

103. Of Death.

The wages of sin is death. *Rom. 6,23.*

God said to Adam: "In the day that thou eatest thereof [of the forbidden fruit] thou shalt surely die." As soon as he and Eve sinned, they were in the power of death. Death always follows sin.

Scripture says of all those who are still under the curse of sin that they are dead in trespasses and sins. Spiritual death is the punishment for all who are born in sin. From this death men can be saved only if the Holy Ghost enlightens them by the Gospel, so that they know Jesus as their Savior, trust and believe in Him, rejoice and take comfort in Him. And after a man has thus been regenerated by a new spiritual birth, let him take heed lest he fall! If he falls back into his sinful state, losing God's grace, it again becomes true of him that *death* is the wages of sin; he relapses into spiritual death. But death also ruins man's bodily life.

As soon as a sinner is born into this life, he is not only spiritually dead, but is also doomed to temporal death. All men must die. This is the punishment attendant upon sin. On account of sin, ruin and destruction comes upon all the children of men. This life with all its pain and sickness, war and worry, is our time of probation, of preparation for death and what follows after death. Once wasted, it never comes back to give us another opportunity; once Death has claimed us for his own, he will never release us again to give us another trial.

We should therefore prepare ourselves to meet death when it comes to claim us. For what comes *after* death? "It is appointed unto men once to die, and *after this the Judgment.*" Man knows that there is a hereafter, with rewards and punishments. But is death also a punishment for the Christian? No; true Christians believe in Jesus Christ, who as their Substitute entered into a contest with death. It was for us that He conquered death. For those who believe in Jesus, death has lost its sting.

Prayer.

O Thou faithful Lord Jesus, give us strength to conquer death by virtue of Thy death and not to fear the grave; for Thou hast hallowed it unto us by Thy burial and hast given us the promise that, because Thou livest, we, too, shall live and be with Thee forever. O Lord, we yearn for the repose of a happy death and have a desire for the joyous resurrection of the body. Oh, let us experience both, and we will forever praise Thee, together with the Father and Holy Ghost. Amen.

When earth can comfort us no more
Nor human help availeth,
The Maker comes Himself, whose store
Of blessing never faileth,
And bends on them a Father's eyes
Whom earth all rest and hope denies;
To God all praise and glory!

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You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

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