

A Periodic Interview with the King of Terrors

1786–1799

By [James Meikle](#)

January 3, 1786. A few days ago, a poor man (rich in this world—but poor for eternity) was carried to his long home—to the house appointed for all living. After the confused merriment of a fair, and the company of jolly companions in an ale-house—he is summoned to the great tribunal. On his way home he fell into the waters of a small river—which wafted him to the ocean of eternity! And in a moment he lost all that world, for which he had toiled so much, for so many years. O that from his eternal folly—may I learn spiritual wisdom!

February 7, 1786. My body is ripening fast for the grave—but my soul is but slowly ripening for eternity! How terrible to misspend time, to sport with death, and to trifle with eternal things! O how sad is it, that the longer I live, I should grow more unwilling, and less ready to die!

March 22, 1786. O how short is the race, and how pleasant the death of some! In the bloom of youth, and but a few months as a pastor, while the hopes of friends and flock are opening with every pleasant prospect—behold, behold, a whole heaven of glory opens and takes him in! And so sure is his hope, and so bright his views—that he forbids his friends to pray for his recovery! Last time we were together, was at the Lord's table. And when we first meet again—it shall be at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

April 4, 1786. Though I have now lived so long that I cannot expect to live much longer; yet, alas! how backward am I to believe my approaching end! O to have my love to the world slain, my carking cares and concern about created things diminished, my views of heavenly glory brightened, and my affections set on high!

May 2, 1786. If anything could make a man immortal, would not every endeavor be used to obtain it, and crowns and kingdoms be bartered for it? A saving interest in Christ, then, is both immortality and heaven and glory. Though death comes to the sinner in every ghastly shape, in every terrible appearance; yet to the Christian it performs every kind office, scatters all his anxieties, finishes his cares, delivers him from all troubles, sets him above temptation and sin, and translates him to everlasting bliss!

August 1, 1786. Death puts all men on the same level. For distinctions drop in

death, and rank and wealth enter not into the eternal and unchanging world.

As a mortal man, I am walking on the brink of eternity! But as a member of Christ, as an heir of God, I am in eternity already, being raised up from a state of spiritual death, and made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places; why, then, should I in the least be afraid of natural death?

September 5, 1786. It is common to look towards the day of death with a sore heart and a sad countenance—as the most melancholy event that can take place. And, indeed, to the greater part of mortals it is such—because then every created felicity is finished, and eternal anguish is begun. But if it is to me the day in which I shall not only be brought out of prison, delivered from every trouble, from temptation and sin—but in which I shall be brought into the courts of God, be crowned with immortality and glory, made perfect in holiness, and ravished with the full and eternal enjoyment of God—should I not rather sing for joy at the approach of death—than be overwhelmed with sorrow?

November 7, 1786. Life and health continued to me and mine, I acknowledge, and would sincerely have my heart filled with gratitude. O! in such a long and pleasant seed-time, may I sow to the Spirit, that of the Spirit we may reap life everlasting.

December 21, 1786. Some days ago, an acquaintance of mine leaves his wife and family in the morning—but returns no more. I saw him that day mingle in a great multitude—but that night he joins the millions that inhabit the invisible world. His day began with going to a market—but ends in his funeral; for he is not only deprived of life by the river—but buried below the stream. The horse that carried him to business, carries him to his final end! The widow and her children search all night by the banks of the river—but in vain—the corpse is not found. Well, the soul is in eternity, and the body shall be raised at the last day. O that the day of death and the day of judgment were oftener in my mind—when I go to a market as well as when I go to a funeral.

January 9, 1787. Being far from home on the first Tuesday of this month, I desire to remember on the second my latter end; and with all to consider that death will never call and find me away from home; or, in other words, that wherever I am death will find me out. A life spent in sinning makes a hopeless death. We mourn for dead friends, why not mourn for those that are spiritually dead—dead in trespasses and sins?

With how little concern do we change the calendars on the commencement of the new year! And, alas! even so do we spend our years as a tale that has been told.

April 5, 1787. This day I have seen an old acquaintance on a sick-bed or on a death-bed; and though arrived at the age of threescore and ten, yet as anxious to

recover, and as fond to live, as if in the bloom of life! At this I seem surprised. But am not I myself arrived at a greater age than thousands that die around me? and am I *willing* and *ready* to depart? O henceforth to be waiting for my final and eternal change!

May 1, 1787. How near is death many a time, and we think not of it! A healthy and young daughter cares for her aged and dying father. Yet, after a very short illness, dies on the same day as her father, is carried in the same hearse, and buried in the same grave; and thus literally attends her father to the chambers of death.

May 30, 1787 (Birthday). When I consider how many birthdays I have seen—I may expect the day of my departure to be at hand. But, O! happy if it be a departure from sin—to perfection in grace, and full possession in glory; a departure from earthly cares—to uninterrupted communion with God!

June 5, 1787. Because I have lived a long time here, shall I never expect to be called hence? Nay, I may expect to be called home shortly. O to live so that, when death comes—I may have nothing to do but die!

August 6, 1787. It is no wonder that the traveler who has nothing in his own country but poverty and enemies, has no desire to return home. But he who has a fine palace fitted up for his reception, and who, on his arrival, may enter on the possession of a kingdom, and has every endearing relation waiting to give him a hearty welcome, and congratulate his return—and yet can loiter in dreary wastelands, amidst unfriendly people, secret enemies, and open foes—without a longing hope for home—will not every wise man count him a madman and a fool? Alas! then, out of my own mouth am I condemned—who have dwelt so long on the confines of hell, and so much of hell within, without longing for the heavenly state!

November 6, 1787. Whether the seasons be good or very bad, whether Providence smiles or frowns—death approaches. And in the hour of death it will not be of much concern, whether our life has been prosperous or adverse. But to meet with death unstinged, and to see him who was once dead—but is now alive, and lives forevermore, waiting to receive me to his glory and presence—will make me forget all my afflictions. A belief of death as near at hand, and heaven on the back of death—may support under all present disasters.

December 4, 1787. Death takes all his prisoners by surprise. If we have any degree of health—we expect not to lose it. If we are in sickness—we expect to recover. Thus we always expect to escape death. But, die we must, in spite of all our vain hopes. And O to die in hope of being forever with the Lord! As I should daily set my own death in view, so should I expect the death of my dearest relations. But the hopes of their felicity would turn my sorrow into joy, and dry up my tears.

January 1, 1788. I would wish to begin the year with a view of the end of my life. I have assuredly begun the one—and shall as surely end the other. And now I may look on myself as standing at the very door of the house of death. O that I may be also standing at the gate of the New Jerusalem, that when the door of death shall open for my lifeless dust, the door of heaven may open for my immortal soul!

February 5, 1788. I know not how long I shall live. I know not how, when, or where I shall die. I know not the length or the kind of my last sickness. But this one thing I know, that after I die, I shall cordially approve of every step of holy providence in my life, and of every circumstance about my death.

March 4, 1788. Every day saints and sinners are carried to their long home. But O! the happiness of the one, and the misery of the other, are so vast—that all the bitterest afflictions of time are lost in the felicity of the godly; and all the good things of time are wholly forgotten in the anguish of the damned.

When death comes into a family, and carries off father or mother, sister or brother, son or daughter, or the dear wife—how familiar to us for a while are the thoughts of death! Now, death comes every day into the family of mankind, and carries off every relation. And though the sorrow cannot be so sharp, yet the instruction is equally strong—to remember our mortality.

April 1, 1788. It is owing to corruption in the sinner, and carnality in the saint, that death is such an unwelcome guest. For the man who has his heart in heaven, will not fight against the messenger which comes to carry him to heaven.

May 6, 1788. Now I see the fields putting on verdure—but by autumn the crop shall be cut down, and the fields made quite bare. Just so, the human race may all expect to be cut down by the *scythe of death*, and that at all ages—the infant, as well as the man of grey hairs. O to look forward to the heavenly state, where death is known no more—but where the saints shall flourish for evermore!

Friday, May 30 (Birthday). I cannot complain, with Jacob, that I have not attained to the years of my fathers, for this day I am as far advanced in life as my dear father was when he finished his course. When I look to my concerns in life, it appears needful that I should be spared a little while. But when I look to the sovereignty and sufficiency of God, I say—here am I, let him call me when he pleases.

July 1, 1788. A few days ago, a child was added to my family; and this day one is taken from the number of my friends, and laid in the house of silence. The decease of my relation, who was about my own age, seems to say—*Arise and follow me to your long home.* And the birth of my boy seems to add, *Retire to your long home, and make room for me!* Admonished thus on every hand by old

and young—let me earnestly prepare for my approaching departure.

August 5, 1788. All that is frightful about death flows from our being sinners. For if we were not sinners, we would not be afraid of death, which is the wages of sin. And if we were not carnal, we would not be so reluctant to change this poor earthly state—for the glorious heavenly state. Then the saint, according to his growth in grace, and fitness for glory, will long for his change, and triumph over his last enemy. Alas! then, how little of the saint do I find in myself, who am so lost in the cares of this life, and so unwilling to go hence!

December 2, 1788. Emptiness is written on riches in many respects, but in none more than this—that the greatest wealth cannot defend the possessor from death. But the favor of God is life in death, and light in darkness—though I should have a small portion of earthly things.

December 24, 1788. How pleasant the death of some saints! My dear acquaintance in his last illness, does not wish to live; he seems both ready and willing to meet his final and eternal change. And, indeed, well may the guest go to the banquet—when the king invites him! Well may the child go home—when his Father calls him!

January 1, 1789. Many of my dear acquaintances are this day in the house of silence—and it is all eternity with them. I know that I am also near the *end* of my life. O why should I be in the *middle* of my concerns and cares? if I am near death—I should often think on death. If I am near eternity—I should be weaned from the things of time, and my meditations should be much on the eternal world. And if I am near heaven—my heart should be in heaven.

March 4, 1789. The spring advances—but it is winter with me! O that in old age I may flourish like the palm-tree, and be verdant like the cedar, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and a world to come!

April 7, 1789. I have had many years to prepare for death. The mercies of my life are many and sweet—but let me remember the day of death—that it is fast approaching. I should also remember the days of darkness—that they shall be many. Can it be believed that there should exist such infidels with respect to death—where death makes such havoc every day? But if I had a solid abiding impression of my approaching death, (how near none can say—but I can say it cannot be very far away,) the things of time would not be so important in my eyes, and the world to come would find proper room in my heart. O to rise superior to the trifles of time—and be daily laying up my treasure in heaven!

May 5, 1789. Why should I be anxious about the future, either with respect to myself or my family—since I cannot be assured of a single day? But O how vast, how constant, how heart-felt should my care and concern be for myself and them, in view of eternity—where very soon some of us—and in a little while all of

us, must arrive! To lose a fortune, an estate, a kingdom, a world—is but a trifle. But to lose the never-dying soul is ruin, is misery, is bankruptcy—through eternity itself!

May 30, 1789 (Birthday). This day I acknowledge the kindness of God, in sparing me so long, until, according to the common computation of thirty years to an average life span—the world is nearly twice swept of all its inhabitants, and fifteen hundred million souls have entered on their eternal state—since I was born! Have not, then, thousands fallen at my side, and millions dropped down around me? O what a glow of gratitude should warm my bosom! But if I shall never be hurt of the second death, what a flame of love should kindle through my soul!

June 2, 1789. How pleasant to see one from a deathbed mounting to glory! But how sad is the latter end of the ungodly! They look backward—and there is nothing but remorse! They forward—and there is nothing but horror and anguish!

August 4, 1789. While I live in the body, I am absent from the Lord. And, alas! Why so careless about communion with God, or arriving at the heavenly presence! Then, if death brings me home and presents me in the heavenly presence—it will do me a great kindness. But O to be preparing for the glorious change! Everyone who hopes to arrive at heaven—should have his heart in heaven.

September 1, 1789. Many wait for the morning-light, I am waiting for the evening-shadows—for the shadow of death. But it is in hope of a following morning without a cloud, and of a day which shall never decline. If I am assured of such a heavenly morning, of such a glorious day—it does not really matter if the intervening days of darkness and nights of sorrow are many. If I can rejoice in hope of the glory of God—I need not tremble in prospect of death.

October 5, 1789. A few days ago, a servant was taken sick, and next day, while being carried home to her father's house—expires by the way! The sky is her roof, and a poor cart is her death bed—and no attendants in her last moments but the boy who guided the horse. Yet in the silent grave none shall be able to distinguish her dust—from those who have died in kingly courts or royal palaces. How trifling then all the things of this world—riches, honors, pleasures, great influence, and numerous friends, and affectionate relations—which can do nothing for us in the eternal world to come! It does not matter whether we breathe our last at sea or on land, in the open fields or in our father's house—so long as death brings us home to our heavenly Father's house.

November 3, 1789. How trifling are all the things that we can lose in this world—compared with the world to come! If the earth must employ our hands, yet heaven only should have room in our hearts. Yet how often do I give my heart to that which deserves only my hand. When a traveler has almost completed his

long journey—how foolish would he appear, if during the last few days of his journey, he made himself uneasy by an anxious solicitude how to finish them, though in safety he had traveled almost sixty days before; instead of being taken up in thinking on his glad arrival, and cheerful welcome home? Just so, I am near (I know not how near) the end of my journey of my pilgrimage below, therefore the cares of the world, the affairs of life, should not be heavy on my mind—while the bright glories of the eternal world open in my view!

December 8, 1789. I believe that both the hour, the place, and manner of death—are fixed in God's unchanging decree; and that whatever my dangers are—my safety is secured. He who dies in Christ need not care whether he be drowned at sea—or buried in a grave.

January 1, 1790. With what indifference do I let go a whole year! I change the figures with the same unconcern as I go from one chair to another in the room! But O how deep a year's account at the bar of God in the book of conscience! Accountable for—365 days—52 Sabbaths—such a state of health—such a multitude of common blessings—family blessings—food and clothing—such opportunities and calls to private and secret prayer, etc. Then what must be the account of my life, a life so long, that I cannot expect it should be much longer! O to improve what little remains—like one who must soon render an account for all.

April 6, 1790. My heavenly Father has kindly given me another son. And, as a dying person, I may say, that if he departs before me—he shall increase my mourning. Or, if he survives me—he shall increase the number of my mourners at my decease. But as a Christian parent, I devote him to God to serve him while he lives, and at death to enter into the full enjoyment of the heavenly bliss. What comfort is it to a parent advanced in years, and who knows not the day of his death—that my heavenly Father lives, and will be a Father to the fatherless!

May 4, 1790. Though every creature avoids death—yet *death* hunts the whole creation, man and beast—and shall pierce each one with his venomous dart! But how melancholy and mournful the death of some! My female acquaintance, surrounded with fears, and harassed with faithless forebodings about the loss of relations, and provision for helpless children, in defiance of the laws of heaven, and the law of nature, takes away her own life, and rushes without thought on the eternal state. What must the first reflection of such a soul be in the eternal and unchanging world? Here thought succumbs, and conception fails.

If I have a genuine hope of eternal salvation, I need not fear about temporal provision. The power which has saved me, can be at no loss to support me. Ah! the mercy which has redeemed me, and gives me grace and glory—cannot be exhausted by giving a few of the good things of time.

September 14, 1790. The memory of some after death is a stench. But the Christian shall never die. By the memory of his holy life, he speaks even when

his tongue is silent in death. And being united to the Lord of life, he shall never feel the sting of death. If such be my happy situation, death shall do me no harm.

October 5, 1790. The young child walking under the tender eye of its mother, may suddenly fall—but she takes it up in her arms, embraces and caresses it, so that the pain is lost, and the fright forgotten—in the endearments of so near a relation. Yes, its fall issues in more abundant felicity than it had before, when only under her affectionate eye.

Just so, if I am a child of God, though death trips up my heels, and I catch a severe fall in this dark valley—yet shortly my heavenly Father will take me up in his everlasting arms, embrace and caress me so kindly—that I shall forever forget the fears of death, and the pangs of death. And I shall find myself enriched by my loss, for I shall only lose dust and muck, trash and trifles—but find all the riches of glory, all the fullness of God.

December 9, 1790. It is a serious thought to think, that I, who am now entertained with the kindness of my dear wife, with the endearments of my children, with the correspondence and acquaintance of friends and kind neighbors—must shortly change my company, and find myself in a world of spirits. When my clay tabernacle, like the earthen pitchers in Gideon's army, is broken to pieces—then the heavenly spirits, like so many luminaries, shall shine around me. And God, the fountain of essence, and Father of spirits, will blaze fully on my soul. Now as such a change will come, as such an event must take place—I would wish it not to come unlooked for, or to find me unprepared for it.

January 1, 1791. When I consider the flight of time, I see that all created things must soon be concealed in impenetrable darkness—and then *the worldling's heaven* must dissolve in smoke. But as the rising sun gilds the tops of the mountains, so at this period the heavenly glory shall spread a beauty on all around, and then the heaven of the godly shall unfold with every felicity that finite souls can enjoy, or God can bestow.

January 4, 1791. Winter with its storms is a picture of human life. And days, however dark and stormy—pass away. Just so, life, however much afflicted—will come to an end. Now, if the end of life is the end of all my afflictions, I am one of the happiest people alive. O how pleasant to meet an unstinged death—and to have the hope of heaven on the back of death!

February 27, 1791. What a sudden and astonishing transition awaits me—from time to eternity—from the material to the spiritual world! Today engaged in the affairs of life, and conversing with my friends; and tomorrow surrounded with millions of spirits, associated with angels, and employed in everlasting concerns! It will therefore be my wisdom daily to take farewell of the things of time—and get more and more acquainted with the eternal state.

July 20, 1791. To dwell at a distance from God—to have the world rolling in our minds—and creature concerns engrossing our thoughts—is not fitting for an heir of God, an expectant of eternal glory. And such a situation may make us long for the happy hour of our departure, when we shall flee into the immediate enjoyment of God, and in our adorations rise to the ardor of angels, and the glow of seraphim! Had I any right apprehension of the eternal enjoyment of God, I would meditate more on it, and long more after it; and, in the midst of all the troubles of life, rejoice in the prospect of it.

December 20, 1791. Now, the last of my grandfather's family is gone to their long home; and I cannot say how soon I must go to my eternal home, who have long been the last of my father's family. But this I see, that old and young, rich and poor, great and small—die, and disappear forever! What comfort to have genuine hope for our friends at death!

What would we think of those who had lost their nearest and dearest relative, carried off by ruffians, and yet felt no disquiet? What would we think of those who could feast cheerfully at their sumptuous table, while their friends were destitute of all the comforts of life? What would we think of those who could sleep pleasantly on their downy beds, while their friends were denied the least slumber, by the torturing hand of their cruel foes? What would we think of those who could quaff and carouse with sparkling wine, while their friends could not procure a drop of water for their scorched tongue?

Now, to apply—where are ruffians like the infernal fiends? Where is a state so utterly destitute of all comforts, as the state of damnation? Where are tortures like the torments of hell, and of damned devils? And where—but in the burning lake, are sufferers so completely miserable, who cannot command even a drop of water to cool their tormented tongue?

And yet the death of those sinners, who lived without God, and died without hope, makes no impression on their surviving friends.

January 1, 1792. The last year ended with the cares and toils of the week, this year begins with the rest of the holy Sabbath. And as my present life has been, and is a scene of troubles and anxieties, (not that I complain,) so let my life beyond the grave be an eternal Sabbath of rest. Moreover, as I may be assured that this life will end; so may I have the sweet faith that such a life will then begin! O for a glance of heaven, a glimpse of glory—and I shall not shrink from death, or be dismayed at death, but long to be forever with the Lord!

January 5, 1792. O now to have a real belief of my approaching end! And indeed, for what purpose would I live much longer? To see earthly good is not worth the while, and I cannot expect to see spiritual good in perfection—but in the light of glory. As for family concerns—my faith can commit them all into the hand of an omnipotent, all-wise, and gracious God.

January 28, 1792. It is the duty of every living man to acknowledge the goodness of God in continuing him in life, and crowning him with blessings. And still more of the Christian to have his heart full of gratitude—if enabled to live a life of faith on the unseen Jesus and his graces, like the fire of the altar, always burning heavenward. But O what glowing gratitude, joy, and rapture—will fill my whole soul in heaven, to find myself enjoying a life of communion with the glorious God—and that through all eternity.

February 7, 1792. The day is fast approaching, when I must take farewell of all created things, and enter on my eternal state. And though I have been these many years *seemingly* preparing for death, yet death may at last come upon me unawares. And the reason is, though I believe that death is on his way, yet I put him still at some distance—a week, a month, or a year—when in truth I should expect him every day, and so like the apostle, "die daily." I would wish to be like the cautious soldier, who, while in the enemy's country, though he may sit down at times to rest himself, yet never takes off his armor; and so, whenever the foe appears, springs to his feet, and is ready for battle.

March 6, 1792. How near am I to the eternal world! So why should a world, a vain world that passes away—give me any vexation? How soon may I mingle with holy angels and spirits of just men made perfect! To enter there with my arms full of earthly cares, would make me appear a monster indeed.

O! how sad to see some going into the eternal state without a serious thought—but their sins going before them to judgment!

April 21, 1792. Though I am traveling through an enemy's country, beset with dangers, and surrounded with difficulties; yet, owing to the wisdom and the omnipotence of my heavenly guide—I am always safe, and shall finish my course with joy. And when my race is ended, I shall obtain the crown. O how comforting is this—when I see so many who started fair for the heavenly prize—stumble and fall in the race, have their bones bruised or broken, and don't know whether they shall ever rise again, or run any more.

But, O! though now near the ocean of eternity, and the center of everlasting rest, alas! how slow is my motion heavenward, how torpid my love, and how languid my desires after the eternal enjoyment of God! But, O happy day! when, in the blissful state, I shall approach nearer and nearer to God. And the nearer I approach, my motion towards him shall be swifter and swifter. And the more I know and love him, my soul will be enlarged and capacitated to know and love him still the more.

July 4, 1792. It is said of the saints in the future state—*Neither can they die any more.* In the faith of that triumphant state, I will submit to diseases and death. And O, how low a poor mortal can be brought before death! To visit a hospital

may every way humble me, and convince me of this. But after death I shall die no more. I do not understand this merely negatively—that I shall never more feel pain, or diseases, or death. But positively, that I shall be possessed of the most vigorous immortality, and enjoy a life of the most uninterrupted communion with God, of unclouded glory, and inconceivable bliss!

July 14, 1792. What a sudden and surprising change shall the saints undergo at death! From the deepest abasement—they shall be raised to the highest perfection of glory! From a long and lingering death—to life everlasting! It does not matter, then—when, how or in what manner I die—if I die in Christ.

July 28, 1792. How uncertain my present life! How near to a future state am I at all times! But how happy—if the day of my death, is the day of my glorification! Then, though the call may be sudden, my passage shall be sweet, and I shall forget, not only my afflictions—but all present things. *Crowns and kingdoms* will be as trite as the sports of children, and the amusements of school-boys.

Two days ago my youngest child seemed to be dying. I resigned her to God, and he has graciously recovered her. But henceforth I would wish to remember—that all my children are walking on the very brink of eternity, and may be called there in a moment! But O may it be the eternal enjoyment of God!

August 7, 1792. I had the near prospect of death in my own family recently. But the God of heaven prevented my fears. Blessed be his name!

"The time of my departure is at hand," said an apostle. I say the same. And O that I may finish my course with joy!

September 4, 1792. When a person, through old age, begins to decline—how do all his acquaintances console with him! But we may rather congratulate the saint who thus is on his near departure to his native country, and his Father's house.

September 30, 1792. The children of Israel were typical of all the children of hope. They were not only delivered from the iron furnace, the brick-kilns, and the cruel task-masters—but were brought into a land flowing with milk and honey, blessed with the liberty of a free people, allowed to sit each man under his vine and his fig-tree, and none to make them afraid. Just so, the saints are not only preserved from going down to the pit, delivered out from the lowest hell, forever set free from the anguish of damnation, and the agonies of consummate despair, and the power of darkness forever bruised under their feet. And they are also planted in the heavenly Canaan, in the full possession of all good, and in the beatific vision and full enjoyment of God and the Lamb.

Thus the poor sinner has one hell in the punishment of *sense*—while the billows of divine wrath roll over his soul forever. And another hell in the punishment of *loss*—in being banished forever from the presence of the Lord, and from the

glory of his power.

But the saint has one heaven in being rescued from such a hell; and another heaven in being raised to such a glory, and possessed of such inconceivable bliss!

November 6, 1792. It is now time for me to be taking farewell of the things of this life, since some of my dear acquaintances, by their death, have bid their last adieu to me. O now to get my mouth opened in commendation of Christ and true religion, since I may be deprived of the use of speech in my last illness!

While I would wish to lose sight of the things of time, I would wish to get better and better acquainted with the heavenly state, for every expectant of heaven should study to have his heart in heaven.

December 5, 1792. Everything is melancholy in the sinner's prospect of death. But the saint has a noble counterbalance for everything distressing in death. Indeed the saint at death loses all his friends. But he mingles in the heavenly multitude. His body is laid in the grave, and crumbles into dust. But Jesus is the resurrection and the life. In a word, he can call nothing in the world his own—but takes an everlasting farewell of all below. But he is forever with the Lord—and this is all in all.

January 1, 1793. Whatever I do—time flies away! And, O! how soon must years, and months, and days—be mine no more! How sad to see men, because privileged with a new year—forget that there is a future eternal world—and that they are hastening fast to a future state! I cannot say that I shall see another new year—but I would wish to have my anchor fixed within the veil—and then whatever storms may blow, or trials come—my soul shall be safely towed into the heavenly harbor!

February 4, 1793. This day my youngest son is dangerously ill with a fever. And I would desire to act faith on the one hand, that he may recover; and submission on the other, should he be taken away.

You know the affection of a parent, and permit me to apply the comfort, "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him." Now, a father pities his children in distress, still more than when in health; so let your compassion be extended according to my affliction. When I reflect on the endearments of my child, my passions struggle, and my affections are stirred. But when I consider your wisdom, your goodness, and your unchangeable love, I would wish to be all silence and submission.

February 5, 1793. My dear boy is still alive—but I have given him away to God. And when he has no more connection with me as his earthly parent, may he be admitted into the presence and enjoyment of his heavenly Father. If in this life

only I had hope for myself or child, I should be miserable. But the faith of a happy immortality wipes the tear from my eye, and sorrow from my heart.

February 11, 1793. After continuing some days in such a state, that all who saw him, looked on him as past recovery, it pleased a gracious God to rebuke the fever, and restore him to health, and this day he is doing better. O to make a right improvement of such kindness!

February 24, 1793. With what surprise will I lift up mine eyes on the heavenly glories, and gaze with wonder on the ravishing displays of infinite perfections! It is my shame and sin, to know so little of that triumphant heavenly state that I am so soon to enter upon. And the reason is, the things of time so engross my thoughts, that heavenly things are strangers there. O to be crucified to the world, and to get the world crucified to me! It will be sad, and unfitting for an heir of heaven to die with the world in my heart, and die shortly I must. I have nothing to do with such a load of cares, since allowed, yes, called and invited, to cast them all on God. But, my whole soul may open to the joys of heaven, and the eternal enjoyment of God.

March 5, 1793. I adore divine sovereignty; for since my boy began to recover—a near neighbor in the vigor of life, the head of a family, is taken away by death! O that my child may live to *serve God!* and may I never forget that *I cannot now live long!*

August 9, 1793. A neighbors of mine has got such a sudden call into the invisible world, as calls aloud for me to be always ready! He visits an acquaintance, and stays until ten o'clock at night; returns home, goes to bed—and early this morning he mingles in the eternal and unchanging world! O to be wise, then, and to do everything as it were my last action, and to have nothing to do at last—but to depart and be forever with the Lord! As interested in the affairs of this life, as connected with dying creatures, I may be surprised. But as an heir of God, as an expectant of glory, I shall never be taken unawares by death, being in a state of immutable security, and dwelling under the wings of the Eternal.

October 6, 1793. Sometimes I have promised myself, in such an ordinance, and at such a season, that I should enjoy communion with God: the season has come, and I have been disappointed. But I have one sweet prospect, that there is a period not far distant, when I shall enjoy full, and free, and uninterrupted communion with God. In the heavenly state, I shall not be vexed with one distracted thought, not a meditation shall be barren of God.

January 2, 1794. When heavenly wisdom has pronounced all to be vanity, I expect to find abundant vexations in this world. But when the days of my mourning are ended, in the state of glory, I shall find superabundant consolation.

March 11, 1794. O to prepare for death in good earnest, for death is a matter of

the greatest importance! Mistakes in every human thing can be mended, or ended in death—but a mistake concerning eternity is fatal. When I hear some talk of death with so much ease, of whose state I have mournful forebodings, I am afraid I also deceive myself, and will go down to the pit with a lie in my right hand. But I beg the Searcher of hearts to try me, cast out every wicked thing in me, and lead me in his way everlasting.

April 1, 1794. I have long been conversant in this world—but it is now high time that I look forward to a world to come. I may expect changes here—but the prospect of my last and eternal change may silence me under all. If the heavenly glories blazed in my eye as they ought, if uninterrupted communion with God was esteemed by me as it should be—the prospect of my departure would fill me with unspeakable joy. But I am carnal, sold unto sin, a slave to sense. But he who is the author, is also the finisher of faith. And this is my comfort.

April 23, 1794. Friends and acquaintance are dropping into the grave around me, and call to me—"you must follow soon!" But what shall I say of a departing soul? It is easy for friends to believe their deceased relations have gone to glory, if they had anything of the form of godliness. Yes, it is easy for a soul to deceive himself, and to have false hopes of heaven, when not far from hell. A partial reformation, honesty, and sobriety, and a performance of some duties—though the heart is never changed—fosters the delusion. However he may shine in the eyes of some men, still he is a stranger to the plagues of his own heart, is a stranger to communion with God, and knows nothing of living by faith on the Son of God. On the brink of eternity, let trifles never raise my spirits—but only the near prospect of the eternal enjoyment of God. And when I come to die, if I have the use of my tongue, let me not be ashamed to speak of true religion, and for God.

May 6, 1794. I cannot but be much astonished at that fatal stupidity in which some men die. But since the scripture pronounces the sinner spiritually dead, why should I be surprised to find him insensible and thoughtless on the brink of hell? Nothing less than the Spirit of God can convince us of our sin and misery. And where his divine power is never felt, no wonder that the soul be insensible, under a weight that might grind the creation to powder! Therefore, to see so many people enter on their eternal state, without any concern at all, is rather a proof of their desperate situation, than of their triumphant entry into glory.

But the day is not now far distant, when I must enter on my eternal state! O that I may not die with the foolhardiness of the worldling—but with the humble faith of the Christian. And knowing in whom I have believed, and to whom I have committed the keeping of my soul—smile in the face of death itself.

May 18, 1794. On my entrance into heaven, I shall find a sweet change, not only of my state—but of the frame of my soul. Every faculty shall be full of God, and every power of soul shall center on God. What a pleasant prospect is this, to the

poor saint who is daily harassed with worldly thoughts, and a wandering heart; and at his best times sorely buffeted by the grand enemy! But rest on the back of such toil, and victory on the back of such a conflict—will be doubly sweet. And of such a rest, and such a victory, every saint may rest secured.

May 30, 1794 (Birthday). Every birthday brings me nearer to the day of my death. But how sad, if still the soul and the affections are indifferent, or averse to the state of glory! O to know something of looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God! Let me be loosening my affections from the creature more and more—as I am nearer and nearer my last farewell of all created things.

June 3, 1794. The shortness of life, and the certainty of death—take off something of the bitterness of some afflictions that befall us in life. But O! the blessed prospect, of an eternity of glory—and that almost at the door—may make us sing through the whole valley of woe!

July 1, 1794. To be guided by the heavenly counsel through life, and afterwards received to glory, makes our pilgrimage pleasant, and our death comfortable. But to have the creature only for our portion, and time to measure the duration of our felicity, gives us a melancholy life, and a miserable latter end!

August 5, 1794. Two days ago I was seized with an illness, which detained me from our sacrament. And every illness, however trifling, is a forerunner of the grand attack, which shall end in death. And thus I am reprov'd for not improving, and highly esteeming, former opportunities. I am called to gratitude for so many opportunities, and for such a good state of health so long enjoyed. I am admonish'd to embrace every opportunity to commemorate my Savior's death, and nourish my own soul. I am admonish'd to go about every day as it were to be my last. Nor can I say how soon the time may come, when I shall be no more able to attend the public ordinances. But here is a counterbalance to all that can happen in time, that it cannot be very long until I shall worship day and night in his temple. And, being fixed as a pillar there, shall go out no more.

September 7, 1794. My heart this day is filled with gratitude to my Divine Preserver. And when a few days more are given, how should they be spent in preparation for death, and improvement for heaven! Two days ago I received a kick from my horse, which had very nearly proved fatal. But God keeps my bones, that not one of them is broken.

October, 1794. He who gives his people an easy death, can bring them in safety through all the storms and tempests of life; for in the roaring of the sea he rules, and stills the swelling waves.

October 7, 1794. Afflictions, uncommon and trying afflictions, may do us much good, by loosening us from the world, and making us welcome the hour of our departure. It gives me some comfort, that my journey through the howling

wilderness, the thorny path, of life, is another month shorter, and that I shall shortly reach the promised land.

October 24, 1794. Though I should not wish for death out of a fit of discontent, or for heaven only because greatly afflicted on earth—yet when surrounded with distressing spectacles of sin, when griefs, heart-piercing griefs, pour in on every hand, when people we care for are under the dominion of Satan; and afflictions, like waves of the sea, dash on us from every quarter—then the faith of the eternal enjoyment of God will support the soul under all.

December 2, 1794. To what purpose is long life, unless we live to God, and do good in our generation? O! with what awful wastes of time do I charge myself! O to work hard in the evening of my life, for the night is fast approaching, wherein no man can work. Whether we die young, or whether we die old—nothing should be left for a death-bed—but to die. The experience of thousands confirms this. And to be prepared for death like a Christian, (but O how little is this thought of, and sought after!) is a nobler attainment than the conquest of kingdoms, or the dominion of the universe!

January 2, 1795. Yesterday, being the first day of the year, my neighbor of long standing was removed by death. We all expected the event—but death is a change that baffles description, exceeds all our conception. Lately he had none around him but friends and acquaintances, now he mingles with an innumerable multitude. From the midst of all his temporal concerns, he is carried to the tribunal of the great God, to have his state fixed for eternity. And O the wonders that must arise around him! Indeed he wished to meet death, as conquered by his Savior's death. And no other way can we look this king of terrors in the face.

January 6, 1795. The mercy that has supported me so long should be the theme of my song, and the support of my grey hairs. And though the dead cannot praise you among the living here, yet the soul of a departed saint can praise you better than below; can praise you with full bent of soul, with every power enlarged and elevated, without sinning and without ceasing.

Worldly people may make a figure in the things of time. But when I look into eternity, I find an amazing reverse of circumstances. The most afflicted saint in this world—is happy above conception in eternity! The most wealthy sinner in this world—is miserable beyond description in eternity! What then are a few moments of sorrow—compared to an eternity of communion with God and the Lamb!

February 5, 1795. This day, oppressed with a great cold, I find my lungs stiffened, and not able to perform their functions with ease as formerly. But, alas! while I am thus admonished of my departure, how do I cleave to life, and long to continue my pilgrimage below! Yet strength in time of need, and grace for a dying hour, will make death easy at last.

March 4, 1795. From a most dangerous situation, in which I continued for two or three weeks, I am now greatly recovered. But I am ashamed before my heavenly Father, that I should in the least dispute his holy will. O how rich is his grace, and how tender his love! He has kindly restored me to health; may I never forget my resolutions, nor the reason why I wished to live a little longer. I see that past attainments can do nothing in new difficulties. I must daily and hourly receive grace from Christ for what I may be daily and hourly called to.

April 7, 1795. When good Hezekiah was in the near prospect of his death, he turns his face from all his courtiers, and towards the wall; so, in view of my departure, I should bid farewell to all, not only to my acquaintances—but to my nearest relatives, to my dear wife and children. And while I foresee a separation among all these, I from them, or they from me; may I have an interest in the best of friends, from whom even death shall not separate me!

May 30, 1795 (Birthday). This day I acknowledge the goodness of God, who has preserved me so long alive, even until I am old and grey-headed. I also desire to look on myself as on the brink of eternity, and that I must soon associate with the heavenly world. But while my friends and relations may cause me sorrow upon sorrow, not one of all the heavenly assembly shall cause me to feel the least pain.

June 4, 1795. I am admonished of my death every day, while my acquaintances, and all younger than myself, are carried off the stage. A moment is little to a year—but sixty or seventy years are less to eternity. While I am in the valley of tears, it is much that I am not always mourning—but have now and then a song in my mouth, while Providence deals kindly, and a gracious God soothes my fears.

August 4, 1795. The fear of natural death has been distressing to some who were ripe for glory, and panting for God. But he who takes away the sting of death, can support under the pangs of death. And though the battle should be severe, it will be but short, and faith may well support the combatant. But, above all things, having such a Savior on my side, from whose love death cannot separate, may fill me with Christian courage in my last conflict.

September 1, 1795. Death closes the campaign to the Christian soldier, and even sets him at eternal rest from all his foes and all his fears. Just so, this king of terrors, under the direction of the king of glory, is the Christian's best friend.

October 6, 1795. The Governor of heaven has been pleased to bestow summer-days on the end of harvest this season, which is an uncommon kindness. So when death, which is commonly a day of trouble and distress, a day of clouds and thick darkness, comes upon me, who can tell but my kind Lord may make my day bright with his heavenly beams, and so shed his love abroad in my heart, that I shall walk singing in the solitary valley, and shout, "O death! where is your

sting? O grave! where is your victory?"

December 1, 1795. How many people die, who never have one serious thought of death! But a leap in the dark here is dreadful, and to die in uncertainty is truly terrible! A strong faith in him who can forgive all my sins—who is the resurrection and the life—and who can take away the sting of death—can alone support me in prospect of death, judgment, and eternity!

March 1, 1796. Well may the grave be called the land of forgetfulness. How soon are our godly neighbors and dear relations forgotten! But it does not matter to them, for they are happy in the company they enjoy, and in the communion they maintain with God in Christ Jesus forever.

April 5, 1796. Threescore and ten years measure the life of old men, (for millions die before the age of seventy,) then how few years am I short of that number? Another inspired penman bids me not to boast of tomorrow, because I know not what a day may bring forth. Then, I see that eternity is at hand. But how happy, if death delivers me from all evil, from sin, and from Satan—and puts me in possession of heavenly glories, and eternal communion with God!

May 30, 1796 (Birthday). This day again I acknowledge the divine kindness, which has preserved me so long in being. And I desire to fix it in my mind, that the time of my departure cannot be far away. O that I may walk as an heir of heaven, as a candidate for glory! I commit all my concerns to him who is the living God, when I am no more. And I approve of his all-wise providence with respect to the time and manner of my death.

June 7, 1796. Like Isaac, I may say, "I am old, and know not the day of my death," but, like Job, I will say, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, until my change comes." O to be meditating more on the heavenly state, on the glories of the unseen world, as I must soon take farewell of this poor world!

July 11, 1796. It has pleased God to increase my family, and I plead that he may put them all among his children, and give them the Spirit of adoption, whereby they may cry, Abba, Father. They may soon lose their earthly father—but they can never lose their heavenly Father—and that is my comfort.

September 6, 1796. Is it possible, that the nearer I approach to death—that death should be more seldom in my view, and the future state more seldom in my meditations? In a little while, I must bid a final farewell to the whole creation, and enter on my eternal state. And O what trifles are all the affairs of life compared to this!

October 4, 1796. Were I in a right frame, I would long for the day of my departure from vexation and vanity, from disappointment and pain—in a word, from temptation and sin! Yes, and I would long for my arrival at my Father's house,

and for my entering on the enjoyment of all divine blessings, even on eternal communion with God!

November 1, 1796. For a long time I have believed that I *might* die—but henceforth I wish to believe that I *must* die.

December 6, 1796. When attacked with any illness that seems to bring death along—why am I unwilling to depart? I desire to put death and life into your hand, and to say Amen to all that you do. But if the lengthening of my life may advance your glory, with submission I would plead for it.

January 10, 1797. For some time past I have had close interviews with death—and realize that it is serious work to die. I know in whom I have believed. Yet, in view of preparing some things for the press, and for the sake of my young family, I have implored my heavenly Father to spare me a little while. But I wish to be resigned to his conduct, which cannot err; and his love, which will give what is good. Henceforth, I wish to be crucified to the world, and the world to me, and henceforth to look upon myself, by this dangerous illness in my lungs, like a tenant that has received a summons of removal, so that nothing remains but to be finally cast out. As afflictions sometimes come not alone—as my five children had the measles almost at once; so mercies come not alone—for these children have all recovered. What shall I render to his name!

February 7, 1797. Though my recovery is slow, yet this day I am much better, and am now well enough to leave the house. May I never forget this long lesson of mortality—but live like an expectant of a blessed immortality, all my remaining short life.

March 7, 1797. Our youngest child for some weeks past has been getting teeth, and seized with a fever. And though sometimes a little better—yet the fever returned and cut her off. Yesterday she was interred. On recollection, I find that the spring has been a seed-time of sorrow to me. For in the beginning of this month, twenty-seven years ago, my sister Margaret died. And in the beginning of the same month, my daughter Margaret is taken away. Here divine sovereignty is manifested—I am spared for many years, but my pleasant infant is mingled with the dead. In a little while it will be eternity with us all—so that survivors have little cause either to boast or mourn. Our best wisdom will be, to hold a loose grip on every comfort that can perish, and to fasten our grip on eternal things. The more we have our hearts in heaven, the less will the troubles of time distress us.

April 4, 1797. I am still kept in the furnace, and have often relapses, and though still able to walk, yet, when I walk any distance, I am greatly fatigued. On the one hand, I would wish to be resigned to death—if appointed at this time, and would commit all my cares and concerns into my heavenly Father's hand, who does all things well. On the other hand, as there is no remembrance of God in death, nor can those who lie in their grave praise him among men—I would gladly exalt his

name among my fellow creatures, before I go hence and be no more. But as I cannot judge best for myself—so I desire not to choose for myself—but to commit the whole matter to my gracious God.

April 29, 1797. For two weeks I have been better than at any period since I fell ill. What shall I render to the Lord for all his kindness to me! But while I am spared, my acquaintance is called to eternity in the middle of the night. He goes to his bed—but he awakens in the invisible world! He gets no time to give a parting advice—and departs without a spectator!

May 30, 1797 (Birthday). Many observe their birthday only by feasting. But I, the child of God, the expectant of glory, may, on this day, have a spiritual feast—and bless God for his loving-kindness, which has followed him like Israel's stream in the wilderness, for sixty-seven years. O now to be willing and ready to leave the desert, and to enter into the heavenly Canaan, and the eternal enjoyment of God and the Lamb!

June 6, 1797. How soon are dead friends forgotten! But my divine Redeemer will not forsake me in death—nor forsake me in the grave. At the last day, he shall come and call me home to his kingdom and glory. Death shall make no inroads into the heavenly family.

July 4, 1797. Already the day begins to shorten, and summer flies away—a fitting emblem of my own decline. But what a sweet scene, what a bright prospect, opens on the back of death! Complete deliverance from a worldly mind, from all sin, temptation and sorrow, from pain and death; and full communion with God and the Lamb evermore!

August 1, 1797. I find myself a dying creature, I carry the seeds of death in my body. O to prepare for my departure, and to improve all my time for God's glory, and the good of souls! I wish to have my anchor within the veil—and then shall I be safe in spite of all the storms and tempests that can blow.

October 3, 1797. Alas! how seldom do I think on death! how little do I prepare for my latter end? And yet I walk on the verge of the grave, on the borders of eternity! There is no folly like spiritual folly. But it is high time for me now to be wise, and to prepare for my approaching final and eternal change.

November 7, 1797. Our acquaintances, if gathered together, would be a great multitude—but nothing compared to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which the saints join immediately after death. At death, I must leave my family, and lose my friends. But I shall sustain no loss, for I shall join the heavenly multitude—and find myself in a world of friends.

December 1, 1797. As I am far advanced in life, I would wish to be like one of those faithful servants, who with loins girded, and lights burning—wait their Lord's

coming—that when he knocks they may open to him immediately. So would I wish, when death comes—to be both ready and willing to die. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour!" *Matthew 25:13*

January 8, 1798. May I never forget that I am walking on the brink of the grave—on the borders of the invisible world! And O how near was I to eternity three weeks ago, when thrown from my horse! I had my collar bone broken, and my side bruised; it was a kind providence that my skull was not fractured, or I killed outright. I have been confined to my room—but am now much better, and even in my distress I have had many kind providences. Henceforth may I improve **time** in view of eternity; and whatever my hand finds to do, do it with all my might—for there is neither work nor device in the silent grave, where I am going.

February 6, 1798. I have had so much trouble on my body lately as might warn me of my approaching death. And nothing can be more fitting for me, than to review my evidences for heaven. But whatever clouds may overshadow me, upon this Rock will I sit down—"Whoever comes to me, I will never cast out." Thus shall I be—safe in the trials of life—safe in the jaws of death—and safe through the ages of eternity!

April 3, 1798. As I am walking on the brink of the invisible world, and know not how soon I must enter in—to think of that state, so solemn and unknown—is a distressing thought! But he who here is my God, my Guide, my Portion, and my Comforter—will be my God, my Guide my Portion, and my Comforter there. For I may change my place but not my relationship to God. Wherever I am, I am still with you, whether on your footstool—or at your throne!

June 5, 1798. I need not go abroad into the world to see the death of my fellow creatures, to seek admonitions to expect and prepare for death; since, in my own frailty, I have a daily monitor of my approaching end! If I go up a hill or up stairs, my throbbing lungs say to me—that I must shortly go down to the chambers of death!

October 2, 1798. I feel my strength fail, I feel my frailty increase, and yet how difficult to have a belief of soon coming death in my mind! It is easy to confess with the lip that I am mortal—but does this belief run through my heart and life—and wean me from the whole creation?

November 6, 1798. Many an interview have I had with the king of terrors—but now we seem to come to close quarters. I find my natural strength greatly gone, and disease attacking my lungs. This is like engaging with the enemy's vanguard. And who can say how soon, before the whole army will be upon me! The conflict may be severe—but the victory shall be sweet. And though the river is rapid, and the passage turbulent—yet the land of promise is on the other side!

December 4, 1798. Now when in the decline of life, and in prospect of

approaching death—what an unspeakable privilege is a saving interest in Jesus? The friendship and company with the people of this world—is always trifling, sometimes sinful. But friendship with God—is light in the midst of darkness; and life in the midst of death.

December 22, 1798. When I began these thoughts more than thirty years ago, death and I might be said to be like two enemies on the field of battle—uncertain when they would engage. But now, everything considered, we may be said to be like two armies with drawn weapons, ready to engage in battle.

A kind father calls his beloved son to come home, whom he finds engaged in some favorite play with his young companions. The boy obeys, but comes grumbling and murmuring at his father's call. But he no sooner has entered into the house, than he is dressed in a fine new suit of clothes, which highly pleases him. And he learns that there is to be a vast gathering of friends, for whom is provided a most sumptuous feast. And that there is to be music and everything grand at this banquet, where he is to be admitted a guest.

His thoughts run all in another channel. He now chides himself for murmuring at his father's call, and blesses the voice which called him from his play.

Just so, when I am called into the invisible world, I shall be clothed with the white linen of Christ's righteousness—with the garments of glory! I shall join the heavenly multitude, sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and hear the song of songs above! Then shall I be dead to all concern with the affairs of this life; to the endearments of friends; to the relations of husband and parent—and wholly taken up with that high, that eternal state.

January 1, 1799. I am favored with the dawn of another day—with the first day of another year. But how soon the *shadows of the evening* may fall on me, I cannot say. O, let me walk in the light of your countenance, and the darkness of death shall not terrify me.

January 14, 1799. The disorder that formerly attacked my lungs, and for some time past made me quite out of breath by walking a short way, is this day greatly gone! What shall I render to my heavenly physician?

February 6, 1799. The great mistake I and many of my fellow-creatures fall into, is thinking this world our home, and that death is a casting us out of our dear home into a foreign and unknown land. Whereas we should look on ourselves as sojourners and pilgrims, traveling through a wilderness to our native country and true home. Then, we should not always look on death with a fallen countenance—but with a cheerful face!

May 7, 1799. If I find delight in visiting a select company of friends, surely nowhere have I more or better friends than in the invisible heavenly world! There

have I beloved acquaintances and companions, dear brothers and sisters, my honored parents, some of my dear children, and the beloved wife of my bosom. Now, immediately on my entering on that heavenly state—I shall have the sweetest fellowship with them, being delivered from all sin, and raised above all infirmity.

May 30, 1799 (Birthday). My birthday brought me into this world—but the day of death will be my better birthday into a more noble world—a more noble society—and a more noble employment.

June 4, 1799. What majestic and glorious prospects shall open to me on the back of death, I cannot tell. But they are all summed up and included in this—I shall see God!

September 3, 1799. I should go about the affairs of my family, the duties of my station, and the concerns of this life—as the children of Israel ate the first Passover in Egypt—with my loins girded, and the staff in my hand, ready to commence my journey at all times, being assured that the command will shortly come. And with what joy may I look forward to my departure, since I shall not, like them, travel to a Red Sea, or to a waste and howling wilderness—but to the land of promise, the heavenly Canaan, the paradise of God!

October 1, 1799. I am now so far advanced in life, that I should expect death to attend every illness. Let me commit the hour of my departure, as well as the salvation of my soul—to God. To be habitually prepared for death, and willing to be gone at any time—will not bring my removal a moment sooner. But when it comes—this will make it comfortable and easy.

November 5, 1799. How kind is God to his people, that when the world is of little comfort to them, and they of little use in the world—he takes them to himself. And in the mean time, he compasses them about with his favor as with a shield! How sweet to a person whose brow is full of wrinkles, and whose hairs are grey, should that promise be, "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."

December 2, 1799. This day I have so much trouble on my body, as may convince me that I am a dying creature. To my gracious Redeemer I commit the time of my departure, whether the present distress shall issue in death, or if he shall be pleased to add a little to my life. But while I live, let me never be ashamed of being on the side of Jesus.

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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