

# Moments for YOU

Volume 51, Number 1

Theme: Eternity



## ETERNITY NOW

Eternity is a difficult thing to think of. It not only boggles the mind, but it also brings uncertainty and fear to many who ponder it. It is our aim with this little paper to bring eternity before you *now*, so that you may better understand it and be prepared to face it.

### ETERNITY AS A CONCEPT

What is eternity? Many definitions and illustrations have been attempted, but they all seem to fall short of fully capturing the concept. This is probably because we are so accustomed to time—to counting seconds, days, and years—that we try to picture eternity as never-ending time. But eternity isn't truly time that never ends; it is more properly the absence of time. Eternity is timelessness.

### ETERNITY AS A REALITY

Regardless of the way we choose to conceptualize eternity, let us never lose sight of the truth that eternity is a reality. The passing of each day brings us all nearer to it, and we must all enter it sooner or later. What will eternity be like? The Bible tells us a lot about it—in fact the whole message of the Bible was written by God who “inhabith eternity” (Isaiah 57:15) so that we might know how to spend it with Him.

When all the teaching of the Bible on eternity is “boiled down” to its essence, we have two things left: heaven and hell. These disparate destinies become the dwellings of all who have walked the earth, and your reality and mine for eternity will be either the joys of heaven or the woes of hell.

### ETERNITY AS A PERSPECTIVE

It's amazing how things can

change when we get a new perspective. The earth seems very large to us, but when compared to the vastness of the universe it becomes very small. In an even more impressive way, the significance of the things which occupy us now will change drastically when we look at them in view of eternity.

Are you prepared for the reality of eternity? Do you know where you will be in eternity? Are the things you care about today things that will benefit yourself or others for eternity? We urge you to take time *now* to consider eternity, and trust that it will change your life! Someone has said: “Life is too uncertain, death is too sure, and eternity is too long to further risk delay. God's Word is to be accepted *now*.”

—T. Don Johnson

## HOURS AND ETERNITY

The Lord Jesus speaks of two “hours” in the fifth chapter of John. May we prayerfully consider these important times and weigh their eternal significance. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (v. 25). Again, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (vv. 28,29). We have brought out here the hour of *grace*, and the hour of *judgment*.

### THE HOUR OF GRACE

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son

**MOMENTS FOR YOU Vol. 51, 1st Quarter, 2007.** A quarterly publication sent free upon request as the Lord provides.

**Publisher:** Moments With The Book, PO Box 322, Bedford, PA 15522. A non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. Visit us online at [www.mwtb.org/mfy](http://www.mwtb.org/mfy) **Senior Editor:** Tim Johnson **Editor:** T. Don Johnson



of God: and they that hear shall live” (v. 25). This hour began with His own ministry on earth, and is not finished; though He has finished the work of redemption, and is now at the right hand of God in glory. Who are the dead? All who have not heard and not believed Him are dead. Those who have heard and believed Him now live, for “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” What kind of life? It is eternal life! Not life in this world; not life that passes away. Thank God the believer has eternal life.

#### THE HOUR OF JUDGMENT

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (vv. 28,29). The resurrection of life, and the resurrection of judgment, are as different as light and darkness. The resurrection of life is a resurrection unto blessing. It is the moment when the Lord shall come, and shall take up from the grave His own people, bought by His own blood, and who, through grace, have found Him to be their Saviour (1 Thess. 4:13-17). The resurrection of judgment is when unrepentant and unbelieving men will stand before the Great White Throne, and be judged according to their deeds (Revelation 20:11-15). And what will that be like? No man can depict that awful moment when God raises man for eternal judgment.

#### THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCE

Notice the difference in the character of the two hours of which our Lord speaks here. During the first hour He quickens into *life* by His word: “For as the Father has life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life

in Himself” (v. 26) Then there is the second hour, the hour of *judgment*, because the Father has also “given Him authority to execute judgment” (v. 27). Do you suppose the first hour is endless, and that the long-suffering of God with man’s sin is to be infinite and eternal? No! Make no mistake, the hour of grace is about to close. When, God only knows, but the ending thereof will introduce judgment in place of grace. God is giving you now the opportunity of being saved: “These things I say, that ye might be saved” (v. 34).

Are you saved? Do you want to be saved? He wants you to be saved (1 Timothy 2:3,4). How may you be saved? Only by Him. I remember the time when I was not converted. I began to think of my soul, and I thought I must *do* something to be saved. I was only a poor dead man, trying to work out a salvation I did not possess. I was dead when I began, and I was dead when I finished. Of course I failed. My conscience accused me of sin, and then came the thought, “I do not have a life that will please God; I do not have one thing suitable to God. I get the sense that I am dead towards God.” But then I heard, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:9). God proposes to *give* you life, eternal life; “The wages of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life” (Romans 6:23). You cannot win it, or earn it. You cannot buy it, and do not deserve it. But God gives it to us.

I know the wages of sin is death, but what do I see? I see the cross of Calvary, and the work Jesus Christ has done on the cross. He has taken all of the penalties and demerit of sin, borne sins, atoned for them,

and thank God, blotted them out. “Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” (Hebrews 9:26). Look, look at the cross! There my sins have been borne, and have disappeared.

### THE CRITICAL CHOICE

This is how—because of the cross—God can righteously and freely give us life, eternal life. My dear reader, do you have this life? If not, you are in a poor condition. How frail is the life you have. You are without strength, a poor sinner, and must let Jesus save you. The gospel is very simple, and very blessed. Listen! “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 5:6). It is all the work of Christ. There is no work on your part, or mine. Salvation is by faith, and faith only: not by works (Ephesians 2:8,9).

“He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (v. 24). On the other hand, the person who does not repent and believe the Gospel is on his way to judgment. Note this verse with a top and a bottom, but no middle: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). Which half of the verse are you in? Have you taken advantage of the current “hour of grace” and called upon Jesus Christ to be your Saviour? If so, hear Him say, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life” (John 6:47). If not, beware the hour of judgment.

—Adapted from *Seekers For Light* by W.T.P. Wolston

“Eternity to the godly is a day that has no sunset; eternity to the wicked is a night that has no sunrise.”  
—Thomas Watson

## ECHOES OF ETERNITY

Eternity! What a word! Who can measure the height, the depth, the length, and the breadth of such a thought? It is fathomless, it is infinite, it is unsearchable as God Himself, and past finding out.

Yet eternity surely lies before us all. Let us pause here, dear reader, and reverently consider this. We may be very near the close of time; both the reader and the writer may be standing as it were on the brink of eternity, with all its vastness stretching out before us. How serious, how soul-subduing is the thought! Thousands daily are passing away—young and old, rich and poor—passing on to eternity!

In view of this most solemn fact, let me ask you a pointed yet friendly question. It concerns your deepest personal interests. Weigh well its important and solemn issue. Oh! my dear reader, **where will you spend eternity?**

Consider that Divine Person, Jesus, who has come out from eternity to this earth. His dear, toiling feet have been on the shores of time. He has felt and measured the deep need and guilt of sinners. He has declared the love and compassion of God to fallen man, and, before He left the world, surrendered Himself as a willing victim for man’s sin upon the cross of Calvary. There He died for sinners—for you and me.

We stood beside the remains of one who had known the Lord Jesus for years, who had opportunity to test

the veritable reality of these truths and the blessedness of trusting such a Saviour. We read to those gathered almost the last words which fell from her lips—words which uttered so near to the final step of time into eternity, they seemed the very echoes of eternity. She said: “Tell all those to whom I have spoken during my life, that I have proved Jesus to be all that ever I told them He was.” Millions have proved the same, and you too, dear reader, are welcome to prove it for yourself.

Another, about to pass into eternity, turned to a loved friend close by, and said, “Had I ten thousand hearts, I would give them all to Jesus.” She appreciated the grace that had bought her salvation, that had put her sins away; and now, about to

go into her Saviour’s presence, she uttered beforehand what she would say in eternity.

A popular preacher, as he lay upon his death bed, was deep in thought. At last he broke the silence, as he turned to a friend by his side: “I have been looking out into eternity; and oh! if I could only return, what a different preaching I would preach!” He saw the past in light of eternity.

May eternity govern our thoughts, our motives, our words, our daily life, in every thing. If yet unsaved, may its solemnity, dear reader, lead you to the Saviour’s feet in repentance; confess to Him your sins, your guilt, your need, and receive Him as your own Saviour and Lord. Then will these echoes express the sentiments of your own heart. —A.E. Booth

## ETERNAL THINGS

Many things are described in the Bible as being eternal or everlasting. Here are some of them.

“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” *Deuteronomy 33:27*

“His mercy is everlasting.” *Psalms 100:5*

“Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness.” *Psalms 119:142*

“In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” *Isaiah 26:4*

“With everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee.” *Isaiah 54:8*

“The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light.” *Isaiah 60:19*

“The Lord is the true God ... and an everlasting king.” *Jeremiah 10:10*

“I [God] have loved thee with an everlasting love.” *Jeremiah 31:3*

“Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” *Matthew 25:41*

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.” *Matthew 25:46*

“Eternal weight of glory.” *2 Cor. 4:17*

“The eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus.” *Eph. 3:11*

“Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction.” *2 Thess. 1:9*

“God ... hath given us everlasting consolation.” *2 Thess. 2:16*

“To [Jesus Christ] be honour and power everlasting.” *1 Timothy 6:16*

“The salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.” *2 Tim. 2:10*

“He became the author of eternal salvation.” *Hebrews 5:9*

“By His own blood He ... obtained eternal redemption for us.” *Heb. 9:12*

“Eternal inheritance.” “An inheritance incorruptible ... reserved in heaven for you.” *Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:4*

“Everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” *2 Pet. 1:11*

## ETERNAL LIFE

### WHAT IT'S NOT

Eternal life is frequently confounded with *eternal existence* and *immortality*, but it is not either of these. All people will eternally exist, but not all have eternal life, because that is God's gift to believers only (John 3:36). Unbelievers "shall not see life," yet they will exist, for it is added, "The wrath of God *abideth* on him." Nor is eternal life the same as immortality. God alone has immortality as an independent possession of self-existence (1 Timothy 6:16). Subordinately angels, too, are immortal (Luke 20:36). Immortality when applied to believers refers alone to the body when it will be raised or changed (1 Cor. 15:53,54). Need we add that the soul of man is immortal, although the word is not applied to it in Scripture.

Eternal life, therefore, is necessarily distinct from both eternal existence and immortality. Neither angels nor unbelievers are said to have eternal life, though the former are immortal, and the latter eternally exist.

### WHAT IT IS

How is eternal life received? It is the gift of God (Romans 6:23) through Jesus Christ (John 10:28), given to all who believe on Him for salvation (1 John 5:13). All believers have eternal life, both in the Son as its source (John 1:4; 1 John 5:11), and in believers as derived from and dependant upon Him (1 John 5:12).

That eternal life is actually and positively *in* believers is very simply shown by our Lord in John 15:4,5. Christ is the vine, and believers are the branches, in whom the life of the vine is the life and power for bearing fruit. The source of life for us is the Son, and we have it *from* Him and *in* ourselves (see John 6:53,54) Again,

in 1 John 3:15, the Bible speaks of sinners as *not* having eternal life abiding in them. This is in contrast to true believers, who *do* have it abiding in them.

Eternal life is rarely mentioned in the first three Gospels, and only then as a future thing (Matthew 25:46; Mark 10:30). Paul and John speak of eternal life as a matter of promise also (Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25). Thus eternal life is spoken of as in us *now*, and also as *future*. Eternal life is needful for the soul's enjoyment of Christ and delight in all that is holy, good, and heavenly. When a soul is born of God, then he only and truly begins to live, and that is termed *eternal life*.

—Adapted from *Doctrinal Summaries* by Walter Scott.

## HAVING AND KNOWING

Some years ago I had occasion to speak with a lady who was traveling beside me, "Kindly allow me to ask you a question: Do you have everlasting life?"

Her reply was, "I hope so." I told her that if she *had* everlasting life, she should *know* it.

I continued, "Allow me to ask you another question: Do you know by faith the Lord Jesus Christ as *your* Saviour? She earnestly said that she surely did, so I called her attention to John 6:47: "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." I said, "Let's go over it again," and repeated the verse, pausing after "hath ..."

"Everlasting life!" she shouted aloud. "I *have* everlasting life!" Oh, the blessedness of resting on the Word of God, and having confidence in it, because it is the Word of God.

"*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life*" (1 John 5:13). —John G. Boate

## ETERNITY

Few words in the language are as hard to comprehend as this synonym for forever-ness. To feel its frustrating elusiveness, just think back to the time before the world was made, then back to that period before even the angels were created, back to the time when there was nothing or no one but God. Go back still farther and farther to the beginningless beginning. Back, back, back. God always was. He never did begin to be.

Then project your mind ahead into the future—after this earth has been destroyed, after sin has vanished, after time has ceased. Forward, forward, forward. Forever and ever. No end. No end.

Then, as your brain seems to strain against its narrow confines, remember that you are going to live eternally. Forever and ever! Endless life!

Eternity! How men have tried to capture its meaning! Hendrik Van Loon, for instance, gave us this classic though inadequate illustration:

High up in the North in the land called Svithjod, there stands a rock. It is a hundred miles high, and a hundred miles wide. Once every thousand years a little bird comes to this rock to sharpen its beak. When the rock has been thus worn away, then a single day of eternity will have gone by.

Rowland Dixon Edwards tried to depict it as follows:

Aboard an ocean steamer we take a thimble, attach a thread to it, drop it over the vessel's side and bring up a thimble-full of salt water taken out of the ocean. This may represent time taken out of the ocean of eternity.

Eternity is an ocean without shores. It is time without end. It is the immediate moment forever present. It is the lifetime of God.

Even words seem to groan under the weight of the idea.

And no man can claim to be rational who does not take into account the overwhelming fact that this life is but a grain of sand on the limitless shores of eternity. His whole path should be formulated in this light. He should live with eternity's values in view.

It is said that Milan Cathedral possesses three adjoining doors. Over the first is carved a wreath of roses with the inscription, "All that pleases us is but for a moment." The third door is capped with a cross and the words, "All that troubles us is but for a moment." Then over the center door is the reminder, "That only is important which is eternal."

As Christians, then, we must come to grips with the fact of eternity. We must closet ourselves alone with its appalling reality. Then when we go forth there will be a strange gleam in our eyes, and a strange determination in our hearts that our plans will not end in time. We will live for *then*, not for now!

—From *Think of Your Future* by William MacDonald.

## ETERNAL PROSPERITY

Psalms 73 gives clear light on some of the deepest questions which meet mankind. It gives us the key to the *present* and *future* of the righteous and the wicked—of the man of faith and the man of unbelief. The notion of "do good and you will prosper" is challenged when the wicked seem to prosper more than the righteous in this life.

The key to the seeming enigma is found in this, that the man of God has God with him in time *and* in eternity, while the man of the world never knows God. That is the secret of the difference. It is having God with us

and for us, knowing and loving and trusting Him; or it is the opposite, being wilfully ignorant of Him, that makes the immense difference, a difference as wide as heaven and hell. It is God known, loved, enjoyed, now and forever; or God rejected, hated, disowned, cast off, now and forever.

When we look at things as men look at them, we get into confusion. To see clearly, we need to see things in the light of God. When we consider the latter end of the wicked in the light of the Word, there will be no place left for being envious when we see the prosperity of the wicked. All their riches and earthly prosperity are but for a moment, as it were. But to live without God, and then to die and pass into eternity without Him—to be forever without Him, banished from Him—the awful darkness of it passes our comprehension. “Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places: Thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors” (vv. 18,19). What a terrible contrast to their pride and satisfaction while on earth! The prosperity of the wicked is all around us. Men make a god of it; they seek after it, bend all their energies to secure it; and yet, when they get it, it destroys them.

How blessed the contrast: “I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever” (vv. 23-26). Here is the secret of the matter. God is the portion of His people. To have Him with us and for us, to know His

love, to know what Christ has done for us, to be guided by His counsel, and afterward received to glory—all this is true riches, durable riches; it is *eternal prosperity*. And to think that it is all the free gift of God, purchased for us by the death of Christ on the cross, given to whosoever will have it, without money or price. How sad that so many are losing all this blessing, spending their lives in vanity, laying up for themselves treasures of wrath and destruction!

Was the psalmist right in saying in verse 14, “All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning”? No; his words are rather the result of his state of mind than actual experience. He was listening to the tempter, and it seemed this way to him at the time. If we turn to such scriptures as 1 Peter 1: 6,7; James 1:2-4; and Hebrews 12:11, we find that trials and chastening by no means fill up the believer’s life. When we are conscious that God is holding our right hand, it makes a great difference in the effect of trials upon us. It is when a believer loses that consciousness, that everything looks bad and the soul is discouraged.

When there is a vivid consciousness that God is the strength of the heart, and our portion forever, then we can rejoice in tribulation. We must see this to get the real lesson of this precious psalm. —From *Help and Food*

*A busy merchant was offered a tract. He replied, “I have no time to think of such things.” “Then God will give you eternity in which to think about them,” was the crushing reply. We can either “think on these things” (Philippians 4:8) now, or “remember” (Luke 16:25) them for eternity.*