

THE STATE OF THE DEAD

"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. (2 Cor. 5:1-4)

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

1. By State: We mean the mode or condition of being, or nature.
2. By Death: "The death of the body, i.e., that separation (whether natural or violent) of the soul from the body by which the life on earth is ended." (Thayer, p. 282)

I. MANKIND GOES THROUGH THREE STATES OF EXISTENCE.

1. Fleshly - This is the state of responsibility to prepare for the other two.
2. Intermediate - Spirit/souls here to await the Judgment Throne of Christ.
3. Eternal - State after Judgment in either Heaven or Hell.

II. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT ONLY THE BODY SLEEPS IN DEATH.

1. Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

This means the body because Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, "Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it."

2. 1 Kings 2:10: "So David rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David." (Refers to the body - how could you bury a spirit).
3. Job 14:12-13: "So man lies down and does not rise. Till the heavens are no more, they will not awake nor be roused from

their sleep. Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that You would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!" (This certainly refers to Job's body since it would not be possible to buy his spirit.)

4. Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."

Ecclesiastes 9:5: "For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward for the memory of them is forgotten."

NOTE: The knowledge which they know nothing of is limited by verse six which says, "Nevermore will they have a share in anything under the sun."

Solomon is merely saying that after a man dies he does not have any knowledge of what is now transpiring on the earth.

5. Dan. 12:2: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt." (This is the body that is in the dust.)
6. John 11:11, 14, 39: ". . . Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, 'Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.'" (Refers to body.)
7. Acts 2:34: "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" (Verse 29 shows that Peter is referring to the body.) "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day."
8. Matthew 27:52: "and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised." (This shows that the bodies were asleep.)

III. THE SOUL GOES TO THE INTERMEDIATE STATE OF HADES TO AWAIT THE JUDGMENT.

1. Words Used to Describe the Intermediate and Eternal State:

- A. **Heaven** - The Abode of God and Eternal Abode of the Saints.
- B. **Gehenna(Hell)** - Found twelve times in New Testament as place of Eternal Punishment.
- C. **Hades**- The Intermediate Abode of the Dead [used by Greek classical writers many years before Christ].

(1) Hades is Divided into Two Parts:

- (a) Paradise - Intermediate abode of the righteous dead.

Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

John 20:17: Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God, and your God.'"

Acts 2:27: Peter points out that Christ went to sheol or hades that day and he quotes a prophecy of David to prove it: "For You will not leave my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." (Ps. 16:10)

2 Cor. 12:2-4: "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago-whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows-such a one was caught up to the third heaven, ... how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."

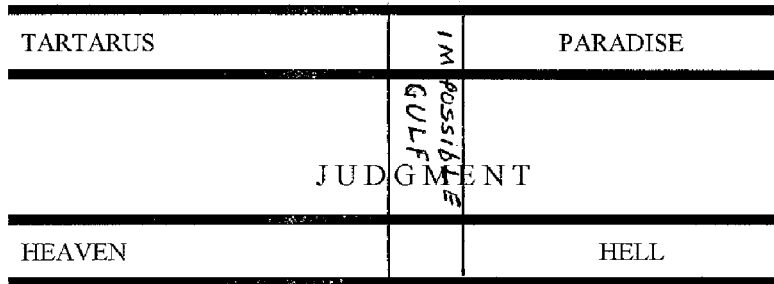
John 3:13: "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven." [Written about AD 90]

Heb. 12:1-2: "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of

witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

- (b) Tartarus (found one time) - Abode of Unrighteous till Judgment.

2 Peter 2:4: "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus (hell), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment."



IV. THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS TEACHES THAT THE SOUL IS CONSCIOUS AFTER DEATH.

1. Luke 16:19-31: "There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and

likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' And he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

2. This Parable Pictures Conscious Faculties Such as These Nine:

A. Seeing, hearing, feeling, remembering, speaking, reasoning, praying, pleading, Missionary Mindedness. He also recognized Lazarus.

3. This Parable Teaches Seven Things About the Intermediate State:

FIRST - That the Dead Can Remember.

- (1) The rich man could remember the good things in life.
- (2) That water was cooling.
- (3) That he had five brothers on the earth.
- (4) That he was conscious of being in torment - implies better previous state.

SECOND - That the Righteous Dead Are Comforted.

Phil. 1: "To live is Christ, to die is gain." "To go and be with the Lord is far better."

- (1) This should be a great source of comfort to all of us who have lost good Christian friends and relatives in death.

A Christian can have the best of three worlds.

THIRD - That the Lost in Hades Do Not Want Others Back on Earth to Follow Them.

- (1) Think of the drunken fathers and mothers, the sum of the earth, the servants of sin, do not want others to join them there.

FOURTH - That the Judgment Had Not Taken Place.

- (1) His Brothers Were Still on the Earth. (Thus, an intermediate state.)

FIFTH - That future recognition Is A Fact. [Elijah and Moses on Mount. Matt. 17:] **LUKE 9: MARK 9:**

- (1) The rich man recognized Lazarus and he pleaded with Abraham.
- (2) What a wonderful thought to be able to recognize friends who have gone on before when we die and be able to talk with them and spend the time until the judgment in peace, comfort, and with friends.

SIXTH - That Abraham Who Had Been Dead Fifteen or More Hundred Years was Conscious.

- (1) He could Talk and Think.

SEVENTH - That the Righteous and Unrighteous Are Separated At Death.

- (1) There is an impassable gulf between Paradise and Tartarus.
- (2) This is as it should be because there is a line of separation between the good and evil in this world and how much more appropriate it is that they should be separated in the world to come.

4. This Parable Refutes:

A. Christian Science which denies the existence of matter.

- (1) Jesus affirms the existence of sin, pain, sores, torment.

B. Spiritism - Seances and communication with the dead.

- (1) The Dead cannot communicate with the living.

C. Doctrine of the Second Chance.

- (1) Heb. 9:27: "It is appointed for men to die once, and after this the judgment."

V. THE SOULS IN THE INTERMEDIATE STATE OF HADES ARE AWAITING THE JUDGMENT DAY.

1. Each of Us Hold Within Ourselves Our State for Eternity.

From a Christian perspective, we can certainly say with David:

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness;
I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your Likeness.

It is strange that we should have to be reminded of the transience of life, but the Bible stresses this idea over and over again lest we should forget our mortality.

Lord, make me to know my end,
And what is the measure of my days,
That I may know how frail I am.
Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths,
And my age is as nothing before You;
Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor.
Surely every man walks about like a shadow!
(Psalm 39:4ff.)

Since life is constantly moving toward death, reminders of our mortality should not be necessary, but strangely enough we may well have to learn to pray with the psalmist, "Let me know how frail I am." The danger of being totally absorbed in "things" is even greater in a relatively wealthy society where the dead and dying have become largely invisible. Even Moses prayed, "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." (Psalm 90:12). To "get a heart of wisdom," to gain insight and self-knowledge, is directly related to our awareness of death (cf. James 4:13-17).

But the question remains why this universal fear exists. It is particularly strong in North America, perhaps attributable in part to the remarkable vitality of the population. Another, more common reason perhaps is that many people seem to believe that some sort of judgment follows death. The fact that death is feared is obvious; the topic is excluded as carefully from conversation as the subject of sex was in Victorian society.

People no longer die, they expire; undertakers are called funeral directors, coffins are caskets, hearses are labeled coaches or, better yet, professional cars; corpses are loved ones. There are countless other euphemisms. People seem almost afraid to call the thing by name lest they provoke it.

Remember the words of John Donne, “Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.”

“Will they meet us, cheer and greet us,
Those we’ve loved who’ve gone before?
Shall we find them at the portals,
Find our beautiful immortals,
When we reach the radiant shore?”

DEATH IS A DEPARTURE

Another word used in the New Testament for death is **departure**. Paul wrote in his last Epistle, just prior to his death, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my **departure** is at hand.” (2 Tim. 4:6). The Greek word used here is anahsis, and it is used metaphorically in a nautical way as when a vessel pulls up anchor to loose from its moorings and set sail, or in a military way as when an army breaks encampment to move on. In the ancient Greek world, this term was used also for freeing someone from chains, and the severing of a piece of goods from the loom. This is what death is as described in the Bible. Here we are anchored to the hardships and heartaches of this life. In death, the gangway is raised, the anchor is weighed and we set sail for the Golden Shore. In death, we break camp here and start for Heaven.

The fact of universal death must be understood and accepted by us. It is the first step in preparing us for the departure of loved ones. And I might add that it is the first step in getting ourselves ready for our own death. And do any of us know when this will be? “Whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” Instead you *ought* to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’” (James 4:14-15). We do to ourselves a grave injustice when we leave death out of a day’s plans. What is your life? It is a brief thing, a little time; it will soon be gone. Yes, your life is like a little steam issuing from the spout on your teakettle. It is there one moment; gone the next.

The death of your loved one is an experience common to all mankind. We set out on the journey of life with high hopes. These hopes are often built upon plans we have made. We think in terms of our children’s needs, their happiness, education and future careers. We plan retirement with our mate in marriage. But one day we are suddenly stopped cold when the icy

fingers of death snatch away one of our precious loved ones. Physicians and surgeons, nurses and friends, all have done what they could to save the life, but in the gracious and perfect providence of God, death has conquered. That life is now beyond recall. Nothing in all this world can bring back those whom God has taken in death.

One day the bottom drops out of our world. Death enters our family, taking from us a cherished loved one, possibly a mother or father, son or daughter, husband or wife, or some other relative or friend. Some of us have already had this experience. We said the final good-bye as our loved one departed this life. This is not an easy experience for any of us. The Christian, even though he is well instructed in what the Bible teaches, finds such a trial to be most difficult. We are just never quite prepared for it.

Much in this world is uncertain, but the fact that we shall die is beyond conjecture. The validity of Benjamin Franklin's observation, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes," goes without question. While some may be able to avoid taxes, no one can hope to escape death. As Sir Walter Scott put it:

And come he slow, or come he fast,
It is but Death who comes at last.
[*Marmion*, II, 30]

Ancient poets lamented the brevity of life:

Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths,
And my age is as nothing before You;
Certainly every man at his best state is but vapor!
(Psalm 39:5)

Pascal observed that between us and heaven or hell there is only life, which is the frailest thing in the world.

But death is far more than a brief, unpleasant moment to be faced sometime in the future; the whole of life stands under its shadow, relentlessly moving toward the boundary. Chaucer expressed it well:

When I was born, so long ago,
Death drew the tap of life and let it flow;
And ever since the tap has done its task,
And now there's little but an empty cask.
My stream of life's but drops upon the rim.
[The Reeve's Prologue from
The Canterbury Tales,
Translated by Nevill Coghill]

Death does not lurk threatening in the future; it penetrates present concerns, is part and parcel of life itself. Death cannot be divorced from life and should not be viewed in isolation. It might almost be called a way of life, a mode of existence. Death permeates life. Life and death coexist. Man's mortality does not begin at the moment of death; death is the horizon of life, it is part of the scenery.

Tertullian discusses the question of fear in *The Soul's Testimony* (Chapt. 4).

Why dost thou fear death at all? There is nothing after death to be feared, if there is nothing to be felt. For though it may be said that death is distasteful . . . not for anything it threatens afterwards, but because it deprives of the good of life; yet, on the other hand, as it puts an end to life's discomforts, which are far more numerous, death's terrors are mitigated by a gain that more than outweighs the loss. And there is no occasion to be troubled about a loss of good things which is amply made up for so great a blessing as the relief from every trouble. There is nothing dreadful in that which delivers from all that is to be dreaded. If thou shrinkest from giving up life because thy experience of it has been sweet at any rate, there is no need to be in an alarm about death if thou hast no knowledge that it is evil.

The dread of it is the proof that thou art aware of its evil. Thou wouldst never think it evil--thou wouldst have no fear of it at all--if thou were not sure that after it there is something to make it evil, and so a thing of terror.

Tertullian's reasoning is unimpeachable. His sentiments were echoed much later by Shakespeare in Hamlet's soliloquy:

To die: to sleep.
To Sleep? Perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause
. . . the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of.

(*Hamlet III, 1*)

The fear of death is rooted in the fact that God must be faced -- a thought which indeed inspires terror if we are not assured of acceptance and forgiveness. On the other hand, if God is denied, the sheer nothingness and emptiness of life deprives it of all meaning. At least Christianity took a realistic view of the situation and labeled death the enemy of man. Far from disparaging the gift of life because of the hereafter, the Christian can thoroughly enjoy life because he has been set free from the fear of death.

Death is not liberation from a dungeon, for the soul is not imprisoned in the body. The soul alone is not the "real man," unaffected by death. The view of Plato that man is uninvolved at the moment of death, a mere spectator, is not biblical.

At the moment of death, the body is not simply discarded. It is part of man's nature, of his very being. Without the body, the soul is "naked." The body is like a tent, wrote the tentmaker, and will perish. But Paul has the assurance that we will obtain a new, permanent body, a "building" as opposed to the temporary "tent." Changing the imagery, the apostle speaks of the new body as a garment to be put on in order not to be found "naked." No one wants to be "unclothed" (die). It would be so much better if, instead of being unclothed, we could be "further clothed"; in other words, if the heavenly body could simply be put on like an outer garment without the experience of death "so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life" (2 Cor. 5:1-4). This will be the experience of those who shall be alive at the return of the Lord. They shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and this perishable will put on the imperishable, the mortal will put on immortality, and death will be conquered (1 Cor. 15:51ff).

It is remarkable how little the Old Testament has to say about life after death, hope, resurrection, and eternal life. The Sadducees accepted the validity of the written law (rejecting only traditional interpretations which were accepted by the Pharisees) and denied the resurrection and personal immortality. Paul, an ex-Pharisee, declared without hesitation that it was Jesus who had shed light on the topic of eternal life and incorruption (2 Tim. 1:10). In this respect, the contrast between the Old Testament and the New Testament is most striking. It is therefore not surprising that Judaism has relatively little to say about life after death. According to Abba Hillel Silver, "the Torah shows no interest in the career of the soul after death." Judaism is "primarily preoccupied with life, with man's life here on earth." He goes so far as to write that "one cannot escape the impression that the deviation toward eschatology represented a sharp departure from classical Judaism." Faced with the fear of death and looking for answers which traditional Judaism did not furnish, popular Jewish imagination filled the void. Theories about life after death evolved complete with purgatory and descriptions of the abode of the blessed and the damned. The Hebrews too lived under the shadow of death. In fact, if the Old Testament was remarkably reticent about life after death, the gloom of death was sufficiently emphasized to give rise to many questions. Sheol, or the abode

of the dead, was described as “a land as dark as darkness itself, as the shadow of death, without any order, where even the light is like darkness.” (Job 10:22). It seems that compared to the living, those in Sheol lived a shadowy and feeble existence. It was a land of “silence” (Psalm 94:17), or a “land of forgetfulness” (Psalm 88:12). No wonder the psalmist prayed, “Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry; do not be silent at my tears; for I am a stranger with You, a sojourner, as all my fathers were. Remove Your gaze from me, that I may regain strength, before I go away and am no more.” (Psalm 39:12, 13).

THE RIGHT TO DIE

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8:

"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace."

INTRODUCTION:

1. Euthanasia is defined by Webster's Dictionary as "granting painless death to a hopelessly ill patient with a non-curable disease."
2. What right does society have to insist that a person live as long as possible?
 - A. Until about 25 years ago a patient was pronounced dead when his heart stopped beating and there was no pulse.
 - (1) Sophisticated electronic monitoring, so much a part of the scene in intensive care and coronary care units today, was essentially unknown in the 1940's and even the 1950's.
 - (2) It was the introduction of technological devices capable of maintaining the vital functions of respiration and circulation for prolonged periods, even in the absence of any cognitive function on the part of the patient, that brought into much bolder relief the issue of termination.
 - (3) Indeed patients who have suffered "brain death" can only be "kept alive" by the use of artificial circulatory and respiratory support devices.

I. THE RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED AS A BASIC HUMAN RIGHT.

1. Just as the right to live is a fundamental human right, to be protected from all incursions, so the right to die should also be recognized and protected.
2. Legal Decisions Tend to Sustain This Right:
 - A. The Declaration of Independence states that "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" are inalienable rights. It does not, however, state that there is any compulsion to live when the pursuit of happiness is impossible because of irremediable incapacitation of body or mind. Nor does any other legal document state that the right to live implies compulsion to live.
 - B. As long ago as 1891, the U.S. Supreme Court stated: "No right is held more sacred, or is more carefully guarded, by the common law, than the right of every individual to the possession and control of his own person, free from all restraint or interference of others, unless by clear and unquestionable authority of law."
 - C. Cardozo in the 1914 Schloendorff case held: "Every human being of adult years and sound mind has a right to determine what shall be done with his own body."
 - D. Brandeis spoke in the Olmstead case in 1928 of "the right to be left alone."
 - E. And a Kansas court in the 1960 Natanson case held: "Each man is considered to be master of his own body and he may, being of sound mind, expressly prohibit the performance of life-saving surgery, or other medical treatment."
 - F. Florida Circuit Court, Seventeenth Circuit in Perlmutter v. Florida Medical Center (7-11-78) held that a terminally ill man whose life was being prolonged, against his wishes, by a mechanical respirator, wins the right to order the treatment stopped.

Socrates: **Death may be the greatest of human blessings.**

II. THE FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN NEED HAVE NO FEAR IN DEATH - INDEED HE HAS HOPE.

1. Romans 14:7-9: "None of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both of the dead and the living."
2. Luke 17:33: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it."
3. Phil. 1:21-23: "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."
4. Psalms 23: "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me... "
5. Prov. 14:32: "The righteous man has a refuge in his death ..."
6. 1 Cor. 15:55: "O Hades, where is your victory?"
7. We Need to Confront Death With an Awareness of Life's Brevity - Uncertainty.
 - A. Psalm 90:4: "For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night."
 - B. Psalms 90:9-12: "For all our days have passed away in Your wrath; we finish our years like a sigh. The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. So each us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."
 - C. Proverbs 27:1: "Do not boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day may bring forth."

NOTE: Without death we would forever be tempted to postpone acts of responsible freedom, since everything could be delayed indefinitely. Ironically, it is from death that human freedom receives its most power vindication.

"Of old when men lay sick and sorely tried,
The doctors gave them physic and they died:
But here's a happier age, for now we know
Both how to make men sick and keep them so!

Hilaire Belle

8. **CRUX** The Distinction Must Be Made Between the Choice Not to Prolong Dying and the Choice Not to Prolong Living.

A. Hospital Patients Have Three Basic Legal Rights:

1. To be adequately informed when ill so a valid decision may be made.
2. To refuse any treatment as long as the consequences are not harmful to others.
3. To refuse treatment and to know that the refusal will be honored even if the patient become incompetent.

NOTE: Under present laws, the doctor is required to tell each patient, when he is asked, specifically what the details of his illness is.

B. Hospital: Poor Place to Die:

- READ TWICE -

"There is no place in the general hospital for a dying patient. It is set up to get patients out of the hospital, to return them to good health ... The dying patient clutters up the place... In a general hospital, the dying patient - for whom everybody knows there is no hope - is the one the doctor visits last on his rounds. This is the patient the nursing staff finds it doesn't have the same opportunity to give a bed bath as the patient who had the appendectomy."

Ira Goldenberg, M.D.
Professor of Surgery
Yale School of Medicine

III. A FEAR OF DEATH IS A STRONG INDICATION OF A LACK OF FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES.

1. John Henry Jowett has well written:

"And yet I must die! Yes, but the old enemy shall now be my friend. He will not be my master, but my servant. He shall just be the porter, to open the door into my Father's house, into the

home of unspeakable blessedness and glory. Death shall not hurt me."

2. John 14:1-6: "In my Father's house are many mansions ... I go to prepare a place for you, . . .that where I am, there you may be also.

3. The Hebrew Writer speaks of God's Providential Care:

"Be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.' . . . For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come." (Heb. 13-5-14).

IV. THE GREATEST TRAGEDY IS NOT DYING, BUT A REFUSAL TO LIVE AND ENJOY LIFE.

1. "Life is only sweet if you can see a sunset or smell a flower."

2. We put off all of our "living" for tomorrow. Yet the Bible says TODAY.

3. It is not a matter of how long, but how well.

NOTE: Each of us must determine where his duty lies and pursue it tenaciously, and resolutely, at any price. There is a real source of contentment in the preparation for death.

EUTHANASIA - A MODERN ETHICAL DILEMMA

INTRODUCTION:

1. Euthanasia - The acting of inducing a quiet and easy death." Oxford Eng. Dict.)
2. From the Greek ea, and thanatos, means well or easy death or a means of inducing death or painlessly putting to death persons suffering from incurable or distressing disease.
3. Euthanasia is the mercy killing of a person, that is to say, the intentional and express termination of a life whose quality is such that it is not worth living. (Eike-Hemmer W. Kluge, in The Practice of Death).
4. Euthanasia may be grouped under three categories:
 - A. Eugenic mercy killing - where the patient is at birth hopelessly defective, incurably deranged, and so on.
 - B. Active medical euthanasia - where a drug is administered to hasten death.
 - C. Passive euthanasia - where treatment is withheld even though it might technically prolong "life".
 - (1) Passive euthanasia may consist of one of three forms:
 - (a) Administering pain-killers in lethal dosages.
 - (i) As the dosages of drugs must be constantly increased in order to have any effect, no doctor can be criticized if his patient's constitution cannot bear the increased dosage.
 - (b) Stopping treatment which is prolonging the patient's dying.
 - (i) Such as turning off respirators, "pulling the plug."
 - (c) Withholding treatment altogether.

(2) There is a distinction between voluntary and involuntary euthanasia.

(a) Voluntary - the adult wishes to have his life ended in order to save himself suffering.

(b) Involuntary - involves killing someone without his permission for reasons which those who commit the killing feel are merciful.

5. "When all usefulness is over, when one is assured of an imminent and unavoidable death, it is the simplest of human rights to choose a quick and easy death in place of a slow and horrible one. I have preferred chloroform to cancer."

6. Seneca in a most excellent dissertation on this subject wrote:

"Against all the injuries of life I have the refuge of death. If I can choose between a death of torture and one that is simple and easy, why should I not select the latter? As I choose the ship in which I sail and the house which I shall inhabit, so will I choose the death by which I leave life ... Why should I endure the agony of disease ... when I can emancipate myself from torments? ... I will not relinquish old age if it leaves my better part intact. But if it begins to shake my hand, if it destroys its faculties one by one, if it leaves me not life but breath, I will depart from the putrid or tottering edifice. If I know that I must suffer without hope of relief, I will depart not through fear of the pain itself but because it prevents all for which I would live."

7. Pliny described a poet who starved himself to death voluntarily:

"Bad health was the cause. He developed an incurable tumor, and wearying of it, he betook himself to death with irrevocable firmness."

8. On Kos, the island birthplace of Hippocrates, it was the custom of old men to drink the hemlock together.

I. ARGUMENTS COMMONLY USED AGAINST EUTHANASIA:

A. The Sixth Commandment says, "Thou shalt not kill."

→ MURDER

- B. Only God has the right to determine when life shall end.
- C. Human life is sacred and must not be taken by man.
- D. The Hippocratic Oath prohibits doctors from granting a request for euthanasia.

The clause in the Oath states:

"I will give no deadly drugs ... "

- E. There would always be the possibility of a mistaken diagnosis and judgment of incurability or remission.
- F. Future discoveries hold a promise of a cure just around the corner; a disease or condition considered incurable today may be curable tomorrow.
- G. The legalization of euthanasia would destroy the patient's confidence in his doctor. A patient would view his physician as an executioner instead of a healer.
- H. Many doctors oppose any euthanasia legislation.
- I. Very few would request euthanasia even if it were legal. Nobody wants to die.
- J. Patients racked with pain or suffering from a temporary mental depression might make impulsive and ill-considered requests for euthanasia.
- K. Most deaths are peaceful, and modern pain-relieving drugs make euthanasia unnecessary.
- L. Legalization would lead to abuse of the law and foul play.
- M. Legalization of voluntary euthanasia would be the opening wedge to state-imposed, compulsory euthanasia and Nazi-like elimination of all unwanted persons.
- N. The patient who had become a burden might feel pressure to sacrifice himself in consideration of others and request euthanasia.
- O. I believe in passive euthanasia but not in active euthanasia.
- P. I believe in voluntary euthanasia but not in involuntary euthanasia.

- Q. There would be borderline cases in which decisions would be difficult, and a law permitting euthanasia would result in making more problems than it would solve.
- R. Legalization of euthanasia would cause a general weakening of public and social morality and a demoralization of doctors.

II. THE HIGH COURT OF JAPAN IN 1963 HANDED DOWN SIX LEGAL CONDITIONS FOR EUTHANASIA:

1. The victim must be suffering from an illness not curable by modern medicine.
2. The victim must be suffering unbearable pain, obvious to any observer.
3. The purpose of the doctor must be the relief of pain.
4. The victim's consciousness must be clear and he or she must have seriously requested or approved the mercy killing.
5. Wherever possible, the means of inducing death must be administered by a physician.
6. The method of inducing death must be morally acceptable.

III. TECHNOLOGY HAS BEEN ABLE TO PROLONG DYING AND CAUSED A PRESENT DILEMMA.

"Technological progress has made it possible to maintain for a considerable time the appearance of life in a moribund or actually dead patient. The respirator can keep breathing going; the heart function can be similarly supported. Under such circumstances, however, as one doctor puts it: 'One is dealing not with a living human being, but with a functioning human heart-lung preparation.'"

A. A doctor at a large American clinic takes this position:

"There are too many instances in which patients are suffering excruciating pain, pleading for release, and clearly beyond saving, yet where they are kept alive indefinitely by means of tubes inserted into their stomachs, or into their veins, or into their rectums ... all ... agents available to us now can keep people suffering for many months."

Again:

CRUX
"Today when the dying develop pneumonia, which kills so restfully, they are given penicillin or some other antibiotic, should they have heart failure, they are put on a pacemaker or otherwise resuscitated. When they stop breathing, a respirator is called for. (Many terminal patients die in a tangle of glass jars, pipettes, tubes with needles in veins, mouth, nostrils, and bladder, and strung up on a cot with ropes, bars, pulleys, and weights, like some kind of barnyard animal ... His family can scarcely reach the dying patient through all this junk.) And isn't that what we want most at the close, our own families? Should we end in a tangle of wires and tubes, with our loved ones held back by the doctor-technicians?"

Again:

"In former times most people approached the end of life in the privacy of their homes with their family to attend them and with only a minimum of medicine to prolong life. Our big metropolitan hospitals have provided care and the alleviation for those in pain, but they have also made dying an undignified ordeal."

Again:

"One of the greatest comforts for the dying is to be left at home. General hospitals are unhappy places where house staff probe and test, where nurses, though not unkind, are indifferent, where in brief, the 'crock' is a second-class citizen. To be in one's own bed, to have quiet and good light, comfortable temperature, books, tasteful food and drink served at reasonable times, this is the final boon a family can give their loved one. It is sometimes impossible, but with the help of friends, visiting nurses, perhaps a night nurse, it can often be managed. Professional nursing is expensive but if costs must be considered, it can be balanced against the useless x-rays and laboratory procedures and the other extras one finds on hospital bills."

Again:

"Most people are not so lucky. Today people are dying more like manipulated objects rather than as masters of the fates. The doctors have become the technological masters. (When you enter their hospitals for the last time, it will be they who decide how and when you shall die, not you or your family.")

Again:

"The technology brought into play to cheat death staggers the imagination. Devices mechanical, chemical, and surgical are breathtaking in their array and scope. Who can deny their power? They intimidate by their very existence. And yet, interestingly enough, these gadgets actually hasten the death of the personality, that is, conscious decision and integrity, self-possession. A patient dominated by such technology, by the hospital, and by the entire medical profession is in no condition to take issue with them in weakened state. Terminal cases in sloppy slippers, robes, and pajamas are not in a position to upstage doctors. The patient is the object, not the prime mover in this situation. If he is poor or otherwise unimportant, he will be experimented upon. If he is well-to-do, he will be kept clinically and biologically "alive" long after he has become personally dead in every meaningful sense. Doctors have been known to keep patients 'alive' on a pacemaker for weeks - 'for teaching purposes'."

IV. THE LINE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH HAS BECOME BLURRED.

1. It is now possible to keep people 'alive' for many years though they are unconscious or in a coma. But even a short period of coma can result in very damaged mental faculties.

Some Relevant Questions:

- A. Is a man alive merely because his body creates wastes and his blood is circulating?
- B. Are reflexes, circulation, and respiration ends in themselves?
- C. Does the personality count for nothing?
 - (1) A List of "extraordinary support" methods:
 - (a) Artificial respirators to promote breathing.
 - (b) Heart massage, use of the pacemaker or other machines for stimulation of the heart muscle.
 - (c) Kidney machine to replace worn-out kidneys.

- (d) Transplant of vital organs.
- (e) Prolonged medication (i.e., to create favorable blood pressure).
- (f) Prolonged intravenous feeding.

V. **GROUND S FOR JUSTIFYING EUTHANASIA AND ITS LEGALIZATION:**

1. Compassion and plain common sense for today's world must be the basis of any consideration of euthanasia.
2. The right to die with dignity should be recognized as a basic human right.
3. Theologians, ethicists, physicians have expressed the conviction that euthanasia, both active and passive, is morally justified in certain circumstances.
4. What is morally right should be made legally permissible.

VI. **BIBLE PRINCIPLES DEALING WITH LIFE AND DEATH.**

1. Why Should Man Want to Live Long?
 - A. To gain time to accomplish something worthwhile.
 - B. To help those who need him.
 - C. To enjoy God's world.
 - D. To help better his society-world.
 - E. To help others get to heaven.
2. Should He be Forced to Suffer - To Become a Vegetable When He Can No Longer Do These Things?
3. God Is The Giver and Sustainer of Life.
 - A. Acts 17:25: "He gives to all life, breath ..."
Dan. 5:23: "He holds the breath of life in His hand ..."
4. The Longer One Lives the Body Continues to Decay With Pain and Discomfort.

- A. Ps. 90:10: "The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."
- B. Prov. 14:32: "The righteous man has hope in his death."
- C. Rev. 14:13: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."
- D. Ps. 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

TILL DEATH DO US PART

The widow of the late apologist Francis Schaeffer recounts his final days.

Fran came across the Atlantic Ocean from L'Abri, Switzerland, in December 1983 for cancer treatment at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. He was very ill, and the flight was a difficult one. On the way from the airport to the hospital, the doctors in the ambulance were reporting by walkie-talkie his pulse beat, blood pressure, and rate of breathing, all of which were rather alarming. When we finally got to the hospital, a doctor told me he doubted Fran would live through the night. I told him I would call upon God and ask him to be the one to make that judgment.

The next morning, Fran was better. He opened his eyes, and said to me, "Edith, would you be willing to buy a house near the hospital so I don't ever have to cross the ocean again, and so I could go home and have my things around me?" Of course I said I would, believing that was part of what I had promised in my marriage vows when I said, "For better or for worse . . . till death do us part."

That evening, I passed a home with a "For Sale" sign in the lawn, and within a week I was signing the papers. A month later, I was back at L'Abri, packing all the possessions of our married life into 269 boxes. It was another five weeks until those boxes reached Rochester. During that time, Fran was in and out of the hospital and on two speaking tours. He was only in the newly furnished house two days before he returned to the hospital for the last time.

On Easter Day, six doctors called me into a room, and the leading consultant said, "He is dying of cancer. Do you want him placed in intensive care on machines? Once a person is on machines, I would never pull the plug. I need to know what your viewpoint is."

Many thoughts went through my head. I had for years talked with my husband about the preciousness of life, of the fact that even five minutes can make a difference if something needs to be said or needs to be done. We did not believe in putting a chain around our necks with a living will, because doctors and ambulance aides can make terrible mistakes. They could find that little tag and push that person aside and take care of someone else, when the one with the living will could have lived for another five years if given oxygen at the right time.

But there is no point in simply prolonging death. It is a fine line; it is not an absolute one-two-three process. There are differences from person to person, and it requires great wisdom.

Based on these thoughts, I told the doctor, "My feeling right now is that above all things, Fran wants to be with me. I haven't left him at all. I believe when my husband leaves his body, he will be with the Lord. I don't want him to leave me until he's with the Lord. Therefore, I am sure he would want to go to the house he asked me to buy and be there for the time he has left."

The doctors got the most relieved looks on their faces. One of them said, "I just wish more people would do things this way. That's the best kind of care at this time. That's the most helpful thing."

Soon Fran was home, in a bed facing four big panels of glass looking out on a deck with grass around it and trees with the first leaves of spring. The L'Abri workers went out and bought pots of geraniums so there would be an instant garden all around the window. All the things Fran loved in Switzerland were around him, just as he asked.

Music flooded the room. One after another, we played his favorite records: Beethoven, Bach, Schubert, and Handel. Ten days later, on May 15, 1984, with the music of Handel's *Messiah* still in the air, Fran breathed his last breath.

THE END IS NOT THE END

(By C. Everett Koop, surgeon general of the United States)

My mother was 87 when she died of uterine cancer. She was in a coma, during which people actually asked me if I wanted to put her on dialysis. That would have been ridiculous for personal, spiritual, and economic reasons.

I do not believe -- and have never taught -- that every patient should be kept alive for the longest time possible. Nor have I said every patient has to have the last bit of high-tech heroic treatment available. I do believe in

the right of the patient to say, "I have lived my life," and to choose his or her own treatment. But that question becomes complicated when we consider the decisions people make for others who are not cognitive and have not made their final wishes known.

Right now, I am 70 years old and in excellent health. If my kidneys shut down tomorrow, let's say, after a severe infection, I don't know how long I would want to be on dialysis. It would be foolish and a waste of resources for me to have a kidney transplant at my age. I would probably opt to clean up my affairs, say goodbye to my family, and drift out in uremia.

The important point is that my wife and I know exactly how each of us feels about the end of life. This will be crucial if the time comes to make such a decision and I'm not then able to do so.

Of course, all such talk has different connotations for the Christian than for the non-Christian. My wife knows I do not believe in being ushered out of this life with a lethal injection. I want to hang around long enough to be sure my family is taken care of. But after that, I don't want my life prolonged in great discomfort when it is fruitless.

I don't look forward to the manner in which I am going to die. But I do not fear death. Indeed, the way in which we face death is a matter of faith. For the Christian, it is not the end.

Anticipating death:

How, then, might Christians approach life-threatening illness?

Early in the course of an illness, the patient, family, and doctor should talk about their attitudes regarding the appropriate extent of care. Then, when faced with a progressively downhill illness, doctors must give the patient and family their best assessment of the situation. (Families have the right to request this information.) It should include a discussion of what measures could be taken to sustain life, what the odds of success appear to be, and what that "success" might mean in terms of the patient's ability to function. Afterward, the doctor needs to render his or her advice: weighing the pros and cons, what he or she thinks should be done.

After giving this advice, the doctor must step back and let the family decide. If the choice is to pursue an aggressive treatment course, doctors must do their best to carry out these wishes. But if the family chooses to withhold potentially life-sustaining (or death-prolonging) measures, they can do so with the reassurance that the doctor has recommended this course as one he or she considers to be merciful and loving. The whole process must be entered into prayerfully.

Finally, we must accept the fact that, on rare occasions, assessments will be incorrect; a patient who has been judged to be irreversibly ill might rally in response to a do-everything-possible approach. However, this possibility must not prevent us from facing these decisions. For, if we indiscriminately use all of the life-sustaining modalities at our disposal, we also err by punishing the 99 patients whose process of inevitable death is merely prolonged, in order to extend the life of one.

The Christian community and Christian doctors are in a unique position to act because of our view that God is in control of life. Thus, our ultimate call is not always to cure disease, but rather to minister regardless of the outcome. Jesus himself did not heal all of the sick, but he set the powerful example of consistent compassion for their suffering. Our own personal walk with Christ and the support of the fellowship of believers can empower us to emulate His compassion rather than be driven by the technological imperative.

Concerning this, Dr. Felix Marti-Ibanez in "*A Doctor Looks at Death*" wrote:

It might help to dissipate our fear if we remember that, were we endowed with consciousness before birth, we would probably feel the same fear of the unknown when passing . . . into the light

One of the most helpful accounts of how a young Christian matron reacted to the harsh news of her swiftly approaching death was reported in the *Farm Journal*. Hazel Andre, the wife of a professor at Iowa State University, was only forty-two years of age when first she knew that time had run out. Immediately, as one prepares carefully for a long voyage, she set out to meet death as a friend and not to let it frighten her children. Her letters to her family were a comfort, and her messages to her friends were a benediction. As she walked up to the brink, she carried all her loved ones with her by sharing her courage, her faith, and her insights.

Because she shared her experience with her inner circle of loved ones, none of them was caught unawares. In addition, she herself found companionable understanding for her troubled thoughts which were difficult to express in words. But more than that, when she was gone, she remembered light of her courageous presence made other family circles brighter and even closer than they had been before. Of such a one an eminent medical editor wrote: "If a person accepts his death as an act of service to an ideal, or as the end of his life's work, it could be a blessing. It could be accepted more willingly if he knew that he had fulfilled his duty in life."

But it is not enough just to face death, for one could do that with defiance alone. It is necessary to *transcend* it with an application of one's

energies to a cause or service which will outlast the final deed. What this means in contemporary terms was evident in the devotion of the late Dr. Tom Dooley. Earlier he had captured the imagination of a post-war world with his passionate concern for the sick and desolate in Asia. But what inspired even deeper responsiveness toward his mission was the knowledge in the last year that he was running against the clock with the threat of an incurable cancer. Here again was one who found death to be no stranger before he was forty years of age and left a heritage of courage, as well as a name to galvanize compassion into fruitful action for years to come.

His life was similar to the affirmation of Paul, who said, "Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Tim. 4:8).

Thus the benediction of a good life is learning to die well during the active years. The fulfillment of one's earthly years is the adequate preparation of the spirit, in Jesus Christ, in order to be ready for the sudden translation to larger adventures ahead.

A TIME FOR

REFLECTION

ON OUR PAST LIVES

ON OUR PRESENT

ON OUR PATH TO ETERNITY

ON STANDING ON AND CLAIMING
GOD'S PROMISES

ON KNOWING THAT EVERY FAITHFUL
CHRISTIAN NEED NOT FEAR
DEATH

TO COUNT OUR BLESSINGS
AND
PRAISE GOD

For my Helen who has matched steps with me across one-fourth of the world. Who is keeping six children and their spouses, and nineteen grandchildren on the road to Heaven. LOVE IS STRONGER THAN DEATH.

LOVE: THROUGH TIME AND ETERNITY

But my love for you can never die.
Just as the sun once warmed our hearts,
Let this love touch you some night,
When I am gone,
And loneliness comes --
Before the dawn begins to scatter
Your dreams away.

Summer, and I never knew a bird
Could sing so sweet and clear,
Until they told me I must leave you
For a while.
I never knew the sky could be so deep a blue,
Until I knew I could not grow old with you.
But better to be loved by you,
Than to have lived a million summers,
And never known your love.
Together, let us, you and I
Remember the days and nights,
For eternity.

Fall, and the earth begins to die,
And leaves turn golden brown upon the trees.
Remember me, too, in autumn, for I will walk with you,
As of old, along a city sidewalk at even-time,
Though I cannot hold you by the hand.

Winter, and perhaps someday there may be
Another fireplace, another room,
With crackling fire and fragrant smoke,
And turning, suddenly, we will be together,
And I will hear your laughter and touch your face,
And hold you close to me again.
But, until then, if loneliness should seek you out,
Some winter night, when snow is falling down,
Remember, though death has come to me,
Love will never go away!

When Death bids us say *Farewell!* to those we love, it is comforting to know that the separation is only for a little. A blissful reunion awaits all who are the Lord's on yon heavenly shore. There are no "Good-byes" in Heaven. (2 Sam. 12:23; Thess. 4:13-18).

At the funeral of Dr. John Mason Neale, of whom Archbishop Trench said, "He is the most profoundly learned hymnologist of our Church", his friends sang a special favorite of his, the first verse of which reads:

Safe home, safe home, in port!
Rent cordage, shattered deck,
Torn sails, provisions short,
And only not a wreck;
But oh! The joy upon the shore,
To tell our voyage--perils o'er!

A friend said to the renowned preacher, Frederick Denison Maurice, as he came to die, "You have preached your last sermon." "Aye," he replied, "but only my last sermon in this life." As John Newton neared his end, he said, "I am still in the land of the dying; I shall be in the land of the living soon." The dying words of the famous Earl Shaftesbury were, "I am touching the Hem of His garment." When Thomas Fuller, the English divine, came to his last moments he said to his nephew, James Cuthbert: "Good-night, James -- but it will soon be morning!" In her extreme old age, Anna L. Barbauld wrote the following stanza, which the poet Rogers regarded as one of the finest verses in English literature. Henry Crabb Robinson repeated it to Wordsworth and heard him say: "I am not in the habit of grudging people their good things, but I wish I had written those lines." Here they are:

Life! We have been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather,
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear,
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear.

The Gathering of the Elect.

The expressions are often used of those who died "gathered to his people," "gathered to his fathers." At the death of the patriarch Abraham, it is said that, "he was gathered to his people." (Gen. 25:8). Such a phrase does not mean that he was buried in the grave containing the dead bodies of his relatives but that he was reunited with them in Paradise. Abraham was buried in the lonely grave in the Cave of Machpelah, a great distance from the Ur of the Chaldees, where his people lay buried. Therefore, being "gathered to his people" means that he rejoined the spirits of his kindred in Eternity. When our Lord used the illustration of a homely gathering, "And

shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," He suggested recognition, as well as a pleasant welcome and communion, in the unseen world.

When a dear one crosses the barrier and heart and home are left vacant, then we pause to think where we are going rather than where we are, and interest is awakened in what has happened to the one "we loved and lost awhile." Many questions clamour for an answer. Where has our beloved one gone? What is he or she doing? Can the precious dead see and hear us? Are consciousness and memory retained? The question George MacDonald asked is one we all ask when we face the overwhelming experience of loss and sorrow:

Traveller, what lies over the hill?
Traveller, tell to me;
I am only a child -- from the window-sill,
Over I cannot see.

Carlyle wrote: "What have we to do with old age? Our existence looks to me, more than ever, *initial*. We have come to see the ground and look at our materials and tools. Man serves his apprenticeship here for a noble vocation hereafter." Praise God! We have not been left as derelicts upon the ocean of uncertainty, because His Word has given us abundant proof of the truth that upon every pale bosom of those who walked with Him amid the shadows of earth, we can lay the unwithering rose of Immortality -- *Absent from the body -- Present, or At Home, with the Lord.*

Commenting upon Paul's phrase about being, "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6-9), that saintly scholar the late Bishop Handley Moule says:

"The Heaven beyond death is Home. It is not only rest or refuge: it is nothing less than Home. And Home is more than a place of safety or of repose. It is the scene where our whole being is in sweet and vivid harmony with surroundings. To enter the unseen state, the Christian is not to totter out into the cold and void. It is to "get Home." The Home will be indeed a circle of blessed fellowship, a place of inconceivable interchange of love and joy among its inhabitants. But the supreme bliss of it which will always spring up through everything else, and be first in everything, is this -- we shall have 'got Home to the Lord'."

Give a man all of the world he asks for, and he is yet unsatisfied. He feels and knows that his nature is too large for this present scene of existence as Browning expresses it in *Pauline*:

I cannot chain my soul; it will not rest
In its clay prison, this most narrow sphere.
It has strange powers, and feelings, and desires
Which I cannot account for nor explain,
But which I stifle not, being bound to trust
All feelings equally, to hear all sides.
Yet I cannot indulge them, and they live,
Referring to some state of like unknown.

Thus, the friends of Martin Luther who were with him at his end relate that he uttered a final prayer, in which he said: "O my heavenly Father, the one God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou God of all comfort, I thank thee that thou hast revealed to me thy dear Son Jesus Christ, in whom I believe, whom I have preached and confessed, whom I have loved and adored. I beseech thee, my Lord Jesus Christ, let my soul be commended to thee. O heavenly Father, though I must now leave this body and be taken from this life, still I know with assurance that I shall abide with thee eternally, and no one can pluck me out of thy hands."

Do you know how it feels
As one is dying?
Can you relate to someone
Who is crying?
Look at the person
Who depends on you
Who needs your strength
And compassion too.

A person who's now so ill
His life may soon be gone;
He needs your help; ease his pain
As he lingers on;
He needs stamina and courage
To fight his fight,
Perhaps may not make it
Through the long night.

Do what you can for him each day
You know he is trying,
And he looks at the unknown.
He knows he is dying.
He wants so much to live
To him it is unfair;
Let him know you're nearby.
Let him know you care.

AT DEATH EVERY PERSON WHO HAS EVER LIVED
WILL EXIST SOMEWHERE FOREVER AND EVER.

“Ships are safe in the harbor, but that is not what ships are for.”

If man is to live on throughout an unending eternity, then preparing for that eternity is the most important endeavor in which he can engage.

“For all our days have passed away in Your wrath;
We finish our years like a sigh.
The days of our lives are seventy years;
and if by reason of strength they are eighty years,
yet their boast is only labor and sorrow;
for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
Who knows the power of Your anger?
For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath.
So teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Psalm 90:9-12.

After death, there is no more opportunity, no chance to do differently, but only the judgment. It is bad enough so far as this world is concerned that everything is broken off, but after death we come into the presence of One who knows us altogether. There we can expect to see our unfinished business. We shrink back to think of how many things there will be that we have not done. That will be harvest time, and in a very real and sobering sense, the moment of truth. That will be the exposure of our life as it is; it will be meeting the Judge.

The following comments after several deaths, all within a two-week period:

“Sooner or later God is going to get you.”

“God will get you in the end.”

“God had numbered his days, and when they ran out, God took him.”

“I don’t understand why he had to die, but God doesn’t make mistakes.”

“God must have needed another bud for His rose garden.”

(Wouldn't it be interesting to hear the biblical proof text for that one?)

“You never know when the Lord's gonna snatch you from this old world, do you?”

“God knows best. He won't put more on you than you can bear.”

Many seem convinced that God *takes* every life. They leave no room for evil actions of another, for chance, for disease, for personal negligence, for health-destroying behavior.

The five “stages of dying” formulated and described in detail by Dr. Ross in her book, *On Death and Dying*, can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. **Denial** -- “No, not me.” This is a typical reaction when a patient learns that he or she is terminally ill. Denial, says Dr. Ross, is important and necessary. It helps cushion the impact of the patient's awareness that death is inevitable.

2. **Rage and anger** -- “Why me?” The patient resents the fact that others will remain healthy and alive while he or she must die. God is a special target for anger, since He is regarded as imposing, arbitrarily, the death sentence. To those who are shocked at her claim that such anger is not only permissible but inevitable, Dr. Ross replies succinctly, “God can take it.”

3. **Bargaining** -- “Yes me, but . . .” Patients accept the fact of death but strike bargains for more time. Mostly they bargain with God -- “even among people who never talked with God before.” They promise to be good or to do something in exchange for another week or month or year of life. Notes Dr. Ross: “What they promise is totally irrelevant, because they don't keep their promises anyway.”

4. **Depression**-- “Yes, me.” First, the person mourns past losses, things not done, wrongs committed. But then he or she enters a state of “preparatory grief,” getting ready for the arrival of death. The patient grows quiet, doesn't want visitors. “When a dying patient doesn't want to see you anymore,” says Dr. Ross, “this is a sign he has finished his unfinished business with you, and it is a blessing. He can now let go peacefully.”

5. **Acceptance** -- “My time is very close now and it's all right.” Dr. Ross describes this final stage as “not a happy stage, but neither is it unhappy. It's devoid of feelings but it's not resignation, it's really a victory.”

These stages provide a very useful guide to understanding the different phases that dying patients may go through. They are not absolute; not everyone goes through every stage, in this exact sequence, at some predictable pace. But this paradigm can, if used in a flexible, insight-producing way, be a valuable tool in understanding why a patient may be behaving as he does.

TO ALL PARENTS

“I’ll lend you for a little time a child of mine,” He said.
“For you to love him while he lives and mourn for when he’s dead.
It may be six or seven years, or twenty-two or three,
But will you, till I call him back, take care of him for Me?
He’ll bring his charms to gladden you, and should his stay be brief,
You’ll have his lovely memories as solace for your grief.
I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return.
But there are lessons taught down there I want this child to learn.
I’ve looked the wide world over in my search for teachers true,
And from the throngs that crowd life’s lanes I have selected you.
Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labor vain,
Nor hate Me when I come to call and take him back again?”

“I fancied that I heard them say, ‘Dear Lord, Thy will be done!
For all the joy Thy child shall bring, the risk of grief we’ll run.
We’ll shelter him with tenderness, we’ll love him while we may.
And for the happiness we’ve known, forever grateful stay;
But should the angels call for him much sooner than we’ve planned
We’ll brave the bitter grief that comes and try to understand.”

JESUS, SAVIOUR, PILOT ME

Jesus, Saviour, pilot me
Over life’s tempestuous sea,
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treach’rous shoal;
Chart and compass came from Thee:
Jesus, Saviour, pilot me.

As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boist’rous waves obey Thy will
When Thou say’st to them, “Be still,”
Wond’rous Sov’ reign of the sea,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

When at last I near the shore,
And the fearful breakers roar
‘Twixt me and the peaceful rest,

Then, while leaning on Thy breast,
May I hear Thee say to me,
“Fear not, I will pilot thee.”
--Edward Hopper

“As a fond mother, when the day is o’er
Leads by the hand her little child to bed
Half willing, half reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door
Nor wholly reassured nor comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which though more splendid, may not please him more;
So nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the Unknown transcends the what we know.
--Longfellow, *Nature*

Again, these lines often comfort me:

For ever with the Lord!
Amen; so let it be;
Life from the dead is in that word,
‘Tis immortality.
Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent,
A day’s march nearer home.

I am sure many of us have been greatly blessed when we read these words of Alfred Lord Tennyson:

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me,
And may there be no moaning at the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound or foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,

And after that the dark.
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark.

For though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far;
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.

Here is a hymn that for many years I have called one of my favorites:

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!

I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
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.
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee

--
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

Eccl. 12:1-6: "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them": While the sun and the light, the moon and the stars, are not darkened, and the clouds do not return after the rain; in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow down; when the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look through the windows grow dim; when the doors are shut in the streets, and the sound of grinding is low; when one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of music are brought low. Also they are afraid of height, and of terrors in the way; when the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper is a

burden, and desire fails. For man goes to his eternal home and the mourners go about the streets. Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the well.”

Ps. 90:10: “The days of our lives are seventy years; and if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

Ps. 39:4-7: “Lord, make me to know my end, and what is the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am. Indeed, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my age is as nothing before You; certainly every man at his best state is but vapor. Surely every man walks about like a shadow; surely they busy themselves in vain; he heaps up riches, and does not know who will gather them. And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.”

Ps. 103:15-18: “As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.”

Job 21:23-26: “One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and secure; his pails are full of milk, and the marrow of his bones is moist. Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul, never having eaten with pleasure. They lie down alike in the dust, and worms cover them.”

Ecc. 9:11-12: “I returned and saw under the sun that --

The race is not to the swift,
Nor the battle to the strong,
Nor bread to the wise,
Nor riches to men of understanding,
Nor favor to men of skill;
But time and chance happen to them all,
For man also does not know his time;
Like fish taken in a cruel net,
Like birds caught in a snare,
So the sons of men are snared in an evil time,
When it falls suddenly upon them.”

Dan. 12:1-3: “At that time Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that time. And at that time your people shall be delivered, every one who is found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall

awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.”

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
and one clear call for me!
And may there be no mourning of the bar,
when I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
and after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
when I embark.

For tho' from out our borne of time and place
the flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
when I have crossed the bar.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

LEAD, KINDLY LIGHT

Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
 Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
 I am the captain of my soul.

(William E. Henley)

2. **What Fate Are You Planning for Yourself This Day - The Decision Is Yours.**