

THE NARROW WAY TO LIFE.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate, because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." Matt. 7:14.

All life is the same. It all issues from the same fountain. God is that fountain. In him, and in him only, is life unlimited, exhaustless, ever-continuous and uncontrolled by any circumstances. The name which describes this perfection of life is Immortal. It signifies death-proof, consequently disease and pain-proof. Many, who have not closely noted the scriptural use of the word immortal, have used it with reference to man and to angels, but scripture ascribes it to God, the Father, only, as we will prove shortly.

The sun is the great fountain of light to earth, illuminating all things, yet it causes many varieties of color and shades of light, according to the nature of the object upon which it shines. The same sunlight shining upon a diamond, a brick, and upon various colored glasses, produces strikingly different effects. The light is the same, but the objects upon which it shines differ in their capacity to receive and transmit it. So, too, with life. It all flows from the one inexhaustible fountain, and it is all of the same kind. The oyster has life, but its organism is such that it cannot make use of much life, just as the brick cannot reflect much of the light of the sun. So with each of the higher grades of life in beast, fish and fowl. Like the various colored glasses under the sunlight, so these various creatures show forth differently the various qualities and powers they possess when life comes in and animates their bodily powers. And as the diamond is so perfect in its nature, and so adapted that it can receive

fully and reflect so as to look as though it possessed within itself the light, and were itself a miniature sun, so with mankind, one of the master-pieces of God's creation, made only "a little lower than the angels." This perfect creature was made so complete in his organism (before sin marred it) as to be able to receive and retain life, and never grow dim.

Adam was formed grandly and perfectly, and filled with life. He was more grand than any other earthly creature, because of the grander organism, mental and physical. Yet let us remember that as the diamond could reflect no light except when shone upon by the sun, so man could possess and enjoy the life given him only so long as he was supplied from the fountain – God. Man is no more a fount of life than a diamond is a fount of light, and one of the very strongest reasons for knowing that we have no exhaustless supply of life in ourselves is that, since sin entered our race, it has lost life. Millions have gone and are going down into death. God had arranged that man should have access to life giving trees, and that, by continually partaking of their fruit, he should continually live, – "eat, and live forever." In this respect, also, he was like the diamond, for it must have the light supplied every moment. Sin entering, our race lost its right to life, and was shut away from the trees of life [plural], and so "in Adam, all die." But God has provided Christ a ransom for sin, and soon in, or by Christ, shall all be made alive, or be brought back to the original perfection of the race. As the diamond loses its beauty and brilliancy when the light is withdrawn, but is lighted up again with the sunrise, so mankind loses life when God withdraws life from him. "Yea, man giveth up the ghost [life], and where is he?" Job 14:10. "His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not, and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. Vs. 21. "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Eccl. 9:10. Because of the sin-offering and sacrifice of Christ, all shall go forth from this

condition of death. "All that are in their graves shall come forth." There shall be a restitution of all things, a restoring to the condition [as at first] in which man can receive back again, and richly enjoy life as it is provided for him in full measure from the fountain – God.

But we asserted that we would prove scripturally that Divinity is the only fountain of life, and that all other forms of life – angels, men, fish, birds, beasts, etc. – are only vessels which hold, each its full, all differing in capacity and quality, according to the will of the Maker. First, then, we read that God "only hath immortality." [The fullness of life which could not cease under any circumstances.] 1 Tim. 6:16, and 1:17. Secondly, the Son, "the first-born of every creature," "the only begotten," "the express image of His [the Father's] person," he who was "in the form of God," and was "made so much better than the angels;" "for unto which of the angels said he [the Father]: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Heb. 1:4,5. This one, we are told, partakes of the Father's nature, and consequently of the same principle of immortal life. So we read – "As the Father hath life in himself [God's life is in himself, and not drawn from other sources, or dependent upon other things], so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Thus, we see that immortality is possessed only by Father and Son. But amazing news! God purposed to call out of the human race a few, "a little flock," who, by obedience to certain conditions, shall become "sons of God," and these, instead of remaining men and continuing of the human nature, shall become "new creatures," "partakers of the Divine nature," receiving a Divine form (body) being made "like unto Christ's glorious body;" not a natural body, but a spiritual body, for "it is raised a spiritual body, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." "We shall be changed but "it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like Him" who is "the express image of the Father's person" and share in the "glory to be revealed." Nay more, not only will they be in the

Divine form and nature, but being of that nature, they will possess the same kind of life – immortal life. Hence we read: "And this is the record that God hath given unto us [believers] eternal life and this life is in His Son" – "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son hath not life." 1 Jno. 5:11.

Again it is written: "Thou hast given Him (Jesus) power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou (the Father) hast given him" (Jno. 17:2.) "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48.) "God hath called us unto eternal glory" – "And this is the promise which he hath promised us even eternal life." (1 Jno. 2:25.) And though it is promised as a gift, yet it is only to a certain class that he ever agreed to give it, viz: to those believers in Jesus "who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor and IMMORTALITY." Rom. 2:7. To those who flee from iniquity and "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness – who "fight the good fight of faith (and thus) lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called." 1 Tim. 6:12.

But the way is a difficult one, hard to walk in "because strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life and few there be that find it (life)." Just how difficult the way is may be judged from Jesus' words: It is not only to believe on him, but to follow him, and obey his voice – "My sheep hear (obey) my voice and I know them and they follow me, ('take up their cross and follow me') and I give unto them eternal life." Jno. 10:27. Yes dearly beloved, if we would be of those who would receive immortality, let us seek it earnestly. Let us have our "fruit unto holiness (entire consecration) and the end thereof [will be] everlasting life." Rom. 6:22.

The new, Divine nature begins with us here, when we believe on Jesus as the ransom from sin, and covenant with God that we will "die with Him that we may also live with Him" – [conversion]. From

that moment we are recognized as God's children and "he sends forth His Spirit into our hearts," "whereby [we] are sealed [marked off as separate from the world] unto the day of redemption." This is our new life begun. By this new life we are to crucify the old will – our will as natural men – and while in the world to "live according to God in the Spirit." The Spirit in us is the germ of immortality. Thus we even now are partakers of the Divine nature but the fullness is to be reached when we enter into life. We are now begotten of the Spirit by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits, but we do not reach birth until we are raised [from the dead] spiritual bodies. Our new nature lives in these mortal bodies as in a house – "But we know that if our earthly house of this [building] were destroyed we have a building of God, &c. – our spiritual, immortal body.

But beloved, the new life would be easily choked and Paul assures us that when thus begotten of the truth, "if [we] live after the flesh [we] shall die [lose our life principle] but if [we] through the Spirit do mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body [human nature] we shall live;" for the sons of God are all those led by the Spirit of God. Rom. 8:13-14. The work of crucifying must take hold upon all our actions – "For he [begotten of the **[R142 : page 2]** Spirit] that soweth to the flesh [lives in willful sin] shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. 6:8. It is a rugged, steep, narrow way that leads to life, and were it not that strength is furnished us for each successive **[R143 : page 2]** step of the journey, we never could reach the goal; but His word encourages us – "Be of good cheer I have overcome;" "my grace is sufficient for thee." The whole world is in the broad road and going down to destruction – death. Jesus opened the narrow way bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel; i.e. he made it possible for us to reach it by paying our

ransom on the cross and making us free from sin and becoming also our example and leader into the Divine life.

The balance of our race now thronging the broad road to death, are to be restored because their guilt and sin are atoned for and will be permitted. As through the disobedience of one man all were placed upon the broad road and swallowed up of death, so through the obedience of one [Christ] all will be forgiven and brought back to life. But when brought back to "their former estate" – the perfection of the original – they will not have life in the same sense that the Divine family will have it.

The restored race will no doubt live eternally. God will supply the means of continuing their life as long as they are obedient and that we are told will be forever. Doubtless their present experiences with sin will prove a blessing throughout eternity. The words incorruptible, incorruption, immortal and immortality are translations of the Greek words *athanasia*, *aphtharsia* and *aphthartos* which occur in all only 18 times and are always used in connection with God or the saints, and are never associated in any way with angels, mankind or lower orders of creation. With a glimpse of this "crown of life" and the honor and glory associated with it, who will say that our all-wise Father has made the pathway too difficult. Its difficulties will act as a separating principle to separate and refine a "peculiar people," "a little flock" to be "heirs of the kingdom," "heirs of glory," heirs of God and joint heirs of Jesus Christ our Lord – if so be that we suffer [death] with him.

As we toil upward on the narrow way, Angels look on amazed at the grandeur of the plan which is able not only to rescue a fallen race from death but to display "the exceeding riches of God's grace and loving kindness toward us who are in Christ Jesus. Eph. 2:7. And it will yet be more clearly seen in the ages to come. Yes, when the plan was first foretold through the Prophets, Angels desired to

look into it and to know concerning the time, and manner of time of their fulfillment, (See 1 Pet. 1:12.) and an "innumerable company of Angels" still watch our progress and gladly become "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation" [Heb. 1:14,] and soon be their rulers: For, "know ye not that ye shall judge [govern] Angels?" [1 Cor. 6:3.] The Father, too, who has called us with so high a calling looks upon us with loving sympathy and desires that we make our calling and election sure by complying with the conditions. And there is another who watches us with intense interest; it is He who redeemed us from death by his own precious blood and invited us to become his Bride and joint heir. If he loved us with such love while we were yet sinners, judge of his love now that we are his betrothed. He knows all about the narrow way – was tempted in all points as we are, without yielding, and now he stands ready to succor and strengthen us as we need and ask his help.

In view of all these things, let us brethren and sisters, "come boldly to the throne of heavenly grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need," while we fight the good fight of faith [warfare of new and old nature] and lay hold on eternal life.
