

DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

A Blind Man and Death.

By Mr. Richard Stoodart late Minister of Christ's Church, in the City of Bristol.

ALSO, THE

GREAT ASSIZE.

OR

THAT IS ITS Certain and Sudden appearance to Judgment.

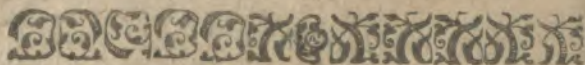
Being serious Considerations on the four last things.

DEATH, JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, HELL.

By John Bunyan Author of the Pilgrim's Progress.

EDINBURGH:

Printed and sold in Swan-Close.



To the Reader.

READER, perhaps thou'll say, it is not fit,
These two Men's Works, should make a Book complete,
But why? If Moderation does attend
Thy Spirit, quickly all such Thoughts suspend.
In them's no Controversy, but each shows
Both best Enjoyment and eternal Woe.
They're dead, and reconciled with God above,
Read therefore, humble Christians, read with Love.



A Dialogue between a Blind man and Death.

Blind Man.

TH E more Men see, the less they do enquire,
The worse they see, the more they do desire,
Others to grant what Blindness cannot give,
And for Intelligence grow inquisitive;
They ask to be inform'd, who cannot see,
I knew't by sad Experience, woes me!

Death.

Where are you, Sir? what sitting all alone?
I did suppose 'twas you by this sad Moan
Coming this way to gather what's my due,
I thought it not amiss to call on you,

Blind Man.

I do not know that Voice, 'tis sure some Stranger,
And by his Words he seems to bode me danger.

Death.

You guess aright, Sir, and before I go,
Know me you shall, whether you will or no.

Blind Man

Why, what are you? Pray tell me what's your Name
And what's your Business, also whence you came?

Death.

I will declare what no Man can deny,
There's none so great a Traveller as I;
Yet you must know I am no wandering Rover,
For my Dominions lie the World all over;
I march through Court and Country, Town and City
I know not how to fear, or how to pity.
The highest Cedar, and the lowest Flower,
Sooner or later do both feel my Power.
The mightiest Emp'ors do submit to me,
Nor is the poorest tatter'd Beggar free.
In Peace I glean here one, and there another,

Some-

Sometimes I sweep away whole Streets together
 In Time of War, this much I can divine,
 Whoever gets the Day the Triumph's mine.
 I am indeed a very great Commander,
 'Twas I that Conquer'd the great *Alexander*,
 And after all the Victories he won,
 Compell'd him to confess himself a Man.
 Were you *Goliath* great, or *Samson* strong,
 Were you as wise and rich as *Solomon*,
 Were you as *Nestor* old, as Infant young,
 Had you the fairest Cheeks, the sweetest Tongue,
 Yet you must sloop; all this would nought avail,
 For my Arrests will not admit of Bail.
 For to deal plainly, Sir, my Name is *Death*,
 And it's my Business to demand your Breath.

Blind Man.

My Breath and Life shall both go out together.

Death.

On the same Errand 'twas that I came hither:
 I'll have both Breath and Life without Delay,
 You must and shall dispatch? come come away.

Blind Man.

Why in such posting haste? Pray change your Mind
 'Tis a poor Conquest to surprize the Blind.

Death.

You may not call it posting or surprize,
 For you had warning when you lost your Eyes:
 Nor could you hope your *House* should long be free,
 When once your *Windows* were possess'd by me.

Blind Man.

But Life is sweet, who would not if he might,
 Have one long Day before he bids Good-night;
 O spare me yet a while slight not my Tears!

Death.

Hard Hearts and hungry Bellies have no Ears.

Blind Man.

I am not yet quite ready for the Table;

Death.

All's one to me, I am inexorable,

Yet

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Blind Man.

Yet by your Favour I may step aside?

Death.

Be not deceived, 'tis in vain to hide ;
 My Forces are dispersed thro' all Places,
 And act for me without respect of Faces.
 I have a thousand ways to shorten Life.
 Besides a Raper, Pistol, Sword or Knife;
 A Fly, a Hair, a Splinter of a Thorn,
 A little Scratch, the cutting of a Corn,
 Have sometimes done my Business heretofore,
 So to the full, that I need wish no more.
 Should all these fail, enough of Humours lurk,
 Within your Bodies, Sir, to do my Work.

Blind Man.

Well then, let some one run for my Physician,
 Tell him I want his Aid in this Condition.

Death.

Run Boy and fetch him, call the whole College now
 For I intend to have them shortly too.

I value not their Potions nor their Pills,
 Nor all the Cordials in the Doctors Bills:
 When my Times come, let them do what they can,
 I'll have my due, so vain a Thing is Man.
 Should *Galen* and *Hippocrates* both join,
 And *Paracelsus* with them too combine,
 Let them all meet to countermine my Strength,
 Yet they shall be my Pris'ners all at length.
 I grant that Men of Learning, worth and Art,
 May have the better of me at the Start:
 But in long Running they'll give out and tire,
 And quite the Field and leave me my Desire,
 As for those Quakes, who threaten to undo me,
 They are my Friends, and speed some Patients to me

Blind Man.

Well, if I must, I will yield you the Day;
 So 'tis enacted, and I must obey:
 Henceforth I'll count myself among your Debtors,
 For tis I see the Measure of my betters.

But

But tell me now, when did your Pow'r commence.
Death.

My Power began from *Adam's* first Offence,
Blind Man.

From *Adam's* first Offence ! O base Beginning,
Whose very first Original was Sinning.
Death.

My Rising did from *Adam's* fall begin,
And ever since my Strength and Sting from Sin.
Blind Man

To know wherein the En'mies Strength doth lie,
In my Conceit its half the Victory.
Have you Commission now for what you do ?
Death.

Yes, I Commission have, what's that to you.
Blind Man.

Yes, very much, for now I understand.
I am not altogether at your Command :
My Life's at his, who gave you this Commission,
To him I'll therefore go with my Petition ;
I'll seek his Love and in his Mercy trust,
And when my Sins are Pardon'd do your worst.
Death.

That you may know how far my Pow'r extends,
I will divorce you from your dearest Friends ;
You shall resign your Jewels, Money, Plate,
Your earthly Joys shall be out of Date ;
I will deprive you of your dainty Fare,
And strip you to the Skin, naked and bare ;
Linnen or Woolen you shall have to wind you,
As for the rest, all must be left behind you.
Bound Hand and Foot, I'll bring you to my Den,
Where constant dreadful Darknes reigns, and then
Your only dwelling House shall be a Cave,
Your lodging Room a little narrow Grave ;
A Chest your Closet, and a Sheet your Dress,
And your Companions Worms and Rottenness.

Blind

(1)
Blind Man.

If this be all the Mischief thou can do
Your Harbingers deserve more dread than you,
Diseases are your Harbingers, I'm sure,
Many of which are grievous to endure;
But when once dead, I shall not then complain,
Of Cold or Hunger, Poverty or Pain.

Death.

There's one Thing more which I to Mind do call,
When once I come, then come I once for all ;
And when my stroke doth Soul and Body sever,
What's left undone; must be undone forever.

Blind Man.

That is a great Truth, which I've learn'd to know,
There is no working in the Grave below,
To be before Hand therefore will I try.
That then I may have nought to do but die.
But tell me, Sir, do all Men die alike ?

Death.

To me they do, for whom God bids I strike ;
Look how the Foolish die, so die the Wise,
As do the Righteous, so the Sinner dies :
The greatest Difference will be hereafter,
But that's a Thing which is beyond my Charter ;
That I to some prove better, to some worse,
To some a Blessing, and to some a Curse.
That's none of mine, I dare not undertake it,
'Tis God's Appointment and Mens Works that make it,
Hence 'tis that Sinners Troubles never cease,
But the end of the upright Man is Peace.

Blind Man.

There now remains but only one Thing more,
Will not your Power be one Day out of Door ?

Death.

Must I needs tell you, Sir, 'tis certain true,
There is a Death for me as well as you ;
And mines the worst, for I must die for ever,
You may revive again, but I shall never.

Death

John Greig August 17: 1753
his book (8)

Death.

Come let that pass, the kinder to appear,
I will reveal a Secret in your Ear:
The Death of Christ upon the painful Cross,
That seem'd to be my Gain, now proves my Loss
All in his Hair the Strength of Sampson lay,
All with his Hair went Sampson's Strength away.
I have no Strength, but what I had from Sin,
I have no Sting, but what lies hid therein,
Christ suffering Death to put this Sin away,
Hath made me his whom I suppos'd my Prey.
My Strength is now decayed, my Sting abated;
My Boldness check'd, and my Dominions stated.
And I am now both faint and feeble grown;
Much like to Sampson when his Hair was gone.
In my own Craft I was compleatly routed,
My Jaws were broken and my Holders outed,
What now I Catch, I have no Power to keep,
My very Name is changed from Death to Sleep.
Tis true, I sic'd on Christ, and brought him down,
And bound him in a Prison of my own;
But all my strongest Doors, Bars, Bolts and Bands
Were but meer nothing to his mighty Hands,
He broke thro' all and left the Door quite ope,
And all his Servants Prisoners of Hope;
For tho' they die, yet with devout Affection,
They do expect a joyful Resurrection;
And with their Master to be brought again,
That they with him may evermore remain.
Thus Christ by dying did become Victorious,
And from his Bed of Darkness rose more glorious;
And I by binding him made my self fast.
And his, I know, will prove my Death at last.
Blind Man.

These Words give Comfort and Instruction too,
Henceforth I shall be better pleas'd with you.
Decreed it is for all Men once to die,
After that Judgment, then Eternity.

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To Prayer therefore will I join endeavour,
So to live here that I may live forever;
And seeing they that have and keep Christ's Words,
Whether they live or die be all the Lord's.
Repentance, Faith and new Obedience shall,
Fit and prepare me for my Funeral;
From whence I trust my Saviour will translate me,
In Season due, beyond their Reach that hate me,
Even to that Place of Life and Glory too,
Where neither Death nor Sin hath ought to do.
This Hope in me, that Word of his doth cherish,
He that believes in me shall never perish.
Now welcome Death upon my Saviour's Score,
Who would not die to live forevermore?
Death.

Sir, I perceive you speak not without Reason;
I'll leave you now, and call another Season.
Blind Man.

Call when you please, I will await that Call,
And while I stand make ready for my Fall;
In the mean Time my constant Prayers shall be,
From sudden and from endless Death

Good Lord deliver me.
*Judge not of Death by sense, least you mistake it,
Death's neither Friend nor Foe, but as you make it,
Live as you should, you need not to complain,
For where to live is Christ, to die is Gain.*

Mercy and Grace by Heavenly Power
Can make the vilest Wretch on Earth,
Forsake his Sins and Christ implore,
To Crown him with a second Birth.

So Bunyan once lay wallowing in the Mire,
'Till Grace and Mercy set his Heart on Fire;
Drew him from hence with Bands of Dying Love,
And Crown'd the Pilgrims Head with Joys above,
Joys which a thousand Deaths will recompence,
Joys which, like God, are lasting and immense.

THE

THE Great Affize :

O R,

CHRIST's Certain and Sudden
Appearance to J U D G M E N T.

J O B xiv. 2, 3.

*Man that is born of a Woman is of few Days and full of
Trouble : He cometh forth like a Flower, and is cut
down ; he flieth also like a Shadow, and continueth not.*

O That poor Earthly Mortals would attend,
With Seriousness of Mind to what is penn'd,
Here is presented clearly to the Eye,
A little World new made most gloriously,
To Day here stands proud Man, like Flowers sprite,
But look To-morrow, and he is wither'd quite:
How happy might poor fallen Man have liv'd
For ever, had he not his Maker griev'd ;
His num'rous Off-spring never would espy,
Thro' that black curtain of Mortality.
He might disdain Assaults, also despise
Grim Death ; but now, alas ! he's born to die.
Dust must to Dust, said God upon his Fall,
Entailing of that Sentence on us all:
Polluted nat'rally with that foul Sin,
Which did in Adam and poor Eve begin.

Alas !

Alas ! how swift the Days of Man pass by ;
 Swifter then Weaver's Shuttle do they fly :
 As soon as Death doth end his Days, so soon
 Man must appear before the great Tribune.
 Death will no Favour to a King afford,
 Nor Difference make 'twixt Beggar and a Lord ;
 Beauty nor Riches, Favour will obtain,
 He'll take no Bribes to mitigate their Pain,
 Nor Florid Language can him satisfy,
 For Death will tell him that he's born to die ;
 No Difference with Age and Youth he makes,
 But each alike of Death participates.
 You find *Methusalem* by Death was told,
 That die he must though he was ne'er so old ;
 Like Fruit when almost ripe, Storms can it shake,
 So Youth when almost Man, Death may him take.
 Search you Death's Lime Pits, and you'll find therein
 As many young Steers, as the Ox's Skin.
 Of all Things here certain unto Man's Eye,
 Nothings' more certain than he's born to die.

The Sinner trusting to his Riches.

And yet how proud's a Man this side the Grave,
 As if he never should an Exit have !
 Boasting, poor Worm, of an uncertain World,
 His busie carping Thoughts with care are hurl'd,
 'Till wealthy grown, proud of his Bags of Treasure,
 He trusts in Riches, taking all the Pleasure,
 His Heart can wish for ; nay, he does controul
 The Checks of Conscience to his precious Soul :
 Says to himself, Soul take thine Ease and spend
 Thy Time in Mirth, ne'er think 'twill have an End.
 Thus, thus the Sinner does abuse his God,
 And chooseth Vice instead of Virtues Road :
 He Swears and Damns, and imprecates God's Wrath,
 To strike him Dead ; but ah ! to Death he's loath.
 He damns; his very Soul, is it not just,

That

That God should do so too, and say, be curst.
 Roaring and ranting is his hellish Note;
 Quaffing so long, until his Senses float;
 Drunk like a Beast, he staggers up and down,
 Sleeps like a Hog, and is a Devil grown.
 But Oh! if God thus anger'd ready be,
 To say, thou Fool I do require of thee
 Thy Soul this Night, come give a just Account,
 To what thy Stewardship does now amount;
 How dumb and senseless would he stand to see,
 Hell ready to devour him presently:
 Fruitless would be his search to find a Place,
 'Mong Rocks to hide him from God's angry Face.
 For Flinty Rocks, and Natures Hills that soar
 Their Towering Heads so high, will be no shore,
 And all Things vanish by God's sov'reign Pow'r.

Old Age with its Troubles.

But now suppose God suffers him to live,
 Adds Mercy unto Mercy, and does give,
 Him yet a longer Time of Life and tries
 If he'll repent before Death shut his Eyes.
 He sees that Life runs round like to a Wheel,
 And wrinkled Years upon his Brows do steal;
 Besides gray Hairs upon his Head do grow,
 Scatter'd it lies like to a drift of Snow.
 A foggy Dimness doth his Eyes assail,
 Sinking into his Head his Eyes they fail;
 His Tongue does falter, and his Hands they shake,
 And with the Palsie every Limb doth quake:
 His staggering Billows cannot stand at all;
 His House is so decay'd tis near to fall;
 His Age brings with it Sickness and Disease;
 His Limbs so feeble are, seek sluggish Ease;
 His Pleasure's gone, it doth him sore annoy,
 To think of Youth's Delight and former Joy:
 His Mind doth Dream of Death before his Eyes,
 And Death's pale Image doth his Soul surprize.

God's Mercy abus'd, Death sent.

His Glass just run, he's even out of Breath,
 Ready to yield his Life to conquering Death,
 Who will no longer Favour his old Age,
 But is resolv'd in his Death t'engage;
 It peeps behind the Curtain in his Face,
 And draws the same then dreadful is his Case;
 His Tongue doth falter and his Veins they start
 Like Sticks asunder, nay his very Heart
 Ceaseth its Motion, and his Virals gone;
 So that at last he's colder than a Stone:
 His Kinsfolk dear his dying Eyes do shut,
 And for his Bed into a Coffin put.
 But when his Soul hath parted clean away,
 And left the Body like a lump of Clay,
 The Carcase is no colder than the Love,
 Of Wife and Friends, who do forgetful prove,
 And 'cause he cannot go he's carried forth,
 Accompany'd with all his Friends of Worth;
 Hir'd Mourners show his Years and Pomp so brave,
 Convey him to his cold and sad like Grave;
 But when they come to Death's pale Habitation,
 And sees the Pit which gape with Desolation,
 They throw the naked Coffin in, of all
 His Freinds, not one for Love will with him fall
 All get them gone, he still alone doth ly,
 A rotten Worm-bait, Tale of Mortality.

The Vanity of his Wealth.

Thus ends his earthly Splendor and his Pleasure.
 Wife, Children, Kinsfolk and his Bags of Treasure,
 Are left behind to hold the same Estate
 A little while, but Follow must his Fate:
 Nay they're not sure t'enjoy it half a Day,
 For Death doth oft sweep Families away.
 The Infant's instantly depriv'd of's Mother,
 Husband from's Wife, the Sister from her Brother,
 Children

Children in Cradles often feel the smart,
 Of conquering Death the King of Terrors Dart,
 Therefore, O Man, why art thou overjoy'd,
 When all thou hast may quickly be destroy'd,
 Many stormy blast of Sickness blow,
 All Features passeth like a Minute show,
 Alas, poor Worm, what Thing can thou call thine,
 But sudden Death may quickly say 'tis mine :
 Behold thy Frailty ! See thy Glass does run !
 Therefore repent before the Time is gone.
 Both Young and Old have this before your Eye,
 You're born to Happiness or Misery.
 Think at Christ's coming, you must then arise
 And there be judged at the Great Assize.

Matth. xxiv. 14. *Watch therefore, for you know not
 what Hour the Lord doth come.*

The Manner of Christ's coming.

Serene, like as the Days of Noah were,
 So shall the coming of our Lord appear :
 Eating and Drinking they will merry make,
 And carnal Souls Security will take,
 Just like a Thief who cometh in the Night,
 So will the Son of Man in Glory bright,
 Come down with numerous Angels, and the sound
 Of Trumpets shrill, unnerving thus the Ground,
 Ye Dead arise ; Lord what a Horror here
 Is to the Wicked, who must straight appear,
 And come to Judgment ! O how this begins,
 To bring to mind their many wretched Sins.
 Conscience immediately appears and must
 Be the sad Soul's accusing Witness first ;
 Hanging their Heads, cannot endure the Shocks,
 Of God's revenging Wrath, then to the Rocks,
 They run in vain, most miserable Elves,
 To seek some sheltring Place to hide themselves.
 Then are they separated as they stand.

The

The Goats i' th' left, the Sheep at Christ's right Hand
 O! the sad Shriecks they make, the rueful cries,
 To see Hell gaping just before there Eyes!
 The Heavens melt away with fervent Heat,
 The Earth is burning underneath our Feet:
 The Books are opened, judg'd now they must,
 Condemned next, then are pronounced curst.

The blessed Estate of the Godly.

But happy, ever happy are the Sheep
 Of Christ, who Joy for evermore will reap,
 When he shall say to's Saints, Come, come ye thither,
 You of my chosen Flock blest of my Father;
 The Kingdom now enjoy, for you prepar'd,
 Before the World was made and Heavens rear'd
 O what Soul-ravishing sweet News is this!
 Angels attend him presently to bliss,
 With Glory crown'd, eternally they sing,
 Hosannahs to their Heavenly Lord and King.
 Rivers of joy before their Eyes run by,
 Oceans of Pleasure to Eternity,
 Cloathed with Robes, shining like Jasper stone,
 They sing Christ's Praises on his heavenly Throne,
 Angels attend these Saints, and what is more,
 Joy hath no end, but lasts for evermore.

The Miserable State of the Wicked.

But hark! what Grief the damned does attend,
 Who have no Advocate to stand their Friend,
 Sentence must pass'd be, Go, go to dwell,
 In endless burning in the Lake of Hell;
 Depart with Devils who did you entice
 To hate your Saviour, and to cleave to Vice;
 Go to that everlasting Pit, and ly,
 Howling with Fiery Fiends perpetually.
 O what a wretched Sight't will be to see,
 The Devils dragging them to Misery?
 Husbands to see their Wives convey'd to bliss,

Whilst

Whilst they with damned Souls saluation miss:
 Son from the Father, Father from the Son,
 Must separated be i' th' Day of Doom,
 Praising of God, and own it to be just,
 Their own Relations are with Devils curst,
 The Godly they to Heaven take their Flight,
 Whilst Wicked take their Course to Hell outright,
 Lord let us watch continually and pray,
 That we may be prepar'd for that great Day;
 Give us Repentance that while here we live,
 We may the Offers of his Grace receive;
 And feed our Souls, O God with thy free Grace,
 That we may stand before our Saviours Face:
 O grant that when the Force of Death we try,
 We may cry out where is thy Victory?
 And mounting up to thee, with joy may sing,
 Oh gloomy Grave where is thy bitter Sting?

F I N I S.

