

WHAT HOPE FOR THE INNUMERABLE NON-ELECT?

[Continued from our last issue, "Make Sure of Winning in God's Election."]

IN OUR LAST ISSUE we found abundant Scripture evidence that God is selecting a little flock from amongst mankind to be joint heirs with our Lord Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom. That fact being proven, it cannot be questioned that all the remainder of mankind are non-elect. The question now is, What provision has the great Creator made for this class – numbering at least fifty thousands of millions of all the families of the earth? Is this condition hopeless or not?

According to orthodoxy it is hopeless – the theory being that all the non-elect of mankind were predestinated by God to be sufferers of eternal torment; but we find no Scripture whatever in support of such a theory. So surely as God did elect or predestinate an elect class he must equally have predestinated and foreordained that there would be a non-elect class. And to suppose that he foreordained that this non-elect class should suffer eternal torment would be to suppose God a monster, devoid of every sentiment of justice, not to mention love. And if God did not foreordain the non-elect to eternal torment, neither could he have authorized any to use eternal torment as a threat against the non-elect – neither to intimidate them nor for any other purpose. Indeed, what object could there be on God's part in endeavoring to scare the world of mankind into striving to be of the elect little flock, when he had already predestinated that only a small number comparatively could be of this elect flock? The whole matter, viewed from any such standpoint, is unreasonable.

Let us notice, on the contrary, that this eternal torment theory may properly be charged with nearly every deflection from the doctrine of the necessity for holiness of life on the part of God's people. Everyone who has read with care the Scriptures already cited which refer to the

elect class must realize that the standard which God has set "for the very elect" is a very high standard; and that comparatively few – saints only – ever attain to that high standard. All will acknowledge that very few of their friends and neighbors, parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, who have died, could have any hope of being in the "elect class," according to the high standard for that class set in the Scriptures: and yet the awfulness of the theory they hold respecting the non-elect has driven them to so modify the standard of Christian living that would be acceptable to God as to include these dear friends. Thus day by day, and century by century, as deaths occur in every family connection, the tendency, under the influence of the popular error of eternal torment, is to lower in the minds of all Christian people the standard of true holiness, – "What manner of persons ought we to be." The funeral discourses in nearly every case help forward this work of undermining the Christian standard, and dropping it to a worldly level of *morality* – and scarcely even that; because even persons who are notoriously immoral, unjust, extortionists, etc., and who have very little indeed to commend them, are felt to be not sufficiently bad to be eternally tormented; and under the theory that they must go either to a heaven of eternal bliss or to a hell of eternal torment, they are, in their neighbors' minds, admitted generously to the former rather than consigned to the latter.

What incalculable harm has been introduced into the faith and hopes of Christendom through this God dishonoring doctrine of eternal torment, which implicates [R2732 : page 356] the great Jehovah as the chiefest coadjutor of Satan, – the planner, the designer of all his accredited devilishness, the one without whose cooperation Satan could not have done all that he, as ordinarily pictured, has done and is doing, – dominating a host of fireproof and pain-proof devils, pitchforks in hand, tormenting millions of humanity, delivered into their power by the Almighty, and by some inscrutable power rendered fire-proof but not pain-proof.

THE GENEROSITY COMMENDABLE BUT THE THEORY WRONG.

We cannot but sympathize with the greater generosity of our day which is gradually coming to disown such a theory, and we must also sympathize with that sentiment which has sought to rescue from such an awful future the loved ones of the present life, however evil and injurious they may have been. But while this increase of benevolence is commendable it is bringing the remedy from the wrong quarter. It is bringing a remedy which, while it is to some extent consoling to the heart momentarily, nevertheless leaves a terrible *fear*, lest peradventure the high standards of the Scripture may be required, and that all not coming up to them will suffer excruciatingly. In others it leads to *doubts*, not only respecting the eternal torment, but also respecting the eternal bliss: and additionally it casts serious doubt upon the Book of divine revelation which is the only foundation for heavenly hopes, because they believe it to be also the authority for their "hellish fears."

WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES RESPECTING THE NON-ELECT?

In the Scriptures the non-elect are of two classes: First: Those who in the present life were (1) enlightened, (2) justified through faith, (3) called, and accepting the call were sanctified and begotten of the holy spirit, and started on the course with a view to making their calling and election sure – but who have not made it sure, but on the contrary have failed, by not coming fully up to the requirements.

This class in turn is Scripturally divided into two parties: –

(a) Those who sin *wilfully* after that they have received a knowledge of the truth, and been made partakers of the holy spirit, etc. For those there remaineth no more a share in the sacrifice of Christ – no further mercy, opportunity or hope. To them the result is the Second Death – nonentity. – Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26,27.

(b) The other class consists of those who, while at heart preferring righteousness and truth, and loving the Lord, have not become copies of God's dear Son, in that they fail to attain to his Spirit of full devotion of heart to the doing of the Father's will – rather they permit themselves to become overcharged with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches, and thus fail to complete that sacrifice according to their covenant, and hence fail to make their calling and their election sure. For these the Lord has a gracious provision, as suggested in Rev. 7:13-15. They will not be utterly confounded, because they have trusted in him (Psa. 22:5), and he will surely carry them through. Yet the Lord's intervention on their behalf must be strictly along the lines of his covenant and general plan – he cannot interfere with their free moral agency; he will not coerce their wills, but he can and will bring them to such a place of experience as will test them and compel them either to renounce their loyalty to him or to seal that loyalty with their lives. Those who renounce the Lord will, of course, in so doing bring upon themselves the penalty of the Second Death, but those who, under such *compulsory* circumstances, are faithful, cannot be counted as of the same likeness with God's dear Son, who, without compulsion, voluntarily gave up his life in the Father's service. The little flock of the elect Church will contain all of this class, and to them will be granted the Kingdom, and to sit with Christ in his throne, and to be the Temple of God and to have the crowns. (Rev. 3:21; 1 Pet. 5:4.) But the others, who will "come up out of great tribulation," having washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, altho they will have suffered equally as much as the elect (more indeed, if the mental conditions are taken into consideration) will not get a crown of victory, but a palm of victory; will not get a seat in the throne with their Lord, as his Bride, but nevertheless an honorable place before the throne as servants. They will not become pillars and stones in the living Temple of God, but they will have the honorable privilege of serving God in his Temple, the Church.

This class is not prominently referred to in the Scriptures, nor in the types and symbols even; because none were called to this position, but, as the Apostle declares, "Ye were all called in *one hope* of your calling" – to the highest place of joint heirship. (Eph. 4:4.) The position attained by these is an unpromised one, of the Lord's abundant mercy.

Second: The second class of non-elect from the Scriptural viewpoint is the world of mankind, including three classes: –

(a) It includes those who have never had any knowledge of God's provision of grace in Christ, and who consequently could not have gone on further to be of the called elect class of this age.

(b) It includes those who have heard of the **[R2733 : page 357]** grace of God, but in that indistinct, indefinite manner which does not bring conviction – those who have seen in Jesus something wonderful and great and admirable, but who have never *seen* him from the Lord's standpoint of Redeemer and Savior – their eyes being blinded to the manifold evil influences of "the god of this world," business or pleasure or love of money or distracting religious dogmas. These, not having seen and not having accepted Christ as the Redeemer, could go no further and by no possibility could they have been amongst those called to the election of this Gospel age.

(c) It includes those who have heard of Christ as the Redeemer, and have appreciated him as such, and have accepted him as their Savior; but who like the nine of the ten lepers cleansed by our Lord at his first advent, thought not to return to give glory to God – thought not to present their bodies living sacrifices in his service. These having reached the point of justification were, undoubtedly, amongst the ones called; but they failed to make their calling and election sure, not caring to respond to the call. Of this class, apparently, are the thousands, the masses of church members of the various sects. They are glad for what they see, but not anxious to see any more, as, intuitively, they realize that further knowledge would bring greater

responsibilities, which they desire to avoid and not even to think much about.

These last mentioned "receive the grace of God [the privilege of justification] in vain." (2 Cor. 6:1.) The intention of this reckoned or faith justification of the present time is to enable the justified ones to present their "bodies living sacrifices, holy, and acceptable to God," their reasonable service; because they could not be acceptable to God as sacrifices, nor in any sense of the word come to his altar, while still they were sinners. Since to permit this sanctification and sacrifice is the only object of the giving of this grace in the present time, they have received it in vain, in that they have not used it as God designed it to be used by those who are appreciative.

Amongst this second class of non-elect, we may say that the vilest are too good to be turned over to devils for an eternity of torment, either mental or physical, and God their Creator was too wise to have ever made them in such a condition as to necessitate such an abominable result, so inharmonious with his character and with every sense of right and justice, and necessitating the everlasting perpetuation of evil, upheld, and therefore sanctioned, by divine power. And God's Word, rightly understood, teaches no such thing. It is only where the false theory has corrupted and perverted the judgment that it is able and willing to construe such a theory from the parables, symbols and "dark sayings" of our Savior, instead of understanding and construing them much more reasonably and in full accord with the divine character of justice, wisdom and love.*

*See *What Say the Scriptures About Hell?* – sample sent free on postal card request.

NO CONDEMNATION POSSIBLE UNTIL AFTER TRIAL.

If the worst class of non-elect do not deserve eternal torment, the less degraded certainly would not deserve it; and indeed we are to remember that none of them can deserve any punishment until first of

all they have had their *trial*. True, the whole race had a trial in father Adam, in Eden, and when he lost in that trial the whole race lost life and came under the sentence of death. But in harmony with the divine plan, our Lord Jesus redeemed Adam and all his race by giving himself as the ransom-price for Adam and thus incidentally for all. We are to remember that Jesus was not only the Redeemer of the Church, but also the Redeemer of the world, as it is written: "He is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours [the Church's] only, but also for the *sins of the whole world*." – 1 John 2:2.

If then all these non-elect have been *redeemed* from the first trial and its sentence with the same precious blood which redeemed the elect Church; and if the Church, by the grace of God, has had her trial in advance of the world in general, and if the Church's trial was the result of the redemption, and without that redemption she could have no further trial for eternal life, is it not manifest that the same redemption has provided a trial for the whole world of mankind, as well as for the Church of this Gospel age? And what matters it that the trial of the world did not take place at the *same time* as the trial of the Church? Has not the great God, our Savior, the full right to arrange this matter of salvation according to his own wisdom? Who amongst fallen men is competent to direct him?

And yet this is what Christian people have been doing; they have been attempting to arrange the divine plan, instead of hearkening to God's own revelation respecting the same. They have said, but he has not said, that the present life is the only opportunity for trial, and that this trial-time will end with the end of the Gospel age. He, on the contrary, has foreseen their misrepresentations of his plan, and has caused it to be written aforetime through the prophet: "My thoughts [plans] are not your thoughts [plans], neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways [R2733 : page 358] higher than your ways and my thoughts [plans] than your thoughts [plans]." – Isa. 55:8,9.

The Scriptures tell us specifically respecting the Lord's plan for these non-elect. We will give it first in our own phraseology and then we will give the Scriptural language. They tell us that the Church is being selected from the world in advance, in order that this little flock, thoroughly trained in the school of experience, thoroughly polished and in full conformity to the Head, Christ Jesus, is, with their Head and Lord, to constitute the Royal Priesthood, whose work will only begin after its election has been completed and it has been received into glory; and that its work will be the *judging* of the world of mankind, not in the sense of pronouncing condemnation upon them, but in the sense of granting to each member of the non-elect a *trial* (judgment) for eternal life. That trial of the non-elect is guaranteed, based upon the great ransom-sacrifice wherewith all mankind were purchased from the death-sentence that came upon all through Adam. And that this trial-time, or day of the world's judgment, will be the Millennial day (a thousand years long), in the which full opportunity shall come to all, full knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, as the waters cover the great deep, and a full blessing of eternal life may be attained by whoever *wills* and obeys, of those then on trial; and that the remainder (the unwilling and disobedient) will be destroyed in the Second Death.

Among the many Scriptures supporting this presentation we cite two which are very pointed and should be fully satisfactory if there were no others. "God hath appointed a day in the which he will *judge the world* [future] in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained" – the Christ, Head and body. – Acts 17:31.

"Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" – 1 Cor. 6:2.
