

The State of the Deceased

K.1/6

1st Chapt Zechariah. 5 Verse
Your Fathers, where are they.

The answer to this demand of the Prophet, is a very solemn one. They have left the world, and are now in their respective graves, where they shall rest, till the trump of God shall summon them to everlasting judgments. Then standing before his dreadful tribunal they shall each receive the righteous sentence according

to that they have done, whether
it be good or bad. In the mean
time, they are in that invisible
world, whether we and our
children shall follow them;
nor is it more certain that
they once lived, than that
we shall likewise die.

What a variety of
reflections are presented
to the soul, when we
contemplate the ages that
are past. What useful and
instructive lessons are thus

to be learned, if we will but
dispose our hearts to receive
conviction. The subject ani-
mated, though it affect us.
If for a moment it should
cast a gloom over our mind,
the hope which is set before
us affords an ample amend.
If it places the image of
Death before our eyes, it
directs our faith to him,
who himself entered the
dreadful lists of the enemy
of mankind; and delivered
them, who through fear of

Death, would otherwise
have been, all their lifetime
subject unto bondage.

From the question in my text
and the reply which faith
enabled us to make. I shall
direct your attention to the
following particulars.

First. The insufficiency of
human projects and designs.

Secondly. The certainty of a
future resurrection
to judgment.

Thirdly. The necessity of leading
a godly and holy life: for
we would die the death of the
righteous.

First: Our thoughts on the app-
roach we all are making
towards the grave: set before us
in the strongest light, the
insufficiency of those projects
which are formed by those
lived fallible mortals.

Go to now, saith the Apostle "ye
that say, to day or to morrow we
will go into such a city and

continue there a year, and buy
and sell, and get gain, whereas
ye know not, what shall be on
the morrow; For what is your life?
It is even as a vapour, that
appeareth for a little time, and
then vaniseth away. The conside-
ration of the shortness of life for-
bids our laying too great a
stress on visionary means of
worldly advantage, lest in the
midst of our designs, we shall
be called upon to join the multi-
tude

of departed souls, while unprepa-
red in the greatest and most
solemn of all concerns.

I am aware, that a spirit of
enterprize may have its use,
and that, as well as a Criminal,
there is a laudable ambition in
the human mind, which ought
not to be suppressed. Let not
therefore the energies of the
soul be weakened; let not
the arm of honest industry
be checked in its exertions

but, in all our actions, in all our
endeavours, let us, with a due
sense of our own infirmity,
(Creatures as we are of an
hour) submit ourselves, and
our hopes to the Author and
giver of our being: If the
Lord will, we shall live, and
do this ^{or} and that. We are not
commanded to be idle, but
whatever we do, to do it in
the name of our Lord
Jesus Christ. our best

interests thus secured, should
death interrupt us in the
prosecution of our designs,
still we are the Lords. Those
who are departed hence in
his faith, and fear, can never
at any ~~time~~ period be said to have
left the world before their times,
some of these faithful servants
of their Lord, had perhaps, in the
course of nature, many years
of health in prospect, but God
who had proved them and
found them worthy of

Himself in the midst of their
pilgrimage deemed them ripe
for glory, and consigned them
to the mansions of rest, and
peace, and everlasting joy.

Do you imagine my friends,
these glorified spirits lament,
that they have left some
project unaccomplished,
some design imperfectly execu-
ted on earth, when they see
the eternal gates of Heaven

opening to receive them, and
hear their Redeemer's voice
calling them to the participation
of those bright rewards, which
his own precious blood shedding
procured for them.

Our ignorance of what
is to happen to us in future,
affords another argument,
in addition to that deduced
from the shortness of human
life: to check our too eager
pursuits of sublimary enjoy-
ments

How can we under such
circumstances presume
to devote our time, our
thoughts, our faculties to
projects, slow in their operation
uncertain in their success,
and distant accomplishment.
Who knoweth
what is good for Man,
in this life, all the
days of his vain life
he knoweth us a shadow.
Of what is to come we all

know nothing, a dark and impe-
netrable veil hangs over the
remainder of our days.

Far be it from my
thoughts to call in question
the procedure of divine provi-
dence: there, as in all other
dealings with mankind,
our heavenly Father ordereth
the concerns of his children
with parental mercy. Could
we know before hand of
the misfortunes that may
befall us, existence would

in some instances be an insupportable burden: Whereas hope now casts a gleam of Sunshine athwart these hours, which would otherwise have been passed in gloomy presages of sorrow, many a gracious interval of serenity enables us to recover our strength before the tempest is again stirred up round about us: and though the winds rage, the rains descend, and

the floods swell, we trust in the mercy of our God, and abide the horror of the dark and cloudy day.

The Experience of what has passed, should warn and admonish us in future. Our Fathers had their plans and designs: they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, and so far ~~they~~ as in these occupations they served their generation,

they fulfilled the will of God.
But in these pursuits some
of them served the creature
more than the creator:
They forgot God their Saviour:
they pursued unreal
phantoms of Missionary
creator's, and in the pride
of their hearts exclaimed,
To morrow shall be as
this day, and much more
abundant. Yet now
where are they?

are they? How are they lost
in oblivion. In the grave, the
ambitious and the humble,
the turbulent, and peaceable
lie down together, and for
the most part, are heard of
no more? Unless their actions
have obtained them a
place in the recording page
of history, which is more
frequently a register of human
vice than a pleasing
memorial of whatever things
are true, whatever things

we have and of goods
report. —————

Let us for a moment
suppose, that those persons
after whom the prophet
enquires, could stand
before us: that the multitude
of departed spirits, the
characters of antiquity, our
own ancestors among the
number, could rise from
their several tombs, and
address us: Gracious Heaven,
what a sermon would
they preach. —————

Secondly. And rise they
most certainly shall. The
awful scene is not imagin-
nary. A day will come,
we appeal to the word of God
for the truth of what we say,
when "all that are in the
grave, shall hear his
voice, shall stand forth,
and appear before him.
Wherever our Fathers are
now, we know that they
shall then assemble at
the judgment of Christ.

Whether their remains now
lie in the remotest parts
of the habitable world, or
whether they were commi:
itted to the bosom of the
deep, it matters not, space
as well as time, shall be
no more. When the Son
of God, shall come with
power and great glory
before him shall be
gathered all nations.
Then amidst that
countless multitude,

Shall we and our Children,
and our Fathers await
the righteous sentence,
which shall proceed out
of his mouth. In that
solemn hour, those decrees
of Providence which now
seem mysterious, and
which are beyond the
reach of human compre:
-hension, will appear
to have been ordained

by unerring Wisdom, and
infinite Justice, and all
mankind shall bow down
with humble submission
before God, crying out
in accents of adoration.

"Thou art righteous Lord
in all thy ways, and holy
in all thy works. Then shall
oppressed innocence lift
up its head with joy

no longer exposed to the fury
of the oppressors. Those tears
which had flowed down
the cheek of the poor and
destitute, shall be wiped
away forever from their
eyes, and the proud
enemies of God, who
had their vain triumph
on Earth for a time

shall know against
whom they dared to
exalt themselves. —

~~the proud enemies of God
who had their vain triumphs
or last for a time, that they
against whom they dared
to exalt themselves.~~

With the circumstances
which shall attend on that
awful day, it has pleased
God, in his wisdom to
acquaint us, and by his
divine revelation to impress
our minds with a due
sense of its certainty. It
may however, be remarked

that though the terrors of the Lord
are occasionally set before
our view, the voice of inspi-
-ration, even on that momen-
-tous subject, rather animates
our hopes, than awakes
our fears. Let us in this
light consider the particular
descriptions of its second
coming, which are har-
-ded down to us in the
oracles of truth.

In the first of these our
Lord himself reveals to his
disciples the manner of his
future coming. The separation
of the wicked from the just.
The trial both of the one, and
the other: and their adju-
-dication to everlasting
punishment, or to life eternal.
Nothing can be imagined
more truly awful. We see
the whole world standing
before the tribunal. Christ
himself the Judge arrayed

in all the glory of the
omnipotent God. Heaven is
his throne, Earth is his
footstool, innumerable
multitudes of angels, the
ministers of his judgment,
and of his mercy.

The second passage of
Scripture alluded to, is the
memorable account of
the Resurrection as delivered
by St Paul to his Corinthian Con-
verts. It is the voice of comfort,
of hope of joy, in the midst
of sorrow. It is the

triumph of Faith over Death,
and the Grave; its resurrection
as leading to ours, the myste-
rious change from mortality
to glory, when the last trumpet
shall sound. The future
incorruptible state of those
who are now sleeping in
It. The sting of Death
blacked out: the power of the grave
overthrown, all is set before
our eyes in such lively colours,
that our hearts echo the song
of exultation, and we are

led to exclaim with the
inspired apostle, Thanks
be to God, who giveth us the
Victory: through our Lord
Jesus X.

The last passage alluded to I
shall recite at length, desues
ting you, at the same time
to keep in your minds, what
has been said, that the
voice of Religion, is the voice
of joy. I would not have
you to be ignorant brethren
concerning them which are
(1. Thes. 1. Ch.)

a sleep, that ye sorrow not, even
as others which have no hope.
For if ye believe, that Jesus
died and rose again, even
so, them also, which sleep in
Jesus will God bring with him.
For this we say unto you by the
word of the Lord, that we, which
are alive, and remain unto
the coming of the Lord, shall
not prevent them which are asleep.
For the Lord himself, shall descend
from heaven with shout, with
the voice of the Archangel
and with the trump of God.

and the dead in Xth shall
rise first: then we which are
alive, and remain, shall
be caught up together with
them in the clouds to meet
the Lord in the air: and so
shall we be with the Lord.
Wherefore comfort one
another with these words:

The Question then, as far
as it respects our Fathers,
is fully answered. They sleep

in death: they shall awake
to judgment. But this is not
a subject of useless speculation
it has its fruits unto holiness,
if we apply to ourselves every
particular of what has
been said.

Our Fathers are departed from
the world. they had their season
of probation. We, are at this
time passing through ours,
the event which has taken
place with respect to them

await all of us in our turn
It is appointed unto all
men once to die; the most
consummate wisdom cannot
devise any expedient to
avert the sentence. Honours
riches, power, cannot avail
to defer its accomplishment.
Let us remember then,
and be this the inference
from all that has been
said, that here we
have no continuing
city.

that we are subject to the same
immutable laws as were our
fathers, that we hold our lives
on the same tenure by which
they held theirs, that we shall
be called upon to leave this
world, whether it is to us a world
of joy or of sorrow. That we shall
join the company of departed
spirits. And that our
children rising up in our
stead, shall in due time
submit to the inevitable
decree themselves, they

will probably enquire, with
some Curiosity after us
their Ancestors. If our
Vices and follies come to
their Ears, our Names will
not escape the severity of
reproach. If our Virtues
have entitled us to
their remembrance
a tear of pious gratitude
shall embalm our
Useless remains.

But motives of a Superior
nature call upon us to live
Soberly, righteously and
Godly in this present world.
As we employ the space of
time allotted us here, so shall
we be happy or miserable
hereafter. The duties are plain
The rewards proposed are
glorious. The dangers we
have to expect are pointed
out to us by the fingers
of God: and we are
Promitted

Promised his support, that we
may be enabled to overcome
them. While we have light,
therefore, let us walk in the
light. Let the consideration of
the shortness, and vicissitudes
of human life teach us to
place our share trust
in the author of our salva-
tion the Lord Jesus X^p, who
having visited the earth
in great humility, and
having himself tasted
of death, is now exalted

at the right hand of the
throne of God. And let me
beseech you, in his name,
and for his sake, to walk
worthy of the vocation
where with ye are called.
He is the resurrection and
the life. If ye believe in him,
though ye be dead, yet shall
ye live: for whosoever
liveth and believeth in him
shall never die. Though
you fall, you shall not
be cast down, for the Lord

will uphold you with his
hand, your hope shall be full
of immortality. God will
make you partakers of the
inheritance of the saints in
light. He whom ye have
loved, and under whose
banner ye have fought,
shall welcome you to the
participation of everlasting
glory.

In the mean time,
your memorial shall be
sacred even on earth

Your children, and your children's
children, shall arise and
call you blessed. Your virtues
shall take root in an honorable
soil; they shall spring up from
the ground, and blossom from
the dust. And when the
question in my text is put
to your posterity: "Your fathers
where are they?" they will
reply with generous passion
of soul: "Their bodies are
buried in peace, but their
name liveth forever and
ever — Amen —"

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C. Plinio 6 Dec 1574
at the funeral of the late
Mr Kimberley Senr