IS THERE DEATH?

by William Standish Reed, MD, MS, Founder and President of EHS

"And when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this [that was] capable of dying puts on freedom from death, then shall be fulfilled the Scripture that says, Death is swallowed up (utterly vanquished, forever) in and unto victory. O death, where is your sting? O death, where is your pow'rer? Now sin is the sting of death, and sin exercises its power [upon the soul] through [the abuse of] the Law. But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory - making us conquerors - through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

"Jesus said to her, I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will never die. I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will never die. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." (II Corinthians 5:8)

Often at the time of the passing of a friend into the life beyond, I wish that there was a term for leaving this life other than "death." Within the last short while, beloved friends, Dr. Duncan Lewis Moore and Randolph Harris, have left us and gone on to be with the Lord. Both of these friends were deep Christians, and their lives had been totally dedicated to living a holy, righteous, and a sober life anchored in the Rock of our salvation, Jesus Christ. Somehow, I do not believe that they actually died but simply stepped out of this temporary temple, which we call the body, and went on into the new life, which no doubt is a life of the spiritual mind. The ills and problems of the flesh are set aside, and the mental man, anointed by the Holy Spirit, is united with the Lord. And with all the very best qualities of that life which has been perfected during the years of one's being here, goes on into the wonderful new school of God's perfecting process. How wonderful it must be to be liberated from the confines of illness and sickness, which both Randy and Lewis for some reason possessed, and to enter into total freedom from pain and discomfort and physical limitation.

When I was in Switzerland with Dr. Paul Tournier in 1959, I heard him allude to Pascal's 'Wager.' Coincidentally, in talking with Dr. J. Lawton Smith, a wonderful member of Christian Medical Foundation and recently retired Professor of Neuropsychiatry at Miami, I found that he had been led to accept Christ as his personal Savior as a result of this very reasoning statement of Pascal. Quoting from The Harvard Classics, "Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God is. Let us estimate these two chances. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager then without hesitation that He is." From "The Thoughts of Blaise Pascal" we read in the translation of Molinier, "What will you wager? Let us weigh the gain and the loss in choosing heads that God is. Let us weigh the two cases: if you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager then unhesitatingly that He is."

"How sad it must be at the moment of one's death, to be translated into the life beyond and find that one had not accepted Christ and had not believed in God, thus finding himself excluded from heaven and the wonderful life eternal with the Triune God and our loved ones who entered His future Kingdom. I do not know exactly what hell must be, but certainly to be excluded from heaven and live in a place shunned by God and inhabited by evil, must assuredly be a terrible plight. On the other hand, were we to simply believe in a childlike way, wagering that God is, that Christ is real, and that His Holy Spirit is that wonderful aspect of life which we know within our inner man to be true, and to find that we, on the basis of that belief, could transform into Christlikeness, at the moment leave this sphere and enter into heaven, we have a most wondrous truth to contemplate. If we wager that He is not, and He is, we have lost everything. If we wager that He is, and there is no life beyond this life, we have lost nothing. Blaise Pascal was certainly right simply from the aspect of logic."

To me, if there is death and certainly if there is hell, it must be that aspect of one's reward for shunning God and turning one's back upon Christ and His Word and His transforming life. Jesus told us that life eternal was simply believing in Him. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent."

Ever since childhood, almost every Christian I know has known the quotation from John 3:16,17, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." John goes on to state that there are two kinds of people, those who have chosen the light and those whom have chosen darkness because their deeds are evil. In other words, one, early on in life or at least somewhere during the time of life, chooses either the light of Christ or the darkness of evil. If man chooses the light of life, which is in Christ Jesus, he chooses eternal life and enters into eternal life at that particular point. If he chooses darkness and elects to live in darkness which is progressive, he then does enter into a time of transition, after leaving the body, wherein he will go into eternal separation from God.

Thus, man must choose Christ, and having chosen Christ and having been born of the Spirit, he then enters into eternal life so that he does not experience that which is so often called 'death', but goes into a time when even the transition from this life into the next life is simply a continued transformation, which transformation process has already begun. To me the statement of St. Paul in I Corinthians 15, that this corruptible must put on incorruption and this temporary and transient must put on eternal life, is not something that is going to happen at the time of the last trumpet sound, but indeed is something which is occurring in every Christian in the here and now. Could it be that the trumpet has already sounded?"
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A CMF friend, Worldwide Medical Services, is putting together a World Wide Web home page for CMF on their server. This page will provide WWW access to the CMF story and mission. However, we would like to offer e-mail references in the home page for those who want to learn more. A newer computer with high speed modem and an e-mail provider will enable CMF to be contacted from around the world via Internet. Also, routine communications can be speeded up via e-mail at a fraction of long distance costs.

Too, the maintenance of the CMF data base is a major task for our reduced staff because of the time required to make just one entry on the slow equipment. A new computer is desperately needed to speed up this task and free up the staff for other important work.

Anyone who reads computer ads in the newspaper knows that a suitable computer system to perform both the e-mail access and the data base maintenance would cost about $2200 to $2500. This would provide a 100 MHz Pentium machine with appropriate memory and monitor, and the essential software. Please consider a gift for this purpose, as a way to keep CMF communicating and serving its mission.

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