



*Concise lectures on*

# HOW TO DIE

*the finest art ever man can learn*

**JEFFERY OPOKU**

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by

Jeffery Opoku

Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the bible.

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*Concise Lectures on How to Die*  
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*Dedicated to the blessed memory of my very good friend and brother, Joshua Osei Akoto who left us to be with the Lord in 2012.*

*To the blessed memory of a cherished brother Ebenezer Ivan Kwakye, who bid us farewell in 2016 to go be with the Lord.*

*And to all the saints who have passed on to be a part of the church triumphant.*

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# PREFACE

If there is one great lesson the church must endeavor to teach its converts and children, then it should be how to die and how to live at the same time. *Ars Moriendi* or better still the Art of Dying is by far the finest and the greatest of all arts ever learnt or taught by man.

It is commonly said that there is pain in death or death is painful. Many individuals who have not even had near death experiences hold it as a very painful object of which I have my own reservations. I, for one, have weighed death very diligently and I see no pains in it. The only pain in death is in its unpreparedness. Its only bitterness is in its unreadiness.

The soul which has adequately made preparations or should we say provisions for it will never find it bitter or painful, because it is truly a happy moment and I trust I am being sincere here.

The portrait death presents before us is undoubtedly a big one. But often times, we are not very fair in the manner at which we look at this portrait. Strangely enough, what we all seem to notice or see is the obnoxious aspect of its imagery of which we decisively conclude that it is entirely ugly or bad.

When death for example takes a man on a happy day, we say it is evil and monstrous. But when it takes a person in the midst of a hopeless situation, we call it a liberator. And personally, I think we are not always fair in the judgement we pass to this particular portrait of life.

Let us not forget that the rain that leaves the playing child in sorrows also puts the farmer in celebration. Though the first feels obstructed by it, the latter loves it for the privilege of watering down his flowers and filling his irrigation tank.

Therefore I say with firmness that nothing is entirely bad or completely monstrous. Because though an event may cause havoc at one side, it may generate happiness at the other end. And yours truly, most of the deaths that flings our world into bitter mournings and grievings plunges heaven into joyous celebration, and many others too that instigate the church militant to carol their praises hardly appeals the blessed angels above to chant their hymns of adoration. So again I say that nothing is entirely evil or monstrously bad.

The death for example which is so much despised by the free man on the street is earnestly sought after by the prisoner with a life sentence. To this prisoner, death represents the whole embodiment of a venerated legal chamber which has the exclusive rights of appealing his sentence and taking him away from his chains.

So is the healthy sportsman on the running pitch training to win an Olympic medal. The whole thought about death brings much grief and sorrow to his heart and almost leaves him feverish. He dares not even think about it. But to the little boy on the hospital bed, whom medicine and paramedics cannot cure, death epitomizes the cure of all his ailments and sufferings, wherefore he earnestly longs for it. The former abhors it all cost whilst the latter does the complete opposite. Something must definitely inform their individual choices! Yes! I am very sure. But irrespective of what that may be, I am certain of one thing that the observations we all have about death has to do with the angle from which we look at it. And with firmness, I can say that this is often dependent on our present predicament making most of our judgement unfair.

That said, one fact still remains that until we first analyze the personality death presents before us, we all might be quick in judging it as the greatest monster of all times whereas it is not. How can it be a monster if it has its own fears? Well death has its own fears too!

I believe we can only pass a better judgment of death if we take time and pain to look at its final work or rather say the effect it produces in the end. For there only can we appreciate its work in our midst and by that prepare ourselves to embrace it all times (whether in pains or in happiness) if not be prepared to feature in its wonderful picture.

The purpose of this book is simply to demystify the ways of death and also to teach by reason of concise expositions, the methodology of dying happily and peacefully at all times. I will be sincere with you my dear reader that the content of this book might hit you a bit! It will also break and consume your pride but all for your good!

I strongly believe that all who in one way or the other are in great fear of death will find great cure for their fear should they take time and pain to wade through the pages of this book in a devotional manner.

Moreover, it is imperative to point out that nothing written here is new to the church or to the world except in the sense that it came out of prolonged silence and meditations which were illuminated by my Boss, the Holy Ghost.

And of course, I can say that many Churchmen who lived before me have presented much insightful and deeper exposés than I have presented here. Though it might not be powerful enough to kindle light in any mortal soul nor rend the garment of any troubled man, I trust that there may be some who would see the light of Christ at its gentle warmth. It is my prayer that above all things, it makes you empty enough to long and thirst after righteousness. Amen.

Jeffery Opoku  
Accra. November, 2016.

# FOREWARD

This elaborate work by Jeffery is indeed one of the revealing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Though Jeff would easily brush that off or refute this, I strongly stand by my claim and my conviction.

I say this because theological titles of this manner are really not for children or should we say youthful persons to experiment with their pen. But the way and manner this young author and evangelist dealt with the subject really comes to confirm that God can use anyone at anytime to carry out his agenda.

This evangelical piece is nothing but the result of frequent meditations, long hours of silence and constant prayers. It is not a collection of lectures he orally delivered but that which he wrote with his pen in his private study there in the midst of complete silence and sincere devotions.

In this book, Jeffery takes his time in lecture by lecture to enlighten us on the arts of dying and he does so in a sound theological manner, unveiling the personality of death.

His lectures are often interspersed with hymns, quotations and poetries of some of the ancient church fathers from whom he was much informed of theology.

As part of the lectures, we have also included five of his solemn letters we discovered in his study.

This book is simply a must read for the souls who long to make it to heaven

The Publisher

# LECTURE 1

## GOOD LIFE OR LONG LIFE ?

Anytime a person dies, we all are very curious to inquire or to know the number of years he or she spent on this earth. Age has always been the point of consideration or should we say the focal point of the deaths that occur around us. We look for it all the time in the obituary letters and in the funeral news that are broadcasted on television and the popular literatures we have here on our markets.

We always look out for the age and when it is pleasing or quite copious in our eyes, we conclude “See how God has bless such a fellow . . .” and then proceed to beseech Him to bless us in like manner. On the other hand, when the age of the deceased person is not very appealing to our eyes, we bow our heads in grief and ask, “What could have taken him away so soon?”

Deaths in the 70’s, 80’s and so on are attributed to the blessings of God whilst those ones that fall within the range of ten to thirty only excite the sympathy of society and leaves them with a sorrowful wonder. They hardly believe that soul went too soon. They best express their grief in the obituary letters with these captions, “What a shock?”, “Gone too soon” and many other frivolous captions undeserving of men who claim to be sons and daughters of the New Creation.

The way and manner society and worst of all, the church places premium on longevity baffles me so much. The message of the Bishop even gets more boring when he stands behind the mortal remains of a departed young brother to officiate a funeral. So what does he do? Well he begins his sermon by exhorting the congregation to ask The Lord God of Abraham for long life so they don’t also end up as young as the fellow whose remains is lying in the casket before him. We often hear this along many other perky

exhortations which I believe are unworthy of seasoned churchmen who were called and sanctified by grace. These, I believe are virtually brought forward to mock the death of young individuals whose demise perhaps are a great incense before the father.

It is said that long life is a blessing but I hold long life as a great vanity. It is vain to desire a long life on this earth and not a very good and fulfilling one. The number of days we live on this earth should not matter if indeed we are pilgrims on earth as some brothers and sisters in the evangelical circles confess. What should really matter is how well we live our lives though it be very little.

A day or a month well lived or spent on earth is better off than hundreds of years spent in slothfulness and in useless pleasure.

For all I know, the thirteen years old boy who dies an ardent believer and a true follower of Christ is better off than the centenarian who dies believing not in the God of Abraham. The latter had a long but a wasteful life whilst the former only had a very short but a fulfilling one. And not stated in too many words, it is the death of the former that the bible describes as precious.

***“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints”***  
(Psalm 116:15).

But rather unfortunately, society holds the death of the former as very disgusting and repugnant and then appreciates that of the latter. They consider with contempt what the lord holds very precious. It is no doubt that the poison they drank at the dawn of creation has infatuated their fancies and hence can't see aright.

I, for one, prefer to only live a day on earth and do exactly as I am instructed of by the Lord than to live hundreds of years chasing after trifles and fooleries.

Time is very valuable and so is life. For this reason, God has not left us any free time or time that we should use at our own discretion. I believe that every hour that passes by is loaded with duties that God has allotted to it with his own hands and for which He will hold us accountable. With this assertion, the man who has a lot of years on his laps has a lot to account to God.

**“ . . . For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required”** (Luke 12:48)

That is to say that if a man is given much then he will have to account much.

If we should ever desire a thing about life, it should be the God-life and not the Long Life. Our all delighting focus should be on how to do and fulfill the will of God in the little time we have today and not be in great expectation of numerous years ahead.

One thing remains to be clarified. I never said you should despise long life; neither did I say it should be held in abhorrence. All I am saying is, there is rather verity in living a God-Life than in that Long Life which lacks God’s fragrance. How long we live on earth doesn’t matter, it is how well we live it even if it is just a day.

“. . . For if length of days be thy portion,” said Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich, “make it not thy expectation.”

“Reckon not upon long life,” says Thomas again, “think every day the last, and live always beyond thy account.”

The quotation continues:

“He that so often surviveth his expectation lives many lives, and will scarce complain of the shortness of his days. Time past is gone like a shadow; make time to come present. Approximate thy latter times by present apprehensions of them: be like a neighbour unto the grave, and think there is but little to come.

And since there is something of us that will still live on, join both lives together, and live in one but for the other. He who thus ordereth the purposes of this life, will never be far from the next; and is in some manner already in it, by a happy conformity, and close apprehension of it. And if, as we have elsewhere declared, any have been so happy, as personally to underhand Christian annihilation, ecstasy, evolution, transformation, the kiss of the spouse, and ingression into the divine shadow, according to mystical theology, they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the world is in a manner over, and the earth in ashes unto them."

LORD, IT BELONGS NOT TO MY CARE, WHETHER I DIE OR LIVE

*By Richard Baxter*

LORD, it belongs not to my care,  
Whether I die or live;  
To love and serve Thee is my share,  
And this Thy grace must give.

If life be long I will be glad,  
That I may long obey;  
If short--yet why should I be sad  
To soar to endless day?

CHRIST leads me through no darker rooms  
Than He went through before;  
He that unto GOD's kingdom comes,  
Must enter by this door.

Come, LORD, when grace has made me meet  
Thy blessed face to see;  
For if Thy work on earth be sweet,  
What will Thy glory be!

Then I shall end my sad complaints,  
And weary, sinful days;



And join with the triumphant saints,  
To sing JEHOVAH's praise.

My knowledge of that life is small,  
The eye of faith is dim;  
But 'tis enough that CHRIST knows all,  
And I shall be with Him.

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