

Who that possesses within him a spark of hope, would wish to be for ever blotted out of existence, when this short troubled life is over. There is something in our composition that shrinks from the hateful idea of annihilation: we want to live again: we instinctively look beyond the grave, and, while we hope, we feel that the life we now live in the flesh is but the infancy of existence, and we would not barter our expectations in the future for anything this life only has to offer. The despairing, the unforgiven, the reckless, might in the sure prospect of eternal woe, desire to be eternally forgotten of God, not because they do not want to live again, but because they shrink affrighted from the penalties of the future life. Proclaim sin as without punishment,—offer eternal happiness to sinners and saints alike, and out of the myriads of the living and the dead, you will not find a solitary being preferring annihilation. Therefore, because the ungodly will gain nothing, and the unholy fear everything from the resurrection, it is no argument against the truth that God has ordained for every human being an unending future; for it is not immortality, but the curse of a tormented immortality that sinners fear.

There would be no advocates for sepulchres shut eternally if their occupants were sure, or even hopeful, of perfect consummation of bliss both in body and soul. None would desire the silence and dishonor of a grave, if it were in his choice to exchange them for the raptures and honors of Heaven: therefore we pass by as not worth consideration any plea against immortality which arises out of the fears of those who by their sins have shut the doors of Heaven against themselves, and for their own sakes would consign all others to an endless sleep in death. And before we seek instruction from Revelation, we would ask Nature what is her verdict between those who hope for immortality, and those who deny its truth, and she will send you to the murmuring brooks,