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assembly worship, as uniquely expressed in the Lord's Supper. In the Supper 'the bread which we break' is 'the communion of *the body* of Christ'—not His personal body, but THE Body of which He is Head. Thus we express our fellowship with other members of the Christian Church. This is a collective thought, and refers only to occasions when we 'come together in the church'.* (ii) The rallying Object (the Person—He is never *the Subject*) Who bears the NAME: speaking of the Nature, Dignity, and Authority of Him Who bears it. (iii) The Divine will expressed in the Divine *choosing* of the 'place', where 'My Name' calls forth adoration and heart exercise, even apart from any human leadership.

Here we get the only effective conditions for powerful witness and fruitful blessing in corporate experience—in so far as we submit to them and do not act in self-will. For 'where two or three are gathered together in My NAME, there am I in the midst'. Hence, 'let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together as the custom of some is; but exhorting one another and so much the more as ye see *the Day drawing nigh*'.**

• 1 Cor. 10: 16-17; 11: 18-26.

• • Heb. 10: 24, 25.

MAN AN ENDLESS BEING

By E. H. DREWERY

These are days of 'liberal theology'. Anything is 'liberal' which gives man a larger licence to do as he likes, that tones down the severity of Divinely threatened judgment; that makes sin less sinful and its punishment less dreadful. The plainest statements of Holy Writ are skilfully distorted, wrested from their context and made to bolster up the figments on man's imagination, his conception of what God is and how He should act towards His creatures. So we are presented with a God who is so loving and kind, who will overlook our faults and failures, not expecting too much from His frail, erring children, for is He not the Father of mankind, who will receive us all at last into His heavenly home? We are

also told there can be no such place as hell for how could a God of love rest content while millions of His creatures were in torment? Others tell us that the wicked cease to be, that they will be annihilated at death, so once again hell is conveniently done away with.

Are these things so? What saith the Scriptures? They speak with no uncertain sound. Man is made for eternity. Possessed of a conscious eternal existence. He will spend that eternity either in everlasting bliss or everlasting torment. It has already been stated that the plainest statements of Holy Writ are distorted to agree with the preconceived notions of men who are evidently not led by the Spirit of God, for 'He', says the Lord Jesus, 'shall guide you into all *truth*' (John 16:13).

Errors concerning man's being and his future state are to a large extent built up on the definitions given to certain leading words which are always cropping up, viz., life, death, existence, immortality, and eternal life: Immortality is made to mean 'endless existence', and is used interchangeably with 'eternal life', as if they mean the same thing. Drummond, in his *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, uses eternal life and immortality as synonymous. 'No truth of Christianity,' says he, 'has been more ignorantly or more wilfully travestied than the doctrine of immortality. The popular idea in spite of a hundred protests, is that eternal life is to live for ever'. The orthodox are almost as guilty as the many exponents of error, in their use of these two words. Whilst the phrase 'endless existence' seems to give to 'immortality' its most common meaning to the ordinary religious mind, many other terms or phrases are used, such as 'eternal existence', 'future life', 'a future state of existence', 'a conscious existence in another world', etc. As 'eternal life' is used interchangeably with 'immortality', so this also has come to mean 'endless existence'.

There are only two portions of the Word of God where the word is correctly translated 'immortality', viz., 1 Cor. 15:53, 54 and 1 Tim. 6:16. The first reads, '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'. Now read into this Scripture the supposed synonyms of 'immortality', viz., 'eternal life' and 'endless existence'. For this corruptible must

put on incorruption and this mortal must put on 'eternal life' or 'endless existence'—and so on. If these three words are interchangeable they should make sense and each tell the truth. Do they?

Take the other Scripture in 1 Tim. 6:16, 'Who only hath immortality'. Now read it like this, 'Who only hath eternal life or endless existence'. Do they express the truth? Paul alone using the word 'immortality', expresses this great truth, that the righteous and they alone put on 'immortality' at the first resurrection, but they most assuredly do not put on eternal life then for they are already in possession of it. Its possession is their title to the first resurrection. John 5:24 says, 'He that heareth . . . and believeth . . . hath . . .', a present possession. Nor is it true that Christ alone has 'eternal life' ('Who only hath "eternal life"') 1 Tim. 6:16, for He says in John 10:28, 'I give unto them (My sheep) eternal life'. Hence a plain difference between immortality and eternal life.

Now another subtle error creeps in when we allow the phrase 'endless existence' to take the place of immortality. 1 Cor. 15:53 will read—this mortal must put on 'endless existence': and 1 Tim. 6:16, 'Who only hath "endless existence"'. To a thoughtful mind this train of reasoning must follow: If Christ alone has 'endless existence' now and the righteous only put it on at the first resurrection, then obviously man is not born an endless being, and the wicked have no 'endless existence' now nor ever will have, so they will finally 'cease to be'! The A.V. gives two more places where the word immortality is mentioned, viz., Rom. 2:7, and 2 Tim. 1:10, and both are used skilfully to bolster up this error of the annihilation of the wicked, but they are both false translations. The R.V. has rectified both, substituting the word 'incorruption', which many scholars consider would be better rendered by 'incorruptible body'.

Hence if immortality does not mean eternal life or endless existence, what *is* its meaning? Simply this, '*not subject to DEATH*'. That which is immortal 'cannot die'. It is the exact opposite of mortal, which means subject to DEATH. The wages of SIN is DEATH (Rom. 6:23) and ALL have SINNED (Rom. 3:23). So DEATH has passed upon ALL MEN; therefore there can be no such thing as 'natural immortality'. Man is not immortal, but he can become so at the first resurrection by accepting the gift of eternal life through

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work upon the Cross. Now eternal life has been defined for us by none other than the Saviour Himself. In John 17:3, He says, 'And this is life eternal that they might *know* Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent'. The possessor of eternal life has the capacity for knowing God. In contrast the world is characterised by this trait, viz., they know **NOT** God (see verse 25). These two words are not, therefore, used interchangeably.

Let us examine the other three familiar words, life, death and existence. What is life? Here is a definition given us by a great scientist. 'LIFE is a definite combination of heterogeneous changes, both simultaneous and successive, in correspondence with external coexistences and sequences.' Simple, isn't it? The truth is that it is a word which almost defies definition; but even so, we ought to be able to recognise its two main uses in everyday language. First as a principle, as an energiser, as a power at work. Second, as a condition of existence, its most common usage. Nearly all dictionary definitions come under this heading of state or condition, but LIFE and EXISTENCE are not synonyms. Existence is a broader word altogether. Its primary meaning is 'to be' and there are millions of things in this world which have existence but not life. LIFE and DEATH are opposites. LIFE means existence: therefore DEATH means non-existence; add to this what has already been noted that eternal life, immortality and endless existence are all made to mean the same thing, (oftimes by those who pride themselves in being orthodox) and this seeming fact emerges that, only those who receive eternal life from Christ will have 'endless existence' the rest will become non-existent at death! Read Psalm 37:10 and apparently it teaches the same thing: 'For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be, yea thou shalt diligently consider his place, and *it* shall not be'. Verse 20 is in the same vein, also Obadiah 16 and Malachi 4:1. How easily Scriptures can be thought to support error.

Death is the exact opposite of life, but we have seen that life cannot be defined by 'existence' though one must have existence to have life, but it is correctly defined as a 'condition of existence', a condition in which spirit, soul and body act in unison. Reference to 1 John 5:12 will expose the folly of making LIFE and EXISTENCE to mean the same, 'He that HATH the SON hath *life* or existence, and he that hath not the SON of God hath not *life* or existence'.

A strange 'he' indeed who has no existence!

If life then is correctly defined as a *condition* of existence and is the opposite of death, it is equally contended that death is also a condition of existence, the opposite of LIFE in which spirit, soul and body become separated, the body being committed to the grave, the spirit and soul pass on to await a resurrection either unto life or unto judgment (John 5:29), depending upon one's acceptance or rejection of Christ as Saviour, when spirit, soul and body will again be re-united.

Those who have left us for the other shore ARE DEAD and have gone to join the DEAD. The righteous when raised, come out from among the DEAD and their resurrection is a coming forth UNTO LIFE from the dead (John 5:28, 29). They are dead, but existing in a conscious disembodied state: the wicked in Hades in torment (Luke 16), the saved of the Lord with Christ (Phil. 1:23). You will never find in Scripture the soul sleeping. The MAN sleeps but always as identified with HIS BODY. 'Many *bodies* of the saints which slept arose' (Matt. 27:52). 'So Stephen fell asleep and devout men carried him to his burial', i.e., his body (Acts 8:2). The closing verses of Luke 16 teach unmistakably the conscious state of the dead. Death separates the soul and spirit from the body but it does not rob them of consciousness, as the rich man in Hades (Luke 16) was in full possession of his senses. He could hear, and see and feel and taste and think and reason.

MAN is made for eternity. Possessed of a conscious, endless existence, he will spend that eternity either in everlasting bliss with the Lord Jesus Christ or in everlasting torment with the Devil and his angels in hell. Eternal life is a gift (Rom. 6:23). It must be a gift to someone who has existence. It cannot be a gift to something that doesn't exist. It must also be a gift to someone who has conscious existence, else it might as well not be given. None will dispute the fact that eternal life will be enjoyed for ever and that it is offered to whosoever will, therefore everybody must be possessed of a conscious endless existence to be able to enjoy it.

—Service