

THE CONQUEST OF DEATH.

By Bishop William H. Clark.

The universal and unvarying consequence of sin is death. It is not an arbitrary infliction, but inheres in the transgression which occasions it. The Creator is as powerless to avert the penalty as to prevent the transgression.

Both originate in the self-conscious and uncoerced choices of creaturehood; and both are foreign from the original purposes of creation. Death is unknown in any sphere untouched by sin. Its presence must forever be a discord in the harmony of a universe planned for holiness, and designed as the sphere of perfect, enlarging, twofold life.

Sin not only introduced but enthroned death in the world. "By one man's offense death reigned" and "passed upon all men." Its dominion was universal, and but for the provisions of infinite grace had been eternal. Adam drew down into ruin with himself, the whole creature of which he was lord and head; and bequeathed the sad inheritance to his posterity by the same law, which through his obedience, would have preserved to succeeding generations the original heritage of holiness and happiness.

The long procession of humanity headed graveward at the point of a rebellious decision by "the father of us all," attended by the travail and groaning of sentient creation, enslaved thereby to the "bondage of corruption." Only two exemptions to the universal law of death have occurred in the history of the race. These entered immortality by the original passage way, to be reopened at the fulfilment of our Lord's promise in His return. John 14:3; I. Cor. 15:51, 52; I. Thess. 4:7.

When by the choices of the creature sin becomes permanent death becomes eternal.

The sacred miracle of the immaculate conception lies at the foundation of the Christian system; and is both scripturally and philosophically essential to redemption. By it the law of heredity was both preserved and diverted in the unity of a sinless humanity in a new racial head. "In Him is no sin," therefore, no amenability to death. The law could exact no penalty where there was no transgression. Hence death had no dominion, and could assert no claim.

Jesus was equally immune from disease and accident. A voluntary, super-legal surrender of life was therefore the only alternative in meeting the penalty, and releasing the prisoners. John 10:17, 18; 19:11. In His voluntary and wholly vicarious death on the cross, Jesus suffered the penalty—not punishment—of racial disobedience, and provided for the forgiveness of individual transgressions. Of the three mysterious and eventful days during which He sojourned in the "region and shadow of death," no revelation is given. It is doubtful if even the faintest glimmer illuminates the sacred mystery; but it is reasonable to conclude that tremendous events transpired during that period of silence and shadow.

The resurrection, personal and literal, is as essential to Christ's conquest as is the crucifixion. Without the former, the

latter is incomplete and inefficient. "He died for our sins, but was raised for our justification." Not only must He pay the penalty, but deliver Himself therefrom. If the "Captain of our salvation" is held captive, the hope of His followers vanishes. There is no high priest within the veil, and "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." "Through death" alone can he be "destroyed who had the power of death." Through the resurrection only can they be delivered "who through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage."

At the cross sin was judged and atoned for, and death deprived of its sting. By the resurrection immortality is assured, and victory wrested from the grave.

Death for Christ's followers is minimized to a temporary dissolution of the material organism, while the "inner man" passes into a larger and fuller life. Just beyond the "valley of shadows" gleams the glory of a resurrection "like unto the body of His glory." Read Rev. 1:12-18.

"The last enemy which shall be destroyed (not annihilated) is death," already conquered. It will not cease to exist, but its dominion will be limited to those who by permanent choice of sin have become its eternal captives, and subjected themselves to the "second death." "Then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of their Father," where

"Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and feared no more."

THE ABUSE OF AUTHORITY.

"Power and authority, unless tempered by a strong sense of responsibility, is intoxicating. There is always the danger that the possession of power will result in an exaggerated egotism, leading to the assumption of superior abilities."

How soon many a person, elevated to some position or responsibility, becomes inflated with a mistaken sense of his importance and superiority. Human nature likes to "show off" when there is opportunity to display such fancied superiority. Such a person will either "swagger" or "bully," or do both, much to the disgust of all right-minded people.

There is nothing so well suited to fit either men or women to places of responsibility and authority as the grace of God. The greater the prominence, the larger the authority, the more imperative is humbleness of mind and true wisdom which God alone can impart. No more beautiful illustration has ever been given for our guidance than the example of Solomon when, as a very young man, he came to the throne of the Israelitish kingdom: "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this so great a people?"—Wesleyan Methodist.

Thirty-three Kentucky Baptist Churches, composing the Elkhorn Association, have embarked on a comprehensive campaign against motion pictures, dancing, immodest dress, mixed bathing, divorce, Sunday baseball, card playing, horse racing, gambling, violation of the prohibition laws, and "all forms of worldliness."

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

A little group of men were climbing the winding path, that led up Olivet's slope. The Master was in the midst, and the others before and behind, where they could hear His voice. For they were talking together as they walked along. That is to say, He was talking, and they were listening, with no occasional question. They went on until they were over, against where little Bethany nestles in among the blue hills. There they stood a little while, still talking together earnestly.

It was their last talk together. And there were two things the Master was saying. Those two things came with all the tender emphasis of a last message. They were to go on an errand to the world; a lifelong errand, and to the whole world. That was being burned in. But they weren't to start on the errand until the Holy Spirit had come upon them. The errand and the Spirit's presence were coupled together. That was to be their errand. And He was to be their life-power as they went on the errand.

They were to go. The Spirit was to come. He would come before they went. They must not go until He had come. Then they were to go in His presence and power. They would be able to go because of Him. Their going would be worth while, because wherever they went He would be at work in them and through them. The real work would be done by Him. But it would be done through them. His presence was essential to their work being done. Their presence was essential to his doing his work. He would work as they went, and where they went.

That was the new blessed partnership of world-wide service planned by the Master as He went away. They would tell of Jesus. The Spirit would open doors, guide their tongues, guard their persons, and make the message of Jesus as a flame of fire in men's hearts.

Just before this, Jesus had talked a great deal with His disciples about the Holy Spirit. They didn't yet know how much this that He was saying, would come to mean to them. But they remembered after the Master was gone, and then they understood. When they got down into the thick of the world's crowds they understood the great significance of what He said.

That last talk they had together in the upper room and along the Jerusalem streets, on the betrayal night, was full of teaching about the Holy Spirit. And the next time after that they met, in the upper room, on the evening of the resurrection day, He breathed strongly upon them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." And the very last word on the Olivet slope was, "Wait; wait until the Holy Spirit comes." He burned in deep that their dependence must be entirely upon the Spirit.

"Do your work cheerfully, heartily and effectually, and be ever prepared for the place further up."

"Don't fool yourself into taking activity for efficiency. Most of the time it isn't."