideth not far from us. I therefore conjure thee again to come hither. Come thou my friend and make the breast of these fair maidens thy pillow. Come ravish thy heart with their caressing for sooner or later we shall turn into corpses. We shall be gone for good. We therefore ought to eat and drink and enjoy every moment of today for tomorrow we may die.

Wisdom: Indeed as thy name is so art thou. For Folly is thy name and folly is in thy heart. Though thy thoughts of death be right and sacred, thy actions be impious and cannot in any way be commended. Speakest not thou intimately of death to heighten thy pleasure and fooleries? My friend, thou indeed speakest well that life is short and that sooner or later we all would die. But this is not enough license for thee to feast away thy days. If thou carest to know, we are not here to run a marathon of delight but to serve the Maker of all things and to perform the holy acts of religion. Thinkest not that death is the end; for man indeed liveth beyond the grave and after death is there judgment of which two things yet abideth - innumerable sorrows or eternal joy. Wherefore do I admonish thee to cease upon the present and adorn thy soul (with excelling virtues) that thou findest not thyself in that unquenchable and tormenting fire prepared for the sons of disobedience. Time abideth a little while for thee to change thy fate and to decide where thou wantest to spend eternity. For the glory of the world passeth away so fast. Remember, my friend, all is vanity!

LECTURE 12

ON HOW TO DISPOSE OF HEAVY POSSESSIONS BEFORE DEATH

One thing that normally hinders men from dying peacefully and gloriously unto the Lord is their inability to impoverish the spirit by disposing of their hard earned wealth, assets, titles and etc from the heart. These earthly treasures and honors put so much burdens on the soul that he who does not learn to dispossess them now or uproot them from the heart will find death even more bitter and unwelcomed.

Often times we think that the best way to dispose of our assets before death is to will them to our loved ones but that's untrue. Though a man may make a will for the distribution of his wealth and assets, he would still die in much pain and sorrow if his heart is filled with love for those things.

Until the human heart is emptied of its affection towards things and people, there would never be any solace in death.

The trouble and restlessness of many in death have always being in their inability to dispose of (properly) things heaped up in the heart.

But one question remains to be answered - How can a man in some few minutes before his death impoverish his spirit so much by disposing of great wealth which perhaps took years to acquire?

Trust me my dear friends, it would be no easy lesson for such a man as he would find it so rough and crude.

If there is any peace or joy in death, then truly the man with a poor Spirit possesses it (or should we say the man with no affection to earthly things possesses it). That man will die a happy

man. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3).

See, my dear friends, the reason why you fear death so greatly is because of the tyranny of things you have laid up in your heart. Notice that the rich man that came to Jesus to inquire of his salvation and perfection, in the end turned away with much sorrows when he heard in his ears the voice of the exhorting Christ, "go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor . . ."

The cloud of self renunciation that came over his head with the thundering voice of the Messiah was the reason for his gloominess. He couldn't believe the Lord was in earnest and will demand such from him. But if that man had been patient and tarried a little, Jesus would have told him, "Son, It was never my intention that you should actually go and physically sell all your wealth and give the proceeds to the poor. All I actually want is for you to remove those treasures from the temples of your heart (the sanctuary I made for myself) and to renounce your self-life. These are the things which have made you heavy in possession."

Therefore "If thou wilt be perfect", Jesus said, "go and sell that thou hast . . ." That is to say, "go uproot them from your heart and you shall be perfect"

And truly, the man that has renounced his self and has rooted from his heart that which is called 'things' has sold all that he has and given to the poor (or should we say impoverish his heart). That man is the poorest of all creatures though he may own the whole treasures of the universe.

There are two things that makes a man rich. First is his 'I' and 'me'. What do I mean by a man's 'I'? By a man's 'I', I mean his 'self-life'; the self confident, the self complacency, the self love, the self vindication, the self-seeking, the self-will, the self-glorying, the self-consciousness, the self-importance, the self-righteousness and all the self syndrome you can think of.

And the second is his love and affections for all that which is called 'things'. The man in either of these estates is the richest of all creatures though that man may not even own a fowl.

Such was the rich man that came to Jesus; he was a man with inordinate love and affection for the things he possessed. His heart was heavy with love for them and that was the whole composition of his wealth. It is to such rich men that Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:23).

But to them that kept their heart pure by not allowing things to flourish therein and were thus poor in spirit (at times in flesh), he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Of such men, we have the Peters and the James and the John, who forsook all and followed Jesus. They were poor in spirit. I mean they were men who possessed nothing (or should we say knew how to dispose of that which is called 'things'). It is therefore of no surprise that with wide arms they embraced with joy the crude death that was brought upon them by their persecutors. Are they not in the father's house as I speak?

Therefore my dear friends, I will teach you by practice to dispose of heavy possessions and to root out things from the heart just like the great saints who lived centuries ago. Know that there is no sin in having abundant riches or wealth. They only become sin unto us when we allow those 'things' to creep into our heart or better still when we inflate our heart with love for those 'things'.

Abraham for example wasn't at fault in having a son (Isaac). His only iniquity was when he allowed his son a seat in his heart (God's sanctuary) and became obsessive in his love towards him. He altered the whole configuration of his heart with the coming of that promised child, by which a monstrous substitution was made; he turned away from The Perfect (The Lord Almighty) to that which is in part. But not in too many words, we are

enlightened by the scriptures on how God repossessed his sanctuary and regained his kingdom of which Abraham was eager to usurp for Isaac. How did he do it? Very simple. He asked Abraham to sacrifice that boy unto him. Though it was just a test and a trial by fire, he declared it unto Abraham as though He was in earnest.

What happened then? Abraham obeyed and journeyed with the boy he loved to the Mount of Moriah to sacrifice him there. As he bound him and laid him on Moriah's Altar and drew the sword, The Lord Himself intervened and intercepted the sacrifice, calling out unto Abraham and saying, "Son, it was never my wish that you should actually slay you son. I only wanted him out of the place of my abode (your heart) in order that I may continue my reign therein", and by this, taught him a lesson by which he learnt to stay single-hearted.

Abraham learnt his lessons very well. Though Isaac was yet alive, safe and sound by his side, he was altogether dead unto him. He was no longer his Isaac, but rather the Lord's Isaac. For the things and people that abide not in the heart are dead unto you.

Therefore my dear friends, endeavor to have all 'things' dead unto you of which I present unto you two ways to do that. First is by stripping off all your affections to them by binding them on Moriah's Altar.

By Moriah's Altar, I mean the altar or place where you lose your "I". I mean the place (that is Mt. Moriah) bereft of affection where you see the true nature and miserableness of all that which is called things.

The man who succeeds in binding his 'things' on the altar of this mount will gain back his God. That man will have those treasures securely and safely by his side just as Abraham had Isaac by his side, but they will all together be dead unto him.

But if it seems so rough for your feet to tread upon the track to this mountain, then look diligently unto this path and you shall attain unto the same end. It is the path of charity.

All you have to do is to give all your ‘things’ willfully to the poor brethren who are amongst you. As you physically let go your ‘all’ to that poor neighbor of yours, guess what? You loose that ability to stick up your head among the men on earth, thereby attaining unto true humility, by which the heart is cleared of all carnal affection. The man who has his heart in this estate will also lose his ‘I’ and will in no wise lose his God. But to such a man, ‘his things’ would be gone physically from him as they would be in the hands of others. This undoubtedly is a hard interpretation.

Even I say that this is the rich man’s interpretation of Jesus’ statement, “go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor . . .” And if you are able to uphold yourself in not turning away in sorrows (like that rich man) but would embrace that appeal with joy, it shall profit you just like the first.

Abraham lost his son by binding him on Moriah’s Altar whilst Hannah lost his son by lending him to Eli. Though they all had their sons dead unto them which is to say uprooted from their heart, Abraham still had control over his son whilst Hannah lost his control to another man.

Even so, my dear friends, on account of these two, choose by which means you seek to purify your heart from carnal affections – Either by binding them up on Moriah’s Altar or by giving them out with the zeal of Hannah’s liberality.

LECTURE 13

ON HOW TO GET ON TOP OF MORIAH'S MOUNT WITHOUT ANY HINDRANCE : THE ABRAHAM'S PATTERN.

The Mount of Moriah like I said is the place where a man sees the true nature and miserableness of all that which is called things and willfully looses them all together with his dearest 'I'.

Many have difficulty in attaining unto this mount or place, but I will teach you how to get there without much trouble and hassle even by Abraham's Pattern or Methodology.

Abraham first began his journey into the land of Moriah without communicating his true intentions to his wife, I mean the woman with whom he conceived the son, Isaac. Had he told Sarah his true mission in that land, she would have been a great hindrance to that holy assignment, for what woman is there of us who will sit back and laugh, when she discovers her only son is going to be killed? That woman would fight back with every fleeting breath of hers to hinder that assignment and if she succeeds in getting her son by her side, would keep protecting him by her side till the boy is man enough to resist evil for himself.

Though we are not told this in the scriptures, I believe that was what Abraham did: he never made his true intentions known unto Sarah - Even so you also ought to endeavor to keep your true intentions from Sarah your wife, if you so desire a successful journey to the land of Moriah. What do I mean by Sarah, your wife? I mean the person or thing with whom you acquired or secured that which you seek to sacrifice unto God on Moriah's Altar. It could be a mortal person, your intelligence, your hard work, your connections, your virtue, vice or anything at all. Any of these can stand as your wife and you ought to keep the matter

from them by becoming utterly deaf to the voice of reason (that is the distinguishing property of man to reason).

As long as you remain deaf to the voice of reason the matter would be concealed from your wife. But he who gives an ear to this voice would receive a great lecture of the Self-life and will in the end fuel his ego, I mean the 'I', to fight back. Therefore my dear friends, I beseech you to remain utterly deaf to the voice of reason if you so desire to arrive in the land of Moriah in peace, lest it fights you and hampers you from crossing over to this land.

Again, we see from Abraham journey that though he went with two of his servants, he climbed not the mountain with them. He only bid them to abide in the land with the donkeys and then made the journey with his son alone into the Mount. Had he climbed the mountain with those servants, he would have yet again faced a great opposition and Isaac perhaps would have been spared. Even so, you are also permitted to journey with your two servants: love and affection. But endeavor never to climb the Mount with these two servants lest they cry out to rescue the object of the sacrifice and hinder you from your divine assignment. Strip yourself of any love and affection before you climb this Mount. Only bid them to wait for you in the land and take the journey alone with your son into the Holy Mount.

In doing this, you would be able to bind 'Isaac' unto the Altar and draw up the sword to slay him as though you only had a lamb or a fowl before you. Trust me, God will speak out in no time and would intercept the sacrifice granting you the grace to clean your heart of all carnal affection and self-infection.

Above all, you would find yourself a cross in that holy path of obedience (self-denial) that would cheer you on to a happy and a glorious death.

LECTURE 14

OF HOW I LOST MY OWN MOTHER THOUGH SHE STILL LIVES

Growing up as a child, one of my greatest fear was to lose my mother (being a single parent) for I was so emotionally attached to her and the empathy between us was also great. Anytime the thoughts of her death presented itself to my mind, it brought great tension upon me and shook me to the point where my knees almost trembled. But always, her physical appearance interfered those thoughts and mental pictures and salvaged me from those pains and inward afflictions.

But my spirit kept terrorizing me with those imaginations for some time and always left me with questions stained on my heart – “What happens to you if she dies or is no more?” “How are you going to take it should you loose her this very day?” And of course, I always knew the answers to those questions. Inwardly, I knew that something terrible would happen to me should that be the case. I knew my pains would be so great and severe and my tears would be boundless. I knew I was going to be in no lesser trouble should that happen.

So often times, I would lift my eyes towards the God of heaven and humbly beseech him for his strength and endurance to withstand all my shocks, and pains should that really happen.

On one glorious night, amidst my usual meditations and silent prayers, He whispered into my ears and with the same ancient voice with which He called forth Abraham unto Moriah’s Mount, and said unto me “son, you better lose your loved ones or else they will lose you.” From that night, I began to purify my hearts from all earthly contacts and relation. I began to remove all my dear ones (my mother being first) from the temples of my heart and to retain it singly for the Lord.

But the question still remains unanswered. How did I do that? Very simple. Since I knew the intensity of the pains that would befall me if she were to die, all I did was to break those pains and sorrows into fragment, having accurate knowledge of the Divide and conquer Algorithm which I learnt in discrete mathematics, and then proceeded by taking a daily dose of it.

What do I mean by that? I mean I would always spend some time in isolation and give diligent contemplations to her death. Often times, I would look steadily on the ground as though her mortal remains were set before me and her funeral around me. This holy exercise I repeatedly gave diligence to practice always brought much pains and grief to my heart. Frankly speaking, it inflicted great wounds on my heart and at times brought tears down my eyes.

At some point in time, I taught I was emotionally torturing myself and subjecting myself to useless sorrows because as often as I turned to the voice of reason, it rebuked me and painted the whole exercise as being demonic. But how can it be demonic, the exercise that is intended to bring unity between a mortal soul and that of His Maker? How can it be ungodly if there is God in the picture?

That not withstanding, I pressed on relentlessly with the practice for some time and greatly increased my sorrows and my tears. The more I had tears rolling down my cheeks, the more I felt her fading away from my heart. With consistent practice, it came to a point where I found her completely out of my heart. I found great cure for my possessive and obsessive love towards her (being the only woman I have known since childhood).

Though I still cherish and love her and still have her by my side (safe and sound) even as a write, she is altogether dead unto me now. I have lost her completely. I mean she abides no more in my heart. The Lord reigns there alone. Should it then be announced

to me that she is no more or dead, I will suffer no great pain or shock as I would some years back. My sorrows shall be very little or few.

This have I done to all my earthly contacts and relations who try invading my heart to put me at risk of losing my God.

Therefore my dear friends, if we would retain our God, then we all ought to lose our Isaac. But every man ought to choose his master, “for no man”, says the Lord, “can serve two masters at a time” I am for the Lord.

LECTURE 15

OF THE DIVERSE MEANS DEATH CAN BE PROCURED

Birth is when we come and death is when we go. We all came in unique ways but we go in diverse ways. It is very obvious that we would all die, but the cloud of unknowing that gathered over the saints of old still gathers above us: we do not know when or how that will happen. But one thing is worth knowing that there is no unique way of our departure, we shall all not die in the same manner.

Therefore my dear friends beware you dispute not on the way and manner some die and be not given to inquire or dispute about the manner of departure of other men, Why this man died in such a manner and that one in that; Why this man died a painless death and the other one a painful one; Why this man's death was of God and that man's death was not of God. Such questions only darken the soul and moreover, they are not yours to know. For when a colleague even suggests them to you, please do well to cast them away from you. Never dispute over such because you do not know how your own death shall be.

A man once said of his dead friend, "he died in a shameful and a disgraceful manner" and a few months later also died in the same manner. I know of many others too who rejoiced in the death or calamity of others, and accounted it as judgment upon them for their disobedience and wickedness; and within some few months, also met with a more uneasy death.

Please my dear friends speak nothing concerning the death of others and only look to your own for you do not know how your own death shall be. If you see others die in an accident, reflect that it may be that you also may die in the same manner and by that retain your peace. If you also see others drown and die in

water, reflect that you may also procure death in that same manner. If you would do this, your peace shall be great.

Think not that death is too far from you for I tell you; it is closer to you than you thought and may embrace you at all times. If it doesn't embrace you on an empty stomach, it will smite you on a full stomach for there are many who have died on a full stomach than on an empty stomach. There are many others also who have died in watchfulness than in sleeping, and in eating than in fasting.

Know that death can be procured in all ways possible and think not that it is too far from you. See every activity or inactivity as a means through which your death may be procured. If you don't die by accident, you will die by providence.

As you eat, reflect that a food may choke you and you may die. As you walk, reflect that you may stumble upon a stone, fall and then die. As you sit at the comfort of your house, reflect that the building may just collapse and you may die. As you relax under a shade of a tree, know that it may fall suddenly upon you and you may die. As you cross the highway, reflect that a vehicle may just run you down and you may die. As you sit rejoicing, reflect that you may suddenly have a cardiac arrest and then die.

As you walk about in ecstasy, think that they may be an explosion somewhere of which you may be caught by the fire thereof and then die. As you unplug your television, reflect that you may get electrocuted and die. As you also journey in the dark, think also that you may be attacked by a robber who may strangle you and then die. Thus nature calls us to meditate on death by those things which are the instruments of acting it; and God, by all the variety of his providence, makes us see death everywhere, in all variety of circumstances.

If you would think about this from time to time and look at all things as a means through which your death can be procured, you

will learn to hold yourself ready to die at all times. It will make you more sensitive and grateful to God who upholds you from evil all the time. It will also make you more careful to please God at all time from whom you have received all grace.

MY GOD! I KNOW THAT I MUST DIE

By Benjamin Schmolck

My God! I know that I must die--
My mortal life is passing hence
On earth I neither hope nor try
To find a lasting residence.
Then teach me by Thy heavenly grace,
With joy and peace my death to face.

My God! I know not *when* I die,
What is the moment or the hour--
How soon the clay may broken lie,
How quickly pass away the flower;
Then may Thy child prepared be
Through time to meet Eternity.

My God! I know not *how* I die,
For death has many ways to come--
In dark mysterious agony,
Or gently as a sleep to some.
Just as Thou wilt I if but it be
For ever blessed, Lord, with Thee.

My God! I know not *where* I die,
Where is my grave, beneath what strand,
Yet from its gloom I do rely
To be delivered by Thy hand.
Content, I take what spot is mine,
Since all the earth, my Lord, is Thine.
My gracious God! when I must die,
Oh! bear my happy soul above,
With Christ, my Lord, eternally

My God! I know that I must die--
To share Thy glory and Thy love!
Then comes it right and well to me,
When, where, and how my death shall be.

LECTURE 16

OF THE TWO TYPES OF SORROWS (GODLY AND WORLDLY) AND WHAT THEY WORK IN US.

There is no way we humans can do away with sorrows in our journey here below. We shall have them and shall continue to have them as long as we remain in the body. Until that appointed time when God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes and eliminate all the sorrows of his saints, sorrows shall continue to be with us. What do I mean by that? I mean we shall continue to see disappointments, heartbreak, bereavement, betrayals etc. They will intercept our lives and will continue to interfere as long as we take our journey here below.

Basically, there are two types of sorrows. The one is pleasant and the other unpleasant. The one, godly and the other worldly. These two sorrows have great resemblances but they are strangely dissimilar in the works they inspire within the human soul. We can only talk of their likenesses as being superficial and the differences as fundamental.

One works repentance to salvation never to be regretted whilst the other produce death in us by fueling the adamic ego to unholy deeds.

The man who is made sorrowful after a godly manner will find great reconciliation with the God of Abraham though he may be the worst of all sinners. But he also who is made sorrowful after a worldly fashion, will resurrect his self-life by fanning the adamic fire into glitzy flames though he may be a saint.

See how Essau in loosing the blessing of his father to his brother, Jacob, became sorrowful and by that thought to slay him. This

kind of sorrows profits us not. It only destroys. It is very useless to sorrow after such a manner.

Normally, the sorrows that dawn upon us as a result of our lack or insufficiency in that which is called “things” are selfish in themselves and they are worldly.

The man who is sorrowful because he has not bread, clothes or high appointments to serve in a board meeting is only but hurting and killing himself. Such were the sorrows of the Israelites. Most of their deepest sorrows and grieves were because they had not bread, meat etc. Their solemn cries were because they were not all together pleased and gratified. Of which tears and sorrows the Lord declared, “they have contaminated my altars with their tears.”

Therefore my dear friends, I exhort you to give no diligence to worldly sorrows but rather to that which is godly and you will find rest for your soul.

LECTURE 17

OF WHY MANY SUFFER SHOCK, EMOTIONAL TORTURE OR EVEN FAINT AND DIE UPON HEARING THE NEWS CONCERNING THE DEATH OF A LOVED ONE.

Many upon hearing that, they have lost a loved one, suffer intense shock and pains of which some even collapse and die. Some also upon hearing such news are instigated to commit suicide whilst others give themselves over much alcohol and sexual pleasures in their bid to overcome that shock.

Not long ago, I heard of a woman, who out of shock ran mad when the death of her only son was whispered into her ears. There are many such incidents happening every day in nobler times as people lose their loved ones. Even Eli's daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, upon hearing the tidings that her husband and her father-in-law were dead and that the ark of God was taken away from Israel in their battle against the Philistines, forcefully went into labor (being a pregnant woman), travailed and then died.

From the days of Noah, men have not been strangely ingenious in handling the pains and grief of their departed loved ones. I must admit that we are barely experts in that. For this reason, most physicians and health practitioners are in great fear anytime they are about to disclose the death of a patient to a relative.

Saw you not how the servants of David also feared in telling him that his son (the one he bore with Beersheba) was dead. For they said among themselves, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead? "

But not in too many words, the Prophet from whom came this wonderful exposition then tells us again that "when David saw

that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: and then asked his servants, Is the child dead? Of which they tremblingly responded, He is dead”, expecting to see some strange moodiness in the King. But contrary to their expectations and predictions, the King made himself glad by rising from the earth to anoint and wash himself and also to change his garment, delighting himself with glorious feasting. He left the servants in great surprise and wonder.

But should we all join the servants in asking the king this question – “What is this thing that you have done, o King (in that you fasted and wept for the child whilst he was alive but now that he is dead, you do rise to eat bread)?”, he has but a simple answer for us.

“Now the child is dead,” he says, “and why should I fast? Can I bring him again? I shall go to him but he shall not return to me.”

The reason for David’s boldness perhaps was because he saw that coming; in that the prophet Nathan had already declared to him that the boy would die and not live.

Often times the blow we see coming are less harmful than the ones that come to us from behind. And secondly, the blows we take in bit are less harsh than those ones delivered as a whole.

My dear friends, there are only two reasons influencing the great intensity of your shocks and sorrows anytime you hear the news of a departed loved one. The first is that, you allow them to come to you unawares or should we say, you receive those sad news from behind and the second is that you dispose of all your sorrows or pains till the time you actually lose your loved ones, hence your great sorrows.

Let me tell you my dear friend, if you don’t lose your loved ones whilst they are alive, they will lose you whilst they die (or you will lose yourself whilst they die).

One thing remains to be said that the man who has his earthly contacts very close to his heart, is more likely to break forth into impatient murmurs and lamentations should death at any time take them away. But he who only cleave to them with that consideration which God wills us to have, and not with our whole heart, shall see them rent away without losing his sense of calmness.

LECTURE 18

OF THE DIVIDE AND CONQUER ALGORITHM

In this particular lecture, I will begin by explaining what the divide and Conquer Algorithm is, for the sake of those who are seeing it for the first time. And I will begin by first explaining what an algorithm is in general.

An algorithm is simply a finite number of steps that solves a computational problem. The problem need not necessarily be computational. It can be any problem at all. But once we are able to find a terminating or a finite number of steps, which is very well-defined (or should we say general) and efficient in solving that problem, then what we really have is an algorithm. All we seek or anticipate from a classic algorithm is that, it should be able to solve our problem (be it computational, real-life or spiritual) anytime it is fed with inputs from a well defined set. Having known this, I shall proceed to explain what the Divide and Conquer Algorithm is.

The Divide and Conquer Algorithm is a special type of Algorithm that solves a problem (a bigger problem) mainly by breaking them into fragments or sub problem and then solving each fragment recursively. It then finally combines the solutions of those fragments or sub problems to be the solution of the entire or bigger problem.

Like the name specifies, the divide and Conquer Algorithm solves problem mainly by division (breaking them into smaller fragments) and then solving them recursively. It is a very efficient way of solving bigger problems or problems with rigid austerities.

It will intrigue you to know that it is the algorithm the Lord used in separating and frustrating the men who gathered in the land of Shinar to build themselves a city and a tower whose height was intended to kiss the very heavens.

And of course we all know what happened. With all precision and divine urgency, the Lord brought them to nothing by luring them into the diverse spaces of linguistics.

By dividing, the Lord conquered their vain imaginations and schemes.

To unite is to strengthen but to divide is to conquer. But let me warn you my dear friends not to be over-excited about this phrase because sometimes, satan unites us to conquer us. But by far, unity is strength.

Death as it stands is a big decision problem which can neither be solved on a deterministic or a non- deterministic machine in polynomial time, not even in an n-factorial time complexity, as discrete mathematicians will put it. Death by far has being a big problem for men. The sound of the funeral bell alone does bring shock to countless souls. Many can't afford to hear of some one being dead let alone contemplate over their own death.

The question of many has been this – “How do I die in peace?”, “How do I die well?”

Well, this is a big problem but with a very simple answer. My answer to this is – to die in peace, first learn to die in pieces. Just as two handfull of boiled rice or roasted maize cannot be swallowed down the throat at once, our Spirit also cannot embrace death at once. Death should be consumed in the same manner food is consumed. It should be taken down in bits if we do not wish to be choked.

And just as the final bit of food left on a plate to be consumed is just like the preceding ones taken, Even so, if we learn to die in bits or should we say in pieces, our final death will be but a very easy task since it will only be a continuation of that daily exercise.

“If we die in part every day of our lives, we shall have but little to do on the last” says the 18th century saint, Archbishop Fenelon.

“O how utterly,” declared he in earnest, “will these little daily deaths destroy the power of the final dying!” What but the Spirit of God can reveal this mystery to Him.

My dear friends, if death will loose its hideous sting, then you ought to die in bits and in pieces. Until you divide the grave, you cannot conquer it. Therefore is the Divide and Conquer Algorithm a very useful algorithm. It is more spiritual than mathematical.

LECTURE 19

OF THE USEFULNESS OF THE DIVIDE AND CONQUER ALGORITHM IN PARTITIONING SORROWS

My dear friends, if you seek to arrive at moderate sorrows at the death of your loved ones, then you ought to learn how to partition your sorrows even by the good use of the Divide and Conquer Algorithm.

Please permit me to ask you these questions my dear friends – “How are you going to take it should you hear that, the only single mother or father you grew up to know is caught up in a gas explosion and is burnt to death thereby”

“How hard will it hit you should you hear that all your children or kids in swimming and playing in a river near your house have drown and died and that their remains are lying there at the river bank, with a huge crowd gathered around them?”

“Please do an introspection and tell me how you are going to take it should you see your wife and your year old son lying in a pool of blood dead, in an accident scene you saw and drew near to sympathize?”

“And again, tell me how you are going to take it should you lose your entire family to flood or landslide in a day?”

Trust me my dear friends, should any of these things befall you or be announced to you all of a sudden, your sorrows shall be exceedingly great upon you and you shall suffer no less shock.

I exhort you therefore, my dear friends to give all diligence in contemplating upon the death of your loved ones. For if thou shall always behold their mortal remains in thy imaginations, and lose

them to the grave in your meditations, their final departure would not be of much trouble to you. It would only be a continuation of your daily exercise.

What more can I say than this very one – know thy sorrows, divide thy sorrows, and you would conquer all thy pains. Wherefore is the divide and conquer algorithm an efficient way of partitioning sorrows.

LECTURE 20

OF THE DIVERSE WAYS WE BEHOLD OURSELVES : THE USES OF MIRRORS

Mirrors play a very vital role in our daily lives. They do a very brilliant work for us. They help us in beholding our beauties. They inform us on the texture, shape and appearance of our bodies. They show us how symmetrical, physique and beautiful we are.

Aside giving us a reflection of ourselves, they also aid us in detecting any distortion in appearance or looks by instigating us with a natural fury to correct them with immediacy and insistence.

We have these mirrors everywhere; in our homes, cars, schools and even our pockets. We hold it above our heads from time to time to see how far we have deviated in appearance and looks so as to get back on track. Never would we adorn ourselves without a mirror to direct and guide us. It is always held as the Jacob's ladder by which the heights of beauty are attained.

If you ask me my dear friends, I will say this kind of mirror is not harmful for you. Only be careful that it leads you not to think so highly of yourself. But it still doesn't give the best reflection. No it doesn't.

There is also another kind of mirror with us today which is like unto the first. This mirror unlike the first is not molded with the hands but with the Adamic ego. It is the self-mirror. What do I mean by the self-mirror? I mean the 'me' and the 'I' with which man always behold himself. This also is a kind of mirror and it gives reflections of all that is brought before it. I exhort you not to behold yourself in this kind of mirror for its reflections are too harmful for you and its images are false. Cast it away from you with all diligence and great shall be your peace.

My dear friends, there is yet another kind of mirror which men hardly know. Any human soul that makes time to contemplate and meditate over death will discover this mirror.

Though many of you may hold this mirror disgusting, I fell in love with it the very moment my soul made that ingenious discovery, because it gave me a very powerful and accurate reflection of myself. It also gave timely reflections of all created things I brought before it. Guess what mirror that is? It is the mirror of death.

I love to stand before it continually and to look into it. It shows me how little, weak and powerless I am. It makes me nothing, gives me nothing and renders me nothing. I love it for the privilege of whittling me down to size. Its sublime reflections have taught me to retain great humility.

For this reason my dear friends, I exhort you also to continually have this mirror before you.

Many have wondered at my manner of life and have so deeply desired that I should tell them the method by which I arrived at my singleness of heart and excelling virtues. I must confess that the practice of looking into this mirror is one significant practice that helped me.

Looking into this kind of mirror continually has rendered me blind to feminine beauty and worldly felicities. It has quenched all my passions and lust – for if anything will quench the heat of lust, abate the heights of pride, appease the itch of covetous desires, and cure our raging desire to possess vanity, this must do. It has cure for many of the Adamic sickness. It will make all things bitter unto you and God only sweet.

Looking into this special kind of mirror by means of frequent meditation of death, would greatly advance you in charity and

humility. As a kind of Balaam's donkey, it will also restrain you from madness as you ply an unworthy course.

Should any ego also inflate in you, looking into this mirror will also save you from destruction. Like an ice pick, it will puncture all the inflated egos in your life. It will deflate them with insistence. It will bring out all the air in your egos through many popping and hissing. Trust me, it will whittle you down to size and remedy all your pride.

Do not think that it will make you gloomy and sad. For even if it makes you sorrowful or sad, it would be after a godly manner which will profit you in the end.

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthian 7:10).

There is indeed great salvation in the diligent contemplation of death and the pains of hell. “The thought of death”, said Fénelon, “is the best rule which we could make for all our actions and undertakings”

Nevertheless if your heart is so weak to receive the reflections of this mirror (which is in the form of meditation of death), then my only caution to you is to give diligence to bring the reflections before your very eyes by means of attending funerals and mortuaries if it is in your ability to do so. The reflections you receive from this may also advance you to prepare yourself for death. It is wisdom to learn from the misfortune of others

If you are also very courageous, then I will exhort you to do this one particular thing as it will advance you in complete devotions to God – adorn yourself as though you were dead, lie down in any wooden cave or on a decorated bed and let another take a picture of you. After taking the picture, make a print of it and paste it in your room. Stand before it from time to time and you would learn

to appreciate your own littleness with time. You can also keep a copy of it in your pocket to behold yourself in it from time to time. The reflections from this mirror will profit you much. The Lord will grow sweeter unto you through it.

I have tasted it and I can tell you for a fact that there is God in that picture. If it were evil, I would tell you!

LECTURE 21

OF THE BODY AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF THE SOUL

Our body is nothing but a big waste after the soul's departure. Once we die, it is given over to loathsome and deplorable plight. It reduces to nothing than a simple meal for the worms and termites of the earth. The beauty of the flesh fades away the very moment we take our last breath. The eyes also with which we behold beauties and lust after them are shut in their sockets and covered with profound darkness.

The ears also which are curious to hear novelties and delight in defamatory discourse will be clogged with dust and repugnant maggots when we die. The nostrils which we often times shield against severe odors and hovering dust will be ruined in the grave. The teeth and jawbones which love to feast on sumptuous meals and assorted meats will fall and rot away.

The mouth which often delights in vain speeches and riddles will be destroyed by termites and caterpillars. Worms will fill every part of the belly and then choke the throat.

The sexual organs, which are desperate to fornicate and delight in pleasure, will rot away in utter disgust and shame. My friends, our waists will grow so weak and pale and greatly diminish in repugnance.

Woman, I wonder where thy wonderful and tender breasts will be? I wonder the state which thy sharp curves and hips will assume which often excites the libidinous impulses of the weaker brethren? Where will thy beauty be of which you now boast. And where thy heavy behind which you love to flaunt?

Verily, I say unto you woman, they shall all rot away in corruption. The worms would feast on thy curves and behind and enjoy all thy flesh with relish.

I wonder what great a meal we would some day be to the little ants of the earth when we finally clasp our hands to our chest.

If there is one thing we all ought to get straight, friends, it is how little we are.

But blessed indeed is the man with a forgiving heart, a pitiful eye, an enduring feet, a charitable hand and an inspirational lips. Though these often end up rotting in the grave, they provide a great incentive for the payment of heavenly premiums.

POOR SOUL

By William Shakespeare

Poor Soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
[Fool'd by] these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer death,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?

Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?

Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:

So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

LECTURE 22

OF THE SOUL AFTER LIVING THE BODY

Once the soul departs from the body, it encounters a lot of accusation and confrontations. The wild beasts of hell surround and gloat over it to see if it will be theirs for eternity. Accusations upon accusations are brought forward against it before the Chief Judge who sits on the eternal throne.

The soul stands alone before God and in the multitude of the hideous demons to be cross-examined on all its actions and inactions even to the slightest negligence.

The devil then will bring up all her offences (both true and forged lies) and then argue out his case to the angels Of God, on why it should be theirs for eternity.

Oh what a terrible hour shall that be when the King of Kings will judge my soul there in the midst of both divine and fallen angels. Will my love for God and humanity be found genuine enough to cover the multitudes of my sins?

Blessed indeed is the man who in such a condition is sheltered by the alms he gave out to the poor whilst he was alive and the injuries he forgave his neighbors. Happy is he that has grievous wounds on his neck to show for the chastisement he endured for Christ sake and the harassment he underwent for choosing the cross. Such a soul has very little to fear on that awful hour.

LECTURE 23

OF HOW THAT ETERNITY CALLS ON EVERY MAN TO REST HIS MARROWS AFTER A 'HARD EARTH'S-LIFE'

What man is there of us who works for a whole day and sleeps not? Sleep is the third of the four great essentials of life. It comes after air and water. Surprisingly, it comes before food. I for one can leave without food for a good number of days but I'm afraid I can't say so when it comes to sleep. I don't have the brow to keep vigil for five conservative days without even a minute shuteye. Sincerely yours, I can't. My body wouldn't just allow me. Let me dare give it a try and the organs within would soon send a hormone to rebuke me. They will whisper into my ears and say, "Buddy, you better allow us some rest or we do something nasty to you." That is how wonderfully God designed our body. It wouldn't take any nonsense from us. Sometimes we just have to cooperate with them.

We can't be without this great essential of nature. God being the Omnipotent and the Indefatigable even had to take some rest after six days of putting the chaotic world in order and "calling those things which be not as though they were." That is not to say God was tired, because He is Almighty and Indefatigable. But it was only a precedent set for man to follow and observe.

Sleep or should we say 'rest' is entirely important. Even robots and lifeless machines which run under the influence of push buttons and external powers are designed to have some moment of rest after hours of recurrently responding to commands. Try working them beyond their authorized limit, and they will begin making awkward sounds. They will rebel every command you issue thereafter. And if you insist of overworking them, they will enter into a 'sleep mode' of which God alone knows when next they will bounce back to work. We often experience this on our

computers, phones and almost all of the 21st century gadgets. It is their way of telling us that they need some rest. Nothing can stay working forever.

Therefore, just as time demand sleep from us after a hard day's work, so does eternity also demand that we rest our marrows after a hard life. We all will have to retire to the grave someday after treading upon rocks and stones and pursuing hard after our specific businesses and callings.

The beggar will retire there, and the businessman will retire there.

The sinner will retire there and the saint will retire there.

The fool will retire there and the wise man will retire there.

The virtuous woman will retire there and the prostitute will retire there.

The teacher will retire there and the student will retire there

The clergy will retire there and the laity will also retire there. We all will not continue in our respective profession forever. Someday, we shall retire to the grave beneath.

Men and women in pains on our hospital beds will also retire there; they will not be there forever. When they are tired of swallowing pills and enduring the sharpness of injection, they will bid us farewell and go to sleep there.

That is the bedchamber of all men. That is where we rest our wearied feet after trekking on dust and ashes and chasing hard after our pride. That is where we hide to pay our oxygen debt after our hearts can no longer endure the marathon of life.

Just as counselors and physicians admonish men to take enough sleep after each days work, so does nature and eternity also call

us all to an eternal rest after working ourselves out on the tracks of life that we may wake up sound in the morning to face the dread judgment of the lamb.

QUIETLY REST THE WOODS AND DALES (STANZAS 4-8)

By Paul Gerhard (Trans by Sandra Findlater)

Now this body seeks for rest,
From its vestments all undrest,
Types of mortality:
Christ shall give me soon to wear,
Garments beautiful and fair--
White robes of glorious majesty.

Head, and feet and hands, once more
Joy to think of labor o'er,
And night with gladness see.
O my heart! thou too shalt know
Rest from all thy toil below,
And from earth's turmoil soon be free.

Weary limbs, now rest ye here;
Safe from danger and from fear,
Seek slumber on this bed:
Deeper rest ere long to share,
Other hands shall soon prepare
My narrow couch among the dead.

While my eyes I gently close,
Stealing o'er me soft repose,
Who shall my guardian be?
Soul and body now I leave,
(And Thou wilt the trust receive,)
O Israel's Watchman! unto Thee.

O my friends! from you this day
May all ill have fled away,
No danger near have come.

Now, my God, these dear ones keep;
Give to my beloved sleep,
And angels send to guard their home!

LECTURE 24

OF HOW THAT DEATH HANDLES NOT ALL MEN ALIKE.

Death indeed handles not all men alike. It is good to the good and evil to the evil. It is rough to the wicked but gentle to the righteous. The true sons and daughters of the kingdom have death as their servant whilst the children of the world have it as their master.

Death undoubtedly has a personality: It sees, It knows, it wills and it has its own fears too. When he sets out to accompany the dying saint home, he does so in all humility. He only moves to stand beside their bed and then politely say, "My Prince, Your Father calls for you", and then gently lead him into that bosom of Abraham and the innumerable company of Angels.

But I can't say so for the children of the world. I am sure he appears before them as a sleuth agent who has been given a warrant to effect an arrest and then forcefully drag them with him to the central command. He sometimes scolds them along the way you know, like a father does to a naughty child after pulling him away from the midst of the bad friends he was warned not to go out with. Yes, I am sure.

Before that noble saint of God, St Teresa of Avila, breathed her last, her final words were, "O my Lord and my Spouse, the hour that I have longed for has come. It is time for us to meet one another", whereas of the famous atheist, Sir Thomas Scott, these final words were penned down, "Until this moment I thought that there is neither a God nor a hell. Now I know and feel that there are both, and I am doomed to perdition by the just judgment of the almighty."

Brooding over these two statements, we can clearly conclude that the blessed lady St. Teresa was very happy dying whilst Sir Thomas wasn't. He wasn't ready to die at all. The former was fully prepared and happy to die whilst the latter was not prepared at all. In fact we have it there in the popular literatures that before Caesar Borgia died, his final words were "When I lived, I provided for everything but death; now I must die and I am unprepared to die", eloquently confessing his unpreparedness to die."

Well, that wasn't the case of the men that clung to the cross. Almost all our church fathers and mothers died a happy death; they just knew how to die. They embraced death so tightly and happily as though it were a close friend that suddenly returned from a trip abroad with gifts in hand.

Death is not entirely monstrous as some think. Perhaps it may appear so to children of the world but definitely not to the sons and daughters of the new creation. To us, "it is gain" just as St. Paul puts it. A great gain for that matter because it takes us home to our Father.

Death, I say, has its own fears too.

LECTURE 25

OF THE USEFULNESS OF TEARS AND OF WHY WE OUGHT NOT TO SORROW AS THEM WITHOUT HOPE.

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”
Thessalonian 4:13-18

The bereavements and the sudden losses we mostly encounter here below are a good incentive for tears.

The sudden death of our friends and relatives has always and will always trigger down a thousand tears upon our cheeks. It will always flood our heart with sorrows and make us broken. Weeping is great and sweet. EST QUÆDAM FLERE VOLUPTAS. That is to say, there is a certain pleasure in weeping. No spiritual teacher will dispute this fact about weeping, especially those ones which flow as a result of the sacred memories of departed loved ones which visits the heart.

It is never wrong to weep and sorrow for our dead friends and relatives, and it will never be wrong as long as the world stands. No, not when the scriptures are concerned. It has nothing to do

with masculinity and femininity neither has it anything to do with who is strong and who is weak or who is emotional and who is not.

I, for one, am terribly afraid of the man who suppresses his tears and keeps a dry eye even when you can see from his face that his heart is bleeding profusely with pain and anguish. Only God knows what harm that man is doing to himself. For even when the skies are heavy with clouds and can they hardly move, they release themselves by showering drops of water above our heads and our roofs, which is most often interspersed with thundering and lightening. They would give out all their rain till they feel lighter to move again.

“Sorrow,” indeed as the preacher says, “*is* better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.” (Ecc 7:3)

I for one believe in weeping and in its sacred ability to lift up burden. Even Jesus, who is our Lord and Saviour, wept his heart out at Lazarus’ funeral. He couldn’t just contain his spirit in that holy mood of sorrow and grief that filled the household of Mary and Martha there in the city of Bethany. What did he do? See what short an answer we have there in the scriptures – he wept.

Yes, Jesus wept. I mean the comforter and the consoler, the healer and the reliever, wept freely. He wept to the amazement of the Jews present. They couldn’t just believe their eyes. They couldn’t just believe it was the man of miracles weeping there in the public. “What a different man we see today”, they rumored among themselves. They were just surprised to see Jesus (the God-Man) also weeping among the crowd, with his handkerchief in hand to wipe away the streaking tears and the dropping phlegm.

But should any of us be curious to know why the King of Kings did become that sorrowful to the point of weeping, this very answer from the Jews will do – “. . . He loved him.” Jesus loved Lazarus so

much. And because He loved him greatly, He couldn't just contain His Spirit when He saw his sisters and the mourners weeping.

There is indeed nothing wrong with sorrowing and shedding tears for our loved ones who depart from us into eternity. The sacred memories and the wonderful times we had with them are not to be banished from the heart because they are not evil. As often as we feel the absence of their presence around us, we are free to let the tears flow and relieve ourselves of any burden. I can say without any fear of contradiction that, it is a holy sorrow and it works great virtues and tenderness in us.

Contrary to what many bible teachers interpret, St. Paul, the Apostle in his letter to the saints in Thessalonica, never admonished us to deal harshly with the sacred thoughts of loved ones nor banish from our heart the godly sorrows that settle upon us as a result of their departure. He could not have done that for he well knows the usefulness of godly sorrows.

Only that he wouldn't have us sorrow as though we were without hope. He wouldn't have us sorrow as if we no longer had faith in the final resurrection or doubted the power of God to resurrect them in the last day. All he meant was like - Friends, there is no need weeping and sorrowing for the departed saints as though they will never be restored to you again or are forever gone and would never be seen. I wouldn't have you sorrow in such a manner which is devoid of hope. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." That is to say that the dead saints are only asleep in Christ. You are free to sorrow and weep by calling to mind the good times you had with them. Let such thoughts inspire you with the hope which is yet to be attained. Only be careful not to sorrow as if you had no hope. Let the hope of the resurrection be your comfort. That is all the Apostle Paul meant.

And truly, all our dead ones in Christ are only asleep. One day, we shall see the sons and daughters we lost painfully running to

embrace us from a distance there in the father's kingdom. Our dead ones in Christ will be restored to us and we shall see and live with them again.

"Blessed indeed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them"

LECTURE 26

THE PREREQUISITE FOR A HAPPY DEATH : SURRENDERING TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS AND ACCEPTING HIM AS SAVIOUR.

If a man so desires to have a blessed and a holy death, then he ought to first surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and then accept him as his Christ and Personal Saviour.

No matter how gentle and loving a man may be, he will not see a favorable death until he first surrenders to the Lordship of Christ and confesses him as his Lord and Saviour.

It doesn't matter the number of times we give to orphanage homes or the number of poor people we cater for on the streets, once our life is without Christ, we will meet up with a very unfriendly death in the end.

Though a man may live his life as a saint and would not indulge in any evil, he will still encounter the horrors of death, should his life lack the fragrance of Christ's Lordship. He will be in no less doom than the notorious murderer in the death row. No man whatsoever is indeed clean until he surrenders his whole life to God.

If there is a word that best describes we the sons of Adam, this particular word will do – disgust. Yes, this word fits us perfectly. It tells us exactly what we are. We are nasty, shameful, ugly, dirty and so wretched. Until a man surrenders himself to the triune God and allows himself to be adopted by the Spirit of Christ, he will still be under the death sentence which through Adam spread to all men.

Life is found no where than in Christ. He only has the power to quicken and restore that which we lost to the devil through Adam's disobedience – life.

Blessed indeed is the man that has renounced everything for Christ's sake and has him as his all-in-all. That man will see no sorrows in death.

Oh what a great blessedness it is to be born again and to have our sins forgiven us. It is a gift to all men.

If you do not know Jesus as your LORD and personal SAVIOUR, please seize the opportunity now and be to Him as a son or a daughter. Only humble yourself and pray the prayer below with confidence.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know I am a sinner deserving of death because your Word says, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Lord I come to you just as I am, modifying nothing, sparing nothing and excusing nothing. I come to you as one bound by sin, poisoned by bitterness, full of carnal affections and one who cannot save himself.

I come to you because you have said in your word that he who comes to you, shall in no wise be cast out (John 6:37).

Lord, I pray for the forgiveness of sins and also rest for my soul after death.

Jesus, I believe you are LORD. I also believe you died on the cross and resurrected on the third day for my sake. Please be the LORD and SAVIOUR of my life that I may be a son/daughter to you. Write my name also in the Lamb's Book of Life that I may spend eternity with you.

Thank you for saving me and for calling me your child.

Amen.

LECTURE 27

OF HOW THAT EVERY MAN OUGHT TO BE A WORSHIPPER IF HE WOULD DIE A HAPPY DEATH.

Throughout eternity, what the saints will be doing is to join the 24 elders in shouting HOLY! HOLY! to the Lord God Almighty. We will be worshipping God throughout eternity. Because that is what we humans were designed to do.

I for one do not believe in the popular lectures in current evangelical circles, that say every man has his own special assignment or calling allotted to him by God's own hand, and by that outline practical steps to the brethren in the church to aid them in discovering these purposes.

Well, if those purposes are meant to make the brethren better worshippers, then I am all for it. But if not, then I am against it with every fleeting breath of mine.

I believe we men were all created for one purpose; and that is to worship. Worship is the single most important reason for our existence. Once a man discovers or knows this, all knowledge ought to cease, and there need not be any further discovery. The greatest discovery a man can ever make is to appreciate that he was created or designed to worship. This kind of discovery is far more ingenious than all the innovations of the scientists and mathematicians put together.

The chief end of man is but a simple and a straight one: it is just to praise and delight in God. We were created not to serve any other purpose than to worship and delight ourselves in God.

I am not afraid to say this – that until we serve our foremost purpose on earth which is to worship and praise God, we will

meet up with a very uneasy death. If there is any peace in death, surely, the man with a worshipping heart has it all. Because that is all God seeks from us. It is the reason why he created us.

Where we spend eternity depends hugely on how we execute this one particular assignment.

But one question remains to be answered at this juncture – What is worship?

Well over the years, I have seen men and women give diverse interpretation to this particular subject of my heart. Some describe worship as the theatrical combination of lyrics and melody and how one can simply get emotional in pondering over the lyrical contents of some songs. Others also see worship as the humming of solemn songs and music to God, in deep sincerity and passion. The emphasis has always been on sound and sight, and some divine arts such as the shedding of tears, the raising of hands and the kneeling on the ground. They are all good, but that is not the best of portrait the church can show to the world it seeks to win.

In fact, if this is the model worship God expects from us, then I am ashamed to say I am not a worshipper. And that father Abraham and all the great saints of old were never Worshippers.

If worship is all about music, then I for one believe that the theatres and the studios can do a very good work than the church (the body of redeemed saints) is doing or has done over the years.

All they will have to do is to sit down there in the studios, generate a sober sound and then throw some sacred lyrics at it, and there we go. We all will have no option that to raise our hands towards the God of heaven and then surrender our knees to the ground. Tears will start drenching down our lean cheeks and God will rush down to the venue in no time to touch lives if not smile down upon us from heaven. And as to what happens

after this experience, I am sure we all know: we will diverge to our various duties at home or abroad and also serve the things that surrounds us a little.

If this is what the 21st century church refers to as worship, then I am afraid to say I do not have a worshipping heart.

My answer to this evangelical question - What is Worship - has always been simple. I will share two of the discoveries I made in the scriptures with you.

My first evangelical answer is this - worship is the complete submission of the body and spirit to the Triune God in loving obedience and humility.

And the second is that – it is the complete imitation of Christ and the constant practice of His presence.

Trust me my dear ones, the soul which is in either of those estate is already in a worshipping mood, though there may be no music nor arts nor sound. He is already glorifying Jesus there in the midst of the 24 elders. This is the true faculty of Worship. The music and the solemn arts and acts are only a program run in this faculty amidst many others. It is therefore a great evangelical blunder to mistaken a single program run in the faculty for the entire structure.

What I said before, I say again that Worship is the reason for our existence, and until we all become worshippers of God, we will meet up will with a very repugnant death. If any man would die a happy death, then he ought to first be a worshipper.

LECTURE 28

JEFFERY'S PRAYER OF DEVOTION TO GOD

Thou creator of the universe and father of all creation, I call upon you this day to praise and adore thee. O most blessed and gracious one whom philosophers refer to as the first cause , I humbly beseech you for that grace and might of the angels and the 24 elders to continue before thy throne in ceaseless praise and adoration. My longing desire just like Mary is to remain seated under your throne to behold thy majesty and thy beauty. For if ever I shall make myself busy as a Martha, I pray that it should be in thy praise and adoration and not in earthly trifles.

O thou indescribable God, I know that we do greatly err in using these corruptible words of mortals to extol thee and to declare thy majesty to the heathens. Forgive us O Lord I pray, for that is all our defiled tongues can afford . May thy mercies continue to bear with us on this till the time where thy glorious transformation shall bestow on us the might of angels to worship and adore thee with the language of Heaven and with transformed tongues. For even there shall eternity be too short to extol thee for thy majesty is infinite.

I pray for grace to continue in the name and thy perfect will, for the distractions are many that beset me about to disconnect me from thy sweet and eloquent voice within. Empower me dear Lord with great and mighty fortification to withstand all the temptations and inducements in the wilderness here below. For many a times the noble powers of my intellect and academic honors, beguile me with fruits in the garden of academia and always proposes to make me a genius and a greater than Einstein should I devote myself to memorize theorems and analyze conjectures which were left unproven by the Riemann's and the likes of Dirichlet. Grant me the grace O Lord, to look upon such suggestions with contempt and to flee from them with all the

insistence of an Elijah, as though they were a death threat issued by a Jezebel.

O Lord I pray, that you take away the desires of my heart and make my eyes blind to feminine beauties and all the worldly felicities so that they do not induce any admiration upon my lips which intends to be for thee alone. For there is none beautiful but thee and nothing is so charming but thy love. These are attributes that belongs to thee alone wherefore do I implore thee for that divine discipline not to impress them upon any human head.

Deliver me Lord from all chaos that lies without and grant me the fervency of spirit to engage thee in that sweet and all- engaging discourse which enlightens the inner chamber.

Grant me the grace also to advance in your holy army here below, where thy saints are my companions and the cross my weapon. I do not pray for an easy or a smooth way in this divine journey but a tough and a difficult one that would make me stumble a thousand times and bring much pains and grief to the feet with which I take the journey.

Plant not my legs in the Broadway of life where there is smoothness of motion and abundance of space to swell up pride and vanity but rather move me to the narrowest path of this life where the scarceness of space and potent grounds would force me to squeeze myself through the travellers (the innumerable company of the saints) in my bid to advance towards thee

May the sharp thorns and briars that borders the narrow way invade my flesh and rapture my veins and cause me to bleed profusely should I at any time loose my focus and stray of this holy path of life.

If by reason of the scorching sun and the numerous pains on this journey, I grow wearisome, and then resolve to lean on the trunk of some tree, may the scorpions and the ants that inhabits the

tree, sting me off my folly and push me back to the funambulatory track of this narrow path and connect me back to this holy path of life.

Should the cry of hungry wolves and the roaring of lions arise from the deep within, to terrify me at night in the midst of pronounced darkness of hopelessness, may the name of thy glorious son Jesus whisper peace to my soul within and keep me at rest.

I pray also for the skillful hand of David to hurl stones at bears who invade the road ahead to deter me from proceeding with my journey ahead. Grant me the grace to continually scare them away from my path.

May no Agabus of any kind by reason of the divine use of symbols and tokens discourage me from the journey ahead by painting the future ahead with gloominess and sorrows. Empower me with that empowerment thou bestowed upon Paul to set my face as a flint to proceed relentlessly on this journey though death awaits me in Jerusalem ahead.

For now abide I as an Elisha, not knowing when the Elijah within shall depart. But I pray that should I at any point in time die either by providence or accident, let the music of thy name continue to refresh my soul in death. Amen.

PER PACEM AD LUCEM
By Adelaide Anne Procter

I do not ask, O LORD, that life may be
A pleasant road;
I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me
Aught of its load:

I do not ask that flowers should always spring
Beneath my feet;

I know too well the poison and the sting
Of things too sweet.

For one thing only, LORD, dear LORD, I plead:
Lead me aright--
Though strength should falter and though heart should bleed,
Through Peace to Light.

I do not ask, O LORD, that Thou shouldst shed
Full radiance here:
Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread
Without a fear.

I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;
Better in darkness just to feel Thy hand,
And follow Thee.

LETTERS

FIRST LETTER

IS NOT DEATH A HAPPY MOMENT? TELL ME ,
MY SON, TELL ME.

Death indeed is a happy moment. I trust I speak in charity. Why do I say so my son?

In death, the prisoner parts with his chains and the jailer with his intimidations.

In death, the servant is freed from the voice of his master and the disciple from the instructions of his teacher.

In death, we are liberated from the sorrows of tears and the miseries of heart-break.

In death, we are inoculated with satisfaction and we cease to lust after food or sensual pleasures.

In death we no longer hear the sound of wars neither are we frightened by the attacks of militants.

In death, we are freed from the pains of sicknesses and the agonies of midnight woes.

In death, the wicked cease from troubling and the weary finds eternal rest.

In death, the small and the great lies together and the rich and the poor sleep in a common house

In death, we cease from writing quizzes and are banned from attending lectures.

In death, we hear nothing like singularities and poles and we do not worry our heads over algebra and Calculus.

In death, we do not receive calls to attend interviews neither are we promoted to serve in higher meetings.

In death, we are raided of our pride and envy as we all lie quietly without raising any objection.

In death, my dear son, everything comes to a standstill as we only clasp our hands over our chest.

The living knows he will die but the dead knows nothing at all.

Deaths will one day end all our strife and contentions. "Death", indeed as Charles Caleb Colton indicated, "is the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release, the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure, and the comforter of him whom time cannot console."

Son, if a man has a good conscience and lives a godly life, he would not fear death that greatly, because it is indeed a happy moment.

LIFE AND DEATH

---Anonymous

The pleasant years that seem, so swift that run:
The merry days to end, so fast that fleet:
The joyful nights, of which day dawns so soon:
The happy hours, which we do miss, than meet,
Do all consume, as snow against the sun:
And death makes end of all, that life begun.

Since death shall dure, till all the world be waste:
What meaneth man to dread death then so sore?
As man might make, that life should always last,

Without regard, the LORD hath led before
The dance of death, which all must run on row:
Though how, or when, the LORD alone doth know.

If man would mind, what burdens life doth bring:
What grievous crimes to GOD he doth commit:
What plagues, what pangs, what perils thereby spring:
With no sure hour in all his days to sit:
He would sure think, as with great cause I do:
The day of death were better of the two.

Death is a port, whereby we pass to joy:
Life is a lake that drowneth all in pain:
Death is so dear, it ceaseth all annoy:
Life is so lewd, that all it yields is vain.
And as, by life, to bondage man is brought:
E'en so likewise by death was freedom wrought.

SECOND LETTER

OF THE USES OF SUFFERINGS : WORDS OF COMFORT FROM SOEUR THÉRÈSE TO HER SISTER CÉLINE.

The enclosed is one of the letters Soeur Thérèse wrote to her sister, Céline way back in 1899. I find her words very comforting. Please do well to comfort yourself with them as well. I thought it best to send you a personal copy so you may also be comforted by them. I urge you to send a copy of it to Bro

March 12, 1899

. . . I must forget this world. Here everything wearies me—I find only one joy, that of suffering, and this joy, which is not one of sense, is above all joy. Life is passing, and eternity is drawing near. Soon we shall live the very life of God. After we have been filled at the source of all bitterness, our thirst will be quenched at the very Fountain of all sweetness.

"The figure of this world passeth away"—soon we shall see new skies—a more radiant sun will light with its splendor crystal seas and infinite horizons. We shall no longer be prisoners in a land of exile, all will have passed away, and with our Heavenly Spouse we shall sail upon boundless seas. Now, "our harps are hanging on the willows which grow by the rivers of Babylon," but in the day of our deliverance what harmonies will they not give forth, how joyfully shall we make all their strings vibrate! Now, "we shed tears as we remember Sion, for how can we sing the songs of the Lord in a land of exile?" The burden of our song is suffering. Jesus offers us a chalice of great bitterness. Let us not withdraw our lips from it, but suffer in peace. He who says peace does not say joy, or at least sensible joy: to suffer in peace it is enough to will heartily all that Our Lord wills. Do not think we can find love without suffering, for our nature remains and must be taken into account; but it puts great treasures within our reach. Suffering is indeed our

very livelihood, and is so precious that Jesus came down upon earth on purpose to possess it. We should like to suffer generously and nobly; we should like never to fall. What an illusion! What does it matter to me if I fall at every moment! In that way I realise my weakness, and I gain thereby. My God, Thou seest how little I am good for, when Thou dost carry me in Thy Arms; and if Thou leavest me alone, well, it is because it pleases Thee to see me lie on the ground. Then why should I be troubled?

If you are willing to bear in peace the trial of not being pleased with yourself, you will be offering the Divine Master a home in your heart. It is true that you will suffer, because you will be like a stranger to your own house; but do not be afraid—the poorer you are, the more Jesus will love you. I know that He is better pleased to see you stumbling in the night upon a stony road, than walking in the full light of day upon a path carpeted with flowers, because these flowers might hinder your advance.

THIRD LETTER

OF THE USEFULNESS OF SILENCE AND SOLITUDE

Brother , I know of your great urge to progress spiritually and your desire to attain unto union with God. But I do recommend silence and solitude to you. Until you learn to walk alone, and give diligence to the practice of silence, you will barely attain unto that end. Personally, I don't think a man can have any great encounter with God without first learning to be alone.

Trust me, bro; there is barely a word God whispers to us in the company of other men. If you so desire to have a great encounter with that God of Abraham, then you ought to first learn to walk alone.

Moses for example was alone when he first met with the wonder of God at Mamre via the burning bush. Every shed of evidence also points to the fact that Gideon, the son of Joash was also alone threshing the wheat by the winepress when he met with the angel of God. I base this particular arguments on the fact that it often takes a man to be alone especially when his mission is to hide an action.

How sweet and solemn was that night when Jesus was betrayed by Judas. There in the midst of Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and far apart from the other disciples, he gently withdrew himself from them all and wrestled alone in tears and prayers there in that profound darkness that covered Gethsemane. He knew the cross was his alone and that he had to carry it alone and die on it alone.

Most of the saints of old were men apart. They were men that loved to spend much of their time alone. They always spent a greater part of their time engaging God in a sweet discourse

within the inner chamber of their soul. Their separation from men always sent them before God. For often times, it is in loneliness that men are thrown back upon God.

Let the worst of all sinners be denied his friends and relative. Let them all avoid his company and never say a word to him, and he would be a man apart and alone. There in that loneliness and the feverishness that would appear following his denial; that man is likely to meet up with God and the knowledge of the Holy will unwind itself in him, if not instigated by an ill conscience to commit murder.

When they are very few that share in our interest, we are forced to walk alone. And that loneliness undoubtedly is good for piety and devotions.

Bro ..., I know for sure that the world cannot afford you the companionship you seek. For this reason I recommend the angels to you. I urge you to make the Holy Spirit your friend by frequently engaging Him in a discourse within. And what but silence can bring this joy to you.

Silence is the surest way to enjoy God. It is also the simplest path by which we journey into our inner chamber, where the Spirit dwells. Bro, if you would learn the disciplines of silence and solitude, you would see the majesty and the sovereignty of God in no time (Ps 46:10).

But it remains to say that I do not forbid you from mingling with your contacts or holding conversations with friends and neighbors who come to you. All I ask of you is to retire sometimes within your own chamber or garden, or wheresoever you can best recollect your mind, and refresh your soul with good and holy thoughts, and some divine reading.

Please do well to avoid frivolous friendship and unnecessary amusements. May the peace of God be upon you. I leave you then

to ponder over this wonderful poetry which was written by one of our church fathers. Extend my greetings to Bro

WHY SHOULD WE FAINT AND FEAR TO LIVE ALONE

---Anonymous

Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone, so Heaven has will'd, we die,
Nor e'en the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh?

Each in his hidden sphere of joy or woe
Our hermit spirits dwell, and range apart,
Our eyes see all around in gloom or glow--
Hues of their own, fresh borrow'd from the heart.

And well it is for us our GOD should feel
Alone our secret throbbings: so our prayer
May readier spring to Heaven, nor spend its zeal
On cloud-born idols of this lower air.

For if one heart in perfect sympathy
Beat with another, answering love for love,
Weak mortals, all entranced, on earth would lie,
Nor listen for those purer strains above.

Or what if Heaven for once its searching light
Lent to some partial eye, disclosing all
The rude bad thoughts, that in our bosom's night
Wander at large, nor heed Love's gentle thrall?

Who would not shun the dreary uncouth place?
As if, fond leaning where her infant slept,
A mother's arm a serpent should embrace:
So might we friendless live, and die unwept.

Then keep the softening veil in mercy drawn,
Thou Who canst love us, tho' Thou read us true;

As on the bosom of th' aërial lawn
Melts in dim haze each coarse ungentle hue.

Thou know'st our bitterness--our joys are Thine--
Why should we faint and fear to live alone
No stranger Thou to all our wanderings wild:
Nor could we bear to think, how every line
Of us, Thy darken'd likeness and defiled,

Stands in full sunshine of Thy piercing eye,
But that Thou call'st us Brethren: sweet repose
Is in that word--the LORD who dwells on high
Knows all, yet loves us better than He knows.

FOURTH LETTER

OF HOW MY FUNERAL SHOULD BE PERFORMED.

My son, I do not know when I shall die neither know I the mode of my departure; whether I shall be caught up in a explosion and thereby be burnt into ashes, or get drown in the deep blue sea and become a sumptuous ration to the whales below - I know not. Whether I shall depart at home or abroad, by fire or water, by the sword or by pestilence, suddenly or gradually, my son – I know not. And I care not to know.

But my dear son, if by reason of divine providence, my mortal remains happens to be seen and identified among men, I want you to go about my funeral in a logical and a simple manner and not in that popular fashion of society. Not long ago I heard a story of how a man was killed by his 'dead brother' for not giving him a befitting burial. That I say, is a big lie. For nothing can be done to please the dead. Once we clasp our hands over our chest we lose our moral power to do good or evil. Nothing, I say can be done to please the dead.

Therefore in the midst of my funeral, should it be brought to your notice or should you remember that a poor family needs food or urgent help, I admonish you to break off instantly from the funeral grounds and go care for that family. You can always continue from where you left off, and it would never be out of order. Until you have cared for the living, give not any attention to the dead. For "Our main business", says John Tulloch, the 19th century saint, "is not with the dead, but with the living, whom we may succor and help and guide."

My dear son, I know you have wonderful plans for me and you have always wished the best for me. But I think I should tell you this that when I die, I do not wish to be laid in an expensive casket

or that which excites the envy of the public. Any wooden structure will do. Perhaps, you can even wrap me in a white swaddling cloth and then cast me into the earth from whence I came. For it is of great madness to spend millions of dollars over a departed soul whilst some living beings still wallow in poverty and barely have any food to eat. It is better to spend on the living than on the dead who have no sense of appreciation.

Never on earth should you think that you owe the dead anything. For the living does not owe the dead and the dead, the living. The only responsibility the living owes the dead is to bury him out of sight – of which I desire that my burial should be in the city of Accra since I have lived a greater part of my life in Accra. You can bury me in any of the cemeteries in Accra.

I yet have many things to say concerning my funeral, but for the sake of time, I will make them simpler that I may attend to other duties.

The first is that, before my remains are carried to the burial site, I wish to be laid in state for those present to file past my body and then appreciate my littleness. Let them behold the end of my flesh and the conclusion of all my pride.

Dead persons are always eulogized irrespective of the life they led but I do not wish to have men say and read only good things about me on my funeral grounds. If I defrauded any man, allow him to come forward and speak freely. If I owed anyone a penny, let him also come out and declare to the hearing of the church present. Let every man be at liberty to voice out any injustice I did to him or her in my lifetime.

If no such man presents himself before the church to level any allegation against me, please do exhort the church to give thanks unto the God of Abraham on my behalf. For it is He that upholds me from evil, it was never by my own steadfastness for in me dwells no good. God only is good.

Please do not deny anyone the chance of seeing me in my wretchedness. Should even a mad man appear out of no where in the very minute when my remains are about to be lowered into the grave and demand to know who it is that is lying in that casket or cloth, my son, I pray you grant him access to also feast his eyes on my wretchedness. Until the stones and sand are finally shoveled above my corpse, please do not deny anyone who so wishes to see me from beholding my littleness. Let all be at liberty to scrutinize my corpse on that fateful Saturday.

After they are all done filing past my body, sit every one down and get Bro.... to preach a sermon of love to the congregations gathered. Instruct him to preach on the value of love. Tell him to tell every man to forgive his neighbor. Encourage every man to share and care for the weaker brethren who have fallen in life. And above all, let the congregation be told about the Love of God and the need to love God in an uncompromised manner. Though this might not look too good a sermon to preach on a funeral ground where all heads are bowed in grief, I strongly desire to have this sermon preached on that Saturday I will be laid before the church.

Once this is done, let the following hymns and songs be sung, which I call my favorite; "Abide with me "by Henry Frances Lyte, "How sweet the name of Jesus Sounds" by John Newton, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me" by Augustus Montague Toplady, "I'll Praise my maker while I have breath" by Isaac Watts, "The Old rugged Cross" by George Bennard, and "Ye Wɔ ɔman Bi Wɔhɔ "by Helena Rubbles and one other local song I shall communicate to you later.

When all is said and done, then you can move my remains to the burials site for the final burial rite to be performed after which all may be discharged to go to their respective homes.

My dear son, please endeavor very much to ensure that once the burial is over, there is no partying or the sharing of assorted foods

and drinks whatsoever, for such things swell up vanity. Call it all over at the burial site.

Two things remain uncertain to me. First is that I do not know what the future holds for me, whether I shall outlive my mother or she shall outlive me. If she happens to outlive me or should we say happens to be alive on the day of my burial, please do keep a close eye on her for me and comfort her for me, for she loves me greatly.

Endeavor very much to keep her from joining the church to the cemetery where I shall be thrown away. But never leave her alone. What I tell you before, I tell you again; KEEP A CLOSE EYE ON HER FOR ME.

The second is that, I do not know how I shall die like I said earlier and I care not to know. This letter only applies in a situation where my corpse shall be in earth's domain for burial. If I happen to die in a manner that gives nature the sole ability of burying me as in the case of being carried away by flood or getting drowned and trapped in the ocean below, reckon this letter as null and insignificant since my corpse will never be seen for formal burials. In such an instance, you are not enjoined to follow any of the directions in this letter.

Whichever way I die, it is all good and I dread not any.

Please do well to encourage yourself and your brethren in those hard moments. But if there is the need for any tears to be shed, let it be shed. I do not forbid anyone from crying or shedding tears, for I myself am a lover of tears. Only that do not weep and sorrow as them that are hopeless. If indeed you believe in the final resurrection of the dead, then do not sorrow for any dead saint as though he is gone forever and would never be restored? For assuredly, I say unto you that they only sleep in Christ and they shall surely be restored in that last hour.

Eternity
---Anonymous

“O Years! and Age! Farewell:
Behold I go,
Where I do know
Infinity to dwell.

And these mine eyes shall see
All times, how they
Are lost i' the Sea
Of vast Eternity.

Where never Moon shall sway
The Stars; but she,
And Night, shall be
Drown'd in one endless Day.”

FIFTH LETTER

OF MY FAVORITE HYMNS AND THE SIX THAT SHOULD BE SUNG IN MY FUNERAL

My son, you well know that I am a lover of all the ancient hymns. I therefore admire that the first six of the hymns below be sung on that Saturday when my corpse shall be laid before the church. Aside the first six hymn I also wish to have these two local songs sung: “Yε Wɔ ɔman bi wɔ hɔ” by Helena Rubbles, and one that I shall communicate to you later.

Let the sixth hymn (THROUGH ALL THE CHANGING SCENES OF LIFE) be sung at the burial site or should we say at the cemetery particularly when my body is being lowered down the grave.

I pray you; let all the hymns be sung by a choir including the local ones.

Of the first hymn

ROCK OF AGES, CLEFT FOR ME
By Augustus Montague Toplady

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flow'd,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labours of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy Cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the Fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to world unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment-throne;
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!

Of the second Hymn

ABIDE WITH ME

By Henry Frances Lyte

Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens: LORD, with me abide!
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away:
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!

Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word,
But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, LORD,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
Come, not to sojourn, but abide, with me!

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings:
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea:--
Come, Friend of sinners, and thus bide with me!

Thou on my head in early youth didst smile,
And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee.
On to the close, O LORD, abide with me!

I need Thy presence every passing hour:
What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me!

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless:
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is Death's sting? where, Grave, thy victory?
--I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy Cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies:
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee:--
In life and death, O LORD, abide with me!

Of the third hymn

HOW SWEET THE NAME OF JESUS SOUNDS

By John Newton

How sweet the Name of JESUS sounds
In a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear!

It makes the wounded spirit whole
And calms the troubled breast;
Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

Dear Name! the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding-place,
My never-failing treasury, fill'd
With boundless stores of grace,--

By Thee my prayers acceptance gain,
Although with sin defiled;
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am own'd a Child.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But, when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then, I would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath;
And may the music of Thy Name
Refresh my soul in death!

Of the fourth hymn

THE OLD RUGGED CROSS

By George Bennard

On a hill faraway stood an old rugged
cross,
The emblem of suff'ring and shame;
And I love that old cross where the
dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Refrain

[So I'll cherish that old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it someday for a crown.]

Oh, that old rugged cross, so despised
by the world,
has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory
above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

In that old rugged cross, stained with
Blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see,
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered
and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.

To that old rugged cross, I will ever be
true
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me someday to my home
far away,
Where His glory forever I'll share

Of the fifth Hymn

I'LL PRAISE MY MAKER WHILE I'VE BREATH
By Isaac Watts

I'll praise my maker while I have breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

Why should I place in man my trust?
Princes must die and turn to dust,
Vain is the help of flesh and blood.
Their breath departs, their pomp and power
Their thoughts are gone within an hour
Nor can they make their promise good.

Happy the man whose hope relies
On Israel's God! He made the skies,
And earth and sea, with all their train;
His truth for ever stands secure,

He saves the oppressed, He feeds the poor,
And none shall find His promise vain.

The Lord pours eyesight on the blind,
The Lord supports the fainting mind;
He sends the laboring conscience peace;
He helps the stranger in distress,
The widow, and the fatherless,
And grants the prisoner sweet release.

Of the sixth Hymn

THROUGH ALL THE CHANGING SCENES OF LIFE
By Nicholas Brady

Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.

Of his deliverance I will boast,
Till all that are distressed
From my example comfort take,
And charm their grief to rest.

O magnify the Lord with me,
With me exalt His name;
When in distressed to Him I called,
He to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
The dwelling of the just;
Deliverance He affords to all
Who on His succour trust.

O make but trial of His love;
Experience will decide
How blest they are, and only they,
Who in His truth confide.

Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,
He'll make your wants His care.

Of the seventh hymn

TAKE MY LIFE AND LET IT BE
By Frances Ridley Havergal

Take my life , and let it be
Consecrated Lord to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart-it is thine own
It shall be thy royal throne

Take my love; my Lord I pour
At thy feet its treasure-store.
Take myself and I will be

Ever, only, all for thee.

Of the eight hymn

JESUS SHALL REIGN WHERE'ER THE SUN

By Isaac Watts

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journey runs;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till sun shall; rise and set no more.

For Him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown His Head;
His name shall sweet perfume shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their young Hosannas to His name.

Blessing abound where'er He reigns;
The prisoner leaps to loose his chains;
The weary finds eternal rest;
And all the sons of wants are blest.

Where He displace His healing power,
Death and the curse are known no more;
In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost.

Let every creature rise and bring
Its grateful honours to our king;
Angel descend with song again,
And earth prolongs the joyful strain.

Of the ninth Hymn

KING OF GLORY, KING OF PEACE

By George Herbert

King of glory, King of peace,
I will love Thee;
And that love may never cease,
I will move Thee.
Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me;
Thou didst note my working breast,
Thou hast spared me.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing Thee,
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring Thee.
Though my sins against me cried,
Thou didst clear me;
And alone, when they replied,
Thou didst hear me.

Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise Thee;
In my heart, though not in Heaven,
I can raise Thee.
Small it is, in this poor sort
To enrol Thee;
E'en eternity is too short
To extol Thee.

Of the tenth Hymn

LET HIM TO WHOM WE NOW BELONG

By Charles Wesley

Let Him to whom we now belong
His sovereign right assert

And take up every thankful song
And every loving heart.

Refrain

He justly claims us for His own
Who bought us with a price
The Christian lives to Christ alone
To Christ alone He dies

Jesus thine own at last receive,
Fulfill our hearts desire;
And let us to thy glory live
And in thy cause expire.

And souls and bodies we resign,
With joy we render thee
Our all, no longer ours, but thine
To all eternity

Other titles by the author

Vessels : Are you fit for the Master's Use?

The Blood Jesus Shed (The Power Factor)

The Great Heritage

The Crying blood of the Aborted child

Relating to the poor (. . . ye have the poor with you always)

The true Worshippers, etc

Death indeed is a Happy Moment

“Death”, indeed as Charles Caleb Colton indicated, “is the liberator of him whom freedom cannot release, the physician of him whom medicine cannot cure, and the comforter of him whom time cannot console.” Death I say, is not entirely bad as we often think. For nothing is entirely bad or completely useless. Death has its own benefits too.

The whole purpose of this classic is just to demystify the ways of death and also to teach by reason of concise expositions, the methodology of dying happily and peacefully at all times. It is hard-hitting. It is tough and it is rough. It is simply a must read for all the sons and daughters of men.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jeffery Opoku is an anointed preacher and a writer. His deep insight into God’s word has earned him many platforms within the evangelical circles to minister to hungry souls and avid seekers of God. He is the president of the jeffery opoku ministries, a non-denominational intercessory body positioned to unite the Body of Christ through revival and also to kindle the Spirit of Love among Gospel Believers of these last days. He is an evangelist and a revivalist by calling. He is also a prolific writer and has authored many classics.



**Jeffery opoku
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