

Life Is Not Extinguished Forever

Unbelievers state that life is like the burning of a candle. When the wick burns all the way to the bottom, and the dwindling flame flickers out, it is as if the light of the candle had never been; it is gone forever. They suggest that when we breathe our last, we are totally extinguished as if we had never been.

British writer Arthur Porritt describes how atheist Charles Bradlaugh was buried:

“No prayer was said at the grave. Indeed, not a single word was uttered. The remains, placed in a light coffin, were lowered into the grave quite unceremoniously, as if carrion were being hustled out of sight. I came away heart frozen, realizing how that the loss of faith in the continuity of the human personality after death gives death an appalling victory.”

Life is not extinguished forever. “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (1Tim. 1:8-10). “Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?’” (John 11:25-26).

Cherish the Aged

Once upon a time there was a little old man whose hands trembled uncontrollably; when he ate he clattered the silverware distressingly, missed his mouth with the spoon as often as not, and dribbled a bit of his food on the tablecloth. He lived with his married son, having nowhere else to go, and his son's wife didn't like the arrangement.

“I can't have this,” she said. “It interferes with my right to happiness.” So she and her husband took the old man gently but firmly by the arm and led him to the corner of the kitchen. There they set him on a stool and gave him his food in an earthenware bowl and a wooden spoon. From then on he always ate in the corner, blinking at the table with wistful eyes.

One day his hands trembled rather more than usual, and the earthenware bowl fell and broke. “If you are going to make a mess like a pig when you eat,” said the daughter-in-law, “you must eat out of a trough on the back porch.” So they made him a little wooden trough, and he ate his meals from that.

These people had a four-year-old son of whom they were very fond. One evening the young man noticed his boy playing intently with some bits of wood and asked what he was doing. “I'm making a trough,” he said, smiling up at his father for approval, “to feed you and Momma when I get big.”

The man and his wife looked at each other for a while and didn't say anything. Then they cried a little. Then they went to the corner and took the old man by the arm and led him back to the table. They sat him in a comfortable chair and gave him his food on a plate, and from then on nobody ever scolded when he clattered or spilled or broke things.

One of Grimm's fairy tales, this anecdote has the crudeness of the old, simple days. But perhaps it is a good descriptor for our youth worshipping culture. This story makes a strong point: honor your parents, lest your children dishonor you. Or in other words, a society that destroys the family destroys itself. A man of honor repays his parents. A Christian is honored to do so. The elderly are a link to a past you and I will never see; and their wisdom is a light that shines into the future so that we need not wander blindly forward. Cherish the aged as a treasured blessing. “Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.” (1Tim. 5:3-4).

No Class is too Small

In 1947, a professor at the University of Chicago, Dr. Chanrasekhar, was scheduled to teach an advanced seminar in astrophysics. At the time, he was living in Wisconsin, doing research at the Yerkes astronomical observatory. He planned to commute twice a week for the class, even though it would be held during the harsh winter months.

Registration for the seminar, however, fell far below expectations. Only two students signed up for the class. People expected Dr. Chanrasekhar to cancel, lest he waste his time. But, for the sake of two students, he taught the class, commuting 100 miles, round-trip through back country roads in the dead of winter.

His students, Chen Ning Yang and Tsung-Dao Lee, did their homework. Ten years later, in 1957, they both won the Nobel prize for physics. So did Dr. Chandrasekhar in 1983. Likewise, for faithful preachers and teachers of God's word, no class is too small. "Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2Tim. 4:2).

The Bible in School

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a fifth grade teacher violated the First Amendment's supposed "Separation of Church and State" by placing a Bible on his school desk. This "doctrine of separation" is attributed to Thomas Jefferson. However, it was Thomas Jefferson who, while President, asked that the Bible be used in public schools for their reading curriculum. Jefferson said: "I have always said, and always will say, that the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make us better citizens." Isn't it ironic that in the name of Jefferson the very thing he advocated is now being struck down by our judicial system? "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!" (Isa. 5:20-21).

A Moments Wisdom

- The largest room in the world is the room for improvement.
- The future is that time when you will wish you had done what you are not doing now.
- Truth exists; only falsehood has to be invented.
- Whoever dares to teach must never cease to learn.
- A single rose for the living is better than the costliest wreath for the dead.
- True strength lies in submission, which permits one to dedicate his life, through devotion, to something beyond himself.
- Gossip is when you hear something you like about someone you don't.
- If you want to get ahead, make sure you use the one you already have.
- There are two ways of spreading light: being the lamp or the mirror that reflects it.
- When we die, we leave behind all that we have and take with us all that we are.
- Great trials seem to be necessary preparations for great duties.
- Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.
- Dignity is often the mask we wear to hide our ignorance.
- The only way to honorably settle a disagreement is on the basis of what is right, not who is right.
- Doubt creates a mountain that only faith can move.
- Sorrow looks down, worry looks around, faith looks up.