

The Future Life - the Future Life Immortality

by W.B. Dunkum

The sermon emphasizes the importance of immortality, highlighting the universal longing for it, the continuation of personality, and the character of God as proofs of its existence.

Scripture: Genesis 2:7, Psalm 16:11, Isaiah 26:19, Daniel 12:2, John 11:25, John 14:19, 1 Corinthians 15:20-51, 2 Corinthians 5:8

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Resurrection Hope"

Description

W.B. Dunkum preaches about the profound importance and interest in the questions of life beyond death, emphasizing that belief in immortality is a powerful motivator for moral and religious living, with the only reliable information coming from the Word of God. He highlights that death is not the end but a gateway to eternal bliss, and that Christ's resurrection has brought life and immortality to light. The sermon delves into the universal belief in immortality, the certainty of resurrection, and the various proofs of the soul's immortality found in nature, human character, and the Scriptures.

Transcript

Does death end all? Is there a life beyond? Can we obtain any reliable information about it? These are questions of the greatest importance and the deepest interest. They lie at the foundation of all religion. They have aroused the interest and attention of the wisest and best of mankind in every age. A belief in this doctrine is a powerful incentive to the practice of moral and religious duty. To establish the doctrine of immortality we turn to the teaching of inspiration. Hence, the only reliable information is the Word of God. The doctrine of immortality is emphatically a doctrine of Divine Revelation. It is purely and exclusively a Bible doctrine. Advocates of this doctrine have been found in every age. Nature may impart the hope, salvation alone can give the assurance. Christ by his life, death and triumphant resurrection "hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light." Therefore Christianity upon the authority of a direct revelation from heaven is giving us the truth of the doctrine.

We are frequently facing the question of the ages. "If a man die, shall he live again ?" It is easy to believe in immortality as we stand by a newly made grave of a friend or loved one. Death does not startle nature or God, but it is the method God uses in changing us from one world to another. The grave is but the gate to life. Death is a visitor with whom we will never become accustomed. Yet, it is nothing uncommon for with every tick of the clock three souls leave this world to meet God.

When stricken with grief we read the Scripture, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Death is the decree of the loving God, the doorway through which we pass to Eternal Day. Death is the best method provided by a loving Lord for exchanging worlds. Jesus Christ tunneled the grave and walked out into Liberty, Victory, and Immortality. What lie did, He gives us power to do for He was declared to be the Son of God with power. "Rut now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept." I Cor. 15:20.

A glance into the other world naturally causes one to ask questions as to their future existence. Is death a gateway to endless sorrow or is it an entrance into endless bliss? Such questions come into the mind of all rational beings from the rich man in his palace to the bum of the street.

"Death is not the end; it is only a new beginning. Death is not the master of the home; he is only the appointed porter to open the gate and let the King's guest into the realm of eternal day." J.H. J. Life is not necessarily enclosed within a limit of three score years and ten. We are sailing upon a great sea. The Great Mediterranean Sea is but a fish pond compared to the sea of life we are sailing upon. We are upon the great waters, yea, we are immortal and are sailing with tomorrow in view.

God made no special attempt to prove our future existence but He gives us this truth as an evident fact.

All nationalities of the past have always had within them a native acknowledgment of the fact of a supreme being. The American Indian called it "The Great Spirit." The woman yonder on the bank of the Ganges River willingly throws her baby to the crocodiles believing there is a God, and she has been taught that by this act she will appease the wrath of her God.

Wicked men will testify to the fact that they have `within them something that witnesses to a supreme power.

Nature will prove to you there is a God if you desires to see the truth. God has placed something in your breast. which will lead you to the dawn of a beautiful day. God has existed from eternity to eternity, the author of the soul of man. Here, we have a silver watch; we know that back of this watch existed some intelligent being greater than the watch itself. Then, suppose we go back to the factory where it was made, hut that fails to satisfy. Hence, we go back to the silver mine, where the silver was obtained. With profound thought we wonder who made the silver and from whence it came, and back of all is an all-wise infinite God. Therefore, man is the climax of all of God's creation. What is man and what can a well developed and well trained man accomplish with the aid of his Maker? Man not only learns by experience and observation hut he can obtain a practical education through the wonderful facilities of travel. Man is back of nature, empires, laws, codes and constitutions. Man has connected continents and annihilated space until this world has become one great neighborhood. The trained mind takes the lead in civilization, constructing roads, building bridges and tunneling mountains. Man has made scales which will weigh a pencil mark or the smallest hair from the eyebrow. He forecasts the weather, predicts the eclipse and foretells the coming storm. He measures the distance from the earth to the sun and gives us scientific information, concerning the Milky Way. lie tells us that two pounds of spider web will go around the earth at the Equator but it will take two tons to reach the nearest star. Yet, with all this power, he can't create even one blade of grass. There must be a first cause back of him. An Omnipotent Being. We see God's mighty handiwork on every hand. His footprints are left on the sand of time. He measures the water in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains with scales and the hills in a balance. Therefore, only a supreme being can do such. When we behold nature and the beauty of God's creation, we will admit that the

heavenly artist alone can make and paint things so beautiful.

It was Dr. Mayo of Rochester, Minn., who said, "Man has religious needs and that religion has what man needs and not creeds." The God who created something out of `nothing and wasted not a single atom in all His creation, has made provision for a future life in which man's universal longing for immortality will find its realization. I am as sure that you will live again as I am sure you are living now.

God created man just a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor and gave him intellect sensibility, and will, and having the right kind of training and environment he can attain much heavenly knowledge. Does it seem that an all-wise God would create such a being as man with capacities to know, love, and serve Him and then assign him to failure and disappointment? Every power of man's makeup bespeaks the fact that he was made for a more noble existence than is possible for him to attain in this life. Every power we possess proclaims the fact that man is immortal; is created for a sunnier clime than that of earth. The best we can do here is to get where we can bless humanity and then off the stage of action, we go into eternity. Could it be reasonable to think that it is all of life to live and all of death to die? The poet was correct when he said:

"Life is real, life is earnest, And the grave is not it's goal; Dust thou art to dust returnest, Was not spoken of the soul."

The Almighty has provided a great ship upon which He will carry us across the misty and muddy stream of time and land us safely in the ocean of glory and happiness where we can enjoy eternal bliss. The universal longing of man for Immortality can find its realization in the haven of eternal rest.

We believe in an all-wise and infinite Creator and that in the meantime, He will lift the limitations placed upon us. But if we live a few passing years and then pass away and be no more, why need man such wonderful power? Then why not make him as the ox which has no higher admiration and aspiration than of food to satisfy the hunger? Man with lofty powers can look forward to the time when limitations will be removed and mortal put on immortality.

We see death ends probation forever, and that life does not end all. Man will live on when this earthly frame shall have crumbled into dust. This is the Christian's hope. In the hour of death, hope sees a star and dying love hears the rustling of angel's wings. The angel of death makes his way across the river of death coming to the rescue of the Christian.

The Christian hope kindles a smile on the brow of the saint and hangs the rainbow of hope over the grave of our loved ones. The anchor holds in the storms of life and when your feet enter the chilly waters of death, you need to fear no evil, for Christ will lead through the misty stream

and will see that the waters shall not overflow. We shall awake in His likeness and climb out over on the other shore and our eyes will catch a glimpse of the King upon His Majestic Throne and behold angels as they welcome to the land of the blessed. Then, we will meet our loved ones who have gone on before and meet to part no more. Brethren, such an experience will "Far exceed our fondest dreams."

Aside from the Resurrection of Christ and what He had to say about it we have no positive proof of the immortality of the soul.

There are various lines of evidences, and no one contains all the truth of the facts under consideration, but each adds to the general weight of proof. Among these arguments are the following:

I. Man's universal feelings about the future life.

We would not for a moment think of God deceiving us along this line. As winter approaches and the birds start for a warmer climate, are they deceived? Can you conceive of God who gives that marvelous instinct to the bird and then not give man some intuitive feeling of Immortality. Bacon said, "Learning leads to skepticism, but profound philosophy leads to religion." Immortality is the goal in view. Scientists, philosophers, and inventors have believed in a future life. Nature never deceives instinct; such as birds to the air, ducks to the pond, and moles to the ground. The skeptic is like a squirrel or a bee which fails to prepare for winter. Just as surely as God designed fins for the water, light for the eye, and sound for the ear, He also made heaven for the soul. Truly, the Spirit of Immortality is divinely implanted in humanity.

Let immortality be the first lesson of the nursery and let it be the motto of every school, college, university and seminary throughout the land; let it be preached from every platform and pulpit in Christendom. Let it be preached everywhere that the soul is immortal, and will live throughout eternity when earthly kingdoms have fallen. The soul may enjoy eternal felicity in the realms of eternal bliss.

II. A sense of our incompleteness.

There is a sense of incompleteness in man as far as this life is concerned. The more the student thinks, the more he is convinced that this is a life of incompleteness. In other words, this life is a small part of a great whole.

1. Is all your experience, wealth, and wisdom purchased with the price of pain and discipline to utterly perish at your death?

2. Most good people feel as they stand by an open grave, though they have the frost of winter upon their heads that eternal spring has just begun within their hearts. You frequently hear people say, "I am seventy or eighty years young" and not old. They mean immortality is about to peep from behind the eastern horizon. In spite of distressing and alarming conditions of earth existing as they do about us, the Eternal and All-Wise God behind the curtain longs and eagerly

waits to bless us with heaven's multiplied blessings and in the morning open to us the door of immortality.

III. The continuation of personality proves the immortality of the soul.

Let us consider the persistence of mankind, and your own individuality. You have passed through many surprising changes since you first became a self-conscious being. The psychologist tells us that the entire body goes through a complete change every seven years, and some say more frequently than that, yet we are the same identical person. Death is not supposed to destroy the real self which has gone through so many and so great changes. If the body undergoes a change every seven years, then the man seventy years old has had ten bodies and the same soul has shown through them all.

The student of ethics tells us that we take up in the future life where we leave off here. It is an evident fact that the future will be one of misery or happiness because we have such conditions though in less degree in this life. We are punished here for vice and rewarded for virtue and it is reasonable to expect same in the future life. Yet, we are not justly or fully rewarded or punished here. If we are religious and heed salvation, we are rewarded, if we are irreligious and do not heed then we must suffer the consequences. God teaches us His approval toward right and disapproval toward wrong by punishing vice and rewarding virtue. So we can be as happy or miserable in eternity as we want to be because our actions here

determine our future. Don't forget whether your life is a life of happiness or misery you will begin in yonder's world where you leave off in this world.

IV. The certainty of Immortality.

The certainty of Immortality is this, "Now is Christ risen from the dead." We no longer guess and surmise. We know whereof we speak. All of our instinctive feelings and convictions center in the Resurrection of Christ. What sort of a Resurrection will it be? A Resurrection of identity. He was, and is the same Christ who walked the dusty streets of Jerusalem and the pathless Sea of Galilee. We, too, will be the same absolutely. Death will not change our character whether pure or impure, justified or guilty. "So them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." It will be a blessed resurrection and a glorious change. Just as the life of Jesus after the resurrection was enlarged and glorified, so will be the life of those who partake of His salvation and share in His life. Have you the certainty of a glorious resurrection? Will you rise to everlasting life or to everlasting shame?

Is it not logical to believe in Immortality?

1. Man not only believes but longs and thirsts after it, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned, barbarian, heathen, civilized, or scientific; they shudder, they quake at the thought of destruction, but with glorious anticipation look forward to Immortality.
2. The soul is the most valuable gem of all God's creation; it is immortal and is capable of happiness or misery here or hereafter. It is an undying creature, more valuable than gold and diamonds, and will live when earthly kingdoms shall have crumbled into dust, will live when the pyramids of Egypt are leveled with the ground, will live when the lofty Alps are swayed by the mighty forces of nature, and will live when the heavens are rolled together as a scroll. Yes, the soul of man will live as long as the Lord God Omnipotent lives and reigns.
3. Every man is created with a principle in him which will live forever. Job asked the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" He seemed to have felt the feelings of Immortality.
4. We are in this world for preparation, being on trial for the next.
5. In this world we are to exist for a short time and afterwards, be transplanted into a better and more healthful climate where we shall grow and flourish throughout Eternity.
6. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the undertaker divorces the Spirit and body ; we will need our minds and bodies in the region beyond the grave. They are our property and no one else will have use for them. There will be a glorious reunion in the Resurrection Morning when we shall have bodies fashioned like unto His glorious body, "Who is the fairest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely." The mortal must put on Immortality and death he swallowed up in life. Then comes the question, "O Death. where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" And a voice from Calvary will be heard saying, "Buried in the bosom of the Immaculate Christ."

V. Nature teaches Immortality.

We behold God and His teaching through nature concerning life and death. When we think of the Almighty casting off the grave clothes of winter, truly He has power to raise the dead.

Man is a little world in himself. A skillful builder might build a beautiful body in form, but it would lack necessary elements to make a man. This is the place God comes in. God has put in every human being something not found in the earthly. It cannot be found in air, sea or water. It is not carbon, nitrogen, lime, phosphate or iron. But that something is personality. "God formed man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils, the breath of life and man became a living soul." The dust after serving its purpose will return to its kindred dust while the God part enters into the realms of the Spirit with a boundless outlook. Call him not dead; he will be more alive than ever. Paul says, "To die is gain." See that little grain of wheat; how powerless it seems, but bury it in the ground and in proper time it will spring up and bring forth flower and fruit. Yet, your soul enclosed in a sinful body, warped by sin will never reach its finished development until Mortal puts on Immortality.

A belief in Immortality is universal and age-long. Every attempt to crush out Immortality has failed. A divine imprint upon man tells us he is not a creature of time but of Eternity.

Men of science falsely so called, have through the years been searching for the missing link and dropped stitch, hut their task is yet unfinished. Man was created by God for a higher and nobler destiny than that of earth. Man's powers are almost unlimited. In obedience and recognition of his Maker, he can walk the golden streets, or he can leave God out and tread the road to eternal despair.

Human nature confirms the hope of Immortality. This life is a life of incompleteness. We hardly learn to be of use until we have to leave the world. By the time we have gained needed experience, we find ourselves nearing the grave. Our moral imperfections and difficulties here, point toward eternal perfection and Immortality by and by. It is here we begin, but we never finish until we are gone. Every man discovers in himself capacities and abilities this world cannot draft into service. Here we only have a portion of time to develop our powers and tests. Everything points to Immortality and a fuller life beyond. "Infinite personality called God is foreshadowed by finite personality called man." As we have borne the image of the earthy so shall we also bear the image of the Heavenly.

VI. Our discontent proves the Immortality of the Soul.

Human nature supplies another argument of Immortality! in our discontent. We are the most unsatisfied being's on the face of the earth. Our hearts tell us we were made to be satisfied, yet nothing in this world quite satisfies us. But every other creature finds the limit of its growth here. The ox finds its capacities satisfied and contented in the meadow and stream. The cat is satisfied with a warm place on the hearth. While our feeble ambitions ever yearn and long for sought goals that are never reached. Animals are at home and satisfied but not man. If this life ends man's activities, then a dog runs a more successful career than a man, as it lasts longer, has no risks or accidents to run and never has a broken heart.

VII. The character of God proves the Immortality of the Soul.

Another strong proof of Immortality is the character of God. God is justice and goodness, hence Immortality is a necessity. When the crippled and suffering child is seen, the question is asked, "Is God good?" Yes, is that child God's complete work? No, God's work is not yet finished in the child. There is another life where God's plan will be revealed and compensation made.

VIII. The universal belief.

Another proof of Immortality is the universal belief in the doctrine. It is believed in where the Bible has never gone. Tombs of Egypt built 5,000 years ago contain pictures representing the future state of the soul. The laws of the Hindu written a thousand years ago believe in a hereafter. The Romans and the Greeks had their heaven, and hell. The Mexicans have their paradise. The American Indians had their happy hunting ground. Immortality is not a question of argument but a universal belief. Who planted this universal belief in man? God the author of life did it. Will He plant such a belief within us and then disappoint us? Nay. When the heart ceases to beat, the soul takes up its existence in the Great Beyond. John Quincy Adams was walking down a street in Boston, met an old friend who asked, "How are you?" Adams replied, "John Quincy Adams is all right, but the house in which he lives at present is becoming dilapidated." Not long afterward, he received his second and fatal stroke. He said, "This is the last of earth and I am content." Paul says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

Another significant evidence of Immortality is found in human character. When your dearest friends die you have no argument then against Immortality; but you feel it, thirst for it and

long after it. Hume, the great writer of metaphysics said when he thought of his mother, he believed in Immortality then.

IX. Immortality is proven by the Old Testament Scriptures.

"Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him." Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. David said, "Thou wilt guide me into glory." Daniel said, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Jeremiah speaks of God as the "Heavenly King." Isaiah says, "Neither hath the eye seen a God beside Thee." Again, David said, "In thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore." These passages of Scripture of the Old Testament are sufficient to show that, the saints of God, under a dark dispensation guided by inspiration, looked beyond this vale of tears to the unfolding glories of the Resurrection Morning.

X. Immortality is proven by the New Testament Scriptures.

The New Testament is permeated with the blessed truths of Immortality.

1. The Incarnation-God manifested in the flesh.
2. The proof that Christ came from Eternity with the Father.
3. The mission of Christ to save lost sinners.
4. The teachings of Christ based on the life beyond the grave.

This is the life of sorrow and cross bearing, but in the life beyond will have the recompense of reward. He forever changed the truth from a rumor or dream to an established fact. Take, for instance, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. To Martha, Jesus said, "He that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "In my Father's house are many mansions."

Man was the crowning work of God's creation, having body, soul, and spirit. Man lives in three realms, mental, physical and spiritual. Yet, most men live and die in the basements, of their nature. These three realms can only be reached by man through the New Birth.

God stamped the word "Eternity" upon man's very nature and started him upon a high and noble destiny. Man was not a savage or an' ape but created in the image of God and `put in the garden for culture, , development and obedience. It was a golden age for man. Traditions tell us that all nations have their stories of a Golden Age somewhere in the far distant' past.

The next act of creation was the creation, o woman. The Lord put man to sleep and took a rib from his side and from it, He made a woman. Matthew Henry says, "Woman was formed out of man. Not out of his head to be ruled by him,, not out of his feet to be trodden upon by him, but out of his side to be his equal, to be loved, comforted and protected by him."

Man bears the marks of the divine likeness of his maker. The divine likeness in five aspects: dominion, intellect, free will, spirituality and immortality.

Man was given dominion over all animal creation. Also,. he has marvelous dominion over the mysterious forces of nature. He has spanned the river, crossed the ocean and his voice has taken wings and crossed the continent until distance is annihilated and the entire world has become one great neighborhood.

The intellect of man shows a marked and wide gulf between man and the lower animals. Man is a genius and his ability is seen in his naming the animals of the earth according to their nature. Animals and birds have made no progress in building their nests and homes, but man with reason and genius has made marked progress.

Man is not a creature of necessity or of instinct, but he is to choose his own destiny. Man may rise to the heights of eternal glory or sink to eternal despair. He is free to obey or disobey God's commands. He can go upward to glory or downward to despair. He can rise to the height of an angel or he can sink to the depth of a demon. He can walk gold paved streets or he can tread the road to eternal despair. He can have fellowship with God or he can shake his fist in the face of Almighty God. He cannot blame God or any one else for his failure.

Man has a nature which impels him to be religious. He has been called a religious animal.

You can travel world over and you can find cities without literature, without kings, without theaters, or public halls, but cities were never founded without churches, chapels or temples, without some god or other.

The recognition of God as Creator gives a new meaning to life. As Creator, He has a definite claim upon our lives. When we lose confidence in Him, we are on the road to confusion and uncertainty.

A belief in Immortality is universal and age long. Every attempt to crush out Immortality has failed. A divine imprint upon man tells him he is a creature of eternity and not of time. Men of science, falsely so-called, `have been searching for the missing link for years but their task is yet unfinished.

Man was created by God for a high and noble destiny. His powers are almost unlimited. He reaches his highest in recognition of his Maker and in obedience to His will and commandments. Man is more than an animal or a beast. An animal is the creature of a day but man is the creature of eternity. Man has the stamp of eternity upon his brow. It is the height of folly for man to go on in sin and expect to rise to his highest. With God, he can rise to the highest, but without Him, he will sink into darkness, defeat and despair.

Is Dying to be Dreaded?

Christ's triumph over the grave removed the mystic conception of death and Immortality. Ere this men looked forward to death with awful dread. For every believing heart, Jesus changes the fear of the grave to joy and peace. Literary writers have referred to death as though death was God's punishment for a sinful life. Physical death did not come to Adam, the first sinful man, nor to Cain, the first murderer, but to Abel, the innocent and the righteous. The sinful brother was punished by living and the good brother was rewarded by being transplanted into a higher and better life. Death is a part of the cycle of change which God has established for everything he has created. People dread death more in health than in sickness. When the time comes, Mother Nature smoothes the way so that it's as natural as to fall asleep. For sleep, the absence of consciousness, is the twin brother to death. Let us not worry about dying grace, but keep on hands a good supply of living grace and dying grace will take care of itself. We should not' prepare to die, but rather prepare to live. After all, life is more to be dreaded than death, for life is overshadowed with temptations which mar the soul and harm the influence. Dying is an easy matter; living is solemn. Never let us look at the grave as the goal, but one more star in the firmament. Should a doubt come to the mind about the future life, remember the words of Jesus, "I was dead, but behold I am, alive forevermore and have the keys of death and hell." Ask Jesus for the key when you want some perplexing problem `solved touching the future life. Jesus has lighted `up the gloom of the grave and made its gates to turn on golden hinges. He made the Cross His pillow that we might pillow our heads on the precious truth of Immortality.

When we lay our dead away, we comfort ourselves with the precious assurance that what has been sown `in corruption will be raised in incorruption that they will be restored to us again informs beautiful, glorious, and Immortal; that they will be again embodied, for God will give them bodies as it pleaseth Him. What will please God will be pleasing to us. We may rest assured that they will be as. perfect, and as desirable and as lovable as God with all His power and skill can make them. As II Cor. 5:1 tells us that death is simply going from one house to another. "To depart," says Paul, "is to be with Christ." "To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." II Cor. 5:8.

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