

“We Which Are Alive and Remain”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple sources)

Introduction: Unbelievers on the subject of death:

1. Voltaire, a French writer of considerable note, and an atheist, was born February 20th, 1694, at Chatenay, educated at the Jesuits' college at Paris, and died May 30th, 1778. He possessed talents, but misapplied them. He spent much of his time in treating with contempt the Holy Scriptures and ridiculing the Christian religion. He said to his physician, Dr. Tronchin a short time before he expired, "I am abandoned by God and man. Doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life." The doctor replied, "Sir, you cannot live six weeks." "Then," said the dying man, "I shall go to hell, and you will go with me!"

2. Thomas Paine, a political writer and deist, was born in Norfolk, England, in 1737, and died in New York, June 8, 1809, aged seventy-two years. In consequence of his disgusting vices, he became an outcast from all respectable society. He is said to have been irritable, vain, filthy, malignant, dishonest, and drunken. Says biographer Cunningham: "Few men have been more bountifully favored with the gifts of nature and expansion of intellect, than was Thomas Paine. His essays on the political rights of man stand as a lasting monument of his genius, and exhibit a mind girded with strength; yet, notwithstanding this, his great success, and acknowledged ability in effecting a political revolution, he revolted against God and common sense. His 'Age of Reason' was his age of folly! He shut his eyes against rational evidence, denied the truth of the Christian religion, and became a skeptic. This infatuated infidel was left to the fruits of his own doings; he degraded himself, and died a fool." Frequently, in his distress, he would call out, "Lord Jesus! Help me." Dr. Manley asked him whether, from his calling so often upon the Savior, it was to be inferred that he believed the gospel. He replied, "I have no wish to believe on that subject." He expired in great agony.

3. Thomas Hobbes, a celebrated philosopher, was born in 1588, in Wiltshire, England; was educated at Oxford, 1608; became tutor to the earl of Devonshire, and, in 1640, retired to Paris, where he performed much of his literary labor. He possessed superior talents, but they were not employed in the cause of God. He sneered at the idea of a God, and condemned the Holy Scriptures. He received no comfort or support from his philosophy. He was wretched beyond description; troubled by it day and night. He could not bear the thought of dying, and labored to avoid the subject as much as possible. When he found that he could live no longer, he said, "I am about to take a leap in the dark. I shall be glad to find a hole at which to creep out of the world."

4. These men did not prepare in this life for the life that is to come.

A. The saved do not share this fear.

1. 1Thes. 4:13; 1Cor. 15:54-55

B. The loss of loved one is a difficult burden to bear.

1. The Lord certainly understands our grief.

a. He wept when as He saw those weeping over Lazarus -
John 11:33-35

b. He prepared His disciples for when He would leave them -
John 14:1-3

- 2. God is the wonderful source of comfort.
 - a. In the here and now - 2Cor. 1:3-5
 - b. In the hereafter - Rev. 21:4
- C. However, we only receive comfort at the death of a dear one, if we have cultivated these sources throughout life.
 - 1. These things will not comfort you in death if they do not now comfort you in life.
- D. There are many God given sources of comfort; here are six:

I. HOPE IN CHRIST

- A. As Christians, we grieve, but not as those with no hope - 1Thes. 4:13
- B. In Christ, we have the hope of resurrection and reunion - 1Thes. 4:14-17
- C. This hope is a comfort - 1Thes. 4:18 - "I'll see you later."
- D. Our hope is reserved for those who are faithful to Christ till death - Rev. 2:10
- E. If we desire this hope, and wish to leave it for those we leave behind, we must be faithful servants of Christ.
- F. Do not wait until it is too late; we are increasing the anxiety level of our loved ones in the here and now, and we will only add to their grief when we die.
- G. But be assured, they will not miss us once they enter heaven.

II. PRECIOUS MEMORIES

- A. Memories are a source of comfort, especially when they involve one's faithful service to Christ - Phil. 1:3-5
- B. These memories add to the confidence of our hope - Phil. 1:6
- C. But now is the time to be making those memories, most importantly memories of our faithful service to God, our kindness to others, etc.
 - 1. What kind of memories have we been creating lately?

III. LOVE OF FAMILY, BRETHREN, AND FRIENDS

- A. One means God uses to comfort the sorrowful is other people, who comfort us with comfort they have received from God - 2Cor. 1:4
- B. Some excel in times of loss and suffering; it often brings out the best in them.
- C. However, good relationships take time to develop.
- D. Don't think only of your family, you might outlive all of yours; remember brethren and make friends of God's children.
- E. What relationships are we developing now with other devout Christians?

IV. THE WORD OF GOD

- A. The Word of God is a source of peace and strength - Psalm 119:165; 1:1-3
- B. If this is true of the Law of Moses, how much more so in the Gospel of Jesus.
- C. It also takes time to become familiar with the Word of God.
- D. Are we spending much time with the Bible now so that our familiarity with it will aid us more in our grief later?

E. PRAYER

- A. Prayer is a source of peace and strength - Phil. 4:6-7
- B. It is way to find grace and help in time of need - Heb. 4:14-16
- C. Most of us feel better just knowing that another Christian is down on his or her knees appealing to God for us.
- D. However, prayer is of value only if we are right relationship with God.
 - 1. 1Peter 3:12
- E. Prayer is comforting only if we are already close to God. Are we drawing closer to God by talking often with Him in prayer?

F. SONGS

- A. Songs of joy, faith, and hope are frequently sung at the funerals.
- B. Hymns, psalms, and spiritual songs both praises God and edifies one another
 - 1. Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
- C. Praising God in song when in grief is the moral equivalent of Job's words when in his grief he said... Job 1:20-21
- D. Like the Word of God, songs comfort us when they are familiar to us
- E. Do we sing spiritual songs enough to find comfort in them in the present?

Conclusion:

- A. The death of a loved one is easier to bear because of God's grace.
 - 1. Jesus died to deliver us from the fear of death - Heb. 2:14-15
 - 2. The death of a righteous person is precious in God's sight - Psalm 116:15
 - 3. The loved one has finally gone home; if we remain faithful, the separation will be only temporary.
- B. The blessings of God for His children in time of death are many, but they must be received and acted upon in the present.
 - 1. Are we doing things today that will make the passing of our loved ones (as well as our own) easier to bear?
 - 2. Acts 1:11