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THE LOST CHORD OF CHRISTIANITY.

What would people think to-day if the Christian Churches of every sect held a great Council and decided that it was a useless and harmful thing to teach men that they would live after death? What would Christians say to such arguments as that men would live more virtuously and adopt a higher standard of ethics and morals, when swayed only by the thought of benefiting their neighbours, uninfluenced by any thought of reward hereafter; or that God's infinite majesty would be added to in the conceptions of men when they realized their own mortal state? How would they feel in presence of a declaration by the Church that such mysteries as the possibility of an after-state were quite beyond the range of man's intelligence, and that in any case they were of no moment beside the important matters of our present existence, the actual duties and dealings of daily life, and the real knowledge to be directly obtained of things evident and apparent to the senses.

It will be said that it would be utterly impossible for such a state of affairs to come about, or for the Church to arrive at such a position. But let us think for a moment. It is exactly three hundred and fifty years since the death of Martin Luther. Have any such objectors a clear idea of the change that occurred in the teaching of a great section of the Christian Church at that time? Or have they any idea of the great difference between the teachings of Luther, and those of any of the leaders of Christian thought to day with their views of Evolution, the Higher Criticism, Eternal Hope, and so forth? Does any one suppose that equally radical changes will not take place in

the next three hundred and fifty years? And who asserts to-day that the Church teaches what Jesus taught in Galilee?

More than four times three hundred and fifty years of the life of the Christian Church preceded the epoch of Luther, and in all those centuries great changes gradually came about in the thought and doctrine of the Church teachers. One of these changes was of a nature equally radical to that suggested in the suppression of the fact of man's life after death, and it was advocated and supported by arguments similar and even identical with those we have instanced.

It was one of the instructions of Jesus to his disciples, part of those teachings to which Theosophy would once again turn men's hearts and minds. It was the truth of man's real immortality; the fact that he always has existed in the past as he shall always continue to exist in the future. The doctrine was preserved in the Church for centuries, but as the priesthood grew in power and became more material in ideas, the reality of the spiritual life of man faded away. About the year 538 A.D. the condemnation of what began to be looked upon as a heresy became an issue, and was debated and discussed at many councils during the next fifteen years. At the Great Council of Constantinople held in 553 the assembled bishops finally branded as a heresy the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul.

In Micah v : 3 we read of Him "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," and to His wise teachings it is well to give our attention. He never asked people to believe what He said because He had