

**THE PROMISE OF LIFE,
AND THE DOCTRINE OF
EVERLASTING
PUNISHMENT**

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The Promise of Life, and the Doctrine of Everlasting Punishment by J. F. B. Tinsling

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BY

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'HIDDEN LESSONS FROM THE REPETITIONS AND VARIATIONS OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,' 'THE POPPY PLAGUE AND ENGLAND'S
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PREFACE.

THE following chapters contain the substance of a course of lectures delivered in Reading in response to a unanimous request of the church of which the author was then minister.

Although convinced of the truth of conditional immortality, after a protracted mental exercise, and without knowing any person who held the same, or any book in which the idea was advocated, he had naturally in the course of eight years become acquainted with many defenders and defences of what he now holds to be clear and important truth, and some of the facts and quotations relevant to this subject which he has gathered from time to time were introduced into the lectures, and are now repeated without special mention of the sources from which they have been borrowed, particular reference being impossible, because the books, some of which are American and out of print, are not now within reach of the author. This acknowledgment is chiefly true with reference to the works of the late Professor C. F. Hudson, which are the most comprehensive and learned which have been written upon this subject. In these, and in the deservedly well-known 'Life in Christ' of the Rev. Edward White, as well as in 'The Perishing Soul,' by Rev. J. M. Denniston, M.A., the teaching of the Christian Church during the first four centuries, and also the opinions of some of the most famous Rabbis respecting the eternal life and the second death have been made familiar to many English readers by a number of remarkable quotations. Some of these are here reproduced, and to a similar extent the author has been indebted for illustrations of the faiths of the heathen world to 'A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life,' by

W. R. Alger, (New York,) and to E. F. Lytton, M.A., in 'Life or Death.'

With respect to the interpretation of Scripture, especially of the few passages which are generally thought to justify a belief in the everlasting existence of all men, the conclusions reached by independent thought are happily not original, but in agreement with those of many devout and intelligent writers on the same theme. The fact that these conclusions have been often published, and that there is no occasion for adding to the simple and natural explanations which they have afforded of such texts as Matt. xxv. 46, or Mark ix. 48, has led the author to deal much less fully with this part of the subject than he would otherwise have done. What may be called the negative argument against the doctrine of a miserable immortality is contained in the exegesis of these few texts, according to the analogy of Scripture. With the popular, but fallacious, interpretation of these vanishes every shadow of evidence in favour of endless sin and suffering. But it will be seen that the chief feature of this little treatise is the exhibition of positive truth in the 'promise of life,' which it is impossible to interpret consistently or reasonably without recognising the loss of all life and consequent extinction as the doom of the finally impenitent. The object of the author in publishing another testimony in support of what is still the least popular side of a vexed question, is not to question the authority of Holy Scripture, but to enforce this by protesting against unnatural interpretations, and by pointing out and applying the simple rule by which alone the consistency of the Bible can be maintained.

THE MANSE, EASTBOURNE, *March*, 1881.

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