

BRIEF REMARKS ON ETERNAL LIFE.

THE following remarks are sent forth, meagre and fragmentary as they are, in hope that the Lord may graciously be pleased to use them for the help of truly exercised souls.

The subject itself must necessarily be as infinite as it is blessed ; and, inasmuch as He Himself is the Eternal Life, it can only be learnt as *He* is learnt, and that, now, in connection with the place where He is. It is noteworthy that the Gospel of John speaks of Him while here below, as "*in the bosom of the Father,*" and "*The Son of Man which is in heaven.*" Though it was *on earth* that the Father was "declared," and the "Life was manifested," it was in connection with a *heavenly* order of things entirely.

ITS SOURCE AND MANIFESTATION.

Eternal Life was in the Son and with the Father before worlds began, and independent, therefore, of all creature circumstances. In the fulness of time, He who was it, came and dwelt here below amid the ordinary scenes of daily human life. As to whom He was actually *made manifest*, AS THE ETERNAL LIFE, is another thing altogether; but the Apostle John could say: "It," *i.e.*, the Eternal Life, "was manifested to *us*." "*We* have seen it." "*We* beheld His glory, the glory as of an only begotten with a Father, full of grace and truth." But it must be remembered that man, in his *natural* state, can neither understand nor receive any spiritual communication (1 Cor. ii. 14). To say that he *could*, would be to deny his total ruin. It was only those in whom grace effectually wrought that had either eyes to see or hearts to appreciate the moral excellencies and perfections of the "only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father"; yet every characteristic trait of Eternal Life was fully and blessedly manifested in Him,

and in His blessed person it ever did and ever will subsist.

“He is the true God and Eternal Life.”—
1 *John* v. 20.

“For the life was manifested, and *we* have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.”—
1 *John* i. 2.

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”—*John* i. 4.

“The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.”—*John* i. 5.

“The world knew Him not.”—*John* i. 10.

ITS COMMUNICATION TO OTHERS.

While it is true that the Son always quickened, yet now, having revealed the Father and accomplished redemption, the Son communicates life in the power of the Spirit—“life abundantly ;” and the believer has this Eternal Life *now*—has it in Him who is its Source—the Spirit, the water and the blood witnessing that it is only through death and beyond death he has

it, even in the Son of God the Risen One. To quote the words of another, "It is the *death* (His death) we enter into and receive it in our souls; so as to have part in the Eternal Life that is in Him." And again, "Though we must be born to have life, and have life if born, yet Eternal Life is only known in redemption, and the scene and state into which redemption brings."—*Notes and Comments, by J. N. D.*, vol. ii., pp. 327, 322.

John vi. 47.—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." Adding, a few verses lower down (verse 54), "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath Eternal Life." See also *1 John* v. 7. "There are three, that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood," etc. (verse 11.) "This is the witness that God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this life is in His Son."

"Eternal Life," as so characterised in the writings of John, is for us more than a life of unending blessedness and everlasting security, and more than being quickened of the Spirit into a sense of our need as sinners. It involves the appropriation, by faith, of Christ's

death, and the knowledge of the Father as revealed in the Son. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." —*John* xvii. 3.

In *John* iii. 14, He is presented as the Son of Man "*lifted up*," and in verse 16 as the gift of God the Father, "That whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

ITS FUTURE ASPECT FOR US.

It has often been noticed that Paul and Jude, and even John, speak of Eternal Life as a future thing. He who is the Eternal Life has gone into a new sphere of blessedness for man : not new to *Him* as the Eternal Son, for it is the sphere in which He had communion with the Father before worlds began, and always ; but into that sphere He has now passed as Man, thereby preparing the place for us. If I might convey my conception of it by a human term, I should say that in the Father's House, Eternal Life is "at home," *i.e.*, in the place and atmosphere peculiar to it.

I gather that this sphere of heavenly and

eternal enjoyment and communion with the Father and the Son, was ever in God's purpose for us; and, as J. N. D. has expressed it, "Eternal Life knows no other place" ("Notes and Comments," Vol. ii., p. 34), though it is not the place, and the place is not it.

Now while this heavenly sphere, with the privileges and relationships which belong to it, are to faith reached and enjoyed now, yet the believer himself is not yet actually there, and hence there is a *future* aspect of Eternal Life, as the result of God's purpose and promise in Christ Jesus; and accordingly some of the inspired writers, especially Paul and Jude, carry us on to the end when all will be fully consummated in glory, and we shall be with Him, and like Him for ever.

See the following Scriptures.

2 *Tim.* i. 1.—"Paul an Apostle, according to the *promise* of life in Christ Jesus."

Titus i. 2.—"In *hope* of Eternal Life, which God, who cannot lie, *promised* before the world began."

Titus iii. 7.—"Heirs according to the *hope* of Eternal Life."

Romans vi. 22.—"Ye have your fruit unto holiness and the *end Everlasting Life.*"

Jude 21.—"Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ *unto Eternal Life.*"

John iv. 36.—"He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit *unto Life Eternal.*"

John xii. 25.—"He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it *unto Life Eternal.*"

MILLENIAL ASPECT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

It has been noticed that the three Gospels which present Christ as the Messiah for Israel and men generally, speak of Eternal Life in a different way to the Gospel of John, in which latter Gospel He is looked upon as rejected by the nation from the very start of it. In the former Gospels, "Eternal Life" seems to be viewed more as that state of blessedness into which Israel with the believing Gentiles will be introduced by Christ in His Millennial Kingdom (see Psalm cxxxiii). "For there the Lord commanded the *blessing, even life for evermore.*" This being Israel's hope, not only do we find the young ruler and the lawyer asking the question as to how it should be "inherited,"

but the Lord Himself speaks of it thus:— (*Mark* x. 29, 30), "There is no man that has left house or brethren for My name's sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this present time . . . and in the *age to come Eternal Life*." [See also *Matthew* xix. 29 ; *Luke* xviii. 30.] Again, when speaking of the ushering in of the kingdom (*Matt.* xxv.), He says, "the righteous (shall go) *into Life Eternal*."

Surely, one may add, the more our souls become acquainted with what is really involved in the subject of *Eternal Life*, the more shall we wonder at the profound depths that are in it, and with adoring hearts be constrained to bless our God and Father for the grace which makes us participators in it now, and holds it out to us as our hope for Eternity.

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God ; *therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not*."—
1 *John* iii. 1.

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