

THE GIFT
OF
ETERNAL
LIFE

"HE who believes on the Son has life eternal; he who rejects the Son shall not see life; but the vengeance of God awaits him". (John 3 : 36).

The reading of this portion of the divine word must, I think, have impressed your minds with the conviction that the world is divided into two classes relatively to the Son of God; of which, the one is made up of believers of the Son, and the other of rejecters of the Son. Now this is true as it appears on the face of the record; but permit me to observe that the phrase "the world" must be taken in a limited sense. Jesus, in his discourse with Nicodemus, uses the expression frequently; and in John 3:17, says, "God has sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world may be saved by him". Now, if we were to insulate this verse from the surrounding context, we might conclude, that the whole world, without a single exception, would obtain eternal life; but the context is against such a conclusion, and teaches us that Jesus meant whosoever of the world that believes on him.

When, then, you say "the world is divided", etc., you, of course, would restrict the term to that world of men and women which was related to the Son; in other words, to those who had heard of the Son, and to whom the evidence of his divine character had been submitted. For it must commend itself to your rationality that a man cannot sustain the character of a rejecter of the Son who has never heard of such a personage; neither can he be regarded as a believer, unless it can be shown that men can believe in things of which they have no knowledge. You perceive then that there may exist a class of people who are neither believers nor rejecter*: now concerning this third class of the human family, Paul inquires: "How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed".

And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" No, it is impossible: for as the apostle says, "faith (or belief) cometh by hearing", and the hearing by the proclamation of the word of God. Law must be delivered to men before they can obey or disobey. "If", said Jesus, "I had not come and spoken unto them" — the Jews — "they had not had sin" — that is, they could not have committed the sin of rejecting me; "but now they have no excuse for their sin", because he had done among them such miracles as none other ever did. So that if Jesus had appeared among the Jews, and claimed to be their King from Heaven, and had done no miracles to sustain

that high pretension, they would not have been obnoxious to a deprivation of eternal life for rejecting him; their condemnation to eternal death must have been predicated on some other ground.

From these and other considerations, I affirm that the race of man is constituted of three classes in relation to the Pentecostal proclamation concerning the Son of God. First, of that class which believes on the Son; second, of that which rejects the Son; and third, of that which never heard of the Son of God.

Now, concerning the first class, John says that its members "have life eternal"; concerning the second: "they shall not see life"; and concerning the third, the principle laid down by Jesus is that God not having spoken to them, they will not be condemned for rejecting Him, as He had not put them to the proof; and Paul shows that they will not attain to eternal life, for he quotes the prophet Joel, who says that "Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved", and remarks, "How shall they call on him on whom they have neither believed nor heard?". No: from death this third class cannot be delivered or saved, as no means of escape therefrom has been propounded to them.

I wish now to rivet your attention upon the things of eternal life, and in doing so I would set before you this

FIRST PROPOSITION

Eternal Life is a matter of promise

By eternal is meant unending; by life is intended a full, perfect, and renewed manifestation of the intellectual, moral, and physical faculties or constituents of man; and by a matter of promise is signified a thing which is assured by a declaration previous to its possession; hence my proposition thus defined, will read as follows:—

The possession of intellectual, moral, and physical powers by man in full, perfect, renewed, and unending manifestation, is the subject of an assurance made previous to its realization.

Having stated to you my proposition, and having defined it with as much precision and simplicity of language as possible, I shall now present to you the proofs upon which it rests. Permit me, then, to direct your attention to the following passages of the Oracles of God.

1 — 2 Tim. 1:1.— Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, on account of the promise of life which is by Christ Jesus.

2 — Titus 1:2. — Paul, in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the times of the ages — who has now manifested His word (of promise), at the proper season, by the proclamation with which I am entrusted.

3 — Heb. 7:6. — Abraham holding the promises.

4 — Gal. 3:16. — To Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed — who is the Christ.

5 — 1 John 2 : 25. — This is the promise, which He has promised to us, even eternal life.

Now, from the first of our proofs we perceive that it was on account of this very promise that Paul was constituted an apostle of Jesus Christ. It teaches us that the life promised is by Jesus Christ; that is, that it was manifested by him. In a subsequent part of this chapter, Paul terms the promise the purpose and favour of God, "given before the times of the ages", and given too "through Jesus Christ", or the seed of Abraham (according to proof No. 4), "and now (in his day) made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ; who has indeed vanquished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the Gospel", of which Paul was appointed a herald and an apostle. Had not the promise of eternal life to "all the families of the earth" been made, there would have been no "Apostle and teacher of the Gentiles": for it was on account of this promise of life that he was appointed "by the will of God". Furthermore, he says that "the light which is the light of man" is developed in the Gospel, which he (Paul) preached; consequently, the gospel is the true interpretation of the promise of life made before the ages of the law.

My second proof sets forth the subject-matter of the promise as a thing of hope; his phrase is. in hope of "eternal life", and in Titus 3 : 7, he speaks of "Heirs according to the hope of eternal life". Now, as to hope, he says, in Rom. 8 : 24. "Hope that is attained is not (or ceases to be) hope; for who can hope for that which he enjoys? But if we hope for that which we do not enjoy, then with patience we wait for it".

As if he had said — If a man have immortality within him, he has attained to it. and is in the enjoyment of it; but if he is altogether mortal and corruptible, and he hope for it, then, with patience, he waits for it until it is conferred; for that which a man actually possesses, cannot, in. the nature of things, be to him a matter of hope. A man cannot, at one and the same time, be an immortal soul and "long for immortality"; the idea, though popular, is absurd.

But Paul says that eternal life becomes a matter of hope by virtue of a promise, which God made "before the times of the ages". But what period is thus indicated? It is agreed pretty generally that the times of the Mosaic law are signified, inasmuch as the period of that dispensation or constitution of things was distributed into ages of fifty years, termed jubilees. It was before the setting up of the kingdom of Israel, then, that God made the promise of eternal life. But it may be asked, how long before, and to whom did He make the promise? These are important queries, and ought to be answered with precision. Paul says, that the diatheke, will or promise, was made 430 years before the Law of Moses was delivered, and that it was made to Abraham and his seed, who is the Christ; see proof 4. Of these, Abraham, was the holder of the promise, and his seed, the Christ, the subject of the will; for Paul terms the promise—"the will concerning the Christ" — Diatheke eis Christon (Gal. 3: 15-17; Luke 22: 20; Heb. 10 : 10).

These phrases, then, "The will concerning the Christ" and "The promise of the eternal life", are one and the same; for the eternal life and the Christ are the same; for John in guarding his brethren against idols says, "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, that we might know him (the God) that is true; and we are in him that is true, in his son Jesus Christ: this is the true God (the Father) and the eternal life (his Son)" (1 John 5 : 20). Besides, Jesus styled himself "the life" as well as the way, the truth and the resurrection.

The promise of eternal life is recorded by Moses in Genesis, and is veiled in the following language, "All the land (of Palestine) which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. 13 : 14-17). "Unto thy seed I have given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates". This promise was sealed with the blood of an heifer, a she goat, and a ram, all of three years old: the duration of the ministry of the anointed Lamb before he was slain by the Jews. Thus was "the will ratified by God" (Gal. 3 : 17), 430 years before the law.

The promise was reiterated to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26 : 2, 3, 4; 28 : 3-4, 13-14), the son and grandson of Abraham. But it may be said, the phrase eternal life is not expressed in the will; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not, nor have they ever, possessed the land. This is true, but though the phrase is not expressed the thing is implied; and it is quite true that all these, and more! died in faith, or confidence of hope not having received the land with its rights, privileges, immunities, and appurtenances thereunto belonging (Heb. 11:13, 39).

But this incident forms the solution of the difficulty. Abraham died without possessing the land; and his seed, the Christ, came to his own land, but left it without acquiring possession thereof. Has God's promise to these personages failed? No, says Paul, for God who promised it cannot lie (Titus 1: 2). What, then, must happen, in order that the will may be administered, or the promise of God fulfilled? The answer is that the Christ must descend from heaven, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be raised from the dead to realize it (Matt. 8:11; Micah 7 : 20).

The subject of the proposition takes a wider range than I can describe at present. I shall therefore proceed to affirm my

SECOND PROPOSITION

The eternal life of man is deposited in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Life

PROOFS

1 — As the Father has life in himself, so has he given to the Son to have life in himself (John 5: 26).

2— O Jews! ye will not come to me that ye may obtain life (John 5 : 40).

3 — Jesus answered, I am the Bread of Life; which descended from heaven; whoso eats of this bread that I will give, shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world (John 6 : 35-51).

4—I am the resurrection and the life (John 11 : 24-25).

5 — Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then you shall also appear with him in glory (Col. 3 : 3-4).

6 — This is the testimony that God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has this life; and he who has not the Son of God has not this life (1 John 5: 11-12).

From these passages it is clear that, though a man may be an heir of eternal life, and in that sense have within him that which springs up to eternal life, yet the life itself is not an inherent principle of his nature, but one that may be acquired by virtue of an interest in the Son of God. He is the bread of life, and it is just as necessary to feed on that bread to live for ever, as it is to feed on the bread which perishes, to live the life of an animal man. Our first proof agrees with the doctrine of the word as revealed in John 1 : 1-5.

The word was God, and in it was life. This life word afterwards became incarnated, and was manifested to Israel by the baptism of John, as the Son, and therefore the equal with God; for the grand difference between the Word by whom all things were created and the Word which sojourned among the Jews, consisted not in their being essentially dissimilar, for they were not — they were one ("I and my Father are one") — but in the life-word Creator assuming in relation to men the nature of a descendant of Abraham. This assumption, however, made no difference as to the inherent attribute of life; hence, said Jesus, "as the Father has life in himself, so has He given to the son to have life in himself" — the Father the life-word incarnated.

The life-word incarnated, named Jesus by the life-word, was introduced among men as the fountain of life and light to the world. Hence in conversing with the Jews, he says, in effect, "You search the Scriptures to discover the way by which eternal life may be procured; now these testify that I am he who confers it; and yet you will not come to me, the fountain of living waters,

and drink that your thirst may be allayed; I am eternal life—in me the fulness, the favour, and the truth are incorporated; and yet, O Jews, you will not come to me that you may obtain the life you seek". But if they had within them immortality, why need they go to Jesus to obtain it? It would have been unnecessary; but inasmuch as there was no immortality — not one spark of it within them, if they would live for ever in any sense, they were imperatively bound to go to Him "who only hath immortality" to bestow, and obtain it on any terms He might deign to prescribe.

Messiah is the resurrection and the life; and no man can enter the presence of the Father unless he introduce him; and because he is the resurrection and the life, Paul told the Christians of Colosse that their life was hid with Christ in God. But if immortality is an inherent principle of human nature, how can it be said to be hid in Christ? It ought then to read our life is hid in ourselves! But in relation to the true believers, Christ the life is termed "our life", because all their hope for eternal life is embodied in him. Hence, he is called "Christ our hope". If he is not risen, their hope is vain, and when they die, they perish as the brutes. But he has risen from the dead and sits at the right hand of God, waiting until the time appointed for his return hither arrive; and "when Christ our life shall appear, then you also (O true believers)

shall appear with him in glory, honour, and immortality", and not one instant before. "We know", says John, "that when he shall appear, we shall be like him (glorious, honourable, and immortal) — we shall see him as he is. And every one who has this hope in him purifies himself even as he is pure". (1 John 3 : 2-3). The idea, then, of an immediate translation from earth to heaven at our animal decease is excluded; for the true believer is not to appear in glory till the appearance of Messiah on earth to raise the dead.

My sixth proof instructs us that God has given to the faithful eternal life; but that, although it says elsewhere that "he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life", yet John teaches in the proof before us, that this life is in the Son of God, and that it is he only who has the Son that has this life: for he emphatically declares, that he who has not the Son has not this life. If, then, this be true, it necessarily follows that the disobedient, the rejecters, and all who have not the Son, in the true scriptural sense, are destitute of all right, title, and property, in the life which endures for ever.

THIRD PROPOSITION

My third proposition, which seems, in the nature of things, to come next in order, is that —

Eternal life is the free gift of God.

By the phrase, free gift of God, is meant anything bestowed by God as a matter of grace or pure unmerited favour. And here are the

PROOFS

1 — Jesus said, "If you knew the gift of God, and who he is who says to you — Give me to drink; you would have asked him, and he would have given to you living water" (John 4 : 10).

2 — The gracious gift of God is everlasting life by Jesus Christ the Lord (Rom. 6 : 23).

3 — By grace are you saved through faith; and this thing not of yourselves; it is the gift of God (Eph. 2 : 8).

4— Constantly hope for the gift to be brought to you. at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1 : 13).

If then, eternal life be the free gift of God bestowed through Jesus Christ, it must surely be obvious to the meanest capacity that immortality is not inherent, or hereditarily derived from the animal Adam: and therefore, that immortality is a principle extraneous to the constitution of man, and consequently, if enjoyed by his race must be derived as a gift — a free and gracious gift from Him who alone has it to confer.

This gracious gift is an eternal reward, as the rejection of those who seek for it in their own way, instead of in the way appointed by God, will, with its concomitants, be to them an eternal punishment. It is a reward which Jesus will bring with him; as it is written, "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me", which, according to Paul, is "glory, honour, immortality, and peace" to every one who does well. Eternal life is styled a free gift; because God bestows it spontaneously — that is, of His own accord.

No one prompted Him; it is a gift which flows from His own pure benevolence and love of the race which He planted on this terrestrial ball. He saw the wretchedness into which the world was plunged; being moved, therefore, with compassion, He devised a scheme in conformity with the excellency of His own nature, by which to deliver it from that extinction which He foresaw would ultimately supervene if left to itself. It is written in the chapter we have read, "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on him, may not perish, but obtain eternal life". Let us, then, admire the goodness and philanthropy of God our Saviour for this unspeakable and inestimable gift, and lay hold on it likewise as the very anchor of Gospel hope.

FOURTH PROPOSITION

Eternal life, though the free gift of God, through Jesus Christ to the world, is nevertheless conditional.

This is my fourth proposition, and worthy of all attention. By conditional, I mean that it is obtainable on certain stipulated terms.

PROOFS

The proofs of this are innumerable; therefore, I shall content myself with a selection, as follows:

1 — Good teacher, what good must I do to obtain eternal life? Jesus answered — If you would enter into that life, keep the commandments (Matt. 19 : 16).

2 — He who shall believe (the gospel) and be immersed, shall be saved (Mark 16 : 16).

3 — Unless a man be born out of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3 : 5).

4 — Whosoever believes on the Son of Man shall not perish, but obtain eternal life (John 3 : 16).

5 — Whosoever shall drink the waters which I — Jesus — shall give him shall never thirst more; but the water which I shall give him, shall be in him a fountain springing up to everlasting life (John 4 : 14).

6 — He who hears my doctrine, and believes on Him who sent me, has eternal life, and shall not suffer condemnation, having passed from death unto life (John 5 : 24).

7 — This is the will of Him that sent me, that whosoever recognizes the Son, and believes on him, should obtain eternal life, and that I should raise him again at the last day (John 6 : 40).

8 — Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He that eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life; and I will raise him again at the last day (John 6 : 53).

9 — My sheep obey my voice. I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one wrest them out of my hand (John 10 : 27-28).

10 — Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes on me, though he were dead, shall live; and every one who lives and believes in me, shall not die in the age (John 11 : 25-26).

11—He who despises me and rejects my instructions, has that which condemns him. The doctrine which I have taught will condemn him at the last day. The Father who sent me has commanded me what I should enjoin, and what I should teach. And I know that this commandment is eternal life (John 12 : 48-50).

12 — O Father! Thou hast given the Son authority over all men, that he may bestow eternal life on all those whom thou hast given him. Now this is the life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ (the anointed) whom Thou hast sent (John 17 : 1-3).

13 — It was necessary that the message of God be first delivered to you (Jews); but since you thrust it away from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. And the Gentiles, hearing this, rejoiced, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life, believed (the word concerning it) (Acts 13 : 46-48).

14 — God first favourably regarded the Gentiles to take from among them a people for His name (Acts 15 : 14).

15 — The Gospel is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes (it); as it is written, "the just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1 : 16).

16 — God will render to everyone according to his works Eternal Life, indeed (He will render) to them who, by perseverance in well doing, seek glory, honour, and immortality (Rom. 2 : 7).

17 — If you live according to the flesh you shall die; but //, through the Spirit, you put to death the deeds of the body, you shall live (Rom. 8 : 13).

18 — This saying is true, that if we die with Christ, we shall also live with him (2 Tim. 2 : 11).

19 — The Son learned obedience by the things which he suffered, and being made perfect (by a resurrection from the dead), became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey him (Heb 5 : 9).

20 — You must persevere in doing the will of God, that you may obtain the promised reward (Heb. 10 : 36).

21 — He who does the will of God, continues for the age (1 John 2 : 17).

22 — No manslayer, or hater of his brother, has eternal life abiding in him (1 John 3:15).

23 — To him who conquers, I will give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God (Rev. 2 : 7). The conqueror shall not be injured by the second death (verse 11).

Now, I do not hesitate to say that these passages prove that eternal life is conditional, or obtainable by those who conform to certain fixed and unalterable stipulations. The expressions, "if", "he who", "unless", "whoever", "as many as", "to take from among", "to everyone who", "them who", "to them who", "that you may", and so forth, are all terms of condition. The reply of Jesus to the young man gives us the gist of the whole matter— "if you would enter into that life, keep the commandments". Now this; teaches us the truth positively; and if we can ascertain distinctly the

affirmative, we need be at no loss to determine what is the mind of God in relation to those who do not the things He requires.

If eternal life be conditional, none can possibly attain to it who either cannot or will not observe the terms upon which it is freely and graciously offered.

All mankind are born of corruptible parents into a state of sin. By this natural birth, they become members of this sinful and evil state, and heirs of its disabilities. By virtue of this birth, they are "constituted sinners", though they could not help, and had no hand in the matter. Now, one would think, there could exist no rational man who could affirm that if such a one were to die a "constituted sinner", without the offer of a means whereby he might change his state, he would be turned over to the pains and penalties of hell for ever.

Yet, such there are! But the truth is, that "constituted sinners" in such a state of helplessness are regarded in Scripture as living under "times of ignorance"; hence Paul said to the "constituted sinners" of Athens, "the time of this ignorance God hath winked at", or overlooked: and to those of Lycaonia, "God, in former generations, permitted all the nations to walk in their own ways".

Now, since the days of Noah, God has not delivered His laws to the world at large, but to sections of it in particular. Hence, He gave the law to Israel, a small and feeble people at the time; fifteen hundred years afterward. He proclaimed His law to the nations of the Roman Empire; and yet it remains for Him to deliver an authoritative proclamation to the nations of Chin-India, Central Asia, Hindustan, and so forth.

These are the proclamations which convert Times of Ignorance into Times of Knowledge. It is knowledge which makes a "constituted sinner" responsible for his sins; and if responsible, therefore, obnoxious to the vengeance of God, if he die unpardoned. When men are made acquainted with God's law, they can no longer plead ignorance as an excuse; for it then becomes a matter of their own choice, whether they will become "constituted righteous" persons, or "enlightened transgressors": for the knowledge of God's law renders it absolutely impossible for them any longer to remain merely "constituted sinners". It was "through the disobedience of one man (Adam), the many (his descendants, babes and adults) were constituted sinners"; and so it was "by

the obedience of the one (Christ), the many (or true believers) are constituted righteous".

In this life, then, there are two states in relation to God and the children of Adam—the one a state of sin, and the other a state of favour; the former is occupied by "constituted sinners" of all ages, from the babe to the old man, of every shade and variety —and by illuminated transgressors, whose sin is not only constitutional but voluntary; and the latter state is composed of persons who were not only constituted sinners and voluntary transgressors, but who, by obedience to the laws of God and to Christ, are constituted righteous.

In regard to the righteous, they are delivered from the fear of death, because, having obeyed the truth, they have passed from death to life; but this is not the case of the constituted sinners and intelligent transgressors. These are both under the sentence of death eternal, with this difference only, that the punishment of the constituted sinners is the common lot of man, aggravated by the demoniacal institutions of Idolatry Mahommedanism, etc., "ending in death" which is uninterrupted by a resurrection; whereas the actual transgressors who know the law, though subject to all this, are raised to judgment and the terrors of a second death, the eternal consummation of their woes.

It would occupy too much space at present to go into the doctrine of the several proofs in detail. In the general, they all concur in teaching, that God has set eternal life and eternal death before men and women living under Times of Knowledge; and that their destiny in relation thereto depends upon their own volition; that is, they will become heirs of eternal life, IF they will obey Him who is the life; or they will continue heirs of eternal death, with the super-addition of suffering, PREVIOUS to that catastrophe, IF they reject His claims to their obedience.

In our second proof, the Prince of Life says, "He that believes the Gospel and is baptized, shall be saved". Saved, salvation, and such like terms are often used in Scripture; and it will not be uninteresting to consider briefly in what sense these are employed. Paul says, that before Christ came, "Jews and

Gentiles were all under sin", and in another place, he says, that "the WAGES of sin is DEATH"; consequently, they were all under sentence of death.

Now this sentence was an inexorable one; and could not be set aside, so long as the cause of it, which was sin, remained in force. Being all under sin, they were, therefore, all under condemnation. Sin and death were the things of which they were all the subject; sin was the labour of their lives, and death the well-earned wages thereof. Jews and Gentiles were all fellow-labourers in evil, and therefore fellow-sufferers in all the calamities of life, and co-heirs of a common fate.

Now salvation in relation to these, it is clear, must have pertained to a deliverance from sin, and consequently from death; for to deliver a man from the cause of his sufferings is to remove those sufferings likewise; hence, to "take away the sin of the world" is to cancel its liability to the punishment due to sin, which is Eternal Death.

When, therefore, it says, "To him bear all the prophets witness, that everyone who believes into him, shall receive forgiveness of sins by his name", the sentence fails to be completed — and, as a consequence, he shall be saved from death eternal, the wages and punishment of sin. The salvation, then, promised in the Gospel, is a deliverance from sin and death. When therefore, it says, "He who shall believe the gospel and be baptized shall be saved", a proclamation is made that all believers of the Gospel who obey it, shall be delivered from sin and eternal death.

And here it is manifest that the proclamation promises deliverance to obedient believers only. It is "he who shall believe", etc.; nor does it stop here, for it declares that he who shall not believe the Gospel shall suffer condemnation, that is, the sentence of eternal death under which he lies shall be carried into effect. Again, "Unless a man be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God", in other words, he cannot enter Paradise. This condition is fixed and unalterable; this rule is the unrepealed statute of heaven, announced by the Great King, who shall reign in that kingdom, and proclaimed to the nations in the language of my second proof.

The heirs of Paradise, constituted such under the new institution, can only become heirs by submitting to this the spiritualisation of the kingdom of God.

The being begotten and born of the water by the word, is the passing from the sentence of death to the sentence of life, which says that such an one shall not suffer the condemnation of the second death — see proof 6. He who has thus passed from death to life, becomes by the transition a sheep of the flock of the Great Shepherd (proof 9); one of the people of God (proof 14); a well doer (proof 16); a subject of the author of eternal salvation (proof 19); a doer of the will of God (proof 21); etc.; and, therefore, entitled to all the blessings predicated of such characters.

The conditions, then, to which men are required to conform if they would live for ever, is, in general terms, to keep the commandments. This I say, is general, and applies equally to the past, the present, and the future. But this condition is resolvable into something more particular. Hence, the sentence fails to be completed, keep the commandments of the Divine Constitution under which you live.

Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had to keep the ordinances of the Patriarchal Constitution of Things; Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites, of the Sinaitic Law; the Jews and Gentiles of the Roman World after Pentecost, A.D. 33 and 41, the commandments of the New Institution; and the universal concourse of mankind will, from the coming of Christ to his kingdom, have to keep that law of love which is to proceed forth from Zion to every nation, tongue, kindred, tribe, and people of the inhabited earth, which is then to be "full of the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah as the waters that cover the depths of the sea". (Hab. 2 : 14).

But, we have more especially to do with the particular commandments of the times which are. We are to keep the commandments, if we would enter into that life which is eternal; and the first condition is, that we believe the Gospel, amend our lives, and be baptized, or buried in water into the death of Christ, that we may rise from it, not only begotten, but born of God; the second is contained in my sixteenth and twentieth proofs, and is, that every son of God persevere in doing His will, which doing is the true import of the phrase, "well-doing". By thus persevering till death, they become conquerors; and though they fall for a time, they will rise again to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God, according to proof 23.

These are the conditions, the fixed and unalterable stipulations, as immutable as the Immutable Himself, to which we must all conform, if we would enter into life by a resurrection from the dead. None has any part or lot in this salvation but the true believers; all others are excluded, physically, circumstantially, or by their own volition.

The world of terrestrial animated nature is but the crude materials out of which the Arch-Builder of all eternal mansions is erecting a superb and undecaying edifice. His materials are animal, and of these He is rearing a spiritual, or immortal and glorious architectural order. He incorporates the choice, the living stones into His building; but the worthless and the rubbish He casts away and destroys by burning. To become stones which will never wear away, we must be incorporated into the rock, and be subjected to the preparation of Him whose workmanship is perfect and complete.

In conclusion, the following are the corollaries which present themselves from the whole.

1 — In relation to life and death there are three classes of mankind; first, the true believers or heirs of eternal life; second, the unbelievers or rejecters of the truth, who are the heirs of the resurrection to suffer a fiery punishment which will end in eternal death, and, therefore, be an eternal punishment; and, third, the descendants of Adam, not yet placed under law, together with those who are physically incompetent of belief or obedience, and whose lot is consummated in death eternal, and undisturbed by future life or suffering.

2 — Eternal life being a matter of promise, it is bestowed only on those who can prove that the promise was made to them: in other words, a man to become immortal, must establish his identity as one of the heirs of the will concerning the Christ.

3 — Jesus must come again; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and others, must rise from the dead in order to realize the things promised to them in the will.

4 — Immortality is not an hereditary constituent of human nature, but a free and gracious gift of God superadded thereto; and laid up with Jesus Christ, as treasure in heaven, to be bestowed at his appearing.

5 — Eternal life is conferred on those only who conform to certain fixed conditions, namely, obedience to the Gospel preached by the Apostles, and a continuance in well-doing.

6 — Salvation, as a whole, is deliverance from sin and eternal death.

In conclusion, then, let us remember that our lot is cast, and, by virtue of the appointment of Him who marks out the boundaries of the nations, we are placed under times of knowledge, and, therefore, can have no excuse for disobedience. By His word handed down to us, with abundant evidence of its superior origin. He calls upon us to forsake the error of our ways, and to walk in that way, to seek that truth, and to pursue after that life which "the way, the truth, and the life" has delineated and procured.

"Behold", says he, "I come quickly, and my reward is with me; I will recompense to every man according as his work shall be". "Happy are they who keep his commandments, that they may have the privilege to eat of the tree of life: and they shall enter by the gates into the city". "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning star. And the spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is thirsty come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely". Here is a free and noble invitation from the Prince of Life. Who would not come and eat and drink, and live for ever?