

THE SECOND DEATH

If there is to be a second, it implies that there has been a first. Not only so, but the second must be like or similar to the first, or it would not be a second. Neither an apple nor a pear would be a second peach; so the second death, like the first, must be a cessation of life or being. The second death is spoken of with reference to humanity; and, since the first death – Adamic – passed upon all men, it follows as a matter of fact, that the first death must be abrogated or set aside in some manner, before the second death would be possible.

Death is the wages of sin. The first – the wages of Adam's sin – passed upon all men. He, having forfeited his right to life, began to have the penalty executed on him – "Dying thou shalt die." He could not, of course, give to his posterity that right to, and perfection of, life which he no longer possessed. Hence all partake of the depravity both mental and physical, and all partake of the penalty – Dying we die. In fact, we are born in a dying condition, or under the rule or dominion of death. This universal death, we call Adamic death, because our father Adam was the direct cause or source of it.

Were it not that this Adamic death is to be destroyed by Christ, there never could be a second death. Life once forfeited, could not be forfeited a second time, unless it first be restored. This restoration to life is called a resurrection (Gr. *anastasis* – a setting up again – rebuilding – restoring.) Jesus obtained of Justice the right to restore mankind to life, by giving himself a ransom for them – a full satisfaction to the claims of justice. He bought us with his own precious blood. (1 Pet. 1:19; and 1 Cor. 6:20.) Hence it is that he can say, "O, death, I will be thy plagues; O, grave, I will be thy destruction." (Hos. 13:14.) He presently, when united with his Bride,

will begin the work of destroying death by raising all mankind out of it – "There shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust."

In the resurrected condition in the Millennial Age, each member of the human family will have an individual trial, testing his willingness to be obedient to the will of God. And the hope is, that the large majority will "choose life and live," being helped in their choice by the bitter experiences of the present Adamic death. Nevertheless, Scripture reveals the fact, that in that age some will sin against light, knowledge, and liberty, and die the second death – the wages of their own, and not of Adam's sin.

The Lord shows the above differences between the first and second death, and the present and future age, in Jer. 31:29,30. "In those days they shall say no more, 'The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. **[R381 : page 4]** But every one shall die for his own iniquity: Every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge" – "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. 18:2,4.) This is a pointed Scripture; it shows that in the coming age the parents' sins will not be upon the children; consequently it describes a time when the first death has been abolished. But it tells of a second death too, for it informs us that then, after release from death once – then, the soul (person) that sinneth, it shall die. This could be no other than the second death.

The first, or Adamic death is an extinction of being, but is called a sleep, because God had foreseen and forearranged that in due time all should be made alive. hence, while really dead, and returned to the dust from whence they came, yet not so in God's sight – they "all live unto him." From the standpoint of his plan and power, they shall all awake again to life. They only sleep until the great Millennial day. But the "second death" is not a sleep, because there is no hope of a resurrection from it. Nowhere in Scripture is there any promise of release from it – "There is a sin unto death (a sin

against light and opportunity). I do not say that ye shall pray for it."
(1 John 5:16.)

The first, or Adamic death, was accompanied by pain and distress in dying; but all pain and consciousness ceased when the death was complete. So with the second death, it doubtless will be accompanied by a certain amount of agony, but the agony will be at an end when the second death is accomplished. Because there will be no resurrection from it, because the second death will never be destroyed, therefore it is called ever-lasting punishment. The punishment or wages is death, and the second death is everlasting, because it will never be undone.

Does some one say – death shall be destroyed – there shall be no more death? We ask which death will be destroyed? – is it not the first; the death that passed upon all for Adam's sin? Yes, and its destruction was often foretold, and the ransom to be given for the Adamic transgression was often typified in the sacrifices of the four thousand years previous to Jesus' sacrifice – the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Having taken away their sin by paying their penalty for them, he obtained the right to take away that death which was on the whole world as the punishment of Adam's sin. But Scripture is silent regarding any ransom from the second death. On the contrary, it says of those who sin willfully against full light and truth, that "there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins [We would no longer have any of the benefits arising from the sacrifice]. Henceforth such are exposed to the full penalty of their own sin – the second death. (Heb. 10:26,27.)

But by taking a full Scriptural view of the subject, we may readily convince ourselves that the second death will never be destroyed. Call to mind the fact that a Saviour from the Adamic sin and Adamic death was necessary, for "Without the shedding of blood

there is no remission" of sins. (Heb. 9:22.) Call to mind also, the Scriptural teaching that every sinner requires a Saviour, and you will see that if a thousand persons sinned thus individually, it would require the death of a thousand redeemers to set them free from the second death – one for each. This was God's reason for condemning the entire race in the person of one man, viz. – that they should require only one redeemer; and only one redeemer was provided. The race which was condemned to death because of one man's sin, could, with justice, be released from death through the one Redeemer. (Rom. 5:18,19.) Witness herein the economy which pervades all of the Divine plans. Truly he condemned all in one that he might have mercy upon all through another one. "Since through a man there is death, through a man (Jesus) also there is a resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15:21.)

Some, overlooking the fact that God is just as well as loving, have arranged a theory for the ultimate eternal salvation of all men; and, anxious to hold their theory, they are in danger of neglecting the Scriptural doctrine of a second or everlasting death, for which there is no sacrifice and no promised redemption. These tell us that the "second death" is a symbol, and is used in speaking of symbols; hence, it cannot be understood as applying to mankind, but to systems.

It is a matter of regret, that a desire to uphold a theory should lead any one to take this ground, for it is not true. Nowhere is second death applied to symbols or systems. We demand a Scripture for such an assertion. As a proof of its use relative to systems, we are referred to Rev. 20:14,15; and 21:8. We recognize the fact that this book is full of symbols and word-pictures, but its pictures are full of meaning; and it abounds also in literal statements. This is no excuse, however, for ignoring its teachings as meaningless. If systems are mentioned as dying a second death, it would prove that such systems

had once existed, died, revived, and then died again. Many false systems now exist, which must die with this evil age. But will such evil systems come to life again, and flourish during the Millennial reign of Christ, and need at some future time to die a second death? Nay, verily. But all should notice that the expression "second death" or any equivalent expression is never used in the Bible with reference to systems.

There is not the semblance of a system connected with the account of the second death in the above references. One reads: "And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."

Here the words "lake of fire," are used symbolically, as elsewhere, to represent destruction; but no systems are mentioned as being destroyed here. The scene is laid in the Millennial Age, when, under the reign of Jesus and his Bride, Satan is bound, and the White Throne (reign of righteousness) is established in the earth. Then the dead, small and great, being brought forth from death and hades, are judged or tried by the opened books – the Scriptures. Then a record will be made of all worthy of ever-lasting life as God's human sons – called a book, or record of life, or of those worthy of life.

[A book or record of life is made during this Gospel Age also – but a different one entirely. The one now being made is of those accounted worthy of the new nature – to be changed from human to divine beings. Hence we see that there are two books of life – one for the overcomers of this age – new divine creatures, and "another" book of life for those who are counted worthy in the next age.]

As the work of raising mankind out of the Adamic death and the tomb progresses – they (death, and hades – the grave) are said to be destroyed or "plagued," or cast into a lake of fire – cast into destruction. **[R382 : page 4]** When the last one has been delivered

from the power of Adamic death and the tomb, then the lake of fire [the judgment] will have destroyed death. But while the judgment of God (symbolized by fire) will thus destroy the Adamic death, it will also be the agency for destroying all men unworthy of life. And thus it is that it is to them the second death, as we read – This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. 20:14,15. Rev. version.)

In the succeeding chapter we have a pen-picture of the Millennial Age, in which the church and her Head – Jesus – are in glory, and the throne or kingdom of God is established among men. Through this glorified church, God dwells with men, and the Millennial Age of blessing progresses. During that age the former things (sorrow, pain, and death as results of Adamic sin) pass away, and death (Adamic) shall be no more. (Verse 4.) This is accomplished by him that sits in the throne – the Christ, head and body; hence it cannot in any sense belong to this age, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth." It must belong to the coming age, when the words of the Master will be fulfilled: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Speaking of those of that Millennial Age who overcome, or are found worthy of life, we read that they shall be God's sons – earthly sons, as Adam before he sinned was an earthly son. (Luke 3:38; and 1 Cor. 15:47,48.) Then, speaking of the class found unworthy of life in the close of the Millennium, after having enjoyed all its privileges and favors, we read – "The fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars – their part shall be in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." The judgments of God which shall devour these, are here, as elsewhere, represented by the two most

destructive agencies known. (Fire is everywhere a figure of destruction, and burning brimstone is the most deadly agency known. It destroys every form of life.) This is the second death, because as we were just informed (verse 4) the general death – Adamic – was no more – it had been completely destroyed by taking out of it the entire race.

Who can object to this decree of Justice, that all who will not come into harmony with the God of love and his loving plans when full knowledge and ability are possessed, should be cut off from life – die for their own sins – the second death. God will have a clean, sinless universe, all harmonious, all perfect; and to accomplish this he must either coerce men, or destroy those who would require coercion. He tells us that the latter is his plan, and it becomes us to assent to it. Does some one say that God's mercy endureth forever, and he will raise men from the second death, and give them further opportunity? We answer that if sin is willfully and persistently pursued regardless of knowledge, regardless of ability to do right, regardless of punishments, it would be useless to repeat the same operation. Besides this, we have shown that a ransom price and redeemer would be necessary for each sinner, and God reveals no such plan in his Word. Is it best to attempt to be wise above what is written? Does not every Scripture bearing on the subject teach that Christ and his Bride will reign a thousand years, and that in that thousand years all evil and every enemy of righteousness shall be destroyed – even death [Adamic] the great enemy? Then the entire earth and its nations – all whose names are in the second book of life (the others being destroyed by the second death) will be delivered up to God, even the Father. 1 Cor. 15:28; and Rev. 20:4. Though Lazarus and various others who were brought to life, died again, theirs was not a second death, because they were never fully brought from under the dominion of the first, or Adamic death. They were merely aroused for a time from the unconsciousness of death, to a

small measure of life, soon to relapse again to sleep until the morning when Adamic death shall be swallowed up in victory.
