

The State Of The Dead

SIGNS PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED
Warburton, Victoria, Australia
1925

Contents

1. The State of the Dead
2. Is Man Immortal?
3. Hereafter
4. Immortality of the Soul
5. Bible Questions and Answers Concerning Man
6. Departing and Being with Christ
7. The Rich Man and Lazarus
8. Tormented Forever and Ever

1. The State of the Dead

BY JOHN MILTON

IN matters of religion, many are, at the present time, proverbially afraid of new things. Had this fear existed before new things usurped the place of the old, it had been well. As it is, we have not only the state of things spoken of by the prophet, when men shall put darkness for light and light for darkness, and bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, but we have them also putting old things for new and new for old, clinging to the new things as if they were the old, and crying out against the old things as if they were new.

Such is emphatically the case with the doctrine discussed in the following pages. An immortal soul and consciousness in death are really the new things in this controversy. These are everywhere opposed by the writers of the Bible, and were only able to creep into the church by means of the great apostasy this side the days of the apostles. Yet some men would have us believe that these- are the ancient doctrines of God's Word, and that the truth has stood on the side of the serpent from the days of Eve to the present. Genesis 3:4. Hence anything which opposes these is branded as innovation-as some new doctrine which has just come up. It is to remove this deception from the minds of the people that we labor. And in sending forth such teaching as this work contains, we are only calling attention to one of the "old paths," out of which the nations have been turned by the great enchantress that sits upon her seven hills, on the banks of the Tiber (Revelation. 17:1, 2; 18:3), and which the prophet calls upon us to seek out, and, when we have found them, to walk therein. Jeremiah 6:16.

To this truth there have all along been witnesses; and those with whom great names are essential to authority will find no lack of these connected with this doctrine. The name of John Milton, author of "Paradise Lost," and who has been styled "The Christian Homer," is all that could be asked in this direction. He was born in London, December 9, 1608, and stood at the head of his generation in literature and theology. With him we may mention; as holding the same views, such men as the Rt. Hon. Sir James Stephens, Regius Professor of Modern History in Cambridge College, England; Archbishop Whately of Dublin; Bishop Law, author of a Call to the Unconverted; Edward White, William G. Moncrieff, of Scotland; H. H. Dobney and Panton Ham of England, eminent as ministers and authors; John Locke, the Christian philosopher; Olshausen, the German commentator, who says: "The doctrine of the immortality of

The State Of The Dead

the soul, and-the name, are alike unknown to the entire Bible; “ John Taylor, author of a Hebrew Concordance; Tholuck, the German critic, etc., etc.-PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.]

THE visible creation comprises the material universe, and all that is contained therein ; and more especially the human race. The creation of the world in, general, and of its individual parts, is related in Genesis 1. It is also described in Job 26: 7, etc., and chapter 38, and in various passages of the Psalms and Prophets - Psalm 33: 6-9; 104; 148:5; Proverbs 8:26; Amos 4:13; 2 Peter 3:5. Previously, however, to the creation of man, as if to intimate the superior importance of the work, the Deity speaks like a man deliberating. “God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness.” Genesis 1:26.

So it was not the body alone that was then made, but the soul of man also (in which our likeness to God principally consists); which precludes us from attributing preexistence to the soul which was then formed-a groundless notion sometimes entertained, but refuted by Genesis 2:7: “God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” “There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.” Job 32:8. Nor did God merely breathe that spirit into man, but molded it into each individual, and infused it throughout; enduing and embellishing it with its proper faculties. “He formed the spirit of man within him.” Zechariah 12: 1.

We may understand from other passages of Scripture that when God infused the breath of life into man, what man thereby received was not a portion of God’s essence, or a participation of the divine nature, but that measure of the divine virtue or influence which was commensurate to the capabilities of the recipient. For it appears from Psalm 104: 29, 30, that he infused the breath of life into other living beings also: “You takes away their breath, they die. You send forth Thy Spirit, they are created;” whence we learn that every living thing receives animation from one and the same source of life and breath; inasmuch as when God takes back to Himself that spirit, or breath of life, they cease to exist. “They have all one breath.” Ecclesiastes 3: 19. Nor has the word spirit any other meaning in the sacred writings but that breath of life which we inspire, or the vital, or sensitive, or rational faculty, or some action or affection belonging to those faculties.

Man having been created after this manner, it is said, as a consequence, that “man became a living soul.” Whence it may be inferred (unless we would rather take the heathen writers for our teachers respecting the nature of the soul) that man is a living being intrinsically and properly one and individual, not compound or separable, not, according to the common opinion, made up and framed of two distinct and different natures, as of soul and body, but that the whole man is soul, and the soul man, that is to say, a body, or individual substance, animated, sensitive, and rational ; and that the breath of life was neither a part of the divine essence, nor was it the soul itself, but, as it were, the inspiration of some divine virtue fitted for the exercise of life and reason, and infused into the organic body; for man himself, the whole man, when finally created, is called in express terms “ a living soul.” Hence the word used in Genesis to signify soul is interpreted by the apostle (1 Corinthians 15:45), “animal.” Again, all the attributes of the body are assigned in common to the soul. The touch: “If a soul touch any unclean thing.” Leviticus 5:2. The act of eating. “The soul that eats of it shall bear his iniquity.” “The soul that eats of the flesh” (Leviticus 7:18, 20), and in other places. Hunger. “To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.” Proverbs 13:25; 27:7. Thirst. “As cold water to a thirsty soul.” Proverbs 25:25 ; Isaiah 29:8. Capture. “You hunts my soul to take it.” 1 Samuel 24: 11. “Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it.” Psalm 7:5.

Where we speak of the body as a mere senseless stock, there the soul must be understood as signifying either the spirit, or its secondary faculties, the vital or sensitive faculty, for instance. Thus it is as often distinguished from the spirit as from the body itself. “Your whole spirit and soul and body.” Luke 1:46, 47; 1 Thessalonians 5:23. “To the dividing asunder of soul and spirit.” Hebrews 4:12. But that the spirit of man should be separate from the body, so as to have a-perfect and intelligent existence independently of it, is nowhere said in Scripture, and the doctrine is evidently at variance both with nature and reason, as will be shown more fully hereafter; for the word soul is applied to every kind of living being. “Every beast of the earth wherein there is life.” Genesis 1:30. (Hebrew, a living soul.) “All in whose nostrils was the breath of life [Hebrews, living soul], of all that was in the dry land, died” (Genesis 7: 22); yet it is never inferred from these expressions that the soul exists separate from the body in any of the brute creation.

(Living soul, “nehphesh chayah, a general term to express all creatures endued with animal life, in any of its infinitely varied gradations, from the half-reasoning elephant, down to the polyp, which seems equally to share the vegetable and animal life.” - Dr. Clarke, Notes on Genesis 7:24.)

The State Of The Dead

On the seventh day God ceased from His work, and ended the whole business of creation. Genesis 2:2, 3. It would seem, therefore, that the human soul is not created daily by the immediate act of God, but propagated from father to son in a natural order; which was considered the more probable opinion by Tertullian and Apolinarius, as well as by Augustine and the whole Western Church in the time of Jerome, as he himself testifies, Tom. 2, Epist. 82, and Gregory of Nyssa in his treatise on the soul. God would, in fact, have left His creation imperfect, and a vast, not to say a servile task, would yet remain to be performed, without even allowing time for rest on each successive Sabbath, if He still continued to create as many souls daily as there are bodies multiplied throughout the whole world, at the bidding of what is not seldom the flagitious wantonness of man. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the influence of the divine blessing is less efficacious in imparting to man the power of producing after his kind than to the other parts of animated nature. Genesis 1:22, 28. Thus it was from one of the ribs of the man that God made the mother of all mankind, without the necessity of infusing the breath of life a second time (Genesis 2: 22), and Adam himself begat a son in his own likeness, after his image. Genesis 5: 3. Thus, "As we have borne the image of the earthy" (1 Corinthians 15:49); and this not only in the body, but in the soul, as it was chiefly with respect to the soul that Adam was made in the divine image. So, "All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins." Genesis 46:26. "Levi was in the loins of Abraham" (Hebrews 7: 10); whence in Scripture an offspring is called seed, and Christ is denominated "the seed of the woman." "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Genesis 17: 7. "It is sown a natural body; ... that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." 1 Corinthians 15: 44, 46.

But besides the testimony of revelation, some arguments from reason may be alleged in confirmation of this doctrine. Whoever is born, or shaped and conceived in sin (as we all are, not David only, Psalm 51:5), if he receive his soul immediately from God, cannot but receive it from Him shaped in sin; for to be generated and conceived means nothing else than to receive a soul in conjunction with the body. If we receive the soul immediately from God, it must be pure; for who in such a case will venture to call it impure? But if it be pure, how are we conceived in sin in consequence of receiving a pure soul, which would rather have the effect of cleansing the impurities of the body; or with what justice is the pure soul charged with the sin of the body?

But it is contended that God does not create souls impure, but only impaired in their nature and destitute of original righteousness. I answer that to create pure souls destitute of original righteousness-to send them into contaminated and corrupt bodies-to deliver them in their innocence and helplessness to the prison-house of the body, as to an enemy, with understanding blinded, and with will enslaved-in other words, wholly deprived of sufficient strength for resisting the vicious propensities of the body to create souls thus circumstanced, would argue as much injustice as to have created them impure would have argued impurity; it would have argued as much injustice as to have created the first man, Adam himself, impaired in his nature, and destitute of original righteousness.

Again, if sin be communicated by generation, and transmitted from father to son, it follows that what is the original subject of sin, namely, the rational soul, must be propagated in the same manner; for that it is from the soul that all sin in the first instance proceeds, will not be denied. Lastly, on what principle of justice can sin be imputed through Adam to that soul which was never either in Adam, or derived from Adam? In confirmation of which Aristotle's argument may be added, the truth of which is, in my opinion, indisputable. If the soul be equally diffused through any given whole, and throughout every part of that whole, how can the human seed, the noblest and most intimate part of all the body, be imagined destitute of the soul of the parents, or at least of the father, when communicated to the son by the laws of generation ?

It was probably by some such considerations as these that Augustine was led to confess that he could neither discover by study nor prayer, nor any process of reasoning, how the doctrine of original sin could be defended on -the supposition of the creation of souls. The texts which are usually advanced, Ecclesiastes 12:7; Isaiah 57:16; Zechariah 12:1, certainly indicate that nobler origin of the soul implied in its being breathed from the mouth of God; but they no more prove that each soul is severally and immediately created by the Deity than certain other texts which might be quoted, prove that each individual body is formed in the womb by the immediate hand of God. "Your hands have made me; has You not poured me out as milk?" Job 10:8-10. "He fashioned their hearts alike." Psalm 33:15. "Did not He that made me in the womb make him?" Job 31:15. "Thus said the Lord, He that formed thee from, the womb." Isaiah 44:24. "He has made of one blood all nations of men." Acts 17:26. We are not to infer from these passages that natural causes do not contribute their ordinary efficacy for the propagation of the body; nor, on the other hand, that the soul is not received by tradition from the father, because at the time of death it again betakes itself to different elements than the body, in conformity with its own origin.

The State Of The Dead

With regard to the passage (Hebrews 12: 9), where “ the fathers of the flesh” are opposed to “the Father of spirits,” I answer that it is to be understood in a theological, not in a physical; sense, as if the father of the body were opposed to the Father of the soul; for flesh is taken neither in this passage, nor probably anywhere else, for the body without the soul ; not “the Father of spirits “ for the father of the soul, in respect of the work of generation ; but “ the father of the flesh “ here means nothing else than the earthly or natural father, whose offspring are begotten in sin; “the Father of spirits” -is either the Heavenly Father, who in the beginning created all spirits, angels, as well as the human race, or the spiritual Father, who bestows a second birth on the faithful, according to John 3:6: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The argument, too, will proceed better, if the whole be understood as referring to edification and correction, not to generation; for the point in question is not from what source each individual originated, or what part of him thence originated, but who had proved most successful in the employment of chastisement and instruction. By parity of reasoning, the apostle might exhort the converts to bear with his rebuke, on the ground that he was their spiritual father. God is as truly the Father of the flesh as of the spirits of the flesh (Numbers 16: 22); but this is not the sense intended here, and all arguments are weak which are deduced from passages of Scripture originally relating to a different subject.

With regard to the soul of “Christ, it will be sufficient to answer that its generation was supernatural, and therefore cannot be cited as an argument in the discussion of this controversy. Nevertheless, he is called “the seed of the woman,” “the seed of David according to the flesh,” that is, undoubtedly, according to his human nature.

There seems, therefore, no reason why the soul of man should be made an exception to the general law of creation. For, as has been shown before, God breathed the breath of life into the other living beings, and blended it so intimately with matter that the propagation and production of the human form were analogous to those of other forms, and the proper effect of that power which had been communicated to matter by the Deity.

The providence of God, as it regards the fall of man, is observable in the sin of man, and the misery consequent upon it, as well as in his restoration.

Sin, as defined by the apostle, is azaomia, or the transgression of the law. 1 John 3:4. After sin came death, as the calamity, or punishment, consequent upon it. “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.” Genesis 2:11. “Death entered by sin.” Romans 5:12. “The wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23. “The motions, of sins which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.” Romans 7:5.

Under the head of death, in Scripture, all evils whatever, together with everything which in its consequences tends to death, must be understood as comprehended; for mere bodily death, as it is called, did not follow the sin of Adam on the self-same day, as God had threatened.

Hence divines, not inappropriately, reckon up several degrees of death. The first, as before said, comprehends all those evils which lead to death, and which it is agreed came into the world immediately upon the fall of man, the most important of which I proceed to enumerate.

In the first place, guiltiness; which, though in its primary sense it is an imputation made by God to us, yet is also, as it were, a commencement, or prelude, of death dwelling in us, by which we are held as by a bond, and rendered subjects to condemnation and punishment. “That all the world may become guilty before God.” Romans 3:19. Guiltiness, accordingly, is accompanied, or followed, by the terrors of conscience. “They heard the voice of God, ... and Adam and his wife hid themselves, ... and he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid.” Genesis 3:8. “You have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.” Romans 8:15. “Who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Hebrews 2: 15. “A certain fearful looking for of judgment.” Hebrews 10:27. It is attended likewise with the sensible forfeiture of the divine protection and favor; whence results a diminution of the majesty of the human countenance, and a conscious degradation of mind. “They knew that they were naked.” Genesis 3:7.

Hence the whole man became polluted. “Even their mind and conscience is defiled (Titus 1:15), whence arises their shame. “They sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” Genesis 3:7. “What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.” Romans 6:21.

The second degree of death is called spiritual death; by which is meant the loss of divine grace, and of that innate righteousness, wherein man in the beginning lived unto God. Who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Ephesians 2:1. “Alienated from the life of God.” Ephesians 4:18. “Dead in your sins.” Colossians 2:13. “You have a name that you lives, and art dead.” Revelation 3:1. And this death took place

The State Of The Dead

not only on the very day, but at the very moment of the fall. They who are delivered from it are said to be "regenerated," to be "born again," and to be "created afresh;" which is the work of God alone.

The third degree of death is what is called the death of the body. To this, all the labors, sorrows, and diseases which afflict the body are nothing but the prelude. "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow; in sorrow shall you eat of it." Genesis 3:16, 17. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." Job 5:7. All nature is likewise subject to mortality and a curse on account of man. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Genesis 3: 17. "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly." Romans 8:20, 21: Even the beasts are not exempt. Genesis 3:14; 6:7. So "the first-born of beasts" in the land of Egypt perished for the sins of their masters. Exodus 11:5.

The death of the body is to be considered in the light of a punishment for sin, no less than the other degrees of death, notwithstanding the contrary opinion with some. "Until the law, sin was in the world; death reigned from Adam to Moses." Romans 5:13, 14. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead" (1 Corinthians 15:21); therefore that bodily death from which we are to rise again, originated in sin, and not in nature; contrary to the opinion of those who maintain that temporal death is the result of natural causes, and that eternal death alone is due to sin.

The death of the body is the loss, or extinction, of life. The common definition, which supposes it to consist in the separation of soul and body, is inadmissible. For what part of man is it that dies when this separation takes place? Is it the soul? This will not be admitted by the supporters of the above definition. Is it then the body? But how can that be said to die, which never had any life of itself? Therefore the separation of soul and body cannot be called the death of man.

Here, then, arises an important question, which, owing to the prejudices of divines in behalf of their preconceived opinions, has usually been dismissed without examination, instead of being treated with the attention it deserves. Is it the whole man, or the body alone, that is deprived of vitality? And as this is a subject which may be discussed without endangering our faith or devotion, whichever side of the controversy we espouse, I shall declare freely what seems to me to be the true doctrine, as collected from numberless passages of Scripture, without regarding the opinion of those who think that truth is to be sought in the schools of philosophy, rather than in the sacred writings.

Inasmuch, then, as the whole man is uniformly said to consist of body, spirit, and soul (whatever may be the distinct provinces severally assigned to these divisions), I will show that in death, first the whole man, and secondly each component part, suffers privation of life. It is to be observed, first of all, that God denounced the punishment of death against the whole man that sinned, without excepting any part. For what could be more just than that he who had sinned in his whole person, should die in his whole person? Or, on the other hand, what could be more absurd than that the mind, which is the part principally offending, should escape the threatened death : and that the body alone, to which immortality was equally allotted before death came into the world by sin, should pay the penalty of sin by undergoing death, though not implicated in the transgression ?

It is evident that the saints and believers of old, the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, without exception, held this doctrine. Jacob: "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Genesis 37:35. "Joseph is not." Genesis 42: 36. So also Job 3:12-18: "As an hidden, untimely birth, I had not been; as infants which never saw light." Compare Job 10:21; 14:10-13: "Man gives up the ghost, and where is he? Man lies down and rises not till the heavens be no more." "If I wait, the grave is mine house. Where is now my hope? ... They shall go down to the bars of the pit." Job 17: 13, 15, 16. See also many other passages.

The belief of David was the same, as is evident from the reason so often given by him for deprecating the approach of death. "For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who shall give You thanks?" Psalm 6:5. "Will You show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Shall Thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or Thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall Thy wonders be known in the dark? and Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness,?" Psalm 88:10-12. "The dead praise not the Lord." Psalm 115: 17. "Before I go hence and be no more." Psalm 39:13. "While I live will I praise the Lord." Psalm 146:2. Certainly if he had believed that his soul would survive, and be received immediately into heaven, he- would have abstained from all such remonstrances, as one who was shortly to take his flight where he might praise God unceasingly. It appears that the belief of Peter respecting David was the same as David's belief respecting himself. Let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. For David is not ascended into the heavens." Acts 2:29, 34.

Again, it is evident that Hezekiah fully believed that he should die entirely, when he laments that it is impossible to praise God in the grave. "For the grave cannot praise You; death cannot celebrate You;

The State Of The Dead

they that go down into the pit it cannot hope for Thy truth; the living, the living, he shall praise You, as I do this day.” Isaiah 38:18, 19. God Himself bears testimony to the same truth. “The righteous perishes, and no man lays it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds.” Isaiah 57:1, 2. “Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.” Jeremiah 31:15 compared with Matthew 2:18. Thus also Daniel 12:2: “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.”

It is on the same principle that Christ Himself proves God to be a God of the living (Luke 20: 37), arguing from their future resurrection; for if they were then living, it would not necessarily follow from His argument that there would be a resurrection of the body; hence He says: “I am the resurrection and the life.” John 11:25. Accordingly He declares expressly that there is not even a place appointed for the abode of the saints in heaven till the resurrection. “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, there you may be also.” John 14:1-3. There is no sufficient reason for interpreting this of the body; it is clear therefore that it was spoken, and should be understood, of the reception of the soul and spirit conjointly with the body into heaven, and that not till the coming of the Lord. So likewise Luke 20:35; Acts 7:60: “When he had said this, he fell asleep.” “The hope and resurrection of the dead” (Acts 23:6); that is, the hope of the resurrection, which was the only hope the apostles professed to entertain. Thus also Acts 24:21; 26:6, 8; 1 Corinthians 15 :17-19: “If Christ be not raised [which resurrection took place for the very purpose that mankind might likewise rise again], then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished;” whence it appears that there were only two alternatives, one of which must ensue; either they must rise again or perish; for “if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable; “which again indicates that we must either believe in the resurrection, or have our hope in this life only. “If the dead rise not at all, why stand we in jeopardy every hour? Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.” Verses 29, 30, 32. That is, die altogether, for otherwise the argument would have no force.

In the verses that follow from verses 42-50, the reasoning proceeds on the supposition that there are only two states, the mortal and immortal, death and resurrection; not a word is said of any intermediate condition. Nay, Paul himself affirms that the crown of righteousness which was laid up for him was not to be received before that last day. “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” 2 Timothy 4: 8. If a crown were laid up for the apostle, it follows that it was not to be received immediately after death. At what time, then, was it to be received? At the same time when it was to be conferred on the rest of the saints; that is, not till the appearance of Christ in glory. “That I may rejoice in the day of Christ.” Philippians 2:16. “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.” Philippians 3:11, 20, 21. Our conversation therefore is in heaven, not where we are now dwelling, but in that place from whence we look for the coming of the Savior, who shall conduct us thither.” They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” Luke 20:35, 36: That is, when they finally become such; whence it follows that previous to the resurrection they are not admitted to the heavenly world.

Thus far proof has been given of the death of the whole man. But lest recourse should be had to the sophistical distinction that, although the whole man dies, it does not therefore follow that the whole of man should die, I proceed to give similar proof with regard to each of the parts-the body, the spirit, and the soul, according to the division above stated.

First, then, as to the body; no one doubts that it suffers privation of life. Nor will the same be less evident with regard to the spirit, if it be allowed that the spirit, according to the doctrine previously laid down, has no participation in the divine nature, but is purely human; and that no reason can be assigned why, if God has sentenced to death the whole of man that has sinned, the spirit, which is the part principally offending, should be alone exempt from the appointed punishment, especially since, previous to the entrance of sin into the world, all parts of man were alike immortal; and that, since that time, in pursuance of God’s denunciation, all have become equally subject to death.

But to come to the proofs. The Preacher himself, the wisest of men, expressly denies that the spirit is exempt from death. As the beast dies, so dies the man “yes, they have all one breath [Hebrew, spirit] . . . all go unto one place.” Ecclesiastes 3:18, 20. And in the twenty-first verse he condemns the ignorance of

The State Of The Dead

those who venture to affirm that the way of the spirits of men and of beasts after death is different: "Who knows the spirit of man [an sursum ascendat], whether it goes upward?" "His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 146:4. Now the thoughts are in the mind and the spirit, not in the body; and if they perish, we must conclude that the mind and spirit undergo the same fate as the body. "That the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Corinthians 5:5. The apostle does not say "in the day of death," but "in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Lastly, there is abundant testimony to prove that the soul (whether we regard by this term the whole human composition, or whether it is to be understood as synonymous with the spirit) is subject to death, natural as well as violent. "Let me [my soul, Hebrew; anima mea, Latin Vulgate] die the death of the righteous." Numbers 23:10. Such are the words of Balaam, who, though not the most upright of prophets, yet in this instance uttered the words which the Lord put into his mouth. "He keeps back his soul from the pit." Job 33:18. "They die in youth." Job 36:14. (Hebrews, their soul dies. Latin Vulgate, anima eorum.) "Deliver my soul from the sword." Psalm 22:20. "He spared not their soul from death." Psalm 78:50. "Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" Psalm 89:48. "My soul had almost dwelt in silence." Psalm 94:17. Hence man himself, when dead, is spoken of under the name of "the soul." "Neither shall he go in to any dead body." Leviticus 19:28; 21:1, 11. (Hebrew, dead soul.) "You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption." Isaiah 38:17. The just and sufficient reason assigned above for the death of the soul, is the same which is given by God Himself. "The soul that sins it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20); and therefore on the testimony of the prophet and the apostle, as well as of Christ Himself, the soul even of Christ was for a short time subject unto death on account of our sins. "His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption." Psalm 16:10 compared with Acts 2:27, 23, 31.

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Matthew 26:38. Nor do we anywhere read that the souls assemble, or are summoned to judgment, from heaven or from hell, but they are all called out of the tomb, or at least they were previously in the state of the dead. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." John 5:28, 29. In this passage, those who rise again, those who hear, those who come forth, are all described as being in the graves, the righteous as well as the wicked. "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." 1 Corinthians 15:52. But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not even as others which have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him; for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep; for the Lord Himself shall descend, . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17. They were asleep; but the lifeless body does not sleep, unless inanimate matter can be said to sleep. That you sorrow not, even as others who have no hope." But why should they sorrow and have no hope, if they believed that their souls would be in a state of salvation and happiness even before the resurrection, whatever might become of the body? The rest of the world, indeed, who had no hope, might with reason despair concerning the soul as well as the body, because they did not believe in the resurrection; and therefore it is to the resurrection that Paul directs the hope of all believers. "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him;" that is, to heaven from the grave.

"We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep." But there would have been no reason to fear lest the survivors should prevent them, if they who were asleep had long since been received into heaven; in which case the latter would not come "to meet the Lord," but would return with Him. "We," however, "which are alive, shall be caught up together with them," not after them, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord," namely, after, not before, the resurrection. And then at length, the wicked shall be severed from among the just. Matthew 13:49. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Daniel 12:2.

In such a sleep I should suppose Lazarus to have been lying, if it were asked whither his soul betook itself during those four days of death. For I cannot believe that it would have been called back from heaven to suffer again the inconveniences of the body, but rather that it was summoned from the grave, and roused from the sleep of death. The words of Christ themselves lead to this conclusion. "Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep; howbeit Jesus spoke of his death" (John 11:11, 13); which death, if the miracle were true, must have been real. This is confirmed by the circumstances of Christ's raising him. "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!" Verse 43. If the soul of Lazarus, that is, if Lazarus himself, was not within the grave, why did Christ call on the lifeless body, which could

The State Of The Dead

not hear? If it were the soul which He addressed, why did He call it from a place where it was not? Had He intended to intimate that the soul was separated from the body, He would have directed His eyes to the quarter from whence the soul of Lazarus might be expected to return, namely, from heaven; for to call from the grave what is not there, is like seeking the living among the dead, which the angel reprehended as ignorance in the disciples. Luke. 24:5. The same is apparent in raising the widow's son. Luke 7:14.

Objections Considered And Explained

On the other hand, those who assert that the soul is exempt from death, and that when divested of the body it wings its way, or is conducted by angels, directly to its appointed place of reward or punishment, where it remains in a separate state of existence to the end of the world, found their belief principally on the following passages of Scripture. "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave." Psalm 49:15. But this proves rather that the soul enters the grave with the body, as has been shown, from whence it needs to be redeemed, namely, at the resurrection, when "God shall receive it," as follows in the same verse. As for the remainder, "their redemption ceases forever," verse 8, and they are like the beasts that perish. Verses 12, 14.

The second text is Ecclesiastes 12:7: "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." But neither does this prove what is required; for the phrase, the spirit returning to God, must be understood with considerable latitude; since the wicked do not return to God at death, but depart far from Him. The Preacher had moreover said before "All go unto one place" (Ecclesiastes 3:20); and God is said to have given and to gather to Himself the spirit of every living thing, whilst the body returns to dust. "If He gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." Job 34:14, 15. See also Psalm 104:29, 30. Euripides, in the Suppliants, has, without being aware of it, given a far better interpretation of this passage than the commentators in question:

Each various part
That constitutes the frame of man, returns
Whence it was taken; to the ethereal sky
The spirit, the body to its earth.
-Line 599, Potter's Translation.

That is, every constituent part returns at dissolution to its elementary principle. This is confirmed by Ezekiel 37:9 "Come from the four winds, O breath." It is certain, therefore, that the spirit of man must have previously departed thither, from whence it is now summoned to return. Hence perhaps originates the expression in Matthew 24:31: "They shall gather together the elect from the four winds." For why should not the spirits of the elect be as easily gathered together as the smallest particles of their bodies, sometimes most widely dispersed through different countries? In the same manner is to be understood 1 Kings 17:21: "Let this child's soul come into him again." This, however, is a form of speech applied to fainting in general. "His spirit came again, and he revived." Judges 15:19. See also 1 Samuel 30:12. For there are many passages of Scripture, some of which undoubtedly represent the dead as devoid of all vital existence; but what was advanced above respecting the death of the spirit, affords a sufficient answer to the objection. The third passage is Matthew 10. 28: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." It may be answered, that, properly speaking, the body cannot be killed, as being in itself a thing inanimate; the body therefore, as is common in Scripture, must be taken for the whole human compound, or for the animal and temporal life; the soul for that spiritual life with which we shall be clothed after the end of the world, as appears from the remainder of the verse and from 1 Corinthians 15: 44.

The fourth text is Philippians 1:23: "Having a desire to depart [caciens dissolvi, having a desire for dissolution] and to be with Christ." But, to say nothing of the uncertain and disputed sense of the word *analusia*, which signifies anything rather than dissolution, it may be answered that, although Paul desired to obtain immediate possession of heavenly perfection and glory, in like manner as every one is desirous of attaining as soon as possible to that, whatever it may be, which he regards as the ultimate object of his being, it by no means follows that when the soul of each individual leaves the body, it is received immediately either into heaven or hell. For he had "a desire to be with Christ;" that is, at His appearing, which all the believers hoped and expected was then at hand. In the same manner, one who is going on a voyage desires to set sail

The State Of The Dead

and arrive at the destined port (such is the order in which his wishes arrange themselves), omitting all notice of the intermediate passage. If, however, it be true that there is no time without motion, which Aristotle illustrates by the example of those who were fabled to have slept in the temple of the heroes, and who, on awaking, imagined that the moment in which they awoke had succeeded without an interval to that in which they fell asleep, how much more must intervening time be annihilated to the departed, so that to them to die and to be with Christ will seem to take place at the same moment? Christ Himself, however, expressly indicates the time at which we shall be with Him. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." John 14:3. See Colossians 3:4.

Because Paul here looks forward to the appearing of Christ as the time when he should be with Him, and expresses a desire for that time to come, as he does also in Romans 8:23 and 2 Corinthians 5: 2, it does not follow that he thought that event to be at hand. Indeed, his second epistle to the Thessalonians, written ten years before, shows that he not only did not expect it himself, but also taught others not to expect it in that age.

The fifth text evidently favors my view of the subject. "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." (1 Peter 3:19); literally in guard, or as the Syriac version renders it, in sepulcher, in the grave, which means the same; for the grave is the common guardian of all till the day of Judgment. What therefore the apostle says more fully in chap. 4:5, 6, "Who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead; for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead," he expresses in this place by a metaphor, "the spirits that are in guard;" it follows, therefore, that the spirits are dead.

The sixth text is Revelation. 6:9: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain." I answer that in the Scripture idiom the soul is often put for the whole animate body, and that in this passage it is used for the souls of those who were not yet born; unless, indeed, the fifth seal was already opened in the time of John; in the same manner as in the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Luke 16. Though Christ, for the sake of the lesson to be conveyed, speaks of that as present which was not to take place till after the day of judgment, and describes the dead as placed in two distinct states, He by no means intimates any separation of the soul from the body.

The seventh text is Luke 23:43: "Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shall you be with Me in Paradise." This passage has on various accounts occasioned so much trouble that some have not hesitated to alter the punctuation, as if it had been written, "I say unto thee today;" that is, although I seem today the most despised and miserable of all men, yet I declare to thee, and assure thee, that you shall hereafter be with Me in Paradise, that is, in some pleasant place (for properly speaking, Paradise is not heaven), or in the spiritual state allotted to the soul and body. Nor is it necessary to take the word today in its strict acceptation, but rather for a short time, as in 2 Samuel 16: 3; Hebrews 3: 7. However this may be, so much clear evidence should not be rejected on account of a single passage of which it is not easy to give a satisfactory interpretation.

The eighth text is Luke 23:46: "Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." But the spirit is not therefore separated from the body, or incapable of death; for David uses the same language in Psalm 31:5, although he was not then about to die: "Into Your hand I commit my spirit," while it was yet abiding in and with the body. So Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and when he had said this, he fell asleep." Acts 7:59. It was not the bare spirit divested of the body that he commended to Christ, but "the whole spirit, and soul, and body," as it is expressed in 1 Thessalonians 5: 23. Thus the spirit of Christ was to be raised again with the body on the third day, while that of Stephen was to be reserved unto the appearing of the Lord. So 1 Peter 4:19: "Let them commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing."

The author seems to overlook 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4; Revelation. 2:7; 22:2, which taken together, show conclusively that Paradise is in the third heaven where God has His residence and throne.

The ninth passage is 2 Corinthians 5:1-20. It is sufficiently apparent, however, that the object of this passage is not to inculcate the separation of the soul from the body, but to contrast the animal and terrestrial life of the whole man with the spiritual and heavenly. Hence in the first verse, "The house of. this tabernacle," is opposed, not to the soul, but to, a "building of God, a house not made with hands," that is, to the final renewal of the whole man, as Beza also explains it, whereby "we are clothed upon " in the heavens; being clothed, not naked. This distinctly appears from the fourth verse; "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." So also verse 5: "Now He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God. "Not for the separating of the soul from the body, but for the perfecting of both. Wherefore the clause in the eighth verse, "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord," must be understood of the consummation of our happiness; and "the body" must be taken

The State Of The Dead

for this frail life, as is common in the sacred writings, and the absence spoken of, for our eternal departure to a heavenly world. The ninth verse proves still more clearly that the expressions, “to be present with the Lord” and “to be absent,” both refer to this life: “Wherefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him; “for no one supposes that the souls of men are occupied from the time of death to that of the resurrection in endeavors to render themselves acceptable to God in heaven; that is the employment of the present life, and its reward is not to be looked for till the second coming of Christ. For, the apostle says: “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad.” There is, consequently, no recompense of good or bad after death, previous to the day of judgment. Compare 1 Corinthians 15, the whole of which chapter throws no small light on this passage. The same sense is to be ascribed to 2 Peter 1:13-15: “As long as I am in this tabernacle,” etc., that is, in this life. It is however, unnecessary to prolong this discussion, as there is scarcely one of the remaining passages of Scripture which has not been already explained by anticipation.

2. Is Man Immortal?

1. Is it reasonable to suppose that God created man an immortal being, and yet has never informed us of the fact?
2. Is it reasonable to suppose that, if man naturally possessed immortality, God would require us to seek for it, as He does in Romans 2:7?
3. Is it reasonable to suppose that, if men were naturally immortal, God’s word would so plainly assure us that God “only has immortality”? 1 Timothy 6:16.
4. Is it not far more reasonable to believe that immortality is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, as stated in Rom: 6:23?
5. Is it reasonable to suppose that words, when found in the Bible, must have a meaning attached to them which no man in his senses would ever think of attaching to them in any other book? For instance, the words life and death, when found in the Bible, must (as theologians tell us) mean happiness and misery; but if found in any other book in the world, they would simply mean “existence” and “cessation of existence.”
6. Is it reasonable to suppose that in all the vast multitude of passages in which Christ promised life, eternal life, to His followers, He did not literally mean what He said? This He could not, if all men have immortal life by nature. In that case, the wicked will live through eternity as well as the righteous.
7. Is it reasonable to suppose, in all the vast multitude of passages in which death is threatened as the punishment of the sinner, that loss of happiness is all that is meant? An unhappy man is as truly alive as the most happy being in existence.
8. Is it reasonable to suppose that Infinite Wisdom would invariably use language which was only calculated to mislead mankind, or which none but doctors of divinity could unravel?
9. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that He would give His creatures such a revelation as plain, common-sense people could easily understand?
10. Is it reasonable to believe that men go to heaven or hell immediately at death, and then hundreds or thousands of years afterward are taken out to be judged, to determine which: fate they deserve? Should we deem it right to send a man to the State Prison for ten years, and then bring him out for trial to see if he deserved such a punishment?
11. Is it reasonable that such prominence should be given in Scripture to the doctrine of the resurrection from the dead, if the soul is as capable of happiness or misery without the body as with it?

The State Of The Dead

12. Is it reasonable to talk about a “death that never dies,” when there is not a word in Scripture to sanction such a contradictory phrase? Would it not be equally reasonable to speak of the reward of the righteous as a “life that never lives”?

13. Is it reasonable to use so constantly, both in sermons and prayers, such terms as “immortal souls,” “never-dying souls,” “deathless spirits,” and similar expressions, when there is not from Genesis to Revelation one single passage to warrant the use of such language?

14. Is it reasonable to say that eternal death and eternal torment are synonymous, expressions (as theologians tell us) for how then can it be said, in Revelation. 21:4, “There shall be no more death”?

15. Is it reasonable to believe that a hell of fiery torment and ceaseless misery is to exist forever, when God says (Revelation. 21:5), “Behold I make all things new”?

16. Is it reasonable to believe in the eternal torment of the wicked, when more than two hundred pass-ages of Scripture plainly affirm that they shall “die,” be “consumed,” “devoured,” “destroyed,” “burnt up,” “be as though they had not been,” etc. ?

17. Is it reasonable to believe that the righteous in their glorified state can be indifferent to, and unaffected by, the endless sufferings of countless millions of their fellow beings; among whom would probably be found parents, children, husbands, wives, etc.?

18. Is it reasonable to believe that God is such a vindictive being that His justice cannot be satisfied with the death of the offender, but that He must be constantly pouring floods of fiery wrath upon the wretched being through the ever rolling cycles of eternity?

19. Finally,

“1. The apostle Paul is the only writer in the whole Bible who makes use of the word immortal or immortality.

“2. He never applies it to sinners.

“3. He never applies it to either righteous or wicked in this world.

“4. He never applies it to men’s souls at all either before or after death.

“5. He speaks of it as an attribute of the King Eternal. 1 Timothy 1:17.

“6. He declares that He is the only possessor, of it. 1 Timothy 6:16.

“7. He presents it as an object which men are to seek after by patient continuance in well-doing. Romans 2:7.

“8. He speaks of it as revealed or brought to light. (not in heathen philosophy, but) in the gospel of the Son of God. 2 Timothy 1: 10.

“9. He defines the period when it shall be put on by the saints of God, and fixes it, at the resurrection, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear. 1 Corinthians 15:52, 54; Colossians 3:4.

“10. Therefore he never taught the immortality of the soul as it is now taught, and hence, when he declared that sinners should be destroyed, or perish, or die; or be burned, or devoured by fire, he did so without any ‘mental reservations,’ or ‘theological definitions.’ In other words, he said what he meant, and meant what he said. “Pauline Theology.”

I might multiply questions of this kind, but I forbear. Men of reason and common sense, give your serious attention to these points. Read your Bibles again. Read carefully-read prayerfully. See whether

The State Of The Dead

these things are true or not. Dare to think for yourselves. Do not trust to commentaries. Do not build your faith on bodies of divinity. Go to the fountain-head of truth. "The words of the Lord are pure words." "The law of the Lord is perfect." This cannot be said of the writings or opinions of any man or number of men, however wise and holy they may be. To err is human. God and His truth are alone infallible. Show yourselves true Protestants, and cast away the "traditions of men." You have the Bible. The wisest and holiest of the "Fathers" had no more. Your ministers have nothing else to guide them--at least they ought not to have. "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." Go, then, to your Bibles, and see whether the God-dishonoring doctrines to which I have directed your attention are found there or not. Excuse me if I tell you that, however full of these doctrines human books and human sermons may be, God's book does not contain them.

Rather believe that man is mortal and condemned to die, but Christ is come that men may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. John 10:10.

"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23.

Questions on Immortality

1. Who is immortal? Answer "The King Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." 1 Timothy 1:17.
2. Are not all men created immortal? Answer God "only has immortality." 1 Timothy 6: 16.
3. Is this immortality revealed by nature? Or is it through Jesus Christ and His gospel? Answer "By the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." 2 Timothy 1:10.
4. Who has power to bestow immortality upon man? Answer "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6: 23.
5. Will God give this gift to all persons, whatever their works may be? Answer God "will render to every man according to his deeds." Romans 2:6.
6. What will be the end of those who obey not the gospel? Answer "Whose end is destruction." Philippians 3: 19.
7. To whom will God impart immortality? Answer "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality." Romans 2:7.
8. What shall be their reward? Answer "Eternal life." Romans 2:7.
9. Upon what conditions may we obtain this blessing? Answer "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." 1 Timothy 6: 12.
10. When do men obtain immortality? Is it at death, or at the resurrection? Answer "The dead shall be raised incorruptible." 1 Corinthians 15:52.
11. How shall those who are not dead become incorruptible? Answer "We shall be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:52.
12. When will this change take place? Answer "At the last trump." 1 Corinthians 15:52.
13. How suddenly will the change occur? Answer "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1 Corinthians 15:52.
14. Will this change be a change of the internal, or of the external and physical, or corruptible, man? Answer "This corruptible must put on incorruption." 1 Corinthians 15: 53.

The State Of The Dead

15. What, then, becomes immortal? Answer "This mortal must put on immortality." 1 Corinthians 15:53.
16. What scripture will be fulfilled when this Corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality? Answer "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Corinthians 15:54; Isaiah 25:8.
17. Who will be raised from the dead? Answer "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth." John 5:28, 29.
18. Will different classes of characters arise in the resurrection? Answer "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Acts 24:15.
19. For what purpose will the good be raised? Answer "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." John 5: 29.
20. To what will others be raised? Answer "They that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:29.
21. Will a man's destiny at last be in accordance with his previous life? Answer "What so ever a man sows, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7.
22. What will be the portion of the ungodly? Answer "He that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." Galatians 6:8.
23. What will be the reward of the saints? Answer "He that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Galatians 6:8.
24. Where now is the Christian's life? Answer "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Colossians 3:3.
25. How, then, should we live? Answer "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Galatians 6:9.
26. What will be the fate of those who sow to the flesh? Answer They "shall utterly perish in their own corruption," 2 Peter 2:12.
27. Is it possible for man to be utterly destroyed? Answer "Fear Him which is able to destroy, both soul and body in hell." Matthew 10:28.
28. What is the wages of sin? Answer "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23.
29. Is this death merely a bodily death? Answer "The soul that sins it shall die." Ezekiel 18:20.
30. If the wicked turn away from his wickedness and do right, what then? Answer "He shall save his soul alive." Ezekiel 18 : 27.
31. "When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, and commits iniquities, and dies in them," what shall be his fate? Answer "For his iniquity that he has done shall he die." Ezekiel 18:26.
32. As he first dies in his iniquity, and then dies for his iniquity, what must this last death be called? Answer "The second death." Revelation. 21:8.
33. What is the result attained by the man who converts a sinner from the error of his ways? Answer He "shall save a soul from death." James 5:20.
34. What has God placed before us to excite us to action? Answer "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing." Deuteronomy 30:19.

The State Of The Dead

35. How does God manifest His love to men? Answer “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16.

36. What is our Savior’s complaint concerning mankind? Answer “And you will not come to Me that you might have life.” John 5:40.

37. What is the command of God to all? Answer “Cast away from you all your transgressions; for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, said the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live you..” Ezekiel 18: 31, 32.

3. In this World and the World to Come

By ROBERT HARE

“Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at Peace.”

Looking out from a life bounded by impossibilities man has longed, and long endeavored, to comprehend the secrets of the unknown. The future, with its hidden mysteries, has always proved an inviting field for speculative thought, and no price would, even now, be esteemed too great if by it a faithful revelation could be purchased. But the margin of the unknown is drawn so closely around the horizon of life that the future can guard its secrets well. Standing as on the shore of an unknown sea the watcher, without God’s word, looks in vain for the unfolding of futurity-all is dark beyond.

True, man, endowed with marvelous capabilities by his Creator, has learned much, and has achieved great things! Captured by his wondrous telescope the stars and sun-worlds have told their story. Measured by his sounding line the deeps have revealed their treasures. Controlled by his will the silent spirit of the air has become a messenger, and by it men whisper across the sea; while the lightning, harnessed to his car, has become an obedient servant! So wonderful are the achievements of man that gold is gathered from the dust; oil is drawn from the rock; stones become iron, and out of the hills men dig brass.

Yes; knowledge has increased among the sons of men, as the prophet foretold (Daniel 12:4); but, yet, across each and every pathway of knowledge there hangs somewhere a vale hiding that which the heart of man would most wish to know. That vale divides between the known and the unknown, and beyond it shadowy forms may beckon and whisper in the strange ministry that invites man to enter paths unknown. But, for the most part, the human ear is too dull to catch the echoes that fall from lips so far distant.

Take any path that he may choose, and man will find that somewhere in that path the vale that falls from heaven, or rises from beneath, shuts out the scenes of promise where human feet would most love to walk.

It is well that this is so, for God will reveal all that it is best for man to know in His own good time. In the beginning man was enticed, by the promise of a deceiver, to eat the forbidden fruit, with the hope that he would know the unknown of “good and evil.” But the experience proved a failure; for, led by that ambition, man disobeyed and died.

There is but one way of beholding the unseen through the eye of faith. By this means Abraham beheld the final triumph of the redeemed, and looked upon the city whose builder and maker is God. There is but one way of knowing the unknown of futurity -believing the revelation given in the word of God; Jehovah alone knows the end from the beginning, and he who would know more than man may know to-day must walk with God.

Forbidden Paths

Satan held out the promise of knowledge to man, but the path to which the deceiver pointed was a forbidden path. It appeared right to man, but in the end it proved to be “the way of death.”

God has spoken of Satan in the Scripture as the being who “deceives the whole world.” His work of deception has measured with the whole history of the human race. With the hope that he would be able to satisfy, or, at least, increase man’s desire to know the unknown, Satan has endeavored to meet him in all

The State Of The Dead

the forbidden paths of life. He has designed by this means to lead man to transgress more seriously the will of his God.

By the grave of the loved and lost the human heart has, in all ages, bowed to weep out its sorrows. And there, gazing into its blackness, man has asked most longingly concerning the future. But no answering voice has come back from the land of silence. Inspiration alone can supply an answer to the heart's plaintive inquiries concerning the dead. Yet men have turned away from the Holy Book, supposing, in their blind uncertainty, that it spoke untruly. But, in turning away from the truth spoken by God, man has listened to a lying spirit that has whispered about the possibility of a life that the grave does not claim, and of a spirit-being that does not die.

Truly, God said that man-the very man that He had made-should die. But the tempter said, "You shall not surely die." Man has listened to the voice of the deceiver, and so believed a lie.

With this thought in mind that all of man does not die-that there is something, though unseen, that still lives-man has continued to weep by the grave, and to inquire at the altars of the dead concerning the spirits and spirit-world that imagination has pictured.

Do you wonder, then, that a voice, sweet in its resemblance to the voices hushed, has answered? It is thus that, in Spiritualism, men claim to find the comfort and information that Inspiration alone can supply.

But this path to knowledge has been forbidden to man by that God who knows all about both the living and the dead. Read His statements:

"When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead?" Isaiah 8:19

This is the only safe plan. First to inquire "what God has said," and then to believe all He has said concerning both the living and the dead.

Read also the warning given to ancient Israel on this point:

"There shall not be found among you a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord." Deuteronomy 18:10-12. "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be deceived by them. I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:31.

Jehovah knew there was danger in this path, so He kindly prohibited His people from attempting to inquire of the dead. God would not prohibit a sainted mother holding communication with her sorrowing child on earth, if such a thing were possible. But God knows that some other being would personate that departed mother if such a means of communication were attempted, so He kindly warns man of that danger, and thus makes this a forbidden path. Satan knows that the heart in its sorrow is easily deceived, but God has warned His people of this deception. The dead cannot answer. We must inquire of Him who alone "speaks from the living to the dead."

Angels Cast Down

Unsatisfied with his position as covering cherub by the throne of Deity, Satan risked all in his mad attempt to be equal with God. He declared that he would exalt his throne above the stars of God, and "be like the Most High." Isaiah 14:14.

But the lawless spirit that ruled him, and would have worked ruin to all the universe of God, must be controlled; so after the war in heaven Satan and all his sympathizers were cast out. Revelation 12:7-9.

Jude speaks of the beings who were thus cast out as "the angels who kept not their first estate." Jude I: 6. And Peter refers to them as "the angels that sinned." 2 Peter 2:4. They were cast down to the earth, and since the casting, down of that "third part" of the heavenly host, Satan, acting as their chief, has been going about like a lion in his anger seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8.

The plans and schemes that Satan has devised for the deception of man have been many and masterful in their designing. Yet among all his schemes for deception none has proved more successful than his attempted impersonation of the dead. The host of his sympathizers, with all their angelic intelligence, have lent themselves to this work of deception, and through this means beings that were once in heaven personate those who are now in the grave.

How successfully this work of personating the dead can thus be carried on may be seen by the fact that these fallen angels know all the history of man in the past. And with their superhuman intelligence they

The State Of The Dead

are fully capable of answering all inquiries that would effectually lead men to believe that they are really speaking to spirits of the departed dead.

Satan possesses power to transform himself “into an angel of light,” and his fallen companions have power to personate the dead, and thus they lead men to believe that Satan spoke truly when he said, “You shall not surely die.”

The impression first given by Spiritualism, in its claim to communicate with the departed, is bewitching indeed. But when through it Satan secures power over the mind, it becomes the way of death.

Saul, the king of Israel, went to communicate with a spirit medium after God had refused to speak with him because of his rebellion. At the call of the witch at Endor a spirit came up to personate the old prophet who had been buried at Ramah, more than seventy miles distant. In its communication to Saul that spirit spoke as Samuel would have spoken to the rebellious king by referring to his past disobedience. But to show the thoughtful reader that it was not Samuel, or any part of that old prophet, that spirit lied both as to the time of the battle and the place of Saul’s final abode. 1 Samuel 28:7-20.

This attempt at communicating with the dead was the last act of rebellion in a wayward life. In a few days after that Saul died a suicide. 1 Kings 31:6. In his obituary he is charged with two great sins—disobeying God, and asking counsel of “a familiar spirit.” 1 Chronicles 10:13. That spirit was not Samuel, it was a fallen angel personating the dead prophet.

Satan leads astray and then reproaches the poor sinner, so that hope is lost, and life goes out in despair. Trust not the deceiver, and hold no communication with the angels that were cast down for their rebellion. He who does commune with the disobedient will also learn to disobey.

The Spirit World

Somewhere in the universe of God there is a spirit world—a place where the fallen angels abide, and where they carry on their work of rebellion against the government of heaven.

The holy angels have their abiding place in the presence of Jehovah, for they are the ministers of His will, and there they hearken to His voice. From that holy place they are sent forth “to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation.”

But where is the spirit-world where the prince of darkness abides, the home of the outcasts from heaven? The prophet speaks of the angels who lost their first estate as being reserved “in everlasting chains under darkness,” unto the judgment of the great day. Jude 1:6. Peter speaks of them as “delivered into chains of darkness.” 2 Peter 2:4. Where are these chains of darkness which surround the evil host that once rebelled in heaven?

The atmosphere that surrounds our earth is said by scientists to extend about forty-five miles above the surface of our globe. As we ascend that atmosphere becomes less dense until it finally ceases altogether. When that point is reached, we enter a region of perfect and perpetual darkness. Without the atmosphere this world would itself be shrouded in darkness, except at those points where the direct rays of the sun might fall.

Pouchet, in his work called the “Universe,” thus describes the atmosphere:

“The aerial ocean which envelops the earth is from fifteen to sixteen leagues high. It is the medium for diffusing animation and life, and its disappearance would be immediately followed by a general destruction of animals and plants, and the silence of death.” – “The Universe,” page 502.

Speaking of the space above this atmospheric ocean, E. F. Burr, D.D., thus writes:

“But the starry spaces are awfully dark. Those who visit the higher regions of our atmosphere, by mountains or balloons, tell us that the pleasant blue gradually passes into an intense black. At last the stars glitter on a background of perfect jet.” – “Ecce Calum,” page 40.

Here, then, we come to the chains of darkness under which the evil host are confined awaiting the judgment. Paul speaks of Satan as “prince of the Power of the air.” Ephesians 2:2. In this region Apollyon marshals his fallen ones in their preparation for the coming Armageddon. From the surface of our earth to the space of darkness that surrounds our atmosphere, is the spirit-world. That is the only place that the fallen angels will ever inhabit.

When the atmosphere is finally removed (as it will be during the thousand years, Revelation. 6:14, the fallen host are brought still lower, and by the same chains of darkness they are confined to the surface of a desolated earth to await their final punishment.

The State Of The Dead

Though invisible to the human eye these inhabitants of the spirit-world can behold all the range of human life and action. Hence the reason why they are so intimately acquainted with all human affairs. They are thus enabled to reveal much that appears mysterious and wonderful to man.

But these inhabitants of the spirit-world are not spirits of the dead! They have never been human beings in any shape or form. Satan and his host were cast down before any of the children of Adam died. They are simply the fallen angels, cast down because they rebelled against the government of God. They are now reserved in the atmosphere of this world so that as the inhabitants of the sinless worlds behold this earth, where the plan of redemption is being demonstrated to the universe, they may also see the work of rebellion carried on by these unholy beings, and so learn to hate sin forever.

These are the beings who personate the dead, and when man would speak with the departed it is a fallen angel that answers his inquiry. There is wisdom, then, in God forbidding man to even attempt holding communication with the dead. That host, led by the great deceiver, will surely deceive all who disregard the warning of God in this matter.

Man has no place among the spirits in the spirit-world, nor will he ever have. The redeemed will finally pass through it on their way to the celestial city. But after that it will be destroyed, and with the new creation there will come in a new atmospheric heaven, in which only the angels of light will spread their snowy pinions as they pass from the glory land to a paradise restored.

The Land Of Silence

During the long ages, while pondering over the hereafter, man has stood by the silent resting place of his fellow mortals, asking, "If a man die shall he live again?"

But the closed lips of the loved answer not, and the silent tomb heeds not the wail of sorrow that has cast its sadness over every human heart.

In speaking of his future hope, Job declares, "If I wait the grave is mine house." Job 17:13. This resting-place he describes as a "land of darkness," without any order, where the rich and poor are equal, where the weary rest, and the servant is freed from his master. Job 3:18, 19; 10:21, 22.

Oh, silent land, how many millions of the children of men rest in thy valleys of peace! How many of the sons of clay have taken up their abode in thy narrow fields! How many slumber in thy dust together! No mad tide of ambition fires the heart of thy inhabitants, for kingly crowns and captive chains lie ever side by side in thy silent halls.

"Why vex our souls with wearing care?
Why shun the grave, for aching heads so cool and low?
Have we found life so passing fair,
So grand to be, so sweet, That we should dread to go?"

The grave is, indeed, a silent land. In fact, it has no tale to tell. The dreamless sleep of its countless inhabitants measures not the days and hours of time. They know naught of the affairs of men. Thus it is written: "The dead know not anything." Ecclesiastes 9:5.

Satan planned that the grave should be a prison house—a prison house that might never be opened. But Christ went down into its darkness, rested awhile in its silence, and then came forth a conqueror, with the keys of the grave and of death. Revelation 1:18. That silent land is now a resting place, held under control by the living Christ, where God's wearied ones may rest awhile before the long activities of eternity begin.

But death itself is not a blessing! It is not the gateway to glory, nor yet to the spirit-world. It is known in Scripture as the "King of Terrors," and the "Last Enemy." But Christ has spoiled the power of death. He holds the keys of the grave, and now whispers to the sleeping ones there, "Because I live, you shall live also."

In this land of silence the inhabitants sleep a dreamless sleep. "Our friend Lazarus sleeps," said Christ in speaking of the dead man. David "fell asleep," and was gathered to his fathers. Acts 13:36. Stephen looked up, beheld the open heavens, and then "fell asleep." Acts 7:60. "Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." Daniel 12:2. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52 "Awake, and sing, you that dwell in the dust." Isaiah 26:19.

The State Of The Dead

From this long sleep there will be a glad awakening for the righteous. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first." 1 Thessalonians 4:16. Then, in the eternal gladness of that life beyond, all memories of the land of silence will be forgotten.

Life After Death

"I am He that lives, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore." Such is the language by which Christ proclaims Himself, the Ever living One, to His church and people.

It will be readily seen that life and death are opposite conditions. Christ lived after He had been dead, but there is no life in death. Of the wicked it is distinctly stated that "they lived not again" till the thousand years are finished. Revelation 20:5, 6. It is very evident, then, that they could not be alive while they were dead.

The life that God has for His people is not a life in death, but a life after death! Christ declares, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25. Of the redeemed it is written, "Neither can they die any more," for they are children of God, being children of the resurrection. Luke 20:36. All who rise in the first resurrection are children of God. The resurrection takes place when the Lord descends from heaven to call His sleeping ones from the dust. So the eternal life begins at the time of the first resurrection.

There is only one thing about man that death cannot touch-the character-life written in the books of heaven. That is the soul part of man that God only can destroy. Matthew 10:28. If that character-life is one worthy of being made immortal, in the resurrection that man will be raised in the image of the Divine, and so "this mortal shall put on immortality."

We find the words soul and spirit mentioned 1,700 times in the Bible, but neither are once said to be immortal! The Hebrew and Greek terms that these words represent in our language are applied in the Scriptures to sixty-nine different things. But so far from representing anything immortal, one of the things to which the Hebrew word for soul is applied is "dead body." Seven times it is thus used in the Old Testament. See as examples Leviticus 21:11; Numbers 6:6; 9:6, 7. Here the Hebrew word for soul is applied to a dead body.

Immortality is given to man only when he lives again after death, or when this vile body is changed and made like unto His glorious body. Philippians 3:21. Man must look for immortality, for it is not something that he already possesses. Romans 2:6, 7. He must receive it as a gift from God, to be put on at the resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:53.

When this mortal has put on immortality, and this corruptible has put on incorruption, death will be fully swallowed up in victory, for the holy ones can then "die no more."

The living saints will also be "changed" when Christ comes, so that, with the holy dead that live again in the first resurrection, they may be able to bear the weight of eternal years. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." Then, as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 1 Corinthians 15:49.

God cannot make the image of sin or the sinful immortal. Only those bearing the image of the Divine may live again in the long, endless life that measures with the life of God.

Tormented Forever

The wicked rise in the second resurrection at the end of the thousand years. Revelation 20:5. They also live again after death (for Christ gave His life for all), but with this difference-they still bear the image of the earthy. There is no change for the unholy; they rise with the likeness of sin still upon them, hence it is that when they awake God will "despise their image." Psalm 73:20.

The wicked also come from the grave-that land of silence-but in their awakening they rise to receive the reward of a life misspent-a life altogether unfitted for immortality.

During the long years of resting in the tomb the wicked have not been suffering punishment. Peter tells us that they are "reserved unto the day of judgment" to be punished. 2 Peter 2:9. So their punishment is yet future. Job also speaks of them as being reserved to the day of destruction, and being brought forth to the day of wrath. Job 21:29, 30.

Human theology has long since consigned the unholy to regions of torment without either judge or jury, but God does not work that way. He will not at last call forth millions of wretched beings, who have

The State Of The Dead

been suffering for ages, to see if in the judgment they are found worthy of punishment. No! This is not God's plan. All sleep alike until the time of the first or second resurrection. Then they awaken, some to life, and some to shame and contempt.

God desires that the universe shall see that His dealing with both the holy and the unholy is just and right. So He has determined that fire shall try every man's work, and also every man. Both the work and the man who stands fire must be God-like. 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. Hence it is that the righteous finally stand on the sea of glass "mingled with fire." Revelation 15:2. But the righteous are God-like, with nothing of sin about them (like the Hebrew children who passed through the fire), so the fire cannot destroy them. Thus the universe can see that God's estimate of their character was just and true.

Finally, the wicked are called to pass the trial by fire. But, when subjected to the burning, instead of standing unscathed amid the flames, behold, the "SMOKE" of their torment ascends, and the astonished universe can see that the fire has power over them. Revelation 14:9-11. That smoke continues to ascend until all is consumed, and so the unholy pass away from the face of God's creation forever. "They shall consume, into smoke shall they consume away." Psalm 37:20.

The Greek word translated "torment" in Revelation 14:11 is *basanismos*, and it is defined by Dr. Young as "a trial, testing, torment." This word comes from *basanos*, the name of a Lydian stone that was supposed to, possess the property of testing metals. The idea of torment is altogether a secondary meaning, as the word primarily signifies "a trial," or "testing." This is the only sense in which it can be applied to the future punishment of the wicked.

Of that time of testing the prophet writes: "Behold, the day comes that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yes, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Malachi 4:1. In this final testing the wicked meet the demands of the sentence first pronounced upon man—"Dust you art, and unto dust shall you return."

In Christ's statement concerning the wicked going into "everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:42), we have another example that illustrates the end of the unholy. The word here translated punishment is the Greek *kolasis*, and it is thus defined by Liddell and Scott: "To prune, retrench, to hold in check, keep in, confine, correct, punish."

The righteous go into everlasting life; but the wicked, like worthless branches, are pruned (cut off) from that life, and so go into eternal death, for "the wages of sin is death." It is not eternal Punishing, but eternal punishment;" neither is it eternal dying, but eternal "death."

In God we live and move and have our being, but cut off, severed from Him, we can have neither life nor being. So after the testing by fire, in which the wicked are shown to be unlike God, and in which they consume into smoke, they must remain forever as "though they had not been." Obadiah 1:16. True, the smoke of their testing will ascend as long as they have any being, but the age *aionai* of their life will end with the final extinction of all that is unholy.

The Lake Of Fire

But where will this scene of the sinner's final testing be located? It cannot be in heaven, for the unholy never enter there. Human theology would suggest "hell" as the place of punishment. But this is at best indefinite. The word "hell" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *helan*, which signifies to cover or conceal, and the first definition given by Webster, in his Academic Dictionary, is the "grave."

In the Old Testament the Hebrew word translated "hell" is *sheol*, but this is simply the place of the dead, for we read, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave [*sheol*] whither you goes." Ecclesiastes 9:10. This word is found sixty-five times in the Old Testament, and it is translated thirty-one times "hell," thirty-one times "grave," and three times "pit."

In the New Testament we have two words which are translated "hell" - *Hades* and *Gehenna*. *Hades* (found ten times) is a Greek word which literally signifies the "unseen." In Scripture it represents the grave. It is so rendered in the margin of Revelation 20:13.

Gehenna (found eleven times) was the name applied to the valley of slaughter outside of Jerusalem. In that valley fires were constantly kept burning to consume the refuse from the city, and also the bodies of such as were executed by law. It is used by Christ in picturing the place of the final destruction of all who are executed under the law of God—they are to be cast into the great antitypical *Gehenna*, to be utterly consumed. See Matthew 10:28, where *Gehenna* is the word used by Christ.

The State Of The Dead

The fire that burned in that ancient valley was never put out. It burned on and on till every particle of the refuse from the city was consumed. So the antitypical Gehenna will only cease to burn when its cleansing work is for all eternity completed.

But this Gehenna, into which the wicked are to be finally cast, will be outside the New Jerusalem, just as the ancient Gehenna was outside the old Jerusalem. Into it everything evil, and every person who is unfitted to abide in the holy city, must be cast. Isaiah 66:24.

At the end of the thousand years of earth's desolation (Jeremiah 4:23-27) the city of God will come down from heaven and rest upon the earth. Then, as the wicked rise in the second resurrection, they behold that city, and, marshaled by Satan (the master whom they have always served), they plan to capture it. But with that great project yet uncompleted fire comes down from heaven, and they are consumed.

Once before fire came down from heaven upon the altar to consume the sacrifice placed there. Leviticus 9:24. That sacrifice represented the sinner without life. Psalm 73:16-20. And now, in this final scene, fire comes down again from heaven to consume the great antitypical sin-offering and by it all sinners are consumed. Revelation 20:9.

That fire melts the earth. Thus the prophet writes, "The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also; and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." 2 Peter 3:10. It is at that time that the angels gather out of Christ's kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, to "cast them into a furnace of fire." Matthew 13:41-43.

The earth, thus molten, becomes a lake-a valley of fire-outside the city, and in that sea of fire the wicked yield up forever the life lost through sin.

The wicked are never removed from the earth. This has been the scene of their transgression, here they have worked evil, and here they must share in the final extinction of the evil.

The Final Revelation

But some one will say, "Is that all that there is in the punishment of the unholy?" No! That is not all. Look at the picture again. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you shall SEE Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out." Luke 13:28.

What a picture is this! How will its details finally be fulfilled? The wicked are to rise in the second resurrection, after the long sleep of a thousand years. As they rise, they behold the city of God that has come down from heaven. In it are the holy and true of all ages-the redeemed from every kindred, tongue, and people. Through the gates and jasper walls of that city flash glories from the rainbow round the throne and from the crystal sea. Through that home of peace runs the broad river of life, while shining streets of gold reflect back celestial splendors from the domes that rise above the mansions of light. Melodies from ten thousand harps join in the eternal harmonies of that song sung by the worshipping myriads who can die no more. Vainly we try to picture that home of the redeemed. Imagination's fairest ideals portray but rude outlines of that Paradise where the voice of weeping shall never be heard.

As the wicked rise in that last resurrection, thousands from warrior beds where they fell in battle, and thousands with the dreams of empire still upon them-they are marshaled by the enemy, and surround the city in a last effort to capture the throne of God. There they stand, a mighty host, with weapons snatched from the field of earth's last Armageddon, to do battle against the city of peace. As they gaze upon that scene - "the city of our solemnities," sunbursts of glory roll in billows across its battlements, and light up, the rainbow splendors of its twelve foundations. The beauty of the revelation becomes overmastering, and the wicked gaze in mute astonishment, unable to raise any weapon in their mad attempt at sacrilege. A moment they gaze, then the consciousness of their loss comes over them-a consciousness too terrible, too deep for words-that can only be expressed in "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

As that great multitude draws near, the gates of the celestial city close, and the unholy are shut out forever! Shut out with only the thickness of that jasper wall between them and the glories of a long eternity. Oh! Think of it, so near to the eternal prize, and yet-all lost forever!

Reader, this realization of their loss-a loss that eternity itself can not repair-will be the bitterest drop in the sinner's cup! They do not here weep and gnash their teeth in pain, but at the loss set forth in the revelation-the last revelation that the eyes of the unholy shall ever behold!

In the beginning Satan promised that man should become wise as God, but instead of that the life of the unholy at last goes out in madness. For it is written: "The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away." Psalm 112:10.

The State Of The Dead

On which side of that picture will you stand? The holy ones within the city are safe forever. No death, no pain, no sorrow, no sickness, no tears can reach them there. But outside the unholy ones, helpless and defenceless, await the last act in the great tragedy of human rebellion.

Once before, when the cross of Calvary was uplifted, this earth became the centre scene that attracted the gaze of a universe. Then the curtain of darkness fell and shut out the vision. And now once more, in the closing hour of God's controversy with sin, the sinless worlds again behold the condemned. This time it is not the Christ that must suffer, but those who have rejected the Christ!

For a moment, as the unholy gaze upon the city of life, the celestial harmonies within its holy walls are hushed, and the voice of Deity proclaims: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still!" Then the curtain falls—a curtain of flame that reaches high as heaven—and by it the visions of that holy city are shut out forever from the eyes of the wicked.

So the last hour in the life of sin and sinners will be an hour of madness, for they "gnash with their teeth, and melt away." But it is the final revelation of what they have lost that drives that disobedient multitude to madness! In the fire that thus descends the unholy consume, and the universe beholds the smoke of their torment (testing) ascend until the last vestige of every evil thing is destroyed, and then the universe of God will be clean again—clean as it was before sin's defilement first came upon it.

"What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel?"

They are reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished. 2 Peter 2: 9; Job 21:29, 30.

The agent of punishment is fire. Psalm 21:9; Matthew 3:12; Revelation 20:9; Matthew 13: 40-42.

In it they melt away. Psalm 112:10.

They shall be consumed. Isaiah 1:28; Zephaniah 1:3.

Into smoke. Psalm 37:20.

They shall be destroyed. Matthew 10:28; Psalm 145:20; Acts 3: 23; 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

They shall be burned up like chaff. Matthew 3:12.

Like "dry branches." John 15:6.

"As tares." Matthew 13:40-42.

As "thorns cut up." Isaiah 33:12.

"As stubble fully dry." Nahum 1:10.

They shall be left neither root nor branch. Isaiah 5:24; Job 18:16, 17; Malachi 4:1.

They shall be as though they had not been. Isaiah 29:20; Psalm 37:10; Obadiah 1:i6.

Endless life is obtained through Christ alone. John 3:16; 6:57; Romans 6: 23.

It is received at the resurrection. Thessalonians 4:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52.

When The Sea Gives Up Its Dead!

With God the resurrection of the human body is a necessity, though to man it appears an impossibility. Should there be no resurrection those who have fallen asleep in Christ must forever perish. 1 Corinthians 15:16-19. If there were no resurrection death would claim eternal victory, and Satan, who has the power of death, would triumph over Jehovah. But this cannot be, for death, as the "last enemy," is to be abolished, and Satan also is to be destroyed. Hebrews 2:14.

The State Of The Dead

In preparation for that time, when all that are in the grave shall hear His voice, Christ already holds the keys of the tomb, and it is only a question of time as to when man shall be wakened from his dreamless sleep.

But you may ask the unbeliever's question: "Suppose the body has been mutilated, and part of it buried here, and part of it yonder, how can it be raised again?" Do not forget that all human bodies are made of dust. Remember, too, that all atoms of dust are exactly alike. All atoms of gold are alike, and it matters not whether the atoms that compose the sovereign were gathered here or yonder. The stamp upon it marks its nature and value, and whether the gold dust composing it was gathered from the valley or the mountain matters not.

The identity of man does not depend upon the atoms that compose his body, but rather upon the arrangement and organization of those atoms. The boy of fourteen years does not retain in his body any of the particles that composed his body when seven years of age. The man of threescore and ten years would have changed his body nine times, yet he is still the same man, and his face remains familiar.

There is in the books of heaven a life-photograph of every man, and when made to live again in the resurrection the body is organized according to that plan.

David writes: "In Thy book all my members were written, when as yet there was none of them." Psalm 139:16. Even the sea will at last give up its dead. But every man will rise in his own order, "Christ the first fruits, and afterward they that are Christ's at His coining."

Reorganized from the dust, but made like unto the Son of God, and with the life of God in them (Ezekiel 37:13, 14), the righteous rise in the first resurrection, redeemed from death, to die no more. But the unholy come last in order, and so rise in the second resurrection after the thousand years.

They can only claim that life after which they sought-a fleeting life of pleasure. Hence they rise to die the "second death." From that death there is no resurrection. Through all the eternal years it will leave the unholy "as though they had not been." Christ is Lord of both the living and the dead. He holds the right to kill and to make alive again. Deuteronomy 32:39. In that second death He will destroy both soul and body in Gehenna-that great antitypical valley of fire in which the rubbish of a world must be consumed.

The righteous rise with the life of God upon them, and so live forevermore. Reorganized by the same word of power that made man in the beginning, and having been proved worthy of eternal life in the judgment, the body, sown in weakness, is raised in power; sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory, and thus made capable of bearing the weight of eternal years.

God has not yet finished with the dead. All must live again. The grave must restore its veiled faces, and beyond that restoration there is the life unending for the holy, and the death unending for the unholy. Eternity begins after the resurrection, when the sea gives up its dead.

"We may sleep, but not forever,
There will be a glorious dawn!
We shall meet to part-no, never,
On the resurrection morn!
From the deepest caves of ocean,
From the desert and the plain,
From the valley and the mountain,
Countless throngs shall rise again.

"We may sleep, but not forever,
In the lone and silent grave;
Blessed be the Lord that takes,
Blessed be the Lord that gave.
In the bright eternal city
Death can never, never come!
In His own good time He'll call us
From our rest to Home, sweet Home."

The State Of The Dead

Alive Forevermore

We read in the Holy Book of a people over whom “the second death has no power.” Revelation 20:6. We read also of a people who live to “die no more.” Luke 20:36. Here man is subject to death. All life-forms die, and this old earth has become a wilderness of graves—a garden of death, where all the fairest blossoms die.

But there is a time coming when the face of man shall no longer wear its shroud of sorrow, or the heart weep its tears of pain. A time when the eyes of man may look out over scenes immortal without fear of the dimness that falls at even time.

David speaks of the life to come as “length of days forever and ever.” Psalm 21:4. Christ calls it “life eternal.” John 10:28. Paul pictures it as the putting on of “immortality.” I Corinthians 15:54. But perhaps the most expressive term by which that life is preserved before man is the statement, “Neither can they die any more.”

Man cannot fully understand the meaning of “eternal life,” but he knows what it is to die. He may then know how sweet life would be without ever a fear or even thought of death.

When Christ stood on the mount of transfiguration with the cross just beyond, two glorified beings, one who had been translated, and one who had been raised from the dead, were sent to commune with Him concerning the coming hour of darkness. Elijah had stood alone, condemned to death by earthly powers, and now Christ was to pass through the same experience. Moses had been in the grave, and he knew what it was to die, and now Christ must pass through the same experience. These were the only two beings in the kingdom of God who could at that time fully sympathize with the Son of man.

Christ, having passed through death, is now able to fully sympathize with all human mortality. “He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust.” But having now taken up the life immortal He calls to His people, “I am He that lives, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore.” “Be you faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” “Because I live, you shall live also.”

This voice comes to man from beyond the tomb from the land of immortality. The shadow of death no longer rests over the Son of God, only the pierced hands tell the story of pain. “In His presence there is fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” He invites man to share with Him the life immortal.

In His word God has revealed the hereafter to man in as far as it concerns his life this side of eternity. But beyond that, the life immortal—the life that measures with the life of God—will reveal the outshining of a hereafter that human thought cannot picture, or the heart at present understand.

That long hereafter will be spent in a land where the inhabitants shall not say, “I am sick,” and where life shall be no longer bounded by impossibilities.

Into that home, beyond earth’s sunset, the redeemed shall at last be welcomed, and there, with the Christ who died and lives again, they shall live forevermore.

Would you know of the hereafter? Go to the Book divine, for that word must be the guide of every child of God, until at last “they shall see His face.” Then, in that other “hereafter,” God Himself shall reveal the mysteries that lie folded under the wings of eternity. Blessed are they that hear the words of the prophecy of this book, until that time come when the Ancient of Days shall speak to His redeemed face to face.

Through eyes tear dimmed, we see but darkly now, And passing shadows make our spirits bow,
But yonder, in the land of nightless day, With eyes undimmed, and tears all wiped away, We shall behold,
as now the angels see, While time becomes a long eternity.

4. The Immortality Of The Soul

What The Scriptures Say Of It

THE doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul is one of the oldest and one of the most widespread doctrines that have ever been in this world. It was preached in the world before ever faith in Christ the Savior was preached. “The serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die;” and from that day to this that doctrine has been believed more generally by the children of men than has the truth of God. Indeed, in our day the doctrine of the immortality of the soul has gained such favor even among those who profess the word of God as their standard of belief that to deny it is considered by the majority of them as equivalent to a denial of the Bible itself. But instead of such denial being in any way a denial of the truth of

The State Of The Dead

revelation, the fact is that the truth of revelation can be logically and consistently held only by the total and unequivocal denial of the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. This the Scriptures plainly show.

The Resurrection

There is no truth more plainly taught nor more diligently insisted upon in the Bible than this; that the future existence of men depends absolutely upon either a resurrection of the dead or a translation without seeing death at all. Paul's hope for future existence was in the resurrection of the dead. In speaking of his efforts to win Christ he says: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Philippians 3:10, 11. It was of the "hope and resurrection of the dead" that he was called in question by the council (Acts 23:6); and when he had afterward to make his defense before Felix, he declared that the resurrection of the dead was the end of his hope, saying: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Acts 24:15.

Nor is Paul the only one of the writers of the Bible who teaches the same thing. The resurrection of the dead is that to which Job looked for the consummation of his hope. Job 14:14, 15; 17:13-15; 19:23-27. David says: "You, which has showed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken" (give life to) "me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth" (Psalm 71:20), and "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." Psalm 17: 15. And what shall we more say? For the time would fail us to tell of Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Hosea, and Micah, and all the prophets and apostles, and of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for Jesus Himself declared that it was the resurrection of the dead of which God spoke when He said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." More than this, Jesus pointed His disciples always to the resurrection of the dead, through which alone they could obtain the reward which He promised. In John 6:39-54 we find that no less than four times the Savior, in giving promise to those who believe in Him, sets it forth as the consummation of that belief that "I will raise him up at the last day." And in Luke 14:13, 14, we read: "When you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

Paul, however, gives us upon this subject a straightforward, logical argument, which leaves the doctrine of the immortality of the soul not a particle of ground to rest upon. The fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians is devoted entirely to an argument in proof of the resurrection of the dead. The apostle first proves, by hundreds of living witnesses who had seen Him after He was risen, that Christ arose from the dead. Still there were some who said, "There is no resurrection of the dead," and, in refutation of that idea, he introduces three points of argument, any one of which utterly excludes the doctrine of the immortality of the soul from any place whatever in Christian doctrine.

In verse 16, his promise is, "If the dead rise not." The first conclusion from that is, "Then is not Christ raised;" then upon this conclusion follows the logical sequence, "Your faith is vain," and upon that another: "You are yet in your sins." From his premise "If the dead rise not" - the second conclusion is, "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." Verse 18. Nothing can be plainer than that this statement and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul cannot both be true. For if the soul be immortal, as is held, it cannot perish, and therefore, so far as its existence is concerned, it is utterly independent of the resurrection of the dead. Is it not supposed by all those who believe the soul to be immortal, that all who have passed from this world in the faith of Christ have gone to heaven, and are now enjoying its bliss? Assuredly it is. Then, if that be the truth, upon what imaginable principle can it be conceived that they "are perished," if there be no resurrection? What need have they of a resurrection?

Have they not, without a resurrection, all that heaven can afford? Upon that theory they certainly have. Then it just as certainly appears that not one of them has perished, even though there never be a resurrection.

Over against this theory stands the word of God that "if the dead rise not, then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." That word is the truth. Therefore it follows that if there be no resurrection of the dead, there is no hereafter for any who have ever died or who shall ever die.

But God has given assurance to all men that there shall be a hereafter, and that assurance lies in the fact "that He has raised Him" (Christ) "from the dead." Hebrews 9:27; Acts 17:31. The resurrection of Christ is the God-given pledge that there shall be a resurrection of all the dead: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," and "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just

The State Of The Dead

and unjust.” Therefore it is by virtue of the resurrection of the dead, and not by the immortality of the soul, that there will be any hereafter for the dead, whether just or unjust.

The second point that the apostle makes in this connection is in 1 Corinthians 15: 32: “If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.” On this nothing can be better than to present Dr. Adam Clarke’s comment upon this same passage. He says (and the italics are his):

“I believe the common method of pointing this verse is erroneous I propose to read it thus: “If, after the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it advantage me? If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we die.” What the apostle says here is a regular and legitimate conclusion from the doctrine that there is no resurrection; for if there be no resurrection, then there can be no judgment, no future state of rewards and punishments: why, therefore, should we bear crosses, and keep ourselves under continual discipline? Let us eat and drink, take all the pleasure we can; “for tomorrow we die, and there is an end of us forever.”

That is sound exegesis, and a just comment upon the words of the apostle. As we have shown, that is the point of Paul’s argument throughout, and it is the thought of the whole Bible upon this subject. But if the soul be immortal, neither Dr. Clarke’s comment nor Paul’s argument is sound. For if the soul be immortal, when so ever it may be that we die, that is not the “end of us forever,” resurrection or no resurrection. By this it is plain that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul nullifies the plainest propositions of Scripture, and is therefore false.

This view fully explains the query which Dr. Clarke propounds in his remarks at the close of his comments on 1 Corinthians 15. He says: “One remark I cannot help making; the doctrine of the resurrection appears to have been thought of much more consequence among the primitive Christians than it is now! How is this? The apostles were continually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God to diligence, obedience, and cheerfulness through it. And their successors in the present day seldom mention it! There is not a doctrine in the gospel on which more stress is laid; and there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching which is treated with more neglect!”

From the doctor’s insertion of exclamation points and his query, “How is this?” it would appear that he was surprised that it should be so. It is indeed surprising that it should be so. But it is easily enough explained. The fact is that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul has become so all-pervading in the present system of preaching that there is no room for the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. If the doctrine of the immortality of the soul be true, then the doctrine of the resurrection is indeed of no consequence. If that doctrine be true, then all need of laying stress upon the gospel doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is destroyed. And although the apostles were continually insisting on the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and although there is not a doctrine of the gospel upon which more stress is laid,” yet it is through the insidious deceptive influence of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul that the preachers of the present day seldom mention it, and that in the present system of preaching there is indeed “not a doctrine that is treated with more neglect; and nothing could show more plainly than does this the irreconcilable antagonism between the truth of God and the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

The third point is in verse 36: “That which you sowed is not quickened except it die.” To quicken is “to make alive.” What Paul says therefore is, “That which you sowed is not made alive except it die.” That this is spoken directly of man and his resurrection is evident from verses 42-44: “It is sown a natural body,” etc. Now the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is that the body properly has no life, that it is not the real man, but that the soul is the real, living, sentient man, that it is that about man which alone possesses real life. In other words, the body is only the house in which the real man lives. The real “I,” the soul, dwells within the body, and death is simply the separation of the soul from the body. Death breaks down the house, and lets the occupant free. According to this doctrine, there is no such thing as death, because the body properly has no life; consequently it does not die, and the soul-the real man-is immortal, and it cannot die; therefore there is in reality no such thing as death. If this be true, there is not only no such thing as death, but there is likewise no such thing as a resurrection of the dead; for upon the apostle’s premise that “that which you sowed is not quickened” (made alive) “except it die,” it follows that, as the body, having no life, does not die, it cannot be quickened (raised from the dead); and as the soul does not die, it cannot be raised from the dead; consequently there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead.

Therefore it stands proved to a demonstration that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is utterly subversive of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. But the resurrection of the dead is a Bible doctrine; it is the very truth of God. So then it is plain that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is subversive of the truth of God, and is therefore false, deceptive, and destructive.

The State Of The Dead

The Second Coming Of Christ

There is another doctrine of the Bible which holds just as important a place in the divine scheme as does that of the resurrection; and that is the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This likewise is subverted by a belief in the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. The subversion of this truth is, in a measure, involved in that of the resurrection, because without the second coming of Christ there would be no resurrection, and anything that destroys belief in the resurrection of the dead by that means destroys faith and hope in the second coming of the Lord.

That the event of the resurrection of the dead depends wholly upon the second coming of Christ is easily shown by the Scripture, which, of course, in these things, is the only authority. We have before shown that the righteous are rewarded only at the resurrection; and to show plainly the connection, we will repeat a verse before quoted: "When you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Luke 14: 13, 14. And of His own coming, Jesus says: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. The coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the righteous dead are directly connected by Paul thus; "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17); and again: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, 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?" 1 Corinthians 15:51-55

"Then shall be brought to pass the saying." When? "At the last trump," certainly; "for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised." When is it that the trump shall sound? "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord: The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise." "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." But through belief in the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, it is now sought to be made to appear that this "saying" is "brought to pass" when men die! There can be no more direct perversion of the word of God than to represent this saying as being brought to pass when men die.

There is One who exclaims, "I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [the grave] and of death." Revelation: 1:18. And when that glorious One "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," and with power that bursts the bars of the cruel grave and destroys the strength of death, then the saint arises triumphant over death, and "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." And, "Thanks be to God which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and thrice thanked, yes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3.

However, it is not alone through the subversion of the doctrine of the resurrection that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul strikes against the coming of the Lord. The issue is directly joined. For by those who believe in the natural immortality of the soul it is held that those who die in the Lord go straight to heaven, that they go direct to the place where the Lord is; and so they sing:

"Then persevere till death
Shall bring thee to thy God;
He'll take thee, at thy parting breath,
To His Divine abode."
-Gospel Hymns, Number 112.

And obituaries are actually written by them such as the following: "Alvah Palmer went to heaven from" a certain place in New York; and then the notice went on to tell when and of what he died, etc. And Dr. Talmage, in relating how a certain saintly woman was "sent to paradise," tells how the chariot of Elijah

The State Of The Dead

was outdone; for there it must have taken some little time to turn out the chariot and harness up the horses; but here in this instance, the transition was all made instantaneously, without waiting for either horses or chariot! And all this when a person died! These are only notable expressions of the common idea of those who believe in the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul.

Now if these things be true, if it be true that death brings people to God; that men and women go direct to heaven from their homes in this world, and this so instantaneously that there is no time to get ready the chariot of God, as was done when Elijah went without dying at all, we say if these things be true, then there is literally no place left for the coming of the Lord. It would be simply the height of absurdity to talk about the Lord's coming to this world after people who are not here at all, but who are, and have been for years and hundreds of years, in heaven, in the very place which He leaves to come here! This is why the doctrine of the coming of the Lord is so neglected, so despised, in fact. Believing this, there is no belief in the coming of the Lord; indeed, it would be a palpable inconsistency to believe in it. To those who believe this, there can be no looking or waiting for the coming of the Lord; all such do is to wait till death shall come and take them; and so death – “the last enemy,” “the king of terrors” is given the place and the office of Him who is our Life (Colossians 3:4), of Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

But this belief is not the “belief of the truth.” There is no element of truth, in any form, in the idea of people going to God or to heaven when they die. Christ Himself said as plainly as tongue can speak, “Whither I go, you cannot come.” John 13:33. Then when His disciples were troubled because of these words, He told them, in words equally plain, of the event upon which they must place their only hope of being with Him where He is, and that event is, “I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:3. And that word “that” shows positively that that is the only way in which men may ever be with Him where He is. Therefore the coming of the Lord is the Christian's hope. And the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, in supplanting; as it certainly does, the doctrine of the coming of the Lord, supplants the Christian's hope.

Then when the doctrine of the immortality of the soul teaches that men are in heaven before the end of the world, before the sounding of the last trump, before the time when the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven and raise the dead, before He appears in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory and sends His angels to gather together His elect, we say when the doctrine of the immortality of the soul teaches that men are in heaven before the occurrence of these events, it does it in defiance of the word of Christ, which lives and abides forever. Therefore we say it stands proved that the belief of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is subversive of the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, and in that is subversive of the truth of God.

The Judgment

The judgment is one of the certainties of Bible doctrine. Again and again Jesus sets before us the awful scenes and the all-important decisions of the judgment. “I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Matthew 12:36. “The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them; for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.” Luke 11:31, 32. In the parable of the wheat and tares, in the parable of the marriage of the king's son (Matthew 22:1-14), in the parable of the talents, (Matthew 25:14-30), in fact, in all His teaching, the judgment was made prominent. In Matthew 25:31-46, He sets before us a view of the very judgment itself.

The Old Testament as well as the New tells of the judgment. Solomon says: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14. Daniel says: “I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool; His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him; thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened.” Daniel 7:9, 10. Isaiah, David, Job, and other prophets as well as Solomon and Daniel, speak of this event. “Enoch also, the seventh from Adam,” prophesied of

The State Of The Dead

these, saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all." Jude 1:14, 15

This is not a judgment that is constantly going on during men's lives, and completed at their death, so that then their reward is given, whether for good or ill. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9:27. Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts 24:25), not judgment already come, nor constantly going on. There is a time appointed for the judgment. "Because He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He has ordained; whereof He has given assurance unto all men, in that He has raised Him from the dead." Acts 17:31. "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law," "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." Romans 2:12, 16. And again: "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Corinthians 5:10. It is not that alone that he has done in his direct personal acts for which he must account; he must answer for the fruit of his doings. "I the Lord search the heart; I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 17: 10

The time when men shall receive for that which they have done, whether it be good or bad, is at the coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the end of the world. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that You should give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and should destroy them which destroy the earth." Revelation 11:15, 18. Again we quote the words of Jude: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Jude 1:14, 15. With this agree exactly the words of Christ: "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. And Paul, in his charge to Timothy and to all ministers of Christ, says, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [living] and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word." 2 Timothy 4:1, 2. Peter also says: "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to -reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Peter 2:9.

More texts might be given on these points, but these are sufficient. From these it is plain (1) that there is a time "appointed" for the judgment; (2) that this is after death; (3) that it is the time of reward to all, for good or evil; (4) that this is called the "day of judgment;" (5) that it is at the appearing and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ; (6) that then, and not till then, it is that the righteous receive their reward; (7) and that the "unjust" are "reserved" until that time to be punished, and are not punished before that great day of judgment. Yet, however plain all this may be, it is equally plain that there is not one of these propositions that the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul does not tend to subvert. For if at death righteous men enter immediately into their reward, and the unrighteous go immediately to the place of punishment, then where is there any possible room for the judgment (unless, perhaps, the absurd idea be adopted that men should spend hundreds or thousands of years in happiness or misery, and then be brought to the judgment to see whether they be worthy of that which they have enjoyed or suffered!)?

For if at death men enter immediately into their reward or punishment, as the case may be, then it follows, if there be any judgment at all, that, instead of there being a time "appointed" after this "for judgment, there must necessarily be a judgment constantly going on in the life of each individual, and that that judgment closes at his death, and that he in consequence of judgment passed enters then upon his destiny, whether for good or for ill. It can be seen at a glance that such a view is utterly subversive of the Bible doctrine of the judgment. If such be the truth, then there can be no such thing as a day of judgment when the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment upon all, because all are judged as fast as they die; there can be no such thing as Christ judging the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom, because all the dead have been judged when they died; there can be no such thing as the "time of the dead that they should be judged," when the seventh angel sounds, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, for all the dead will have been judged before the seventh angel shall have sounded; and there can be no such thing as reserving "the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished," because by this theory they are sent to punishment as soon as

The State Of The Dead

they die. In short, if the doctrine of the immortality of the soul be the truth, the Bible doctrine of the judgment cannot be the truth. And the time has now come when a choice must be made between them. As for us, we choose the Bible, with all its doctrine and with all that that choice involves.

But that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is subversive of the Bible doctrine of the judgment is not all. By virtue of that doctrine, men have usurped the seat of the judge of all, and have arrogated to themselves the prerogative of reading into heaven whom so ever they see fit. How often we read that such and such a person is in heaven! But what right has any man to say who is worthy of a place in that bright world? Who knows the heart? None but God alone. He alone it is who pronounces upon the worthiness of men "to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead," and when men take upon themselves to read into heaven this man or that man, they are simply usurping the awful prerogative of the Most High. And only for belief in the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, no man would ever think of it. We repeat: It is God alone to whom belongs the right to pronounce that decision. He will pronounce it in every case, but it will be in the judgment; not at death, but at the resurrection of the dead, and before the assembled universe, and by the voice of the glorious Son of God, who has loved us and has washed us from our sins in His own blood; for He has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." John 5:27-29. Any doctrine that will lead men thus to usurp the prerogative of the judge of all the earth cannot be the truth. This is exactly what the doctrine of the immortality of the soul does; therefore it cannot be the truth: and as it is subversive of the Bible doctrine of the judgment, it is not only not the truth, but the belief of it is subversive of the truth.

God created man upon the earth, and gave him dominion over all upon it. He made him, not as the angels, but lower than they-inferior to the angels. Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:7, margin. God made man upright, but through the deception of Satan he turned to crooked ways; he sinned. And although God had put all things in subjection under him, and "left nothing" that was not "put under him," yet now, says Paul, we see not all things put under him. Hebrews 2:8. Through sin he has been deprived of his glory, and honor, and dominion, which God gave him, and which the Lord intended that he should forever enjoy. This sin was brought upon him by Satan, and hard upon sin death followed.

But when man had thus sold himself under sin, God gave His only begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." When 'man had so sold himself under sin, under the curse, God gave His dear Son to redeem him from sin, from the curse, and from all condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hanged on a tree." Galatians 3:13 "He has made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:3, 4

A Clean Universe

To put away sin and plant righteousness in its stead is the mission of Christ to this world. That He might accomplish this, He had to make the awful sacrifice of Himself, the Creator of the universe. "Now once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Hebrews 9:26. By the greatness of the sacrifice we may judge of the enormity of sin, and how abhorrent it is in the sight of God, and also how widely contrary it is to every principle of the government of the King of eternity. To deliver man from its thralldom He spared not His own Son. Rather than see the blight and stain of sin upon the fair face of His universe, God gave up the "Son of His love" to die the cruel death of the accursed tree. John says: "He that commits sin is of the devil; for the devil sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3: 8. The work of the devil is sin; for he says, "He that commits sin is of the devil." Therefore when it is said that the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, it is simply expressing, in other words, that which we quoted from Paul: that Christ appeared to put away sin.

As therefore Christ's mission is to destroy the works of the devil, to put away sin, it follows that as long as there is a vestige of sin remaining His mission is not accomplished. Whatever, therefore, tends to perpetuate sin, tends just so far to delay the accomplishment of the mission of Christ. And if by any means sin were made eternal, the inevitable result would be to nullify and subvert the mission of Christ. Now that is exactly the tendency of the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. The very meaning of the

The State Of The Dead

word” immortal” being “not subject to death,” it follows that if the soul be immortal, it must live eternally, whatever its condition may be; and from this again it follows that when the awful sentence is pronounced, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still,” whatsoever soul it be that shall then be unjust must live so to all eternity, which is simply to make sin eternal, and so to subvert the mission of Christ.

That sin is to be eternal is strenuously maintained by those who believe that the soul is immortal. This is shown positively in the doctrine of the eternal torment of the wicked. In fact, the belief in the eternal torment of the wicked is simply the necessary consequence of the belief in the immortality of the soul. We know= for the word of God says it-that the wicked will be punished. We know likewise, by the same authority, that they will be punished as long as they live (aion-a lifetime). Now if they live eternally, it is evident that they will be in pain eternally. But the word of God says just as plainly that the wicked shall die as it says anything at all about them. “The wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23 “The soul that sinned, it shall die.” Ezekiel 18:4. That word tells us of a time when “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,” shall be heard saying, “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” Revelation 5:13. This scripture can never be fulfilled if the doctrine of eternal suffering be true, or, in other words, if the doctrine of the immortality of the soul be true; for every living intelligence joins in the song of joy and praise. Again, we read of a time when “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall these be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4. If the doctrine of eternal suffering be the truth, it is literally impossible that there can ever come a time when there shall be “no more pain.”

But there stands that faithful word that there is coming a time when there shall be no more pain; there is coming a time when every voice in the universe will ascribe “honor, and glory, and power,” “unto Him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” This is the truth of God; He has given His only begotten Son that it might be accomplished; and we have seen that the mission of the Son is declared to be “to put away sin,” to “destroy the works of the devil.” And the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, in making sin eternal and in immortalizing the works of the devil, would frustrate the purpose of God and subvert the mission of Christ.

The Mission Of Christ

Once more, the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul makes the body only worthless clay, formed into a prison that binds, and fetters, and clogs the free action of the soul, while death is the friendly messenger that bursts the prison bars, and sets free the aspiring soul to seek its native sphere. One of the most influential preachers said of one who had died that that person “is living, and more thoroughly living to-day than any of us who are clogged and hampered and chained down by earthly impediment.” This is simply the expression of the common belief of those who hold to the idea that the soul is immortal. Embodied in metre so that it can be sung, it runs on this wise:

“Why should we start and fear to die?
What terrible worms we mortals are!
Death is the gate to endless joy;
And yet we dread to enter there.”

Now we read in the word of God as follows: “O death, I will be thy plagues” (Hosea 13: 14); and again, we read that “death” “shall be destroyed.” I Corinthians 15:26. Can it be that God is going to visit with plagues and destroy the gate to endless joy? Is He so displeased to have His creatures entering into endless joy that He is determined to destroy the very means by which they enter that blissful state? If the words of this preacher, the language of this hymn, and the doctrine upon which they are founded, be the truth, then the Lord is going to do just the thing that is here pointed out; that is, He is going to visit with plagues and destroy the gate to endless joy.

But this is not all. We read further of Christ: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the Power of death, that is, the devil.” Hebrews 2:14

Granting the claim that death is the gate to endless joy, then from this scripture it follows, just as absolutely as logic can demonstrate, that the devil, having the power of death, is the gate-heeler. And so the Lord is not only going to destroy this “gate to endless joy,” but He is going to destroy him that keeps it!

The State Of The Dead

Nor yet is this all. Granting not only the claim based upon the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, that death is the gate to endless joy, but also that the soul is clogged, and hampered, and imprisoned by its - confinement in the body, and that it is released by death, it follows that if there had never been any death in the world, no soul could have ever been set free, and there never would have been any gate to endless joy. And as it was the devil who brought death into the world, therefore, under that doctrine, to him must be accorded the honor of setting men free from this world and of creating and opening to men the gate of endless joy. But this is the very thing that Christ says that He Himself came to do. He says: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." John 14:6. "I am the Door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." John 10:9. Therefore when the doctrine of the immortality of the soul teaches that death is the gate to endless joy, and the friendly messenger that releases men from this world, it supplants the Savior of the world, and bestows upon Satan the honor that is due to Christ.

And by all this we lay against the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul the legitimate and logical charge that it tends to frustrate the purpose of God, to nullify the mission of Christ, and supplant the Savior of the world. And if anything more is needed to show that between that doctrine and the truth of God there is a difference wide as eternity, it will be found in the following pages.

Christ Our Life

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 6:23 "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin," and "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But when man had sinned, and thus brought himself under the doom of death, then Christ, the only begotten Son of God, presented Himself, and was accepted of God, in man's behalf. God had before pronounced the penalty of death against transgression. And Adam would have died the day he sinned, had not the Son of God interceded in his behalf, and presented Himself in satisfaction of the demands of the broken law of God. But by the love of Christ and the mercy of God, man was given a second probation, a second opportunity to attain to righteousness. Only for the mediation of Christ, the race of man would have ceased the day that Adam sinned. Only for Christ, there never would have lived a man after Adam. So that every man who has ever lived, or who shall ever live, from the sin of Adam to the end of the world, owes that life to the fact that Christ, the Son of God, offered Himself when Adam sinned.

This is shown in the words of Christ: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10. Christ offering Himself in behalf of Adam is the only means by which men have life at all: "I am come that they might have life." But this life is only temporal. It is only extended as an opportunity for man to approve himself worthy of eternal life, that he may show himself worthy of having life more abundantly; for, as Christ said, He is come that they might have life, "and that they might have it more abundantly." The way in which men use the life which is already given, will decide whether, they shall have life more abundantly, or whether they shall have life at all. The man who shows himself abusive of the trust of God, and ungrateful for His favor shown in granting this life, only shows himself unworthy of that which he already has, and much less can he be entrusted "more abundantly" with anything pertaining to life.

In this view is contained the very basic principle of the lesson inculcated in the parable of the unjust steward: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous riches, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Luke 16:10-12. And also in the lesson of the parable of the talents: "Unto every one that has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that has not shall be taken away even that which he has." Matthew 25:29. If men will turn to purposes of iniquity, and transgression, and sin, a life which is committed to them for a time, how can the Lord commit to them this gift for eternity? If this life, which is not their own, they will use simply as an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin, to rebellion, and unfaithfulness to Him who gives it, how shall He give to such immortal life-a life which, not being subject to cessation, may properly be called their own? To do so would be only to subvert His own authority and the principles of His government. Such a thing He will never do. But such as devote this life to the honor of Him who gives it, and to righteousness before Him-to them will be given life "more abundantly," even eternal life, in which to honor and glorify Him; while from all who do not so shall he taken away even that which they have. "Of a truth God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that fears Him, and works righteousness, is accepted with Him." Acts 10:34, 35.

The State Of The Dead

The righteousness which is acceptable with God is the righteousness “which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:22, 23. “He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” Hebrews 5:9. And “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. Christ’s coming to this world was not in vain. He came for a purpose, and that purpose is that those who will believe in Him may not perish, but have eternal life; and as surely as those who believe in Him shall have eternal life, just so surely those who do not believe in Him shall perish. If not, if those who do not believe in Him do not perish, then this record which He has given cannot be true. If by virtue of the immortality of the soul, those who do not believe in Christ live as long as those who do, then where is there any point in these scriptures? We know full well the meaning that is put upon the word “perish” by those who believe in the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul; that is, that it means eternal life in misery. But no such idea is contained in the Scripture. Eternal life is the heritage of those who believe in Christ, and of those alone. Nor will language allow any such meaning to be put upon the word “perish.” That word is defined thus: “To be destroyed; to go to destruction; to pass away; to come to nothing; to be blotted from existence; to die; to lose life.” Every part of this definition can be duplicated time and again from the Scriptures. But no part of this definition can be true if the soul be immortal.

In Psalm 37:10 we read: “For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yes, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.” Again, in Isaiah 41:11, 12, we read a promise of what the Lord will do with those who contend with the “seed of Abraham,” “the friend of God:” “Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded; they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. You shall seek them, and shall not find them, even them that contended with thee; they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of naught.” But to the meek, to those who learn of Christ, it is promised: “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” “The seed of the wicked shall be cut off.” “The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.” Psalm 37:11, 28, 29. All is summed up by the Lord Jesus in one sentence, as follows: “He that believeth on the Son has everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life.” (John 3:36), and again: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you.” John 6:53.

If these scriptures, from the first to the last, do not show that life is obtained only in Christ, then it would be impossible for the Lord Himself to put words together that would show such a thing. If the Lord wanted to tell men that without believing in Christ they could have no life, that without believing in Him they should perish; if He wanted to tell them that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, how would it be possible to tell them so more plainly than He has already told, in the words quoted? Yet in defiance of these plain, positive scriptures, and in direct subversion of them, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which gives to all men eternal life irrespective of Christ, is held by the majority of professed Christians as a veritable article of Christian faith. Why is it that men will not believe the record that God has given on this subject? Why is it that they will not believe that life is given alone through Christ? It is no light thing to disbelieve this. Many seem to think, and will even so express themselves, that it makes no difference particularly whether this be believed or not. But it does make a difference. We state it as the simple truth that not to believe that eternal life for man is in Christ alone is one of the greatest insults that can be offered to the God of heaven.

Please read carefully the following scripture, and see whether we have stated more than the exact truth:

“He that believeth not God has made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.” 1 John 5:10-12.

Here is the plain statement that to believe not a certain “record” is to make God a liar. That record is just as plainly stated to be that the eternal life that is given us “is in the Son” of God, and that “he that has not the Son of God has not life.” Now the doctrine of the immortality of the soul causes men not to believe that record. They who believe the doctrine of the immortality of the soul do not believe that they who have not the Son of God have not life. Therefore the doctrine of the immortality of the soul “has made God a liar, because it causes men to “believe not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God HAS NOT LIFE.” Therefore we say that not to believe that future life is given us in Christ

The State Of The Dead

alone is to insult the God of heaven by making Him “a liar.” It does make a difference how we believe on this question.

Which Will We Believe

Nor is that all; for when the Lord is thus removed from His throne, Satan is put into His place. See here: In the event of man’s sinning;

GOD SAID

“You shall surely die.”

SATAN SAID

“You shall not surely die.”

Which of these told the truth? It is impossible for both to be true. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul teaches that the devil told the truth; for that doctrine teaches that there is no death, and if there be no death, then every man has life, independent of belief in Christ, which, as we have read from the word, makes God a liar. Therefore the doctrine of the immortality of the soul sets God aside as a liar, and exalts Satan as the one who tells the truth, and as the one who is to be believed.

Here we close our investigation of this subject. These evidences certainly show that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is subversive of the truth of God. We have proved by logical deduction from sound Scripture premises that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is subversive of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead; that it is subversive of the doctrine of the coming of the Lord; that it is subversive of the doctrine of the judgment; that it is subversive of the mission of Christ; that it supplants Christ in the honor of opening the way from this world to another, and bestows that honor upon Satan; and, finally, that it puts God aside as a liar, and exalts Satan to His place as the one who tells the truth.

The logical summary of all this is contained in one word—SPIRITUALISM. The immortality of the soul is the foundation of Spiritualism; and through the already prevalent belief of that doctrine, Spiritualism will yet lead the world to the active acceptance of every point which we have charged. Therefore, we pray all to flee this thing, and believe the record that God gave, of His Son. And this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.”

5. Bible Questions and Answers Concerning Man

IN the thoughts of man there are a great many questions which arise concerning himself. Some of these are highly important. So important indeed are they that the Word of God itself has recorded them. Nor is that all. This Word has not only recorded the questions, but it has also recorded the answers to the questions. And when the Word of God asks a question and answers it, then in the answer we have the absolute truth on that question, and there is an end of all dispute. There is left no room for controversy; for - thus said the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord thy God, which teaches thee to profit, which leads thee by the way that you should go.” Isaiah 48:17. Therefore whatever the Lord teaches is profitable teaching. Whether we believe it, or whether we like it or not, makes no difference so far as the teaching is concerned. The teaching is profitable, and everything that conflicts with it is unprofitable. The way the Lord leads is the way that we should go, and to follow any other leading is to go in the way that we should not.

Is Man Mortal Or Immortal?

In the eighth psalm and the fourth verse is this question, “What is man, that You art mindful of him?” Of course there are more ways than one in which this question can be ‘referred to man, but the thing about man upon which we wish now to bring it to bear is that of immortality. What is man?” is he mortal or immortal? We have not far to go for an answer. “Shall mortal man be more just than God?” Job 4:17 “O Lord, You art our God; let not mortal man prevail against You.” 2 Chronicles 14:11, margin. Thus we find

The State Of The Dead

in answer to the question, that the Word of God calls man mortal, and everything that the Bible says directly about immortality is consistent with this answer.

Says this Word in 1 Timothy 1:17 “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.” Here it is shown that immortality is an attribute of God equally with eternity, wisdom, honor, glory, etc. None of these belong to man as he is.

Again, speaking of the appearing of Jesus Christ, the Word says, “In his times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see.” I Timothy 6: 15, 16.

Christ has brought this immortality to light. The purpose and grace of God, says the Word, “is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Timothy 1:10. What the gospel is, is shown in a few words by I Corinthians 15:1-4: “I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you; for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.” Thus, then, in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is summed up the gospel; and “through the gospel” it is said Christ “brought life and immortality to light.” Certainly it was not by dying nor being buried that either life or immortality was brought to light, for both these things were familiar to all men; but to rise again from the dead, and bring with Him a multitude of the dead, who also appeared unto many (Matthew 27:52, 53), that was to bring to light something that had never been seen before; that was to bring life and immortality to light indeed. Therefore it is through the resurrection that Christ has brought immortality to light.

Again, the Scripture says that God will render eternal life “to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality.” Romans 2: 6, 7. Now as immortality is to be sought for, and as God is the only one who has it, and as Christ is the only one who has brought it to light, it follows that immortality must be sought of God through Christ. Even so says the Scripture, “The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” “This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.” Romans 6:23; 1 John 5:11, 12.

Having then sought and found that immortality comes only through Christ, we ask, When is it bestowed upon us as our own? “Behold, I show you a mystery : We shall not all sleep, but we shall all 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, 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. Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Thus the story which the Word of God tells about immortality is this: Man, being mortal, has it not; God has it; Christ has brought it to light through the gospel; man is to seek for it of God, through Christ, and will obtain it at the resurrection of the dead; for then it is that this mortal puts on immortality; then it is that death is swallowed up in victory. This comes “at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,” and the living shall be changed. But when is it that the last trump sounds?-It is when the Lord Jesus comes in his glory. “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” I Thessalonians 4: 16, 17

Immortality is obtained of God, through Christ, at the resurrection of the dead. It is the sound of the last trump that awakes the dead. That trump is sounded at the coming of the Lord. Therefore without the second coming of the Lord Jesus, we shall never receive immortality. For this reason we long for his glorious appearing. We watch, we wait for Him who shall change our “vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;” for “we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Where Do Men Go When They Die?

Another important question concerning man, one which has, no doubt, been asked by every person that ever lived long enough to think at all upon the subject, is, When a man dies, where does he go? What is his condition? etc., etc. This question the Bible asks, “Man dies, and wastes away; yes, man gives up the

The State Of The Dead

ghost, and where is he?" Job 14:10. Answer: "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead." Ecclesiastes 9:3. To good king Josiah God said, "You shall be gathered into thy grave in peace." 2 Kings 22: 20. Of the wicked He also says, "Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb." Job 21: 32. Jacob said, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Genesis 37:35. We shall not multiply texts on this point, but simply show, that this is confirmed by the word of Christ. When He comes to give reward to his people, and when He calls for them, they, all that are dead, are found in the grave: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29. Therefore the Bible answer to this question is plainly that he is in the grave.

But what is his condition there? Let us read a verse from Job again: "Man gives up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up, so man lies down, and rises not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleet." Job 14:10-12. This shows that man, when he dies, is asleep. Again, Job says that if he had died when he was an infant, "now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept; then had I been at rest, with kings and counselors of the earth. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master." Job 3:13-19.

In the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, twenty, five times is the record made of their deaths, "He slept with his fathers."

Not to multiply texts, we again turn to the word of Christ. Lazarus was sick. Jesus and his disciples were some distance away, and Lazarus died. Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus speaks of his death; but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then Jesus said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead." John 11:11-14. Here are the words of Christ: "Lazarus sleeps;" "Lazarus is dead." Therefore the plain word of Christ is that when a man is dead, he is asleep.

Paul says that "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption." Acts 13:36. And Peter says of him, "David is not ascended into the heavens." Acts 2:34. And the reason is that "David slept with his fathers and was buried." 1 Kings 2:10.

Of Stephen it is recorded, "He kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." Acts 7:60. It is certain, therefore, that the Bible plainly teaches that when man dies, he falls asleep. The Word of God plainly teaches the sleep of the dead.

Death is wholly an unconscious sleep, as, in the very nature of the case, it must be when the place of sleep is in the grave. But here is the proof: "The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun." Whatsoever thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you go." Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Psalm 146:3, 4. When men's love, and hatred, and envy, and their very thoughts, have perished, and their memory is gone, there can be nothing else but unconsciousness. And that is precisely what death is, and that is the condition into which men go when they die—a silent, dreamless sleep.

But the Bible story on this subject does not stop here. For "now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." 1 Corinthians 15:20. "And many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection." Matthew 27:52, 53. And as God "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus," so also "them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him;" "for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump."

Then it is that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." Daniel 12:2. Then is the time to which David looked when he fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers: "As for me, I will behold

The State Of The Dead

thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” Psalm 17:15. This is the time to which Job looked when he said, “Till the heavens be so more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.” For it is at the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead that the heavens roll away. “The, heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their, places,” and men cried “to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” Revelation 6:14, 16, 17

Therefore the Bible answer to the Bible question, When man gives up the ghost, where is he? Is this: He is asleep in the grave until the trump of God awakes the dead. Until the voice of the glorious Son of God calls, and all that are in the graves hear his voice. For it is God who gives victory over death, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Reader, this is profitable teaching, for it is the teaching of the Word of God; for “thus said the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord thy God, which teaches thee to profit, which leads thee by the way that you should go.” Isaiah 48: 7. This is the way that the Lord Jesus leads us. Will you follow?

Do The Dead Praise The Lord?

Another question is, Do the dead praise the Lord? Nowadays it is held, as a matter of course, that if a person be righteous, or even professedly so, when he dies he goes to heaven, and joins the angelic hosts in their holy songs of praise to the Creator of all. But in the Scriptures this question is asked, in connection with certain others, in a manner and in a tone which of themselves admit only of a negative answer.

Says the psalmist: “Will You show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? Or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?” Psalm 88:10-12. Here the grave, the place of the dead, is called “the land of forgetfulness.” This is strictly in accord with that which we read under our last question, that “the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.” They are in the land of “forgetfulness.” “Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished” (Ecclesiastes 9:5); and “in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4); and “there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you goes.” Ecclesiastes 9:10. In this respect therefore, no single expression could better describe the place of the dead than does this one, “The land of forgetfulness.” The psalmist also speaks of it as “the dark.” On this Job says, “I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.” Job 10:21, 22. Those that have been long dead David says” dwell in darkness.” Psalm 143:3.

Now it is of those who dwell in this place, the place of the dead, that the question is asked, Do they praise the Lord? And here is the direct answer, “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.” Psalm 115:17. And again: “In death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who shall give You thanks?” Psalm 6:5. These words are the words of God. They are the truth. Therefore the idea that people go to heaven, or anywhere else but this place of the dead, when they die, cannot be the truth. The Lord, who speaks to us in the Bible, made man. He knows what was before us. He knows what will be after us. He knows our thoughts afar off. He it is who says, “The dead know not anything.” He it is who says, “The dead praise not the Lord.” He it is who says that the place of the dead is “the land of forgetfulness.” We implicitly believe this word, for He alone knows. He teaches us to profit; and though we may have to pass through this land of darkness, this valley of the shadow of death, if our trust is in Him, his rod and his staff will comfort us; for He has gone this way before us. He died, and lives again. If our hope is in Him, even though we may have to go to the place of the dead, yet we shall come again from it and live by Him.

When the prophet went to king Hezekiah with the message that he should die and not live, Hezekiah was greatly grieved, and turned his face to the wall and prayed, and said, “I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living.” This, with much more, he said in his prayer, and the Lord sent Isaiah again to the king, saying, “I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.” Then Hezekiah praised the Lord and said, “You has in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for the grave cannot Praise You, death cannot celebrate You; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise You, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth.” See Isaiah 38, throughout.

The State Of The Dead

Take this plain, express statement of the Word of God, "They that go down into the pit cannot hope, for thy truth," and by it test the new theology-probation after death-and its utter worthlessness will be seen at a glance. When a man dies, his opportunity to learn the truth is gone. He is dead. He is gone to the "land of forgetfulness," to the grave, and they that go there cannot hope for the truth of God. If they have not learned it and loved it before they go there, they will never learn it at all. "Now is the accepted time." "Now is the day of salvation." "Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The living, the living it is, not the dead, who praise the Lord.

Therefore the Bible answer to this Bible question is, "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."

If A Man Die, Shall He Live Again?

This question is not one that is asked now so much as it ought to be. The question that is now asked a great deal more than it ought to be is whether man really dies-whether there is really any such thing as death. And as it is in the great majority of cases decided that man does not die, that "there is no death, what seems so is transition," in the view that man never ceases to live it would not be an appropriate question at all to ask, Shall he live again?

But as we have abundantly shown, the Bible considers this subject from the standpoint of the fact that man does die; that when he is dead he is wholly unconscious, and that all prospect of future existence depends upon an affirmative answer, from the Word of God, to the question as to whether he shall live again. In Job 14:14 is written the question to which we have here referred "If a man die, shall he live again?" And in Isaiah 26:19 we have the direct answer to the question, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

The only hope of future life which the Word of God presents is in the resurrection of the dead. This is the hope of the righteous; it is the Christian's hope. Paul, in discussing this subject of the resurrection of the dead, proves first that Christ is risen, and then says, "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." I Corinthians 15:12-14. It is evident that there were some at Corinth, even as there are some now, who professed to believe in Christ, and at the same time believed not in the resurrection of the dead. But Paul settles that at once by saying, "If there be no resurrection of the dead," your faith in Christ is vain. This proves plainly that our hope and faith in Christ meet their fruition only at and by the resurrection of the dead.

This is so important that the Spirit of God, by the apostle, repeats it. Again he says, "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins." Here it is declared that to deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny the resurrection of Christ, is to leave the professed believer yet in his sins; and therefore it subverts the gospel and the salvation of Christ. This is followed by another most important conclusion, and that is, If the dead rise not, "then, they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." It would be impossible to more forcibly show that all hope of future life depends upon the resurrection of the dead. If there be no resurrection of the dead, then the dead are perished. And this is stated, not of the wicked dead, but of the righteous dead; "they also which are fallen asleep in Christ," even these have perished, if there be no resurrection of the dead. In verse 32 this is repeated in another form: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

The hope of life by Christ at the resurrection of the dead, is the hope in which Paul lived, the hope in which he exercised himself, the hope which he preached. When he stood before the council, he said, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Acts 23:6. And afterwards, when he answered his accusers before Felix, he said, "I have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. Let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me while I stood before the council, except it be for this one voice that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day." Acts 24:15-21. Again, when he stood before Agrippa, he said, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I

The State Of The Dead

am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Acts 26:6-8.

Now put these things together: (a) He stood and was judged for the hope of the promise made of God. (b) This was the promise made unto the fathers. (c) Unto this promise the twelve tribes-all Israel-hope to come. (d) For this hope he was accused of the Jews. (e) But he was accused-called in question-of the Jews "touching the resurrection of the dead." (f) Therefore the hope of the promise of God, made unto the fathers, is the hope of the promise of the resurrection of the dead. (g) This is made emphatic by his question to Agrippa, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should -raise the dead?" When Paul was at Athens, "he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection." Acts 17:18.

Therefore it is plainly proved that the hope which God has set before us in Christ and his blessed gospel, is the hope of the resurrection from the dead unto everlasting life and eternal glory. And as this resurrection all depends upon the glorious appearing of our Savior, therefore the second coming of our Savior is inseparably connected with this, the Christian's "blessed hope." Thus said the Lord, "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." Titus 2:11-13.

This is that for which Job looked. He says, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." Job 14:14. This change is at the resurrection; for Paul says, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52. Again says Job, "If I wait, the grave is mine house; I have made my bed in the darkness. And where is now my hope?" Job 17:13-15. Here it is: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not a stranger. My reins within me are consumed with earnest desire for that day." Job 19:25-27, margin.

Time and space would fail us to quote the words of this hope as expressed by David, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel, and Hosea, and Micah, and all the prophets and apostles. We can only cite again the words that this is the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, unto which promise we instantly serving God day and night hope to come. Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? The righteous dead shall live again at the coming of the Lord, and therefore we look and anxiously wait for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing- of the Lord Jesus. Like faithful Job, our reins within us are consumed with earnest desire for that glorious day. And as He assures us "Surely I come quickly," our hearts reply, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

6. Departing and Being with Christ

John Nevin Andrews

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose I want not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you." Philippians 2:21-24.

What did Paul mean by departing? Is it fair to answer this by his words to Timothy: "The time of my departure is at hand." 2 Timothy 4:6. It was his death.

Could he be with Christ by dying? That depends upon the place to which the dead go.

Where do the dead go?

To sheol, or Hades, the one of these names being the Hebrew, and the other the Greek, term to designate the place of the dead.

How do you know that the dead go to sheol or Hades? The Psalmist asks what man there is that can deliver his soul from death and sheol. Psalms 89:48. Jacob, at death, entered sheol. Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31. Korah and his company went down into sheol. Numbers 16:30, 33. Job was to be hid in sheol, and wait there till the resurrection. Job 14:13; 17:13. All the wicked go into sheol. Psalm 9:17; 31:17; 49:14. All mankind go there. Psalm 89:48; Ecclesiastes 9:10. (N. B. These words in our English version are sometimes translated grave, and sometimes hell.)

Have you any other proof that the dead are in Hades? Yes. When the resurrection occurs, all the righteous, being rescued from death and the place of the dead, triumph over both in most exultant language.

The State Of The Dead

1 Corinthians 15:51-55. And at the second resurrection, both death and Hades give up the wicked dead. Revelation. 20:11-15. Paul did, therefore, enter Hades by departing this life.

Did Paul find Christ in Hades?

No, indeed. Christ had been there before Paul, but was not there when Paul entered the silent abode of the dead. We have express statements on this point. Peter says that David spoke of Christ's resurrection when he said, "You will not leave my soul in hell." (Greek, Hades.) And he informs us that at the resurrection of Christ his soul was not left in hell, or Hades. Observe, this is not spoken of his death that his soul was not left in Hades; for then it might be evaded as meaning that his soul should not be suffered to enter Hades at all. But it is spoken of his, resurrection that his soul was not left there. And this proves, beyond dispute, that his soul did enter this abode of the dead, but remained there only till the morning of the third day. Compare Acts 2:25-31; Psalm 16:8-11.

But was not Paul grievously disappointed, on entering the place of the dead, not to meet Jesus there?

There is no reason to believe that he expected to meet Him in Hades. In fact, there is excellent testimony to show that he looked to a very different occasion for the meeting with Christ. But there was no sadness, gloom, nor disappointment, to Paul in Hades. It is a place where there is no knowledge. Ecclesiastes 9:10. Those who enter there have no thoughts. Psalm 146:4.

All is silence, darkness, sleep, rest. The wicked therein are silent in death. Psalms 31:17. The righteous in sheol do not praise God, and do not even remember Him to whom they have given their, lives to honor. Psalm 6:5; Isaiah 38:10-19; Psalm 115:17.

But how sad and gloomy such a prison-house to Paul, and how long and dreary his confinement therein!

To the living the grave may be dark and cold, and the period of waiting may seem long and tedious. But not so to the silent sleeper in his quiet rest. There is no lapse of time to those whose thoughts have perished. There is no gloom to those who "know not anything." Ecclesiastes 9:5. There can be nothing tedious, nor distressing, nor unpleasant to those in Hades. In fact, there can be no time to them at all. It is an atom of time, as the twinkling of an eye. Rather, it is simply a blank. This is proved by facts of frequent occurrence. Men receive blows upon the brain which destroy the power of thought. They remain in this condition sometimes for months. When consciousness is restored, thought begins at the very point where it was suspended.

An officer wounded in battle, and remaining months without a thought, when relieved by surgical operation has arisen in bed and finished the order he was giving when struck down. This shows that to those who have no power of thought time is annihilated. To Stephen, who fell asleep while gazing upon the glory of heaven, it will ever be the same as though, without one moment's delay, he had entered it. Acts 7:55-60. And so of many Christians who have had rapturous views of heaven in the hour of their death. It will never seem to them as though heaven had even disappeared from their view. In winking, we cease to gaze upon that which is before us. It disappears from our view, yet we do not even notice the disappearance of the object. Such is the sleep, of death. To the sleeper, it is an imperceptible atom of time, of which he can take no account.

Have you any evidence that Paul did not expect to be with Christ till the resurrection?

Judge for yourself in the light of such words as the following: "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." 1 Corinthians 15:32. If Paul entered heaven by dying, and by that event was taken to be with Christ where there is fullness of joy, was not this of some advantage to him? Suppose there never should be a resurrection, would not Paul's immortal soul-if lie had one-in the felicity of heaven find something to compensate his cross-bearing life? Indeed, he would, were he to enter Christ's presence at death, even though there were no resurrection. But he plainly indicates that if there were to be no resurrection, there would be no reward; A decisive proof that he knew nothing of the entrance into the heavenly city by the gate of death. In fact, had he entertained such an idea, instead of speaking of immediate death as a sad thing if there were no resurrection beyond it, he would have said, "Courage, brethren, tomorrow we die, and that will usher us into our Lord's presence." His words convey, in every respect, the opposite idea.

Was there not some point of time to which Paul looked for deliverance and reward? Was this the day of death, or of the coming of Jesus?

There is a certain day which he has emphasized very remarkably. It bears the designation in his epistles of "that day." It is thus presented:

The State Of The Dead

1 Thessalonians 5:2, 4: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. But you, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief."

2 Thessalonians 1:10: "When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired-in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, is that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

2 Timothy 1:12: "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

2 Timothy 1:18: "The Lord grant unto him (Onesiphorus) that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day; and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, you know very well."

2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of lily departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

These Scriptures do plainly teach the fact that the advent of Jesus was the time to which Paul looked for the deliverance of the saints, for the gathering of himself and all the others to Christ's presence, and for the placing of the crown upon his own head, and upon the heads of all that really love the appearing of Jesus. He refers to the time of this great reward as "that day." But he marks it over and over in such a manner that we cannot mistake the point of time. It is not the day of his death, but A is the day of the Lord Jesus.

But can you give a text from Paul's writings in which both the time and the manner of the taking of the saints to be with Christ are presented?

The following text is exactly to the point

1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The word "so" signifies "in this manner," or "thus." This text shows with distinctness the time and the manner of meeting the Lord, and being received into His presence. It is indeed a testimony of the same character as that in 2 Thessalonians 2:1, where the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is made the point for the gathering together of Paul and his brethren to him.

There can be no doubt that this was Paul's hope, but can you conform it by the words of the Lord Jesus?

If a direct statement of the Savior will answer, here it is:

John 14:2, 3: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, 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, there you may be also."

Now observe, 1. Jesus was going away personally. 2. While absent, He was to prepare a place for His people. 3. Then He was to come back and receive them 4. That thus they might be where He was. Then it follows that they cannot be with Him till He comes after them. He will not come after them till He has completed the preparation of the place for them. And observe this fact: If they could go to Him before He comes after them, they would find the place unprepared for their reception. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Our Lord has fixed the time and the manner of the saints' being received to be with Christ. It is at His glorious advent.

Then how do you reconcile all these testimonies with the language of Paul, quoted at the head of this article, in which he says, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better?" The reconciliation is not a matter of difficulty. The departure is by death; the being with Christ is by the resurrection. These are two events, and not one and the same thing. "To depart, and to be with Christ which is far better." We may illustrate this by a supposition. We will say that Paul, when at Miletus, being very anxious to see the brethren in Jerusalem, and to find rest from the severe labors of the field he had in the face of bitter opposition so long cultivated, used this language: "Having a desire to depart, and to be with

The State Of The Dead

James at Jerusalem.” No one would misunderstand that language. The departing was one thing; the being with James, another thing at some distance in the future.

Can you illustrate this out of Paul’s language relative to the death and appearing of Jesus?

I can give an illustration that meets the point exactly, and that uses one of the very terms of the disputed text. Here is the passage:

2 Timothy 4:6, 8: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. . . Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

Paul’s “departure” was at hand. This was his violent death by the axe of the executioner. But his reward was laid up for him till the day of Christ’s appearing. The word “henceforth” covers the period between his departure and his being with Christ.

But might not Paul be with Christ before the appearing of Jesus, though he received not his crown till that time?

No. If being with Christ would be any “advantage” to Paul, it follows from his own Him till the words that he could not be with resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15:32. Christ on his own showing, as we have seen, until Christ comes after him. “So shall we ever be with the Lord.” Besides, this text relative to the crown must not be set aside too summarily. A crown implies a throne, a kingdom, and a reign. Paul will not have these things withheld after entering his Lord’s presence. But the time to reward the saints, small and great, does not come till after the sounding of the seventh angel. Revelation 11:15-19. We say, therefore, that 2 Timothy 4:6-8, is a good illustration of Philippians 1:23.

But why should Paul speak of these two in death and the entrance into Christ’s presence so closely connected a manner if they are really separated by a long space of time?

Several reasons may be assigned:-

The Scriptures often speak of events widely separated in such a manner that the careless reader would suppose them one and the same thing; or at least that they were both to transpire at the same point, or very near to each other.

Hebrews 9:27: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” But with most men there is a very long space between. Revelation 2:10: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

James 1:12: “Blessed is the man that endures temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him.” But we do know from plain testimony that the crown is not given as soon as man falls in death, but when he rises in the resurrection of the just. 2 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 5:4. As a further illustration of the fact that there is need of care in reading the Bible, that we may give everything its proper place, take this text:

Luke 2:39: “And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.” Now, who would suppose that between this performance of all things required by the law when our Lord was eight days of age (see verse 21), and their return into Nazareth, occurred the flight into Egypt? Yet such was the case. Matthew 2. It appears that they returned into Bethlehem, and were there found of the wise men. Then, at the warning of God, Joseph fled into Egypt, and stayed till Herod’s death, then returning out of Egypt he was afraid to stop in Bethlehem, and so retired to his old home in Nazareth. But all these things Luke passes over.

A second reason for Paul’s manner of expression is found in the fact that his death would close his probation, and make it certain that he should be with Christ when Christ comes after His saints.

A third reason is that to him it would be the same Wing as though death (lid usher him into Christ’s presence. For there would not be even a moment to him between departing and being with Christ.

Paul was in a strait betwixt two. He was now an aged man, and a prisoner of Jesus Christ. He had borne the burden in the heat of the day. Being bowed to the earth with burdens, cares, toils, labors, and sufferings, he felt that for himself it was better to die; but when he saw the flock of God contending with Satan, and wrestling for life, he felt that it was needful that he should live yet for a season for their furtherance and joy of faith.

Paul rests in the silence of Hades. He is not yet with Christ. But Christ has been in Hades, and when He left it, took away the key. Acts 2:31; Revelation 1:18. If the dead should not rise, Paul would have no advantage from all his labor. But Christ shall call, and Paul shall answer. He shall stand up an immortal being. He shall ascend to meet the Lord in the air. The crown shall be placed on his head. And “so” shall he “ever be with the Lord.”

The State Of The Dead

The Return Of The Spirit To God

“Then shall the dust return unto the earth as it was.
And the spirit unto God who gave it.” Ecclesiastes 12:7.

This text is the exact counterpart of Genesis 2:7: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

One text teaches how man was first formed. The other text makes known the process of his dissolution. What God did in creating, death undoes by dissolving. How did death get the power to step in and undo the Creator’s work? Man forfeited his right to live by sinning against God. Death entered by sin. Romans 5:12. Death, then, has an evil parentage. In fact, it has a bad character in the book of God; it is not a friend, but an enemy; and so serious and formidable a foe is it that its destruction is made the subject of special promise to the people of God. 1 Corinthians 15:26. The power of death Satan controlled. Hebrews 2:14. Death came from the devil just as life came from God. God gave to man life, and instructed him that if he would obey Him, he should continue to live. Genesis 2. The devil, telling Eve that she should by sinning be introduced to a higher life, brought death upon our race. Milton’s idea that death is the child of sin and Satan is strictly true.

But many at the present time believe death to be the gate to endless joys! Death, as they imagine, is the door whereby the Christian enters heaven! By what means was this door created? By man’s rebellion against God. Who was the chief agent in promoting this transaction? The devil! What does Jesus call him because of this work? A murderer. John 8:44. If death is the door of heaven, Satan has acted the part of doorkeeper of heaven, for he has had the power of death.

One of the principal proofs that men reach heaven by dying, is found in our text which is so often quoted: “The spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” Does this prove that death ushers men to heaven? Please consider before you answer. If so, please observe that this text is not descriptive of the case of the righteous only; it is spoken of death as the common lot of man. Then we get all men into heaven by dying, whatever may become of them afterward. Can it be true that every wicked man is to enter the gates of the holy city when he dies? See Revelation. 21:27; 22:14, 15.

But does not this text really teach the entrance of the righteous into heaven at death? Not unless it does that of the wicked also; for the text is descriptive of the common portion of mankind. The infirmities of old age are first described, and then the dissolution of man in death. The fact is, Solomon is admonishing the young men to attend to the service of God before these infirmities come in which lead to final dissolution. If it were only one class spoken of, it would be rather the wicked than the righteous; for Solomon would not have a young man grow up to these infirmities, and consequent dissolution, unprepared.

It is the unbuilding of the man after the infirmities of old age have worn out all his strength, that Solomon describes; it is not his translation to heaven. The Lord God formed the man out of the dust of the ground. Death causes that dust to return to the earth as it was before it formed the man. If God does the first work, it is not God that destroys it. No; indeed. An enemy is the doer of all this.

“The spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” There is a record of the giving of the spirit by God. When He had formed the man from the dust, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Now when death dissolves the man, this very thing which God gave to man, returns. What comes from God returns to God, just as what comes from earth returns to earth. Then what better proof can we have that men are happy with God when they die? Who can deny a blissful existence to the spirits of men in the presence of God? And what will you do now with all the texts that you adduce to show that in death there is no remembrance of God; that the thoughts of men perish in death; that they sleep in silence till the heavens pass away; that they are to be satisfied when they wake in Christ’s likeness; and that if there were no resurrection, there would be no advantage obtained, even by faithful Paul? Do not set these ideas aside too hastily; they are all ideas of men inspired of God. See Psalm 6: 5; Isaiah 38:18, 19; Psalm 146:4; Job 14:12, 13; Psalm 17:15; 1 Corinthians 15:32.

But if the spirit goes back to God, must it not be happy in His presence? And must it not know infinitely more than while the man lived? Those who ask such questions overlook one point in the text, and that point is the key to the whole subject. That which goes to God once called from Him. You infer that in returning to God the spirit enters upon a blissful existence in His presence. Have you well considered the point? It exists in God’s presence after it has returned, with just as conscious an existence as it had before it

The State Of The Dead

came from Him. No more goes back than came. It is no more exalted when it leaves man to go back to God than when it left God to come to man.

Did the spirits of the dead once live with God, then leave Him and come and live with men, and then return to live again with God? It would be very absurd to affirm it. Somebody ought to remember something about living once in the presence of God before living in this world of sorrows. Why not some one recollect about this?

But if that be so, how much better to have allowed us to stay in heaven when we were there, than to send us into this world of sorrow, pollution, and crime. To be sure, if this text be rightly expounded by the popular interpretation, the just all get back to heaven when they die; but even then how much better is dissolution than creation? How much more beneficent the work of Satan ill introducing death, which returns us all to heaven, than the work of the Creator which took our happy spirits all out of heaven to live in sorrow, sin, and pain!

The reader will see that there is just as much of blissful existence for the spirit after this life as before it. What came from God to enable the man to live, returns to God when he ceases to live.

There has been one grand act of the Creator in which He bestowed that upon man which at death he takes from him. God gave to Adam, when He formed him, the breath of life, and man, thus formed, became a living soul. The record says God breathed this into man's nostrils. This was what gave Adam life. Elihu tells us that "the breath of the Almighty" gave to him "life;" i.e., by giving it to the common father of mankind. Job 33:4.

What God gave to Adam was not an angel of glory to dwell in his body formed of dust. If it had been, what a misfortune to that heavenly being! No; it was simply "life." Having made the man, God gave him life. When man had forfeited his right to live, God told him he must return to the ground out of which he was taken. Genesis 3. And so when Adam closed his eyes in death, the great Creator took again to His own keeping that life which Adam gave up. God designs that men shall live again. He holds all in His hand till the hour shall arrive to give them life the second time. Jesus said that He laid down His life that He might take again John 10; and so when dying, spirit, or life, to His Father's hands.

Adam had his life from God. We have ours from Adam. Adam forfeited his right to live, or God would never have taken from him that breath of life by which he was made alive. That being taken from him, he had just as much life as he had before it was given him, which was none at all. That which God breathed into his nostrils being taken from him by the Author of his existence, has just as much thought and knowledge as before being given to Adam, which was no knowledge at all.

He did no put within Adam a living, conscious, organized being from glory, but the man being organized out of dust, God put the principle of life into him, i.e., He made him alive.

Our life is from Adam. It is not immortal life. The facts are too palpable to believe thus of ourselves. Life is transmitted from parents to children. What vast multitudes of living beings perish without ever seeing the light, i.e., without ever being born. Yet they had life. And so life exists in that which precedes embryonic existence. But in all this there is no immortality. We cannot take from the first Adam what he had not to give. Nor can we find in death, which is the fruit of sin, the door back into that paradise from which sin caused us to be expelled. But, thank God, the second Adam can give us a life that shall never end. "For as the Father has life in Himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in Himself." John 5:26. Death cannot convey us to the presence of God; but the resurrection shall show us the path of life, and "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Shall Our Earth Burn Eternally?

By no means. The fire shall melt it. Every part of it shall be subjected to the refining heat. The fire shall devour the earth; but its elements shall all remain. When it has answered the great purpose of furnishing the fiery oven, or furnace of fire where the wicked shall receive their dreadful doom, the second death, it shall, like Sodom, be reduced to ashes by the eternal fire, and cease longer to burn. Then by the power of the great Anther of its existence, it shall be re-created. New heavens and new earth shall exist, formed out of the elements of the old thus purged of sin and sinners, and therein shall the righteous have the promise fulfilled that they shall be recompensed in the earth. 2 Peter 3:10-13; Malachi 4:1.

John Nevin Andrews

The State Of The Dead

7. The Rich Man and Lazarus

IN the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) mention is made of "Abraham's bosom." Singularly enough, this is the only instance where such a place is referred to in the Scriptures. We say place because the statement that "the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," leaves no room for doubt that the latter was a locality. Nor is this all. The familiar manner in which the Savior speaks of "Abraham's bosom" more than suggests that its existence and location were well understood by the average Hebrew of His time. It is, therefore, to the history of Jewish opinions at the date of the first advent that we naturally turn in the search for light as to the meaning of the term "Abraham's bosom."

Before doing so, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus should be scanned closely in order that we may gather there from the most prominent features of the place or places about which our Lord was talking, A careful reading of the parable will bring out the following ideas:

- (1) Abraham's bosom is a place to which the righteous are taken at death. Verses 19-22.
- (2) The wicked go to hell at death. Verse 23.
- (3) Hell and Abraham's bosom are so near to each other that the inhabitants of these places can converse together without difficulty. Verse 24.
- (4) In hell, flames are employed as a means of tormenting the damned.
- (5) The lost in hell have tongues, eyes, fingers, etc.
- (6) Between hell and Abraham's bosom there is a great gulf which cannot be crossed either by the just or the unjust. Verse 26.
- (7) The scene of the parable is located this side of the judgment, since the brethren of the rich man were still living on the earth, and still on probation, as otherwise there would be no force in the remark of Abraham that they had Moses and the prophets, and if they would not hear them they would not be persuaded though one should rise from the dead. Verses 27-31.

This much for the salient points of the record respecting the death and destiny of the wealthy sinner and the pious beggar. The next thing in order is that of finding in the writings of those who lived at or about the time of Christ mention of a place which, in its material aspects, will answer to the one for which we are seeking.

Flavius Josephus, the justly celebrated historian of the Jewish people, lived and wrote in the first century of the Christian era. A priest by birth and a Pharisee by profession, he was eminently qualified to set forth accurately the peculiar views of both his sect and the nation at large. Below we give from Whiston's edition of his works extracts from his discourse on Hades:

"1. Hades is a place in the world not regularly finished, a subterraneous region wherein the light of this world does not shine; from which circumstance, that in this region the light does not shine, it cannot be but there must be in it perpetual darkness. The region is allotted as a place of custody for souls, in which angels are appointed as guardians to them, who distribute to them temporary Punishments agreeable to every one's behavior and manners.

"2. In this region there is a certain place set apart as a lake of unquenchable fire, where into we suppose no one has hitherto been cast; but is prepared for a day afore determined by God, in which one righteous sentence shall deservedly be passed upon all men; when the unjust and those that have been disobedient to God, and have given honor to such idols as have been the vain operations of the hands of men, as to God Himself, shall be adjudged to this everlasting Punishment, as having been the causes of defilement; while the just shall obtain an incorruptible and never-fading kingdom. These are now indeed confined in Hades, but not in the same place wherein the just are confined.

"3. For there is one descent into this region, at whose gate, when those pass through that are conducted down by the angels appointed over souls, they do not go the same way; but the just are guided to the right hand, and are led with hymns sung by the angels appointed over that place unto a region of light, in which the just have dwelt from the beginning of the world; not constrained by necessity, but ever enjoying the prospect of the good things they see, and rejoicing in the expectation of those new enjoyments which will be peculiar to every one of them, and esteeming those things beyond what we have here; with whom there is no place of toil, no burning heat, no piercing cold, nor are any briars there.; but the countenance of the fathers, and of the just, which they see always smile upon them, while they wait for the

The State Of The Dead

rest and eternal new life in heaven, which is to succeed this region. This place we, call the Bosom of Abraham.

“Put as to the unjust, they are dragged by force to the left hand by the angels allotted for punishment, no longer going with a good will, but as prisoners driven by violence; to whom are sent the angels appointed over them to reproach them and threaten them with their terrible looks, and to thrust them still downwards. Now, those angels that are set over these souls, drag them into the neighborhood of hell itself; who, when they are hard by it, continually hear the noise of it, and do not stand clear of the hot vapor itself; but when they have a near view of this spectacle, as of a terrible and exceeding great prospect of fire, they are struck with a fearful expectation of a future judgment, and in effect punished thereby; and not only so, but where they see the place (or choir) of the fathers and of the just, even hereby are they punished ; for a chaos deep and large is fixed between them; insomuch that a just man that has compassion upon them cannot be admitted, nor can one that is unjust, if he were bold enough to attempt it, pass over it.”

The reader cannot fail to recognize in the Hades of Josephus the locality to which our Lord refers in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The points of identity are too numerous and striking to admit of question, First, both were places where the spirits of the just and the unjust went at the time of their demise. Secondly, in the Hades of Josephus, as well as in the locality to which Christ refers, there was a place called hell, into which the wicked were thrust at death and tormented with fire. Thirdly, both Christ and Josephus make mention of a place which they call Abraham’s bosom, and to which the just are conveyed by the angels when they leave this world. Fourthly, the hell and Abraham’s bosom of the parable, like those of the Jewish historian, were separated by an impassable gulf. Fifthly, according to both Christ and Josephus, that gulf was so narrow that the just and the unjust could both see and converse with each other from their respective localities, and yet it was impassable. Sixthly, the characters of the parable, and those of the Jewish essayist, possess eyes, ears, etc., or such organs as belong to them in this life. Seventhly, the Hades of Josephus, like the hell and Abraham’s bosom alluded to in the parable, existed at the time when Christ was on this earth.

Other points of resemblance between the Pharisaic theory respecting the region allotted to the spirits of the dead, and the one mentioned in the parable as devoted to a similar purpose, might be developed were it necessary; but those already presented are sufficient for our present purpose. In not a single essential particular does the place where Dives and Lazarus went at death differ from the abode of the dead as described by Josephus. It is true that the description of the latter is fuller than that of the parable, but the historian in his more ample account brings out nothing which is incompatible with the record given by the parabolist. Indeed, what he says seems to supplement the statements of the latter in such a way as to give a more detailed view of the subject. It is futile to argue that the Jewish historian built his theory upon that of Christ, since he simply records an opinion respecting the intermediate state which the Pharisees entertained long before the commencement of the Christian era.”

The Jews at the time of the first advent had a parable of their own almost identical with that employed by the Savior. “There was a rich man,” etc. That this is only a parable and not a real history of what was actually done, is evident, (1) because we find this very parable in the Gemara Babylonicum,” whence it is cited by Mr. Sherringham in his “Joma.” Whitby’s Commentary on Luke 16:19. (2) “Dr. Lightfoot and others have shown that the Jews in their ‘Gemara’ have a parable much to the same purpose.” Doddridge, as quoted in Emphatic Diaglott in note on Luke 16:19. See supplement to “Life Only in Christ.” If, as claimed above by Lightfoot and others, the Jews have in their Babylonian Talmud a parable substantially the same as that of the rich man and Lazarus, the accuracy of the “Discourse Concerning Hades,” by Josephus, as given on a former page, is fully confirmed.

The unavoidable conclusion is, therefore, that the-Lord drew the materials for the construction of His parable from the theory of a sect which was very influential in His day, and some of the members of which He was addressing at the time in question. Such a conclusion explains two things which otherwise could not be accounted for: First the use by Him of the term “Abraham’s bosom” in a manner to show that it was one with which all were acquainted, even though it is not found in the Scriptures; and, secondly, because His references to the place so styled are so meager that they could not have been understood by the people had not they possessed more knowledge on that subject than the parable imparted.

Having reached the decision that the Master formulated His parable in such a manner that it agrees exactly with the Pharisaic notion of the state of the dead current in His day; our next task is that of determining its precise value as a basis for Christian doctrine. Shall we, as some are in the habit of doing, look upon it as a veritable record of things which actually took place, or shall we regard it merely as a parable designed to emphasize a single point by the use of auxiliaries which are not necessarily true in fact?

The State Of The Dead

Before deciding which course to pursue, we would do well to consider the consequences that would flow from an endorsement of the parable as a history of literal events that actually transpired. If Lazarus did really go at death to Abraham's bosom, then there must be such a place as the one just mentioned; but as the Bible does not elsewhere refer to such a locality, the men to whom Christ was talking when He uttered the parable must have understood Him to refer to the only place with which they were acquainted' that was styled Abraham's bosom, i.e., the place so named by the Pharisees. In the absence of any additional light upon the subject, we are shut up to the same conclusion as were the men whom Jesus addressed; in other words, we are forced to decide that the Abraham's bosom of the parable was identical with that in which the Pharisees believed.

Are we ready for such a result? Is it true as a matter of fact that there is now, or ever was, a vast cavern in the bowels of this earth, where the spirits of the wicked and the righteous are confined? Is the gateway to that place a cave, nobody knows where, through which the spirits of the good and the bad are carried at death by, the angels?

Are hell and the home of the redeemed situated in that cavern? And are they separated only by a gulf so narrow that the inhabitants of one place can see and converse with those of the other place? Was the rich man thrust into the hell in question? And did the conversation between him and Abraham, as related, actually take place? Is it true that disembodied spirits, which are supposed to be lighter than the most rarefied gases known to science, possess eyes, fingers, tongues, etc.? Is it possible that the immaterial tongue of a ghost can be affected by literal fire? Would literal water cool the parched tongue of the rich man if applied by the finger of the shadowy Lazarus? If not, did the rich man, who must have been tolerably shrewd when in-this world, lose his wits when he entered the spirit land? But enough; the absurdities that would follow were we to decide that the hell and Abraham's bosom of the Pharisees were actual localities to which the rich man and Lazarus went at death, doing and saying what is attributed to them, are so great and so numerous that they would stagger even the most credulous.

If the reader would examine still further into the difficulties which must beset him who insists that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was a transcript of actual events, let him picture before his mind, if he can, the condition of the saints, some of whom have been shut up in Abraham's bosom from Adam's day to our time. There they have been for six thousand years in a place where there is neither sun, nor stars, nor sky, nor clouds, nor trees, nor flowers, nor green grass, nor running streams, nor indeed any of those things which make up the sum of all that is delightful to us as we are now constituted. Nay, more; let him imagine, if he can, how it is possible for the husbands or wives, the fathers or mothers, or the brothers or sisters, of those who are suffering the torments of hell to be supremely happy while they hear the agonizing shrieks and groans of those whom they love, and see the terrors of their surroundings: Could the great God devise no better plan than this? Could He not find in all the universe a more fitting home for those whose joys He delights to multiply? Let him answer in the negative whose very soul does not revolt at the thought of taking up its abode within sight of the lurid flames of hell, and within earshot of the wails and moans and horrid blasphemies of its occupants.

Believing that we have successfully controverted the popular view that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is a plain, straightforward statement of transactions which really have occurred, we are satisfied that we would not perform our whole duty should we fail to offer an exegesis better than the one which has been overturned.

The following is the view of the subject which we present for the consideration of the candid reader: 1. The parable was nothing more or less than an *argumentum ad hominem* addressed to the Pharisees, and framed upon their conceptions of the future life. 2. The objective point of the parable in the hands of Christ was not to prove that the Pharisaic idea of the state of the dead was sound, but rather that their estimate of riches was false.

Before proceeding further, it may be advisable to define what is meant by an *argumentum ad hominem*. The following from Archbishop Whately is in point:

"The *argumentum ad hominem* is addressed to past peculiar circumstances, character, avowed opinions, conduct of the individual, and therefore has reference the him only, and does not bear' directly and absolutely real question as the *argumentum ad rem* does. It appears, then (to speak rather more technically), that in the *argumentum ad hominem* the conclusion which actually established, is not the absolute and general one in question but relative and particular; viz., not that such and such is the fact, but that this man is bound to admit it, in conformity, to his principles of reasoning, or in consistency with his own conduct, situation, etc. Such a conclusion it is often both allowable and necessary to establish in order

The State Of The Dead

to silence those whose weakness and prejudices would not allow them to assign to it its due weight. It is thus that our Lord on many occasions silences the cavils of the Jews." - Elements of Logic, Pages 170-171.

The foregoing is so clear that nothing needs to be added in regard to the nature of the argument in question.

The next step to be taken is that of establishing that proposition that the objective point of the parable the Pharisaic idea of riches was untenable.

The first portion of Luke 16 is devoted to the parable of the unjust steward. That parable inculcated the doctrine that it is the duty of men to glorify God in a proper use of it closes with the words, "You cannot serve God and mammon." In verse 14 we read "The Pharisees also, who were covetous heard all these things and they derided Him." To be covetous is to overestimate the value of money, and to hold it with too much grasp. The Pharisees were offended because the Master revealed the plague spot of their hearts. The Savior, knowing the danger of this love of gold, wishes to correct their error, and so He adds, in verse 15, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." These words were conclusive as regards His view of the proper uses of wealth, but the Pharisees cared little about His personal opinions unsupported by what were to them unanswerable arguments. The Savior knew this, and, proposing to confound them out of their own mouths, He propounded the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Verses 19-31. The parable begins with these words:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores."

You will observe that in the persons of the rich man and Lazarus we have the extremes of wealth and poverty. The one was clothed in "purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day;" the other was covered with sores, and fed by the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. The parable sent the rich man at death to hell, and Lazarus to Abraham's bosom, thus emphatically condemning the covetousness of the Pharisees. What did the Pharisees do under the circumstances? What could they do but remain silent, as the absence from the record of any reply from them would seem to intimate that they did. They could not safely go so far in the presence of the crowd as to deny that a poor man could be saved, and that a rich man might be lost, and, these things admitted, their estimate of riches was shown to be false; since, if a man's property, whether much or little, was not to be taken into account, when deciding upon his standing before Heaven, then riches could be of value only when employed to the glory of God.

With a masterly art which compels the most unbounded admiration Jesus silenced His jeering enemies by an illustration that rendered their folly so manifest that the weakest mind could not mistake its true nature. In the use of a parable constructed upon their accepted theory respecting the, place and condition of the dead, He rendered it impossible for them to take exception to the auxiliaries of that parable, thus holding them to the logic of its teaching, and preventing them from throwing dust into the eyes of the multitude by denying that what He said about hell and Abraham's bosom was according to their views of those places.

From beginning to end the parable presents a contrast between the future condition of a godless rich man and a devoted poor man. There is not one word in it designed either to refute or support the theory of consciousness in death. If the Savior believed in, that consciousness, it was not necessary that He should emphasize that conviction there. If He disbelieved in that consciousness, the occasion did not afford a proper time or place for the enunciation of His views on that point. What He wished just then was to confound once and forever the Pharisees, who were covetous and held riches in too high estimation. This He did in the use of a parable which, though expressing their opinions of the condition of things into which spirits enter at death, was not necessarily true as a matter of history.

To the objection that this view would represent the Lord as guilty of distorting the facts in the case, I reply that such a charge is utterly destitute of force. The Scriptures speak of the trees, hills, and mountains singing and clapping their hands (Isaiah 55:12), of the blood of Abel as crying from the ground (Genesis 4: 10), of the dead conversing, etc. (Isaiah 14:9-11), when, as all understand, these things never actually occurred. No man takes exception to this procedure, for the reason that such things are allowable in metaphorical writings. The principle involved in such a use of metaphors is this: By common consent one who employs the figure of speech known as personification, commits no impropriety in making inanimate things talk and reason, since all understand that he is permitted to do so by common usage. The same law holds good in the construction of apologues and parables. Jotham, for example, in the apologue by which he sought to illustrate the unjust dealings of the men of Shechem, declares that the trees undertook to

The State Of The Dead

choose a king to reign over them, and gives verbatim the discussion as it took place between them. Judges 9. Every child knows that the things in question never transpired. Nevertheless, no one would think of charging Jotham with falsehood, simply because he acted in harmony with the laws which govern in the construction of apologues and parables; namely, that in framing them one is at liberty to speak of things which are not as though they were. Insist that the auxiliaries of a parable must present nothing but what is or has been literally true, and you have destroyed that flexibility which renders the parabolic superior in some respects to every other method of illustrating truth. Take into account the fact that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was not only a parable, but also an argumentum ad hominem addressed to the Pharisees and constructed upon their theory of the future life and the course pursued by the Savior in the case in hand is most fully vindicated. In such an argument all that could be required was that He should state nothing which might not have been true according to the Pharisaic idea of Hades. Since, therefore, His assertion that the rich man and Lazarus went respectively to hell and Abraham's bosom at death was perfectly consonant with the Pharisaic notion of those places, Christ kept wholly within the limits of the line of argument which He saw fit to adopt when He framed the parable as He did.

The next thing to be considered is the question whether the Savior ever did on any other occasion employ the argumentum ad hominem in the inculcation of truth. If He did so, that fact would furnish a strong presumption in favor of the theory which we advance concerning the arable under investigation. In the quotation already given from Archbishop Whately, the latter says, "It is thus [i.e., in the use of the argumentum ad hominem] that our Lord -on many occasions silences the cavils of the Jews." Three illustrations of the practice of Christ in the particular in question must suffice for the present. Take, if you please, the woman who was healed on the Sabbath day. Luke 13:15, 16. The Jews alleged that in performing this miracle Christ had broken the Sabbath. He does not stop to frame an independent argument in defense of His own action, but replies to them on this wise: "The Lord then answered him and said, You hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" The point which He makes is this:

Each one of you looses his ox or his ass and leads him to water on the Sabbath day. In doing that you justify My act in healing this woman, since it was more important that she should be healed than it was that your ox or your ass should be watered. The reader will not fail to discover that this was an argument based upon the practice and faith of Christ's critics, and therefore an argumentum ad hominem. The healing of the dropsical man (Luke 14:1-5) furnishes another case in point. There the Savior defended His miracle on the ground that His opponents could not complain of His act since they would pull an ox or an ass out of a pit on the Sabbath day.

One more citation and we must pass from this branch of the subject. The Pharisees declared that Christ cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub. Replying to them, He said. "And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." Matthew 12: 27, 28. Right here I submit that the children (disciples) of the wicked and vindictive Pharisees were not in reality able to cast out devils. This granted, the Savior planted His argumentum ad hominem upon a claim of His adversaries which had no foundation in fact. Here we have a case precisely parallel with that of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, i.e., a case in which He silenced His antagonists by quoting against them certain of their opinions which He knew were unsound in reality. In the matter of casting out devils, He employed the fallacious conception of the Pharisees respecting the ability of their disciples to exorcise demons. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus He built His argument upon the mistaken views of the same class respecting the state of the dead, hell, and Abraham's bosom. To reason that Christ would not be justified in framing an argumentum ad hominem upon the erroneous conceptions of His enemies, would be not only to repudiate what He actually did, but also to ignore the very principles which by common consent govern in the use of such an argument.

In the first portion of this article, we have shown that were we to insist that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus must be regarded as a narration of events that actually transpired, it would be a virtual endorsement of the crude and deceptive tenets of the Pharisees concerning a gloomy cavern in the bowels of this earth where are located hell and Abraham's bosom, and where the just and the unjust of all ages are confined. If the reader would escape from the necessity of indorsing such a dismal conception of the place where God confines both the righteous and the wicked, he has but to agree with the writer that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus was framed in the form of an argumentum ad hominem based upon Pharisaic conceptions of the condition of the dead without regard to the soundness of those conceptions. Were it

The State Of The Dead

suggested that by adopting the view which I have set forth in these pages the parable of the rich man and Lazarus would be lost to those who insist that the souls of men are conscious in death, I reply (1) that if the theory is supported by plain and direct statements of the Scriptures, it needs not the aid of the parable in question; (2) that if it is not supported by clear and explicit declarations of the Word of God, it ought to fall to the ground, since, as all scholars admit, parables should never be made the sole foundation of an argument in matters of doctrine and duty.

To all who are willing to yield their preconceived opinions concerning the state of the dead, to the explicit declarations of the Scriptures, the following propositions, accompanied by suitable references, are submitted.

(1) The dead sleep. Deuteronomy 31:16; 1 Kings 2:10; Job 14:12; Matthew 27:52, 53; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 18, 20, 51; 1 Thessalonians 4:13; 5:10.

(2) The dead are unconscious. Job 14:21; Psalms 6:5; 88:12; 115:17; 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Isaiah 26:13, 19.

8. Tormented Forever And Ever

Testing the Unholy

Nothing of an impure, unholy, or defiling character can ever ascend into the hill of the Lord or stand in His holy place. Nothing, ever enter the presence of Deity, for “Our God is a consuming fire,” and the unholy that would dare to approach unto that which is so holy must immediately be consumed. Nadab and Abihu, the two young priests of Israel who attempted to minister before the Lord while they were drunken, added to their sin by attempting to offer “strange fire” before the Lord, but their unholy action and their unholy condition demanded retribution. They had come too near the Holy to escape, so “there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them.”

We read of the righteous that finally they are made to “stand upon the sea of glass mingled with fire.” God will thus demonstrate before all worlds that they are God-like in character, and therefore cannot be consumed. The fire cannot destroy that which bears the impress of Deity, and as the righteous have been sealed with the seal of the living God, they are thus prepared to abide forever in the presence of Him who is a “consuming fire.” With this demonstration in mind God places them on the sea of fire, but instead of being consumed, they strike the harps of God and sing, “Great and marvelous are Thy works Lord God Almighty.” Revelation 15:1-3,

The wicked will also be subjected to a testing by fire—a testing that will show to all the universe that God’s estimate of their character is correct. The result of that testing is told by the prophet in language the most fearfully solemn that can be found in all the book of God.

He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receives the mark of his name. Revelation 14:10, 11.

And the devil that deceived them was, cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever. Revelation 20:10. See also Revelation. 19:3.

No passages in all the Bible express the fearful fate of the wicked in stronger terms than those quoted above. They speak of fearful punishment to the great arch rebel and to those who deny the last message of God’s mercy. The heart shudders to realize the sinner’s fearful doom. And yet we do not believe that these texts teach the endless, conscious misery of the unsaved; rather, they teach the contrary when rightly understood.

One reason why we do not so believe is that the theory of endless misery is contrary to the general teaching the Bible, contrary to what God has revealed concerning man’s nature, and to specific and numerous texts which declare that “the wages of sin is death,” “the soul that sins it shall die,” and many

The State Of The Dead

other expressions of the same import in both the Old and the New Testaments. Certainly these many plain, positive texts, in connection with other reasons, ought to decide the doctrine that the wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23. As God's word is truth and no one text disagrees or is out of harmony with any other, therefore Revelation. 14:10, 11, and 20:10 must agree with Obadiah 1:16; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Romans 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 1: 9, and others. The few and obscure expressions are certainly in harmony with the many plain, positive, unambiguous statements, which no fallacy can set aside, and they should be so understood.

The Word "Torment"

Our idea of "torment" is not at all sustained by the Greek word here so translated. Dr. Young defines the word as meaning, "a trial, testing, torment." In every case the idea of torment is placed the most distant, and trial or test is made the most prominent.

"Torment" and "tormented," as appearing in this passage, both represent the Greek word *basanos*, which is defined in its various forms by "Baxter's Analytical Greek Lexicon" as follows:

Basanos, properly lapis Lydius, a species of stone from Lydia, which, being applied to metals, was thought to indicate any alloy which might be mixed with them, and therefore used in the trial of metals; hence examination of a person, especially by torture, in New Testament torture, torment, severe pain. Matthew 4: 24; Luke 16:23, 28.

Basanizo, properly to apply the lapis Lydius, or touchstone; by metonymy, to examine, scrutinize, try, either by words or torture; in New Testament to afflict, torment; passive, to be afflicted, tormented, pained by diseases (Matthew 8 : 6, 29, et al.), to be tossed, agitated as by the waves (Matthew 14:24).

Basanismos, properly examination by the lapis Lydius, or by torture; torment, torture. Revelation 9:5; 14:11; 18: 7, 10, 15.

Says the standard lexicon of Liddell and Scott:

Basanos, the touchstone, Latin lapis Lydius, a dark-colored stone on which pure gold, when rubbed, leaves a peculiar mark. 2. The use of this as a test; generally, a test, trial whether a thing be genuine, solid or real. 3. Inquiry by torture; tormenting labor, torture of disease. Matthew 4:24.

Basanizo, to rub upon the touchstone; hence, of things, to put to the test, prove, to investigate scientifically. 2. Of persons, to examine closely, cross-question; to question by applying torture, to torture, rack.

It will be seen from the above definitions that the meaning of the term is to test or try, by words or torture; for the idea of torment, or of causing pain, is not a necessary element in the original meaning, but is a derived sense. Test or trial is the primary significance; and the use of the word in the New Testament must have some correspondence to the original and proper use of the word. If torture alone was intended, why was not the Greek word used, which means, according to the Greek lexicons, "pain of body or mind;" or the verb meaning "to pain, either bodily or mentally; passive, to be in an agony, be tormented." The idea of torment alone has been read in the word to meet the exigencies of a false theology.

The Great Falsehood

In the beginning Satan deceived our first parents into believing that they could never die. Genesis 3:4. But this was contrary to God's express declaration that they should die. Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4. The vast mass of humanity have all along believed Satan, and have clothed themselves and the dead with the attributes of Deity, making of themselves demigods. They have believed the falsehood in its fullest sense, "You shall not surely die;" "you shall be as God." Genesis 3:4. And through the deceitfulness of sin, Satan has no doubt persuaded himself that he is immortal, and that no material agency which Deity can use will bring him and his to naught.

God's Touchstone

If man had believed God in the beginning, if he had by simple faith walked in the way of God's precepts, he would never have died; for "righteousness tends to life," while "he that pursues evil pursues it to his own death." Proverbs 11:19, 30. But man sinned ; and. that he might not perpetuate to all eternity a life of sin and misery, God in His goodness separated man from the tree of life, and left him to his own way, the way which man himself had chosen. See Genesis 3:22-24.

The State Of The Dead

But God did not leave man, who had sold himself under sin, without hope. Jesus Christ offered Himself as man's substitute, and thus became "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Revelation 13:8. As Christ by emptying Himself became filled with all the fullness of God, so, if we by faith in Christ yield all of self and accept of Christ, we are made sons of God, and are clothed with "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." This righteousness is not only imputed for our sins that are past, but it is imputed by faith for the present, so that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. This work of cleansing, re-creating, and restoring, is wrought by the Spirit of God through His word.

But as this Spirit was life in Christ, even to that extent that death could not hold Him, so also in those who are complete in Christ by faith "the Spirit is life because of righteousness." And as the righteousness is the same righteousness possessed by Christ, and as the Spirit is His Spirit, so the new life is the same life possessed by Christ, even eternal life; for "this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life." 1 John 5:11, 12. But while this life is as actual as is the righteousness, it is not absolute. We hold it by faith. Says the apostle: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

If man holds fast the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end (Hebrews 3:14), he will be given eternal life absolutely at the last day, and made, like Christ, immortal. See John 6:40, 54; 1 Corinthians 15:47-56. Then, and not till then, shall this mortal put on immortality; and to Him who bestows the precious boon in answer to the simple trust of the saint, will be all the glory.

Therefore as God in His wisdom has decreed that none but the holy and righteous shall be made immortal, and the great final test will be the fire of His wrath; for God's lapis Lydius, or touchstone, by which the counterfeit will be revealed, is fire. The world will be melted by fervent heat at 'the end of the thousand years, and thus form the lake of fire. Revelation 20:10, 14. Upon this flaming sea the holy city, with her holy children, will be up-borne as was Noah's ark upon the deluge of waters. To that fearful time the prophet refers in the following language:

The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting [age-lasting] burnings? He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly; he that despises the gain of oppressions [margin, "deceits"], that shakes his hands from the holding of bribes, that stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from seeing evil.

The boastings of the earth-dwellers will have lied on their lips; the hope of the hypocrites will have gone; the power of the deceiver to sway them will have perished. Each must stand in his own character, possessed of the life which he has chosen. The wicked claim to possess within themselves an inherent immortality. The righteous possess it only as they obtain it by righteous in Christ Jesus.

Satan has deceived multitudes into believing -that if they were united with a Christian church in some way, their salvation would be assured. Millions of this character have been built up in the nominal churches by professed ambassadors of Christ. But their work must be tested by fire. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day (of God, 2 Peter 3:10) shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." 1 Corinthians 3:11-13.

The precious jewels, or special treasure, of God are His people. Malachi 3:17, margin. The fires of trial and persecution, the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, will then have purged away all dross, and they will then stand immortalized, partakers in full of the divine nature; and the fires of the last day cannot hurt them. But those who would not accept Christ, who will not endure the fiery trials of this age, are found to be wood, hay, and stubble, when the fires of the day of God break forth upon the world. This is God's last test for those who have claimed to be possessed of a life which runs parallel with that of God. When subjected to the fire the smoke of their "testing" is seen to, ascend and to all the universe of God that smoke declares that the wicked are found wanting, and that in the fire of God -they are being consumed. When the righteous stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire, no smoke is seen to ascend, for the fire cannot destroy them. Not so with the wicked; the smoke is the most prominent feature in all the picture that portrays their doom. It ascends with a magnitude so tremendous that the universe beholds the great burning and reads in it the evidence of an utter destruction. That smoke' also ascends so persistently that to the prophetic eye it

The State Of The Dead

seems to cover all the boasted eternity that sin and sinners have claimed for themselves. The fearful scene pictured by the Revelator will finally close, but in its closing it will leave God's justice and His judgment vindicated forever.

Eternal Or Everlasting Fire

Just how long these fires continue we do not know, but there will come a time when the wood, hay, and stubble are consumed, and then the fire will go out. An illustration of this is given in Jude 7 and 2 Peter 2:6. In the former text it is stated that "Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth, as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire." Revised Version. An equivalent expression, "Everlasting fire," from the same terms in Greek, is found in Matthew 25:41. It means fire everlasting in its effect, not in continuance. This is shown by the apostle Peter in the case of the above cities. God turned "the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly."

The "eternal fire" proved the utter destruction of these cities; it burned them up, reduced them to ashes, and it plainly declared that this is an ensample of the punishment which waits the ungodly. This punishment is therefore "everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46), but not everlasting punishing. It indicate, a completed process which will never be repeated. The wicked have chosen death, eternal death; and this death (Romans 6:23), this eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46), is the very opposite of the eternal life which the righteous enjoy. The "eternal fire" is the means by which the "everlasting punishment" is inflicted, and this is "everlasting destruction" to all "them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9. So we read of "eternal judgment." (Hebrews 6:2), not a judging forever going on, but a judgment, the sentences of which are irrevocable and irreversible; of "eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9), not a salvation going on to all eternity, but a salvation which once accomplished is eternally sure. Isaiah 51:6, 8.

Consumed Into Smoke

Sodom and Gomorrah were literally burned up, and the salt waters of the Dead Sea are now where those once proud cities stood. See Genesis 19:24-48. It is said of that fire, "And, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Of the wicked the Psalmist says: "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." Psalm 37:20. The very figure denotes the totality of the destruction. The ashes on earth soon mingle with, and become part of, the soil; the smoke rises up and dissipates to all eternity. It is said of the great harlot Babylon, "Her smoke rose up forever and ever." (Revelation 19:3), and the fire of this smoke burns her up; for "she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judges her." Revelation 18:8.

Unquenchable Fire

The same solemn, fearful truth regarding the doom of the wicked is taught in Mark 9:43-48. The place of punishment, hell, or Gehenna, is spoken of three times, in verses 43, 45, 47. Its fire, or means of punishment, is called in verses 43, 45 "the fire that never shall be quenched," in the Revised version, "the unquenchable fire." See Matthew 3:12, where the same term is used. In Mark 9:44, 46, and 48 it is "the fire is not quenched." These expressions all mean the same thing. A description of Gehenna, and two illustrations from Scripture, will make the meaning clear:

Gehenna, properly the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterward polluted with every species of filth, as well as the carcasses of animals, and dead bodies of malefactors, to consume which, in order to avert the pestilence which such a mass of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning. Bagster's Analytical Lexicon.

Gehenna thus became a symbol of utter destruction, a fitting representation of the place of punishment of the wicked. Thus also we are told in Jeremiah 17:27 that if Jerusalem continued in disobedience to God, he would "kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." But in the fulfillment of this the historian states that this unquenchable fire "burnt the house of God, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah." 2 Chronicles 36: 19-21. This will be the nature of the fire in which the wicked will be cast; it will not be quenched, nor can man quench it, till it has done its work. John the

The State Of The Dead

Baptist likens the righteous to wheat, which is gathered into the garner, but the wicked to chaff, which he declares the Lord "Will burn up with unquenchable fire." Matthew 3:12.

Symbols Of The Wicked

It is the nature of fire to consume, and the wicked are likened to the most combustible materials. They are "as tow" (Isaiah 1:51); like the garment eaten by the-moth (Isaiah 51:8); they "shall be stubble" (Malachi 4:1); "the chaff" (Matthew 3:12); dried tares (Matthew 13:40-42); withered branches (John 15: 6); "fat of lambs" (Psalm 37:20). They "shall be consumed" (Isaiah 1:28; Psalm 37:20); "shall wither as the green herb," "shall be cut off," "shall not be," "shall perish," "shall be destroyed" (Psalm 37: 2, 9, 10, 20, 38); shall be "burned up," and left "neither root (Satan) nor branch (wicked);" "they shall be ashes" (Malachi 4:3); "they shall be as though they had not been" (Obadiah 1:16); "whose end is destruction" (Philippians 3:19); "shall be utterly burned with fire" (Revelation 18:8); "whose end is to be burned" (Hebrews 6:8); the devil is to be "destroyed" (Hebrews 2:14); for he will be brought "to ashes," and never will be any more (Ezekiel 28:18, 19). The above are but a few of the passages which speak of the utter and "everlasting destruction" of the wicked, which is the "second death."

If the sinner chooses God's way, and thus renounces the sin, God will destroy the sin and save the sinner; the dross will be purged by grace, the pure metal will remain. But if the sinner identifies himself with the sin, if he will not separate from it, when the proper time comes, God's burning glory will consume him in a moment. 2 Thessalonians 2:8. God's pleasure is that the wicked turn from his evil way and live. Ezekiel 33:11.

And thus the wicked are tried, tested by fire, by that which in its very nature causes pain, suffering, and anguish. It is the last final test. The wicked were once slain by water, but men believe them still alive. But in that great day, all will appear to be finally tested, eternally tried. And the test will be final. It will reveal the heavenly and the earthly. It will never be repeated. Its results are eternal. The fire of God has proved the ungodly perishable instead of imperishable, mortal instead of immortal. They are wood, hay, stubble; and day and night, as long as the throne of God shall endure, they shall ever more live. The test proved them base metal. The fire has devoured them, for it is a "devouring fire." Isaiah 33:14. Sin cannot endure God's presence, and having identified themselves with sin by choosing sin, the wicked perish when the glory of His presence is revealed. 2 Thessalonians 2: 8, Revised Version, margin. From the second death there will be no resurrection. The wicked will have obtained their choice. Proverbs 1:29-32.

But the righteous, the precious jewels of God, remain unharmed by the fiery element. They pass through the fire, "and they have no hurt," nor is the smell of fire left upon them. (Daniel 3:25, 27), because the Lord of all is with them and in them. They have immortality, not, however, by birth through sinful fallen man; it is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is another thought worthy of consideration here. The Scriptures declare that "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner." Proverbs 11:31. The sin will be punished where it has been committed. The apostle Peter states the same thing. He says that "the heavens (atmospheric) and the earth, which are now, by the same word (of God's power) are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men." 2 Peter 3:7. In verse 10 he tells us when and how this destruction will be accomplished:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

The same solemn truth is presented in Isaiah 34:1-10, in which the desolation of the earth by fire is symbolized by the desolation which came upon Idumea. Says the prophet:-

For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever. Verses 8-10.

The fire will do its work. But this is not the end of the picture. In the just punishment of those who have identified themselves with sin, God declares that "the indignation shall cease, and Mine anger in their destruction." Isaiah 10:25. The earth was not made in vain. Isaiah 45:18. The place of the destruction of sin will be the place of the reward of the righteous, "when the wicked are cut off." Psalm 37:34. Therefore Peter declares, in connection with the text quoted above:

The State Of The Dead

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.”

And Isaiah says in the same prophecy from which we quoted above: “The wilderness, and the solitary place, shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory, of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellence of our God Isaiah 35 ~ 1, 2. The picture of this glorious new earth will be completed by a quotation from the last book of the Bible:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying. Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, 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. And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful. Revelation 21:15.

Thus ends the sad tragedy of sin and those who have chosen sin. Thus dawns the morning of the eternal day of those who have chosen the righteousness and life which are in Christ Jesus. Sin is forever banished, and death, pain, misery are no more. Both classes have obtained their choice. Infinite Love is vindicated.

Sinner, turn to God. He loves you; He longs to save you; Christ died that you might live. Go with your sin-burdened, death-poisoned heart to Him; He will abundantly pardon and heal you. Listen to what He says: “As I live, said the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live ; turn you, turn you from your evil, ways, for why will you die?”