

## **NOT HURT OF THE SECOND DEATH.**

From the foregoing it will be seen that the death of the saints as a sacrifice with Christ, as members of his body sharing his death, is their second death. It was reckoned that our death as sinners in Adam was accomplished in the crucifixion of Jesus, and our resurrection as justified men, as accomplished in Jesus' resurrection, as shown above. One death was therefore in the past, hence when we, as justified persons, presented ourselves as living sacrifices, to be baptized with Jesus' baptism of death and to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, we then and there were covenanting a second death, and day by day, if obedient to our covenant, we are dying, and soon the second death shall have swallowed up this justified human nature.

But will it be a great loss? It would be a sad and irreparable loss of our existence forever, were it not that the Father, who highly exalted Jesus, our Head, to the divine nature, has covenanted similarly to exalt all the members of his body – "So many of us as were baptised into Christ," "baptised into his death."

These, who during this age follow in the footsteps of the Forerunner, are the overcomers of the world mentioned in our Lord's promise – "He that conquers, in no wise shall be injured IN CONSEQUENCE of the second death." (Rev. 2:11 – Rotherham's translation.)

Shall we conclude then that the second death would injure no one? Nay; death is everywhere presented as the destruction of whatever it is applied to. It is the wages of sin always; the first or Adamic death which passed upon all men was the penalty of one man's disobedience entailed upon all whom he represented in trial, and it is because Adamic death is to be removed through Christ,

that any could die again. But [R649 : page 4] the second death shall not be a continuance of the first, a dying on account of Adam's sin, but it will be the result of an individual and deliberate act of each one who suffers it. It shall no more be a proverb, "The fathers ate a sour grape [sin] and the children's teeth are set on edge"; but then, every man that dieth the second death will die only for his own wilful sin, against full light and power to do otherwise. "The soul that sinneth, IT shall die." (Ezek. 18:2-4; Jer. 31:29,30.) And not a single reference of Scripture, in which the second death is mentioned, ever refers it to any but a class of wilful sinners, who, in spite of knowledge and ability, love sin and hate righteousness, except this one, which hastens to assure us that though this class will suffer death aside from the Adamic, and, therefore, the second, they will not be injured in consequence. The unavoidable inference is, that all others than this class – the overcomers of the Gospel church – will be greatly injured by the second death.

Since each one who dies the second death will have had a full individual trial, it follows, that to recover them from death would require the death of a Redeemer for each. And not only are we told that Jesus dies only once for sin, and will die "no more," but we can see that a ransom from the second death would be useless, since there could be no more favorable opportunity presented than that which they shall have experienced under the Millennial reign, before being condemned to the second death.

As the first death, or wages of Adam's sin, was not torture, but a destruction of being, (Psa. 90:3,) so also the second death, the wages of wilful, individual sin, is a destruction or blotting out of being forever, but is not torture. As Adamic death would have been everlasting in duration without a ransom and resurrection, so the second death will be everlasting because of no ransom and no

resurrection from it. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE through Jesus Christ our Lord."

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### **SPECIAL LIGHT FROM HEAVEN.**

The notion of a special light [beyond or different from that contained in the Scripture, is evidently the brother's meaning. – Ed.] being vouchsafed to the prayerful reader of Scripture, is as destructive of the divine record itself, as it is of man's responsibility in rejecting it; for if God, by his Spirit, communicates directly with the minds of men now, as an Interpreter,\* such communications will assuredly control any words given to mortals eighteen hundred years ago.

[\*The manner in which the Holy Spirit acts as a guide into truth, we believe to be, first, by purifying the moral nature – removing such obstacles as pride, prejudice, etc., and secondly, by directing the careful student through a comparison of Scripture, into such channels as to show its wonderful harmony with every other part of the Divine Revelation, and with a reasonable idea of the character of an all-wise God. What the author here combats is the prevalent claim of numerous careless readers of the Scriptures, that their fanciful imaginings – which cannot be proved in harmony with the divine record, are given by the Spirit of God. – Ed.]

So men who hold to this sort of divine aid, are already beginning to reason: "Are we," it is now said – not by skeptics only, but by evangelical teachers, – "to bring down the word inspiration to a use merely narrow and technical, asserting it only of prophecy and other Scripture writings, and carefully excluding from it all participation by ourselves, in whatever sense it might be taken?" Are we to 'become a class unprivileged, differing from

the anointed men of Scripture and Scripture times – shut down to a kind of second-hand life, feeding on their words?' Is it to be believed that they were inspired, while we in no sense can be? If so, there is no relief for us, but in a recoil against inspiration itself, even that of the Holy Scriptures; for who will credit that men were inspired long ages ago, when now any such thing is incredible?" [Rev. Horace Bushnell, D.D.] [R650 : page 4]

The recoil thus spoken of as inevitable, finds its expression in those later forms of criticism which are now issuing from the great seats of learning, according to which the inspiration of the first century, is to bow before that of the nineteenth; the miraculous is to be expurgated; and if, as a necessary consequence, the Bible loses its authority, the result may be regretted, but it must be considered as inseparable from progress.

The root of these terrible errors, is the notion that the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind by other means than by the purification of the nature. This is evident from the ground taken by Dr. Rowland Williams, who boldly asserts, not only that inspiration is a permanent power in the Church, but that the Bible always supposed in its readers, "an illumination kindred to its own." In explaining what he means, he quotes as an authority, St. Basil, who speaks of the Holy Spirit as an intellectual light, affording illumination to every rational faculty in the investigation of truth; the light which clears mental perplexities, and the secret energy through which every organ discharges its functions aright.

In the faith of this doctrine it is asserted the creeds were developed, doctrine was drawn from doctrine, liturgies were collected, and gentile customs were adopted.

But what follows? Why, of course this: that as the Comforter at present acts within the bounds of our capacities, leaving us liable to error and the shortcomings of our generation, so [the

deduction would be] it is in harmony with the Divine dealings to suppose that while Apostles and Prophets enjoyed a larger measure of illumination, they, too, were left liable to shortcomings in knowledge or humanity in reasoning. The argument culminates in the question, What then is the authority of the Scriptures apart from what good men approve, and from what fair historians think credible? The answer implied is, Nothing at all.

Such are the consequences involved in a doctrine which is to this day cherished with the utmost tenderness by all evangelical churches.

But this is not the doctrine of Scripture. The "illumination" there supposed is a spiritual, not an intellectual gift. It is light proceeding from love. It is moral sympathy leading to the recognition of the Divine Word. It is, in short, reason, enlightened and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and thus made capable of appreciating divine truth when it is presented to the mind.

We lay it down then as

### **A FIXED PRINCIPLE,**

That he who would understand the Bible must believe, first, that God in giving it, has not withheld anything necessary for its comprehension, so far, at least, as present duty is concerned; secondly, that to seek to CONTROL the inspiration of Prophets and Apostles by any fancied inspiration of our own, is a miserable delusion; and thirdly, that as a consequence, whether we approve or not, we must either feed on the words of men who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit eighteen hundred years ago, or wither in our pride. And this, not because the Apostles and other Scripture writers are set between us and God, to fence us away, but because the action of the Spirit of God on man, when not exercised miraculously, as at the planting of the Christian Church,

and as in the case of the Apostles and other Scripture writers, is on the moral nature only, and never directly on the intellect; that the Holy Spirit enlightens, not by a process of addition, but by one of subtraction; by removing moral obstacles to the free and healthy action of the natural faculties.

The contrary view, however spiritual or consoling it may seem, destroys all tangible distinctions between inspired and uninspired communications; favors mysticism; lowers the authority of the written Word: and justifies, so far as anything can do, the most fanatical interpretation of Scripture. For it is evident that if a man's understanding of Holy Writ depends on anything else than the right use of the faculties God has given him (which of course implies their non-perversion by dislike or prejudice) it must be interpreted by a light, which, try to explain it as we may, can never be more or less than a personal inspiration, in which case, such personal teachings must be supreme.

It is both curious and instructive to observe how error changes its form without changing its nature. It would really seem as if Protestants, like Romanists, believed that A DIVINE REVELATION without an INFALLIBLE INTERPRETER was no revelation at all. Dr. Whately has well shown that this craving for infallibility, than which there is no more powerful principle in human nature, not only predisposes men towards the pretensions of a supposed unerring Church, or of those who claim or who promise immediate inspiration, but becomes the parent of no small amount of infidelity.

It is an error that falls in at once with men's wishes, and with their conjectures; it presents itself to them in the guise of a virtuous humility; and they readily and firmly believe it, not only without evidence, but against all evidence.

Vain, however, is it to hope that by any such means, we can evade our responsibility. What we really want is that blessed indwelling of the Holy Spirit – the only influence we are authorized to seek and to pray for – which is not intellectual, but moral; which is inseparable from candor, love of truth, and obedience generally; which manifests itself in growing sympathy with the divine character; and which therefore involves clearer perceptions of, and a deeper insight into, the divine mind and will as exhibited in the Bible, than can be obtained in any other way: For saith the Lord himself, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

H. DUNN.

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