

“CHRIST OUR LIFE,”

OR THE SCRIPTURE TESTIMONY CONCERNING IMMORTALITY.

BY A CLERGYMAN OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

“He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.”-1 John v. 12.

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If there be one blessing more than another, which the Scriptures agree in ascribing to Christ as its author, and for which the believer is taught that he is wholly indebted to Redemption, it is “IMMORTALITY.” For example, it is placed with “glory and honor,” as the great aim and object of the righteous:

“To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality.” (Rom. 2. 7.) It is that with which resurrection in vests the believer: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” (1 Cor. 15. 53, 54.) It is that which pre-eminently the Gospel reveals, and which Christ hath brought to light:

Who," says the apostle speaking of the Savior Jesus Christ, " hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel," (2 Tim. 1. 10) where it is to be observed, that " life and immortality are brought to light," not, as often asserted, in contradistinction to the comparative obscurity of the Old Testament revelations, but to death:—"Who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light;" namely, by his resurrection, as the " first-begotten from the dead," and "first-fruits of them that slept;" the beginning of that " victory" in which the passage last quoted has told us, " Death shall be finally swallowed up," when, at the resurrection of the redeemed, " this mortal shall have put on immortality." And, lastly, it is one of the distinguishing attributes of God, as it essentially and properly belongs to Him alone "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting." (1 Tim. 6. 15, 16.)

There are two words in the Greek original which we hart-slate " immortality," viz. Both are found in 1 Cor. 15. 63, .54, above quoted, where the former is rendered "immortality;" the latter " incorruption." The only other place in which it occurs is 1 Tim. 6. 16, " Who only hath immortality." The other instances in which it occurs are—

Equally exclusive is the application of " Life," and " Eternal Life," in the Scriptures, to God and the redeemed. In no one instance are the condemned said to have either, no more than immortality; while they are the usual and, if one may so speak, the favorite expressions for salvation; so much so, that in the language of the Bible there could not be a greater contradiction in terms than to say, The damned have immortality, or, The unbeliever shall have eternal life.

This being so, it must surely be regarded as a Rom. 2. 7, and 2 Tim. 1. 10, above quoted.

1 Cor. 15. 42, " It is raised in incorruption."

50, " Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

And Eph. 6. 24, and Titus, 2. 7, where used in a moral sense for purity, and rendered "sincerity."

Adjective.

Rom. 1. 23, " The glory of the incorruptible God."

1 Cor. 9. 25, " An incorruptible crown."

1 Cor. 15. 52, " The dead shall be raised incorruptible."

1 Tim. 1. 17, " To the King eternal, immortal."

1 Pet. 1. 4, " To an inheritance incorruptible," etc.

1 Pet. 1.23, " Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible."

1 Pet. 3. 4, " The hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible."

In all which it is to be observed the application is either to God, or that which is of God—his people, their inheritance, resurrection, and reward.

Strange circumstance that the popular creed should distinctly maintain the contrary opinion; and, though not in those words, yet unequivocally assert that the unbeliever and the damned have eternal life, and are immortal; that immortality or life eternal is just the one thing of all others which man does not owe to Christ, and for which he is not indebted to redemption, being already partaker of it by creation and natural constitution; and that accordingly the terms " life," "eternal life," and "immortality," cannot be used in their proper sense in Scripture (in which sense they apply to all), but are figurative expressions for happiness, glory, etc. as are the opposite terms, death, "second-death," "perdition," "perishing," and "destruction," also figurative; and so far from being used in their true and obvious sense, that they actually denote the very opposite; are intended to describe a condition of being—eternal life in other circumstances—immortality, but in a state of misery and suffering.

By creed, is not meant the confessions in our services called creeds, which, as well as the Articles of the Established Church, are, on this subject, not at all inconsistent with Scripture.

It is not the least of the evils which result from? such a system of interpretation—from such a way of " handling the Word of God," that on the same principle and by the same license, by which these terms are made figurative, every vestige of truth might be swept away from the pages of inspiration; for, whatever license we ourselves take in interpreting Scripture, we must allow the same to the infidel; and, if we say, that "death" means " life "—that " perishing" is a mode of existence, and that " destruction " means preservation, he may, with equal justice, invert the reasoning, and say, that " life " means " death;" and that incorruption and immortality are but glowing metaphors, denoting no more than what we mean when we speak of men immortalizing themselves by their actions, living in the memory of posterity, and so forth; but by no means implying actual existence beyond the grave, much less endless duration in another world.

It is not, however, the integrity of Scripture language only that is affected by our decision on the subject of immortality; but it may be truly said, that on the right apprehension of this one doctrine of revelation depends our having perfectly just and scriptural views of all its other doctrines—of the corruption of human nature—the person and divinity of Jesus Christ—the atonement—the office of the Spirit and regeneration—the union with Christ—the resurrection from the dead—the final judgment, together with the ultimate end or consummation of redemption. Of so many subjects it is needless to say, that it is not proposed, in these few pages, to treat. They can be but glanced at in endeavoring to exhibit the testimony of Scripture on the one point—the proofs of the one proposition, namely, That Christ is the Author of Immortality; or, as this proposition may, for sake of clearness, be subdivided:

1 THAT MAN IS NOT, BY CREATION OR NATURAL. CONSTITUTION, IMMORTAL.

2 THAT IMMORTALITY OR ETERNAL LIFE IS, IN THE PROPER SENSE OF THE WORDS, DERIVED TO MAN - ONLY THROUGH CHRIST.

3 THAT IT IS COMMUNICATED IN REGENERATION, AND IS IDENTICAL WITH THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN BELIEVERS.

4 THAT THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE THE GOSPEL, AND HAVE NOT THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST SHALL, FINALLY, BE DESTROYED, OR DIE AS TO ALL LIFE.

These propositions, it is proposed, as far as may be done, to consider separately; and THAT MAN IS NOT IMMORTAL BY CREATION OR NATURAL CONSTITUTION.

In seeking for proof of immortality as an original property or birth-right of man, it is natural that we should first look to the account of his creation; and here it must be confessed, that, in our translation, some countenance is, at first sight, given to the idea, when we read that " The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became A LIVING SOUL." (Gen. 2. 7.) Not that the words, "living soul" necessarily infer immortality, or the impossibility of dying; no more than does the declaration previously made, that " God made man in his own image" (chapter 1. 27); it being evident that he might be

made after the image or likeness of God morally speaking, in uprightness of principle and in knowledge, as well as in the dominion conferred on him, without being by constitution immortal. And such we have scriptural reason for saying were the points of likeness. Compare Gen. 1. 26, " Let us make man in our image after our likeness; and let them have dominion," etc. with Eccles. 7. 29, " God made man upright; and Coloss. 3. 10, " Renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." But the truth is, the distinction made by the words " living soul," first found, in our translation, in the account of man's creation, is only apparent; as in the original we find the very same words had been used several times before, in recording the creation of the various animals. For instance, Gen. 1. 20, " Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life (Heb. "living soul "). So verses 21 and 24, where we read " living creature," the Hebrew has "living soul;" as also verse 30, where we read " wherein there is life;" in two of which places (ver. 20 and 30) the margin gives the true reading.

Nor does the remaining part of the account of man's creation imply anything more of an immortal constitution. It says, that he was "formed of the dust of the ground," which fact is afterwards, as might be expected, quoted as descriptive of frailty and mortality. See the words of God, chap. 3. 19, " For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Again, Ps. 103. 14, " He knows our frame; He remembered that we are but dust;" followed by, "As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field so he flourished. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." (ver. 15, 16.) And again, 1 Cor. 15. 47, " The first man is OF THE EARTH, EARTHY." It is added, that, when so formed, "The Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." But we have already seen that the result was nothing more than had been realized in the creation of the other animals—that " man became a living soul," as they had successively become; though we must say, that if any difference in the kind of life was intended, here was the place to mark it, as our translators evidently wished to make the text do. But this expression also is afterwards used with respect to all the animal creation, in the account of the flood: Gen. 9. 21, 22, " And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that crept upon the earth, and every man: all in whose nostrils was the breath of life (Heb. and Marg. " the breath of the spirit of life ") of all that was in the dry land, died." And, like the preceding, is also made to indicate human frailty and perishableness: see Isaiah, 2. 22, " Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?"

But, are we left to the proof, however strong, inferred from the meaning of these expressions, that man was by creation mortal? or, have we not the express declaration of God that he was so? No sooner was man created than God placed him under a law, and what was its sanction? It was DEATH: " In the day thou eats thereof thou shalt surely DIE." (Gen. 3. 17.) But how could an immortal creature die? The contradiction in terms is plain. Nor is it enough (to say, as is usually said, that we must understand here only what is termed moral or spiritual death. For the sentence is a denunciation of punishment, not a declaration of a change of qualities or principles. We are bound to take the words as Adam himself would have taken them. He had been just constituted " a living soul," and to him the sentence would have been understood as though God had said to him, Live to me, or cease to live: a sentence which must have commended itself as equitable and just, but no more. There was in it nothing of severity, no inequality between the offence and its punishment: so far from it, that with respect to this first sentence, as to every subsequent sentence denounced in scripture against the sinner, our judgment responds to the appeal which God himself has condescended to make, else we should not dare to start the question—" Ye say the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?" Ezek. 18. 25.

It may indeed be objected that Adam did not die, did not cease to exist, on the day he transgressed. But why? Is it because death meant something else than death, and that in this meaning he did die that day? Or is it not because God timely interposed that remedy which now saves the believer from death? Strange that every Christian reader should not see this! ' Yet Adam died, and believers now die? Yes, but it is to prove the very thing the objection is meant to confute. To prove that life is now not from Adam, but from another—not from natural constitution, but from altogether a different source, the natural life is resigned by the believer;—the Christian dies naturally, that he may rise again to life spiritually; "It is sown a natural body, (that is, a body animated by natural life): " It is raised a spiritual body," (a body quickened by the Spirit.) " And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul:" (having only natural life:) " the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit," (endowing those who are in him with the life of the Spirit.) 1 Cor. 15. 44, 45.

The question, however, as to the meaning of the sentence is finally decided, and the argument from the creation or original constitution of man completely set aside by the reason given after the fall for his expulsion from paradise. " And the Lord God said, behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and LIVE FOR EVER. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." Gen. 3. 22-24.- That is, the Lord, in compassion to his creature, " in wrath remembering mercy," here timely interposes to save him from that to which the popular creed condemns him, to save him from perpetuating endlessly a life which in his fallen state could only be miserable. He had not originally made him immortal, and now he will not let him make himself so. This is very plain. Allegorical interpretation can do nothing here; unless it be to prove too much, and make an allegory of the fall and the whole narration. If the " tree of knowledge" be a reality, so is "the tree of life." If the former had physical properties (and we believe it had,) introducing disease and corruption and death into the system, so may the latter have had; but whether by physical property, or what ends in the same thing, the Divine appointment, the declaration is express, and so we leave

it—" Now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of LIFE, and eat and LIVE FOR EVER: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden."

#### IMMORTALITY OR "ETERNAL LIFE" IS, IN THE PROPER SENSE OF THE WORDS, DERIVED TO MAN ONLY THROUGH CHRIST.

That "the wages of sin is DEATH," we have seen, is the statement of the Scriptures from the beginning, as it is afterwards repeated in passages too numerous to quote: and, that this " death" is to be understood figuratively we have seen no reason to conclude; but, on the contrary, every reason to believe it literal, reasoning presumptively, or a pion, and also from the record of man's creation.

But admitting a question as to its meaning, and supposing that nothing could be decided by the words in which the sentence of condemnation is expressed, still we have another and decisive proof, liable to no such question. We have an appeal from the meaning of words to a fact, and that fact is THE ATONEMENT—the way in which the sentence has been averted, and sin expiated. The doctrine of the gospel is, that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, took our nature that he might "bear our iniquity;" that " the chastisement of our peace was laid on him," and that " with his stripes we are healed:" and it will be admitted, also, that it was as man he suffered for man—that though it is his being Son of God, and not merely man of Adam's race, that gave efficacy to his work—because it enabled him to volunteer obedience for others, which, were he only man, would be due from and for himself—yet that " being found in fashion as a man," and having condescended to be made " in the likeness of sinful flesh," it was in that capacity, in that fashion, form, and likeness of man, and, in a word, as man, that he became man's substitute. Substituted then for man, and suffering in his stead, what was it that he suffered, and by suffering of which he ATONED for our sin? The whole of his life, indeed, was suffering; but the question we are now concerned with is, What is that in the suffering of which Christ is declared to have made ATONEMENT? The answer is, his death: " he DIED, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God;" " God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ DIED for us," etc. etc. And what was " death," as suffered by him? Was it a figurative death he died? Or, was his death only a circumstance of the atonement, or, the atonement itself? These are questions which 'it should not be necessary to put to professing Christians; but recent experience has shown that there is too much occasion to press them. The Scriptures then answer that the atonement was made by the death—the literal, actual death of Christ on the cross. The whole series of types, from the beginning, had shown that reconciliation was by the shedding of the life's blood of the victim. The blood is the life, and therefore it was the atonement;41. and " without shedding of blood is no remission," whether under the law or gospel.

See Lev. 17. 11, 12, ,4 For the LIFE of the flesh is in the BLOOD: and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your SOULS: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood; neither shall any stranger that sojourned among you eat blood;---where it is remarkable that the word for the "souls" for which atonement is made, is the same in the original as for "the LIFE of the flesh, which is in the blood."

So Christ takes away the sin of the world, because he is " the LAMB of God;" and his " BLOOD" it is that " cleansed from all sin." " He hath washed us from our sins in his BLOOD." To quote more passages is needless: but what is the inference we are to draw as to the desert of man's sin, and the meaning of that " death" which is all through the Scriptures declared to be the wages of sin? That it is literal death. We learn this from the Cross; and we learn also the answer to a question which the popular creed leaves utterly without an answer, namely, How is the death of Christ a true and adequate atonement for sin? If the never-ending sufferings of a creature essentially immortal be the wages of sin, has Christ paid this penalty, and discharged the debt of justice? Palpably not. He has paid no such penalty. Nor is it enough to say, (as is usually said,) that his divine nature made a few hours of his suffering equivalent to an eternity of the suffering of an immortal soul. The statement is a mere evasion, and departs from the verity both of Christ's humanity, and of the Scripture doctrine of atonement; which, let it be repeated, is, that Christ Jesus took human nature, and "was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death;" that he died as man for men, and that his death is the atonement. As he took the verity of human nature, he had an immortal human soul, f the human soul be, immortal; and if the soul in those for whom he vouchsafed to substitute himself were under the sentence of endive; suffering, then did he make his soul liable- to the same: whereas we find, that after three days he was raised again.; his humiliation and sufferings all. over, and the atonement and our justification completed.

It may, indeed, he said that this, his resurrection from the dead, and living again as man, is equally against the sentence he bore being literal death, a ceasing for ever to live. The answer to this, how. ever, is obvious, viz. that Christ was raised from the dead, not in the power of natural life, but of his divine life—that life which was not forfeited, because not originally possessed by man; but with which human nature was endowed in the person of. Christ, when he was conceived by the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, his resurrection is proof that he is " Son of God," and not the consequence, much less the proof of his humanity. " He was," says the apostle, " made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son OF GOD with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead;" (Rom. 1. 3, 4,) where his resurrection is referable to "the Spirit," which dwelt in Christ without measure,—is the reasserting of the divine life in him, not of that which is natural, or merely human. To have done this last, to have lived again in the power of natural, or merely human life, would have been an evasion of the sentence of death, which, as it respects man without divine life—without any other resource—is final and irrevocable. But this did not Jesus; as, blessed he God, he is one who " has life in himself;" and who, therefore, having died, now lives again.

Another objection which may be made is, that in this view of the atonement it as much precludes any suffering after death from forming part of the sinner's sentence and condemnation, as an infinite duration of suffering; inasmuch as Christ did not suffer the one no more than the other.

It is, indeed, admitted and distinctly recognized as a most important truth of Scripture, that there is suffering after death, in the instances of the damned: that they live after their departure from this life until that event emphatically called " the second death." (Rev. 20. 6, 14.) But while a state of intermediate suffering between the first and second death is thus distinctly here admitted, it is at the same time denied, first, that this after-existence is a consequence, still less a proof, of constitutional immortality in man: and, secondly, that it is any part of the " wages of sin," or of the sentence which Christ died to expiate. No: it is asserted without fear of refutation, that this is ever in Scripture spoken of as a special condemnation awarded to those who are unbelievers—" who received not the love of the truth that they might be saved,"—who have heard, but " have not obeyed, the gospel of Christ." (Compare Mark, 16. 15, 16; Acts, 17. 30, 31; 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9, and 2. 12.) Even the rich man in the parable, who " lifted up his eyes in hell," had been a despiser of the word of God—had, with his five brethren, refused to hear " Moses and the Prophets;" and, being the sentence of those who disown the Redeemer, no one ever was redeemed from it. It presupposes the atonement; and therefore could not be the object of it. Thus far, then, as to the reason why Christ did not endure this suffering.

But still it may be said, ' Granting this,—allowing that this is the condemnation only of the aggravated sin of unbelief, why may it not be, for the same reason, an infinite sentence? For, if life be prolonged for a limited period for the suffering of this punishment, why not endlessly?' Certainly there is no reason why not, if God willed it. There is no impossibility in the case; for, "with God nothing is impossible." But is it so stated in the word of God? This is the only question we have now to answer: for, the presumptive argument on which it will be found that most persons build the opinion, namely, that it must be so because man is by nature immortal, has been shown to be without foundation in Scripture, and directly opposed to the doctrine of atonement and sacrifice. Before, however, coming to the passages which reveal the sentence of the condemned, (which are given in another section,) there is one other proof connected with the atonement that should not be passed over, viz.:

2. That the salvation effected by it is most commonly expressed in terms, which, according to the popular doctrine of immortality, have no meaning; such as the word "IMMORTALITY" itself, "LIFE," and "ETERNAL LIFE."

The passages in which the first of these terms occurs, have been already given; and it has been seen that it is exclusively applied to those who are saved, and spoken of in a way utterly inconsistent with the supposition that all are immortal. Thus; in one of them, the apostle describes the righteous as "seeking for immortality." But, wherefore should a creature seek for immortality who is already immortal? Again, " Christ hath brought life and immortality to light by the gospel;" but both of these, the popular creed says, the damned have, as well as the saved, independent of either Christ or the gospel—by natural constitution I etc.

LIFE is another expression for the benefits of Christ's death, and also used by itself, without any word of qualification. For example, we read—

John, 1. 4, " In him" (Christ) " was LIFE, and the LIFE was the light of men." Comp. 1 John, 1. 1, 2.

John, 5. 40, " Ye will not come unto me that ye might have LIFE."

John, 6. 33, " The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth LIFE unto the world."

John, 20. 31, "That believing ye might have LIFE through his name."

Acts, 3. 15, " And killed the Prince of LIFE, whom God bath raised from the dead."

Rom. 5. 17, " Shall reign in LIFE by one, Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 18," The free gift came upon all men to justification of LIFE."

2 Cor. 2. 16, " To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of LIFE unto LIFE."

2 Tim. 1. 1, " The promise of LIFE in Christ Jesus."

1 Pet. 3. 7, " Being heirs together of the grace of LIFE."

1 John, 5. 12, " He that hath the Son hath LIFE, and he that hath not the Son HAS NOT LIFE."

Compare 1 John, 2. 17, " He that doeth the will of God, abideth forever."

Now what is the meaning of "Life," in all these passages? and why, of all words, is it thus selected to express the first of all the blessings of redemption, if all have life by nature, life in its fullest extent, immortal life? and, above all, how are we to receive the last of these sayings—"He that hath the Son hath life; and HE THAT HAS NOT THE SON HAS NOT LIFE." Shall We give it a positive contradiction, and read it,—He that hath the Son hath life, and so has he that hath not the Son It is easy to say, that life is not here meant by life? And, why then (with reverence we would ask)—why did not God say what he meant? Why, since all have life, do we not find the difference of the life marked (as was so easy to do) by some such qualifying terms as a 'blessed' life and a 'miserable life?' Much is said about the Scriptures abounding in figurative language. But unless it be maintained that the whole is figurative, and that words are nowhere used in their plain meaning, these passages must be excepted: as it cannot be said they are taken from the poetical books, or quoted out, of contexts couched in allegory, or symbolical in their structure. Moreover, as has been before observed, this term "LIFE," like "Immortality" is nowhere predicated of the lost.

Again, "ETERNAL LIFE" is another frequent expression for salvation. It is unnecessary to quote the passages; but, when we read,— "the wages of sin is DEATH; but the gift of God is ETERNAL LIFE, through Jesus Christ our Lord," (Rom 6.23,) where, it is again asked, is the sense of saying, that the gift of God through Jesus Christ is that which all men have already? And, what is the meaning of "eternal life" in this passage? With what is it placed in contrast? With "DEATH:" and therefore we conclude that "life" means life, or else we have a double metaphor in this most simple of all scripture declarations. And, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not PERISH, but have EVERLASTING LIFE:"—What would the writer of a dictionary of Scripture terms say, is the meaning of "everlasting life" in this passage, according to the rules of sound and honest interpretation? That being contrasted with "perish," it must be understood literally; unless "to perish" be to live everlastingly, and then there is no contrast in the passage.\* Accordingly, Dr. Johnson says that to PERISH, 'to die,' 'be destroyed, lost, come to nothing;' and then on the word DESTRUCTION, says—, in theology, eternal death.'

But enough: the language of Scripture in the most emphatic declarations of the Gospel, confirms the proof afforded by the death of Christ—that "He is our life" in every sense of the word: and we now come to the statement concerning the communication of this life:—viz.

### 3, That It Is Communicated In Regeneration, And Is Identical With The Indwelling Of The Spirit Of Christ In Believers.

If man were by natural constitution possessed of immortality or eternal life, then would we expect to find the Scriptures insisting only on a modification of that life—a change of its dispositions and new direction of its powers, as necessary to his seeing the kingdom of God. Whereas, if it be true that immortal life is altogether distinct from natural life—a new life and from another source, then, on the other hand, we would expect to hear of a new generation, and to find it written that "except a man be BORN AGAIN he cannot see the kingdom of God." In other words, we would expect to find not merely conversion, or repentance, but REGENERATION insisted on in the Scriptures as necessary to our partaking of everlasting life. Now what is the fact? That the Scriptures, teaching that immortality is only through Christ, and is in fact the life of God,—of Him "who only hath immortality,"—participated by the redeemed, teach also the doctrine of regeneration by the Spirit of God, an actual communication of the Spirit as the commencement of a new life, as that life in itself; whereas the popular creed teaching that man has eternal life by nature, has been constrained to explain regeneration in such way as reconciles it with this persuasion,—to make it identical with conversion, and a change of heart or affection, which is in fact to deny that there is any such thing as regeneration, strictly speaking; and to interpret it as a metaphor, 'a bold figure of speech,' as it has actually been called! This is indeed a serious difference; and it is hoped that no Christian reader will think, that to inquire which is true is involving him in a question either speculative or unprofitable.

When, then, the Lord told Nicodemus the necessity for regeneration, that "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," (John 3.) and found that he understood him to speak literally of a new or second birth, how did he answer him? Did he say that he had only used the expression figuratively for conversion to God or genuine repentance? Had he so said, there is no doubt he would have at once set to rest all the doubts, and removed all the difficulties of the inquiring ruler; for we cannot suppose a Jew, and especially "a ruler of the Jews," and "a Pharisee," to be perplexed and confounded at hearing of the necessity for conversion or true repentance—doctrines which had been inculcated in every page of the prophets. But no: The answer which Jesus gave him left his difficulty where it was, if it did not increase it. He corrected his misconception, but how? not by saying that he did not mean a literal new or second birth, but that it was not, as Nicodemus thought, a second birth after the flesh, a second birth of natural Nicodemus saith unto him, how can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Here for the words "born again," which he had first used, he substitutes "born of the Spirit:" and is the meaning of this only, that he still speaks of conversion, but adds that the influence of the Spirit is necessary to produce it? If so, it is still as unaccountable as ever that his hearer's amazement should remain. But the following words show what he meant. "That (he continues) which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." As if he had said, "Your mistake is in taking the second birth to be after the flesh; it is a birth of the Spirit; and these two are utterly distinct—the one constituting man a child of Adam; the other constituting him literally and truly a child of God—a partaker of the Divine nature." This indeed was as great a difficulty as ever to Nicodemus; he, answers, "how can these things be?" and so do many Christians still answer, who are more inexcusable; for if a master of Israel

might have, been prepared for this disclosure by the promises of the Spirit to be found in the prophets, how intelligible should it be to us who live after the promise has been fulfilled—who live in the dispensation of the Spirit.

The passages which teach an indwelling of the Spirit of God, and not merely an influence, as is now generally taught, are too numerous to quote. But what we have to shew is, that with this Spirit is connected immortality—that the Holy Ghost is truly, in the words of the Nicene creed, 'The Lord and giver of LIFE?' This indeed may be considered to be decided by the apostle Peter, who speaking of regeneration, says it is a birth of "incorruptible seed." See 1 Pet. 1. 23-25,— "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which LIVETH and ABIDETH FOR EVER. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass: the grass withered, and the flower thereof falls away, but the word of the Lord ENI)URETH FOR EVER, and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." Here are two things to be noted—1st. That man is declared to be born of "CORRUPTIBLE seed," equivalent to "born of the flesh" in our Lord's discourse just quoted; and the comment given on this is, "for all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass: the grass withered, and the flower thereof falls away."—2nd. That believers are "born again of INCORRUPTIBLE seed," a word which in its strict meaning, (as before-remarked,) says nothing of the saved that is not equally true of the lost, according to prevailing opinion; but which is here applied to the regenerate alone, and in its strict meaning, as appears from its being immediately added "by the word of God which lives and abideth forever,"—which is the comment on "incorruptible;" as "all flesh is grass, etc. is the comment on "corruptible:" and thus is "incorruptibility" and "living and abiding forever," (in other words "immortality,") connected with "regeneration." Compare also Gal. 6, 8, "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

But the great proof that immortality is identical with the indwelling Spirit of Christ, or regeneration, is in the connection ever stated in Scripture between this truth and the resurrection—that is the resurrection of the believer,— "the Resurrection of LIFE," as it is emphatically called.

It has been already noticed that the resurrection of Christ himself is said to have been "according to the SPIRIT OF HOLINESS," while by it he was "declared to be "the SON OF GOD with power." (Rom. 1. 4.) In other words, that it was not in the power of natural life that he was raised, but in the power of the divine, and as having the Spirit "without measure." So we are told, it was as "the HOLY ONE of God"—the name that implies the Spirit resting on and dwelling in him—that "he saw no corruption." And the Apostle Peter says, that when "put to death in the flesh, he was quickened (made alive) in the Spirit." (1 Pet. 3. 18.) From which—as well as from the fact that the atonement consisted in, and was completed at his death—we learn, that the soul of Christ, which otherwise never would have revived, was quickened by the Spirit after having died: that is—according to the original sentence denounced against man's sin, the human soul of Christ died at the same time with his body: the natural life originally conferred on Adam, which constituted him "a living soul," and which was forfeited by his transgression, was completely resigned by the Redeemer; and when he lived again in soul and body, and rose from the dead, he was, as to both, quickened by the Spirit.

Now, of this resurrection life of Christ believers become partakers in regeneration, which is actually the operation of the same power in them by which Christ was raised. So we read, Ephes. 1. 19, "That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power towards us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead," etc. And again, "hath quickened us together with Christ," (ch. 2. 5.) Not, as is commonly said, that the Spirit of God was purchased by Christ, 'to do another work for the believer, which formed no part of his; but that it is the very life of Christ imparted to, and participated in; by the regenerate—hence denominated, "the Spirit of Christ," and "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus;" and thus giving reality to another blessed truth of Scripture, which is also now treated as an allegory, in common with regeneration—namely, "THE UNION WITH CHRIST." Accordingly, as in Christ, so in the regenerate, the Spirit is the earnest of resurrection. So reasons the apostle, Rom. 8. 11, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by (or, "because of"—marg.) his Spirit that dwelleth in you:" in agreement with a statement of the same apostle before quoted, in the chapter which treats of the resurrection of, believers—"The first man Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made A QUICKENING SPIRIT."

This truth is recognized, not only in the Nicene creed, (as before mentioned,) where we say, I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life;' but also in the Communion Service of the Established Church, when the communicant, in receiving the emblems of the body and blood of Christ, is addressed in the words, The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,—and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee—preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life:' where the doctrine that everlasting life is from Christ, and is not a property of either body or soul, is maintained truly; as also The union with Christ," as symbolized by the same ordinance; by which its full meaning is declared in op-position to the common error—that the Lord's Supper is only a memorial, or commemorative observance.

But (it will be said) do not the unregenerate rise as well as the regenerate, and does not this altogether set aside the argument for the exclusive possession of immortal life by the redeemed, drawn either from regeneration or resurrection?" True: the unregenerate do rise, but mere resurrection is no proof of immortality, though they are generally treated as identical. Lazarus, and many others mentioned in Scripture, were raised from the dead, were restored to life, and yet died again in course of time. And why? Because they were restored only to natural life, and natural life is mortal life. And so, in order that all may appear before the judgment seat of

Christ, it is declared by him (John 5. 29,) that " the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of LIFE," (another of those remarkable passages where "Life," simply and by itself, is used to mark the great distinction between the saved and lost;—) " and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation;" where " damnation" being opposed to " life" teaches us that whatever be the previous sufferings of the damned, or of however long duration, DEATH is their ultimate destination. So Christ marks the distinction between "resurrection" and "life," when he says (John 11. 25.) " I am the resurrection and the life." Why add " life" to " resurrection?" Because there is a resurrection, not to life, but with a view to " second death;" and so he proceeds to state, that to the believer only is He revealed in this character:—" I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whoso-ever lives and believeth in me shall never die."

Precious truth by which indeed the sting of death is drawn—that the believer's life is the life of Christ; and " because Christ lives he shall live also!"

It is only necessary to add on this head, that here we discover the true reason why man once saved can never again fall. Because it is the life of Christ, the life "hid with Christ in God," of which he is made partaker: "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." This life Adam had not. He had but the perfection of creature-life. He was the head of natural life only. And therefore he fell: But, "saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation," the believer now stands to fall no more; he lives now to die no more; not only as being perfectly justified, and cleansed by the blood of Christ from all sin; but as being partaker of divine life —of a new spirit which " sins not, because born of God:" to which " there is no condemnation," because there attaches, there can attach to it, no charge of guilt, no defilement; and to which spirit when the flesh is conformed, by that which is sown a natural body being raised a spiritual body, the believer will be wholly perfect, will be pure with the purity of God.

And this brings us to the last statement proposed to be proved respecting the fate of those finally lost—viz.

4.—That Those Who Do Not Believe The Gospel And Have Not The Spirit Of Christ Shall, Finally, Be Destroyed, Or Die As To All Life.

That a state of suffering after this life awaits those who " obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," has already been allowed to be a truth most clearly revealed in Scripture; and it has been also stated that it is spoken of as a special condemnation, awarded to those who when "light has come into the world, have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." To them are adjudged the torments of hell—and the " everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. 25. 41.

The only question then that remains is—whether this be a suffering without end, to which no revolution of time, no change of dispensation sets a limit; to which no period is affixed? The answer is anticipated: it will be said, Has not the sentence of Scripture just quoted decided it? Is it not expressly declared by our Lord himself, that the cursed "depart into EVERLASTING fire, prepared for the " devil and his angels?" And more: do we not read at the close of the same passage, verse 46, "these "shall go away into EVERLASTING punishment; but " the righteous into life ETERNAL?" where the same word is used in the original to describe the duration of the " punishment," and of " the life"

The objection is admitted in its full force, but still is it far from being as decisive as it at first appears. To meet an objection by a criticism, or an appeal from the translation to the original, is we are aware always looked upon with suspicion, especially by the mere English reader, who immediately conceives there is an attempt made to impose on him. And the suspicion is commendable as far as it acts as a check on that criticism, falsely so called, which is a mere passion for new translating. But it will sometimes happen that owing to the various applications which the original word bears, variety of translation is necessary; and in the present instance our translators are themselves our authority for saying that the word here rendered "everlasting" and "eternal," has not always the absolute signification of infinity. The following is quoted from Observations subjoined to Scarlett's Translation of the New Testament, and, as a matter of fact, stands independent of that author's opinions,— The substantive occurs 128 times in the Greek Testament: viz. 66 times in the singular, and 62 times in the plural number. In our common translation it is rendered 72 times ever; twice eternal; 36 times world; seven times never; three times evermore; twice worlds; twice ages; once course; once world without end , and twice it is passed over without any word affixed as a translation of it.' That is 128 times, with nine different translations.

The adjective manes occurs seventy-one times. The common translation has rendered it once ever; forty-two times eternal; three times world; twenty-five times, everlasting and ease former ages.' That is, 71 times with 5 different translation. The following is from Cruden's concordance on the word " ETERNAL."

The words "eternal," "everlasting," "forever," are sometimes taken for a long time, and are not always to be understood strictly. After several examples he concludes:---And in particular where the word "forever" is applied to the Jewish rites and privileges, it commonly signifies no more than during the standing of that commonwealth, or until the coming of Messiah. Exod. 12. 14, 17. " Ye shall keep it (the Passover) a feast by an ordinance FOR EVER." Num. 10. 8. " And " the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; " and they shall be to you for an ordinance FOR EVER throughout " your generations."



The following is from Parkhurst's Greek Testament Lexicon; omitting the references, etc.

It denotes duration, or continuance of time, but with great variety.

I. Both in the singular and plural it signifies eternity, whether past or to come.

II. The duration of this world.

III. Auons— The Ages of the world.

4. This present life, this world, as we say.

V. The world to come, the next life.

VI. An age, period, or periodical dispensation of Divine Providence.

Seems in Heb. 11. 3, to denote the various revolutions and grand occurrences which have happened to this created system, including also the system or world itself.' To which his Editor, Mr. Rose, of Cambridge, adds:

Parkhurst does not notice, as he should have done, the indefiniteness of the word in some cases, like that of the words ever, never, always, in English.' Aunseg-1. Eternal, having neither beginning nor end. II. Eternal, without end. (Here Rose applies the same observation as above to war.) III. Refers only to Jude, verse 1.7.

4. The ages of the world, the time since the beginning of its existence.

These various significations are not here quoted as all authoritative in reference to the particular passages adduced by Parkhurst to support them; but merely as so much evidence in addition to that given by our own translators, (in the quotation above,) that the occurrence of the word is not sufficient in itself to decide the question as to the infinity of that to which it is applied. That it is not like the word infinite, (that is, without end,) or immortal, (that cannot die,) to which no second meaning can properly be assigned. Indeed we may go further, and say that the strict and proper sense of the Greek is limited duration. For, aim, is an age, a limited period of time; and its adjective is properly lasting for an age or ages. So, For ages of ages, usually translated "for ever and ever," strictly means, of great duration, though applied to a subject in itself infinite, it would be understood to mean infinity. In like manner, the English words " everlasting" and "eternal" are strictly, from their derivation, words of limited duration; the former being from the Latin swum, an age, and the latter from aetas, also an age or season, yet applied truly to infinite subjects, which, a fortiore, are everlasting or age-lasting.

Still, (it may be said,) admitting that the word atuvtos has frequently a limited signification, the objection from the passage in question, Matt. 25-46, remains unshaken. For the same word must, surely, have the same meaning in the same passage: and in this passage it is applied to the " life" of the saved, as well as " the punishment" of the condemned; and consequently, if the punishment be of limited duration, so is the life.' And it is admitted that the life of the believer—which we have seen is in itself an infinite life, and on much better grounds than the words " eternal" or " everlasting" afford—is spoken of here, and in a great number of other passages in a limited view, and with respect to a limited portion of it. For, the Scriptures, though they reveal "life and immortality as brought to light by the Gospel," and show how the believer is even now put in possession of both, do not propose to give the history of eternity, or to disclose what shall be the state or occupation of the redeemed during the countless ages of their future existence. Here we have only general terms, and the fact, in itself sufficient, that our life, being the life of Christ and of his Spirit, shall be evermore like his—blessed, holy, and glorious. But there is a certain portion of the believer's future life, on which the Scriptures are full and explicit, both as it respects Christ and his redeemed—namely, that time and state emphatically named " The world to come;" of which the apostle (in asserting the superior dignity of Christ) says, " Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection THE WORLD To COME, whereof we speak;" (Heb. 2. 5,) and which he goes on in the same chapter to show, is not another world, but a future age and state of this world; when, according to the prophecy of Psalm 8. "all things shall be put under the feet of Christ;" but which, he says, " we now see not yet," though we shall see it at his coming. Comp. verses. 6, 7, 8, with 1 Cor. 15. 25-27.

The subject of the Lord's Second Advent has, happily, of late years, acquired a great increase of notice in the church. It is not intended, nor would it be practicable here to enter into the consideration of its manifold and important objects.; and therefore we must venture an assertion, (which, however, we do not expect to find contradicted by anyone who has considered the subject,) that by it will be brought in that blessed " AGE" of which the Scriptures continually speak, and which has furnished the burden of the richest effusions of the Spirit of prophecy from the beginning: when, the kingdom of Christ being come, his saints shall rise to reign with him, and the world be universally subjected to his and their rule and dominion. But while that period shall be emphatically THE AGE of blessedness, and is ever so held up to the believer's hope—" the time of the dead, when they shall be judged," and when the Lord "

will give reward unto " his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and " them that fear his name, small and great;" (Rev. 11. 18,) and is now much spoken of in this view—it is not, perhaps, sufficiently considered in another of its bearings, namely, as " The day of judgment" as it respects the ungodly, when, as the same passage adds, God " will destroy them that destroy the earth;" not (as may be clearly shown) a day of assize merely, but a period, reign, and dispensation of judgment—the time, as other passages describe it, of " The marriage feast"—when, the bridegroom being come, and those who were ready having gone in with him to the marriage, the door is shut, and the unprepared are left in " outer dark- ness, where shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth." Compare Matt. 25. 1-12, Luke, 13. 25-29.

So Mark, 10. 30, where the original is very remarkable: "in the age to come, the life of that age:" not, as before said, precluding the enjoyment of endless life after; but particularizing and securing the blessedness of that "age" to which the Scripture revelation extends, and which can therefore be realized and apprehended in prospect: The age and days of the Messiah,' so familiar to the Jewish writers.

See, also, Luke, 20. 34, 35, " The children of this world marry and are given in marriage: But " they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, "neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they die anymore," etc.

So Ephes. 1. 21, Where we read, " The world which is to come;" and compare the expression, " This Age," in the following passages: Matt. 13. 39, 40, where we read incorrectly, the end of the world;" Luke, 16. 8; Gal. 1. 4; 1 Tim. 6. 17; 2 Tim. 4. 10; Tit. 2. 12; 1 Cor. 1. 20, 2. 6, 8. 13; 2 Cor. 4. 4; Eph. 2. 2.

That this same "AGE TO COME" shall both begin and end in judgment, is also clearly stated in Scripture, and should be peculiarly noted: See 2 Thess. 1. 8, which declares, in common with many other passages, that the Lord Jesus shall be " revealed in flaming fire, taking vengeance;" when also is " the harvest," and " the gathering and burning of the tares," Matt. 13. 39, 40, (not " the end of the world," as we read, but " the end of this age,") and the "vintage" and judgment described Rev. 19. 11 to end. But after this judgment (and note, it is at the coming of the Lord, verse 11) the 20th chapter gives an account of the reign of Christ and his saints who partake of "the first. resurrection," for " one thousand years;" and then follows another judgment—the great assize, when "the dead small and great, stand before God," verse 11, and when is awarded the sentence of "THE SECOND DEATH," to those not found written in "the book of LIFE." And that it is the first of these judgments, and not the last and general judgment which the Lord describes in Matt. 25. is evident, first, because it takes place immediately on his coming, (ver. 31,) and, secondly, because the trial is only of those who had heard of Christ; as is evident from the defense set up by the condemned, who attempt to assert their faithfulness to him; when, if they had never heard Iris name, they would have a ready and Successful plea wherewith to meet the charge. Accordingly, the sentence of this judgment is the "punishment," as being at the beginning of the awl". It is, indeed, worthy of consideration whether it be not the judgment of the professing Christian (that, is the Christian and anti-Christian) nations, in existence on earth at the coming of Christ; the whole church, or flock, in the widest sense; and so parallel to the two preceding accounts in this chapter, of a judgment confessedly limited to the professing church—viz. the parable of the wise and foolish virgins, and of the talents.

A larger space has been given to the consideration of this objection, (from Matt. 25. 46,) because it is that most frequently urged, and decidedly of first importance, as involving the meaning of the word of which word it is, surely, not too much to say, that enough has been advanced to make us modest in our appeal to passages where the sense is to be decided by its application. In such cases—in the instance of passages in which a doubtful word occurs—the right course to pursue evidently is, to look to other passages relating to the same subject, in which the doubtful word or phrase is not found; and in the present instance we have many such—many passages which state the final award of the wicked, in which this word does not occur, and about which there can be no question, so long as plain and unequivocal terms are taken in their plain meaning: a selection from these shall be given; but first we would notice some other objections.

Objection 2—Rev. 14. 11, " And the smoke of their " torment ascended up for ever and ever: and they have no " rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and " whosoever received the mark of his name." Parallel to which is— Chap. 19. 3, " Her (Babylon's) smoke rose up forever and ever:" and Chap. 20. 10, " And the devil that deceived them' " was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the " beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

The expression "for ever and ever" is, in all those passages, "for ages of ages," an expression which, it is not denied, often implies endless duration; as, for instance, in the numerous Doxologies of Scripture, such as Gal. 1. 5, etc. etc. But the subject in these latter passages decides the meaning; and besides, it is in them used without the addition of words peculiarly to be noted in the passages above quoted—viz. the words "day and night," which in themselves bound the duration of the sentence by the existence of the present system, and forbid our extending it beyond that great and final period, which divides be. tween the course of time and a boundless infinity. What length of time is meant it is not pretended to say. It extends beyond the Millennium, because, though the beast and his worshippers are cast into the lake of fire at the commencement of the thousand years, (see chapter 19. 20, the first mention in the New Testament of "the lake of fire,") the Devil, and those whom he deceives at the end of the thousand years, are only then cast into it, (ch. 20. 10,) as are those not found written in the book of life, after the last judgment, (ver. 15). But whatever be the duration of this suffering, it leaves unimpeached the statement that to the redeemed only belongs " IMMORTALITY," when day and night, and all the

periods of time—and when time itself shall be no more. Still is "DEATH" its end—the end of those cast into the lake of fire—"second death" as that sentence is there called. Rev. 19. 14, and 21. 8.

And such, it must be acknowledged, is the conclusion we should naturally draw from the other passages which speak of the judgment by FIRE. Thus— Matt. 3. 12, " He will BURN UP the chaff with unquenchable Fire."

Mal. 4. 1, " Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be STUBBLE; and the day that cometh shall BURN THEM UP, saith the Lord of Hosts, THAT IT SHALL LEAVE THEM NEITHER ROOT NOR BRANCH."

1 Cor. 3. 12, " Now if any man" (any minister, 9, 10) " build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones," (that is true disciples,) "wood, hay, stubble," (false professors,) "every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day" (the day of the Lord's coming) shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abides which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from oven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with" (Gr. shall suffer the sentence of) everlasting DESTRUCTION from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Hebrews, 6. 8, But that which bears thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be BURNED."

Many others might be added; but who, on reading these, would suppose that preservation of the condemned in a state of endless life is intended? The sentences express the exact opposite: and, if it be said they are metaphorical, it is granted:—but we do say, that the Spirit of inspiration could have chosen other metaphors, if he meant otherwise; and that when the strongest possible emblems of destruction have been selected, it is much to say that preservation is meant. And if it be replied, that the soul cannot be destroyed: we answer that this is assuming the whole question, while it expressly contradicts the words of Christ himself: " Fear not them (he says) which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able TO DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN HELL;" where the whole prerogative asserted by God consists in his being "able to kill the soul."

Objection III.—Mark, 9. 43-46, " If thy hand offend thee" (be a stumbling-block to thee—cause thee to offend) " cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee," etc., as before.

The explanation of this passage is to be found Isaiah 66. 24, from which place it is a quotation. When we ask those who quote, this passage—what is " the worm" of which it speaks? several explanations are offered; some saying it is the conscience; others the soul; but all agreeing that it is a metaphor. The original passage in the Prophet shews that it is not a metaphor: but that a real worm is intended, which feeds on the carcasses. And they shall go forth, and look upon the CARCASSES of the men that have transgressed against me; for their WORM shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

The preceding verse had described the time—(we would say during the millennium)—when "it " shall come to pass that from one new moon to " another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall "all flesh come to worship before me, saith the " Lord; and they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses. Where again, without pretending to explain the precise manner of the fulfilment of this judgment, we have the most abundant proof that it also refers to the ages of this world, expressly marked as they are by revolving "moons" and returning " sabbaths."

In speaking, however, of the suffering of the wicked, as of limited duration, it is carefully to be noted that we do not limit the sentence of damnation. No: the sentence is infinite, because it is irrevocable. It is the death of HOPE, because the death of LIFE. And this is, perhaps, its most awful feature: for, were existence prolonged, the hope, at least, might enter, that in the revolution of ages,—perhaps, after millions of millions of millions of years of anguish, some change would take place, some new dispensation of mercy open. But this hope destruction forever debars; and if it does not condemn to infinite misery, it does effectually exclude from infinite enjoyment and happiness.

No other passages are objected that we are aware of, that have not been anticipated in the foregoing re-marks; and what is the result we arrive at? That with those, which can scarcely be said to cause a difficulty, are to be placed in parallel the numerous passages which (as before said,) state the final award of the wicked in terms which cannot be mistaken. Some of these have been already pointed out, and the following selection (and it is only a selection) is now added chiefly to shew that it is not on a few isolated passages the argument for the ultimate destruction of the wicked rests; but that it is supported by various modes of expression, which constitute the ordinary language on this subject of the inspired writers. It may be observed that they are purposely selected from the New Testament, as have been all the testimonies from Scripture adduced in these remarks, except those which contain the account of

the creation and original constitution of man. And this, not because the Old Testament is unfavorable; but, on the contrary, because its testimony is so uniformly in favor of the decision here sought to be established, as to have led some to account for it by saying that "life and immortality" were not then revealed; and that it is in contrast with this former darkness that they are said to be now brought to light by the Gospel. The darkness, however, might on examination be found to be only the silence with respect to the immortal life of the wicked, which equally characterizes the New Testament Scriptures: for, as to the future life, and even the resurrection of the believer, the Old Testament is far from being silent or even speaking equivocally. However, as all agree that Life and immortality are now brought to light under the New Testament, it is better to confine ourselves to its evidence.

We have already seen that "DEATH" was from the beginning declared to be the desert of sin. The following are a few more of the passages DEATH,

Rom. 1. 32. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death."

Rom. 6. 21. " What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed: for the end of those things is death."

Rom. 6. 23. " The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Rom. 7. 5. " The motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death."

Rom. 7. 10. " The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death."

Rom. 7. 24. " O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Rom. 8. 2. " The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Rom. 8. 6. To be carnally minded (the minding of the flesh death; but to be spiritually minded (the minding of the Spirit) is life and peace."

1 Cor. 15. 26. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

2 Cor. 3. 6. " The letter killed, but the Spirit giveth life." 7, 8. "But if the ministration of death written and engravers on stones was glorious—How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" etc. etc.

In which the connection is to be noted between Sin, "the Flesh," and "Death," on the one hand; and between " Life," and "the Spirit," on the other.

## PERISH

John 3. 16. " For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 10. 28. " I GIVE unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish."

1 Cor. 1. 18. " The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

2 Cor. 2. 15. " For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the savor of DEATH unto MATH; and to the other the savor of LIFE unto LIFE."

2 Thess. 2. 9. " Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Heb. 1. 11. " They (the heavens and earth,) shall perish, but thou retained; and they shall all wax old, as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

Jude 1. 11. " Woe unto them I for they have—perished in the gainsaying of Core."

Jas. 1. 9, 11. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted: But the rich in that he is made low: because as the flower of

the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withered the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the grace of the fashion of it, perishes; so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways."

2 Pet. 2. 12. " But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not: and shall utterly perish in their own corruption," (Gr. destruction, same as "destroyed" before.)

2 Pet. 3. 9, " Not willing that any should perish."

Where note that " PERISH" is contrasted with "eternal life," and "life," in the two first and fourth passages; with "salvation" in third and fifth; with " remaining"—being always " the same,"—and "years not failing" in sixth: and is synonymous with "death" in the fourth; with "damnation" in the fifth; with the waxing old and changing of the heavens and earth" in the sixth; the " withering," "falling," and "fading away" of grass and " the flower of grass" in the eighth; and, lastly, " the destruction of the natural brute beast" in the ninth.

To which may be added the following, which exemplify the word

## PERDITION

John 17. 12, " None of them is lost but the son of perdition." (Comp. 2 Thess. 2. 3, " The man of sin—the son of perdition.")

Phil. 1. 28, "To them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation."

Heb. 10. 39, " We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

2 Pet. 3. 7, " But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and PERDITION of ungodly men."

Rev. 17. 8, " The beast—shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, (Gr. the abyss,) and go into perdition." 11.

DESTROY and " DESTRUCTION."

[N. B. The figure in brackets prefixed to the quotation, refers to the Greek word similarly numbered.]

Matt. 7. 13, 14, " Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life."

Mark, 1. 24, "Art thou come to destroy us?" (the devils.)

Rom. 9. 22, " What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction."

1 Cor. 15. 26, " The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

Phil. 3. 18, 19, " Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction."

1 Thess. v. 3, " When they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them."

2 Thess. 1. 9, " Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Compare, as to the " presence of the Lord" here, chap. 2. 8—" whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit (or breath) of his mouth, and shall destroy (1) with the brightness of his coming."

1 Tim. 6. 9, " Foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

Heb. 2. 14, " That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

Jas. 4. 12, " There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy."

2 Pet. 2. 1, " Shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." (Comp. chapter 2. 12, before.)

Rev. 9. 11, "The angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek Apollyon," (i.e. Destroyer.)

Rev. 11. 18, "Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth."

And all the instances in which the words "lost" and "saved" occur, which words are literally true of "death" and "life," and only figuratively applicable to misery and happiness.

To these we have only to add the passages in which the word "Hell" occurs; of which it is necessary to observe that there are two words in the original which we so translate:—First, *Hades* (Hades) a word which simply means the invisible place of the dead, and applies equally to the saved and lost; and second ("Gehenna," or "the Valley of Hinnom,") which is that part of the Hades allotted exclusively to the damned; so called from a place near Jerusalem where the idolaters burned their children to Moloch and Baal, and where the worms continually preyed on the dead carcasses that were cast out into it, and a perpetual fire was kept to consume them. (See Parkhurst's Lexicon on the word.) To the blessed region or department of the "Hades," the Jews were accustomed to give the name "Paradise," (see again Parkhurst on this word); and with this agrees the declaration of our Lord to the believing thief on the cross, that he should be with him in "Paradise," the very day of the crucifixion; when, (as a passage before quoted has told us,) though "put to death in the flesh," he was "quickened by the Spirit": as also the view of Hades given in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; where both are represented in the same place, but in different regions or departments or it.

The hope of going to Heaven at death we have the fullest scriptural warrant for believing, was not realized by any of the departed spirits, until that Christ had ascended; who in this, as in resurrection, "had the preeminence," or was first." Since then it is the hope commonly entertained; and is naturally, though improperly, confounded with the former state of the blessed in the Paradise of Hades, before the ascension.

The circumstance, however, of principal importance to the present argument is, that we are told the time shall come when Hell shall be no more; when "Death and Hell," ("Hades," that is Hell in the most extensive sense,) "are cast into the lake of fire," Rev. 20. 14; a fact which is also to be deduced from the locality which the Scriptures uniformly assign to Hell. Now-a-days, indeed, it would be considered only a curious question to ask, where is Hell? But considering that we speak so often of going to Hell, and that it is an article of the Christian creed that Christ descended into Hell, (that is, as we have seen, into "Hades,") it would seem to be a question as to which there should not be any uncertainty; and neither is there in Scripture, nor was there in the minds of the ancient Jews, or early Christians. On this subject, however, we prefer quoting other authority, to giving our own; and the following is from the Sermons of the late Bishop Horsley, a name too well known, and by the biblical student too much valued, to require any introduction. In his Sermon on 1 Peter 3. 18-20, a passage which he shews was understood literally by the early Fathers till Augustine, ('who,' he says, 'I think, was the first who doubted of its literal sense,') and by the early reformers, so as to have been quoted in its literal sense in the Articles agreed on in 1552, the 6th of Edward the Sixth,—we have the following remarks on our Lord's descent into Hell:

· It is evident that this must be some place below the surface of the earth; for it is said, that he "descended," that is, went down to it. Our Lord's death took place upon the surface of the earth, where the human race inhabit; that, therefore, and none higher, is the place from which he descended; of consequence the place to which he went by descent was below it; and it is with relation to these parts below the surface that the rising to life on the third day must be understood. This was only a return from the nether regions to the realms of life and day, from which he had "descended;" not his ascension into heaven, which was a subsequent event, and makes a distinct article in the creed.' Again, speaking of the place of the souls departed:— But revelation is not silent; the sacred writers of the Old Testament speak of such a common mansion in the inner parts of the earth; and we find the same opinion so general among the heathen writers of antiquity, that it is more probable that it had its rise in the earliest patriarchal revelations, than in the imaginations of man, or in poetical fiction. The notion is confirmed by the language of the writers of the New Testament; with this additional circumstance, that they divide this central mansion of the dead into two distinct regions, for the separate lodging of the souls of the righteous and the reprobate.'

Again, speaking of Ephes. 4. 9,— "Now that he "ascended, what is it but that he also descended " first into the lower parts of the earth," he adds, in refuting the opinion that the earth itself is here meant, and the descent of the Lord to it, when he came from heaven,—

But, indeed, this phrase of "the lower parts of the earth" is in the Greek language so much a name for the central parts of the globe, as distinguished from the surface or outside on which we live, that had the apostle intended by this phrase to denote the inhabited surface of the earth, as lower than the heavens, we may confidently say, his Greek converts at Ephesus would not easily have guessed his meaning.' Compare Psalm 10, Ezek. 32. 18, and the phrase "going down into the pit," so frequently found.

This being so, it would follow, that in the general conflagration in which the present heavens and earth shall be dissolved to give place to "a new heaven and a new earth," Hell must necessarily be involved, and after the new creation have no more place; and this

accordingly is confirmed in the passage Rev. 20. 14, just quoted. It will indeed be said that it does not necessarily follow that the sufferings of the damned should cease with the existence of Hell; for the lake of fire may continue after death and Hell have been cast into it: and this is admitted; but the passages respecting the lake of fire have been already considered; and here, the object is merely to shew that no warrant for the endless duration of suffering is afforded by the passages which speak of Hell.

The following are all the instances in which the word " Hell" occurs; from which it will be seen that it is but seldom used in Scripture, in comparison with those terms already so fully exemplified, viz. " Death"—" Second Death"—" Corruption"—" Perdition"—" Perishing"—and " Destruction."

HELL.

Matt. 5. 22. " But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Matt. 5. 29. "And not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." So 30; 18. 9. Mark 9. 45.

Matt. 10. 28. " Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Matt. 23. 15. " Ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves."

Matt. 23. 33. " How can ye escape the damnation of hell."

Jas. 3. 6. " And it (the tongue) is set on fire of hell."

Note. —Thus it appears that the " Gehenna," is only mentioned in the Gospel by Matthew and the Epistle of James, both which were written for the Jews.

Matt. 11. 23. " Thou Capernaum, shall be brought down to hell."

Matt. 16. 18. " The gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Luke 16. 23. " And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments."

Acts 2. 27. " Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." 31.

1 Cor. 15. 55. "O grave (Hades) where is thy victory."

Rev. 1. 18. " I have the keys of hell and of death."

Rev. 6. 8. " His name that sat on him was death, and hell followed with him."

Rev. 20. 13. " Death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them."

Rev. 20. 14. " Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire."

To which may be added 2 Pet. 2. 4, where the Greek is Tartarus, not found elsewhere.

## **CONCLUSION.**

WE have now briefly stated the principal arguments in support of the position that to the redeemed alone belongs immortality, and that destruction is the ultimate destiny of the lost; which may be recapitulated as follows:— First—The original constitution of man as gathered from the account of his creation.

Second—The sentence which formed the sanction of the first command; together with the reason for debarring him from the " Tree of life."

Third—That "Immortality," is never in a single instance applied in Scripture to the lost; but is always spoken of as a distinguishing privilege of the believer.

Fourth—That "Life" and "Eternal Life," are also exclusively applied to the believer; without any qualifying adjective, such as would be necessary if all had eternal life, that is, were destined to live for ever.

Fifth—The ATONEMENT, in conjunction with all the sacrifices, at once shows Christ to be the source of "Life," and proves beyond the possibility of doubt that the "Death," which is the "wages of sin," is literal death.

Sixth—The doctrine of REGENERATION shows how the believer becomes partaker of life and immortality; namely, by participation of "the spirit of life in Christ," "who alone hath immortality;" by which believers are truly and actually "born of God," in contradistinction to those who are only "born of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man," (John 1. 12, 13,) whose nature is consequently corrupt and mortal.

Seventh—The object and result of the believer's RESURRECTION, which is ever stated to be "Immortality," "Incorruption," and "Life," proves that in the strictest sense these only belong to the saved.

Eighth—In the passages which mention suffering after death, there is not found any expression which absolutely and unequivocally declares its duration to be infinite; while Ninth—The terms in which most frequently the sentence of the sinner and unbeliever is expressed, are such as in their proper sense can only apply to ultimate destruction; as, for example, the term itself, "Destruction"—and "Death"—"Second Death"—"Perish"—"Corruption"—and "Perdition."

To these, however, is to be added yet another which has not before been alluded to, but which to many may in itself be considered completely conclusive. In reflecting on the fact that the enemies of God have, since the fall, ever formed the larger portion of mankind, and that consequently many, very many, the majority (of those at least to whom his truth has been revealed) are lost, as the Scriptures plainly state, Matt. 7. 13, it cannot but strike the mind that, according to the popular creed which assigns never-ending existence to all these, there never comes a time when evil ceases to exist; but both evil and the enemies of God are made to exist as long as God himself. The contrary, however, it cannot be denied, seems to be promised in many very plain passages of Scripture. Thus we read that "death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed,"—observe, "the last enemy," implying surely that all other enemies have been destroyed previously; while the popular creed makes the reign of death only then commence, if by "death" we are to understand infinite misery. Again we read, that in the end "God shall be ALL IN ALL,"—that he himself at a certain period says, "Behold I make ALL things new"—that "there shall be no more curse"—"that the creation (the whole creation) shall be delivered" from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. While the object of the Lord's reappearing and kingdom, we are taught, is to bring in a dispensation for "the restitution of all things,"—whom (says the apostle) the heaven "must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3. 21.

It was to be expected that such promises as these should from time to time, in the history of the Church, attract attention, and so they have; but the result has been, that a conclusion has been drawn from them in very many instances, and by not a few in our own day, which has justly been looked on with alarm by every sober-minded Christian—viz. that every soul will in the end be saved, even all the damned, including Satan, his angels, etc. Two glaring contradictions indeed at once present themselves in this conclusion; namely, first, that it makes the sufferings of the damned for a certain time, the means of reclaiming them and turning their hearts to God; makes hell-fire do, what the truth and spirit of God are declared alone competent to do, makes it in fact a substitute for justification, conversion, and regeneration. In other words, it inculcates the doctrine of Purgatory in its worst form—far worse than as taught by the Roman Church, in which it is held to be a purifying discipline or chastisement of those only who, in this life, were true believers; whereas by the Universalists, as they are named, the whole work of grace is assigned to it, even in the instances where all means of grace have failed. Secondly—It not only (with the popular creed) brings life and immortality out of "death;" enduring existence out of "perishing;" salvation and preservation out of "destruction," etc.—but absolute happiness and glory out of all the sentences of damnation recorded in Scripture! reading the sentence, "He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," as though it were written, "He that believeth shall be saved at once" and immediately; and he that believeth not, shall "be saved likewise, though not till after a time!"

Grossly erroneous, however, as is this doctrine, and, we may add, as dangerous in tendency as it is unsound in reasoning, one thing is to be said in palliation of it, and in excuse for those who hold it; viz. that they had no alternative but either to assert this, or deny that glorious consummation which has just been alluded to, when evil shall cease and enmity against God be no more,—when "God shall be all in all." That is, they had no alternative but this, believing, as they all do, the immortality of the natural soul. For, if the enemies of God are possessed of endless life, it is indeed certain that enmity against God, and the spirit of rebellion, can only be put an end to by their salvation and conversion.

But take away the notion of immortality as essentially belonging to man by nature, and admit the ultimate destruction of the wicked, and both consummation hold true without any inconsistency. The sentence of the wicked is maintained to be final and irreversible; and at the same time, and by the very execution of it, the period arrives so delightful to contemplate, so worthy of God, and so congenial to the minds of all who have his glory at heart—when he is indeed "all in all," and when nothing opposed to his will, or contrary to his nature, is found in existence.\* And we do believe, and are well assured, that the time will come when we may traverse the whole of



God's creation from the one end to the other, and not find a trace of sin or evil; not see the curse in any form—not hear a sigh or groan—not meet with an enemy of God—but when every heart that beats shall respond to His will, and every voice that sounds shall swell the chorus of His praise.

It may be said that, if Universalism holds the salvation of Satan, in this view his destruction must be held. It is admitted; and does not the Scripture say so? Does it not say, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head," in other words, kill him, as well as deprive him of his power. And in plainer terms, do we not read, Heb. 2. 14, « that through death he (Christ) might DESTROY him that had the power of death, that is the Devil?'

1. And here, perhaps, we may say the practical bearing of the question first presents itself. The fact is, that the prosecution of justice, or rather of severity, to the extreme, by the popular creed, has produced a reaction in the minds of men to the n opposite extreme—a belief in an unbounded and unqualified exercise of mercy. As in human legislation the visiting or every offence with the extreme penalty of the law would necessarily end in the commuting of the sentence in the majority of instances, so the assertion that the sentence of divine justice is infinite suffering in every case of a condemned sinner—that is suffering, which after ages of ages, millions, and millions, and millions of years, is yet as it were, only beginning—has engendered a hope in the minds of the majority, which is founded simply on the unlikelihood of such a sentence being followed up by a God, whose prominent attributes are goodness and mercy. It is easy to say that this persuasion is only the working of unbelief. It is indeed granted that if such sentence be clearly revealed, it is unbelief to deny it, however unlikely or improbable. But, at the same time, before we set revelation in opposition to improbability in the highest degree of it, we should be sure that we have the decided authority and warrant of revelation itself, for so doing; otherwise we sap and mine all belief in it. And such has been the result in the present instance; for everyone believes in a sentence of infinite suffering, and no one believes in it. Everyone holds it in theory—no one in reality, and as applied to themselves; in other words, Universalism is practically the creed of all. Such, however, we are bold to say, would not be the case with respect to the sentence of " destruction." As being a more equitable sentence it would be more apprehended. Probability is, for this reason, awfully in its favor.

And, as to what is said about man courting destruction, and desiring the cessation of his own existence, this might be true if the wicked were to pass directly from a course of sin to a state of unconsciousness, though, even so, we doubt if destruction be not the most horrible thought to the human mind. But such is not the statement of Scripture. It says, that after death is the judgment: and that between death and the execution of the last sentence, there is a punishment, not indeed infinite, but of such duration as shall seem fit to Divine Justice, for the purpose of affording an example of the consequences of unbelief—of what the unbeliever would experience to be his endless desert, if mercy—thus shewn even to the damned, did not interpose, and terminate it by death; in which state, moreover, all the resources will be cut off which, in this life, administer to insensibility and thoughtlessness.

The argument from consequences is, however, at all times a bad one, where the truth of God is concerned. " Let God be true, and every man a liar." What has the argument from consequences done with respect to the doctrines of justification by faith and salvation by grace? It has argued them both licentious in tendency. Yet what is the truth? That they are the only doctrines capable of producing any genuine influence! So, we say, let the sentence of the unconverted, as here stated, be but that pronounced by the word of God; and, for this sole reason, will it be more influential a thousand fold, and appeal more effectually to the conscience, to the hopes, and fears, of the sinner, than any other defined and devised by man, though ever so much more formidable, and apparently better calculated to awe and intimidate. In contending for such a sentence we may indeed show that we have a zeal for God; but, it may be a zeal not according to knowledge; and never should it be forgotten by the Christian, that conversion is to be effected by far other means. Experience has indeed abundantly proved this, in the extent to which the popular creed, even where most implicitly received, is found unavailing not only for conversion, but for outward restraint and reformation.

2. But further, the practical bearing of the subject under consideration appears not only, as already shewn, in its proving the sufficiency of the atonement, but also in showing that Christ is indeed the sole author of salvation, to the exclusion of everything of man's doing, of human desert in every form. For, what does it say is the meaning of salvation It proves it to be identical with the imparting of " Life,"—with a new birth to a new and spiritual existence with which alone Immortality is connected as a quality and property; and surely it must be obvious that in this man can do nothing for himself. As well might he speak of bearing a part in his creation as in his regeneration; if such and so real be this second birth to spiritual life—this " formation of Christ" in the believer as the "hope of glory." Nor have we any doubt that, though there is scarcely any thing the pride of the human heart will not aspire to, yet the notion, so general among men, of becoming entitled to eternal life by their works and character, etc. is considerably fostered by the pre-ailing misconception as to what that life is —viz. that it is rather another condition of life than life itself; that the question is rather as to the circum-stances in which we are to live for. ever hereafter, than as to whether we are to live for ever or not. For, though a man may think himself capable of contributing by his exertions to fix his condition in life, and to determine the circumstances of his im-mortal existence, supposing him to be immortal, he will scarcely imagine that he can make himself immortal if he be not so. Pride may still indeed suggest a claim upon this new gift of God, admitting it to be a blessing altogether superinduced on human nature; but still, the believer at least will feel that he is indebted to Christ for more than he ever before imagined; that, in this instance preeminently, it is true, that In him our fallen race can boast, More blessings gained than ever were lost:' —that " Christ is his life," in the fullest sense, and so is " all and in all" to him.

3. Neither should it be overlooked, that in the doctrine that " Christ is our Life," and the author of Immortality in this strict sense, we have the proof not only of our superior. obligation to him, (as stated in the well-known lines just quoted,) but of his superior nature; and not only of his superiority to man in his best estate, but of his superiority to every creature—in a word, of his absolute Divinity. For, though any creature may become immortal by participation, to be the author of immortality, the source from whence it is derived, and by union with whom it is participated,—this can belong to none but Him of whom it is emphatically said, that " He alone hath immortality;" and where is the hope of the Arian or Socinian, if the doctrine of the immortality of the soul (of man by nature) be taken from him? He cannot immortalize himself—he cannot superinduce on himself a new constitution—and if he have it not in himself, whence has he it? For he has extinguished the light, stopped up the source, and quenched the spirit of life in denying that Christ Jesus is the author of it! Awful indeed in this point of view are the consequences of the popular doctrine of immortality—in enabling men to maintain views thus fatal in their tendency, which they must at once abandon if deprived of its countenance, or else forego all hope of eternal life.

And the resurrection—the resurrection of Christ as "the first-begotten from the dead;" not passing into life through a door which another had opened, but bursting the gates of the grave himself for the first time, and so opening unto us the door of ever-lasting life—his rising in consequence of his " abo- fishing death,"—this splendid proof of his divinity, as it is ever asserted to be in the Scriptures of the New Testament—whence is it that it has lost its weight with the minds of so many,? What has weakened its force as an argument? The assuming the truth of the immortality of the soul, which makes resurrection almost natural to man; instead of being, as it is, utterly unnatural to him, utterly opposed to his natural constitution—the greatest miracle of Christ, and energy of the divine power in him; though, blessed be God, in one sense it has ceased to be a miracle, in being made natural to all who have "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Let this consideration be solemnly weighed by the Christian before he perseveres in giving up, or reducing to nothing, the first of all proofs of the Savior's divinity,—that he is the author of im-mortality.

4. The objections of persons unhappily tinctured with infidel principles,—though oftentimes originating only in depravity of heart, and so undeserving of consideration,—are not always to be disregarded; and particularly should we be most careful that we do not by our errors strengthen their doubts. The immortality of the soul, though very generally received, is denied by some; and especially by many whose professional pursuits have led them to make the constitution of man, and the laws of natural life, their peculiar study. What has been the result in such cases? Taking it for granted, without examination, that the Bible teaches the contrary—teaches that man is by nature and constitution immortal, in op-- position to what they deem to be evidence of the reverse—they have parted with the Bible as op-posed to a doctrine which, we affirm without hesitation, the Bible teaches I and there was no one to correct the impression, and show that this ground of objection to the Bible is really a reason for stronger attachment to it ! We do not at all undertake to say, that the observations made on the constitution of man fully warrant the inference so drawn from them; but granting that they do, we do say it is a pity that men—many of them men of candor as well as high intelligence—should be left to advocate infidelity on grounds that really prove the truth of Christianity.

5. Lastly—This doctrine is calculated to have the happiest effect on the true believer, by giving him just conceptions of "the flesh" on the one hand, and of " spiritual life" on the other. It shows him more clearly that by natural constitution he inherits nothing but sin and corruption, and that to the Spirit all life is to be attributed. The inference will be, that as he " LIVES in the spirit," he should also, " WALK in the spirit;" that he should regard every gratification of the flesh—all following of it, as tending only to DEATH; whereas the tendency of every spiritual act, feeling, and emotion is to LIFE; remembering that the "minding of the flesh is death, but the minding of the spirit is We and peace," (Rom. 8. 6. Greek); that " he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." And knowing whence it is he derives the spirit of life, as also the glorious consequences of possessing it—in being actually thereby made "partaker of the divine nature" and born " a child of God,"—he will feel the full force of the appeal of the apostle, and the obligation it implies,—

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. • ,c For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8. 12-17.

Connecting also the life of the spirit, of which he is made partaker in regeneration, with the life of the spirit in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, he will see a force, which he otherwise never could discern, in the expressions " crucified with Christ as to the

old man"—" dead with Christ"—" buried with him by baptism into death"—and also, " rising with him to walk in newness of lye"—  
yea more, ascending with him, and having his life hid with him in God.

All this will be read no longer as so much figurative language, however beautiful, but as literally true of spiritual life. In a word, he  
will more fully feel the force, and apprehend the meaning of the Apostle's exhortation,—

If ye then be RISEN WITH CHRIST, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth:

FOR ye are DEAD, and YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD.

When Christ, WHO IS ova LIFE, shall appear, then shall ye appear with him in glory.

Mortify, THEREFORE, your members which are upon the earth.—Colossians 3.1-5

THE END.

<http://www.creationisonline.com/TSK/Immortality.html>