

# THE DEATH OF AN ACQUAINTANCE

This morning, I picked up a church bulletin from another state and read of the death of a young preacher. The announcement was a shock because I had met him just last fall and he seemed to be in excellent health. We had lunch together and he came to hear my sermon in the evening. These were our only occasions to be together, still I am grieved to hear of his passing. The announcement praised him as a true Christian gentleman and faithful gospel preacher. Such is the impression he left with me.

Hearing of the death of an acquaintance has a sobering effect. It makes us reflect on the uncertainty of life and on the certainty of death. The Bible tells us that death is appointed for men, and this is confirmed by our own observation. It is clear that it may be without warning. Centuries ago, Solomon wrote, "Man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Ecclesiasties 12: 5-7

We are reminded also of Job's words in chapter 21, verses 32 and 33. "Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb. The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him."

There is a natural fear of death because it involves a completely new experience. Christians, however, enjoy such confident hope that they are not enslaved by that fear. The New Testament declares that Jesus died that "He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Hebrews 2:14-15) Inasmuch as Christ died and was resurrected, providing deliverance for us, there is no longer any need for men fearing death. To the believer, it is not a blind alley, but a passageway leading to everlasting life.

We must not assume, however, that death is a blessing for any but the children of God. Revelation 14:13 says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." The Bible does not say, "Blessed are those who die out of Christ." These come before God unprepared. Their lives were wasted and their deaths were tragic. In no sense is death ever a blessing for one who is lost.

It would be unnatural for us to have our thoughts constantly occupied with the subject of dying. Still, we need to be aware of it to the extent that we will be prepared. Attorneys will tell us that a will is important for the disposition of our material assets. Insurance men remind us that a good policy is important for the welfare of those we leave behind. The word of God teaches that the most important preparation of all is a righteous daily life. "It is appointed unto men once to die but after this the judgment."

## **The Keys to Salvation:**

<b>Hear the Gospel:</b>	<b>Rom. 10:17</b>
<b>Believe the Gospel:</b>	<b>John 3:16</b>
<b>Repent of your sins:</b>	<b>Luke 13:3</b>
<b>Confess Jesus Christ:</b>	<b>Matt. 10:32</b>
<b>Be Baptized:</b>	<b>Mark 16:16, Acts. 2:38</b>
<b>Continue Steadfastly:</b>	<b>1Cor. 15:58</b>