

## A Periodic Interview with the King of Terrors

By [James Meikle](#)

1730-1799

"It is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment!" Hebrews 9:27

"Prepare to meet your God!" Amos 4:12

It is appointed to all men to die *once* — and therefore every man should prepare to die *well*. And as we are to die but *once* — an error in death is irreparable and eternal.

It is downright madness in dying creatures to doubt their own mortality! And, if they do believe they are mortal, it is even more desperate folly never to have one serious thought about their death and future eternal state!

Time is but a short preface to long eternity — it is the seed-time of a solemn, eternal harvest. Life is much esteemed, but little improved — while death is treated like a fiction. And yet a real, a practical belief of death, is of great importance to our living happily, as well as dying hopefully. The prospect of death will prevent us from being puffed up with prosperity, or depressed with adversity, since this is the termination of both. To the worldling, death is the *rock* on which he dashes, and is undone forever! But to the weather-beaten Christian, death is the *harbor* at which he arrives, and hears the storm and tempest no more. Death is the king of terrors — and the terror of kings!

*Sin brought death into the world — and death carries sinners into Hell!* Death makes an ominous appearance on his pale horse; but being followed by Hell, this renders him infinitely more formidable! And yet to the believer, this very same death has Heaven at his back. The reason why our death-beds are so melancholy is, that melancholy subjects are debarred from us all our life-long. We should often converse with death, view it in all its gloomy shapes, that at last when it approaches, we may not be confounded. Being convinced that my time is short, and that the hour of death is a trying hour — I design, as in the sight of God, to take a view of the world to come — that I may not be altogether a stranger there when I must go there, nor terrified for death when I must grapple with it.

To debar death from our thoughts, and the future eternal world from our meditations — will neither render us immortal, nor afford us a triumphant

dismissal from this into the eternal world — but must make our exit dreadful, and our latter end a scene of ineffable anguish. While, on the other hand, we never enjoy the pleasures of life, the sweets of society, and the endearments of our friends and families, with a better relish — than when serious thoughts of death and eternity predominate in our mind.

We should study —

1. To have a practical belief in the future eternal states of both Heaven and Hell.
2. Not to be much elated with prosperity.
3. Not to be much dejected by adversity.
4. To more and more be weaned from the world, and to have our conversation more and more in heaven.
5. To have frequent meditations on death and eternity; and then, when death comes, we may be made, not only submissive to our dissolution — but long to depart, and be ravished in the prospect of our being forever with the Lord. *"I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far!"* Philippians 1:23

Biographer's note —

James Meikle died on the 7th of December, 1799, leaving behind him a name which is better than precious ointment; and a widow and five children, with little on which to depend for future support but the good providence of that God, who, to use his own words, "had guided him through all his wanderings, and supplied him during life to his heart's content."

The cheerfulness of his disposition continued to the last. Disappointments never soured his temper. Though strict both in his principles and morals, he never appeared sullen or morose; he was rather cheerful, gladsome and merry. There does not appear, for forty years, among all his voluminous papers, notwithstanding the many severe censures which he passes in them upon himself — one expression from which it can be certainly concluded, that he entertained any doubt of his eternal salvation. This, and the constitutional gaiety of his temper, will account for the surprise which many of his most intimate acquaintances have expressed at the perusal of his writings; and explain what otherwise might be deemed paradoxical — that a man uniformly cheerful in company, should in private, make death and the future world the favorite subjects of his meditations.

To him death was surrounded with no terrors! The future world captivated his imagination, and filled him, as frequently as he contemplated it — with most exquisite joy. He maintained his reputation for piety, and his unshaken faith in

God, to the end. And the God whom he served, honored him with continued usefulness in his station, almost to his last hour. On the first of December, he officiated as an elder in the dispensation of the Lord's supper. On the second, he wrote a short article in his Monthly Memorial. On the sixth, he was still serving medicines to his patients. On the seventh he was with God!

"I will be your God throughout your lifetime — until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you!" Isaiah 46:4

*"I know that my Redeemer lives!" Job 19:25*

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