

1:19–30 TO LIVE IS CHRIST

¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.


²⁷Only let your manner of life be worthy^a of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now

^aGreek Only behave as citizens worthy

hear that I still have.

OVERVIEW: Paul the prisoner, facing the distinct possibility of execution for his faith and preaching, presents his dilemma—to desire to depart to be with Christ, or to remain engaged in useful ministry. Meanwhile, he exhorts the Philippians to live lives that reflect well on the gospel of Christ. Themes of unity, holding firm under pressure, acceptance of suffering for the gospel and for the sake of Christ all crowd in as he instructs them on how to live in dangerous times. The commentators debate whether Paul meant “deliverance” in the sense of release from captivity, or a more spiritual meaning, of death as release from the limits and restrictions of this life.

Philippians 1:23 gives occasion for discussion of what happens to the Christian after death, an issue that was controversial for a number of reasons. Some radical Protestant theologians (including Calvin’s opponent Servetus) had argued for a form of what was sometimes called soul sleep, the idea that the soul leaves the body and then sleeps until the day of resurrection. By contrast, contemporary Catholic theologies of purgatory underlay much of the sacramental theology of indulgences, masses and merits against which the reformers struggled so strongly. This verse gave occasion for some commentators to reassert their belief that life after death is life with

Christ, making use of a distinction between the body that sleeps until the day of resurrection and the soul that goes immediately to be with Christ. A century on, when these debates were less urgent, Richard Sibbes takes this further in a thoughtful and provocative meditation that defines the joys of heaven as being the presence of Christ, even going so far as to suggest that heaven without Christ is not to be desired. This reflects the increasingly pietistic mood of  seveneenth-century Puritanism, a very different feel from the doctrinal crossing of swords during the tense early years of the [Reformation](#) itself.

1:19–26 *Staying or Departing*

PAUL'S KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION. HENRY AIRAY: What did he know? “I know,” he said, “that this”—This! What? This chain by which I am bound, and this practice of some brethren in the Lord to bring me to shame by leaving the defense of the gospel, or to bring me to death if I stand in the defense of the gospel—“I know,” he said, “that this shall turn to my salvation.” Now, what is meant by salvation, all do not agree. Some think he means thereby his bodily deliverance out of prison.... Others think he means the salvation of his soul in the day of Christ, as the word is most of all used. But I think the apostle may be understood to speak of both.... For what was the affliction which

they supposed to add to his bands? That he as the chief, by the threats of Nero, should be forced to leave the defense of the gospel, to his shame and the hazard of his soul; or if he should stand in the defense of the gospel, should be delivered up to death. Now, in opposition to this, he said that whatever they supposed, he knows that this, their practice against his constancy or his life, should turn to his salvation, even the salvation of his soul, through his constancy in the defense of the gospel, so that in nothing he should be ashamed, etc.; and likewise, to the salvation and deliverance of his body out of prison, quite otherwise than they had intended. LECTURES ON [PHILIPPIANS](#) 1:19–20.¹

HELP THROUGH PRAYER. JOHN CALVIN: In order to stir them up to pray more ardently, he declares that he is confident that the Lord will grant their prayers. And he is not lying. For whoever depends on the prayers of the saints for help relies on the promise of God. At the same time, nothing is detracted from the unmerited goodness of God, on which our prayers and requests depend.... The statement must, therefore, be explained in this manner: “I am absolutely certain that all this will bring about my deliverance through the administration of the Spirit and by the aid of your prayers.” Thus, the

¹ Airay, *Philippians*, 63*.

provision of the Spirit is the effective cause, while your prayer is an inferior, secondary cause. We must also note the specific meaning of the Greek word, for *epichorgia* means the furnishing of what is lacking, just as the Spirit of God pours into us all that we lack. COMMENTARY ON PHILIPPIANS 1:19.²

CHRIST AN ADVANTAGE IN LIFE AND IN DEATH. HENRY AIRAY: From this I observe how a Christian becomes indifferent to either life or death, and that is thus: if Christ be advantage to the person both in life and in death, if the person seeks no other gain but this, that Christ may be glorified in his or her body, then the person is indifferent to whatever it is whereby Christ may be glorified, be it life or death.... Let this, then, teach us, even so many of us as do not feel in ourselves this indifference to either life or death, to look into the reason that we are not indifferent to either. And surely, if we are not too partially affected toward ourselves, we shall find that it is because this is of the least importance with us, that Christ be glorified in our bodies. LECTURES ON PHILIPPIANS 1:21.³

NO FEAR OF DEATH. MILES COVERDALE: And again he speaks comfortably: “Christ is to me life, and death is to me advantage.”

² CTS 42:40* (CO 52:16).

³ Airay, *Philippians*, 73–74.

Let them fear death that know not Christ, neither believe in him; even such as from temporal death pass unto death everlasting. God gives charge and commandment that we should receive comfort in the Lord Jesus, as the words sound: “Be of good comfort, I have overcome the world.” Whoso now will not be comforted with the Lord Jesus does unto God the Father and the Son the greatest dishonor; as though it were false that he bids us “Be of a good comfort,” and as though it were not true, that he “has overcome the world.” And by this, whereas the devil, sin and death are overcome already, we strengthen them to be our own tyrants against the faithful true Savior. FIRST BOOK OF DEATH, CHAPTER 28: OF TRUE FAITH.⁴

CHRISTIAN JOY IN THE FACE OF DEATH. PETER MARTYR VERMIGLI: How could Christ have wished for death, saying, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you”? And the apostle, “I desire to depart and to be with Christ,” and again, “for me to die is gain.” How did Saint Andrew (if the things told about him are true) say when he was being led with an eager heart to the place of punishment, “Hail precious cross, receive now the disciple since you previously bore up his master?”[†] It is clear that all these either

⁴ Coverdale, *Remains*, 85.

[†] According to an early Christian tradition, these are the words of Saint Andrew as he was

lacked emotions or judged as good what was evil.

I reply: Death, as was said, is not good of itself; therefore insofar as we receive it as such, it always strikes terror. Indeed it often happens that our thought does not stop at death but looking beyond it sees that by dying we make an end to sinning, we pass over into eternal life, we promote the building up of the church, we give testimony to the truth of the gospel, things for which no non-Christian has a strong desire. While we contemplate so many and such great good things, the soul exults for joy; but fear, which death naturally causes, gives way and is so buried by that great happiness that we do not feel it the same way as when we examine death alone in itself.

Frequently God pours into the minds of his martyrs so much consolation and his spirit that fear, which otherwise by its own nature would be painful for them, is so weakened and put to death that it does no harm. ON FLIGHT IN PERSECUTION.⁵

CHRIST IS BENEFIT IN BOTH LIFE AND DEATH. JOHN CALVIN: Until now, interpreters, in my opinion, have incorrectly translated and expounded this passage. For they divide it in this way, that to Paul Christ was life, and death gain. I, however, make Christ the subject in both

taken to his own martyrdom, crucified on an X-shaped cross.

⁵ PML 5:70, quoting Lk 22:15.

clauses, so that he is declared to be gain to him both in life and in death. For it is common with the Greeks that the particle *pros* is assumed. Besides that this meaning is less forced, it also corresponds better with the foregoing statement, and contains more complete doctrine. He declares that it is indifferent and all the same to him, whether he lives or dies, because, having Christ, he considers both gain. And assuredly it is Christ alone who makes us blessed both in death and in life. Otherwise, if death is miserable, life is not any happier. Indeed it is difficult to determine whether without Christ it is more advantageous to live or to die. On the other hand, if Christ is with us, he will also bless our life and our death, so that both will be favorable and desirable for us. COMMENTARY ON PHILIPPIANS 1:21.⁶

LIFE OR DEATH? JOHANNES BUGENHAGEN: Here he explains, as he has done above, how “Christ will be glorified in my body.” “If I live, then of course I live for Christ, not myself; I will declare his love and praise, and, in my role as preacher, will do useful work, that is, I will do good to those who hear the Word from me.” He speaks in the same way in Galatians 2: “I live, yet not me, but Christ lives in me.” “Then I will redeem the time and fulfill my task so that I will be enthroned with Christ.” As he says in 2 Timothy 4: “I am

⁶ CTS 42:41–42* (CO 52:17).

already being poured out as an offering, and the time of my departure is near.” “To die would be best for me; however, to live would be better for you.” Nevertheless, as we read this, we can gain from it an edifying thought, learning our weakness and how far we still are from the kingdom of God ... when we fear and flee from the cross and death as accursed things. COMMENTARY ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:20–22](#).⁷

PEACE WITH GOD. HENRY AIRAY: If we are at peace with God and keep faith and a good conscience, whatever our outward state might be, we have such comfort and joy on every side that we neither desire to die in respect of the griefs of this life nor yet to live in respect of any fear of death. The example of our apostle is proof enough to this purpose. He lay in prison for the defense of the gospel, where no one assisted him but all forsook him. And many practiced much against his conscience and against his life, so that his untoward state was very hard, and such that in respect of the griefs of his life he might have desired death, and in respect of the fear of death he might have desired life. Yet even then, whichever way he looked, to life or death, he saw such joy and comfort in both as that neither the griefs of life made him to wish death nor

the fear of death made him to wish life. LECTURES ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:22](#).⁸

ATTITUDES TO DEATH AS THE TEST OF TRUE FAITH. JOHN CALVIN: Believers do not cease to regard death with horror, but when they turn their eyes to that life which follows death, by that consolation they easily overcome all dread. Certainly whoever believes in Christ ought to be so encouraged [by this] that at the mere mention of death he raises his head, delighted by the announcement of his redemption. From this it is clear how many are Christians only in name, since when most hear death’s name, it is as if they had never heard a single word about Christ—not only do they become frightened, but they are rendered almost lifeless! O good conscience, how powerful and mighty you are! Now the foundation of a good conscience is faith—in fact, it is itself the goodness of the conscience. COMMENTARY ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:23](#).⁹

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE FEAR OF DEATH. JUAN DE VALDÉS: Many pious persons are made sad and lament at the thought of death, not being able to bring themselves to be resigned to death.... I think that among the pious who fear death, some do so because they are not fully confirmed in religion, nor are they fully assured of the righteousness with which eternal life is

⁷ Bugenhagen, *Ein Kurze, Wolgegründte Außlegung*, 48.

⁸ Airay, *Philippians*, 78.

⁹ [CTS 42:43–44*](#) ([CO 52:18](#)).

obtained. Others fear it through natural instinct, God having so constituted it that people should fear death and should love life, in order that they should preserve it. Still others fear it because it has been inflicted on humanity as the punishment of sin, God having so constituted it that people should feel as chastisement that which has been given them as chastisement by a general sentence affecting all, because all are implicated in the evil of original sin. In all these, I recognize piety, righteousness and holiness, although I discover weakness and infirmity in the former, which I likewise impute to those pious persons, who, without consciousness of inward inspiration that God wills that they should die, desire and love death, for this desire is not free from some traces of impatience, akin to that of those who are destitute of piety.

... The fear of death in the pious springs from piety, righteousness and holiness.... The pious, when they find themselves timid in death, have no cause for self-depression, thinking that their fear is caused by weakness and infirmity, through lack of assurances, and firmness in reliance; or that they have it from natural temperament; or that they have it as a conscious chastisement for sin, which operates on all who belong to the people of God anyway, even though not everyone feels it to the same extent. If anybody should say, "Christ having suffered for original sin, they who are his members

ought not to feel the penalty and chastisement of death," I shall reply that Christ has not revoked the sentence issued against us all, which subjects us to death, but he provided a remedy for it by the resurrection, so that we died through Adam and are raised through Christ.

I come moreover to a further conclusion, which is, that the pious are, as such, content to die when the glory of God is magnified by their death, as the Christian martyrs were content, and when it is God's will that they should die. I understand that God at such a moment gives them contentment. So that when the pious shall feel within them a fixed fear of death, not being able to bring themselves to be content to die, they may rest assured that God will not remove them from this life at such a moment; and they ought to think that, while they fear, natural inclination and the chastisement of sin are producing their effect on them; and thus they will not grieve, neither will they hold themselves to be less pious on this account.... The pious, when they fear death the most, speaking the truth, will confess that they would not be content that there should not be another life, feeling within themselves that God has not created them for this world but for the other.

And this discontentedness with the present life only, is, as I understand it, a great sign by which we may be able to assure ourselves of our piety and of our

predestination—for I hold it for certain that God implants exceedingly great love and affection to eternal life in all those to whom he is about to give it.... So those who shall consciously feel love in his soul for life eternal, and discontentedness with this present life, let them hold themselves to be pious, and predestined to eternal life, although they may fear death, considering all that has been said here, and above all, that even he feared death who was the only Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.[†] THE HUNDRED AND TEN CONSIDERATIONS, XLV.¹⁰

AGAINST “SOUL SLEEP”. JOHN CALVIN: Ungodly people call death the destruction of a person, as if they altogether perished. Paul here reminds us that death is the separation of the soul from the body. And this he expresses more fully immediately afterward, stating what condition awaits believers after death: that they dwell with Christ. We are with Christ even in this life, inasmuch as the kingdom of God is within us, and Christ dwells in us by faith, and has promised that he will be with us even unto the end of the world, but that presence we experience only through hope. For that reason, we feel that we are currently far away from him. This passage is useful for refuting the ridiculous delusion of those who dream that souls

[†] E.g., [Mk 14:33–34](#).

¹⁰ Valdés, *Life and Writings*, 330–33, alluding to [1 Cor 15:22](#).

sleep once separated from the body. For Paul openly declares that we enjoy Christ’s presence on being set free from the body. COMMENTARY ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:23](#).¹¹

JOY OR SORROW IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW DEATH. HULDRYCH ZWINGLI: Paul says in [Philippians 1:23](#), “My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; but to stay alive for a while and remain in the flesh is more important for your sake.” Paul shows us here that one may come to Christ without any mediation, provided one has faith. He indicated this in [2 Corinthians 5:4–6](#) also when he says, “For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety; not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who gave us the Spirit as a guarantor.” All this serves to show that the future state of joy or sorrow begins immediately after death. And the body sleeps until the universal day of judgment, when, with the soul it will experience joy or sorrow.

¹¹ CTS 42:44* ([CO 52:18–19](#)), alluding to [Lk 17:21](#); [Eph 3:17](#); [Mt 28:20](#); [2 Cor 5:6](#). In one of his earliest theological works, *Psychopannychia*, published in Strasbourg in 1542, Calvin counters at length the theory of “soul sleep,” the idea that the soul sleeps between death and the day of final judgment, as argued by several Anabaptist theologians.

EXPOSITION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH ARTICLE.¹²

JUDGMENT AT DEATH AND AT THE LAST DAY. THEODORE BEZA: Question: The fact that Christ will come on the last day to judge the quick and the dead is not without difficulty. For it is evident from many passages of Scripture, and especially from the story or parable of the rich glutton, that the judgment of good and bad people soon follows the departure from this life. Answer: God to a certain degree does execute his judgment (or rather, pre-judgment) even then to such an extent that it must not be doubted that the joy of eternal life is tasted by the souls of the godly and that the torments of hell are experienced by the souls of the ungodly. However, the prejudgment has only to do with souls, while their bodies are still sleeping[†] in the dust, for the full declaration and execution of judgment whereby the whole person is made either a possessor of eternal life, or is sent into eternal torture, is delayed until that last day of the resurrection. A LITTLE BOOK OF CHRISTIAN QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES.¹³

TO BE WITH CHRIST. PETER MARTYR VERMIGLI: Our posthumous end is to see God present and to enjoy his sight fully and

quite completely. That is what Paul wished to accomplish when he wrote to the Philippians: “I would like to depart and to be with Christ.” He also said: “Now we see him as in a mirror and in enigma; then we will see him face to face.” Similarly, “Now we know him in part and in part we prophesy, but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.” The gospel offers us this remarkable reward which will be given us in heaven after all these burdens and toils of this life. HUMAN HAPPINESS.¹⁴

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?. GIROLAMO ZANCHI: But what and what manner of life it is, and how great felicity, which is meant by the name of the heavenly kingdom, we do with the apostle freely confess that neither ear has heard, nor has it come into a man’s heart to conceive. For it is a matter greater and more excellent than can be comprehended in man’s understanding and of such passing happiness, that nothing can be wished more happy. We therefore simply believe that we, who are Christ’s, who are guided by his Spirit, who depend on his Word, who lastly do place our whole hope of salvation in him, shall all be most blessed, shall all shine as the sun in the sight of God. We shall all see God even as he is, we shall all live a heavenly and divine life

¹² Zwingli, *Writings*, 1:348.

[†] E.g., [Acts 7:60](#).

¹³ Beza, *Little Book*, 26, alluding to [Lk 16:19–31](#); [Mt 25:33](#).

¹⁴ [PMR 99](#), quoting [Phil 1:23](#); [1 Cor 13:8](#); [1 Cor 13:12](#).

with Christ and his angels and be delivered from all sin, from all misery, from all ill, without any longer grief, without fear, without lack or desire of anything, because God shall be all in all, and we shall behold his face. And in that city shall be no more night, neither shall there be need for any candle or sunlight, because the Lord shall give us light and we shall reign forever and ever with Christ Jesus our head, spouse, Savior and our Lord, to whom be praise, honor and glory, world without end. Amen. OF ETERNAL LIFE.¹⁵

AGAINST PURGATORY. SECOND HELVETIC CONFESSION: What some teach concerning the fire of purgatory is opposed to the Christian faith, namely, “I believe in the forgiveness of sins, and the life everlasting,” and to the perfect purification through Christ, and to these words of Christ our Lord: “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life; he shall not come into judgment but has passed from death to life” (Jn 5:24). Again: “He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over, and you are clean” (Jn 13:10). CHAPTER 26, OF THE BURIAL OF THE FAITHFUL, AND OF THE CARE TO BE SHOWN FOR THE DEAD; OF PURGATORY, AND THE APPEARING

OF SPIRITS.¹⁶

THE SOUL WITH CHRIST. HENRY AIRAY: The apostle desires to be loosed and to be with Christ. To be loosed, why? That he might be with Christ. Whence I observe that the death of God’s saints is nothing else but a departure of the soul out of the body into heaven, where Christ sits at the right hand of the throne of God. He who at the first coupled soul and body together, in death parts them asunder and takes the soul to himself, to be where he is, until in the resurrection he couples them again together, never after to be parted asunder. Of this all the godly in Christ Jesus at all times have been so thoroughly persuaded that always in death they (after the example of Christ Jesus) have commended and do commend their souls into the hands of him that gave them, saying as he did in Luke 23:46, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” So we read that the holy martyr Stephen, when he was stoned, called on God and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” in Acts 7:59. And in death it is the very ordinary prayer of all God’s saints, wherein they plainly show their thorough persuasion that in death their souls are received by the Father of spirits into the heavenly habitations, there to be joined to Christ Jesus. LECTURES ON PHILIPPIANS 1:23.¹⁷

¹⁵ Zanchi, *Confession*, 1:521–23, alluding to 1 Cor 2:9.

¹⁶ Cochrane, *Reformed Confessions*, 295.

¹⁷ Airay, *Philippians*, 81.

LIFE OR DEATH? RICHARD SIBBES: Death is but a departing, which word is taken from loosing from the shore or removing of a ship to another coast. We must all be unloosened from our houses of clay and be carried to another place, to heaven. Paul labors to sweeten so harsh a thing as death by comfortable expressions of it. It is but a sleep, a going home, a laying aside our earthly tabernacle, to teach us this point of heavenly wisdom, that we should look on death as it is now in the gospel, not as it was in the law and by nature. SERMON ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:23–24](#).¹⁸

FACING DEATH. JOHN OWEN: Here lies the difficulty. I told you the soul has an aversion to this dissolution; nonetheless, the apostle says, “I have a continual, strong inclination to it.” To what? Please observe: “To be with Christ.” I have no inclination to be dissolved as the end, but only as the means for another end, that without it I cannot be with Christ. There is my end. And so far with respect to that end, that which is in itself no object of inclination becomes an object of desire. Brethren, I know no one dies willingly, no one living can have a habitual inclination to close cheerfully with this dissolution. The only way to do so is by looking on it as a means to come to the enjoyment of Christ. I tell you, your bodies are better to you than all the world, than all your

goods or anything else, but Christ is better to the soul than anything. Therefore, unless it is for the enjoyment of Christ, let people pretend whatever they want, there is no one willing to part with the body—to be dissolved. Grow in that desire of coming to Christ, and you will conquer the unwillingness of death. **THE CHRISTIAN’S WORK OF DYING DAILY**.¹⁹

CHRIST OR HEAVEN? RICHARD SIBBES: Why does he not say “I desire to be in heaven”? Because heaven is not heaven without Christ. It is better to be in any place with Christ than to be in heaven without him. All delicacies without Christ are but as a funeral banquet. Where the master of the feast is away, there is nothing but solemnness. What is all without Christ? I say the joys of heaven are not the joys of heaven without Christ; he is the very heaven of heaven.

True love is carried to the person. It is adulterous love, to love the thing, or the gift, more than the person. Saint Paul loved the person of Christ, because he felt sweet experience that Christ loved him; his love was but a reflection of Christ’s love first. He loved to see Christ, to embrace him and enjoy him who had done so much and suffered so much for his soul, who had forgiven him so many sins.

The reason is, because it is best of all.

¹⁸ Sibbes, *Works*, 5:339.

¹⁹ Owen, *Works*, 9:349, alluding to [Phil 1:23](#).

To be with Christ is to be at the spring-head of all happiness. It is to be in our proper element. Every creature thinks itself best in its own element, that is, the place it thrives in and enjoys its happiness in; now Christ is the element of a Christian.... Why then should we fear death, that which is but a passage to Christ? It is but a grim sergeant that lets us into a glorious palace, that strikes off our bolts, that takes off our rags, that we may be clothed with better robes, that ends all our misery and is the beginning of all our happiness....

God will have it so, for the comfort of Christians, that every day, they live, they may think, my best is behind, my best is to come, that every day they rise, they may think, I am nearer heaven one day than I was before, I am nearer death, and therefore nearer to Christ.... A Christian is a happy man in his life, but happier in his death, because he then goes to Christ; but happiest of all in heaven, for then he is with Christ. SERMON ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:23–24](#).²⁰

CHRISTIANS LONG TO BE WITH CHRIST. GEORG MAJOR: Here is an excellent sign by which we recognize justified Christians. This also illustrates that the heart of justified Christians does not cling to what is temporal and fleeting, but rather to Christ their Lord. Thus they long to

depart and to be with Christ. They know that here they will never have a permanent home; instead, they are only pilgrims. They do not belong on earth, but rather they belong to their Lord Christ in heaven. All the while they know and believe this firmly. Therefore their heart depends only on Christ. Even though the flesh is terrified of death, not at all willing to die, still the spirit sighs and screams out for Christ and for eternal life. Indeed, if we want to be Christians, then we must one day also be able to say honestly with Paul, “I long to depart and to be with Christ....” SERMON ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:23](#).²¹

THE VALUE OF GOOD PEOPLE FOR SOCIETY. RICHARD SIBBES: Gracious men are public treasures and storehouses, wherein every man has a share, a portion; they are public springs in the wilderness of this world, to refresh the souls of people; they are trees of righteousness that stretch out their boughs for others to shelter under and to gather fruit from.... Beloved, the lives of good men are very useful. A good man, says the philosopher, is a common good; because as soon as ever a man becomes gracious, he has a public mind, as he has a public place.... It is needful, therefore, that there be such men alive.

If this be so, then we may lament the

²⁰ Sibbes, *Works*, [5:339–41](#)*.

²¹ Major, *Auslegung der Epistel S. Pauli an die Philipper*, 108r–v.

death of worthy men, because we lose part of our strength in the loss of such, God's custom being to convey much good by them; and when there is a scarcity of good men, we should say with Micah, "Woe is me, the good is perished from the earth." SERMON ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:23–24](#).²²

TO LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR IS THE HIGHEST CALLING. GEORG MAJOR: So we must behave as follows. If I or someone else sees that in another vocation I might serve myself and my family better, earning more money and more goods than I do as a preacher, teacher, in this or that vocation, but still I see that through my preaching office or teaching office—or whatever office it might be—I am beneficial and useful to the people, then I must not abandon my calling or office on account of my own benefit. Instead I must regard my neighbor's needs and God's honor higher than my own. SERMON ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:23](#).²³

FOR THE LORD'S GLORY. HENRY AIRAY: The Christian's life in general is preserved and continued for the glory of the Lord, and the minister's life in particular, for the good of God's church and of the people over whom they are set.... And so are all Christians, when they are delivered from any peril of sickness, enemies, or the like,

to resolve within themselves that their lives are preserved and continued for the further glory of their God, and all ministers in particular, that their lives are preserved and continued for the further good of God's church and for the profit of their people by the work of their ministry. LECTURES ON [PHILIPPIANS 1:24–26](#).²⁴

²² Sibbes, *Works*, 5:343–34, alluding to [Mic 7:1](#).

²³ Major, *Auslegung der Epistel S. Pauli an die Philipper*, 107v–108r.

²⁴ Airay, *Philippians*, 86.