

4 The Enlightenment - Farewell family and friends

The eighteenth century was the period of the Enlightenment, the growth of scientific and rational thought. Greater emphasis was placed on individual effort as against aristocratic privilege and the traditional interpretations of biblical messages began to be challenged. Might this be reflected in the messages left by way of epitaphs on our gravestones?

This category examines those stones that make almost no mention of Christian tenets but concentrate on the worldly effect of a death on the family left behind. Around 18% of all stones with epitaphs are from the eighteenth century, but 55% of the stones in this category are from that period, a clearly disproportionate amount. This suggests there may well be a distinctive group here that could be thought of as characteristic of that age. The period 1800-1849 displays just over the expected proportion (33% as against 30%) whilst post 1850 has 52% of all stones but only 14% of the family and friend's category, a considerable shortfall in familial concern replaced by an emphasis on biblical rectitude that we shall see later in section 8.

- 1721 SE068 HOUTON Mary 38
Here lieth one that hath resig'd this life
Who was both loving **mother** and a faithful **wife**
- 1729 SE047 DENNIS Mary 58
Pale death cannot find out such another
So good a **wife** so kind a **mother**
In all her actions so discreet
As she who lies here at your feet
- 1730 SE061 WHITE Mary 19
Pale death can't find out such another
So good a **wife** so kind a **mother**
In all her actions so discreet
As she who lies here at your feet
Death did her short warning give
Therefore be careful how you live.
- 1737 SE084 BROOKS William 52
When I could stay no longer here
I left my **wife** and **child** most dere (sic)
To the protection of kind heaven
And dy'e in hopes to be forgiven
- 1763 SE058 GREEN Richard 61
He was a man of honest life
A quiet neighbour freed from strife
A sincere **friend**, a loving **brother**,
Tis hard to find out such another.
- 1764 SE133 HINDE Mary 30
She was a kind and loving **wife**, a tender **mother**
and a good neighbour
And a sincere Christian.
- 1765 SW106 HORSEPOOL Elizabeth 35
I phoenix like have made my end to leave
Two **children** and my **friend**
So to prevent Ensuing Crimes
Nature laid me to bed betimes
- 1774 SE018 TIMM Hannah 63
Lo here she lies whom death deprived of life
Who was a virtuous, prudent loving **wife**
Great is the lot of those that's left behind,
But she no doubt eternal joys will find

- 1781 SE063 OLIVER Richard 35
 My days on earth they were but few
 And washed like the morning dew,
 When I could stay no longer here,
 I left my **wife** and children **dear**
 To the kind providence of Heaven
 Then dy'd in hopes to be forgiven.
- 1798 SW020 MARSLAND William 21
 Go home dear **friends** do not lament
 For unto you I was but lent
 My days on earth they were but few
 And wafted like the morning dew
- 1798 SW029 PORTER Elizabeth 17
 Death with his dart did pierce my heart
 When I was in my prime.
 Mourn not for me my dearest **friends**
 'Twas God's appointed time.
- 1805 SE127 DIKES John 54
 In health I was, and living as you are blest
 with three **children** and a **wife** most dear.
 I trust that God will for them provide
 And be to them an everlasting guide.
 How fair my prospect! Yet how short my stay!
 God thought it good to call me hence away.
- 1807 SE098 NOWELL Mary 68
 In brief to speak her praise let this suffice.
 She was a **wife** both frugal good and wise
 Of **children** careful, to her **husband** kind,
 All certain symptoms of a virtuous mind.
- 1818 SW038 BREWSTER William 78
 They lived together 45 years
 a worthy example of **conjugal affection**
- 1823 SW096 SKINNER Martha 19
 When death takes husband, wife and son
- 1841 SW147 OLIVER Sarah 62
 Here lies a tender **wife** and **mother** dear
 Each virtue lost demands a filial tear
 Children, be wise betimes, and whilst ye may
 Improve the short lived blessings of the day
- 1844 NW043 ROADLEY Mary 67
Husband farewell I am gone before,
 My love to you can be no more,
 No grief nor sorrow for me to take
 But love my **children** for my sake.
- 1856 NE098 TURVILL Harriet Shepperson 20
Husband farewell I am gone before
 My love for you can be no more
 No grief no sorrow for me take
 But love my **offspring** for my sake

1880 NW023 HITCHCOCK Alice 39
Faithful **wife** in silence slumbers here
... kinder **mother** and a **friend**
...just, industrious and broken

1888 NE050 WIDNALL Wiliam 54
No more we shall see him by our side,
No more his voice shall hear,
For death has been and borne away,
The one we loved so dear.

Thy will be done
(last line -(The Lord's Prayer- Luke 11)

5 The Enlightenment - Rational pragmatism

This group has an air of the Enlightenment about it and the statistics turn out to be similar to those for the more family oriented epitaphs in the previous section. The epitaphs seem to deliver a message of rational thought rather than traditional faith, but do not mention family. God sometimes figures but the essential messages on the earlier stones are that life is transient, death is inevitable and you never know when it will come; so take care, you may be next! 39% of these stones are pre-1800, the core period of the Enlightenment, whereas the proportion of all inscribed stones from this period is 18%. After 1850 the short one line epitaphs characteristic of the age are dominant, but not all are of biblical origin. The low proportion of these (29% compared with 50% of all stones) is explained by the high proportion of biblical quotes reported in section 8.

- 1700 **NW008** unreadable surname Gabriel
Spectators all who here you be
See that you live and die as (s)he
- 1704 **SE077** STEVENSON William 20
Dear friend grieve not for me, my glass is run
It is ye Lord and let his will be done
- 1709 **SE090** WHALES Thomas 53
Remember man as thee pass by
As thou art now so once was I
- 1728 **SW044** CHETTLE Elizabeth 46
Death crops flowery blossom and ye bud
Happy in youth or age whose lives are good
- 1729 **SW107** LITTLE William 82
This world's an inn and I her guest have ate and drank and taken my rest
with her a while and now I pay her lavish bills and goes my way.
- 1753 **SE119** HAND Sarah 65
The censure of the world no-one can shun
With these it's right with those it's wrong what's done
Then since from censure none are fairly free.
I value not aspersions cast on me.
In what we end let all who now me blame
Labour as hard and strive to miss the same.
- 1755 **SE118** HAND Thomas 61
Even from the earth and dust we came and nothing brought at first.
We to the earth return again and mingle with the dust.
It's God that lifts our comforts high or sinks them in the grave
He gives and blessed be his name. He takes but what he gave.
- 1757 **SE131** SMITH Francis 33
Farewell vain world I've seen enough of thee
And care not now what thou can say of me
Thy smiles I court not nor thy frowns
I fear my hand - - - Lies easy
I may be quiet here
What faults you saw in me take care to shun
Look but at home enough is to be done
- 1768 **SE164** MARRIOTT Edward 44
My peace with God I hope I have made before am gone and hence shall be
seen no more

- 1771 SW032 CLIFTON Ann 51
 Stay passinger (sic) depart not from this stone
 But stand and ponder where I am gone.
 Death quickly took my life and sense away
 And laid me down in this dark bed of clay
 Consider it and take home this line
 The grave ye next is opened may be thine.
- 1771 SE189 WHITE Samuel 73
 Our peace with God we hope to make before
 We are gone hence, and shall be seen no more
- 1783 SW081 STAFFORD Daniel 61
 No epitaph need make the just man fam'd
 The good are praised when they are only nam'd.
- 1786 SW055 WALL Ann 28
 When time shall fall and nature feel decay
 And sun and skies and earth dissolve away
 The soul this consummation shall survive
 Defy this wreck and live no more to die
 Then let not this vain world your thoughts employ
 Think this day the last you shall enjoy
- 1786 SE134 BROOKES John 63
 Virtue and vice lie blended here
 this bids us hope that bids us fear
 To solve the doubt and ease our care
 God's mercy bids us not despair
- 1792 SE128 RICHMOND Thomas 84
 May the great God now guide the mind of those whom we have lost behind!
 And may the power of his word teach all their souls to serve the Lord.
- 1794 SE073 NOWELL Mary 22
 How many pompous epitaphs are spread
 To educate the memory of the dead
 Vain wait of praise! Since all must know
 The judgement day will plainly show
- 1806 SW084 LANGLEY Mary 26
 One night awaits all and the way of death must once be trod by all
- 1806 SW061 PETTY William 71
 (William)
 Who was one of the churchwardens of this Parish 37 successive years

 Death is the door through which mortals go out of time into eternity
- 1810 SW109 GREENWOOD Ann 31
 Grieve not dear friends nor be dismayed
 Tis native debt and must be paid
 Death's fatal stroke none can prevent
 In name remember and repent

- 1813 SE157 WICKHAM James 71
 Weep not for us except with joyful tears
 Let our blest change engross your worldly cares
 Be weaned from earth then when your summons come
 Your souls with joy shall hear that happy doom
 Of 'come ye blest' when all both small and great
 Shall stand before Christ's awful judgement seat.
- 1818 NE062 HUTCHINSON John 73
 Be not deceived God
 For whatsoever shall be
- 1819 SW138 SCARR Mary 42
 Stay passenger and view thy fate
 Stand and compose thy mind
 Death's no regard to rank or state
 Thou's but one step behind
- 1822 SE023 TIMM William 69
 O sacred spirit! whilst thy friends distress'd
 Weep oe'r thine ashes, and lament thee bless'd
 O let the pensive Muse inscribe this stone'
 And with the general sorrow mix her own;
 The pensive muse! - who from this mournful hour
 Shall raise her voice, and wake the string no more! -
 Of love, of duty, this last pledge receive:
 'Tis all thy lost and widowed friend can give.
- 1823 SW085 CLIFTON William Thomas 35
 If worth departed claim a pitying tear
 Stay, passenger, and drop that tribute here.
 This spot contains the ashes of the just
 Who sought the honour and betrayed no trust
 This truth he prov'd in every path he trod
 An honest man's the noblest work of God
- 1825 SW039 LITTLE Mary 64
 Stray mortal and depart not from this stone
 But stand and ponder well where I am gone
 Death quickly took my sense and strength away
 I now am laid in this dark bed of clay.
 Reader consider and take home this line,
 The grave that is made next may be thine
- 1830 NE0102 PARR Elizabeth 74
 Praises on tombs and honours vainly spent
 A parent's good name is the best monument
- 1841 SE155 GILMAN Thos 29
 Transient are all things here below
 And soon they disappear
 While yet in health seek ye to know
 And serve the lord with fear
- 1844 SW090 TOMKINSON Thirza 21
 In Christ
- 1862 NE113 FRANCIS Mary 49
 Her faith was in God

1864	NW018	SMITH	33	
		Tho lost to sight, to memory dear		
		<i>Very common pragmatic words used in graveyards all over the country)</i>		
1868	NW028	PARNHAM	Ellen	55
		Though lost to sight		
		To memory dear		
		<i>(Very common pragmatic words used in graveyards all over the country)</i>		
1873	SW143	BRICE	Ann	59
		Her end was peace		
1876	NE009	GILMAN	Amy Bluff	23
		Though lost to sight, to memory dear		
		<i>(Very common pragmatic words used in graveyards all over the country)</i>		
1881	NW101	WHEATLEY	Prudence	90
		Her end was peace		
1882	NE071	HARDSTAFF	Mary	71
		A friend of the young		
1885	NW114	SWANWICK	Mary	79
		Her end was peace		
1899	NE064	HUTCHINSON	John	66
		Rest in Peace		
1899	NE089	STRONG	Mary	77
		May she rest in peace		
1903	NW003	MARSTON	Robert	91
		His end was peace		