

THE BASIS OF HOPE.

"Ye shall not surely die." Gen. 3:4.

Under the mask of friendship, and as a bearer of good news, Satan, filled with jealousy at sight of the newly created beings, struck the blow for their destruction. He meant the murder of the race (John 8:44), and he was successful. While all who accept the Scriptures admit the authorship of the cunning lie, comparatively few are ready to believe that it is the only text in all the inspired writings that intimates that man is immortal, or that when dead he is at all different from the lower orders of the animal creation. They everywhere recognize just what scientific research reveals, i.e. that life is not a created element at all, but a principle or force from some incorruptible and immortal fountain, transmitted into different organisms. That it is the same principle in all, the difference of its manifestations consisting in the endless variety of organism, and not in the principle itself. (See "Food for Thinking Christians," page 134 – Eccl. 18:20 – 1 Tim. 6:16.)

All life is the same whether in fish, fowl, beast, man or angel, and can be withdrawn by Him in whom all "live and have their being." (Psalm 36:9.)

God subjected the creation to frailty in hope, (Rom. 8:20), and mankind in endeavoring to find a basis of hope for the future, believed it lay in an inherent immortality; that death is not really death, but a condition of some kind through which he passes into another sphere of existence. And upon this idea are built all the theories and philosophies of a future state, that man has conceived.

God's dealings with the Jew and with the world were not of a kind to enlighten mankind upon the *real* hope if he chose Satan's lie. He manifested no *love* toward his creature, but was a "jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth

generation of them that hate him." (Exo. 20:5.) And he was so dreadful that man could not but excessively fear him. "Every transgression received a just recompense of reward." No *love* was shown, and *mercy* was only granted that the whole Jewish race be not destroyed. (2 Sam. 24:16.)

There was no manifestation of love from God through all the long ages of man's experience with Justice. The first public choir that sang of "Peace and Good Will to Man" pointed to the infant in the manger, the real basis of hope for the world; not affirming that man does not die, but that an "off-spring" from the dying stem has been vitalized from the fountain of life and will become the "root" and life giver to the dying race. See articles "David's Son and Lord," Dec. 1885 TOWER, and "Except a Corn of Wheat Die." Feb. 1885, TOWER.

Here then is the hope for the world of mankind; and on that central fact the doctrine of Jesus, from the "pure milk" to the "strong meat," must be built, as the only true hope for the future destiny of man.

He who rids himself of these doctrines, who leaves this central fact at any point, at once wanders off into darkness, and must build again to some extent on the lie that murdered the race. (Jno. 8:44.)

We regret to say that not a few are thus, wandering, and multiplying theories are to-day advanced which practically ignore the doctrine of Christ, and while they are less repugnant than the heathenish idea of eternal torment, they are no less obnoxious to the fires that will burn up his enemies round about.

The value of a gift lies in the appreciation of it, and life is a gift that will not be forced upon any. It is the synonym of existence, the principle that man lost, and without which there can be no sensation of either pain or pleasure. It is the one essence that man found it impossible to retain. It is not heaven, or hell, or any other place, or condition, that was held out through the law for man to seek for or to avoid, but life itself that renders any condition possible, is the promise

everywhere held out by the law, or spoken of by the prophets. (Gen. 2:7. Deut. 30. Mal. 2:5 and all between.)

So deeply fixed in the human mind has this monologue of Satan become, that the true meaning of death is almost beyond the grasp of the intellect of many. And the theories and conjectures upon the condition in death, (which they call *after* death,) are as numerous and different as the nations of earth and their difference of knowledge upon other subjects. Having no data for conclusions, and with no evidences from the grave, it is not strange that no two classes have arrived at the same understanding of the matter. Hence we have theories innumerable from the simple "Happy hunting grounds" of the Red man, to the complete and listless swallowing up of the being in "bliss ineffable in the bosom of the Creator," of the Buddhist and, from the refining processes of symbolic fires of advanced theorists, to the more monstrous but equally absurd doctrine of writhings in torture, or shrinking aghast in mental horrors of the heathen and dark ages and, (with shame we add,) of our own day; all traducing the character of God and dishonoring to Christ, the Life-giver.

The condition of death is the antithesis of life; it can only be defined in negatives or in figurative expressions. It is not a road to Paradise nor a passage-way through which a being is evolved into something else. If so, it would be a blessing (1 Cor. 15:26), and Satan would have been telling the truth in intimating that a spark remained that could not die. **[R822 : page 8]**

It is figuratively called "a land" in Scriptures, but it is the "enemy's land," a "land of darkness" and "obscurity" without "any order." The "land of forgetfulness," "Where no man is," etc. It is also named "Sheol" and "Hades," "hell" etc. It is the place to which all alike go from the sinner of three-score and ten, to the little one of two years old and under. All cease to be, and "are not." (Matt. 2:17,18; Jer. 31:15,16; Ezek. 3:20; Psa. 88:12; Job 14:2.)

We used to wonder why Lazarus and others were silent upon their experience in hades, but now we know that they had nothing to tell, that "the dead know not anything."

The hope for the world lies in a *resurrection from the dead*, and not in any "ray of divinity" inherent in man. This hope has always been deemed a heresy, even by the systems that "allow" a resurrection (Acts 24:14,15; 26:7,8.) while denying it virtually. And the basis of this hope is Jesus only, who is "The resurrection and the life" (John 11:25) – a more than representative man; to him has been given to have "life in himself" and apart from him all at death perish. (1 Cor. 15.) He only hath the keys of hades and can re-create from nothing the beings that before existed and give them back the boon he purchased for and will again present to every son and daughter of Adam; and as they hear his voice and appreciate the gift he will restore to them all that was lost by the "fall." (Acts 3:21.)

"What think ye of Christ? is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme:
You cannot be right in the rest,
Unless you think rightly of him."

H. L. GILLIS.

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