

MORTAL AND IMMORTAL.

These words are usually given a very uncertain meaning. Wrong ideas relative to their meaning produce erroneous views of subjects with which they stand connected in general and in Scripture usage.

The definition of MORTAL is, a state or condition of being liable to death. Not a condition of death, but a condition in which death is a possibility.

The definition of IMMORTAL is, a state or condition not liable to death. Not merely a condition of freedom from death, but a condition in which death is an impossibility.

The common, but erroneous idea of MORTAL is, a state or condition in which death is unavoidable.

The common definition of IMMORTAL is more nearly correct.

The word immortal signifies not mortal; hence the very construction of the words indicates their true definition.

It is because of the prevalence of a wrong idea of the meaning of the word mortal, that so many are confused when trying to determine whether Adam was mortal or immortal before the transgression.

They reason that if he was immortal God would not have said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"; for if immortal it would be impossible even for him to die. To this we assent; it is a logical conclusion.

On the other hand, say they, If he was mortal [their idea of mortal – a state in which death was unavoidable] wherein could

consist the threat or penalty of the statement, "Thou shalt surely die"? since if mortal (according to their idea of the term) he could not have avoided death anyhow.

The difficulty, it will be perceived, is in the false meaning given to the word mortal. Apply the correct definition and all is clear and plain. Adam was mortal. [i.e., In a condition in which death was a possibility.] He had life in full and perfect measure, yet not inherent life. His was a life sustained by "every tree of the garden" save the one tree forbidden, and so long as he continued in obedience to, and in harmony with his Maker, his life was secure – the sustaining elements would not be denied. Thus seen, Adam had life, and death was entirely avoidable, yet he was in such a condition that death was possible – he was mortal.

The question arises then, If Adam was mortal and on trial, was he on trial for immortality? The general answer would be, Yes. We answer, No. His trial was to see whether he was worthy or unworthy of life. Since it was nowhere promised that, if obedient, he should have a prize, we are bound to leave all such speculations out of the question. He was promised a continuation of the blessings then enjoyed so long as obedient, and threatened with destruction if disobedient.

It is this false idea of mortal that leads people in general to conclude that all beings who do not die are immortal. Under this head are classed Jehovah, Jesus, angels, and all who are saved of mankind. We claim, however, that this is an error; that the great mass of mankind, those saved from the fall, as well as the angels of heaven, will always be mortal; that they will, though in a condition of perfection and bliss, always be of that mortal nature which could suffer the wages of sin – death – if they should commit sin. The security of their existence will be conditioned as it was with Adam, upon obedience to the all-wise God, for whose justice,

love, wisdom and power, to cause all things to work for good to those who love and serve him, will have been fully demonstrated by his dealings with sin at the present time.

Nowhere in Scripture is it stated that angels are immortal, nor that mankind restored will be immortal. While, on the contrary, it is a quality which is ascribed only to the DIVINE NATURE – to Jehovah, to Jesus in his present highly exalted condition, and to the Church, the "little flock," the "Lamb's wife" and "joint-heir," when glorified with him. And not only is this true of the English word "immortal" and its corresponding word "incorruptible," but it is equally true of the original Greek terms which these translate. Let every student prove this to himself by using his "Young's Analytical Concordance."

Not only have we the foregoing evidence that angels are not immortal, but we have proof that they are mortal, in the fact that the chief of their number is to be destroyed. (Heb. 2:14.) The fact that he can be destroyed proves that they, as a class, are MORTAL.

Thus considered, we see that when all sin and misery and evil are blotted out, immortal and mortal beings will live in joy and happiness and love. The first class possessing a nature incapable of death – having life in itself, (Jno. 5:26), the latter having a nature susceptible of death; yet, because of perfection of being and knowledge of the evil and sinfulness of sin giving no cause for death, they being approved of God's law shall be everlastingly supplied with those elements necessary to sustain them in perfection, and shall never die.
