

**PIOUS MEDITATIONS,
AND DEVOUT
BREATHINGS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649292035

Pious meditations, and Devout breathings by Joseph Hall

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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BY THE

REV. JOSEPH HALL, D. D.

BISHOP OF NORWICH.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION

No. 265 CHESTNUT STREET.

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9/15/90

Stereotyped by

S. DOUGLAS WYETH, No. 7 Pear St., Philadelphia.

PIOUS MEDITATIONS.

THE BEST PROSPECT.

OH my God, I shall not be worthy of my eyes, if I think I can employ them better, than in looking up to thy heaven; and I shall not be worthy to look up to heaven, if I suffer my eyes to rest there, and not look through heaven at thee, the Almighty Maker and Ruler of it, who dwellest there in all glory and majesty; and if seeing thee I do not always adore thee, and find my soul taken up with awful and admiring thoughts concerning thee. Many eyes have looked curiously upon that glorious frame, or they could not have made such exact observations on those globes of light which thou hast placed there, as to foretell all their conjunctions and oppositions for many hundreds of

years before. But while they look at the motions, let me look at the Mover, and admire that infinite power and wisdom which preserve those numberless and immense bodies in such regularity, that they all keep their proper stations and times, without the least varying from the course in which thou didst set them in their first creation. While therefore their observations make them wiser, mine shall make me more holy. Various objects thou hast given us here below, which commonly take up our attention; but it shall be my fault, if they do not rather lead my thoughts to thee, than withdraw them from thee; since thy power and majesty are clearly conspicuous in them all. Oh God, while I have eyes, let me see thee in all things, and let me evermore enjoy thee. Let me see thee here as thou mayest be seen by the eye of faith, till I may see as I am seen hereafter in glory. Let me see thee here on earth, as through a glass darkly, till I may come to see thee face to face in heaven.

THE HAPPY PARTING OF SOUL AND
BODY.

I HAVE lived many years longer than holy David did; yet I can truly say with him, 'We have brought our years to an end as it were a tale that is told.' Oh my soul, it is but yesterday since we met; and now we are going to part. I hope we shall not be unwilling to take leave; for what advantage can it be to hold out longer together? One half of me cannot but grow more infirm with use and time, and thereupon must follow a decay of all faculties and operations: for where the tools are grown bad and dull, what work can be exquisite? Thou seest it then necessary and inevitable that we must yield to age, and grow worse with continuance.

And what privilege can mere time give us in our duration? The basest stones last longer than the most durable plants; and we see trees hold out longer than any sensitive

creatures ; and divers of those sensitive creatures outlast man, the lord of them all ; and yet none of these are held more excellent because they wear out more hours. Enoch was more happy, though taken away at three hundred and sixty-five years, than Methuselah at nine hundred and sixty-nine. Gen. v. 23, 24, 27. Should we continue our partnership many years longer, could we hope for more health and strength of body, more vigour of understanding and judgment, more warmth of good affections ? And can we doubt that it will be better with us elsewhere ? Do we not know what remains for us above ? Are we not assured that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ? Why, therefore, should ye be loath to part upon fair terms ; thou, O my soul, to the possession of that happy mansion which thy dear Saviour has from eternity prepared for thee in his Father's house : and thou, O my body, to that quiet repository of thy grave,

till ye both shall happily meet in the blessed resurrection of the just, never, never to be severed any more?

HEAVENLY CONVERSATION.

IT matters not a little with whom we hold our familiar conversation; for commonly we are transformed into the disposition and manners of those whose company we frequent. We daily see those who, by haunting the society of drunkards and infamous persons, have from civil and orderly men become some of the worst of characters. And on the contrary, those who have associated themselves with the holy and the virtuous, have attained to a gracious participation of their sanctity. Why shouldst thou not then, O my soul, by a continual conversation with God and his angels, improve to a heavenly disposition? While here thou must indeed have somewhat to do with the world, that will necessarily intrude into thy presence,