

What Are You Looking For?

by Walton Weaver

I read the other day the story of an old Negro lady who was dying, and the remarkable faith she demonstrated to all around her in her last moments is worth sharing with our readers. Her friends and loved ones from the entire community had gathered to her home, and were comforting one another with prayers, handclasps, and tears. Maude had been a great inspiration to all who knew her. She had raised fine children, cared for her neighbors, and faithfully worked for the Lord in the local church where she was a member. She would be greatly missed. A handful of her closest family stood above her bed. They were whispering all the appropriate epitaphs when Maude spoke up with her typical wit and wisdom, "Why's you cryin'? You know I ain't lookin' for the undertaker. I'm lookin' for the Uppertaker."

The world needs more people like Maude, people who are looking for the Uppertaker. Most folks are so nearsighted that they never look much beyond the present. They just take life as it comes---they go to work, then come home; they eat, then they sleep; they watch T. V., etc.---without giving serious thought to important issues like life and death. Not many are living in view of eternity, like Maude.

Unhappily, when Jesus returns most people will not be looking for Him, just as they are not looking for Him now. About all that most have to look forward to is the undertaker.

Jesus said:

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed (Lk. 17:26-30).

When you look at the things Jesus says people will be doing when He returns, and what they were doing during the time of Noah and Lot, nearly all of them are things all of us do because they are just a part of living. They are things that are right in themselves, and things the Lord wants us to do and enjoy doing. They are normal life activities. The warning is against ignoring God in the midst of these activities. The problem people have is that they do not cast their sights beyond these normal activities, beyond the undertaker to the Uppertaker.

One may have all the ambition necessary---plus the brains and the industry---to succeed in this world, but he cannot succeed ultimately unless he has been able to see beyond what this world has to offer. One has to break through the drift of the time and cast his eye upon the port that Maude saw before he can expect to land at the harbor where she landed. Some poet unknown to me has made this point well in these words:

Half the wrecks upon life's ocean
If some star had been their guide
Would have safely reached the harbor
But they drifted with the tide.

It is not enough just to do normal life activities well; the star that guides one's life must be God Himself. If one is to expect to die well, he must live well. He must live in service to God while he goes about living the normal life he lives.

Paul gives us a rich formula for life when he says, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Paul knew that a short while after he penned these words he might be executed. If that should happen he wanted his brethren to know that he would not be dead; rather, he would be more alive then than he was at the time he wrote these words to them. Death to him would be gain.

Maude believed that too. But only those who are living for Jesus and are looking for His coming will have a right to die with that kind of confidence.

What are you looking for when you die, my friend? The undertaker, or the Uppertaker? Think about it — then DO SOMETHING about it!