

**WHY DO I LIVE?**

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Why do I live? by Thomas Smyth

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**THOMAS SMYTH**

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## CONTENTS.

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|   |    |
|---|----|
| CHAPTER I.  |    |
| The true end of life, . . . . .                           | 5  |
| CHAPTER II.   |    |
| Why Christians are not taken at once to heaven, . . .     | 23 |
| CHAPTER III.  |    |
| What wilt thou have me to do? . . . . .                   | 28 |
| CHAPTER IV.   |    |
| Go work in my vineyard, . . . . .                         | 35 |
| CHAPTER V.  |    |
| The Christian in the world, but not of the world, . . .   | 41 |
| CHAPTER VI.   |    |
| This world our field of duty and of trial, . . . . .      | 52 |
| CHAPTER VII.  |    |
| The peril of a fruitless life, . . . . .                  | 58 |
| CHAPTER VIII.   |    |
| The living Christian stimulated, . . . . .                | 65 |
| CHAPTER IX.   |    |
| The Christian a living Christian to the end, . . . . .    | 71 |
| CHAPTER X.  |    |
| The living Christian obeys as fully as he believes, . . . | 83 |
| CHAPTER XI.   |    |
| The living Christian guided by the law of order, . . .    | 90 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| CHAPTER XII.   |     |
| The Christian's supreme duty is to Christ, . . . . .       | 96  |
| CHAPTER XIII.  |     |
| The Christian's duty to himself, . . . . .                 | 101 |
| CHAPTER XIV.   |     |
| The Christian in the family, . . . . .                     | 110 |
| CHAPTER XV.  |     |
| The Christian in the church, . . . . .                     | 118 |
| CHAPTER XVI.   |     |
| The Christian in his business, . . . . .                   | 121 |
| CHAPTER XVII.  |     |
| The Christian in the world, . . . . .                      | 126 |
| CHAPTER XVIII.   |     |
| The Christian's philanthropy divine, . . . . .             | 130 |
| CHAPTER XIX.   |     |
| Christian, how are you living? . . . . .                   | 134 |
| CHAPTER XX.  |     |
| Dignity of the Christian and his work, . . . . .           | 143 |
| CHAPTER XXI.   |     |
| The Christian constrained by the love of Christ, . . . . . | 153 |
| CHAPTER XXII.  |     |
| All things needful in Christ, . . . . .                    | 162 |
| CHAPTER XXIII.   |     |
| The Christian earnestly urged to work, . . . . .           | 169 |



# WHY DO I LIVE?

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE TRUE END OF LIFE.

APART from the teaching of God's word as to God's end in the creation and perpetuation of man, there is no greater mystery than human life. Make pleasure, happiness, self-interest, personal aggrandizement, or present sublunary enjoyment, the end of life, and man is an enigma, life a problem incapable of solution, the world a chaos of disordered, wild, conflicting elements, and all our reasoning a hopeless paradox. Man is then an atom of an atom world, tossed to and fro by every wind, whirled round by every eddy, borne along by every current, until he vanishes into the nothingness from which he inexplicably emerged. He is an effect causeless, a beginning without middle or end, a meteor flash brilliant with promised

glory, and extinguished in the very effulgence of its course.

Only when, in the light of God's word, we see life to be a probation, a discipline, a preparation, a labor, a strife, a conquest, an emancipation, a redemption; and the world to be the field and opportunity for working out glory and honor and immortality and eternal life—only then is sunlight thrown over the turbid chaos of human existence, every wave of trouble made to sparkle with beauty and roll in majestic harmony, and sin, sorrow, and toil—clothed in angel garments—transformed into ministering spirits sent forth to minister to heirs of immortality.

“Oh earth, thy maiden innocence  
Too early fled, thy golden time—  
O earth, earth, earth, for man's offence,  
Doomed to dishonor in thy prime,  
Of how much glory then bereft,  
Yet what a world of good was left.

“The thorn, harsh emblem of the curse,  
Puts forth a paradise of flowers;  
Labor, man's punishment, is nurse  
To haleyon joys at sunset hours;  
Plague, famine, earthquake, want, disease,  
Give birth to holiest charities.

“ Whence came I? memory cannot say;  
What am I? knowledge will not show;  
Bound whither? ah, away, away,  
Far as eternity can go:  
Thy love to win, thy wrath to flee,  
O God, thyself my helper be.”

Oh how melancholy are the voices of humanity, of God-rejecting, Bible-defaming men! To what a depth of inconceivable degradation are men willing to plunge themselves and their whole race, rather than come to the light, and acknowledge their being's end and aim. Rather than not live like beasts, men have been found in all ages ready to herd with the beasts, to live and die as brutes, wallowing in pleasure, drinking in all uncleanness with greediness, spending their strength in excess of rioting, and taking as the motto of their creed, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

In speaking of Anacreon, Archbishop Potter remarks, that “the ancient poets were sometimes accustomed to introduce into their poems images of poverty, distress, and death, not to deter themselves or their readers from those gratifications which formed the principal enjoyment of their lives, but rather to prompt them