

My Comfort in Death

Death is a cruel and a inevitable reality. In my work as a physician I have seen scores of people die, including many children and babies.

One day I too must depart from this world. The prospect of death is fearful because I did not always do what is right, and I know that I have to give an account of myself to God, the righteous Judge of the universe. I should have obeyed him, but I did not, hence I cannot expect anything more than his wrath and condemnation in hell.

Is there any hope even for a sinner like me?

Anselm of Canterbury addresses the dying person in a series of questions and answers:

Question. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus died for you?

Answer. I believe it.

Question. Do you thank him for his passion and death?

Answer. I do thank him.

Question. Do you believe that you cannot be saved except by his death?

Answer. I believe it.

Having ascertained that the dying person truly believes in Christ, Anselm comforts him with the following words:

“Come then, while life remains in you; in his death alone place your whole trust; in nothing else place any trust; to his death commit yourself wholly; with this alone cover yourself wholly; and if the Lord your God will to judge you, say, ‘Lord, between your judgment and myself I present the death of our Lord Jesus Christ; I cannot contend with you in any other way.’ And if he shall say that you are a sinner, you say: ‘Lord, I interpose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my sins and yourself.’ If he says that you deserve condemnation, say: ‘Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my evil deeds and yourself, and I offer his merits for those which I ought to have and have not.’ If he says that he is angry with you, say: ‘Lord, I oppose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between your wrath and myself.’ And when you have finished, say again: ‘Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between you and me.’”

Those words are balsam to my soul. What was true a thousand years ago remains relevant for me today, for like our forefathers we too are guilty sinners; God is forever just, and Jesus Christ is ever ready to save completely those who come to the Father through him.

The Bible assures us who believe in Christ that “God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. How much more then, since we are now justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath” (Romans 5:8, 9).

This then is my only hope. Christ died for me! On that day, the Lord will save me from the wrath to come, and the punishment I deserve, for God already counts me righteous on account of the blood which Christ shed for me.