

Quotes on Death

by

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Those that flatter themselves with hopes of living a great while longer in the world, very commonly continue so to do till death comes. Death comes upon them when they expect it not; they look upon it as a great way off, when there is but a step between them and death. *(At death)* They *(the lost)* feel the frame of nature dissolving, and perceive the soul is just a going; for sometimes the exercise of reason seems to hold to the last. What, in such a case, is felt in the soul, in those last moments, when it is just breaking its bands with the body, about to fetch its leap, on the edge of eternity, and the very brink of hell, without any Saviour, or the least testimony of divine mercy: I say, what is sometimes felt by Christless souls in these moments, none can tell; nor is it within the compass of our conception.

Death is a happy change to them (the saints), and a change that is by far more like a resurrection than a death. It is a change from a state of much sin, and sorrow, and darkness, to a state of perfect light, and holiness, and joy. When a saint dies, he awakes, as it were, out of sleep. This life is a dull, lifeless state; there is but a little spiritual life, and a great deal of deadness; there is but a little light, and a great deal of darkness; there is but a little sense, and a great deal of stupidity and senselessness. But when a godly man dies, all this deadness, and darkness, and stupidity, and senselessness are gone for ever, and he enters immediately into a state of perfect life, and perfect light, and activity, and joyfulness.

So the soul of a wicked man, at its departure from the body, will be made immediately sensible that it is before an infinitely holy and dreadful God and his own final Judge; and will then see how terrible a God he is, he will see how holy a God he is, how infinitely he hates sin; he will be sensible of the greatness of God's anger against sin, and how dreadful is his displeasure. Then will he be sensible of the dreadful majesty and power of God, and how fearful a thing it is to fall into his hands. Then the soul shall come naked with all its guilt, and in all its filthiness, a vile, loathsome, abominable creature, an enemy to God, a rebel against him, with the guilt of all its rebellion and disregard of God's commands, and contempt of his

authority, and slight of the glorious gospel, before God as its Judge. This will fill the soul with horror and amazement.

Death is a far different thing when it befalls wicked men, from what it is when it befalls good men; to the wicked it is in execution of the curse of the law, and of the wrath of God. When a wicked man dies, God cuts him off in wrath, he is taken away as by a tempest of wrath, he is driven away in his wickedness.. Job xviii. 18. "He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world." ... Though wicked men, while they live, may live in worldly prosperity, yet they cannot live here always, but they must die. The place that knoweth him shall know him no more; and the eye that hath seen him shall see him no more in the land of the living.

How dismal must his state be, when the disease prevails, so that there is no hope that he shall recover, when the physician begins to give him over, and friends to despair of his life; when death seems to hasten on, and he is at the same time perfectly blind to any spiritual object, altogether ignorant of God, of Christ, and of the way of salvation, having never exercised one act of love to God in his life, or done one thing for his glory; having then every lust and corruption in its full strength; having then such enmity in the heart against God, as to be ready to dethrone him, if that were possible; having no right in God, or interest in Christ; having the terrible wrath of God abiding on him; being yet the child of the devil, entirely in his possession and under his power; with no hope to maintain him, and with the full view of never-ending misery just at the door. What a dismal case must a natural man be in under such circumstances! How will his heart die within him at the news of his approaching death, when he finds that he must go, that he cannot deliver himself, that death stands with his grim countenance looking him in the face, and is just about to seize him, and carry him out of the world, and that he at the same time has nothing to depend on!

Death appears sometimes with an exceedingly terrible aspect to them; when it comes and stares them in the face, they cannot bear to behold it. It is always so, if wicked men have notice of the approach of death, and have reason and conscience in exercise, and are not either stupid or distracted. When this king of terrors comes to show himself to them, and

they are called forth to meet him, O how do they dread the conflict! But meet him they must.

When a godly man dies, he rises from all remains of spiritual death, and comes into a state of perfect life. This body is like a prison to the holy soul, it exceedingly clogs, and hinders, and cramps it in its spiritual exercises and comforts. But when a saint dies, the soul is released from this prison, this grave, and comes into a state of glorious freedom and happiness. So that death is not only deprived of his sting, but is made a servant to the saints, to bring them to Christ in heaven, who is their life. And their ground of comfort does not only last when they are going out of the world, but it is in some respects increased, for then their perfect happiness draws nigh. It is “far better” to depart and be with Christ, than to continue here. And when the saints are enabled to see their own happiness in death, they are enabled exceedingly to rejoice in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death, and to triumph joyfully over the king of terrors. Death to the saints is always a passage or avenue, leading out of a world of vanity, and sin, and misery, into a world of life, light, and glory; but though often a dark avenue, it is at times full of light, the darkness all vanishes away, and the light shines out of that glorious city into which they are entering. It shines through the darkness and fills the soul, and the clouds of death vanish before it. The awful appearance of death is but a mask or disguise that death wears. It is not terrible but joyful in reality, and this light of the New Jerusalem sometimes so clearly shines, that it shines through the frightful disguise, and shows the saints that death is but a servant.

Death, sent on purpose to summon him, will give him no release nor respite: he must go before the holy judgment-seat of God as he is, to have his everlasting state determined according to his works. To such persons, how differently do things appear from what they did in the time of health, and when they looked at death as at a distance! How differently does sin look to them now; those sins which they used to make light of! How dreadful is it now to look back and consider how they have spent their time, how foolish they have been, how they have gratified and indulged their lusts, and lived in ways of wickedness; how careless they have been, and how they have neglected their opportunities and advantages, how they have refused to hearken to counsel, and have not repented in spite of all the warnings that were given!

It is an awful thing for a person to be lying on a sick bed...to be without an interest in Christ, and to have the guilt of his sins lying on his soul, to be going out of the world without his peace being made with God, to stand before his holy judgment-seat in all his sins, without any thing to plead, or answer. To see the only opportunity to prepare for eternity coming immediately to an end, after which there shall be no more time of probation, but his case will be unalterably fixed, and there never will be another offer of a Saviour; for the soul to come just to the very edge of the boundless gulf of eternity, and insensibly to launch forth into it, without any God or Saviour to take care of it; to be brought to the edge of the precipice, and to see himself falling down into the lake of fire and brimstone, and to feel that he has no power to stop himself: who can tell the shrinkings and misgivings of heart in such a case?

Their (*natural men's*) misery shall be perfect misery; and because damnation is the perfect destruction of a creature, therefore it is called death. It is eternal death, of which temporal death, with all its awful circumstances, is but a faint shadow. The struggles, and groans, and gasps of the body when dying, its pale awful visage when dead, its state in the dark grave when it is eaten with worms, are but a faint shadow of the state of the soul under the second death.

God acteth as judge towards the children of men more especially, In man's particular judgment at death. Then the sentence is executed, and the reward bestowed *in part*; which is not done without a judgment. The soul, when it departs from the body, appears before God to be disposed of by him, according to his law. But by this appearing before God, to be judged at death, we need understand no more than this, that the soul is made immediately sensible of the presence of God, God manifesting himself immediately to the soul, with the glory and majesty of a judge; that the sins of the wicked, and the righteousness of the saints, are brought by God to the view of their consciences, so that they know the reason of the sentence given, and their consciences are made to testify to the justice of it; and that thus the will of God for the fulfilment of the law, in their reward or punishment, is made known to them and executed. This is undoubtedly done at every man's death.

If you continue God's enemy until death, you will always be his enemy. And after death your enmity will have no restraint, but it will break out and rage without control. When you come to be a fire-brand of hell, you will be so in two respects, viz. As you will be full of the fire of God's wrath; and as you will be all on a blaze with spite and malice towards God. You will be as full of the fire of malice, as you will with the fire of divine vengeance, and both will make you full of torment. Then you will appear as you are, a viper indeed. You are now under great disguise; a wolf in sheep's clothing: but then your mask will be pulled off; you shall lose your garments, and walk naked.

Examine yourselves, whether all the ways in which you live, are likely to be *pleasant to think of upon a death-bed*. Persons often in health allow and plead for those things, which they would not dare to do, if they looked upon themselves as shortly about to go out of the world. They in a great measure still their consciences as to ways in which they walk, and keep them pretty easy, while death is thought of as at a distance: yet reflections on these same ways are very uncomfortable when they are going out of the world. Conscience is not so easily blinded and muffled then as at other times.

Many things pass in their lifetime, which one would think might well strike terror into their souls; as when they see others die, who are as young as they, and of like condition and circumstances with themselves, whereby they may see how uncertain their lives are, and how unsafe their souls. It may well surprise many sinners, to consider how old they are grown, and are yet in a Christless state; how much of their opportunity to get an interest in Christ is irrecoverably gone, and how little remains; also how much greater their disadvantages now are, than they have been. But these things do not terrify them: as age increases, so do the hardness and stupidity of their hearts grow upon them. But when death comes, then the sinner is often filled with astonishment.