

ETERNAL LIFE.

A LECTURE

BY THE LATE

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“This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ
whom Thou hast sent”—(John xvii. 3).

“The wages of sin is DEATH, but the *gift* of God is eternal LIFE through
Jesus Christ our Lord”—(Rom. vi. 32).

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

Eternal Life.

RESPECTED FRIENDS,—The object of to-night's lecture will be to exhibit the teaching of the apostles, as set forth in the New Testament, on the vital subject of eternal life.

It is very important to see that we cannot apprehend their teaching without apprehending their doctrine of eternal life. I can only make this manifest by inviting your attention to a few passages which you may have seen before, but which, nevertheless, in the present connection, may have an especial significance. I refer to such pregnant remarks as we find Paul making in 2 Tim. i. 1, where he first introduces himself to Timothy: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, *according to the promise of life* which is in Christ Jesus." In Titus i. 1, 2, he describes himself thus: "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ in hope of ETERNAL LIFE which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." The apostle John, in his first epistle, ii. 25, says: "*This is the promise* that he hath promised us, even ETERNAL LIFE." Jesus, in his prayer to his Father, recorded in John xvii. 2, says: "Thou hast given him (the Son) power over all flesh, *that he should give ETERNAL LIFE* to as many as Thou hast given him." I use these citations merely to introduce the fact which I think they make sufficiently obvious—that there is a doctrine appertaining to the apostolic system of truth, which, whatever may be our conceptions of the phrase, is defined as the doctrine of eternal life.

"SPEAK AS THE ORACLES OF GOD."

Now, we are exhorted by Peter to "speak *as the oracles of God*;" and we are told in Isa. viii, 20, that "if they speak not *according to this word*, it is because there is no light in them." It is, therefore, of very great moment that we should strive to ascertain the meaning of so essential a proposition as that appearing in the texts I have quoted, that the apostolic mission had reference to eternal life which has been promised; and that the apostleship that was entrusted to the hands

of John and the other apostles, was in accordance with this promise of eternal life, "which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Now, what is the idea expressed by those words! All words in the Scriptures are employed as the vehicles of ideas. The word is given for our instruction: of the word it is said, "It is a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path;" and it is said "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17). Paul tells us in Rom. xv. 4, that "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." Paul says the Scriptures are profitable, amongst other things, for "instruction." Now, how is this instruction communicated but by means of the words employed? This being so, how important to consider the meaning of this ever-recurring form of speech, of which I have given but one or two illustrations.

THE TEACHING OF THE PRESENT DAY.

Before pursuing this enquiry, let us realise for a moment what is the teaching of the present day with respect to this question of life. We are all familiar with it; we have all been taught that, by nature, we have a life that can never end; that we are immortal and cannot die; that as sure as we have come into existence, so surely must we always exist. Holding this idea, it is very natural when we read of eternal *life* to think of it as meaning the *condition* of those who are subjects of it, and not as having anything to do with the idea of existence or non-existence. In the same way, when we read of *death*, we are led to understand it as meaning a state of miserable existence, and not by any possibility as an ending of existence. In each case, the terms express to the popular mind the idea of *state*, not of being; condition, not existence.

"IMMORTAL SOUL" NOT IN THE SCRIPTURES.

The popular doctrine leading to this result is expressed by the phrase "immortality of the soul." Now, it is noticeable, to begin with, that this phrase is entirely absent from God's Word, nor do we come in contact with any form of words that has any affinity with the phrase. The expressions, "deathless spirit," "immortal soul," "never-dying soul," "immortal being," "never-dying creatures," are never found in the Scriptures. Some will, doubtless, be incredulous as to this fact. Most people, at the first impulse, declare that it is not true; that it would be easy to find many illustrations to the contrary. But, if they will set themselves to the task of finding them out, they will find my words are true—that *there are no such phrases*,

nor any proposition approaching to their meaning in any part of God's Word.

This, of itself, is a preliminary fact of the gravest moment ; and reasonable people will demand some explanation of the circumstance that a phrase which is continually in the mouths of religious teachers, a form of speech and a doctrine which are continually prominent in popular preaching, are not to be met with in the book to which they believe they owe their religious faith. Many attempts have been made to account for the absence of these phrases, but the reasons given for it are even worse than a simple admission of the fact.

ALLEGED REASONS FOR THE OMISSION.

It is said that the fact of man's natural immortality is so self-evident as to require no assertion ; that the doctrine is taken for granted throughout the course of divine revelation.

The first thought that occurs to the mind in reference to this suggestion is, that if self-evidence is the reason of silence on the part of inspired writers of divine truth, it ought to have operated in the same way with modern instructors. If prophets and apostles judged it unnecessary to speak of natural immortality, why should not ministers and clergymen ? Do modern teachers profess to be more wise than Christ and the apostles ?

In the next place, is the explanation a reasonable explanation ? Do we find God's Word dealing on the taking for granted principle with any part of divine truth, even the real self-evident part ? For if there is a self-evident doctrine in the whole range of divine truth it is the fact that God exists ; for, as Paul says in Rom. i. 19, "that which may be known of Him is manifest by the things that are visible." The Bible does not take for granted the fact that there is a God, but formally propounds to us the fact that there is such a Being as the Creator. No truth is more solemnly or more explicitly, or, I may say, more frequently brought forward.

Then, in the third place, the suggested explanation of the Bible's silence about the immortality of the soul is an impossible one ; for surely if the immortality of the soul be, as in our day it is made to be, the great reason for religion, can anyone imagine the original expounders of religion omitting it ? The writings of earnest religious writers, or the outpourings of impassioned preachers of our day, continually put forward man's immortality as the reason or the basis of their appeals. Well, we have discourses of the apostles on record ; we have letters written by them in our possession ; do we ever find them, either in speech or writing, mention this alleged fact as the reason

why they, as the apostles of Christ, should be attended to ? *Never ; not once.*

WHAT THE BIBLE DOES TEACH.

Well, now the question is, What do they teach ? What does Christ teach about Eternal Life ? What is the doctrine of Eternal Life taught in the Bible ?

In the first place, what is meant by "life ?" As the best way of obtaining an answer to this, let us consider what it teaches with respect to death.

A certain young man was invited by Christ to follow him, and the young man said, "Suffer me first to go and bury my father." Christ said, "Let the *dead* bury their *dead* ; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 60). Why did Jesus apply the term "dead" equally to corpses and living men ? There is a reason supplied in a statement of Paul's in Rom. iv. 17 : "God calleth those things *which be not* (but are to be) *as though they were.*" In principle, Christ spoke of living persons as dead, because they stood in relation to death as a thing that was to come. How did they become related to it ?

WHAT IS DEATH ?

You will find an answer in Rom. v. 12, where Paul says, "By one man *sin entered into the world and death by sin*, and so *death passed upon all men.*" Again, in 1 Cor. xv. 21, we read, "By man came death." What was the death that came by man ? If we can ascertain the facts connected with the man by whom death came, we can find out the nature and relation of death to ourselves, who have descended from him ; for we are nothing more nor less than Adam's individual being propagated ; and therefore sustaining in ourselves no higher relation to futurity than Adam when he was driven out of Eden.

Now, what was the sentence passed upon Adam ? We get a full, true, and correct account of it in Gen. iii. Let us look at the consequences that came by Adam's transgression, as defined in Divine words. Here are the words which define that which Paul calls "death ;" and you will find, before we get through the argument, that it is necessary to comprehend the Bible doctrine of death before we can understand the Bible doctrine of life. In Gen. iii. 19, we read, "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.*"

WHAT IS MAN ?

I ask anyone, skilled in the representation of the ordinary belief as regards the fate of the wicked, whether they can discern their con-

ception of that fate in these words, which define the consequences of sin, *i.e.*, whether the prevailing doctrine of hell is visible in those words. By no means. We see a very simple idea. God had made a certain living being whom He called "man." Now, what was he as made? According to ordinary conception, God created a certain invisible, immaterial, immortal intelligence, called man, into a body, that he might sustain a certain probation in that body, with this object, that if in that body the soul was disobedient, the soul, after being separated from the body, would be tormented; and that if obedient, it would be promoted to celestial spheres.

Now, what is the language of the oracles of God with regard to the constitution of the man created, and afterwards sentenced to death? The language is exceedingly simple, and highly intelligible. In the first place, we find that the material out of which this creature or being was made was not immaterial spirit, as the ordinary idea involves, but dust. For mark the language in Gen. ii. 7,—“The Lord God *formed man out of the dust of the ground*, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man”—the man made from the dust of the ground—“became a living soul.” First consider the meaning of the word “man.” What does it mean? Ask any minister or clergyman, and if he understands the Hebrew word, and be honest, he will tell you it means “dust,” “earth,” “clay;” which is the fact; so that the very generic name we bear as a race, is evidence of our extraction. We are extracted from the ground. And this is a point that Paul lays hold of in his comparison of Adam with Christ in I Cor. xv. 47: “The first man is *of the earth*, EARTHY: the second man is the Lord from Heaven.”

“THE BREATH OF LIFE.”

But some may suspect that the second statement of the verse bears a special significance favourable to the common idea, *viz.*, that “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” It may be imagined that this statement carries with it the idea that God put into the body formed from the ground, an immortal principle that subsequently constituted the immortal disembodiable man.

We have only to look at this suggestion in even a superficial manner to see its fallacy. The breath of life is not the man: it is simply the principle of life enabling the man to be. The correctness of this is shown by the fact that the animals possess the same life-giving principle. In Gen. vii. 15, we read thus: “They (the animals) went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh *wherein is the breath of life;*” so that the animals have the breath of life; whence it follows that either the breath of life does not give immor-

tality, or the beasts are immortal. The second conclusion will not be contended for. Therefore the first stands. All life is from God, and is never-ending or not, according as He wills, and not because of inherent quality. By one Creator is all creation sustained, and all life of man and beast. “In Him,” as Paul said, in speaking to the Athenians on Mars Hill, “we live, and move, and have our being; and He giveth to all life and breath and all things” (Acts xvii. 25-28). But the life and the breath are not the creatures, but the means of their existence. Look at this statement in Job xxxiv. 14-15, that, “If God were to gather unto Himself *His spirit and His breath*, all flesh would perish, and man would turn again unto dust.” When, therefore, we read that God breathed into man’s nostrils the breath of life, we are not to understand that God breathed into him an immortal principle, but merely that He breathed into him that which made him a living creature, as we shall presently see.

“A LIVING SOUL.”

Then some think, failing the second statement, that they find countenance for natural immortality in the third statement of the verse—*viz.*, that after the infusion of the life-energy expressed by the phrase “breath of life,” “man became a living soul.” The first remark upon this is, that a living soul is not necessarily an *ever-living* soul, for there is a great distinction between “living” and “ever-living.” The next remark is, that whatever this statement may mean, it is equally applicable to the inferior creatures, for it is applied to them in God’s word; and “if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,” and not in the language of philosophy, which is merely the reflex of the inductions of fallible intellect, which, acting upon abstractions, is more likely than not to make great mistakes.

In Gen. i. 21, it says: “God created great whales, and every *living creature* that moveth.” The words in the original are precisely the same as those applied to Adam (*nephesh chayiah*), and translated “living soul.” In fact, the translators of the Scriptures have been sufficiently cognizant of that fact, and have inserted in the margin (see verse 30) a statement to that effect. “To every beast of the earth, to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat.” In the margin, the translators give “living soul” for “life:” “every beast of the earth wherein there is a *living soul*.” Well, that is honest to the original words, for the original words are the same in both cases; and, therefore, if we find God using precisely the same language with regard to beast as to man in this case, obviously it would be inconsistent to conclude that the language proves something with regard to

man which is not true in regard to animals. The statement that Adam became a living soul, simply means that he became a living creature. If anyone contends that it means he became an immortal soul, he lays himself open to the rejoinder that the beasts became immortal souls as well, for the statement is equally applied to them.

THE REAL "ESTATE OF THE SONS OF MEN."

It is, doubtless, a displeasing idea, at first sight, that we should be brought down to this level; yet in searching for truth, we are not to consider what is pleasing. We are to open our eyes to the evidence. And here I will introduce an explicit declaration of the Bible affirming the very conclusion which results from the argument I have been using. I refer to Eccles. iii. 18, 19, where Solomon says: "I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts; for that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they all have one breath; so that a man *hath no pre-eminence above a beast*; for all is vanity: all go unto one place." Now you will observe these are the words of the Scriptures; they are not my words. I introduce them here simply as illustrating the scripturalness of the conclusion that I am seeking to deduce from the Bible account of the creation of man.

"DUST THOU ART."

Well, here is a creature of the ground, made in the image of God, placed in a garden, and given a commandment to obey—*forbidden to touch a certain tree in the midst of the garden*; that creature made of the earth, and animated by the life of God, but having a higher relation by reason of his affinity to the divine nature as regards mental capacity. What follows? That under seductions which we need not at present consider, Adam disobeys. Adam is then summoned into the divine presence to hear the consequences of his transgression defined to him; "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.*" This is what Paul styles death—a resolution of man into his original dust. But then people say, "But what becomes of the spirit in death?" I ask where was the spirit before life? Where was the spirit before Adam got it? Wherever it was thither it returns. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and *the spirit shall return to God who gave it*" (Eccles. xii. 7). Is that spirit Adam? No; for that spirit was in existence long before Adam was. Is the dust dissolved in death Adam? No; for the dust existed long before Adam. You must have

both combined in order to have Adam; if you dissolve the partnership between the dust and spirit which constitutes a man, you destroy him; death occurs.

THE PLACE AND NECESSITY OF RESURRECTION.

And here I should like to introduce THE RESURRECTION which was the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles. In the light of this view, how differently it stands from the position it occupies in popular theology! According to that theology, *we do not need a resurrection.* According to it, when we die we go to our reward; we go to join our friends in heaven; we go to enjoy the felicity of the heavenly state, and are lost in the joys of heaven. If it be so, if we mount on wings of angels to sing the song of the redeemed; if we enjoy to the full the delights of the divine presence, why should we come down from heaven to be re-united to a body which was a hindrance to our spiritual development? That has been a stumbling block to a great many people, who have thought it the stirrings of infidelity in their hearts. It gives a great handle to unbelief. You will find that sceptical men make use of it, and no wonder they make use of it, for it is a very incongruous thing, and strongly and instantly appears to any reasonable mind when attention is directed to it. Why should glorified immortals come back to earth? If they are happy in heaven with Christ, without a body, why should they ever have a body? If they are happy in heaven as disembodied spirits, the resurrection is no reward to them. They are independent of the resurrection.

AND OF JUDGMENT.

The case grows worse when you put in the fact that in connection with the resurrection there is a judgment. What can judgment have to do with saved immortals? What is the object of a judgment? Is it not to discern, to discriminate, to decide, to award? Doubtless. If so, wherein lies the fitness or the necessity for judging of people that are judged; a judging of those who are a long time before sent to heaven in order to see whether they should go there; a judging of those who are consigned to hell, to see whether they ought to have gone there? This increases the confusion.

The confusion vanishes instantly when you realise the idea that death is death. The resurrection then takes its place of beauty, and splendour and fitness. "Since by man came *death*, by man came also *the resurrection of the dead*" (1 Cor. xv. 21). From this antithesis, it follows that the death Paul had before his mind is the going into the grave. By man came death—the going into the grave; by man came the resurrection of the dead—the coming out of the grave. In this connection, we look at the statement that the wages of sin is death.

We go back to Genesis and see that it is so; for when Adam and Eve go out of Eden, we read in the sentence nothing about a state of misery after death, but simply that they were *to go back to the ground* from whence they were taken.

THE PLAIN TEACHING OF CHRIST—LAZARUS.

When we come to Christ's individual teaching—the teaching that came from his own lips—we see entire accordance. "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, *though he were dead, yet shall he live*" (John xi. 25). None can attach what is called a spiritual sense to this statement because the circumstances under which he made the statements, how the meaning of it. You will recollect that it was spoken in connection with the death of Lazarus (the brother of Mary and Martha), who had died while Christ was absent from Bethany. And as Christ approached Bethany, Martha came to meet him, and, plunged in deep grief, said unto him, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus said to Martha, by way of consolation, "Thy brother shall rise again." He did not say, "Thy brother Lazarus is now gone home;" but "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus then uttered the words I have quoted, which, by their connection, refer to literal resurrection.

To this literal resurrection you find Christ frequently referring as the time when men are to be dealt with according to their deeds. In John v. 28, 29, he said that the day would come when the dead would hear the voice of the Son of Man, "and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of condemnation;" the reward in the case of the righteous being connected with the resurrection, and the punishment of the wicked being connected with the resurrection. In Luke xiv. 13, 14, we read this exhortation of Christ: "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; . . . *for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,*" and in Matt. xvi. 27, Jesus says, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels: *and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*" THEN—*when he comes.* That agrees with what Paul says in 2 Tim. iv. 1: "The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

The same thing we discover in another way in Rev. xi. 18. At verse 15 we read: "The seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and he shall reign for ever

and ever." That time has not yet come; though there will be no time to speak upon this phase of the matter, but in connection with what we read, at the 18th verse: "The nations were angry and thy wrath is come, and *the time of the dead, THAT THEY SHOULD BE JUDGED, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints,* and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth;" intimating that the dead are not judged before that time (although ordinary theology teaches us that they are judged at death), and intimating that the prophets and the saints, and them that fear the name of God, are not rewarded until then, although, as we well know, the systems that we have been brought up under, distinctly teach that they are rewarded when they arrive at the death-state.

THE TEACHING OF THE APOSTLES.

The preaching of the apostles after Christ left them is characterised by the same doctrine: they point forward to the resurrection; they hope for the resurrection: they preach the resurrection. Look, for instance, at Acts iv. 1: "The captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came unto them (Peter and John, who were in the temple), being grieved that they taught the people, and *preached through Jesus THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.*" That was just the doctrine; that as by man had come death, by man would also come the resurrection of the dead.

And it was Paul's individual hope, for if you consider the argument he uses in 1 Cor. xv., you will see, among many striking things that confirm the view I am presenting, the fact that he was looking to the resurrection for the results of his labour as apostle. In that chapter, he first shows the importance of the resurrection doctrine by saying that if they denied the resurrection of the dead, there was no justification for them, for if Christ was not raised, their faith was vain. Secondly, that if there was no resurrection (verse 18), "then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished"; a conclusion which would not follow if ordinary ideas were true, for, according to ordinary ideas, those that are asleep in Christ, have gone to Christ, are in heaven, are safe, are saved—and, therefore, are quite independent of the resurrection. Then Paul says (verse 32), "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, *what advantageth it me IF THE DEAD RISE NOT?*" Showing that Paul looked to the raising of the dead for the salvation that he was looking for in connection with Christ. Now, suppose Paul had entertained ordinary ideas, how could he have used this argument? For, had he entertained ordinary ideas, he would have looked for a very great advantage when

he died, irrespective of the raising of the dead; he would have expected to go to heaven, to depart to glory, to join the host of the redeemed. But Paul here distinctly shows that he did not look for anything before the resurrection; he says, in effect, "If you take away the resurrection from me there is no advantage in my doing what I am doing; for I am looking to the resurrection for the great salvation." This is, indeed, almost what he says in Phil. iii. 11, where he thus defines the objects of all his labours: "If by any means I might attain unto *the resurrection of the dead.*" "If by any means." Do you find Christians of our day defining their spiritual aspirations in that mode? Not at all; they do not look forward to the resurrection as a matter of desire; they look forward to death.

APOSTOLIC COMFORT CONCERNING THE DEAD.

See how Paul confirms all this in what he writes on the subject of the dead, to a certain community that was gathered together by his instrumentality in Thessalonica. Certain of them had died, and the rest were mourning for them, and Paul writes to comfort them in their trouble. Now, look at the consolation as administered, and while you will find it in exact harmony with all his teachings, you will find it very dissimilar from the death consolation administered in our day from the pulpits.

In 1 Thess. iv. 13, he says: "I would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again,"—now observe that; it is very important to observe that, that the key-note of the consolation which he has to administer is the fact that Jesus died and rose again: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him"—or by means of him. "For this we say unto you"—here is the reason—"by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (or go before) them that are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first," that is, before the living are attended to. "Then," when the dead in Christ have risen, "we, who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

What words? That the Lord would come, that the dead would lose nothing by dying, because the living would not be admitted to Life Eternal until those that were dead were first awakened

from their sleep. Now, how is it that Paul, in administering this comfort concerning the dead, did not run in the groove of popular consolation? Why did not he tell the believers that they were to be comforted in reference to the dead by a contemplation of the fact that they were in heaven? That omission on Paul's part is explicable only on one principle, and that is the principle I have been exhibiting before you to-night—that Paul recognised the truth that man is by nature purely mortal, purely of the earth, earthly, and that Eternal Life—immortality—is a thing that is only brought within our reach in Christ, and to be conferred at the resurrection. As Paul says in Col. iii. 3: "Ye are dead," that is in themselves, "and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

Then John says: "This is the record, that God hath given to us 'eternal life,' and this life is *in His Son*" (1 John v. 11). This life is in His Son, not in us; we have no immortality in us; we are not immortal. Immortality has been revealed as a thing attainable by us through Christ; for observe the statement in 2 Tim. i. 10, that Christ "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light *through the gospel.*" And look at what Paul says in Rom. ii. 7, that God will give eternal life "to them who by patient continuance in well doing, *seek for glory, and honour and immortality.*" He there represents immortality as a thing to be sought for. It is a thing promised: "This is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life" (1 John ii. 25).

ETERNAL LIFE TO BESTOWED IN "THE AGE TO COME."

When does that life commence? Christ himself tells us when he says that any man that has lost his father, mother, brothers, houses, or lands "for my sake, shall receive manifold more, even in this present time," which was fulfilled,—"*AND IN THE WORLD TO COME life everlasting*" (Luke xviii. 30). Life everlasting as an actual bestowment is a thing reserved for his coming,—which enables us to understand that other statement in 1 Cor. xv. 53, where he says: "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." That is the Bible doctrine of immortality,—that is the thing that this mortal is to put on. Now we know that by "this mortal" Paul means this mortal body. It is this mortal body that is to put on immortality. The body, indeed, is a great thing in the New Testament writings; for just consider what Paul says in another place in dissuading them against a certain course of immoral conduct: "Know ye not that *your bodies* are members of Christ?" (1 Cor. vi. 16). Then again (1 Cor. xv. 44), "It is sown a natural body; it is

raised a spiritual body ;"—still a body, but a *spiritual body, like unto the Lord's*; as we read in Phil. iii. 20, 21, "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall *change our vile body*, that it may be fashioned LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY." And again, in Rom. viii. 23: "We who have the first fruits of the spirit groan within ourselves, *waiting for the adoption, to wit, the REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY.*"

"CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS."

Christ has a body; surely none will deny that. He has the body that he was crucified with. When he came forth from the tomb, he showed the marks of the nails in his hands, and the mark of the spear in his side, that they might be quite sure that he was the same Jesus; and not only so, but he asked them to handle him. "Handle me and see, for a spirit" (or phantom, or illusion, such as they thought he was, for they could not believe that he was the real Jesus), "hath not *flesh and bones*, as ye see me have." And it is said, "while they believed not for joy," being still incredulous, he said, "Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of a honeycomb, and he did eat before them" (Luke xxiv. 39, 43). Now Christ is the pattern after whom Christ's people are to be regenerated physically, according to the testimonies I have submitted, confirmed by John's testimony in 1 John iii. 1, 2, where he says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and *it doth not yet appear what we shall be*; but we know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM." "As we have borne the image of the earthy," says Paul, in 1 Cor. xv. 49, "*we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*," that is the second Adam—Christ.

THE "SPIRITUAL BODY."

We have borne the earthy nature of the first Adam, but all who are accepted of God through the faith in Christ will be privileged to be moulded or fashioned of the second Adam—the Lord from heaven; and he is a spiritual body. He ascended into heaven, and some people think that after he ceased to be the Lord Jesus the apostles had known, that his substance became ethereal, or immaterial, or invisible. This idea is inconsistent with the testimony of the angels, who said: "THIS SAME JESUS which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner*" (Acts i. 11); also with the testimony of Zechariah (xiii. 6), that "One shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? and he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." And the spirit of Christ

in the same prophet (xii. 10) says: "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." When Jesus comes again, it will be the same Christ that went away; therefore a bodily Jesus, a spiritual body, but a real body: for the spiritual body of the Bible—the body connected with the Bible doctrine of eternal life—is a more real body than the body of our present experience, for, as we know by experience, the present body has to be taken great care of to be kept in being at all. The neglect of food for a week would reveal to us the feebleness which is characteristic of this body. Or if we were to neglect the atmospheric conditions of our existence, we should soon die. There is great force in saying that "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field" (Isa. xl. 6).

But with the spiritual body it is different. When this corruptible has put on incorruptibility, it will no longer be like the grass; but, as Paul gives us to understand, it will be glorious, powerful, pure, enduring, beautiful. But all this is reserved for the coming of Christ, and will only be given to Christ's own people; for, in regard to the others, we are told that they that sow to the flesh shall of the flesh reap *corruption*; whilst they that sow to the Spirit, in accepting the Spirit's doctrines, and in obeying the Spirit's precepts, shall of the spirit reap *life everlasting*. But life everlasting is not to be reaped until the day of reaping. In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not, that is in the day of harvest, and the day of harvest is when Christ comes. "Behold, I come quickly," he says, "to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12).

The subject might be much extended. Indeed it is impossible in a single lecture to indicate anything like the length and breadth of it. What has been advanced will serve its purpose if it excites you to a study of the Bible. This is the only standard of wisdom in divine matters. Outside the Bible, all is speculation, including the philosophy of the ancients. Our only safety lies in holding hard and fast by God's word, trying all things by it; and if you test this doctrine of natural immortality by it, you will find yourself forced to a conclusion in opposition to accustomed thoughts. You will find that it is not a doctrine of the Spirit of God, but a doctrine of the natural mind, which has been generated by the speculations of natural men in past times.

PAUL versus PLATO.

It is a doctrine that was taught by the Pagan schools of Greece, and it is worthy of notice that its principal teacher, a Pagan philosopher—Plato—is looked upon as an authority on the subject by the religious teachers in our day. Whereas, when Paul had to do with philosophers his attitude was one of hostility to their teaching, for he

said: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. ii. 8); and "I fear lest . . . your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 3). The "simplicity" of the truth is one of its great objections with natural men, because it exalts God and debases man. It presents man as a poor mortal creature, under the operation of God's law, and shows that if he is to be immortal it must be by accepting the gift of eternal life at the hands of His Son, upon the simple conditions that He requires; and those simple conditions are humiliation, faith, and obedience; for except man humbleth himself as a little child, he shall in no case enter THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

As for the wisdom of this world, Paul says it is foolishness with God; and he says, "If a man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool"—that is, a fool in the estimation of people around—"that he may be wise" (1 Cor. iii. 18).

And now I must conclude. If what I have said serve to stimulate your minds to the consideration of these matters, and to look into God's Word for yourselves, the meeting to-night will not have been in vain.

(If this lecture interests you, and you desire to know and obey the truth, read "Christendom Astray"; and, above all, read the Bible daily. Tables for this purpose, and catalogue of Christadelphian Publications, may be had from the address on the first page hereof.)