

Are We Eternal? By Mike Thomas

J.F. Rutherford, one of the founders of the Jehovah Witness faith, taught people to dismiss the belief of eternal punishment. He wrote, "For a long time men have been taught that the punishment for the wicked, those who disobey God, is everlasting torment or torture in a hell burning with unquenchable fire and brimstone... It is another doctrine of Satan, used to blind the people" (The Harp of God, p. 47). He instead taught that all souls are unconscious at death and the only ones brought back to life are the ones who believe in Jesus (p. 45). All unbelievers will have "everlasting death, with no hope of a resurrection" (p. 51). Oh, that this were so!

I'm like you in that I don't like to think about the possibility of suffering for an eternity apart from God. Who would enjoy such a thought? However, that does not change the reality of what Jesus taught. He said we're alert after death, both the saved and the lost (Luke 16:22-25). He persuaded men with eternal life (John 6:40, 54; 10:28) as well as warned of eternal damnation (Matt. 25:45-46; Mark 9:42-48). To accept Jesus' teachings on heaven without accepting His teachings on hell is dishonest. If one is true based on His word, the other must be equally true. The Lord said, "all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28-29). In whose words will we entrust our eternal soul: Rutherford or Jesus? Who has proven He is qualified to speak on eternity (2 Tim. 1:10) and man's eternal soul (Acts 17:30-31)?

Life is nothing more than a test with eternal consequences. Will we live for the world and its lusts, and suffer eternally for it (Rom. 2:5-11; Gal. 5:19-21)? Or will we be wise and choose life and faith in God, and live forever (Mark 8:35-38; John 3:15)? If the dead could return, they would beg us to love and obey God, and to be saved from sin through faith in Jesus—"And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb. 5:9). To obey Jesus for salvation we must have faith (Acts 18:8), repent of sin (Acts 2:38), confess faith in Him (Rom. 10:9-10), and be immersed in water for the forgiveness of sins (1Peter 3:21). From one eternal soul to another, let us be wise and choose to walk by faith in Christ.

"Your Enemy is over There!"

"But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!" (Gal. 5:15)

Before Andrew Jackson became the seventh president of the United States, he served as a major general in the Tennessee militia. During the War of 1812 his troops reached an all-time low in morale. As a result, they began arguing, bickering, and fighting among themselves. Mr. Jackson called them all together, on one occasion when tensions were at their worst, and said, "Gentlemen! Let's remember, the enemy is over there."

His sobering reminder would be an appropriate word for the church today. In fact, I wonder if Christ sometimes looks down at us and says with a sigh, "Christians, your Enemy is over there! Stop your infighting! Pull for one another. Support one another.

Believe in one another. Care for one another. Pray for one another. Love one another."
(From Hope Again)

An Obituary for Common Sense

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense, who has been with us for many years. No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: knowing when to come in out of the rain; why the early bird gets the worm; life isn't always fair; and, maybe it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. He declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as churches became businesses; and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home or the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally breathed his last breath after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death, by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility, and by his son, Reason. He is survived by his four delinquent stepbrothers: I Know My Rights; I Want It Now; Someone Else Is To Blame; I'm A Victim. Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone.

A Moments Wisdom

Don't tell me that worry doesn't do any good. I know better. The things I worry about don't happen.

Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them?

It takes less time to do things right than to explain why you did it wrong.

There are two kinds of people: those who do the work, and those who take the credit.

Try to be in the first group; there is less competition there.

Bad habits are like chains that are too light to feel until they are too heavy to carry.

A prudent question is one-half of wisdom.

To live in the presence of great truths and eternal laws, to be led by permanent ideals -- that is what keeps a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him.

In the final analysis there is no solution to man's progress but the day's honest work, the day's honest decisions, the day's generous utterances and the day's good deeds.