

IMMORTALITY
ON
GOD'S TERMS:
Endless Life
IN
Christ the Lord.

By **GEORGE P. MCKAY**

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LONDON.

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"Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake,
I may of Endless Life partake."

Bishop Ken, 1695.

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PREFACE.

"NOBODY can pretend that I am talking of what does not concern me at this time," said Socrates, when, near his death, he discoursed upon the hope of Immortality. But not in the dying hour alone is this subject seasonable; at all times it attracts the minds of thoughtful men. Recently it has occupied a place of special prominence among the studies of the day, and the author of the following pages believes, therefore, that, while at any time the publication of such a work is justifiable, it is at this moment particularly opportune. The matter herein presented has already been set forth in Sermons and Bible Studies, in the author's ministry; and it now appears, at the earnest request of many, with the sincere desire and prayer that what has been helpful when heard, may have equal, or greater, weight and influence when quietly read and studied.

It has been the author's aim to know, and to present, "the mind of the Spirit" on the question of Immortality; to do this "advisedly, reverently, and in the fear of God"; and to remember the Apostolic injunction, "Speaking the truth in love." "The Word of God" is that to which he makes appeal, and he firmly believes that the things herein "delivered" have, first of all, been from that word "received." All that he can ask is, that his readers shall imitate those who, after the preaching of Paul, "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

GEORGE P. McKAY.

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London, N.

TESTIMONIES.

"It ought to be placed in the forefront of all Christian teaching that Christ's mission on earth was to give men Life. And that he meant literal Life, literal, spiritual and Eternal Life, is clear from the whole course of His teaching and acting."

—*Professor Drummond.*

"The life that Jesus Christ communicates to believers is not of a purely moral nature; it is His complete life, corporal as well as spiritual."—*Professor Godet.*

"Men's lives have been prolonged by the transfusion of blood from vigorous frames. Jesus Christ passes His own blood into our veins, and makes us immortal."

—*Dr. Alexander McLaren.*

"The doctrine of natural, as distinguished from Christian, immortality . . . crept into the Church by a backdoor as it were."—*W. E. Gladstone.*

"Human Immortality, in the sense of necessarily endless, indestructible existence of man, is not taught in the Bible, is, indeed, utterly foreign to the whole scheme of Scripture, which knows only of one Being that hath immortality in Himself."—*J. Morgan Gibbon.*

"The advocates of what they call 'Conditional Immortality' have done good service by exposing the baselessness of the popular doctrine of the intrinsic and endless permanence of the human soul. They have also done good service by demanding a reconsideration of the whole matter; and by protesting against a theory long dominant in the Christian pulpit which, as I believe, goes far beyond the teaching of Holy Scripture."—*Dr. J. Agar Beet.*

"Believers themselves . . . are not, as they should be, joyful, nor grateful to Jesus Christ for the preservation of their very life and existence, but only for secondary gifts. They seem to forget that He has called Himself the 'Bread of Life,' the 'Water of Life,' which are symbols, not of enjoyment nor even of holiness, but of ontological maintenance and support. This serious mistake of most Christians is derogatory to the divinity of Christ, which would be confirmed and placed upon a much higher level if it were recognized that Jesus, in His union with God, is really the great life-giver, and that apart from Him there is no permanent existence of any kind for any man."

—*Dr. E. Petaval.*

"Jesus Christ then is the source, the means, the giver of eternal life; the life which is spiritual, blessed, immortal . . . Belief then in Jesus Christ is the condition of securing the gift of immortality . . . There is on the part of the Church itself such a belief in the doctrine of the natural immortality of all men as to amount to a virtual denial of the doctrine that immortality or eternal life is the gift of Christ alone."

—*Dr. G. Dana Boardman.*

"I believe that for the moment the main current of opinion among us is running strongly in favour of universal restoration. But that doctrine seems to me so destitute of all solid foundation, that it is impossible for it to remain as a permanent article in the faith of the Church . . . I believe that within a few years the main body of opinion in the free churches, at least of this country, will be in favour of suspense of judgment, and I cannot but believe that after that, the main body of opinion will be found substantially on the side of the doctrine with which the name of the Rev. Edward White is so honourably connected."

—*Dr. R. W. Dale, in 1874.*

A SUMMARY OF THE TEACHING.

- 1.—That Scripture nowhere states that every man has Immortality.
- 2.—That the common assumption of soul immortality is unwarranted and dangerous.
- 3.—That "Mortal man," and not immortal, is the Scripture designation of the race.
- 4.—That, still, in Man are longings, deep and strong, for Immortality.
- 5.—That these Desires are God-implemented, and by God they, in the Gospel, have been met.
- 6.—That "Whosoever believeth" shall not perish, but shall have immortal life.
- 7.—That such shall, at the Resurrection, "put on Immortality," and so, through Christ, shall live for evermore.

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I.

IMMORTALITY ON GOD'S TERMS.

"To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality."—

Rom. ii. 7.

THE prevailing belief is that man is naturally immortal, that once born he can never die. But this doctrine we take the liberty to challenge. We believe that he who is *twice* born shall never die,—*"Ye must be born again,"*—and we must ask, with all respect, and yet with firmness, for better reasons than have yet been given, before accepting the dogma that every man shall live through endless years.

Some who hold this dogma say they find it in the Scripture; but when asked for the portions declaring man to be immortal, they fail to bring them forth. Others say that the immortality of man is *to be inferred* from certain passages; but when these are examined, it is found that the doctrine is brought to the passages before it can be taken out. Others, again, seek to prove it from some points in metaphysics; for example, they say, "Man has the power to think and reason, therefore he is an immortal being." But the same argument would hold good for the immortality of dogs. They have certain thinking and reasoning faculties; and if the power of man to think proves his immortality, the thinking powers of brutes prove theirs.

The fact is, there is not so much enquiry into the truth of this dogma as we might expect or desire. It is too generally taken for granted, or believed on credit. Sometimes we are appealed to in this fashion:—

"O listen man!

A voice within us speaks the startling words,
Man—thou shalt *never* die! Celestial voices
Hymn it round our souls: according harps
By angel fingers touched when the mild stars
Of morning sang together, sound forth still
The song of our great immortality."

And we have listened; but have never heard a voice within, nor voices around, conveying such a message. But stay! We have! One voice has whispered such words in our ears! A voice, alas, we long believed; a voice once heard in Eden, but a LIAR'S voice! "The serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die."

Celestial voices speak the opposite. Hear the experience of Isaiah: "The voice said Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?" The answer was not, "Cry, all men are immortal"; but, "All flesh is grass and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass." The Holy Spirit warned men, saying, "Turn ye turn ye, why will ye die?" The Son said, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." The Prophets said, "O wicked man, thou shalt surely die." And the Apostles declared, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." How then can we believe that men shall *never* die?

This is not, as some think, the denial of resurrection to the ungodly. "Believing all things which are written in the law, and in the prophets, we have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." But we ask for proof that the unjust who rise to judgment shall be kept alive for ever. "The wages of sin is *death*." Speaking of that time of resurrection, Jesus said, "He that liveth and *believeth in Me* shall never die." And if these words stood alone they would be sufficient to uphold the doctrine of Immortality on God's conditions, and on God's conditions only.

But let us now proceed to give some further reasons for our faith. Why do we hold it?

I.—Because Immortality is prized.

It is a boon to be desired. The wish for it is present in the minds of millions. Almost where'er you turn, it may be found. The history of mankind proves this. It is of course admitted that the dread of extinction is not positively universal. The Chinese, for example, are an exception to the rule that man longs to live for ever. Buddhism has long been holding the *Nirvana* (peaceful extinction) before the imagination of its votaries, as the reward of the highest and most perfect virtue. Still, most men do dread death; they hate oblivion, and desire to keep their hold of life.

It has been affirmed that this proves man's immortality. But if immortal, why should man so thirst to become immortal? A craving for anything does not amount to evidence of possession; it rather reveals the non-possession of the thing desired. What this longing, so nearly universal, does prove, is, that immortality is a thing of value; something worth having; in short, a Prize. Can you win, unless you run? If you prize health, must you not obey its laws? If you would have wealth, must you not labour? If knowledge, must you not study? If fame, must you not perform some special deed? Our soldiers are often found

"Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth."

They prize "glory," and know that they must fight for it; and we, knowing immortality to be a prize, need not wonder that it can only be obtained upon defined conditions. Eternal life is for "them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality."

II.—Think of the powers of an immortal.

These powers are incalculable; and can such talents be continued, when the object for which they were conferred has been defeated? All things are created for a purpose. "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." Now, if even a tree fails to fulfil the object of its being, the command is given, "Cut it down! why cumbereth it the ground?"

But if man be immortal, he can never be cut down. To all eternity he can defy his Maker. The purpose of his being is unfulfilled; his immortal powers are prostituted; and yet of these powers he cannot be deprived!

If you believe in immortal sinners, you must believe in the eternity of sin; the most God-dishonouring conclusion to which a man, by any dogma, can be driven. Remember, that sin would for ever be growing blacker, and more daring. It is its nature. When men had slighted the messages of God sent through the Patriarchs, they were prepared to persecute the Prophets, and after that they were ready to kill the Prince of Life Himself. And what immortal rebels would, in distant ages do, God only knows.

We believe then that those who qualify for immortality, learning now how to use a never-ending life for the glory of God, shall receive the gift. We believe this, further, because of—

III.—The Old Testament statements as to Sin, Sacrifice, and Salvation.

AS TO SIN :

Its uniform assertion is, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." From the beginning, it shows that the consequence of sin is loss of life,—death. This is seen very distinctly in the cases of Adam, the men of the Flood, the Sodomites, the Egyptians, and Korah and his company. The sinful are therefore not immortal. In the Old Testament it is never once suggested that such are indestructible. Nay, again and again it asserts, as in *Mal. iv. 1*, that "all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

AS TO SACRIFICE :

The lambs and bulls were substitutes for the transgressors. The punishment due to the latter was laid upon the former. That punishment was death. Not the death, or destruction, of their well-being; which some

tell us shall be the ultimate doom of the ungodly. Nor the death of their ill-being; which others say shall be the punishment of such. But it was the death of their whole-being. The animals were utterly destroyed; cut off; burnt up. The fate of the finally impenitent was thereby vividly portrayed.

AS TO SALVATION :

The light of this was not so clear as we now have it; and it appears all the less clear to us, because of the great light we enjoy to-day. A dim light seems as darkness to those who are in full light. Yet various passages in the Old Testament indicate that the early saints had knowledge of a life to come, and a hope of never-ending days for those who were either obedient—like Enoch and Abraham, or penitent—like David and others, who, when they fell into sin, came before God with confession and the appointed sacrifice. Salvation from the destroyer is never promised in the Old Testament to others.

IV.—The New Testament statements exactly agree with those of the Old.

AS TO SIN :

While the Old Testament declares "The soul that sinneth it shall die," the New asserts that "The wages of sin is death." It has been objected that the Old Testament death was death of the *body*, and that that of the New is death of the *soul*. But the language is so exactly the same, that we cannot think the inspired writers had such a distinction in their minds. Indeed, the Apostles frequently *quoted from the Old Testament* when speaking of the doom of sin. For instance, in *Acts iii. 22-23*, Peter, speaking of Christ as the Prophet like unto Moses, takes the words from the mouth of Moses: "It shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, SHALL BE DESTROYED from among the people." If these words meant, in Old Testament usage, that the transgressors would be literally put to death, why should they not mean the same, when used in the New?

AS TO SACRIFICE :

Jesus, "The Lamb of God," like the sacrifices of old, took the penalty due unto the sinful. What was that? Spiritual death? No! To die spiritually is to commit sin; and "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." Like the lambs, He was without blemish. Was it torment? No! He did suffer, it is true; but the cup was not drunk *until He died*. There was the penalty! Actual death! The Lamb was slain. His life was taken. "He poured out His soul unto death." And had it not been for the Resurrection, He would have been dead to-day. Then death—the literal cessation of life—is the award of evil.

AS TO SALVATION :

The New Testament light on this is clear. "Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light." How? By showing that men are immortal naturally? Nay; but "Through the gospel." What is that? It is the good news "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here the conditions attached to immortality are revealed. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread *he* shall live for ever." Could "life in Christ" be expressed more forcibly than in such passages? But, to proceed, we believe in it, because—

V.—It Vindicates the Character of God.

That doctrine which exalts Him in the estimation of man is most likely to be the true; and the doctrine of immortality on God's conditions does this. It justifies Him even while He punishes the finally impenitent with death. Now your sense of justice (a sense God has implanted), rebels against the idea of eternal misery. You cannot recognise the love of God, nor His wisdom in such punishment. And your sense of truth battles with the theory of universal restoration; when you remember such passages as *Matt. xii. 32*: "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, *it shall not be for-*

given him, neither in this world nor in that which is to come"; also *2 Thes. i. 9*: These "shall be punished with *everlasting* destruction from the presence of the Lord." But both justice and love, wisdom and truth, are manifest in the doctrine of conditional immortality. God's character is vindicated, while the sinner is condemned. The way of life, and that of death, were set before the doomed. The chance of a choice was given: and the "destruction cometh as a whirlwind"; "for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord."

VI.—Conditional Immortality adds New Lustre to the Name of Jesus.

"All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father"; and we ascribe more honour to Him now than with the common view we could. Commonly, our Lord is honoured for having added joy and felicity, to an immortality supposed already to be had: but *we* praise Him for the *immortality as well*. We recognise that *all* our future state is due to Him. He saves *us*, not from suffering only, but from death itself. We see that by nature we were no more possessed of "immortality" than we were of "glory and honour," and finding all in Christ, we give Him fuller praise.

VII.—This Doctrine moves the Hearts of Men.

It has been stated that "Life in Christ," if fully preached, or broached at all, would do great harm, leading men to live more careless and ungodly lives. Now this we know to be a fear that has prevented many sincere Christians from even the study of the subject. The first thing, however, that should be sought for, is *the Truth*. "Seize upon truth where'er 'tis found," and spread it, spread it! God can take all the responsibility of the consequences.

But *does* this teaching bring forth mischief? No. A thousand times, no. It may be abused; as any truth, or any man may be. They abused the Christ of God Himself when He was here. But, from over twenty

years' acquaintance with the doctrine of immortality on God's terms, we can testify that it works incalculable good.

IT AWAKES THE UNGODLY.

They can perceive its reasonableness. That is more than can be said for the eternal torment theory. Again and again have we seen the effect of the simple preaching of "Life in Christ." Bigots have been furious; but "the common people" have heard it gladly, and it has brought many hard-headed working men to know and love the Saviour. It has not free course in England; because still branded by the majority as heresy. But this we can say, "It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

IT ESTABLISHES AND STIMULATES THE GODLY.

These find it a rock beneath their feet: a firm foundation for any fabric they may build: "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." And it cannot fail to spur them on to "love and to good works," when they "know that He who converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall *save a soul from death*, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

Here then is our position: Firstly,—We cannot find a single declaration in the Word of God, that immortality is natural to man. This is most significant, when we remember how often the affirmation falls from the lips of the preachers of to-day. Evidently these preachers are on a different line from that of the prophets and apostles.

Secondly,—Not one only, but innumerable passages are found, declaring that the boon can only be obtained through Christ. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." As to the past: "In Him was life." As to the present: "Your life is hid with Christ." As to the future: "When He who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

In this doctrine, Scripture, science, and sense; history, prophecy, and experience fully agree, so what can one do but believe? And further,—what can an honest believer do but preach? We share in the sentiments of Luther, and would take a humble place beside such

men as he. You remember that, at the Diet of Worms, he was requested to recant, but boldly he replied, "I neither can nor will retract anything, for it is unsafe for the Christian to say aught against his conscience. Here I stand. I can do no otherwise. God help me. Amen."

We feel, with Luther, that we can do no otherwise than believe and teach that which we see is God's own truth. Others may base their hope of never ending life on some supposed inalienable right; but we base ours on Christ alone.

"My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness:
I dare not trust the *serpent's lie*
Regarding immortality.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:
All other ground is sinking sand."

II.

"IF MY IMMORTAL SAVIOUR LIVES."

"I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—Rev. i. 18.

HERE is a precious portion for the lover of the glorified Redeemer. It is one of the gems of the Book of Revelation, that book which contains many a "dark saying upon the harp"; but which also glitters with the glory of the stars. It is the book of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," and here, as in a glass, the believer may behold his blessed Lord. See, in this place, how strikingly He stands! 1. As the Living One: "He that liveth." 2. As the One that died: "And was dead." 3. As the Resurrected One: "Behold, I am alive." 4. As One to die no more: "Alive for evermore." 5. As Lord or living and of dead: "Having the keys of hell and of death."

I.—"The Living One."

"I am He that liveth." This is the Saviour's statement as to Himself. It is no other than a claim to Divinity, an assertion of self-existence. It is hereby affirmed that His life is inherent, not derived; His own, not borrowed, as is ours. There is a wide difference between Landlord and Tenant. The former possesses the property, the latter but occupies it; and it is only according to the will of the landlord, and by agreement with him, that the tenant can hold at all. Christ was no tenant of the estate called Life. He was

the Life-Lord. "In Him was Life": it was part of His eternal possessions. He was holder of "that eternal life which was with the Father." "The same was in the beginning with God," and the same would continue with Him unto the ages of ages. No candidate for immortality was He. Others, "by patient continuance in well doing," might have to "seek" for it; but unto Him, by native right, belonged "glory and honour and immortality." He was

THE ONLY MAN IMMORTAL:

the only one who could defy death. The grim monster could not insert one poisoned fang in Him without His own consent. "I lay down my life." "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." It has at times been discussed, whether, if Christ had died a natural death, say, on a bed of sickness, the atonement would by such a death have been effected. But it was impossible for Him to die "a natural death." Death did not come as a part of the natural order or process of His life; nor could it, for He was "The Living One." All we are dying ones, mortal men: but He towers above us, like a solitary mountain peak above the plains, and from that height majestic the declaration comes, "I am He that liveth—that liveth." "I go on for ever—and ever—and ever."

II.—The One that died.

To live for ever was His royal right. To die "for every man" was His sweet will. And when He died He passed through no mere form; it was a stern reality to Him. Theologians and poets have belittled death. They have said that to die is simply "to shuffle off this mortal coil," to change one's sphere, to pass into a larger life. They have declared death to be the "gate of life," and have even said, "There is no death: what seems so is transition." Since they have spoken thus regarding ordinary men, it is not surprising that they have argued also that the Saviour Himself did not die at all, He but changed His sphere of life. Some have boldly asserted that for three days

HE WENT TO THE PLACE OF TORMENT,

which popular theology supposes to exist. Dr. Talmage, with imaginative genius, has delivered himself thus: "The Lord Jesus Christ not only told us there was a Hell, but He went into it. He walked down the fiery steeps. He stepped off the bottom rung of the long ladder of despair. He descended into Hell. He put His bare foot on the hottest coal of the fiercest furnace. He explored the darkest den of eternal midnight, and then He came forth lacerated and bleeding, and mauled by the hands of infernal excruciation, to cry out to all the ages: I have paid the price to all those who would make me their substitute. By my groans, by my agony I demand the rescue of all those who will give up sin and trust in Me." Against all such American oratory, and God-dishonouring flights of vain imagination, we indignantly protest. Whatever else is true regarding the death state of our blessed Master, we feel that it can not be true that, for three days and nights, He was the sport and butt of hellish fiends. But others say that the Lord spent the time of His incarceration in a mission of mercy,—

PREACHING TO SPIRITS IN PRISON.

This is founded upon the well-known passage in the First Epistle of Peter. (Ch. iii. 19.) But reference to that portion shows, that it is Christ's power to preach by His Holy Spirit that is spoken of, and it is said that He exercised that power even so far back as the time of Noah. Noah was "a preacher of righteousness," and through him Christ "went and preached (unto the men of the Flood) the spirits (now) in prison"; just as afterwards, through Paul and others, He "came and preached peace" to the men of Ephesus (Eph. ii. 17). There is not ground, in this passage in Peter, for the statement that Christ only changed His occupation, in the hour and article of death. Nor is the ground any firmer for another theory that is advanced, namely, that

CHRIST ASCENDED TO THE FATHER,

when He breathed His last on Calvary. His "departure unto the Father," of which He had repeatedly spoken, was not fulfilled in death, for after His resurrection He declared, "I am not yet ascended

to My Father; but go to My brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God and your God." Christ did not go to Heaven at death; He went into the grave. He did not go up at all: He went down. Not even into "Paradise," as many interpret Luke xxiii. 43, did he go; for Paradise is not yet regained, and into His Kingdom the Son of Man has not yet come. The three theories are mutually destructive; Christ could not go to Heaven, and Hell, and Paradise as well. He could not at the same time be in happiness and in misery, resting in the bliss of Paradise and engaged in snatching men, by His preaching, as brands from the burning. How much wiser we should be, did we but take the words of Jesus as they stand! I, saith He, "was dead"—"dead." Spiritualists may teach that men in "what is called death" do not die at all, they only pass into a fuller life; but Christ says, "I (for one) became dead," and with this agree the whole scriptures of truth. Believing Him and them, we must arrive at this, that "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures." There was a literal death to the Lord of life. It was no mere departure from the body.

"Jesus, whose dwelling is the skies,
Went down into the grave for me;
There overcame my enemies,
There won the glorious victory."

III.—The Resurrected One.

"Behold, I am alive"! The Master might well say, "Behold"; for to raise Christ from the dead, required a special exercise and manifestation of the mighty power of God. "The exceeding greatness of His power" was therein seen. The attempts of Satan to secure his prey were many and determined. He entered into Judas to accomplish the betrayal; he stirred up the crowd to cry, "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" He moved Pilate, the priests, and the people to the destruction of the Christ. He saw to it that it was no swoon that overcame the Lord; but that He really died, with spear-rent heart, and empty veins. Then when they

laid Him in the rock-hewn tomb the arch fiend framed the plot to keep the Saviour there. The stone was sealed; the watch was set.

"But in vain the grave has bound Him;
Death has barr'd its gates in vain.
Lo, for us the Saviour rises!
Lo, for us He breaks the chain"!

By many infallible proofs is this established for our faith. The very devices of the devil to detain our Lord are links in the chain of evidence. The palpable lie of the bribed grave-guard bears witness to the truth. For once the Prince of darkness hath o'erleaped himself, and hath assisted to bring in the light. Regarding the Resurrection no shade of doubt remains. "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," to the women, to the twelve, to "above five hundred brethren at once," to James and to Paul, and last of all to the Seer of Patmos. It was he who heard the Master say, "Behold I am alive—alive who once was dead."

IV.—Alive, to Die no more.

This is the glad announcement of the Resurrected Lord: "I am alive for evermore." "Death hath no more dominion over Him." And this life of Christ, unassailable by death, is the source of assurances and hopes most blessed to the believer in Him. It assures the Christian that the Atonement is completed and accepted. Since "Christ dieth no more," "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The law having acquitted and liberated the Surety, it is clear that full satisfaction of its righteous demands have been made.

"He bore on the tree the burden for me,
And now both the sinner and Surety are free."

It is clear, too, that since Christ is unassailable now by death, His great mediatorial work is not subject to interruptions. The sons of Aaron were but mortal men, and often, between the death of one and the appointment of another, there would be periods in which there was no representative of the people to

present prayer on their behalf. This would be most serious loss to Israel, and especially if it occurred, as easily it might, at the time of some annual celebration, say, on the Great Day of Atonement. "And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

"A LIVELY HOPE"

is also begotten within the believer," by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," a hope abloom with flowers from the garden where He was laid. Since Christ, the Head of the Body, is alive to die no more, it is obvious that the members of the Body are secure of a deathless life through Him. "Because I live ye shall live also." At present, death appears to work in them, that is, according to the flesh; but Christ the Lord is begotten within them, and with Him comes "the power of an endless life." They "see not yet all things put under Him; but (they) see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." He is alive to die no more, and as they look at Him they hear a voice which affirms of themselves, in their future state, "Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

"If my immortal Saviour lives,
Then my immortal life is sure;
His word a firm foundation gives;
Here let me build and rest secure."

V.—The Lord of Living and of Dead.

"I have the keys of hell and of death." (R.V. "Of death and of Hades.") Hades is Gravedom; not this grave or that, but the whole domain of death. In Rev. xx. 13 (margin) the translation is, "death and the grave." "Death" describes the state of the

departed; "the grave," the place. The two are distinguished in such a passage as *Job xxx. 23*: "I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." In that ancient writing, the truth is also brought to view, that there is One above who hath supreme control over our lives. "I know that *Thou* wilt bring me," etc. He holds the keys of death and the grave, and

TILL HE TURN THE KEY WE CANNOT DIE.

Jesus says, I am that One: so the believer knows that the hands that were pierced for him on Calvary hold the instruments of death. Till these Hands use them, those instruments are powerless. When Christ's Hands do apply the keys, there will be a Heart of Love and Eyes of Wisdom directing the operation. In Westminster Abbey there is a striking monument, celebrating the devotion of a distinguished statesman to his wife. He is depicted shielding her with his arms from the aim of a bony marksman, whose arrow is directed towards her breast. But it is all in vain. The affectionate care of the husband cannot preserve the wife from death. Here stands One, however, who can turn back any dart that may be prematurely hurled at them that trust in Him. "No shaft can hit, until the God of love sees fit." "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father." At the girdle of your Elder Brother are the keys of death and the grave. He hath descended into the dark abode, hath overcome "him that had the power of death," and hath brought away the keys, that He might comfort them that mourn, "and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

BUT THERE IS A DOOR OUT OF DEATH,

as well as one into it, and of that door as of the other, Christ carries the key; so here is hope of Resurrection. His people shall not be for ever confined to the dark prison of the tomb. Men may drive them to death; but they cannot keep them there. "I," saith the Saviour, "am He that hath the key. He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth." "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me though he die yet shall he live."

This does not mean that the believer is alive in death; but, that out of death he shall be raised to life.

As Lazarus came forth at the word that He spoke;
As the daughter of Jairus the ruler awoke;
As the son of the widow of Nain was restored,
So they shall revive at the call of their Lord.

Thus have we joy unspeakable who know, as our own personal Redeemer, the One who holds the keys of death and the grave. Till He appoints, we cannot die; and when we die, we shall be safe in His keeping; then at the appointed time He will swing back the heavy portals of the tomb, and call His own by name and lead them forth. The Patriarch Job beautifully describes this Resurrection scene when he says, in answer to the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; Thou wilt have a desire for the work of thine hands" (*Job. xiv. 14, 15*).

"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; *on such* the second death hath no power" (*Rev. xx. 5, 6*), for "who-soever liveth (then) and believeth in Me shall never die" (*John xi. 25, 26*).

O Living Lord! Light of the blind!
Life of the dead! Death of the grave!
Emancipator of mankind!
We bless Thee for Thy power to save;
And shall for ever sing to Thee,
In whose right hand is every key.

III.

"The BREAD TO GIVE LIFE FOR EVER."

"I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever."—John vi. 51.

MOST homely are the Scripture symbols of our Saviour. He is constantly likened to things which are familiar to us all: "The Door," "the Way," "the Sun," "the Light," "a Star," "a Vine," "a Branch," "a Lamb," "a Shepherd"; yes, and even to "Water," and to "Bread." Of all familiar illustrations this last is surely most familiar. Wherever men are found, there bread is known. Three times a day, at least, it is spread upon the board; and as long as life is ours, "the staff of life" is in our hands. In adopting Bread, then, as an emblem of Himself, our Lord was laying before us that which would supply continual food for thought. May His good Spirit now aid each of us to taste the sweetness of the same. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth."

This illustration came close upon, and was suggested by, the Miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand with five barley loaves and two small fishes. The multitude had enjoyed the fare so strangely furnished then, and many of them followed Christ for more. The blessed Master was always ready to take pity upon men, for His heart was full of tenderness; but a spirit of selfish greed He could not bear. Therefore, "Jesus answered them, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour

not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you; for Him hath God the Father sealed." "Meat which perisheth," of course, will not keep you from perishing; whereas "That meat which endureth unto everlasting life," makes

THE EATER LIVE FOR EVER.

The desire of our Lord's hearers to have a life that lasts for ever is evidenced by their reply, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God." They are ready to "labour"; but He had to show them that it is a gift, rather than a fee or wage. Still, they seem anxious to possess that life; for, just as "the woman (of Samaria) saith unto Him, Sir, give me this Water," so these men say, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread." But evidently, like the woman, they became somewhat mystified when Christ presents Himself as the way to the life for which they long. This He does in the words (four time, in substance, repeated): "Everyone that seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." It is in this connection that the words are spoken: "I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever." Here then let us note: (1) The striking illustration, "The Living Bread." (2) The super-human origin, "Which came down from Heaven." (3) The self-evident condition, "If any man eat of this Bread." (4) The startling result, "He shall live for ever."

I.—The Striking Illustration: "The Living Bread."

Man is in daily warfare with the forces of corruption and decay. The waste tissues of his frame require continually to be replaced, "and there is no casting off weapons in that war." The conflict must be endured by all, and all must endure it constantly. Bread is the chief weapon by which, on the part of man, the struggle is maintained. By that, his failing forces are replenished, and his drooping spirits cheered. No

wonder, then, that Jesus should be likened to this prime necessity. "In Him was life."

BUT THERE IS CONTRAST HERE,

as well as correspondence; indeed, the main thought is the difference between Christ and ordinary bread, rather than his likeness to it. Ordinary bread is "the meat that perisheth," and even the manna that fell in the Wilderness is included in that. Though a man eat of it, he shall hunger again, it yields but temporary relief. At last a time comes when it yields no relief at all: "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead." But Christ, as "the Bread of Life," is set over against that; "Not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever."

We shall be aided to understand the full meaning of this by turning to the Third Chapter of the Book of Genesis. There "bread" is, for the first time in the Bible, mentioned. Verse nineteen: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Here we see that, at first,

IN EDEN MAN WAS ON HIS TRIAL.

Whether he should live for ever or no, was not a matter settled. Mortal or immortal he would become, according to the issue of the test. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," or (margin) "dying thou shalt die." It is well to note this, for too often the fact is forgotten that man was not made immortal, but that there was given to him an opportunity of becoming such, by obedience to the voice of God. That it was an opportunity, and no more, is clear from the decisive act of God at the conclusion of the test: "Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground whence he was taken."

FROM EDEN MAN WENT FORTH CONDEMNED.

The trial was over; the test was ended. Adam had ignominiously failed. No hope now for him of living for ever. He was still just what he had been created, "a living soul"; not what he might have been, a soul immortalised, and bound to live as long as God shall last. Nay, he had sunk. "The Fall" had taken place, and in his body, as he went, he bore the seed of death. To the flesh he had sown, and of the flesh he now must reap corruption. The law had been broken; and the Divine Law-giver had pronounced over him the dread sentence of dissolution. "So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, cherubims and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." Thus man went forth to die.

HIS EXECUTION WAS DELAYED BY BREAD.

Provision was mercifully made by God that, through the use of bread, man's life should be prolonged; so, doubtless, that he might find space for repentance, and that the purposes of God regarding the race might be fulfilled. But this was at the cost of sorrow and strain, which man had never known before. In the days of his innocence the earth had freely borne its fruits to him; now it bore, instead, the curse. "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." And all this struggling but obtained for man a brief reprieve. It did not, could not, disannul the sentence. Over him there ever hung the words, "Till thou return unto the ground," "and all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years,

AND HE DIED."

Died also his sons and his successors, one by one, from generation to generation, even "them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression"; yes, and even the "fathers that did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven to eat."

The difference between the first Adam and the second is here to view. "The first man Adam was made a *living soul*," that is, simply a being possessed of life for the time, having no power to prolong that life nor to pass it on to another, apart from the Creator. "The last Adam was made a *life-giving Spirit*"; "The Living Bread." "In Him was life," just as life is in bread; and instead of being secured at the price of sweat and suffering, this is "The Gift of God." Instead, also of furnishing a mere postponement of the execution of the sentence of death, *this Bread is ever "living,"* and it imparteth life for evermore.

"Bread of Heaven! on Thee I feed,
For thy flesh is meat indeed;
Ever may my soul be fed
With this true and living Bread."

II.—The Super-human Origin: "Which came down from Heaven."

As we have just seen, sinful man, even with bread in his hands, was condemned man. The fiat had gone forth, and die he must; the bread could not save him. But in its power to prolong life it became a prophecy of Him who would come "to give life unto the world." In the hands of those who in the Old Testament days were types of the coming One, that emblem was constantly displayed. Four Saints of God in those far off times have the honour of being, in a special sense, types of the coming Saviour, and each of them is seen, in his representative capacity, as a giver of bread to the hungry. Their names are,

MELCHIZEDEK, JOSEPH, MOSES, AND DAVID.

In Gen. xiv. 18 (the second place where the word "bread" occurs), it is recorded that as Abram and his exhausted followers returned from the rescue of his kinsman, Lot, two kings met him, "the king of Sodom," and "Melchizedek king of Salem." The first appears to have come empty-handed, for no type of Christ was he; but the second "brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." In like manner, "Joseph nourished his father

and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread, according to their families." And this was truly "a God-send" to these men, "for there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt, and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine" (Gen. xlvii. 12-13). In the wilderness, God, "by the hand of his servant Moses," "gave them bread from Heaven for their hunger," and this, to the people of Israel became the distinguishing mark of the authority of Moses; so, when surrounding Christ they asked, "What sign showest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?" Lastly, to speak of David, whose city was Bethlehem the House of Bread, when seeking to shew "the kindness of God" unto Mephiboseth the son of Jonathan, it was done with the words, "And thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." All these types shewed that

HELP MUST COME FROM ABOVE,

if man was to be saved at all. He might labour and strain to the utmost, but neither by sweat nor suffering could he save his soul from death. Like Abram and his band, he was already spent; like the men of Joseph's day, the famine was too much for him; like Israel in the wilderness, he was "ready to perish"; like Mephiboseth, he "was lame on both his feet," helpless, hapless, hopeless. Sentence having been delivered he was now in "the condemned cell," awaiting execution.

Strange to say, while thus delivered over unto death, many supposed themselves immortal. They still believed the serpent's lie, "Ye shall not surely die." Deluded by the devil, and hoping even while a-dying, they learned to weave for themselves mystic theories regarding the survival and endlessness of the human soul; and thus the sinner's wish to live for ever became the father of the doctrine of inherent immortality.

THE HELP REQUIRED, ARRIVED AT LAST.

It came "when the fulness of the time was come." It came as "Living Bread," the very form and substance that the famished race required. It "came down from Heaven," the only quarter whence aid

could appear. It came, not at the call of man, nor through his merit, but as "the Gift of God." It came as the expression of his gracious heart; for "in this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." It came by way of Bethlehem, that "House of Bread." It came with joy, and melody, and music all-divine.

III.—The Self-Evident Condition: "If any man eat of this Bread."

Bread sent from Heaven, is not enough; the manna must be gathered. To gather it is not sufficient; it must be eaten. There is a human qualification in connection with all the gifts of God, and conspicuously so in relation to the gift of immortality. On almost every page of the New Testament it is shown to be reserved for certain souls alone; namely, for "them which shall be accounted worthy"; for "them who hunger and thirst after righteousness"; or, in explicit terms, for them who eat of the Bread from Heaven. Now this has

NOTHING TO DO WITH TRANSUBSTANTIATION,

the Romish doctrine of the supposed conversion of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. "The words that I speak unto you," said Jesus, "they are spirit, and they are life." To believe *them*, to receive *them* into the heart, is to eat of Him. "Truth is in Jesus," not in man; just as strength is in bread and not in the hungry. He who takes the bread receives the strength, and lives by it; so, saith the Apostle Paul, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." He accepts the truth regarding Christ; he takes it, as it were, into his own hands; receives it into his own lips. He does this daily; he does it with delight; and thus "the Word of Christ" dwells in him richly, and to the inner man it is what bread is to the body.

Is not then the symbol most beautiful? Should we not rejoice at the suggestions it contains? Bread is of universal consumption: so Christ is sent for all. He is needed by all, suited to all, and may be partaken of

by all. Thank God, the Bread of Life is freely offered to us in the Gospel! Ordinary bread can only be obtained by sweat of brow, and not always by that. Christ is *given away*, "without money and without price." All that you and I have to do is seen in the glorious words, "Take, Eat."

"O ye needy, come and welcome.

God's free bounty glorify . . .

Without money, come to Jesus Christ
and buy."

IV.—The Startling Result: "He shall Live for Ever."

The point here is over against the statement of the failure of ordinary bread, and even manna, to prolong life beyond the allotted span. "Your fathers did eat manna and are dead." How marvellous is the Heavenly Food! "He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever." Let it be noted that all through this wonderful chapter it is not of metaphorical, not of spiritual, nor of moral, but of

LITERAL LIFE AND DEATH,

the Saviour speaks. To prove how literal the life is, we have but to note, that in order that the believer may enter it, our Lord declares resurrection to be necessary. No less than four times He affirms, "I will raise him up at the last day." As for the death, that also is literal enough, for all through the interview the reference is to those "whose carcases fell in the wilderness."

But the *symbol* makes the meaning clear beyond dispute. Bread is not furnished us that we may have moral or mental quickening? nor is it given in order to secure happiness as an addition to a life by other means possessed. Bread is the aliment of life in the most literal sense; the first and, in a sense, the last object for which it is provided is to support life. Without it man must die, whether happy or miserable; and, without Christ, the ungodly man must perish everlastingly.

DR. ALEXANDER MACLAREN,

in a published sermon on the text, "Because I live ye shall live also" (*John* xiv. 19), says, "We shall live as long as He lives, and His being is the pledge and the guarantee of the immortal being of all who love Him." That is "Life in Christ only," or "Immortality on God's Terms," as clearly as it could be stated; and as the text on which the preacher bases it is considered, it is seen to be self-evident and true. But beyond all human teachers do we go, to the great "Teacher come from God," and His pronouncement is, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. *Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood* hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (*John* vi. 53, 54).

If hope, then, of living for ever you cherish,
Acknowledge at once it is hope in the Lord;
For He is the Bread for men "ready to perish";
The Life is in Him, as revealed in His Word.

IV.

"THE TREE FOR IMMORTALITY."

"Lest he put for his hand, and take also of the Tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden" (*Gen.* iii. 22, 23. *"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."*—*Rev.* ii. 7.

THESE statements seem as simple and as clear as daylight. A plain and unfettered reader would suppose the Tree of life to be an essential to a life that is to last for ever, and therefore only the man who "overcometh" can be assured of such a life, only he can be immortal. But despite this evidence, there are many who believe that every son of Adam must live on and on for evermore. Let us therefore give close attention to the teaching of the passages now read, and seek to gather what they really mean. They present us with pictures of the Tree of life in the Past, the Present, and the Future.

I.—The Tree in the Past.

It is distinctly spoken of as a Tree that was in Eden. Whether a literal tree, or a symbolical, is of no moment now: "the Tree of life" was there.

1. IT'S PRESENCE WAS THE PLEDGE OF LIFE.

"The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every

tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of life also in the midst of the garden" (*Gen.* ii. 9). So the Tree was one—let us say the chief—of the many sources of pleasure, provided by God for His new formed son. "Eden" means "pleasure or delight." and "Paradise," "a park, or pleasure ground." There God supplied all things that could contribute to the joy of man. The cradle of the human race was lovelier than the loveliest dream of childhood's innocence. Milton describes it as

"A happy rural seat of various view;
Groves whose rich trees wept od'rous gums
and balms:
Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
Hung amable and of delicious taste."

There in the midst, as though the principal contributor to all the joy waved, ever green and beautiful, the Tree with which we are now dealing. But it was more than a mere source of pleasure; for that Tree meant *life* to man. So long as it was there, and he had access to it, his immortal life was sure. The waste of tissue, and the loss of energy, involved in labour, were amply met by the provisions of this Tree; and in that Paradise where it was found man might have had a lasting home, if he had but been faithful to his trust.

2. BUT THERE WAS A TREE FORBIDDEN.

"In the midst," beside the Tree of life, "The Tree of knowledge of good and evil." Of that Tree God had said, "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (*Gen.* iii. 3). "Lest ye die," was said in mercy, rather than, as some appear to think, caprice. God would not have His human sons and daughters know the bane of "evil." God knew that in that Tree there was the seed of death; therefore He warned them off. It was no mere arbitrary appointment. There were sufficient grounds in the nature of things, and in the dire result that would ensue. "There is death in the pot," was the cry that told Elisha of the poison there, and of the fatal effects of partaking of that fare; and so, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," meant, for Adam and his bride, that, certain as they took of that Tree, the dread effect would

follow. The moment of eating the poisoned pottage decided the fate of the eater, though death might not ensue for days; and on the very day man took of the forbidden Tree his fate was sealed: as Milton has it, he was "from that day mortal." The *time* of death is not the point at all—as a matter of fact the execution was long delayed—but the certainty of it is expressly declared. "Spiritual death" is not here. Adam was not a modern theologian, and he could have no knowledge of such a thing as that. But of literal death he did have knowledge, and that was what, of necessity, he would understand the threatening to be. Thus man tasted of the Tree of Death, rather than of that of Life.

3. AND FROM THE TREE OF LIFE HE WAS CAST OFF.

Having proved unfaithful, he was thereby proved unworthy to retain his place, or keep his life. Access to the Tree of life would have made null and void the sentence of the Judge, therefore, man had to go. An immortal rebel God could not endure, and that man would have been, had he been permitted to remain beside the Tree. The very threatening of death showed that man at this point was not immortal, and God is not so foolish as to threaten it. Man had been made "a living soul" but not "an ever-living soul"; he required the Tree of life for that. When, therefore, he went forth from Paradise, he went as a mortal man, to die. "Ichabod" was written over him; the glory had departed; his chance of living for ever was past; the sentence had gone forth, and he was "ready to perish." There, behind him, were the "cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the "Tree of life."

II.—The Tree in the Present.

Thank God, the Tree of life was not destroyed; nor was it even removed. It was man that was driven forth. He had to go, but there the Tree remained, "in the midst of the Paradise of God"; and of it the poor outcast bore, at least, the cherished memory. Nay, we may surely say, that of a return to it he carried secret hope, and even a God-given promise, based on certain terms.

1. THE MEMORY OF THE TREE IS CLEAR.

At any rate, it is clear that it exists. Among the nations there is a sense of loss, a dim "vision of enchantments past." The Greeks dwell on a long gone Golden Age, when men were as gods, and had no care, nor sorrow, nor infirmity. The Persians say that man originally dwelt in a secluded valley, where there was no sin, no violence, no poverty, no evil spirit. In Chinese books we may read of "the period of the first heaven," when everything was beautiful and good. And Hindoo literature tells of a "first age of the world, when justice in the form of a bull, kept herself firm on her feet; virtue reigned and no good was mixed with baseness." In the midst of all these traditional gardens of delight, there stands the Tree of life. "The Indian tradition speaks of the tree *Kalpansksham*, whose fruit gave immortality; among the Persians a similar tree was called *Hom*; among the Arabs *the Tuba*; among the Greeks *the Lotus*. On the Assyrian sculptures the Tree of life is constantly seen, and its high importance cannot be doubted. The most ancient name of Babylon in the idiom of the first dwellers in that region, was 'The place of the Tree of life,' and even on the coffins of enamelled clay, of a date later than Alexander the Great, found at Warka, the ancient Erech, this tree appears as the emblem of immortality. In Egypt the Tree of life is seldom seen except on funeral monuments, and it is always planted beside 'the water of life.' A Divine form in the midst of the tree is, also, always represented as pouring forth this water of immortality to souls, personified as birds with human heads." (Geikie's "Hours with the Bible," vol. 1, p. 117.)

2. THERE IS A DEEP-SEATED LONGING FOR THE TREE

within the human heart. This is by no means universal, and yet, so wide spread is it, that it oft is spoken of as all-embracing, and by many it is thought to be a proof that man already is possessed of immortality. The inference, however, is not justifiable. Much may be longed for that we have not reached. Indeed, "what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" But the longing for the Tree of life is a God-implemented faculty; and while it is no proof of possession, it is

a proof of God's willingness to impart, and of man's capacity when "strengthened with might by God's Spirit," to receive the wondrous boon. So then, "we are saved"—roused to expectancy—"by hope."

3. A PROMISE, RELATING TO THE TREE, IS GIVEN.

This is sufficient for the present; it is all we have; but, oh, what an "all" it is! "He hath said . . . So that *we* may boldly say." The embryo-promise was given ere man went forth from Eden. He bore it with him in his exile. Of the seed of the woman, God, to the serpent, said, "It shall bruise thy head." This meant the demolishing of him that had the power of death, and, from the time it came to man, that promise must have been an anchor to him. But we have a fuller, clearer, word—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of life." Here, then, the way is open for us all. Not through Adam have we any claim, nor can we come: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life" saith the Lord Divine. Why cherish hope because of supposed inherent immortality? We have none. If ever man had any, he lost it at The Fall. It is Christ alone who can give the "right to the Tree of Life." Blessed be His name, He will give that permit here and now, if we trust His word and do His will.

III.—The Tree in the Future.

There is a future for the Tree of Life. Whate'er may pass away, it shall endure, and in its everliving boughs we build our hopes of future life. This we may do with every confidence, because of the promise of the Lord, the nature of the Tree, and the place in which it is to be again beheld.

1. THE PROMISE IS FOR FUTURE FULFILMENT.

"To him that overcometh *will* I give to eat of the Tree of life." It is a blessed assurance of eternal life to be attained beyond the present sphere. Here we have no continuing city; here we have no greater tenure of life than have our fellow sinners. "To every man upon this earth, death cometh soon or late." And

the Christian hath no exception made for him, nor any pre-eminence over an unbeliever: "as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath." (See *Ecc.* iii. 19, where the assertion is made even regarding man and beasts). Yet there is a difference, after all. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death" (*Prov.* xiv. 32). He hath heard the voice of Jesus, even in the death-hours, say, "Come unto Me and rest," and he just lays his tired head upon the gentle breast of his dear Lord, and, like a wearied child, he falls asleep. He does this without any misgiving, "in sure and certain hope of joyful resurrection." That hope is stablished on such promises as this before us now; for in order to give "him that overcometh," "to eat of the Tree of life," the Lord must raise him from the dead. This promise, then, contains much more than may at first appear: not eternal life alone, but the resurrection unto eternal life. But are not all the promises of God much deeper than we generally think?

2. THE NATURE OF THE TREE IS MOST APPROPRIATE.

"'Tis life of which our souls are scant,
More life and fuller, that we want."

And here we have the promise of the very Tree that meets our case. "The Tree of knowledge" would not suit us, were it of knowledge, even, only of the "good." Nor would a tree that gave delight alone, be fitting to our case. It is life we need, and life that we must have. This is exactly what this Tree supplies. It is not promised to confer upon us wisdom, nor joy, nor glory, nor honour, but *Immortality*; and were these two passages that we are now considering the only Scriptures on the subject, they would be sufficient warrant for our faith in everlasting life as God's free gift, through Jesus Christ His Son, to them that love His name. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life."

3. THE PLACE OF THE TREE IS NOTEWORTHY.

"In the midst of the Paradise of God." Then Paradise is spoken of as though it still existed. Yes, and it does exist, in "the determinate counsel and fore-

knowledge of God." The curse is not to rest upon the ground for ever. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (*Rom.* viii. 22). But this is only for the present "little while" of our Lord's absence: "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

"He is coming for redemption,
He will change the thorns to flow'rs;
He will make the desert blossom
In this poor world of ours.
As the King of every nation,
He will bless the whole creation
At His day of Coronation,
At His Coming again."

In that glad day, when He cometh into His Kingdom (*Luke* xxiii. 42), His saints shall stand around the Lord in Paradise. Their number will include the "Thief" who received from the Saviour on the solemn day of their death—see *Deut.* xv. 15, xxx. 11, 18, as well as *Luke* xxiii. 43—the assurance that he would be remembered, and be with the Master then. And in the midst of that "Paradise of God" there shall be seen the Tree of life. After all the sin, the sickness, and the suffering of the present age, how refreshing it is to read, "And the leaves of the Tree are for the healing of the nations; and there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads; and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever" (*Rev.* xxii. 2-5).

This glorious scene is laid beyond the grave; and this does not mean, simply, beyond the moment of death, as though at that moment men entered into Paradise. It is beyond the grave-state; not after death alone, but after Resurrection. The Resurrection scene is found in *Rev.* xx.; then fitly follows the Paradise scene of chapters xxi. and xxii. Put "first things first," and confusion will be saved.

Here then, we see that sin has severed men from the only source of immortality, "the Tree of life"; that die they must, for the sentence hath gone forth; that "so death passed upon all men—including the Christian—for that all have sinned" (*Rom. v. 12*). But the obedient Believer hath the promise of life, after death and resurrection, through access to "the Tree of life"; and this promise is so sure, that he is said now to "have" the life, though it is not in himself, but "hid with Christ in God" (*Col. iii. 3, 4*). Behold then, the only way to endless bliss: it is, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let faith, the faith "that overcometh the world," be fixed in Him, then is the vilest sinner sure of never-ending life.

And when night's shades shall fall
On him, "the peace of God
That passeth understanding" shall
Be trusty staff and rod
For, though he sleep in death,
Life, hid with Christ above,
Is unto him secure, and faith
Holds fast the gift of love.

V.

"THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE."

"Go, stand and speak in the Temple to the people all the words of this life."—Acts v. 20.

WORDS are a God-given means of thought-conveyance. We must therefore understand the meaning of words if we would express thought, or receive thought, through them. The hearer must understand the words as the speaker understands them, or thought cannot rightly be conveyed. Now, inspiration gives to us words "which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and it is essential we should understand them, and know how to take them, that is, whether literally or symbolically, if we would have "the mind of the Spirit." Let us aim, then, at obtaining a firm grasp of the meaning of those that are used in the Scriptures with relation to the Life question. We shall simply take a Lexicon—Dr. Bullinger's well-known Lexicon and Concordance is the one before us—and examine the definitions therein to be found. In doing this let us remember the

PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION.

(a) That in the interpretation of Scripture, the literal sense is to be presumed and chosen, unless there be evident cause to the contrary; (b) That metaphors, allegories, and parables, are not to be taken as absolute proof of any doctrine. Illustrations they may be, but they are not to be relied upon as proofs. As Martin Luther said, "The Christian should direct his first efforts toward understanding the literal sense of Scripture, which alone is the substance of faith and of Christian theology. The allegorical sense is commonly uncertain, and by no means safe to build our faith

upon; for it usually depends upon human opinion and conjecture only, on which if any man lean, he will find it no better than the Egyptian reed." With this proviso, take, then, the following familiar words:—

"Immortal."

This is from *Aphthartos*, NOT LIABLE TO CORRUPTION. It is a word never joined with the Hebrew or Greek words for "Soul," "Spirit," etc., though these occur in Old Testament and New, 1644 times. It is predicated only of one Being—God, and it occurs but once, namely in *I. Tim.* i. 17, "The King eternal, immortal, invisible." Surely this should give pause to those who so dogmatically speak of "immortal man" and "the immortal soul"!

"Immortality."

This is from two words, namely, *Aphtharsia*, incorruption, so not liable to decay; and *Athanasia*, immortality. "The Immortality of the Soul" is a phrase quite foreign to Scripture.

(1) *Aphtharsia*, INCORRUPTION, OR NON-LIABILITY TO DECAY, is not the inalienable possession of the human family, since the Fall. It is restricted to those who "by patient continuance in well doing seek for it" (*Rom.* ii. 7). These receive it, through faith, as "the gift of God." Thus it is "brought to light through the Gospel" (*II. Tim.* i. 10). "Immortality," from this word, is only found in the two passages now named.

(2) *Athanasia*, IMMORTALITY, OR NON-LIABILITY TO DEATH, is expressly declared to be possessed by God alone (*I. Tim.* vi. 16) "Who only hath immortality." As for man, he who believes in Jesus has the promise of it, and it is to be "put on" at the Resurrection (*I. Cor.* xv. 53, 54). Between this time and that, believers die as do others, for "it is appointed unto men once to die" (*Heb.* ix. 27); but once on Resurrection ground, they are "clothed upon with the house which is from heaven" (*II. Cor.* v. 2); "neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the

Resurrection" (*Luke* xx. 36). "Immortality," from *Athanasia*, is only found in *I. Cor.* xv. 53, 54, and *I. Tim.* vi. 16. Altogether, only five times, as above, is the word "Immortality" found in our English Bible, and it is not once applied to the unregenerate man.

"Spirit."

In the Old Testament this is from *Ruach*, a word which occurs 400 times; in the New Testament from *Pneuma*, which occurs 385 times. In all, the original words for "spirit" appear 785 times; but never once is it called immortal, indestructible, or incorruptible.

(1) *Ruach*, IS WIND, OR THAT WHICH IS IMPALPABLE, LIKE WIND! It is rendered spirit 200 times, and is often used of an intelligent being—Divine, angelic, or infernal—but never of man as such. "God is a Spirit," and the angels, "ministering spirits"; but we never read, "Man is a spirit." *Ruach* is rendered in twenty-one other ways, namely, 'wind,' 'breath,' 'air,' 'whirlwind,' 'windy,' 'blast,' 'tempest,' 'quarter,' 'side,' 'cool,' 'smell,' 'smelleth,' 'smelled'; and of moral and mental moods, 'mind,' 'anger,' 'courage,' 'understanding,' 'spiritual,' 'vain'; also 'accept' and 'toucheth.'

(2) *Pneuma*, EXACTLY CORRESPONDS TO *Ruach*, rendered 'spirit' 292 times, it is also rendered 'Ghost' (Holy), 'ghosts' (allied to 'gust' and 'gush'), 'wind,' 'breath,' 'life,' 'spiritual,' and 'spiritually.' The word *pneumatic* will impress the meaning of *pneuma*: it is first, 'air,' then breathing as the sign or condition of life, or immateriality, as that which, like wind, is only recognised by its operations (e.g., "God is a spirit") In that connection it is also used for a state or frame of mind; as "haughty spirit," "a proud spirit."

SPIRIT IS DISTINCT FROM SOUL.

Too often the terms are used interchangeably: but see *I. Thes.* v. 23, "Your whole spirit and soul." "The body without the spirit is dead" (*James* ii. 26); with the spirit (margin, 'breath') it is alive, possessed of soul. So while 'soul' is life, 'spirit' is the power or

principle producing life. "It is the spirit that quickeneth" (*John* vi. 63). It is the source of life in all its manifestations, whether in man, animals, or vegetables, "Yea, they have all one breath" (*ruach*, *Ecc.* iii. 19); "all in whose nostrils was the breath (*ruach*) of life, . . . died" (*Gen.* vii. 22). It is not the Man, nor is it ever represented as a conscious or accountable part of him. When commended to God by his dying saints, it is because they know He is "able to keep" it till the Resurrection.

"Soul."

In the Old Testament, from *Nephesh*, which occurs 752 times; in the New, from *Psuchè*, which is found 105 times. To neither word is the adjective "immortal" ever attached. "Immortal soul" is not a Bible phrase.

(1) *Nephesh*, IS THE VITAL PRINCIPLE, OR THE PERSON AS POSSESSED OF THE SAME, rendered 'soul' 475 times, it is also rendered in forty-three other ways; viz., 'life' and 'lives' (120 times); animals as possessed of life, 'creature,' 'beast,' 'thing,' 'fish'; 'man,' as possessed of the same, 'person,' 'him,' 'himself,' 'me,' 'myself,' etc., also a state of feeling through the possession of life, 'desire,' 'mind,' 'heart,' 'lust,' 'will,' 'pleasure,' etc.

(2) *Psuchè*, IDENTICAL WITH *Nephesh* IN MEANING, is rendered 'soul' 58 times; also translated 'life' and 'lives' (40 times), 'mind,' 'heart,' 'heartily,' 'us,' and 'you.' The original thought in this, and in *nephesh*, is 'life,' or that which is produced by 'spirit.' So we read (*Gen.* i. 20) of "the moving creature that hath life" (margin, 'living soul'; and literally, 'the creeping living soul'); also in *Rev.* viii. 9, of "the creatures which were in the sea and had life" ('soul'); again, in *Rev.* xvi. 3, "Every living soul died in the sea." It is thus seen that

ANIMALS AS WELL AS PERSONS ARE "SOULS."

Gen. ii. 7, reads, "Man became a living soul"; but, before that (*ch.* i. 21) it is said, "God created great whales and every living creature (margin, 'soul') that

moveth." The simple meaning is seen in *Gen.* xii. 5. "The souls that they had gotten in Haran": it means absolutely every living thing that Abram and Lot possessed, and might there be translated "live stock." The word applies to men and animals alike.

SOULS CAN DIE OR BE KILLED.

They are nowhere said to be indestructible; but it is always enforced that if the life given is not rightly used it shall be taken away, "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (*Ezek.* xviii. 4). "God is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna" (*Matt.* x. 28). "He which converteth a sinner . . . shall save a soul from death" (*James* v. 20).

"Life."

In the New Testament this (omitting *Rev.* xiii. 15, where the translation should be 'breath,' as in R.V.) is from three Greek words, *Zoè*, *Psuchè*, and *Bios*.

(1) *Zoè*, IS THE PERFECT AND ABIDING ANTITHESIS OF *Thanatos*, DEATH. *Zoè*, is life in all its manifestations, from the life of God, down to the life of the lowest vegetable. It is necessarily active; it cannot be inert. Its one only source is God, "The Living One." "In Him we live and move and have our being." *Zoè*, as used of the future life which we have now in Christ, is "the gift of God" (*Rom.* vi. 23), by Christ (*John* vi. 27, x. 28). "He that hath the Son hath the life: and He that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (*I. John* v. 12). It is now "hid with Christ in God" (*Col.* iii. 2).

(2) *Psuchè*, IS BREATH OR ANIMAL LIFE; one manifestation of *Zoè*, namely, that which is manifested in men or animals; hence, life, animal life, or the living individuals as such. Its meaning is clear from the first two passages where it occurs, namely, *Matt.* ii. 20 ("Which sought the young child's life") and *Matt.* vi. 25 ("Take no thought for your life").

(3) *Bios*, AS LIFE, IS THE LIFE WHICH WE LIVE, THE LIFE LED; hence, manner of life, period or duration of life, or means of living. *Zoè* is life as the gift of God,

and therefore is applied to everything which has life. *Bios*, is applied only to men, who not only live, but lead lives; hence the difference between the words Zoology and Biography.

"Life Everlasting" (or Eternal).

This is always from *Zoë* joined with *Alōnios*, which means, belonging to the age; hence, constant, abiding, lasting for ever. It is the gift of God to those who are in Christ, and is expressly confined to these. "I give unto them eternal life (*Zoēn Aiōnion*), and they shall never perish" (*John* x. 28).

"Death."

In the New Testament from *Thanatos*, THE NATURAL END OF LIFE, especially death as the sentence and punishment of God against sin; it is not merely an occurrence, but a state, the state of man as condemned through sin. It is doubtful whether it ever has the meaning of moral or spiritual insensibility.

John Locke, in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, says, "By reason of Adam's transgression, all men are mortal and come to die . . . Nobody can deny but that the doctrine of the Gospel is that death came on all men by Adam's sin; only that they differ about the significance of the word *death*. For some will have it to be a state of guilt, wherein not only he, but all his posterity was so involved, that every one descended of him deserved endless torment in hell-fire. It seems a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and directest words, that by *death* should be meant *eternal life* in misery. Could any suppose for a law that says, *For felony you shall die*, not that he should lose his life, but be kept alive in perpetual and exquisite torments? . . . I confess that by *death* here, I can understand nothing but a ceasing to be, the losing of all actions of life and sense. Such a death came on Adam and all his posterity by his first disobedience in Paradise, under which death they should have lain for ever had it not been for the redemption by Jesus Christ."

Dr. Isaac Watts in *Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*, says, "There is not one place of Scripture that occurs to me, where the word death as it was first threatened in the law of innocency, necessarily signifies a certain miserable immortality of the soul, either to Adam, the actual sinner, or to his posterity."

Death, as at first threatened, was to be the consequence of Adam's disobedience, not the disobedience itself, nor any state of mind or estrangement from God that led up to it. It could not therefore be what is called "spiritual death." That is a state of sin, not a sentence upon sin. "The end of those things is death" (*Rom.* vi. 21). "To bring forth fruit unto death" (*Rom.* vii. 5). "The sin unto death" (*I. John* v. 16, 17). "Our Gospel is hid to them that are perishing" (*II. Cor.* iv. 3).

"Damnable," "Damnation," "Damned."

Young's Analytical Concordance and the Revised New Testament show at a glance the meaning of these words. Here we combine these two authorities:—

DAMNABLE—From *Apōleia*, DESTRUCTION, LOOSING AWAY. *II. Pet.* ii. 1, "Damnable heresies." R.V. "Destructive heresies" (Margin, Sects of Perdition).

DAMNATION—From three words, *Apōleia*, *Krima*, and *Krisis*.

(1) *Apōleia*, DESTRUCTION, LOOSING AWAY. *II. Pet.* ii. 3, "Their damnation slumbereth not." R.V. "Destruction."

(2) *Krima*, JUDGMENT, CONDEMNATION (as the result or issue of a trial). *Matt.* xxiii. 14, *Mark* xii. 40, *Luke* xx. 47, "Greater damnation." R.V. "Condemnation." *Rom.* iii. 8, "Whose damnation is just." R.V. "Condemnation." *Rom.* xiii. 2, "Receive to yourselves damnation." R.V. "Judgment." *I. Cor.* xi. 29, "Eateth and drinketh damnation." R.V. "Judgment." *I. Tim.* v. 12, "Having damnation." R.V. "Condemnation."

(3) *Krisis*, JUDGMENT (the act of testing, the judicial process). *Matt.* xxiii. 33, "The damnation of hell." R.V. "Judgment (Mar.) of Gehenna." *Mark* iii. 29,

"Eternal damnation." R.V. "Sin" (the Revisers accepting another text). *John* v. 29, "Resurrection of damnation." R.V. "Judgment."

DAMNED (To be)—From two words, *Krinō*, and *Katakrinō*.

(1) *Krinō*, To JUDGE (to divide, to separate, to make a distinction; hence, to judge). *II. Thes.* ii. 12, "That they all might be damned." R.V. "Judged."

(2) *Katakrinō*, To JUDGE ONE DOWN (to give judgment against, or to condemn). *Mark* xvi. 16, "Believeth not shall be damned." R.V. "Condemned." *Rom.* xiv. 23, "He that doubteth is damned." R.V. "Condemned."

"Destroy" and "Destruction."

Ten Greek words are in the New Testament rendered by the one word, Destroy, and the strongest of these, a word expressing UTTER DESTRUCTION, is the one used where the fate of the ungodly is the subject. Homer uses this word chiefly of death in battle: it means to kill, to waste, to ruin, to demolish. The first New Testament use of it displays its meaning; *Matt.* ii. 13, "Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Its next use is in *Matt.* x. 28, "Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."

"Destruction" is our English representative of four Greek words; but again it is the STRONGEST that is used, when the judgment of sinners is in view. It is the word that means death, especially death by violence. Here are the passages: *Matt.* vii. 13, "The way that leadeth to destruction"; *Rom.* ix. 22, "Vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction"; *Phil.* iii. 19, "Whose end is destruction"; *II. Peter* ii. 1, "Bring upon themselves swift destruction"; *II. Peter* iii. 16, "Wrest . . . unto their own destruction."

"Hell."

An Anglo-Saxon word, from *Helan*, to cover, conceal; literally, A COVERED PLACE, OR PLACE OF CONCEALMENT. Akin to 'hole,' 'hollow,' 'hold' (strong-hold, ship's hold), and to 'helmet' (the head's covering). When a

house was roofed in, and so covered, it was said in old English to be "helled." 'Helé' is to hide, to cover, to roof; and a 'hellier' is a tiler, or slater. In the Old Testament this word is the translation of *Sheol*; and in the New of *Hades* (the exact equivalent of *Sheol*; compare *Ps.* xvi. 10, and *Acts* ii. 27), also of *Gehenna*, and (but only once) of *Tartarus*.

(1) *Sheol* and *Hades* mean exactly the same as the Anglo-Saxon word originally meant. They denote, THE PLACE CONCEALED, THE REALM OF THE INVISIBLE, GRAVE-LAND. Not this or that grave; but the place of all the dead, whether they lie in a tomb, in the sea, or even are torn by beasts, or devoured by fire. It is represented as a place of silence, of darkness, and of inactivity, not of life of any kind. (See *Ps.* vi. 5; *lxxxviii.* 10, 12; *cxv.* 17; *Ecc.* iii. 19; *ix.* 5, 10; *Isa.* xxxviii. 18, 19). It is also shewn to be in the earth, not in another sphere, as though men flew off to it at death. Even the Son of Man was three days and three nights "in the heart of the earth" (*Matt.* xii. 40).

(2) *Gehenna* PRESENTS THE PICTURE OF THE DESTRUCTION OF FOUL AND OFFENSIVE MATTER. Ghi.-Hinnom, the valley of Hinnom, was 'defiled' by King Josiah, and devoted henceforth as the place for the burning up of the city refuse (*II. Kings* xxiii. 10). So it became 'Tophet,' an abomination, "The valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes" (*Jer.* xxxi. 40). There the fires were constantly burning, and 'the worm' might continually be seen. (See *Mark* ix. 44, which is plainly a quotation from *Isa.* lxvi. 24). This loathsome place, then, easily became a lurid emblem—not of unceasing torment, but of that "Judgment and fiery indignation that shall devour the adversaries" (*Heb.* x. 27). Better says Christ, "That one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into *Gehenna*" (*Matt.* v. 30).

If in *Gehenna*, then, there is to be eternal suffering, let those who think so understand it is to be the torment of the "whole body"! That ought to be faced; for if the text proves immortality at all, it is the immortality and the consequent never-ending agony of the whole physical being. Pray now, is that conceivable?

"THE WICKED SHALL BE TURNED INTO HELL" (*Ps.* ix. 17). This is simply "The wicked shall return to *Sheol*" (R.V.) That may be the same as, "Unto dust shalt thou return" (*Gen.* iii. 19); or it may be a forecast of future judgment, when though raised out of *Sheol*, the unrighteous shall not retain their life but shall be sent back to *Sheol*. "This is the second death."

"THOU WILT NOT LEAVE MY SOUL IN HELL" (*Ps.* xvi. 10, *Sheol*; *Acts* ii. 27, *Hades*). This shows that all souls (all living things), good and bad alike, go at death to "Hell." "What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" (R.V. The power of *Sheol*, *Ps.* lxxxix. 48). But the believer, like his Lord, can say, "Thou wilt redeem my soul from the power of the grave" (R.V. *Sheol*, *Ps.* xlix. 15). In Christ's case that took place at his resurrection. In the believer's case it shall be wrought through resurrection also. Till then the grave ('hell') retains its prey; but "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written . . . O grave (margin 'hell') where is thy victory?"

CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HELL.

The foregoing fully explains this. It implies no additional thought to that of His burial. The article in "The Apostles' Creed" which does so was not originally there, nor in any of the ancient creeds, Roman or Eastern. It first appears about A.D. 400 in the creed of the Church of Aquileia, and there it is used as the equivalent for, and instead of the word 'buried.' It came into "The Apostles' Creed" about A.D. 600, as also did the phrase "The communion of saints," and "The life everlasting."

DIVES AND LAZARUS IN HELL (*Luke* xvi. 19-31). The scene of this parable is in *Hades* or *Sheol*, which, as already seen, is the place of all the dead. The rich man and Lazarus are both there, even according to the parable; and "Abraham's bosom," also a "place of torment," are made use of by the Lord because *according to the views of the Pharisees*, whom He was then addressing, there are two such divisions with a great gulf between, in that lower world. It is far removed

even from the modern orthodox theory of the state of the dead; for in that they are supposed to be disembodied spirits, and in this parable they have 'eyes,' 'bosoms,' 'fingers,' 'tongues,' and altogether are most corporeal. It also does not touch the question of immortality, for not a word is said regarding the permanence of the conditions pictured. Our Lord is simply out of their own mouths reproving the Pharisees, "who were covetous" (*v.* 14), though they believed in such an intermediate state.

"Perish" and "Perdition."

What do these words mean? Take a Lexicon, any Lexicon, and you will find they are from the same Greek stem, and mean 'LOSS,' 'DESTRUCTION,' 'RUIN,' ('ETERNAL DEATH': Robinson's Greek and English Lexicon). The end pronounced upon all who having heard the summons to repentance and faith in Christ, have persisted in impenitence. The loss of all that such ever had, or might have had, for ever; the destruction of such, in body, soul, and spirit; an utter and final ruin, which will not be reversed (Bullinger's Lexicon).

"Beware therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the Prophets: Behold ye despisers, and wonder and *perish*" (*Acts* xiii. 40, 41). "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise *perish*" (*Luke* xiii. 2-5). "The Lord . . . not willing that any should *perish*" (*II. Peter* iii. 9). There is a "day of judgment and *perdition* of ungodly men" (*II. Peter* iii. 7). "These, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, . . . shall utterly *perish* in their own corruption" (*II. Peter* ii. 12). But "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not *perish*, but have everlasting life" (*John* iii. 16).

"Everlasting Punishment."

The word translated 'Punishment' in *Matt.* xxv. 46, is *Kolasis*, a *pruning*. Now does a pruning condemn to death, or does it save alive the branches that it

deals with? Clearly, it is for their destruction, not their preservation. If there be no grafting again, the severed branches soon are gone for ever. "If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned" (*John* xv. 6). "Everlasting" pruning precludes the thought of a regrafting, so the cutting off is for ever; there is no restoration for those "who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction" (*II. Thes.* i. 9. R.V.). Let believers in "Final Restoration" and the "Larger Hope" take note of this.

"Eternal Punishment" is an expression analogous to "eternal salvation" (*Heb.* v. 9), "eternal judgment" (*Heb.* vi. 2), "eternal redemption" (*Heb.* ix. 12); it is not eternally saving, judging, redeeming, nor punishing that can be meant. The eternal effect of an act, a result and not a process, is in view.

"Eternal Sin."

This requires consideration, as the phrase is introduced by the R.V. of *Mark* iii. 29. Presuming the reading to be the original, and, therefore, the right; does this text teach that some souls shall be committing a certain sin for ever and ever? That is, at times, declared to be the import of the phrase. But that would be making 'eternal sin' a process, not a result, and it is manifestly of a RESULT our Lord is speaking: "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit"—there is the process—"hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"—there is the result. It does not affect the question of the immortality of the sinner; but is simply a forceful way of saying that the sin referred to is unpardonable. Dean Alford pertinently asks, "If a sin remains unremitted for ever, what is it but eternal?"

Thus, then, by the aid of the Lexicon, have we endeavoured to fix the meaning of the most familiar of "the words of this life." We can but pray now for grace on our own part, and on the part of others, to accept these words in their plain and original interpretation, and to let them lead us, in our study of eschatology, whithersoever the Holy Spirit wills.

Bishop Hooker, in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, says, "I hold it for a most infallible rule, in expositions of sacred Scripture, that when a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst." Dr. Angus, in his *Handbook*, also says "Whether words are used literally or tropically, the first rule of interpretation is to ascertain the sense in which general usage employs them. If this principle is applied to such words as 'Life,' 'Death,' 'Destruction,' and 'Perish,' there can be no other issue to our search than a glad acceptance of the truth, that for the life-immortal men must come to God.

Pardon, power, and perfect peace
 "The words of this life" afford.
 Never then must the tidings cease
 Of life in the living Lord!
 Open wide the portal
 Unto every mortal!
 Tell it around! let it abound!
 Life in the living Lord!

VI.

HISTORY AND THE LIFE
QUESTION.

"Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know?"—Isa. xli. 26.

HISTORICAL facts cannot be proved and demonstrated with the absolute precision and conclusiveness of which mathematical truths are capable. Yet conclusions are warrantable from History as from Mathematics, and they may be as satisfactory to the enquiring mind. It has also been found that the history of a question of theology or philosophy, casts such light upon it, as often to lead to its correct decision. In the study of the Life question, therefore, it will be helpful to enquire what History has to say. Let us go straight to the point, by asking, Who were

The First to Hold Soul-Immortality?

The answer that History has to give is most decisive. By it this doctrine is always traced to ancient Egypt. Herodotus distinctly states that the Egyptians "are the first of mankind who have defended the immortality of the soul." The source does not augur well for the stream. Could it have been traced to a people enlightened with the rays of Revelation, we might be ready to receive it; but emerging, as it does, from the darkness of Egypt, we do well to be upon our guard. It is, perhaps, more than a coincidence,—it may be a hint at the real author of the delusion—that the serpent was anciently worshipped in Egypt, and that "the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." At any rate, they run grievous risks who go down into

Egypt for the chief factor in their faith. It is true that the early Egyptian teaching was not always that of soul immortality in the modern sense. Much of it amounted only to soul-survival for a limited period, namely, so long as the body, or the form of it, could be preserved. That accounts for the sand-graves, the mummies, and the pyramids of Egypt. The belief was also usually linked with Metempsychosis, that weird idea, of the transmigration of souls. Still, Egyptian notions largely influenced the latter.

Ancient Philosophers.

PYTHAGORAS (B.C. 580-505) is said to have spent thirty years in foreign countries, studying with the priests of Egypt, the Magi of Persia, and the gymnosophists of India. He taught the pre-existence and transmigration of souls; that no real entity was made or destroyed; and that, as a consequence, the souls of men are eternal. He was the great pioneer of Greek philosophy.

SOCRATES (B.C. 469-399) regarded the soul as a divine being, and therefore "immortal." His last words before his judges show, however, that he (unlike the martyrs), had no sure and certain hope: "I am going out of the world, and you are to continue in it; but which of us has the better part is a secret to every one but God."

PLATO (B.C. 429-347), the most celebrated of the disciples of Socrates, taught that the souls of men are eternal, and that the number is fixed and definite; so that whatever the number of souls, all must have existed from eternity. He likewise held the Pythagorean doctrine of the migration of souls through various human and brute bodies.

ARISTOTLE (B.C. 384-322), for twenty years a favourite disciple of Plato, and tutor to Alexander the Great, disdained to follow the doctrines of Plato, or those of any other philosopher. He had the courage and ambition to think and reason for himself on every branch of human knowledge. The statements in his writings concerning human immortality are so conflicting that critics and commentators are divided in opinion as to whether he thought the human soul mortal or immortal.

CICERO (B.C. 106-43), incomparably the ablest defender and most eloquent advocate of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul that the heathen world has ever produced, makes this frank admission: "I have perused Plato with the greatest diligence and exactness over and over again; but know not how it is, whilst I read him I am convinced; when I lay the book aside and begin to consider of myself the soul's immortality, all the conviction instantly ceases." (See Whitmore's *Doc. of Immortality*.)

Archbishop Whately, in "Revelation of a Future State," says, "To these philosophers immortality meant the eternity of the soul, a life anterior as well as posterior; as it was to have no end, so it had no beginning; and the boasted continuance and existence which according to this theory we are to expect after death, consists in returning to the state in which we were before birth; which, everyone must see is the same thing virtually with annihilation."

Dr. Angus, speaking in his valuable "Handbook" of the vice and immorality that prevailed in the ancient world, says, "Nor was this tendency checked by any belief of a personal conscious immortality. A resurrection of the dead was universally rejected as ridiculous. An immortality of the soul, properly so-called, none admitted. That the souls of men might survive, in some shadowy, semi-conscious state, or even enjoy for a time the company of their deities, a few were disposed to maintain; but the evidence was so faint, and the difficulties were so serious, that even the greatest of heathen philosophers, Socrates, was constrained to confess, that whether it were better to live or die was known only to the gods." This shows the state of the heathen mind upon the Life-question before, and up to the time of Christ. Let us now see what the early Christians thought of it.

Early Christian Faith.

"THE CHIEF CORNER STONE."

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—*Jesus Christ*.

"THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES."

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Paul*, (*Rom. vi. 23*).

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."—*Peter* (*I. Peter i. 23*).

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."—*James* (*James i. 12*).

"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life."—*John* (*I. John v. 6, 12*).

"OF THE FATHERS."

"He that chooses evil shall be destroyed, together with his works."—*Ignatius, Martyr* (*First Century*).

"How wonderful are the gifts of God! Life and immortality, splendour in righteousness, faith in assurance, self-control in holiness."—*Clement of Rome* (*First Century*).

"Watch, as an athlete of God. The prize is immortality and eternal life."—*Hermas* (*First Century*).

"We have been taught that those only attain to immortality who live holily and virtuously near to God."—*Justyn, Martyr* (*Second Century*).

"God made man neither mortal nor immortal, but capable of both. So if he was carried to the things that lead to immortality, he might receive immortality as a reward and become God-like; but on the other hand, if he should turn to the works of death, he might become the author of death to himself."—*Theophilus* (*Second Century*).

"The Father of all conferred endurance for ever on those who are saved. For not of ourselves, nor of our own nature is life; but it is given according to the grace of God."—*Irenaeus* (*Second Century*).

"The spiritual communion of faith commits man to eternity (along with those who are divine), immortalising him . . . Let us regard His commands as the short and straight path to immortality . . . Being sons, we are made perfect, being perfect we are made immortal."—*Clement of Alexandria (Second Century)*.

"The souls of the wicked are . . . of a middle quality, as is learned from the authority of Christ, and may be destroyed if they ignore the life of God."—*Arnobius (Third Century)*.

W. E. Gladstone on the Early Belief.

In "The North American Review" of March and April, 1896, this Christian Statesman gave much information regarding the growth of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. On page 305, speaking of the mental freedom of the first centuries of the Christian faith, he says, "The secret of this mental freedom, the condition which made it possible, was the *absence from the scene* of any doctrine of a natural immortality, inherent in the soul. Absent, it may be termed, for all practical purposes, until the third century; for, though it was taught by Tertullian in connection with the Platonic ideas, it was not given forth as belonging to the doctrine of Christ or His Apostles." . . . "It seems to me as if it were from the time of Origen that we are to regard the idea of the natural, as opposed to that of Christian, immortality as beginning to gain a firm foothold in the Christian Church . . . The opinion for which he is now most generally known to have been finally condemned is that which is called RESTORATIONISM OR UNIVERSALISM; an opinion which harmonises with and perhaps *pre-supposes* the natural immortality of the soul. But the idea of restoration was only one amidst a crowd of his notions, all of which had the natural immortality of the soul for their common ground."

"Even down to and after the time of Gregory the Great, Flüge finds no approach made towards the formation of a Christian dogma of eschatology. There was a disposition to dwell on the immateriality of the soul, but it was regarded as in its own nature perishable, and as deriving immortality only from the know-

ledge of God. Still he considers, and it seems indisputable, that the materials for such an opinion, whether we call it dogma or hypothesis, were for a long period in course of steady accumulation, *but this was not so* from the first.

INTRODUCTION OF IMMORTAL-SOULISM.

After some generations, however, the mental temper and dispositions of Christians inclined more and more to its reception, were also on the increase. Without these assumptions it would be impossible to account for the wholesale change which has taken place in the mind of Christendom with regard to the subject of natural immortality. It would be difficult, I think, to name any other subject connected with religious belief (though not properly belonging to it) on which we can point to SO SWEEPING AND ABSOLUTE A REVOLUTION OF OPINION; from the period before Origen, when the idea of an immortality properly natural was *almost unknown*, to the centuries of the later middle ages, and of the modern age, when, at least in the West, it had become practically undisputed and universal."

In endeavouring to obtain "so much of light as we may upon

THE CAUSES WHICH WERE AUXILIARY

to this extraordinary change" Mr. Gladstone mentions "the disappearance of those simple and frugal manners, which for three centuries had been the glory of the Church"; and the fact that "that sinner had to be persuaded; he had also to be threatened," and the preacher thought that "the force of the instrument he employed materially depended on what he could say as to the duration of the penal term." Further, "it was an affirming and believing, not a questioning or denying age," and in such an age ideas of a natural immortality . . . enhanced the power of the leverage at the command of the Christian preacher. It seems also indisputable that it enhanced therewith the influence of the priesthood as a caste.

Protestants will do well to note the practically Papal origin, certainly the Papal nursing of this dogma of the immateriality and immortality of the soul; for Gladstone follows Flüge, who "considers that all along the

Latin Church led the way in this development." "At length, in the year 1513, in a Bull of Pope Leo X., which purports to be issued with the assent of a Lateran Council (which, however, has been questioned), we have the following words: *Damnamus et reprobamus omnes asserentes animam intellectivam mortalem esse.*" ("We do condemn and reprobate all those who assert that the intellectual soul is mortal.")

FRUIT OF IMMORTAL-SOULISM.

"With the departure of the ancient reserve there (came) a great practical limitation of the liberty of thought possessed by the individual Christian. The doctrine of natural as distinguished from Christian immortality had not been subjected to the severe tests of wide publicity and resolute controversy, but had crept into the Church by a back door as it were, by a silent though effective process, and was in course of obtaining a title by tacit prescription. The evidence of the change may perhaps be most readily supplied to us by observing that when arguments are offered for the immortality of the soul they are rarely derived from Scripture." So wrote "The Grand Old Man."

Luther on Immortality.

The Council of the Lateran, held A.D. 1513, having, as we have just seen, pronounced the immortality of the soul to be an orthodox article of Christian faith, it added,—“And we strictly inhibit all from dogmatizing otherwise; and we decree that all who adhere to the like erroneous assertions shall be shunned and punished as heretics.” But Martin Luther soon shewed that he was “heretical” on this point, as on others. In his *Defence*, Prop. 27, published in 1520, he said: “I permit the Pope to make articles of faith for himself and his faithful—such as the soul is the substantial form of the human body, that the soul is immortal, with all those monstrous opinions to be found in the Roman dunghill of decretals.” Thus it is clear that LUTHER WAS NOT A BELIEVER IN THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL. He held that the soul is a substance distinct from the body, but not immortal. Nor was the immortality of the soul believed in by the great English Reformer,

William Tyndale, the Translator.

In answer to the advocates of the usual Popish theory, he at one time said, “In putting departed souls in heaven, hell, and purgatory you destroy the arguments wherewith Christ and Paul prove the resurrection. What God doth with them, that shall we know when we come to them. The true faith putteth the resurrection, which we be warned to look for every hour. The heathen philosophers, denying that, did put that souls did ever live. And the Pope joineth the spiritual doctrine of Christ and the fleshly doctrine of philosophers together—things so contrary that they cannot agree.” It is interesting also, to note that the Reformation affected the question of man's nature and destiny even in

The English State-Church.

In the sixteenth century, along with other reforms, this Church deliberately sought to deliver itself from the bondage of belief in the dogma of endless suffering. There were originally Forty-two Articles in the Creed, and two of these distinctly involved belief in eternal misery. With the Reformers' knife these were cut out in the fourth year of Queen Elizabeth. Another Article also was eliminated, and the number thereby reduced to the present Thirty-nine. So lately as 1864, the Lord Chancellor, when a clergyman was brought before him for denying the eternity of sin and suffering, gave judgment, on the ground of the excision of those Articles, that EVERLASTING MISERY WAS NOT NOW A DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

From all this it is evident that the dogma of natural, as opposed to Christian immortality, found greatest currency in the Church during its days of Papal darkness. Happily, all down the ages there have been enlightened men whose testimony has been given against the lie, and for the truth. The number of witnesses has greatly multiplied of late; for the history of this century shows wonderful advances towards the light. Innumerable testimonies could be quoted, and the names could be supplied of many well-known men who in recent years have embraced the doctrine of

Immortality on God's conditions. Edward White, author of "Life in Christ," published a long list of prominent adherents, a few years ago; but space does not permit the giving of that list nor any other. Suffice it to say, that some of the foremost scholars and theologians, in England and abroad, have openly declared their allegiance to this view of truth, and have testified how greatly it has aided them in the study of God's Word. One of the best known, and most deservedly revered of these, is undoubtedly, the late

Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham.

In 1874, before the Congregational Union, he said, "There are some of us, and to this class I myself belong, who have taken a definite position. We have reached the conclusion that eternal life is the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ; that this life is not given to those who reject the Gospel; but given in the new birth to those who believe, and who are thereby made partakers of the divine nature . . . And I wish, with the greatest possible emphasis, to state that, in my own experience, the reception of this doctrine has not only not enfeebled my belief in the great doctrine of the evangelical faith, and especially in the doctrine of the incarnation, the atonement, and regeneration, but has given all those doctrines a firmer hold on my intellect, my conscience, and my heart." With this quotation we now close, feeling assured that many will agree with us that ancient History, and much ancient and modern Testimony, unite in ascribing to Jesus Christ alone the glory of conferring immortality.

Through that dear life He gave,
He now hath power to save
From sin and strife.
And all who trust His blood,
Leave dark destruction's road,
Gaining the gift of God,—
Eternal life.

VII.

"TRADITIONAL" TEXTS EXAMINED.

"They searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so."—Acts xvii. 11.

IT is wise to search into the matters that we are expected to believe; we ought to try the foundations, to see whether they are sound or not. If hope of future glory depends on belief in natural, or unconditional, immortality, that belief must be well based or hope will easily be overthrown. If fear of future punishment is based upon belief in natural immortality that belief should be well founded, or fear will fail, and dread will die. Without faith there can be neither hope nor fear. It is, therefore, to the advantage of all who hold to the immortality of the soul, to have that which is so commonly believed well tried, tested, and proved; for it is at the foundation of all, and if the foundation is not sound, then nothing built upon it can be stable. Some say we ought not to inquire into these things, but that we simply should believe. But Dr. Adam Clarke has well said, "The doctrine which cannot stand the test of rational investigation cannot be true." We are not called upon to believe anything on which we dare not think. We are not born with the belief in natural immortality. We are taught when we are children that our souls can never die. But the faith of childhood is credulity. The child simply accepts what is laid before it, asking no questions. The belief of manhood ought to be a very different thing from that. We must see whether these things which were taught us in our youth are according to the Book of God. It is our duty and our privilege so to do.

Proof, therefore, we must request, if expected to continue our faith in unconditional immortality, and that proof must be placed in the balance and found not wanting, before it can command acceptance.

SCRIPTURE AND REASON ARE BOTH SAID TO UPHOLD THE
THEORY OF NATURAL IMMORTALITY.

Let us begin, then, by examining a few of the Scripture passages advanced in support of it. But lo! a strange thing meets us at the very start. When we ask our orthodox friends for the Scripture wherein it is plainly stated that man is immortal, we cannot get it from them. They cannot produce, in either the Old or the New Testament, any passage which says that man has an immortal soul, nor one which contains the oft-repeated phrases, "never-dying soul," "deathless spirit," or a "death that never dies." Moses says, "These are not in my books"; the prophets declare, "We know them not"; and the Psalmist is ignorant of them. The Apostles and the first Fathers of the Christian faith knew them not, and He who spake as never man spake, used not one of them. Such silence is surely most significant. But with great ingenuity it is said that the *very silence of Scripture* proves the doctrine, for it is so self-evident that God did not require to state it. Even the Rev. J. E. C. Welldon, in his work, *The Hope of Immortality*, adopts that line of argument. Sometimes, in support of it, the words of our Lord are quoted, "If it were not so I would have told you." But this is peculiar reasoning. It opens the floodgates for any statements, however erroneous. If it may be said, "silence gives consent" to the doctrine of the immortality of man; then it may also be said, it permits belief in the immortality of brutes, or in any other unscriptural notion that may enter a bemuddled brain. Even the very being and immortality of God are not left (as some say) to be argued from the silence of Scripture. In one way and another these are plainly declared. For instance: "There is one God, and there is none other but He"; "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God"; "The King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God"; "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality." The last two quotations show that the Scripture is not

altogether silent as to immortality. But it declares that God only hath it. As for man, it shows repeatedly that by nature he is mortal, and must perish everlastingly, unless saved from such a fate by Jesus Christ the Lord.

FAILING TO FIND A DIRECT SCRIPTURE

for unconditional immortality, we are told that it can be *inferred* from various passages. Now, inference is a most dangerous thing to build upon. It is almost entirely excluded from the legal courts—direct evidence is required. But let us look at one or two of the texts from which the natural immortality of man is said to be inferred. Perhaps the inference is so strong and over-whelming, that it shall amount to evidence. We must endeavour, however, to examine these passages with an unbiased mind. We must lay aside our theological spectacles if we have any, or else we shall "see double." Alas, how easy it is to infer or impute wrongly, even as to the words of a friend! Let us be careful. "Often the philosopher has taught the religious inquirer the proper frame of mind in which every inquiry, if it is to have a good result, must be pursued. It must be undertaken, not to gratify a foregone conclusion, but with the simple desire to discover truth. 'How legible,' saith Goethe, writing to a friend, 'the book of nature becomes to me! Much as I find that is new, I find nothing that is unexpected, because I have no system, and desire nothing but the pure truth.' And perhaps the Book of Grace would become as intelligible to us as the book of nature became to him, if we sought to possess ourselves of its contents with the same simplicity of purpose, and made our love of theological system, and our reverence for ecclesiastical authors, bend to the higher allegiance that is due to truth."

Let us see, however, how far clear inference will carry us.

Referring to *Gen. i. 26, 27*, it is said that as

Man was made in the image of God,

and God is immortal, man must be immortal, too. In that case he must also be invisible, and omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, and all-good, for God has each

of these attributes as well as immortality. So this argument appears to prove too much. Now, it is not ours to explain each passage with which we here may deal. All we have to do is to show that they do not teach that which is commonly affirmed from them. But we may say that the phrase, "In the image of God," is explained by the fact that God "made man upright," and gave him dominion over all the earth. But man by transgression fell from the estate in which he was created, and Jesus Christ, the second Adam, is the only one now "who is the image of the invisible God" (*Col. i. 15-19*).

"The Breath of Life, and "A living soul,"

are sometimes said to prove the immortality of man. But here nothing is said about immortality. "The breath of life" has no adjective attached to it to show its continuity, nor does it say the "living soul" is to be an ever-living soul. Read the verse: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Now, "the breath of life" is bestowed upon the animals as truly as on man. At the Flood "all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land died." This is admitted almost universally, but somehow it is thought that in man there is a special "breath of life," and that at any rate the term "living soul" is his exclusive birthright. For instance, in Nicholson's "Bible Explainer," we read, "God is said to breathe the breath of life into all animals, and we sometimes read of the soul of every living thing, but they are never said to be living souls as men are." (*Art. Man.*) But this is a contradiction of facts. We do read of animals as "living souls." In *Rev. xvi. 3*, it says, "Every living soul died in the sea." Surely these are not men! And the truth is, that the phrase "living soul" is applied, in the original, to the brute creation before it is applied to man. In *Gen. i. 20*, we read, "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life"

(Margin—"living soul"). The same words occur in verses 21, 24, and 30, also in chap. ii. 19, and chap. ix. 10, 12, and 16. The original Hebrew words, then, rendered "living soul" in the verse describing the creation of man (*Gen. ii. 7*) simply mean "living creature," and are rendered in that manner elsewhere. So here there is no foundation for the ordinary theory of immortality.

We cannot leave this verse without pointing out, on the contrary, how lowly is the origin of man. He speaks of himself as if he came from heaven, a spark of the great I AM, and bound therefore to exist to all eternity. But the words are plain, "God formed man of the dust of the ground." This agrees with *I. Cor. xv. 47, 48*, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy such are they also that are earthy."

The language of Scripture as to the punishment of the wicked is frequently referred to in proof that man is immortal. It is said that as

"These shall go away into Everlasting Punishment,"

they must be immortal beings. But is that necessary? It depends upon the nature of the punishment. Now, the wicked are to be eternally deprived of that which the righteous gain, viz., life. "For the wages of sin is death," and that shall be their everlasting punishment. After the second death, if God awoke them into life again, their punishment would be but temporary; but, as He shall never do this, it is rightly called "eternal punishment." "They shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction" (*II. Thess. i. 9*, New Version). So the phrase "everlasting punishment" fails to establish the doctrine of unconditional immortality.

But it is said that as the wicked shall "go into hell,"

"Where their worm dieth not

and the fire is not quenched," they must be immortal. When our friends say this they are thinking only of the immortality of the soul. But if the foregoing

phrases prove anything to be immortal, it is the human body, the entire being. "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Now, who will venture to-day to affirm that the lost shall suffer physically as well as mentally to all eternity? But what do the unquenchable fire and the undying worm teach? Simply this, that the wicked shall be burnt up, root and branch, and "shall utterly perish (come to nothing) in their own corruption." The language is taken from the 66th chapter of *Isaiah*, where we find the wicked spoken of as "the slain of the Lord," whose "carcasses" the worm shall feed upon, and fire consume, "and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." The passage quoted then does not support the popular opinion of inherent immortality, but teaches the opposite, and leads us to fear "Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

It is, however, said that if they are destroyed, the wicked cannot suffer

"Shame and Everlasting Contempt."

Now, "shame" is that which a wicked man shall feel when brought to judgment from the prison house of death. It shall not be eternal, but with himself shall die. The "contempt" (literally "abhorring," as in *Isa. lvi. 24*), is that which "all flesh" shall heap upon him. That shall be eternal, for those who are not hurt of the second death shall live for ever. The case, therefore, for orthodoxy, is not yet proven.

Failing otherwise, the believer in unconditional immortality at last flies to the Book of *Revelation*, and says, man must be destined to immortality, for in chap. xiv. we read,

"The Smoke of their Torment

ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." Also in chap. xx. 10, we find that "the devil that deceived

them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." But surely that is not going to be proved from a highly figurative and allegorical book, which cannot be found in any other portion of God's Word! Whatever these passages may mean, they cannot mean what is commonly affirmed from them. Unquestionably the phrase "For ever and ever" (or, "unto the ages of the ages,") to the public ear implies everlasting duration, but it is also, as unquestionably, applied at times to things and matters which come to an end. For instance: property is bequeathed to a man and to his heirs for ever. "Of the ninety widely different subjects to which the Scripture writers apply terms which occasionally take the sense of endlessness, in seventy instances they are confessedly of a limited and temporary nature" (*White, "Life in Christ"*). Now, in *Isaiah xxxiv. 9, 10*, language is used of which the phrases under consideration almost appear to be echoes; yet that language is taken in the limited sense referred to. Speaking of Edom, *Isaiah* says, "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever." This language must be taken in the temporary sense. It simply signifies "a great slaughter in the land of Idumea," and the laying waste of the land for an indefinite period afterwards. And, read in that light, we see that the language in *Revelation* has to do with the death and destruction (not the everlasting misery) of the enemies of God. Those whom we read of in the 14th chapter as receivers of the mark of the beast, are said, in the 19th chapter, to be "slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse," "and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." So they certainly are not immortal. And as for the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet, who are to be cast into the lake of fire, whoever these personages may be, they shall not endure for ever. According to the 14th verse of the same chapter, "Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire." And this is but another way of saying,

"He will swallow up death in victory."—"There shall be no more death." And so we may say that whoever is cast into the "lake of fire" shall be no more. Even Satan himself shall perish there, for the Saviour came "that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." At any rate, enough has been said to show that these passages fail utterly to prove the unconditional immortality of the human race, and that is what they are supposed to do. From end to end the Bible speaks of man as mortal, and teaches that if he would be otherwise, he must seek for immortality through union with the living Christ.

THERE ARE A FEW PASSAGES,

it is not denied, which at first sight would lead us to believe in the eternity of torment, and consequently in the immortality of man. But we have endeavoured honestly to deal with them, and all may see how little they support the dogma. And it does not surprise us to find such passages. Coming, as the Bible comes, through so many various minds, need we wonder at occasional apparent contradiction? Do Trinitarians never stumble on texts that appear to teach the unity of God? Do Unitarians never notice any that seem to support the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ? Do Armenians never find passages that savour of Calvinism? And do Calvinists never see any that tell of free grace and human responsibility? Surely they do. And yet these various parties hold their views, on the principle that a doctrine is not to be drawn from isolated texts, nor even from a string of texts, but from the whole tenor of the Word of God. They compare spiritual things with spiritual, explaining the few texts by the many, and the questionable by those that are clear and explicit. The principle is right, though it is not always wisely followed, and various opinions have arisen. But really we have not had much to do to explain texts supposed to teach unconditional immortality, as their number is so limited, and their incapability so visible. Why then do our friends believe in it? We find they have not Scripture on their side; let us see, in our next, if they have reason.

VIII.

"TRADITIONAL" REASONS WEIGHED.

"Behold I waited for your words: I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say."

—Job xxxii. 11.

SO many believe in the natural immortality of the soul, that it is commonly supposed that the arguments for it are overwhelming, and that they cannot be assailed. It becomes us, however, who dispute the point, to face the reasoning, whatever it may be; and this we now essay to do with all humility. Without preamble, then, let us proceed.

The Orthodoxy of the Doctrine.

It is not thought possible that Christians would so universally believe in it were it not true. Surely, it is argued, the Bishops and Clergy, the Professors and Schoolmen, cannot all be wrong. Well they are not all wrong, for they do not all believe in it. Thank God, there is a number, ever growing, who are freeing themselves from the trammels of their youth, and ridding their minds of the bugbear of eternal torment. But although they all accepted inherent immortality, that would not prove the doctrine right. Orthodoxy before to-day has erred most grievously. Orthodoxy frowned upon John Wesley. Orthodoxy hunted for John Knox. Orthodoxy imprisoned John Bunyan. Orthodoxy arrayed itself against Luther. Orthodoxy condemned Galileo. Orthodoxy persecuted Paul, and Orthodoxy crucified the Christ of God.

But the Age of the Doctrine is said to prove it.

Those who say so generally suppose that it has come down from Apostolic times. It may be well, therefore, to remark that the phrase "immortal soul" is not found in any Christian writing of earlier date than about A.D. 135, and then it is the Christian soul that is spoken of. Tertullian of Carthage, who flourished in the early part of the third century, was the first in whose writings the doctrine of eternal misery is found. Such an able (orthodox) writer as Mr. J. N. Darby says, in "The Hopes of the Church," "We would express our conviction that the idea of the immortality of the soul has no source in the Gospel; that it comes, on the contrary, from the Platonists; and that it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the Church, or at least began to be lost sight of, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to replace that of the resurrection. This was about the time of Origen." Since that time the doctrine of inherent immortality has undoubtedly held a place in Christian creeds. But it has in every age been protested against by godly men; and among those who have spoken against it, Martin Luther and William Tyndale may be named. Age, after all, does not prove accuracy. We may have hoary errors, and mistakes as long-lived as Methuselah. Did men not believe for ages in the flatness of the earth and its immovability; in the actual rising and setting of the sun; in witch craft; in alchemy; and in the superstitions of Popery? The age of these beliefs did not justify anyone for holding them, and no more to-day are we justified in clinging to the doctrine of unconditional immortality just because our forefathers believed in it, and it has been in the world so long. The pity only is, that Error has sat upon the throne of Truth for so many ages. And it is high time that men returned to the real old and original doctrine of Life Eternal in our Saviour. This is "the faith once delivered to the saints." It is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone."

Universal Belief in Natural Immortality,

is, at times, brought forward as a proof of its reality; but it is not true that unconditional immortality is, or ever has been, universally believed. In the ancient civilized world it was held by few. Even Plato had more of hope regarding it than faith. But if it were a matter of universal faith, that in itself would be no proof. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"; and might not all have erred also in doctrine, led by the Deceiver who taught man first to sin. We all know that men are easily induced to believe in that for which they hope. But it is said that as we have a

Natural Desire for Immortality,

it must be ours. Truly here, then, is a case in which "the wish is father to the thought." The reasoning is peculiar: I wish to be immortal, therefore I am immortal. Tried on any other subject, its absurdity is manifest. For instance: I wish to be a wise man, therefore I am a wise man,—I wish to be rich, therefore I am rich! Now, we grant at once that God creates no craving in the human heart to mock it: there must be some store in the universe from which it can be satisfied. Man thirsts for pleasure, and all round him God has scattered fruits and flowers and means of enjoyment; but man must seek after these in order to enjoy them. So with "this pleasing hope, this fond desire, this longing after immortality." God does not intend it to be mocked in any human breast. He has the means of gratifying it. He will render eternal life "to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour and immortality." Lo, then, this strong desire for never-ending life teaches conditional immortality, not unconditional!

The Goodness of God

is sometimes said to support the doctrine of inherent immortality. It is alleged He is too loving and kind to pronounce upon any the fearful sentence of extinction. This, from a believer in the orthodox hell of fire, is

monstrous. Which most accords with our conceptions of God's goodness: to let a man die off, or to preserve him alive in the pains of hell for ever? The answer is clear: the mind at once revolts against the latter course. But some may reply, This is not the alternative before us. We do not require to believe in unending agony; hell is not such a place as is commonly supposed; the worm and the fire mean only an uneasy conscience. To this we will only say, that if "wailing and gnashing of teeth" do not indicate agony of the most fearful kind, we know not what words can mean. These signs of pain are to accompany the second death, and if that is to be a "death that never dies," the wailing and the gnashing of teeth must be eternal. The alternative therefore remains. We must believe in everlasting physical and mental pain, or else in the sure destruction of the ungodly. There are still others who seek to escape the alternative by advancing the theories of "Eternal Hope" and "Final Restoration." But these theories have no sure foundation in the Word of God. They are based upon the doctrine of natural immortality. Being supported by it, they do not support it. They prove it to be in existence, but do not prove it to be true.

Those who regret the spread of Universalism in the Churches, would do well to take note of this. That doctrine is born of, and feeds upon, the dogma of the souls inherent immortality; and men who see the havoc it is causing, may lament the rapidity of its growth; but so long as they admit that every soul of man must live for ever, they are powerless to withstand it. If the alternative is Eternal Misery or Final Restoration of all, then the latter wins the day. But, to proceed, it is suggested that

Belief in the Wisdom of God

causes belief in the immortality of man. It seems to some a waste of power, to create a man and sustain him in life for a period during which he is trained, educated, and disciplined, and then to cut him down on the day of judgment like a flower. The question is asked, "Would it display wisdom on the part of God to destroy, for instance, a Shakespeare, a Scott, or a

Byron, if such were amongst 'the unsaved?'" This suggestion requires consideration. Let us see. For what purpose was man made? "What is man's chief end?" "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever." Would it display wisdom, then, on the part of God to preserve for ever any man who could neither glorify his Maker nor enjoy His love? You will at once say, No. You must; for infinite wisdom cannot keep in eternal existence a being who can never fulfil the purpose of his being. We have no narrow idea of the number who shall enter into eternal life. Regarding the heathen and the partially informed we entertain a large hope. The kingdom of heaven shall be much more populous than many close-minded men would calculate. The seed of the Kingdom may often be where God can see it, though man fails to do so. But beyond this we dare not go. Depend upon it, if Shakespeare and Scott, and Byron and Burns, and Voltaire and Hume, and Plato and Paul are not rendered immortal by Christ, the might of their intellect shall not immortalize them. But supposing it did. If God in His wisdom spared the intellectual stars on account of the brightness of their shining, would that be unconditional immortality? Nay, does not the very suggestion show that man's consciousness of what is just, and right, and good, leads him to expect conditions in connection with such a wondrous boon as never-ending life. He says, The Wisdom of God shall grant it to the wise among men. But God says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." "He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life," however great and intellectual he may be.

But now, turning to the Metaphysical Argument,

we find it stated that man must be immortal because he is a spirit tabernacled in the flesh. It is said that the spirit (or soul, for orthodoxy does not distinguish between these carefully), is the real man, and though the body perishes the spirit survives eternally. Now

the Bible declares, "There is a spirit in man," but it nowhere states that man himself is a spirit. "God is a Spirit," and the angels are "ministering spirits," but "God formed man of the dust of the ground." There is his nature! "Of the earth, earthy." And as for the spirit, it was "breathed into his nostrils," it abides there ("The spirit of God is in my nostrils," *Job* xxvii. 3); and it is in the nostrils also of the animals around, "Yea, they have all one breath (or spirit); so that (in that matter) a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast" (*Eccles.* iii. 19).

But, it is argued, man must be a spirit, and therefore immortal,

Because he can think and reason.

This is based upon the assumption that matter cannot produce thought. Now we admit, of course, that inert matter produces no thought; a stick, or a stone, or a piece of iron cannot think. But may not matter be organized so as to produce thought, just as it produces feeling, and heat, and light, and perfume, and electricity? Besides, if matter does not think, how do horses, dogs, and elephants think and reason? That they do think as really as man does, though not to the same degree, is beyond dispute. And if man is a spirit because he can produce thought, so also are the brutes beneath him, for they can do the same. But it is said, "It is the soul that thinks, and that is what is claimed to be immortal." As it is put in Cruden's Concordance: "The soul is spiritual because it thinks, and immortal because it is spiritual." Now, when man is laid upon his couch, and yields himself up to "Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," what is it that falls asleep? Is it the body or the soul? Every one at once will say, the body. How is it then that man is unconscious? Why does not the soul continue to think? The answer is evident: it is because *thought depends as much upon the body as the soul*. And dreams prove nothing to the contrary of this, for they come upon us when we are only partially asleep. Sound sleep is dreamless. It is, however, urged that as

The personality is preserved,

although the body undergoes continual change, the soul must be the real man. This appears at first sight plausible, but a little consideration proves its insufficiency as an argument. The fact that mental impressions are retained from childhood to old age, is explained by the law of atomical succession, just as that explains the retention of scars, and other marks of the body, during the same period.

But now, *supposing men are immaterial souls*, or spirits, "cabin'd, cribbed, confined, bound in" by material bodies, out of which they mount at death. Does that prove they are immortal? It certainly does not. On the contrary, the very statement brings to one's mind more vividly the language of the Scripture: "Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine; the soul that sinneth it shall die" (*Ezek.* xviii. 4). "He which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (*James* v. 20). "Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (*Matt.* x. 28). The supposition, therefore, does not support the theory of unconditional immortality; for though the word 'soul' and 'spirit' are used in the Scriptures over sixteen hundred times, the adjective 'immortal' is never once attached to either of them.

Philosophy, however, in desperation, says,

Nothing can be Annihilated,

therefore man must live for ever. This argument rests upon the scientific statement that matter cannot be destroyed. If ground to powder, or burnt with fire, or blown up into the air, or washed away with the floods, still it remains in existence; only its form has changed. Well, we are not arguing against the eternity of matter; but against the natural immortality of man. The atoms of which he is composed may remain in existence for ever, but as for the man himself, only "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." A regiment may be annihilated, though the soldiers composing it may not

be blown into thin air. Let the battle-field be strewn with their lifeless bodies, and the deed is done. A palace may be destroyed by fire, through the stones, and bricks, and mortar, and dust, and ashes may remain somewhere in existence. And so with man, matter (and spirit), as such, may be indestructible; the atoms or particles may be eternal; "but the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away" (*Ps. xxxvii. 20*). They who advance the theory that nothing can be destroyed do not always see what it involves, viz.:

THE IMMORTALITY OF ALL BRUTE BEASTS.

The Rev. J. E. C. Welldon, however, sees this, and in *The Hope of Immortality*, sad to say, he accepts the ridiculous conclusion, rather than yield up his argument. It is clear that he feels humiliated at having to do this, for he uses "a deal of Latin" to excuse himself and he is careful (on p. 198) to add, "But their immortality will be less august and perfect than his" (Man's), as well as (on p. 61) to say, "It cannot admit of the spiritual prerogatives of worship or rapture or communion with God." Of course, it cannot. Nobody would suppose that beasts, and birds, and fish, and creeping things, will possess the prerogatives of worship and rapture and communion. That is not the point. All that we now need to note is, that the argument that nothing is ever annihilated proves *too much*, if it proves anything; for it compels you to believe that if you kill a weasel or a wasp, it does not die at all, but goes off into some spirit-world, where, henceforth and for ever, it will dwell, possessed of an immortality which (again to quote from Welldon) "allows of life, movement, desire and instinctive action." Can absolute absurdity by anywhere more clear to view?

UNCONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY IS UNTENABLE.

This is the outcome of our study. We have carefully weighed the principal reasons given in its support, and have found them "wanting." It is called the orthodox opinion, because so many hold it. But not a text of Scripture states it, and not one upholds it when examined in the light. On the contrary,

IT CONTRADICTS THE WORD OF THE ETERNAL.

When He forewarns the wicked, saying, "The soul that sinneth it shall die"; this doctrine dares to say (with one of old), "Ye shall not surely die." Thus men are deceived and led on to their own hurt. It is the basis of the eternal-torment theory, and of universalism. It is the foundation of faith in purgatory, ghosts, spiritualism, and other forms of error. It is also a cause of unbelief in resurrection and a day of judgment. For if men never die at all, why, it is asked, need there be a resurrection-morning and a judgment-day? And it has made many Atheists; for, through the representations of the Hell-fire-God of orthodoxy, many have cast the Bible utterly aside.

OUR APPEAL IS TO THE WORD OF GOD.

"Whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith." We have demonstrated that the Book divine knows nothing of soul-immortality, and therefore do we call on all to look to Jesus for the Life to come. "I am the Way," saith He, "and the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me" (*John xiv. 6*). "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life" (*v. 24*). "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day (*vi. 40*). "I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever" (*vi. 51*). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying *He* shall never see death" (*viii. 51*). Here then, are the solid grounds for the pleasing hope of Immortality, namely, the Divine Terms, of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Acts xx. 21*).

Glad Hosannas then begin!
Sing aloud with heart and might!
Immortality hath been,
THROUGH THE GOSPEL, brought to light.

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