

# LIFE

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## A Treatise

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# LIFE

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In this world of ours there are many mysteries incomprehensible to the human mind; *life*, the most profound of them all, is utterly inscrutable by any faculty with which the Creator has endowed man. We know something of its activities and manifestations, but, in its essence, it is an unsolvable mystery.

In the creation about us, life is seen in three distinct forms—vegetable, animal, and human; but in whatever form we view it, it is beyond our power to comprehend or define.

Herbert Spencer, the British scientist, had the presumption to give a definition of it. According to him, "Life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations" (Unity of Nature, p. 174). Life is an "adjustment." But whom does this definition satisfy? As to eternal life, Prof. Drummond referred to the following scripture as a definition, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17: 3). According to this, life would be knowledge; but few would accept this as defining life. Human science

cannot answer the question, What is life? neither does divine revelation afford us an explanation.

There is another form of life: it is that of the angels, who are heavenly and spirit-beings. For the knowledge of their existence and work we are indebted to the Word of God alone: "Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire" (Ps. 104: 4).

So far as we know, there are four forms of created life—vegetable, animal, human, and angelic. The first two serve a temporary purpose, then cease to exist. The last two are intelligent and moral beings destined to live forever. But beyond these forms of life, there is an uncreated and eternal life, the life of the redeemed, which is to engage our special attention. But let us first contemplate Him who is the eternal Fountain of it, as Scripture presents Him to us.

God has revealed Himself in various ways, chiefly through creation and redemption. This revelation of Himself extended over a long period of time, and in it He has assumed different names, all of which express Himself in different aspects. One of these is "*The Living God*," which occurs about 30 times in the sacred volume in various connections.

The first mention of Him in this character is found in Deut. 5: 26: "For who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the *living God* speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?" This voice gave the ten commandments to the nation of Israel, offering continuance of this present life on condition

of perfect obedience thereto. "This *do*, and thou shalt live," was Christ's reply to the question; "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10: 25).

It was as "the living God" that He carried the people through the wilderness and rolled back the waters of Jordan for Israel to pass through dryshod, and dispossessed seven nations, giving Israel the land, according to His promise to Abraham.

David met the Philistine, who had defied "the armies of the living God," with the statement, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Sam., ch. 17). David's trust in the living God laid low the audacious foe.

When the Assyrian king besieged Judah and blasphemed "the living God," the godly king Hezekiah appealed to the prophet Isaiah in these words: "This day is a day of trouble and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God" (2 Kings, ch. 19). Hezekiah put his faith in the living God, and was not disappointed, for "the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand."

When we turn to the New Testament, too, we find reiterated assurances of the infinite resources available

for faith in the living God. Paul said, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour (Preserver) of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4: 9, 10). Timothy was also to "charge the rich in this world...that they trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6: 17).

Thus we learn that the hand of the living God is outstretched for His people—delivering, protecting, upholding them, and is against the enemies of God and His people. With such demonstrations of divine power before them, do men generally live in the loving and reverential fear of the "the living God?" Even in apostolic days were those who trod under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith they had been sanctified, an unholy thing, and had done despite unto the Spirit of grace! (Heb. 10: 25).

If the living God whom Rabshakeh reproached visited his sin with death, what will befall men who trample upon the Son of God, and despise the Spirit of grace? Will He overlook such insult to His Son and His Spirit? Impossible! "Vengeance is mine; I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people" (Heb. 10: 30). They may still call themselves His people, as they do, but this will not save them from utter ruin. For any sinner, and spe-

cially for such, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (ver. 31). Irretrievable ruin will overtake them in hell, while the redeemed will find their happy abode in "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12: 22).

This living God is "the Fountain of Life" (Ps. 36: 9). All things were created by Him, "He giveth to all life" (Acts 17: 25). None other could. This fact was recognized and acknowledged by Egypt's magicians in Moses' day, when they saw lice generated from the dust smitten by Aaron's rod. They said, "This is the finger of God" (Exod. 8: 19). They had come to the limit of their jugglery, and were compelled to confess that here was what divine power alone could do. Life can come only from Him who is the Author of Life.

Not long since, a strange delusion had taken possession of a class of scientists who held and taught that life could be produced from non-living matter. Spencer and Huxley in England were advocates of this theory, and Haeckel in Germany. They termed their doctrine *Abiogenesis*, that is, spontaneous generation, in contrast to *Biogenesis*, meaning that life alone can generate life. Thus there were two schools: one teaching that life can originate from inert, lifeless matter; the other, that life can only come from antecedent life.

Demonstration soon convinced the sincere advocates of the theory of spontaneous generation that their position was untenable. Huxley announced that the

doctrine of Biogenesis is "victorious along the whole line at the present day." And Tyndall, while confessing that he wished the evidence were the other way, is compelled to say, "I affirm that no shred of trustworthy experimental testimony exists to prove that life in our day has ever appeared independently of antecedent life" (Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," p. 61).

How sublime and simple is the account of the origin of life as given in the first two chapters of Genesis! There we learn that life is the effect of God's creative act. "God *created* every creature that moveth," and "God *created* man in His own image."

O men of science! go back to the Scriptures. Leave not behind this faithful guide when you enter upon the study of nature. Many have looked deeply into creation's works and acknowledged the Bible to be God's work also. Listen to the confession of Lord Bacon to whom the modern "scientific method" owes its origin. "Thy creatures (God's creatures) have been my books," he says, "but Thy Scriptures much more" ("Christianity and Modern Science," p. 213).

Too often proud "science" will not submit to divine testimony, but how often have its theories been proved to be but vain speculation. Any scientific theory that is clearly in opposition to Scripture, as evolution, for instance, will eventually be shown to be unscientific and untrue; and Scripture tells us to "avoid profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-

called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 6: 20, 21). Let the people of God at least take heed to this injunction.

The living God, the Fountain of life, is also its preserver. Paul's charge to Timothy reads thus: "I give thee charge in the sight of God who quickeneth all things" (1 Tim. 6: 13). The marginal reading of the Revised Version, the Numerical Bible, and the translation of J. N. Darby render this clause, "Who preserveth all things in life;" that is, God is not only the life-giver, but its preserver also. All creature-life is supported by Him who is the eternal, self-subsisting God. He who sustains all life-forms is self-sustained. This is the force of the expression, "Who only hath immortality" (ver. 16).

The word "immortality" means deathlessness. This text has been used by annihilationists to deny the immortality of the human soul, saying that man becomes immortal only in Christ. They will not allow that man's soul was *created* immortal. They teach that man must accept Christ or become extinct forever. If God only hath immortality, how can man have it also? they ask. To which we answer, Are not the angels immortal? Scripture tells us they *are*, as in the resurrection *we* shall be (Luke 20: 36).

It can easily be shown from Scripture that all impenitent men will continue to exist forever. Whether saved or unsaved, man's soul survives the dissolution of the body. The case of Lazarus and the rich man cited



by the Lord in Luke 16 proves the continuance of life after death. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" proves the everlasting existence of the wicked. So also does the declaration, "They shall be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20: 10).\*

If men and angels have immortality by creation, in what sense then can it be said that "God only hath immortality?" It is in the sense that He has it *in Himself*—the self-existing, eternal God. The never-ending life which man and angels and demons have is derived from God. Of our existence it is said, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being."

The death of the human body is the consequence of sin. Death was not natural to man, as some scientists affirm. Man was created to live forever. This was true even of his body. For his continuance of physical life, God had made provision in the tree of life. This is implied by what is said after the fall: "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Gen. 3: 22). This would indicate that besides partaking of the ordinary food of the garden, man would have needed the tree of life to perpetuate his physical existence. Being deprived of

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\* We need not enter here into the specious arguments of annihilationists that seek to show that eternal here does not mean eternal. For a full examination of this subject, the reader is referred to "Facts and Theories as to a Future State" by F. W. Grant, (\$2.00); abridged edition, \$1.00, same publishers.

access to the tree of life, our first parents in the course of time died.

Having viewed the living God as the author and sustainer of life, in its varied forms, let us behold Him as the source of life for *fallen* man. Of the nature and character of this life we shall speak later.

First, let us see in the light of Scripture what man became because of his fall. His original state was one of perfection, mentally, morally and physically, and his environment was perfect also. His Creator's affectionate desire (not His purpose) was that these should continue unimpaired.

Eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the one thing forbidden to him—as a reminder or test of his allegiance to his Creator. Under the influence of Satan (who with others had previously revolted from God and spiritually died, and through whom sin had entered the universe) Eve took of the forbidden fruit, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband, and he did eat. Thus was accomplished man's ruin. The immediate effect of this transgression was spiritual death—alienation from the life of God.

For light upon this aspect of man's state we are chiefly indebted to the New Testament, and especially to John's and Paul's writings, to which we will now appeal. Among many texts a few must suffice. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3: 36). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is,

when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (John 5: 25). "And you hath He quickened *who were dead in trespasses and sins*" (Eph. 2: 1). "*You being dead in your sins* and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2: 13).

These passages will be sufficient for any who will submit to divine authority on this matter.

Death and desolation characterize man's condition since the fall. The heart of the "inner man" ceased to beat for God. There was no longer any movement of the soul Godward. Man's heart is like a desert, not a desert in which are scattered some fruitful oases, for total depravity is certainly a doctrine of Scripture. "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14).

How different is the divine estimate from man's! Scripture knows nothing of "some good in all of us," which can be made to grow and increase by religious culture. Happy the person that submits to God's estimate of man.

While in this state of spiritual death man has no desire to seek after God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2: 14). In ani-

mate nature all power to appropriate the elements disappears when death intervenes. The same is true of the spiritually dead. They do not appropriate the things of God, nor can they value them, for all capacity to do so is lost, and no amount of intellectual, moral, or religious training can ever give them this capacity.

*Life* is what the unregenerate need, not moral or religious culture. The Lord said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3: 6). Flesh and spirit are different in kind, not in degree, and as diverse as two different species in the plant or animal world. Spirit is not flesh in a higher state of cultivation. God established a law in creation which is unalterably fixed, that each species, whether plant or animal, should produce its kind. Had Darwin believed the Word of God he would never have penned his book, "Origin of Species," in which he seeks to show that by certain forces working in nature one species is gradually, through a long period of time, changing into another species—for instance, a monkey into a man (!).

This theory has been abandoned by many scientists of repute. In fact, it had never been accepted at all by many competent scientists.

There is no such thing as transmutation of species in nature. The evolution theory is simply an hypothesis, a non-scientific guess, contrary both to the observed facts in nature and to the Word of God.

The unregenerated man has a nature which Scripture terms "the flesh"—a sinful nature, which came through Adam and Eve's disobedience, and which has been transmitted to every member of the human family. They produced their own kind, according to the law referred to above: "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his own image" (Gen. 5: 3). David declared, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Ps. 51: 5); thus, this sinful nature of Adam and Eve is transmitted to us all.

But the child of God, whilst having this nature, has become the happy possessor of another nature which the Lord calls "spirit." In virtue of this the child of God becomes distinct from other men. It is not that he is better naturally, but he belongs to another and higher order; in fact, the highest order of created beings. "Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1: 18). But to become a member of this special class one must be born again. To Nicodemus the Lord said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." And when Nicodemus marvels at this the Lord repeats it, "Ye must be born again."

This nature received in new birth is called "spirit." It is not by any evolutionary process that a soul becomes a partaker of this nature. A person's moral and religious nature may be cultivated, and so grow and develop. This has often been done. But a higher

state of morality and religiousness thus acquired does not constitute one a member of this special class. This nature produced in new birth and called "spirit" is not obtained by anything that man can do.

Nicodemus, full of wonder, asks, "How can this be? How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" In the Lord's answer we are taught how, by what agency, this is accomplished. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

God is the source of this new life. We will first view it in its source; then as in man to whom it is communicated.

On the divine side we will dwell on seven things, as follows: (1) the Spirit as the agent who imparts it; (2) the Word of God as the instrument He uses; (3) the will of God; (4) the work of Christ at Calvary as the ground on which it is bestowed; (5) the nature of the life communicated; (6) Christ the perfect expression of eternal life; (7) Christ as the fountain-head of this life to man.

*1. The Holy Spirit as the agent of its communication.*

The Spirit, the third person in the Holy Trinity, communicates this life to the sinner. "It is the Spirit that quickens" (John 6: 63). The Trinity is active in all divine work. So we read, "Born of the Spirit" (John 3: 8), and quickening is also ascribed to the Father and

the Son. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will" (John 5: 21).

New birth is a work that God alone can accomplish. We have seen already that death is man's state as a sinner. All but divine power is helpless in the presence of death. The Lord showed to Ezekiel a valley of dry bones, and asked, "Son of man, can these live?" Ezekiel answers, "O Lord God, Thou knowest." Yes, they can live, but by divine power alone. The gulf between death and life can be bridged by God alone. He alone can create life. This we have seen already. He alone was competent to breathe life in the dust of which He had made man, and He alone can communicate the spiritual life to one dead in sins.

## *2. The Word of God used for new birth.*

It is clear that this is the *Word of God*—not baptism, as some take the water in John, ch. 3 to mean. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by *the Word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1: 23). "Of his own will begat He us with *the word of truth*" (James 1: 18). The water in John, ch. 3, must be understood in the light of these texts. It is not baptism, but the "washing of regeneration" (Titus 3: 5), the "washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5: 26). Peter further states that this word is *the gospel preached*—"This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1: 25).

Here is where the human instrument has part in this blessed work. It is the Christian's happy privilege, as well as responsibility, to announce to men the gospel, which is "holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2: 16). "Go," said the angel who delivered the apostles from prison, "stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life" (Acts 5: 20). Life is what the dead need, and no moral and religious training can impart it. That life is offered to all men through the word of God.

(3) *The will of God.*

It is not in man's will to be born again. This is clearly stated in the Scriptures: "He came unto his own, and his own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood (natural descent), nor of the will of the flesh (the man's own will), nor of the will of man (some other person's will), but of God" (John 1: 11-13). "*Of his own will* begat He us with the word of truth" (James 1: 18).

Man left to his own will never chooses to have this new life, never chooses Christ in whom this life is: "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life" (John 5: 40). All this proves the utter perverseness of the human will. His will is totally out of harmony with the divine will. But if God wills to save men none can hinder Him. "He doeth according to his



will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4: 35). His will is sovereign, and will be accomplished. This is expressed by what the Lord said to Nicodemus: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3: 8). The wind is an invisible force, and its presence is observed only from the effects it produces. No man can control it. Man's perverse will then must be changed. It must be brought into accord with the divine will. This is what God does. He works until the prodigal says, "I will arise and go to my father." Man's natural will leads him *away* from God, as the prodigal's will led him into the "far country." God's will brings him *back* to Himself and to His house of plenty with rejoicing.

4. *The work of Christ the ground of all blessing.*

"Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12: 24). In the realm of nature, the seed deposited in the earth first dies, then springs up and produces fruit. Christ has died and from His atoning death springs up much fruit. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him should not per-

ish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3 : 14-16). "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6 : 51).

Now that the foundation has been laid in the death of Christ, God is righteously free to carry out his holy will in bestowing upon the sinner the inestimable blessing of life as a gift. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6: 23). "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him may have everlasting life" (John 6: 40).

Is my reader in possession of this great gift which Christ's death has made available for all? Is he alive unto God? We read of some who judged themselves "unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13: 46). Oh, may you not be one of them.

##### *5. The nature of this gift of life.*

Peter calls its growth and development in the believer, "The divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4). It is life from God Himself that is in the new-born soul. All other forms of life owe their origin to the creative power of God. But that God should make His creatures participants in His own life, the uncreated life, is an amazing fact. For the life of the believer is eternal life in the fullest sense of the word. Among many texts as proof

of this, we give a few only. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3: 36). "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John 6: 47). "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life" (John 6: 54).

Both vegetable and animal life had a beginning and will have an end. Human and angelic life had a beginning but shall have no end. But the divine life in the child of God has in itself neither beginning nor end. It is the life of the Eternal communicated to believing man.

This life then must be distinguished from what we term immortality, of which we have spoken already. Men and angels were created immortal; they will never cease to exist. Yet this is not the same as eternal life which God imparts through faith to men once dead in trespasses and sins. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6: 53). Fallen men and demons have no spiritual life in which they can "live unto God." Of course, they exist, and will forever exist. They have immortal souls, but not eternal life.

*6. Christ the perfect, living expression of eternal life.*

"For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John 1: 3). "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5: 20).

There can be no question but that the saints in past dispensations possessed this life. If the Old Testament saints had life, as can easily be shown from Scripture, what life, other than this divine, eternal life, could they have possessed? Scripture speaks of no other. But whilst this divine life was in all those born again, it is by the accomplished work of the Cross and the coming of the Holy Spirit that it has *abounded* to the believer. There were hindrances, to some extent, to its manifestations over which they had no control. We may speak of some of these later.

But in Christ this life was displayed in all its glorious perfection. In Him it shone in undimmed glory. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us—and we beheld his glory, the glory as of an only begotten of the Father—full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14). No part of this life was hidden, no aspect of it concealed.

We have the record of it in the four Gospels. Study that life; contemplate it, dear Christian reader, for that is the life in which believers are before God. In them it is imperfectly expressed, but in Christ it found its perfect manifestation. Glorious life!

### *7. Christ the Fountain Head of eternal life to man.*

As we have seen, Christ is the one in whom divine and eternal life unfolded itself in dependence upon and communion with His Father. But Christ is also the fountain-head of this divine life for men. If divine

life is what God has been giving to believing men in all ages, it must be in a divine Person. God's word does not leave this matter doubtful: "In Him was life" (John 1: 4). "And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life in in His Son" (1 John 5: 11). "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11: 25). "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5: 26).

In the Son, then, this life is, and always was. The Son always had it in Himself, even as the Father. When the Son become man, the Father *gave Him* to have life in Himself. The incarnate Son has it in Himself as the source for others, because He is the Mediator between God and men.

In John 15, under the figure of the vine and its branches, we have this line of truth illustrated. The life of the branches is in the vine, as the life of God's people is in the Son become incarnate.

Before we speak of this wonderful life as connected with man, let us see what we can learn from Scripture regarding this life in the ages past. For light on this matter we are indebted chiefly to the New Testament.

This must be clear from what Paul says in 2 Tim. 1: 9, 10: "God hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality (incorruptibility, as referring to the body) to light by the gospel."

Spiritual life is a subject not fully developed in the Old Testament. This does not mean that there was no light at all given. There was a "promise of life which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1: 1). Again, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began (before the age-times), but hath in due time manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour" (Titus 1: 2, 3).

"Before the world began" has been variously translated. "Times eternal" the R. V. renders it. "Before the ages of time"—J. N. D. "Before the age-times"—Num. Bible. The "ages of time," or "age-times," have been taken to refer to the dispensations or epochs from the fall of man onward. Before these began to run their course, God gave a "promise of life," implied in the announcement of the Redeemer and his death: "It shall bruise thy head (the serpent's), and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3: 15).

It is clear, therefore, that as soon as sin and spiritual death entered the world, God gave a promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. Faith could appropriate that promise, and Adam and Eve did appropriate it to themselves, as we may properly infer from the name which Adam gave to his wife "Eve," which means "life." Abel, too, laid hold of the same promise, and brought

unto God an acceptable offering, one which foreshadowed the vicarious sacrifice on Calvary, in view of which God could, and did, communicate divine and eternal life to Adam, Eve, Abel, and all who believed in the promised One along the centuries preceding Christ's incarnation.

Thus, the Son of God, who in due time became man, is the fountain of divine and eternal life for men in all ages. The Word of God speaks of no other source for man but the Son, and of no other spiritual life than the divine and eternal.

It is not meant by this that the Old Testament saints knew or were conscious of possessing this life. The Old Testament Scriptures gave no full light on this subject, for life was brought to light by the gospel, not by the Old Testament.

Having looked at this life from the divine side, let us now look at it in its human possessors, and see (1) On what principle it is received. (2) The proof of its possession beyond the testimony of consciousness. (3) What is the status of its possessors? (4) The growth and development of this life; and (5) The characteristics by which its presence and nature can be recognized by others.

(1) *On what principle is this life received?*

The life that the law of Moses proposed was on the principle of works. "Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" asked the lawyer. The Lord referred him to the law. "What is written in the law?

How readest thou?" The lawyer answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." "This *do*, and thou shalt live," responded the Lord (Luke 10: 25-28). "Hard conditions," some one may say. Yes, friend, impossible conditions to a sinful mortal.

No man ever received eternal life on these conditions. If there is no other way in which life can be had then the human race must be shut out from God forever. But Christ has died for men, and life is obtained not by working but by believing. The texts to prove this are numerous. A few must suffice. "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth on Him* should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, *that ye might believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that *believing, ye might have life* through his name" (John 20: 30, 31). "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John 5: 1).

Eternal life is a gift, and a gift is not bought or earned. I would affectionately ask the reader, Have you got eternal life? If not, put your trust in the Son of God who died for you, and this precious gift shall be yours—none is more precious, it is life from Himself, imparted to the believing sinner.



Before leaving this point, I would remark that the life which the law offered was not divine life. It was rather the continuance of natural life here upon earth. Let the reader study carefully Deut. 28: 1-14 and he will see what was proposed to the one who would fulfil the legal conditions. It was not the divine life which the believer receives in the new birth.

(2) *Proofs of the possession of eternal life.*

Can any one be sure that he is regenerated? Suppose I were to ask, Can any one be certain that he exists? The true answer would be, "I think; I feel; therefore I exist." To what does such a person appeal as proof of his existence? To his consciousness.

In new birth a radical change takes place in the soul. As stated before, it is the impartation of a life which we had not before. With the reception of this divine life, come new instincts, new affections, new desires to the inner man. The person is conscious of a great change. The person can say with absolute certainty, as the man in John 9, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." The spiritual eye has been opened, and the man sees and feels he is a new man. The activities of his mind and the soul move along different lines than formerly. They are directed toward new objects — towards God, Christ, heavenly things, and the people of God. These are now loved instead of hated. Once they were repellant, now they are attractive. Once they were distasteful, now they are relished.

To the testimony of this consciousness John appeals in an epistle in which he presents evidences of the possession or non-possession of this life. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3: 13-15). "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love" (1 John 4: 7, 8).

But the new-born soul needs more. He needs the word of God to interpret this change for him, and to show him what the nature of this new life is. His own consciousness apart from the Word of God could not tell him this." "These things have I written unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5: 13, R. V.).

How many new born souls do not realize the nature of the life which they have. They could assure you that a great change has come over them—not a change of thought merely, but a "change of heart," as it is expressed. They realize they are changed, they are new creatures, with all that this implies. But they need the Word of God to tell them this is life eternal—that they have been made partakers in the life of the Son of God.

(3) *What status does this divine life give?*

If the new-born person possesses a different nature from that of his unsaved fellows, how shall we classify him? James says he is a "kind of firstfruits of God's creatures" (James 1: 18). In virtue of this divine nature he is exalted above angels, for they, as we have seen, have created life only. Of the Christian, Scripture says: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5: 17). And, "Having put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4: 24). "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2: 10). "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3: 10).

The new man is the man "in Christ," in contrast to being "in Adam." In what sense, we may ask, is he created anew? The communication of this new life from God—an uncreated life, as we have repeatedly affirmed—makes him "a new creature" or "a new creation," "a kind of firstfruits of God's creatures," as James says. In Colossians we have the distinctions that obtain among men—Jew, Greek, circumcision, uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, free. The new man, the man in Christ, is outside all these distinctions. Even sex distinctions disappear. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ

Jesus" (Gal. 3: 28). This speaks of what the believer is *in Christ*. While we are here in the world, the Christian, of course, is to recognize the natural relationships, and walk in them to the glory of God, as Eph. 5; Col. 3 and 1 Pet. 3 clearly show.

Three distinct relationships are recognized in the Scriptures into which the believer in this present dispensation is introduced. By new birth he becomes a member of the family of God. By the "life which is in Christ Jesus" he is constituted a member of the "last Adam's" race. And by the baptism of the Spirit he is made a member of the Body of Christ. The first two relationships mentioned bear directly on our theme.

In Old Testament times those regenerated could not take the place of children of God, though children they were. "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world" (Gal. 4: 1-3). But when Christ came all was changed for them: "As many as received Him (Christ) to them gave He power (the right, *margin*) to become the sons of God" (John 1: 12). "Sons" should be "children" throughout John's writings, because the term speaks of life-connection with God, while "sons" speaks rather of position, or standing and privilege.

What a blessed and exalted relationship to God this possession of divine life gives us! "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!" (1 John 3: 1). May God grant His people grace to walk worthy of this relationship.

Scripture speaks of two races of human beings—a natural and fallen race, and a redeemed and spiritual race. Of the former, Adam fallen is head; of the latter, Christ risen and ascended is head. As to headship, the first Adam is a figure of the second, "a figure of Him that was to come" (Rom. 5: 14). "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam is a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. 15: 45). There is contrast between the two, as well as comparison. The connection with each head is by life. As we partake of the fallen, the corrupted life in the first Adam, in like manner we share in the spiritual and divine life in the last Adam. "In Adam" means life and standing in Adam; "In Christ," life and standing in Christ.

There should be no question that as the Son of God is the Mediator, He always quickened souls. Those born again before His incarnation received life from Him, for there is no other life for sinful man. The life that was in them is the same life that is in us. They are in Christ now, because the Son of God became Christ by incarnation. As risen and ascended the Son, as Christ, is the head of this new race. "The dead in Christ shall rise first" includes the Old Testa-

ment saints as well as those fallen asleep in this dispensation.

The people of God in all ages belong to the family of God. The new-born ones in all ages belong also to the last Adam's race. They form the new creation of which Christ is the glorious head.

*(4) The growth or development of the divine life in the redeemed.*

The theory of evolution according to which new species are produced by natural selection and transmutation is utterly false. All the different forms of plant life, as well as the many forms of animal life, whether extinct or living, are the result of a direct creation by the almighty God. The same is true of the new man. The man in Christ is not the product of development or evolution, but created. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature," or, "it is new creation."

All life manifests itself by growth and development. The mighty oak is developed from the acorn. The bird is developed from the egg. "The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself—first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mk. 4: 28). These developments we observe are going on all about us. We see this to be a fixed law in nature, a method of the divine working in the natural world. But whoever saw a fish develop into a bird, or a mouse into a cat? Oh, no, replies the evolutionist; these changes do not

take place in a person's lifetime. Millions of years are required for a tadpole to develop into a monkey or a man. Evolution is but an infidel dream. It has never been anything else.

There is, however, an altogether proper use of the term evolution as signifying the development of inherent potentialities. It is in this sense that we may properly speak of evolution in the life of the believer. In the family of God there are people in all stages of development. John indicates three: babes, young men, and fathers (1 John 2: 13). Divine life is in every member, but this life is not equally developed in all. As in the natural, so in the spiritual world, life as a rule is of slow development—the blade, the ear, then the full corn in the ear indicate this gradual development. So with man—the babe, the youth, the full-grown man.

The spiritual babes spoken of by John are those in the earliest development of the divine life in them, or those in whom, for some cause or other, life has not properly developed. We find representatives of this class in the Corinthians and the Hebrews. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ" (1 Cor. 3: 2, and Heb. 5: 12-14).

Carnality in the Corinthians was the cause of this arrested growth. In the Hebrews, it may have been the legality of a former dispensation. They remained in an infantile condition. Life was there, or supposed

to be, but there was lack of progress in divine things. An infantile condition is not to be despised—nay, how lovely is the innocent child—but when this undeveloped condition in the Christian is the effect of carnality, it is a sad and serious state.

Life gives capacity for the appropriation of food. Where there is no capacity for such appropriation, there is no life, or life is not functioning. Among the Corinthians and the Hebrews, there was capacity, but only for elementary truth. Paul says, "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able" (1 Cor. 3:2). "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Heb. 5: 13). A Christian thus proves his state by his capacity, or lack of it, for truth deeper than the first elements.

Growth is the result of the intake and assimilation of food. So it is with the Christian. "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2: 2). A new born babe craves milk. In this sense (of having appetite for the Word) we should always be babes. A child of God who has lost his relish for the Word is not in spiritual health. Oh, to maintain through life that keen relish for the Scriptures which characterizes one just born again! May the Christian watch against everything which would weaken or destroy his taste for holy things.

In another sense, the Christian should not remain a babe; he should grow; he should advance in the spirit-



ual life; there should be continual development, and growth is certain if there is real absorption of spiritual food. A steady appropriation of the means of growth—the Word of God with prayer—will result in the second stage of development—manhood. “I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one” (1 John 2: 14). There is now the strength of spiritual manhood. The infantile condition of weakness has developed into manhood. There is ability to cope with the forces of evil, to overcome the wicked one. It does not mean that there are no dangers for such. The apostle warns them against love of the world, and the things that are in it. But the word of God in them is a source of spiritual strength which enables them to overcome the world and its allurements.

The “fathers” in Christ represent a still more advanced stage of growth. John gives us what characterizes that state. “I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning” (1 John 2: 13). He repeats this statement in ver. 14 because Christ is the “fathers’” exclusive object; they covet nothing beyond this; they know Him intimately and do not need to be warned against false Christs as the babes are warned (chap. 2: 18-23); nor do they need to be cautioned against worldliness, as the young men. Christ fills their vision. They have intelligence to refuse all that is of the enemy. The world does not

attract because they possess what satisfies through occupation and communion with "Him that is from the beginning."

They have ability to take in the strong meat of the Word. "Strong meat belongs to them who are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5: 14). "Strong meat" is rendered in the Revised Version "solid food." It is in contrast to milk. It is for Christians whose spiritual senses have been exercised in divine things.

"Full age" is "perfect" in the margin; it represents a state of maturity in contrast to an infantile condition. In the first chapter to the Colossians the apostle presents the glories of Christ, and says: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect (full grown, mature) in Christ Jesus" (ver. 28). The Lord gives gifts to the Church to produce this state in God's people—"for the perfecting (maturing) of the saints" (Eph. 4: 12).

Fathers have not ceased to learn, but a state of maturity or ripeness is produced by the use of the Word and living in sweet intercourse with Christ. Having passed through the two preceding stages they have an experience which those in the other stages do not yet possess.

Let us look at the gradual development of the divine life, as Peter presents it, and note the spiritual qualities

which are unfolded. God's divine power, he says, "hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1: 3, 4). These "exceeding great and precious promises" must of course be laid hold of, that we may profit by them. As things in nature grow by laying hold of and appropriating what is suited for this, so it is in the spiritual life.

Speaking of the animal creation, the Psalmist says, "That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good" (Ps. 104: 28). Let the Christian do likewise—use what God has provided in His Word, and his soul shall be filled with good. Faith is the power by which the word of God is appropriated. The apostle says, "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Heb. 4: 2).

Peter sets before us the qualities of this divine nature developed by an assimilation of the Word of God through the exercise of faith. I quote the R. V. as being more exact here: "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge temperance; and in your temperance patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your

godliness love of the brethren; and in your love of the brethren love" (2 Pet. 1: 5-7).

We may well take lessons from the things in nature all around us. For instance, here is a magnificent oak tree. It had its beginning in a little acorn. It sprouted, it laid hold of the soil, drawing from it and absorbing the elements for its growth and full development; and now its stately form and strength draw out our admiration. What analogy we may observe in this to the spiritual life's development, laying hold of the word of God — nourished, strengthened, developed in knowledge by laying hold of the "exceeding great and precious promises," and, as says Peter, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 8).

We may pause at this point to examine a few texts in John's Gospel, which have been used by some to deny that Old Testament saints had eternal life.

In chapter 10, verse 10, the Lord says: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Apart from Christ's coming in flesh none could have life in any age. His coming and death were absolutely necessary for this. A corn of wheat must *die* or remain alone.

Old Testament believers received eternal life in the new birth, but they could not have it in abundance. We have already seen they were children, but under tutors and governors (*i. e.*, under the law in a state of

bondage—Gal. 4: 3). Moreover, there was not the full revelation of God in Christ, which was needed for the manifestation of this life in its true character and for its full and proper development. Thus our Lord says, “This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John 17: 3). There is a life *by which* we live, and the *practical or daily life* we live. The first is what is called potential life—life in its essence; the other is phenomenal or displayed life. The same distinction is to be made in *spiritual* life. We have divine life *in us*, imparted to us through the Holy Spirit. Communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ is essential for the full development of that life. This knowledge of the Father and the Son, and an accomplished work of redemption, the Old Testament saints did not have, and therefore the spiritual life in them lacked this full development. They could not grow beyond the revelation made known to them. They had life, but not in its full development, not in “abundance.” The abundant life in John 10: 10 is life in those who have been freed from the bondage of law to which the saints of the past dispensation were subject.

What a glorious dispensation it is in which we are living! Christ has passed through death, and is back in heaven. The believer has been quickened and raised with Christ, and is seated in the heavenlies in Christ. Bondage to the law is past, and in Christ we have the full, perfect manifestation of eternal life. The realiza-

tion of this by the Christian gives the life in him its full practical character. All the noble qualities which Peter enumerates are in embryo, in the life, from its inception, as the oak is in the acorn, or the man in the babe. It is the *development* of these qualities that Peter terms the "divine nature."

(5) *Characteristics by which the divine life is recognized by others.*

There are certain traits by which the new born soul is distinguished from one unregenerated. In the world of nature there is almost an endless variety of objects, animate and inanimate, each having its own distinguishing properties or characteristics: as a stone from a piece of iron, an apple tree from a cherry tree, a cat from a mouse, or a monkey from a man. In the same way we may distinguish a possessor of divine life from the one devoid of it.

Before presenting the distinguishing traits of the divine nature in the believer, as John gives them, I would refer to a fact which I have scarcely noticed thus far; it is that the person born again has two natures—"flesh" and "spirit" (John 3: 6). We may see these two natures exemplified in a grafted tree. All fruit upon the grafted part will be of the same kind as the graft; and all that grows below the graft will be like the old stock. James uses this very figure—God's word engrafted in the human soul: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive

with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1: 21).

The two natures remain in the believer throughout this present life, and this accounts for the mixture of good and evil that appears in the life of the people of God. Out of the same person come these different fruits. James, speaking of the tongue, says: "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, who are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh" (Jas. 3: 9-12). This anomaly is often seen in the child of God because of these two natures in him.

John in his first epistle does not dwell on the defects and blots that sometimes manifest themselves in a Christian. He refers, however, to Christ as Advocate, which implies that the Christian may fail. "He puts the Christian here before us characteristically. He does not bring in the blots and disfigurements, nor the imperfections, though he may warn against them. He is giving us a picture of Christianity—not of whatever foreign elements may still cleave to the Christian" (*Numerical Bible* on John 2).

Let us now present the characteristics that evidence the possession of the divine life in the child of God.

“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep his commandments” (1 John 2: 3). “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” (1 John 3: 10).

Obedience, righteousness, and love to brethren are the evidences of the possession of eternal life. Where there is a characteristic lack of these qualities, the life is lacking also. “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2: 4). “If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him” (1 John 2: 29). “He that loveth not his brother abideth in death” (1 John 3: 14).

John then gives the negative as well as the positive side. Some men may not have any specially vicious and injurious traits. All unregenerated men are not equally degraded. Many have some very good qualities viewed from a human standpoint, but they are not those that spring from the divine nature, as obedience to Christ’s commandments, righteousness measured by the divine standard, and love to those who belong to Christ. These things mark one as a new-born soul.

Having looked at eternal life as a new vitality in the soul of a child of God, it is important to notice that eternal life is also spoken of as something future. So we read, “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6: 22). In the



judgment to come God "will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality (*incorruption*, is the word, as referring to the body) eternal life" (Rom. 2: 7, 8). The righteous shall enter into life eternal (Matt. 25: 46). The preserved of Jews and Gentiles that go into the Millennium are said to receive life eternal (Luke 18: 30).

Some have inferred from these and similar texts that eternal life is not a present possession of the believer on Christ. But such texts, as, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John 3: 36), and, "He that believeth on Me *hath* everlasting life" (John 6: 47), are too clear and emphatic to be construed as teaching other than that the believer has it *now* as a present possession.

Some have affirmed that Old Testament saints had not eternal life, though they were born again. They seek to make a distinction between the life received in new birth and eternal life, saying that eternal life is always associated with faith in the Son of God lifted up. But eternal life was certainly possessed by believers in Christ before His death, as John the Baptist testifies, "He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life" (John 3: 36). The Lord Himself said before His crucifixion, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (John 5: 25). The believer in the Father who had sent

His Son, had passed from death unto life. He had eternal life then, as John 5: 24 shows.

The doctrine has been advanced by some that new birth is subjective, and eternal life is objective. But even this position is untenable in the face of such texts as John 5: 24, 25; 6: 53, 54, and 1 John 3: 15.

Eternal life is a new vitality (if the term is permitted) that God communicates to believers in all dispensations in new birth, in the power of which they live unto God.

If then the child of God has eternal life already, how can he enter into life eternal, as the texts quoted above teach? We must not be guilty of setting one text against another, and, as it were, make the Word of God contradict itself. But the world in its present state is not the sphere in which the believer can fully and unhinderedly enjoy the life he possesses. Divine life is here in contact and conflict with the forces of evil which rule in the world. Look at Christ, who was the Eternal Life in the world, the complete expression of it. Were not all the powers of evil against Him? The world and the devil combined marshalled all their forces to overthrow Him. His life was one of continual warfare; and when His work and ministry here were finished, they "killed the Prince of Life" (Acts 3: 15).

Such is the world in which the Christian lives. Such is his environment, a world that would not tolerate the Prince or Author of life, but cast Him out—crucified Him.

More than this. In Christ's case all the forces of evil were without, were in all His environments. In the case of the Christian there is an internal force of evil to guard against. To the end of his days here the sinful principle called in Scripture "the flesh" is in him. With these enemies against him, can he enjoy unmolested, undisturbed, the eternal life within him? Assuredly not!

And not only is the Christian in a wicked and hostile environment, but the degraded nature within is linked with an unredeemed body that belongs to a groaning creation (Rom. 8: 22, 23). Listen to Paul, speaking of his earthly house—his body, he says: "In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house from heaven. . . For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5: 2, 4). This mortal body, a temple of the Holy Spirit, shall be quickened by the Spirit of God (Rom. 8: 11). All that is mortal in it shall be "swallowed up of life"—another life than that by which the body now lives shall swallow up what is mortal. "This mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor. 15: 53).

I have been speaking of those who are alive when Christ comes, but the bodies of those who have fallen asleep shall be quickened from the grave: "The dead shall be raised incorruptible" (1 Cor. 15: 52).

So in this age, as in ages past, there are real hin-

drances to the *complete* enjoyment of eternal life; but the evil environment and other conditions will disappear when the Lord calls us up to be with Himself, and makes an end of our connection with this scene.

Let us now follow the happy possessors of eternal life to the world beyond, to which they are destined—to the Father's house, their eternal habitation. The Lord Himself comes and removes them from a world of woe and sin, and brings them into the place prepared for them (John 14: 2). They are in their own country, a "better country, that is, a heavenly" (Heb. 11: 16). They are in the city of which God is the architect and maker (Heb. 11: 10), the "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12: 22). This is their eternal home, the realm of life eternal.

How changed their condition! The "body of humiliation" (Phil. 3: 21, R.V.) has been changed to the likeness of Christ's glorious body. They have fully and for ever been conformed to Christ's likeness, spiritually, morally, physically. They are "forever with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4: 17), the eternal Lover of their souls; with Him in closest intimacy through an endless eternity! They are with the Father, whom they have learned to know and love through the Son (John 14: 6-11); with Him who in His eternal purpose planned this place for them. There too with the holy angels, who had ministered to them in their passage through the world. The eternal day has come for them, the day in which God is "all in all" (1 Cor. 15: 28).

The redeemed are in every respect perfect and in perfect surroundings. Christ, the "tree of life," is their food forever. They are in a world of life and holy surroundings "*where sin can never come.*" So we sing in anticipation,

"How will our eyes to see His face delight,  
Whose love has cheered us through the darksome night!  
How will our ears drink in His well-known voice,  
Whose faintest whispers make our soul rejoice!

"No stain within, no foes or snares around;  
No jarring notes shall there discordant sound;  
All pure without, all pure within the breast;  
No thorns to wound, no toil to mar our rest.

"If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love  
Lift our poor hearts this weary world above,  
If even here the taste of heavenly springs  
So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim sings,

"What will the sunshine of His glory prove?  
What the unmingled fulness of His love?  
What halleluiahs will His presence raise?  
What but *one loud eternal burst of praise!*"

The expression eternal life is applied also to the Millennial period, as already noted. If we look at that epoch in the light of prophecy, we learn that perfection will not characterize it. In Matt. 19: 28 the Lord terms it "the Regeneration." A new order of things will prevail then. Satan, the world's prince, is cast in

the abyss (Rev. 20: 3). The world, as a scene of lust and corruption, has given place to one characterized by righteousness and peace. The Messiah Himself rules to the ends of the earth (Ps. 72). It is true the people of God in the "age to come" will still have the sinful nature and mortal bodies; but what a difference when Satan shall be bound and the Prince of Peace reigns over the whole earth! Even unsaved men shall yield feigned obedience (Ps. 18: 44; 66: 3); and because of the greatness of the Messiah's power, evil will perhaps seldom manifest itself.

One can easily understand that hindrances to the enjoyment of eternal life will then be reduced to a minimum. The environments, though not perfect, will undoubtedly be righteous. Those that enter it will enter into life eternal (Matt. 25: 46; Mark 10: 30).

In closing I would say, What a wonderful treasure we possess in the Scriptures! It takes us back to the origin of all things. Genesis takes us back to the beginnings—the origins of all that has developed since, and the Book of Revelation brings us to their consummation with a glimpse of eternity!

The Bible is the key to nature's secrets. It is the key to history. John Müller, the greatest of modern historians wrote: "The Gospel is the fulfilment of every hope, the perfection of all philosophy, the interpreter of every revolution, the key to all the seeming contradictions in the physical and moral world: it is life and immortality. Since I have known the Saviour, every-

thing is clear to my eyes: with Him, there is no difficulty I cannot solve.”\*

This Bible, the Book of books, is now being widely discredited. Its divine origin is questioned everywhere. And what is offered in its place? Science, boastful science, infidel science. But the thoughts of men shall perish. “The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations” (Ps. 33: 11).

J. B. GOTTSHALL.

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\* History of the Reformation, by D'Aubigné.

# BY SAMUEL RIDOUT

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