

# Death and Immortality of the Soul



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**W**hile we are still living, we must do well, to render our love to God and fellow men, for there is no opportunity in death. “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:6,7).

Therefore, you who are living and know you will die, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

It is a solemn thing to die, but a far more solemn thing to live. Every thought and word and deed of our lives will meet us again in judgment. What we make of ourselves in probationary time, that we must remain to all eternity. Death brings dissolution to the body, but makes no change in the character. The coming of Christ does not change our characters; it only fixes them forever beyond all change.

## **When the arrow of death strike**

We have but a brief lifetime here on earth, and we know not when the arrow of death may strike our hearts. If we remain alive till Christ returns, we know not exactly when the mandate will go forth: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: ... and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still” (Revelation 22:11).

We need to be spiritually wise. “O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” (Deuteronomy 32:29).

The Lord “doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men” (Lamentation 3:33). “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psalms 103:13, 14). He knows our heart, for He reads every secret of the soul. While we are still living, we must do the will of God in all things. Pray for guidance at all times.

If Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” and added, “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matthew 26:39), how very appropriate it is for finite mortals to make the same surrender to the wisdom and will of God.

Death may strike us, but are we prepared? Have we become acquainted with God, the Governor of heaven, the Lawgiver, and with Jesus Christ whom He sent into the world as His representative? When our lifework is ended, shall we be able to say, as did Christ our example: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do . . . I have manifested thy name" (John 17:4-6)?

### **Man is a mere mortal**

It is important that while we are still living, we fully understand what the Bible teaches about the state of man. We are mortal, not immortal. "Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?" (Job 4:17).

Man is only mortal, and while he feels himself too wise to accept Jesus, he will remain only mortal. Physical life is not eternal or immortal; for God, the Life-giver, takes it again. From dust he came to dust he returns at death. Man has no control over his life.

The Word of God nowhere teaches that the soul of man is immortal. Immortality is an attribute of God only. "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for

ever and ever. Amen” (1 Timothy 1:17). Again, “King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Timothy 6:15, 16).

Upon the fundamental error of natural immortality rests the doctrine of consciousness in death – a doctrine, like eternal torment, opposed to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the dictates of reason, and to our feelings of humanity. What say the Scriptures concerning these things? David declares that man is not conscious in death. “His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalms 146:4).

When, in answer to his prayer, Hezekiah’s life was prolonged fifteen years, the grateful king rendered to God a tribute of praise for His great mercy. In this song he tells the reason why he thus rejoices: “The grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day” (Isaiah 38:18, 19).

Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss, and praising God

with an immortal tongue; but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, declared that the patriarch David “is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.” Peter continued, “For David is not ascended into the heavens” (Acts 2:29, 34). The fact that David remains in the grave until the resurrection, proves that the righteous do not go to heaven at death. David repented his sin and died righteous. But only until the resurrection, and by virtue of the fact that Christ has risen, that David can at last sit at the right hand of God.

### **Man's state in death**

Now that we have established that the dead do not go to heaven, let the Bible tell us of their state in death. “For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6).

According to the popular belief, the good dead go to heaven and are acquainted with all that takes

place on the earth, and especially with the lives of the friends whom they have left behind. But how could it be a source of happiness to the dead to know the troubles of the living, to see them enduring all the sorrows, disappointments, and anguish of life?

Another popular belief is that the bad dead go to hell. Even logic of the worst error militates against this popular belief. How utterly revolting is the belief that as soon as the breath leaves the body, the soul of the impenitent is consigned to the flames of hell! To what depths of anguish must those be plunged who see their friends passing to the grave unprepared, to enter upon an eternity of woe and sin!

Christ represents death as a sleep to His believing children. Awaking Lazarus from death sleep, He said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead" (John 11:11-14). So are they that die in Christ, their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him.

Others have misunderstood the statement of Jesus to the thief on the cross. The thief repented and said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Then Jesus answered him, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42, 43). People conclude that the thief and Jesus went to heaven that same day.

But Jesus did not go to heaven that same day, for three days later Jesus confirms that He had not gone to heaven yet. "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

What then can we say, is Jesus' answer to the thief a contradiction? No! It is the punctuation in the translation that is confusing. In harmony with the rest of the Scripture, it should be punctuated with a comma after 'to day' and not before. So, it should read: "Verily I say unto thee To day, shalt thou be with me in paradise." That same day Jesus assured the thief of a place in the future paradise. Moreover, the thief did not ask to be in heaven that same day, but "when thou comest", for the thief understood that at a future time Jesus was to come back to begin His kingdom. The thief died in the hope of resurrection.

## **Goodness in God's justice**

There is a popular belief that at death wicked souls go to hell for torment. This ignores that man is a soul, for God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). Moreover, souls die, for the Bible says, “the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4). Jesus said, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28).

Satan and his agents represent God as even worse than themselves, in order to justify their own malignity and rebellion. How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell; that for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live. Yet this doctrine has been widely taught and is still embodied in many of the creeds of Christendom.

Where, in the pages of God's Word, is such teaching to be found? Will the redeemed in heaven be lost to all emotions of pity and compassion, and even to feelings of common humanity? Are these to

be exchanged for the indifference of the stoic, or the cruelty of the savage? No, such is not the teaching of the Bible.

The theory of eternal torment is one of the false doctrines that constitute the wine of the fornication of Babylon, which "she made all the nations drink of" (Revelation 14:8). When we consider in what false colours Satan has painted the character of God, can we wonder that our merciful Creator is feared, even hated?

The principles of kindness, mercy, and love, taught and exemplified by our Saviour, are a transcript of the will and character of God. God executes justice upon the wicked, for the good of the universe, and even for the good of those upon whom His judgments are visited.

Those who have chosen Satan as their leader, and have been controlled by his power, are not prepared to enter the presence of God. Could they endure the glory of God and the Lamb? To sin, wherever found, "our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29). In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them.

## **Portion of the wicked**

While all life belongs to God, those who choose a life of sin sever themselves from life. God says, “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4).

While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. The soul that sinneth it shall die an everlasting death – a death that will last forever, from which there will be no hope of a resurrection; and then the wrath of God will be executed.

It is a great marvel that Satan could succeed so well in making men believe that the words of God, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die,” mean that the soul that sinneth it shall not die, but live eternally in misery. But the truth is, life is life, whether it is in pain or happiness. Death is without pain, without joy, without hatred. There is no life outside Christ.

Christ endured an agonising death under the most humiliating circumstances that we might have life. He gave up His precious life that He might vanquish death. But He rose from the tomb, and the myriads of angels who came to behold Him take up the life He had laid down heard His words of triumphant joy as He stood above Joseph’s rent

sepulcher proclaiming: “I am the resurrection, and the life” (John 11:25).

The question, “If a man die, shall he live again?” (Job 14:14) has been answered. By bearing the penalty of sin, by going down into the grave, Christ has brightened the tomb for all who die in faith. God in human form has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. In dying, Christ secured eternal life for all who believe in Him. In dying, He condemned the originator of sin and disloyalty to suffer the penalty of sin – eternal death.

### **Natural immortality of soul is a lie**

The great original lie, which Satan told to Eve in Eden, “Ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4), was the first sermon ever preached on the immortality of the soul. That sermon was crowned with success, and terrible results followed. Satan has brought minds to receive that sermon as truth, and Christian ministers preach it, sing it, and pray it.

After the Fall, Satan bade his angels make a special effort to inculcate the belief in man’s natural immortality; and having induced the people to receive this error, they were to lead them on to conclude that the sinner would live in eternal misery.

Now the prince of darkness, working through his agents, represents God as a revengeful tyrant, declaring that He plunges into hell all those who do not please Him, and causes them ever to feel His wrath.

A large class to whom the doctrine of eternal torment is revolting, are driven to the opposite error. They see that the Scriptures represent God as a being of love and compassion, and they cannot believe that He will consign His creatures to the fires of an eternally burning hell. But holding that the soul is naturally immortal, they see no alternative but to conclude that all mankind will finally be saved. Many regard the threatenings of the Bible as designed merely to frighten men into obedience, and not to be literally fulfilled. Thus the sinner can live in selfish pleasure, disregarding the requirements of God, and yet expect to be finally received into His favour.

God has given to men a declaration of His character, and of His method of dealing with sin. The Bible says, "All the wicked will he destroy" (Psalms 145:20). Yet all the manifestations of retributive justice will be perfectly consistent with the character of God as a merciful, long-suffering, benevolent being.

## **Between now and death time**

God has ordained laws for His government, not only of living beings, but of all the operations of nature. Everything is under fixed laws, which cannot be disregarded. It is time that we who are living abide by His laws to signify our acceptance of the gift of salvation. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

The dwellers in Eden had been placed upon probation; their happy estate could be retained only on condition of fidelity to the Creator's law. They could obey and live, or disobey and perish. God had made them the recipients of rich blessings; but should they disregard His will, He who spared not the angels that sinned (Revelation 12:7-9), could not spare them; transgression would forfeit His gifts, and bring upon them misery and ruin.

Adam and Eve transgressed the law of God (Genesis 2:17; 3:6). This made it necessary for them to be driven from Eden and be separated from the tree of life (Genesis 3:21-24), to eat of which after their transgression would perpetuate sin.

Death entered the world because of transgression. But Christ gave His life that man should have another trial. He did not die on the cross to abolish the law of God, but to secure for man a second probation. He did not die to make sin an immortal attribute; He died to secure the right to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

While our probation is open, we must repent of sin and have life in Jesus Christ. For them in Christ, the hope goes beyond earthly life. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:19, 20). At Christ's second coming all the precious righteous dead shall hear His voice, and shall come forth to glorious, immortal life. Now is the time to prepare, to have characters purified.

### **Death swallowed up in victory**

Nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures is found the statement that the righteous go to their reward in heaven or the wicked to their punishment in hell at death. The patriarchs and prophets have left no such assurance. Christ and His apostles have given

no hint of it. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as sleeping until the resurrection.

Now let us take note that Paul used an argument that forever precludes the doctrine of the soul going to heaven at death. In one simple statement, Paul shattered the popular argument for natural immortality. He said, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Corinthians 5:4). Obviously, mortality can only be swallowed up by immortality, or eternal life, not by death.

But is this the passing of the soul from the mortal body at the hour of death? For argument sake, let us assume that the soul can continue living outside the body, which it cannot. Assume the body is mortal and the soul immortal. At death, the body, which is mortal, does not become immortal, but loses all its life and crumbles back to dust in the grave. Moreover, the soul, which was immortal before, is no more than immortal afterwards. Is there any "swallowing up of mortality by life" here? Just the reverse! Mortality, or the mortal part, is swallowed up by death! There is not as much life afterward as there was before, because after death

only the soul lives, while the body which was alive before, is now dead. That view is unbiblical and we must reject it as false doctrine.

In the very day when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl broken, "in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:4). They that go down to the grave are in silence. They know no more of anything that is done under the sun. Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality.

"For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible . . . So when . . . this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15:52-54).

As they are called forth from their deep slumber, they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death, the last thought that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55).

For the dead, the pangs of death were the last things they felt. When they awake the pain is all

gone. For the righteous who resurrect, the gates of the city of God swing back upon their hinges, and the ransomed of God walk in through the cherubims and seraphims, and Christ bids them welcome and puts upon them His benediction. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

### **First and special resurrection**

Behold the scene as it unfolds. Soon and very soon, there is heard the voice "It is done" (Revelation 16:17). That voice shakes the heavens and the earth. Then there is a mighty earthquake, "such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great" (Revelation 16:18). The whole earth heaves and swells like the waves of the sea. Its surface is breaking up. Its very foundations seem to be giving way.

What follows? Graves are opened, and "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth . . . awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2).

All who have died in the faith of the message of warning and mercy found in Revelation 14:6-12 come forth from the tomb glorified, to hear God's

covenant of peace with those who have kept His commandments. Those who had died in faith under this message of warning and mercy, keeping the Sabbath, come forth from their dusty beds.

To the obedient believer, Christ is the resurrection and the life. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thessalonians 4:14). In our Saviour the life that was lost through sin is restored; for He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will. He is invested with the right to give immortality. The life that He laid down in humanity, He takes up again, and gives to humanity.

The living righteous are changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Corinthians 15:52). At the voice of God they are glorified; now they are made immortal, and with the risen saints are caught up to meet their Lord in the air. It is then righteous friends long separated by death are united, nevermore to part, and with songs of gladness ascend together to the city of God in heaven.

But another class resurrect in a special resurrection, not to glorification, but to contempt. "They also which pierced him" (Revelation 1:7), those that mocked and derided Christ's dying agonies, and the opposers of His truth and His

people, are raised to behold Him in His glory, and to see the honour placed upon the loyal and obedient.

### **Earth desolate for a thousand years**

Now, the righteous dead and righteous living at Jesus' second coming have gone to heaven, what happens next? Well, all the wicked and those that resurrected in a special resurrection die, and Satan and his angels remain on a desolate earth without inhabitants to tempt.

At Jesus' second coming, the sinners will be cut down by the bright glory of God as though a thousand volts of electricity had fallen upon them. Jesus spoke of that moment in these words: "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matthew 24:27, 28). Christ indicated that the bodies of the wicked dead will be scattered as a result of the blazing glory of His return.

The revelator, John, echoed the words of Jesus in describing the fate of the wicked. "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and

all the fowls were filled with their flesh” (Revelation 19:21). The bodies of the lost will be food for vultures, immediately upon the appearance of Christ in the heavens.

Remember, Jesus is not coming to deal with the sin problem, and therefore no one repents at His coming – all cases have already been decided. The Bible is very explicit on this point. John records the actual words of a mighty decree that Christ declares just before His return to this earth. “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:11, 12).

The earth thus becomes desolate, without a single human being. Jeremiah beheld this earth in vision following the return of Christ. He described it thus: “The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground” (Jeremiah 25:33). Of course, they will not be gathered. Nobody is here to do it. No one can weep for them, because the earth is entirely emptied of all

its inhabitants. The dead bodies of the wicked will be scattered all over the earth, in the same places where they were cut down by the glory of God's presence.

What about Satan and his angels? Oh, them, they will be on this earth turned, as it were, a bottomless pit and held therein by the chain of circumstances. John beheld them, "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20:1-3).

What an astonishing scene! The pit is a desolate earth. The chain is the circumstances that forbid him access to any human being during the thousand years. Unable to deceive a single soul, he will inhabit this desolate planet for a thousand years contemplating the havoc his rebellion has produced. The righteous souls are in heaven, the wicked are all dead, and Satan has no one to work on till the end of the thousand years.

For six thousand years since creation, Satan has been plenty busy, saying in different ways to souls, “ye shall not surely die” (Genesis 3:4). Satan has followed souls around trying to devise their destruction. His chief employment for centuries has been to accuse, mislead and destroy. Suddenly, though, he has nothing to do. They are all taken away, and he is left with his own thoughts.

Does the devil know of his thousand-year prison sentence? Of course, the devil is a good Bible student, and knows the Bible better than you do. Oh yes, holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but the devil was looking over their shoulder and committing to memory every bit of it. The devil knows better than we do that every word of the Bible is true. He knows that everything about heaven is true, because he used to live there. He knows that it is just as beautiful and wonderful as the Bible describes it, but he does not want anybody else to believe that. So, he is desperately working to keep people from studying the Bible and to keep people off their knees in prayer for victory.

## **Second resurrection**

A thousand years pass by before the wicked resurrect. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" (Revelation 20:5). At the close of the thousand years the second resurrection will take place.

The resurrected wicked will seek to hide in the rocks, to shield themselves from the terrible glory of Him whom they once despised. And, overwhelmed and pained with His majesty and exceeding glory, they with one accord raise their voices, and with terrible distinctness exclaim, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Psalms 118:26).

But Satan does not leave the wicked, even at that time. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them" (Revelation 20:7-9).

The fires, known as hell, which burn the wicked, the devil and his angels, do not burn forever in the

sense that it burns continually and physically seen burning forever. “For behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Malachi 4:1).

But like the burning of Sodom, the effect of the burning of the wicked is an everlasting effect, and cannot be reversed. “Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7).

We know Sodom and Gomora are not still burning, yet they are said to have burnt in “eternal fire.” It is the effect of their burning that is eternal. Likewise, the wicked will burn ‘eternally’ as was Sodom. “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly” (2 Peter 2:6).

The destruction of the wicked is forever, never to be reversed. Paul simplifies it further with these words: “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of

our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9). Again, the punishment is “everlasting destruction,” in other words, the effect of which is everlasting and never to be reversed.

### **Immortality only in Jesus Christ**

It was in the time of sorrows of death that Job asked the question: “If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come” (Job 14:14).

Our fondest hopes are often blighted here. Our loved ones are torn from us by death. We close their eyes and habit them for the tomb, and lay them away from our sight. But hope bears our spirits up. “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (1 Thessalonians 4:13). We are not parted forever, but shall meet the loved ones who sleep in Jesus. Are we ready so that if we shall fall asleep, we can do so with hope in Jesus Christ?

We have immortality only in Jesus Christ. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal

life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). Jesus declared, "I am the resurrection, and the life" (John 11:25). In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. "He that hath the Son hath life." The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of immortality. "He that believeth in me," said Jesus, "though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25, 26).

To the true believer, death is but a small matter. Christ speaks of it as if it were of little moment. "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death," "he shall never taste of death" (John 8:51, 52). To the Christian, death is but a sleep, a moment of silence and darkness. The life is hid with Christ in God, and "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:4).

He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood a conqueror of the grave, and asserted His right and power to give eternal life. "I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). Those who see Christ in His true character, and receive Him into the heart, have everlasting life. It is through the Spirit that Christ dwells in us; and the Spirit of God,

received into the heart by faith, is the beginning of the life eternal.

Jesus is crying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). While mercy lingers, obey Christ's call, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

## **Conclusion**

God promised life on condition of obedience. Satan promised life in disobedience – "ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4) – was the first sermon ever preached upon the immortality of the soul. This sermon, resting solely upon the authority of Satan, is echoed from the pulpits of Christendom and is received by the majority of mankind. The divine sentence, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20), is made to mean: The soul that sinneth, it shall not die, but live eternally.

Those who flatter themselves that God is too merciful to execute justice upon the sinner, have only to look to the cross of Calvary. The death of the spotless Son of God testifies that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), that every violation of God’s law must receive its just retribution. Christ the sinless became sin for man. He bore the guilt of transgression, and the hiding of His Father’s face, until His heart was broken to death. All this sacrifice was made that sinners might be redeemed. In no other way could man be freed from the penalty of sin. And every soul that refuses to become a partaker of the atonement provided at such a cost must bear in his own person the guilt and punishment of transgressing the eternal law of God.

Finally, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

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