

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

3.6: OUR FUTURE HOPE

1. GOD ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY

“The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.” I Timothy 6:15, 16.

Immortality is brought to light through the gospel, and consequently will be bestowed only on those who accept the gospel.

“But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:10.

Immortality, instead of being bestowed upon man at the present time, is set before him as a thing to be sought after.

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.” Romans 2:6, 7.

Immortality is not bestowed upon any class of men in this life nor at death, but is to be given to the righteous at the Second Coming of Christ.

“Behold I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory?” I Corinthians 15:51-55.

“Immortality, promised to man on condition of obedience, had been forfeited by transgression. Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach. While “death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,” Christ “bath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” And only through Christ can immortality be obtained. Said Jesus, “He that believes on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life.” Every man may come into possession of this priceless blessing if he will comply with the conditions. All “who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality,” will receive “eternal life.” The Great Controversy, page 533.

Yours for today! just this I ask: That in the silence of this morn,
With dew still bright on barren thorn, The day with sorrows yet unborn,
I pray for strength to meet each task!

Yours for today! 'Is sweet to know That through the hours of coming day,
My hand in Yours, I cannot stray. Though I may falter by the way,
Still through my heart Thy peace shall flow!

Yours for today! O Lord, I come To cast my eyes upon thy face,
My will submit to Thy sweet grace, With Thee to occupy a place
At last when Thou has said, “Well done!”

Yours for today! O blessed peace! To consecrate myself anew, Each morn, and know when day is through,
It was Thy love that kept me true, Thy love for me that ne'er shall cease! Elizabeth M. Hotaling.

2. THE DEAD UNCONSCIOUS

When man dies, instead of going to heaven or to hell, or into some conscious intermediate state, he passes into a condition of unconscious sleep, with the grave as his house.

1. During this period men neither love, nor hate, nor envy.

The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun. Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.

2. They have no knowledge of anything that takes place on this earth.

“Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away. His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.” Job 14:20, 21.

3. They are incapable of exercising any thought whatsoever.

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” Psalm 146:3, 4.

4. There will come a time in God's providence, in the day of resurrection, when the dead, both righteous and wicked, shall be awakened out of their sleep.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28, 29.

“Nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures is found the statement that the righteous go to their reward or the wicked to their punishment at death. The patriarchs and prophets have left no such assurance. Christ and His apostles have given no hint of it. The Bible clearly teaches that the dead do not go immediately to heaven. They are represented as sleeping until the resurrection. In the very (lay when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl broken, man's thoughts perish. They that go down to the grave are in silence. They know no more of anything that is done under the sun. Blessed rest for the weary righteous! Time, be it long or short, is but a moment to them. They sleep; they are awakened by the trump of God to a glorious immortality. “For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible.... So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

“As they are called forth from their deep slumber, they begin to think just where they ceased. The last sensation was the pang of death, the last thought that they were falling beneath the power of the grave. When they arise from the tomb, their first glad thought will be echoed in the triumphal shout, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” The Great Controversy, 549, 550.

3. THE RESURRECTION

“If a man die, shall he live again?” This question has concerned the human family throughout all the centuries. It is asked and answered by the patriarch Job. He inquires,

“If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.” Job 14:14.

Where did the patriarchs expect to wait? This question also he answers. He declares that he would be hidden in the grave.

“But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!” Job 14:10-13.

There will come a time when the Lord will desire to see the work of His own hands, to see brought to life the child whom He hid in the grave; of this. Job declares,

“Thou shall call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands.” Job 14:15.

Job's Triumph of Faith: The triumph of faith in His power is expressed in these words: “I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.... Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.” Job 19:25-27.

The Hope of the Church: The resurrection has been the hope of the church throughout its history. The sweet singer of Israel declared, “As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.” Psalm 17:15.

Isaiah bears this testimony: “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.” Isaiah 25:8.

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” I Thessalonians 4:16-18.

“The question, “If a man die, shall he live again?” has been answered. By bearing the penalty of sin, by going down into the grave, Christ has brightened the tomb for all who die in faith. God in human form has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: In dying, Christ secured eternal life for all who believe in Him. In dying, He condemned the originator of sin and disloyalty to suffer the penalty of sin, eternal death.” Testimonies 6, 230, 231.

4. THE END OF THE IMPENITENT

The Finally Impenitent Will Receive Their Punishment at the Last Great Day.

“The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. 2 Peter 3:7.

The Place of Punishment: This earth will become the place of punishment for all who reject the provision of God's wondrous grace.

“Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner.” Proverbs 11:31.

The Agency in Their Punishment: By the agency of fire, God accomplishes the exercise of His righteous indignation.

“They went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.” Revelation 20:9.

The Nature of the Punishment: The impenitent, finding themselves unworthy of everlasting life, are denied the reward of right doing, life eternal in the kingdom of God. They are given that which they have earned. They are paid the wages which are their due.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23.

By striking figures and similes this truth is emphasized in the Scriptures. The finally impenitent are compared to fat which melts away in the fire. Psalm 37:20. They are likened to the chaff of a summer threshing floor. Daniel 2:35. They will be burned tip root and branch. Malachi 4:1-3. They will be burned with unquenchable fire. Matthew 3:11, 12. The fire is unquenchable, not in the sense that it will burn throughout eternity, but that no power of man can extinguish it until it has destroyed that upon which it feeds. The wicked will suffer everlasting, destruction. The destruction will be an everlasting death. 2 Thessalonians 1:9. They shall be destroyed both soul and body. Matthew 10:28. And finally they shall be as though they had never been. Obadiah 16.

“The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. While life is the inheritance of the righteous, death is the portion of the wicked. Moses declared to Israel, “I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil.” The death referred to in these scriptures is not that pronounced upon Adam, for all mankind suffer the penalty of his transgression. It is the “second death” that is placed in contrast with everlasting life. . . .

“Those who have not, through repentance and faith, secured pardon, must receive the penalty of transgression, “the wages of sin.” They 'suffer punishment' varying in duration and intensity, “according to their works,” but finally ending in the second death. Since it is impossible for God, consistently with His justice and mercy, to save the sinner in his sins, He deprives him of the existence which his transgressions have forfeited, and of which he has proved himself unworthy.” The Great Controversy, 544.

5. GOD'S CARE FOR LITTLE THINGS

“And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

“Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Luke 12:22-31.

“Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears, before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who, numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. “The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” His heart of love is touched by our sorrows, and even by our utterance of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly

Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds." The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.

"Jesus said, "You shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loves you." "I have chosen you, . . . that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you." John 16:26, 27; 15:16. But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works.

"God does not mean that any of us should become hermits or monks, and retire from the world, in order to devote ourselves to acts of worship. The life must be like Christ's life, between the mountain and the multitude. He who does nothing but pray will soon cease to pray, or his prayers will become a formal routine. When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer, and have no incentive to devotion." Steps to Christ, 104-106.

6. OUR RELATION TO GOD AND CAESAR

"Tell us therefore, What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt you Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He says unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Caesar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him, and went their way." Matthew 22:17-22.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." Romans 13:1-8.

"Those who put the question to Jesus thought that they had sufficiently disguised their purpose; but Jesus read their hearts as an open book, and sounded their hypocrisy. "Why tempt you Me?" He said; thus giving them a sign they had not asked, by showing that He read their hidden purpose. They were still more confused when He added, "Show Me a penny." They brought it, and He asked them, "Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's." Pointing to the inscription on the coin, Jesus said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

"The spies had expected Jesus to answer their question directly, in one way or the other. If He should say, It is unlawful to give tribute to Caesar, He would be reported to the Roman authorities and arrested for inciting rebellion. But in case He should pronounce it lawful to pay the tribute, they designed to accuse Him to the people as opposing the law of God. Now they felt themselves baffled and defeated. Their plans

were disarranged. The summary manner in which their question had been settled left them nothing further to say.

“Christ's reply was no evasion, but a candid answer to the question. Holding in His hand the Roman coin, upon which were stamped the name and image of Caesar, He declared that since they were living under the protection of the Roman power, they should render to that power the support it claimed, so long as this did not conflict with a higher duty. But while peaceably subject to the laws of the land, they should at all times give their first allegiance to God.” *The Desire of Ages*, 602.

7. GOD'S CHASTENING

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction: for whom the Lord loves He corrects; even as a father the son in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:11, 12.

“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;” Hebrews 12:5-12.

“The Lord can bring victory out of that which may seem to us discomfiture and defeat. We are in danger of forgetting God, of looking at the things which are seen, instead of beholding by the eye of faith the things which are unseen. When misfortune or calamity comes, we are ready to charge God with neglect or cruelty. If He sees fit to cut off our usefulness in some line, we mourn, not stopping to think that thus God may be working for our good. We need to learn that chastisement is a part of His great plan, and that under the rod of affliction the Christian may sometimes do more for the Master than when engaged in active service.” *Acts of the Apostles*, 481.

“We also need to learn that trials mean benefit, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when we are rebuked of Him.

“Happy is the man whom God correcteth: . . . He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.” Job 5:17-19. To every stricken one, Jesus comes with the ministry of healing. The life of bereavement, pain, and suffering may be brightened by precious revealings of His presence.

“God would not have us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up, and behold His dear face of love. The blessed Savior stands by many whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they do not discern Him. He longs to clasp our hands, to have us look to Him in simple faith, permitting Him to guide us. His heart is open to our grief, our sorrows, and our trials. He has loved us with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness compassed us about. We may keep the heart stayed upon Him, and meditate upon His loving-kindness all the day. He will lift the soul above the daily sorrow and perplexity, into a realm of peace.

“Think of this, children of suffering and sorrow, and rejoice in hope. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” I John 5:4.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 25, 26.