

Monergism

THE HAPPINESS OF A QUIET MIND

BOTH IN YOUTH AND OLD AGE WITH THE WAY TO ATTAIN IT

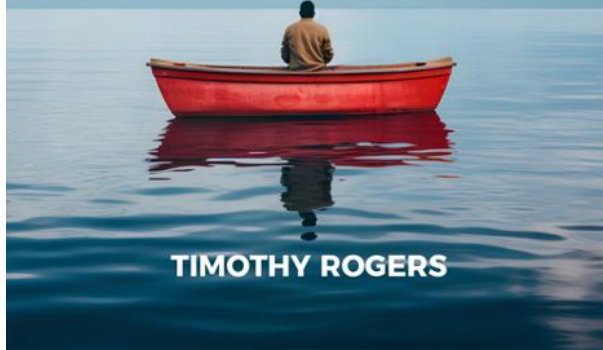


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In a DISCOURSE occasioned by the Death of Mrs. Martha
Hasselborn, who died on March 13th, 1695/6, in the 95th year of her
Age.

By TIMOTHY ROGERS, M.A.

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Table of Contents

[THE Epistle Dedicatory.](#)

[The Happiness of a Quiet Mind](#)

[Exhortations to those who have patiently waited on God, even in old
age.](#)

[The more general use.](#)

The Epistle Dedicatory.

TO Mr. Jacob Hasselborn, Merchant.

There is nothing that people are more prone to value themselves upon than being descended from great and honourable persons who either had noble blood flowing in their veins or had distinguished themselves through a series of heroic actions for the good of their country. In doing so, they pass their names down to posterity, adorned with the laurels they coveted for glory. However, many who are thus descended tarnish the memory of their ancestors and, to the best of their ability, cause all their achievements to wither away by living their lives according to their own whims and the corrupt examples of a depraved age.

But you have the honour of being related to someone who was on Earth connected to the family of Heaven. Your dear mother, after enduring the trials of her weary journey with unwavering patience, has finally arrived at her most cherished home, where she longed to be.

I have no doubt that the memory of her is a great source of strength to you in your Christian journey. Such an example of goodness, so genuine and sincere, as it continually shines before your eyes, provides you with both guidance and the fortitude to follow her in the same joyful path she walked. Reflecting frequently on the sanctity of her life will be a powerful incentive for you to emulate her in every commendable and praiseworthy aspect. Contemplating her

faith, meekness, and patience will enable you to flourish in these same virtues, just as young painters improve their skills by frequently copying old and excellent originals. In your pious mother, you have witnessed living religion exemplified—a tranquil mind, not as it is presented in the coldness of precepts, but as it is warmed and animated by the blessed Spirit, patiently enduring until the end of a long life. Such patience is to be admired but cannot be fully described, for no colours can be gentle enough to depict this admirable grace.

St. Paul rejoiced in his beloved Timothy and expressed great delight in the thought of someone who had very good parents and was virtuous himself. He said, "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded in thee also, wherefore I put thee in remembrance, &c." I hope that the pure and unwavering faith that was in your mother has passed on to you, not through the propagation of blood, but of spirit; not through nature, but through grace. My heartfelt prayer is that you and your loved ones may meet her and all the blessed saints with comfort on the Great Day, living together in a place where there will be no sin, pain, or old age, but instead, eternal holiness, spring, and youth. There, our present weaknesses shall be replaced by strength. This is the sincere wish of

Your true friend and servant, T. Rogers.

The Happiness of a Quiet Mind

I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. - Psalm 40:1

As of all the ages of the life of man, infancy is the most innocent, childhood the most vain, and youth the most brisk and daring; so old age is the most clogged with pains and miseries. In other stages of our journey, we are occasionally troubled by trouble and calamity, sickness, and declines in strength. However, this last part of our pilgrimage, this feeble part of life, is itself a disease. It is so weak that generally, the powers of the soul, as well as the members of the body, lack the liveliness and vigour they had in their younger years. The evening is much cloudier and more tempestuous, darker and more frightful than the morning of their days. Yet there are blessed souls that flourish even in winter; neither the sharpness of the weather nor the discomfort of the season hinders their being evergreen. Such a one was David, who was musically inclined throughout his life, with a harmonious heavenly temperament. In his delightful angelic melodies, he often ascended to heaven, and finally, with praise, he took flight there to transform his hymns into sweeter hallelujahs (1 Chronicles 29:10). He blessed the Lord before all the congregation (verse 20). He said to all the congregation, "Now bless the Lord" (verse 28). He died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour.

Similarly, old Jacob, when the declines in strength and the weakness of his age did not allow him to be long in his devotions, used the easier intervals of his illness to seek God (Genesis 49:18). His expression was brief, but his faith and patience were profound. Moses prepared his soul for the joys of heaven by tuning his harp below, singing before he died (Deuteronomy 32). Before his death, he blessed the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 33). Afterward, he ascended the mountain and shed his mortal coil to be clothed in life and immortality (Deuteronomy 34:5).

Good old Simeon, who had a promise that he would not depart until he had seen the Lord's Christ, did not shy away from the glorious sight, even though he knew that he would soon die. He came by the Spirit into the temple and met the Child Jesus, whom he had longed to see for many years. Having seen the blessed babe, he took Him up in his arms and was filled with joy, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation" (Luke 2:27, 28).

I could also mention the example of Paul the Aged, who was then in chains and near execution under the tyrant Nero. Despite serving for several years under Christ's banner and facing the cruelties of his imprisonment and the prospect of death, age did not diminish his hope in God. On the contrary, his hope had matured into assurance when he said, "I have fought the good fight," speaking as though he were in Paradise, with the crown of glory already on his head.

To all these examples, I may add the daughter of Abraham, for whom I preach this funeral sermon. She served God with hopeful cheer for many years and faced the advances of death and the decline of her age with remarkable calmness, resignation, and unwavering faith and hope. She died at nearly a hundred years old, like a ripe fruit dropping from the tree. Her soul had no clouds or darkness; it remained calm and serene. She lived in joy and died in light, setting like the sun in beams. A significant factor contributing to the pleasure of her life and the serenity of her death was the tranquillity and stillness of her soul, frequently using this very passage from the holy prophet: "I waited patiently for the Lord." From these words, I observe,

First, it is not beneath the greatest and most honourable persons to wait on God. The grandeur of a king is no barrier to their dutiful

attendance on their Maker. The crowns of those princes shine with the highest lustre when they are laid at the feet of God. Those who honour Him will be honoured by Him. The angels, who serve as the courtiers and nobility of heaven, maintain their constant reverence and acknowledge their distance. Despite occupying the highest rank among creatures, they always remember their creaturely status. While they marvel at the glory of the Divine Majesty, they recognize that it is beyond their comprehension. They do not sit upon the throne but instead maintain postures filled with reverence as they attend to their duties around it. Even in their highest ecstasies, they remain very humble and cover their faces when they cry to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory" (Isaiah 6:3).

Secondly, when affliction or trouble befalls us, it is our most becoming and advantageous duty to patiently wait upon God and pray for His relief and assistance.

I. What is implied in this patient waiting?

II. What obligations do we have to it?

III. The Application.

First, patient waiting includes a complete and willing submission to the will of God regarding the nature and duration of our trouble. We accept that it comes and stays as long as He pleases. A waiting Christian regards it as the hand of their Father and is not frightened by the most bitter cup. They are not swept away by violent passions, murmuring, or uneasy thoughts. The divine wisdom, which knows when and how to provide deliverance, leads to the most refreshing acquiescence. There is no haste or impatience; neither speech nor actions betray any signs of turmoil (Isaiah 30:18). When the storms

rage, they remain calm. In all the ups and downs of providence, through changes in health and life, they maintain inner peace. There is no bitterness, no thorns, no canker in their soul. They leave the timing of their deliverance to their all-wise Creator and wait quietly until it arrives. They do not complain or find fault with the weight of the cross or the gradual approach of help. They understand that uneasiness and displeasure with the ways of the Most High are the marks of a fallen angel, not the characteristics of a saint.

Secondly, this patient waiting upon God is accompanied by faith and hope. There is faith regarding the reality of the good to come and hope concerning the timely fulfillment of the promises upon which one relies. "What wait I for, my hope is in thee" (Psalm 39). Hope is the lively source of action; it infuses life and spirit into the feeble and the most humble. Conversely, despair cramps, freezes, and enervates all the powers of the soul. It reflects on the goodness and mercy of God and makes us sink into the lowest depths under its crushing weight. It swells our sorrows, turning our sighs into roars and our tears into seas of grief. In contrast, the one who patiently waits knows that after the darkest night and the most tempestuous storms, the sun will rise again to bring reviving help. Such a person understands that celestial comforts are often found alongside the most doleful fears. Sometimes the howling wilderness is the path to Canaan, and the waters may be troubled just before the healing moment arrives. The surface of the pool was not as smooth when the charitable angel descended, but it became more useful and medicinal. No season was more gloomy than when our Saviour was on the cross, yet no season was marked by more glorious events. It was a dark night when He suffered, but it was a glorious day when He rose again. Those who patiently wait remember that the Church has been dearest to God and most fruitful in good works when tossed by storms. It has flourished most when the devil and his angels have

sought to suppress it. They wait for help as those who watch for the morning, looking and hoping for the dawning of the day, watching for the first streaks of rising light and rejoicing when it appears (Psalm 130:6).

Thirdly, this patient waiting upon God is accompanied by earnest desires and prayers for His merciful appearance. "I waited and I cried unto the Lord, O for that sweet and pleasant hour when I shall be saved! That the time to favour me, even the set time, were come! O that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away from the windy storm and tempest! O Lord, behold my distressed case, oh send me some help for thy mercy's sake. Remember my weakness and your own promise. Hear my groans and perform the word on which you have caused me to hope. Do not cast out my prayer, do not allow me to perish in my low estate." All this earnestness is submissive, full of resignation and tranquillity. The sick often desire to die from weariness and pain, but a good Christian shows that he is ready to depart while being willing to stay until God bids him go. He waits for Christ with a longing, craving eye, as one waits for a dear friend from a distant country. He bears Christ's absence with patience but would be very glad to see Him come. Heaven is welcome to such a panting soul as the port is to one who has been frightened and endangered by storms. Such a person, when confined by trouble, longs for release but will not break free on their own. They wait until the hand that bound them shall break their bands asunder, remembering that God is as jealous of His word when promising favours to His children as when threatening punishment to His obstinate and hardened enemies. The desires of those in distress are most earnest and importunate. When Peter was on the verge of sinking, we can imagine that he cried out with all his strength, "Master, save me" (Matthew 14:30). Our Saviour, in the days of His flesh, used strong cries, and the prayers of the mariners in Jonah

were as loud as the storms. These prayers were not more tumultuous than they were heartfelt. People who are on the brink of drowning have no time for formality; their danger overwhelms all other thoughts except those related to their immediate circumstances.

Fourthly, this patient waiting guides the tranquil soul in such a way that it refrains from unjust reflections on the instruments or immediate causes of trouble. When sick, the patient Christian does not rail against the physician for not providing relief but instead considers that even the wisdom of the wisest and the skill of the most skilled may not always be effective. When plundered, they do not condemn the vile agents of their misfortune but lament their own sins that provoke God to unleash lions and bears upon them. When the Sabeans and Chaldeans had spoiled Job, he calmly said, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken" (Job 1:21). A composed Christian, falsely accused of things abhorrent to their soul and seeing the hand of the Devil at work using weak and malicious people as agents to spread lies, pities their cruel malice. In contempt of these mean tactics of hell, they say, "The Lord that has chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee." Or when they hear a Shimei railing—some take delight in railing, being a generation of vipers with poison and stings in their constitution—they simply say, "It may be the Lord has bid them Curse us" (Psalm 37:7). When others plant thorns and briars to vex them, they do not torture and distress themselves. When wounded, they do not enrage and multiply the wounds. Such a Christian remains calm and tranquil in every state. They understand that God is the author of all good and the ruler of evil. All their diseases have their commission from Him as the God of nature, and all inward troubles are under His direction as the Father of spirits. In both cases, He is gracious and merciful.

Fifthly, patient waiting upon God implies that a person does not resort to unlawful methods to rid themselves of trouble. If we employ sinful means to escape from affliction, it demonstrates depleted patience and weakness. It reflects severe unbelief in both the power and goodness of God, as if He were either unable or unwilling to help us. If we no longer experience the presence of our Saviour as before, we must not, like Saul, seek out the witch of Endor or believe that the Devil can aid us when God has withdrawn. In all troubles, we may use all lawful means of escape that we can, provided they are consistent with the wisdom of a person and the innocence of a Christian. We are to wait on the Lord and walk in His way. Just as a handmaid's eyes are fixed on her mistress, ready with patient attention to know and do her bidding, our eyes must similarly be fixed on heaven with dutiful regard. The precepts of the Gospel, in all these cases, stand in stark contrast to the maxims of Stoic philosophy, which allowed its wise men to end their own lives when they found their pain and grief too numerous and insupportable. This approach, as some have observed, exposed the falseness of their patience and contradicted other opinions within the same philosophy, which claimed that no grief, however intense, could overwhelm a wise man. Zeno, the renowned founder of their sect, even strangled himself. A patient waiter on God must refrain from anything that shortens or destroys their own life, whether through excess, drunkenness, intemperance, or any other wicked action.

Sixthly, patient waiting on God encompasses a constant perseverance in all good duties until relief and mercy arrive. We must wait during the sweetness of spring and the rigours of winter, in ease and in pain, during prosperity and unexpected sad events. We must begin to wait in youth and not cease until old age blankets us with snow (Job 14:14). Just as a sentinel maintains their post until relieved, if help does not come this hour or moment, it may come the

next. We will never be ashamed of our hope; even if afflictions closely besiege us, our Saviour will come to our aid in due time and reward our courage and fidelity (Exodus 14:13).

The husbandman eagerly anticipates the precious fruit of the earth, even when faced with unseasonable weather and harsh seasons. Nothing diminishes his hope of a harvest; he knows the joyful day will surely come. He does not idle at home when the season invites him to sow his seed. He rouses himself, summons his servants, and earnestly gets to work. He is undeterred by stormy days or the sun not shining or the wind not blowing as he wishes (Ecclesiastes 11:4). However, many make excuses to evade their duty and delay it. It's too hot or too cold, too early or too late to start working. Many refuse to be good because the days are bad, and they won't travel for fear of rain. Yet that rain they fear might lay the dust, and the affliction they encounter on the road might free them from the burdensome cares that otherwise cloud their judgment.

Let us be cautious lest the patience of the husbandman condemn our peevishness and our hasty impatience. If we don't receive immediate help, we often think we are undone. Yet the patient son of Adam, after ploughing and sowing, does not concern himself further but leaves the rest to the influence of heaven and the God of nature. He quietly awaits the harvest and the rain that nourishes the crops. He does not cut it down when it first sprouts but waits until it is fully ripe. Similarly, Christians in darkness should remember that "light is sown for the righteous" (Psalm 97:11). Let us not desire to reap before the appointed time and not futilely strive to hasten the months of harvest (Jeremiah 5:24). We will reap in due time, and our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. We may find much work to do before the harvest arrives. A Christian knows that if no

salvation from trouble comes in this world, death will set them free, and the long hours of pain will cease forever.

Waiting is indeed challenging and grievous to flesh and blood, but it aligns with the brightness of our faith and the greatness of our hopes. What is this brief life compared to eternity? Saints like Simeon, Jacob, and others who waited are now at rest, enjoying their blessed hopes. Long waiting upon God demonstrates uncommon courage and profound humility. Being impatient and uneasy because we are not delivered exactly when and how we desire reveals an inflated opinion of ourselves. If we were less proud, we would be more patient. Reflecting on what we truly deserve, we would not murmur at the burdens placed upon us (1 Samuel 13:11). The hastiness of Saul led to his downfall; he could not wait and rebelled. Acting as if bewitched, he rebelled against God, which is akin to witchcraft. However, patiently waiting until the One who sends trouble deems it fit to remove it reflects a truly Christian disposition and demonstrates a subdued and resigned will.

Secondly, we are to consider the reasons that should oblige us to this patient waiting.

Reason 1: We should patiently wait on God because our many miseries and sorrows call for such a frame of soul. The thorns in our flesh, the troubles of our minds, our pains, and our fears all call for it. Our voyage to Heaven may prove very stormy, and through this patience, we can escape shipwreck and not be left to the mercy of the waves. Instead, we will have a wise Pilot to steer us and a sure Anchor within the veil.

God may allow the Devil to vex us, and an Angel of Satan may buffet us, torturing and distressing us sorely, even if he does not have permission to kill us. The roaring of the lion makes the beast

tremble, though they are not within his devouring jaws. The Devil is often instrumental in bringing sickness and pain upon us. The worst of men serve as common executioners, and the basest of spirits may bring judgments. Besides, God will have no creature be useless; even storms, vapours, lightning, and thunder fulfil His will.

But by our patient hope in God, the malice of the Devil will be turned to good. His buffeting will teach us the need we have of Christ and make us watchful and full of gentleness and pity to those he falls upon. When we escape, our hearts will yearn over them. This waiting upon God will reconcile us to the most painful and the sharpest methods of His providence. It disappoints the Devil, who would have us torment our own souls when the hand of God smites us. He will be disappointed if we are not fretful even if we are diseased. Through patient waiting, we extract the sting from troubles, conquer sin that would embitter all our comforts, rob us of our peace and hope, make God our enemy, and render every frown of His more frightful and astonishing than the united threats of men. Every touch of His hand is heavier than their combined strength, and one drop of His anger will overwhelm us more than the floods of many waters.

Innumerable evils in this life will assault us as both men and Christians, and therefore we have need of patience. Patience is required to steer a right course to Heaven, for we shall encounter many rough and contrary winds blowing from every quarter. Only through this quiet waiting shall we be happy, with no tempest within even if there are storms abroad.

We need patience because we may face many tribulations that will shake our confidence, put our strongest faith to a sharp trial, and make the bruised reed bend, though it does not break. If we have many years of smiling, shining light, the days of darkness will

eventually come, and the shadows of the evening will be stretched out. Youth knows little sorrow, but it weighs heavily on decaying age. A thousand miseries crowd upon old folks, and after all these, the shadowy veil and bitter death await.

When we stand on the shore and view the blustering winds and rough seas we are to encounter, we certainly need a great deal of patience, waiting, and prayer. Our great afflictions will not be well borne with a little grace; fiery trials will consume us if we are not fortified before being thrown into the furnace. We need a vast treasure of grace when we consider the pain we may live to feel and the stinging troubles and provocations we may encounter.

Reason 2: We should patiently wait upon God because, through our most painful troubles, He designs our welfare. If we do not fail ourselves in making proper use of our crosses, we may reap unspeakable advantages. The ruggedness of adversity may be more useful to us than all the smoothness of our most unclouded and easy days. Our souls may thrive with the fairest and most lasting qualities.

In the midst of our overflowing afflictions, we are like those at sea (Psalm 107:24). We see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. A thousand strange things are discovered to those in the midst of the gaping waves, which are not seen by those on the land. They witness the wonders of His power in their support and the wonders of His wisdom in finding ways to save them amid danger.

We should particularly wait on God in all our sickness, for it is then that He teaches us to know ourselves—our weakness, ignorance, and the folly of our careless, unthinking health. He teaches us to see that we, and others in our best state, are altogether vanity. The sharpness of our pains makes the instructions given by the rod more memorable and lasting. We cannot easily forget the terrible

consequences of sin, which cause our bodies to pine and our souls to droop.

Our deep and lasting troubles teach us to see that none of our fellow creatures, even in the height of their grandeur and prosperity, should be the objects of our envy. In one moment, they may be as low as we are. Those who have been scorched with fiery trials must pity those poor souls who have been singed in the flames. We should not be uneasy or grieved at the cross, for our pain will soon pass, and our past pain gives a mighty relish to our present ease. We may hope that in the midst of the sorrows God sends, He will give us the most refreshing discoveries of His love and, through the inconveniences that seize our bodies, remedy and abolish the far greater disorders of our souls, such as unbelief, ignorance, self-conceit, vain glory, and an excessive admiration of the world.

No books or preachers can teach us what our own painful feelings and sensations can. A few days of sickness can bring a mighty alteration in all our thoughts and apprehensions. By this, we judge all things in a different and truer light. We look upon this alluring world with different eyes than before. All its paint and varnish do not change its bewitching quality, and after having seen it at the borders of the grave, we cannot think it beautiful or be infatuated with it. Such a discovery we then make of ourselves and our own evil hearts as we never had before. We could not have imagined that our faith had been so weak until the storms came and made us tremble. While we are in a calm, on the quiet shore, we do not truly know our weakness. But when we put out to sea, lose sight of land, and the wind and waves roar around us, then we are amazed and astonished.

All the medicinal strokes of God to His servants are the product of His love. He could remove all their burdens in one moment, but He

sees that their faith and patience in the midst of troubles are beneficial to themselves and others. Without some of the calmness in their souls, this world would be a region of blasphemous discontent in their afflictions. His people develop a deeper love for Christ and receive new manifestations of His faithfulness and wisdom in His guidance.

Reason 3: This calm waiting upon God makes us, in all sickness, pain, and trouble, easy to ourselves and others. It enables us to possess our souls in patience. Being fretful, peevish, and quarrelsome about our burdens only makes them more burdensome, splitting one cross into a thousand. It fills our bitter cup and causes what was previously only half full to overflow with gall and wormwood. A sour, uneasy temper of mind prevents us from finding rest in any posture, and no cushion will be soft enough for us when we crown our heads with thorns. An uneasy disquietness of spirit approaches the tormenting fury of the damned. Hell is a place of horrible rage and discontent, where they are constantly angry at God and themselves, perpetually consumed by flaming thoughts.

However, a patient soul is like the Milky Way, with no clouds obscuring the brightness of its grace. It shines with a multitude of graces combined. Its innocent sense of grief and expressions of affliction fall gently, like the drops of dew in the silent night. Wherever they land, they make everything green and flourishing. The words of the patient edify those who stand by and demonstrate the strength and beauty of religion. There is an undeniable attractiveness in a composed, serene soul that lives and dies in harmony. While storms rage outside, all is still within. In contrast, an impatient person vexes themselves and others, heading towards rocks and shipwreck. They are overwhelmed by anxious cares and

often, in their prosperity, are capsized by too much sail—pride and ambition—driven onto the rocks by too strong a wind.

Therefore, let us strive to keep our spirits under control, for the scorching of a fever, and all the violence it inflicts upon the blood, are no surer indications of failing health than tumultuous, fluctuating passions, discontented thoughts, and murmuring expressions are of a troubled state of the soul.

Reason 4: Such evil days may come upon us when we are unqualified for active service due to decaying age and trouble. We need to patiently wait because it may be a long time before our sorrows come to an end. We may have to take many weary steps and bear numerous burdens before reaching our journey's end. A time may come when nothing that appeals to our senses—sight, hearing, or taste—will bring us pleasure. We will be unfit for both business and recreation, and even the motions of our graces will decline with age. When you become a burden to yourself, finding contentment in other things will be nearly impossible.

Old Barzillai was not enticed by the grandeur of preferment to lead a courtly life, and similarly, you will have little capacity for spiritual improvement when your faculties are weak. When old age and its frailties befall us, we can only hope for some vigour in our hope during the winter of our life. The oil we have stored in our lamps may barely suffice for our passage through the dark and shadowy veil. We must take great care not to exhaust our stock and treasure of grace when the night comes, as it will be difficult to maintain inward liveliness and health when our outward selves deteriorate. It will be challenging to muster the courage for new conflicts when we return from the battlefield like weary soldiers. Our pace towards Heaven will slow when old age hampers us and our blood begins to freeze in

our veins. In such proximity to the grave, people are generally so feeble that they are fit for nothing. Those who have learned calmness and resignation in such afflicted circumstances and can patiently wait are blessed. By doing so, pleasant harvests and sweet, easy thoughts will arise in the furrows of age. While their foreheads are wrinkled, the face of their soul will be smooth, devoid of thorny cares, weeds, or thistles.

In this condition, if you patiently wait, you will have the essence of faith firmly rooted, like a stately cedar that has taken deep hold and is not easily uprooted. In the withering decay of age, you may not run swiftly in the ways of God, but you can journey softly and easily to the grave, with your soul refreshed by bright visions of Heaven while your body stoops under the weight of many years. Though your hearing may fail, good news from within will greet you; music will resonate in your own breast when the daughters of music are brought low. You will have the happiness of not hearing slanders or sorrowful tidings. When your taste for other things has faded, you will feast upon the Bread of Life. When your eyesight is diminished, your heart will be in Heaven. Even when your memory falters, God will not forget you; His word will be the staff upon which your tottering age may lean.

Reason 5: By patiently waiting upon God, we shall experience renewed strength and a fresh sense of His love. This patience provides help for both our bodies and souls. A life of patience contributes to its own preservation, preventing bodily humors from overflowing their bounds and spirits from fermenting irregularly. Conversely, the peevish and impatient provoke continuous feverishness, leading to a decline in strength. It is said in Deuteronomy 12:3 that Moses was very meek, more than all the men on the face of the earth. In Chapter 34:7, he was a hundred and

twenty years old, yet his eyes were not dim, nor his natural strength abated. Moses seemed to have a kind of eternal spring or youthfulness, with enduring vigour in every aspect. It is evident that patiently waiting upon God may prevent the judgments that waste and shorten life, such as raging plagues, famines, and devastations that claim many lives prematurely. By doing so, we shall not spend our days in His wrath.

An aged Christian who has patiently waited for many years returns home, laden like a vessel after a long and stormy voyage, filled with reviving experiences of God's goodness from morning to noon and evening of life (Psalm 71:17-18). They joyfully recall the various and admirable conduct of their Heavenly Father, appreciating His wisdom in laying the foundation of their happiness and carrying on the structure. They reflect on how God healed their diseases and brought them safely to the borders of perfect recovery. These patient souls find new support and strength (Isaiah 40:31) as they hasten to escape from trouble, just as the stillness and composure of a person with a fever mitigate its force, while restlessness only inflames and agitates the body further. Through suffering, they learn to endure, and patience reconciles them to the cross (Psalm 27:14). No arguments or eloquent sentences fortify the soul in trouble as effectively as one's own experience, which serves as a soothing balm for anxious and restless thoughts.

Reason 6: This patient waiting excellently prepares us for the awaited mercies and gives them the sweetest relish when they arrive, akin to rest for weary travelers longing to return home. The meeting between God and a waiting soul is filled with joy and ecstasy. "O, He has come, He has come, the One I longed to see! His cheering language revives me; His smiling face delights me." Consider Old Simeon's ecstasy as he embraced his Savior after waiting many long

years for the blessed sight. The joy of seeing the beginning of Christ's ministry! A father's delight in the return of a prodigal child after a long wait is immeasurable. Such a day is celebrated with music, joy, and feasts. Similarly, Augustine's mother had prayed and wept for her son daily, and when he was finally converted, her spirit was at ease.

Augustine recounts in his Confessions that as his mother's days drew to a close, they talked of the joys of Heaven. In the midst of this delightful conversation, she said to him, "My son, I assure you that, as far as I am concerned, I have no longer any pleasure in anything in this world. What I do here still, I know not, for I have no more hopes in this world. The only thing I wanted to do was to see you a Christian before I died, and God has granted me this great favour, enabling me to see you completely His servant, by your contempt for all the goods and pleasures of this life. Why, then, should I continue here any longer?"

Reason 7: Patiently waiting upon God cures the frowardness of our spirits in our final sickness, making death a happy transition and heaven a sweet reward. The conclusion of such a serene life is calm and fair, like the evening of a summer's day. Such individuals do not leave this world in haste but walk from one room to another, sleeping in death with the composure of an infant at its mother's breast. They pass smoothly to death, some without much pain, although exemption from the last enemy's assault is rare. Some are gently laid down on their bed of dust, while others extinguish the dwindling lamp of life with groans and sighs.

A patient soul is prepared and, when God gives the word, gladly departs, longing and fluttering to be gone. In the parting moment, such a soul shall not be left alone; a convoy of angels will accompany

it, ensuring a safe passage through the regions of the air, where evil spirits might attempt to obstruct its journey to glory. Heaven is a welcoming sight for a troubled, weary soul, and Hallelujahs are a joy to one who has endured slander and reproach on Earth. The clouds of life scatter, and eternal day dawns. In heaven, patience has no further work, as there is no pain, and hope is realized, for the desired good is possessed. The calm of the quiet region entered after death compensates for all the storms endured on the way there. Many blessed souls have faced similar trials—sickness, temptation, scorn, and affliction. Leaving a world like this, often described as the suburbs of Hell, for the New Jerusalem must be an unimaginable relief.

Though we may experience tempests in life, we are not meant to dwell upon the sea forever. Life may be calamitous but is also short. Despite bitter and uneasy grief, there is no more sorrow in heaven, for there is no sin. Minds will be filled with light, consciences with peace, and hearts with comfort. In the vast assembly, there will be no fear, no doubting souls. Former suspicions will turn into pleasant wonder. It is an honour to be in Christ early, a greater honour to be His disciple, and an even greater honour to be in His glorious temple. Blessed are those who have reached the end of their journey after patiently waiting for God. While we sin, they are pure; they rejoice while we mourn. We often think of them as calm and patient Christians ascending to heaven, yearning to join them. They were in Christ before us and are with Him sooner. We will follow in their footsteps, and then, you and we, and Jesus, our dearest Jesus, shall meet together.

I often reflect on Ecclesiastes 4:1-2 because it acknowledges that many afflictions, miseries, and judgments are the portion of the living. Blessed are those who rest in the quiet grave, no longer

troubled by dreams or restless nights, no longer hearing the chaos of our world. Patient waiting in life contributes greatly to the peaceful slumber there. How Jacob blessed his sons before his death, and how peacefully he passed away (Genesis 49:3)! Oh, happy death to wait for God's salvation and to see the salvation for which one waited. The hope of this salvation sweetens the lives of heaven's blessed heirs, alleviating the thorns of sickness and the sting of death. It relieves their old age, makes the grave less frightening, and softens their bed of dust. They live in motion and rest in peace, never reaching the dregs of life, for theirs is clear and pure to the very bottom.

Exhortations to those who have patiently waited on God, even in old age.

Reflect 1: Consider how gracious He has been to you, granting you many years to acquire oil, trim your lamps, and prepare for another world. You have outlived many storms that have brought others to their knees. Many young people have faced judgment long before now, while the hand that crushed them has shown great gentleness and mercy to you. You have survived the perils, sins, and recklessness of youth and are now nearing the end of your journey.

2: Endeavour to do good to others who have not had such experience of God as you. In this way, you bring forth fruit in old age and are fat and flourishing, as Psalm 92:14 describes. It's as if you grow young again, with a vast increase in your spiritual stature. When you are full of patience and, through your example and words, proclaim to others how faithful and kind God has been to you, you will, in

teaching them, rekindle and inflame your own light. While others younger than you may decline, you shall thrive and prosper. He who planted you makes the green tree wither and the dry one to grow. You will not only go to Heaven fully ripe for glory, like a shock of corn gathered in due season, but there will be something for others to glean when you are gone. In the meantime, summer and winter, youth and old age, seem to meet in you—the decay of one and the fruitfulness of the other. In your evening, there is light, as stated in Zechariah 8:4-5.

Fortify yourselves with the experiences of God's goodness whenever your patience is about to wane. As Polycarp said when urged by the Proconsul to deny Christ or something like it, "These fourscore and six years have I served Christ, and he never did me any harm; and how can I then blaspheme my Master and my Savior?" Exhort others to fear, love, and trust God, as you have done. Through your holy awe and reverence, seek to correct their lightness and vanity. You have served a good Master, and you have had the honour to serve Him for a very long time. Do not grow weary of His work now, nor think of leaving His vineyard when He, who employed you, is coming to reward your diligence. Be of good courage, for the Lord is at hand. O, ye aged people, bless the Lord, your Preserver, and sing His praise daily. Let your winter, like the spring of youth, praise the Lord. How few have had the time for Heaven that you have had! Oh, the blessed seasons and days of grace that you have enjoyed! It's a wonderful honour for those who are old to have such a large space in which to do much good, to expand the Kingdom of Christ, and to make their future crown more weighty. None should begrudge labouring for fourscore or a hundred years when, for such a short duration of painful diligence, they shall receive an everlasting recompense. By living to old age, you have acquired more wisdom, experience, and skill than others. Your graver years have taught you to avoid several

rocks upon which they might have shipwrecked. All these mercies are amplified for those who reach a healthy old age, free from the usual pains, griefs, and languishing that often accompany the aging process, as mentioned in Joshua 14:10-11.

Thus, life smoothly takes its course without encountering significant obstructions and is not only long but happy too. This was the peculiar felicity of the Patriarchs before the Flood, whose lives extended to almost a thousand years, and yet we read of none of those sad symptoms that often accompany old age as we experience it today, as described in Psalm 90:10. It's very comforting not to have a poor or sickly old age, not to lack necessities or suffer in pain. It's a blessing to live long enough to see your posterity and an even greater joy to see them walking in the truth, as stated in Psalm 128:6. However, no one can expect to be completely free from the evil days described in Ecclesiastes 12:1, which are full of trembling palsies, grievous aches, lingering pains, and innumerable evils.

But if you patiently wait on God and make good use of your declining years, you will eventually be satisfied with living, as Job was in his old age, as mentioned in Job 42:17. He died, being old and full of days, and he rose from life's feast not surfeited but well pleased with the joys and plenty of his later days. Job had once wished for any sort of death during his darkest hours when he had restless pain by day and no sweet sleep at night. However, this was more Job's disease than his grace, and it was a rash and hasty wish to die in terror and anguish. To eagerly thirst for the grave under such circumstances is forlorn and doleful. Job's perspective changed, and he looked at death differently, going to it as a weary traveller goes to bed, with regular desires and quiet hopes, refreshed and satisfied with living. Those who are good in age find themselves similarly content with life.

On the other hand, a sinner who is a hundred years old is accursed. Such a person is cursed in their neglect of life's purpose and condemned by a perpetual desire for more time, plagued by trouble and afraid to die. The sins of their youth resurrect in their thoughts, and they are scared of death, knowing that those sins will not only lie down with them in the grave but rise with them from it. Despite these dreadful views and apprehensions, they have an unquenchable and painful thirst for pleasures that are long past. Their lust remains fresh and lively when their head is grey, and everything about them grows old except their sin. For such an individual, a long life is a continued load of guilt, treasuring up wrath against the great day. In contrast, nothing is more decent or lovely than to see a remaining greenness under the snow of age. The beauty of an old person lies in their grace as well as their years. To be full of days and full of grace, faith, hope, and joy in God is as beautiful as the most blooming youth.

Take care of all the evils that often accompany old age, such as peevishness, moroseness, sourness, and covetousness if you are old. If you are young, be temperate, sober, and useful to the world to either live to be old or get to heaven early. If you are aged, use your leisure hours to prepare for your change, and if you are young, listen to the speeches and directions of those nearing the end of their lives. In old age, find recreation in looking forward to a better state. Even when your breath falters, continue to aspire to heaven, and your sincere sighs and groans will be as acceptable as all the actions of your swifter youth. As your tongue falters, let your actions speak of patience and submission to God's will. When you feel like sinking under pain and misery, remember that you are almost home, with just a little more to run and fight before receiving your crown. Watch a little longer; the sun is setting, and in a few moments, you may be

allowed to go to sleep. There is only a little sand left in your hourglass, and your life is like a candle burnt down to the bottom.

And though the religion of young people is very pleasing in the eyes of God, their graces send forth a sweet perfume. When He walks in His garden, it is agreeable to Him to see the moist flowers breathe out their morning incense. Yet He loves old disciples too, and He gives them His Word and His promise for their tottering age to rely upon.

Be sure to make good use of the leisure of your declining years and be thankful that you are now retiring from the noise and hurry of the busy and disagreeing world. As Sir Henry Wotton said after a kind of tempestuous life, "I have a great advantage from my God, that makes the out-goings of the morning to praise Him. I daily magnify Him for His particular mercy, of an exemption from business, a quiet mind, and a liberal maintenance, even in this part of my life when my age and infirmities seem to sound a retreat from the pleasures of this world and invite me to contemplation, in which I have ever taken the greatest felicity."

You may make use of all the remembrances of the places where you have lived to help you in the best things. As Mr. Walton tells us of the aforesaid politician, he said upon being in his old age in Winchester School, "My being in this school and seeing the very place where I sat when I was a boy occasioned me to remember the thoughts of my youth that then possessed me. Sweet thoughts indeed that promised my growing years numerous pleasures without mixtures of cares, and those to be enjoyed when time, which therefore I thought slow-paced, had changed my youth into manhood. But age and experience have taught me those were but empty hopes, for I have always found it true, as my Saviour did foretell, 'Sufficient to the day is the evil

thereof.' I have, in my passage to my grave, met with most of those joys of which a discursive soul is capable and have not wanted those that were inferior. Nevertheless, I have not in this voyage always floated on a calm sea, but have often met with cross winds and storms, with many troubles of mind and temptations to evil. And yet, though I have been and am a man compassed about with human frailties, Almighty God has, by His grace, kept me from making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, the thought of which is now the joy of my heart, and I most humbly praise Him for it. I humbly acknowledge that it was not myself, but He, that has kept me to this great age, and let Him take the glory of His mercy."

"And now, my dear friend," continues he, "I now see that I draw near my harbour of death; that harbour that will secure me from all the future storms and waves of this restless world. I praise God I am willing to leave it and expect a better, that world wherein dwelleth righteousness." To him, I add the example of Mr. George Herbert, that blessed man, that other David, that tuned his soul with heavenly thoughts and musically lived and musically died. Mr. Walton, in his Life, tells us that in the time of his last decays, he often thus expressed himself to Mr. Woodnot and his other friends who attended him in his languishing condition.

I now look back upon the pleasures of my life past and see the content I have taken in beauty, wit, music, and pleasant conversation are now all past by me, like a dream, or as a shadow that returns not, and are all now become dead to me, or I to them. And I see that as my father and generation have done before me, so I also shall now suddenly (with Job) make my bed in the dark, and I praise God I am prepared for it. I praise Him that I am not to learn patience now; I stand in such need of it, and that I have practiced mortification and endeavored to die daily, that I might not die eternally. My hope is

that I shall shortly leave this valley of tears and be free from all fevers and pain. What will be an even happier condition is that I shall be free from sin and all the temptations and anxieties that attend it. And this being past, I shall dwell in the New Jerusalem, dwell there with men made perfect, dwell where these eyes shall see my Master and Saviour Jesus, and with Him see my relations and my friends. But I must die or not come to that happy place, and this is my content, that I am going daily towards it, and that every day that I have lived hath taken a part of my appointed time from me. And I shall live the less time for having lived thus, and the day past.

And to another, he said, "My dear friend, I am sorry that I have nothing to present to my merciful God but sin and misery. But the first is pardoned, and a few hours will now put a period to the latter."

Thirdly, do not murmur if some that began to wait upon God later than you yet have more joys. He is gracious to you still, and He may do with His own what He will. Though it is your privilege to have served Him long, yet remember you are at the best, and when you have done all, but unprofitable servants. They that came in later to the vineyard may have as much joy as you, but you have as much as you deserve. He may give to His returning prodigals very noble entertainment, but you that are elder are not excluded from the feast. You may come and taste of the fatted calf and share in all the festival solemnities and joys of others. The surliness of the elder brother in the parable discovered a great deal of spiritual pride, made him undutiful to his father and unkind to his brother, whom, in union to his father's carriage, he should have welcomed home. There was in all the behavior towards him nothing of injustice or partiality. He took nothing from the elder to give the younger; he did not strip him to clothe his brother. Can you who are aged murmur who must have heaven at last? In the meantime, God is yours. All that He has is

yours, His Son, His Word and promises, and innumerable blessings. It should rejoice you to think that these younger servants of your Master may prove eminent instruments of His glory when you are at rest from your labors.

Fourthly, with humble reliance on the grace of God, endeavor to persevere in His service to the last moments of your lives. You have done a great deal for Christ, which is a matter of joy, but you have done it all with His assistance, which is a matter of humility. Alas, how little have you done for God, of what you might have done. It was a great favor to you that you did not grow old among His enemies, but it is a favor that obliges you to a particular acknowledgment. Take heed lest having begun in the Spirit, you end in the flesh and degenerate to formality and worldliness and a vain religion. Take heed lest your latter end be not worse than your beginning. Paul the Aged and a prisoner was still doing good. Some will say, "I have labored so hard and done so much, I hope I may now sit still and take mine ease." You must labor till your last sand be run. You must labor from your first morning to the conclusion of your day, from your conversion to your death. And you must strive that your last days may be your best.

To all such aged servants of our Lord, so steady, so religious, and so fruitful, there is great reverence due from young people. We must not despise those that are old, for if we live, we shall be so too, and then others may with justice treat us as we treated them. A good old man or woman is never to be spoken of but with terms of respect, and not with such a slight air and jeering contemptuous sort of expression that is usual with many giddy people. With all imaginable deference does St. Paul speak of Andronicus and Junia, who were in Christ before him (Rom. 16:7).

As Solomon observes (Prov. 16:31), "The hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness." That is, old age is very honourable if it does not dishonour itself by a course of wicked actions. The wise king intimates that great respect is to be paid to one who has long travelled in the best way, somewhat resembling that which is to be given to a crowned head. It's a most comely thing to see grace ripening with the maturity of age, and the number of services to God and men bearing proportion with the number of increasing years. Old age, though decrepit, is honourable, like the ruins of some noble palace. There remains in the fragments of the stately structure some gracefulness and beauty, something uncommon and magnificent. It may be said of goodness of long standing, as of old gold, old painting, sculpture, statuary, and architecture: the pieces that have most antiquity are generally most valuable. Their duration does not lessen but increases their excellence. Good old age is, to the true discerners of things, full of wonder and observation. As in a winter or a frost landscape may be expressed a curious deal of art, though such as are young practitioners in painting may perhaps be more affected with those descriptions that represent the blooming spring.

It is certain that persons advanced in years and grace have a more established love for God than younger people. In this regard, we may prefer their more grounded knowledge before that of those who have been but a while tutored and disciplined in the school of Christ.

The more general use.

First, in all your troubles, to further your patient waiting upon God, be sure to pray to Him for support or deliverance. When St. Paul had a thorn in the flesh, a painful disease that caused as much trouble to

him as a thorn usually does in tender flesh, he sought the Lord thrice. This denotes his earnestness and fervent desire to have the cross removed. In that regard, he was not heard, but he obtained sufficient grace, which was infinitely better than external ease and comfort. Say, when you are deeply distressed, "O Master, save me, or else I perish." When troubles increase, renew your cries, just as mariners double their cable of the anchor when the storm grows more furious. It is far from being a sin to pray against violent and sharp afflictions because it shows a right knowledge of our own weakness. We may not be able to bear a burden that is very heavy. We may lawfully desire to be freed from tedious, lingering, and sharp pain, for the length of it is a great temptation.

There are two things which we may pray against:

1. Reproach: This, like some Indian poisons, murders us by slow degrees and shoots its envenomed arrows in the dark. We are wounded, and we know not who it is that bends the bow. The blasting of our good name is a persecution of the worst kind, one of the most refined stratagems of hell. Those who slander their neighbor either do not know what they do, in which case they are fools, or they do it willfully, in which case they are devils. They smell rank of fire and brimstone. Some are as eager to engage in slander as if they had a patent for lying, as if they had monopolized this sin. They think a little backbiting has no great harm in it, whereas there may be death in a whisper, as well as murder in a wish.
2. Anguish and terror of the soul, which is like a fiery furnace and scorches us on every side, embittering all that others call the pleasures and sweets of life. We must pray, especially, that when sickness or pain robs us of our health, sin may not, at the same

time, rob us of our faith and hope in God. We should also pray that God would not allow Satan to rake in our wounds, and when His almighty hand has smitten us, that He would not leave His enemy and ours to touch us to the quick, as He did Job. Finally, we should pray that all Satan's malice may be defeated and that his thirst for our ruin may be extinguished. If we patiently wait, we must, in all our pains, maintain a most entire compliance with the will of our Corrector, both as to the continuance and removal of our sufferings.

And while they last, let us open with all the freedom imaginable our whole case and all its circumstances to the Father of our spirits, and when we open our griefs, His bowels will yearn over us. Our very miseries have with Him a pleading and moving eloquence. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him." You may cry to the Lord, which implies a vehement, eager motion of the soul and an outward expression of your sense of grief. The best of men have not been insensible of pain and trouble; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the other Patriarchs felt these inconveniences of life as well as other men.

It is said of Jacob, Gen. 48.1, that he was sick, and in ver. 10, that his eyes were dim with age, so that he could not see. He was bedridden sometime before his death, and no doubt had his groans and cries like other aged men. David, with all his music, could not preserve an undecaying youth, nor charm away the cold winter of his life. When he was old and stricken in years, they covered him with clothes, but he got no heat, 1 Kings 1.1. And in other seasons of his life, he says, the pressure of his grief was so very weighty that it made him groan all the night, and he was weary with his groaning, and his bed swam in an inundation of overflowing tears, Ps. 6.6, and Ps. 38.8. "I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of

my heart." This roaring notes the loudness and vehemence of his cries.

And says the poor, desolate Job, when his melancholy and terrors were upon him, chap. 30.28. "I went mourning without the sun: I stood up and cried in the congregation." During my tempestuous night, I had scarcely a glimpse or beam of joy. I was in such flaming anguish that scorched my body and preyed upon my soul. I was in such dreadful and amazing fears that I was not able to keep silent. My inward torment, even when I was in any public assembly, made me shriek and cry aloud. Hezekiah says of his sick and languishing condition, Isa. 38.14, "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove." His cry was quick, frequent, loud, and frightful, with a very sorrowful and doleful tone. His eyes failed with waiting, and his heart was even like to break.

I cite these examples to show you that the best of men may be sensible of pain and yet be submissive to the Author of it. Loud groans and cries are no marks of inward impatience and disorder. By these, troubled nature gives itself a little vent and finds a little ease, though indeed but very little, because our returning grief makes our groans and cries return. Though they are innocent and unavoidable expressions of some weighty sorrow that is likely to crush us, grace does not overthrow nature, but it corrects all its excesses and disorders.

We know that the language of the sick has not the liveliness, briskness, and strength of those who speak in health. Their countenance, looks, actions, and words are all changed. All are not equally sensitive, for some persons have a finer set and contexture of spirits and consequently a quicker sense of pain than those of a heavier and duller constitution. The delicate temper of the body of

our Saviour was more susceptible of grief than the bodies of the thieves who were crucified with Him.

2ndly. When you pray, do not wonder if you are not immediately answered; do not murmur at the slow pace of Divine Mercy. You shall have help in the most beautiful season when the glory of God and your good may be most promoted. If He, as yet, delays to hear your very earnest and importunate cries, remember that His elect cry to Him day and night, and He will at length avenge their cause. The souls under the altar cry; all nature groans and cries to be eased of the miseries that our sin has brought upon it. We must pray, but not presume to tell our Benefactor what and when He is to give. It is an excellent posture to be found waiting on our knees, though mercy and deliverance come not just when we would have it.

1. Those things which we many times most earnestly ask might be vastly prejudicial to us. Many a one says, "Give me this or that, or else I die," and the very things they prayed for, when obtained, prove a curse. Those in which they hoped to rejoice many years send them betimes mourning to the grave. Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." There was in her speech a great deal of childish weakness and impatience. She hoped that having a child would prolong her life, and she smarted for her wish; she died in her lying-in. Many are very importunate with God, and nothing will serve them but this or that particular comfort. "I must have it, or I am undone." And when they have the idolized vanity that they doted on, they quickly find cause to repent of their hasty follies. The Israelites were fond of a king, but they had a long time wherein to repent of that fondness. You may perhaps have what you ask, but you may have it with a frown, with such displeasure as will change your wine to vinegar and your smoothest delights into the

roughest thorns, Psal. 78.31. It is a friendly act of God to refuse us often what we ask when it is really for our hurt. To save us from our misguided wishes is the love and kindness of a Father. If Paul had had his thorn removed immediately, he might have swelled too greatly with his gifts and revelations or become like a Saul again.

2. Though God does not immediately hear our cries, yet He may gratify us with better things. Moses begged to enter into Canaan, but he had no remaining longing after that happy land when he was once in heaven. The joys of Paradise had with him a sweeter taste than all the milk and honey of Canaan could ever give. We have no cause to grumble that our suits too long depend. If in the delays of desired help, He now and then gives us a sight of His amiable face, the cross will not overwhelm us when His arms are underneath. Though He does not remove the cup, He sweetens it with His love. He delays to save us to try our faith and to make His salvation more illustrious, just as Jesus, though He heard that Lazarus was sick (Joh. xi. 6, 7), did not hasten to his dying friend, knowing that He intended to glorify His power in his resurrection.
3. He delays an immediate answer to our cries to see whether we can patiently wait and believe His promise when we have no sensible proofs of His goodwill. Whether, like the woman of Canaan, we will continue suppliants when He seems to chide us from His presence. This is evidence of confirmed patience when we abide waiting at His door, though for several hours or days He seems to take no notice of our cries.
4. He allows us to wait a long time before He hears our cries to bring our sins to remembrance and to remind us of how we used

Him. How long and how many tedious hours we made Him stay before we bid Him welcome to our hearts. A long time He knocked before we let Him in. It's no wonder that He uses us as we used Him; it's a most equitable and unblamable retaliation that we should taste the fruit that we have planted.

5. He loves to see His servants in a praying posture, for it is an argument of love and of humility. Their tears are bottled. He knows that these sorrows, like April showers, will make them more fruitful afterwards. By praying, they learn to pray, and the frequent returns of duty make them perform it with greater zeal and skill.

As to your cries to God for help in trouble, observe these rules.

1. Be sure to offer up all your cries in the name of Christ, and all the while you pray, think of His kind, compassionate, and prevailing intercession. Cry in His name, for you are encouraged to do so from His promises, from the virtue of His blood and merits, from His nearness to God, and His love for you. You find in Mat. 14:23 that He was praying on the mountain when His disciples were in a storm at sea. As He does not suffer in all our agitations, He is not unmindful of our troubles. When we are tossed here and there by the changes of our bodies or our souls, He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). How many gulfs would swallow us up, and against how many rocks should we be dashed if it were not for the powerful and tender remembrance of our Savior? Let us, under every cross, pray to God in His name, for by His sufferings, we are reconciled and have access to the throne of grace, a throne sprinkled with blood. Without Him, we would tremble at the bar of strict justice. He prays for us not only as a favorite but as the surety of

the covenant, not merely by entreaties but in the virtue of His blood. Whenever we make mention of His blessed name, it must be with the lowest reverence, a due apprehension of our unworthiness, and a high value of the love and grace of Christ. Take care to avoid whatever may obstruct the success of your repeated cries. As the apostle says, "You ask and receive not, because you ask amiss" (James 4:3).

2. When you have prayed and cried, look for an answer to your prayers. Do not shoot your requests at random; propose some good end, and see whether you have obtained it. If you have asked for peace of soul, inquire whether all is still within and whether His light has shined upon you with its cheering beams. If you have begged for patience, inquire whether you have more willingness to suffer. In all other cases, it shows that we perform our duties as a task, from a slavish temper or a cold indifference when we never concern ourselves with the success. This neglect withholds the glory that is due to God. Upon every answer to our prayers, we should give Him fresh acts of praise. If we have a petition pending in any court, as we wait with hope, we fail not on all occasions to inquire whether it is remembered and kindly received and whether we are likely to have what we petitioned for. Neglecting to review this part of solemn worship weakens our trust and hope and weakens our own hands. To mind our answered prayers would increase our love (Psal. 116:1), and our neighbors fare worse for this omission as we do not encourage and invite them to praise God with us.
3. Wonder greatly that such poor cries as yours should reach Heaven. It was a matter of great thought to Solomon when he said in 1 Kings 8:27, "Will God indeed dwell on the Earth?" He that has all the spacious heavens for His circuit and dominion,

will He not only visit this Earth but dwell there? So, you may ask, will He whose court is thronged with angels and happy saints regard such a poor wretch as I? Will He that sits upon a throne regard me, a prisoner on this Earth? Will He that is surrounded by Hallelujah's regard my sight, my groans, my tears? Oh, what grace is this! What adorable condescension! I know He would not regard me but for the sake of Christ. Glory be then given to Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb. I am not worthy to look towards Heaven. What am I then that my prayers should reach thither, enter, be recorded, and answered there? A poor beggar is not disdained by the King of Kings. He does not trample on a worm (Psalms 34:3, 6). Oh, what am I that I should be admitted into the presence and have an audience with the King of Heaven? Lord, what is man, or the son of man?

How shall I know that God has heard my cry, and that my patient waiting has not been in vain?

1. If He bestows upon you the very thing that you requested: If after your cry for ease, you are eased; if you are recovered after you have prayed to be brought from the gates of death. If, after having had many solicitous thoughts about being falsely accused, God is at length pleased to scatter the cloud and make your innocence appear to the shame of your malicious enemies. Thus, Jabez prayed in 1 Chronicles 4:10 that God would bless him and enlarge his coast, and He granted him that which he requested. It was a superabundant kindness to one desirous of grandeur and dominion, for Jabez might have been a very happy man, though his coast had not been enlarged. He might have governed and enjoyed himself and his friends in a little room, and he might have gone to Heaven by the way of grief.

2. Your cries are heard when God gives you resignation to His will, even in the absence of that which you most eagerly desired. If, after having poured out your supplications, you return from His presence cheerful, easy, and well-pleased, leaving Him who is infinitely wise to do with you and your bodies, with you and your friends, what seems best to Him. When you find your hearts unburdened with anxious cares and solicitude, whether you are gratified or not. This secret contentment is a foretaste of Heaven and a pledge and instance of Divine Love.
3. It is a most certain sign of your cry being heard when, even in the delays of the desired comfort, you love God more than you ever did. When your thoughts of Him are more frequent and delightful, when your love for all His appointments and even painful duties is increased, and when you are thankful for the smallest mercies and for the smallest intervals of pain and trouble. Even in the way of His judgments, you wait for Him. By all of this, you may plainly perceive that your prayers may be heard when your affliction is not removed, and many times the mercies may be given, and they are so sudden or surprising that you can scarcely believe yourselves delivered, even when you are delivered (Psalms 126:1 and Acts 12:14). Though they had the faith to pray for Peter, they had not the faith to believe that he had escaped and was knocking at the door.

The second general head, in order to your patient waiting upon God, you must endeavor to keep up in your minds good and honorable thoughts of Him all the while you are in trouble. It is with great industry and art that the Devil takes occasion from our affliction to possess us with unbecoming thoughts of Him who is our best Friend. He seeks to make Him, during our dark and gloomy seasons, appear as an Enemy, just as the Disciples in the storm mistook their

approaching Saviour for a spirit. In their hideous consternation, they shouted out, thinking that some evil spirit had come to make their death more terrible, for they looked upon themselves as just drowning.

If we have irregular apprehensions of God, perceiving Him as rigorous and inexorably severe, using His great power to crush and ruin us, such undue thoughts breed black and superstitious fears. They shrink all the faculties of our minds with despairing unbelief. Our minds are weakened and cramped by the terror of our thoughts. Consequently, we shall either give Him no service or render that which is very trifling, full of vain and idle ceremonies. Superstition leads those whose eyes are hoodwinked and blinded by it to pompous insincere worship. Under our dark, mistaken thoughts of God and His designs, our obedience becomes the action of a slave. It is done with unwillingness and constraint. We retain, at the same time, a disposition to throw off the yoke. We proceed in our devotions like those who row in galleys - with a backward heart and an unwilling shrug. Whatever we give to our Maker is given with a convulsive and stingy hand, for we apprehend Him as severe and rugged, full of stern and ghastly majesty.

To remedy these uneasy fears, our Saviour came into this world to give us admiring thoughts of God, to represent Him as amiable and worthy of delight. He made God the object of our trust and hope, not of our dread. God is represented as a benefactor, a most liberal physician, tender and compassionate, wounding us for a lasting cure. His Spirit is sent to promote our love for Him. St. John, whose soul was most full of love, was the most beloved. God has, to a great extent, left off dealing with men in visible terrors, as He did in the past. As the Apostle says in 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Though we know the terrors of the Lord, yet we persuade men." We use the gentlest,

softest, and easiest methods toward them. We are to say to them, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." There is nothing frightful in Him; He has all the tender qualities of one of the meekest of all animals, a lamb.

Thirdly, if you would patiently wait upon God, beware of having only little faith. We are not to lay the blame of our being troubled so much on the greatness of our danger as on the weakness of our faith. When we doubt and tremble, then, like Peter in the storm, we begin to sink. That our faith may grow, we must use all the good means we can to enlarge our knowledge of God and Christ. For the dwarfness of our trust is owing to the darkness of our minds. "They that know thy name will trust in thee." Knowledge, of itself, does not produce this admirable reliance of the soul. The devils are very learned and knowing spirits, but their light only serves to scorch them; it gives no comeliness to their horrid shape, nor any relaxation to their flaming torments. However, such knowledge as is founded upon love, hope, and sweet experiences of the truths and mercies of God will convey to us great degrees of strength.

To remove our little faith, we may make frequent and delightful use of Christ. We must run to his arms with all the speed and force we can muster. By being near to him, we shall learn to bear the crosses of this life and how to long for that which is to come. Those whose faith is rooted and spread to a mighty breadth, and of a tall stature, do not hesitate in the face of the greatest tribulations. Many of them go to Heaven with as much calmness as if they were just going into another room or changing their rags for a new suit of clothes. On the other hand, little faith shivers and trembles, and is reluctant to depart from this life, being amazed at the painfulness of the passage and the greatness of the change.

In no case should we blame God for His rigour, but rather ourselves for our unbelief. In this life, we are exposed to very great trials, and these will not be patiently borne with a little patience. What a contest there is between great storms and little faith! The time will come when we shall wish we had more oil in our lamps and more grace in store against an evil day. When the devil and his temptations, diseases, pale and dreadful death, and all his mournful train of evils set upon us, how shall we meet such enemies without well-polished armor on? What shall the sick, lame, blind, and decrepit do in the day of battle? Will not our little faith be an unkind and disingenuous return for the great love of Christ? How unsuitably do these two look together: His love in its strength and our faith in its decay, his love in its flourishing perfection and our faith withered and liable to be extinguished almost with every little breath? Our grief will be increased by the time we had to prepare for all the sorrows that might come upon us, the leisure and the help of many years. But if our faith is strong, we shall not be discouraged by the delays of God. We shall trust Him though He slay us, cast our anchor in the dark, look to an absent Saviour, and wait for His salvation when there is no deliverance within the ken and view of sense. When all other refuge fails, when all creatures cannot help us, even in the most threatening and the last extremities, when we see no light, we shall cast ourselves at the power and love of God.

Fourthly, if you would patiently wait upon God in trouble, you must have suitable promises to rely upon. You have but small encouragement to wait if you have no promise that your waiting shall not be in vain. We are not to labour in vain by stretching our thoughts too much upon the future or by plunging ourselves into the unfathomable depths to know the secret decrees of God. Our eyes are too weak to read the records of heaven, and they are far distant from our sight. However, it is easier and more profitable to look into the

revelation that guides our lives, both in prosperity and in trouble. In this revelation, there are plenty of reviving promises for the most trembling soul to rely upon. All these promises are sincerely true, not like those of many men in high places who draw along those who wait upon them with large promises, kind looks, and obliging words but never think much of what they promise. So the poor expectant of preferment often goes away ashamed, having spent a lot of time and perhaps money to no purpose. They gain little except a little acquired wit, which they dearly bought with the circulation of many torturing and uneasy hopes. Often they depart both with their heads and purses empty. But those who wait upon the Lord shall not be ashamed of their hope. They shall eventually obtain what God has promised and what they waited for.

Fifthly, to patiently wait upon God, remember how many kind experiences you have had of His love so far. Without this reflection, you will be startled at your new trials. However, with these reflections, no Goliath with all his stalking greatness and his big words will make you quit the field. You should consider how God has often secured you from dangers as near and as significant, from hissing serpents swollen with venom, ready to spit it all upon you, and from the paw of the lion and the bear. Unless we call to mind the years of the right hand of the Most High, every present storm will always seem the most blustering and every present pain the sharpest. It would be unreasonable for us to sink now when we have been delivered from as near and as great calamities before. The arm that saved us once is not now shortened so that it cannot save. The sweet experiences we have had of God should assure us that when we wait on Him, we do not wait in vain. No evidence can give us such unshaken certainty of His being and His providence as those inward tastes and relishes of His love. This inward sensation is extremely comforting; it's a beam of divine light. No troubles, however long or

severe, can force us to quit our religion and our faith when we have once felt the joy and pleasure of them. A good man has two harvests every year: one from the furrows of the field and another from his own thoughts. Such efficacious faith spreads vital warmth over every faculty and cannot be separated from a Christian. It keeps the pleased, recreated soul from being listless and indisposed, chilled and frozen with excessive fear and anguish. To have a treasury of experiences to which to have recourse is the privilege of those who have reached a good old age. Every year of their pilgrimage, they have had new experiences of the kindness of their unerring guide. They can look back and see wonders of mercy and deliverance. What a catalogue of joyful passages offers itself to their observation! How often they were dying, and God made them recover; how often they were sinking and afraid, and He bid them be of good courage. It's comforting for old people to have a great deal of money saved up from the spring and summer of their active life. It supplies their needs, earns respect from their attendants, and makes the decays of weary old age more tolerable when they can no longer work for a livelihood. But how much more comfortable is it to be rich in faith, such that their good Master looks upon with a pitiful and watchful eye. He takes care of their weakness, as all good people have great kindness for an old servant who has lived many years in their family. Very honourable and blessed is that age that has been long faithful to God. Moreover, those who have been careful to remember their experiences of His mercies may plead them with hope in prayer. "Lord, thou hast been my Father hitherto, be not now my enemy; thou hast heretofore dealt graciously with me, do not now overwhelm me with the weight of numerous and too great afflictions. In other distresses I have had thy presence; O be not now a stranger to me!"

Sixthly, if you are to patiently wait on God, maintain in your spirits a great indifference to the things of this world, so that you may be prepared to take your flight from it upon the first summons. Regard without excessive concern or affection all that is dear to you in this life, and while you are on Earth, keep your eye on Heaven. Cease to live for sin, so that you may not be torn from your enjoyments, but bid them farewell without a sigh. Through a continued progress in mortification, you will outgrow the anxiety that others have about what will happen to the world or themselves. This Earth is often overvalued by most of its inhabitants, and they are reluctant to leave it.

Seventhly, to patiently wait on God, keep your eye most constantly and steadfastly fixed on your blessed Master. When the storms arise, look to Him whose power can, in a moment, make the sea calm and the lowering sky clear again. In your trouble, look to your Helper, just as when we ford a deep river, we look to the further side. If we only dwell upon our miseries, we tire our spirits and create more dreadful prospects of calamity for ourselves. You need not go far to see your Saviour, for He is with you in your assemblies, in your closets; He is in the Scriptures and in all the promises. No part of the world is beyond His dominion, and He has all power in Heaven and on Earth. The prince of the air, who is limited to his own principality and changeable empire, cannot raise a storm without His permission. Although he is powerful, he is subject to a greater power. The Apostle directed the Christians of his day to wait for the Lord from Heaven, 2 Thessalonians 3:5. They eagerly awaited the sight of that glorious Person in whom they had believed, with whom they hoped to live forever. The sight of Him was their greatest desire. When He comes, He will reward His patient servants, manifest their grace, and make the world wonder at His power in their support. "Behold the faith and patience of the saints." David in the text says,

"I have waited for the Lord. I have not waited so much for my own exaltation or the conquest of my enemies as for the favor and love of God. I have not longed to see my house flourish, my friends enriched, or my name perpetually celebrated on Earth. No, truly, Lord, I have longed for You and You alone. This is all my satisfaction, this is all my desire. Even if no deliverance comes, if You, O my God, come, I shall have enough." Another kind of spirit belongs to those who are entirely focused on this world. They all aspire to climb higher and are discontented until they attain higher or loftier things. "Oh, that I were honourable," says the rich; and "Oh, that I were rich," says the poor. Everyone with money wants more, and someone with a lot of land wants to possess another field. Those who are obscure long to be noticed, and those who are publicly known long to be more popular. These are the things they long for and wait for, often not content with what Providence sees fit to give them. Sometimes even princes feel they have insufficient room unless they invade the dominions of others as well as rule their own. A wicked king like Ahab could find no pleasure in his crown unless he had the vineyard of honest Naboth. However, you should be satisfied with whatever Providence allots to you, and not complain if you encounter pain, reproach, poverty, and various crosses. All the saints in Heaven went through great tribulations to reach that blessed land.

And now, I come to speak of our departed friend, Mrs. Hasselborn, who passed away this month at the age of 95, truly a good old age. In these times, very few of Adam's descendants live such long lives, and fewer still reach her age. I shall make no excuses, nor will I refrain from praising her, for there is no harm in commending those who have passed away. Our Saviour himself commended individuals while they were alive, and we should not treat the memory of the departed with disrespect. Jesus, who spoke humbly and truthfully, referred to John the Baptist, saying, "Verily I say unto you, among

them that are born of women, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11). The apostle Paul, known for his plain-spoken nature, did not rebuke people for commending Dorcas for her good work and acts of charity (Acts 9:36). Therefore, I consider it my duty to honour the memory of those dear to Christ on Earth, who now live with Him above.

All the graces of the Holy Spirit are too valuable to be neglected or obscured in darkness. We should invite others to behold the beauty and loveliness of religion, to see how it shines, triumphs, and spreads its healing light. We should acknowledge the gifts and graces bestowed upon others with candour and generosity. Let us not bury the memory of their excellent deeds in the grave. We may lawfully praise them without offering worship. We honour the Virgin Mother as blessed among women, but we never consider her above her Son, nor do we remove the crown from His head to place it on hers. We imitate the examples of the saints who have passed away but do not pray to them.

In preserving the memory of good people, we act in accordance with God's design, for He has ensured that several of His excellent servants are recorded in the scriptures, without which we might never have known of them. Just as they were zealous for His glory while alive, He will not allow their names to be trampled upon in pride after their passing. These individuals are like withered flowers; in their flourishing state, they delighted those around them with the sweet fragrance of their charity, meekness, and good works. Even in their most unattractive state, like medicinal plants, they continue to be of great use and service to the world. Scripture perpetuates the memory of many good women, such as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Miriam, Hannah, Deborah, and the Blessed Virgin. It also records the affectionate person who spared no cost to show respect to our

Saviour (Mark 14:9). Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus, and He often found a welcome at their hospitable home (John 11:5). Saint Paul greeted Priscilla as well as Aquila, Mary, Julia, and several others (Romans 16).

This old disciple of Christ, of whom I am now to speak, had spent her years in the fear and the love of God. She was full of days, pleasant quietness, and hope as she departed to rest. She calmly sleeps until the morning of the Resurrection when she will have a body free from the marks of withering and decayed age, a body full of luster and activity, like the glorious body of our Lord. Similar to the angels who possess eternal youth, her radiance will never dim, and her light will never weaken. After a long cycle of hymns and joys, her praises will remain as cheerful, and her voice as loud as ever.

This aged servant of our Lord had made it her great business to trust in Him. In the midst of revolutions with threatening prospects, she remained unmoved. While others were frightened by alarms and the imagined approach of bloody enemies, she remained undisturbed, saying, "I have a good God, and I fear nothing." She often used to say, "They are well-kept whom God keeps." She safely dwelt under the shadow of His wings. As one who knew that thoughts and discussions of worldly matters were very unseasonable in a dying hour, she settled all her affairs before death gave the final summons and was prepared to die.

She lived nearly a hundred years, enjoying good health without the debilitating weakness and sorrows that cloud the lives of others and send them to the grave prematurely. While she experienced occasional afflictions, she was never overwhelmed.

This good woman spent her time in prayer and reading the Holy Scripture, the best of books and the greatest conveyor of heavenly

light and warmth. To gracious souls, like her, this revelation was dear and precious. Those who are ignorant and rude may ridicule it, but others place their entire hope for the next world upon it. Her Bible was dear to her, a source of trust, and the foundation of her support and consolation. It was her lantern in this world during the darkness of her pilgrimage, although she no longer needs it in the everlasting day.

In addition to the blessed Scripture, she often read works by Dr. Preston, Dr. Sibbs, and the lives of Luther and Calvin, along with some of their works in English. These were precious and reviving names of men who were stars of the first magnitude in the Church. They continued to edify the Church with their grave and learned writings, in which everything was manly and substantial, without frivolity or ridicule. Their works were worthy of the majesty of divinity and their esteemed character. These useful men left behind solid writings, more substantial than some poets of our day, who season a great part of their compositions with wit and folly. They often dress up vice with soft and easy names, accommodating everything to the taste and humor of a depraved age. They do not combat sin as much as they reveal it, seeking to please rather than profit. Their books are contagious while the authors are alive, and when they die, they, like Nero, leave poison behind them, propagating infection for a long time.

Among all the rest of the old divines, she had a particular respect for Dr. Preston. This showed that she had both a good taste and judgment in divine matters. His solidity and wise handling of truth illuminated her understanding, and his serious and devout teachings warmed her heart. Among all the works of this pious doctor, she was most pleased and edified by his discourse about God's all-sufficiency. Another old disciple, whom I knew to be above 90 years old, also

found a peculiar refreshment in that very treatise. These aged people, having sorrowfully witnessed the vanities of life, wisely turned to God alone, seeking and finding His help.

As she prepared her own soul for another world, she also thirsted for the welfare and happiness of others. In moments free from pain, she urged them to focus on matters of the greatest and most lasting consequence, encouraging them to prepare for death and live a holy life. She fully believed, along with the great Apostle, that "without holiness, none can see the Lord." The sight of the pure Majesty of Heaven would be amazing and astonishing to a soul inclined towards earthly and sensual objects. Therefore, this excellent woman often reminded her friends to be cautious, lest they walked through life like people in a gallery, moving forwards and backward without getting any closer to their journey's end. She wished that they might draw nearer to Heaven every day.

On one occasion, I had the pleasure of discussing the famous divines mentioned earlier with her. She spoke of the advantages she gained from the preaching and sermons of many worthy men, such as Mr. Burroughs, Mr. Lockyer, old Mr. Calamy, and several others, most of whom she had outlived. She lived in fortunate times and had the privilege of living during the days of our forefathers when religion was more practiced and esteemed than it is today. The Puritans engaged in fewer disputes than we do and led better lives. Oh, that their catholic charity, peaceful spirit, and innocent simplicity might experience a revival!

She witnessed the passing of most of her old acquaintances, and thus, after having lived a satisfying life, she was eager to depart so she could reunite with her friends. She trusted in God during her health, and the same trust carried her through her pain and sickness.

She often asked someone attending to her in her final moments to read the first words of the 40th Psalm, finding them extremely suitable to her case and temperament. She exhibited great humility and patience during her illness, never uttering fretful or disorderly expressions. She bore the burden imposed by God with grace, even though her earnest desire to see Him occasionally led her to say, "O, why does He tarry?" On her sickbed, she kept her gaze fixed above and sent her longing prayers to Heaven, seeking the blotting out of her iniquities and desiring to be with Christ. When her daughter attended to her and ministered to her spiritual needs in the twilight of her life, telling her that God would receive her into the arms of His mercy, she responded with the composure of a soul on the brink of happiness. She stated that she had laid herself at the feet of Jesus Christ and had submitted to Him, who was able to save to the uttermost. She had often uttered these words in her earlier and later years. A night or two before her passing, she repeated part of the 39th Psalm, verses 8, 9, and 10. Her faith and hope were so strong that she could apply to herself the triumphant words of patient Job: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that I shall see Him for myself." She has now gone to see this Redeemer. In His arms, we leave her until He gathers all those who sleep in Him on the last day.

And now, my friends, from all that I have said concerning this departed saint, we can easily observe that meekness and patience are the sure path to a long life. I firmly believe that this good woman would not have lived so long had she not possessed a calm and quiet spirit. Those who are furious, passionate, and ill-natured only corrode and vex themselves, hastening the snapping of the thread of life. There are two remarkable aspects to consider regarding this individual. First, that she should have lived so long, being one of the weaker and frailer sex; and secondly, that her patience never waned during her 95 years on this earth, enduring until the very last

moment of her life. How magnificent is the power that protected such a fragile vessel from shattering? How glorious is the grace that enabled her to persevere in the love of God?

We should also reflect that death is the destiny of all, even the most aged. No one is immortal; eventually, all must go to their long home, although some may reach it with quicker and more hasty steps than others. The oldest oak in the forest, which has survived numerous scorching summers and harsh winter blasts, will eventually succumb to the ravages of age, though not as swiftly as the younger trees. The longest day will always have a concluding night. Both those who are a hundred years old and those who are just twenty will eventually rest in a bed of dust. Methuselah lived many long years, but he did not live forever. Let us be inspired by this to seek a life that is eternal, a life free from corruption and immune to decay—a life the blessed experience in heaven, where there is no death.

Furthermore, let no one here assume that, just because they occasionally hear of someone who has almost reached a hundred, they will live as long. Such thoughts might lead them to spend their present days in merriment and frivolity, thinking they have an abundance of time ahead. However, they will be greatly surprised if they stumble into the grave in their youth when they expected to grow old. If you examine the weekly mortality statistics, you will find that comparatively few people die of old age. More people die before reaching thirty than live to eighty. Even the youngest among us have witnessed individuals younger than themselves taken by death. Many a flower withers just as it begins to bloom. For many, the sun sets at noon. It is as unreasonable to expect to live as long as St. John did, who lived to be 93, as it is for every disciple of Christ to expect the same. Simeon, the son of Cleophas and brother of our Lord, lived to the age of 120. Longevity is not the most desirable of all blessings. As

one observer noted, it was not unique to grace or the holy line; there were eleven generations from the fathers to the Flood, while only eight generations are counted for the sons of Adam by Cain, suggesting that Cain's descendants may have lived longer. Good men and good women sometimes lived very long lives, such as Abraham, who lived to be 175, Isaac, who lived to be 180, and Jacob, who lived to be 147. Sarah, whose years are the only ones recorded among women, died at the age of 127—an excellent mother and a good wife. In Luke 2:36-37, Anna is described as being of great age, a very patient person. When she was about 84, she did not depart from the temple.

To those who are the relations of this good old disciple, do not moisten the grave of your friend with unavailing tears. It is indeed a reason for lamentation when a useful and serviceable person is taken away by sudden or untimely death; it's like the falling of fruit before autumn arrives. But those who have been a blessing and a long-standing example of piety, even up to the very last step of human life, should not be mourned as if their lives were cut off prematurely but as those who have completed their course with great regularity and were not interrupted in the middle of their journey. Nevertheless, as someone once said, it should be noted that the saints of God, no matter how old they were or how low they had been brought by the miseries of life, were still buried with great lamentation. Abel-Mizraim, as mentioned in Genesis 5, was a place that was never forgotten, either by the Egyptians or the Canaanites. Not only Jacob but also Moses, Aaron, and Samuel were buried by the people of Israel, and there were great public mournings.

It would be quite unreasonable for you to mourn, and it is unnecessary for me to request that you refrain from doing so. She prayed and longed to be with Christ, and would you grieve that God

has answered her prayers and taken her to where she longed to be? It would be unjust to be sorry that a laborer has gone to rest, or to lament the passing of someone at the age of ninety-five, who was not gathered until the fullest time of harvest, and when she was fully ripe for glory. Instead, be thankful that God has finally comforted this faithful servant of His, who eagerly awaited His consolations. Be grateful that you have had the benefit of her wise counsel, her shining example, and her holy prayers for so long. Let the memory of her faith, patience, hope, and other excellent qualities ignite the same virtues within you. Consider the end of her earthly life, how peacefully she lived, and how joyfully she passed away. Do nothing unworthy of the children of such a good mother. Walk in her footsteps and follow her in the practice of all praiseworthy things, so that you may meet her with comfort on the last day, never to part again. Amen.

The End.

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