

## VALUE OF THE PRESENT LIFE.

Is life worth *living*? What a question! Who would die? glad youth replies, buoyant with hope, unfettered with care, the ruddy cheek glowing with health, the eye sparkling with pleasure, – How sweet to be, to think, to move, to drink of joy on every hand. Oh, who could part with life?

Is life worth living? 'Tis youth again gives answer, but hope has fled. The pale face, emaciated form, and sunken eye betoken affliction's heavy hand, with days and nights of anguish and unrest. Oh what is life to me! – *to be*, and *suffer*. Life is a synonym of pain, and time means torture.

And what has life for you, O man of riper years! busy from early morn till close of day. Has labor aught of joy that one should care to live? Talk not to me of giving up to plan and do, gaining of knowledge, wealth, honor's wreath, and fame's fair title. 'Tis true, life has its trials, cares, its stormy days, but these are only fleeting shadows that serve to gild the intervening time with brighter splendor. But again an answer comes from him who has reached the meridian of life in our day. Misfortune on the right hand and the left. Life to me means toil for naught. Affection has no sooner settled firm around earth's fairest blossoms than death puts an end to all our cherished hopes. Friends are gained but to be lost again. Honor is a bubble to be bursted by the first foul breath of jealousy. The cup of pleasure scarce is lifted to the lips till dashed to earth again. To judge the future by the past, what has life in store that I should crave it?

And what of life? 'Tis now the gray-haired veteran gives reply. The weight of years has bent the once proud form, furrowed the cheek and brow, and robbed the senses of their acuteness. Alone, and trembling on the verge of the grave, memory of younger days is all there is left of comfort. The days of the years of my pilgrimage have

been few and full of sorrow. The beacon lights of pleasure, wealth and glory are as fleeting as the moments we employ in their pursuit, as changeful as the firefly, and if secured are only vanity. Humanity's portion is, to be, to hope, to hover between its fruition and despair, and end in death, fitting finale of the fitful dream.

But Christian, what say you of life? It is our first and greatest blessing, the [R1119 : page 7] preface to eternity, the time in which true happiness may be forever gained. I look not for the present earthly joy, knowing full well that the afflictions, trials and temptations which abound are means by which God proves me, whether I will do his sovereign will. What virtue in obeying him if there are no desires of my own to disregard? How may I prove him to be the chief object of my affections, and not be called upon to deny myself for his sake? Life affords the opportunity to battle for immortality, to struggle for an existence that shall prove eternal. They who use it for a baser purpose are void of understanding. The curse of God now rests upon the land. We need not think to find our hearts' desires where such a blighting curse exists. But he has promised to remove all evil in his own good time, when, with his blessing here instead, happiness shall be ours. Rejoicing in his love so freely manifested in the gift of his only Son, who even died to redeem us from our present sin-cursed state, gladly do I seek to follow him, scorning all that earth now has in store, and present my body a living sacrifice to God, a reasonable service. I am made conformable unto his death, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection. I rejoice in his self-denial, and partake of his sufferings, that I may share in his joy and glory. Glory to God in the highest! for the being and time by which I may work out so great a destiny. Whatever may be my portion now, I praise his name for life; for I look not at the things that are seen, they are temporal, but at the things that are not seen, which he has promised, for they are eternal. "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to

come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Those who live to make the most they possibly can of earthly objects through their present fleshly nature, are doomed to bitter disappointment. This life can prove a blessing only when lived for God.

– *P. W. Pope.*

