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"THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH"

– 1 JOHN 5:16. –

ONCE we were inclined to believe that the final results of God's great Plan of Salvation would show the vast majority of his creatures saved and granted eternal life through faith in Christ and obedience of heart. However, as the years roll by and as our view of the Divine requirement becomes more clear, our expectations are considerably modified. From our present viewpoint it will not surprise us if the number going into the Second Death will be a considerable one.

This does not mean that our clearer sight shows the love of God to be less than we had at first supposed, nor that the provision made will come short and fail to grant a full opportunity of eternal life to every creature. It does mean that daily we are coming to see in a clearer light the high standard which God will require of all who will be granted life eternal at any time and on any plane.

The fact is that God leaves the human will entirely free; that he seeks not the worship of those whom he will be obliged to coerce and restrain, but merely "seeketh such to worship him as worship him in spirit and in Truth." God's provision is that with the close of the Millennial Age "there shall be no more crying, no more sighing, no more dying;" because there shall be no more sin; because all the former things of sin shall have passed away. Putting these items together we perceive that the tests to prove who are worthy and who are unworthy of life eternal must be very crucial. None must go beyond the Millennial Age whose heart is not perfect; for if any others should be admitted there it would mean a perpetual danger of recurrence of sin in some form – a menace to the perfect bliss of that blessed state.

The world will have its purgatorial experiences during the Millennial Age – its blessings under the reign of the glorified Messiah, the Mediator of the New Covenant, Head and Body. By lessons, encouragements and chastisements it will learn the lesson of obedience to the Divine will, that thus it may attain to the full perfection of God's likeness and to life eternal. But failing to attain [R4400 : page 158] this blessed state during that time appointed, the only alternative will be Second Death, for no provision is made for sin or sinners beyond the Millennium.

The *Church's trial*, as we have seen, is now taking place during this Gospel Age. Every justified believer who knowingly and intelligently consecrated himself and whose consecration the Lord has accepted by begetting him of the holy Spirit – every such one is on trial now, for either life or death, and he can have no future opportunity. In other words, the trial of the spirit-begotten ones of this age will eventuate in eternal life on the spirit plane or eternal death, just as the trial of the world in the time of Restitution will eventuate in eternal life on the human plane or in eternal death.

Consider what this means: It means that all who will be saved during the Millennium must attain to a condition of *actual* perfection and absolute heart loyalty to God, absolute love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, if they would have eternal life. It means to you and me and all other spirit-begotten ones of this age that, if we do not reach a perfection of heart-development during the period of our trial, we shall die the Second Death. Thank God, it does not mean a perfection of the flesh, which would be impossible to us; but a perfection of the spirit, a perfection of the New Mind, a perfection of the will. But, oh, how much a *perfect heart* signifies! No wonder our dear Redeemer said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"! Any impurity of heart, of intention; any degree of evil contention,

anger, hatred, strife, bitterness of heart, would mean just so much shortage of the Divine standard – perfect love.

We are not competent to judge, however. Some may have perfect love in their hearts who, because of imperfections [R4401 : page 158] in their flesh, make a poor showing of it. In our experience, however, comparatively few even make the claim of *perfect love*, either for God or for the brethren or for neighbors, not to mention their enemies. We may be sure that of all spirit-begotten ones in such a condition at the time of death there will be no place found amongst those counted worthy of life eternal. The only alternative for them will be Second Death.

They could not be of the "little flock" because God has foreordained that every member of it must be "a copy of his dear Son." "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. 8:29.) Can they not, then, be of the "great company"? We answer, No. All who would be of the "great company" must, through tribulation, attain to heart perfection, in order to be accounted worthy of life eternal. The difference between the "great company" of overcomers and the "little flock" of "more than conquerors" is that the former prove faithful under stress, when forced to the decision, while the latter class, the "little flock," possess more zeal, press forward joyfully to do, to be, to suffer, to serve; but both classes, to be overcomers at all, and to get eternal life at all, must reach the mark of *perfect love*.

Ah, yes, God's ways are wise and just and loving. It would not be to his glory nor in the interests of his faithful ones or others for him to admit to eternal life conditions any deficient in love. Does this alarm us and cause us to fear for our own acceptance and our own attaining of eternal life? The Apostle says, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) Let the thought

stimulate us to a renewed zeal and energy in conquering self and the old nature and in pressing on from glory to glory and from one degree to another higher degree of likeness to our Lord.

We feel sure that, in the Lord's providence, the Vow, published again in the last issue, is proving a great blessing and great help to many. Let no one take it except after mature consideration, but let all who see it to be thoroughly Scriptural in its every provision take it as a partial expression of their original consecration Vow of baptism into Christ's death. It is proving a blessing to many to daily read it every morning in connection with the Manna text and comment and morning devotion. It helps to impress upon the mind and upon the heart the very things which are most necessary to be remembered and yet most likely to be forgotten in the necessary hurry and push of the present life. Let us with deliberation and determination take all the vows that will assist us to a closer walk with God and to the binding of our sacrifice to the altar. We shall surely need in the trial time which is now upon the Church every assistance which the Lord provides, that we may be able to stand; that we may develop the proper character; that we may make our calling and election sure.

