

"IF A MAN DIE SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN."

A Sermon Preached by Rev. Allan Hudson Who is Well Known to the Citizens of Charlottetown.

The following sermon was preached last Sunday evening in the Presbyterian church by Rev. Allan Hudson. The subject was "The Immortality of the Soul."

That question has troubled the lips of every age and every people. The hope of an immortal life beyond the touch of time has surged from the breast of every human soul, and in every clime and the islands of every sea.

"If a man die shall he live again?" was the question of the ancient Egyptian, whose crumbling mummies are now silent test monies of the hope of a continued existence. It was the question of the reverent Persian who dreamed of a Zoostan heaven, where the soul from its conflict with weakness passes into the kingdom of eternal light.

But it was not until the incarnation of Christ—not until the world had felt the tread of the Redeemer—not until death's deep gloom had vanished on the radiant morn of his resurrection—not until then did the world know that the tomb is but an accident, that there is no death! What seems so is transition;

This life of mortal breath is but a suburb of the life Elysian, Whose portal we call death."

1. An argument for the immortality of the soul is drawn from the religious consciousness of the race. From primitive times man has ever believed in an endless life. Such a belief is part of human nature—it is an instinctive aspiration in an inborn hope of the human heart, and therefore must have been implanted by the Creator himself. Such a doctrine is not so-called—it is the common belief, the prevailing hope of every race.

The Indians of Mexico, the Islanders of the Pacific, the races of Southern Africa, who seem to dwell in the shadow-land that lies between the beastly and the human—the Bushmen, the Fijis, the Peruvians, and the Esquimaux; together with the most cultured races of Europe and America, were alike born with an instinctive hope of immortality.

Whence came this hope? Is it a figment of the brain—is it a vain illusion of the heart and intellect? No! It is inconceivable to suppose that during all the long ages of the past, man could be thus deceived, or that a good God would allow him to live in so vain and terrible delusion. If man's breast in every age has throbbled with an innate hope of immortality, it is because it has been placed there by a hand infinite and Divine.

That instinct is divine. The consciousness of immortality was placed there by God. Man was made in the image of his maker, and therefore man is immortal.

2. Notice next the metaphysical argument for the immortality of the soul—advanced in ancient times by Plato, and strongly advocated in modern times by the distinguished Bishop Butler.

This argument is substantially this—the self or the I is the most perfect unity of which we have any knowledge. There is in man a personality independent of the body, and that personality—that I—has baffled the power of scientists in every age, for they have never touched it, they have never seen it.

They have beheld the dissolution of the body; they have seen the physical organism go back to its parent dust; but the "ego"—the personality—the "being" that lived, reasoned and worshipped in the body, where it is, whence it has gone, what it is; nature, are questions which fall beyond the range of penetration, which are beyond the range of human reason.

There is no annihilation. The great physical law of the conservation of matter and energy forbid such an assumption. Burn a stick of wood on the hearth and it disappears, but the chemist will show that not one particle has been lost. The ashes, the smoke, the carbonic dioxide contain the wood in another form.

What is death? We see but one side of it—the dissolution of the body—but know that body has not ceased to exist; it has but gone back to its original elements. If then the body which decays cannot be annihilated, what of the soul—what of the self-conscious—"I"—what of the spirit, that cannot be touched by the crumbling finger of decay? Aye, an indestructible nature of the soul.

White man is classed in the animal creation, he has high powers of intellect and soul, that far transcend those of the animal kingdom. His mind is capable of infinite development. The highest elements of the world are concentrated in His nature. He bears evidence of being created for greater work than is possible in his earthly life.

The great powers of man, unlike anything of creation do not reach their maturity in the present existence. How great is the work he is fitted to accomplish! Yet scarcely has he reached the opening of his powers than death cuts him off. He steps upon the stage—receives the plaudits of the audience, and just as the play begins, the curtain falls, and the lights go out.

Surely this is not the last of that splendid existence created with powers that have not reached their maturity. There must be another life where these undeveloped minds will reach their perfection. If God created man with a brain capable of expanding, through eternal ages, the life he created would not, and cannot, prevent that development.

All the powers of the human soul which fail to reach their maturity here; presuppose an immortal life where they may continue their never-ending development—where they may grow more and more into the nature and likeness of God. And as each new wave of that shoreless, sunlit eternity bears us onward, we shall say "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."

4. From pure reason there is also another argument for the immortality of man—which is the moral argument. Imprinted in the soul is a sense of justice. Conscience declares that there is a law of retribution, and sometime, somewhere, men get their deserts. Righteousness deserves happiness, wickedness deserves punishment. It is the law of the moral universe that all wrong shall suffer for its evil, and all right shall be rewarded for its good.

But this justice is not always obvious in the present existence—hence evil triumphs over good—falsehood and treachery often succeed where truth and righteousness fail. How frequently in anguish the cry comes up from the heart of the upright—"Why does God allow the good to fail and the wicked to flourish?"

Such a question would be difficult to answer were it not for a belief in the future life, and where all men are judged according to the deeds done in the body. The fact of immortality solves the injustices of the present. The good man whatever his sufferings and struggles on earth, shall in eternity receive the final reward for his goodness. The wicked will suffer the retribution of sinful life however outwardly successful on earth. Justice demands immortality.

It is inconceivable to suppose that death ends all. That the malignant corruption of a Herod receives the same destiny as the inviolable righteousness of a John. It is irrational to assume, that the murder and cruelty of Nero, a Catiline, of a Shylock and Macbeth, and the piety and self-denial of a John and a Peter, a James and a Paul, all receive a common reward, and that the windowless tomb of the pallid worm, beyond which there is no future, either of recompense or punishment—where the murderer and the chaste are all alike; and receive the same reward. Such a conception—is irrational, unjust, preposterous.

Reverend justice remind future life or by the wrong of the present life. Reason and just demand immortality were good shall be rewarded and evil shall be punished. Such is the testimony of divine revelation. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the first reap corruption; he that soweth to the spirit shall of the first reap life everlasting.

5. The Bible is emphatic in its affirmance and decree of the immortality of the soul. But this great doctrine was not always clear—it is one of evolution in scripture. In the early part of the Old Testament through often inferred, immortality is not explicitly declared. "Enoch was not for God took him" is inferential of the soul's continuance after death. The translation of Enoch in a chariot of fire when Enoch saw it, and cried, "My Father, My Father! The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," is a significant proof of the immortality of the soul.

But the religious education of the Jews was gradual. All revelation did not come at once. First came great truth which was thoroughly learned was succeeded by another. Their spiritual development was evolutionary. In the progress of time to a few of the most spiritual prophets was revealed an immortal realm—a realm of higher life, after death had claimed the body. Thus Job amid his suffering, and in anticipation of the grave catches a glimpse of that dawn revelation "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that He shall stand the last day upon the earth; and after my skin hath been destroyed—yet without my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, not another."

The inspired writers of the Psalms had revealed that the soul is not the end, but that through the favor of God, deliverance would come and life would be continued after death. "Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol—to the grave—neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; in thy right hand are pleasures forever more."

As the rising sun first gilds the distant peaks with a fringe of gold and then in turn flash on the far-off valleys the glad news of coming light—so the Old Testament scriptures are the tall peaks that have caught the first golden flush of immortality, suggesting the coming day, when the Messiah should declare the perfect revelation, when He should abolish death and bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

The New Testament contains this complete revelation. On every page is an expectancy of, and complete belief of, the soul's unending existence. This great doctrine was given definiteness in all the teaching of Christ. It was essential to His Gospel—to His teaching of reward and punishment—to His declarations of a future state. The immortality of the soul is the foundation on which the redemption of man is based. Deny that, deny it either by annihilation, or materialism, and the whole fabric of the Christian system well explode like the pained bubble of a child.

It is on this ground that the whole battle must be fought. If the New Testament through the revelation of Christ can give us no assurance of a life after death, either by inference, or in exact words, then the Gospel is false and the destiny of mankind is lost amid uncertainty and despair.

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To this question of the ages revelation gives the decisive and final answer. "If a man dies shall he live again?" "Yes," says Paul, "For this corruptible must put on corruption, and this mortal put on immortality. When this corruptible shall have put on in corruption, 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. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" "If a man dies shall he live again?" "Yes," said St. John, for "I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, behold the tabernacle of God is with man, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

"If a man dies shall he live again?" "Yes," said St. Peter, "for according to God's promise we look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." "If a man dies shall he live again?" "Yes," said the great pupil of Gamaliel "for we shall not on all sleep but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed."

"If a man dies shall he live again?" "Yes," said the Nazarene, for "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on Me though he were dead yet shall he live again. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am ye may be also."

6. We cannot now escape the logical question, are we prepared for this endless—this immortal life?

Have the years brought consciousness of God's abiding presence? Has the glamor of this world—its gains, its luxuries obscured the hope of a life beyond? Have you been educating your mind and your heart in the perishing things of the present or are you so at one with God—so absorbed in spiritual realities that you can say with the great Apostle, "I know that when this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved I have a building not made with hands eternal in the heavens!"

Alas, each day marks the death of some wretched soul, without God and without a hope of happy immortality. Each day marks the departure of some life, surrounded by all spiritual blessings, but who has neglected them all, and gone into the dark dim halls of eternity, without a God, without a guide—without a light to illumine the trackless way.

Soul, art thou ready for the final change that comes to each and all? Art thou prepared to meet thy God? Has thy life been such that thou canst hope for a joyful immortality in heaven? Or do the grave bring to thee the dark horrors of a traity, starless, hopeless, Godless?

List again to the words of the Divine Redeemer, "He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

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THURSDAY, SEPT. 14th. ONE DAY ONLY.

HORSE RACES. 2.25 Class \$200.00 Free for all 300.00 2.30 Class 150.00

Entries close 30th August 1899. No horse barred by record made after 1st August 1899.

All further particulars given on application to the secretary. Admission to the grounds 25 cents, children under 12 years old 15 cents. Admission to Grand Stand 25 cents.

Special Rates by Steamers and Railways

By regular and all special trains from all stations to Charlottetown on the 14th good to return same day as follows:—

Table with columns for destination (Tignish, Piusville, Portage, etc.), inclusive price, and return date.

Also return tickets at one single first-class fare will be issued from all stations to Charlottetown on the 13th and 14th September, good to return by all trains up to and on the 15th September.

The special trains will run as follows: Local Time—Leave Summerside on arrival of the regular train from Tignish on the 14th September.

Table with columns for departure time (9.25 a.m., 9.45 a.m., etc.) and arrival time (10.30 a.m., 10.45 a.m., etc.) for various stations.

Special train leaves Cape Traverse at 7 a.m.; Albany 7.16 a.m.; Kinkora 7.30 a.m.; connecting with the special at Emerald and arrives at Charlottetown 11.40 a.m. A special train will leave Charlottetown on the afternoon of the 14th for the west at 6.00 p.m., connecting at Summerside with the train for Tignish.

It addition to regular morning train on the 14th, a special train will leave Souris at 8.00 a.m.; Bear River 8.31 a.m.; St. Peter's 9.05 a.m.; Morell 9.36 a.m.; Arrive Charlottetown 11.40 a.m.

Special trains will leave for Georgetown and Souris at 6.30 p.m. day of the race. Excursion return tickets will be issued at one-first class fare from all stations on the Intercolonial and P. E. I. Railway to Charlottetown on the 13th September good to return up to and on the 15th September.

Return fare from Pictou to Ch'town \$2.00 on the 13th, good to return up to and on the 15th. Steamer Jacques Cartier will issue tickets, good to return same day for 25 cents, leaving Ch'town at 5 p.m.

All communications to be addressed to the Secretary. F. L. HASZARD, President. C. R. SMALLWOOD, Secretary. Aug 22 Tues. Thur. & Sat.

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