

Dying Daily

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that true Christian living involves embracing the reality of daily dying—mortifying the flesh and living by faith in the hope of resurrection and eternal glory.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:13, Philippians 1:23, Romans 8:38-39, John 14:2-3, Revelation 20:4

Topics: "Death and Resurrection", "Faith and Assurance"

Description

In 'Dying Daily,' C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound Christian truth that believers are called to live with a daily awareness of death, not as a morbid fixation but as a spiritual discipline that fosters holiness and hope. He emphasizes the necessity of assurance in salvation, the joyful anticipation of eternal life, and the mortification of sin. Through vivid illustrations and biblical truths, Spurgeon encourages believers to embrace the art of dying daily to live victoriously in Christ.

Transcript

"I die daily." 1 Corinthians 15:31.

IN a certain sense we all do this. The very moment we begin to live we commence to die. We are like hour-glasses—there are fewer sands left to run from the very moment they begin to trickle down. The whole of our life is like an ebbing tide—our first months and years may look like advancing waves, but the whole is retreating, and by-and-by the living flood will be replaced by the mire of death—

"Our pulse, like muffled drums, are beating Funeral marches to the tomb."

Or, as Watts words it—

This is no land of the living, but the land of the dying, and this so called life is but one protracted act of death. This is not our rest, our soul is ever on the wing. Like the swallows, we must depart for another land. Life is a long descent to the valley of the shadow of death—it shelves gradually to the precipice—and no man can prevent his feet from sliding down it every hour. We fly like arrows to that common target of mankind—the grave—so that we may all say in the words of the text, "I die daily."

Of some, also, this may be affirmed in a very painful and unhappy sense. They die daily because they feel a thousand deaths in fearing one. They are those of whom the Apostle writes, "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." This nightmare oppresses them and breaks their rest. This ghost stalks before them at all hours and makes life grim with foreboding—this gall-drop makes all their

pleasant things bitter. They are afraid to die and yet are so fascinated by death that they cannot take their eyes off it. They cannot shake off the chill horror of the grave. Their clothes seem to them to smell of the coffin, and their bread tastes of the morgue. They are slaves to a fear whose chains are heavy.

These timorous doves ought to remember that Jesus Christ came into this world on purpose that He might deliver such as they are. It was never His intention that any of His people should be subject to the fear of death, nor ought they to be—nor, indeed, would they be if they walked by faith—for what can there be in death for a Christian to fear? "The sting of death is sin," but that is pardoned! "The strength of sin is the Law," but Christ has fulfilled it! What is dying but departing to be with Christ, which is far better? And why should a man fear that which is far better for him—which will rid him of all his ills, admit him into unlimited blessedness, take him away from all fear and all care—and conduct him to the fullness of the Glory which is laid up in Christ Jesus? I trust you and I may never have to moan out, in that mournful and gloomy sense, "I die daily," but with holy joy may we look forward to the hour of our departure which is so near at hand.

Paul used this expression in an heroic sense, to which I fear you and I are not very likely to attain. He said, "I die daily," because every day he deliberately put his life in jeopardy for the cause of Jesus Christ. One day he went into the Jewish synagogue, knowing that in all probability they would drag him out, scourge him with rods, or, perhaps, in fanatic zeal, stone him to death. Another day he was found in the street preaching to a multitude of idolaters and denouncing their gods—irritating them by exposing their vices and by advancing truths which were novelties—and so contrary to their prejudices that they could not endure them.

Behold him often crossing the sea in a frail ship, or passing over rugged mountains among robbers! He was often in peril from the mountain-torrents, and from cold and nakedness. In all places, he lived the life of one whose neck was always on the block—who stood ready at any minute to offer himself up as a sacrifice for Christ. In these more silken days we cannot run such serious risks, and it is to our shame that there are some who are not willing to run even the little risks which the times may demand. We know professors who cannot imperil their business by an admission of their faith, and others who cannot venture the breaking of some fond connection for the sake of the Cross of Christ.

Alas, there are many who are ashamed of Jesus because a father or a mother or a brother might, perhaps, ridicule them or sneer at them. They are ashamed to bear the loss of anything, when our Apostle rejoiced to suffer the loss of all things, and did count them but dung that he might win Christ! May the heroic age of Christianity return to us, and even if it should be necessary that the furnace should be heated once again, yet if God's gold may but glow with that clear, bright luster which it exhibited in the former days, we may well be satisfied with the fury of the blazing coals! The persecuted were happy men despite their sorrows. They were honored men notwithstanding their shame. They were earth's princes, Heaven's peers—for they could say that for Christ's sake they, every day, were delivered unto death—but did rejoice and were exceedingly glad that they were privileged to suffer for the Cross of Christ.

Our text we shall now take in a spiritual sense. Neither fixing our minds upon its universal sense, nor yet upon its mournful, nor even upon its heroic meaning—but taking it in a spiritual way common to all the saints, "I die daily." Our subject this morning is the art and mystery of dying every day. First, we shall notice some previous necessities for the practice of this art. Secondly we shall speak upon in which this art consists. and thirdly, upon the great benefits which will accrue to those who shall learn to die daily.

I. First, there are CERTAIN THINGS PREVIOUSLY NECESSARY before a man can be a scholar in this great art of dying everyday. The first necessity is that he must be willing to die. If he shall shrink at death, and covet life and dread even the thought of departure, it will be a miserable necessity to him that he will have to die someday—but he will not be at all likely to be an apt pupil in the art of dying today, and tomorrow, and the next day—and every day that he lives. With a natural disinclination, with an awful fear and a terrible shrinking from the very fact of dissolution, he will not be at all forward to bring his mind to find delight and satisfaction in contemplation of the grave.

In order that a man should be willing to die daily he must be a saved man. He must have his sins forgiven and he must know it by infallible assurance or else death will be to him, of all things, the most terrible. He must be clad in the righteousness of Jesus Christ as with armor of proof, and he must know that he has it on or else death will be a dart that will afflict him terribly, and from it he will shrink with all his soul. He must be a man perfectly at peace with his Creator, not ashamed to look into his Maker's face in Christ Jesus, nor afraid to stand before Jehovah's solemn bar.

He must, in fact, have looked by faith to the blood-stained Cross and he must have seen Jesus making a full atonement, there, for sin. He must have accepted that Atonement as being made for him. He must be resting on it with an unstaggering faith, believing that all his sin is put away through that one dread Sacrifice. He must know that the righteousness of Christ is wrapped about him and that he is accepted in the Beloved, or else to talk to Him of dying daily would be somewhat analogous to inviting the thief to be hanged daily, or asking a culprit to be arrested daily. It will be enough, he thinks, to endure once that dread sharp stroke which will separate him from his joys. He certainly will not predict and anticipate the period, but be glad to forget it while he can, crying, "Let us drown care and live while we live."

Yet more is necessary than this to make a good student of the art of daily dying. A man must not only submissively await his dissolution, but he must be even desirous of departure and cheered with the hope of the better land. A hard thing, you say, yet not impossible. Impossible, perhaps, to nature, for it shrinks from the hard thought of dissolution, but possible enough to Divine Grace, for Grace overlooks the temporary separation, anticipating the bright resurrection and the everlasting Glory.

To an ungodly man, to die can never be a thing to be desired, for what remains for him after death? His possessions go from him. Like birds that have rested for a little while upon the field, but take to their wings when the traveler claps his hands, so all the worldling's riches must take to themselves wings and fly away. And what remains for the sinner in the next world? A fearful looking for of judgment, and of fiery indignation! Ungodly men and women, you know what you have to expect when you shall be called to the unknown land to face the Judge upon His Throne! You will be condemned, banished, accursed, executed, destroyed forever! It is not possible that death should be a welcome thing to drunkards and unclean persons, or even to merely moral men.

But the Believer, what of him? To him death is gain! What he loses of comfort, here, is made up to him a thousand fold by the joys of the hereafter. He knows that for him there is the crown of triumph and the palm of victory—for him the harp of ecstatic joy! For him the robe of immaculate purity! For him a place at the right hand of God, even the Father, in eternal security and ineffable delight! Therefore the Christian not only regards death as a necessity through which he hopes to be supported as a patient through a painful operation, but he looks for his departure as an heir looks forward to the day of his majority! As the bride anticipates her wedding day!

It is the time when his manhood shall burst its shell, when his imprisoned soul shall snap its fetters, when that which was long like a shriveled corn shall bud and blossom, and bear sweet fruit in the garden of God! When he is in his right mind and his faith is in active exercise, he longs to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better! Endowed with such a longing, he becomes an apt pupil in the art of dying daily.

Once more, if a man would learn to die daily, it is necessary that he should have a good understanding and a clear knowledge as to what death really is, and what are the matters that follow upon it. Nothing is more becoming our study than the departure of our souls from this mortal stage to the immortal Glory. What is it to die? Is it to cease to be? If it were so, then, indeed, we should be idiotic to speak of dying daily. To die! Is it to part with every comfort and lose every joy? If it were so, and we had to be driven forth from the body as naked spirits—houseless, restless, drifted about with everlasting winds—we might, indeed, be excused if we shut our eyes to the dreary prospect.

To die is nothing but for the soul to be separated from the body. The body remains to rest in the grave and mold back to mother earth while the soul ascends immediately to God who gave it—to be at once with Jesus, immediately in Paradise, without the body—a disembodied spirit, naked for a time, but yet most sweetly blessed! To die is, in its after consequences, to wait a little in a state of bliss, and then at the trump of the archangel to return to put on the body again—the same body which was buried, the same in identity but marvelously changed—as changed as the flower from the seed, or the crocus with its golden cup from the bulb which was put into the soil.

I say our souls shall come back to their bodies to a new marriage. The spirit and the body shall be knit together once again, so that our manhood shall be again entire—body, soul, and spirit, all being in Glory even as we are here on earth—but far more gloriously developed. Believers in Christ know that the first resurrection delivers them from all fear of second death. We shall reign with Christ upon the earth—a thousand years of glory shall be given unto the saints—on this same globe in which they suffered with their Master they shall triumph with Him! Then in the last time when Jesus shall have delivered up the kingdom unto God, even the Father, then the people of God shall reign forever and ever in unsurpassed and unimaginable delight!

This it is, then, to die. There is nothing dreadful at all about it. It is altogether the very simplest of operations, although it involves afterwards the most wonderful of results. I suppose that to die is but a pin's prick, or less than that. The pains which we call dying pains are really pains caused by life's struggles to hold its own. Death gives us no pain whatever. It is the anodyne that lulls us into a blessed slumber. It is the obstinate grasp of life within us which causes all the agony of separation—but as soon as life relaxes its stern grip, grief is ended. As for Death, his hand is gentle and tender, and to those who know him his voice is music and his countenance a delight!

Now, Christian, if you can get an intelligent view of what dying is—and a clear view of what will follow dying—you will then be able to learn to die daily. And by the Grace of God you may yet be able to achieve it—and everyday, before you have mingled with the din of this world's turmoil, you may bathe in Jordan's river, and be refreshed!

II. Secondly, WHEREIN DOES DYING DAILY CONSIST? Many things go to make up this high achievement. The first is to consider with much care, everyday, the certainty of death to all those who shall not remain at the coming of Christ, and to let the certainty of our own death or change go with us as an undivided companion. We ought always to feel that we are mortal—it should be to us a garment that we

never shake off. The fact that we are here but as sojourners and wayfarers should be painted on our eyeballs.

We are never right-hearted when we imagine that we are abiding inhabitants of this land. We are but strangers and sojourners in it! We are only right when we act as such. The Lord, knowing that we should try to shake off the remembrance of death, has so helped us as almost to force us to it. We have before us the frequent departures of others—the path to the cemetery is well trod. It is well for us that we live not always in the house of feasting—the grave's brink is a healthier resort than the table of luxury.

Just think how often you have seen strong men who appeared to be as likely to live as yourselves taken away in their strength! How often have we marked others sickening gradually before our eyes like slowly fading lilies! God rings the funeral knell in our ears and bids us remember that the bell may next toll for us. Our dying friends cast their shadows over us and cool our worldly heats and madness. In the presence of the corpse we gather up our skirts and gird up the loins of our mind, because as surely as the soul is gone from yonder lifeless body we, too, must follow. We have no lease on life. We have no earthly immortality guaranteed to us. Let us, then, remember the myriads who have marched before us. Let us keep their track before our eyes, feeling that we are wending our way to the same goal.

The whole of Nature around us also helps us to remember that we are mortal. Look at the year. It is born amid the songs of birds and the beauty of flowers. It comes to its ripeness and luscious fruits and shouts of harvest home—but soon the old age of autumn comes and a lamentation is heard, "The harvest is passed and the summer is ended." Amidst the fall of decaying leaves and the howling of the cold winds of winter the year finds its end. So, too, with each day. Well does Herbert sing—

Every flower we see lavishing its fragrance on the breeze trembles because it hears the footsteps of Death. It blooms that it may wither. "Its root is ever in its grave, and it must die."

Where do you see immortal things beneath the moon? Lift up your eyes—look where you may—don't you see everywhere, change and mutability, and departure written upon Nature's brow? And all this God hangs up, as it were, as a notice upon the wall—like the mystic characters which amazed Belshazzar—that we may not dare to forget that it is appointed unto all men once to die. No, as if this were not all, not only is Nature full of helps to make us familiar with the grave but our own bodies also tell us of our appointed change. What is that gray hair but the beginning, the first sign, the foretoken of the coming winter which shall freeze the life current within the veins and chill the heart itself?

What is that loosened tooth but a part of the fabric crumbling to let us know that the whole tenement must soon come down? What are those aches and pains, and what that decay of the eyesight, and that dullness of hearing—what are those tottering knees, and why that cane but that we may receive clear warnings that the whole tabernacle is shaking in the rude winds of time and must soon totter to its fall? The Lord will not suffer us to win a freehold here! He puts affliction into our family and disease into our flesh in order that we may seek after a better country, even a heavenly one!

Let me exhort you then, beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ, seeing you have all these mementoes to keep the lamp of the sepulcher always burning in your chambers, to be well acquainted with the shroud and the winding sheet. Every time you take off your clothes at night think how you must be unrobed for your last narrow bed. And when you put on your garments in the morning, familiarize yourself with the time of the resurrection—when you shall put on your glittering garments in which you are to rejoice forever.

Do not, I pray you, put aside these reflections because at first sight they may seem somber. Familiarize yourself a little with the gray tints of death and they will brighten before your eyes—and before long you will see a transcendent beauty in such meditations to which you would not be a stranger if you could! Thus the first part of dying daily is to think constantly of death.

The next part of dying daily is to put your soul, by faith, through the whole process of death. It is a wise thing to sit down quietly and to picture your departure. You need not stretch your fancy much. You have seen the like with others—you can picture it for yourselves. There you lie, upon that bed grown hard with weeks of weariness, and loving watchers whisper in the silent chamber. They are anxious that you should not catch the sound, but your quick ear hears it, and you wistfully enquire, "What is it the physician says?" You gather, though they tell you not, that you must soon depart. As a Believer in Jesus you are glad to hear it! You have had enough of this world. You are like a child tired out with its day's play and you are glad to fall asleep upon your father's breast.

The solemn article comes nearer and nearer, the pulse is fainter. You have enough consciousness left to perceive that the eye is being glazed and outward objects are lost. Perhaps you have also enough strength to sing your last song, for Heaven has met you while you are yet here and your soul is flooded with a joy you never knew before! You have evidently arrived at the border land, for there are flowers beneath your feet, the like of which never bloomed in the wilderness! And you hear songs such as you never before heard in the desert. Then you, yourself, begin to sing. Perhaps it is some such song as this—

or perhaps you burst out with a song concerning the new Jerusalem, "your happy home," name ever dear to you! And you rejoice that you are about to end your labors in the joy and peace which remains for the people of God.

The solemn instant has come, but will you be able, precisely, to distinguish it? May there not be so sweet a gradation from the earnest of the Spirit to the bliss, itself, that at no exact moment shall there be a wrench from time to eternity? All may be so Divinely ordered that pilgrims may advance by degrees from the tabernacle of earth to the Temple of Heaven. There will be a matchless change, but it will not necessarily be a shock to the spirit—the folding gates of Paradise may be opened by degrees that our eyes may be gradually prepared to endure the excessive Glory.

But while we linger, the spirit has mounted. Now, oh, joy of joys! You are in His bosom, who loved you with an everlasting love! The hand that embraces you still wears the nail print, and as you bow to kiss those sacred feet and cast the crown which has been placed upon your head before that Man, that God—you see that the feet are the feet of Him who was nailed to the tree for you. What joy! What blessedness to see that your Father smiles upon you! The Spirit of God fills you and you know Him and you grieve Him no more! The Son of God gives you to partake in all His Glory, for you are with Him where He is!

Now be sure that you rehearse such thoughts as these as though they were a sacred drama in which you are soon to take your part. Traverse the azure way. Plume your wings for the last solemn flight. Let faith, like a courier, march before to track the way. Every semblance of affectation upon dying beds is shocking. I have never been able to admire the oft-quoted deathbed of Addison. "Come," he said, "and see how a Christian can die." It seems to me too like a brag to be a fitting utterance for a soul humbly resting at the feet of the Cross and looking out over the black waters which fringe the eternal shore.

The true idea of a Christian's dying speech is a humble and gracious witness to those who look around—that though a sinner, he has found peace with God through the precious blood of Jesus—and

would have others trust in the same Savior. Prepare to deliver such a testimony. Often picture yourself as bidding adieu to every earthborn thing. Anticipate the final stroke, the upward mounting, the soaring through tracts unknown, the sight of the Judgment Throne, the eternal Beatific Vision. So will you die daily.

But we have not come into the soul of the matter yet. The way to die daily, practically, is to hold this world with a very loose hand. Birdlime so much abounds. When a man wins a little gain in this world it sticks to him, holds him, prevents his aspiring to heavenly things and holds him bound to earth. Our dear friends, and our beloved children are all strong chains, binding our eagle-souls to the rock of earth. "Ah!" said one, as he was shown a rich man's ample house and luxuriant gardens, "these are the things that make it hard to die." And I suppose they are. When they are misused and wrongly applied, they birdlime us—they hold us to the soil when we would wish to mount.

But, Brothers and Sisters, you must not be the servants of the present. Look on your lands as a dying man would look on them. Look on your children and the comforts of your fireside, and your little savings, as so much hoar-frost to vanish in the sun. Look on your hourly cares and daily joys as on things which perish with use—mere visions of the night—things that flit at the rising of the sun. You will never enjoy earth rightly unless you know it to be a poor mutable thing! Earthliness eats as does a canker, and if you become so great a fool as to think that mortal things are eternal, or that you, yourself, will long endure, you will reserve for yourself many sorrows.

See you not how the glittering dew drops exhale as the day grows old—such and so fleeting are human joys! Mark how the meteor marks the brow of night, and soon is seen no more—such and so hasty is mortal bliss! Hold not earth's treasures with too firm a grasp. Give them all up to your Father and use them as temporary comforts borrowed for awhile, to be returned soon. Our bereavements would not be half so sharp if we always viewed our friends as being lent to us. A man does not cry when he has to return a tool which he has borrowed. No, but as an honest man, he knew he borrowed it—he never called it his own—and he hands it back, thankful that he has had it so long.

When you weep, who have lost your friends, you do well. But if you carry that weeping to repining, you ought to remember the mercy of God in letting you retain these dear ones at all, and in sparing them to you so long. And you should mourn that a rebellions spirit should so reign in you as to make you lament because your God takes back His own. Gracious souls rejoice to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." To die daily, then, is to hold this world with a loose hand—and to look upon earthly possessions as fickle joys.

To die daily, again, is to test our hope and our experience very solemnly everyday. Alas, for that evil habit of taking our religion for granted—of looking back to some period a few years ago and believing that we were then converted— and reckoning that it must be all right now because of something that happened then! Brethren, it is most mischievous to live in the past and to be afraid, at any moment, to try our faith by present tests. We may live on experience if we will use experience in its proper place—but any man who is afraid to search present evidences and to try the foundation of his faith before God, today, is treating his soul most wretchedly.

How would you like to die today, dear Friend? Would you like to die with a hope too weak and tender to endure to be questioned? Can you enter into eternity with a hope that you dare not put into the crucible? Oh, no, you feel you need sure work when it comes to the last! You need a safe and stable foundation to build your soul upon in the trying moment! Well, then, Beloved, see that your hope is stable now. Each day

examine yourself whether you are in the faith. Whether you have really repented of sin. Whether you have actually and truly laid hold of Jesus Christ. Search! See whether the root of the matter is in you and the fruits of the Spirit proceeding from you—whether God dwells in you—whether you walk after the flesh or walk after the Spirit.

I would not foment doubts and fears, but I would, above all things, press professors to avoid presumption. The man who is in a sound business does not object to overhaul his stock and examine his books. But the man to whom bankruptcy is eminent generally seeks to shut his eyes to his actual position. O Sirs, if you are right with God you will desire to be quite sure! You will not flinch at heart-searching preaching! You will be anxious to be put into the sieve and to be tried even as by fire! Your prayer will be, "Cleanse me, O God, from secret faults! Search me and try me, and know my ways!" You will not be among those who hunt after prophets with smooth tongues who prophesy in gentle strains. You will not desire to have your cradle rocked that you may be lulled into presumption, but you will labor to make sure work for eternity lest you suffer irreparable loss.

Beloved, do this everyday! Look into the glass of the Word and see what manner of men you are. Purge yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of your spirit. Put yourself under the lash of the severest texts of Scripture, and by all means labor that you are not deceived, for God will not be mocked but will deal with you according to fact. To die daily, it will be necessary that you come everyday, just as you did at conversion, to the Cross of Christ, as a poor guilty sinner and rest in Him. I do not know anything that is more delightful, more necessary, or more profitable than a renewal of the look of faith. I have always found, when I have been in fear as to my safety, or have had hard thoughts of death pressing heavily upon me, that my only resort has been a humble resort to the Atonement. Carey ordered that they should write on his tombstone—

Here is an epitaph for each one of us. Just come with nothing of your own—no good feelings and no good works. Fall become the Cross of Jesus and rest there. Take Jesus to be everything that God's Law and your conscience can require. I think, dear Friends, this is the way to die daily—and if you can always live as an empty sinner filled with the fullness of Christ, as a lost sinner saved wholly by a precious Savior—you are then fit to live and fit to die!

But I have not quite concluded. To die daily, the Christian should take care to be always in such a place and situation that he should not be ashamed to die therein. Therefore, the possessor of faith in Jesus Christ has no license to be found in places of ungodly and unclean amusement. How would he like to die there? The old story has it that the devil once carried off a very hopeful young man, hurrying him on a sudden to Hell. A monk of great saintliness called after the devil, "You have taken one of mine. You have no business with him!" "Well," said Satan, "I found him in the theater. He was on my premises, and I took him."

I should not wonder if many a professor is carried off in that style. If professors of religion go astray into the purlieu of iniquity, no wonder if they are shot at by that old hunter after souls! Where your treasure is there your heart is. Tell me where you go to find your amusement and I will tell you what you are—for where a man finds his highest joy—there his heart most truly abides. It may serve you as a guide when you have to question yourself, "Ought I to do this, or to go to this or that place?" Then ask yourself, "Should I be prepared to die in such company and in such an occupation?" If you could not, leave it alone. If you would, you may fairly go.

The Christian, also, should never be in a state of temper in which he would be ashamed to die. Who would like to die bearing malice against any man? Who would wish to die with hard thoughts of a neighbor? Who would like to die in a passion? You have no business to get into a passion at any time, but to die daily. The aim and strife of a Christian should be to keep himself in that delightfully equable frame of mind in which he should be prepared, at any moment, to stand before his God with his present emotions and feelings upon him. You say that is hard work? So it is, but you have a glorious Helper—the Holy Spirit shall enable you—and by His power you may accomplish miracles of holiness.

To die daily a Christian man should have all his affairs in such a condition that he is ready to die. I admire that habit in Whitfield, who was a man so very orderly that he would not go to bed at night until everything was in order, for he said, "I should not like to die with a pair of gloves out of place." And yet I know some Believers who have not made their wills! And if they were to die today, and they may, their property would go far otherwise than it ought to do, and a wife whom they love so well might be put to serious suffering.

A Christian man has no right to leave his affairs in a tangle. If he cares not for the affairs of his own household he is worse than a heathen and a publican! Many traders keep their business transactions in such a confusion that if they were taken away their very character might be impugned—but such should not be! We must set our house in order, for we must die, and not live. We should watch because the Master comes as a thief, and a good servant would wish to have all things in good order at his Lord's appearing.

So should it be with all our acts towards God. Some of you have not yet fulfilled the Master's command with regard to Baptism. Now, if you died unbaptized you would be saved, but still, I am sure you would not wish to be taken away till you had fulfilled your Master's bidding. Make haste, then, and delay not to keep His commandments. Some of you have dear children who are unconverted and you have not spoken to them about their souls. Now, if you were called, this afternoon, to sleep upon the bed of death I am sure you would wish that you had delivered your soul fully to these dear ones. This afternoon, then, call them into your room and plead with them. A thousand other things may press upon your conscience, but you have been putting them off—attend to them, I pray you, at once—as a dying man should do! Who would wish to die with a duty left undone? I would like to depart when the day's work is quite finished.

It is said that that venerable divine, Watts Wilkinson, asked of God that he might never know consciously what it was to die, and he died, as many of you will remember, in his sleep, so that his admission into Heaven must have been almost without any recognition of death. In his case death was swallowed up in victory. Perhaps such an end may be given to us. I would choose so to die, that I should have nothing to disturb my mind of matters left undone, but be found waiting and ready. If we are thus prepared, we have acquired the art of dying daily.

III. What would be THE PRACTICAL BENEFIT of such daily dying? It will help us to live well, and this is no small matter. We would not be covetous and grasping if we knew that the heap would soon melt or we should be taken from it. We should not be so impetuous, and attach so much importance to trifles, if we felt that there were grander things close at our heels. We should not be so obstinate, and take so long to be persuaded to Christian duty, if we felt that the time was short and it behooved us to get much done in a little time. If we saw our candle flickering in its socket, we should be far more diligent. We should not be so groveling and so earthly if we saw that the world is founded on the floods, and therefore is utterly unstable.

Next to living close to Christ, I do not know of any better prescription for overcoming worldly-mindedness than this dying everyday. He whose mind anticipates a departure to be with Jesus is armed with weapons for warring a good warfare. But mark, Brothers and Sisters, the best practical effect is that it would help us to die. No man would find it difficult to die who died everyday! He would have practiced it so often that he would only have to die but once more—like the singer who has been through his rehearsals and is perfect in his part. He has but to pour forth the notes once and for all and have done.

Happy are they who every morning go down to Jordan's brink and wade into the stream in fellowship with Christ, dying in the Lord's death, being crucified on His Cross, and raised in His Resurrection! They, when they shall climb their Pisgah, shall behold nothing but what has been long familiar to them—as they have studied the map of death. I do not know how wide the benefits of dying daily may be, but they seem to me to be commensurate with the whole period of human existence. You young people, you would not be likely to plunge into youthful gaieties to your own damage if you felt that you might die while yet you are young. That wild oat sowing would never cause you a harvest of regrets if you felt that you might perish in the midst of sin! Graves are often short trenches for little prattlers. Beware, you boys and girls!

You men of middle age, how it would check you in that eager pursuit after gold—that hastening to be rich which never leaves a man innocent—if you felt that it is little matter, after all, to gain wealth since so soon you must be parted from it. And you who totter on a staff, I cannot conceive of anything which would keep you in a holier frame of mind, or in a happier and calmer state than to be always dying the death of Jesus that you might live His life! Put the Christian man in any position, and this art of dying daily will be useful to him. Is he rich? He will not be purse proud because he knows that he must soon be removed from all his treasures. Is he poor? He will not murmur, for he recollects the streets of gold which are so speedily to be his portion!

This is useful to a Christian in all pursuits. If he is seeking after knowledge, as he may, he will mingle with it the knowledge of Christ Crucified, for he knows that all else will not serve him. If he is toiling for a livelihood, as he may and as he should, he will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, because these things last when all else shall perish like faded leaves. Make a Believer a king or a pauper, and the art of dying daily will help him in either position! And whether he shall rule as a potentate, or suffer as a slave, dying daily will be an equal benefit to his soul. Put him under every temptation and this will help him, for he will not be tempted by the offers of so brief a happiness—his soul has a grip upon eternal realities, and vain shows it utterly despises.

"See here, Tempter," he says, "I have a kingdom which cannot pass away. Vain is your offer of the kingdoms of this world. See here, foul Fiend, I have the beauty and the joy which never can fade—why tempt me with these vanities, these painted nothings?" Above temptation's billows the Believer lifts his head with calm joy because he breathes the atmosphere of Heaven! Daily dying is as useful to the saint in his joys as in his griefs, in his exaltations as in his depressions. It is a blessed thing for him in the valley and on the mountain, in strength and in sickness, on the battlefield of activity or in the hospital of suffering. He shall be tutored for immortality, trained for bliss, fitted for Heaven by learning to die daily! God teach us this art, and He shall have the glory of it. Amen.

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