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The Hope of Immortality.

(Ezek. 18:19-32. Convention Address).

THERE is a longing hope within men that death does not end all existence. There is an undefined hope that, somehow and somewhere, the life now begun will have a continuation. In some this hope turns to fear. Realising their unworthiness of a future of pleasure, many fear a future of woe; and the more they dread it for themselves and others the more they believe in it.

This undefined hope of a future life and its counterpart, fear, doubtless had their origin in the Lord's condemnation of the serpent after Adam's fall into sin and death, that eventually the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. This was no doubt understood to mean that at least a portion of the Adamic family would finally triumph over Satan, and over sin and death, into which he had inveigled them. No doubt God encouraged such a hope, even though but vaguely, speaking to and through Noah, and through Enoch who prophesied, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints." But the gospel, "the good tidings" of a salvation from death to be offered to all mankind in God's due time, seems to have been first clearly stated to Abraham. The apostle declares, "The gospel was preached before to Abraham,—saying, In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This at least was the basis of the Jewish hope of a resurrection; for since many of the families of the earth were dead and dying, the promised blessing of all implied a future life. And when, centuries after, Israel was scattered among the nations at the time of the Babylonian captivity, they undoubtedly carried fragments of God's promises and their hopes everywhere they went.

Sure it is, that whether it came as a result of an admixture of Jewish thought, or because hope is an element of man's nature, or both, the whole world believes in a future life, and almost all believe that it will be everlasting. But such hopes are not proofs of the doctrine; and the Old Testament promises, made to the Jews, are too vague to constitute a groundwork for a clear faith, much less for a "dogmatic theology," on this subject.

It is not until we find, in the New Testament, the clear, positive statements of our Lord, and afterwards the equally clear statements of the apostles on this momentous subject of everlasting life that we begin to exchange our vague hopes for positive convictions. In other words, we not only have positive statements to the effect that the possibilities of a future life have been provided for all, but the philosophy of the fact and how it is to be attained and maintained are set forth there as nowhere else.

Many have not noticed these points, and hence are "weak in the faith." Let us see what this philosophy is, and be more assured than ever that future life, everlasting life, is by our great and wise Creator's

provision made a possibility for every member of the human family.

Beginning at the foundation of this New Testament assurance of life everlasting, we find to our astonishment that it first of all admonishes us that in and of ourselves we have nothing which would give us any hope of everlasting life; that the life of our race was forfeited by the disobedience of our father Adam, that although he was created perfect and was adapted to live forever, his sin not only brought to him the wages of sin — death but that his children were born in a dying condition, inheritors of the dying influences. God's law, like Himself, is perfect, and so was His creature (Adam) before he sinned; for of God it is written, "His work is perfect." And God through His law approves only that which is perfect, and condemns to destruction everything imperfect.

Hence the race of Adam, "born in sin and shapen in iniquity," has no hope of everlasting life except upon the conditions held out in the New Testament and called the Gospel—the good tidings, that a way back from the fall, to perfection, to divine favour and everlasting life, has been opened up through. Christ, and for all Adam's family who will avail themselves of it.

The keynote of this hope of reconciliation to God, and thus to a fresh hope of life everlasting, is laid in the statements (1) that "Christ died for our sins," and (2) that "he rose again for our justification;" for "the man Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom (a corresponding price) for all." Adam and his race, which when he sinned was yet in him and shared his sentence naturally, "have been redeemed (bought) by the precious blood (death) of Christ." I Pet. 1:19.

But, although the Lord's provision is abundant for all, it is not applicable to any except on certain conditions; namely (1) that they accept Christ as their Redeemer: and (2) that they strive to avoid sin and to thenceforth live in harmony with God and righteousness. Hence we are told that "Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23.) The following Scripture statements are very clear on this subject:—"He that hath the Son bath life (a right or privilege or grant of life as God's gift); but he that hath not the Son shall not see (perfect) life." John 3:36; 1 John 5:12.

None can obtain everlasting life except from Christ the Redeemer and appointed Lifegiver; and the truth which brings to us the privilege of manifesting faith and obedience, and thus "laying hold on eternal life," is called the "water of life" and "the bread of life." John 4:14; 6:40, 54.

This everlasting life will be granted only to those who, when they learn of it and the terms upon which it will be granted as a gift, seek for it, by living according to the spirit of holiness. They shall reap it as a gift-reward. Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:8.

To gain this everlasting life we must become the Lord's "sheep" and follow the voice, the instructions of the Shepherd. John 10:26-28; 17:2, 3.

The gift of everlasting life will not be forced upon any. On the contrary, it must be desired and sought and laid hold upon by all who would gain it. 1 Tim. 6:12, 19.

It is thus a hope, rather than the real life, that God gives us now: the hope that we may ultimately attain it, because God has provided a way by which He can be just and yet be the justifier of all truly believing and accepting Christ.

By God's grace our Lord Jesus not only bought us by the sacrifice of His life for ours, but He became our great High Priest, and as such He is now the "author (source) of eternal salvation to all that obey Him." (Heb. 5:9.) "And this_ is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life." 1 John 2:25.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life (now by faith and hope, and by and by actually, when He who is our life shall appear’), and this life is in His Son. He that bath the Son hath life; and he that bath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1 John 5:11, 12.

This everlasting life, made possible to Adam and all his race, by our Creator through our Redeemer, but intended for, and promised to, only the faithful and obedient, and which at present is given to these only as a hope, will be actually given to the faithful in the “resurrection.”

It will be noticed that the explicit promises of God’s Word differ widely from the worldly philosophies on this subject. They claim that man must have a future everlasting life because he hopes for it, or in some cases fears it. But hopes and fears are not reasonable grounds for belief on any subject. Neither is there basis for the claim that there is something in man which must live on forever; no such part of the human organism is known, or can. be proved or located..

But the Scriptural view of the subject is open to no such objections; it is thoroughly reasonable to consider our existence or life, as therein presented, as a “gift of God,” and not an inalienable possession of our own. Furthermore, it avoids a great and serious difficulty to which the idea of the heathen philosophies is open; for when the heathen philosopher states that man cannot perish, that he must live forever, that eternal life is not a gift of God, as the Bible declares, but a natural quality possessed by every man, he claims too much. Such a philosophy not only gives everlasting existence to those who would use it well, and to whom it would be a blessing, but to others also, who would not use it well, and to whom it would be a curse. The Scripture teaching, on the contrary, as we have already shown, declares that this great and inestimably precious gift (life-everlasting) will be given to those who believe and obey the Redeemer, and Life-giver. Others, to whom it would be an injury, not only do not possess it now, but can never get it. “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The wicked (all who, after coming to a clear knowledge of the truth, still wilfully disobey it) shall be cut off from among God’s people in the second death. They shall “be as though they had not been.” “They shall utterly perish.” “Everlasting destruction” shall be their doom—a destruction which will last forever, from which there will be no recovery, no resurrection. They will suffer the loss of everlasting life, and all of its privileges, joys and blessings—the loss of all that the faithful will gain. Psa. 37:9, 20; Job 10:19; 2 Thess.. 1:9.

God’s gift of life eternal is precious to all His people, and a firm grasp of it by the hand of faith is quite essential to a well-balanced and consistent life. Only those who have “laid hold on eternal life,” by an acceptance of Christ and consecration to His service, are able to properly and profitably combat the tempests of life now raging.

But now, having examined the hope of immortality from the ordinary understanding of that word (everlasting life), and having found that everlasting life is God’s provision for all those of Adam’s race who will accept it in “due time” under the terms of the New Covenant, we are prepared to go a step further and to point out that everlasting life and immortality are not synonymous terms, as people in general suppose. The word “immortal” means more than power to live everlastingly; and according to the Scriptures, millions may ultimately enjoy everlasting life, but only a very limited “little flock” will be made immortal.

Immortality is an element of quality of the divine nature, but not of human or angelic or any other nature than the divine. And it is because Christ and His “little flock,” His “bride,” are to be “partakers of the divine nature” that they will be exceptions to all other creatures either in heaven or on earth. (2 Pet. 1:4.)

The word immortal signifies not mortal—death-proof, indestructible, imperishable. Any being whose existence is dependent in any manner upon another, or upon conditions such as food, light, air, etc., is not

immortal. This quality inheres in Jehovah God alone as it is written—"The Father hath life in Himself' (John 5:26); i.e., His existence is not a derived one, nor a sustained one. He "only bath immortality" (1 Tim. 6:16) as an innate or original quality of being. [This Scripture may be held to apply to our Lord Jesus Christ in His present and future condition, "highly exalted," "the express image of the Father's person." But even so understood, this passage would be subject to the rule of interpretation laid down by the same writer in 1 Cor. 15:27; "It is manifest that He (the Father) is excepted (in all comparisons—for He is the fountain from which all blessings proceed.)]

These Scriptures, being decisive authority on the subject, we may know beyond peradventure that men, angels, archangels, or even the Son of God before and during the time He "was made flesh and dwelt among us" were not immortal—all were mortal.

But the word "mortal" does not signify dying, but merely die-able—possessing life dependent upon God for its continuance. For instance, angels, not being immortal, are mortal, and could die, could be destroyed by God if they became rebels against His wise, just, and loving government. In Him (in His providence) they live and move and have their being. Indeed, of Satan, who was such an angel of light, and who did become a rebel, it is distinctly declared that in due time he will be destroyed. (Heb. 2:14.) This not only proves that Satan is mortal, but it proves that angelic nature is a mortal nature—one which could be destroyed by its Creator. As for man, he is a "little lower than the angels" (Psa. 8:5), and consequently mortal also, as is abundantly attested by the fact that our race has been dying for six thousand years.

So, then, Adam did not become mortal by reason of sin, but was created mortal—by nature he was subject or liable to the death penalty. Had he been created immortal nothing could have destroyed him; for, as we have seen, immortality is a state or condition not subject to death, but death-proof.

What, then, was Adam's condition before he sinned, and in what way did the curse affect him? What life had he to lose if he was created mortal?

We answer, that his condition in life was similar to that of the angels; he had life in full measure—lasting life— which he might have retained forever by remaining obedient to God. But, because he was not death-proof, because he did not have "life in himself," but was dependent upon conditions of divine pleasure and favour for its continuance, therefore God's threat, that if he disobeyed he should die, meant something. Had he not been mortal, God's sentence would have been an empty threat. But Adam's perfect life, which would have been continued forever had he continued obedient, was forfeited by disobedience, and he died.

Jehovah God, "who only hath immortality" or "life in himself' originally, innately, and of whom are all things, having created various orders of beings, angelic and human, in His own moral and rational likeness, but mortal and not of His divine nature, has declared that He designs a new creation—an order of beings not only morally and rationally in His resemblance, but in "the express image" of His person, and partakers of His own "divine nature" a prominent constituent or element of which is immortality. (2 Pet. 1:4.)

With amazement, we inquire upon whom shall this high honour and distinction be conferred? Upon angels, or cherubim, or seraphim? No; but upon His Son — His specially "first-born" and "only begotten" Son, that He, who was always His obedient Son, "should in all things have the pre-eminence" over others. But before He could be so highly honoured He must be tested, proved "worthy" of so great a distinction and so high an exaltation "above His fellows." This test was in view when the sentence of death was pronounced upon Adam and all his children in his loins; the test was that He, Christ, should lay down His life as a ransom-price for the life of Adam, and all who lost life in his transgression. And He was equal to

the test, and gained the prize of “the divine nature,” “life in Himself,” “immortality.”

Consider Him, who, for the joy set before Him, endured the Cross; despising the shame, and is now in consequence set down at the right hand (place of favour) of the throne of God. He was rich, but for our sakes, He became poor. Inasmuch as the man and race to be redeemed were human, it was needful that He become human so as to give the ransom or corresponding price. He therefore humbled Himself and took the bondman’s form; and after He found Himself in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself even unto death — even unto the most ignominious form of death—the death of the .Cross. “Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him (to the promised divine nature, at His resurrection), and given Him a name that is above every name (Jehovah’s name excepted). (1 Cor. 15:27; Heb. 12:3; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:8-9.)

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” (Rev. 5:9-12.)

But more, the opulence of divine favour does not stop with the exaltation of one, but has arranged that Christ Jesus, as the Captain, shall lead a company of sons of God to “glory, honour, and immortality” (Heb. 2:10; Rom. 2:7), each of whom, however, must be a spiritual “copy” or likeness of the “first begotten.” And as a grand lesson of the divine sovereignty, and as a sublime contradiction to all evolution theories, God elected to call to this place of honour as “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife and joint-heir” (Rev. 21:2, 9; Rom. 8:17), not the angels and the cherubs, but some from among the sinners redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb. God elected the number to be thus exalted (Rev. 7:4), and predestinated what must be their characteristics if they would make their calling and election sure to a place in that company to be so highly honoured; and all the rest is left to Christ who worketh now as the Father worked hitherto. (John 5:17.)

The present age, the Gospel age, from Pentecost to the present time, is the time for the selection of this elect class, variously termed “the Church,” “the Body of Christ,” the “royal Priesthood,” “the seed of Abraham” (Gal. 3:29), etc.; and the permission still of evil is for the purpose of developing these “members of the body of Christ” and to furnish them the opportunity of sacrificing their little and redeemed all, in the service of Him who bought them with His precious blood; and thus of developing in their hearts His spiritual likeness, that when, at the end of the age, they are presented by their Lord and Redeemer before the ‘Father, God may see in them “the image of His Son.” (Col. 1:22; Rom. 8:29.)

As the reward of “glory, honour and immortality,” and all the features of the divine nature, were not conferred upon the “First-begotten” until He had finished His course by completing His sacrifice, and obedience in death, so with the Church, His “bride”—counted as one, and treated collectively. As our Lord, the First-born and Captain, “entered into His glory” at His resurrection; as He there became partaker of the divine nature fully, by being “born from the dead,” “born of the spirit,” as He there was highly exalted to the throne and highest favour (“right hand”) of God, so He was promised that His Church, His “bride,” shall in her resurrection be changed, by resurrection power, from human nature to the glory, honour, and immortality of the divine nature.

And so it is written respecting “the resurrection” of the Church: “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption (immortality). It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural (animal) body, it is raised a spiritual body.” (1 Cor. 15:42-44, 49.)

God’s plan of salvation for the race of Adam is to extend to each member of it, during the Millennium, the offer of eternal life upon the terms of the New Covenant sealed for all with the precious blood of the Lamb. But there is no suggestion anywhere that Immortality, the Divine nature, will ever be offered or granted to any except the “elect” Church of the Gospel age—the “little flock,” “the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.” For the others of Adam’s race the offer will be “restitution” (Acts 3:20, 21) to life and health and

perfection of human nature — the same that Adam possessed as the earthly image of God before his fall from grace into sin and death. And when, at the close of the Millennial age, all the obedient of mankind shall have attained all that was lost in Adam and redeemed by Christ—then all, armed with complete knowledge and experience, and hence fully able to stand the test, will be tested severely (as was Adam), but individually; and only those found in fullest heart-sympathy, as well as in outward harmony with God and His righteous arrangements, will be permitted to go beyond the Millennium into the everlasting future or "world (age) without end." All others will be destroyed in the Second Death—''destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23.)

But, although there shall be no more death, neither sighing nor crying, it will not be because the victors of the Millennial Age will be crowned with immortality, but because, having learned to judge between right and wrong, and their effects, they shall have formed characters in full accord with God and righteousness; and because they will have stood tests which will demonstrate that they would not wish to sin if the way were opened and no penalties attached. They will not have life in themselves, but will still be dependent upon God's provision of food, water, air, etc., for the sustenance of life. This is particularly stated in Amos 9:14, and Isa. 65:21.

Seen in this, the Scriptural light, the subject of immortality shines resplendently. It leaves the way clear for the general "gift of God, eternal life," to be extended to all whom the Redeemer shall find willing to accept it upon the only terms upon which it could be a blessing; and it leaves the unworthy subject to the just penalty always enunciated by the great Judge of all, viz.,—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18.

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While it is our intention that these columns be used for teachings strictly in accord with the Lord's Word, we cannot accept responsibility for every expression used, either in the correspondence or in the sermons reported.

Decorum in the House of God.

THE following has been received from one of our brethren: “I thank you for the helpful article on Bible Class Studies’ in the August ‘Peoples Paper.’ That was a very helpful and timely article indeed; it might be repeated with profit and an addition might be made to it, pointing to the necessity for using the time just before the studies begin to prepare the mind and heart for them, during the season of fellowshipping, by conversing as much as possible on those matters that bring us nearer to God. It is the practice with some, to waste this time on many worldly subjects, which, when the study begins, rob them of the fullness of the blessing they might then receive had they properly attuned their hearts and minds beforehand. . . Some article and advice on this matter would be very helpful, especially to class leaders.”

The above reference to preparing the mind and heart for the services to be held, whether it be for Bible study or other form of meeting, is certainly very important. The arrangement that some Classes make that a period of quiet meditation be observed by all members immediately prior to all meetings is most beneficial. Members should seek to arrive at the meeting place in good time so that a period of quietness for all can be observed of at least ten minutes.

It is thought well to present again the following article which appeared in “Peoples Paper” some years ago. From the pen of a noble Christian, all sincere followers of the Lord could well seek, as far ,as possible, to follow the advice given. Under the heading “Decorum in the House of God,” and based on the text, Eccles. 5:1—”Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil,”—the writer states:

The Wise Man was undoubtedly not talking about literal feet or literal steps, but giving some wise counsel, which his hearers might appropriate, just as we do. They understood him to mean that they must be circumspect in their daily lives.

“Keep thy foot.” Notice where you are going. Do not go to the House of God as you would go to the marketplace or to some place of amusement. Go as to the place where God will meet with His people. The Wise Man goes on to assume what would be heard in the House of God. Be not ready “to give the sacrifice of fools.” This would seem to refer to laughter, levity, foolish talk, and jesting.

This Scripture is one which may very properly be taken to heart by all of God’s people at the present time. Reverence is very becoming. We have lost the fear that God will cast us into eternal torment. We know our Heavenly Father better than to suppose that He would have any such evil intention towards any of His creatures. But we should not go to the House of God as we would go to the market-place. Many of the Lord’s people do not appreciate the fact that decorum is necessary in every place where God is worshipped.

Reverential Conduct to be Cultivated

It is for us to realise that we have God in the Church today in a sense that He never was in the typical temple. Wherever there is a meeting of the members of the Church, the Lord has declared that He will be there. The living stones constituting the Temple of God should be as fully reverenced as temples made of literal stones.

Whether we meet in a parlour or in a church or in an opera house, the fact that God’s people are there makes that building, whatever it may be, a holy place. Therefore, whoever approaches it should do so with a watchfulness of his feet. When he arrives, he should be appreciative of the place where he is, and

should be ready to “hear”listen—not full of mirth. All conversation should be of a kind that would edify—build up— along spiritual lines. If we cannot talk along such lines, it would be better for us to hear the discourse, join in the singing, and then withdraw.

Whatever conversation be carried on, it should be with reverence, not merely for the place, but for the occasion. There should be no turning about and saying, “Here comes Brother So-and-so, Sister So-and-so; we shall hear them sing.” Such conduct is very improper.

We do not know any lesson the Lord’s people need to learn more than that of reverence. The Lord will not call anyone who is devoid of reverence, and He wants that quality to grow strong. But when fear is banished, the tendency is to less reverence. Special care in this respect is to be observed when we go to the House of God, or to any place where Divine service is to be held.

Consideration Of The Rights Of Others.

Not only should we watch our feet in going to the House of God, but we should watch what we take with, us. We should see that we go there clean. We should also see that we do not take children who are not properly trained. Thus we shall not be in danger of annoying others.

There may be occasions when children ought to be left at home. If it seems impossible to control them at the meetings, it would be better for the parents to take turns in coming to the meetings. No one has a right to take children to the meeting, when their presence would be detrimental to the spiritual interests of others. Probably some way could be devised whereby the child could be left at home until of such an age as not to disturb the class. The majority of parents become so accustomed to the ways of their children that they do not realise that others are being annoyed— when probably every motion of the child is disturbing others. The others have their own trials to tax their patience.

Punctuality is the mark of character development

It would seem that some need to watch, not only their feet, but also their watches. To come into the meeting late is out of harmony with the principles of both justice and love. All who attend ought, in justice to others, to see that they arrive in time. They ought so to arrange their affairs that they can be at the meeting promptly at the hour.

There is, however, even a higher principle involved in this matter of coming late to the gatherings of God’s people. Where God’s people meet is the House of God, and there should be such a reverence for the Lord that we should all make every effort to be on time so that the prayers, praise and studies may not be disturbed. The reverence of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. There are occasions when it may not be possible for one to be in time, then entrance should be made as quietly as possible. It is the habitual late coming which seems to indicate the lack of reverence and appreciation of the fact that we go specially. to the Lord’s House to meet the Lord and His people, and in expecting His people to either wait for us to be disturbed by our entering late is presuming upon the Lord’s graciousness for, “Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of My brethren ye do it unto Me.”

Doubtless the Lord would view our efforts to be punctual and not to annoy others as marks of Christian character development, which would have His approval, and which would help to prepare us for the Kingdom. He who is indifferent to the rights of others manifests that he is lacking in the spirit of love, the spirit of Christ. And whoever has not the spirit of Christ, well developed, will not have a place in the Kingdom.

Hence these matters-unruly children, tardiness at meeting, etc., will have to do with our fitness for a place

in the Kingdom. By this we do not mean that we are being judged according to our works, or that we have any right to judge others according to their work. The Lord said, “Judge not.” We should show that our endeavours to do the Lord’s will are equal to the desires of our hearts. If we exercise determination in trying to live up to these, we shall be glad when we experience our change in the Resurrection.

Bible Study Meetings.

Assemblies for undenominational Bible Study are to be found in the various States, and all earnest truth seekers will be very welcome.

Melboume.-Masonic Hall, 254 Swan Street, Richmond (near Church Street) -Sundays, 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Thurs.. days, 19 Ermington Place. Kew, E.4.-7.45 p.m.

Geelong, Vic.-Sons of Temperance Hall, Ryrie Street, Sundays, 3 p.m.

Adelaide.-Druids Hall, Flinders Street-Sunday, 3 p.m. and 6.30 p.m.

Sydney.-75 Liverpool Street (few doors from George Street) -Sunday, 3 p.m. and 5.15 p.m.

Perth.-Chancery House (First Floor) 3 Howard Street. Sunday, 3.30 p.m. and 6 p.m.

The Day of Judgment.

“GOD bath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He bath ordained—”Jesus Christ, the righteous.” “For the Father judgeth no man, but bath committed all judgment unto the Son.”—Acts 17:31; 1 John 2:1; John 5:22.

A very vague and indefinite idea prevails in regard to the day ofjudgment.

The term judgment signifies more than simply the rendering of a verdict. It includes the idea of a trial, as well as a decision based upon that trial. And this is true not only of the English word judgment, but also of the Greek word which it translates.

The term day, both in the Scriptures and in common usage, though most frequently used to represent a period of twelve or twenty-four hours, really signifies any definite or special period of time. Thus, for instance, we speak of Noah’s day, or Luther’s day, etc.

Then again we read of the “day of Christ,” the “day ofjudgment,” and “His day”—terms applicable to the Millennial age, in which Messiah will reign over, rule and judge the world in righteousness, granting trial as well as rendering sentence. And of that period it is written: He shall judge the world in righteousness, and in His day shall show who is that blessed and only potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords. (Acts 17:31; 1 Tim. 6:15.) Why any should suppose this day of judgment to be of but twelve or twenty-four hours, while recognizing the wider meaning of the word day in other similar cases, is beyond comprehension, except upon the supposition that they have been influenced by tradition, without proper evidence or investigation.

Those who will carefully consult a complete concordance of the Bible with reference to the Day of Judgment, and note the kind and amount of work to be accomplished within that period, will soon see the absurdity of the common view, and the necessity for giving to the term day its wider significance.

The first great judgment [trial and sentence] was at the beginning, in Eden, when the whole human race, as represented in its head, Adam, stood on trial before God. The result of that trial was the verdict—Guilty, disobedient, unworthy of life; and the penalty inflicted was death —”Dying thou shalt die.” (Gen. 2:17, margin.) And so “In Adam all die.” That trial time in Eden was the world’s first judgment day, and the decision of the Judge (Jehovah) has ever since been enforced.

But God has appointed a day, in which He will judge the world individually. We are informed that when God gives the world this individual trial it will be under Christ as Judge, whom Jehovah will thus honour because of His obedience even unto death for our redemption. God has highly exalted Him, even to the divine nature, that He may be a Prince and a Saviour (Acts 5:31) that He may be able to recover from death and grant judgment to all whom He purchased with His own precious blood. God has committed all judgment unto the Son, and has given Him all power in heaven and in earth.—John 5:22.

It is, then, the highly exalted, glorified Christ, who so loved the world as to give His life as its ransom-price, who is to be the Judge of the world in its promised future trial. And it is Jehovah Himself who has appointed Him to that office, for that very purpose. Since such are the plain declarations of the Scriptures, there is nothing to dread, but on the contrary there is great cause for rejoicing on the part of all, in looking forward to the Judgment Day. The character of the Judge is a sufficient guarantee that the judgment will be just and merciful, and with due consideration for the infirmities of all, until the willing and obedient are brought back to the original perfection lost in Eden.

This coming judgment will be on exactly the same principles as the first. The same law of obedience will be presented, with the same reward of life, and the same penalty of death. And as the first trial had a beginning, progressed, and culminated with a sentence, so also will the second; and the sentence will be life to the righteous, and death to the unrighteous. The second trial will be more favourable than the first, because of the experience gained under the results of the first trial. Unlike the first trial, the second trial will be one in which every man will stand the test for himself alone, and not for another. None then will die because of Adam's sin, or because of inherited imperfections. It shall no more be said, "The fathers have eaten a sour grape and the children's teeth are set on edge; but he that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:4; Jer. 31:29, 30.) And it will be true of the world then, as it is of the Church now, that a man will not be judged according to that which he bath not, but according to that which he bath. (2 Cor. 8:12.) Under the reign of Christ, mankind will be gradually educated, trained and disciplined until they reach perfection. And when they have reached perfection, perfect harmony with God will be required, and any who then fall short of perfect obedience will be cut off, being judged unworthy of life. The sin which brought death to the race through Adam was simply one disobedient act; but by that act he fell from his perfection. God had a right to demand perfect obedience of him, since he was created perfect; and He will demand the same of all men when the great work of restoring them is complete. None will be permitted to have everlasting life who then in the slightest degree fall short of perfection. To fall short of perfection, then, will be to sin wilfully against full light and perfect ability.

Any who sin wilfully, against full light and ability, will perish in the second death. And should any one, during that age of trial, under its full blaze of light, spurn the offered favours, and make no progress toward perfection for a hundred years, he will be reckoned unworthy of life and will be "cut off," though at a hundred years he would be in the period of comparative childhood. Thus it is written of that day: "As a lad shall one die a hundred years old; and as a sinner shall be accursed he who dieth at a hundred years old." Isa. 65:20—Leeser.) Thus all must have at least one hundred years of trial; and, if not so obstinate as to refuse to make progress, their trial will continue throughout the entire day of Christ, reaching a culmination only at its close.

The conclusion of the world's coming judgment is clearly shown in the parable of the sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46) in Rev. 20:15; 21:8 and in 1 Cor. 15:25. These and other Scriptures show that at its close the two classes will have been completely separated—the obedient and the disobedient; those in harmony with the letter and the spirit of God's law, and those out of harmony with it.

We do not wish to be understood as ignoring the present responsibility of the world, which every man has, according to the measure of light enjoyed, whether it be much or little, whether it be the light of nature or of revelation. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," and "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." (Prov. 15:3; Eccl. 12:14.) The good and the evil deeds of the present time will receive a just recompense of reward either now or hereafter. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some they follow after." (1 Tim. 5:24.) No others than the Lord's favoured "little flock" have as yet sufficient light to incur the final penalty, the second death.

Under the sophistries of the great deceiver, Satan, both the world and the Church nominal have been robbed of the blessed assurances of the coming time of righteous judgment. They know that the Bible tells of a coming judgment day, but they regard it with only fear and dread; and because of this fear, there is to them no more unwelcome tidings than that the day of the Lord is at hand. They put it far away from them, and do not wish to hear it even mentioned. They have no idea of the blessings in store for the world under that glorious reign of Him whom God hath appointed to judge the world in righteousness. Among the greatest of the blinding influences which Satan has devised to keep men in ignorance of the truth

regarding the judgment day have been the errors which have crept into the creeds and hymn books of the various religious sects. Many have come to esteem those errors as of paramount importance to the Word of God.

How differently did the prophets and apostles regard that promised day of judgment! Note the exultant prophetic utterance of David (1 Chrori. 16:31-34) . He says:—

“Let the heavens be glad,
And let the earth rejoice;
And let men say among the nations,
Jehovah reigneth.

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof ;
Let the fields rejoice, and all that are therein.
Then shall the trees of the wood sing aloud
At the presence of Jehovah,

BECAUSE HE COMETH
TO JUDGE THE EARTH.

Oh give thanks unto Jehovah, for He is good;
For His mercy endureth forever.”

To the same day the Apostle also points, assuring us that it will be a glorious and desirable day, and that for it the whole creation is groaning and travailing in pain together—waiting for the great Judge to deliver and to bless the world, as well as to exalt and glorify the Church.—Rom. 8:21, 22.

In John 5:28, 29 a precious promise for the world of a coming judgment-trial for life everlasting is, by a mistranslation, turned into a fearful imprecation. According to the Greek, they that have done evil—that have failed of divine approval —will come forth unto resurrection [raising up to perfection] by judgments, “stripes,” disciplines. --See the Revised Version.

In Time of Trouble.

I placed my life in Thy dear hands—My Father,
For better or for worse, for good or ill,

And so no matter what may come upon me
I'll smile up in_ Thy face and trust Thee still.

I know that Thou can'st see the hidden future
No cloud can hide the things that are to be

From Thy clear vision—so—when trials cluster
Like brambles round my path I look to Thee.

Thy love shines like a beacon through the shadows.
I see Thy dear hand reaching for my own.

I clasp those strong, unfailing fingers tightly,
Nothing but kindness have those dear hands shown.

Ah yes,'tis true there have been many trials
To test my faith and draw me to Thy side.

Weaning me from the world with its false pleasures
That I might in Thy love and care abide.

My Father—oh how sweet to thus address Thee—
To hear Thy gentle whisper "Child of Mine"

No matter then what griefs or ills befall me
I lie unfearing in the arms Divine.

Then when my work is done—my testing over—
I'll lay me down in Thy dear arms to rest

Forgotten all life's worries, joys and sorrows,
Borne in Thine arms to Mansions of the blest. —L.K.P.

The Radio Witness.

All our friends within hearing distance of the broadcasts of the Frank and Ernest Dialogues are advised that advertising cards are available for distribution. A number of friends are doing good work with these cards and others are invited to co-operate also. Cards are supplied free from the Radio Fund.

The next evening broadcast at 7.30 p.m., over 6KY Perth, will be on 29th September, and our friends in West Australia within hearing distance of this station are asked to make this decision known to others. These Sunday evening sessions are given every three months, in addition to the regular Sunday morning Dialogues over the same station at 10.15 a.m.

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