

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT

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We wish to correspond with every preacher in Kentucky in reference to the circulation of the HERALD, and contributions to its columns. Send for terms.

Immortality.

Life, death, eternity—how vast, how deep, how solemn these three words, so familiar to us all! Who can measure, who can fathom their meaning? In the midst of life we are surrounded by death and confronted by eternity with its boundless prospects of weal and woe. Life on earth ends in death, and death is but the dark door to another life which has no end. Astronomy cannot tell whether this visible universe has boundaries or not, and what lies beyond. Theology cannot determine the locality of that invisible universe from which no traveller returns, nor the direction and length of that lonely passage which carries the disembodied spirit from its present to its future abode. But this we do know—and it is enough for our comfort—that in our Father's house are many mansions, and that our Savior has prepared a place for all His disciples. There is an abundance of room for all even within the limits of this universe, and for aught we know, the spirit world may be very near and round about us. There are exalted moments in our life when we see the heavens open and the angels of God descending and ascending. Life is a mystery, a glorious mystery with a heaven beyond, but a terrible mystery with annihilation or endless punishment in prospect.

The immortality of the soul is a universal instinct and desire of the human race. Like the idea of God, it is implanted in our intellectual and moral constitution. We cannot think backward without reaching an ultimate cause which has no beginning; we cannot think forward without arriving at a result which has no ending. God and eternity precede time and succeed time, and time itself is filled with both. We cannot conceive that a wise Creator should make man in His own image and endow him with the highest faculties without ordaining him for endless existence. He cannot intend the head of creatures, the masterpiece of His hand, to perish like the brute. He cannot allow virtue to suffer and iniquity to flourish without some future adjustment

which will give to every one his dues and restore the harmony of character and condition. It seems impossible that a rational being filled with infinite longings and capable of endless progress should be suddenly cut off in the beginning of its career, "like the empty fabric of a vision leaving no wreck behind." It seems impossible that the mind, which proves its independence of the body and matures in strength while the body declines, should be dissolved with its material tent. No husband can close the eyes of a beloved wife, no parent can commit a child to the cold grave, no friend can bid farewell to a bosom friend, without the ardent wish of the recovery of the lost and a meeting again in a better world, where tears of parting are unknown. Every consideration of God's goodness, love and justice, of man's capacities, desires and hopes, and of surrounding nature, with its perennial renovations of seasons and transformations of death itself into new forms of life, forces upon us the belief in the immortality of the human soul.

But after all, philosophy and science can lead us only to the probability of immortality, and there is a vast step from probability to certainty. The starry heavens above and the moral law within may well have filled the great philosopher of the last century with ever-growing reverence and awe; but beyond the starry heavens and behind the moral law lie the sublimer regions of faith, which fill us with deeper reverence and which alone can give us solid comfort in life and in death.—PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D., LL. D., *October Pulpit Treasury*.

Notes and Comments.

Those who have come very nearly drowning relate that all the acts of their lives pass rapidly before them, within the space of a few moments. This is a strange experience. I was sitting by the bedside of a sick man, very dear to me, when he related the following: "Last week I was attacked with a congestive chill. In a few minutes every thing that I ever did rushed through my mind." This strange fact may help to point out a useful lesson. When a wicked man dies in all his awful sins, will not the vivid and constant remembrance of them be tormenting?

BEAUTIFUL MUSIC.—My grandfather, who was as void of supersti-

tion as any one, sensible, brave, frank and generous; being a Scotchman; with his wife, was going one afternoon to see a sick relative, suddenly they heard the sound of beautiful music, the sweetest they had ever heard. It continued for some time. My father was sick some months ago; he was lying awake one day, when he caught the sound of the sublimest music he ever heard. He listened for an hour and the sounds continued. The tunes were familiar: "The Old Musician and His Harp," and "Who at the Door is Knocking." Do we catch, ever and anon, the sounds of the heavenly music? Does our Father give us these sweet foretastes to cheer us on?

We made an assertion, when connected with the *Apostolic Church*, in that paper, to the effect that some disciples are as tenacious about some customs we have, that are not named in the Bible, as about things that are clearly taught, some hastily concluded that we were making a covert strike at baptism, that we had become unsound, and were hungering for the fair smiles and worthless flatteries of Babylon. The assertion was made after much observation and contemplation, and further experience only confirming what we then said. Some of our ablest men think the same. Hear A. I. Hobbs, whose ability none will deny: "The bondage of human forms and customs is now, and always has been, the characteristic of Bourbonism both in church and State. The form of receiving persons, the whole membership present extending the hand, is an impressive usage and unobjectionable while a congregation is few in numbers, but, for many reasons, becomes impracticable when a church becomes large. But the use is not even recognized by a reference in the Scriptures, yet we have known persons so enslaved to this custom that any attempt to substitute it by the custom of the preacher giving the hand in behalf of the congregation, would be regarded as a dangerous innovation, a departure from the 'ancient order.' So ready are we to rank among the permanent what belongs to the temporary, to fix in the very essence or structure of Christianity what is a mere appurtenance." Who but has seen this sore evil in our ranks. It is the old story of tithing mint, anise and cummin, and neglecting

the weightier of the law. This stickling is very destructive of spirituality; and he who higgles at the tithing alone must dwindle and die, or become a dwarf in the kingdom. Nine-tenths of the controversies which disfigure our periodicals are on these unessentials. They simply gender strife, and leave untouched the great questions of permanence and vitality. It will mark a great advance when we have laid aside these incidentals and plead only for the real and permanent.



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