

THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY

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While this earthly life is short and but a brief span, we must ever bear in mind that life is immortal. Here is the great inspiring hope for man, the hope of a glorious immortality. We are not to be discouraged by our frailty and by the dangers that beset us, but we are to lift our eyes toward the sunlit hills of the eternal light that reaches out before us. We are to drink from the fountains that never run dry. We are to have our youth renewed like the eagle's, and our spirits kept young with the dews of youth upon our brows forever.

If you sit down to reckon on the brevity of life with its frailty and the great dangers that beset it, and begin to count the months of your short life, you can have yourself an old man with one foot in the grave before you realize it. It is man's immortality that makes him of infinite worth. The brevity of life is not to send us to the grave to weep with tears, but rather it is to send us to our work to live the endless life unfolding in an increasing panorama of glory. The brevity of life is to send us forth with the high hope and purpose that we shall not die within the limited and narrow sphere of threescore years and ten. These brief years are to be viewed as only the introduction to an endless life of glory and triumph.

Jesus is for us the supreme revelation of this immortal life. The grave could not hold him. Death could not conquer him. He said to his disciples: "Destroy this temple and within three days I will raise it up again." It was while the enemies of Jesus were hurrying him away to the cross to be crucified that he gave the promise to his disciples: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

It has been near 2,000 years since Jesus died upon the cross, but millions have discovered to their great joy and satisfaction that Christ still lives and that he has fulfilled the promise which he made in the face of death, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." There are millions on earth who rejoice in the fulfillment of this promise this very day.

We know that Christ lives because we have His presence with us. He was present to comfort us in the day of our sorrow, to help us in the day of our trial, to rejoice with us in the day of our rejoicing, and to be near as we worshipped in the sanctuary and to answer the outcry of our souls for his help under all conditions and circumstances of life. We know that Christ conquered death, for he is still alive and we have his presence with us.

Christ brought life and immortality to life. He gave to His disciples this great promise also: "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Through Jesus Christ, victory may be perched upon our banners in a life that is very brief, with besetments of dangers on every hand. John the beloved apostle speaks of the victory which it is possible for men to have in these words: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Yes, it is possible for us to overcome the world with its sorrows, its uncertainties, its temptations, its brief span of years for man and inevitable death at the close of these years. The victory that overcomes the world is the victory in Jesus Christ our Lord. Christ was victorious under every condition and circum-

stance of life. He was victorious over sin. "He was in all points tempted as we are, and yet without sin." "He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin." It was because sin could have no dominion over Christ that Christ can give to His children victory over sin so that sin cannot have dominion over them.

Christ had victory in the presence of His enemies who persecuted Him and finally put Him to death. He always stood in their presence with the calmness of a June morning, unruffled, undisturbed, unmoved. Christ can give us the victory over the irritating and disturbing circumstances of life. He can give us victory in the presence of irritating personalities. Why all the irritation and frustration which comes in so many of our lives over incidental circumstances which cross our pathway? Christ is sufficient to calm these irritations and frustrations and disturbances and give us a glorious peace and calm in the presence of all of these things. "This is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith."

While life is short, life is rich and abounds with unlimited possibilities. Life is rich in what civilization has had to contribute to the brief span of our years. The heritage of civilization to our lives is an increasing heritage. We are the heirs of the ages of the past. All of the best in art, in literature, in culture has been placed at our disposal. The scientific discoveries of our modern age have added much to the fulness of our lives. We can do more of living in a few brief years today than our fathers could, over a period many times as long. We have witnessed within a single lifetime the coming of the radio, the automobile, the airplane, air-conditioned homes and trains and a thousand and one devices which add to the comfort and the convenience of living.

But what are we doing with all of these advantages—this privilege of living more within a single year than our fathers might have lived in fifty years? Life from the standpoint of living and possible achievement is perhaps fifty times longer for us than it was for our fathers. Are we improving the years to the same advantage that our fathers improved them?

Civilization has done much for us. It has eliminated the distances of the earth, with the swift modes of transportation that have knit the world together in a common neighborhood relative to distance. Civilization has given us the great libraries, paintings, music, and cultural agencies that have made life so much richer and fuller. And while civilization has accomplished all of these things, it has served only as an outside veneer and polish for the worm that dieth not. Civilization has not touched the sin of the souls of men. And civilization is in a sad way today. The worm that dieth not is the great curse of mankind. The worm that dieth not still remains in the face of all of our culture and the progress that we have made in our boasted civilization. And today, civilization itself is confronted with the possible tragedy of self-destruction because of this worm that dieth not.

Who can touch this malady? Who can remove this terrible biting thing that is sapping the very life of the nations and threatening the destruction of mankind? Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there, for this worm that dieth not? Thank God, the answer is that there is a balm in Gilead. There is a physician there, the great physician for the healing of the biting worm that dieth not is the Christ of the ages, the Christ of the cross,

the Christ of the empty tomb, the Christ of intercession at the right hand of the Father, who ever liveth to make intercession for us.

He is the one who has brought life and immortality to life. He alone has healing for our sin-sick souls. He only can give us victory and triumph in a world of sorrow, disappointment, blasted hopes and defeat. This Christ of the ages who conquered death, is alive forever more to make us more than conquerors through him over the worm that dieth not, over death, and at last to present us faultless in the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

GUEST EDITORIAL

"Theology" or "Christ"

C. L. Howland, Editor, "Free Methodist"

The pilot under this title carries the following story:

"A Japanese worker visiting a seminary in Tennessee said to a promising student, 'Brother, you have finished college; we need you in Japan. Why don't you go?'"

"The student explained that he had to take his seminary course and must study theology before he became a missionary.

"The Japanese gave an answer which applies not only to Japan but to our own land: 'Brother, Japan can do without theology, but sadly needs Jesus Christ.'

"The best preacher said, 'I determined * * *, (1 Cor. 2:2).'"

This is passed on for just what it is worth.

Certainly some theology is a necessity, so the subject should not be dismissed too lightly. Theology, among other things, deals with the deity of Christ, the atonement He provided, and His resurrection.

Just where this theology should be studied is another question. Probably the answer would be different for different persons.

Theoretically, if there is apparent time for it, a college education is a good thing for the ministry. The same can be said for the seminary training which may come beyond college.

But the object is to make better and more useful preachers of this gospel. If a man thinks that because he has been to college or to seminary he is too cultured or wise to begin at the bottom and make a poor church into a good one, something is wrong. Surely the fact that a man is well-trained in the schools should not mean that he can properly use his gifts only where some less-trained man has gone before and prepared the way.

Our fathers with little training at great cost to themselves went into new communities and established churches. Others of them took these churches when they were poor and small and made something good out of them.

The college—or seminary-trained man ought not to be too good for such work, and he ought to be as capable of it as were our less-trained men of other days.

EXPERT TESTIMONY

A judge of the Domestic Relations Court, Nashville, Tennessee, recently said, 'The Juvenile court over which I preside has jurisdiction over children under seventeen years of age who have violated the law. Since June 1, 1939, I have tried approximately 4,800 cases. Of this number, only twenty-nine have a regular Sunday-school or church record. So far I have not had a child in juvenile court whose father or mother attended either Sunday School or church regularly.'—Selected.