

THE

# Spiritualists' National Union

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Registered Office :

**30, GLEN TERRACE, CLOVER HILL, HALIFAX.** 

## HANSON G. HEY, Secretary.

## **OBJECTS:**

THE SPIRITUALISTS' NATIONAL UNION was established to promote; maintain, and extend the propaganda of the facts and teachings of Modern Spiritualism.

### PURPOSES :

For this purpose the National Union wishes to strengthen the hands of existing Spiritualist Societies, to unite and consolidate them in a spiritual brotherhood and organisation, to develop and encourage Spiritualist investigation and research, to foster international relationships with the Spiritualist and kindred associations of other lands, to make fraternal arrangements and co-operate with progressive bodies working for human advancement, to arrange for conferences, lectures, and demonstrations, and to issue explanatory, instructive, and inspiring literature on the subject of Modern Spiritualism.

With the recognition and maintenance of the independent, internal government of Societies, the National Union desires to bring about and increase mutual understanding, fraternity, co-operation, and consolidation amongst Spiritualists generally.

#### **BENEVOLENT WORK:**

A National Fund of Benevolence, supported by voluntary contributions, is administered on behalf of aged workers in the Movement, and others in distress.

Particulars for the affiliation of Societies and individual members, and other information, on application to the General Secretary, as above.

July, 1919.

# OUR REPLY TO THE CLERIC



## Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Lecture

In Leicester, October 19th, 1919, following the Church Congress.

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## "SPIRITUALISM, DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER."

Address by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at The Palace Theatre, Leicester, on Sunday, October 19th, 1919, being a reply to criticisms of Spiritualism made at the Church Congress, Leicester, the same week.

Mr. Ernest W. Oaten, Editor of "The Two Worlds," presided, and the theatre was crowded with an attentive audience. The chairman, in introducing the speaker, said that "Leicester had seen the death throes of an old system and the birth of a new."

Sir Arthur, on rising, said :-- Mr. Oaten ladies and gentlemen-On this pilgrimage I am making happened to be lecturing at Worcester on Friday night and afterwards I wandered into Worcester Cathedralfor I love the atmosphere of the old cathedrals-and a service was going on, beautiful, dignified, formal. I counted the people engaged in conducting the service and found there were 29, and then I counted the congregation and found it to consist of two men and five women. As I looked on that pitiful sight-and it is a pitiful sight to see a great machine unconnected with its work--I thought surely those high dignitaries who have the running of the cathedrals in their hands would be better employed trying to get their engine to work instead of assembling in Leicester saying unkind things about us. They have had a discussion about us in Leicester, and we are supposed to be here to answer them. But discussion of such a matter is in truth a vain thing. If God is on our side we win; if He is not we must lose, and no human discussion can alter that fact. If we continue the work it is because we may perhaps quicken the tide of faith, but the tide

itself is set by a Higher Power. But when I consider that we represent a cause which for 70 years has been the butt of every person who tried to be humorous subjected to every form of abuse, from accusations of Devil worship down to the most absurd joke, and see that after all this you cannot take up a newspaper with out seeing allusions to us and discussions about us, and that from Aberdeen to Cornwall the country is overflowing with it, I think we can see on which side the tide has set, and the Divine Power is manifesting itself.

As I travel around—I have now given 50 lectures and spoken to something like 100,000 people—as I travel around these people may or may not agree with me. My duty is to give them the message; the responsibility rests with themselves as to what they do with it. But I feel strongly that they come to hear me because they are tired of the old ruts; they feel that there is something beyond the old mechanical ruts in which religion has run so long, and that something newer is wanted. So gigantic a phenomenon as the late war cannot pass without leaving some spiritual upheaval and spiritual change behind it.

Our quarrel is not with Christianity, though we have some criticism to make of organised Christianity. We believe that in organising itself it has choked the life out of itself. But far from quarrelling with Christianity we say we are the lineal descendants of the primitive Christians. They speak about our phenomena as being something beyond normal laws. We can show their equivalent amongst the early Christians. We see in many ways how close is the resemblance between that great movement of the Spirit in Judea 2,000 years ago and that which is now descending on the earth, a resemblance so close that those who can see, can discern the light breaking through the cracks. Before I leave this hall I hope to give you instances of what I say to show you how near the Spirit World is to us. Whether it comes as a prelude to the coming of

some great personality, or upheaval, or whether it is that second coming of which all may read, of this presence I am keenly aware, and so is every Spiritualist who has had the opportunity of making a personal We know, as we read our test of the matter. New Testament, that there are many verses, allusions and passages which none but Spiritualists could explain; which could have been written only bv Spiritualists. St. John, in the letter he wrote, says : "Try the spirits whether they be of God." We have there a direct order. It is no use saying that spirit tests mean tests of doctrines. In the Greek the word means spirits, and nothing but spirits, and the passage shows that these early Christians approached the question as we do. If a neophyte was examining the phenomena we would say as they did: "Test them whether they are of God; use your judgment."

The Church has been harsh with us, but, I put it to you, should not the Church itself at the present day be sitting in sackcloth and ashes? For 2,000 years Christianity has had the running of Europe. They have been the moral teachers of Europe. At the end of it we have seen the most frightful catastrophe that the world has ever experienced; ten million men lie dead on the ground. How came this about? You cannot say it was because people would not listen to Christianity. It was the business of Christians to enforce their religion. True religion has a compelling force of its own. If Christianity had not been lacking in something absolutely needful in a great religion, we could never have had this terrible experience.

I admit that the English Church comes out of it better than others, but all Christianity should be sitting in sackcloth and ashes, not judging us, but judging themselves. (Applause).

The argument about Spiritualism has been confused at the Church Congress. Personal challenges and small details are below the dignity of such a body. But

we have to deal with them because if we don't people might think we were shirking the issue. This debate is not between individuals, or between us and the Church of England; it is between us and all organised Christianity. When I say organised Christianity I wish to point out that there is no antagonism between Spiritualism and real Christianity, but, on the contrary, that Spiritualists believe that they are the true representatives of those primitive Christians who themselves saw spirits and held communion with the dead saints. We must broaden our whole view. For 200 years Christianity has been fighting against Materialism. First there were Hume, Voltaire and Gibbon, then the great Agnostics Huxley, Herbert Spencer, Haeckel. All these great men attacked the orthodox Christian position, and the Church was helpless against them. All it could do was to quote a text, which was met by the reply : "I don't believe it." The Church relied on authority and as that authority was denied by its opponents it was useless in the controversy. The Church was beaten from position after position and Materialism triumphed, and with the triumph came this catastrophe.

We come forward as allies. We say we are prepared to prove all these things; to prove that life goes on after physical death; that man in the next world endures and suffers according to his life here; to prove in fact all the basic principles of religion one after And anyone who' knows our literature another. -unfortunately these gentlemen at the Church Congress are ignorant of it-know we have proved that life goes on after physical death, carrying with it a reasonable evolution of the human soul. That being so, if these people were not blind they would say to us: "Come in and help us to fight the materialism of the world." We are their strongest allies, and yet all they can do, according to their ability-and their ability is not great-is to turn upon us and try to rend us. (Applause).

When I speak of the Church, I am reminded of the dictum that you cannot frame an indictment against a nation. And it is difficult, or impossible to frame an indictment against a great institution like the Church. In my remarks against the Church I except many whom we have found inside the Church, children of light far in advance of their day, men like the late Archdeacon Colley and the late Archdeacon Wilberforce, and many also of the parochial clergy, some of whom are not only Spiritualists, but are amongst the strongest mediums whom we possess at this time. Amongst the clergy we have found some of our leaders, men like Tweedale, Haweis, Chambers, Moses, and the Rev. Vale Owen, who is not only a devoted parish priest but is the greatest writing medium in England to-day. He wrote a book on Heaven inspired by his mother, written by his own hand. I have had the privilege of reading it in script, and I have never read such a book before. Heaven is depicted in so wonderful a way that it has an inspiring effect on the reader. One who had read it said that for two nights afterwards he could not sleep. This book, I hope, will soon be in print, but I mention it to show that the greatest writing medium to-day is a Church of England clergyman. (Applause).

Every Spiritualist owes a debt of gratitude to the Dean of Manchester. He spoke at the Congress like an educated and intelligent gentleman. In his speech he made the remark that the explanation of fraud in connection with Spiritualism is out-of date. It was out-ofdate fifty years ago. Fraud? Of course, we have had fraud. I could fill a book of it. We have had fraud because we have treated our mediums so badly. They are men with the most delicate and beautiful gift that God ever put in the human frame, and we have turned them out to earn their living. We forget, and the public don't know, that mediumship is an intermittent gift. A man may be the best of mediums to-day and his gift be gone to-morrow. Home lost it for a year. Put yourself in the position of a man who has important engagements and has been honest in getting phenomena but who finds his power suddenly gone. He has people coming to see him and he simulates by fraud what he had previously done by psychic means, and this is the real cause of mediumistic fraud. I don't excuse his wrong; but the flesh is weak. We admit this kind of fraud, and there has been plenty of it. But because some have been guilty, at some time, of fraud, it is preposterous to urge that all others are frauds. All the best mediums that I know in England and Scotland are amateur mediums, unpaid, so that in their case the question of fraud is most unlikely.

Some people have said that these phenomena deal with puerile things and ask : What have our dead to do with moving tables and flying chairs? I sympathise with that point of view; but let me explain. All these phenomena, freakish as some of it may appear, are simply to call the attention of this materialistic age to the fact that there are forces about which are beyond any force known to humanity. That is the reason. Let us take it on to a higher scale: the relations between Christ's miracles and Christ's teaching. When Christ performed a miracle no one was bettered except the one cured. But the miracles were of enormous importance because they drew the attention of the countryside to what He had done and showed powers beyond that of other human beings. And so they came and listened, and thus there was a connection between the miracles and the Sermon on the Mount. In the same way the powers of this movement from the Other Side have been brought forward in order to appeal to the class of mind we find in the 20th century. You might go to a scientific man with beautiful texts and he would put them to one side. But show him something that goes up when it ought to come down and he will begin to study the subject. This will convince him that there is a force, and that takes him further and further. Watts was led to the invention of the steam engine from observing the lifting of the lid of a kettle. Galvani's observations on the leg of a frog were the precurser of electricity, and we have the story of Newton and the fall of the apple in relation to the discovery of the theory of gravitation. Don't therefore, affect scorn about the movement of a table, because it means the starting of a trend of thought in men's minds. This is what it was conceived for, and how it is worked.

I could draw up a list of 40 professors of Universities who have inquired into and endorsed our claims, I dare say every one of them drawn in by physical phenomena. When I quote 40 who believe, you might say: "I can quote 400 who don't believe it!" But that is the sort of foolish argument we are continually having to meet. It is as though I were to mention to someone in another town an incident that happened in Leicester and was met with the reply: "Oh, but I can find you some people who say they never saw it!" (Laughter).

What we claim is that a great wave of new truth has come by the messages from beyond to which the phenomena have merely been like a telephone bell which by ringing calls attention to the receiver. Instead of going to the receiver and taking the message we have for 70 years been listening to the telephone bell and asking whether it did or it didn't ring, or whether Mr. Maskelyne could ring it or not. (Laughter). These messages purport to come from the dead and give descriptions of the life beyond and of the truth of religion, as looked at from the broader point of view of two worlds. On the whole their message is not revolutionary but seems to strengthen the Christian basis, if that basis is taken away from what is small and narrow, and widened out to fit in with the teachmgs of that great teacher who left it behind as his legacy. God's dealings with the world did not end 2,000 years ago, nor is there any reason why His truth should not come in instalments as the evolving human brain gets more fitted to receive it.

In my usual lectures I go over the evidence and prove that what we believe is true and then I deal with the life on the Other Side. I have to leave these to-night in order to deal with the Congress matters, otherwise they would say I have avoided the questions To us the phenomenal side is merely the raised. A.B.C.; to us it is nothing. But to read the ordinary attacks on Spiritualism you would think we began and ended with a musical box. We go on from physical signs to that higher literature and higher philosophy which is second to none, and which has never before been brought out by any religion of which I have any knowledge. On the side of physical phenomena there are a large number of photographs of materialisation. These are as a rule a somewhat low form of development. They don't rank with our philosophy, but they are part of the foundation building.

Turning to the consideration of the Church Congress again, Sir Arthur continued: Mr. Magee sent me a personal challenge-a most hateful thing to me, as individuals in this matter count for nothing. He asks me whether I am prepared to say if this movement will not lower the moral, mental and spiritual standard in this country. I don't want to be unkind, but is not this a silly question? I am going round without any material gain-I have been lecturing five evenings this week-does Mr. Magee think I am doing it for fun? I do it because I think it is going to raise people's status enormously. (Applause). I am а better man for this knowledge, and so is every Spiritualist. It increases the sense of conscientiousness and our ideals of public service. And what is good for individuals must be good for individuals in the mass. He quotes me as saying, "every woman is an undeveloped medium," and he taunts me with that. That is an old theological trick, to take a few words

from their context. In my book, "The New Revelation," which every critic recognises as moderate, I have put the whole thing in a moderate way. Again and again I insist that people need not go to physical phenomena at all as the literature is enough. If they do go, having got one final test, they need not go They then know that what we talk about is again. When I talk there about a woman developing true. as a medium I mean one who has cause to develop; one to whom, on account of her private sorrows, it means everything to develop. Then instead of going to a paid medium, who may be a fraud, she should see if she cannot develop the God-given power, and so get into contact herself with the departed. And I know that again and again I have succeeded in bringing that consolation to forlorn people. That is my answer to Mr. Magee.

Then, with regard to Dean Inge. He made a prophecy that we could never win a military victory in the war. This was not a happy thing to say when we were fighting for our life. But it goes to show the value of his judgment; if he could go so far wrong on a political matter his judgment can hardly be trusted on a spiritual one. He is a ripe scholar. He may illtreat us, but he must not ill-treat the King's English. He charges us with necromancy. This is derived from the Greek word "nekron," and the word really means incantations round a corpse. (Laughter). But we look upon a corpse as matter; we have nothing to do with it. We deal with the spiritual body, as St. Paul taught. The corpse is gone. So that if he had hunted through the dictionary from end to end he could not have got a worse word to describe our belief. He is a bitter opponent; he speaks bitterly of us. But look at all this movement in the past and we see it as an unbroken line. When we think of the so-called witches who were burnt, the Quakers scourged, the Dissenters thrown into prison, and the Pilgrim Fathers driven out of the country, we see the same spirit manifesting as that in which Dean Inge speaks of us. But in the meantime the world has advanced. It is now the spirit of intellectual intolerance which is displayed instead of active persecution, but it is quite innocuous. He talked about spurious consolation. The vicar of a large town in England wrote to me and I offered him some proof and he wrote back to me: "I read what you said to my wife. She had never sang since my boy died, but now I hear her singing in the garden." We take our hard knocks; it doesn't matter. Such letters as these make up for many hard knocks. There was no spurious consolation about that. I have had a letter from one who contemplated suicide. It was her last card when she went into the room of a medium and the medium said to her : "Your husband is standing beside you and he says if you do what you contemplate you will be separated from him. See it through and you will be re-united." (Applause). The woman afterwards wrote to me and ended by saving : "I am now content to wait . . , for comfort has been brought to me." I could show you at my home letters I have received from many broken people who thought there was nothing more for them in this world and whom, fortunately, I have been able to put into touch with those they have loved and lost, and by this means interest in their life has been again revived and they have been made happy. These things are not spurious consolations. But long-winded harangues and biblical texts to broken hearts are the real spurious consola-(Applause). tions.

It is no spurious consolation if you have the privilege of developing the God-given powers within. When I met my own son, eleven months after his death, with six witnesses present, and he conversed with me on private things; was that spurious consolation, to know that my boy was alive and happy? And when my wife has spoken to her own mother, and heard her own mother's voice, do you think any words that are uttered at a Church Congress will alter our beliefs? Never !

Canon McClure traced us back to Swedenborg. He might have gone a great deal further back than that, to the same Great Master whom Canon McClure himself serves. It is to Him we look for the message, and if His message had not been smothered by the formalities of the Church then our position would not be one of opening a new movement but of confirming an old one. Canon McClure made a great play of the fact that mediums are neurotic people. You don't take your beliefs from a medium any more than you take a message from a telephone receiver. A medium may be a simple minded person and merely a transmitter, but you will get messages which no simple-minded person could have sent. I know most of the great mediums of England and Scotland, both amateur and professional. Physically they are above the average of the citizens of these islands. I know and admire them all. They are people of charming and unselfish disposition as a rule, and physically as well balanced as any I know. The old idea that Spiritualists are palefaced, wild-eyed, long-haired individuals has gone. I am afraid the appearance of myself and the chairman do not fit in with that description. (Laughter). Now they are trying to shift it on to the mediums. The medium does not give religious instructions and is not wild or hysterical at all. On the question of sanity they have made great play with Forbes Winslow, who wrote on "Spiritualism and Insanity" in which he traced a connection between the two.

Before his death he wrote a complete recantation, saying that he had been absolutely mistaken and that the figures were not as he had imagined them to be. That letter has been published. But you cannot overtake a statement of that kind. It will pop up again and again. It is not to be denied that there are people who say wild things. These people are usually outside the movement. Perhaps they have read something in the evening papers. But we have nothing to do with them. We steady them and show them how beautiful and reasonable the whole thing is, if they come to us.

A religion of happiness never hurt anyone in this world. If the people in Leicester knew our religion, and if they knew its truth, the absolute certainty of it, I tell you it would be the happiest day Leicester ever saw. Just consider what it means. It means that death, which we all have to face, is nothing but an enormous advantage, except for leaving those we love. We know where we are going, what we will see on the other side, and we face it not with resignation, but with feelings of hope and anticipation. As regards those whom we love, we miss their physical presence, but we know how we shall meet them afterwards-not as glorified angels but as our own people. Those we knew we shall see again as we knew them. A mother wants her child as it was. (Applause). It is a happy religion. We have no room in it for Dismal Deans or dismal anyones. If we could get him with us we would soon stop him being dismal. (Laughter).

Spiritualism is a force which in action is capable of great things. These are the days of small things, but things are growing. We are growing at a pace unknown. Every country is producing us. How it will end in affecting the morals and the lives of men is inconceivable. Let me at this point tell you a story. Two friends of mine, a Rev. Mr. Crewe and a Mr. Phillips, a lawyer, both of New York, and belonging to the American Young Men's Association, were walking along Oxford Street when they saw a young Englishman the worse for liquor. Mr. Crewe, who is a clairvoyant saw the spirit form of a woman walking beside the young man and looking with great compassion and pity upon him. He was so moved with the sight that he determined to see what he could do, so he went up to the young man and asked him to come with them and have a talk. They took him home and found he was the nephew of one of the

highest dignitaries of the Church of England and that he had fallen into a low state. I will not mention names as I do not wish to give anyone any pain. Mr. Crewe spoke to the young man about the figure he had seen with him and said: "I think it must be your mother." The young man replied : "It is just like my mother." Mr. Crewe then said : "When you are better we will have a little seance." Next day a seance of the three men was held and Mr. Crewe went into a trance and the young man's mother, who was a sister of the dignitary of the Church of England, took possession of the medium and talked to her son. The result of this was, Mr. Crewe told me, that when he came out of the trance the son was sobbing on one side of the table and the New York lawyer on the "Good Heavens! what has happened?" he other. asked. They told him that the mother had come back. She began by giving her boy her dying words, and then sang a hymn which she always sang to him in his childhood at nights. Then she told him not to be disheartened, that he had now come round the curve of the road, and that all would be well with him in the future.

I received a 40-page letter from the boy describing the whole event and ending with the words : "My tribute to the cause which has saved me. I will never go wrong again. Take it and do what you like with it." I sent it to the dignitary of the Church. I said : "I won't use your name. Here is your sister's son saved by your sister. Remember in future not to say this thing is diabolical; remember it is angelic." I have not heard from the dignitary since. (Applause).

Imagine how this truth will affect morals. Can you picture a young man going into a house of ill fame if he knows that his mother is looking upon him? That is the practical effect of our teaching on people. We don't want to convert everyone. It would be terrible to do so at once. Here is the "Times," our leading newspaper, with an article on Spiritualism the other day. The man who wrote that article said he would be converted to Spiritualism when he found a medium who could give him all the winners for a race. (Laughter). I think it was Capt. Coe and not the spirit world he was looking for.

Christianity took a long time in getting a hold. It was 327 years old before Constantine declared himself a Christian. The Reformation began with Wycliffe and culminated in Luther. This has been the slowest of movements. It came 2,000 years ago. Now it has risen again for the second time, but this time it has come to stay and sweep the earth. It is for us to throw the message abroad and let the seed rest and sprout in that soil where it is best fitted to sprout. We want nothing for ourselves. We grudge the Church nothing. We shall be glad for them to adopt our views. They are already adopting some of them. Our view of Hell is that it does not exist-temporary purgation does exist-was referred to and accepted as a fact in the Church Congress. And at St. Paul's service for our heroes not one word was used that might not have been heard in our own memorial service in the Albert Hall.

Our duty is to go forward with what we know to be the truth. We don't ask for either blame or praise. We simply have to do the work that lies before us; we go forward because we can do no other. (Applause).

THE END.

#### THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES. By M.A. (Oxon.) Advice to inquirers.

If you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really only jugglery and imposture, try it by personal experiment. If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist on whose good faith you can rely, ask him for advice; and if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one to see how he conducts séances, and what to expect. There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on experiences in your own family circle, or amongst your own friends, all strangers being excluded.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, half, or at least two, of negative, passive temperament, and preferably of the female sex, the rest of a more positive type. Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance, in subdued light, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. The hands of each sitter need not touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

Do not concentrate attention too fixedly on the expected manifestation. Engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable at all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear. Patience is essential, and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such a trial you still fail, form a fresh circle. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful séance.

If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held OVER, but not in contact with, it. Do not, however, try this until the movement is assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the urseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is elowly repeated, at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No, three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

When a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and, if not, what order you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs, ascribe it to the difficulty that exists in directing the movements at first with exactitude. Patience will remedy this. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an Intelligence separate from that of any person present, you will have gained much.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and ask as the raps become clear that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to en-trance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer.

Last' try the results you get by the light of Reason. Maintain a level head and a considered digment. Do not believe everything you are told, for though the great universe ordid contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error; and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Cultivate a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

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