

Christ's Resurrection and Our Immortality.

GLEANINGS FROM A SERMON PREACHED BY THE REV. D. MCKENZIE,
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In the resurrection of Christ, we find the crowning evidence of our immortality. It was by His resurrection that Christ so completely brought life and immortality to light. Up till that time the grave gave no answering voice to those who asked if there was life beyond. By rising from the dead and showing Himself on the other side Christ revealed that as a matter of fact, there is a life beyond the grave, that as surely as there is life on this side the grave, so surely there is life on the otherside.

Centuries before the days of our Lord, prophets in Israel had called back to life those who had departed in death. Christ Himself had also during His ministry raised several from the dead. All such works of power were imitations of our immortality. They were not conclusive however. They were rather cases of restoration to this life than resurrection to a life to come. The restored were seen on this side the grave not on the other. Not so Christ and His resurrection. His is a resurrection to the life to come. Those who saw Him after His resurrection saw one alive beyond the river of death. The intercourse which the disciples held with Him during the forty days preceding the ascension was intercourse with one living in the life to come. They had therefore as strong evidence of life beyond the grave as they had of life on this side. The fact of life is proof that there is life here, so the fact of Christ's life beyond death is the proof of life hereafter.

In the records of the days before Christ we read that two men had been translated into the unseen without having tasted death. Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him, and Elijah was parted from his companion by a chariot of fire and horses of fire. The miraculous departure of these men was strong evidence that there is an unseen world into which they were introduced. It was evidence enough to assure of immortality men not prone to doubt. And yet it was not thoroughly conclusive. Two objections might be raised. One is that these men were not seen after their departure and so there was not absolute certainty that they continued to live. The other is that they did not depart through death and consequently their life in the future, does not show that they will continue to live who are cut down by death. The objector might say if these men had fallen in death as others do they might never arise. None of these objections holds against the evidencing power of Christ's resurrection. He was seen after His departure, consequently it is certain that He continued to live. Moreover His departure was through death. His after life was proof that life continued after it had passed through death and the grave. A recent writer, having immortality in view, says: "The problem is probably insoluble or will be until a 'traveller' returns from that 'undiscovered country.' Now what this writer demands in order to solve the problem is what Christ's resurrection secures. He did return from that 'undiscovered country' and was seen after His return. Or, what is the same He was seen alive in that 'undiscovered country' making it as certain as it can be made that life continues to exist there, that is, that there is life beyond the grave.

It may be objected to this reasoning that while the resurrection of Christ reveals life in the future it does not prove that this life will be endless. The objector may say that through some occurrence the surviving life may be destroyed in the distant hereafter. Now it must be admitted that coming from some quarters this objection might have some force. It might have some force coming from those who believe in what is called 'conditional immortality.' It has no force whatever coming from those who deny altogether the doctrine of a future life.

There are two schools of thought that deny in toto such a life. These are the Materialistic and the Pantheistic; the Materialist says that what is called the soul of man is only a function of his organism, that his thought is only a function of his brain. From this it follows that when the organism ceases to act the soul becomes non-existent, that when the brain refuses to work there is no longer any thought. In other words according to the Materialist, life ceases to exist at death. The Pantheist believes that at death the individual returns to the ocean of being whence he came like the water drop falling back into the bosom of the sea. Consequently for the Pantheist, as well as for the Materialist, conscious personal being ceases immediately at death. Both theorists are by their principles forced to deny any life in the future no less than immortality. To either therefore it is a sufficient answer to show that for some time at any rate, life exists in the future. For if it exists at all it may exist throughout eternity for any objection that the Pantheist or Materialist can make. Now this is the answer that the resurrection of Christ gives. It shows that there is life beyond death, that as a matter of fact life continues at least for some time beyond the grave.

Consequently it shows, as far as any objection offered by either Materialist or Pantheist is concerned, that it will always continue. Establish the truth of Christ's resurrection, and you sweep from the field all opponents to the truth of our immortality worthy the name. You leave those who believe in 'conditional immortality.' But these are a feeble folk and can be safely left to other Scripture evidence.

To The Work.

BY J. B. MILLER, D.D.

With the opening of another autumn there should be in every church the reconsecration of the entire membership to active service. It is a "living sacrifice" which God asks. "Simply to Thy cross I cling" is very precious Gospel, but it is only half the Gospel. If we are saved ourselves we have something to do in saving others. There is a common print which shows one clinging with one hand to a cross, rising out of the waves, while the other hand is reached down, trying to rescue another drowning one. The picture is a completer Gospel than the hymn-line. One reason Jesus leaves His disciples in this world after they are saved is that they may seek the salvation of others.

Now this is just as true of all Christ's disciples as of any. It is a false idea that only some Christians are to try to save others. The Church will never reach its full possibility of power and usefulness until every one who takes the bread and wine of its communion goes out to carry to other perishing souls the bread of life and the wine of grace. There is converting power enough lying idle and covered up in the lives of the membership of Christian churches, if only it were all called into action and anointed for service, to bring the whole world in a little while to the feet of Christ.

Part of this great reserve of unused power is in each individual life. We have different faculties, powers, gifts, capacities, and therefore different duties and responsibilities. There is the orator, whose eloquence thrills men's souls and aways their wills. There is the poet, whose song lives and goes abroad as an angel of blessing, singing age after age. There is the artist whose pictures live to be admired throughout centuries. Perhaps these gifts are beyond most of us; but there are lowlier spheres. "There is the little wood-thrush, that sits on the limb of a tree and sings his obsequy note, hour after hour; and there are men and women who have only a slender work to do, but whose work is just as important to the perfection of the whole as the largest mission that ever gifted genius achieved."

Pulpits are not the only places of service that need to be filled. Officers alone do not make an army; without the men in the ranks few battles could be fought, few victories won. The humblest soldier's part is just as important in its place as that of the commander. It is so in the church. The one talent may not shine as brightly before men as the five talents, yet they are just as essential to the perfection of the ministry of the church.

Look at some of the places, besides its pulpit, that the average church wants to have filled. It wants teachers who will enter with heart and soul into Sabbath-school work, shepherding with gentle care the lambs of the flock. It wants visitors who will go after absent people and absent scholars, invite strangers to the services, and carry the Gospel to those who will not come within the sanctuary. It wants angels of mercy to go to homes of sickness, sorrow and distress, and bear there the gracious comforts of Christ's Gospel. It wants a whole congregation, large or small, that will exhibit the love of Christ in the sanctuary, in the kindly courtesy that is such a real means of grace. It wants a company of young people willing to give at least one evening every week to the Lord's work. It wants scores of Andrews and Phillips, who, having found Christ themselves, hasten to bring their brothers or or neighbors to Him. It wants an entire congregation of loving, sympathizing people, who will be patient with the erring, who will lift up the fallen, who will seek to reclaim the wandering, whose week-lives shall be illuminated pages of bright Gospel, whose whole influence shall be purifying, elevating, enlightening. It wants members who shall be in their place at all services, ready to take hearty part in all the worship, and also in all the work that the church seeks to do.

Besides all these formal classes of service, there is an individual ministry, a daily and hourly wayside ministry, which cannot be classified, but which every Christian should render, which he cannot but render unless he be untrue to the very spirit of his high calling. "Woman's work is never done," says the rhyme; the same is true of the Christians work. Save when he sleeps, he is always on duty as Christ's servant, with some mission which he is bound to render or be faithless. Wherever he goes, he goes as a Christian and represents his Master. To every one he meets, even most casually, he has an errand, some message from God, some