

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

LIFE ETERNAL.

A Sermon

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”—John x. 28.

SOME will say that this is a mixed congregation, and that such a doctrine as this should not be advanced in the presence of ungodly men and women. This shows how little such objectors read their Bible, for this very text was spoken by the Saviour, not to his loving disciples, but to his enemies. Read the thirty-first verse of the chapter, and you will see the temper of the congregation to whom Jesus Christ preached upon this subject—“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.” So that an indignant multitude of bigots had this hurled into their face by the Saviour, that although *they* might reject him, and because of their wilful obstinacy might miss the blessings of grace, yet those blessings were rich and rare. He would have them to know that what they lost was inexpressibly precious, and that his message was not to be despised without great damage to their souls. Thus, if there be a mixed multitude here—and I fear the allegation is true, that there are many here who cannot comprehend the preciousness of the things of God—yet, for the same reason which prompted the Saviour to preach of this doctrine to the wicked in his day, we will do the same now, that they may know what it is they lose by losing Christ, what those comfortable things are which they despise, and what are the inestimable treasures which those must miss who seek after the treasures of this world, and let their God, their Saviour go.

We have no time to loiter, and let us therefore, as the bee sucks honey from the flower, seek after the sweet essence of the text, “I give unto them eternal life.” The connection tells us that the pronoun “them” refers to Christ’s sheep, to certain persons whom he had chosen to be his sheep, and whom he had also called to be such. Lest we should be in the dark as to whom they are, our Saviour has kindly put us in possession of the marks by which his sheep may be discovered. We cannot read the secret roll of election, nor can we search the heart, but we can mark the outward conduct of men, and the verse before the text tells us by what signs we are to know God’s people. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” The marks are the

hearing of Christ, and then the following of Christ, first, by faith in him, and then by an active obedience to his precepts. "Faith which worketh by love" is the mark of Christ's sheep, and it is of true believers that he speaks when he says, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Would to God that all of us wore the livery of the elect, namely, active, sanctifying faith! Oh that we all listened to the Great Shepherd's voice, that we received the truth which he delivers! and then resolved by his grace to follow him whithersoever he goeth, as the sheep follow the shepherd.

Having thus explained to whom the text belongs, we will now handle it in a threefold manner. The text implies, first, *somewhat concerning the past of these people*; the text plainly states, in the second place, *a great deal about the present of these people*; and, thirdly, the text not obscurely hints at *something about their future*.

I. In the first place, the studious reader will observe that the text implies **SOMEWHAT CONCERNING THE PAST HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD.**

It is said, "I give unto them eternal life." There is an implication, therefore, *that they had lost eternal life*. Every one of God's people fell in Adam, and all have fallen also by actual sin; consequently, we came under condemnation, and Christ Jesus has done for us what Her Majesty the Queen has sometimes done for a condemned criminal—he has brought us a free pardon. He has given us life. When our own desert was eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, Jesus Christ stepped in, and he said, "Thou art forgiven; the sentence shall not take place upon thee; thine offence is blotted out; thou art clear." Nay, I think the text implies that there was something more than condemnation, there was execution. We were not only condemned to die, we were already spiritually dead. Jesus did not merely spare the life which ought to have been taken, and in that sense gave it to us, but he imparted to us a life which we had not before enjoyed. It is implied in the text that we were spiritually dead; nay, we are not left here to our own surmisings, nor even to our own experience, for the apostle Paul has said, "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." What, Paul, dead? Are you not mistaken? Perhaps they were only a little sick? Nay, we are ready to admit, O apostle, that they were sick and near to death, but surely they had a little vital energy, a little power to assist themselves! "No," says the apostle, "you were dead, dead in trespasses and sins." The work of salvation is tantamount, not only to the healing of the sick, but to the actual resurrection of a dead man from his grave. All the saints who are now alive unto God were once as dead as others, quite as corrupt and offensive as others, and as much an ill savour in the nostrils of Divine Justice by reason of their sins as even the most corrupt of their fellows. We had altogether gone out of the way; we had altogether become abominable, for "there is none that doeth good, no not one." When we were all shut up under sin then Jesus Christ came into the region of death, and brought life and immortality to us. Life was forfeited by all the saints; spiritual life they had none: Jesus the Quickener has made them alive unto God.

Is it not also very clearly implied that, so far from having any life, *these people could not otherwise have obtained life except by its being*

given to them? It is a rule well known to all Biblical students, that you never meet in God's Word with an unnecessary miracle, that a miracle is never wrought where the ordinary course of nature would suffice. Now, my brethren, the greatest of all miracles is the salvation of a soul. If that soul could save itself God would not save it, but would let it do what it could do; and if the spiritually dead could quicken themselves, rest assured, from the analogy of all the divine transactions, that Jesus Christ would not have come to give them life. I believe that it would be utterly impossible for any one of us to enter heaven, let us do what we might, unless Jesus Christ had come from heaven to show us the way, to remove the bolts and bars for us, and to enable us to tread in the path which leads to glory and immortality. Lost! lost! lost! The race of man was utterly lost, not partly lost, not thrown into a condition in which it might be ruined unless it worked hard to save itself; but so lost, that but for the interposition of a divine arm, but for the appearance of God in human flesh, but for the stupendous transaction upon Calvary, and the work of God the Holy Ghost in the heart, not one dead soul ever could come to life. Eternal life would not be the peculiar work of the Lord Jesus if man had a finger in it, but now man's power is excluded and grace reigns.

It is clearly to be seen in the text, by a little thought, *that eternal life was not the merit of any one of God's people, for it is said that it is given to us.* Now, a gift is the very opposite of payment. What a man receives as a gift he certainly does not deserve. If it be given to us, then it is no more a debt, but if it be a debt then it can be no more a gift. None of us merits eternal life, or ever can merit it. Mere mortal life is a gift of divine mercy, we do not deserve it; and as for the eternal life spoken of in the text, it is a boon too high for the fingers of human merit to hope to reach it; if a man should work never so hard after it, yet upon the footing of the law it would be impossible for him to obtain it. Man merits nothing but death, and life must be the free gift of God. "The wages of sin is death;" that is to say it is earned and procured as matter of debt; "but the gift of God," the free-grace gift of God, "is eternal life." Now, this is a very humiliating doctrine, I know, but it is true, and I want you all to feel it. Children of God, I know you do. You see the hole of the pit whence *you* were drawn? Do you see it? Or have you grown proud of late? Those fine feelings and prayings of yours have you stuck them like feathers in your cap? I pray you recollect what you were! *You* be proud! do not forget the dunghill where you once grew! Remember the filth out of which God took you, and instead of being scarlet with the garments of pride, your cheeks may well be scarlet with a blush! Oh! may God forbid, once for all, that we should glory, for what have we to glory in? What have we that we have not received?

It is clear, too, from the text, that *those who are now righteous would have perished but for Christ.* Christ says, "they shall never perish." Promises are never given as superfluities. There is a necessity, therefore, for this promise. There was a danger, a solemn danger, that every one of those men who are now saved would have perished eternally. Sin made them heirs of wrath even as others, so Scripture tells us; and justice must have overwhelmed them with the rest if

distinguishing grace had not prevented. Even now it is solemnly true, that there is no reason why a truly righteous soul should not perish, except that Christ still prevents it. You are alive, but you would not be spiritually alive an hour, unless the Holy Spirit continued to pour his vital energy into your soul. You shall be preserved, but, mark you, it is stated as a promise, and therefore it is not at all a matter of natural necessity. Apart from grace you are in fearful danger of apostacy, and probably you have fears about it even now; like the apostle, who feared lest after having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway; a very proper fear, a fear which will often come upon sincere souls, who feel a holy jealousy of themselves. But we need have no fear when we come to the promise of God, for if we are really in Christ we have a guarantee of security, since Christ's own word is, "They shall never perish." The promise was certainly given because it was wanted. There is a danger of perishing; there are ten thousand risks of perishing; only Omnipotence itself keeps off the fiery darts of Satan; the blessed Physician gives the antidote or the poison would soon destroy us; he who swears to bring us safely home protects us from a thousand foes, who otherwise would work our ill. "They shall never perish."

It is also implied, *that naturally the people of God have ten thousand enemies who would pluck them out of Christ's hand.* They were once in the hand of the enemy; they were once willing bond-slaves of Satan. All this they know, and all this they are willing to acknowledge. I would to God that some here would feel the truth of that which I have been saying. You self-righteous ones will say, "I am all right; I do my best, I go to a place of worship." Now, soul, that is right enough in itself, but if thou boastest of it, it is an evidence that thou knowest neither God nor thyself. When I have heard of some who have boasted that they felt no inbred sin, I have wished that they would read the story of the Pharisee and the Publican. At the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting, a brother asked for the prayers of believers, because he felt so much the corruption of his own heart, the temptations of Satan, and especially the natural vileness of his own nature. A brother stood up on the opposite side of the hall, and said he thanked God that was not his experience; he did not feel any corruption, and his heart was not depraved. The other one made no reply, but a friend present read these words: "Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." A sense of sin is a blessed sign either of pardon received, or of pardon to come. He that says he has no sin makes God a liar, and the truth is not in him. He who will not confess his sin shall never be absolved; but he who with a broken and a trembling heart goes to the foot of the cross shall find forgiveness there. This much, then, upon the past estate of the heirs of heaven.

II. And now, to plunge at once into the subject. THE TEXT SHEDS A FLOOD OF LIGHT UPON THE PRESENT STATE OF EVERY BELIEVER.

We shall have to give you hints rather than a long exposition; so kindly take the first sentence, which speaks of *a gift received*. "I give unto them eternal life." This gift is, first of all, *life*. You will make strange confusion of God's Word if you confound life with existence, for they are very different things. All men will exist for ever, but many will dwell in everlasting death; they will know nothing whatever of life. Life is a distinct thing altogether from existence, and implies in God's Word something of activity and of happiness. In the text before us it includes many things. Note the difference between the stone and the plant. The plant has vegetable life. You know the difference between the animal and the plant. While the plant has vegetable life, yet it is altogether dead in the sense in which we speak of living creatures. It has not the sensations which belong to animal life. Then, again, if we turn to another and higher grade, namely, mental life, an animal is dead so far as that is concerned. It cannot enter at all into the mysterious calculations of the mathematician, nor revel in the sublime glories of poetry. The animal has nothing to do with the life of the intellectual mind; as to mental life it is dead. Now, there is a grade of life which is higher than the mental life—a higher life quite unknown to the philosopher, not put down in Plato, nor spoken of by Aristotle, but understood by the very meanest of the children of God. It is a phase of life called "spiritual life," a new form of life altogether, which does not belong to man naturally, but is given to him by Jesus Christ. The first man, Adam, was made a living soul, and all his descendants are made like unto him. The second Adam is made a quickening spirit, and until we are made like the second Adam we know nothing of spiritual life. This body of ours is by nature adapted for a soulish life. The apostle tells us, in that wonderful chapter in Corinthians, that the body is sown—what? "A natural body." The Greek is, "A soulish body"—"but it is raised"—what? "A spiritual body." There is a soulish body, and there is a spiritual body. There is a body adapted to the lower life which belongs to all men, a mere mental existence; and there is to be a body which will belong to all those who have received spiritual life, who shall dwell in that body as the house of their perfected spirit in heaven. The life which Jesus Christ gives his people is spiritual life, therefore it is *mysterious*. "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but thou canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." You who have mental life cannot explain to the horse or the dog what it is, neither can we who have spiritual life explain to those who have it not what it is. You can tell them what it does and what its effects are, but what the "spark of heavenly flame" may be you yourselves do not know, though you are conscious that it is there.

It is spiritual life which Jesus Christ gives his people, but it is more; it is *divine life*. This life is like the life of God, and therefore it is *elevating*. "We are made," says the apostle, "partakers of the divine nature." "Begotten again by God the Father, not," says the apostle, "with corruptible seed, but with incorruptible." We do not become divine, but we receive a nature which enables us to sympathize with

Deity, to delight in the topics which engage the Eternal Mind, and to live upon the same principles as the Most Holy God. We love, for God is love. We begin to be holy, for God is thrice holy. We pant after perfection, for he is perfect. We delight in doing good, for God is good. We get into a new atmosphere. We pass out of the old range of the mere mental faculties; our spiritual faculties make us akin to God. "Let us," said he, "make man in our own image, after our own likeness." That image Adam lost; that image Christ restores, and gives to us that life which Adam lost in the day when he sinned, when God said to him, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." In that sense he *did* die; the sentence was not postponed; he died spiritually directly he touched the fruit; and this long-lost life Jesus Christ restores to every soul who believes in him.

This life, you will gather from my remarks, is *heavenly life*. It is the same life that expands and develops itself in heaven. The Christian does not die. What does the Saviour say? "He that believeth in me shall never die." Does not the mental life die? Yes. Does not the mere bodily life die? Ay, but not the spiritual life. It is the same life here which it will be there, only now it is undeveloped and corruption impedes its action. Brethren, nothing of us shall go to heaven as flesh and blood, but only as it is subdued, elevated, changed, and perfected by the influence of the spirit-life. Know ye not that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Then what is the "I," the "myself" that shall enter heaven? Why, if you be in Christ a new creature, then that new creature and nothing but that new creature, the very life which you have lived here in this tabernacle, the very life that has budded and blossomed in the garden of communion with God, that life which has led you to visit the sick, and clothe the naked, and feed the hungry, that life which has made tears of repentance stream down your cheeks, that life which has caused you to believe in Jesus,—this is the life which will go to heaven; and if you have not this, then you do not possess the life of heaven, and dead souls cannot enter there. Only living men can enter into the land of the living. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, so also shall we bear the image of the heavenly." Even now the heavenly life heaves and throbs within us.

I think it may also be inferred from all this that the life which Christ gives his people is *an energetic life*. If the spiritual life is poured into a man it raises him above his former state, and lifts him out of the range of merely carnal comprehension. He himself is discerned of no man. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." You cannot expect the world to understand this new life. It is a hidden thing. It will be a mystery to yourselves, a wonder to your own hearts. But oh! how active it will be! It will fight with your sins, and will not be satisfied until it has slain them. If you tell me you never have a conflict within, I tell you I cannot understand how you can have the divine life, for it is sure to come into conflict at once with the old nature, and there will be perpetual strife. The man becomes a new man at home; his wife and family observe it; he is a different man in business; he is a changed man altogether, whether you view him in connection with his fellow-men or

with his God. He is a new creature. He feels that the new and wondrous life which has been planted in him has made him of a different race from the common herd, and he walks amongst the sons of men feeling that he is an alien and a stranger. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

I wish there were more time to describe the inward life, but this must suffice to indicate the blessing which Jesus gives to the believer by the work of the Holy Ghost.

There is a word in the text which qualifies it: "I give unto them eternal life." "Eternal" means "without end." If Christ puts the life of God into a man that life cannot be taken away. It cannot die, that were impossible. When I have heard one say that you may be a child of God to-day but that next week may find you a child of the devil, I have supposed that the word "eternal" according to him could only have meant five or six days; but according to the dictionary I use, according to the mind of the Spirit, "eternal" means "without end." If, then, a man says, "I had spiritual life once, but I do not possess it now," it is clear that either he is mistaken altogether or he never had it at all. If Jesus had said, "I give unto them life which shall last for seven years, but which may perhaps be quenched and put out under temptation," I could understand a man saying that he had fallen from grace; but if it be "eternal life," then it must be "eternal;" there is no end to it, it must go on. The mere existence of the soul we believe will be never-ending, but it will be no boon to the ungodly that it will be so. It is not for Christ to give us mere immortality of existence, for that will be a fearful curse to some men. Lost souls would be glad enough if they could be rid of their immortal existence, but Christ gives an eternal, a holy life, a happy *life*, which is infinitely more than existence. Existence may be a curse, but life is a blessing. This life begins here: "I give unto them." Not, "I shall give," but "I give." Not, "I will give it to them when they die," but "I give it them here, I give unto them eternal life." Now, my hearer, you have either got eternal life to-night, or you are still in death. If you have not received it you are "dead in trespasses and sins," and your doom will be a terrible one; but if God has given you eternal life, fear not the surrounding hosts of hell nor the temptations of the world, for the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath you are the everlasting arms.

This life *is given as a free gift* to every one of the Lord's people, and is bestowed by the Lord and by none else.

2. Let us turn now to the second part of the blessing. Here is *preservation secured*. "They shall never perish." Certain gentlemen who cannot endure the doctrine of final perseverance manage to slip away from the next sentence, "Neither shall any pluck them out of my hands," and suggest, "but they may get out themselves." No, no, no, because the text says, "They shall never perish." Our present sentence which we have now in hand puts aside all suppositions of every kind about the destruction of one of Christ's sheep. "They shall never perish." Take each word. "*They shall never perish.*" Some of their notions may, some of their comforts may, some of their expe-

riences may, but **THEY** never shall. That which is the essence of the man, his true soul, his inward renewed nature, shall never be destroyed. See, then, Christian, you may be deprived of a thousand things without any violation of the promise. The promise is not that the ship shall not go to the bottom, but that the passengers shall get to the shore. The promise is not that the house shall not be burned; the pledge is that you who are in the house shall escape. "*They shall never perish.*" Take another word: "*They shall never perish.*" They shall go very near it, perhaps. They shall lose their joys and their comforts, but "*they shall never perish.*" The life in them shall never be starved out, nor beaten out, nor driven out. If you once get leaven into a piece of bread you cannot get it out; you may boil it, you may fry it, you may bake it, you may do what you like with it, but the leaven is in it, and you cannot get it out. Get the soul saturated with the grace of God, and you can never eradicate it. The man himself shall never perish. He may think he shall, the devil may tell him he shall, his comforts may be withdrawn, he may go to his death-bed full of doubts and fears about himself, but he shall never *perish*. Now, this is either true or it is not. You who think it is not true tell the Lord so; but I believe that it is a most sure and infallible fact, for Jehovah says it. I do not know how it is that they do not perish, it is a wondrous thing; but then it is all a marvel throughout from first to last. Now take the word "*never.*" We have shown how long the preservation endures: "*They shall never perish.*" "Well, but if they should live to be very aged, and should then fall into sin?" "*They shall never perish.*" Oh! but perhaps they may be assaulted in quarters where they least expect it, or they may be beleaguered by temptation." "*They shall never perish.*" "Well, but a man may be a child of God and yet go to hell." How so, if he can *never* perish? Why, that "*never*" includes time and eternity, it includes living and dying, it includes the mount and the valley, the tempest and the calm. "*They shall never perish.*"

"In every state secure,
Kept by the eternal Hand."

Beneath the wings of the Almighty God night with its pestilence cannot smite them, and day with its cares cannot destroy them; youth with its passions shall be safely passed; middle age with all its whirl of business shall be navigated in safety; old age with its infirmities shall become the land of Beulah; death's gloomy vale shall be lit up with the coming splendour; the actual moment of departure, the last and solemn article shall be the passing over of a river dryshod. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee, saith the Lord." "*They shall never perish.*"

There is a way of explaining away everything, I suppose, but I really do not know how the opponents of the perseverance of God's saints will get over this text. They may do with it as they will, but I shall still believe what I find here, that I shall never perish if I am one of Christ's people. If I perish, then Christ will not have kept his promise; but I know he must abide faithful to his word. "He is not a

man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent." Every soul that resteth on the atoning sacrifice is safe, and safe for ever; "they shall *never* perish."

3. Then comes the third sentence, in which we have a *position guaranteed*—"in Christ's hand." We have not time to expound it: it is to be in a place of honour; we are the ring he wears on his finger. It is a place of love: "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." It is a place of power: his right hand encloses all his people. It is a place of property: Christ holds his people; "all the saints are in thy hand." It is a place of discretion: we are yielded up to Christ, and Christ wields a discretionary government over us. It is a place of guidance, a place of protection: as sheep are said to be in the hand of the shepherd, so are we in the hand of Christ. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, to be used by him, as jewels in the hands of the bride to be her ornament, so are we in the hand of Christ. Now, what says the text? It reminds us that there are some who want to pluck us thence. There are those who, with false doctrine, would deceive, if it were possible, the very elect. There are roaring persecutors who would frighten God's saints, and so make them turn back in the day of battle. There are scheming tempters—the panderers to hell, the jackals of the lion of the pit, who would fain drag us to destruction. Then there are our own hearts that would pluck us thence. You know in the text before us we need not read the word "*man*," for it is not in the original. The translators have put the word "*man*" in italics to show that it is not in the Greek, and so we may read it—"Neither shall *any* pluck them out of my hand." Not only—any "*man*," but any *devil* either. Nothing that is present shall do it, nothing to come; no principality, no power, nothing whatsoever that is conceivable. "None shall pluck them out of my hand." It does not merely include men, who are sometimes our worst foes, for the worst that we have are they of our own household; it also includes fallen spirits; but none shall be able to pluck us out of his hand. By no possibility shall any be able, by any of their schemes, to remove us from being his favourites, his property, his dear sons, his protected children. Oh, what a blessed promise!

Now, do you know, while I have been preaching to you about this, I have been thinking a little about my own history before I knew the Lord. One of the things that made me want to be a Christian was this. I had seen some young lads that I was at school with, they were excellent lads, and some of them had been held up as patterns of imitation to me and to others. I saw them, though only a very few years older than myself, turn out as vain and ungodly as well could be, and yet I knew them to have been excellently well disposed as boys, nay, to have been very patterns; and this kind of thought used to cross my young brain, "Is there not some means of being preserved from making a shipwreck of my life?" When I came to read the Bible, it seemed to me to be full of this doctrine: "If you trust Christ, he will save you from all evil; he will keep you in a life of integrity and holiness while here, and he will bring you safe to heaven at the last." I felt that I could not trust man, for I had seen some of the very best wandering far from truth; if I trusted Christ, it was

not a chance as to whether I should get to heaven, but a certainty; and I learned that if I rested all my weight upon him he would keep me, for I found it written, "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." I found the apostle saying, "I am persuaded that he that hath begun a good work in you will carry it on," and such-like expressions. "Why," I reasoned, "I have found an insurance office, and a good one too; I will insure my life in it; I will go to Jesus as I am, for he bids me; I will trust myself with him." If I had listened to the Arminian theory I should never have been converted, for it never had any charms for me. A Saviour who casts away his people, a God who leaves his children to perish, were not worthy of my worship, and a salvation which does not save outright is neither worth preaching nor listening to. When I stand here and say to this assembled mass, Trust my Master, believe him, and it is no matter of question as to whether you shall be saved, for he has said that "he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" when I say that, I feel that I have something to say which is worth listening to. My dear hearer, with a new heart and a right spirit you will be a new man. As you now are, if you were to be pardoned to-night you would be condemned to-morrow, for the tendencies of your nature would lead you astray. But if God shall put a new nature into you, your old nature shall not be able to control it. The new immortal principle shall get the mastery; you shall be kept from sinning; you shall be preserved in holiness, and though you will have to mourn over your imperfection, yet you will feel that you have God's own life in you; though you will realize that you are not perfect, yet you will wish you were, and this wishing to be so will be a sign of grace in your soul, and these wishes and desires will go on waxing stronger and stronger, till, having mastered sin by the power of the Spirit, the day shall come when this body shall be dropped off, and the new life, disencumbered of the vile rags which it was compelled to wear while it was here, shall leap in its disembodied existence into perfection, and then shall wait for the trumpet's sound, and the body itself, purified and made fit for the new and higher life, shall be again inhabited, and so both the body and the soul, delivered from all sin, shall be an everlasting testimony to the promise of Christ, for those who rest in him shall have eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand.

III. I have anticipated the last point, as to THE OUTLOOK OF MY TEXT INTO THE FUTURE.

If God has given you eternal life, that comprehends all the future. Your spiritual existence will flourish when empires and kingdoms decay. Your life will live on when the heart of this great world shall grow cold, when the pulse of the great sea shall cease to

beat, when the eye of the bright sun shall grow dim with age. You possess *eternal* life. When, like a moment's foam which melts into the wave that bears it, the whole universe shall have gone, and left not a wreck behind, it shall be well with *you*, for you have eternal life. You have an existence that will run parallel with the existence of the Deity. Eternal life! Oh! what an avenue of glory is opened by those words—Eternal Life! “Because I live,” saith Christ, “ye shall live also.” As long as there is a Christ there shall be a happy soul, and you shall be that happy soul. As long as there is a God there shall be a beatified existence, and you shall enjoy existence, for Jesus gives you eternal life. Spin on, old world, until thine axle is worn out. Fly on, Old Father Time, until thine hour-glass is broken, and thou shalt cease to be! Come, mighty angel! plant thy foot upon the sea and upon the land. and swear by him that liveth that time shall be no more, for even then every Christian shall still live, because Christ gives unto them eternal life.

Does not the next sentence also look into the future?—“They shall never perish.” They shall never cease to exist in perpetual blessedness! never cease to be like God in their natures; never. Think you have been in heaven a thousand years—can you realize it? A thousand years' blessed communion with the Lord Jesus! A thousand years in his bosom! A thousand years with the sight of him to ravish your spirit! Well, but you will have just as long to be there as if you had never begun, for you shall never, never perish. When the millennium shall come, or when the judgment shall sit, and when all the great transactions of prophecy shall be fulfilled, these need not distress you, for if you trust Christ you shall never—oh! turn that word over—you shall never, never, never, *never*, NEVER perish! What an eternity of glory, what unspeakable delight is wrapped up in this promise—“They shall never perish!”

Then, surely, this is another glance into the future—“And none shall pluck them out of my hand.” We shall be in his hand for ever, we shall be in his heart for ever, we shall be in his very self for ever—one with him, and none shall pluck us thence. Happy, happy is the man who can lay claim to such a promise as this!

Oh! there are some of you to whom I wish this promise belonged! It is very rich, and very full of comfort; I wish it belonged to you. Dost thou say, “I wish it belonged to me”? Oh! friend, I am glad to hear thee say that! Dost thou know, soul, that there is but one key to open this precious treasure, and that is the key of the cross of the Lord Jesus? What sayest thou? Canst thou trust him? When one told me the other day she could not trust Christ, I looked her in the face and said, “What has he done that you should not trust him? Can you trust *me*?” “Yes,” she said, “I can trust my fellow-creatures, but I

cannot trust God." Oh! I thought, what terrible blasphemy! It was honestly spoken, and it was spoken by one who did not perceive the greatness of the offence in it, but I do not know that there is any worse thing that can be said than that—"I cannot trust God!" Well, sir, you have made him a liar then! That is the practical result of it; for if you believe a man to be honest you can always trust him. Can I trust my fellow-man, and not trust God? Oh! the horror of that thought! There is such an amount of blasphemy in it that I must not quote it again! Not trust Christ! "Well," says one, "but may we not have a merely natural trust and so be deceived?" I do not know of any trust in Christ except a spiritual one, nor do I believe in any. If thou trustest Christ thou hast not done that of thyself. There was never a soul that did trust Christ unless he was enabled to do it by God the Holy Spirit, and if you wholly and simply trust Christ you need not ask any questions about natural trusting or spiritual trusting. If you trust the Lord Jesus wholly you are right. Rest on him then; rest on him only, wholly, and solely, and if you perish then I do not understand the gospel, and I cannot comprehend what the Bible means. I will tell you one thing, and then close. If you trust Christ and you perish, then I must perish most certainly, and so must all my brethren and sisters here who have believed in Jesus. It is all over with us if it is all over with you. When there is a storm, one passenger cannot very well go to the bottom, if he is in the ship, unless the whole of the ship's company go too. We must go together. We have got into the life-boat, and if the life-boat goes down with you it must go down with all the saints, and all the apostles, and all the martyrs too. They went to heaven resting upon Christ, and if you rest on Christ you will get there also.

Oh! sinner, mayest thou be led to-day to rest on Jesus and on Jesus only, and then take the text. Do not be afraid of it—"I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."