

Time's Shortness

by Thomas Watson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of living in the present, using our time wisely, and preparing for eternity.

Scripture: Job 14:1, Psalm 133:1, Ecclesiastes 3:2, 1 Corinthians 7:29, 2 Corinthians 1:12, Ephesians 3:20, Ephesians 5:16, Revelation 12:12, Revelation 14:11, Revelation 14:13

Topics: "Eternal Perspective", "Repentance"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches a sermon on the shortness of time, emphasizing the brevity and transitoriness of life. He urges believers to love one another, avoid discord, and strive for unity. Watson highlights the importance of self-examination, repentance, and making the best use of time for God's glory. He warns the wicked of the consequences of sin and encourages the godly to find comfort in the shortness of their suffering and waiting time, looking forward to the eternal reward in heaven.

Transcript

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by Thomas Watson

A sermon preached July 2, 1676, at the funeral of Pastor John Wells

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short." 1 Corinthians 7:29

The blessed Apostle in these words shows us what our station in the world is, and what all our secular enjoyments are. They are short and transient. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short." The text consists of two parts:

1. A kind address--"Brethren."
2. A seasonable admonition--"The time is short."

1. A kind address--"Brethren." The saints of God are brethren. They are cemented together with the blood of Christ. Then let there be no strife among them, seeing they are brethren (Genesis 13:8). Believers are regenerated by the same Spirit; they suck the same breasts--the promises; and wear the same garment--Christ's righteousness. They sit at the same board--the table of the Lord; and partake of the same glory--the inheritance in light (Colossians 1:12). Should they not love one another? There ought to

be no contending among God's people--but as to who would love most.

Satan foments discord and warms himself at the fire of men's passions. If he cannot divide the spiritual members from their Head, he will endeavor to make them smite one against another. If he cannot keep the saints from heaven, he will endeavor to make them fight with one another along the way.

It was ill for Abraham's herdsmen and Lot's to fight with one another, when the Canaanite was in the land (Genesis 13:7). It is an ill time for mariners to be fighting, when the enemy is boring a hole in the bottom of the ship. Take heed that the popish enemy does not enter at your breaches.

Let Christians remember they are brethren. Unity among brethren resembles the harmony among angels. Psalm 133:1-3: "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, as the dew of Hermon." It is compared to ointment because it is sweet; and compared to the dew of Hermon because it makes everything fruitful. The primitive Christians were of one heart (Acts 4:32).

Let us pray that that golden motto may be written upon the churches: "One heart and one way" (Jeremiah 32:39). What a blessed place will heaven be, where our light shall be clear, our love shall be perfect, and our joy shall be full.

2. A seasonable admonition--"The time is short." This word "time" I shall take more strictly as the term and period of man's life. The time is short. The diverse instances of mortality, may serve as so many commentaries upon the text. The Greek word for "short" alludes to mariners who roll up their sails and bring them into a narrow compass when the ship draws near the harbor. Though the sails of man's life were spread larger in the times of the patriarchs, now God is folding up these sails in a narrower compass: "The time is short." The Scripture frequently asserts the brevity and transitoriness of man's life. Psalm 89:47: "Remember how short my time is." Psalm 39:5: "Behold, You have made my days as a hand-breadth," which is the least of the geometrical measures.

Job used three elegant metaphors to set forth the shortness of man's life. Job 9:25-26: "My life passes more swiftly than a runner. It disappears like a swift boat, like an eagle that swoops down on its prey." If we look to the land, man's life is like a swift runner. If we look to the sea, it is like a swift ship. If we look to the air, there it is like a flying eagle.

Life is compared to a cloud (Job 7:9). A cloud is a vapor drawn up by the sun into the middle region of the air. When this cloud comes to its full proportion, it is soon dispersed and blown away with the wind. Life gathers as a cloud, bigger and bigger--but all of a sudden it is dissipated by death. Our life is but a breath, even less. Psalm 39:5: "My life is no longer than the width of my hand. An entire lifetime is just a moment to you; human existence is but a breath." There is but a span between the cradle and the grave. Solomon said, "There is a time to be born--and a time to die" (Ecclesiastes 3:2)--but mentions no time of living--as if that were so short, it were not worth speaking of.

QUESTION. In what sense is the time of life short?

ANSWER. It is short in respect to the uncertainty--it may instantly expire. Our time is short, because of the uncertainty. Hezekiah, it is true, had a lease of fifteen years sealed (Isaiah 38:5)--but we have no such lease sealed for us--death may be within a day's march.

There are so many casualties, that it is a wonder if the slender thread of our life is not cut off by an untimely death. Have you not seen a virgin on the same day dressed in her bridal apparel--and her winding sheet?

Time is short in respect to its improvement. If we reckon that for time which is well-spent, then time is brought into a narrow compass indeed. A great part of our time lies fallow. Take from our life all the time of eating, drinking, sleeping, besides idle impertinences--and then how short is our time! How little is the time wherein we can truly say, "This time I have lived!" Oh, how little is the time which is spent with God! Time misemployed is not time lived--but time lost.

Time is short compared with eternity. There is no telescope which can see to the end of eternity. Eternity is a day which has no sun setting. It is a circle--without beginning or end. Eternity is a sum which can never be numbered, a line which can never be measured. Reckon as many millions of years as there have been minutes since the creation, and they stand as ciphers in eternity. The most elevated strains of rhetoric cannot reach eternity. It is a sea without bottom--or banks. Time may be compared to a spot of earth lying at the mouth of the great ocean. Time is a spot on this side of eternity. What a little spot of that, is man's life! Thus you see, in this sense, time is short.

It will not be long before the silver cord is loosed and the golden bow broken (Ecclesiastes 12:6). Time goes on apace. The poets painted time with wings, because it flies so fast. In Joshua's days, when the sun and moon stood still, time went on. In Hezekiah's reign, when the sun went ten degrees backward, time went forward. Our whole life is nothing else but a passage to death--where there is no staying by the way or slacking our pace.

USE 1. See what a poor inconsiderable thing life is. The time is short, and upon this small wire of time hangs the weight of eternity. Life is but a short scene acted here. It is but a vapor or puff of wind (James 4:14). Life is made up of a few flying minutes. Oh, then, how imprudent are those, who will damn their souls to save their lives! He would be unwise who, to preserve a short lease, would lose his inheritance. How many there are who, to preserve this short life, will take sinful courses, defraud and oppress and build up an estate--but will pull down their souls! Many, to save their skins, will destroy their souls.

It is better to endure a blow on our body or estate--than suffer our precious soul to be damaged. The soul is the man of the man. The soul is the princely part, crowned with reason. It carries in it some faint idea or resemblance of God. The soul is a rich diamond set in clay. What folly it is to save the clay--and lose the diamond! Tiberius the emperor, for a drink of water--lost his kingdom!

USE 2. EXHORTATION.

BRANCH 1. Is time so uncertain and short? Let us often contemplate the shortness of life. Feathers swim upon the water--but gold sinks into it. Light, feathery people float in vanity--but serious Christians sink deep into the thoughts of their death. Deuteronomy 32:29: "Oh, that they were wise--that they would consider their latter end." Forgetfulness of the latter end--makes life sinful--and death formidable. People naturally shrink back from the thoughts of death. Amos 6:3: "They put far away from them the evil day." When they are young, they hope they shall spin out life to the blossoming of the almond tree. When old age comes, they hope to renew their strength as the eagle, though their bodies are subject to corruption and they feel the symptoms of mortality in them. Deafness of hearing--is death creeping in at the ear. Dimness of sight--is death creeping in at the eye. Yet they are so frantic as to persuade themselves of long life. Bodily diseases are but death's harbingers which go before to prepare a lodging for death. Why,

then, do men dream of an earthly eternity? Psalm 49:11: "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue forever." Where is the man who contemplates time's shortness, or makes another's death a looking-glass in which he may see his own dying face?

Some may say this discourse of the shortness of time is fit for such as are mortally ill, whom the physicians have given over. But those who are in health, may live many years.

Though your blood is fresh in your veins, and your bones are full of marrow--you know not how short your time may be. He was not sick nor in fear of sickness who said, "Soul, take your ease--eat, drink, and enjoy yourself." But that very night, death terminated his life (Luke 12:20). A strong constitution is no guarantee of a long life. People likely enough to live, have been suddenly taken away by convulsions and strokes. How soon may death sound its alarm! It is reported of Zelenchus that the first he brought into his new house, was a tombstone. Oh, meditate on the transitoriness and brittleness of life! Think often of your tombstone!

QUESTION. What advantage will accrue to us, by often thinking of our short stay here?

ANSWER 1. Meditation on the shortness of time would cool the heat of our affections for the WORLD. These visible objects please the fancy--but they do not so much delight us--as delude us. They are suddenly gone from us. Worldly things are like a fair picture drawn on the ice--which the sun quickly melts.

The time is short, so why should we overly love that which we cannot keep over long? 1 Corinthians 7:31: "The fashion (or pageant) of the world passes away." Time passes away as a ship in full sail. This, thought on seriously, would mortify covetousness. Paul looked upon himself as ready to loosen anchor and be gone. His love to the world had already died, Galatians 6:14: "The world is crucified to me--and I unto the world." Who would covet that which has neither contentment nor continuance?

Peter had the same view in 2 Peter 1:14: "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle." Among the Grecians, the city of Sparta had a king for a year and then he was to lay down his crown--which made everyone strive not to be king. Why should we so toil about the world as if we were to live here forever? What need is there for a long provision--if it is for a short way? If we have enough to bear our charges to heaven, that should suffice. Suppose a man's lease were ready to expire and he should fall to building and planting; would not he be judged to be foolish? When our time is so very short now, to follow the world immoderately, as if we would fetch happiness out of the earth which God has cursed--is a degree of madness. We shall soon have no need of the earth--but to be buried in it!

ANSWER 2. Meditation on the shortness of time should be a means to HUMBLE us. Augustine calls humility the mother of the graces. Balm sinks to the bottom of the water. A good Christian sinks low in humility. And what can sooner pull down the flags and banners of pride--than to consider we are shortly dropping into the dust! The priest was to cast the feathers of the fowls by the place of the ashes (Leviticus 1:16). Just so, all your feathers of honor must shortly lie in the ashes. Shall not he who is clothed with mortality--be clothed with humility? The thoughts of the grave--should bury our pride.

ANSWER 3. Meditation on the shortness of time, would hasten our REPENTANCE. Repentance is as necessary, as heaven. As moisture and natural heat preserve life--so repenting tears and a heart burning with love preserve the soul. It is natural to delay repentance. We say with Haggai 1:2, "The time is not yet come." But, the text says, the time is short. Our life is a candle, which is soon blown out.

The thoughts of time's uncertainty and swiftness, would keep us from putting off our repentance. There is no time for us to delay. It is observed of the birds of Norway, that they fly faster than the birds of other countries. By the instinct of nature, knowing the days in that climate to be very short, they therefore make more haste to their nests. The consideration of short abode here, will make us avoid delays and fly faster to heaven upon the wing of repentance.

ANSWER 4. Meditation on the shortness of time would give us an antidote against the TEMPTATIONS of Satan. Temptation is Satan's eldest daughter, who woos for him. Satan does more mischief by his wiles--than his darts. He knows how to suit his temptation, as the farmer knows what seed is proper for such a soil. Satan tempted Achan with a wedge of gold; and David with beauty. It is hard to keep up the banks of grace against the sea of temptation. I know no better remedy against Satan's immodest solicitations than this text: "the time is short."

"What, Satan, do you tempt me to vanity--when I am going to give up my accounts at the judgment? Shall I now be sinning--when tomorrow I may be dying! How shall I look my judge in the face!" Christian, when Satan sets sinful pleasure before you, show him a death's-head. This will make temptations vanish.

ANSWER 5. The consideration of the shortness of our stay in the world would be a help to TEMPERANCE. It would make us sober and moderate in the use of worldly comforts. By excess, we turn lawful things into sinful things. The bee may suck a little honey from the flower--but put it into a barrel of honey--and it is drowned. We may with Jonathan dip the end of the rod in honey--but not thrust it in too far. The flesh, when pampered, rebels. The best preservative against intemperance is this--the time is short!

The Egyptians at their great banquets, used to bring in the image of a dead man, and say to their guests, "Look upon this--and proceed in your banquet." An excellent antidote against excess. Joseph of Arimathea erected a sepulcher in his garden--to spice his flowery delights with the thoughts of death.

ANSWER 6. Meditation on the shortness of time would much mitigate our grief for the loss of dear RELATIONS. It is observable that when the Apostle said, "The time is short," he immediately added. "Let those who weep be as if they wept not."

No doubt the loss of relations is grievous to the fleshly part. It is like pulling a limb from the body. When God strikes us in our right eye--we weep. It is lawful to give vent to our grief. Joseph wept over his dead father. But though true religion does not banish grief, it bounds it. We must weep--as if we wept not. Rachel's sin was that she refused to be comforted (Matthew 2:18). If anything can stop the issue of sorrow, at least assuage it, it is this, "The time is short." We shall shortly have our losses made up and enjoy our godly relations again in heaven!

ANSWER 7. Meditation on the shortness of time would make us highly value GRACE. Time is short--but grace is forever. 1 John 2:27: "The anointing which you have received from Him abides in you." Grace is a blossom of eternity; it is an immortal seed (1 John 3:9). Grace is not blasted by death--but transplanted into a better soil. Grace is not a lease which soon expires--but an inheritance entailed forever. He who has true grace can no more lose it--than the angels can, who are fixed in their heavenly orb. Grace shall outlast time--and run parallel with eternity.

BRANCH 2. If time is so short and winged, take heed of MISSPENDING this short time. To misspend time, is the worse wastefulness.

1. Take heed of spending time UNPROFITABLY. Domitian wasted much of his time in catching flies. Many live merely to cumber the ground. Judges 10:4: "Jair had thirty sons who rode around on thirty donkeys" and they died. So it may be said, such a one was born in the reign of such a king and he possessed such an estate--and he died. His life was scarcely worth a prayer--or his death worth a tear. An idle person is a cipher in the world--and God writes down no ciphers in the Book of Life. Many are like the wood of the vine--useless. Ezekiel 15:3: "Will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?"

Too many resemble the lilies which do not toil, neither do they spin. They spend their time as the emperor Caligula. He was at a great expense to provide a navy, and when it was provided he sent his mariners to sea to gather cockle-shells, and so they sailed home again. God has furnished men with precious time wherein they may work out salvation--and they employ it in foolish vanities. What reward can be expected--when there is no work done? Who is crowned as a conqueror--who never fights? Matthew 25:30: "Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness!"

2. Take heed of spending time VICIOUSLY. Many spend their short time in drinking, gaming, and whoring. Esau lost the blessing, while he was hunting. Many lose heaven, while they hunt after sinful pleasures. Sin is boiled to a great height in this age. Men count it a shame, not to be vile. They are steeped and boiled in wickedness! They live in the world to infect others--as the cockatrice with its breath poisons the herbs. What a dreadful account will they have to give, who have nothing to show God but their sins!

BRANCH 3. If the time of life is so short, let us IMPROVE it. Ephesians 5:16: "Redeeming the time." If a man had but a short time on a farm, he would make the best improvement of it and get as good a crop as he could out of it before he left it. The thoughts of our short stay here on earth, should make us improve this little inch of time.'

That we may do this better, remember we are accountable to God for our time. God will say, "What have you done with your time?" If a master entrusts his steward with money and goods--he expects that he should give him an account of what he has done with them--and how he has employed them. All of us are stewards, and God will call us to a reckoning and say, "What have you done with the talent of time which I entrusted you with?"

QUESTION: How should we improve this short time?

ANSWER: In general, mind salvation work (Philippians 2:12). He who lays up gold and silver is wise for his children--but he who gets salvation is wise for himself.

Especially, improve this short time by a serious examination. Examine how the case stands between God and your souls. 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves." Examine yourselves--as the goldsmith does his gold. Time is short, and what if God should say this night, "Give an account of your stewardship!"

Reckon with yourselves about your debts. Are your debts paid--and your sins pardoned? Reckon with yourselves about making your will. Time is short; you may die before night. Have you made your will? I mean, in a spiritual sense, have you given up your will to God and, by solemn vow--set seal to the will? They are most fit to resign their souls to God--who have resigned their wills to Him.

Call yourselves to account about your evidences for heaven. Are your evidences ready? Your desires are your evidences. Do you desire Christ for Himself--as beauty is loved for itself? Can nothing quench your thirst but Christ's blood? Is your desire quickened into endeavor? This is a blessed sign.

For lack of this self-examination, many who are well known to others--are unknown to themselves. They know not where they shall go when they die--or to what coast they shall sail--to hell or to heaven.

Improve this short time, by laying hold of all the seasons and opportunities for your souls. The mariner takes the fittest season; he sets to sea while the wind blows. Time is short, and opportunity (which is the cream of time) is shorter. Let not the seasons of mercy slip away unimproved.

While God's Spirit strives with you, nourish His sweet whispers and motions. When the dove came flying to the windows of the ark, Noah reached out his hand and pulled it into the ark. So when God's Spirit (this blessed dove) comes to you, entertain and welcome Him into the ark of your souls. If you repulse the Spirit, He may refuse to strive any more. Gospel seasons, though they are sweet, are swift.

While God's ministers are with you, make use of them. Zechariah 1:5: "The prophets, do they live forever?" Their time (by reason of their labors) is scarcely so long as others. We read of lamps within the pitchers in judges 7:16. Ministers are lamps--but these lamps are in earthen pitchers, which soon break. Though ministers carry the word of life in their mouths--yet they carry death in their faces! Improve their labors while you have them. They thirst for your happiness and, as so many bells--would chime in your souls to Christ.

Improve this short time by keeping up a close communion with God. 1 John 1:3: "Our communion is with the Father." This sweet communion with God is kept up by holy meditation. Genesis 24:63: "Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening." Meditation cements divine truths into the mind. It brings God and the soul together. Meditation is the bellows of the affections. It gives a sight and a taste of invisible glory. Psalm 104:34: "My meditation of Him shall be sweet."

Communion with God is kept up by prayer. Praying days are ascension days. Caligula placed his effigies in the capitol, whispering in Jupiter's ears. Prayer whispers in God's ears. It is a secret parley and conversation with God. On this mount of prayer, the soul has many sweet transfigurations.

Improve this short time by doing all the service you can for God. Wisdom may be learned from an enemy. Satan is more fierce because he knows his time is short (Revelation 12:12). We would act more vigorously for God seeing our time is short. Our lives should be as jewels--though little in quantity yet great in value. Paul knew his stay in the world was short, therefore, how zealous and active was he for God while he lived! 1 Corinthians 15:10: "I labored more abundantly than they all." Paul's obedience did not move as slowly as the sun on the dial--but as swift as the sun in the sky. Is time short? Let us be "God-exalters." Let us bring glory to God in doing good to others. As aromatic trees sweat out their precious oils, so should we lay out our strength for the good of others.

Let us do good to their souls and convince the ignorant, strengthen the weak, and bring back the wandering. A good Christian is both a diamond and a lodestone--a diamond sparkling in sanctity; and a lodestone for his attractive virtue in drawing others to Christ.

Let us do good to their bodies. Many at this day say to their sorrows, "You are our companions." Let our fingers drop with the myrrh of liberality. Hebrews 13:16: "Don't forget to do good and to share what you have with those in need, for such sacrifices are very pleasing to God." Let us feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and be temporal saviors to others.

Could we thus improve our time--our lives, though short, would be sweet. This would be the way to cast abroad a fragrant, redolent smell in God's church, like the orange trees which perfume the air where they grow.

Could we thus improve our time, we might have our consciences drawing up a certificate for us, as in 2 Corinthians 1:12. Then it does not matter if the world censures--as long as conscience acquits; it does not matter how cross the wheels go--if the clock strikes rightly.

Could we thus improve our time, we might have an easy and joyful passage out of the world. This was Hezekiah's comfort when he thought he was lying on his deathbed. 2 Kings 20:3: "I beseech You, O Lord, remember how I have done that which is good in Your sight." To improve time aright answers God's cost, credits true religion, and saves the soul.

USE 3. Let this strike terror into every wicked person who exhausts his strength in sin; his time is short--and then begins his hell. He spends his life in a frolic. He takes the timbrel and harp and rejoices at the sound of the organ (Job 21:12). But the time is shortly coming, when all his mirth shall cease. Revelation 18:22, "Never again will the sound of music be heard there--no more harps, songs, flutes, or trumpets." "All the fancy things you loved so much are gone. The luxuries and splendor that you prized so much will never be yours again. They are gone forever." Revelation 18:14. The grave buries all a sinner's joy. When a wicked man dies--the devil gets a windfall.

Satan (in Samuel's shape) said to Saul, 1 Samuel 28:19, "You shall be with me tomorrow." The sinner has his lusts today--and may be with the devil tomorrow! Who would envy the wicked their honor or pleasure? They must pay dearly for it! They have a short feast--but a long reckoning! For a drop of mirth, they must drink a sea of wrath! And who knows the power of that wrath? Bellarmine said that if a man had a sight of hell--it would be enough to make a drunken person sober.

Hell is the epitome of torment. The sacrifice of jealousy was to have no oil nor frankincense put to it (Numbers 5:15). In hell, there is no oil of mercy put to the torments of the wicked to assuage them; nor is there any incense of prayer to appease God's wrath. Oh, that sinners would in time break off their iniquities! What has become of their intellect--have they sinned away reason as well as conscience? The time of life is short--but the torments of hell are lengthened out! Revelation 14:11: "The smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever!"

USE 4. Here is a light side of the text to the godly. They may be glad that their time here is short. They cannot really live--but by dying. Behold, there is honey at the end of the rod.

The time being short, their sinning time cannot be long. Sin is a troublesome inmate. Romans 7:24 says that Paul, that bird of paradise, sighed and groaned under corruption. A child of God mingles sin with his duties. He cannot write a copy of holiness, without blotting. There's a part of a regenerate heart that sides with Satan. But be of good comfort, the time is short. It is but for a short while, Christians, that you shall be combating a proud, unbelieving heart. The year of release is coming. Death does to the godly as the angel did to Peter--it smites them, and makes their chains of sin fall off!

The time being short, their working time cannot be long. In this life, much work is cut out. There is the work of the hand, as the artificer works in his trade (Proverbs 10:4). There is the work of the head. Notions are the children of the brain, and there is labor in bringing them forth. There is the work of the heart, which is the hardest work--to search, cleanse, and watch the heart. As a clock sometimes goes faster, sometimes

slower, so the heart sometimes goes faster in sin, sometimes slower in duty. But here is the saint's comfort--their working time is short. Revelation 14:13: "They will rest from their labors." When their bodies return to dust--their souls return to rest.

The time being short, their suffering time cannot be long. Life is laden with trouble, "How frail is humanity! How short is life, and how full of trouble!" Job 14:1. You may as well separate weight from lead--as trouble from a man's life. We come into the world with a cry--and go out with a groan! Everyone has his yoke, and it is well if there is not a nail in it. Though the cross is heavy--we have but a little way to carry it. Death will give the godly a writ of ease. Job 3:17: "There (in the grave) the wicked cease from troubling."

The time being short, their waiting time cannot be long. The godly shall not be long out of heaven. While the blessed angels see the orient beauties which shine in God's face, believers live far from court, being imprisoned in the body. Here they rather desire God--than enjoy Him. But the time is short, perhaps a few days or hours--and the saints shall be solacing themselves in the light of God's countenance. They shall leave their pillow of thorns--and lay their head on Christ's bosom! Faith gives a propriety in God; death gives a possession. The wagons and chariots came rattling to old Jacob--but they were to carry him to his son, Joseph. Death's chariot wheels may come rattling to a believer--but it is to carry him home to his Father's house!

In that paradise of God, a Christian shall have more than he can ever imagine (Ephesians 3:20). He can imagine, "What if every mountain were a pearl, every flower a ruby, every sand in the sea a diamond, the whole globe a shining gem?" But all his thoughts are too low and dwarf-like to reach the glory of the celestial pyramids. The heavenly reward (as Augustine said) exceeds faith--and, as the time is short, a Christian shall be in heaven before he is aware. Then he shall bathe his soul in those perfumed pleasures of paradise, which run at God's right hand forevermore!

I am done with the text. Let me speak to the occasion. We are meeting here to commemorate the death of an eminent minister in this city, Mr. John Wells. I am sorry I am the actor in this mournful scene. But being requested by him in his life (in case I survived), I was willing to do this last office of love.

There has been a great mortality of ministers lately. The men of the world need not be so fierce against God's ministers; they will not trouble them long. God's taking away His ministers so fast (two in a day) bodes much evil. It presages the fall of a house--when the pillars are removed.

Concerning this reverend brother deceased, it is not my purpose to use any exaggerated eulogies; only give me permission to strew a few flowers upon his casket.

Our worthy friend was endued with learning and volubleness of speech. He could rightly divide the Word as a workman who needed not to be ashamed. He had seals to his ministry. Some of his hearers might call him their spiritual father.

Regarding his piety, he was not only a follower of that which was good--but a leader. He said not long before his death, that he was sure that he loved God. He was fixed to his principles. Though he is by death a fallen star, he was not a wandering star.

His disposition was not morose--but affable. He was a man of candor and courtesy. He obliged and won the affections of many to him. When grace and sweetness of nature meet--it is like a diamond in a gold ring.

Regarding his preaching, he preached intelligibly to the capacity of his assembly of hearers, because he was sure that a minister would never touch the hearts of his hearers if he shot over their heads. Ministers should be stars to give light, not clouds to darken the truth. Clearness is the grace of speech. Gregory Nazianzen preached plainly to the ignorant--yet was admired by the learned.

He was conscientious and painstaking in his work. Sloth in a minister, is as bad as sleep in a sentinel. He would not offer that to God, that which cost him nothing. Christ bled for souls; well may we sweat. This good man, like a candle, consumed himself while he gave light to others.

He was a man of a forgiving spirit. He was not troubled with the overflowing of gall. Kindnesses he wrote in marble; injuries he forgot. He was very charitable. The backs and bellies of the poor, were the furrows where he sowed the seeds of his liberality. But though his charity shone, he did not care that it might blaze. He is now taken from the evil to come.

For you who sat under his ministry, let me tell you that you have lost a friend and a guide. You have cause to be dear mourners. Let me request only this of you, that you would remember the many good instructions given you. Though he is dead, let not his sermons die, too--but labor to copy them in your lives.

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