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The
Eternal

Living Series

Mayan Revelation Number 198

The Dimensions of Eternal Life

Dimensions

Infinite Breadth

The Dimensions of Life

Infinite Height

In Eternal Proportions

Infinite Depth

Infinite Length

Prayer

Beloved Centurion:

We all have daydreams of what we want to be, or have, or do; and a high imaginary standard, like the good resolutions we form often help us to a better life.

We may never completely reach our ideals, whether they are of mental or moral improvement, but the very thought of them causes us to think of our deficiencies and urges us on to higher and better things. Ideals are of great value to us. We should all have them. As a matter of fact, they should be formed early in life but, if not, it is better that they be formed late in life than never be aspired to at all. The best and noblest lives are those which are set toward high ideals.

In this lesson series, ETERNAL LIVING, we take up now the second meditation which is called THE DIMENSIONS OF ETERNAL LIFE. When we have mastered eternal living, we have thrown away boundaries; we are no longer held by the shackles that restrict us.

A large proportion of people live too much within themselves. We must forget self and think of others, striving to find means whereby we may help those who are not as fortunate as we are, not only from the standpoint of what we have, but of what we have learned. We must learn to stretch out a hand and bring them out of the darkness into the light we have found. This, in turn, carries us one step forward in our search for perfection and idealism, toward a more soul-satisfying eternal life.

Poor indeed is the person who has never learned the value of sharing. It is one of the greatest and most essential qualities to be cultivated by the one who is seeking to better his condition in eternal living. Let this truth permeate your consciousness always.

We now advance together on the path in the study of THE DIMENSIONS OF ETERNAL LIFE:

The Dimensions of Eternal Life

DIMENSIONS

WE all remember the day in school when the subject of dimensions was explained. We were shown a cubicle block or a picture of one and told a number of interesting things about that oblong plane with sides and a top erected on it. One of those things was that it necessarily had to have three dimensions - length, breadth, and thickness. We did not then stop to ponder that breadth is really another phase of thickness, and that the thickness the teacher referred to is really a combination of height and depth.

Much later when we considered it from the philosophical point of view or from that of the new theories, such as Doctor Einstein's, that when the subject of dimensions is more extensively considered, it may take on an added one, or that in

the farther reaches of truth there may be even more, and that one of them may be a combination of what we call time and space.

These more advanced concepts do not matter in our present study. What does matter is that only a straight line or a plane surface can have less than the dimensions of length, breadth, and thickness; and life is neither a straight line nor a plane surface. But we shall examine this matter more fully in the next division of the present lesson.

Now let us think a little more about dimensions in general. Suppose we have before us a quantity of toy building blocks, taking them rather than bricks, or tiles, or pictured lines, because we can handle them and think of them more easily. Suppose we lay three blocks in a row. Now suppose we lay three more beside them and three more beside these. We now have nine blocks, three times three and three on each side, making a square. We have multiplied our original three blocks by itself, and the result is a square area of nine blocks. That is why when we multiply a number by itself, we say we have squared it.

Now let us place a layer of nine blocks on the first and another on the second. What we now have is a cubicle pile of blocks, measured by three on each side and three up and down. That is, we have first multiplied the original three by itself, making it a square. Then we have multiplied it by three again, making it a cube; or as we say, we have cubed it. Nine is three squared, twenty-seven is three cubed, three is the square root of nine and the cube root of twenty-seven.

What we have really been doing in this whole operation was to build dimensions. First we built length and breadth. Then we added thickness, or a combination of height and depth.

Even yet the important point here is that only a line has length alone. Life is too often thought of as being only a straight line running on and on to some point where presumably it ceases. From this point eternal life would be a straight line running on and on into infinity or endlessness. Neither is any such thing. Life, considered as either temporal or eternal, has all the dimensions - length, breadth, height, and depth.

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THE DIMENSIONS OF LIFE

WE have said that the only thing that has length alone is a straight line, and that life is no straight line. Like a point, a straight line is imaginary, and life is certainly not imaginary.

It is something with form and substance, and that means that it has dimensions. Think in these terms of life in general, then in the same terms think of your own life. Keep thinking of it in the light of the things set forth in these lessons and see if you do not come to have a thrilling and exultant conception of what it means to life. Now let us begin by thinking of the dimensions of this present life we are living in the material world.

The dimension of length we have always assumed in relation to our existence. We simply saw it as a continuing thing going on and on, like an unwinding ball of

string, or a lengthening road, or a measured distance; and this appearance of things caused the human mind to think of it in terms of length alone.

Life does indeed have length, and the life that now is has measurable length, as does an hour, or a day, or a year. A whole department of statistics has been built up around this conception of life. We call it life expectancy, and the actuaries can tell us exactly what it is on the average at any age. It is made up of years, which in youth seem very long, but which appear shorter as they grow fewer. This often makes us run out of time before we have accomplished all we want to do. So-called Death is the timekeeper who sounds the chime announcing that it is time to stop for the night. But we should remember that night is always followed by morning, and an opportunity either to take up the task and finish it, or go on to a more important one. Thus we cherish the idea of eternal life.

This present life also has breadth. It is the measure and scope of what we can see and what we can make of the mystery of it. Life is as wide as its horizons on either side. That is as far as sight can reach, and it is quite enough to occupy our interest while we are here.

Instead of saying that life has thickness, let us say that it has height and depth. The height of this mortal life is limited too. We can see to the nearest of the stars, but we cannot get very well acquainted even with them, or do much about it. Adventurous souls dream of traveling to some of the nearer planets but no one knows whether they can or what they can accomplish by it. Many of us fly a little in the air, but only to get to some other spot on the ground. What use we actually make of height is mostly limited to erecting buildings and climbing mountains.

Earthly life has depth, but what the senses can perceive of it or the hands do with it is extremely limited. We mine ore, drill for oil, and dive into the ocean. We take great pride in these achievements, but we know they are very small.

Such are the dimensions of this present life. It is a life of sensation, and the senses were never made for more than a very limited existence. It is like living in a closed tent, shutting out the reach and wonder of things. But now let us take the tent down, and think of the dimensions of life lived in universal terms, and eternal values. As soon as we do that, we shall realize that we have done a transforming thing.

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IN ETERNAL PROPORTIONS

WE have now extended our conception of life to its universal and eternal proportions. We no longer think and feel in cramped-up terms like someone huddled in a dark corner. The sky is open before, behind, above, and on both sides; and it is full of stars. The soul has cast off its fetters, and the mind has escaped its limitations. There are no boundaries, and there is no end.

This is the world of the soul, and it can send its messenger, Thought, to any part of that world and back in a moment of time, with no means of conveyance,

without any charge, and without even so much as the flutter of a wing. It can call on Faith to open doors anywhere and carry out its wishes where no other power could reach.

In the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis we are told that God created the firmament and called it heaven. What that means becomes clear when we consider what the word firmament signifies. In the marginal notes of your Bible you will probably find the explanation that "firmament" is a word for expanse or expansion, in other words, for space or spaciousness.

That gives us two interesting and challenging inferences. The first is that the arena of life is space or expanse, that its home is anywhere and everywhere, and that it really has no limits.

The second is that heaven is wherever life is, so it too may be anywhere and everywhere, for its name is one of those that God gave to space itself. Worry no more about whether there will be plenty of room in heaven. There will be. Worry no more either about how we shall be transported there. We shall not have to be transported at all. If we have it, we shall take it with us. If we do not have it, we shall not get it by going somewhere else but by building it into our lives where we are. Make a heaven of your heart, and the thing is done, including the problem of transportation.

How far have we now proceeded in our examination into the eternal reaches of life? We said we would take down the dark, enclosing tent that separated our temporal lives from the rest of the universe, and stand out in the open. What exactly was meant by that? We meant that we would push aside the limitations of the sense life and give mind and spirit free range, for thought moves and faith operates freely anywhere, even in more than one place at a time.

That will open the way for the definitely practical part of all this. It will make it possible for us to begin living in terms of the eternal values these larger perceptions reveal to us. No more living only for the one spot where we stand, but rather for all our world and all God's universe. No more planning with reference only to the present moment or the current day, but for the years, for a lifetime, for beyond a lifetime, for the ages, for eternity. No more thinking of ourselves and our lives as limited and temporary arrangements, but conceiving ourselves as sons of God made in the image of his universality and immortality.

If you have been living in a back alley, move out onto the freeway. If you have dwelt in a valley, move to a mountaintop where you can look at the stars. If you have been thinking of life in terms of space and time, remove the walls and think of it as limitless and unfettered.

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INFINITE LENGTH

NOW let us consider the dimension of length again, but from a different conception of life - the infinite one. The best one could say about the length of mortal life was not very satisfying. It would mean, as an old Japanese proverb puts it, that when we meet we begin to part. Its refrain

would be that every dawn is the way to another twilight. Its days are labor, and its goal is a tomb; and all love can look forward to is bereavement. That is not much to offer to the heart.

The length of life from the infinite viewpoint drives back the clouds of fear and despair and floods the landscape with the sunshine of confidence and hope. It claims through the pen of Victor Hugo that life is not a blind alley but a thoroughfare, and through the pen of Whittier that life is ever lord of death, and love can never lose its own. Its theme is that every twilight is the way to another dawn. This infinite reach of life from the eternal viewpoint not only assures the heart against permanent loss, but it also makes life far more worth living than the finite reach can ever do.

Ask any number of young people of a given age their ideas of life and you will get much the same replies. To youth life is a perfectly wonderful thing because it is yet mostly promise, and youth has not yet learned to distinguish very clearly between promise and fulfillment. The young person's mind is full of wonderful ideas of the things he is going to be and do. To him it all seems to be coming tomorrow because he has no idea that he will meet with any obstacles or hindrances.

But ask any old man the same question and what will you hear? He had his dreams and he has spent a lifetime trying to make them come true, but he is only now getting started. Like a delayed worker in the late afternoon he knows the night may come before he can finish. It is not a pleasant prospect, but it is all the finite view of life can promise. It offers rest, but rest is not what the heart wants. It wants a chance to realize its hopes and carry out its plans.

How different when we view this dimension of length from the point of view of eternity! It assures us that there is no death, but only change; and that instead of quenching our dreams it only gives us a better set of conditions in which to go on working. It promises the belated toiler not only a twilight that will end his labor temporarily but also an infinite tomorrow in which not only to complete it but to carry it on to undreamed of perfection.

But this is only one of the dimensions of eternal life, and it is one we cannot have independently and alone. As we have said, life is not a straight line nor any kind of a line. Life can have length only if it also has breadth, height and depth; and its length can be infinite only if the other dimensions are expressed in infinite terms also. They might be called the conditions of eternal life or the means to immortality, or the lines along which we must work if we are to live forever in any meaningful way. Let us now proceed to the other dimensions.

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INFINITE BREADTH

THE length of eternal life, then, is necessarily related to and more or less determined by its breadth. A person who is narrow in his thinking, sympathies, ideals, and practices, is probably at the moment not headed for immortality in any very satisfying form.

Once a rich young man was concerned about this matter of eternal life, and he went to ask Jesus about it. We know that is where his mind was placing its emphasis just then. He was not thinking of eternal life as something to be given by formula but as something that had to be developed and achieved. We know that because his question was what he must DO to inherit it.

He was thinking about a way of living, a practice; but when the Master set one up for him he was dismayed and did not accept it. It was that he adopt making constructive use of his wealth as a lifework. That was the right prescription for his particular case because he was wealthy. If he had been a poor man he might have welcomed the idea, but in that case he could not have done much with it either. He went away sorrowful because he was not willing to pay the price.

You see, this young man was seeking life that was eternal in length, which was as far as he had thought it out. But the Master could not promise it to him because life is not a straight line. It reaches not only forward, but outward also. In effect, the Master told the rich young ruler that if he wanted to live forever he must broaden out in his sympathies, interest, and service. You cannot separate the dimensions of anything, including life. If one is removed, they all disappear.

Nothing is more stifling to the soul than narrowness. Life has to have scope in which to see, room in which to breathe, and space in which to exercise and stretch itself. It has to have room, and it has to occupy that room with rightness and goodness. The excuse for the existence of a line is what it bounds.

A warning is needed here, however, and we shall utter it by distinguishing clearly what is meant by breadth. There is abroad today a certain loose and misleading idea and practice of "anything goes" which people thoughtlessly call broad-mindedness. There is nothing broad about it, unless it is its shallowness. It is merely destructive and irresponsible. There is really no kind of "mindedness" in it at all. We are not referring to any such thing when we speak of the breadth of eternal living. What we mean is rather largeness of heart, breadth of understanding, and inclusiveness in doing good. It means scope in our knowing and caring. It means putting no limitations on any good.

Anyone who practices eternal living for any length of time begins to show signs of this breadth of conception, understanding, sympathy and interest. His life takes on a spirit of wisdom and maturity that shows him to be one who is building his life of eternal values and doing so along the lines of more than one dimension.

Do not make the mistake of running your trains of thought, feeling, and action on narrow-gauge rails. Do not start toward the achievement of your life purpose over a one-lane highway. Broaden out, and you can go forward with greater speed and confidence.



INFINITE HEIGHT

HEIGHT is an important consideration in our finite, temporal, physical lives in the sense that we are always trying to scale it, or build into it, or explore it, or keep from getting hurt by falling from it. That is about all. But to the soul life, which is the infinite life, the ground on which we do our living for eternity, it immediately becomes a matter of very much greater importance. There we deal with height of a very different kind and we do so in a very different way.

Those who have attained greatness of soul have learned much about this. They have become able to deal with it familiarly because they found in it the ground of their aspiration, endeavor, and achievement. That is your task now, and how well you do with it will affect your destiny forever.

Those who attempt the high things of the physical life think in terms of towers, mountaintops, and heavier than air flying devices. These are temporary and of only passing importance. But those who attempt the heights of thinking and living from the eternal point of view deal with an entirely different set of facts and values. They are qualities, habits, and ideals - the kind of thing that cannot be taken from us and that can never pass away.

Not real, did you say? Those who know most about these things have not found it so. Not practical? Those who have practiced them longest and most earnestly say they are the most practical things with which they have ever had to do. Not profitable? Those who have accumulated the richest store of them say they keep one's life enriched even though the material values are lost, and that they obtain blessings money cannot buy.

St. Paul wrote to one of the first-century churches to set their affections on things that are above. Among the people who had the strength of character and purpose to build up this country from a wilderness to a delightful land a favorite slogan was, "Plain living and high thinking."

Among the values we are now thinking about are such as these - a rich and satisfying thought life, association with others on the higher levels of friendship and helpfulness, the centering of the emotional life on the higher qualities of affection, good will, aspiration, loyalty, and faith, the cultivation of love of truth and justice, emphasis on the kingdom of God and His righteousness, cultivation of the qualities of peace and good will, the practice of daily fellowship and communion with the divine, the building of that strength of character that will enable us to make the voyage of life on an even keel and meet whatever comes with courage and confidence. These are but a few, but the list is long enough to indicate the kind of things we find and deal with in the upper heights of living where we look out upon the eternity through which we are moving. If you can make the above your pattern for eternal living, you will have come near to mastery.

Thus we add one more dimension to the two we have already considered. We now move on to the second phase of thickness, which is depth. Practice your ascents, meanwhile. Be an aeronaut of the spirit, a space pilot of the soul.

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INFINITE DEPTH

"DEEP calleth unto deep at the sound of thy waterfalls" wrote the psalmist long ago. He was thinking of the life of the soul, which is the eternal phase of our existence. He wrote well about it for he had had much experience with it and knew a great deal about it. Among other things he understood that one of the most important and essential phases of it is its depth. That all of us also need to come to know, not merely by the unsureness of theory but by the certainty of experience and the assurance of practice.

It is in the depths that the life of the soul is rooted, like a tree. It is there that the great taproot is sent down to gather the water of life from hidden and exhaustless springs when the more superficial sources fail. It is there that the firm, strong fingers of the soul seize it and hold it upright against the tempest. It is there that a basis is provided from which it can grow from the depths into the heights. It is there where the gems of the spirit are found hidden deep in mines that sense and the flesh do not suspect. It is there that foundations lie waiting for the structures of man's worthiest hopes and dreams.

We all look forward to the distances ahead, even beyond the grave, for the heart has the will to live. All that a man has he will give for his life. We do this without even trying. Most of us aspire to the heights. That is easy. They are open, and we can see without effort how beautiful they are and how infinite is their reach.

But we must not forget the depths. They are hidden and mysterious, and it takes effort to explore them; but they hold values we cannot do without if we want our lives to be on the eternal basis. Much of truth is there, and it is fundamental truth, bedrock truth. Aspiration is light. It takes the heights easily; but it needs something to rest upon, to hold to, to steady it. That something is faith, a fundamental thing, a matter of the deep.

Learn to think deeply. Do not be content with passing fancies, superficial notions, popular ideas, and the shibboleths of the day. Get at the roots of things. Think them through. Seek for their sources. Let your thinking pierce the heights, but build it on solid foundations.

Feel deeply. Do not let your emotions be trifling, fitful, or uncertain. Right feeling is one of the prime elements of living at its best. Having seen to it that your affections, desires, and urges are right, let them be strong. We sometimes miss victory for lack of enthusiasm and power of approach. Those who succeed with anything are those who believe in it profoundly and feel powerfully about it.

Live deeply. Base your program of life on the solid rock of the eternal right. Let your purposes be deeply rooted and your motives spring from deep

sources. Surface things pass like the shadows they are. The profound things endure. Cultivate them. Let your thoughts and purposes be like deep calling unto deep and hearing the answering deep reply.

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PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, I thank thee for an adequate conception of life. Help me to meet it adequately by growing in power and wisdom along all its many lines. Amen.

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And so, we bring to a close another department of our study of Eternal Living. This is a rich subject and I hope you will study meditatively; think as you study. May God bless you and keep you steadfast in your climb ever onward and upward until you have reached the summit.

YOUR CLASS INSTRUCTOR.