

## PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD.

SOLEMN admonition! To whom is it addressed? Reader, it is addressed to you. It may be the last that the God of infinite mercy will ever give you. He has often spoken to you before; sometimes in the language of threatening, sometimes in the tender tones of invitation and promise. He has addressed you by his word, and by his ministers—by his judgments, and by his mercies. His next call may be from the throne of judgment. O, then, as you value your immortal soul, “*To day*, if you will hear his voice harden not your heart.” “Prepare to meet thy God.”

Consider the *certainty* of the event. You *must* meet God. Other events may be doubtful; other meetings may never take place; but from this there is no escape: “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.” “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Willing or unwilling, prepared or unprepared, *you must appear in the presence of God.*

This meeting *may take place soon*—it cannot be *very* far distant. If delayed to old age, it will soon arrive. The intervening years are lost in comparison with eternity. But you may never see old age; you may never see another year; nay, another *day*, another *hour* may usher your soul into the presence of your Judge.

Consider *whom you are to meet*. Not a man like yourself; not an angel, however exalted, but God! the infinite Creator and Governor of the universe: a Being whose majesty and glory fill the highest seraph with awe; a Being of perfect holiness, inflexible justice, unchanging truth, as well as boundless goodness and mercy. Reader he is *thy God*. Thou mayest never have acknowledged him as such; thou mayest never have chosen him as thy portion; yet he is thy Creator, thy Preserver, thy Sovereign and Judge. On him thou art entirely dependant; to him indebted for every blessing; and thou art accountable for the use thou hast made of all his gifts. Art thou ready to appear in his presence? *He is coming to judgment!* “The voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God; announce his approach. “Behold, he cometh with

clouds." The startled world looked up in amazement; the millions of the dead are waked and stand before the Judge in silent and awful expectation: and thou among them, reader. The books are opened, and the dead are judged out of the things that are written in the books, every one according to his deeds.

Say not with the cavillers of "the last days," "Where is the promise of his coming?" "The day of the Lord *will* come as a thief in the night." The *day of death* will be to you the day of judgment; the sentence of which will be confirmed amid the pomp and splendors of the final scene.

*How fearful will be the consequences if found UNPREPARED!* What shame and confusion, what consternation and despair will overwhelm the spirit, as it is ushered into the presence of the infinite Judge, with all its neglected opportunities, its unheeded calls and warnings and invitations full in recollection! What self-reproaches, what bitter regrets, what agonies of remorse will convulse and tear the soul! But the righteous sentence must be pronounced! "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." O, what a pang of insufferable woe does this sentence strike through the soul! and yet it is but the beginning of sorrows. It is but a foretaste of the *worm that never dies*, and the *fire that is never quenched*. The sinner now finds himself in the hands of the omnipotent God, beneath whose all-consuming wrath he must sink forever. Resistance is vain; tears are of no avail. Repentance now comes too late. The day of probation is closed; *his doom is sealed*. And Oh, what a doom!

*Banishment from heaven, and eternal misery in hell!* Yes, the bright abodes of purity and peace, where angels and saints mingle their praises and joys in sweet and holy fellowship, he shall never see, except "far off," and only to aggravate his pain. Separated for ever from the good and holy, his dwelling is amidst the "blackness of darkness," his companions devils and damned souls, destitute of every lovely feature, "hateful, and hating one another." Scenes of horror and sounds of woe, the mournful fruits of sin, such as eye has not seen, nor imagination

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conceived, meet his eye and his ear in every direction: it is indeed "a place of torment." Hope, that sweet solace amid the trials of this life, now dies. ETERNAL PUNISHMENT is written on all sides of this infernal prison, and is echoed in all the wailings of the lost.

Reader, is this to be your portion? It will be, unless you listen to the gracious admonition now addressed to you—"Prepare to meet thy God." Can you be so thoughtless, so rash, so hardened, as to neglect it? Will you give heed to the admonition of an earthly friend, and not listen to "Him who speaks from heaven?" Will you prepare in summer for the desolation of winter; in health for sickness; in youth for approaching age: prepare for every earthly contingency, and yet make no preparation for eternity? Will you prepare a habitation for the body, which must soon crumble to dust, and neglect the never-dying spirit? Will you prepare to meet the chief magistrate of the nation, and make no preparation to meet God, the Judge of all?

Is the happiness of the immortal soul of so little value, that you can afford to part with it for the few uncertain and short-lived pleasures of this life? Are *they* sufficient to counterbalance *the endless pains of the second death*? Oh, no, you cannot say this, you do not believe it. Why, then, not awake immediately to your peril and your duty? God is now calling upon you; the Savior extends his compassionate arms; the Holy Spirit, it may be, is striving with you; Christians are praying for you; the angels are waiting to rejoice over you; and are *you only* indifferent?

Do you plead your pressing engagements! What engagements? This is the prime business of life—the only thing worth living for; and this neglected, whatever else is attended to or obtained, life is *lost*; *all* is lost for ever.

Are you waiting for a more convenient season? What reason have you to believe that you will ever see such a season? The present is all the time of which you are sure; the future may be in eternity. If not, it may find you surrounded with more hinderances, and more callous to every impression of truth. God, in his righteous an-

ger, may withdraw his Spirit, give you up to your own lusts, and swear, in his wrath, that you shall *never enter his rest.*

O, how many beacons warn you of the danger of delay! How many blighted hopes and ruined souls admonish you to prepare *now* to meet God! It falls from the gasping lips of the dying sinner, and comes up in tones of anguish and despair from the bottomless pit: "Prepare to meet thy God." It is echoed from heaven and earth, from time and eternity, and from the voice of your own conscience within, "Prepare to meet thy God." Now, in this excepted time, this day of salvation, make your peace with God.

I will indulge the thought that your careless mind at length begins to think, and your hard heart to feel, and that you begin to inquire, "What shall I do to be saved?"

Most gladly would I endeavor to answer the question. If then, a single serious thought has arisen in your mind, *cherish* it. As you value your immortal soul, let it not go till it has led you to peace and safety. Now form the purpose at once, that preparation to meet God shall, from this moment, be the great business of life. Look up to God to confirm this purpose. Fall at once before God, and with a broken and penitent heart *confess your sins, and resolve, in his strength, utterly and for ever to forsake them. Implore his forgiveness, and yield yourself up to him to be his servant for ever.*

*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.* Without him you are lost. "There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Trust in him *with all your heart*, and you are safe. "His blood cleanses from all sin." Guilty and hell-deserving as you are, you need not fear to go to him. He himself has said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Go, *now* and commit your condemned and polluted soul to his hands, and you will find "how freely Jesus can forgive."

And now, my friend, what is your decision? Whatever it is, it is recorded in heaven, and you will meet it at the last day. Will it be with joy or grief?