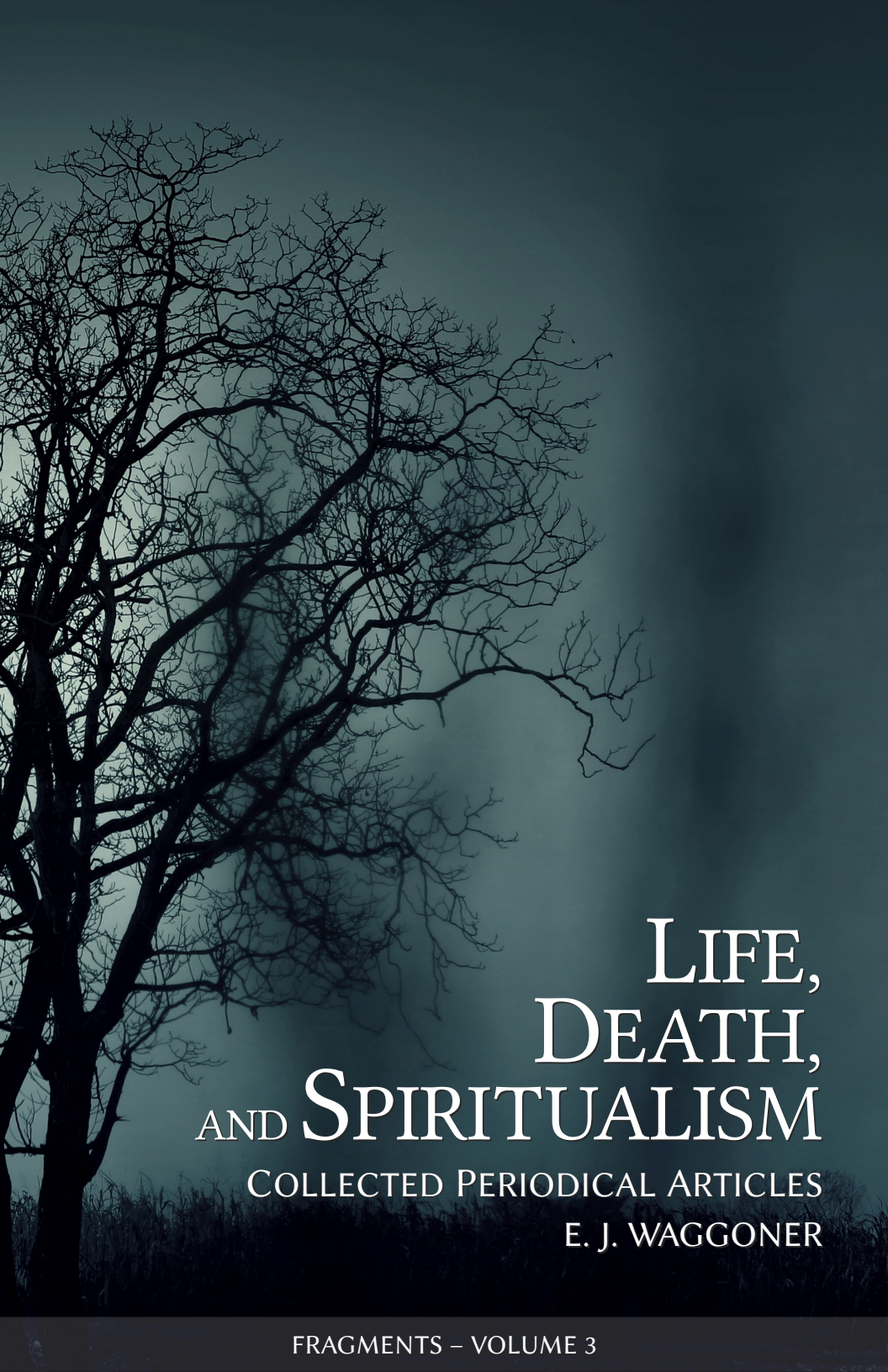

LIFE,
DEATH,
AND SPIRITUALISM
COLLECTED PERIODICAL ARTICLES
E. J. WAGGONER
FRAGMENTS – VOLUME 3

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About the "Fragments" Series

THE *Fragments* series is composed of 12 books of articles, gathered from the various Periodicals which E. J. Waggoner contributed to during his lifetime. There is a separate and parallel series devoted to the writings of Waggoner's companion in the gospel, A. T. Jones.

In order to bring some cohesion to these articles, the books are topical: that is, articles are organized according to their topic, and there is a separate book for each topic, as follows:

1. Grace Greater Than Sin [The Gospel]
2. Healing and Temperance
3. Life, Death, and Spiritualism [Conditional Immortality]
4. Money and Work
5. Religious Liberty
6. The Bible
7. The Church
8. The Holy Spirit
9. The Law and the Sabbath
10. The Name [Character] of God
11. The Prophetic Word
12. Thoughts on Education

Most often, the articles within each volume are grouped by the year of publication, or if one year had few articles, sometimes the group includes a range of years. In other cases, the articles are grouped by topic. In still other cases, there was sometimes a mini-series that continued through a few periodical issues, and those were grouped accordingly.

While trying to make this as complete a collection as possible, at times I have not included some smaller articles that carried only local news or material that would not be relevant to our time. Even at that, the amount of included material is quite vast.

In most cases, I have left out articles that already appear in other books. For example, often Waggoner would write articles, and then later publish them as a book. Since these books are available separately on our website, I did not see the need to duplicate this material.

Also, some articles crossed over many topics. For example, an article on the Sabbath could fit into the "Law and Sabbath" book, but it might also cover "Religious Liberty," "The Gospel," and even "The Prophetic Word." I tried to fit these kinds of articles into the book that most matched its topic, or where there were a series of articles to which it belonged. Occasionally an article is included in more than one volume.

Due to the great amount of material that came from the pen of Waggoner, I've also added a few more volumes for his writings:

- All About Jesus, volume 1 & 2
- Paul and the Early Church
- Christ Our Life
- Gleanings from the Psalms
- Leaves from the Tree of Life
- Reflections on Proverbs
- The Call of Abraham
- The Law and the Gospel
- The Lord's Prayer
- The Miracles of Jesus
- Questions and Answers on the Bible
- Gospel Lessons in the Old Testament (Waggoner & Jones)

There are also two companion volumes, one each from Jones and Waggoner, on the topic of the Papacy:

- The Light Shines in Darkness (Jones)
- The Great Falling Away (Waggoner)

What these books demonstrate is that E. J. Waggoner produced a lot of precious material, much of which was never organized or reprinted after his death. Jesus taught us to…

John 6

[12] Gather the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.
[13] Therefore they gathered them together, and filled *twelve baskets with the fragments.*



Since much depends on how we receive and appreciate the light that God gives through His chosen messengers, I felt a burden to put these forgotten treasures into an orderly and easily accessible format. May the Spirit that gave them, bless you as you read His words!

Frank Zimmerman
practicaprophetica.com

"If human beings would open the windows of the soul heavenward,
in appreciation of the divine gifts,
a flood of healing virtue would pour in."

Ellen White, Ministry of Healing, p. 116

About This Volume

THIS volume is titled: *Life, Death, and Spiritualism.* It gathers together those articles from E. J. Waggoner that are on the topic of the soul, eternal life, immortality, the nature of man, and what happens after death.[1]

When the early church started mixing in Greek philosophy with Christian teachings, the idea of an "immortal soul" became incorporated into church belief, and has been held by many denominations since that time. It is, however, contrary to:

1. The Law: God warned that souls which break the law are subject to death and not to life.[2]
2. The Gospel: Only through Jesus Christ can man receive eternal life again.[3]
3. God's character: The "immortal soul" idea leads to an "eternally burning hell" for those who disobey God. But an unending eternity of punishment for a short life of sin is not only unjust, but cruel.
4. The Resurrection: Why is a resurrection of the body needed, if our immortal souls go right to heaven at death?
5. The Judgment: There is to be a judgment before the resurrection, to determine who has "made themselves ready."[4] But if souls are constantly flying to heaven (or hell) at death, why is the judgment required?
6. Separation from Spiritualism: Many warnings have been given in the Bible against communicating with spirits of the dead.[5] But now even professed Christians think that their relatives are in heaven and can communicate with them, or people with "near death experiences," are relating the supposed "travels" of their soul after death, and seeing various of their relatives in heaven.

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[1] PP Editor's Note: some articles on the fate of the wicked are included in the book, *The Return of Christ*. These articles are not reproduced in this volume.
[2] *Genesis* 2:17; *Romans* 6:23.
[3] *John* 10:10; *1 John* 5:11.
[4] *Daniel* 7:10; *Revelation* 11:18, 14:7.
[5] *Isaiah* 8:19-20, *Leviticus* 19:31, *Deuteronomy* 18:10-11.

7. The Prerogative of God: The Bible declares that God only possesses innate immortality, and that it is only through the gift of Christ, that man can receive it again.

The opposite of the "immortal soul" concept, introduced into Adventism through George Storrs (a Methodist minister who joined in with William Miller's revival), is the teaching of man's natural mortality through sin, and that death is an unconscious state until the resurrection. Immortality, at the resurrection, is granted conditionally, to those who have "made themselves ready" for the gift.

This truth does not deny that Christ gives us His spiritual life in the new birth, and that this life is "eternal":

John 6
54 Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, *has eternal life;* and I will raise him up at the last day.

1 John 5
11 And this is the record, that God *has given* to us *eternal life*, and this life is *in His Son*.
12 He that has the Son *has life;* and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

But this spiritual life cannot be conscious without a body. Therefore, believers are said to "sleep"[6] in the grave, until the resurrection of the body, at which point they receive an immortal body, by which the eternal spiritual life gains consciousness, and through which it is manifested.

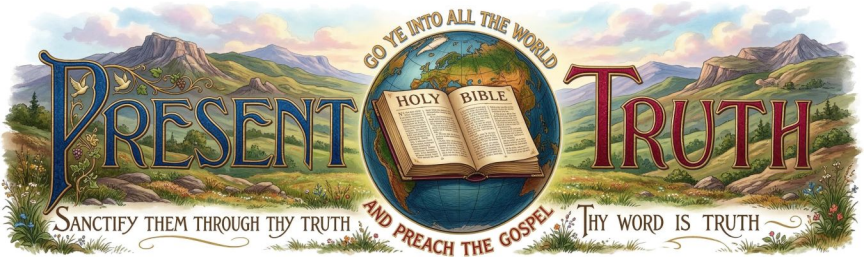
This concept of "conditional immortality" became incorporated into the Seventh-day Adventist church after 1844, and has been considered one of the pillars of the faith ever since.

Frank Zimmerman
practicaprophetica.com

[6] *Matthew* 9:24; *John* 11:11; *1 Corinthians* 15:51; *1 Thessalonians* 4:14;

THE Present Truth

"Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is truth."—John xvii. 17.





The Nature of the Soul

Signs of the Times

Notes on the Sabbath School Lessons
January 18, 1883 to March 17, 1890

1. Immortality – I

Signs of the Times, September 18, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: October 11
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word "immortal"?
2. What is the appointed lot of mankind?
   Hebrews 9:27
3. Are any exempt from death?
   Romans 5:12
4. Then can it be that any of the human race are immortal?
5. What exhortation did Paul give to Timothy?
   1 Timothy 6:12
6. Until what time did he charge Timothy to keep this commandment?
   1 Timothy 6:13-14
7. What did he say that Christ in His times should show?
   1 Timothy 6:15
8. What did he say further concerning this "blessed and only Potentate?"
   1 Timothy 6:16
9. Who is this "blessed and only Potentate" here referred to?
10. Then who alone is possessed of immortality?
11. Does Christ share this attribute equally with the Father?
    John 5:26
12. What contrast does the apostle Paul insinuate between God and man?
    Romans 1:23.

13. What is the meaning of the words "corruptible" and "incorruptible"?

14. Since God only has immortality, what term must be applied to man?

    Job 4:17.

15. Who has eternal life to bestow?

    Romans 6:23.

16. Through whom may it be obtained?

    Ibid.

17. To what class of persons will it be given?

    Romans 2:7.

18. If men have immortality, would they be exhorted to seek for it?

19. How are we to seek for it?

    Romans 2:7.

20. Then if none get it but those who seek for it, what can you say of those who do evil?

21. Who is it that has brought immortality to light?

    2 Timothy 1:10.

22. By what means is it presented to mankind?

    Ibid.

23. Then where are we to seek for immortality?

24. What can you say of those who do not accept the gospel?

Discussion

The definition which Webster gives of the word "immortal" is this:

> "Not mortal; exempt from liability to die; and dying; the imperishable; lasting forever; having unlimited existence."

To say, then, that any being is immortal, is equivalent to saying that he cannot die. This will be the case with the redeem saints, for Christ says:

Luke 20
[35] But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage:
[36] *Neither can they die anymore*, for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

When they obtain the resurrection from the dead, they are immortal, for they cannot die any more. But they did die once, and therefore they were not always immortal. And so Paul says that…

Hebrews 9
[27] It is appointed unto men once to die,

–and that…

Romans 5
[12] Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

To say, then, that the Scriptures teach that men are by nature immortal, is to say that words have no meaning. Death is the appointed lot of mankind; and there are only two men,—Enoch and Elijah,—who have been favored above their fellows, in that they did not see death.

In *1 Timothy* 6:12 Paul gives the exhortation to…

1 Timothy 6
[12] …fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.

If we are already in possession of immortality, it would be impossible for us to heed this exhortation, for we could not "lay hold on" that which we already held; and no matter how earnestly we might fight the good fight of faith, it would have no effect on our immortality, if we already possessed it. Immortality is absolute; no man can be more than immortal. But in the thir-

teenth and fourteenth verses the apostle says that this charge must be kept until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 6
[13] I give you charge in the sight of God, who quickens all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;
[14] That you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From that we learn that we are to continue the fight of faith until the Lord comes; and since it is by that means that we lay hold on eternal life, we must also conclude that the eternal life will not be gained until that time.

The apostle goes on to say that Christ will show who is…

[15] …the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only has immortality.

The reference here can be to no other than to God himself. Nothing, then, can be plainer than this statement that God alone has immortality. That is, He has…

John 5
[26] …life in himself.

Immortality is an attribute of God, just the same as infallibility, omniscience, omnipotence. Christ, as the Son of God, possesses the same attributes, and is therefore equal with God and worthy to be called God. But man has no more right to claim one attribute of God than all; he may as well put himself on a level with God in respect of knowledge, as to claim equality with respect to life. The simple fact is, as the text shows, that God alone possesses immortality; and therefore if man ever gets it, it must be as a gift from God.

The distinction between God and man is clearly defined throughout the Bible. Paul, in showing the depth to which they even had fallen, says that they…

Romans 1
[23] ...changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man.

This might with equal propriety be translated:

"Changed the glory of the immortal God into an image made like to mortal man."

In *Job* 4 the question is asked,

Job 4
[17] Shall mortal man be more just than God?

In *Isaiah* 51, the Lord, through the prophets, asked:

Isaiah 51
[12] Who are you, that you should be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass?

In contradistinction to this, God is everywhere spoken of as "the living God," that is, the one who ever lived, who can never die. If man were possessed of immortality, then he might with propriety have the same titles applied to him that are applied to God.

Romans 6
[23] For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here we have the statement that eternal life comes alone from God, and the additional fact that it comes only through Christ. In *Romans* 2:7 we learn still farther that God will give it only to them who "seek" for it, by patient continuance in well-doing. And in *2 Timothy* 1:10 we learn that we are to seek for it in the gospel. The apostle says that Christ has...

2 Timothy 1
[10] ...brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

From these three texts we are forced to the following conclusions:

- No sinner can have eternal life, for "the wages of sin is *death*."
- No one can have eternal life unless he *seeks for* it, and the proper way to seek for it is by patient continuance in well-doing.
- Again; since it is only through the gospel that immortality is brought to light, and eternal life comes only through Christ, it is evident that no one who rejects Christ and the gospel can have immortality.

It may be argued by some that, while it is true that immortality comes from God alone, and He alone has life in himself, He has implanted it in all human beings. But this will not harmonize with the Bible. If men were *by nature* immortal, then it would not be true that immortality comes through Christ and the gospel. If we accept the Bible as authority, then immortality cannot be bestowed until it is seen who have accepted Christ, and have persevered in well-doing. And this cannot be seen in this life, for there is always a possibility of the best man's falling from his steadfastness. And still further, if it be true that all men have in them an immortal principle, then there can be no such thing as sin. For immortality means exemption from death. Whoever is immortal cannot die. But,

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death;

–that is, whoever sins will die; and no one will die except those who sin. Now, then, if we claim that all men are immortal, and that none can die, the logical conclusion is that none are sinners. In other words, wages will be given where due; and if death, the wages of sin, is given to no man, then it follows that no man is deserving of it. Thus immortal-soulism is pure universalism.

The following extracts from standard commentaries will be read with interest, and will show that the conclusions which we have drawn from the texts used in the lesson, are warranted by the best scholarship.

On *1 Timothy* 6:16 Olshausen says:

> "Who only has immortality." He is therefore the source of immortality to all who are partakers in it; out of Him is *death*."

Dean Alford quotes Justin Martyr as follows:

> God is said only to have immortality, because He has it not by the will of another, as the rest who possess it, but by His own proper essence.

Dr. Bloomfield says:

> "*ho monos echon athanasian*," *i.e.*, immortality self-derived; by which it is implied that He alone can confer it.

Dr. Barnes says:

> "Who only has immortality." The word here—*athanasia*—properly means *exemption from death*, and seems to mean that God, in His own nature, enjoys a perfect and certain exemption from death. Creatures have immortality only as they derive it from Him, and of course are dependent on Him for it.

On *Romans* 5:12 Dean Alford says:

> Literally "on ground of," "on condition that," which meaning, if rightly applied, suits the case in hand. *Life* depended on a certain conditions, viz., obedience; *death*, but on another, *viz.*, disobedience. Mankind have disobeyed; the condition of deaths and entrances and diffusion has been fulfilled; death extended to all men, as a consequence of the fact that all have sinned.

On *Romans* 2:7 Dr. Barnes has the following:

> The word *immortality* means that which is not corruptible, where subject to decay. It is applied to Heaven as a state where there will be no decay or death, in strong contrast with our present condition, where all things are corruptible, and soon vanish away. These expressions are undoubtedly descriptive of state of things beyond the grave…."Eternal life." That is, God will "render" eternal life to those who "seek" it in this manner.

2. Eternal Life / Man's Condition in Death

Signs of the Times, October 2, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: October 18 & 25
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions – October 18

1. Upon what did Paul exhort Timothy to lay hold?
   1 Timothy 6:12
2. By what means was he to lay hold of it?
   Ibid.
3. Would it be consistent to exhort one to "lay hold" of the eternal life if he has it by nature?
4. To whom must we come in order to have life?
   John 5:40
5. For what purpose did Christ say He came?
   John 10:10
6. Then if men possess immortality by nature, did not Christ come in vain?
7. What is proved by the fact that He came to give life?
8. Who does Christ say have everlasting life?
   John 3:36
9. In what sense do we have it now?
   2 Timothy 1:1
10. In whose keeping is this gift?
    1 John 5:11
11. Can one do anything more for Christ than to give up everything for His sake?
12. What does Christ say that those who do so shall receive in this present time?
    Mark 10:29-30

13. What shall they receive in the world to come?

    Ibid.

14. Then when will eternal life be enjoyed?

15. At what time will immortality be bestowed?

    1 Corinthians 15:51-54

16. How is it that we receive immortality?

    1 Corinthians 15:52-53

17. Can a person "put on" that which he already has on?

18. Then what can you say as to man's present possession of immortality?

19. What is due to Christ from all men?

    John 5:23

20. How much honor is due Him?

    Ibid.

21. What does Christ alone have?

    John 6:68

22. Through whom does eternal life come?

    Romans 6:23

23. If men were by nature in possession of immortality, would they be dependent upon Christ for it?

24. Then is it not robbing Christ of the honor due Him, to say that man possesses immortality whether they believe in Him or not?

Review Questions – October 25

1. Concerning what did Paul wish the brethren not to be ignorant?

   1 Thessalonians 4:13

2. What is sleep often used to represent?

John 11:11-14; *Psalm* 13:3

3. What is the condition of a man in a sound sleep?
4. Then what must we conclude as to the Bible idea of the condition of man in death?
5. In what place are the dead sleeping?

   Daniel 12:2; *Job* 7:21
6. What does Paul say that God will do for those who sleep in Jesus?

   1 Thessalonians 4:14
7. When will he do this?

   1 Thessalonians 4:15-16
8. From what place will he bring them?

   John 5:28-29
9. In what sense, then, is it that God brings them "with him," *i.e.* with Christ?

   Hebrews 13:20
10. Who are they who go into the grave?

    Psalm 89:48
11. What kind of a place is the grave?

    Job 10:20-22
12. How is it described by the psalmist?

    Psalm 88:11-12
13. What does Solomon say as to the activity of those who go to the grave?

    Ecclesiastes 9:10
14. Are we to understand, then, that the dead are entirely unconscious?

    Ecclesiastes 9:5
15. Do they not feel any of the emotions which sway the living?

Ecclesiastes 9:6

16. Are they not affected even by the success or adversity of their best loved ones?

    Job 14:21

17. If a tree is cut down, what may happen?

    Job 14:7-9

18. What is said of the death of man?

    Job 14:10

19. How complete is the "wasting away" of man when he dies?

    Job 14:11-12

20. How long will it be before the dead shall be raised out of their sleep?

    Job 14:12

21. When is it that the heavens shall pass away?

    2 Peter 3:10

22. Then at what time did Job locate the resurrection?

23. Where did he expect to stay while waiting for this event?

    Job 14:13; 17:13

Discussion

Since there was no paper last week, we this week print the questions for two Sabbaths, in order that those who are following the series may not lose the connection.

In *John* 10:10 we have Christ's statement of the object which brought Him to earth to die:

> **John 10**
> [10] I am come that they [believers in Him] might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Compare this with His words in *John* 3:16. He came into the world to save sinners;[7] and since the wages of sin is *death*, it must

[7] *1 Timothy* 1:15.

follow that He gives life, as He says. And this statement cannot be turned aside from its literal meaning by saying, as Dr. Barnes does, that the word "abundantly":

> ...denotes that which is not absolutely essential to *life*, but which is superadded to make life happy;

–for it is not merely the "abundance" of life which He came to bestow, but *life* itself.

> **John 10**
> [10] I am come *that they might have life*, and [something else] that they might have it more abundantly;

–that is, to all eternity. But the fact that Christ came to give life, proves conclusively that we cannot have it without Him, unless we are willing to admit that He came in vain—for a purpose wholly unnecessary.

The fact that life comes only through Christ is again and again repeated in the Bible.

> **John 3**
> [36] He that believes on the Son have everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life.

Here we have a most positive declaration; a plainer statement of the case could not be made. There are some, however, who misapply the first portion of the verse, and claim that even now, in this present life, Christians have the eternal life. But the beloved disciple, in repeating the words of Christ, says:

> **1 John 5**
> [11] And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

And this is how it is that...

> [12] He that has the Son has life.

We have it in Christ. It is not ours in the sense of actual possession, but by promise.[8]

And when shall we receive this promise? Christ himself tells us. Said he:

> **Mark 10**
> [29] There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,
> [30] But he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions...

This will be the portion of a follower of Christ in this world; but this is not all. He continues:

> [30] ...and in the world to come eternal life.

So the eternal life is ours in this world only by promise; in the world to come it will be ours in fact. But so surely does Christ give life, that if we have Him, we may say that we have life.

One word of explanation on *John* 3:36.

> **John 3**
> [36] He that has not the Son shall not see life.

Of course this can have no reference to this present life; it must refer to eternal life. That is the object for which man was created. This brief existence is but a preparation for eternal life. The Lord gives us a little period of time to see how we will use it. If we are faithful, He will at His coming give us that for which He has designed us. But if we do not appreciate this life, if we are not faithful in that which is least, what object could there be for Him to give us that which is greatest, eternal life? None at all. If we do not gain that, our lives will have been spent in vain. The wicked will...

[8] See *2 Timothy* 1:1; *Titus* 1:2.

Obadiah
[18] ...be as though they had not been,

–and so it can be said of them that they do not see life.

The great reason that we urge why men should accept the doctrine of conditional immortality is that it honors Christ. If we say that we possess immortality by nature, we deprive Christ of His highest honor. We virtually make ourselves independent of Him.

Romans 6
[23] The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now if we claim immortality as ours by birthright, we may not deny the first part of this text, but we do the second. We may admit that immortality is the gift of God; but we must honor the Son even as we honor the Father. We must also admit that it comes only through Christ.

Few people realize it, but it is a fact that the doctrine that men are by nature immortal is really a denial of Christ. If Christ came to give life, and we claim to have it without Him, do we not thus cast Him off? Spiritualists have carried the doctrine of inherent, unconditional immortality to its legitimate conclusion, and openly repudiate Christ as a Saviour. If we hold the same doctrine, what warrant have we that we will not go to the same lengths as they? The doctrine of conditional immortality is the only safeguard against Spiritualism. Can anyone say that it is not a practical doctrine?

Having learned that man is mortal and possesses no principle of immortality until the coming of the Lord and the resurrection, when he puts on immortality, we would naturally conclude that the dead are unconscious, extinct. And so the Bible represents them. Sleep is a common symbol of death. Daniel says that when Michael stands up,

Daniel 12
[2] Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.

Christ said when Lazarus was dead,

John 11
[11] Our friend Lazarus sleeps.

David prays the Lord to remember him lest he…

Psalm 13
[3] …sleep the sleep of death.

And Paul says of David after he had served his own generation, he…

Acts 13
[36] …fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

Sleep is thus defined by Webster:

> A natural and healthy, but temporary and periodical, suspension of the functions of the organs of sense.

Of the verb he says:

> To take rest by a suspension of the voluntary exercise of the powers of the body and mind, an apathy of the organs of sense; to become unconscious.

Sleep is a synonym for unconsciousness. When a man is in a perilous position and knows nothing of it, we say that he is asleep to his danger. So death, in order to be fitly represented by sleep must be a total suspension of the functions of the organs of sense, and of all the powers of body and mind. And such we shall find the Bible declares it to be.

The dead go to the grave. They are said to "sleep in the dust."[9] It is a place to which both good and bad go. This of itself would prove that men do not go to Heaven at death. The following description of the place of the dead also shows that it is not Heaven:

[9] *Job* 7:21; *Daniel* 12:2.

Job 10
[22] A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

It is the "land of forgetfulness."[10] It is from this place that the Lord will bring His faithful ones when He comes. Paul says concerning them that sleep:

1 Thessalonians 4
[14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him.

This does not mean that He will bring them from Heaven, but from the grave.[11] The apostle in verse 14 has not yet introduced the coming of the Lord from Heaven. He has simply spoken of the death and resurrection of Christ. It was God who…

Hebrews 13
[20] …brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ,

–and if we believe in Jesus, He will bring us from the dead also, even as He did Him.

But until the coming of the Lord, the dead remain in their graves, unconscious of passing the events. Read Solomon's statements concerning them in *Ecclesiastes* 9:5, 6, 10.

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] [They] know not anything.
[10] There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave.

Even the prosperity or adversity of their best loved relatives, produces no emotion either of joy or sorrow.

Job 14
[21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

[10] *Psalm* 88:12.
[11] See *John* 5:28-29.

The utter extinction of man in the grave is brought out in this 14th chapter of *Job*. If we cut a tree down, there will be enough life left in the stump to cause it to sprout again;

Job 14
[10] But man dies, and wastes away; yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?

This is equivalent to saying that he has no existence. But this condition is not final; it lasts until a fixed time.

[11] As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up:
[12] So man lies down, and rises not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

We can here only refer to the texts which locate this time. Peter says that in the day of the Lord the heavens shall pass away with a great noise.[12] It is the voice of God, which at Sinai shook the earth, which is yet once more to sound, and shake the heavens.[13] And this voice is the trump of God that is to arouse the sleeping dead. So Job's words are equivalent to the statement that at death man becomes utterly extinct, and remains so until the coming of the Lord.

[12] *2 Peter* 3:10.
[13] *Hebrews* 12:26.

3. State of the Dead

Signs of the Times, October 9, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: November 2
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. When King Hezekiah was sick, what message came to him from the Lord?

   Isaiah 38:1

2. When he received this message, what did he do?

   Isaiah 38:2

3. How did he feel at the prospect of death?

   Isaiah 38:3

4. In answer to his prayer, what did the Lord promise?

   Isaiah 38:5

5. When he had recovered, what reason did he give for the sorrow he manifested?

   Isaiah 38:9-10

6. Of what did he say he was about to be deprived?

7. What do you conclude from that statement?

8. What further reason did Hezekiah give for his sorrow at the prospect of death?

   Isaiah 38:11

9. Where does the Lord dwell?

   Psalm 11:4; 33:13-14

10. Then if Hezekiah had gone to Heaven, would he not have seen the Lord?

11. What had been the character of Hezekiah?

    Isaiah 38:3; *2 Kings* 18:1-6

12. Then what must we conclude from his statement that if he died he should not see the Lord?

13. To what place had Hezekiah expected to go if his life was cut short?

    Isaiah 38:10

14. Was it simply his body that was about to go into the grave?

    Isaiah 38:17

15. What did he give as the final reason for not desiring to die?

    Isaiah 38:18

16. Who alone can praise the Lord?

    Isaiah 38:19

17. How positively does David speak on this point?

    Psalm 150:17

18. Why is it that men who have praised God all their lives cease to do so at death?

    Psalm 6:5

19. Why do they so soon forget God?

    Psalm 146:3-4

20. If their thoughts perish, how much to the dead know?

    Ecclesiastes 9:5

Discussion

The texts quoted in our lesson this week are so clear that scarcely any comment is needed. The interesting story of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery is presented to us, and certain doctoral lessons are drawn therefrom. These cannot be misunderstood by any who study the text. We would notice, in the first place, the popular fallacy that peace of mind in view of death is a sure test of piety, and a token that all is well with the departing one. We are told concerning the wicked that…

Psalm 73

[4] There are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm;

–and in the lesson we find that righteous Hezekiah "wept sore"[14] when he heard that he must soon die. While all good persons do not express deep sorrow, as did Hezekiah, we have no example in the Bible of one who expressed anything like joy at the prospect of death. Without exception, the Bible writers looked upon death as something to be dreaded. It is represented as an enemy; and Solomon could find no better example of cruelty than the grave:

Song of Solomon 8
[6] ...cruel as the grave.

Why, then, should it not be feared?

The modern popular ideas of death are all upset by the statements of the Bible. We are taught that death is a friend, and that...

> 'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
> To call us to His arms.[15]

If this were true, death would indeed be a friend; but it is positively false. Hezekiah's grief was entirely consistent with his previous upright and godly life, for, said he,

Isaiah 38
[11] I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living.
[18] For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

Instead of death being the voice of Jesus, calling His loved ones to His arms, it is the cruel weapon of Satan, with which he seeks to destroy the human race, and deprive them of all happiness and good.

[10] I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years.

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[14] *Isaiah* 38:3.
[15] Isaac Watts, *The Death and Burial of a Saint* ("Why do we mourn departing friends").

Even if it were true that good men go to Heaven as soon as they die, this language shows plainly that Hezekiah knew nothing of any such doctrine. He regarded death as the cutting off of his days, the deprivation of the residue of his years, and not a lengthening of his existence to all eternity. The language that he used is utterly inconsistent with the idea of continued existence after death.

Without doubt many whose attention is specially called to the chapter relating the story of Hezekiah's illness and recovery, will query in regard to the sign that was given him by the Lord. We have no explanation to offer; we do not think that one is needed. There are some who think to rid the sign of the appearance of a miracle by saying that the shadow went backward on account of the extraordinary refraction of the sun's rays. They do not seem to think that this would also require miraculous interposition. For our part, it is no more difficult to believe that God could, if necessary, move the sun itself backward, than to believe that he could cause it to stand still, or create it in the beginning. We have no sympathy with that spirit which attempts to bring the acts of an infinite God within the comprehension of a finite mind. That which is necessary for us to understand,—our duty to God and our fellows, and the blessings promised to the obedient, are clearly set forth in the word. To these things we should give earnest and reverent heed, and pray the Lord to increase our faith.

4. Mortality and the Resurrection

Signs of the Times, October 23, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: November 9
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. Of what substance did God create man?
   Quote proof, and give reference.
2. What was given him to make him live?
3. In what part of man is this breath of life located?
4. When man's breath is taken away, what takes place?
   Job 34:14-15
5. What then becomes of the breath which causes him to live?
   Ecclesiastes 12:7
6. Is man the only creature that has this breath or spirit of life?
   Genesis 7:14-15
7. In what part of the beast is this breath placed?
   Genesis 7:21-22
8. When God takes away their breath, what becomes of them?
   Psalm 104:29
9. Is the breath of the man any different from that of the beast?
   Ecclesiastes 3:19
10. Of what are both beast and man composed?
    Ecclesiastes 3:20
11. In what do both classes alike return at death?
12. Is there any difference between a wise man and the fool in the matter of death?
    Psalm 49:10
13. Does David agree with Solomon in saying that the death of man is the same as that of beasts?

Psalm 49:14

14. If this is the case, what hope can a man have in life?
    Isaiah 26:19; *Job* 19:25-27
15. If there were to be no resurrection, would man be justified in living as the beast does?
    1 Corinthians 15:32
16. Then in what does man have the pre-eminence above the beast?
17. Where do we find a graphic illustration of the resurrection?
    Ezekiel 37:1-12
18. What did the prophet see?
    Ezekiel 37:1
19. Were the bones living?
    Ezekiel 37:2-3
20. By what means did the Lord say He would cause them to live?
    Ezekiel 37:5-6
21. When the prophet prophesied, what took place?
    Ezekiel 37:7-8
22. When the bones, sinews, flesh, and skin were all in their proper place, what was still lacking?
    Ezekiel 37:8
23. What was the prophet next directed to say?
    Ezekiel 37:9
24. How were the bodies made to live?
    Ezekiel 37:10
25. Then for what purpose does God receive a man's breath or spirit of life when he dies?

Discussion

In *Genesis* 2:7 we are told that…

Genesis 2
[7] 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.

It does not say that a soul was put into man, whereby he might live, but that man himself *became* a dual being, composed of body and soul, and that the first was formed of the dust, but that the latter is pure spirit. Without entering into a discussion of the subject of the soul, what it is, we are warranted, by the text just quoted, in saying that whatever different elements combine to form "man," were made of the dust of the ground. When the catechisms tell us that man is composed of body, soul, and spirit, then they must also claim that all these were formed of the dust, for "man" was born of the dust. But the fact is, that which was formed of the dust was "man" before the breath or spirit of life was bestowed. He was a lifeless soul; but when the breath was given, man *became* a *living* soul.

This conclusion is verified by *Job* 34:14-15. The patriarch, speaking of God, says:

Job 34
[14] If He set His heart upon man, if He gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;
[15] All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

After the breath is taken away, then man turns again to dust. That this breath may be called a spirit is shown by *Job* 27:3-4, quoted in last week's lesson:

Job 27
[3] All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;
[4] My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

Here the spirit (called the spirit of God, because it came from God) is said to be in the nostrils, and that, it will be remembered, is where God placed the breath of life, which is the same thing.

In the light of the above texts, we can readily understand *Ecclesiastes* 12:7, where, after having spoken of death, the wise man says:

Ecclesiastes 12
[7] Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.

This is no more than a repetition of *Job* 34:14-15:

Job 34
[14] If He [God] gather to himself his [man's] spirit and his breath;
[15] All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust.

Both texts teach simply this: that at death man returns to his original elements; that which was born of the dust—the whole man—returns to the dust, and the spirit or breath, having come directly from God, returns to His keeping. There is no more reason for supposing that the spirit, as it returns to God, is conscious, than there is in supposing that the dust is conscious, or that the spirit was conscious before God bestowed it upon man, or that the breath, while in man's nostrils, was conscious. The dust of which man was formed was inanimate; man, after he was formed by the Creator, was inanimate, unconscious; and the spirit while yet in the hands of God was likewise without consciousness; but when the man and the spirit were brought together, conscious existence was the result. How this result was obtained is a secret known only to the Author of life.

This breath of life is something that man shares in common with the beasts. In the description of the flood we learn that every beast and creeping thing—

Genesis 7
[22] All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

It is not the possession of the breath or spirit of life that distinguishes man from the beast. In *Psalm* 104:28-30 we learn that

their creation is effected by God sending forth His spirit, and that, as we learned concerning man, when He takes away their breath they die, and return to their dust. More than this, we are expressly told that there is no difference between the formation of man and lower animals, nor in the elements composing them. We read:

> **Ecclesiastes 3**
> [19] For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: as the one dies, so dies the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man has no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.
> [20] All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

This language is plain, and no apology is needed for it, because it is the language of inspiration. Let it be remembered that when the wise man says that a man has no pre-eminence above a beast, he is speaking of death. In that event all are alike. Here the parallel ends, for to man a resurrection is promised. In this life man has pre-eminence above the beast, because he is gifted with a moral nature, the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong, and the power of loving the right because it is right. This the beast does not have. To all men a resurrection is promised, but not to beasts. If, however, it shall then appear that a part of mankind have died as do the beast, without regard to the future, they will die the second death, and then they will indeed be like the beasts that perish, for with that death their existence will forever end. Man's hope is in the resurrection; but he cannot have a well-grounded hope even in that, unless he seeks those things which are above.

Ezekiel 37:1-14 brings to view the literal resurrection of the dead. First the bones, sinews, muscles, and skin are arranged in proper order. At death these return to the earth, but now they are re-formed. There are the complete bodies; but there is no breath in them. They are just as Adam was before God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. But at the command of the Lord the

breath comes into the inanimate bodies, and they stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Some choose to apply all this to the bringing of literal Israel from the Babylonian captivity, but such an interpretation is of their own choosing, and not by divine authority. God himself (verse 12) says that it is the bringing of His people out of their graves, and this takes place when the Lord comes.[16] And thus we learn that when the spirit—that which causes man to live—returns to God at the death of the man, it is that He may bestow it again at the resurrection, when man shall live *again*.

[16] *1 Thessalonians* 4:15-17; *John* 5:28-29.

5. Immortality – II

Signs of the Times, October 30, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: November 22
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. What is the meaning of the word "immortal"?
2. Quote three texts which prove positively that man is not immortal.
3. Who alone has immortality?
4. May man ever become immortal?
5. What must he do in order to receive immortality?
6. Can we earn immortality, or do we receive it as a gift?
   Give proof.
7. Where must we look for immortality?
8. Can you prove from the Bible that eternal life will not be given to the wicked?
9. For what purpose did Christ come to earth?
10. Who alone does Christ say have everlasting life?
11. In what sense do we have it now?
12. When shall we come into possession of it?
    Give proof.
13. In the Bible, by what figure are the dead often represented?
    Give instances.
14. In what place are they asleep?
15. Until what time do they sleep?
16. Is there any business carried on in the grave?
    Quote proof.
17. Do the dead know what their friends on earth are doing?

18. Do any of the dead praise the Lord?
19. State in Bible language just how much the dead do know.
20. At what point of time do men thus lose all consciousness?
21. From what does this breath of life come?
22. To whom does it return at death?
23. What is the difference, if any, between the breath of man and that a beast?
24. Of what is man composed?
25. To what does he return at death?
26. What is the difference between the death of man and that a beast?
27. Then what is it that makes a man's life so much more valuable than that of a beast?
28. Give two texts of Scripture that you have already learned, which prove that man can derived no benefit from praying to the Virgin Mary.

Discussion

The lesson for this week being a review of the subject of immortality, it will be in place to make the notes of a general nature. From our previous study we have learned that the terms "immortal" and "immortality" do not occur in the Bible so frequently as is so commonly supposed. In hymns and sermons and essays we find such expressions as "immortal soul," "immortal spirit," "undying spirit," "death-blessed soul," "the immortal part of man," etc., very frequently. In the Bible we look for them in vain. Query:

> "If the Bible does not contain any of these expressions, by what authority do Christian teachers use them? Where are we to look for information concerning the nature of man? Shall we look to our own experience and observation?"

That would lead us to conclude that man is mortal, for we see death on all sides. We do not need the words of inspiration to convince us that man's life is…

James 4
[14] …even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.

Death and decay are the lot of all earthly beings. If we turn history, we find that such has ever been the case. The biographies of all men end with the statement, "And he died."[17] Shall we go to the heathen authors? If we do we shall find them contradicting one another, one affirming that man has a principle within him that cannot be destroyed, another declaring that death ends all; and by this very diversity of opinion they proclaim their own ignorance of the subject. And yet these very heathen "philosophers" are the ones to whom Christianity is indebted for its dogma of inherit immortality.

It is indeed strange that professed followers of Christ should turn from the statements of…

2 Peter 1
[21] …holy men of God, [who] spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,

–to the conjectures of men who…

Romans 1
[21] …when they knew God, glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened;

–to those who, while…

[22] Professing themselves to be wise,…became fools;

–who, because…

[17] For example: *Genesis* 5:5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31.

Romans 1
[28] ...they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, [were given over] to a mind void of judgment.

Yet this is what is done. The words of Plato and Socrates are preferred above those of Job, Isaiah, David, Luke, Peter, and Paul. For when we turn to Holy Writ, where alone wisdom dwells, we find no record of "the immortal part of man," but perfect unanimity in declaring that...

Hebrews 9
[27] ...it is appointed unto men once to die,

–that there is no man that lives that can deliver his soul from the hand of the grave,[18] and that God only has immortality.[19]

If we look for the origin of the anti-scriptural doctrine of natural immortality, we find that it sprung from the mind of Satan, the father of lies. The arch-deceiver said to the mother of the race:

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die,
[5] ...[but] you shall be as gods, [or, "as God"].

The same trait that prompted the acceptance of this doctrine, has perpetuated it. Vanity, love of self, is that to which Satan has deceived the world. It was flattering to Eve's vanity to be told that she had the principles of life within herself, so that she could maintain her own existence as well as God can. It was for this reason that heathen philosophers seized upon the idea, and is largely for this reason that the Catholic Church adopted it from them. From the Catholic Church, Protestant bodies have received it as a sacred legacy. When we realize the practical effect of the doctrine—to make one self-confident, and regardless of God as the Author of life, and of Christ, as the one through whom it is vouchsafed to man, we can understand something of the far-reaching policy of Satan.

[18] *Psalm* 89:48.
[19] *1 Timothy* 6:16.

There are but a few Catholic abominations for which this dogma is not responsible. Out of it grew purgatory, and the sale of indulgences, by which the pope of Rome waxed rich at the expense of the purses and the morals of the people of Europe. Without that doctrine, the worship of so-called saints, and of the Virgin Mary, would find no place in the Catholic Church. And Spiritualism, that masterpiece of deception, would make no headway but for the prevalence of the belief that departed ones are not really dead. It is a fact that so long as Protestants hold to the doctrine of inherent immortality, they have no weapon with which to successfully meet the errors of Catholicism, or the deceptions of Spiritualism. But the unlearned peasant, who relies on the Bible as God's holy word, and who understands its simple and harmonious truths, may, with the help of God, withstand the assaults of learned prelates or blasphemous infidels.

6. The Earthly and Heavenly Body

Signs of the Times, November 6, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: November 29
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. What do the afflictions of this life work for us?

   2 Corinthians 4:17.

2. Under what means do we behold unseen things?

   Hebrews 11:1.

3. By what means do we behold unseen things?

   Hebrews 11:1.

4. While looking (by faith) at unseen things, of what are we assured?

   2 Corinthians 5:1.

5. What is meant by "our earthly house of this tabernacle" being dissolved?

   Compare *2 Peter* 1:13-14 with *John* 21:18-19.

6. What does Paul say that we earnestly desire while in this earthly tabernacle?

   2 Corinthians 5:2.

7. Why do we desire to be "clothed upon"?

   2 Corinthians 5:4.

8. Then to what is being "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" equivalent?

9. What do these two "houses" represent?

   1 Corinthians 15:44.

10. Which of these is first?

    1 Corinthians 15:46.

11. When is the spiritual body bestowed?
    1 Corinthians 15:42-44.
12. Whence does this spiritual body come?
    1 Corinthians 15:49.
13. When is it that corruption puts on incorruption, and mortality puts on immortality?
    1 Corinthians 15:42, 51-53.
14. Then when is it that mortality shall be "swallowed up of life"?
15. And to what is this equivalent?
    2 Corinthians 5:4.
16. Who has wrought us for this thing?
    Verse 15.
17. What is it for which God has wrought us?
18. As a pledge of immortality, what does He now give to us?
    Verse 5.
19. If when this earthly house is dissolved, and we are "clothed up" with our heavenly house, mortality is swallowed up of life, what opposite conditions do the two houses represent?
20. Then in what condition are we while in this earthly body?
21. And while "at home in the body," from whom are we absent?
    Verse 6.
22. When is it that we shall be with the Lord?
    1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
23. And what do we "put on" at that time?
    1 Corinthians 15:21-54; *2 Corinthians* 5:2-4.
24. Since that is the dissolving of this present body, and we are not "clothed upon" with our spiritual body till the resurrection, in what condition are we between death and the resurrection?

2 Corinthians 5:4.

25. But is that a desirable state?

26. What do we desire rather than this?

    2 Corinthians 5:8.

27. Quote the three texts to prove that we can be "present with the Lord" only at His second coming.

Discussion

In the portion of Scripture covered by this lesson the apostle sets before us the grounds for hope. The matter what we may be called upon to suffer, we are to be of good courage, and trust in the Lord; for this is what is meant by *2 Corinthians* 4:16:

> **2 Corinthians 4**
> [16] But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day-by-day.

In the next verse he tells us why he is thus hopeful:

> [17] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Surely if we believe this, we could, with the apostle,

> **Romans 5**
> [3] ...glory in tribulation.

It is not, however, for every one, nor under all circumstances, that afflictions accomplish this result. It is not to all that afflictions seem light. Each person is inclined to feel that his own trials are the most severe of any; but certainly there are none that have to endure more than Paul did. Now what was the means by which he lightened them?

> **2 Corinthians 4**
> [17] For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;

[18] While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

And thus it is that everybody can make their own trials light or heavy, just as they please. If they choose to look only at the present time, and think of their trials, they will appear enormous; but if they looked at eternal things—the world to come, and its joys—earthly sorrows will be entirely lost sight of. Who would not endure a moment of pain to secure a year's pleasure? If during an entire year we should suffer pain but a single second, would that instant of pain be remembered? Certainly not; it would not attract our attention. Well, a second of time is infinitely greater in comparison with a year, than a lifetime is in comparison with the eternity. So, then, if our entire life were filled with pain, it would not be remembered in eternity. Now in order to get the benefit of this comparison *now*, and make our present afflictions seem light, we have only to transport ourselves, by faith, to the eternal world, looking so steadfastly at it that what it has to offer appears real to us. Christians are to live not alone in the present, but in the future:

2 Corinthians 5
[7] For we walk by faith, not by sight.

But what is that unseen thing at which we look, that affords this hope? The first verse of chapter 5 gives the answer:

2 Corinthians 5
[1] For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

This verse gives the answer in full; the remaining verses are devoted to enlarging upon and explaining this point. The question to be solved, then, is,

"What are these two houses? and when are they occupied?"

There can be no question but that by the dissolution, of this tabernacle the apostle refers to death. Peter uses the same expression in referring to his decease.[20] The fourth verse, being partially a repetition of verse 2, affords data for determining when the second house is bestowed.

2 Corinthians 5
[4] For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Thus we see that when we are clothed upon with our heavenly house, immortality is bestowed, or, still better, that the being "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" is the same as the putting on of immortality. We have already learned[21] that immortality is given only when the Lord comes; so we conclude that this heavenly house is not received at death. This will appear still more plainly hereafter.

By referring to the 15th of *1 Corinthians*, we find still more about these two "houses." In the forty-fourth verse we learn that there are two bodies, a natural body and the spiritual body. These bodies do not exist at the same time, but the first is the natural body,

1 Corinthians 15
[46] ...and afterward that which is spiritual.

Verse 49 tells us that this spiritual body is heavenly, thus more fully identifying it with "our house which is from heaven." And now from verses 42-44 we learn that this spiritual, heavenly body is given at the resurrection:

[42] So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:
[43] It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:
[44] It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

[20] *2 Peter* 1:13-15.
[21] *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54.

Thus we find that the two houses are the natural and the spiritual body; that the spiritual body is given at the resurrection, which is at the coming of the Lord; and that this receiving of the spiritual body, or "putting on immortality," is the same as mortality being "swallowed up of life."

But what about the state of death? What house do we occupy then? None at all. Our condition at that time is represented by the term "unclothed." While we are in this house—this mortal body—we groan,

2 Corinthians 5
[2] ...earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

In *Romans* 8:23 Paul says that that for which we groan is...

Romans 8
[23] ...the redemption of our body,

–thus proving what we have already learned, that the heavenly house is the putting on of mortality.

2 Corinthians 5
[3] If so be dead been clothed we shall not be found naked.

Now if this earthly house is dissolved at death—which none will deny—and the heavenly house is given only at the resurrection, it must be that there is a time of being unclothed. But this was not what Paul desired; it is not for which we groan. Death is not given as the object of desire. We groan with the burden of mortality, not that we desire death to rid us of the cares of this life, but desiring that mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Because we do not desire to be thus unclothed, however, is no sign that that may not be our lot. But...

1 Corinthians 15
[51] We shall not all sleep;

–some will be living when the Lord comes, and they will change mortality for immortality...

1 Corinthians 15
[52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Mortality and immortality are then the two houses—the one earthly, and temporal; the other heavenly, and eternal. Now while we are in the first state we are absent from the Lord; for it is only when Christ comes, and immortality is bestowed, that we shall be…

1 Thessalonians 4
[17] …forever with the Lord.

And since this is the case, we are not only willing to be absent from this mortal state, and be present with the Lord, but that is the thing for which we groan. Our confidence rests in the fact that God has created us for this selfsame thing; He designs that we shall have immortality, and to assure us that it will be given, He has given unto us the earnest of his Spirit. So long as we have that, we are sure of our future, immortal inheritance. And our faith in God's promise brings that inheritance so near, and makes it so real, that, in spite of present tribulation, we may be always…

Romans 12
[12] Rejoicing in hope.

7. Christ's Answer to the Thief on the Cross

Signs of the Times, November 13, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: December 6
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. When Christ was crucified, who were put to death with Him?
   Luke 23:32-33.
2. While they were hanging on the cross, what did one of the thieves do?
   Verse 39.
3. What did the other one do?
   Verse 40.
4. With what words did he rebuke his companion?
   Verses 40-41.
5. To whom did the penitent thief address himself?
   Verse 42.
6. What request did he make?
   Verse 42.
7. What reply did Jesus make?
   Verse 43.
8. What is the midst of paradise?
   Revelation 2:7.
9. By the side of what river is the tree of life?
   Revelation 22:1-2.
10. From what does the river of life proceed?
11. Then since both the tree and the river of life are in Paradise, where is God's throne?
12. When people go to paradise, in whose presence do they go?

13. How long after Christ's crucifixion was the resurrection?

    1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

14. On the morning of the resurrection what did He say to one of His disciples?

    John 20:17.

15. If He had not yet ascended to the Father could He have been in Paradise on the day of His crucifixion?

16. Since Christ cannot deceive, can it be that He intended to meet the thief in Paradise three days before?

17. If not, why did He use the word "today"?

18. At what time did the thief want to be remembered?

    Luke 23:42.

19. When does Christ have His kingdom?

    Matthew 25:31.

20. And when will all who believe on Him be with Him?

    John 14:3.

21. Then to what time did the penitent thief look forward?

22. Will his request then be granted notwithstanding he is now dead?

    1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

Discussion

The lesson this week covers that much discussed passage, Christ's answer to the thief on the cross. Comments on this subject need not be extended to any great length, for if the texts referred to are each read carefully, and a comprehensive view of them all is then taken, there can be no difficulty in arriving at the true interpretation.

In the first place we must consider the present and previous circumstances of the malefactor, and what it was for which he asked. One source of the popular error on this subject is the sup-

position that the thief had never before heard of Christ. Such a supposition is not probable. The wonderful thing about his action was the faith which he manifested. But faith comes by hearing,[22] and in no other way. So the thief must have heard of Christ and His mission. While others, even His chosen disciples, thought that Christ's career was ended, and that there was no hope of His saving anyone, the thief grasped the great truths which Jesus had been trying to impress upon His followers, of a resurrection and a future coming in glory, when He would reward every man according to his deeds. In harmony with this new born hope, the penitent thief exclaimed,

Luke 23
[42] Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

It is evident that whatever might happen to the thief that day would not be in answer to his request; for Christ did not have His kingdom that day. He himself had likened the kingdom of heaven to a nobleman that…

Luke 19
[12] …went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

In the seventh of *Daniel* we learn that the kingdom is not given to the Son of man until all earthly kingdoms have run their course. When He receives the kingdom He will return. So He says,

Matthew 25
[31] When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, *then* shall He sit upon the throne of His glory.

And therefore Christians are instructed still to pray,

Matthew 6
[10] Your kingdom come;

–as yet they are only…

[22] *Romans* 10:17.

James 2
[5] ...*heirs* of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love Him.

It is worthy of note in this connection that, according to Griesbach, *Luke* 23:42 should read,

> "Lord, remember me in the day of your coming."

The next point to be noted is what the Lord promised. It was,

Luke 23
[43] You shall be with me in Paradise.

Where and what is paradise? A few words in answer must suffice. Paul plainly intimates,[23] that it is in, or corresponds to, the third heaven. We can identify it still more closely. In *Revelation* 2:7 we learn that the tree of life is...

Revelation 2
[7] ...in the midst of the paradise of God.

In *Revelation* 22:1-2, we learn further that the tree of life is on either side of their river of life. Then the river of life must also be in Paradise. From this same passage we also learn that the river of life proceeds from the throne of God, thus showing that the throne of God is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Whoever goes to Paradise must necessarily be in the presence of God. Christ's promise to the thief, then, was virtually this:

> "You shall be with me in the presence of God."

Now what about the fulfillment of that promise? Was it fulfilled that day? or is its fulfillment still future? We can determine this in two ways:

1. By considering, as we have done, what an answer to the thief's request would imply, and
2. By examining the actual facts in the case.

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[23] *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4.

By the first we learned that if Christ intended His promise as a direct answer to the thief's request, then its fulfillment must still be future, because Christ's coming is still future. Now as to the recorded facts. On "the third day" after the crucifixion, as Mary, suddenly recognizing her risen Lord, was about to embrace Him, Jesus said:

John 20
[17] Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father.

This at once settles the matter, for if He had not ascended to the Father, of course He did not go to Paradise—into His presence—three days before. But it is not possible that Jesus should have prevaricated in the least, for…

1 Peter 2
[22] He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth;

–and therefore since He did not go to Paradise on the day of His crucifixion, it must be that He did not promise the thief that He should be with him there that day. In the light of the facts of the case we are forced to conclude that they who think that Jesus and the thief met in Paradise on the day of the crucifixion, do not understand the Saviour's words to the thief.

Consider the circumstances under which Jesus uttered those words. He had told His disciples that He was the one spoken of by the prophets, who was to occupy the throne of David. He had told the twelve that when He should sit on the throne of His glory they also should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Their hopes had been raised to the highest pitch when, but a few days before, He had entered Jerusalem in a triumphant manner, while the multitude waved palm branches before Him. They had thought that their hour of triumph had come, and that He was then to assume His kingdom. Instead of that, however, they had seen Him taken by a cruel mob, hurried unresistingly from judgment-seat to judgment-seat, subjected to the most brutal insults, beaten, spit upon, and scourged, and finally fainting and under the load of a heavy cross, to which He was

now fastened with huge nails, dying the death of the malefactor. The hopes of the disciples were blasted, and while they had all confidence in the integrity of their Master, they thought He had been deceived. To them the future looked dark and gloomy. Not so with Jesus. From the beginning of His earthly ministry He had foreseen this event; and His confidence in God's power to raise Him from the dead, and in the final success of His mission,—that through suffering He should bring many sons into glory,[24]—remained unshaken. And so when the penitent thief, with a faith that has seldom, if ever, been equaled, proffered his request, the mind of Jesus reached forward to the consummation of His work, and like a king He replied in words calculated to strengthen the faith of the petitioner,

Luke 23
[43] I say unto you *today*, You shall be with me in Paradise.

Truly so royal a gift was never before promised under such untoward circumstances.

> "But," someone will say, "the punctuation will not allow of such interpretation."

Well, we have found that the words of Jesus himself will not allow any other interpretation, so what shall be done? Shall we preserve the present punctuation, and thus make Jesus contradict himself? or shall we alter the punctuation so that the passage will be in harmony with the after-statement of Jesus, and with the rest of the inspired record? Reason and reverence would say the latter, because the punctuation is only the work of man, while the words of Jesus cannot disagree. If we just imagine ourselves back in the time when Luke wrote these words, or else that the art of punctuation has not yet been invented, our difficulty will vanish. Remembering that there were no marks of punctuation when the Bible was written, we can read the words of Jesus so that they will harmonize with other statements of Scripture. We will not

[24] *Hebrews* 2:10.

say to change the position of the comma, but just drop it out, leaving the texts as it was originally written. Then read it, making the emphasis where a due regard for the harmony of the sacred word would suggest that it be made. Surely there is no more of presumption in dropping out a comma than there is in placing it there in the first place. In fact, there is no presumption in either case. Those who placed it there doubtless thought that it was necessary to the sense. We, with clearer light on God's word, see that it destroys the sense, and read it in harmony with that clearer light.

8. Preaching to the Spirits in Prison

Signs of the Times, November 20, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: December 13
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. Upon whom did Christ pronounce a special blessing?
   Matthew 5:10.
2. For what did Peter say it was better to suffer?
   1 Peter 3:17.
3. For what did Christ once suffer?
   Verse 18.
4. For whose sins did He suffer?
   Isaiah 53:5.
5. Why did He thus suffer?
   1 Peter 3:18.
6. How did He suffer for our sins?
   Ib.
7. By what was He made alive?
   Ib.
8. To whom is it said that Christ preached?
   Verse 19.
9. By what agency did He preach to the spirits in prison?
   Verses 18, 19.
10. But who are they who walk at liberty?
    Psalm 119:45.
11. Who may be said to be in prison?
12. When was it that Christ by the Spirit preached to those disobedient ones?
    1 Peter 3:20.

13. Did the Spirit of God indeed strive with the antediluvians?

    Genesis 6:3.

14. When did the Spirit cease to strive with them?

15. To what place do the dead go?

    Psalm 8:48.

16. Where did Christ go before He ascended to Heaven?

    Ephesians 4:9.

17. Did the same Jesus that ascended to Heaven also descend into the grave?

    Ephesians 4:10.

18. Did the soul of Christ go into the grave (*Hades*)?

    Acts 2:29-32.

19. What Scripture proof can you give that Christ did not preach while in the grave?

20. When we read that Christ suffered for sin, "being put to death,"[25] does it mean that the soul of Christ suffered even to death?

    Matthew 26:38; *Isaiah* 53:10, 12.

21. What had the Lord promised concerning death?

    Isaiah 25:8.

22. How only could He destroy death?

    Hebrews 2:14.

23. If Christ himself had not died, what would be the condition of the human race?

Discussion

The Scripture which calls out the texts that compose this lesson, is *1 Peter* 3:18-20. The text itself teaches a lesson far different from that which is commonly supposed to teach, and the design of the lesson is to correct this mistaken idea. The apostle exhorts Chris-

[25] *1 Peter* 3:18.

tians to be patient under reproach, even though it be unjust, citing the example of Christ, who, though sinless, suffered for sins,

1 Peter 3
[18] ...the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit;
[19] By which also He went in preached and to the spirits in prison.

It is concerning this last expression that the misapprehension exists, people supposing that because preaching to the spirits in prison is introduced almost immediately after the death of Christ is spoken of, therefore Christ must have preached to those spirits after His crucifixion and before His resurrection. If this supposition be true, then our previous teaching concerning the state of man has been at fault; therefore we will study the text carefully.

It would be well for those who hold to the theory that Christ immediately after His crucifixion went and preached to the spirits in *Hades*, to compare this text with *Luke* 23:43, which was studied last week. It is claimed from that text that Christ went at once to Paradise; yet the same persons claim from *1 Peter* 3:18-20 that Christ went to some place where the dead were congregated, and preached to them. If one theory be true, the other cannot be. A little examination of this passage will show us that no statement whatever is made in it concerning the condition of Christ between His death and resurrection.

Notice that the statement concerning His preaching to the spirits in prison does not immediately follow the statement that He was put to death. Between these two is the statement that He was "quickened"—made alive. So if we follow the order of the apostle's statements, we find that the preaching was done while Christ was alive. But on reading the verses still more closely, we find that Jesus did not preach in person at all. It was by the Spirit that He preached. The apostle, having introduced the sufferings of Christ, mentions the fact that He was put to death. But the Bible writers always connect the death and the resurrection of Christ. They do not have Christ put to death, and then leave Him. So he says,

1 Peter 3
[18] ...put to death in the flesh, but quickened,

–made alive. This is not all, he was

[18] ...quickened by the Spirit;
[19] By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison.

The verse teaches simply that the Spirit which raised Christ from the dead, is the very same spirit by which Christ preached to the imprisoned spirits.

Now when did this preaching take place? The twentieth verse contains the answer.

[20] When the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.

Turning to *Genesis* 6:3, we read:

Genesis 6
[3] And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.

Thus we find a harmony between the two passages; the Spirit of the Lord was striving with the antediluvians. Christ was preaching to them, through Noah, but all true preaching is accompanied by the Spirit of God. It is the Spirit that impresses the truth of God upon the heart, and convinces of sin.

"But," says one, "you forget that those to whom Christ preached by the Spirit, were in prison."

No, we do not. For what purpose was the Spirit upon Christ when He was here on earth? In *Luke* 4:16-21 we read that Christ read *Isaiah* 61:1-2, and said,

Luke 4
[21] This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

That scripture reads:

Isaiah 61
[1] The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to [them that are] bound.

Who are these captives? David says,

Psalm 119
[45] I will walk at liberty; for I seek your precepts.

And from that we would conclude that all others are not at liberty. So Peter says of false teachers, and those who are inspired by them:

2 Peter 2
[19] While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Paul also teaches that if a man yields himself to sin, he is the servant of sin;[26] and in *Romans* 7:15-24 he gives a graphic description of the struggles of one who is seeking to escape from the cruel bondage of sin. At last he finds liberty in Christ; His servants alone are free men. So then all sinners are in prison; they have transgressed the law of God, and where the laws are not a nullity, transgressors are always consigned to prison. Through faith in Christ, they may get liberty. But this liberty is contingent on their obedience to the law. The Spirit presses the claims of the law home to the heart, and when the sinner repents and accepts the way of truth, the Spirit abides with him.[27] In Noah's time,

Genesis 6
[5] ...the wickedness of man was great;

–and therefore the Spirit, through the preaching of Noah, was striving to have them repent and find true liberty.

[26] *Romans* 6:16-17.
[27] See *Romans* 8:7-14.

It is not alone for the bearing that the popular theory of this text has on the Bible doctrine of immortality, that it deserves notice. There is a deeper reason. The popular interpretation of both *1 Peter* 3:18-20, and *Luke* 23:43, not only makes these texts contradictory, but overthrows the foundation principles of the gospel. In what way? By virtually denying the death of Christ. When man had sinned, he could not save himself. He could not by any obedience atone for his own sin. Neither would the life of one man answer for the life of another, for all have forfeited their lives by sin. Human sacrifices, then, would avail no more than with the blood of bulls and goats. Nothing but the life of a divine being, one who was sinless, and the giving of the law,[28] could answer for man. Such a one was which Christ. He offered himself freely, not because the law had any claim on His life, but that His righteousness might be counted instead of the past transgressions of those who should believe in Him, and obey Him. But now they tell us that Christ, the divine Son of God, did not die; that only His earthly, human body died. If that be so, then indeed is our faith vain, and we are yet in our sins. With the sorrowing Mary we may say,

> **John 20**
> [13] ...they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.

An interpretation that makes such a conclusion necessary should not be held for a moment by those who profess to love the Lord.

That Christ himself did die, there is abundant proof. Aside from the texts which say that the dead know not anything, we have special statements concerning Christ. The Jesus that...

[28] PP Editor's note: This phrase, "and the giving of the law," seems not to fit here. But this is how it is written in the original *Signs* article. It would make more sense to say, "and the giving of that life."

Ephesians 4
[10] ...ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things,

–who now sits at the right hand of God, there making intercession for us,[29] is the same Jesus who...

[9] ...descended first into the lower parts of the earth.

Not merely His human body, but His soul, which certainly must include His divinity, went into the grave. As we read in *Acts* 2:29-31, David did not, in the 16th Psalm, speak of himself, but, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath that He would raise up Christ to sit on His throne,

Acts 2
[31] He seeing this before spoke of *the resurrection of Christ that His soul was not left in* hell [*Hades*, the grave], neither did His flesh see corruption.

If, by the resurrection, the soul of Christ was not left in the grave, then it must previously have gone into the grave. Christ himself declared in the garden that his soul was...

Matthew 26
[38] ...exceeding sorrowful; even unto death,

–and this is just in harmony with the prophet's statement that...

Isaiah 53
[12] ...[He] poured out His soul unto death.

By death alone could He...

Hebrews 2
[14] ...destroy him which had the power of death, that is, the devil.

So then, notwithstanding the theories of man,

2 Timothy 2
[19] ...the foundation of God stands sure,

[29] *Romans* 8:34.

–*viz.*, that…

Romans 5
[6] …Christ died for the ungodly.

9. The Rich Man and Lazarus – I

Signs of the Times, December 4, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: December 20 & 27
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions – December 20

1. Where do you find the story of the rich man and Lazarus?

   Luke 16:19-31.

2. What description is given of the rich man?

   Verse 19.

3. What is said of Lazarus the beggar?

   Verses 20, 21.

4. What happened to them both?

   Verse 22.

5. Throughout the narrative, in what condition are they both represented as being?

   Verses 30, 31.

6. What further shows that they are not considered as being alive?

   Verse 25.

7. What is cited in the narrative as sufficient authority concerning the future?

   Verses 29, 31.

8. In the Old Testament, what do we learn as to the condition of the dead?

   Ecclesiastes 9:5-6.

9. What becomes of their thoughts?

   Psalm 146:3-4.

10. How much interest are they able to manifest in the affairs of their friends who still live?

    Job 14:21.

11. Where is the rich man represented as being after his death and burial?

    Luke 16:22-23 (See *Revised Version*).

12. What does the word "hell" (*Hades*) signify?

    1 Corinthians 15:55 (See marginal reading of the word "grave").

13. What have we learned as to the dominion of death and the grave over mankind?

    Psalm 89:48.

14. To what place did Christ go when He died?

    Acts 2:29-32.

15. What kind of a place is the grave?

    Job 10:20-22.

16. What can you say concerning the activity of the wicked in the grave?

    Psalm 31:17.

17. Why should people not put off that which they find to do in their life-time?

    Ecclesiastes 9:10.

18. In view of this state of things, what kind of a land is the grave called?

    Psalm 88:10-12.

19. In the narrative before us, where is the beggar represented as having been taken?

    Luke 16:22.

20. What does the inspired record say of Abraham and his death?

    Genesis 25:8.

21. Can this mean that he went to Heaven?

    Joshua 24:2.[30]

[30] PP Editor's note: The text does not answer the question. Perhaps *1 Kings* 2:2 was intended.

22. What is meant by "being gathered to his people"?

    Genesis 15:15.

23. Was any different disposition made of Abraham than of the rich man in our lesson?

    Compare *Genesis* 15:15; 25:9, with *Luke* 16:22.

24. Then must not all of these persons, if all of them ever really existed, have gone to the same place?

25. What is the place to which all the dead go?

Review Questions – December 27

1. Relate what is stated in the 16th of *Luke* concerning the rich man and the beggar.
2. What happened to them both?
3. To what place have we learned that they both went?
4. Do you know of any people who are exempt from going into the grave?
5. What does the psalmist say about all men going into the grave?

   Psalm 89:48.

6. Of what was "man" formed?

   Genesis 2:7.

7. What did he afterward become?

   Ib.

8. What was imparted to him to bring about this change?

   Ib.

9. Does the breath have life and consciousness in itself?
10. How does the wise man describe the death of man?

    Ecclesiastes 12:7.

11. Since there is nothing to man but that which is formed of the dust, and the breath, can there be any conscious entity when the dust returns to the earth?

12. Give a brief summary of the Scripture statements concerning the dead—their place and condition.

13. Since both Lazarus and the rich man are represented in *Luke* 16 as dead, could the conversation ascribed to them have been real?

14. What other instances can you cite of inanimate objects represented as talking?

    Genesis 4:10; *Habakkuk* 2:10; *James* 5:4.

15. What are such representations called?

    See Webster's definition of "apologue."

16. What important lesson is taught by this apologue?

17. With what precious statement of Christ is it in harmony?

    Luke 16:11-13.

18. What action of the Pharisees made its recital necessary?

    Psalm 16:14.

19. Why is human judgment as to the comparative worth of man liable to be at fault?

    1 Samuel 16:7.

20. When will every man be judged according to his real merit?

    1 Corinthians 4:5.

21. What will the righteous Judge give to those who love His appearing?

    2 Timothy 4:8.

22. How will the despised, humble poor man stand then?

    James 2:5.

23. When will the angels actually take the righteous to the mansions of rest?

Matthew 24:30-31.

24. When will the wicked be tormented?

    Matthew 13:40-42.

25. When the separation is thus made, what fixes the gulf between the righteous and the wicked?

    Revelation 22: 11.

Discussion

That which forms the basis of these two lessons, is the story of the rich man and Lazarus, as found in *Luke* 16:19-31. It is given in the lesson under the general heading, "Immortality," although the Scripture has really nothing to do with that subject. The condition of the dead, or the final reward of the righteous and the wicked, was not the subject under consideration, and Christ did not design by this passage to teach anything concerning either of those things. The only object, then, in considering it as bearing on the subject of immortality, is to show what it does *not* teach, rather than what it does, and to make it the means of refreshing our minds on certain plain declarations of Scripture already learned.

The idea that has become popular in regard to this passage of Scripture, is that a real occurrence is described—that the soul, or spirit, of Lazarus, and his death, was borne a way to a place called Abraham's bosom, in the full enjoyment of unutterable bliss, and that the disembodied soul, or spirit, of the rich man, as conscious as when it inhabited the body, was cast down to hell, there to suffer the torments of the damned. So firmly fixed is this idea in the minds of the majority of people, that it will be necessary to show its inconsistency before stating what the text is really designed to teach.

Let us, then, for a moment suppose the passage to be a plain narration of fact.

Luke 16

[22] And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

There is no law of language by which it can be made to appear that what "was carried" is not the same thing that "died." Popular theory would have it that the *body* of Lazarus died, and that his *soul*, or *spirit*, was carried to Abraham's bosom. But the language forbids any such construction.

> "The beggar died and [the beggar] was carried."

If only the body died, then only the body was carried; if it was the soul or spirit that was carried, then it was only the soul or spirit that died. Let us suppose, by way of illustration, that a man is describing a hurricane and its effects. Of a certain building, he says:

> "The house trembled to its foundation, and was blown down."

Now if, when you inquire the amount of the loss, he should say,

> "Oh, the house was not blown down, it was the people who were in it,"

–would you not think that he needed to learn how to use the English language? So we think concerning those who would argue from this passage that one part of Lazarus died and another part was carried to Abraham's bosom.

Again, we meet with the same difficulty in the case of the rich man.

Luke 16
[22] The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes.

In this case the language plainly says that what died was the same as what was buried, and this again was the same that is next said to be in hell. If it was only the body that died and was buried, then it was only the body that was in torment. If it was the soul that was in torment, then it was the soul that died. It will be noticed that throughout the narrative, all parties are represented as possessed of all the organs and faculties of ordinary living beings.

These things are sufficient to show that the popular idea is inconsistent with itself, and that we cannot look upon this scripture as containing the relation of a natural occurrence.

This conclusion is still further sustained by a consideration of the fact that both parties in this narrative are represented as dead. It is said of both that they died; Abraham says to the rich man,

> **Luke 16**
> [25] Son, remember that you in your *lifetime* received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but *now* he is comforted, and you are tormented.

Here is a direct contrast between their present condition and their lifetime. Now when we remember that…

> **Ecclesiastes 9**
> [5] …the dead know not anything;

–that when man's…

> **Psalm 146**
> [4] …breath goes forth and he returns to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish;

–that they perceive not when their friends are exalted or abased,[31] we conclude that this passage must partake of the nature of a fable.

We find, moreover, that the word here translated "hell," is *Hades*, and this, we are told, is the Greek word signifying the place of all the dead. If we turn to *1 Corinthians* 15:55, we find that "hell" (*Hades*) is placed in the margin as the equivalent of "grave" in the verse. Now in *Psalm* 89:48 we learn that there are none who can deliver their souls from the power of the grave; and in harmony with this, we find that both righteous and wicked go there.[32] Still further, we find that this place where all go is a

[31] *Job* 14:21.
[32] *Genesis* 37:35; *Job* 14:13; *Psalm* 31:17.

"land of forgetfulness";[33] a "land of darkness, as darkness itself," "where the light is as darkness";[34] and that in it…

Ecclesiastes 9
[10] …there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom.

Since all the dead go there, this narrative concerning those who are expressly declared to be dead, could not have been an actual occurrence.

This narrative may then properly be called a fable or an apologue. But the latter, Webster defines as:

> …a story or relation of fictitious events, intended to convey useful truths; a moral fable.

It differs from a parable, in this respect: a parable relates things which do take place among mankind, and which therefore *might* occur in the case supposed; but an apologue relates the supposed actions and words of brutes and inanimate things. Of this figure of speech there are many instances in the Bible, as in:

- *Genesis* 4:10, where Abel's blood is said to cry;
- *Habakkuk* 2:11, where the stone and the beam are said to speak together;
- *James* 5:4, where the hire of the laborers is said to cry;

–and an extended instance occurs in:

- *Judges* 9:8-15, where the trees are represented as talking among themselves, and choosing a king.

In all of these cases, some truth is designed to be conveyed in a striking manner.

In order to understand what this fable is designed to teach, we must observe the connection. The chapter opens with the parable of the steward. He was commended because he prudently provided for the future. From this, the Saviour showed the necessity

[33] *Psalm* 88:10-12.
[34] *Job* 10:22.

of using the wealth with which God may entrust us, in His service, so that He may commit to our trust true riches. Said He,

Matthew 6
[24] You cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 16
[14] And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him.

They regarded riches as a mark of God's especial favor, and poverty as indicating His displeasure. He therefore, by a fable drawn from their own tradition, showed that if a man has all his good things in this life, he can expect nothing more. He may *seem* to be far above his poverty-stricken but pious neighbor, but when things are seen as they really are, as God sees them, it will appear that there is indeed a great gulf between them, but that the advantage is all in favor of the poor man. Death ends the probation of every man, and thus *fixes* this gulf, so that there can be no changing of positions.

10. Ancient Spiritualism: Saul and the Witch

Signs of the Times, December 11, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: January 3
Original title: Ancient Spiritualism. Saul and the Witch

Review Questions

1. When on a certain occasion the Philistine host came against Israel, how was King Saul affected?

   1 Samuel 28:4-5

2. To whom did he seek for guidance?

   Verses 7, 8.

3. How had Saul previously treated such people?

   Verses 3, 9

4. By what authority had he done so?

   Exodus 22:18

   Leviticus 20:27

5. Why had the Lord given such instruction concerning the diviners, consulters of familiar spirits, etc.?

   Deuteronomy 18:10-12

6. With what people were such abominations common?

   Verses 9, 14

7. What had the Lord said it would be the result to those who should seek after such persons?

   Leviticus 19:31

8. Since Saul had obeyed the Lord in putting away those who had familiar spirits, why did he now consult one?

   1 Samuel 28:6

9. When he went, for whom did he ask?

   Verse 11

10. Why did he not go directly to Samuel?

    Verse 3

11. What can you say concerning the part which the dead are able to act in earthly affairs?

    Ecclesiastes 9:5-6

12. Give other Scripture testimony concerning the state of the dead.

13. Then could it indeed have been Samuel himself who carried on the subsequent conversation with Saul?

14. Was Saul at this time in favor with the Lord?

    1 Samuel 28:6

15. Why had the Lord rejected Saul?

    1 Samuel 15:22-23

16. When people reject the word of the Lord, what are they left to believe?

    2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

17. Then since Saul had rejected the word of the Lord, what must his supposed interview with Samuel have been?

18. Who is the author of the illusions and lies?

    John 8:44

19. Whom did he then worship?

    1 Corinthians 10:20

20. When the Israelites turned from the Lord, whom did they worship?

    Deuteronomy 32:16-17

21. Then what sort of a spirit was it which Saul consulted?

22. How is the devil able to make himself appear?

    2 Corinthians 11:14

23. If he can appear as an angel light, would it not be easy for him to assume the appearance of persons who have died?

24. How could Saul have kept from being deceived?

Discussion

The lesson this week is based on the account of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor, recorded in the *1 Samuel* 28. In order to keep the connection, the entire chapter should be carefully read. It may not be amiss to say that many good people suppose that Samuel did really come and talk with Saul, and thus they are strengthened in their belief of the conscious existence of the dead. We shall follow the subject in the order of the questions in the lesson, and see what we find.

The scene opens with the Philistine host prepared to fight against the Israelites. So great was the number of the Philistines, as compared with that of the Israelites, that Saul was very much alarmed. As it is forcibly expressed in the text,

1 Samuel 28
[5] ...his heart greatly trembled.

When David was surrounded by enemies, he said to the Lord, in his prayer,

Psalm 56
[3] What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.

But Saul was in a pitiable condition, for when he would seek the Lord, he received no answer. In his extremity he had his servants find a woman that had a familiar spirit, and, disguising himself, he went to her for information.

It was necessary for him to disguise himself, else he could not have gained admittance to the witch's abode; for in time past,

1 Samuel 28
[3] Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

This was in accordance with the command of God, and does not mean simply banishment, but death. Thus:

Exodus 22
[18] You shall not suffer a witch to live.

Leviticus 20

[27] A man also or woman that has a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard shall surely be put to death.

In *Deuteronomy* 18:9-12 we learn that witchcraft, and consulting with familiar spirits, was very common among the heathen that inhabited Canaan and before it was conquered by the Israelites. Under direction from the Lord, Moses said to Israel:

Deuteronomy 18

[9] When you are come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

[10] There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

[11] Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

[12] For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord your God does drive them out from before you.

The woman at Endor was one who had, by some means, escaped the proscription.

In order to a perfect understanding of this incident, it is very necessary to know the relation that existed between Saul and the Lord. Why would not the Lord listen to Saul? The answer is found in *1 Samuel* 15. The Lord had given Saul a commission, and he had not fulfilled it. He deliberately disobeyed the Lord. And this was only one of a long series of disobedient acts. So the prophet Samuel announced the will of the Lord, in these words:

1 Samuel 15

[23] For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has also rejected you from being king.

From that time, we learn that Samuel came no more to see Saul. So we see that Saul's rejection by the Lord was due to the fact that he himself had first rejected the Lord.

When Saul came to the witch, he said,

1 Samuel 28
[11] Bring me up Samuel.

Why did he not seek directly to the prophet himself? Because…

[3] Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city.

In response to this request the woman told him that she saw an old man, covered with a mantle, coming up out of the earth.

[13] And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what did you see? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.
[14] And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

The reader will notice that in this case Saul did not see the apparition at all, but "perceived that it was Samuel," from the woman's description. Notice, also, that the pious Samuel was called "up," and came up "out of the earth," instead of down from heaven. Saul knew nothing about the doctrine of the good going to Heaven at death, and the heathen, one of whom he was consulting, had all souls, good and bad alike, in the lower world—in *Hades*.

Now what reasons have we for saying that Samuel did not converse with Saul on that occasion, and was not there at all?

1. It is not reasonable to suppose that, if Samuel would not during his life-time listen to Saul, whom he loved, when personally urged do so, he would come to him after death, at the solicitation of a despised heathen.

2. It is the height of absurdity to suppose that God, who had rejected Saul, and had refused to answer him in His own appointed way,—by dreams, by Urim, or by prophets,—would communicate with him through one whom He had said should be put to death as an abominable thing.
3. That which settles the matter beyond all controversy, is the word of inspiration:

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything.
[6] Also their love, and their hatred, and there envy, is now perished.
[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go.

Psalm 146
[4] [Man's] breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Satan has the power of *death;* but the Lord alone has *life*. Satan can seize men, and shut them up in his prison house, the grave; but Satan cannot liberate them; Christ alone has the keys of the grave; He alone can set Satan's captives free. For these reasons, we say we *know* that Samuel had no more to do with the occurrence narrated in *1 Samuel* 28, than the stones under their feet.

> "If Samuel was not there, who personated him so successfully as to deceive Saul?"

Satan, or one of his evil angels. And this also is susceptible of Bible proof. *First*, we learn that...

2 Corinthians 11
[14] Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

It was as an angel light, his true form and character concealed, that he came with his temptations to Christ in the wilderness. Had he come as the chief of the powers of darkness, he could not

have hoped to make any impression on the Saviour. He hoped to deceive Jesus into thinking that he was an angel sent with a message from heaven. The Lord, however, saw through the disguise at once. But the point is, if Satan may appear as an angel light, how much more may he not personate a human being? To successfully personate another is nothing more than many *men* are able to do.

Second, Saul had put himself on the devil's ground. Long before, he had first cast off, and then been cast off by the Lord. Now there is no neutral ground between the Lord and Satan. As soon as Saul was entirely out from under the influence of God, he passed under the influence of Satan. His frenzied attacks on the innocent David showed the influence under which he had fallen. Then what more natural than that he, being under the influence of the devil, should go to the devil for help? A "familiar spirit" is…

> A demon or evil spirit supposed to attend the call.[35]

"Witchcraft" is…

> Intercourse with evil spirits.

See also the definition of "sorcery," and "enchantment." This was what the heathen practiced. Their worship was devil worship.

> **2 Corinthians 10**
> [20] But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils.

Whenever the Israelites forsook the Lord, they engaged in devil worship.

> **Deuteronomy 32**
> [16] They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations they provoked Him to anger.
> [17] They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

[35] Webster.

Psalm 106

[34] They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them:
[35] But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.
[36] And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.
[37] Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.

No wonder that they were an abomination to the Lord. Therefore, since Saul had voluntarily put himself under the devil's power, we are forced to conclude that the devil deceived him in this instance. Deceived him, indeed he did; for if space permitted, we could show that Saul did not die on the morrow, as was intimated to him.

"How could Saul have kept from being deceived?"

By heeding the word of the Lord.

2 Thessalonians 2

[11] Strong delusion, that they should believe a lie,

–is not sent to men until they reject the truth. And in that case, how could it be otherwise? If a man does not believe the truth, what is there but lies for him to believe? Remember, also, that it is…

Hebrews 3

[12] …an evil heart of unbelief

–that first leads men away from God, and under the devil's power. And now we will give a sure rule for detecting all evil spirits.

Isaiah 8

[20] To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Christ at once detected Satan's attempted imposture because he acted contrary to the written word. So when we hear of men who

pretend to communicate with the dead, we may know that there is no light in them, because the Bible says,

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] The dead know not anything.

If we strictly adhere to God's word, we cannot be deceived; if we cast any portion of it aside, we need not hope to stand.

11. Spiritualism (1884)

Signs of the Times, December 18, 1884
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: January 10
Original title: The Sabbath-School. Spiritualism

Review Questions

1. What did Paul say should come in the last days?

   2 Timothy 3:1

2. What causes these perilous times?

   Verses 2-5

3. What sort of persons are they who do these things?

   Verse 6

4. What all-important requirement do they lack?

   Verse 7

5. How do they resist the truth?

   Verse 8

6. How was it that the magicians of Egypt withstood Moses?

   Exodus 7:10-12

7. For what purpose will miracles be performed just before the Lord's coming?

   Matthew 24:23-24

8. By what power did the heathen magicians perform their miracles?

   1 Corinthians 10:20

9. Then must we not expect, from the words of Paul and Christ, that by the aid of devils, miracles will be performed in the last days?

   Revelation 16:13-14

10. For what purpose do these spirits of devils work miracles?

    Ibid.

11. What immediately follows their deceitful miracles?

    Verse 15

12. What did Paul say the coming of Christ would immediately follow?

    2 Thessalonians 2:8-9

13. Among other things what do these wonder-working spirits profess to be?

    Matthew 24:23-24

14. What is the specific work of Christ?

    John 5:40; 10:10

15. What has Christ brought to light?

    2 Timothy 1:10

16. Then if the spirits claim to be Christ, what will they claim to have demonstrated?

17. By what is this now fulfilled?

18. Who originated the doctrine of the natural immortality of man?

    Genesis 3:4

19. Who is this serpent?

    Revelation 20:2

20. What effect does this doctrine have upon the wicked?

    Ezekiel 13:22

21. How is it that people are deceived by these lies?

    2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

22. When we are urged to seek unto them that have familiar spirits, to what should we turn?

    Isaiah 8:19-20

23. How is it that we can resist the adversary?

    1 Peter 5:8-9

24. In order to successfully resist the devil, where must we have the word of God?

Psalm 119:11

Discussion

2 Timothy 3

[1] This know also, that in the last days perilous time shall come.

Reference is here made to the time immediately preceding the coming of the Lord. The reason why the times are then so perilous, is contained in the first clause of the second verse:

[2] For men shall be lovers of their own selves.

The sins that are afterward enumerated are simply different forms of the one great sin—supreme love for self; men will love themselves, and pleasures, more than they love God. There is no form of idolatry that is any more debasing than this.

[5] Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

Those who commit these crimes are professed followers of God. Here, then, we find that there are heathen who have a knowledge of the true God, and who profess to worship Him. The sins that are imputed to them are of the same class exactly as those which are common among the ancient heathen.[36] How is it that they deny the power of godliness? By their evil practices. Paul elsewhere speaks of certain unbelieving ones, who…

Titus 1

[16] …profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.

The apostle does not say that these persons have no power; but it is the power of *godliness* that they lack. They are of the class that the prophet speaks of, who take delight in approaching to God, who fast, and afflict themselves, and are very fervent in their devotions, yet the Lord sees them not. These are they of whom the Lord speaks in…

[36] See *Romans* 1:28-32.

Matthew 7
[22] Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works?

Surely, such zeal and power must indicate true Christianity; but the Saviour says He will say to them,

[23] I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.

They will be told to depart from Him. Why? Because, with all their profession, they "work iniquity," or do unlawful deeds.

One sin seems to especially characterize this class. Not content with saying that they are…

2 Timothy 3
[3] …without natural affection [and] incontinent,

–the apostle continues.

[6] For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women, laden with sins, led away with divers lusts.

From the fact that they are…

[7] Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth,

–we conclude that these people do not regard their wicked practices as sinful. They have not that "knowledge of the truth" which would enlighten them, and so they…

Isaiah 5
[20] …call evil good, and good evil.

They are…

2 Timothy 3
[3] …despisers of those that are good,

–and in their blindness they…

[8] …resist the truth.

How do they resist the truth?

2 Timothy 3
[8] As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these resist the truth.

This sheds a flood of light on the subject, for in *Exodus* 7:11, and onward, we learn that Pharaoh's magicians withstood Moses "with their enchantments."[37] They withstood him by performing, up to a certain point, miracles, the object of which was to make the king believe that his gods were as powerful as the God of Israel. Enchantment is the same as sorcery, and witchcraft; it is "intercourse with evil spirits." Then the magicians, Paul tells us were Jannes and Jambres, resisted Moses by means of their intercourse with evil spirits. What evil spirits? The spirits of devils, for heathen worship was nothing but devil worship; when the heathen offered sacrifices, they offered them to devils.[38] Now since people in the last days will resist the truth just as the magicians did, we know that they will oppose the spread of the truth by means of miracles which, through the power of Satan, they are unable to perform.

This conclusion is verified still further by the prophet, who saw, just before the coming of the Lord, the…

Revelation 16
[14] …spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world.

Paul also tells us that the coming of Christ follows…

2 Thessalonians 2
[9] …the working of Satan with all power and signs and wonders.

Christ spoke of these wonders as being signs of His coming, and said that they would be so great that, if it were possible, they

[37] *Exodus* 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18.
[38] *1 Corinthians* 10:20.

would deceive the very elect.[39] These verses also give us a clue to the nature of these deceptions.

Matthew 24
[24] For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets.

Now if certain people profess to be Christ, they must necessarily profess to do the work which the Bible says Christ alone has power to do. Christ says,

John 10
[10] I am come that they might have life.

Paul says that Christ has…

2 Timothy 1
[10] …brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Modern Spiritualists claim that Spiritualism alone demonstrates the immortality of the soul. They say that while Christians *believe* that man is immortal, they *prove* it. By their so-called materialization of dead persons, they *seem* to prove it, but this is the delusion against which we are warned.

Satan's first recorded lie, the one which has formed the basis of all his deceptions, was the statement to Eve,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

There in the garden of Eden he proclaimed the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. By this same doctrine he deceives the people in the last days. The great truth of the Bible is salvation in Christ alone; salvation from sin and its penalty, death;

John 3
[36] He that believes on the Son have everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life.

Those who do not receive this truth, who teach that there will be endless life for the wicked, and that the dead are not really

[39] *Matthew* 24:23-24.

dead, are open to this deception of Satan. The devils, personating individuals who have died, can appear to their friends who believe in the immortality of the soul, and thus "demonstrate" it to them. When people accept this as truth, the miracles which they perform will also be attributed to the Spirit of God. Then those who say anything against the doctrines taught by these wonder-working spirits, will be accused of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and will be persecuted. Thus these last-day apostates become…

2 Timothy 3
3 …despisers of those that are good.

The only safety is in having the word of God *hidden* in the heart. If the word has been "engrafted" into the life of the individual, he will always have wherewith to resist the devil.

Isaiah 8
19 And 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?
20 To the law and to the testimony [the Spirit of prophecy; see *Revelation* 19:10]: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

12. Punishment of the Wicked: The Harvest

Signs of the Times, January 1, 1885
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: January 17
Original title: Punishment of the Wicked. The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. How many classes of people does the Bible recognize as existing in the world?

   Matthew 13:24-25.

2. What are these classes?

   Verse 38.

3. How long do they remain mingled together?

   Verses 28-30.

4. When is the harvest?

   Verse 39.

5. Is there any class between these two?

   Matthew 12:30.

6. Can one be in both these classes at the same time?

   Matthew 6:24.

7. When will the separation between these two classes be made?

   Matthew 25:31-33.

8. Briefly describe the character of these two classes?

   Verses 34-45.

9. What will finally become of them both?

   Verse 46.

10. When it is said that the righteous shall go into "life eternal," what is meant?

    Luke 20:35-36.

11. Define the words "everlasting" and "eternal."

12. How much difference in duration will there be between the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked?

    Matthew 25:46.

13. What is to be punished with the wicked?

    Romans 6:23.

14. Since their punishment is to be everlasting, or eternal, what can you say of the death which is the wages of sin?

15. What is said of the punishment of those who do not obey the gospel?

    2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

16. From whom does the apostle say the everlasting destruction comes?

17. What is it that comes from God and destroys the wicked?

    Revelation 20:9.

18. Will any wicked person escape the wrath of God?

    Nahum 1:3.

19. How many of earth's inhabitants have never sinned?

    Romans 10:23.

20. Then how will it be possible for anybody to escape eternal death?

    1 John 1:7.

Discussion

There are innumerable classes of people in the world, according to a human reckoning, but according to God's standard—the Bible—there are only two. These are the righteous and the wicked. God made man upright, and designed that he should remain so; but the enemy came in and marred the handiwork of the Creator. Since the fall of Adam there has not been a time when there have not been wicked persons on the earth. Indeed, so great has been the contamination that there has been no man since that time who was not to a greater or lesser extent a sinner. It is evident,

then, that if at that time the tares—the wicked of earth—had it been plucked up, there would have been no wheat left. Both are to grow together until the harvest—the end of the world. Then a separation will be made by the only one who is able to distinguish between the good grain and the worthless matter.

From these facts two things are evident.

1. There are only two classes. Christ said:

Matthew 12
[30] He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not with me scatters abroad.

There is no provision made for people who are "as good as the average." To be only as good as the average of mankind, is to be very bad. The standard is: *good*. Anything different from that is bad.

2. None receive the reward until the Lord comes. In the end of the world—the harvest—the master sends for his angels, and they…

Matthew 13
[49] …sever the wicked *from among* the just.

The farmer does not reap one portion of his wheat-field in the spring, another in midsummer. And still another in the fall. There is a special harvest-time, and then all his grain is reaped. So the Lord has not been all the time gathering from this field that He has sown, but has…

Acts 17
[31] …appointed a day, in which He will judge the world.

Matthew 13
[39] The harvest is the *end* of the world,

…not the beginning, middle, and end.

From *Matthew* 25:35-45 we learn that the Lord weighs not only *actions* but intentions. Those to whom the king says,

Matthew 25

[34] Come you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom,...

–have not an opinion of their merit. They have had such exalted ideas of right that their humble deeds seem as nothing in comparison. But love to Christ is the mainspring of all their action, and that glorifies every deed however small. Christ identifies himself with His people so closely that whatever is done to them is accounted as done directly to Him. On the other hand, we learn that no act, however worthy in itself, is of any value in the sight of God unless done for love to Christ. The heathen did many good things. Their philosophers taught what they called "virtue," some things in which were really good. But all their boasted virtue was only for the exaltation of self. Selfishness was the motive that prompted all their deeds; and since a fountain cannot send the forth at the same time both sweet water and bitter, neither can a good accompany evil, it follows that even their seeming good deeds were really evil. On this same basis, whatever is done, *in order...*

Matthew 19

[16] ...that [we] may have eternal life,

–with the idea that good deeds are going to make one worthy of reward, is all in vain. Love must be the ruling motive. If we serve God because of gratitude to Him for his love that has already been manifested to us, His love will be still further manifested in *giving* us eternal life. His love will always be as much greater than ours as He is greater than we; consequently the utmost efforts that our love can prompt will fall infinitely short of compensating for His benefits to us.

Matthew 25

[46] And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life the eternal.

The words of "eternal" and "everlasting" are from the same word in the original, and mean the same. We know that in this case they mean "without end," for Christ tells us that those who

obtain that world, cannot die anymore;[40] hence eternal life means life without end. Then eternal or everlasting punishment means punishment without end. This will be the fate of the wicked. But mark, this verse does not tell the *nature* of the punishment; it only tells us that the punishment will be inflicted, and that it will last eternally. *Romans* 6:23 tells us what the punishment is to be:

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death.

Then *Matthew* 25:46 might very properly be paraphrased thus:

> "And these—wicked—shall go away into eternal death; but the righteous into eternal life."

This is exactly what the text teaches. In harmony with this Paul says of those who know not God, and do not obey the gospel, that they…

2 Thessalonians 1
[9] …shall be punished with *everlasting destruction.*

This cannot be the case if they are never *destroyed.* The agent of this destruction is to be fire, which is to come…

[9] …from the presence of the Lord.[41]

Nahum 1
[3] The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.

No guilty person can escape the wrath of God. How then can anybody escape eternal death, since…

Romans 3
[23] All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God?

Only by having their guilt taken away by the blood of the Lamb of God. If we do not come to Christ, we can never have life; but if He is…

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[40] *Luke* 28:35-36.
[41] See *2 Thessalonians* 2:8; *Revelation* 20:9.

1 Corinthians 1

30 ...made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification,

–He will also be unto us...

30 ...redemption.

13. Punishment of the Wicked: Everlasting Fire

Signs of the Times, January 8, 1885
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: January 24
Original title: The Sabbath-School

Review Questions

1. When will all the nations of earth be gathered before the Lord?
2. How many classes of people will there be?
3. Name and describe them?
4. What will be said to those on the right hand—the righteous?
   Matthew 25:34.
5. What will the Lord say to those on the left?
   Verse 41.
6. Have any people ever yet been punished with everlasting or eternal fire?
   Jude 7.
7. Describe the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah.
   Genesis 19:24-25.
8. How long a time, in comparison with eternity, did it take to accomplish this overthrow?
   Lamentations 4:6.
9. As the result of being overthrown by "everlasting fire," what did those cities become?
   2 Peter 2:6.
10. After the cities became ashes what must have become of the fire?
11. Then does "everlasting fire" necessarily burn to all eternity?
12. What did the prophet Malachi say of the fierceness of the fires of the last day?

Malachi 4:1.

13. As the result of this fire, what will the wicked be?

    Verse 3.

14. When this takes place, what will have become of the fire which devoured them?

15. What wonderful promise was made concerning Jerusalem, on condition that the people should obey the Lord?

    Jeremiah 17:24-25.

16. What did the Lord say that He would do if they did not obey Him?

    Verse 27.

17. What did He say that this fire should do?

    Ibid.

18. What did He say should not be done to the fire?

    Ibid.

19. What is the meaning of the word "devour"?

20. If the fire, when kindled, had been quenched, would the gates and palaces have been devoured?

21. When that upon which the flames were feeding was "devoured," what must have become of the fire?

22. What did Christ say of the fire into which the wicked are to be cast?

    Mark 9:45.

23. Since the fire is not to be quenched, what will it do?

    Revelation 20:9.

24. Then how much of the wicked will there be left?

    Malachi 4:1.

Discussion

It has been said that the Bible is like a fiddle, because it will play any tune that is desired. To this it has justly been replied that you can get only one tune from a fiddle if you keep your fingers off from the strings. So the Bible of itself does not teach many and contradictory doctrines, but only one, harmonious in all its parts. In no case is this better illustrated than in the doctrine of the punishment of the wicked, which we are now considering. If we only let the Bible explain itself, nothing more harmonious was ever seen. Our lesson covers one or two texts which suffer much from being tampered with by human hands; let us see how they appear when the Bible is used as a commentary.

Matthew 25

41 Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and His angels.

The "angels that kept not their first estate"[42] sinned against such great light that there was for them no forgiveness. If man had not yielded to temptation, they would alone have suffered the torments of the everlasting fire; but now they are to be accompanied by wicked men who will not be forgiven.

"And this torment is never to end,"

–says one, and then, of perchance, he asks,

"Is it just for God to cause a man to suffer the eternal torment for the sins committed in one short life?"

We answer, It must be, if that is what He has threatened to do. We are not to decide by our ideas of justice what God ought to or will do, but must derive our ideas of justice from what God says He will do; for He is the embodiment of justice, as well as of every other desirable thing. Perhaps if we study carefully, we shall find that God has not threatened anybody with eternal torment.

[42] *Jude* 1:6.

Eternal *punishment*, as we learned last week, is threatened; but we must remember that this punishment is *death*, and that no one has received his punishment until death takes place, and then *torment* must necessarily cease.

As we read along the New Testament, with this text in mind, our attention is caught by a similar expression in *Jude*, the seventh verse:

> **Jude**
> [7] Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Everybody is familiar with the story of the destruction of Sodom. It is found in *Genesis* 19. There we learn[43] that God rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brimstone, and *overthrew* them and all their inhabitants. Peter tells us how complete was this overthrow:

> **2 Peter 2**
> [6] And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah *into ashes* condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.

When a thing is reduced to ashes, we know that every particle of it that is combustible has been burned, and that fire can no longer be kept burning upon it. In fact, there is no surer way of putting out a fire than of covering it with ashes, for they are incombustible. So then the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah having been long since turned to ashes, must have, for an equally long time, ceased to burn. Nobody will question this, for all believe that a portion of the Dead Sea covers a place where they once stood.

And still those cities suffered the vengeance of "eternal fire." This being true, we reasonably conclude that although the wicked

[43] *Genesis* 19:24-25.

are to go into everlasting or eternal fire, they need not necessarily continue to burn to all eternity. At least *Matthew* 25:41 does not teach that they will. Now if we carry our investigation a little further, we shall see that, as in the case of the cities of the plain when they were turned to ashes, the fire which preys upon the wicked must cease to burn.

Malachi 4

[1] For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Stubble cannot long withstand the action of fire, and we are not surprised to learn that if the wicked are stubble nothing will be left of them when once they are subjected to the flames. But read verse 3:

[3] And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.

That settles the matter beyond controversy. We know not how long a time it may take to reduce the wicked to ashes; to our comprehension it will doubtless be a very long time; but we are certain that they eventually will be ashes, and are just as certain that when that time comes, the "everlasting fire" which consumed them will have ceased to burn.

The learned commentator, Dr. Barnes, although he believed in the eternal torment of the wicked, has given the following just criticism on *Jude* seven:

> The phrase "eternal fire" is one that is often used to denote future punishment—as expressing the severity and intensity of suffering. See Notes on *Matthew* 25:41. As here used, it cannot mean that the fires which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah were literally eternal, or were kept always burning, for that was not true. The expression seems to denote, in this connection, two things: (1) that the destruction of the cities of the plain, with their inhab-

itants, was as entire and perpetual *as if* the fires had been always burning—the consumption was absolute and enduring—the sinners were wholly cut off, and the cities forever rendered desolate; and (2) that in its nature and duration this was a striking emblem of the destruction which will come upon the ungodly.

Mark 9:45 is another text that is sadly misunderstood. People think, or, rather, conclude without thinking, that "fire that never shall be quenched" must of course always continue to burn. But what is the natural consequence to perishable substances when the fire into which they are cast is not quenched? Why, they are burned up, of course. They are speedily reduced to ashes, and then the fire, which was not quenched, dies a natural death. Throw stubble into the fire; if you speedily quench the flame, the stubble may be saved; but if the fire is unquenchable, nothing can keep the stubble from becoming utterly consumed. So of the wicked; if the Bible said that the fire shall be quenched, we should know that they would escape punishment; but no human power can quench the fire of the last day, and God said that He will not. So we must conclude, even if the Bible did not tell us, that the wicked are to be *devoured*, not preserve alive. When the fire has done its work, they will be left…

Malachi 4

[1] …neither root to nor branch.

14. Punishment of the Wicked: Everlasting Destruction

Signs of the Times, January 15, 1885
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: January 31
Original title: Punishment of the Wicked—Continued

Review Questions

1. With what does Paul say that the wicked shall be punished?

   2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

2. When will this punishment take place?

3. From whom does this destruction come?

4. What does the prophet Joel say of the day of the Lord?

   Joel 1:15.

5. What is the agent of this destruction that comes from the Lord?

   2 Thessalonians 2:8; *Revelation* 20:9.

6. What does the inspired writer say of the suffering of those who are thus *devoured?*

   Revelation 20:10.

7. Repeat another testimony on this point.

   Revelation 14:9-11.

8. What, in ancient times, was the law concerning Hebrew servants?

   Exodus 21:2.

9. If in the seventh year the servant refused to leave his master, what was done?

   Verses 5, 6.

10. After the ceremony of boring the servant's ear had been performed, how long was he to serve his master?

    Ibid.

11. Can this by any possibility mean that in such a case the servant was never to die?

12. What must we understand by the expression, "he shall serve him forever"?

    See Notes.

13. Then what may we understand by similar expressions concerning the torment of the wicked?

14. What positive proof can you give that those sufferings will eventually be terminated by cessation of existence?

    Malachi 4:1, 3.

15. How many other texts do you remember that prove the same thing?

Discussion

2 Thessalonians 1

[6] Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
[7] And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
[8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
[9] Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

The time when this vengeance will be taken on the disobedient is stated in verses 7 and 10. It is when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, and when He shall be glorified in His saints.[44]

There is a quite general misunderstanding of this text in *Thessalonians*. We frequently hear it quoted as though it read that the wicked shall be banished from the presence of the Lord. But the text says no such thing. Further, to be banished from the presence of the Lord is an impossibility, for God is omnipresent; He fills the

[44] Compare *Matthew* 25:31-36.

universe; and still further, if such a thing were possible, it would be no punishment for the wicked, but would be what they would desire. No position could be more unsatisfactory to a wicked man than to be continually in the presence of God. What the text does say of the wicked is that they…

2 Thessalonians 1
[9] …shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

The destruction comes from the Lord. So we read in *Joel* 1:15 that the day of the Lord comes "as a destruction from the Almighty." And Paul in another place says that the wicked shall be consumed by the spirit of His mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of His coming,[45] thus showing how they are destroyed from, or by, the glory of His power.

From *Revelation* 21:9, as well as elsewhere, we learn that fire is to be the agent in the destruction of the wicked. As they compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, fire comes down from God out of heaven, and *devours* them. This indicates complete extermination. Then what are we to understand when, in the next verse, we read that they…

Revelation 20
[10] …shall be tormented day and night forever and ever?

Some may answer that this applies only to the devil, who deceived them. This will not meet the difficulty, since the Scriptures do not teach that Satan is to be punished differently from the wicked, except in degree; and in *Revelation* 14:11 we have a statement concerning the wicked, that is similar to that in *Revelation* 22:10. Now since John, looking at things that are to be, as though they had been, saw that the fire *devoured* the wicked, and Paul says that they shall be punished with everlasting *destruction*, we must conclude that "forever and ever" must be limited in duration. For if the wicked are always to exist in torment, then it

[45] *2 Thessalonians* 2:8.

would necessarily follow that they will never be destroyed nor devoured.

The Bible must be its own interpreter, and we will let this text, which seems obscure, be explained by another one, which has no obscurity. Turn to *Exodus* 21, and read verses 2-6:

Exodus 21

[2] If you buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.
[3] If he came in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him.
[4] If his master have given him a wife, and she have born him sons or daughters; the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself.
[5] And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:
[6] Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him *for ever*.

We say that there is no obscurity in this passage. The different parts of the transaction are clearly indicated, and the result is plainly stated: after having his ear bored through which an awl, the servant was to continue a bondman *forever*. And no one would mistake the statement, and suppose that the servant was to endure the rigors of servitude throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Certainly not. All would agree that this means simply that the servant could, under those circumstances, derive no benefit from the Sabbatic year, but that he must serve without intermission just as long as his life should last. This is all there is to it.

> "But why," says one, "do you introduce such an instance as that?"

In order to show that the term "forever" does not necessarily indicate that the thing to which it is applied has no end. It may be applied to an object that is, in its nature, perishable, as in the case of the servant. In general this rule may be laid down: Whenever

there is anything in the nature of the object spoken of that forbids the idea of its eternal existence, the term "forever" merely implies continuity of existence. God's word forbids us to imagine that the wicked shall exist throughout eternity; so when we read that they shall be "tormented day and night forever and ever," we are to understand that their torments will be long, and will be uninterrupted until they are utterly consumed. That such a time will come is taught by the word of the Lord:

> **Malachi 4**
> [1] For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and *all that do wickedly*, shall be stubble: and the day that comes *shall burn them up*, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall *leave them neither root nor branch.*
> [3] And *you shall tread down the wicked;* for *they shall be ashes* under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.

Matthew 3:11-12; *2 Thessalonians* 1:7-9; 2:8; *Revelation* 22:9; *Romans* 6:23; *John* 3:16, 36; and many other texts may be cited to prove the same thing, namely, that the wicked will eventually be utterly exterminated.

15. Punishment of the Wicked: The Wages of Sin

Signs of the Times, January 22, 1885
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: February 21
Original title: Punishment of the Wicked—Continued

Review Questions

1. Give a scriptural explanation of *Revelation* 14:9-11; 20:10.
2. When the wicked have been simply *tormented* with fire and brimstone, have they received their reward?

   Romans 6:23.
3. Then what must that fire do in order that the wicked may receive their deserts?

   Malachi 4:1.
4. What is appointed unto all men?

   Hebrews 9:27.
5. Can this death, to which all men are appointed, be the death which is the wages of sin?
6. What is promised to all men, regardless of their character?

   1 Corinthians 15:22; *Acts* 24:15.
7. Are the wicked now suffering their punishment?

   2 Peter 2:9.
8. When will ever man be rewarded according to his works?

   Matthew 2:9.
9. Then for what purpose will they come forth from their graves?

   Job 21:29-30.
10. Give further proof that the death which is common to all men is not the wages of sin.

    Ezekiel 18:26.

11. What is it that causes the death which is the wages of sin?
    Revelation 20:9.

12. What is this death by fire called?
    Revelation 21:8.

13. How long is it after the resurrection of the righteous before the wicked are "brought forth" to destruction?
    Revelation 20:4-5.

14. Who will escape the second death?
    Revelation 2:11; 20:6.

Discussion

Revelation 14
[9] And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,
[10] The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:
[11] And the smoke of their torment ascends 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.

It is not the province of this lesson to explain the meaning of the beast, his image, or his mark. It is sufficient to say that to worship the first two, or receive the last, must be the most heinous crime that man can commit, since it brings down upon the offender the unmingled wine of the wrath of God. The point to be explained is the expression,

Revelation 14
[11] And the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever.

As this has been explained in past lessons, a brief mention here will be sufficient. If the student will read *Exodus* 21:2-6, he will find that the term "forever" does not necessarily denote that the thing to which it is applied shall never cease to exist; for under

certain conditions a servant was to serve his master *forever*, which could not possibly mean "without end." Now if that term does not *necessarily* mean "without end," *Revelation* 14:9-11 affords no proof that the wicked will be tormented to all eternity. That doctrine, if true, must be proved by other texts. But we have already learned that the wicked are to be stubble in a fire that shall "burn them up," and will leave them "neither root nor branch."[46] Then, as in *Exodus* 21:2-6 we understand that "forever" means as long as the servant might live, so we must understand that *Revelation* 14:9-11 teaches that the smoke from the torment of the wicked will ascend without any cessation, until there are no wicked left in existence.

This explanation will also suffice for *Revelation* 20:10:

Revelation 20
[10] 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 for ever and ever.

The preceding verse shows that the fire has already "devoured" the wicked; this shows that the devil, the author of sin, survives to see the destruction of all his works. That he himself will, after a long torment, cease to exist, we are well assured, because Christ did not die in vain, and He died that He might…

Hebrews 2
[14] …*destroy* him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Satan is the "root" from which all wickedness springs; the day that comes…

Malachi 4
[1] …shall leave neither root nor branch.

It is true that…

Romans 2
[8] …indignation and wrath,

[46] *Malachi* 4:1.

[9] Tribulation, and anguish [are threatened to] every soul of man that does evil,

–yet we are by no means to suppose that those things comprise the sum of the punishment which the wicked are to receive.

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is *death*,

–and then until death takes place, the sinners will not have received their punishment. They are to be…

2 Thessalonians 1
[9] …punished with *everlasting destruction;*

–and this will not be until their torment has been ended by the eternal death.

Certainly no one can gather from the Scriptures that the death with which we are so familiar is the wages of sin.

Hebrews 9
[27] It is appointed unto men once to die;

–all men, both good and bad, die because they have inherited a mortal nature, and not because they have sinned. To all men, whether good or bad, there is promised a resurrection[47] from the death which they die as a consequence of being the descendants of mortal Adam; now if this death were the penalty for sin, then the resurrection would be the revoking of the penalty; but this can never be, because, when once inflicted, it is to be everlasting. That none of the wicked are now receiving the penalty for their sins is evident from:

2 Peter 2
[9] The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

[47] *Acts* 24:15; *1 Corinthians* 15:22.

Those who are dead are preserved in their graves, from which, at the voice of Christ, they shall come forth.[48] Job also says that…

Job 21
[30] The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, [and that] they shall be *brought forth* to the day of wrath.

In *Ezekiel* 18:26 we have most conclusive evidence that the death which Adam died, and which all his posterity have likewise suffered, was not as a penalty for sin. It reads thus:

Ezekiel 18
[26] When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, and *commits iniquity*, and *dies in them;* for his iniquity that he has done *he shall die.*

The prophet here mentions two deaths. If a man dies in his sins, *i.e.*, if he does not repent before death overtakes him, then he shall die. But if he is dead, how can he die? Evidently he must have a resurrection, and this, as we have seen, is promised to all men, irrespective of character. Those that have done evil come forth from their graves to the resurrection of damnation.[49] And in harmony with this idea are the words of:

Revelation 21
[8] But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: *which is the second death.*

Revelation 20:6 shows when the wicked are "brought forth" to suffer the second death. The apostle in verse 4 mentions the righteous who have been martyred, who, he says, lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. They had been dead, but now lived. This, he says, is the "first resurrection." It is the first because…

Revelation 20
[5] The rest of the dead lived not *again* until the thousand years

[48] *John* 5:28-29.
[49] *John* 5:28-29.

were finished.

The word *again* implies another living, or a resurrection. So a thousand years intervene between the resurrection of the righteous and that of the wicked.

Revelation 20
[6] Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection;
upon such the second death has no power.

This statement has no force unless those who do not have part in the first resurrection do suffer the second death. This is the death which is the wages of sin, and is brought about by fire. It is yet future, and will not take place until the harvest,—"the end of the world"—when the tares will be gathered out and bound in bundles to be burned.[50]

[50] *Matthew* 13:24-30, 36-43.

16. Punishment of the Wicked: The End of Sin and Sinners

Signs of the Times, January 29, 1885
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: February 28
Original title: Punishment of the Wicked—Continued

Review Questions

1. What is given to those who believe on Christ?

   John 3:36.

2. What is to be the fate of those who believe not the Son?

3. What does the Psalmist say will be the result to the wicked, if the Lord's wrath is kindled only a little?

   Psalm 2:12.

4. Then what will be their condition if His wrath *abides* on them?

5. What contrast did the wise man make between the continuance of the righteous and that of the wicked?

   Proverbs 10:25.

6. With what words of the Psalmist does this agree?

   Psalm 1:1-4.

7. What is to be done with the chaff?

   Matthew 3:12.

8. To what other perishable substances are sinners compared?

   Hosea 13:3.

9. To what is their destruction compared?

   Isaiah 5:24.

10. How has the beloved disciple described the fate of the wicked?

    Revelation 20:9.

11. In what manner will they be devoured?

Nahum 1:10.

12. Into what shall the wicked consume?

    Psalm 37:20.

13. Of what was man formed?

    Genesis 2:7; 18:27.

14. After the fire of the last day, what will the wicked be?

    Malachi 4:3.

15. In view of this fact, what does one of the prophets say of the wicked?

    Obadiah 16.

16. What corroborative testimony can you give on this point?

    Psalm 37:9, 10.

17. Quote another text which proves that a time will come when there will be no wicked in existence in the universe.

    Revelation 5:13.

18. Who is the author of the doctrine that the wicked shall not die?

    Genesis 3:4.

19. Who is the serpent?

    Revelation 20:2.

20. For what purpose did the devil invent that doctrine?

    Ezekiel 13:22.

Discussion

If the reader will only take pains to look up the references given in this lesson, he certainly will not need comments to aid his understanding of the subject. Just note the strong expressions that are used concerning the wicked:

John 3

[36] [They] shall not see life.

They pass away as does the whirlwind.[51] They are…

Psalm 1
[4] …like the chaff which the wind drives away.

This chaff is to be burned up with a fire so intense that it cannot be extinguished.[52]

Hosea 13
[3] They shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passes away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.

Isaiah 5
[24] As the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust.

Nahum 1
[10] They shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.

Psalm 37
[20] They shall consume…into smoke.

Malachi 4
[1] The day that comes shall burn them up,…
[3] And…they shall be ashes…

–under the feet of the righteous.

Obadiah
[16] They shall be as though they had not been.

Psalm 37
[10] For yet a little while, and *the wicked shall not be;* yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

One who reads these texts may well wonder how those who profess to believe the Bible implicitly can hold to the doctrine that the wicked shall exist in torment to all eternity. That doctrine squarely contradicts every one of the texts which we have quoted.

[51] *Proverbs* 10:25.
[52] *Matthew* 3:12.

Yet the contradiction is no more emphatic than was the serpent's contradiction of the words of the Lord, when he said to the woman,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

This was the origin of the doctrine of eternal life for the wicked. It is the only doctrine held by religionists, that can be traced *directly* to the devil. His object in inventing this doctrine was to induce Eve to transgress the command of the Lord; and it has been for the purpose of holding men in the bondage of sin, that he has kept the doctrine prominently before all mankind ever since.

In *Ezekiel* 13:22 we have the testimony of the Lord on this subject. When threatening punishment upon certain evil ones, he says it is...

Ezekiel 13
[22] Because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.

Let us see how this result has been accomplished. We do not know the exact motive of the one who introduced this doctrine of eternal life for the wicked, into the Christian church. It was no doubt mainly a result of his heathen training, and without any definite motive. But so far as he had any definite idea, it was designed to deter men from sin and to frighten them into repentance. This is why all denominations have advocated it in times past. We have often heard it said by ministers, that if the doctrine of eternal torment were not preached, sinners would have no fear of the consequences of sin. Just as if the Lord did not know what He was about when He made *death* the penalty for sin! The Lord has said,

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death,

–and,

Ezekiel 18 [also vs. 4]
[20] The soul that sins, it shall die;

–but these persons say, in effect:

> "No, no, Lord; You must not tell people that; for if You do, they will all keep sinning."

And so, making light of the real penalty, and ignoring the love of God as the great factor in turning men to righteousness, they presume to improve upon His word.

And so the doctrine of eternal torment was for many years taught in all its horrible enormity. People accepted it as the word of God, because the priests and ministers said that it was such. Thousands were frightened into a nominal profession of Christianity, and to the infliction of severe punishments upon themselves, thinking by so doing to avert the wrath of God. It is safe to say that no *real* converts were made in consequence of the propagation of this doctrine; but "the church" gained immense sums of money by the sale of "indulgences," or releases from punishment, to poor, deluded sinners; this money was spent by the popes in self-aggrandizement and riotous living, and the devil was doubtless satisfied.

But there was always a class of people who, believing that the word of God taught this horrible doctrine, repudiated the Bible entirely. They would have nothing to do with a book which taught, as they supposed, such barbarous cruelty. And thus the doctrine has fostered infidelity. Others believed the doctrine, and settled down into stolid indifference, while others determined to have as good a time as possible while they were on earth. The terrible French Revolution, when all religion was proscribed, and God and the Bible were insulted and ignored, was a recoil from this terrible doctrine of eternal torment. And now, in our day, we find that the church itself is passing from that extreme of error, to the other extreme. Instead of being the leading topic of sermons,

as formerly, the doctrine of eternal torment is seldom mentioned. On the contrary hundreds, yes thousands, of ministers who are called "orthodox," openly hold that God will not punish anybody, or that if He does, it will only be for a time, and that then all men will be restored to His favor. Now anybody who stops to think can see that if men believe this, there is absolutely no incentive for them to change their course of life. The fear of punishment has been taken away, and if they are taught that all men will ultimately be saved, whether they now wish to be or not, they can see no necessity for believing on Christ.

And so we see the object that Satan had in the beginning is attained, the wicked are strengthened in their wickedness and carnal security, by the promise of life. The safest and the best way is to hold and teach only the simple truth, and leave the results with the Author of truth.

17. Punishment of the Wicked: Review

Signs of the Times, February 5, 1885
Lesson for the Pacific Coast: March 7

Review Questions

1. How many classes of people does the Bible recognize?
2. When will the final separation between them take place?
3. With what will the righteous be rewarded?
4. What will be done with the wicked?
5. What can you say of the comparative duration of the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked?
6. What is to be the punishment of the wicked?
7. What is the agent in the destruction of the wicked?
8. How complete will be this destruction?
9. To what perishable material are the wicked likened? Quote texts.
10. What will be the effect of the wrath of God abiding on the wicked?
11. How can you harmonize the theory that you have advanced with *Mark* 9:43?
12. What is always accomplished by an unquenchable fire? *Matthew* 3:12.
13. Prove that *Revelation* 20:10 does not contradict the doctrine that the wicked are to become utterly extinct.
14. Of how many deaths does the Bible speak?
15. Explain the distinction between the first and the second death.
16. State the origin and effect of the doctrine that the wicked are not to *die* for their iniquity.

17. What do you learn from *Revelation* 5:13?

Discussion

Although the lesson this week is a review, we will give a few notes for the aid of those who have not had the previous lessons. However much people may imagine that there is provision made in the gospel for people who are "as good as the average," the fact remains that the Bible recognizes only two of classes,—the good and the bad.

Deuteronomy 30

[15] See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.

To be counted *good*, a person must keep all of God's commandments; to be among the bad requires the breaking of no more than one.

Matthew 12

[30] He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathers not together with me scatters abroad.

In the battle of life there is no intermediate or neutral ground. This is also evident from the account of the final separation.

Matthew 25

[31] When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:
[32] And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides His sheep from the goats:
[33] And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

The succeeding verses plainly tell the character of these two classes. The first class are they who have served the Lord; love for Him has sanctified every effort of their lives, and they have obeyed this exhortation of the apostle:

Colossians 3
[17] Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and to the Father by Him.

The other class are they who have lived for self; even their deeds of kindness have been prompted by love of applause, and so have been nothing but manifestations of the evil in their hearts. To the first class it is said,

Matthew 25
[34] Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

To the other class it is said,

[41] Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

The comparative duration of the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked is stated in *Matthew* 25:46. The Saviour closes His discourse with these words:

Matthew 25
[46] And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting on [eternal] punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

If there were no other text relating to this question, we should note that death is to be the final portion of the wicked. If it were not so, then the promise of eternal life to the righteous would not indicate any difference in the state of the two classes. But there is a contrast. The wicked shall go into *punishment*, but the righteous into *life*. No one who regards the Bible will say that both classes see this same award; but it is certain that the righteous are to have *life*. Now anything that is different from life must be death, therefore the wicked receive the sentence of death, which is executed. To show that this conclusion is sound, we have only to quote Paul's words:

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

The Saviour said that the punishment of the wicked and the life of the righteous are both to be eternal; therefore we know that eternal life,—death from which there is no resurrection,—is the wages of sin. Paul says[53] that the wicked shall be punished with "everlasting destruction," when the Lord Jesus is revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire; and both John[54] and Malachi,[55] and many others state this destruction is to be by fire.

For the completeness of the destruction of the wicked, we can only refer the reader to a few texts, which require no interpretation. See *Psalm* 1:1-4; 2:8-9; 37:9-10, 20, 38; *Isaiah* 5:24; *Obadiah* 16; *Malachi* 4:1-3; *2 Thessalonians* 1:7-9; *Revelation* 20:9, etc. David says that if the wrath of God be kindled but a little, its effect will be to cause the wicked to...

Psalm 2
[12] ...perish from the way;

–when therefore it *abides* on the wicked,[56] they will be, as Obadiah has said,

Obadiah
[16] ...as though they had not been.

See Webster's definition of "perish."

In *Mark* 9:43 the Saviour says that the wicked shall be cast into a fire that "never shall be quenched." This, instead of contradicting the above statements, is the strongest confirmation of them. The effect of an "unquenchable fire" is to "burn up" that which is cast into it;[57] if the wicked were cast into any other kind of fire, their destruction would not be complete. "Everlasting fire" is fire whose effects are everlasting; it is like that which destroyed the

[53] *2 Thessalonians* 1:7-9.
[54] *Revelation* 20:9.
[55] *Malachi* 4:1-3.
[56] *John* 3:36.
[57] *Matthew* 3:12.

cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.[58] This was unquenchable fire, and resulted in the overthrow of those cities; it turned them to ashes.

We can only refer to the texts that answer question 13. See *Exodus* 21:1-6, where it is stated that under certain circumstances the Hebrew servant should serve his master "forever." Of course this meant during his natural life. So, likewise, "forever," in *Revelation* 20:10 and similar passages, covers only the space of time that it is possible for persons to exist in "unquenchable fire." See also *Isaiah* 34 and 35, where, after the land is described as burning and lying waste, so that none can pass through it "forever and ever," it is described as blossoming and as the rose, and being inhabited by "the ransomed of the Lord."

This death of which we have been speaking is…

Revelation 21
[8] …the second death.

1 Corinthians 15
[22] In Adam all die,

–both righteous and wicked, men and little children; and…

[22] …so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Christ does this for all, because no one is to blame for being the descendant of Adam, and thus mortal. When all have been made alive, it will be seen who are worthy to have life continued to them, and those who have died in their iniquity shall die the second time.[59] This is the death to which God had reference when He said to Adam,

Genesis 2
[17] In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die.

That penalty has never been executed; through the kindness of God in Christ the execution of the penalty was stayed, in order to give fallen man another chance for his life. Christ tasted death for

[58] *Jude* 7.
[59] *Ezekiel* 18:26.

every man,[60] and those who accept His sacrifice will escape the penalty for sin, but upon those who do not, it will fall grievously.

The originator of the doctrine of life for the wicked, as we learn from *Genesis* 3:1-4, was the serpent,

> **Revelation 20**
> [2] ...which is the devil and Satan.

His object in teaching it to Eve was to lead her to sin. He made her believe that if she disobeyed God she would not suffer for it, but would be the gainer by it. It was a direct lie, and it had its designed effect. Ever since that time it has been repeated, and with the same result. Thus the Lord through His prophet rebukes those who "with lies" have made the heart of His people sad, and have...

> **Ezekiel 13**
> [22] ...strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.

Reader, do you wish to be found on the devil's side, perpetuating his falsehood?

[60] *Hebrews* 2:9.

1883 – 1886

1. Comment on 2 Thessalonians 2:9

Signs of the Times, April 26, 1883

A QUESTION has been raised in regard to a statement on page 170, No. 15, of the present volume of the *Signs*, on *2 Thessalonians* 2:9. The statement was:

> In Paul's second epistle to the Thessalonians, he exhorts to be on guard, and not depart from the faith. He speaks of Christ's coming as an event to immediately follow the work of Satan in Spiritualism, in these words: "Even him, whose coming is *after* the working of Satan and with all power and signs and lying wonders," etc.

The objection is that the word "after," in this verse, does not convey the idea of time, but of matter, and that it means "according to," as it reads in the *Revised Version*. In this case the "coming" in verse nine would refer to the Man of Sin; and the verse, instead of making a point in regard to Christ's coming, would simply teach that the work of the Man of Sin would be characterized by the spirit of Satan. We think it can be clearly proved that this verse refers to the time of Christ's coming, and not to the manner in which the Man of Sin does his work. The argument will consist of two points:

1. That the word here translated "after," is often used with reference to time, and
2. That the context requires that it should be so used in this passage.

It will be no news to state that one word often has a variety of meanings. This is not peculiar to the Greek or Latin; any one who is not aware of it, will need only to consult Webster's Dictionary to find that it is true of the English language. This very word "after" is a case in point. It is used, as in *Acts* 13:22, to express conformity with, in the sense of "according;" it is used to express difference in location, as,

"The books are placed one *after* another;"

Also to indicate movement towards any object, as,

"The constable is *after* the thief."

And it is very commonly used to express difference in time. No one has any difficulty in determining from the general tenor of the passage with which meaning is employed.

The word "after" in this case is from the Greek preposition *κατά* (*kata)*, which is used, in different constructions with a variety of meanings. It is often used to denote likeness, similarity, conformity with; but it is not true, as is intimated by those who claim that it should be so used here, that it never expresses time. We quote from the Lexicons those definitions of its use in the same construction as in the verse under consideration:

> VII. Of periods of time, throughout, during, for, *κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον* (*kata ton polemon*), during the war. *κατ' Ἄμασιν* (*kata Amasin*), about the time of Amasis.[61]
>
> (25) In definitions of time, during, *κατὰ τὸν πόλεμον*, at the time of the war.[62]
>
> 2. Of time, *i.e.*, a period of time *throughout*, *during*, *in*, or *at* which anything takes place.[63]

Of the corresponding word in the Vulgate, *Andrews' Latin Lexicon* says:

> In time or succession, *immediately after*, after, *next to*. (Quite classical.)

Following are some of the instances of the use of the word in the Bible, to express the idea of time:

[61] Liddell and Scott.
[62] Pickering.
[63] Robinson.

Mark 15
[6] Now *at* that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

Acts 12
[1] Now *about* that time Herod the king stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church.

Acts 16
28 And *at* midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God.[64]

Acts 19
[23] And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

Romans 9
[9] For this is the word of promise. *At* this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

1 Corinthians 16
[2] *Upon* the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store as God has prospered him.

Hebrews 1
[10] You, Lord, *in* the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth.

We have now only to see if the word is used in this sense here. If we trace Paul's argument through, we shall see that *time* is the thing. In the 4th chapter of the first epistle he speaks of those who are asleep, and says that they shall be raised when Christ comes. In the 5th chapter he says,

1 Thessalonians 5
[4] But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief;

The brethren know of the times and the seasons. Again in the 1st chapter of his second letter, he refers to the second coming of Christ, and tells (verses 7-9) what shall then take place. Then he

[64] See also *Acts* 27:27.

proceeds, in the 2nd chapter, to correct the idea that some seem to have gained, that the day of the Lord was at that time near at hand.

> **2 Thessalonians 2** [paraphrase]
> [3] Before that day should come, [he said,] there would be a falling away, and the Man of Sin would be revealed.

In verses 3-4 he fully describes the nature of that power, and its manner of working, and says that it will continue until the Lord shall consume it with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy it with the brightness of His coming. Then, with the idea of Christ's coming still uppermost, and the reference to it fresh from his pen, he says,

> [9] Whose coming is after [or, at the time of] the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.

It must be evident to all that the word "coming" in verse 9 refers to the same thing as the same word in verse 8, *viz.*, the second advent of Christ; so the word "after" must refer to time, for the apostle would not say that the coming of Christ is according to the working of Satan.

That the connection between verses 8 and 9 is very close will be clearly seen when we understand that the words "even him" form no part of the original. They were supplied by the translators, for no reason except that they thought that the reference was to the Man of Sin, and wished to make that idea appear. There is absolutely nothing in the Greek, from which the words "even him" could be translated. Let anyone read these verses 8 and 9, leaving out these two supplied words, and he will at once see that the ninth verse refers to the time of Christ's coming. Thus:

> [8] And then shall that Wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming:
> [9] Whose coming is after [at the time of or next to] the working of Satan and with all power and signs and lying wonders.

Or, to make the case still plainer, instead of repeating the noun, substitute the appropriate pronoun in its stead, and it would then read,

2 Thessalonians 2
[8] ...whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming,
[9] *Which* is after the working of Satan, etc.

The apostle is simply carrying out the idea with which he started, and states an additional factor in regard to the time of Christ's coming.

As corroborative proof we refer to *Matthew* 24:24, 27. The Lord there says that just before the second advent...

Matthew 24
[24] There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

This harmonizes exactly with *2 Thessalonians* 2:8-10.

Again, the 13th of *Revelation* brings to view a work which will immediately precede the second coming of Christ. It is the last great effort of Satan against God's Government. The case is precisely the same as that in *2 Thessalonians* 2. An attempt is to be made to enforce the mark of the beast (this beast in *2 Thessalonians* 2, is called the Man of Sin) upon all men. To aid in the accomplishment of his designs, Satan brings to bear his masterpiece of deception,—Spiritualism—as shown in verses 13-14, working wonderful miracles in order to beguile men into accepting a lie as the truth. Compare with this *2 Thessalonians* 2:10-12. So wonderful are his miracles that, as Christ says, if it were possible, even the people of God would be deceived. But this is not possible; the conflict will be sharp and short: the decision between truth and error will be quickly made in the minds of men; and the Lord will quickly come to reward His own.

One more text: In *Revelation* 16 we have the same deceptive work brought to view, and, as already seen, it immediately precedes the coming of the Lord.

Revelation 16

[13] And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs, out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

[14] For they are the spirit of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

[15] Behold, I come as a thief.

All these passages harmonize and show that the coming of the Lord will be the next thing after Satan has performed these deceiving miracles, which have not as yet taken place, but which cannot be far in the future. Thus the rise and progress of modern spiritualism is a most interesting study for those who are looking for their Lord's return, since the rapidity with which that delusion spreads shows beyond a doubt that the great day of the Lord is at hand.

2. A Strange Thing

Signs of the Times, July 12, 1883

IN THE *S. S. Times*, in an article on the raising of Dorcas by Peter, Rev. Charles S. Robinson, D.D., says:

> Imagine Dorcas' surprise when she first opened her eyes. Here she was back in the world again. How stranger it is to discover that no one of those persons who were raised from the dead ever attempted to tell the story of what they saw or heard.

We wonder that more people do not look at it in this light. The grave is spoken of as that…

> …undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns.

But as a matter of fact many have returned, yet none have ever opened their lips to relate what they heard or saw while dead. But if the dead are conscious, this is passing strange. If it be true that death is simply the separation of the soul from the body which has acted as a clog to it, restricting its free exercise, why is it that in those instances where the soul has been returned to its lodgment, no note is made of the wonderful things learned while it was permitted to expand unrestrained?

We say that it is indeed a wonderful that no revelations have been made of what is beyond, if, as the poet says, death is only transition, and the soul is more acutely conscious in death than it ever was during life. But we do not bring forward the fact that no such revelation has been made, as proof that the dead are not conscious. We have proof of a more satisfactory nature, which clears the subject of all doubt, and explains why those who have been raised from the dead were silent as to what transpired during that absence from among the living. The testimony is abundant, but we have space here for only the following:

Those who are dead are asleep:

Psalm 13
[13] Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten my eyes, lest I *sleep the sleep of death*.

Psalm 127
[9] It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved *sleep*.

Daniel 12
[2] And many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake, some everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Jeremiah 51
[39] In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and *sleep a perpetual sleep*, and not wake, says the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15
[16] For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:
[17] And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.
[18] Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

1 Thessalonians 4
[13] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are *asleep*.
[14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with Him.

People who are in a sound sleep are entirely unconscious of what is going on, and the Bible says that the dead are unconscious:

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything.
[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you go.

Job 14
[10] But man dies, and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?
[11] As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up; so man lies down, and rises not:
[12] Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.
[21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

Psalm 115
[17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither indeed that go down into silence.

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Many more texts might be added but these are sufficient for our purpose. They are direct statements of fact and need no explanation. There only two things that can be done with them:

1. Either accept them as literally true,
2. Or reject them all together.

But if we accept the Bible as the infallible word of God, we are not left to wonder why those who have been raised from the dead never told the story of what they saw or heard. They had none to tell. They were unconsciously sleeping, and were unable to take note of passing events. Then it is not a strange thing after all.

But there is one strange thing about this matter, and that is how, in the face of all these Bible texts, a Doctor of Divinity could write such a paragraph as that quoted at the beginning of this article.

3. That Blessed Hope

Signs of the Times, November 1, 1883

1 Thessalonians 4

[13] 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.

THERE are several points that may be noted on this text:

1. Those who are dead are represented as asleep. The term is very common in the Bible. Read *Job* 7:21, *Daniel* 12:2; *John* 11:11-14, etc. The righteous are asleep in Jesus.

2. This being the case, it follows that the dead are unconscious, for a sleeping man knows nothing of what is going on around him. The general tenor of the inspired writings is in harmony with this idea. For examples see *Job* 14:14-21; *Psalm* 6:5; 88:10-12; 115:17; 146:3-4; *Ecclesiastes* 9:5-6, 10.

3. It is folly to say that we cannot know anything of the future. Paul said that he would not have his brethren ignorant; if we believe his words, we must admit that something can be known of man's future.

4. It is not wrong for Christians to sorrow; the only sin is in giving away to uncontrollable grief, as did the heathen. They, having no hope, indulged in the most extravagant expressions of sorrow—tearing out the hair, rending their garments, uttering loud shrieks, cutting their flesh, etc. A Christian's grief may be even more acute than that of the heathen, for Christianity tends elevate, and to quicken the sensibilities, but it will always be tempered by hope.

1 Thessalonians 4

[14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

From what place will God bring them? "From Heaven," many persons say. But the apostle says that those whom He brings have

been *asleep*, and if the view of our friends be true, it must be that the saints in heaven do nothing but sleep, and that is absurd. The psalmist says,

Psalm 16
[11] In your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

We think it will need no argument to convince any rational person that David's conception of "fullness of joy" and "pleasures forevermore" would not be met by a long period of unconscious sleep. Those who are asleep are in the grave, and from thence God will bring them, even as He did our Lord. Just as surely as Jesus died and rose again, so surely will God raise from the dead all the sleeping saints.

1 Thessalonians 4
[15] 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[65] [precede] them which are asleep.

Paul says, "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord." From this some have supposed that Paul expected that the Lord would come in a very few years, and that he would live until that event; but this was not his expectation. We must believe him when he says,

[15] For this we say unto you *by the word of the Lord.*

Paul received his instruction directly from Heaven. Not to say that Paul was mistaken in regard to the time of Christ's second advent, is equivalent to saying either that he was not inspired, or

[65] The word "prevent" is from the Latin words *pre* (before), and *venio* (to go), meaning "to go before," and was formerly used in this sense. It is so used in *King James Version.* But as one who went before another was able to "head him off," as it is commonly expressed, the word finally became restricted to the present signification, *to hinder.* The *Revised Version* has the passage in harmony with modern usage. The word "conversation" is another word whose signification has been thus changed. It now means simply familiar talk; but in the Bible is has an entirely different meaning, being applied to one's manner of life.

that the Holy Spirit was mistaken. Neither of these positions can be taken by those who believe the Bible.

That Paul had a correct idea of the time of the second advent, is clear from *2 Thessalonians* 2:1-8. In his vivid narrative, Paul speaks of things to come as though they were present.

1 Thessalonians 4
[16] 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:
[17] 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.

We cannot regard this text in any other way than as a description of an actual occurrence to take place in the future. If the expression, "the Lord himself," does not mean Jesus Christ in person, but is a figure of something else, what words could the apostle have used to express the reality? If this be figurative language, then there is no literal language in the Bible. It agrees, however, with the words which the angel spoke to the disciples at the ascension of Christ.[66] The last clause of the verses quoted settles an important point.

[17] ...and *so* shall we ever be with the Lord.

How shall we be with the Lord? By the descent of Christ to raise the dead and change the living. Can we not be with Him before that time? No; for so He told His disciples when on earth. The ardent Peter said,

John 13
[27] Lord, why can't I follow You now? I will lay down my life for your sake;

–but still Jesus did not reverse His former sentence:

[66] *Acts* 1:9-11.

John 13
[33] As I said unto the Jews, Whither I go you cannot come; so now I say to you.

Then He comforted them with these words:

John 14
[2] 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.
[3] 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.

This is the "blessed hope"; with these words the apostle Paul commended Christians to comfort one another.

1 Thessalonians 4
[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Men should be careful how they attempt to improve on the methods laid down by inspiration.

Some time ago a religious journal of note made an admission on this text, that was fatal to the popular view (the one which it also holds), that all men have inherited immortality. It said:

> It is hard for us to understand how those converts could have imagined that it was peculiarly unfortunate to die before Christ's second coming. It was because they imagined, and Paul too, perhaps, that Christ was to come soon, in the lifetime of some of them,[67] and that His coming was physical; and they did not understand the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

That is, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is so opposed to the doctrine of Christ's second coming, that those who hold to the former necessarily ignore the latter. We believe that this is the case. But the doctrine of Christ's second coming is one of the most prominent in the whole Bible, and it must therefore follow that the Bible is opposed to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. It was well said that…

[67] We have already shown that he did not imagine any such thing.

…they did not understand the doctrine of the immortality of the soul;

–but if Paul and his co-laborers did not understand nor teach it, whence is it that our modern teachers have learned so much about it? Have they a later revelation in which inspiration has corrected its former mistakes? Away with a doctrine which leads men to so treat God's word. Such teachers would do well to ponder upon Paul's words to the Galatians brethren.

Galatians 1
[8] But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

1 Thessalonians 5
[1] But of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you.
[2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

No argument can be drawn from this to prove that Christians cannot know anything about the Lord's coming, for the next verse shows that He comes as a thief only to those who cry "Peace and safety,"—those who are not watching. The brethren, Paul states, are not in darkness that this day should overtake them as a thief. Christ gave His disciples very full instructions in regard to the times and the seasons,[68] and as the whole gospel was revealed to Paul by the Lord himself, he had imparted the same information to the Thessalonians brethren. The prophecies of the Old Testament, especially the book of *Daniel*, give much light on the times and the seasons.

1 Thessalonians 5
[10] …whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

On *2 Thessalonians* 5:10, Dr. Barnes makes the following comment:

[68] See *Matthew* 24.

> "Whether we wake or sleep." Whether we are found among the living or the dead when He comes. The object here is to show that the one class would have no advantage over the other. This was designed to calm their minds in their trials, and to correct an error which seems to have prevailed in the belief that those who were found alive when He should return, would have some priority over those who were dead. "Should live together with Him." The word rendered "together" is not to be regarded as connected with the phrase "with Him," as meaning He and they would be together, but it refers to those who wake and those who sleep, those who are alive and those who are dead,—meaning that they would be *together*, or would be with the Lord *at the same time;* there would be no priority or precedence.

That is exactly the truth on this important subject. Happy would it be for Christianity if the churches had never departed from it.

4. Facts Against Supposition

Signs of the Times, June 12, 1884

IN THE *Signs* of March 6, the editor, commenting on a sermon on Spiritualism, penned the following words:

> We record our emphatic denial of the assertion that the Scriptures give any instances of the spirits of the departed reappearing; and we invite any one to point out to us the texts wherein such reappearing is supposed to be given.

Had the call been for texts which *prove* the return of departed spirits, eternity might pass before a response could be made, the word "supposed" gives the Spiritualist considerable latitude; for there is no limit to what a man may "suppose" about a Bible text, if he only gives loose rein to his fancy. A gentleman from Boston, taking advantage of the above invitation, sends us his supposition as follows:

> Permit me to call your attention to one of the many to be found in the Bible. *Luke* 16, verses 9, 12, 14; *Luke* 24, verses 14, 29, 30, 31, 36; *John* 20, verses 19, 20, 26, 27, and 29. The latter part of the 29th verse contains the following: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." To what extent the above will apply to those of the present day, who have the opportunity to see and believe, and won't do either, remains to be seen.

We are willing to give our correspondent credit for believing without seeing, for we doubt much if he has ever seen some of the texts to which he refers. If he had, he certainly would not have to used them. We refer to those in *Luke* 16, not one of which contains even the most indirect allusion to a spirit either present or absent. As we said before, though, there is no accounting for what a man may "suppose," especially if he is wandering in the fog of Spiritualism.

In the references made to *Luke* 24 and *John* 20, our friend is equally unfortunate. These texts speak of the appearing of Jesus to His disciples after His resurrection; but they say nothing about

the return of His spirit. Jesus was then alive, not dead; and we do not question the fact that living beings may appear to whomsoever they please. *Luke* 24:36, one of the verses referred to, says:

> **Luke 24**
> [36] And as they thus spoke, *Jesus himself* [not His spirit] stood in the midst of them.

And verses 38 and 39, *not* referred to, plainly declare that it was not a spiritual manifestation. They read thus:

> [38] And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? and why do thoughts are rise in your hearts?
> [39] Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see me have.

We are inclined to think that it is far easier to believe some things without having seen them, than after the light of truth has shone clearly upon them.

We are well aware that Spiritualists, and many who are pleased to style themselves orthodox, claim that the resurrection is simply the act of the soul or spirit leaving the body at the death of the latter. In such a case there would be no resurrection from the dead; there would, in fact, be no death. But the Scriptures invariably speak of a resurrection "from the dead." Paul was willing to suffer all things if by any means he might attain unto the "resurrection from the dead;" literally, from "dead ones."[69] When Jesus was transfigured before His disciples, He charged them to tell no man of it until after He was "risen again from the dead."[70] And this resurrection was not the escaping of the spirit at the dissolution of the body, for we are told that...

> **Mark 8**
> [31] He began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

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[69] *Philippians* 3:11.
[70] *Matthew* 17:9.

Those who claim that the real Christ did not die, or that it was His undying spirit that appeared to the disciples the third day after the crucifixion, must squarely deny the above and many other Scripture texts.

And right here we would drop a word of warning, and urge upon all the necessity of a well-grounded, intelligent faith in the Scriptures. There is no doctrine upon which it is more necessary that we be firmly settled than that of the State of the dead. Error is wonderfully blinding and seductive. We may think that we are proof against temptation on this point, but the human heart is in itself deceitful, and Satan knows how to take advantage of it, if it is left unguarded. Our only hope of safety is in having a *thorough* knowledge of the true teachings of the inspired word, and in being led by the Spirit of God, that when we are brought into the conflict with Satan, we may meet him at every point with, "It is written." We are to resist him steadfast "in the faith."[71]

Our correspondent says:

> Your paper is good in many ways. Pray be good enough to spend half as much time in the investigation of Spiritualism as you have in attacking it, and give the readers the result of your investigations.

Why, we have spent a great deal more time in the investigation of Spiritualism than we have in attacking it. But we don't propose to investigate in the way that our friend wishes us to. We do not like to investigate in the dark. We have studied the Bible, and we find Spiritualism there exposed so plainly that we have no need to go nearer. As we said, error is blinding; and those who investigate Spiritualism by going into it, or by going where spiritual manifestations are given, will do so at the peril of their souls. It is simply putting themselves on the devil's ground and inviting him to try his power upon them. Christ will not accompany us when we needlessly go on to the enemy's ground, and without him human strength is powerless against the prince of darkness.

[71] *1 Peter* 5:9.

The man who is groping about blindfolded in a dark cavern does not have nearly so good a chance to know what it is like, as the man does who stands outside with open eyes, and holding in his hand a lamp whose beams shine into its utmost recesses. The man who sinks in the ocean knows nothing of its depth, compared with the one who stands secure in a boat and casts in a sounding line. So the man who ventures into the mazes of Spiritualism, is no proper judge of its real nature; while the man who holds in his hand the lamp of God's word can see all its terrible dangers,—dangers all the more terrible because they are so seductive.

We do not need to take poison in order to know its deadly character. We learn its nature and effects from books, and are therewith content. And so we would say again to all: Study the word of God carefully; and earnestly and continually pray,

Matthew 6
[13] Lead us not into temptation.

5. The Foundation of Spiritualism

Signs of the Times, June 26, 1884

MR. SAVAGE, a Unitarian minister of Boston, preached a sermon a short time ago on "Immortality from the Standpoint of the Modern World," in which he took occasion to speak of Spiritualism as follows:

> There is nothing in it out of accord with the faith of those who already believe in continued existence. That our friends, if they still live and love us, should want us to know it, is only what we should expect.

That this statement is true, we do not see how anybody can deny. And this is why we do not regard it as a matter of indifference how we believe concerning the state of the dead. We say that no one who believes that man is conscious in death—that his thoughts, instead of perishing when his breath goes forth,[72] are more clear and active than ever, has any warrant whatever that he will not become a Spiritualist. Let us see: Spiritualism, pure and simple, is a belief that the spirits of the departed may communicate with their living friends, and may even appear to them. The mass of mankind believe that the essential part of man never dies, but that what is called death simply releases it from its prison house. They believe that it is in Heaven, and conscious of what is passing in this world. Indeed, we have heard more than one "orthodox" minister preach that the spirits of our departed friends hover around us and protect and comfort us by their influence.

Now we ask, What is lacking to make such ones real Spiritualists? Nothing, but to see and converse with one bearing every feature of a departed friend, having the same tone of voice, and who can recall incidents known only to that dead friend. This has been done to a certain extent, and will be done on a vastly more extended scale.

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[72] *Psalm* 146:4.

"But how would you account for such a thing?"

We read that Satan is able to transform himself into an angel of light,[73] and this being so, it does not surprise us to hear of his personating a human being. The Bible warns us against wonders that will deceive, if it were possible, the very elect,[74] pointing out that which we have said, that a large portion of the world is in danger of being drawn into Spiritualism. The "elect" will not be deceived simply because they are grounded on Bible truth. So long as a man takes the Bible as it reads on the subject of the state of the dead, he cannot become a Spiritualist. When he holds to the popular theory, he has no safeguard against that terrible delusion.

[73] *2 Corinthians* 11:14.
[74] *Matthew* 24:24.

6. Spiritualistic Theology

Signs of the Times, August 28, 1884

TWO weeks ago a sermon was preached in the Calvary Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, on this subject: "Do the Dead Revisit this Earth, and Take an Interest in Earthly Affairs?" From the brief synopsis of the discourse, as it appeared in the *Bulletin* next day, we quote the following:

> He thought that there are no dead; that those who have passed away are now living in the full possession of all the faculties possessed here. . . . The speaker went on to say that the spirits of our departed friends and relatives were with us, always hovering near,...

We hope that is not a sample of the sermons that are preached. In fact, we know it is not; for we do not think that Spiritualism has yet captured the world entirely. We wish to make one or two comments from a Bible standpoint; but first we will call attention to the inconsistency between the subject and the discourse itself. "Do the Dead Revisit this Earth?" was the subject, and one of the first statements was that there are no dead. If so, then the only possible answer to his question is, "No." The subject was very inappropriate, or else the sermon was all a mistake.

As we read the report, we could not help asking,

> "Did the man ever read the Bible? and if so, does he believe it?"

Even the *Revised Version*, with all its changes, has not dropped the words "dead" and "death." If there are no dead, what does the Bible mean when it says of each one of the patriarchs, "...and he died"[75]? What are we to understand when we read,

> **Hebrews 9**
> [27] It is appointed unto man once to die;

[75] *Genesis* chapter 5.

Romans 5
[12] By one man death came into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men;

–and many similar passages which speak of death? Does the "Reverend Doctor" wish us to take his "thoughts" in preference to the Bible? And if it is permitted us to believe the Bible, in what Dictionary will we find a proper definition of Bible words? For if we take Webster's definition of Bible terms, the preacher's suppositions are greatly at fault.

Again, he thinks…

> …that those who have passed away are now living in the full possession of all the faculties possessed here.

What reason has he for thinking so? When Hezekiah was sick, the Lord said to him,

Isaiah 38
[1] Set your house in order: for *you shall die* and *not live.*

Christ says:

Revelation 1
[18] I am He that lives, and *was* dead.

The Bible recognizes the great difference between life and death. Hezekiah saw so much difference that he wept sore at the thought that he should die and not live. Now, query: If "death" means "life," are not the terms identical? They must be, and therefore "life" means "death," and "living" means "dead." Then why are we not justified in saying that there are no living? that all who are on earth are dead, and "no not anything"? Would we be any farther out of the way than the San Francisco preacher?

The speaker thought that the dead are in possession of all their faculties. We do not. Do you want to know how we dare differ with a man who writes "DD" after his name? If you have a Bible, open it and turned to *Ecclesiastes* 9:5. Now read slowly:

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] For the living know that they shall die [some pretend not to]; but *the dead know not anything*.

Read also the tenth verse:

[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, *nor knowledge, nor wisdom*, in the grave wither you go.

We commend this verse to the preacher above mentioned, with this explanation thrown in, that when Solomon says, "Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might," he has no reference to preaching sermons that contradict the Bible. Read once more:

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Are we not justified in differing with the learned doctor? We advise our friend who is looking up these references, to read carefully the last quotation. "Put not your trust in princes," neither in doctors of divinity, but in the word of the Lord, which abides forever.

Once more,

> The spirits of our departed friends and relatives are with us, always hovering near.

Again we dissent. Why? Read the preceding paragraph again, and you will see. But we ask you to open your Bible once more, and turn this time to Job, and read the 14th chapter at your leisure. We will together read verses 19-21:

Job 14
[19] You destroy the hope of man.

[20] You prevail for ever against him, and he passes: you change his countenance, and send him away.
[21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

Will someone tell us why we should not believe the words of the Bible rather than those of a man?

It is not probable that one of those who listened to that sermon dreamed that it was a Spiritualist sermon. They would be surprised, perhaps indignant, if you should tell them so.

> "Why," they might say, "Spiritualism is something horrible, but we don't see anything bad about this."

Is it not a horrible thing to ignore and deny God's holy word? Read *Jeremiah* 5:30-31, and see what did Lord says about it. Spiritualism is simply the doctrine that there is really no death, but that the (so-called) dead may hold communication with the (so-called) living. The only terrible thing about it is that it is a square denial of the Bible, the inspired word of God, and an acceptance of the words of Satan, the father of lies, who first promulgated the doctrine.[76] But a more terrible thing than this we cannot imagine. And the most frightful thing of all is that people look upon it as truth, and think that it is pleasant. What is to hinder the whole world from being swamped in this last great delusion of the arch-deceiver? Nothing but the plain truths of God's word, repeated again and again. But, alas! with the majority even this will not avail, for…

Isaiah 1
[3] My people do not consider.

[76] See *Genesis* 3:4.

7. Immortality

Signs of the Times, September 4, 1884

IN ALL investigation of Bible doctrines it must be borne in mind that the Bible was written by inspiration of God, and must, therefore, be perfectly consistent with itself. If we find passages which seemed to conflict, we must conclude that we do not fully understand them. Besides this, we must always interpret those parts that are obscure and indefinite by those that are definite and plain. This is but reasonable. If we have a friend whom we know to be perfectly honest, and two expressions of his that seem contradictory are reported to us, we do not condemn him until he has had an opportunity to explain. We expect that when we learn all that he said, we will find that the two statements agree. Neither would we take a statement definitely and emphatically expressed, and offset it by words from which, taken by themselves, we might infer something directly the opposite. It is thus fairly that we must deal with the Bible. We are not at liberty to draw, from any passage, an *inference* that is opposed to the plain declarations of the word.

Now we have brought forward texts of Scripture that have no double meaning, which proved that God's people are rewarded only at the coming of Christ and the resurrection, and that all men are dependent on Christ for eternal life. There are no doubt other texts from which the reader gathers that men are essentially immortal; these will be considered in due time, but in the meantime we ask the reader to let the plain statements that we quote have their full weight.

Last week we quoted Christ's words:

> **John 3**
> [36] He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life.

This is a plain statement that those who do not believe in Christ will not live eternally. The question now arises,

"In what sense do those who believed on Christ have eternal life now?"

Let us read the answer:

1 John 5
[11] And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and *this life is in His Son*.

Now turn and read the introduction to Paul second letter to Timothy:

2 Timothy 1
[1] Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to *the promise of life* which is in Christ Jesus.

Here we have the answer complete. Eternal life is ours by promise, if we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone it may be obtained. But if a young man possesses the writings of which show that he is heir to a certain estate, he will speak of the estate as his, even though he is not in possession of it, and has no voice in its control.

When many of Christ's disciples became offended and left him, he turned to the twelve and asked,

John 6
[67] Will you also go away?
[68] Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

The twelve believed as Christ had said, that…

John 3
[36] …he that believes not the Son shall not see life.

If this be not true, what a chance for retort the unbelieving Jews had when Christ said to them:

John 5
[40] And you will not come to me, and that you might have life.

They might have said,

"We have no need to come to you for life, for we are immortal by nature."

And is not this a logical position for those to take who believe that the essential part of man, the real man, can never die? We may not openly repudiate Christ as did the Jews, yet if we say that we already have that which He came to bestow, do we not thereby signify our independence of Him? The only inducement that He holds out for our accepting Him is that He can give us life. Now if we proudly insist that we have life, do we not treat His offer with contempt, and so dishonor Him? So long as we insist that we are not dependent on Him for eternal life, our professions to accept Him have a good deal the error of patronizing condescension.

Let us have some more plain declarations. In *1 Timothy* 6:12 Paul charges Timothy to…

1 Timothy 6
[12] Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on the eternal life.

A man cannot "lay hold" of something that he already has hold of. And how should he "lay hold" on eternal life? By exercising faith: and this again is in harmony with Christ's words in *John* 3:16, 36.[77] The apostle then charges Timothy to…

[14] …keep this commandment without spot, and blemish, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:
[15] Which in His times He shall show who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;
[16] Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see.

This language was referred to God the Father, for although Christ in revelation is called "King of kings and Lord of lords,"[78] it is He in this instance who is going to make known the "blessed and only potentate;" and further, the one here spoken of is one

[77] PP Editor's note: Verse 36 was spoken by John the Baptist. So it was Christ speaking through John.
[78] *Revelation* 19:16.

"whom no man has seen, neither can see;" but Christ has been seen many times.

But to the main point of the statement. It is that God only has immortality. So long as the Bible remains, this text will be a standing rebuke to those who claim immortality as theirs by right. That is an attribute of God alone.

> "But," says one, "is not Christ immortal? and do we not read of the angels that they cannot die?"

Yes; and we turn to *John* 5:26 and read Christ's words:

> **John 5**
> [26] For as the Father has life in himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in himself.

Christ, then, being the only begotten Son of God, partakes of His attributes, and has life in himself. That is, He is able to impart life to others. The text in Timothy does not shut off anyone from obtaining immortality, but if it is obtained it must be as a gift from God. It is in this way that the angels are immortal.

Turn now to *Romans* 2:5-7. There Paul states that God will render...

> **Romans 2**
> [6] ...to every man according to his deeds.
> [7] To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, [He will render] eternal life.

"Immortality" means the condition in which one cannot die, and "eternal life" means unending existence; the terms, therefore, are synonymous, and the verse is equivalent to the statement that God will render immortality to those who seek for it. Two points are here made:

1. In order to gain eternal life we must seek for it. Then those who do not seek for it will never receive it.

2. The only proper way to seek for immortality is by "patient continuance in well-doing." Then those who do not do well, will not obtain eternal life, even though they may desire it.

Again: In *2 Timothy* 1:9-10, Paul says that the purpose and grace of God, which was given us in Christ Jesus,

> **2 Timothy 1**
> [10] ...is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Here then we learn the place in which we are to seek for immortality. It is in the gospel. Whoever looks for it in any other place will fail to find it.

Having learned how immortality may be obtained, we have only one thing to consider, and that is when it will be bestowed; when believers in Christ will come into possession of their promised inheritance. This is definitely settled by Paul in the fifteenth of *1 Corinthians*, in a text which we have before quoted. We begin with verse 50:

> **1 Corinthians 15**
> [50] Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherit incorruption.

This statement might raise a query in the minds of some, so Paul adds:

> [51] Behold, I show you [that is, make known to you] a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
> [52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

This, then, explains how we may get into the kingdom of God, even though flesh and blood cannot inherit it.

> **1 Corinthians 15**
> [51] ...we shall...be *changed*.

And when does this change take place?

1 Corinthians 15
[52] ...at the last trump.

And what will the change be?

[52] ...for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
[53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must *put on* immortality.

"This *mortal* must put on immortality." The Bible writers never speak of man as being anything else than mortal.

Job 4
[17] Shall mortal man be more just than God?

How could they speak otherwise, since God only has immortality? The contrast is sharply drawn in *Romans* 1:23. Paul speaks of the heathen, who had "changed the glory of the uncorrupted God into an image like to corruptible man." God is immortal, incorruptible; man is mortal, corruptible. But we are to be *changed*, and then we shall be like him, immortal.

1 Corinthians 15
[54] 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.

And this occurs, as the preceding verses show at the coming of the Lord.

We have not quoted, besides several texts that speak of "the eternal life," every text in the Bible that contains the word "immortality." Let us see what we have found:

1. God alone has immortality. This, of course, applies to Christ, who, as the Son of God, partakes of His nature, and who is entitled to be called God.
2. If man would have immortality, he must seek for it.

3. The only proper way to seek for it is by a patient continuance in well-doing.
4. Man can find immortality only in the Gospel, for it is there that it is brought to light.
5. It belongs to every one who believes in Christ, but only by promise. This life is now in Christ, and whoever has Christ, as the eternal life, because he is in possession of that which will bring it to him.
6. This promise of life will be fulfilled, and a man's search for immortality will be crowned with success, when…

1 Thessalonians 4
[16] The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.

Then those who have fought the good fight of faith will be crowned as victors with…

1 Peter 5
[4] …a crown of glory that fades not away.

8. How Will They Do It?

Signs of the Times, September 11, 1884

WE ARE not entirely alone in the belief that Spiritualism is of the devil, as the following from the *Pacific Methodist* will show:

> We regard Spiritualism as among the most infernal of Satan's inventions and its absurdness before the bar of enlightened reason is not proof sufficient of its harmlessness, when we reflect that nothing is too preposterous to believe, when the appeal is made through the senses, and is one which accords with the reigning corruption of the soul. . . . We doubt if Christianity has ever before confronted such a monster as this modern necromancy. And this repulsive hybrid from the cesspools of nameless infamy reigns over many, and is spreading its borders. Let the press speak, and the pulpit but cry aloud.

Isaiah 40

[6] The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?

This is what the "press and the pulpit" might well ask. We are glad when we see any one aroused over the terrible delusion of Spiritualism. But what can they say or do against it? Will they cry out against the corruption that is often associated with it? That would be simply an attempt to lop off some of the other branches, leaving the root untouched. Besides, if that is all that our friend the *Methodist* would assail, he would find his efforts seconded by many Spiritualists themselves. There are thousands of them who outwardly lead moral lives, so far as their fellow-men are concerned. Therefore a person might assail vice and corruption with all his power, and still leave Spiritualism unscathed.

If the *Methodist* really wants to strike at the root of Spiritualism, we will tell it how. Let it teach the Bible doctrine concerning the state of the dead. Let it teach that…

Psalm 115
[17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down in the silence;

–that…

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] The dead know not anything;

–that man's…

Psalm 146
[4] …breath goes forth, he returns to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish;

–that they…

Daniel 12
[2] …sleep in the dust of the earth;

–and that…

Job 14
[12] …till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of sleep.

He who with all his heart believes these plain declarations of Scripture, can never be a Spiritualist. A belief in the conscious state of the dead is the foundation and superstructure of Spiritualism. He who holds to that doctrine has no warrant that he will not be a Spiritualist; indeed, there is hardly a possibility that he will not, when evidence is presented that appeals overpoweringly to his *senses*. Nothing but a firm belief in the word of God, *as it reads*, will save man from Satan's masterpiece of deception.

We know that many try to make a distinction, and say that while they believe that departed ones are conscious and active, they do not believe that they can communicate with their friends in the flesh. Well, why do they not? Have they any *reason* for thinking that the dead cannot communicate with the living?

"Why, certainly," says one, "the Bible says that they cannot."

Exactly; we quoted several passages at the beginning of this article. The Bible says that the dead cannot communicate with the living, because they are unconscious, "they know not anything."[79] And no man can prove that the dead cannot make themselves known to us, without using those texts which declare that they have no conscious existence.

Perhaps there are Christians who see nothing shocking in such teaching. They say,

> "It is a matter of no *practical* importance how I believe concerning the dead. We could be just as good, even if we believed that the dead could return to us."

Do not thus deceive yourselves. For what purpose did Christ come? He says He came…

> **John 3**
> [16] …that whosoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.

And again,

> **John 10**
> [10] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Now if we believe that we shall never die, but that, when that which men call death takes place, we shall go right on just as we do now, only under somewhat improved conditions, where does faith in Christ come in? What inducement can we have to believe in Him? Cannot all see that those who hold such a theory leave Christ out of their religion entirely?

And this is just what Spiritualism actually does. It rejects Christ. There is no Spiritualist who believes in Christ as a Saviour; they regard Him as a good man, and that is all. They have no room for a Saviour in their system. They repudiate Christ.

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[79] *Ecclesiastes* 9:5.

With this brief explanation all can see why we are so earnest in our teaching of conditional immortality. It is not as a mere theory which we can adopt or reject at pleasure, but a truth of vital importance. To accept the doctrines of Spiritualism is to reject Christ; and without Him we can do nothing.[80]

> **1 Corinthians 1**
> [30] [He is] made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

We can be "complete" only in Him.[81]

The *Methodist* truly says that Spiritualism is one of "Satan's inventions;" it was invented by him when there were but two human beings on earth, and formulated in these words:

> **Genesis 3**
> [4] You shall not surely die.

We shall not cease to cry out against this "modern necromancy." We should be rejoiced if we might stand side by side with the *Methodist* in this fight. The Bible, and that alone, will furnish the weapons.

[80] *John* 15:4-5.
[81] *Colossians* 2:10.

9. Fate of the Wicked

Signs of the Times, January 1, 1885

Lesson from the Jewish Sacrifices

THE prophet David had in his lifetime an experience similar to that of many others. That to which we refer is recorded in the 73rd *Psalm*. He thought things were very unequally and unjustly divided. He saw that the wicked were, as a rule, in better circumstances than the righteous; and in contemplating this, he came very near making shipwreck of this faith. Said he:

Psalm 73

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.
3 For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
4 For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.
5 They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men.
7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.
8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.
9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walks through the earth.
11 And they say, How does God know? and is there knowledge in the most High?
12 Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

As he contrasted his condition with theirs, he concluded that the service of the Lord didn't pay. His words were:

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.
14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

How many people we have heard reason in the same way.

"If God is just," they say, "why does he allow Mr. A, who is a humble, devoted Christian, to suffer so much of poverty and sickness, while Mr. B, his blasphemous neighbor, has an abundance of everything, with nothing to trouble him?"

It is short-sighted reasoning, as David himself found out, although not from his own reasoning as to what God ought to do. He continues:

Psalm 73
16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me;
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood their end.
18 Surely You did set them in slippery places: You cast them down into destruction.
19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.
20 As a dream when one awakes; so, O Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image.

In these verses we find a striking confirmation of the texts which have before been quoted as proving the final utter extinction of the wicked. Their present security is only apparent, not real; they are in slippery places, and are to be cast down to destruction. As in a moment they are to be brought into desolation. More than this, when the Lord arises to take vengeance on his adversaries, they are to be as a dream when one awakes from sleep —vanished into nothingness. As elsewhere expressed, they are to be…

Hosea 13
3 …as the early dew that passes away.

All this the psalmist found out when he went into the sanctuary of the Lord. Let us then, go in with him, and see for ourselves what is there taught concerning the fate of the wicked. It is evident that we must consider that part of the sanctuary service which has to do with sin, if we are to learn anything concerning the end of the wicked. This service is given somewhat at length

in the 4th chapter of *Leviticus*. We will quote enough of the chapter to bring the matter directly before us:

Leviticus 4
[27] And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he does somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty;
[28] Or if his sin, which he has sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has sinned.
[29] And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering.
[30] And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.
[31] And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savor unto the Lord; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

With some modifications, of a minor character, this was the ceremony to be performed when sin had been committed. The victim to be offered might be a bullock, a goat, a lamb, or a pigeon, according to the rank or wealth of the sinner, the poor not being required to bring so costly an offering as the wealthy. But in all the principle was the same, and that principle is so simple that a child can easily grasp it. The sinner, by laying his hands upon the head of the offering, transferred, in figure, his sins to the victim, which represented Christ,

1 Peter 2
[24] Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

The offering having thus, in figure, received the sins of the transgressors, was slain, thus prefiguring Christ,

Romans 4
[25] Who was delivered for our offenses,

–and who…

Romans 5
[6] …died for the ungodly.

When this was done and the blood or flesh of the victim had been carried into the sanctuary, the man's sins were forgiven him. If he remained penitent until the day of atonement, his sins were blotted out entirely when the sanctuary was cleansed.[82] In all this reference was had to Christ, who…

Hebrews 9
[26] …appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

As a victim, when it had in figure received the sins of the transgressor, was slain, so Christ, when…

Isaiah 53
[6] …the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all,
[12] …poured out his soul unto death.

He died for us,

1 Peter 3
[18] …the just for the unjust;

–thus showing what would be man's fate had the offering not been made, or should He not accept it. And so, in the figure, the penitent Jew, as the victim bearing his sin was slain before his eyes, was reminded that…

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is *death.*

The victim was then burned to ashes, thus showing both the instrument and the completeness of the sinner's destruction; and so the penitent was taught in a manner that he could not misunderstand nor forget, that…

[82] *Leviticus* 17.

Psalm 37
[20] 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.

Now no one can deny that these sacrifices typified Christ's sacrifice, nor that Christ himself did really die for sinners, unless he denies the truth of the Bible. Then the conclusion is unavoidable that if Christ had not died all men must have died, for all men are sinners. And further, since…

1 John 3
[5] He was manifested to take away our sins,

–thus saving us from death because He saves us from sin, it is just as evident that those who do not wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, will in the end perish. Their fate will be the same as though no sacrifice had been made. This is what David learned when he went into the sanctuary of the Lord, and this made him content with his hard lot.

One text more must suffice for the direct testimony concerning the destruction of the wicked. We give it because the contrast between the righteous and the wicked is so marked. It is:

Psalm 37
[37] Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.
[38] But the *transgressors shall be destroyed* together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

Note the contrast: The end of the upright is peace, but the end of the wicked shall be cut off. Dr. Barnes says that the word rendered "end" means properly:

> The last or extreme part; the end or issue of any thing, that which comes *after* it; the after time, the future, the hereafter. *Isaiah* 2:2; *Micah* 4:1; *Genesis* 49:1; *Daniel* 10:14. It may, therefore, refer to *anything* future; and would be well expressed by the word *hereafter.*

The Septuagint has *engkataleimma*, the meaning of which is, according to Liddell and Scott, "a remainder." Substituting this meaning in the place of the word as translated, we get the full force of the text. Thus:

> Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the *remainder* of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the *remainder* of the wicked shall be cut off.

And this agrees with what the psalmist says in the earlier part of this, and in the 73rd *Psalm*. The righteous, although they may be plagued and afflicted in this earth, will, in the new earth,

Psalm 37
[11] ...delight themselves in the abundance of peace,

–all the remainder of their lives, which will last to all eternity. But the remainder of the wicked, who now have all that they desire, shall be cut off. Nothing could more clearly express their other extinction.

[38] ...the end [remainder or hereafter] of the wicked shall be cut off;

–*i.e.*, there shall be no remainder to their lives.

10. No Probation After Death

Signs of the Times, August 6, 1885

A FRIEND asks the *Signs* to give an exposition of *1 Peter* 3:18-19; 4:6. He says that he has met a man who bases his belief in the immortality of the soul, on these two texts, the argument being that the dead spoken of are those that died previous to the promise to Abraham; that before Abraham's time there was no promise of the redeemer, and that to those who lived before that time, Christ went and announced the good news of salvation. The brother is not troubled on his own account, but wishes to know how to present the case to another.

In the first place, a man's opinion is no consequence whatever, unless he can offer some evidence in its support. When the objector says that there was no promise of the Messiah, until the time of Abraham, he must show proof, or else his theory is not worthy of consideration. That the Messiah was promised before our first parents were driven from the Garden of Eden, is susceptible of the clearest proof. Thus:

1. It was the devil himself who attempted Eve. With *Genesis* 3:13 and *2 Corinthians* 11:3, compare *Revelation* 12:9, which says that the serpent is the devil and Satan, and that it is he that deceives the whole world. There can be no controversy over the statement that it was the devil under the guise of a serpent, who caused our first parents to fall.

2. In the garden God said to the serpent, the devil,

> **Genesis 3**
> [15] I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Here is the statement that the seed of the woman should destroy Satan; and when we read that Jesus died[83] in order that…

[83] *Hebrews* 2:9.

Hebrews 2
[14] ...He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil,

–we know that Jesus Christ is the "seed" mentioned in *Genesis* 3:15. So then, not withstanding what may be said to the contrary, we know that the Messiah was promised before the days of Abraham. More evidence could be given if it were needed.

But, it being true that the promised Messiah was known from the time of the fall, the supposition that Christ, between His crucifixion and His resurrection, went to preach the gospel to those who lived before the time of Abraham, or before the flood, amounts to nothing. There is absolutely no ground for the position that the people before Abraham were not on probation; therefore the only loophole for those who will have it that Christ, after His crucifixion, went and preached to some dead persons, is the more common position that certain ones, especially of the antediluvians, "did not have a fair chance," and that justice required that after death they should have the chance of which they were deprived during their lifetime. This is the position taken by Canon Farrar, and by all who, with him, adopt the theory of a probation after death. But this view is unscriptural and wicked, as we shall show.

It is wicked, because it presents God as a tyrant, changeable, and careless of the welfare of his subjects, instead of the God of infinite mercy, love and justice, and with whom is...

James 1
[17] ...no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Take notice. If it were true that immediately after His crucifixion Christ went and preached to some who had lived before the flood, there could be no other reason for it, than the one usually given, namely, that they had not had "a fair chance,"—opportunity to hear and repent. Then we have presented to us the spectacle of God visiting His terrible wrath, as in the flood, upon men whom He had not given a chance to repent! No earthly tyrant was ever

accused of greater cruelty and injustice than this. And then they would have us believe that the unchangeable God, as if to atone for His error, sent His Son to announce a pardon to those who had once been the subjects of His ill-advised wrath! We marvel how any who profess to love and reverence God, can countenance a theory that so degrades His character. It cannot be denied that the picture here presented is the legitimate and only result of the objector's position on *1 Peter* 3:18-20. This alone is more than enough to stamp that position as erroneous.

That position is also wicked because it is unscriptural. The word of God says:

> **Psalm 115**
> [17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

Then even supposing that God had unjustly cut off some of the antediluvians, it would have been a hopeless mission for Christ to go to the grave to preach to them, for it would have been an impossibility for them to repent and give glory to God. More than this, allowing that Christ could and did go to the grave to preach to them, it would have been impossible for them to take any action whatever, for the inspired word says,

> **Ecclesiastes 9**
> [10] ...there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave.

It would have been impossible for them to hear the message, for, while the living may know many things,

> [5] ...the dead know not anything.

Of man it is said that...

> **Psalm 146**
> [4] ...his breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

And the grave is called, a...

Psalm 88 [see also vs. 11]
[12] ...land of forgetfulness,

Job 10
[22] A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

Moreover, that position would have it that Christ did not really die, and that is not only unscriptural, but subversive of the whole plan of salvation.

Romans 5
[6] Christ died for the godly.

He was...

1 Peter 3
[15] ...put to death [in order] that He might bring us to God.

If, therefore, the divine Son of God did not die, then there is no salvation for sinners. But Christ did die;

Isaiah 53
[12] ...He...poured out His soul unto death,

–and His soul, thus poured out unto death, was as...

[10] ...an offering for sin,

–and consequently there is hope for sinners.

Now let us read *1 Peter* 3:18-20, and see just what it does teach. The apostle after the exhortation to meekness under unjust accusation, says:

1 Peter 3
[18] For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
[19] By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
[20] Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Examine this text, and you will find the following simple statements:

1. Christ, the just one, suffered for the sins of the unjust.
2. He did this that He might bring us to God.
3. He was put to death in the flesh.
4. He was made alive by the Spirit.
5. This Spirit was the same by which He went and preached to the spirits in prison.
6. This preaching was "when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

It is the Spirit that convinces of sin,[84] and the Spirit was striving with men in the days of Noah.[85] So they did have a "chance," but it was only while their days continued—in their case one hundred and twenty years. We see, then, that the preaching, spoken of in *1 Peter* 3:18, was done, not by Christ in person, but by the Holy Spirit; not in the Christian era, but before the flood; not to disembodied, conscious spirits confined in some part of *Hades*, but to living men in the flesh, who were in the bondage of sin.[86]

But what shall we do with *1 Peter* 4:6? Just believe it. Let us read it, together with the two preceding verses:

> **1 Peter 4**
> [4] Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:
> [5] Who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.
> [6] For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

This has been done many times in our experience. We have often heard the gospel preached to men that are dead. But they

[84] *John* 16:8.
[85] *Genesis* 6:3.
[86] See *Romans* 7:14; *Galatians* 4:3.

were not dead at the time the gospel was preached to them, and the Bible nowhere says that the gospel was ever preached to men who *were* dead when the preaching was done. Peter, however, says that it was preached to them that *are* dead, and that statement effectually shuts off the infidel argument for a second probation, that some men have "never had a chance." The reason why the gospel was preached to them, is that both living and dead must be judged, and God is just.

Hebrews 9
[27] It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the Judgment,

–and not another probation. Before death comes, all have an opportunity to repent, so that if the Judgment finds them void of righteousness, they will be speechless.

This is the simple truth concerning the oft-perverted words of Peter. They are easily understood, and give no warrant whatever for the idea of a life in the grave.

11. Death and the Coming of the Lord

Signs of the Times, September 17, 1885

IN A sermon recently preached in New York by Dr. R. S. Storrs, from…

Revelation 22
[20] He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus,

–the speaker asked whether it is proper for us to take up and repeat the prayer of the apostle, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." He then proceeded to answer the question as follows:

> It was only natural and proper, we may think, that he should utter this prayer to Christ. But we may not so freely repeat it after him. There is a certain tremor of hesitation, natural to the heart, in echoing the words. We would rather, for ourselves, know beforehand, if it might be, the moment when the summons is to come; we would rather see the Master after all, and in a gradual approach; we would rather make special and protracted preparation for the voice which is to call us from all the circles of life on earth, to go and be henceforth with Him. At any rate, we do not feel at liberty to offer a prayer for sudden death, and in this we are right. We have no right to offer such a prayer. Even John did not offer it until the Master had manifested to him His purpose of coming quickly.

If Dr. Storrs had studied the Bible as thoroughly as he studied history, he could not have spoken such words, and then have deliberately written them for publication. There is just one correct statement in the paragraph, and that is, that it is not right to pray for death. That is true; it is not right to pray for sudden death, nor for any other kind of death; but it *is* right to pray for the coming of the Lord, and to long for it, as the following texts clearly prove:

Matthew 6
[10] Your kingdom come. Your will be done in the earth, as it is in heaven.

This is what Christ himself commanded us to pray. Now when we read these words:

> **2 Timothy 4**
> [1] I charge you therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom;
> [2] Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine,

–we know that the kingdom comes only when Christ comes; therefore Christ taught His disciples that they should daily pray for His coming.

Again, Paul says:

> [7] I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:
> [8] 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.

The crown of life, then, is to be given only to those who love the coming of the Lord. Paul and Dr. Storrs do not seem to agree on this subject.

We have no disposition to carp at Dr. Storrs. He is an able man, and we admire his talent. He is no more out of the way than are thousands. The trouble with him is, that while in history he searches for himself, and draws his own conclusions, in matters of Bible doctrine he accepts unquestioningly what the multitude believe. From his standpoint, it was very natural to say that we ought not to pray for the coming of the Lord. But what a terrible doctrine it is which obliges its adherents to deliberately throw aside the only hope which Christ left His church. What doctrine does this? The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul—the theory that men go to heaven at death. The doctrine of the second

coming of Christ is the "blessed hope,"[87] the hope with which Christ comforted His sorrowing disciples; but the dogma of inherent immortality ignores all this.

People sometimes say that it makes no difference what we believe concerning the immortality of the soul; that it is not of any practical importance whether we believe that it is inherently immortal, or dependent on Christ for immortality. Does it make any difference whether or not we believe the words of Christ? Is it a matter of no importance that we lay hold on the only hope that Christ has left us? If there were nothing else against the doctrine of natural immortality, this alone would condemn it. Of course it will not do for people to say that the Lord is not coming at all, for the Bible is full of assertions that He is; and since the people have settled it for themselves that men receive their reward at death, they combine the two. Since the idea is getting so prevalent that death is the coming of the Lord, it is proper for us to devote space to examine it in the light of Scripture.

First, Christ said to His disciples,

John 14
[3] If I go away, I will come *again*.

He did not promise to come *again and again*, but simply "another time; once more." Paul's words in *Hebrews* 9:28 agree with this:

Hebrews 9
[28] And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the *second* time without sin unto salvation.

Now since He comes only once more, it is certain that death cannot be that coming, for death is constantly occurring.

He promised to come "again." The word "again" indicates another of the same kind. Christ was on the earth in the flesh; He was seen by thousands. Now if He comes "again," a "second time," He must come in person. The departure of the soul for Heaven

[87] *Titus* 2:13.

cannot be another advent of Christ. If any think this is a far-fetched argument, let them read the account of Christ's ascension:

Acts 1
[9] And when He had spoken these things, *while they beheld*, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
[10] And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;
[11] Which also said, You men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner as you have seen Him go into heaven.*

No amount of philosophical theorizing can ever wrest that scripture so as to make it teach a coming of the Lord at death. Those who hold to that theory, must deny the statement of the angels.

Something more in the same line. Read:

Revelation 1
[7] Behold, He comes with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.

Every eye does not see when a man dies. Thousands die in solitude, unseen by mortal eye. So here is another text that is either unknown to those who hold that the theory we are considering, or else is denied by them. Moreover, this shows that John knew what he was praying for when he uttered the words found in *Revelation* 22:20. He was not praying for death, but for the Lord to come in the clouds of heaven. Every follower of Christ may and should offer the same prayer.

Still further, we read in *Matthew* 24:27, that…

Matthew 24
[27] As the lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west, *so* shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Who ever saw or heard of such a phenomena at the death of anyone? It is utterly impossible for a man to believe those words of the Lord, and still believe that death is the coming of Christ. Ought not the words of Christ to be believed rather than the theories of men?

When Christ comes, it is to take His people to himself. He doesn't take one before another, as Paul shows in…

1 Thessalonians 4
[15] 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 [go before] them which are asleep.
[16] 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:
[17] 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.

Here we see that both the righteous dead and the righteous living are taken to be with the Lord at the same time, at His coming. And this is just what the same apostle teaches in *2 Timothy* 4:6-8, already quoted. He says that the Lord will give him a crown of righteousness "*at that day*." At what day? Why, the day referred to in the first verse, when Christ comes in His kingdom to judge the living and dead. "At that day," says Paul, the Lord will give me a crown,

2 Timothy 4
[8] …and not to me only, but to all them also that love His appearing.

Yes, at the coming of the Lord all who love Him shall receive a crown, and all at the same time.

Look once more at…

1 Thessalonians 4
[15] We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord…

Now if it be true that the "coming of the Lord" is equivalent to "death," we can substitute the latter word in the verse, and we shall then have the sublimely ridiculous statement that…

> "We which are alive and remain [alive] until death, shall not go before them which are asleep!"

If there is one *special class* of persons who live until they die, what becomes of those who do not live until they die? We should like to have Dr. Storrs turn his logical mind to the solving of this conundrum.

We turn to the second chapter of *2 Thessalonians*. Paul says:

> **2 Thessalonians 2**
> [1] Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him,
> [2] That you be not soon shaken in mind…as that the day of Christ is at hand.
> [3] 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;
> [4] Who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Paul assured them that the Lord would not come until after the great apostasy, and the full establishment of the papacy. The papacy was fully established in the sixth century; but would Dr. Storrs have us believe that between the first and sixth centuries no one died? He is too good a historian not to know all about the bloody persecutions during the reign of Nero, Domitian, and others, in which hundreds of Christians yielded up their lives for the faith. Yet Christ could not come until after the setting up of the papacy, and He has not come.

There is scarcely any limit to the texts that might be quoted to show the absurdity of the idea that death is the coming of the Lord. There is just one more passage that we wish to notice. It shows that none of Christ's disciples entertained the idea that

death was His coming. Christ had met His disciples at the Sea of Galilee. He had questioned Peter concerning his love, and had showed him by what kind of a death he would be called upon to show his love. Then Peter looked around, and seeing John, asked,

John 21
[21] Lord, and what shall this man do?

Jesus answered,

[22] If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to you?

Suppose we substitute death for the coming of the Lord, and then we have the Master saying,

> "If I will that he tarry [remain alive] until he dies, what is that to you?"

What a horrible doctrine it is that makes such nonsense of our Lord's simple language.

But notice: Just as soon as Jesus asked Peter what difference it was to him if John should live until the coming of the Lord, the disciples, assuming that Christ had declared that John *should* remain until His coming, began to spread abroad the statement that John would never die! They knew very well that death and the coming of the Lord have nothing in common.

If all our readers do not agree with us in saying that the idea that death is the coming of Christ is both absurd and unscriptural, we have underrated their sagacity. If any hold that idea after carefully reading the texts we have quoted, we should be glad to hear from them, that we may together consider the matter further. We do not care to hear from any who cannot give a reason for their belief. We do not expect to hear from any [such]. May the Lord help all to study well all that relates to the coming of the Lord, and to speedily learn to pray,

Revelation 22
[20] Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

12. From Adam to Moses

Signs of the Times, October 29, 1885

A BROTHER writes as follows:

> Do you think that in the expression in *Romans* 5:14, "death reigned from Adam to Moses," the apostle had reference to the resurrection of Moses; that the reign of death was there broken, as is inferred from *Jude* 9?

Answer: No; there is no hint of the resurrection of Moses in the 5th of *Romans*. We give, in brief, the following reasons for this statement:

1. The subject of the resurrection is not under consideration. The subject of discourse is justification by faith in Christ. In order to show the importance of this, the apostle shows that all are under condemnation of death through transgression of the law.

Romans 5

[12] By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.

Wherever there is death it is an evidence of the existence of sin; and since…

[13] …sin is not imputed when there is no law,

–the fact that "death reigned from Adam to Moses," shows that during all that time God's law was known and transgressed. It was necessary to show the extent of the need, in order to show how greatly the grace of God abounded. In such an argument, to branch off upon the resurrection of Moses would be manifestly out of place.

2. The phrase "until the law," indicates what time in the history of Moses is referred to. "From Adam to Moses," then, simply means, from the creation to the giving of the law upon Sinai. Of course the text itself, speaking of sin, which is not imputed when there is no law, shows that the phrase "until the law," does not

mean that the law did not exist before. But if the time indicated in the expression, "death reigned from Adam to Moses," reaches only to the giving of the law upon Sinai, it certainly could have no reference to the resurrection of Moses, since he did not die till forty years later.

3. There can be no reference to the resurrection of Moses, since the fact that Moses died shows that death reigned over him as well as over anybody else. A subsequent resurrection would not alter the fact that death had extended its reign over him, anymore than the general resurrection would alter the fact that death has reigned over all mankind. If the resurrection of Moses shows that death did not reign over him, then the final resurrection of all men will show that death never reigned over anybody. That which proves too much, proves nothing.

4. In order to have the expression of any force as indicating the breaking of the reign of death by the resurrection of Moses, it would be necessary to show that up to the time of Moses all men had died; but the case of Enoch entirely destroys that argument. The translation of Enoch was certainly more of a break in the reign of death than was the resurrection of Moses. But the fact is, there has not been a moment since the fall when death did not reign, although some, as Enoch and Elijah, and Moses and the saints at the crucifixion of Christ, have been rescued from its power, as pledges of the time when its reign will be forever broken.

The fact that "the dead know not anything," but sleep, unconscious, in the grave,[88] and that fifteen hundred years after his death Moses was seen by Peter, James, and John, is proof enough that Moses was raised from the dead. *Jude* 9, which speaks of the dispute between Michael (Christ) and the devil over the *body* of Moses, corroborates this fact. There is not the slightest doubt but that Moses was raised from the dead, but there is no more doubt that *Romans* 5 contains no reference to such resurrection.

[88] *Ecclesiastes* 9:5; *Psalm* 146:3-4; 115:17; 88:10-12; *Job* 10:18-22, etc.

13. Which Is Evangelical?

Signs of the Times, November 12, 1885

THE following is a portion of an editorial note in the *Pacific* of June 10:

> The election of the Rev. Edward White to the chairmanship of the Congregational Union of England and Wales is sure to be noted as indicating the tendencies of belief among the Independents there. Mr. White is by far the most pronounced and prominent advocate of the doctrine of "eternal life only in Christ." Of course, he was not elected because of his advocacy of that tenet. He is a man of great energy and ability, and has done yeoman service for the Free Churches of England. He is also a thoroughly Evangelical minister, if we except this particular divergence.

An "evangelical minister," according to Webster, is one who is…

> …earnest for the truth taught in the gospel; fervent and devout; strict in interpreting Christian doctrine.

And the *Pacific* says that one who believes that we have "eternal life only in Christ," is not, in that particular, evangelical. Let us see whether Mr. White or the *Pacific* is evangelical on the immortality question. The New Testament must, of course, decide the matter. To start with, we take that most wonderful of texts,

> **John 3**
> [16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

What do we learn from this verse?

1. That God's love for the world was so great as to cause Him to send His Son for their rescue. We can judge something of God's love for His Son, when we remember that Christ was the brightest of the Father's glory,

> **Hebrews 1**
> [3] …and the express image of His person,

–that He was…

Hebrews 1
[2] …heir of all things,

–the one by whom the worlds were made;[89] and that…

Colossians 2
[9] In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

God is infinite in all His attributes and therefore His love for His Son was infinite. And since He gave His Son for the world, we know how great was His love for the world. It was infinite.

2. The worth of the sacrifice shows the extent of the need. God would not lightly give His Son to suffer and die; it must be that without that gift there was no possibility for man to be rescued from his condition, and to receive that which was offered to him.

3. We are plainly told that this wonderful sacrifice was made that those who would believe in Christ might not perish, but that they might have everlasting life. Man can believe in Christ and have everlasting life, or he can disbelief and perish. There is no other alternative. The choice is not between happiness and misery, but between life and death. With eternal life in the presence of God, happiness must necessarily be associated, but it is secondary. Eternal life is what Christ says we get by believing on Him. To deny that we get to eternal life only through Christ, is to deny the words of Christ. Mr. White accepts the words of Christ; the *Pacific* says, "Not so." Which is evangelical?

Let us imagine that Nicodemus held to the doctrine of inherent immortality, as advocated by the *Pacific* and many others. Then when Christ said,

John 3
[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,

[89] *Hebrews* 1:2-3.

–Nicodemus would have retorted,

> "Well, He needn't have gone to all that trouble, for we shall have the eternal life any way. If that's what You came for, You came to no purpose."

Do you say that such language would be insulting? We admit it, but how many are saying the same thing today!

The doctrine of "eternal life only in Christ" is not evangelical, says the *Pacific*. Then the author of the gospel must be declared unevangelical; for he says,

> **John 3**
> 36 He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.

Is not this eternal life only in Christ?

Other texts are simply a repetition of the statement already made. Says Christ,

> **John 10**
> [10] I am come that they might have life.

Says the *Pacific*,

> "You are too late; we have it already."

Again the Saviour said to the unbelieving Jews:

> **John 5**
> [40] You will not come to me, that you might have life.

We can imagine the pitiful tone in which He spoke these words, and the sorrow of His heart, as…

> **John 1**
> [11] He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

And then to think that He knew all that this coming implied,—the agony in the garden, the brutal insults and cruel scourging in

the judgment hall, and the shameful death on the cross. What for?

John 10
[10] ...that they might have life.

Was Christ deceived? Was His anxious solicitude for man all a mistake? and was His sacrifice a useless waste of life? Evidently so, if men could have life outside of Christ. But He was not deceived; none so well as He could know man's terrible need, and the eternal destruction that must follow if the sacrifice was not made. Then how terribly deceived must those be who, in response to Christ's pathetic appeal, virtually say,

> "We don't need to come to You that we might have life; we can get it without your assistance."

Fatal delusion! What an insult to the Son God!

Once more. Said Christ, in that wonderful prayer which was not for the apostles alone, but for them who should believe through their word:

John 17
[1] Father,...glorify your Son,...
[2] As You have given Him power over all flesh, *that He should give eternal life* to as many as You have given Him.
[3] And this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

Would the *Pacific* say that Christ was...

> "...thoroughly evangelical, if we except this particular divergence"?

Perhaps the *Pacific* has another standard of evangelicalism. But for "this particular divergence," Mr. White would be "a thoroughly Evangelical minister." Divergence from what? Not from the New Testament and the teaching of Christ, as we have clearly seen. What then? Ah, now we have it. The Rev. Edward White is a Congregationalist, and in general holds to the doctrines which

the Congregationalist body holds in common with the great mass of professed Christians. But this same mass of professed Christians does not accept the doctrine of "eternal life only in Christ," and it is in "this particular divergence" that Mr. White is unevangelical. If it were not for that, he would be "thoroughly evangelical." Then it is evident that, according to the *Pacific*, popular belief, and not the New Testament, is the standard of evangelical principles. Popularity seems to be the accepted standard; but in spite of the great number on the popular side, we can't help believing that the Bible is true, and that Jesus meant what He said.

What is a record?

> **1 John 5**
> [11] And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
> [12] He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

Is not this "eternal life only in Christ"? It certainly is, and it is evangelical doctrine, too.

> **Romans 6**
> [23] For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life of Jesus Christ our Lord.

> "No, no," says the Pacific, "Paul is mistaken; eternal life doesn't come 'through Jesus Christ our Lord;' or, even if it does sometimes come through Him, we can get it without Him just as well."

Again we ask, Which is evangelical?

Sometimes people say,

> "Well, it is of no practical importance what you believe concerning the immortality of the soul."

We think that the intelligent reader can see that it is of a great deal of importance. It is a question of whether we shall give Christ the honor that is His due, or whether we shall withhold

from Him all His honor. One of his titles is "our life."[90] Nowhere in the Bible can we find that He came for any other purpose than to give life to those who would believe on Him. His sole object in coming to earth to suffer and die, was to give life. And now if we say that Christ did not bring…

2 Timothy 1
[10] …life and immortality to light through the gospel,

–but that Socrates or Plato brought it to light, then we exalt a heathen philosopher above Christ, and rob the Lord of glory of His crown. The work of Spiritualism today is to convince men that they have life in themselves, instead of in Christ; and thousands who profess to be evangelical, and to abhor Spiritualism, are doing their best to help along that delusion of Satan. And this popular doctrine, which is so flattering to the pride of the human heart, that man is not dependent for eternal life on any source outside of himself, is that which will eventually sweep millions of professed lovers of the Lord into the ranks of those who openly blaspheme His name.

Reader, where do you stand? Do you profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ? Then do not any longer refuse to acknowledge that which will constitute His crown of glory and rejoicing.

1 John 3
[18] My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue;
but in deed and in truth.

[90] See *Colossians* 3:4.

14. Punishment and Torment

Signs of the Times, April 8, 1886

A READER of the *Signs* sends the following:

> Your number of March 11, in "Notes on the International Lessons," says the doctrine of eternal torment is contrary to the word of God. Will you please explain *Matthew* 25:41, 46, Christ's own words? I have had faith in your paper; its teachings compared in many respects to my belief. But without satisfactory explanations in this doctrine, my faith will have some doubts on other subjects.

The last verse of the 25th of *Matthew* reads thus:

Matthew 25
46 And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

We believe that this verse will be literally fulfilled. We know, also, that the words "everlasting" and "eternal" in this verse from the same in the Greek, and have the same meaning in the English; and therefore the text teaches that the punishment of the wicked will last just as long as the reward of the righteous. Our friend must certainly agree with us thus far.

Now what will be the punishment of the wicked?

Romans 6
23 The wages of sin is death.

Then since the punishment of the wicked is everlasting, it must be everlasting death—a death from which there is no awaking. Paul also in another place says that they...

2 Thessalonians 1
9 ...shall be punished with everlasting *destruction.*

Many have confused the words "punishment" and "torment." They are not synonymous terms. Whatever torment the wicked may suffer, they cannot be said to have *been punished* until they

have suffered death; for the wages of sin is death. The "tribulation and anguish"[91] which will be rendered to them may be a very long continuance; but their *punishment* consists in death. And this punishment—death—will be everlasting. To all eternity the wicked will…

Obadiah
16 …be as though they had not been.

The 41st verse of *Matthew* 25 reads as follows:

Matthew 25
41 Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

This does not in the least contradict the explanation just given. Everlasting or eternal fire does not necessarily imply that its victims must exist eternally. How was it with Sodom and Gomorrah? The Lord rained fire and brimstone upon them, and they were consumed from off the face of the earth. Nothing marks where they once stood, and it is supposed that the waters of the Dead Sea roll over it. They have no existence, yet the apostle says:

Jude
7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire.*

If "eternal fire" resulted in the complete destruction of the cities of the plain, it must have a like effect on those who are finally impenitent. Indeed, the connection shows that the destruction of those cities was an example of the final fate of the wicked. On this passage Dr. Barnes says:

> The phrase "eternal fire," is one that is often used to denote future punishment—as expressing the severity and intensity of the suffering. As here used, it cannot mean that the fires that con-

[91] *Romans* 2:9.

sumed Sodom and Gomorrah were literally eternal, or were kept always burning, for that was not true. The expression seems to denote, in this connection, two things: (1) That the destruction of the cities of the plain, with their inhabitants, was as entire and perpetual *as if* the fires had been always burning—the consumption was absolute and enduring—the sinners were wholly cut off, and the cities were for ever rendered desolate; and (2) That in its nature and duration this was a striking emblem of the destruction which will come upon the ungodly.

One word concerning the position taken by our correspondent. He says that he has had faith in the *Signs*, because its teachings corresponded to his belief. While we are pleased to have people favor the *Signs*, we do not like to have the favor rest on that foundation. If a man accepts only what he already believes, he will make no advancement, and may only be confirmed in error; but if he accepts whatever is demonstrated to be truth, whether it accords with his previous belief or not, he will always be in the right. This is in accordance with time apostolic injunction:

1 Thessalonians 5
[21] Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

15. Ex-parte Evidence

Signs of the Times, August 5, 1886

IN ITS issue of June 26, 1886, the *Golden Gate* contains the following:

> Truth is generally determined by the weight of evidence in its favor. Our Adventist friends declare with Job, that there is "no knowledge nor device in the grave"—that the soul sleeps after death till the literal resurrection of the body. Now we can bring a great "cloud of witnesses" who were once mortals like us, and who will all declare most positively that they were never more alive nor wide-awake than they are now. Shall we not believe our spirit friends in preference to Job, who evidently did not know what he was talking about, never having had any experience as a spirit separate from the body? It is hardly fair to insist that a man is dead, when he himself declares to the contrary.

Again, in its issue of July 17, we find the following in an editorial note:

> Job said that "the dead know not anything;" while the so-called dead come back to us by thousands, and declare that Job was mistaken. Who shall we believe?

It is not at all surprising that a paper which has no special use for the Bible should persist in giving Job credit for what Solomon wrote; we never knew an opponent of the Bible to be acquainted with its contents. The mistake is not so bad a one, however, for although Job did not use the language attributed to him, he did speak thus of the dead:

> **Job 14**
> [21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

Job's testimony is directly opposed to Spiritualism, and so the editor of the *Golden Gate* did not go so very far astray. But it is surprising indeed to see a man of his intelligence bring in behalf

of Spiritualism a class of evidence that would not be accepted by a Police Judge in a petty larceny case, and then call it "*weight* of evidence." Here the spirits are on trial. The Bible charges them with being spirits of devils. We call them up and put the question,

"Guilty, or not guilty?"

They reply,

"Not guilty,"

–and straightway the editor of the *Golden Gate* claps his hands, and says,

"I told you so."

The story is told that in a remote country village, a man of limited capacity was elected Justice of the Peace. The first case that came before him was that of a man charged with stealing chickens. To the usual question, the accused replied,

"Not guilty."

Immediately the Justice prepared to leave the court room. The prosecuting attorney asked in surprise if he were not going on with the trial. The Justice replied,

"What's the use? The prisoner admits that he isn't guilty."

We always thought that this story was the creation of somebody's imagination; but now we are prepared to believe it. Surely a country justice should not be laughed at for doing that which is done not only by the learned editor of the *Golden Gate*, but by Spiritualists all over the world.

We don't accept the evidence; and we would warn all unsuspecting persons against being imposed upon by such one-sided testimony. When you are asked to believe that there is no death, on the ground that some wonderful spiritual phenomena have been exhibited, remember that the Bible says,

Revelation 16
[14] They are the spirits of devils working miracles;

–and remember also that the only defense made is on the testimony of the accused themselves.

But this is not all. Not only is there no evidence in behalf of the accused, except their own testimony, but their own testimony is admitted to be worthless. The *Golden Gate* of May 8, 1886, gave an account of a slate-writing séance, together with a *facsimile* of the messages that were received. In the course of the account, the editor said:

> It is not claimed that this writing was done, in all instances, or even in any instance, by the spirit giving the name. Much of it, no doubt, is done by the medium's control, or by spirits skilled in the manipulation of the pencil tips; and such spirits act as mediums for those less proficient in the matter. This explains the poor grammar and orthography sometimes witnessed in communications from spirits who, in earth life, we know would never have committed such mistakes.

In the face of this admission, we are asked if we shall not believe our "spirit friends" when they testify in their own behalf! No; for the most "advanced" Spiritualists admit just what the editor of the *Golden Gate* does, that there is no means of identifying the spirits. We could give abundance of testimony on this point, but prefer to use the recent matter all from the same source.

The case stands thus: Certain spirits do communicate with men. This we all admit. We claim, on the testimony of the Bible, that they are the spirits of devils. Spiritualists claim that they are our "spirit friends," and offer the testimony of the spirits themselves as proof, at the same time telling us, what we would know without being told, that their statements are not to be relied on.

And for the sole testimony of the accused, who are known only as liars, we are asked to throw away the Bible, which, by the exact fulfillment of prophecy is covering the whole of the earth's history, as well as by its general testimony concerning human na-

ture, has been demonstrated to be the embodiment of truth. We shall stick "to the law and to the testimony;"[92] and urge all people who are asked by Spiritualists to "*try* the spirits," to challenge the testimony that is offered.

Christ said that lying is the characteristic of the devil.

> **John 8**
> [44] He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

It has been shown that the only thing known about these communicating spirits is that they are liars. Do they not in the themselves afford proof of the Bible charge that they are the spirits of devils?

Next week, if we have space, and if not, the week following, we shall answer the question that is so often asked, namely,

> "If the spirits are the spirits of devils, how is it that they sometimes heal the sick, and in other ways render aid to men?"

It is not a difficult question to answer, yet thousands have stumbled over it.

[92] *Isaiah* 8:20.

16. Satan as a Deceiver

Signs of the Times, August 19, 1886

IN OUR last article we showed the admission of Spiritualists themselves that the testimony of the spirits is not to be depended on; and that since they are lying spirits, they must be, as the Bible says,

Revelation 16
[14] ...spirits of devils.

We know indeed that the spirits that can indicate to man, and work wonders, are spirits of devils because the devils and the angels of God are the only spirits there are. But none of these are the spirits of dead men. Angels, whether good or bad, are an order of beings entirely distinct from men. The Bible declares that...

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] ...the dead know not any thing;

–but angels were never meant, and men never become angels. If it is asked how we know that the spirits of which we speak are not good angels, we reply, that they are lying spirits. They deny the Bible, and the divinity of Christ. A sure test is this:

Isaiah 8
[20] To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Then the question arises,

> "If Spiritualism is of the devil, how is it that men are often healed of diseases, and helped in various ways by it?"

People will go to clairvoyant physicians, and will patronize the "mind cure," thinking that if they are benefited thereby to any degree, there can be nothing wrong in it. Say they,

> "The devil wouldn't do people good, would he?"

Right here is where thousands will be swept into Spiritualism

in spite of themselves. Notice these texts:

Revelation 16
[13] And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.
[14] For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Revelation 19
[20] And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Also in *Revelation* 13:13-14, we read of the power called "the false prophet,"

Revelation 13
[13] He does great wonders, so that he makes fire come down from heaven on the earth than the sight of men,
[14] And deceives them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.

These texts show that the devil performs his wonders solely for the purpose of *deception.* To deceive means to impose upon; to delude; to ensnare by artifice. We are deceived only by false pretenses. The gambler deceives the unwary by pretending to be his friend. Very often a man who is a thief at heart deceives a whole community, so that they trust him as an honest man. He will be very kind to them; he may do them great favors until he can gain their confidence and their property. If the libertine should always appear in his true character, he could never seduce the innocent. But he appears as a virtuous man; he talks of virtue and religion; he appears as the embodiment of virtuous sentiment, until he gains a full confidence of his intended victim. Does he practice those seductive arts that show him to be an apt pupil of his master the devil? Indeed, anyone who has lived long in this world

need not be told that the worst of men often dissemble and appear to be the best of friends of those whom they would ruin.

If this is so with men, should we be surprised that Satan, the arch deceiver, should do likewise? He is the originator of deception and deceptive arts; and wicked men and seducers are only attempting what he can do to perfection. Paul says that he appears as an angel of light.[93] Now it would be useless for Satan to appear as an angel of light unless he acted as one. Thus we are to understand that, so far as possible, he throws aside, or rather conceals, his devilish character, and appears as a friend.

Let it be borne in mind then that when the Bible says that the devil will work in order to deceive those that dwell on the earth, it virtually tells us that he will do things to gain our confidence and goodwill. But just as the seducer has selfish ends in view when he does good acts, so Satan has an object of his own to serve in all his deceptions, and that is the ruin of mankind. And they should answer those who say,

> "Well, suppose the devil is behind this clairvoyant healing and mind to cure, if we are helped isn't it all right?"

We answer, no. Just as we would not receive favors from a villain who had ends of his own to serve by offering them to us, so we ought not to accept favors at the hands of the devil. We do not care to be under obligation to him, for we are sure that for everything he gives he will exact more than tenfold in return. By means of his pretended good services, he is now fastening the chains of error around thousands. Remember, he…

> **Revelation 13**
> [14] …deceived them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do.

Then the question has been asked,

> "Why does God permit the devils to lay their invisible snares for the souls of men? Why does He allow them to be so de-

[93] *2 Corinthians* 11:14.

ceived?"

He does not allow them to lay *invisible* snares. His word sheds the clearest light upon them, so that none may be deceived.

2 Corinthians 2
[11] We are not ignorant of Satan's devices,

–if we take heed to the lamp of God's word. But, unfortunately, people will not heed the warning. The Bible is full of admonitions, but these will do no good unless heeded. Says the wise man:

Proverbs 2
[3] If you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding;
[4] If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;
[5] Then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.
[9] Then shall you understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path.

But instead of so doing, men hate (true) knowledge, and do not choose the fear of the Lord; therefore, they eat of the fruit of their own way, and are filled with their own devices.[94] Indeed, the Bible plainly declares that no man is ever led away by the deceptions of Satan unless he first rejects truth. Paul says that Satan works...

2 Thessalonians 2
[9] ...with all power and signs and lying wonders,
[10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; *because* they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

To those who are thinking of "trying" the spirits by personal inspection, we would say, "Beware." Trust the description that you find in God's word, and go not into their assemblies. God's word is a better guide than human sense. Keep as far away from danger as possible; keep off the devil's ground; in short, keep in Christ, where alone there is safety.

[94] *Proverbs* 1:31.

17. At the Seat of Mormondom

Signs of the Times, November 18, 1886

HAVING time on our way East to spend two days at Salt Lake City, we improved the opportunity, and made the most of our time in viewing the city and learning the peculiarities of its peculiar people. We are not of the class who can generalize with the air of authority about a place after two days' stay in it, and shall therefore confine ourselves to what we saw and heard, especially the latter, for as an old Mormon official said,

> "It isn't what you see, but what you hear, that's going to benefit you."

As one of the days of our stay was Sunday, we attended the general service at the tabernacle. Here we may remark that only one service a week is held in the tabernacle: at 2 PM Sunday afternoons. The city is divided into twenty-one wards, each presided over by a bishop and in each of which there is a meeting-house. On Sunday mornings there is a Sunday-school and perhaps a short service in each of these ward meeting-houses, and another short service at 6 o'clock each Sunday evening. Once a week, as before stated, there is a general meeting in the tabernacle.

Of this tabernacle, as well as of the other noted places in the city, but little need be said, simply because they are noted. The structure is exceedingly plain both within and without. It is oval in shape, being 200 feet long, 150 feet wide, and 70 feet high. The dome rests on low but massive brick columns, which, with the intervening windows, form the wall of the building. Besides these outer columns, the roof has no support. The building has the appearance of a huge dish-cover resting upon blocks. But although it is ungainly, its acoustic properties are wonderful. The dropping of a pin at one extremity can be heard at the other extremity as distinctly as though it were a nail dropped close by. And there is no echo. When the building is filled to its utmost capacity,—13,000,—a person in any part of it can hear the speaker without

difficulty, provided the remainder of the people keep still; we doubt if they ever do. The organ in the tabernacle is said to be the second largest in the world, and the music and singing were really fine. The singing was done by a large choir of trained singers, and the congregation did not join.

The services themselves struck us as being exceedingly formal. Everything was done in a sort of matter-of-course way, much as a railroad employee performs his routine labor. There was nothing in any of the services that would tend to impress one with a sense of sacredness,—at least so it seemed to us; and we noticed that but few of the congregation acted as though they had come to worship. There was a great lack of interest on the part of the people. Women and girls played with the babies, to which there were many more present than we ever before saw in any assembly, and there was a constant moving about. We are sorry to be obliged to say that this spirit of inattention is not confined to the Mormons; but we never before saw a congregation that was not quiet a part of the time.

For this lack of interest on the part of the people, we think we can see ample reason. Mormonism is, on a small scale, a State religion. Church membership is a necessary qualification for public office.[95] Church officers are *ex officio* government officers, because the church *is* the government. Under such circumstances, church services must soon become a matter of form, just as the routine duties of a State official are performed mechanically. And when the services are performed mechanically the people will listen mechanically, when they listen at all. Mormonism is a perfect model (except, of course, as to belief) of what the whole country will be when the National Reformers shall have accomplished their design. In time past, when the fear of the United States Gov-

[95] PP Editor's note: This changed in 1895 when Utah drafted its state constitution to meet the federal conditions for entering the union, and became the 45th state of the USA. At that time, it had to bring its rules into line with the American Constitution, which declared that "no religious test" could ever be required "as a qualification for any office" of government.

ernment did not stand before the eyes of the Mormons, and the guns of the United States fort did not command the town, a non-Mormon did not have any rights in Salt Lake City, and it was at the risk of his life that one ventured there, especially if he dropped a word against Mormonism; and when the proposed religious amendment to the Constitution is adopted, no one who does not profess the State religion will have any rights in the United States, and one who ventures to talk, and especially to act, contrary to the established religion, will do so at his own peril. Church officers will then be Government officers as well, and the gospel will, so far as "the church" is concerned, be dead. Then *Revelation* 18:2 will meet its complete fulfillment:

> **Revelation 18**
> [2] Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

No National Reformer has any right to cast a stone at the Mormons.

On the day that we were at the tabernacle, there was a short address by a "converted Jew," and a sermon by Bishop Whitney. The Jew applied all the prophecies to literal Israel, predicting a return of all the Jews to Jerusalem, there to rule over their enemies, with Christ as their king. One peculiar thing in the services was that the sacrament was administered while the other services were going on. After the Jew's address, one of the elders asked a blessing on the bread, which was then carried around through the congregation by several men, while the bishop began his discourse. After the bishop had spoken about twenty minutes, he stopped very abruptly, and sat down. Then the same elder as before asked a blessing on the *water*, that being used instead of the fruit of vine. The men then began to pass the water, and the bishop resumed his discourse.

The sermon was a history of Mormonism and a representation of its doctrines. Probably this subject was taken because there

were many strangers present. It interested us only because it was a summary of Mormonism, by the best authority, and because it contains some egregious errors of which we had never heard before. Otherwise it was somewhat tedious; if we had been as familiar with the subject as a greater part of his auditors doubtless were, we should probably have been about as much bored as they seemed to be.

Following are some of the points of the discourse: Referring to the Jew's address, he said that as the Jews were building up Jerusalem, so the Mormons were building up Zion. *Isaiah* 2:2-5 was applied to the Mormons.

> "Because we believe in the literal fulfillment of this prophecy, and look for the literal return of Christ to reign over us," said the speaker, "we are stigmatized as traitors."

He did not deny that they are in opposition to the Government; the only ground on which they could deny that they are essentially traitors to this Government, is that they do not acknowledge its authority in any particular. Joseph Smith is declared to be the "stick of Ephraim,"[96] and later the Book of Mormon was declared to be the "stick of Judah." He said that the Mormons do not deny the divinity of the Bible; they hold it as equal to the Book of Mormon. But as the Mormons are all Ephraimites, and the Book of Mormon is the "stick of the Ephraim," while the Bible is the "stick of Judah," the inferences seem to be that even though they joined the two sticks together, the Ephraimites would regard their own stick with the greater favor.

The speaker said that when the plates of the Book of Mormon were given to Smith by the angel, he (Smith) was able to interpret and translate them because he had the Urim and the Thummim. Then followed a long account of the Nephites (the aborigines of this country) and their wars with the Lamanites. This country is considered to be the land of promise to Joseph, and the Rocky

[96] *Ezekiel* 37:16.

Mountains are "the everlasting hills."[97] Jacob's blessing was not fulfilled to Joseph in Palestine, since that tribe was not very powerful in that land; hence it must be fulfilled here. The Nephites came to this country ages ago. When Christ ascended from the disciples upon the Mount of Olives he was wafted across the ocean to this country, where He chose twelve apostles. These were the "other sheep not of this fold,"[98] and to them He spoke the many things which the disciples could not bear.[99] The "lost tribes" of Israel are now somewhere in the frozen North, whence they will someday be led to "Zion" (Salt Lake City) by a prophet who will smite the icebergs so that they will melt before them. In bringing these lost tribes to "Zion" a miracle will be wrought, "beside which the passage of the Red Sea will pale into insignificance." The prophet who is to conduct these tribes is John, who remains "superior to death" until the Lord shall come to reign over "Zion." In the meantime he is probably up North among the "lost tribes." Their claim is that John the Baptist came to anoint Joseph Smith to the Aaronic priesthood, and that Peter, James, and John came to bestow upon him the apostleship, and to anoint him to the Melchizedek priesthood. Thus it will be seen that they have every office that the Jews ever had, and many that they never had, and all in a greater abundance; for they have many "high priests."

But time would fail us to recount all the absurdities that were dealt out with all seriousness. The next morning, while viewing the tabernacle, and the Assembly Hall, the old Mormon who thought we could be benefited only by what we might hear, gave us many additional ideas. In obedience, no doubt, to the command to "be instant in a season, out of season,"[100] he preached us a sermon nearly an hour in length, interrupted only by an occasional question from us. The main thing of interest to us in this

[97] *Genesis* 49:26.
[98] *John* 10:16.
[99] *John* 16:12.
[100] *2 Timothy* 4:2.

discourse was that part which related to polygamy. Many very specious arguments were adduced in its favor, but they all seemed to be summed up in the one statement that it is "according to nature." We mentally agreed that it might be compatible with a depraved human nature, but utterly inconsistent with the divine nature of which true saints must be partakers. But the most fanatical Mormon will hardly assert that polygamy is in accordance with the nature of women. To be sure the women talk in favor of it, and many no doubt think that it is of divine appointment; but we are inclined to think that most of them are at heart like the one whom we met, who thought it all right for a man to have more than one wife, but upon being pressed, admitted that she wouldn't like to have *her* husband do so.

Before we heard the particulars of Mormonism from the mouths of its advocates, we thought that Spiritualism was the only form of religion which has not *some* truth in it, but we shall have to make another exception for Mormonism. It is true that they professedly accept the Bible, as do the Spiritualists, and they have "baptism for the remission of sins,"[101] and profess to believe some other Bible doctrines; but everything is so distorted as to bear scarcely any semblance to Bible truth. Like Spiritualism, it is a gigantic delusion, wholly of the devil. It is admirably calculated to catch those who are ignorant of the Bible, and are in a condition to be imposed upon by the hierarchy, and also those who are sensually inclined. It will eventually culminate in Spiritualism pure and simple. Those with whom we talked seem to be really sincere, and we believe they were. The one who discoursed to our benefit had been a Mormon for over thirty years, as a "high priest," and has shown his faith in polygamy by taking four wives. He is doubtless as sincere in his belief as the Hindu is in his. The originators of Mormonism were beyond question intentional deceivers, but in process of time no doubt came to believe their own lies.

[101] *Mark* 1:4; *Luke* 3:3.

The Mormons exhibit every evidence of temporal prosperity, and, like the ancient Pharisees, they accept this as evidence of the favor of God. If numbers or temporal prosperity, however, are evidence of the favor of God, the Catholic Church would have to be accepted as the true church. But there is just one standard of truth, and that is the Bible, and the Bible alone. Tried by this standard, Mormonism is seen to be a fatal delusion. Yet we doubt not but that there are many deceived ones even among Mormons, to whom God will yet grant repentance,

2 Timothy 2
[25] ...to the acknowledging of the truth.

As we passed by the magnificent structures built for "worship," for business, or as residences for members of the hierarchy, and saw the evidences of the sagacity of the founders of that city, and then thought of the murderous "Danites," the Mountain Meadow massacre, and the "blood atonement" which is a thing of the past only because of the fear of the hated United States laws, one text continually forced itself upon our mind. It was this:

Habakkuk 2
[9] Woe to him that covets an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!
[10] You have consulted shame to your house by cutting off many people, and have sinned against your soul.
[11] For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.
[12] Woe to him that builds a town with blood, and stablishes a city by iniquity!

1887

1. Life and Death Are Opposite

Signs of the Times, January 27, 1887
Original title: Back Page

SAID Christ:

> **John 10**
> [10] I am come that they might have life.

To the Jews He sorrowfully said,

> **John 5**
> [40] You will not come to me, that you might have life.

These texts prove that if Christ had not come, men could not have had life; for He would not come to give men what they already had. And it proves that although Christ has come to give life, those who do not come to Him cannot have life. Christ said:

> **John 10**
> [8] All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers.

That is the truth today. All who come between men and Christ, who teach men that they may have life without accepting Christ, are thieves of the worst sort. They steal from their deluded victims their only hope of life. If the man who takes from his neighbor that upon which he depends to sustain his life shall receive sevenfold, surely the one who takes from his neighbor the Bread of eternal life shall receive seventy and seven fold.

Let it be understood that life and death are exactly opposite terms. Life means existence. So long as a man has breath, he has life, no matter what his circumstances may be. He may be in poverty, or suffering the utmost agony, yet he is alive. Eternal life is simply eternal existence. The statement that the righteous are to have eternal life does not necessarily imply that they will be happy. That they will have perfect happiness is true, but it could not be learned from the simple statement that they shall have eternal life. When we are told that they shall dwell eternally in the presence of God, we know that they will have fullness of joy.

But we are told by men, not by the Bible, that the wicked are to suffer eternal torment. If that were true, they also would have eternal life; for man cannot be in torment unless he is alive. The Bible tells us, however, that…

John 3
[36] He that believes not the Son shall not see life;

–and further that they…

2 Thessalonians 1
[9] …shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

So then he who rejects Christ does not simply reject happiness, but dooms himself to everlasting destruction,—death from which there is no resurrection,—

Jude
[13] …the blackness of darkness forever.

2. Immortality of Angels

Signs of the Times, February 17, 1887

IN PLACE of the regular Sabbath-school which would be commented upon this week, we occupy the space in answering the following questions concerning the angels. Since the ministration of angels is the subject of the present series of lessons, these notes will not be devoid of interest to the Sabbath-school scholars, as side lights.

> Do the angels now have immortality? If they do, how are we to understand *1 Timothy* 6:15-16, where it is stated that God only has immortality? This text is often used to prove that no part of man is immortal; why does it not prove the same with reference to the angels, or even of Christ himself?

Immortality is unending existence; it is exemption from death. Christ says of those who shall gain the world to come, that they cannot die any more, because they shall be equal unto the angels.[102] This indicates plainly that the angels cannot die, and that they are therefore immortal. And yet it is a truth that God only has immortality. This seeming paradox is explained by *John* 5:26, 27, where we read:

John 5
[26] For as the Father has life in himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in himself;
[27] And has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.

God has "life in himself;" He is immortal by nature. He not only has life for himself, but He has life to bestow upon others.

Romans 6
[23] The gift of God is eternal life.

[102] *Luke* 20:35-36.

It is in this sense that God only has immortality. He is self-existent, and His existence is self-perpetuating. He is the source of all life.

Acts 17
[28] In Him we live, and move, and have our being.

The angels, when they were created, were placed upon probation. Some of them sinned, and…

Jude
[6] …kept not their first estate, [and they are kept] in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day,

–when they will utterly perish. Others remained loyal to God, and are now confirmed in immortality. But they, just as will be the case with the redeemed saints, depend upon God, the source of life, for their immortality, and they have no power to confer immortality upon others.

The case of Christ is different. He is the only begotten Son of God. As such He not only possesses immortality, but He possesses the power to confer immortality upon others. Thus we read:

John 5
[26] For as the Father has life in himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in himself.

And again:

[21] For as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens them; even so the Son quickens whom He will.

This life which Christ has in himself, and which He can bestow upon others, was not given to Him after a successful probation, for Christ was never placed on probation, as created beings are. He has *by inheritance* a more exalted name and station than even the angels.[103] All that He has, is His by inheritance; immortality,

[103] *Hebrews* 1:3-4.

and the power of bestowing it upon others, is His by virtue of His being the Son of God.

This statement concerning Christ does not at all militate against the statement that God only has immortality; for Christ is God.

John 1
[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Whatever attributes belong to the Father, belong also to the Son. When we read that…

Genesis 1
[1] In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,

–we must understand the term "God" as including both the Father and the Son, for without the Word…

John 1
[3] …was not anything made that was made.

And so the Father…

John 5
[22] …has committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.
[23] He that honors not the Son honors not the Father which has sent Him.

> Is there any Scripture authority for speaking of Gabriel's trump as the one that shall raise the dead?

None whatever. The angel Gabriel is one high in position in the courts of Heaven, as we learn from the mention of him. He was commissioned to make known to Daniel the interpretation of his visions.[104] When he was also sent to foretell the birth of John the Baptist, his words…

Luke 1
[19] I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God,

[104] See *Daniel* 8:16; 9:20-22.

–seem to imply a more intimate relation to God than that of ordinary angels. From *Revelation* 22:6 we conclude that the work of revealing secrets to the prophets is intrusted to one certain angel. The angel who showed John the wonders recorded in *Revelation*, said,

> **Revelation 22** [see also 19:10]
> [9] I am your fellow servant, and [the fellow-servant] of your brethren the prophets.

Then Gabriel was the one who talked with John. This view is strengthened by *Revelation* 1:1, where we learn that Christ sent His angel to convey His messages. Thus:

> **Revelation 1**
> [1] The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He [Christ] sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.

But it is the voice of the *Archangel* that shall raise the dead,[105] and the name of the Archangel is Michael.[106] Michael, the Archangel, is none other than Christ, for it is the voice of the Son of God that causes those who are in their graves to come forth.[107] The trumpet that sounds is the "trump of God."[108] Only once in the history of the world has that trumpet sounded, and that was when the Archangel,—the Son of God,—spoke the ten commandments from Mount Sinai. Then the earth quaked. When it sounds at the last day, not only does the earth quake, but heaven also.

[105] *1 Thessalonians* 4:16-17.
[106] *Jude* 9.
[107] *John* 5:28-29.
[108] *1 Thessalonians* 4:16.

3. Concealed Infidelity

Signs of the Times, February 24, 1887

> "The gentle Nazarene did not die to become an atonement for the sins of a fallen world, but to set an example to mankind of fidelity to principle, even unto death. His pure life and noble teachings speak to the soul now as never before."

THE above we find in an editorial in the *Golden Gate*. We would like to ask how the writer found out that there was such a person as the "gentle Nazarene;" how he knows that His life was pure and His teachings noble; and where he learned about His death? The answer must be, in the New Testament; for nowhere else do we find any account of Jesus of Nazareth. There are in one or two profane histories, references to Jesus; but if the Bible had never been written, the world would have no knowledge of the life, character, and teachings of Christ. Whoever, therefore, accepts the truth that there was once a person on earth whose name was Jesus, and that His life was the perfection of purity, and His teachings the perfection of wisdom, must do so solely on the authority of the Bible.

But the same book which gives the history of Christ, tells us the manner and object of His death. Peter says[109] that He was taken and by wicked hands crucified and slain; and He says also, that He…

> **1 Peter 2**
> [24] His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.

We read also that righteousness shall be imputed to us,

> **Romans 4**
> [24] …if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;
> [25] Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

[109] *Acts* 2:23.

We read again, that…

Romans 5
[8] God commends His love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Again we read that we are justified…

Romans 3
[24] …through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
[25] Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

The same book which tells about the life of Jesus says,

Isaiah 53
[5] But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.
[6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

These statements concerning the death of Christ might be multiplied indefinitely. They teach plainly that Christ did die as an atonement for sin, and that those who believe in Him may be justified from sin. The same book which tells about the noble character and pure teachings of Christ, gives the above reasons for His death. If we accept the first, we cannot reject the other. The one who denies the atonement of Christ, convicts himself of inconsistency when he professes to believe that Jesus lived and taught. The historical narrative includes the death of Christ as well as His life.

Moreover, Jesus himself said:

John 3
[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

[17] For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

Now the man who says that the teachings of Jesus were pure and noble, and yet says that He did not die for the sins of the world, stultifies himself, for he virtually asserts that Jesus taught that which is not true.

Our object in noticing this statement from the *Golden Gate* is to expose a sort of infidelity that is becoming very common. It is a concealed infidelity, with which Spiritualists expect to entrap many professed Protestant Christians. They refer to the historical narrative of the Bible as though they accepted it fully, and thus gain the confidence of the unwary. Having thus concealed their hatred of the Bible, they proceed to undermine faith in it by perverting its teachings. The infidel who denies the Bible as a whole, rejecting even its historical statements, is not half so dangerous as one who professes a portion of it in order that he may more easily undermine its principles. It is simply an aggravated case of Judas betraying his Lord with a kiss.

It is not Spiritualists alone, however, who do this sort of thing. There are thousands who call themselves Christians, who segregate the Bible, calling this or that portion uninspired and throwing it overboard, if it runs counter to their preconceived opinions or perverse practices. If everyone who makes a profession of Christianity, should awake some morning and find the Bible or Bibles in his possession a perfect blank, with the exception of those portions which he really believed, there would be few whole Bibles in existence, and the supply of blank paper would largely exceed the demand.

4. Is It Strange?

Signs of the Times, February 24, 1887

SOME time since, a religious writer of considerable prominence, in commenting upon the resurrection of Dorcas, said:

> "Imagine Dorcas's surprise when she first opened her eyes. Here she was back in the world again. How strange it is to discover that no one of those persons who were raised from the dead ever attempted to tell the story of what they saw or heard."

The grave is spoken of as that...

> ...undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns;[110]

–but as a matter of fact many have returned, yet none have ever opened their lips to relate what they heard or saw while dead. Now if the dead are conscious, this is passing strange. If it be true that death is simply the separation of the soul from the body, which has acted as a clog to it, restricting its free exercise, why is it that in those instances where the soul has been returned to its lodgment, no note is made of the wonderful things learned while it was permitted to expand unrestrained?

We say that it is indeed wonderful that no revelations have been made of what is beyond, if, as the poet says, death is only transition, and the soul is more acutely conscious in death than it ever was during life; but we do not bring forward the fact that no such revelation has been made, as proof that the dead are not conscious. We have proof of a more satisfactory nature, which clears the subject of all doubt, and explains why those who have been raised from the dead were silent as to what took place during their absence from among the living. The testimony is abundant, but we have space here for only following:

Those who are dead are asleep:

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[110] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 1.

Psalm 13
[3] Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten my eyes, lest I *sleep the sleep of death.*

Psalm 127
[2] It is in vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives His beloved *sleep.*

Daniel 12
[2] And many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Jeremiah 51
[30] In their heat I will make them feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and *sleep a perpetual sleep*, and not wake, says the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15
[16] For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:
[17] And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.
[18] Then they also which are fallen *asleep* in Christ are perished.

1 Thessalonians 4
[13] But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are *asleep*...
[14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with Him.

People who are in a sound sleep are entirely unconscious of what is going on, and the Bible says that the dead are unconscious:

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything.
[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you go.

Psalm 146

[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Many more texts might be added but these are sufficient for our purpose. They are direct statements of fact, and need no explanation. There are only two things that can be done with them: Either accept them as literally true, or reject them altogether. But if we accept the Bible as the infallible word of God, we are not left to wonder why those who have been raised from the dead never told the story of what they saw or heard. They had none to tell. They were unconsciously sleeping, and were unable to take note of passing events. Then it is not a strange thing after all.

But there is one strange thing about this matter, and that is how, in the face of all these Bible texts, a Doctor of Divinity could write such a paragraph as that quoted at the beginning of this article.

5. Spiritualism a Delusion

Signs of the Times, April 14, 1887

THE Bible plainly teaches the existence of good and bad angels, and that they have a great deal of influence upon our lives; so much so, indeed, that if we are not ministered unto in spiritual things by good angels, we are by evil ones. Of the good angels we read:

> **Hebrews 1**
> [14] Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

–while the fallen angels are, we are told,

> **Revelation 16**
> [14] ...are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

This last scripture we understand refers to the delusion of Spiritualism, which today numbers its votaries by millions both in this country and in Europe. Kings and queens have become its devotees, and multitudes are everywhere being led captive by Satan at his will. And why? Simply because the professed church of Christ, both Protestant and Catholic, is almost a unit in teaching those twin errors:

1. The immortality of the soul, and
2. The conscious state of the dead.

Faith in these errors makes it well nigh impossible for people even now to resist the delusions of Spiritualism, and the time will come when Satan works "with *all* power, and signs, and lying wonders,"[111] that all who are not rooted and grounded on Bible truth will be swept into the whirlpool of this monster delusion.

[111] *2 Thessalonians* 2:9.

When good angels have appeared to men and have communicated with them as spiritual beings, they have declared themselves to be angels: Said the angel that appeared to Zacharias,

Luke 1
[19] I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God;

–but when the spirits of devils come, they come professing to be the spirits of the dead. And it is to this fact that the prophet alludes when he says:

Isaiah 8
[19] And 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?
[20] To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

Let us heed the admonition, that we…

Luke 21
[36] …may be accounted worthy to escape all these things,…and to stand before the Son of man.

6. Present and Future Probation

Signs of the Times, April 21, 1887

IN OUR comment on *Matthew* 12:31-32 in last week's *Signs*,[112] we had designed to make a few remarks upon the last clause of the passage, but we could not do so without too much of a diversion from the subject under consideration. The part referred to reads thus:

> **Matthew 12**
> [32] ...but whosoever speaks against against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

This especially of late years has been perverted to the support of a rapidly-growing theory which is subversive of the very foundation principles of the gospel of Christ. We refer to the theory of a probation after death. It is claimed that the clause,

> [32] ...it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come,

–teaches a probation after death;

> "For," say the advocates of this theory, "Christ would not say that a certain sin shall not be forgiven in the world to come, unless it is possible for some sins to be then forgiven."

So far as the passage in question is concerned, this matter may quickly be settled. The same thing is recorded by two other evangelists, and these parallel passages must determine the meaning of the expression in *Matthew*. *Mark* recorded it thus:

> **Mark 3**
> [29] But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost *has never forgiveness*, but is in danger of eternal damnation.

[112] The article referred to is titled, "The Unpardonable Sin," and is included in Volume 1 of the Fragments Series, *Grace Greater Than Sin*.

The words "has never forgiveness," express the meaning exactly. Someone may say that this does not disprove the theory of future probation; but the clause, "is in danger of eternal damnation," when rightly understood, shows that no thought of future probation is connected with the text. For all sin there is condemnation; whoever sins is condemned already. But this condemnation may not be lasting; if the guilty one accepts Christ, his condemnation may come to an end; for...

Romans 8
[1] There is...no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

If, however, the sinner has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit, his condemnation is eternal; from it there is no possibility of escape. This is all that can be 1found in the text.

In further proof of this, we have the simple statement made by *Luke*. He says,

Luke 12
[10] But unto him that blasphemes against the Holy Ghost *it shall not be forgiven* him.

This is just what the Saviour meant and all that he meant. He made an emphatic statement that the sin against the Holy Ghost should have no forgiveness; any attempt to make more out of his words is adding to the words of Inspiration.

Proverbs 30
[6] Add you not unto His words, lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar.

There are just two other texts in the Bible, which are quoted to uphold the future probation theory. These are *1 Peter* 3:18-20; 4:6. These texts should receive careful consideration, especially the first, for, as perverted, it is made the foundation of many unscriptural theories. We will quote the text in full:

1 Peter 3

[18] For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
[19] By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
[20] Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

The simplest way to show what the text does not mean, is to show what it does mean. This we may do by a series of questions which will enable the reader himself to explain its meaning. Thus:

1. Who once suffered?

   "Christ also has once suffered."

2. For what did Christ suffer?

   "For sins."

3. Why did He thus suffer?

   "That He might bring us to God."

4. How did He suffer?

   "Being put to death in the flesh."

5. By what was He quickened, or made alive?

   "Quickened [made alive] by the Spirit."

6. What else did He do by the Spirit?

   "He went and preached unto the spirits in prison."

7. Why were they in prison?

   They "sometime [once] were disobedient."

8. When were they disobedient and in prison?

   "When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah."

There is the whole matter stated in the words of Scripture, so plainly that the most obtuse could not fail to see it. These disobedient spirits were in prison in the days of Noah, and therefore it was at that time that the preaching was done to them.

Note the harmony between this text and *Genesis* 6:3. This text says, that Christ, by the Spirit, went and preached to the spirits in prison,

1 Peter 3
[20] ...when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah.

This would imply that in the days of Noah, God had waited a long time for something. Now read *Genesis* 6:3:

Genesis 6
[3] And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.

Here we find that God's longsuffering waited one hundred and twenty years, to give those wicked people a chance to repent. All that time Christ, by the Spirit, was preaching to them. Noah was the visible agent, but he was simply the mouthpiece, just as Paul says of all true preachers, they are...

2 Corinthians 5
[20] ...ambassadors for Christ, [saying to sinners,] we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.

Here we might leave this subject, but someone will probably be questioning about the prison, and we may as well forestall the queries. By gross perversion of Scripture, it is assumed that this prison was *Hades*, and that the preaching was done there. Indeed, many would-be expositors write as though this were expressly stated in the text. In the next number we shall show clearly why such an assumption is absurd, and how it would have been impossible for Christ, or anybody else, to preach in *Hades*, for that subject is worthy of an article by itself. We shall now be content to show what the imprisonment was, which is mentioned in the text.

The reader will bear in mind that these "spirits in prison" were disobedient. Now disobedience brings condemnation to death,[113] and a man under sentence of death is always kept in prison. This is the idea conveyed by the psalmist when he says:

Psalm 102
[19] ...from Heaven did the Lord behold the earth;
[20] To hear the groaning of the prisoners; to loose those that are appointed to death.

And the idea is still more forcibly expressed by the apostle, when he says that Christ took part of flesh and blood,

Hebrews 2
[14] ...that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
[15] And deliver them, who *through fear of death* were all their lifetime *subject to bondage*.

Nothing but sin causes fear of death; hence the text teaches emphatically that sin makes men "subject to bondage." It is the especial mission of Christ to save people from sin,[114] and consequently to release them from prison. For proof of this read the following texts:

Isaiah 61
[1] The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Isaiah 42
[1] Behold my servant, whom I uphold; my elect, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon Him:...
[7] To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison.

Notice that Christ proclaims the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and brings out the prisoners from the prison, be-

[113] *Romans* 6:23.
[114] *Matthew* 1:21.

cause the Spirit is upon Him. This agrees with Peter's statement that Christ, by the Spirit, went and preached to the spirits in prison.

Psalm 116
[16] O Lord, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, and the son of your handmaid: You have loosed my bonds.

Psalm 142
[7] Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise your name.

Psalm 79
[11] Let the sighing of the prisoner come before You; according to the greatness of your power preserve those that are appointed to die.[115]

To this might be added our Saviour's talk to the Jews, recorded in the 8th of *John*. He told them how they might be made free. Verse 32. They denied that they were in bondage. Verse 33. He told them that…

John 8
[34] Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin,

–and therefore in bondage.[116] He then told them that the Son alone could make them free indeed. Verse 36. Yet although Christ was there, filled with the same Spirit by which He preached to the wicked antediluvians, these Jews, like them, refused to be set free, and died in their sins. Verse 21.

With this we leave the text, *1 Peter* 3:18-20, believing that anyone with whom simple Bible statements are all-sufficient evidence, will have no difficulty in seeing that it teaches this; that by the same Spirit by which Christ was raised from the dead, He went in the days of Noah, and through him, preached unto the antediluvians, who were in the bondage of sin; and that in so doing He was simply doing what He is doing today, and has been doing ever since the fall.

[115] Compare *Psalm* 102:19-20; *Hebrews* 2:16.
[116] Compare *Romans* 6:16-18; 7:14; *2 Peter* 2:19.

This work of Christ, of preaching deliverance to the captives, is limited to this present life, for when He comes the second time He comes "without sin unto salvation,"[117] to take the released prisoners home.

Therefore,

Hebrews 3 [also 4:7]
[15] Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts;

–for,

2 Corinthians 6
[2] Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

[117] *Hebrews* 9:28.

7. Christian Science

Signs of the Times, April 21, 1887

THIS is a very innocent name, and one well calculated to impress many people favorably. The word "science" is in itself sufficient to overawe the multitude, for so great is the reverence for science that a bundle of the veriest nonsense will pass current, if it is only labeled "scientific;" and when to this is prefixed the word "Christian," to say anything derogatory would be thought sacrilegious. The term is used to designate…

> …the greatest remedial system ever employed to eradicate pain and disease.

As a matter of fact, it is the name of the most unchristian and antichristian nonsense that has lately been invented to deceive people.

According to one of its most intelligent advocates,

> It is very necessary to impress upon the novice in the science that we are created spiritually as well as physically, and that the body is not the real self.

After this Spiritualistic utterance, we are prepared to learn that,

> There is no death. You are created as a spiritual being, and you cannot get away. What we call death is merely a cessation of the action of the mind on the body. The body is now dead, and it is merely animated by the action of the mind.

Of course if there is no death, there is no disease, and this "Christian Science" consists in deluding people with this idea. If a man has a broken leg, these "Scientists" will not heal it, but will argue something like this:

> "Your body is no part of yourself. You are a spiritual being, and a spiritual leg cannot be broken, consequently your leg is not broken. That which you call your leg, and which is broken, has

> nothing more to do with you than though it was a stick that was broken."

But with all this "reasoning," they would not be able to induce the man to so ignore his real broken leg as to walk upon his spiritual leg.

As an evidence of the anti-Christian character of this so-called "science," we need only state that the president of a "Christian Science College" in Chicago, says that the works of Christ and His disciples…

> …were not supernatural, nor miracles, as is generally supposed, but could be performed by anyone whose knowledge and faith in Christian Science would enable him to do it.

This "Christian Science," or Mind Cure, is simply a phase of Spiritualism. That it will erelong have many followers, there can be no question, for it is based solely on the pagan notion of the immortality of the soul, and that the body is no part of the real man; and a belief of this is nowadays quite generally considered as evidence that one is a Christian. And it is for this reason that Spiritualism is arrogating to itself the name Christian, with good prospects that it will not be long before its claims are recognized by the remainder of the "Christian world."

8. Where Are They?

Signs of the Times, April 21, 1887

> Where are the saints that rose from the dead at the time of Christ's resurrection? Did they return to their graves, or are they in Heaven? Where are Enoch and Elijah? - O. B. H.

THE Bible tells us that...

2 Kings 2
[11] Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven.

Of Enoch it says that he...

Hebrews 11
[5] ...was translated that he should not see death,

–and that...

Genesis 5
[24] God took him.

So there can be no question but that he too is in Heaven. We are not told positively what became of those whose graves were opened at the death of Christ, and who came out of the graves after his resurrection,[118] but the evidence seems to indicate quite clearly that they, too, are now in Heaven. Thus Paul says of Christ that...

Ephesians 4 [margin]
[8] ...when He ascended upon high, He led a multitude of captives, and gave gifts unto men.

Since Christ himself is in Heaven,[119] it is evident that those whom He led with Him from captivity are there too.

If we turn to *Revelation* 5:9-10 we shall find a company brought to view who have been redeemed from among men, by the blood of Christ, who are around the throne of God. That this is not a

[118] *Matthew* 27:50-53.
[119] *1 Peter* 3:22.

prophetic view of what shall take place after the coming of the Lord, is proved by the fact that at the same time there stood in the midst the…

Revelation 5
[6] Lamb as it had been slain.

Now since men can get to Heaven before the coming of the Lord only by a special resurrection or translation, we are warranted in concluding that these saints who were raised at the resurrection of Christ, are identical with those whom John saw in Heaven.

9. Can Inanimate Objects Talk?

Signs of the Times, May 12, 1887

Editor, Signs of the Times: Sometime last year I asked you the following questions:

"Would it not be wrong, in teaching by allegory or parable, to use one founded on a superstition or false conception of facts, without showing its falsity? Did our Saviour ever use such an allegory or parable?"

You replied:

"An answer to the second question would render the first unnecessary; for if Christ did make use of such a parable it would be evidence that the thing was not wrong. We have no knowledge, however, that our Saviour ever based any of His teachings on superstitions or false theories. The story of the rich man and Lazarus is not strictly a parable, but an apologue, like that found in *Judges* 9:7-15. An apologue is the relation of supposed actions of brutes or inanimate objects, and does not convey any wrong impression, because the hearers, knowing that the things referred to cannot do or say the things credited to them, readily understand that some moral truth is intended to be impressed by it."

To this I made a brief reply at the time, but as it failed to reach you, I will by request restate some of my objections to your answer. In the first place, you say: "If Christ did make use of such a parable it would be evidence that the thing was not wrong" as if it would be right under some circumstances to do wrong—for the teaching of false doctrine, if only by implication, is certainly wrong. This position is not a good one. But you say you have no knowledge He ever so taught. Neither have I. You call the story of the rich man and Lazarus an "apologue." Was it one to the Jews? Certainly not. They believed in the conscious existence of the soul (or spirit) after death, and this story, being based on that belief, had to them all the elements of probability—a parable—and would surely tend to confirm them in it. If this is an apologue it stands alone as such among all of Christ's teachings. Even an apo-

logue should have some foundation in fact as Jotham's did in the olive, fig, vine, and bramble." –W. M. B.

TO THE above we have to say:

1. We did not imply that it would ever be right to do wrong. What we did say was that Christ could not do wrong, and that therefore the fact that a certain thing was done by Him, would be sufficient evidence that such act was not wrong. But in that case we should not be able to find anything in the word of God to condemn such action. In the case under consideration, however, we find no evidence that Christ ever used such a method of conveying instruction, and we do find that He could not have done such a thing, for it would have been a sort of deception.

2. Our correspondent begs the question entirely, when he says that the Jews...

> ...believed in the conscious existence of the soul after death, and this story [of the rich man and Lazarus], being based on that belief, had to them all the elements of probability.

In order to show that the story of the rich man and Lazarus had to the Jews all the elements of probability, our friend ought to *prove* that they believed in the immortality of the soul, which he simply *assumes*. There is not the slightest evidence in the Bible to show that the Jews, as a people, believed in the conscious existence of the soul after death. Without doubt many of them had become so tinctured with Grecian philosophy, from their contact with the heathen world, that they had come to believe in the existence of the soul after death; but the sacred writings of the Jews,—the Old Testament,—give not the slightest warrant for such a belief, and as a people the Jews still clung, outwardly at least, to the religion of their fathers. Therefore it is entirely an assumption to say that the Jews would either gain wrong ideas, or have erroneous views strengthened, by Christ's teaching in *Luke* 16:19-31.

3. Our correspondent says:

> Even an apologue should have some foundation in fact, as Jotham's did in the olive, fig, vine, and bramble.

What foundation in fact did Jotham's story of the olive, etc., have? Is it true that the trees ever went forth to anoint a king over them? and did anybody in the world ever hear an olive-tree, a fig-tree, a vine, or a bramble utter speech? No; Jotham's story had not the slightest foundation in fact. Was it therefore calculated to deceive, and to lead the people to think that trees do really talk? Not by any means; for his hearers well knew that it is contrary to nature that inanimate things should talk; they knew that he was using an imaginary instance to illustrate his case, and they saw the point at once.

So in the case of our Saviour. To illustrate a point He put words into the mouths of dead men. But the Jews knew, both from observation and from their acquaintance with the Scriptures, that it is impossible for dead men to talk or think. They understood the point intended to be conveyed, just as well as the men of Shechem did the words of Jotham; and they were no more likely to imagine from Christ's words that dead men can talk, than the men of Shechem were to conclude from Jotham's words that trees can talk. For a dead man to talk would be as contrary to nature as it would be for trees.

The only way we can understand our friend's statement that Jotham's apologue had a foundation in fact, is to suppose that he means to say that in Jotham's time there were such things as trees, vines, and brambles. Well, so there were such things as dead men in Christ's time. And so the parallel between the two illustrations is perfect. Neither Jotham nor Christ taught that inanimate objects can talk, and nobody was deceived.

It is very common for people to read their own beliefs into the Bible. Because the majority of the people of the world believe that the soul of man exists after death, they take it for granted that the

Jews always believed so, and that the Bible so teaches. Taken as it reads, and allowed to explain itself, the Bible bears very emphatic testimony against the pagan anomaly of a man being alive when he is dead.

10. Only an Echo

Signs of the Times, May 12, 1887

AT THE annual convention of the Baptist Churches of California, recently held in Oakland, there was considerable discussion over the "new theology." "Probation after Death" was the subject of a paper read by Dr. Frost, who styled that unscriptural theory the "great hypothesis," and said:

> The great hypothesis was first in vogue among the nations of heathendom, and there is reason to believe that probation after death is the inspiration of the prince of the power of the air, of the power of darkness. It is an echo of that first sermon preached by the serpent in Eden, from the text, "You shall not surely die."

Nobody could have stated the case more forcibly and aptly. All talk of the "larger hope" of a probation after death is simply the devil's device to induce men to slight the gospel and become hardened in sin. It is not a new device, for, as Dr. Frost says, it was popular among the ancient heathen; it has been the strength of Roman Catholicism, but it remained for the present generation to attempt to make it appear to be a part of Protestant Christianity.

The question that agitates the minds of those who are not willing to see Protestantism wholly paganized is,

> "How shall we check this growing delusion?"

The answer is not difficult, and should be suggested to everyone by the statement which Dr. Frost makes as to its origin. Says he:

> It is an echo of that first sermon preached by the serpent in Eden, from the text, "You shall not surely die."

Common sense would say, Stop the preaching from that text, and the echo will necessarily cease. There can be no echo without some noise preceding it; when the noise ceases, the echo will cease. And it is a truth that the theory of probation after death is

the legitimate result of the doctrine of the indestructibility of the human soul, which doctrine was first preached by Satan, and which is being repeated by thousands of Christian ministers, who are astonished that there should be any echo. Abandon the unscriptural theory that the soul of man cannot die, and probation after death would need no one to combat it.

On the other hand, so long as Christian preachers persistently hold that man is by nature immortal, the hypothesis of probation after death will find a hearing. The echo will not die out so long as that which causes it continues.

11. He Descended into Hell

Signs of the Times, May 19, 1887

THIS is one clause of the so-called apostles' creed, which was formulated somewhere between the fourth and the ninth centuries, and which is now adopted by nearly the whole of Christendom. The sentiment was evidently based on the mistranslation of the Greek word *Hades*, in *Acts* 2:27, and a misconception of *1 Peter* 3:18-20. In the last number but one of the *Signs*, we showed what this text really does mean,[120] and now, according to promise, we propose to show what it does not mean; that it cannot by any possibility mean that in the interval between His crucifixion and His resurrection Christ went to some unknown region where wicked spirits were confined, and preached to them.

It cannot be possible that the thousands who are accustomed to interpret *1 Peter* 3:18-20 as we have just indicated, as proof that what we call death is not really death, have any idea of all that such an interpretation involves. A few words, however, will suffice to show any candid, thinking person that those who use this text to prove the immortality of the soul, thereby open the door for the introduction of some grievous heresies. If it were true that the "spirits in prison," of whom Peter speaks, were preached to by Christ in person in the period between His crucifixion and His resurrection, then we should be forced to admit,

1. That there is a probation after death. For preaching is for the purpose of saving those who will believe.[121] It makes no difference whether the ones preached to will believe and repent or not; the fact that they are preached to, shows that there is a possibility of their repenting, and therefore they are still on probation.

2. We should also have to admit the Catholic dogma of purgatory, for that doctrine is based chiefly on this common perversion

[120] See article 6 in this section, *Present and Future Probation*.
[121] *1 Corinthians* 1:21; *Romans* 10:13-14.

of this text. Purgatory and probation after death are practically synonymous.

3. Prayers for the dead would follow as a necessary consequence. For if souls are in a condition to be preached to, they are on probation; and if they are on probation, there is a possibility that they may be saved; and if there is a possibility that they may be saved, all good people ought to, and will, pray that they may be saved. It is not necessary here to show how unscriptural all these positions are, for nearly all Protestants are agreed that they are unscriptural; what we design is to show those who reject purgatory and prayers for the dead, that they cannot do so consistently without also rejecting the dogma of the natural immortality of the soul.

Another point: The same ones who use *1 Peter* 3:18-20 as proving that the man does not wholly die, use Christ's reply to the thief on the cross[122] to prove the same thing. From the one they claim that Christ descended into some place where the wicked antediluvians were kept, and preached to them, and from the other they claim that immediately after His death He went to paradise. These two positions destroy each other, for if Christ spent the time between His death and His resurrection in preaching to wicked spirits in purgatory, He certainly did not go to the "paradise of God."[123] Some people seeing the inconsistency of these two positions, both of which are wrong, have sought to evade it by taking another position equally erroneous, namely, that those wicked spirits were in paradise! As many people are in doubt over this point, we shall, erelong, show from the Bible what and where paradise is.

But does not the Bible say something about Christ being in hell? It does say that He was in a place which the *King James's* translation incorrectly rendered "hell," but which the revisers

[122] *Luke* 23:43.
[123] *Revelation* 2:7.

have very properly left untranslated, namely, *Hades*. In *Acts* 2:25-31 we read the following:

Acts 2
[25] For David speaks concerning Him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for He is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:
[26] Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:
[27] *Because You will not leave my soul in hell*, neither will You suffer your Holy One to see corruption.
[28] You have made known to me the ways of life; You shall make me full of joy with your countenance.
[29] Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.
[30] Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;
[31] He seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption.

The words which Peter here quoted, "Because you will not leave my soul in *Hades*," are found in *Psalm* 16:19 where the Hebrew word corresponding to *Hades* in the New Testament is *sheol*. Let us now examine a few texts to ascertain the nature of this place, who go there, and their condition while there.

1. Good people go there. This is proved by the fact that Christ went there. Jacob said to his sons who thought to comfort him after Joseph was taken away,

Genesis 37
[35] I will go down into the grave [*sheol*] unto my son mourning.

He expected to go to *sheol*, and he knew that Joseph, if dead, was there. When Christ comes and calls the righteous from their graves, and the saying is brought to pass that is written,

1 Corinthians 15
[54] Death is swallowed up in victory,

–they will shout,

1 Corinthians 15
[55] O death, where is your sting? O grave [*Hades*], where is your victory?

2. Wicked people also go there. David says of the wicked:

Psalm 49
[11] Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.
[12] Nevertheless man being in honor abides not: he is like the beasts that perish.
[13] This their way is their folly: yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.
[14] Like sheep they are laid in the grave [*sheol*]; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave [*sheol*] from their dwelling.

We read also of the rebellious princes of Israel, that…

Numbers 16
[31] …the ground clave asunder that was under them:
[32] And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.
[33] They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them; and they perished from among the congregation.

3. All must go to this place. Says David:

Psalm 89
[48] What man is he that lives, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave [*sheol*]?

4. The souls as well as the bodies of men and likewise animals, go there. See *Numbers* 16:31-33; *Psalm* 49:15; 89:48; *Acts* 2:31, etc.

5. The wicked who go there are silent. Says David:

Psalm 31
[17] Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave [*sheol*].

6. The righteous who go there do not call on the Lord.

Psalm 6
[5] For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave [*sheol*] who shall give You thanks?

Psalm 115
[17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

7. Not only do the righteous not praise the Lord in *sheol* but no one who goes there can be converted to the truth. Said Hezekiah:

Isaiah 38
[18] For the grave [*sheol*] cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

8. It is a land of forgetfulness.

Psalm 88
[10] Will You show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise You? Selah.
[11] Shall your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or your faithfulness in destruction?
[12] Shall your wonders be known in the dark? and your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

9. Finally, it is a place where there is absolutely no consciousness of anything.

Ecclesiastes 9
[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave [*sheol*], whither you go.

10. Dead people cannot think.

Psalm 118

[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.[124]

These texts show conclusively that it is absolutely impossible that at the time of Christ's crucifixion there could have been any of the antediluvian sinners, or any others who had died, capable of listening to preaching, or that Christ could have preached to them or to anybody else, between His crucifixion and His resurrection. In addition to these texts, we may note that Christ's soul was in *Hades*, whence it was rescued only by His resurrection;[125] that it was Christ's soul that was made an offering for sin;[126] and that His soul was poured out unto death.[127] Surely lovers of the Bible ought to accept the simple, consistent statements of that book, rather than a view which makes the Bible contradict itself, and brings in a train of pernicious heresies.

[124] See also *John* 11:21; *Ecclesiastes* 9:5-6, etc.
[125] *Acts* 2:31.
[126] *Isaiah* 53:10.
[127] *Isaiah* 53:12.

12. Conditional Immortality: What Is It?

Signs of the Times, May 19, 1887

AT THE Baptist Convention recently held in Oakland, Californian, one of the essays, written and read by a prominent clergyman, contained the following:

> Two of the foremost nations of the world stand face to face with two great problems. Conditional immortality is leavening the Church of England, and probation after death is sapping the foundation of Congregationalism.

From the fact that the essayist connected conditional immortality with probation after death, which he regards as a dangerous heresy, we conclude that he regards conditional immortality in the same light. We know, indeed, that many people do regard that doctrine as a pernicious one, and we are forced to conclude that, if they are honest, their aversion is due to ignorance of what conditional immortality is.

What *is* meant by conditional immortality? Simply this, that immortality, or eternal life, which is the same thing, is conditioned upon the individual's belief in Christ. It means that...

> **Romans 6**
> [24] ...the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is the doctrine which our Saviour himself taught, when He said:[128]

> **John 3**
> [36] He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.

Or, as expressed by the apostle:

[128] PP Editor's note: The text was spoken by John the Baptist, but Jesus taught the same in *John* 5:24 and 6:47.

1 John 5
[11] And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

It is the doctrine which Christ taught to Nicodemus in these words:

John 3
[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It is the doctrine which gives Christ His rightful title of Life-giver, which He himself claimed, when He said:

John 10
[10] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

To hear the same men talk, one would get the idea that the doctrine of conditional immortality is rank infidelity, and utterly opposed to all true Christianity. As a matter of fact, it is based on the reception of the fact that in all things Christ has the preeminence; that man can have nothing except as he gets it through Christ.

As a matter of fact, a denial of the doctrine of conditional immortality is to that extent a denial of Christ. Indeed, we may truly say that it is wholly a denial of Christ, since it denies the very thing for which Christ came. He himself declares that His only object, for fallen mankind, was that they, by believing on Him, should have life.[129]

Now the man who says that eternal life is not conditioned upon his believing in Christ, virtually says that man has no need of Christ. This was just what so many of the ancient Jews did, to whom Christ sadly said,

[129] PP Editors note: I reconstructed this last sentence, as parts of it were missing, and I could not check the original article, as it is missing from *Adventist Archives*.

John 5

[40] You will not come to me, that you might have life.

They did not profess to be Christians; they rejected Christ unreservedly. Is it not strange that in these days Christ is rejected in exactly the same way by those who profess to love and honor Him?

Why should people refuse to acknowledge their indebtedness to Christ for all that they have or hope to have?

13. What and Where Is Paradise?

Signs of the Times, May 26, 1887

Luke 23

[42] And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

[43] And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, today you shall be with me in paradise.

THIS language will be recognized at once as the request of the penitent thief who was crucified with Jesus, and the reply of our Lord. It has been the subject of an unlimited amount of controversy, and doubtless will be, as long as men choose to interpret the Bible according to their system of theology, instead of deriving their system of theology wholly from the Bible. We do not design at this time to give a detailed exposition of the text, but simply to note a few points concerning paradise.

From Christ's language to Mary, recorded in *John* 20:17, three days after the crucifixion, it is very evident that He did not go to Heaven on the day when He gave the thief the solemn assurance that they should meet in paradise. On account of this text, many who cling tenaciously to the idea that Jesus did not actually die, argue that Christ did go to paradise that day, but that paradise is not in Heaven. Then they connect this text with their erroneous reading of *1 Peter* 3:18-20, and conclude that paradise is a sort of half-way house—an intermediate place between earth and heaven—where all souls, both good and bad, are retained until the Judgment. In short, paradise is made identical with Hades. A very few texts will suffice to show that this is a most erroneous conclusion.

First, however, we wish to call attention to the fact that if this definition of paradise were true, the Saviour's promise to the thief would be made nonsense. If paradise were only a place where souls remain between death and the final judgment, then Christ's promise to the penitent thief would amount simply to this:

"Today you shall be with me in the place of the dead!"

There would certainly be nothing very comforting about that, and nothing that would require the exercise of much faith, seeing both Jesus and the thief were at that time hanging on the cross; but this is what Christ's answer meant, if the theory be true that paradise and Hades are identical. This fact alone should be sufficient to show the fallacy of such a view.

There are only three places in the Bible where the word "paradise" is used. One is in the text quoted at the beginning of this article. The second is in *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4, which we quote:

2 Corinthians 12
[2] I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knows;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.
[3] And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell; God knows;)
[4] How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

This text proves conclusively that paradise is not an intermediate place between earth and Heaven, but that it is Heaven itself. In the first place, Paul says that he (for he speaks of himself) was caught up into the third Heaven, and then in repeating the statement for emphasis, he says that he was caught up into paradise. Then Christ's promise to the thief on the cross involved nothing less than that the thief should be with Him in the third Heaven.

In *Revelation* 2:7 we find the following promise, given by the Spirit:

Revelation 2
[7] To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

From this text we learn that paradise contains the tree of life. Turn now to *Revelation* 22 and read:

Revelation 22
[1] And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

[2] In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life.

Here we learn that the tree of life is in the midst of the New Jerusalem, which contains the throne of God. But the tree of life is in the midst of the paradise of God;[130] therefore we must conclude that the paradise of God is in the midst of the city of God, and that whoever goes to paradise goes into the immediate presence of God.

"Paradise" is an Anglicized Greek word meaning "a park or a beautiful garden." Earthly cities have parks and pleasure gardens, and the heavenly Jerusalem has one also, but as much more beautiful than earthly gardens as the city whose builder and maker is God, is grander than cities built by man. Now compare this with…

Ezekiel 28

[13] You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold.

Read with this the description of the New Jerusalem, in the 21st of *Revelation*, and it will be seen at once that the Garden of Eden and paradise are the same.

When Adam sinned, he was driven from the Garden of Eden; nothing sinful could be allowed to remain there. So we read of the New Jerusalem which contains the paradise of God, that…

Revelation 21

[27] There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

This, together with *Revelation* 2:7 and 22:14, teaches us that entrance into paradise, and enjoyment of its delights, is to be the reward of those who shall overcome through faith in Christ. But the righteous are rewarded only at the coming of the Lord in His

[130] *Revelation* 2:7.

kingdom and the resurrection of the just;[131] and that was just what the thief asked for in the words,

Luke 23
[42] Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

[131] *Matthew* 16:27; 25:31; *Luke* 14:14.

14. One Probation Enough

Signs of the Times, May 26, 1887

> **Isaiah 26**
> [10] Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

THIS text is of itself sufficient to show the folly of the claims that after death there will be another probation for those who have not accepted Christ in this life. Of course the text does not mean that the grace of God is entirely in vain, and that no wicked persons will turn from their wicked ways, for Paul says that the grace of God does bring salvation;[132] and if it were not for the grace of God, as manifested in the gift of His Son, it would be impossible for anybody to repent. But it does mean that those who will not repent in consequence of the ordinary manifestations of God's favor, would only be hardened still more by greater manifestations of it.

The case of Pharaoh is right to the point. In the first place he had the same call that is extended to all the world:

> **Isaiah 55**
> [1] Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

This call is to all the world, and included Pharaoh. It cannot be said that he had no chance, for the chosen people of God were right in his own land.

Then Moses came to him with a message direct from the Lord, saying,

> **Exodus 5**
> [1] Let my people go.

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[132] *Titus* 2:11.

And in order that he might know from whom the message came, miracles were wrought, showing the power of God. Here he had additional opportunity to acknowledge God, but he refused.

Then God's judgments began to come, and when the agents of Satan,—the magicians,—could no longer counterfeit these wonders, the proud king was constrained to beg for the favor of God, whom he had despised. His request was granted, and the frogs were removed:

Exodus 8
[15] But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them.

Again the power of God was manifested in judgments, and again the king sent for the servants of the Lord, and begged that the plague of flies might be removed.

[30] And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the Lord.
[31] And the Lord did according to the word of Moses; and He removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people; there remained not one.
[32] And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

Still closer and closer came the judgments, so that it was absolutely impossible for anyone to doubt the power and majesty of God. The cattle were destroyed, terrible boils broke out upon man and beast, and finally a fearful storm of thunder, hail, and fire, was sent, which destroyed everything in its path.

Exodus 9
[27] And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.
[28] Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and you shall stay no longer.

[33] And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the Lord: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.
[34] And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.
[35] And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go; as the Lord had spoken by Moses.

Here we have a perfect illustration of the truth spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 26
[10] Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness.

The more favor was showed to Pharaoh, the more hardened he became. It was not until a plague was sent from which there could be no respite, that he relented long enough to let the people go as the Lord had commanded; and even then, when there seemed to be a prospect of no more judgments, he hardened his heart and rushed forth to his own destruction.

Thus it would be with the wicked if God should grant them a second probation. In this life they have had a chance to see the power of God manifested in both mercy and judgment. Sometimes they have trembled at the near approach of danger, but have hardened their hearts as soon as the danger was past. By and by the Lord will be…

2 Thessalonians 1
[7] …revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
[8] In flaming fire.

Psalm 50
[3] A fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.

Then…

Isaiah 2
[11] The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

Everyone will then be willing to confess…

Philippians 2
[11] …that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now what would be the result if, after all this, God should grant the wicked another probation? Both revelation and experience show that they would be worse than they ever were before. To give them another probation, would be worse than casting pearls before swine. The reason for this is, that God never cuts off any sinner while his heart is tender, and when his heart has ceased to be tender, nothing but terrible judgments can make any impression upon him, and the only impression they can make is that of cowardly fear.

It is true that many of the advocates of a second probation claim that it will be granted only to those who in this life have "not had a fair chance." That this is a direct charge against the justice of God, will be shown at another time;[133] it is sufficient here to remind the reader that a "second probation" necessarily implies a first, and a probation is a trying, a testing. Therefore to say that any will have a second probation, is to admit that they have been tried once and found wanting. In other words, they have "had a fair chance," and having refused it, they would count any additional favor an evidence of weakness on the part of God, and would deride Him for it.

[133] See Article 10, "*No Probation After Death*," in the section, *1883 – 1886*.

15. What Is the Resurrection?

Signs of the Times, June 16, 1887

IN ANSWER to a question upon the resurrection, the *Christian Union* says:

> Resurrection, or "rising up" (as the word means) is the entrance of the spirit into the embodied life of the world to come.

This is Spiritualist doctrine, but it is held by very many who profess to be orthodox. There seems to be a sort of fascination about it, although we cannot conceive wherein the fascination consists, unless it is in the fact that the doctrine contradicts the Bible. Let the reader who is inclined to accept the *Christian Union's* definition of the resurrection, but who has a regard for the Bible, notice the following scriptures:

1. Resurrection of Christ After Three Days

Matthew 20

17 And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death,

19 And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again.

Paul also says that...

1 Corinthians 15

3 Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

And he also states that this was...

Romans 1

4 ...the resurrection from the dead.

The Spiritualist theory says that the resurrection is the rising of the soul from the body, at death; the Bible says that the resurrection of Christ was not till three days after His crucifixion. Which is more worthy of belief?

2. Resurrection Affects the Body

Matthew 27

62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,
63 Saying, Sir, we remember what that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.
64 Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead.

Notice the direct contrast between the Spiritualist theory of the resurrection and the Bible teaching. According to the Spiritualist theory, the resurrection of Jesus took place as soon as He breathed His last breath upon the cross. But here we find that the next day after the crucifixion the Jews desired a guard so that the disciples might not steal His body away and so claim that He had been raised from the dead according to His prediction. From this we learn that when Jesus, His disciples, and the Pharisees spoke of the resurrection from the dead, they all had the idea but that some time after death, the body should be restored to life. And the Bible nowhere recognizes anything as resurrection, except restoration of the body to life. Just imagine the Pharisees asking for a guard to prevent the spirit of Christ from leaving the body! The Spiritualist theory makes nonsense of the Bible.

3. Resurrection Takes Place in the Last Day

John 6

40 And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise Him up at the *last day.*

These are the words of Christ. The Spiritualist teaching is that everyone is raised at what is called death; Christ says that believ-

ers shall be raised *at the last day*. No "advanced thinker" would be so wild as to claim that the spirit does not leave the body of any man until the last day, yet Christ says that this is when the resurrection will take place. And lest some should claim that the "last day" refers to the last day of a man's earthly life, we quote the words of Christ in:

John 5

[28] Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

[29] 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.

This shows that the resurrection is a coming forth from the grave.

4. Resurrection Takes Place at the Last Trump

1 Corinthians 15

[51] Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

[52] 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.

[53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

[54] 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.

No comment could make it plainer that the resurrection takes place at the last trump, and that it consists in the raising of the body to life.

We might cite additional texts by the score, showing the same thing. Shall we not believe the Bible doctrine of the resurrection, rather than the Spiritualist theory? Reason alone would say that we ought, since it is the Bible alone that reveals the fact that there

will be a resurrection. And does it not seem strange the Spiritualists, and those who follow their teaching without taking their name, will prate loftily about the resurrection from the dead, while all the time they deny that there is any such thing as death? Surely "the legs of the lame are not equal," and all who depart from the simplicity of Bible doctrine are deplorably lame.

16. What Absurd Thing Shall Come Next?

Signs of the Times, June 16, 1887

WE HAD often heard of the mind-cure theory, but now we see it. We always thought it was a mess of nonsense, but now we know that such only it is. We have before us the "formula" by which prescriptions are to be compounded for the cure of all diseases that humanity is heir to. What? "humanity" did we say? Oh, no, there is no humanity! It is all divinity. And "diseases" did we say? It is all a mistake. There is no such thing as disease, nor ache, nor pain—all this is a hoax. You get your finger caught as in a vice; it is not pinched, it does not hurt—it can't hurt, for don't you know that…

> …matter has no life, and is insensible to pain or pleasure?

You only believe it hurts, and that is all. In fact matter "has no real existence" anyhow, and how can anything be really affected that has no real existence?

> Matter is only an appearance like an image in a mirror;

–and do you suppose that your reflection in a mirror could have its hand cut with a buzz-saw, or its finger mashed with a hammer? Do you suppose its tooth or head ever aches? Does it ever have the dyspepsia or neuralgia? Why, of course not. Well, then, are you so lost to all true ideas of sense or perception as not to know that "you are not material," and that part of you which appears to be matter "is only an appearance like an image in a mirror"? And are you so dull as to suppose that an appearance can ache, or swell, or be inflamed, or be sick? If you are, you must get bravely over all that, for…

> …pain and sickness exist only as beliefs, and come from consulting the appearance instead of clinging to the reality.

Gentle reader, do you wonder whether we are not just "making this up"? Do you wonder whether there is anybody in this wide

world who would put forth in sober earnest, and apparently with the expectation of being believed, such utter senselessness? If you do then you may safely lay aside all wonderment, for such is the case, and it is all sober fact. Let us proceed:

> The belief you have entertained of neuralgia, constipation, hoarseness, etc., is a profound error from beginning to end.

We know better, for we have had them all—not all at once, but one or two at a time—and instead of it being only a belief that we had them, it was a painful reality.

> You are a spirit…you cannot commit sin, be sick, or die.

Wrong altogether. We are not spirit, we are flesh, subject to all the laws of flesh. We *can* commit sin, and are afraid we shall (especially if we read much more of this stuff), and we often have, and are sorry for it. We *can* be sick, and must be very careful that we be not, as thousands of people are. We *can* die, as everybody, except two persons, has died that ever has lived in this world, and multitudes are dying daily, and as multitudes shall die.

> You are perfectly well [*yes*, we are], ever have been [no, we have not], ever will be.

Thank you for the conclusion; hope we may be, yet we doubt it much.

> Jesus conquered all these beliefs in false seemings [that is false, for He died], and was lifted up into a perfect person of the spiritual truth of being, and He said that if He was lifted up, He would draw all men unto Him. Therefore, because He did reveal this Christ-life of spiritual truth to man, you have only to follow that thought of His in your thoughts to come, yourself realizing that you are perfectly well and cannot suffer from any inflamed nerves, or irritated vocal organs or bronchial tubes, which you call neuralgia and hoarseness; it is an illusion.

There, that is all we need to quote; there is much more to the same purpose, but this is enough. We can only say that if any-

thing could possibly be more of "an illusion" than this theory of the mind-cure, we should like to know how any conception of it could be conveyed to the human mind. And when we realize that there are men and women who actually believe in such unmitigated nonsense as is set forth in this "formula," we confess that our confidence in human nature is just about in the last stages of dissolution, for after that what is there, or what can there be, that men may not believe?

17. The Growth of Evil

Signs of the Times, July 14, 1887

THERE is a growing tendency towards the belief that evil is a necessary thing in this world. This is a fundamental principle in the creed of Spiritualists, and it is gaining ground exactly in proportion to the growth of Spiritualism. Spiritualism professes to be a religion of nature, and sin being natural, it is very evident that the idea that sin is necessary will very easily find a multitude of adherents. The very fact that Spiritualism makes such a claim is sufficient evidence that, despite its pretension to elevate the race to the love of the pure and the beautiful, it can only result in the total degradation of the race; for let men once be assured that evil is in even the slightest degree necessary in this world, and they will be sure to make no efforts to get rid of a thing which is so pleasing to them.

A few Sundays ago, Professor Fiske, of Harvard University, lectured before the Unitarian Society of San Francisco. His address was on the nature and origin of evil. Following is a portion of the newspaper report of the address:

> Mr. Fiske then went into a discussion of considerable length to establish the relativity of all knowledge. We know nothing, he said, except by contrast with or relation to something else. If there were only one color in the world, we would be unable to conceive the idea of color at all. If everything were as sweet as sugar, we would not know what taste means. In the same way, evil exists only by contrast—the contrast of a lesser good with a greater. Evil may be defined as a low stage of existence looked at from a higher one. There is ground for the hope that evil may be evanescent[134] in the universe, but it now exists as a *necessary condition* of the development of man, like the relation of the shadow to the light. Were there no evil in the world, there could be no morality—no man in the highest sense; human beings would be

[134] "evanescent": quickly fading, disappearing, or lasting for only a short time – like vapor or smoke dissolving into the air. (*Merriam-Webster*)

so many puppets, but such a thing as character would be impossible.

With all due respect for the learned Professor, we can think of nothing else, as we read his words, but the apostle's description of the downward progress of enlightened men toward heathenism:

Romans 1
[22] Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
[23] And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
[24] Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves:
[25] Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

Such teaching as that of Professor Fiske is identical with that which sunk the ancient world into the most licentious idolatry, and it cannot fail to have the same effect now if it is but followed. Our boasted superior enlightenment will be no bar whatever to such a result; for, in spite of our boasting, the ancients were wiser than we, and it was, in fact, their boasted wisdom which led them into such folly and degradation.

Take now the statement that evil is necessary, and that without it there can be no morality. Can anyone fail to see that this makes the goodness of God dependent upon evil, and actually denies His absolute goodness? and that this is simply to deny His existence as God, and to degrade Him to a level with man? This is identical with what Paul said:

[23] They changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man.

And when men have done that, the changing of it still further into an image like to fourfooted beasts and creeping things, and giving of themselves up to uncleanness through the lusts of their

own hearts, is only a question of time, and not a very long time, either.

The Professor thinks there is ground for hoping that evil may be evanescent; but what necessity is there for such a hope, or what incentive to induce man to eradicate it in himself, if evil is only a lesser good, and consequently no evil at all? Indeed, if it were true that evil is "a necessary condition" without which "there could be no morality," then it would follow that evil ought not to be evanescent; for no matter to what heights of morality man had attained, we would begin to degenerate as soon as the evil was removed! Is it possible to conceive of a more absurd proposition? Yet in spite of its absurdity, it is seriously advanced by men who have committed to them the task of educating the youth of our land.

This theory is simply another way of expressing the idea that "whatever is, is right;" that man can do no wrong, for really there is no wrong. So, then, whatever a man may do, it is only a necessary step in his development. This is a pleasing thought to the carnal heart, and one that will find adherents without much urging. Now when it is remembered that…

Jeremiah 17
[9] The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,

–and that…

Mark 7
[21] From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,
[22] Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness,

–(and these statements may be verified by anyone who knows much of his own heart), it is easy to see how those who think that all the impulses of their nature are only undeveloped good, could plunge into any excess. Public sentiment may act as a restraint upon a man with such an idea; but when the public sentiment is

the same, when the majority of people conclude that nothing that they want to do is evil, then there will be no restraint, and the floods of iniquity will cover the earth.

2 Timothy 3

[1] This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
[2] For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
[3] Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
[4] Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.

It now requires no prophet's eye to see this state of things just ahead. When men occupying the highest positions as molders of the thought of the rising generation, can without rebuke give utterance to sentiments that directly lead to unrestrained vice, it is surely time for an alarm to be sounded.

1 Timothy 6

[11] But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.
[12] Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.

18. Life and Death Everlasting

Signs of the Times, July 14, 1887

WHEN we read the words of the Lord concerning the wicked,

Isaiah 10
[23] For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.
[25] For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and my anger in their destruction,

–and say that the Lord never designed to keep the wicked alive to all eternity suffering torture, we are told that if we limit the suffering of the wicked we have no assurance that the righteous will have everlasting happiness.

This idea is based upon the erroneous idea of what is to constitute the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked. It is true that the wicked are to suffer torment, and the righteous to have fullness of joy evermore at the right hand of God; but neither of these constitute the reward promised to the two classes. All that is promised to the righteous is life. Said Christ,

John 10
[10] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 5
[10] You will not come to me, that you might have life.

John 3
[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

2 Timothy 1
[1] Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the *promise of life* which is in Christ Jesus.

To the wicked, death is threatened,

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death.

Revelation 21
[8] But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; *which is the second death.*

Deuteronomy 30
[19] I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.

Romans 8
[13] For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.

We find that everywhere the choice is between life and death. The reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked are exactly opposite. As we said, all that is primarily promised to the righteous is life, but that comprehends everything else. The man who has unlimited life may have all things. Then, too, that promised life is really *life*. It is not partial life, as is our short life, but perfect life in every organ, so that there will be no sickness to interfere with plans. Therefore we say that this promise of life comprehends all blessings that may be desired.

But how long will it last? To all eternity, for the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

> "But," says one, "you limit the punishment of the wicked, which the Bible declares will be eternal, and why may you not as well limit the reward of the righteous?"

That is a mistake; we do not put a limit to the punishment of the wicked. It will be everlasting, that is, without end. It will be just as long as the reward of the righteous.

Matthew 25
[46] These [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

But this does not say that the wicked shall be in eternal *torment*. As we have seen, the punishment of the wicked is not primarily suffering, but it is death. They will suffer torment, and doubtless for a very long time, but until death shall have ensued they will not have received their punishment. Since their punishment is death, and it is also eternal, it follows that the punishment of the wicked is eternal death. And this agrees exactly with the words of Paul, who says that they…

2 Thessalonians 1
[9] …shall be punished with *everlasting destruction.*

There is no life except in Christ. The righteous have the promise of life which is in Christ. Their life is hid with Christ in God. And when they, in common with all men, are redeemed from the death which came upon them as the result of their inherited mortality, they will live as long as Christ does. The wicked, however, after having their mortal life restored to them, shall be punished with death for the sins which they have committed, and when they go down to the grave the second time there is no way by which they can be rescued, and they…

Jeremiah 51 [also vs. 57]
[39] …sleep a perpetual sleep.

19. Our Senses Not Infallible

Signs of the Times, July 21, 1887

IN SPEAKING and writing on the subject of Spiritualism, and the lying wonders that will be manifested by it just before the end, we have often said that in order to stand firm during that trying time, one must have such an implicit, fixed faith in the Bible that he will trust it rather than his senses, and even against the evidence of his senses. A recent published statement to this effect was noted in a leading Spiritualist journal, with the request that we should tell "for what purpose our senses are given us." This we shall endeavor briefly to do, negatively at least, not especially for the benefit of the questioner, but for thousands of others, who may not be in the snare, but who may be in danger of it through their too great confidence in their own sensations.

It requires not much thought to convince one that he can know very little by his unaided senses. For instance, our senses would tell us that the earth is stationary, and that it is the sun and moon that move. There is not a sense, even allowing that we have seven instead of five, by which we could tell that the sun does not actually sink into the ocean at night, and in some mysterious way slip around to the east in time to start the next morning on another trip overland. The native Indians have the sense of sight and of hearing far more acutely developed than we have, yet they have never discovered the rotation of the earth. Once, we are told, the question was discussed in a certain tribe that had heard the newfangled notion from a white man. An old Indian philosopher took steps to settle the question effectually. He drove a stake into the ground, and then placed a round stone on top. In the morning the stone was found in its place on the top of the stake, and the whole tribe knew at once that there was nothing to the white man's notion that the earth revolves, for if it did, would not the stone have fallen from the stake during the night?

We repeat: The senses of savages are far more acute than those of others, yet a knowledge of the movements of the heavenly

bodies exists only among civilized nations. Why is this? The skeptic will no doubt laugh at our reply, but we have not the slightest doubt that it is because civilized nations have the influence of the Bible. It is because of the direct or indirect influence of the Bible that nations are civilized, even though they may not acknowledge this influence. We can trace the increase of knowledge right along with the increased circulation of the Bible. In the Dark Ages, when the Bible was almost unknown, scientific knowledge was at a low ebb, yet may hundreds of years before, a book had been written, which said:

> **Job 26**
> [7] He stretches out the north over the empty place, and hangs the earth upon nothing.

And the same writer said that the winds have weight.[135] Where did he get his knowledge? From God.

We are not claiming for the Bible that it is in the popular sense a scientific book. That is, it is not designed as a text-book on philosophy; it was written for a different purpose. But we do claim that it is scientifically correct, and that it is the foundation of all knowledge. It is only the literal truth when the Bible says:

> **Job 28**
> [28] Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Without stopping to dwell on this point, we will simply say that, notwithstanding the infidel taunts that Christianity has done nothing for science, the men who have added the most to our store of real knowledge, as Newton and Kepler, were devout Christians, and the vague hypotheses and groundless assumptions that have had to be abandoned, were devised by men who scouted[136] the Bible.

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[135] *Job* 28:25.
[136] "scouted" [verb]: to mock at; to reject scornfully. (*Merriam-Webster*)

Our senses are not infallible. "Optical illusions" are among the most common occurrences. The moon has a fixed, unvarying size, yet there are probably no two persons to whom it has exactly the same appearance. One will say that it looks as large around as a cart-wheel, while another will say that it looks no larger than the bottom of a quart cup. Of a dozen persons who hear a statement, scarcely any two will repeat it exactly alike.

Yet it will be said, and truly too, that we cannot perceive anything except through some one or all of our senses. It is only by means of our senses, after all, that we are able to realize the fact that the earth is round, and that it revolves on its axis and moves through space. But let it be remembered that this knowledge comes to us only after our senses are educated; and faith is the prime agent in this education. We may say that we use our reason in determining the truthfulness of any statement that is made to us; but we have to accept certain things on trust as a basis for our reasoning. Certain things must be accepted simply on the authority of the one who tells them to us, before we can have any starting-point for our reason. The science of mathematics, which calls for the exercise of pure reason, depends upon certain principles which the child must take upon trust. And the whole of our knowledge of nature depends upon faith.

Hebrews 11
[3] Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Now we come to the phenomena of Spiritualism, and we will take the phenomena of materialization, which is the *we plus ultra*[137] in the "proof" of Spiritualism. There are only three senses available in testing the claims of this phenomena,—seeing, hearing, and feeling. By these it may be ascertained that the spirits that appear are real beings. But this does not settle the case at all,

[137] "we plus ultra": a Latin phrase which means *going beyond expectations,* or *exceeding limits.*

for we do not question the fact that real beings do appear, and will appear more frequently as the end approaches. The real question is,

> "Are these beings what they profess to be,—the spirits of men who have once lived on this earth?"

The only help that one can get from his senses in determining this point is through looking at them and hearing their testimony. As to the first, we know that cases of mistaken identity are very common, and that it is possible for a man to so disguise himself as to deceive his most intimate friends, making them think that he is somebody else; or, on the other hand, a stranger may so change his appearance as to impose on people, and make them believe that he is some one of their acquaintances. This being the case, it is evident that seeing the appearance of one's dead friend is by no means positive evidence that it is indeed that friend.

If it is said that the spirits tell things that were known only to the hearer and the departed friend, that is easily explained by the Bible doctrine that…

Revelation 16
[14] …they are the spirits of devils.

Once allowing that there are angels, both good and bad, who are of a higher order of creation than man, and who are invisible to our natural sight, and the conclusion is necessary that they must know many things that we do or say when we think we are unseen and unheard.

Then we come to the testimony of the spirits themselves. We may hear them say that they are indeed our friends who have been long dead. But this appeal is not to our senses but to our trust in their word. They say that they are the spirits of dead men, and the Bible says that they are the spirits of devils. So it is simply a question of evidence, and we must decide as to which is the more reliable. But Spiritualists themselves admit that the testi-

mony of the spirits is unreliable. The editor of the *Golden Gate* says:

> Whoever surrenders his individual judgment, and places his trust implicitly upon the communications of spirits, as given through promiscuous mediumship, is almost certain to be deceived. It matters not how confiding his trust, or implicit his faith, nor how sincere or honest he may be in his intentions, he will find the average spiritual message a broken reed, if he attempt to lean upon it to the exclusion of the staff of his own reason.

Again, in his issue of May 6, 1886, he gave a *facsimile* of some slate writing done by the spirits, and in commenting upon it he said:

> It is not claimed that this writing was done, in all instances, or even in any instance, by the spirit giving the name. Much of it, no doubt, is done by the medium's control, or by spirits skilled in the manipulation of the pencil tips; and such spirits act as mediums for those less proficient in the matter. This explains the poor grammar and orthography sometimes witnessed in communications from spirits who, in earth life, we know would never have committed such mistakes.

That is to say that the awkward language in a communication received from Webster is due to the acknowledged fact that Webster never wrote it! A very good reason. But when it is admitted by Spiritualists themselves, that communications from the spirits are untrustworthy, the last plea for the evidence of our senses in determining their character, is voluntarily withdrawn.

In contrast with the confessedly false testimony of the spirits, we have the testimony of the Bible, which is not yea, and nay, but yea and amen. It is always consistent with itself, which is one of the highest evidences of truth. That book assures us that...

Ecclesiastes 9

[5] ...the dead know not anything...

–for when…

Psalm 146
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth, [and] in that very day his thoughts perish.

We are told that…

Psalm 115
[17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence;

–that…

Job 24
[21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them;

–and that…

Ecclesiastes 9
[6] …neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.

It also tells us that these wondrous miracles that are alleged to be performed by departed spirits of men, are the work of "the spirits of devils;[138] and this tallies exactly with the Spiritualist's statement that the spirits are untrustworthy; for the devil is a liar and the father of it; it is his nature to lie.

Therefore we repeat that when the devil shall come down…

Revelation 12
[12] …with great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time,

–and shall work…

2 Thessalonians 2
[9] …with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,

–the only safeguard any person will have will be his faith in the sure testimony of the Bible. Our senses will be appealed to, to

[138] *Revelation* 16:14.

bear witness of the reality of these miracles, and so far as the senses themselves can determine, the spirits will be what they profess to be; but we must remember that our senses may be deceived, and can therefore do nothing but distrust their evidence, and depend on that higher evidence—implicit faith in God's word. Happy will it be for those who are now trusting that word so implicitly, and testing it so fully by a practical application of its teachings to their lives, that when that trying time comes they will turn to it as the most natural thing to do, and will meet every attempt at deception with the words, "It is written."

20. Baptized for the Dead (1887)

Signs of the Times, July 21, 1887

> If Christ did not preach to the spirits of the dead in prison, as explained in Vol. 13, No. 17,[139] and the dead are unconscious, then what does *1 Corinthians* 15:29 mean? –E. J. G.

THAT text reads as follows:

> **1 Corinthians 15**
> [29] Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?

We do not know what view our friend has of this; but if he thinks it has any bearing whatever on the condition of man in death, he must believe in the theory of a probation after death. We will not take the space here to again show the fallacy of that theory, but will give the simplest exposition of the text in question.

The whole chapter is a defense of the doctrine of the resurrection. The apostle has nothing directly to say of the condition of man in death, for that is unnecessary; the very fact that he is demonstrating the truth of the resurrection, shows that he regarded the dead as unconscious. For if the dead were to be conscious—that is, if they were not really dead—there would be no necessity for a resurrection. Incidentally, however, the apostle shows the condition of the dead when he says that if there be no resurrection,

> **1 Corinthians 15**
> [18] Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

That is to say that the promised resurrection is all that stands between the dead in Christ and eternal extinction.

[139] See Article 6 in this section, *Present and Future Probation*.

Christian baptism is an act expressive of faith in the death and *resurrection* of Christ.[140] It is also an act representative of faith in the future resurrection, for the resurrection of Christ was a pledge of the general resurrection. He says,

John 14
[19] ...because I live, you shall live also.

So when a person is baptized he shows:

1) his belief that he is a sinner under sentence of death;
2) his acceptance of the condemnation as just;
3) his belief that Christ "was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification;"[141] and
4) that by being thus baptized into Christ's death, and rising to walk in newness of life, he will finally have a resurrection from the dead, and will live with Christ.

Paul's argument is evidently addressed to those who professed Christianity, and who believed in baptism, but who questioned the doctrine of the resurrection. To such he shows the inconsistency of their position, by proving that if there be no resurrection, Christ is not raised, and if Christ be not raised, those who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished; and since if they are baptized it is only into a *dead* Christ, their being baptized amounts to nothing, since baptism derives all its force from the resurrection.

[140] See *Romans* 6:3-14.
[141] *Romans* 4:25.

21. Virtue at a Discount

Signs of the Times, July 21, 1887

THERE is nothing that can equal the certainty of some people, concerning things that have never been revealed, unless it is their condition of blissful uncertainty concerning things that are clearly set forth in the sacred word. For instance, notwithstanding the plain wording of the fourth commandment, it is a rare thing to find one who knows that the seventh day of the week,—Saturday,—is the Sabbath of the Lord, and ought to be kept holy, while the same ones who express so much doubt on this point, are very sure that any man who has died in the belief that the soul is immortal, has gone to Heaven.

An instance of the positiveness is given in a matter-of-course way in the *Congregationalist* account of the closing exercises of Andover Theological Seminary. After the professors had completed their work of examination on the subject of eschatology, the board of visitors began their catechizing thus:

> "Are Socrates and Plato in Heaven?"

And the reply came back promptly,

> "Yes, sir."

Unfortunately we are not told why Socrates and Plato are so undoubtedly enjoying the bliss of the saved, so we must examine their character for ourselves. Socrates wrote nothing, and about all we know of his teaching is what we learn from Plato, who was his echo. One or two statements, however, will throw a little light on his character. In the first chapter of his *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, Dr. Horne, speaking of the ancient heathen philosophers, says:

> Truth was but of small account among many, even of the best heathen; for they taught that on many occasion a lie was to be preferred to the truth itself! To which we may add that the unlimited gratification of their sensual appetites, and the commis-

> sion of unnatural crimes, was common even among the most distinguished teachers of philosophy, and was practiced even by Socrates himself. . . . "The most notorious vices," says Quinetilian, speaking of the philosophers of his time, "are screened under that name;" and they do not labor to maintain the character of philosophers by virtue and study, but conceal the most vicious lives under an austere look and singularity of dress.

It is a well-known fact that Socrates had a *dream*, or familiar spirit, from whom he derived all his knowledge, and upon whose counsel he depended for direction in the affairs of life. In other words, Socrates was a Spiritualist, and his life was perfectly in accord with the teachings of Spiritualism when they are carried out to the fullest length. We have the authority of Potter's *Antiquities of Greece* for the statement that...

> ...it was frequent in some parts of Greece to borrow one another's wives. At Athens, Socrates lent his wife Xantippe to Aleibiades.

Of Plato's morals we learn an abundance from his own teachings. He it was who formulated the pernicious doctrine that was held in principle by all heathen, and is a cardinal doctrine of modern Spiritualism, that man is the sole judge of his own actions; that truth is inherent in the human soul, or, in other words, that man himself is God. Consistently with a doctrine which opens the way for the fullest gratification of one's passions, we find that Plato advocated community of women, and the education of them the same as men, and together with them, even so far as exercising together in the gymnasium naked. He also advocated perjury in matters of love, advocated also that...

> ...on an expedition soldiers should be allowed unbounded license both with respect to women and boys, as by this means they will be more inflamed to gain the victory.

He himself was no more austere in his personal life than was his master, Socrates, and made no secret of his association with prostitutes.

Yet these are the men whom modern theology unhesitatingly grants a place in Heaven, thus anticipating the sentence of God, the Judge of all. And why do they do this? Solely because to them the Christian church owes the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the soul. All their vice and immoral teachings are condoned, and they are translated to the third Heaven simply because they taught that the soul was immortal. Surely such teaching places virtue at a discount, and really puts a premium upon vice. Nowadays when a man dies, no matter if he had been perfectly indifferent concerning religion, if it can be remembered by anyone that he ever expressed a belief in the immortality of the soul, he is at once set down as undoubtedly a Christian, although his belief in immortality had no connection whatever with Christ.

Socrates and Plato are accounted as saved because they taught the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the soul. Now it is susceptible of the clearest proof that their immortality, which would most surely shut them out of Heaven[142] unless they repent, of which there is not the slightest evidence, was the direct result of their belief in the immortality of the soul. Here is the proof:

The apostle Paul tells us that…

Romans 14
[23] …whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Now their belief in immortality was not based upon faith at all. It was based solely on self-conceit and egotism. They had so exalted an idea of their own attainments, and of the powers of their own mind, that they could not conceive of anything in the universe greater than man. They thought that the mind of man was "lord of itself and of all the world beside;" and that all knowledge was inherent in the human soul. Thus while they professed belief in the gods, and even in one supreme God, they had no higher conception of God than that He was like themselves;[143] for they thought that they themselves were part of God, and their gods

[142] *Ephesians* 5:5.
[143] *Psalm* 50:21.

were dead men. But if knowledge was inherent in the human soul, it must be, they reasoned, the latent knowledge that was acquired in some anterior state of being; and if man was a part of God, he must be immortal; that is, mind being supreme could have neither beginning nor end. Thus their belief in the supremacy of the mind of man was inseparable from their belief in the immortality of the soul: the two were one. But their exaltation of the human mind led them into the grossest licentiousness, for they thought that whatever the mind conceived must be right and proper. Thus,

Romans 1
[22] Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

They had faith only in themselves, and that was, of course, no faith at all; and this self-exaltation led them into sin.

At some future time we shall show, what is here implied, that all the evil that has cursed this earth sprung from the teaching of the immortality of the soul. We are aware that some will regard such language as almost blasphemy, but they will change their minds when they study the subject from the Bible standpoint. Let no one think that we are not believers in immortality. We believe that Christ…

2 Timothy 1
[10] …brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

–and that all who truly believe in Christ will be clothed with immortality when He comes. We believe in immortality that is received through faith, which exalts Christ, and not in immortality which a man has without faith, which exalts man and ignores Christ.

- A belief in immortality through Christ, is Christianity;
- A belief in immortality without Christ, is paganism, even though it be taught in a professedly Christian theological seminary.

22. Bible Exposition Against Human Speculation

Signs of the Times, July 28, 1887

SAYS the *Independent:*

> The anthropology of the Bible as to what awaits man after death is comprehensively given in these words: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The body sinks into the bosom of its mother earth, and molders back to dust; but the soul ascends back to God, and meets the issues of another life.

This doubtless expresses the unthinking belief of thousands, yet it is inconsistent and unscriptural in the following particulars:

1. It starts out with a Bible statement concerning the Spirit, and ends with the human statement concerning the soul, thus assuming that soul and spirit are identical; whereas:

2. Soul and spirit are not the same. Paul prayed that the Thessalonians might be sanctified in their...

> **1 Thessalonians 5**
> [23] ...whole spirit and soul and body.

3. The Spirit, which returns to God, is identical with the breath of life. Job said:

> **Job 27**
> [3] All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils;
> [4] My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

Compare with the expression, "the Spirit of God is in my nostrils,"

> **Isaiah 2**
> [22] Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

That which is in the nostrils is breath, but it is also called Spirit; and the translators made a just comment on *Job* 27:3, "the Spirit

of God is in my nostrils," when they placed in the margin,

> "That is, *the breath which God gave him*, *Genesis* 2:7."

4. Man was a soul, although lifeless, before he received his breath or spirit from God.

> **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.*

The old catechisms recognize the fact, unconsciously, perhaps, when they say that...

> ...man is a dual being, composed of a body and soul.

But the Bible says that *man* was formed of the dust of the ground. That everything which goes to constitute a man is also of the dust; the addition of the breath of life makes a *living* man.

5. Nothing can come from man except that which was given him. There can be no more elements after dissolution than were made use of in building him. Now *Genesis* 2:7 is the record of the building of man, and *Ecclesiastes* 12:7 is the record of the manner of his unbuilding; therefore we must find the very same parts in *Ecclesiastes* 12:7 that we find in *Genesis* 2:7. In *Genesis* 2:7 we find *dust*, of which man is formed, and *breath* breathed into his nostrils to make him alive. In *Ecclesiastes* 12:7 we have the spirit or breath returning to the One who gave it, and the man returning to the dust of which he was formed. Now unless the *Independent* is willing to claim, and able to prove, that the *breath* which God gave Adam was conscious before Adam received it, or that it ever obtained consciousness while Adam had it, it has no right to assume that it was conscious when it left Adam.

6. Let it be emphasized that nothing "returns" to God except that which God gave, and that all that came directly from God in the making of man, was the breath. Now read two Bible state-

ments concerning the unmaking of man, which corroborate the positions to stated:

Job 34
[14] If He [God] set His heart upon man, if He gather unto himself His spirit and His breath;
[15] All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

And this:

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

These passages cover exactly the same ground as *Ecclesiastes* 12:7. Bible expositions of the text are much better and more trustworthy than human assumption.

23. Punctuation and Inspiration

Signs of the Times, August 18, 1887

NOT infrequently we find people who seem to think that everything which may be found between the lines of the Bible is inspired. Some people think that the references under the verses are a sort of inspired comment, forgetting that they only serve as a miniature concordance, and were never put into the Bible until 1611 AD, and the last of them not till 1785. There are others who think that Usher's *Chronology*, which is placed in many Bibles, is inspired, and who would think it heresy to teach that Christ was crucified in the year 31, when the date in the margin of the Bible says 33. Indeed, we have seen some who seem to think that the pictures in the large family Bibles are inspired, and who cannot be made to believe that when Jacob fled from home he was an old man nearly eighty years old, because in the Family Bible illustration of Jacob's dream, he is represented as a curly-headed little boy sleeping upon a rock.

But the most common error of this sort is in supposing that punctuation of the Bible is inspired. A friend who writes to us from Illinois seems to labor under this misapprehension. He says that he has been reading the *Signs* for some time, and has had the most implicit confidence in it until he read the article in the *Signs* of May 26, entitled, "What and Where Is Paradise?"[144] In that he found that in our quotation of *Luke* 23:43, we placed the comma after the word "today," whereas in the ordinary version it is after the word "you." Again he notices that in *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4 the *Revised Version* and *King James's Version* each have the text punctuated differently, while the text as we quote it is punctuated differently from both. Consequently, our correspondent says,

> "Now if you are right, it will be easy for you to explain; if you do not explain, the conclusion will be that you have punctuated it to bring out your own idea regardless of truth."

[144] Article 13 in this Section.

We are very happy to explain for the benefit of our brother and others who may be similarly troubled. We will consider the last text first. On this he can certainly have no more fault to find with us than with the revisers, for, as he himself says, the punctuation is not the same in the two versions. We will quote the text just as it is in both of the versions and just as it appeared in the *Signs;* for thereby a point may be illustrated. *King James' Version* has it as follows:

2 Corinthians 12
[2] I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.
[3] And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knows;)
[4] How that he was caught up in the Paradise, etc.

The *Revised Version* has it thus:

2 Corinthians 12 [RV]
[2] I know a man in Christ, fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knows), such a one caught up even to the third heaven.
[3] And I know such a man (whether in the body, or apart from the body, I know not; God knows),
[4] How that he was caught up in the Paradise,

Although there is some difference in the marks of punctuation used in those two verses, there is no difference in the sense. Punctuation marks are not used so freely as they were formerly, and the colon is seldom used in ordinary sentences. According to modern usage when words are inclosed in parentheses, the necessary marks of punctuation are placed *after* the marks of parentheses, and not *within*, and so the *New Version* [RV] conforms to this usage. All the other difference is that the *New Version* has a comma, instead of a semicolon, after the parenthesis as in the Old. The text as it appeared in the *Signs* was punctuated the same as in the *New Version* with the exception of the semicolon being used after the parenthesis instead of the comma. But this change was

simply incidental, and it was not known at the time that there was any difference; but the matter is of no consequence anyway, as the meaning is not affected in the least by the difference in the punctuation.

All the readers of the Bible should understand that at the time that the Bible was written, there were no marks of punctuation, and the words in the sentences were not separated by spaces as we now have them. For example, the first verse of the book of John was something like this:

> INTHEBEGINNINGWASTHEWORDANDTHEWORD-
> WASWITHGODANDTHEWORDWASGODTHESAME-
> WASINTHEBEGINNINGWITHGOD.

The *American Encyclopedia* says:

> The modern points came into use very gradually after the invention of printing, the comma, parentheses, notes of interrogation, and period, being the earliest introduced, and the note of exclamation last. It was not till sixteen centuries that an approach was made to the regular system by the Manutii of Venice.

Modern punctuation has been a thing of growth. The marks have been invented and placed were the sense seemed to require them, to make it easier for the reader, and it follows, therefore, that punctuation which vary in some instances according as those who translated the Bible differed in their ideas of its meaning. In some instances the punctuation has been changed. *Hebrews* 10:12 was formerly punctuated thus:

> **Hebrews 10**
> [12] And this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God.

This would indicate that after making a sacrifice for sins, Christ sat down at the right hand of God never to leave that place. But this idea is contradicted by the whole tenor of the Scriptures, which teach that Christ is going to stand up and come to this earth again, and finally to reign upon this earth; therefore the

punctuation has been changed so as to present the true idea, namely, that when Christ had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, that is, a sacrifice once for all, he sat down at the right hand of God. This change has been made not to conform to anyone's theory of truth, but to the plainly expressed truth of the Bible.

Again, *Matthew* 19:28 was once in some Bibles punctuated thus:

> **Matthew 19**
> [28] Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That you which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

This punctuation would make the text mean that the disciples had followed Christ in the regeneration, that is, that they had followed Christ in being born again; but such an idea is monstrous, as it would indicate that Christ, like the disciples, had been a sinner and had been obliged to be born again, and so in our version the comma is placed after the word "me" instead of after "regeneration," so that the text expresses what Christ meant, that those who followed Him, should in the regeneration, when Christ comes, that is, when all things are made new, sit upon twelve thrones.

So in quoting *Luke* 23:43, we placed the comma after the word "today," not to bring out our own idea regardless of truth, but to make the text express what is evidently the truth, and make it consistent with the plain declarations of Scripture. As it stands in the *Authorized Version*, it seems to indicate that Christ told the penitent thief that he should be with Him in Paradise that very day on which they were hanging on the cross. But this would be to make Christ contradict himself, because three days later He said that He had not yet ascended to God, and He would not receive the adoration of Mary until He had ascended;[145] but God's throne is in Paradise, therefore, when Christ said that He had not ascended to the Father, it was equivalent to saying that He had

[145] *John* 20:17.

not ascended to Paradise. But since He had not ascended the Paradise, it is very evident that He could not have told the thief that He would meet him there three days before, because He could not tell an untruth.

Perhaps it will be less objectionable if, instead of saying that we changed the punctuation of the verse, we imagine ourselves living before the art of punctuation was invented. Let us strike out all punctuation from the verse, and then we shall have it just as it was written in the inspired historian. Literally thus:

> VERILYISAYTOYOUTODAYWITHMEYOUSHALLBEINTHEPARADISE.

Now we read it through, and, being acquainted with the teaching of the Bible, namely, that Christ did not ascend to Paradise until three days after the crucifixion, and, moreover, that He could not have ascended until the third day, when He rose from the dead, because the dead know not anything and have no power of locomotion, we know better than to place the comma after the word "you." We therefore consider the circumstances under which the words were uttered. We consider that Christ was hanging upon the cross, condemned as a malefactor, despised by almost everybody, and His teachings doubted even by His own disciples, with no earthly prospect that any of His predictions could ever be verified, and we see how natural that Christ in making the promise to the thief should put emphasis upon the word "today,"

> "Verily I say unto you *today*, notwithstanding these untoward circumstances, and that all my hopes and predictions seem to have come to naught, even *today*, I say unto you, that you shall be with me in Paradise."

But this, the only natural and consistent view of the text, would force us, in punctuating it, to place the comma after the word "today," because the voice, following the obvious meaning of the passage, makes a pause there whether one is indicated or not.

It is unfortunate that the translators of the Bible did not have a perfect and consistent view of its teachings. And yet we do not know but that it was providential, for there are but only a few passages where the meaning is in any way obscured by the translation or by the punctuation, and the meaning of those few can be easily determined from parallel passages; and the fact that the nature of man, the sleep of the dead, the seventh-day Sabbath, and similar unpopular truths, stand forth in bold relief in a Bible translated by those who believed none of those truths, makes it far more evident that they are unquestioned Bible truths, than if the Bible had been translated by men predisposed in favor of them.

24. Is There Such a Thing as Death?

Signs of the Times, September 29, 1887

WE FIND on our desk a letter from a professed "holiness" man, the editor of a "holiness paper," taking us to task in no measured terms for teaching that man is not alive when he is dead. The writer thinks that such teaching is "scientifically devilish," and says that if there is not a hell there ought to be one for people who will thus deceive the people, which charitable statement he makes for our special benefit. We pass this by as but the natural result of the Pharisaism which says,

> "Come not near to me; for I am better than you,"

–and notice the question at issue, for there is no doubt but that some people do honestly stumble over some of the points which our critic mentions. For the benefit of such we write.

We will repeat the statements which appeared in the *Signs*,[146] with which fault is found;

> Life and death are exactly opposite terms. Life means existence. So long is a man has breath, he has life, no matter what his circumstances may be, etc.

This we reaffirm. For Scripture proof that "life" and "death" our terms exactly opposite in the meaning, we quote the following:

> **Isaiah 28**
> [1] In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus says the Lord, Set your house in order; for you shall die, and not live.

Here we find life and death directly contrasted. If Hezekiah had died, he would have ceased to live. Again, read:

> **Deuteronomy 30**
> [19] I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I

[146] See Article 1 in this Section, *Life and Death Are Opposite*.

have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.

Also,

Deuteronomy 30
[15] See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.

Here is life and blessing promised to the good, and death and cursing promised to the evil. Inasmuch as good and evil and blessing and cursing are directly opposite terms, it follows that death and life are also placed in contrast. The contrast is the same as in:

Romans 8
[13] For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.

Read also:

Revelation 20
[4] I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reign with Christ a thousand years.
[5] But the rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years were finished.

Note that some who had been dead now "lived," and more than this, they "lived again," showing that there had been a cessation of life. There are two periods of living brought to view, separated by an interval of death, or of not living. Here again we see death placed in contrast to life. Now know what it is that causes life or death. When God formed man of the dust of the ground, He…

Genesis 2
[7] …breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

It is the presence of breath that continues life. Job said:

Job 27
[3] All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils;
[4] My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

That which is here called the "spirit of God" is, as the margin says, "the breath which God gave him." Job's assertion was that he would not utter deceit as long as the breath which God gave him remained with him; in the other words, as long as he lived. He knew that after the breath left him he could not utter either deceit or truth. The same Spirit that inspired Job, also moved another holy man to say:

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Another writer also said:

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything.

So then that is the exact opposite of life, in that the living have breath and consciousness, while the dead have no breath, and do not know anything. But now the objection is urged that there are places in the Bible where the word "dead" or "death" is used without the meaning of non-existence or unconsciousness. As a sample objection, we quote the words of our "holiness" critic. He says:

> Will you please inform me if the apostle meant non-existence when he said, "You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God"? Did the prophet mean that he was speaking to non-existence when he said, "Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light"? And the word of God said to Abimelech, "You are but a dead man," he meant to say that he was speaking to a *non-existence?* When the father said, "This my

son was dead" (*Luke* 15:24), he meant he was non-existent? he had been in a state where "he had no breath"?—and the apostle meant they had no "breath," when he said, "who were dead in trespasses and sins"? *Ephesians* 2:1.

The trouble with our critic is that he does not seem to know that words may have a secondary meaning, or that there is such a thing as a figure of speech. We have known people to argue the same way about the word "day." They would deny that the days of creation were literal days of twenty-four hours, because the term "day" is applied to the whole time in which the gospel is preached,—

2 Corinthians 6
[2] ...now is the day of salvation.

That is, because the word "day" is sometimes used for a long period of time, they would deny that it is ever used with reference to a period of twenty-four hours; because a word is sometimes used in a secondary sense, they would deny that it could have any primary application! If our objector should ask us what a stone is, I might answer in the words of *Webster's Dictionary:*

> "A mass of connected, earthy, or mineral matter."

And then he would reply,

> "Are you not ashamed to try to deceive people with such half truths? When Paul says that Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone, does he mean that Jesus Christ is a mass of connected, earthy, or mineral matter?"

And then he might go on to argue that because Jesus is called a stone, it is utterly misleading to speak of a stone as being a mass of earthy matter. But would he claim that nothing can be called a stone unless it is like our Lord? Of course he would not. Everybody knows what a stone is, and its characteristics. And so when Christ is spoken of as being the chief corner-stone, they recognize at once that the idea meant to be conveyed is that He is something enduring, one upon whom it will do to build.

Now would the objector claim that when the Lord said to Abimelech, "You are but a dead man,"[147] He meant that he was in the same condition that Lazarus was in when the Saviour said of him, "Lazarus is dead"[148]? Or that when Paul says,

Colossians 3
[3] You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,

–those to whom he is speaking are in the same condition as were the Assyrians after the angel of the Lord had smitten them, when it was said of them,

2 Kings 19
[35] They were all dead corpses?

Of course he will not; for the most rabid Spiritualist, who denies that there is any such thing as death, will admit that the man who is in the condition commonly called death, is in a different condition from the one to whom that change has not come. Then it is admitted that there is such a thing as death, and that the dead are not alive.

Now let us consider each passage that is quoted above.

Colossians 3
[3] You are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Note here that the word "death" indicates the absence of life. And so it is the primary idea of death,—absence of physical life,—that the apostle uses in his figure. An entire article would be needed to properly explain the gospel truth here referred to; it would be sufficient here to say that the death is the same as in *Romans* 6:2, 7; 7:4, 6, namely, that the person is dead vicariously. He was a sinner under sentence of death. Christ has actually died, —ceased to exist,—for sin; and the sinner has accepted the death of Christ in his behalf, and has indicated such acceptance by baptism, and now the law considers him as though the penalty had been executed, justice is satisfied; the man has been put to death,

[147] *Genesis* 20:3.
[148] *John* 11:14.

in Christ, has "risen with Christ,"[149] and is now considered as another man.

Again, take the texts,

Ephesians 5
[14] Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light,

–and,

Ephesians 2
[1] You has He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death.

Those who are sinners are condemned already; they have sentence of death in themselves. Their death is sure, unless they repent, and so, by anticipation, they are called dead. The same explanation applies in the case of the word that came to Abimelech:

Genesis 20
[3] You are but a dead man.

The thing which he had started to do, if persisted in, would surely result in his death, and so he was counted the same as dead already. But notice that these words mean nothing unless there is a fixed, definite meaning to the word "death."

In the parable of the prodigal son, the father is represented as saying,

Luke 15
[24] This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

The son had been absent from home for a long time, and his father had heard no word from him, nor seen any trace of him. He had been as completely separated from his father as though he had really been dead. And his father had mourned for him as

[149] *Colossians* 3:1.

dead. Therefore the father speaks of him as having been dead. So far as any communication between them was concerned, he was the same as dead. And this again makes prominent the condition of the dead—they are separated from their friends, and are silent; there can be no communication between them. This is the idea that is naturally conveyed by the word "death;" then so common is it that when the father in the parable would convey the idea of utter separation and the long silence that had existed between him and his son, he could best indicate it by saying that he had been dead.

It is only the fact that words have a fixed, definite meaning, that enables us to use them in figures of speech. If they had no fixed meaning, there would be no meaning conveyed by the figure. The reason why we have no difficulty in understanding the passages of Scripture that are quoted in this article, is because there is a fixed meaning to the word "death," to which the mind involuntarily recurs.

And so we adhere to our scriptural statement that death is the opposite of life; that life is existence, and that death is the absence of existence. He who does not accept this, is in duty bound to tell what death is, and to give the texts which we are to depend on as giving the primary idea of death.

25. Why Will They Say So?

Signs of the Times, October 6, 1887

THE New York correspondent of the *Michigan Christian Advocate* recently gave an account of the funeral of Bishop Harris, in the course of which he said:

> He is not dead. God's saints don't die; they only change their modes and forms of life.

As soon as we read that, certain texts of Scripture came to our mind, and we jot them down for the benefit of those who may have given a hasty assent to the *Advocate* correspondent's assertion.

Genesis 9
[29] And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and *he died.*

Noah was certainly a saint, for we read that he was...

Genesis 6
[9] ...a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God;

–and that by his faith and obedience...

Hebrews 11
[7] ...condemned the world.

Yet the inspired declaration is that "he died."

Of Abraham we read:

Genesis 25
[8] Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years.

Of Moses, who was honored of God more than any other man that ever lived, and he was faithful in all the Lord gave him to do,[150] the record says:

[150] See *Numbers* 12:6-8.

Deuteronomy 34
[5] So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

Again we read of another great and good man:

Joshua 24
[29] And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, been a hundred and ten years old.

Samuel was one who was consecrated to the service of the Lord at a very early age. While yet a small child he was employed by the Lord to perform a very delicate task, and his whole life was marked by piety and strict devotion to duty. Of him the record is:

1 Samuel 25
[1] And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.

And again:

1 Samuel 28
[3] Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city.

Of the prophet Elisha the simple record is:

2 Kings 13
[20] And Elisha died, and they buried him.

This list might be lengthened indefinitely, for of all the thousands of millions people who have lived on this earth, there have been but two of whom it could not be said, "And he died." These are the words which closed each of the biographies (with one exception) in the 5th chapter of *Genesis*. But we have selected only a few of whom it could not by any possibility be denied that they were saints.

Now what shall we conclude? Shall we say that the correspondent of the *Advocate* is correct? If we do, then we contradict the record concerning all those holy men. This we dare not do; so we

shall have to conclude that the writer whom we quoted is misinformed.

But why should he be misinformed? And why should thousands of others coincide with him in his disagreement with Scripture? For there is not a doubt but that more than nine-tenths of the professed Christians of the world, including theological professors and ministers of the gospel, would never think of questioning his statement. We repeat, Why should they be misinformed? What excuse can they have for flatly contradicting the Bible? We confess that we cannot frame any excuse for them. They can read and the ability to do that is all that is required in order for one to know that both good and bad do die. Nay, it is not even necessary to be able to read, to know this fact, for observation teaches it to everyone.

Psalm 49

[10] For he sees that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

And there is no man so powerful that he can redeem his brother[151]...

[9] That he should still live forever, and not see corruption.

Then why will they persist in using such language? If they were blatant infidels, denying the Bible, and even in their mad blindness denying their own existence, we should not be surprised. But it is astonishing that men who profess to love the Bible as the inspired word of God, should so squarely contradict it. The only explanation that we can give is that, not heeding the warning of the apostle, they have been spoiled...

Colossians 2

[8] ...through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Can anybody give a better explanation?

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[151] *Psalm* 49:7.

26. The Testimony of the Dying

Signs of the Times, November 10, 1887

THE so-called testimony of the dying is one of the strongholds into which the advocates of "no actual death for man" retreat, when they have been driven from every position which they have taken from the Bible. When it is demonstrated that the Scriptures teach that man does really die and go to the grave, and that the moment he dies he loses all consciousness and power of thinking, and that until the resurrection he remains in the grave, where there is...

Ecclesiastes 9
[10] ...no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom,

–they will cite instances where the dying have declared that they saw Jesus, or the angels, or even some of their friends who were already dead, and who were coming to welcome them, and have said that they were going directly to Heaven; and then the question will be asked,

> "Can't you accept the testimony of the dying? Do you think that a dying man would tell a lie about where he is going?"

This appeal, made in such confidence, and in a pathetic tone, very often satisfies people that the dead are conscious, and that they go to Heaven immediately upon their death, even when these same people know that the Bible emphatically contradicts such ideas.

We wish to examine this testimony, and see just how much weight it is entitled to. In the first place, we must rule out all the cases in which the dying person is or has been delirious, for certainly no one would wish to base any theory upon the statement of a person not in his right mind. But allowing that there has been no delirium, we must even then take the ecstatic ejaculations of the dying with a great deal of allowance, although the veracity of the individuals may be beyond question. The reason is,

that although the mind may not wander, it is from the very nature of the case weakened. It is exceedingly rare, perhaps impossible, at the close of an illness which is about to result in death, when all the physical organs are relaxed, that the mind should retain its full vigor and clearness. It is often said of people that they retain all their senses to the last, and this is undoubtedly true, but that they retain their mental faculties to their fullest extent, is impossible. And so many of the broken statements of the dying as to what they see and hear, may be set down as a result of hallucinations. Proof of this may be found in the cases of those who have been nearly dead from drowning or freezing, or from some other cause, and who have recovered. Such ones relate the happy sights which they saw, and the blissful sounds which they heard, and state that to be called away from them to real consciousness seemed a rude awakening.

There is no reasonable doubt, therefore, but that ninety-nine one-hundredths of the cases in which the dying are said to have seen and heard wonderful things must be ruled out altogether from the so-called testimony of the dying. And even the other one-hundredth is very doubtful testimony, since in no case can it be *known* that anything has actually been seen. We will proceed on the supposition, however, that there are some cases in which certain forms are actually presented to the dying person, and will consider in their order the cases where the dying person has said that he was going immediately to Heaven, and were Jesus and angels, or the forms of dead friends, are said to have been seen.

But first and continually let it be remembered that the testimony of the Bible is emphatic upon the point that the dead know not anything;[152] that they are sleeping a dreamless sleep, from which they can be awakened only by the voice of the Archangel and the trump of God at the last days;[153] that their thoughts perish as soon as their breath leaves the body;[154] and that none can go to

[152] *Ecclesiastes* 9:5.
[153] *1 Thessalonians* 4:15-16.
[154] *Psalm* 146:4.

Heaven until Christ comes for them in the glory of His Father, with His angels.[155] If this is constantly borne in mind, then no one who believes the Bible can be moved in the least by the testimony of anybody, whether dying or in the full possession of all his powers. The Bible must be the decisive standard of appeal and all cases. If we give up the plain declarations of the Bible for the statements of individuals, then the Bible is no longer to us a sacred book, and we virtually deny its inspiration. Let the word of God be held as true, even though every man is thereby proved a liar.[156]

Now who are they who say upon their death-beds that they are going at once to Heaven? Why, it is those who all their life-time have been taught that men go to Heaven as soon as they die. Nobody ever heard of such a thing as that a believer in eternal life only through Christ, to be received at the resurrection of the just, has upon his death-bed seen visions of angels coming for him to take him away to Heaven. But why not? It will not be denied, even by the most earnest advocate of the natural immortality of man, that many very good men have held to the doctrine of conditional immortality. Then if the angels do come for the dying, whose eyes and ears are often unable to catch their forms and voices, why are not such visions granted to the believers in conditional immortality? The question suggests the answer, which we have already given, that such visions are hallucinations, which naturally follow the bent of the person's mind. And so the statement of a dying man, to the effect that he is at once going to Heaven, is of no more value than the statement that the righteous go to Heaven at death, made by the same man in health. The fact that a man is dying, does not add one whit to the force of the statement that he may make concerning the future. He will say just what he has been taught to believe, and we must go to the Bible to find out whether or not the statement is true.

[155] *Matthew* 16:27.
[156] *Romans* 3:4.

In the adherence of the so-called testimony of the dying, in spite of the testimony of the Bible, the thoughtful person will see the leaven of Spiritualism working. Spiritualists ignore the Bible, for the testimony of those who claim to be the spirits of the dead. But this is in reality but little different from taking the statement of the living, in contradiction of the Bible. When people base their belief as to the condition of man after death, upon what a dying man says, notwithstanding the fact that the dying man's statement contradicts the Bible, it will not be long before they will accept the testimony that is given by what appears to be the same person after his death, and which tells them that the Bible itself is but a fable. In short, when one sets aside the testimony of the Bible for any cause whatever he is on the high road to Spiritualism, with all that implies.

We have, indeed, the record of one man who shortly before his death saw Heaven opened and the Saviour standing at the right hand of God. But the case of Stephen is entirely different from that of a dying man that is brought forward, because,

(1) Stephen was not a dying man when he saw this. It was his statement of what he saw that caused the Jews to stone him to death immediately.

(2) Stephen did not say that he was going to Heaven or anything of the kind. He had been arraigned before the Sanhedrin for preaching Christ, and this vision of heavenly things was to vindicate the truth of his words, to confound the opposition, and to give him courage for the ordeal just before him; and

(3) the record says that after Stephen had this view of heavenly things, he was stoned by the Jews and "fell asleep."[157] He did not enter at once upon the enjoyment of those heavenly scenes, but the vision faded from his view as he fell asleep and lost all consciousness of things either earthly or heavenly. As with Paul, so

[157] *Acts* 7:60.

with Stephen, the crown of life was laid up for him, to be given at the appearing and kingdom of Jesus Christ.[158]

It need not be concluded that no good person ever has visions of heaven; that no one has, like Stephen, a view of heavenly realities to strengthen him in the power of death. But that is no evidence that the one who sees such things is going at once to enjoy them.

> "But," says one, "what a disappointment it would be to the good soul who has been taught that he will go to Heaven at death, if he should see heavenly things, as Stephen did, and should not go at once to enjoy them!"

Not at all. How can there be any disappointment when there is unconsciousness? When the approach of death causes the scene to fade from the sight, and the person sinks into the unconscious repose of death, it is the same to him as though he had seen nothing. There is no disappointment, for there is no knowledge. The time spent in the tomb, whether it be days or centuries, is to the unconscious sleeper as no time at all, and if his last conscious moment was brightened by a view of Heaven, the first moments after his awakening will usher him into the reality; so that there is no chance for disappointment though centuries may have intervened between his death and the resurrection.

There remains only for our consideration the case of those who, when dying, say that they see their friends who have died before, and that they beckon them to come. Of course much, and perhaps all, of this may be set down to hallucinations. When people have been taught to believe that the dead are conscious and in Heaven, and have thought much of meeting them in death it is very natural that the hallucinations of their weakened minds should take such a form. But we will allow, although it can never be proved, that there are cases in which the dying do actually see what appear to be their friends to have died before them; and the question will arise,

[158] *2 Timothy* 4:8.

"How do you dispose of such testimony?"

We reply that we dispose of it just as we would dispose of similar testimony given by any person in full health. We know that many persons have attended Spiritualist séances, and have seen what appeared to be the forms of their dead friends, and that they have received from them messages. Now what do we conclude in such a case? Simply that the spirits of devils have assumed the appearance of those dead friends in order to strengthen the living in their belief in the inherent immortality of the soul, and to weaken their faith in the plain testimony of the Bible. And if such forms should appear to the dying outside of a Spiritualist séance, we should say the same thing, for we know both from reason and revelation that it is impossible for dead people to move or talk or think.

It will be objected that Satan could have no object in thus deceiving those who are at the point of death, and that if he had an object, it would be cruel for the Lord to allow either the dying or the living to be so deceived. To this double objection we reply:

(1) Since Satan is a deceiver, and his whole aim is to cause men to disbelieve the word of God, it would be the most natural thing for him to take advantage of the erroneous opinions of the dying, to confirm the living in the same erroneous opinions.

(2) As to the justice of God in allowing such deceptions to take place, we have only to say that God is in nowise responsible for them, for He has given sufficient warning against them.

In the Bible He has again and again warned men against such deceptions, and has given us the truth by which we may detect error. Now if men neglect or despise the warning which God has given men, who dare lay it to the charge of God if they are deceived? They need not be deceived if they heed the words of God.

But if they choose to listen to their own imaginations, or to heathen speculations, or to any statement that contradicts the

word of God, they invite deception, and have only themselves to blame if that deception results in their ruin.

It is possible, of course, that certain ones may have, just as they are about to die, a vision of the resurrection, and, if so, this would account for their seeing their friends who had died before them, and who would appear in the first resurrection. But this would not, of course, add anything to the claim that the good go to Heaven at death.

Whether those who might have such a vision, would understand that it represented the resurrection, or would think that their friends have actually come from glory to meet them, would make no difference with the fact. Even though, if such a vision were given, the one who had it should declare that his friends were coming from heaven to meet him, that would not make it so. The Bible furnishes all the knowledge that we have or can have on the state of the dead, and its evidence is unequivocal.

The object of this article is to emphasize the words of the prophet:

> **Isaiah 8**
> [19] And 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?
> [20] To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Remember that God's word is true, and that outside of that there is no truth, and that conscientiousness on the part of the speaker does not add any force to his words if they are contrary to the teaching of the Bible.

27. Analogy Not Proof

Signs of the Times, November 17, 1887

IN A RECENT article, Prof. R. A. Proctor reviews at some length a so-called argument by Dr. Phillips Brooks, on immortality. Mr. Proctor quotes and answers Dr. Brooks as follows:

> I have before me a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Brooks, Doctor of Divinity, in Boston, in which he speaks of a man immediately after death. "That man is dead," he says; "what is it that has come? A minute ago I was talking with him; he was speaking to me of the loves and dreams and imaginings with which I have been familiar, as I have known him these forty years. Now that is stopped. Shall I believe that an end has come to that vitality? The spiritual life is in the powers of the soul, not in the accident which linked them in association with this body in which the physical change has taken place. Shall I believe that they have ceased because it has ceased to be their minister?" To which he answers: "No, because what has passed away is merely the bodily life, not the inner life with its thoughts and emotions."
>
> He does not deem it necessary to show that the power of conceiving thoughts or feeling emotions is not as essentially a quality of that which has been destroyed by death, as the power of making tine cloth is a quality of a weaving-machine, and presumably brought to an end by death as the weaving powers of the machine by its destruction. What he says of the man might equally be said, and with about as much reason, of the machine. "A minute ago that machine was weaving beautiful cloth; now it has done its last work, and all its parts will presently be applied to other uses. Shall I believe that the powers of working charming patterns it possessed so short a time since are gone because its mere material structure is to be destroyed? Never; for only the merest accident linked those powers with the machinery!"
>
> No answer is needed to one argument any more than to the other. The destroyed machine lives no longer as a piece of mechanism; it can never more produce the delicate textures or the charming patterns which it produced when it existed as a machine. It will live only in its products, direct and indirect. And in

like manner, it seems reasonable to believe (though none can say it has been approved) the dead exist no longer as beings capable of feeling or expressing emotions. They live only in their work—in the influences, direct and indirect, which they have produced on those around them during life, or on those who are to come hereafter.

The Professor's reasoning is correct, not because of the analogy which he draws, but because it is in accordance with reason, and most of all, because, whether he knew it or not, it is in accord with divine revelation. The dead, so far as their present condition is concerned, are perished from the earth. The statement, however, by no means indicates a disbelief in immortality, although it is possible that Professor Proctor may not look beyond the grave. But Paul, who says:

1 Corinthians 15
[16] For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:
[17] And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.
[18] Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished,

–thus teaching that the dead are so far as present existence and capacity are concerned, the same as though they had not been, also says:

[20] But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.
[21] For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.
[22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

That which may be drawn from Paul's argument, concerning the state of the dead, is, in brief, this: The resurrection of the dead depends upon the resurrection of Christ; if Christ is not raised, then the dead will not be raised; and in that case those who have fallen asleep (died) in Christ, have perished. To perish means,

To be destroyed; to go to destruction; to pass away; to come to nothing; to be blotted from existence.

Now it is evident that the condition of those who died before Christ's first advent, was not changed in the least by His coming and His death and resurrection. Adam and Abel died and returned to dust hundreds of years before the first advent; if that coming of Christ had not taken place until the present time, their condition in the grave would not have been altered in the least; and if Christ had never died and rose again, their condition would remain the same to all eternity that it is now. But Paul says that in that case they would have perished. Therefore it is evident that the dead are not in existence, and that only the promised future resurrection saves them from being forever perished from the face of the earth.

That this does not argue a disbelief in immortality is further shown by Paul's words which follow:

> **1 Corinthians 15**
> [51] Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
> [52] 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.
> [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
> [54] 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.

We believe in immortality, although we do not believe that men have it by nature so that they cannot die. Immortality will be bestowed, according to the Bible, which is our only source of information, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But the *Interior*, ignoring these plain declarations of the Bible, assume that if men are not conscious in death there can be no immortality, and that he who argues that death is a cessation of existence—in other words, that death is death—denies the possibility of immortality, and proceeds to "prove," by an analogy, that men

are conscious in death. It says that the weaving-machine could not have produced the fabric unless there have been some controlling power, a weaver, who was independent of the machine. Then it concludes:

> Now we are ready to discover whether the analogy makes for, or makes against, the independence of mind for its existence over matter. And as we know to a certainty that mind, which is the prime essential of the weaving machine—without which it would be nothing but formless wood, iron, brass, leather, and fibers of hemp—that the animating and directing mind is not in the least dependent upon the weaving-machine for its existence, so we may know as certainly as we can know from an analogy, that the animating and directing mind is not dependent for its existence upon the human machine. The analogy flatly contradicts Mr. Proctor's theory that the machine produces the mind, and is necessary to its existence.

That is to say, that because the mind that runs the weaving-machine is independent of it, therefore, the mind must be independent of the body. (It must be so, you see, or else the analogy wouldn't work.) And it still further concludes, that since the man loses none of his skill when his machine is destroyed, therefore the mind loses nothing of its force when the body is destroyed. Very pretty analogy, isn't it? But the analogy should have been carried a little further, and it should have been shown that, even though the man retained his skill after his machine is destroyed, he cannot weave without a machine, so the mind, even allowing that it could exist without the body, can accomplish nothing after the body is destroyed. To be sure this analogy does not teach us anything, but from the Scriptures we learn that it is a correct one, and that the mind cannot act independently of the body, for the psalmist says:

> **Psalm 146**
> [3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Analogies prove nothing, yet they are all that can be adduced in favor of the natural immortality theory. We once heard Joseph Cook deliver one of his famous lectures, the point of which was to prove the immortality of the soul. In the beginning of his lecture he told a story of the war ship *Cumberland*. He said that as she went down under the blows of the *Merrimac*, a sailor who was down in the hold saw a glimmer of light through the open hatchway, and swam up through the water toward that point of light, until he reached the surface and escaped. This he compared to the soul leaving its tenement of clay, and soaring heavenward; and this illustration was the only "proof" of the immortality of the soul that was given in the entire lecture! This incident was often referred to, and because the man escaped from the sinking ship, it was taken as a natural consequence that the soul survives the body, and leaves it at death. And the greater part of the man's audience seemed to think that he had "proved" his point! When even the philosophical Joseph Cook is driven to such ridiculous makeshifts for arguments to prove the inherit immortality of the soul, the thoughtful reader can readily see that the theory itself is inherently weak.

The fact is, as before stated, that analogies and illustrations prove nothing, not even the truth. When a truth has been demonstrated, then an illustration is valuable for the purpose of impressing the truth already demonstrated, but it is not the proof. Not only can no illustration prove anything, but no illustration can perfectly illustrate any biblical truth. As Dr. Clarke has expressed it,

"No parable can go on all-fours."

Then how much more feeble must illustrations be when they are used as proof of error. They serve simply, when closely examined, to make the error more apparent. The trouble is that too many persons wish to believe the pleasing fable that they are by

nature immortal, and thus allied to Deity, and therefore an *assertion* to that effect will have more weight with them than scores of plain declarations from the Bible to the contrary.

1888 – 1892

1. Forever and Ever (1888)

Signs of the Times, May 11, 1888

> Will you please explain *Revelation* 20:10, which says: "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 for ever and ever." Is it possible that their punishment will last forever and ever without an end? I thought that after the earth was thoroughly melted, and all things therein had burned up, the fires would go out, and the earth be prepared as a fit inheritance for the saints. Please explain to me, for I am a little confused. - M. V. B. R.

THIS text has often been explained in these columns, but we are glad to repeat any point as often as it is required. On of the points upon which our friend is confused, although unconsciously, is in the terms "torment" and "punishment." It is not only possible, but absolutely true, according to the Scriptures, that the punishment of the wicked will have no end. When Christ said,

Matthew 25
[46] These [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal,

–He showed that the punishment of the wicked will last just as long as does the reward of the righteous; for the words "everlasting" and "eternal" in *Matthew* 25:46 are from the same Greek word, and the same word could not be used in two senses in such close connection.

But what will be the punishment of the wicked? Paul answers, when he says that the wicked...

2 Thessalonians 1
[9] ...shall be punished with everlasting destruction,

–and that...

Romans 6
[23] ...the wages of sin is death.

Death, destruction, will be the punishment of the wicked.

Obadiah
[16] They shall be as though they had not been.

Psalm 37
[20] For yet a little while, and 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.

While they will be made to suffer...

Romans 2
[8] ...indignation and wrath,
[9] Tribulation and anguish,

–they will not have received their punishment until they have consumed away into smoke and ashes, until it can be said of them,

> "They are dead; they are then as extinct as though they never had been."

From that death there will be no awakening; it will be eternal.

This, however, is of itself sufficient to disprove the supposition that the wicked will to all eternity suffer torment. While they are being punished, they will suffer anguish; but how can they suffer torment after they have become as though they had never been? It is utterly impossible. This point may be emphasized thus: If the wicked die, and become as though they had not been, and this death never has any end, then they cannot suffer torment to all eternity; if it be true that the wicked are to suffer torment to all eternity, then it cannot be true that they will die, for so the Bible expressly declares in many places; therefore it is not true that eternal torment is to be the lot of any creature which God has made.

What then must we conclude? that the Bible contradicts itself? Not by any means. That would be an impossibility, for the Bible is the word of God,

2 Timothy 2
[13] ...and He cannot deny himself.

Then we must conclude that the term "forever and ever" does not necessarily mean "eternity." And that is just the case, as can be proved from instances in the Scriptures. One instance alone will suffice.

In the 34th chapter of *Isaiah* there is a record of the punishment that is to be visited upon all the nations of the earth, and of the state into which the earth is to be brought. Although the judgment is said to...

Isaiah 34
[5] ...come down upon Idumea,

–and the...

[6] ...great slaughter [is to be] in the land of Idumea,

–the first four verses of the chapter, which read as follows, show that the whole earth is meant, and that Idumea is put for the earth:

[1] Come near, you nations, to hear; and hearken, you people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.
[2] For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He has utterly destroyed them, He has delivered them to the slaughter.
[3] Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
[4] And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falls off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

The following verses, also, to which we wish to call special attention, show that the judgment spoken of is not local, but is the final judgment upon the whole earth:

Isaiah 34
[8] For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion.
[9] And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.
[10] It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

This language is just as strong as that used in *Revelation* 20:10, and refers to the same thing; and yet in the very next chapter we read:

Isaiah 35
[1] The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.
[2] It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.
[6] Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.
[7] And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.
[10] And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

This shows that the same land concerning which it is said that…

[10] …the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever,

–will afterwards be inhabited. If anything more is needed to prove this, *2 Peter* 3:10-13 furnishes it. That text brings to view the melting of the earth, and also its restoration as an abode for the righteous. The psalmist also shows that the righteous are to dwell upon the same place from which the wicked are to be removed, when he says:

> **Psalm 37**
> [9] For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.
> [10] For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.
> [11] But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

We understand, therefore, that the term "forever and ever," as used in *Isaiah* 34:10; *Revelation* 14:11; 22:10, does not mean unending duration, but that it does mean that the thing spoken of shall continue a long time, and without intermission within the limits assigned to it.

But then, it may be asked,

> "How can we know when the term 'forever and ever' is used in the sense of eternal duration? or how can we be sure that it is ever used in that sense?"

It is a proper question, and easily answered. We may know in the same way that we know that in the instances already considered it does not mean eternal duration, and that is by what is elsewhere taught us of the nature of things to which it is applied. True, we know that it does not mean eternal duration when applied to the torment of the wicked, and the destruction of the earth, because the Bible expressly declares the wicked shall cease to exist, and that the earth will be restored to the condition in which it was when God pronounced it "very good,"[159] and shall be given the righteous for an inheritance. So when we read that the righteous shall shine…

[159] *Genesis* 1:31.

Daniel 12
[3] ...as the stars for ever and ever,

–we know that it means ceaseless duration, because in the same prophetic book it is declared that...

Daniel 7
[27] The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,...

–and that the kingdom is...

[14] ...that which shall not be destroyed,

–and...

Daniel 2
[44] ...shall not be left to other people, but...it shall stand for ever.

There is not need for confusion upon the subject if one will but particularly compare scripture with scripture, giving to each its due weight.

2. Life and Death Opposite Terms

Signs of the Times, July 6, 1888

IN THE last words which Moses, at the command of the Lord, spoke to the children of Israel, he said:

Deuteronomy 30
[15] See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil;
[16] In that I command you this day to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God shall bless you in the land whither you go to possess it.
[17] But if your heart turn away, so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them;
[18] I denounce unto you this day, that you shall surely perish, and that you shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither you pass over Jordan to go to possess it.
[19] I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your seed may live.

In this text we have the most positive evidence that life and death are exactly opposite states. It should be unnecessary to quote anything to prove such a self-evident proposition, yet it is well known that in the face of the statement that...

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,

–many claim that the wicked, as well as the righteous, will have eternal life. If it be true that both righteous and wicked are to have everlasting life, then life and death must mean the same thing, for the Bible says that life is for the righteous and death is for the wicked.

We do not say that it is claimed that the wicked will have life *under the same conditions* as the righteous. But this we say is con-

tradictory of Scripture. The Scripture promises life to the righteous, and death to the wicked. These terms are unqualified except as to duration,—both are eternal. Therefore, if it be claimed that the wicked will live eternally, it must be claimed that life and death are identical in meaning.

But the scripture just quoted shows that they are not identical. They are as widely separated as the antipodes. They are no more alike than are blessing and cursing.

Deuteronomy 30
[15] See, [says the Lord,] I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.

Who will claim that good and evil have anything in common? No one certainly who has any regard for God's word. Well, death and life are just as far apart as are good and evil. Life follows good, and death follows evil. Again the Lord says,

[19] I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing;

Who will say that blessing and cursing are identical terms? There is no question but that they are as far apart as the east is from the west. But life is the blessing wherewith God blesses those who love Him, and the curse pronounced upon the disobedient is death.

Notice a clause in the last verse of *Deuteronomy* 30. After admonishing the people to cleave unto the Lord, Moses says:

[20] For He is your life, and the length of your days.

Question: If God is the life of His people, and the length of their days, what will become of those who do not cleave to the Lord? It must be that they will not have life nor length of days. This is what the Bible teaches. Paul says that those who…

2 Thessalonians 1
[8] …know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
[9] …shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

He says again that…

2 Timothy 1
[10] [Christ] has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel,

–which leads to the conclusion that all who do not accept the gospel will know nothing of life and immortality.

Again the apostle John says,

John 3
[36] He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.

So far will the unbeliever be from having life, that he shall not see life. And this is literally true. This life amounts to nothing, unless it is used as a preparation for eternal life. It is hard enough at the best. In childhood even, when the world seems brightest and when the spirit is buoyant, there are troubles as great as the child can endure. As age comes on, cares increase, and the words of the patriarch, that…

Job 5
[7] Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward,

–are proved to be true. The life which we live in this earth is not real life. There is not a man who knows, even at his best, anything of the freshness and vigor of that life which will be felt by those who drink of the river of the water of life, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life. One moment of that life will contain more of vigor and joyous energy than threescore and ten years of this present life. And so the man who rejects God and the gospel, and who consequently is punished with destruction, may truly be said to have never seen life.

Christ is the life-giver. He came to earth and died for no other purpose than that men who were doomed to death might have life.

John 10

[10] I am come, [said He,] that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

To say that we can have eternal life without Christ, is to rob Him of His highest honor. Who that loves Christ can refuse to worship Him as the giver of our life, as well as of all good things?

3. Paradise and Hades

Signs of the Times, July 27, 1888

A PORTION of the *Christian Evangelist*, published at St. Louis, Mo., has been sent to us with the request that we give a little attention to an article which it contains on the "Intermediate State of the Dead." The letter states also that the writer of the article, who is one of the editors of the paper, is one of the best educated ministers in the "Christian" denomination. If that is true, and we have no reason to doubt it, it is simply another evidence that the best educated men may be darkly ignorant of Bible truth.

The article is in answer to the question,

> "Do the spirits of the dead enter *hades* since Jesus' soul came forth therefrom?"

We quote the first paragraph of the reply to the question, and will confine our comment this week to that portion. It is as follows:

> In discussing this subject, it must be assumed, for lack of space as well as condition, that paradise was that part of *hades* into which the disembodied spirits of the righteous entered prior to the resurrection of Christ. We think that part of *hades* was abolished when the Saviour's spirit came out of it, and that ever since then the spirits of God's people have gone directly to the Father at death.

The utter falsity of this assumption may be shown in a few words. *Hades* in Greek is the same as *sheol* in the Hebrew, and so, to avoid confusion, we shall give simply the Greek form *hades* in all the texts. Now let us learn something about *hades*.

1. It is a place into which people go bodily. In *Numbers* 16:32-33 we are told concerning the rebellious princes of Israel that…

Numbers 16
[32] The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods.
[33] They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the *pit* [into *hades*], and the earth closed upon them.

Again Jacob said that he would go down into *hades* unto his son, mourning,[160] and again that his sons would bring down *his gray hairs* to *hades*.[161] And the psalmist said:

Psalm 141
[7] Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth [the mouth of *hades*], as when one cuts and cleaves wood upon the earth.

2. There is nothing going on in *hades*. Says Solomon:

Ecclesiastes 9
[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you go.

3. It is a place of silence. David said:

Psalm 31
[17] Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon You: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave [in *hades*].

4. Those who go there have ceased to live, and they have no knowledge of God, and are not able to praise Him nor hope in Him. Thus Hezekiah speaks:

Isaiah 38
[10] I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave [*hades*]: I am deprived of the residue of my years.
[11] I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

[160] *Genesis* 37:35.
[161] *Genesis* 42:38.

[18] For the grave [Hades] cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

5. Lastly, the righteous will remain in *hades* until the sounding of the last trump, at the end of the world. When the Lord shall come with all his holy angels, to give every man according as his work shall be, it will be…

1 Thessalonians 4
[16] …with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise.

At the sounding of that trumpet…

1 Corinthians 15
[52] …the dead shall be raised incorruptible,

–and not till then will be brought to pass the saying that is written,

[54] …Death is swallowed up in victory.
[55] O death, where is your sting? O grave [*hades*], where is your victory?

And this passage alone is sufficient to scatter to the four winds the fanciful assumption that all the righteous dead left *hades* at the resurrection of Christ, and that none have gone there since. One plain text of Scripture is worth ten thousand pages of human assumption.

Now a few words concerning Paradise. Has it any connection with *hades?* and has it been abolished? To both questions we answer emphatically and unqualifiedly, No. If Paradise were abolished at the resurrection of Christ, then there would be no salvation for any man. One or two texts will show the utter folly and wickedness of such an assumption.

The book of *Revelation* was written more than sixty years after the resurrection of Christ, yet in that revelation Jesus himself said to His people, through His servant John:

Revelation 2
[7] To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Would Christ make a promise to His people of pleasure to be enjoyed in a place that has no existence? Impossible. This promise applies to us in this age as well as to overcomers in all ages, and proves beyond question that Paradise has not been abolished.

The tree of life is…

Revelation 22
[2] …in the midst of the Paradise of God.

The tree of life is on either side of the river of life.[162] And, further, the river of water of life proceeds directly from the throne of God.[163] Still further, when Paul was…

2 Corinthians 12
[4] …caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words,…
[2] …[he was in] the third heaven.

Therefore Paradise,—the place where are found the tree and the river of life,—is in the third heaven, and is the dwelling-place of God. It is the place to which the saints will be taken when they are raised from the dead and made immortal at the second advent, for…

Revelation 22
[4] …they shall see His face,

–and shall be…

Revelation 7
[15] …before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple.

Therefore if Paradise had been abolished at the resurrection of Christ, not only would the saints have no place of reward, but the

[162] *Revelation* 22:2.
[163] *Revelation* 22:1.

tree of life and the river of life would also have been abolished, and God's dwelling-place destroyed.

The fact that Paradise is the place of God's throne, the place of final reward, is sufficient to show that it is not part of *hades*, and is not and never was a half-way house for the dead. Next week we shall notice another portion of the article, if it is possible for anything to be worse than a theory which abolishes God's dwelling-place, and turns Paradise into chaos.

4. Forgiveness Real, Not Pretended

Signs of the Times, August 3, 1888

LAST week we made some comments on an article which claimed that Paradise was that part of *hades* in which the souls of the righteous dead were detained until the resurrection of Christ, when it was abolished. We showed from the Scripture that *hades* is not and never was a half-way house to Heaven, that it is a place of unconsciousness where both righteous and wicked remain until the resurrection, and that Paradise has no connection with it, but is the dwelling-place of God, the place where the saints will be gathered when they receive their final, eternal reward. We gave all that was necessary to show the folly of the position that Paradise was an intermediate place of abode for God's people; but there is another position taken in the article, as the basis of the one already noticed, which is so utterly opposed to divine revelation that it must have some attention. The writer says:

> The necessity for an intermediate place of abode for the Lord's people, grew out of the fact that sin was not actually forgiven till the blood of Christ was actually shed.

We are sorry to see that this most unscriptural doctrine is being received with considerable favor of late. We wish that such would give special heed to the following texts:

> **Micah 7**
> [18] Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retains not His anger forever, because He delights in mercy.

This is the language of one who knows the joy of actual forgiveness. The prophet extolled the Lord as one who did actually forgive sin.

> **Exodus 34**
> [6] And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abun-

dant in goodness and truth,
7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.

At that time, the Lord declared what He then *was*, and not simply what He *would be* at some future time.

The Old Testament is full of promises of forgiveness. When one of the people sinned, he was to make the proper sin-offering, and the promise was,

Leviticus 4
26 ...and it shall be forgiven him.

So the prophet Isaiah said:

Isaiah 55
6 Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near:
7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

These words were as true when they were written as they are now. The people were told that if they would turn to the Lord, He would "abundantly pardon" them. To say that they did not receive pardon when they turned from their sins, is to say that God held out to them a false hope; to say that the pardon was not real, is to discredit all the promises of God. The promise of pardon could not have been made any stronger.

But we can refer to facts as well as promises. Read the following:

Psalm 32
5 I acknowledged my sin unto you, and my iniquity I have not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Here we have pardon actually granted. See also *Psalm* 85:2; 90:8 and *Numbers* 14:19, where it is expressly stated that God forgave the iniquity of the children of Israel.

Some have thought that pardon before the death of Christ was not real but only typical, though what sort of a thing a "typical pardon" might be, they have not told us. But the pardon which David received was so real as to cause him to exclaim:

Psalm 32
[1] Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
[2] Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity.

The forgiveness which David received was such as took away the sin so that the Lord did not any longer account him guilty. If that was not actual forgiveness, we should like to have someone tell us what more than that, actual forgiveness could do for a man.

This blessedness was Abraham's when his faith was counted for righteousness. Abraham was the father of the faithful, for he…

Romans 4
[18] …against hope believed in hope.

He had faith in Christ, who, it had been promised, would be descended from him, when he had no child, and when it was utterly impossible, humanly speaking, that he should ever have one. He is called the father of the faithful, because he exercised stronger faith than any other man who ever lived. But faith nowadays always brings the fullness of pardon, and Abraham's greater faith must have brought the same thing to him. And so it did, as the Scriptures plainly declare.

Abel likewise, by his sacrifice of faith, obtained witness that he was righteous.[164] But if he was righteous, he had been cleansed from sin, for no man can be righteous before his sins are forgiven. Of Enoch we read that he walked with God.[165] That is the same as saying that he was at peace with God; for two cannot walk to-

[164] *Hebrews* 11:4.
[165] *Genesis* 5:22.

gether except they are agreed.[166] But peace comes only after the faith which brings pardon.[167] Enoch could not have walked with God, if his sins had been upon him; but if his sins were not actually forgiven, then they were actually upon him. Forgiveness must precede a righteous life; therefore to say that there was no actual forgiveness before Christ came, is the same as saying that there were no men who were actually righteous before the resurrection of Christ, but that all were hypocrites. Thus the theory of typical or pretended pardon dishonors both God and men.

There is, however, a real difficulty in the minds of some who have no notion of denying God's word, which declares that from the earliest ages men were actually forgiven, and were actually righteous. That difficulty is this: All the blessings that come to men, come by virtue of what is called the "second covenant," of which Christ is mediator; but that covenant was not ratified until the death of Christ, as Paul says:

> **Hebrews 9**
> [17] For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator lives.

Then how was it possible for men before the days of Christ to receive the blessing of forgiveness, which is promised only in the second covenant?

A verse in the 4th chapter of *Romans* will serve to answer this. The apostle, after telling how Abraham received the righteousness of faith, says that he believed God,

> **Romans 4**
> [17] ...who quickens the dead, and calls those things which be not, as though they were.

God can make a thing that is not, just as real as though it actually existed. How is that? The answer is in:

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[166] *Amos* 3:3.
[167] *Romans* 5:1.

Hebrews 6
[13] For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by himself, saying,
[14] Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.
[15] And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.
[16] For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.
[17] Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:
[18] That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.

The promise which God made to Abraham was confirmed in Christ. His faith was counted for righteousness, by virtue of the Seed which was to come. And although God cannot lie, He confirmed His immutable promise by an oath, and so made it doubly unchangeable. So although all pardon is granted solely by virtue of the blood of Christ, after Christ had been promised it was the same as though He had actually been slain. So sure is the promise of God, that Christ is called…

Revelation 13
[8] …the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;

–for the promise that was made to Abraham was nothing more than the promise made to Adam. There is but one plan of salvation.

Hebrews 13
[8] Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever,

–is the center of that plan, and the grace of God through Him has been equally abundant in all ages since sin entered into the world.

Romans 10
[12] For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.

5. Hezekiah's Sickness

Signs of the Times, October 5, 1888

THE case of Hezekiah affords an excellent test of the doctrine expressed by the popular hymn, that:

> Death is the gate to endless joy.[168]

Isaiah 38

[1] In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz came unto him, and said unto him, Thus says the Lord, Set your house in order: for you shall die, and not live.

There was no doubt but that he was doomed to die. And how did he receive the news? We are told that…

[3] …Hezekiah wept sore.

He loved life more than death. But perhaps there was something in his past life that was wrong, and the thought of this caused him to fear. Let us see.

[2] Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord,
[3] And said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in your sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

He was a very good man; and besides this, the Lord granted him time to set his house in order, and to make any preparation that he might desire. This privilege is not accorded to everyone. And yet Hezekiah did not want to die; did not want to go (according to the popular idea) to be with the One whom he loved and had served so faithfully. We will let him tell in his own words why he did not want to die. After he had recovered, he deliberately wrote as follows:

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[168] Isaac Watts, Hymn 31, "Christ's presence makes death easy," or "Why should we start, and fear to die."

Isaiah 38
[10] I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years.

So instead of his years being lengthened out to all eternity, they would have been cut off. Then he would not have gone to Heaven, but to the grave. But would he not have gone to Paradise, there to praise God? Hear his words again:

[18] For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

This was at least one reason why Hezekiah did not want to die. He wanted to continue praising the Lord, and he knew that he could not if he died. We will not now consider whether or not he might have honored the Lord more by dying than by living. Had he died at that time he would have avoided at least one sin; but the point is that he could no more have uttered praise to God.

But the objector will say,

"All this is spoken of his body; of course its functions would have ceased, and it would have decayed; but his soul would have gone to God."

Well, then, we will listen to him once more:

Isaiah 38
[17] Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for You have cast all my sins behind your back.

So it appears that neither his body nor his soul would have gone to Heaven if he had died, although he was a good man. This case alone is sufficient to disprove the doctrine that the good go to their reward at death.

But it may still be urged that Hezekiah lived in the old dispensation, before Christ, and that "life and immortality"[169] had not then been brought to light; that he did not understand the doc-

[169] *2 Timothy* 1:10.

trine of the immortality of the soul, and that his words are not to be taken as authority. We readily admit that he did not understand the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, as held by the majority nowadays, but will not admit that his words are not authority. Hear what Paul says of the Old Testament writings:

2 Timothy 3
[16] *All Scripture* is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, etc.

Then we may go to the Old Testament to learn doctrine; and in this case we learn a very important doctrinal lesson. These words of Hezekiah stand unrebuked and uncontradicted, as a part of divine revelation. We will then accept them as such, believing that they, with the rest of the Scripture, are necessary in order to make us...

[15] ...wise unto salvation.

6. The Penalty Eternal

Signs of the Times, January 7, 1889

IN A LETTER recently received, a clergyman in Nebraska intimates that he has objections to the doctrine that…

> "The penalty of the transgression of the moral law is not eternal,"

–seeming to have the idea that we hold to that view. We are happy to say that we do not believe any such doctrine; and we hope he never will believe that the penalty for sin—the transgression of the moral law—is not eternal. If he now believes that the penalty is eternal, he is correct, but he may be in error as to what that penalty is. However, the Bible is very plain on that point, as a few texts will show. First we quote the Saviour's words in…

> **Matthew 25**
> [46] And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

This is plain. The word "everlasting" is from the same Greek word as "eternal," in the same verse, and the statement shows that the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous will be of equal duration. Now read what this punishment of the wicked is to be. The apostle Paul says that:

> **2 Thessalonians 1**
> [7] The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
> [8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
> [9] Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

These two texts are sufficient to decide the matter. In addition we quote the words of Paul:

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

The penalty for the transgression of the law is death, and that death, when once inflicted, will be as lasting as the Government of God. This follows from the fact that the day of grace will then have passed. There will be no more pardon for sin, and so of course those upon whom the death penalty is inflicted, must rest under it forever.

The popular error concerning the punishment of the wicked lies in the supposition that it consists solely of torment. But that is a mistake. The wicked are likened to…

Psalm 1
[4] …the chaff which the wind drives away,

–and we are told that Christ will…

Matthew 3
[12] …*burn up* the chaff with unquenchable fire.

It is not in the nature of man to exist eternally in the midst of fire; but the wicked are to be cast into a lake of fire.[170] The psalmist says of the Lord:

Psalm 97
[3] A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.

And again:

Psalm 37
[20] 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.

The prophet Nahum also says of the wicked:

Nahum 1
[10] For while they be folden [*i.e.*, tangled] together as thorns, and

[170] *Revelation* 21:8.

while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be *devoured* as stubble fully dry.

That there will be torment and anguish in connection with the punishment of the wicked would naturally follow from the fact that fire is to be the agent of their destruction. Not only so, but the apostle Paul expressly declares that God will render…

Romans 2
[8] …indignation and wrath,
[9] Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil.

But this tribulation and anguish is not the sum of the punishment of the wicked, for the same apostle declares, as already quoted, that it is to be everlasting destruction. When the penalty is death, a man may suffer greatly in dying, but it cannot be said that he has received his punishment until death ensues. And when death shall have taken place in the case of the finally impenitent, it will be everlasting.

Jeremiah 51
[7] They shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, says the King, whose name is The Lord of hosts.

Obadiah
[16] They shall be as though they had not been.

7. Spirits in Prison

Signs of the Times, February 11, 1889
Note: See the next article (Charging God Foolishly) also.

SOMEBODY, we do not know who, asks for an explanation of certain texts which he thinks seem to conflict with the doctrine of the sleep of the dead. We herewith answer the last text that he mentions; the others will receive attention at another time. He says:

> It has been suggested that the preaching to the spirits in prison, referred to in *1 Peter* 3:19-20, was done by Christ between His death and His resurrection. Please explain through the *Signs of the Times*.

We wish first to say that a suggestion does not prove anything. The man who reads a plain declaration of the Scripture, and then listens to suggestions of doubt, will have all the opportunity that he desires for doubt. Satan is always ready with suggestions against the truth of God, and those who entertain them do so to their own ruin. If suggestions were to be considered as worthy of comparison with plain, positive proof, nothing could stand; for it is possible to suggest anything.

Following are the verses referred to, together with the eighteenth:

1 Peter 3
[18] For Christ also has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
[19] By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
[20] Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

Now let us read this carefully, to see just what it tells us. After stating that Christ, the Just One, once suffered for the sins of the wicked world, it tells us how he suffered: "being put to death in

the flesh." Next it tells us that he was made alive by the Spirit; then it says that it was by this same Spirit that He went and preached to the spirits in prison; and lastly, it tells us when this preaching was done:

1 Peter 3
[20] ...when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing.

There you have the whole story. There is not a hint that the preaching was done by Christ between His death and His resurrection. On the contrary, it is stated that the preaching was not done at all by Christ, but that He did it by the Spirit. Now turn to *Genesis* 6:3, and you will see that in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, the Spirit of God was working among the people:

Genesis 6
[3] And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.

The preaching, then, was done by the Spirit, the same Spirit which brought Christ again from the dead. But how about the spirits being in prison? How were they in prison? A few texts will answer this. First, we remember that the antediluvians were exceedingly wicked. The Bible says that:

[5] God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

But sin is a bondage, as the wise man says:

Proverbs 5
[22] His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be held with the cords of his sins.

And the apostle Peter, speaking of those who by their deceitful wantonness seduce those who have escaped from the snare, says:

2 Peter 2
[19] While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

The work of Christ is to save men from the bondage of sin.[171] Read also Paul's account, in the 7th of *Romans*, of his bondage to sin, and of his deliverance. And it is by the Spirit that this deliverance is effected. When Christ stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth, He read these words, which He said were fulfilled in Him:

Luke 4
[18] The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,
[19] To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

In the passage from which Christ read,[172] it says plainly,

Isaiah 61
[1] ...the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Bound with what? Why, with the cords of their sins.

Read now *Psalm* 102:19-20, where it says that the Lord...

Psalm 102
[19] ...has looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from Heaven did the Lord behold the earth;
[20] To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.

From this we learn that those to whom the Spirit preaches deliverance are not dead, but are only "appointed to death."

And now read *Hebrews* 2:14-15, where the apostle says of Christ:

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[171] *Matthew* 1:21; *Galatians* 1:4.
[172] *Isaiah* 61:1.

Hebrews 2
[14] 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;
[15] And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Whom did He come to deliver? Those who all their lifetime were subject to bondage. How were they thus in bondage? Through fear of death. What is it that brings the fear of death? It is sin; for...

Romans 6
[23] ...the wages of sin is death.

So then, Christ came to deliver them who were held in the bondage of sin. This is just what He came for, and this He does by the Spirit, which both convicts and converts. It was this same Spirit by which the gospel of deliverance was preached to the antediluvians; but they rejected it, and so were lost.

This is just what we learn from *1 Peter* 3:18-20. It is Scriptural and reasonable. In an article in another column, entitled "Charging God Foolishly,"[173] we shall show how contradictory and dishonoring to God is the theory that the preaching referred to was done by Christ himself, in the interval between His death and His resurrection.

[173] See the next article.

8. Charging God Foolishly

Signs of the Times, February 11, 1889

IN THE article entitled "Spirits in Prison,"[174] we have given the explanation of the words of Peter, that Christ was...

1 Peter 3
18 ...quickened by the Spirit,
19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.

We saw that the preaching was done by the Spirit, when before the flood it strove with men who were in bondage to their own corrupt desires. We propose now to show the folly and the wickedness of the theory that the preaching was done by Christ between His death and His resurrection.

We will first quote the words of two eminent theologians, which voice the popular sentiment concerning this text. Archdeacon Farrar, in *Early Days of Christianity*, speaks of this text as showing that there is hope for those who die in their sins, and says:

> Of all the blunt weapons of ignorant controversy employed against those to whom has been revealed the possibility of a larger hope than has been revealed by Augustine or Calvin, the bluntest is the charge that such a hope renders null the necessity for the work of Christ. As if it were not this very hope which gives to the love of Christ its mightiest effectiveness! We thus rescue the work of redemption from the appearance of having failed to achieve its end for the vast majority of those for whom Christ died.[175]

[174] See the previous article in this section.
[175] Chapter 7.

Dean Alford also, in his comments on the text, says that the *inference* to be drawn from it, which with him is the same as Farrar's,

> ...is one which throws light on one of the darkest enigmas of divine justice; the cases where the final doom seems infinitely out of proportion to the guilt which incurred it.

And so man, in order to fathom the mind of God, will deliberately belittle sin, and will presume to judge how much punishment is due for the commission of certain sins! If the severest punishment that God ever inflicts is not justly due those who corrupted their way, and obstinately resisted His pleadings for a hundred and twenty years, each year growing more and more bold in their rebellion, we should like to know what sin would merit the vengeance of God, and everlasting destruction.

Again, the view which we combat actually charges God with acting rashly, in punishing people who did not deserve it. For if there were some of the antediluvians who in the time of Christ were fit subjects for the preaching of the gospel, then they ought not to have been destroyed in the flood. It would seem as though reverence of God ought to be sufficient to deter His professed ministers from making such charges against Him.

It is said that...

> ...by the theory that Christ preached while in *hades*, we rescue the work of redemption from the appearance of having failed to achieve its end for the vast majority of those for whom Christ died.

Who has the right to say that the gospel has not achieved its end unless everybody is saved? The Bible nowhere teaches us to expect that all will be saved. When one came to Christ and asked,

Luke 13
[23] Lord, are there few that be saved?

–He replied:

Luke 13
[24] Strive to enter in at the straight gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

In the sermon on the mount, he also said:

Matthew 7
[13] Enter in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
[14] Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.

Thus we see that the Lord himself teaches us that all men will not be saved. Why will men do violence to a text, in order to draw from it an inference which contradicts the plain declaration of Christ?

Note that the theory Christ descended into *hades* to preach to the dead, does teach the doctrine of probation after death, and universal salvation. In fact, the doctrine of probation after death, inevitably runs into that of universal salvation. For if God, in order to be just, must grant another probation to those who remain impenitent at the close of the first, He must also grant another to those who remain impenitent at the close of the second, and so on until all have been converted. But this, as we have seen, contradicts the plain word of God.

The theory of future probation, or probation after death, which is built almost solely on this false interpretation of *1 Peter* 3:18-20, is nothing else than the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, with its attendant prayers for the dead. For if we must pray for those who are on probation before death, as we assuredly ought, then it follows that we ought to pray for those on probation after death, if there were any such.

Not only so, but we ought in that case to pray to them, in the sense that the Catholics pray to them, namely, to ask their intercession for us. For if the dead are on probation, they are in as good case as we are, who are also on probation; and since we are

exhorted to pray for one another, we ought to ask the dead to pray for us, as well as to pray for them. In fact, there is no absurdity of Catholicism or Spiritualism which does not legitimately follow from the theory that Christ went after death to preach to people in *hades*.

Finally, take notice that all these absurdities and false doctrines come from the unscriptural theory that the dead are conscious, and thus capable of listening to preaching. If men believed what the Scripture says, that…

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] …the dead know not anything,

–they could not take the position Farrar and Alford and so many thousands of professed Christians do, in regard to *1 Peter* 3:18-20. We have already fully shown the fallacy of that theory; but we will in conclusion quote a few texts which, if men will adhere to them, will keep them from such false and unnecessary conclusions.

[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you go.

Psalm 115
[17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

Isaiah 38
[18] For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Let us hold to the plain statements of the Bible, and not be carried away with the suggestions of the enemy.

2 Chronicles 20
[20] Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe His prophets, so shall you prosper.

9. Do the Dead Know?

Signs of the Times, February 18, 1889

WHY is it that men who profess Christianity, and especially men who profess to take the Bible as their only guide, will so persistently ignore its plainest teachings? For instance, read the following from an editorial in the *Christian Oracle*, on the death of Isaac Erret:

> In attempting to pronounce a eulogy on such a man as Bro. Errett, words appear to have such poverty that the heart hesitates to use them. If, however, the departed one knows what is said of him (and who shall say he does not?) he will know the sentiment that prompts the expression, and that its very sincerity is its chief virtue.

"Who shall say that he does not" know? Solomon, to whom God gave wisdom greater than that of all men who ever lived before or since, will say. Hear him:

> **Ecclesiastes 9**
> [5] For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten.
> [6] Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Job will speak most emphatically to the contrary. Hear what he says of the dead man:

> **Job 14**
> [21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

Surely, then, the man cannot perceive what is said in his praise. If men would but heed the plain words of the Bible, they would know, what certain also of their own poets have said, that:

> Flatt'ry [cannot] soothe the dull cold ear of Death.[176]

Hear what the psalmist says on this point:

> **Psalm 115**
> [17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

Take now the case of a man eminent for his piety; a humble-minded man. Will it be claimed that, although in death he cannot praise the Lord, he can nevertheless know all that is being said in his own praise? Is it so, that the man whose whole life was one of self-denying love for Christ, becomes oblivious of everything but self, as soon as he is dead? Can he listen to eulogies upon himself, while he is unable to utter a word for his Master? No; it is not so. Again the psalmist, by whom the Lord spoke, says of man:

> **Psalm 146**
> [4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

The grave is…

> **Psalm 88**
> [12] …the land of forgetfulness.

It is the synonym of nothingness. Now the question is,

> "Do the men who use such language as that quoted from the *Oracle* really believe the Bible?"

We shall not attempt to answer it; but we will say this, that there is no actual difference between such language and the language of Spiritualism. If the dead know all that is taking place on the earth, if their activity and consciousness go on just the same as before, and even in increased degree, then it is simply absurd to say that they cannot communicate their own ideas, and manifest themselves just the same as before their death. The only logical believers in the natural immortality of the soul, are Spiritual-

[176] Thomas Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, 1751.

ists. And all who cling to the *Oracle's* theory, will, by their position, sooner or later be driven into Spiritualism.

> "But," says some believer in the doctrine of immortality outside of Christ, "the Bible teaches that between the living and the dead there is a great gulf fixed, so that those in the two states cannot communicate with one another; and so I cannot by any possibility become a Spiritualist."

Very true; the Bible does so teach; but is there any more truth in that portion of the Scripture than there is in another? The Bible also teaches that the dead know not anything; yet you squarely and positively deny it. Since you deny the teachings of the Bible in one point, what is there to keep you from denying any other part, or the whole of it, when some specious sophistry, or some manifestation that appeals to your senses, is presented to you? Just nothing at all. And so we say that the man who, in contradiction of the Bible, declares that the dead are conscious, is on the high road toward declaring, in contradiction of the Bible, that the spirits of the dead may appear to and communicate with the living, and of finally denying the whole Bible.

10. The Christian's Hope

Signs of the Times, February 25, 1889

Philippians 1

[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.
[22] But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose I wot not.
[23] For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.

THE common view of the first verse of the quotation was expressed some time ago by a condemned murderer in San Francisco, who, when speaking of what he termed the "persecutions" he had suffered since the commission of his crime, said that he had made his peace with God, and was prepared to die, and that he could say with Paul,

[21] For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,

–meaning that if he should die he would thus escape a great deal of trouble. In so saying he but voiced the almost universal opinion that, to the Christian, death is always a gain, whenever or however it may come. Much of the theological teaching nowadays, conveys the idea that death is always something to be desired. This idea is strengthened by the hymns which teach that…

> Death is the gate to endless joys,[177]

–and that…

> 'Tis but the voice that Jesus sends
> To call us to His arms.[178]

Now to show that this is a mistaken view, it is only necessary to quote a few texts which show that death is not a friend, and

[177] Isaac Watts, *Why Should We Start, and Fear to Die?*, 1707.
[178] Isaac Watts, *Why Do We Mourn Departing Friends?*, 1707. PP Editor's note: It is interesting to look up the last 4 stanzas of the poem, which concern the rising of the body at the resurrection; compared to the first 2 stanzas, which imply that the soul goes to heaven in advance of that time.

that it does not usher a person into the realms of bliss. Paul said that Jesus died,

> **Hebrews 2**
> [14] ...that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

But the devil is the adversary of the human race, and he especially hates and seeks to destroy the good,[179] so that it is utterly inconsistent to think of death as being the gate to endless joy; and one needs only to remember that the devil has the power of death, to know that it is not the voice that Jesus sends to call His people to himself. Death is plainly declared to be an enemy,[180] and we are told that they who are dead cannot see the Lord,[181] and that in the grave they cannot praise Him.[182] We are taught also, by the Lord himself, that His people cannot be with Him unless He comes again;[183] and we learn that when He does come, it will be to redeem them from the power of the grave.[184]

From these texts, and many others that might be quoted, we are forced to conclude that if there is any gain in death, it is simply the gain of exchanging toil and trouble for nothingness. It is true that in the grave,

> **Job 3**
> [17] ...the wicked cease from troubling; and...the weary are at rest,

–yet it is doubtful if it can with strict propriety be said that a person is a gainer by being freed from trouble, when he cannot be conscious of his release. But however this may be, the fact remains that death is an enemy, and is the emblem of cruelty,[185] and on this ground alone there is a manifest absurdity in speaking of

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[179] *1 Peter* 5:8.
[180] **1 Corinthians 15** [26] The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.
[181] *Isaiah* 38:10-11.
[182] *Isaiah* 38:18-19.
[183] *John* 14:1-3.
[184] *Hosea* 13:14; *1 Corinthians* 15:51-55.
[185] *Song of Solomon* 8:6.

death as a gain. If it were a gain, then it would not be an enemy, but a friend.

Suppose, however, it be allowed that to an overworked, persecuted man, death may be called a gain, even though he is unconscious of the relief that would come from laying off care, we shall see that this idea was not in the mind of the apostle. To wish for death as a release from toil is essentially a selfish wish; and selfishness was something entirely foreign to that devoted servant of Christ. His sole object in life was to advance the cause of Christ. So in this epistle to the Philippians, written when he was a prisoner in Rome, he thought not of himself and his sufferings, but of the cause. He says:

Philippians 1
[12] I would you should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;
[13] So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places;
[14] And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Here we see that he rejoices because his bondage has resulted in the spread of the gospel in places which probably could not have been reached if he had been free.

[15] Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:
[16] The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds:

True, there were some who preached Christ of envy and strife, thinking, no doubt, that by presenting the simple truth of the gospel, which calls for the crucifying of self and which was so opposed to the self-pleasing doctrines of paganism, they would lead the emperor to make more severe the persecution of the one who had done so much to introduce that gospel. But Paul did not care for himself. Said he,

Philippians 1

[18] What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

Then he goes on to say that his earnest expectation and hope are, that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it be by life, or by death.

[20] According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

And he adds,

[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Who cannot see that in all this Paul had no thought of personal gain? It is impossible to suppose that immediately after saying that his sole desire was that Christ should be honored by him, whether it were by life or by death, he should add that if he should live, Christ would be the gainer, but that if he should die, he himself would be the gainer.

No; living and laboring for Christ is not the only way in which Christians can advance His cause. Not a martyr has fallen but that the cause of God has been advanced thereby. Paul well knew that if he should be put to death for the sake of Christ, that also would turn out to the furtherance of the gospel. Said he,

Philippians 2

[17] Yea, and if I be offered [margin: "poured forth"] upon the sacrifice and the service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church;" and Paul's sole thought was that he might preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ"[186] while he lived, and might be enabled to meet death in

[186] *Ephesians* 3:8.

such a manner as to add another to the long list of testimonies to the power of faith.

Romans 14
[8] For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Having thus stated his unselfish devotion to the cause of Christ, he proceeds to say,

Philippians 1
[22] ...what I shall choose, I know not.

That is, he does not know whether if the choice were given him, he would choose life or death. Having no desire but to honor Christ either by life or by death, and not knowing which would honor Christ the more, he is unable to express any preference. He says,

[23] For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.

There is no question that the two things between which Paul was in a strait, or, more literally, by which he was pressed, were life and death, and that he says that he does not know which of these he would choose. And yet his desire "to depart and to be with Christ" is usually considered as the expression of a desire to die. But by what process of reasoning people make the apostle express an intense desire for death, as being far preferable to life, immediately after he has said that he could not tell which he would choose, we cannot imagine. It would be the same as saying:

"It is impossible for me to tell whether I would choose life or death, but I would much rather die."

Anybody can see that one statement is a contradiction of the other.

What, then, was it that Paul declared, in the emphatic Greek idiom, to be "very much more better" than anything else? It was to depart and to be with Christ. But is not this the same as death? Not by any means. Said Jesus to the Jews,

John 8
[21] I go my way, and you shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, you cannot come.

Here Jesus told them that though they should die, they could not be with Him.

"Of course not," says one, "because they were wicked."

Well, then, turn to *John* 13:33, and read what He said to His own beloved disciples:

John 13
[33] Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, you cannot come; so now I say to you.

So, then, death does not take a man to Christ, even though he be a righteous man. Remember, also, what has been quoted above, that death is an enemy, and that they who die cannot praise the Lord. Death is, in fact, the very farthest thing imaginable from a condition of being with the Lord. It is the instrument by which Satan attempts to keep men forever banished from God. King Hezekiah thus recounts his feelings, when he was told that he should die, and not live:

Isaiah 38
[10] I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.
[11] I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

Death is so far from being a departure to be with Christ, that the process of death must be entirely reversed before one who has died can be with Him. In *1 Thessalonians* 4:15-17, Paul himself

describes the means by which people are taken to be with the Lord. We read:

> **1 Thessalonians 4**
> [15] 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.
> [16] 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:
> [17] 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* [by this means] shall we ever be with the Lord.

Nowhere in the Bible can we find any hint of any other means by which people can be with Christ. Either they must be alive when the Lord comes, so that they may be taken up bodily into Heaven, as was Elijah, or, if they have died, they must be raised from the dead, and then be caught up with those who never died. Now since Paul said[187] that he did not know which he should choose, life or death, and yet he said that it was far better to depart and to be with Christ; and since he knew that there was no way that men could be with Christ except by the resurrection of the dead and the translation of the living, both of which take place only at the coming of Christ, there is only one conclusion open to us, and that is, that Paul longed intensely for the coming of the Lord, and for translation.

It does not militate at all against this conclusion, that Paul knew that he could not expect to live till the Lord should come. He could long for the event with just as much ardor. Neither does the fact that in *2 Timothy* 4:6 the words, "The time of my departure is at hand," refer to his execution, prove that the word "depart," in *Philippians* 1:23, means death. The word "depart" does not in itself convey any idea as to the manner of the departure. When Paul was praying in the temple, shortly after his conversion, the Lord said to him,

[187] *Philippians* 1:22.

Acts 22
[21] *Depart:* for I will send you far hence unto the Gentiles;

–but we very well know that this was not a command for Paul to die. Paul's death was indeed a departure, and so is the death of every man—a departure from life,—but we have ample proof from the Scriptures that no man's death is a departure to be with Christ.

It may help some to realize that Paul longed only for the return of the Lord, that he might be with Him, if we state that the only other place in the Bible where the Greek word (*ἀναλύω analuō*) occurs which in *Philippians* 1:23 is rendered "depart," is in *Luke* 12:36, where it refers to the coming of the Lord. Thus:

Luke 12
[36] Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and you yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when He will *return* [*ἀναλύω*] from the wedding; that when He comes and knocks, they may open unto Him immediately.

And even in the place where Paul unquestionably referred to his death—not, however, as something for which he longed, but as a sacrifice for which he was ready—he looked forward to the coming of the Lord as his only hope, saying:

2 Timothy 4
[8] 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.

The coming of the Lord is the blessed hope of the Christian, and besides it there is no other.

11. Conscious Life Is Not Death

Signs of the Times, July 7, 1890
Original title: Front Page

ELSEWHERE in this paper we have written briefly on the subject of eternal life, showing that it can be obtained only in Christ, and that to deny that life comes only through Christ is virtually to deny Christ. Now it is doubtless a fact that the most of the professed Christians who believe that all men, whether good or bad, will exist throughout eternity, imagine that they do believe in life through Christ, because they confound life with happiness. They hold that only believers in Christ will have eternal happiness, and that unbelievers will be doomed to eternal misery, and they call the first state eternal life, and the second state eternal death. But in considering this subject it should not be forgotten that life and death are distinctly opposite conditions. As long as a man has breath he is alive, no matter how miserable he may be. People who are suffering intense agony, sometimes pray for death to relieve them of their sufferings. Nobody considers them dead because they are in misery. So if the wicked were to be drowned to an eternity of conscious suffering, they would have eternal life just as surely as would the righteous in glory. Let the terms "life" and "death" be taken in their simple, obvious meaning, and the doctrine of immortality as revealed in the Bible may very easily be understood.

12. Seek for Immortality

Signs of the Times, July 7, 1890

Romans 2
[7] To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, [God will render] eternal life.

FROM this verse we conclude that the sum of glory and honor and immortality is contained in eternal life, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.[188] It also furnishes the most complete refutation of the idea made so popular by Plato and Addison, that men are by nature endowed with immortality, because there is so universal a longing for it. The apostle asks in one place,

Romans 8
[4] ...what a man sees, why does he yet hope for?

–and with far greater force might it be asked,

"What a man has, why does he yet long for?"

–and with still greater force,

"What a man has, why is he exhorted to seek for?"

Let us note the occurrence of the word "immortality" in the Bible. It will not take long, for it occurs only five times, yet they take us by regular steps through the whole subject. First, we read in *1 Timothy* 6:15-16 that the...

1 Timothy 6
[15] ...blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords,

–is the one...

[16] Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see.

[188] *Romans* 6:23.

He has "life in himself,"[189] and can bestow it on whomsoever He will.

The contrast between God and man is clearly brought out in *Romans* 1:23, where we are told that the heathen…

Romans 1
[23] …changed the glory of the uncorruptible [or immortal] God into an image made like to corruptible [or mortal] man.

God is immortal; man is mortal, and he is therefore exhorted to seek for immortality, that he may dwell with God.

But where shall we seek for immortality? Shall we look to writings of the ancient heathen? Of what use would that be?

1 Corinthians 1
[21] The world by wisdom knew not God,

–and how then could they know anything of immortality, which belongs to God alone? The word of God alone can direct us in our search, and it declares that the purpose and grace of God in Christ…

2 Timothy 1
[10] …is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

The gospel, then, is the place where we are to seek for immortality. There alone is it revealed; there alone can it be found.

Having found where immortality is revealed, how are we to make it ours? The Scriptures are very definite on this point. Thus we read:

John 3
[36] He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.

[189] *John* 5:26.

The beloved disciple declares of Christ, that…

John 1
[4] In Him was life.
[14] [He was] full of grace [favor] and truth;

–and the psalmist tells us that in the favor of God there is life;[190] therefore he who has Christ has the favor of God, and life from Him.

That life comes from God, and that no man can have it except by the grace of Christ, is shown very clearly. Said Jesus:

John 10
[10] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

From this, with the statement in *Acts* 17:28, "for in Him we live, and move, and have our being," we learn that we depend upon Christ, not alone for immortal life, but for this present existence. When Adam fell he brought the race of mankind under the sentence of eternal death, and it was only through the grace of God in Christ that a second probation was granted. So while the saints will throughout eternity offer praises to Christ for bestowing immortality upon them, all men owe thanks to Him for giving them this little span of life, in which to seek for immortality.

Jesus reproved the Jews for inconsistency, in that, while they searched the Scriptures, because in them eternal life was to be found, and those Scriptures testified of Him as the way of life, yet they would not come to Him that they might have life.[191] Now if life could have been obtained in any other way than through Christ, the Jews might have retorted,

> "We don't need to come to You that we may have life, for we have it without you."

[190] *Psalm* 30:5.
[191] *John* 5:39-40.

This is what they, in effect, did; and it is what thousands are actually saying today. It is the language of Spiritualism. Believing that men are by nature endowed with immortality, Spiritualists scornfully reject Christ as the way of life. The inevitable tendency of the doctrine of the natural immortality of man, is to lead men to lightly esteem Christ.

Read one more testimony.

> **1 John 5**
> [10] He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that believes not God has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son.
> [11] And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
> [12] He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

It is a terrible thing to deny that life can be obtained only in Christ, for to do so is to charge God with lying, since that is the record that He has given. Let God be true, even though every man be proved a liar.[192]

Note that while eternal life belongs to everyone who has Christ, no one is yet in full possession of it. God has given to us eternal life, but this life is in His Son. Not only is it to be found in Him, but for a little space it remains in Him, for safe-keeping. Paul says to Christians:

> **Colossians 3**
> [3] For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
> [4] When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with Him in glory.

Eternal life is ours now, if we have Christ, just as surely as it ever will be; but Christ keeps it in His own charge. When will it be ours by actual possession? This brings us to the summing up, which we read as follows:

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[192] *Romans* 3:4.

1 Corinthians 15

[51] Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

[52] 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.

[53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

[54] 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.

Now let us review briefly. All men are by nature mortal, corruptible; God only has immortality. If we would have immortality, we must seek for it. It is to be found only in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He who does not seek Christ, will know nothing of immortality. Outside of Christ there is no life. For a little season we have, by the mercy of God, existence granted to us, that we may seek life. As long as God's mercy is extended to men, good and bad alike may live; but when Christ shall say to those who reject him, "Depart from me,"[193] they will be cut off from the Source of life, and will suffer eternal death. But to those who have accepted Christ, the gift of immortality will be bestowed at His appearing.

How is it possible that men who profess to love our Lord Jesus Christ, can dishonor Him by ignoring Him as the giver of life?

[193] *Matthew* 7:23; 25:41.

13. Conditional Immortality

Signs of the Times, December 28, 1891

What is meant by conditional immortality?

SIMPLY this, that immortality, or eternal life, which is the same thing, is conditional upon the individual's belief in Christ. It means that…

Romans 6
[23] The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is the doctrine which our Saviour himself taught, when He said:

John 3
[36] He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.

Or, as expressed by the apostle:

1 John 5
[11] And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

It is the doctrine which Christ taught to Nicodemus in these words:

John 3
[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It is the doctrine which gives Christ His rightful title of Life-giver, which He himself claimed, when He said:

John 10
[10] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

To hear some men talk, one would get the idea that the doctrine of conditional immortality is rank infidelity, and utterly opposed to all true Christianity. As a matter of fact, it is based on the recognition of the fact that in all things Christ has the pre-eminence; that man can have nothing except as he gets it through Christ.

As a matter of fact, a denial of the doctrine of conditional immortality is to that extent a denial of Christ. Indeed, we may truly say that it is wholly a denial of Christ, since it denies the very thing for which Christ came. He himself declares that His only object in coming to this earth to die, was that men might, by believing on Him, have life. Now the man who says that eternal life is not conditional upon believing in Christ, virtually says that man has no need of Christ. This was just what so many of the ancient Jews did, to whom Christ sadly said,

John 5
[40] You will not come to me, that you might have life.

They did not profess to be Christians; they rejected Christ unreservedly. Is it not strange that in these days Christ is rejected in exactly the same way by those who profess to love and honor Him? Why should people refuse to acknowledge that indebtedness to Christ for all that they have or hope to have?

14. All Saints' Day

Present Truth, November 17, 1892

FROM one of a series of articles entitle "Thoughts for the Times," in a Protestant paper, we extract the following paragraph:

> The festival of All Saints Day, although so entirely in accordance with the tenor of the Gospel, can be traced to a Pagan source, being an adaptation of one of the sublimer conceptions of idolatry. Some broad-minded heathen worshiper conceived the idea of a temple for all the gods, giving rise to that splendid Roman edifice known as the Pantheon, on which the genius of the architect had been lavished, and in which became enshrined all the known deities, amid such splendor as art and welfare could provide. But under the guiding hand of Pope Boniface III, in the seventh century, this temple was dedicated to the memory of all martyrs; the 1st of May being set apart for the festival. Subsequently the date was changed to November 1, and the commemoration placed on a wider basis as an "All Saints' Day."

In the *Epistle to the Ephesians* we read the following injunction:

> **Ephesians 6** [RV]
> 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God:
> 18 With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

But this is by no means to be considered as authority for praying for the saints who have died, anymore than we are to think that when Paul said to the Corinthians,

> **2 Corinthians 13**
> 13 All the saints salute you,

–he meant that those who were dead joined in the salutation.

Why should not dead saints be prayed for? Because it can do them no good. They are not in a condition to be benefited by prayers. Here is what the Scripture says of the dead:

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, neither in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalm 115
[17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

Effectual prayers always bring blessings; and for blessings received saints always give thanks to God; therefore since the dead do not praise the Lord, it is evident that prayers for them are useless.

Isaiah 38
[18] For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

Why can they not hope for the truth of God? The answer is given in the following scripture.

Ecclesiastes 9
[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you go.
[4] For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.
[5] For 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.
[6] Also their love and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.

These are some of the straight declarations of Scripture concerning the condition of the dead. They show that they cannot

profit by any prayers that may be offered in their behalf, and that therefore to pray for them is a vain repetition. More than this, we learn from the Scriptures that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, and that fact shows in itself that the dead are not in a condition to enjoy happiness or to suffer pain. If they were, there would be no need of the resurrection. The apostle Paul, in combating the idea that some had that there would not be a resurrection, said,

1 Corinthians 15
[16] For if the dead rise not, then Christ is not raised:
[17] And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.
[18] Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

Think of this a moment. If there were to be no resurrection of the dead, the saints who have died would be perished. Now suppose there were to be no resurrection; would that change the condition of the dead? Of course not. They would remain just as they are now. But in that case they would be perished. Therefore they are now in the same condition that they would be if they were for ever blotted from existence. All that stands between them and that fate is the resurrection. But that is a sure thing. They sleep in Jesus, and their resurrection is as sure as His. Their life was given to the Lord while they lived, and He still keeps it for them, to clothe them with it at the resurrection. When the Lord comes, and the trumpet sounds, and the living are changed, then the corruptible puts on incorruption, and the mortal puts on immortality. Then, as in their lifetime they had the life of Christ manifested in their mortal bodies, they have the same life manifested in their immortal bodies.

All this is sufficient reason why there should be no "All Saints' Day" in which prayers for the dead are offered.

The festival is indeed, as the paragraph quoted says, of heathen origin. That of itself would be sufficient to condemn it. No good thing ever came of heathenism. There were men among the hea-

then with whom the Spirit of God strove, and in every age there have been men who have, even amidst the darkness of heathenism, followed the…

John 1
[9] …Light that lights every man that comes into the world,

–and have risen above their fellows; but from heathenism nothing good ever came. And even those men of whom we have spoken, added nothing to the sum of religious knowledge. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not indebted to any man. It is from above. Heathenism is from beneath.

Outside of the Gospel there has never been any *knowledge* of immortality and a future life.

2 Timothy 1
[10] [Christ] brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

Heathenism talked about immortality, and longed for it, but knew nothing of it. The philosophers deluded men with the thought that they already had it; but it was but a delusion; for they knew nothing of Christ, or if they knew of Him they rejected Him; and without Christ there is no life. The heathen doctrine of immortality was the doctrine that men are by nature gods. In order to have immortality by nature they would have to be gods, for life and immortality are attributes of God alone. He gives them to those who accept Him. So it was in keeping with heathenism to erect a temple to all the gods; but for those who professed Christianity to substitute the names of martyrs for those of the gods, and to perpetuate the worship of all the gods under the form of prayers for (and to) all saints, was but to continue heathenism under the name of Christianity.

It is not bringing a railing accusation to say that there is very much Paganism that has crept into professed Christianity, for it is freely acknowledged by all. Query: If there was a need of a reformation from heathenism in the days of the apostles, must there

not now be the same need of the reformation from the heathenism that has crept into the Church?

1893 – 1894

1. Is It Not Spiritualism?

Present Truth, January 12, 1893

NOTHING is more pitiful than to see people running into danger of which they are unconscious. And the fact that they might have known of the danger ought not to prevent people from sympathizing with them and trying to help them. We do not refuse to help a drowning man, although his own carelessness has precipitated him into the water. But nothing calls for more sympathetic help than that of men who are running into the snares of the devil when they think that they are in the way of life. True, the word of God is so plain that there is no need of anybody's mistaking the way, but that should not cause us to censure. Men pity the blind, even though their blindness is due to their own fault.

It is therefore only for the purpose of helping those who may be in danger, that we call attention to the following paragraph; for we are sure that very many are in the same condition, who do not know their danger. On December 4, Dr. Talmage preached a sermon about "Rizpah on the Rock" watching the dead bodies of her relatives. After drawing many parallels, he said near the close:

> I wonder if now there is an after-death watching. I think there is. There are Rizpahs who have passed death and who are still watching. They look down from their supernal and glorified state upon us, and is not that an after-death watching? I cannot believe that those who before their death were interested in us have since their death become indifferent as to what happens to us. Not one hour of the six months during which Rizpah watched seated upon the rocks was she more alert, or diligent, or armed for them than our mother if glorified is alert and diligent and armed for us. It is not now Rizpah on a rock, but Rizpah on a throne. How long has your mother been dead? Do you think she has been dead long enough to forget you? My mother has been dead twenty-nine years. I believe she knows more about me now than she did when I stood in her presence, and I am no Spiritualist either. The Bible says, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent

forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?" Young man, better look out what you do and where you go, for your glorified mother is looking at you. You sometimes say to yourself, "What would mother say if she knew this?" She does know. You might cheat her once, but you cannot cheat her now. Does it embarrass us to think she knows all about us now? If she had to put up with so much when she was here, surely she will not be the less patient or excusatory now.

Oh, this tremendous thought of my text, this after-death watching! What an uplifting consideration! And what a comforting thought! Young mother, you who have just lost your babe, and who feel the need of a nearer solace than that which comes from ordinary sympathy, your mother knows all about it. You cannot run in and talk it all over with her as you would if she were still a terrestrial resident, but it will comfort you some, I think, yes, it will comfort you a good deal, to know that she understands it all. You see that the victories of the heavenly conditions are so great that it would not take her half a second to come to your heart. Oh, these mothers in heaven! They can do more for us now than before they went away. The bridge between this world and the next is not broken down. They approach the bridge from both ways, departing spirits, and coming spirits, dis-imprisoned spirits, and sympathizing spirits. And so let us walk as to be worthy of the supernal companionships.

Dr. Talmage says that he is no Spiritualist. We can however, leave him entirely out of the question while we consider for the benefit of others, whether or not that to which he has given utterance is Spiritualism. The question is:

> "Does a belief in the conscious existence of the dead, and that they are interested in human affairs, and can even communicate with the living, constitute Spiritualism?"

Surely none can answer this better than those who acknowledge themselves to be Spiritualists. In order to learn what Methodism is, we go to Methodists themselves; to learn about Presbyterianism, we apply to Presbyterians; and so for a definition of Spiritualism, we must ask Spiritualists. From the standing

motto of the *Spiritual Magazine*, for many years the leading Spiritualist publication in England, we take the following statement:

> Spiritualism is based on the cardinal fact of open communion and influx.

Also from a leading Spiritualist journal of America, we take the two following definitions:

> The central idea of modern Spiritualism is the keystone of the religious arch. That is, a continued existence.
>
> The very central truth of Spiritualism is the power and possibility of spirit return, under certain conditions, to communicate with those in the material form.

The idea that the spirits of the dead have a conscious existence, and that they can, under certain conditions, return and communicate with the living, is the sum and substance of Spiritualism. Therefore all who believe that the dead are conscious, and that they can return to earth to communicate with those with whom they were associated in life, are Spiritualists, whatever name they may bear. And it is a fact that there are thousands who would be shocked at the intimation that they could ever by any possibility become Spiritualists, who hold exactly these ideas. Why is it that they have such a dread of the name? It is because they think that Spiritualism is nothing but jugglery and trickery. They have associated it with table tipping, immorality, etc. It is true that such things have been connected with Spiritualism, but they are but manifestations of Spiritualism. Spiritualism itself is, as we have seen, nothing but a belief in the return and communion of the dead. Whatever is connected with Spiritualism is an outgrowth of that idea.

Having learned in brief what Spiritualism is we now consider the question of whether or not it is wrong in itself, and if so, wherein the evil consists.

2. Spiritualism and the Bible

Present Truth, January 12, 1893

IN THE preceding article we have found out what Spiritualism is. We have learned from the word of Spiritualists themselves that Spiritualism is nothing more or less than a belief in the doctrine that the dead do not really die, but that after the change which men call death they continue to exist, with keener perceptions and larger knowledge than they had while on the earth, and that they can under certain conditions communicate with people still on the earth. The question now before us is, Is this true? The Bible must furnish us with the answer to this question.

Isaiah 38 [RV]

9 The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness:

10 I said, In the noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years.

11 I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.

12 My age is removed, and is carried away from me as a shepherd's tent: I have rolled up like a weaver my life; He will cut me off from the loom: from day even to night will You make an end of me.

17 ...but You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for You have cast all my sins behind your back.

18 For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

19 The living, the living, he shall praise You, as I do this day.

Ecclesiastes 9

4 For to him that is joined with all the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

5 For 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.

[6] And their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.
[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither you go.

Psalm 146
[2] While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Still further, the patriarch Job asked the question,

Job 14
[14] If a man die, shall he live again?

–and immediately answered it thus,

[14] ...all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.
[15] You shall call, and I will answer You: You will have a desire to the work of your hands.

What this "change" is we learn from the word of the Lord by the apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 15
[51] Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
[52] 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.
[53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
[54] 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.

Once more:

Revelation 20

[4] And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

[5] But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

Note carefully all these scriptures. The first four plainly state that the dead have no consciousness whatever. Therefore to claim that the dead are conscious is to contradict the Bible. Spiritualism *does* make that claim. Therefore Spiritualism is a direct contradiction of the Bible. The last three texts speak of "living again," and of a change that takes place in order that men once dead may "live again." A man cannot go to Paris "again" if he has never been there once and gone away. If he was born in Paris, and has never left the city, it is impossible to speak of him, and speak correctly, as being in Paris "again." So with living. The man who has never ceased to live cannot be spoken of as being alive "again." In order for that to be truly said of him, he must have ceased to live, and then have been made alive once more. So the scriptures last quoted teach us that when man dies he ceases to live, and that in order to live "again," so that he may praise the Lord, and receive a reward, a change must take place in him. This change takes place at the coming of the Lord. But Spiritualism teaches that men never cease to live; that at the change which people call death, they are more alive than ever before, therefore, again we find that Spiritualism is in positive contradiction to the Bible. But the Bible is the truth of God. Therefore Spiritualism is a lie of the devil.

And so we find it. In the form of a serpent the devil deceived Eve, and thus caused the loss of Eden. God had told our first parents not to eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, saying that if

they did so they should surely die. But the devil said to the woman,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

That is just what Spiritualism says. It is because Spiritualism is only a deception of Satan that we feel so sorrowful to see men embracing the teaching of Spiritualism, while they think that they are opposed to that system. And now that we have given the matter this much attention, we wish in the following articles to show how directly the doctrine that the dead do not really die is subversive of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the natural source of all immortality and vice.

3. Spiritualism Against the Gospel

Present Truth, January 12, 1893

LET it not be forgotten that Spiritualism is simply the belief that the dead are conscious, that they are interested in the affairs of men on the earth, and that they may communicate with them. That it is against the Gospel is sufficiently shown in the fact that it contradicts the Bible. But we wish to trace a little more minutely its natural working. Take, for instance, the paragraphs quoted from Dr. Talmage in the first article. Read them carefully again, and see what is set forth as the motive for right doing. Is it the approval of the Lord Jesus? Not at all, it is the approval of dead friends. The words are,

> Young man! Better look out what you do and where you go, for your glorified mother is looking at you.

But that is not the motive to set before any man, in order to get him to do right. Even if his mother were alive, something higher than the fact that she is looking at him ought to be the motive of his actions. But the idea that people are alive after they are dead, and that they are watching the living, puts them in the place of the Lord Jesus Christ and the angels.

Here is a fragment of an editorial in a religious paper that has a circulation of many thousands among all denominations of Christians:

> Some of the saintly faces of fathers and mothers, which are a benediction to all who look at them, could never have shone as now with the reflected light of heaven, unless they had been summoned to frequent upward lookings through the clouds in loving communion with their children in heaven. There are manly and womanly children, who are more serious and earnest and devoted in their young life struggles, because of their constant sense of the over-watching presence of their dead parents.

That is the Spiritualist way of being glorified. But now read the Bible way:

2 Corinthians 3
[18] But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

2 Corinthians 4
[6] For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

That which can in reality be done only by the Lord Jesus Christ, Spiritualism thinks to have done by the spirits of the departed. Thus the Lord is robbed of the honor due Him.

But further. Life and righteousness are inseparable.

Romans 8
[6] To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

This is so because God alone is good.[194]

2 Corinthians 5
[19] God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,

–and therefore the life of Christ was the life of God. His life is the only perfectly sinless life that was ever manifested on this earth. Therefore no one can be righteous unless he has the righteousness which is by the faith of Jesus Christ, the righteousness of God by faith. It is by the righteousness of one that many are to be made righteous.[195] That one is Christ.

But as the life of God in Christ is the only righteous life, and righteousness is inseparable from the life of Christ, it follows that all who are made righteous by His obedience, are made so by having His life in them. It is in Him that we are made the righteousness of God. So we read,

[194] See *Romans* 3:9-12 and *Mark* 10:17.
[195] *Romans* 5:19.

Galatians 2
[20] I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Now since righteousness is inseparable from the life of God, it follows that both eternal life and righteousness are attributes of Divinity. For one to claim that he has life in himself regardless of his faith, is to claim that he has also righteousness in himself, and that he has no need for the Saviour. For nothing is more certain than that Christ came to this earth for the sole purpose of giving life to men.[196] Therefore Spiritualism is opposed to the very fundamental truth of the Gospel.

In a previous number of the *Present Truth* we have seen that Christ gives righteousness by giving His own life. But that teaching that would make out that man has life in himself, frustrates the grace of God, and makes out that Christ died in vain. The apostle Paul, after showing the necessity of faith in Christ as the only means of righteousness, says,

[21] I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

And in the next chapter he says,

Galatians 3
[21] If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

Wherever life is, there is righteousness. Therefore the man who thinks that he has life in himself, unconsciously denies that Christ is the source of righteousness for men.

The tendency of this teaching is to throw man upon himself for righteousness. Thus the Pharisees who would not come to Christ that they might have life,

[196] See *John* 3:16; *Colossians* 3:3-4; *John* 10:10.

Luke 18
[9] ...trusted in themselves that they were righteous.

But this tends most directly to vice and immorality, for man is by nature corrupt, and out of evil, only evil can come.

Again, take the temptation by which Eve was made to fall. Satan said,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

Being deceived, she ate, and gave to her husband, and he ate. This disobedience...

> Brought death into the world, and all our woe.[197]

All the iniquity in the world has resulted from a belief of the words, "You shall not surely die." Nothing but evil can come from that belief.

For this reason we lift up our voice in warning against any approach to the doctrine of Spiritualism. Shun as a pestilence any teaching that makes Christ and His sacrifice of none effect; accept nothing but the teaching of the word of God; and remember that man has life only by that same word.

[197] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

4. The Result of Spiritualism

Present Truth, January 12, 1893

THE statements made in the last paragraphs of the preceding article may seem too strong by some who have not given the matter much consideration, and therefore a few words further are in place. It is not charged that all who have held the doctrine that man does not in reality die are immoral. That would be a gross perversion of facts. Among the adherents of that doctrine have been some excellent men, and so there are still. Yet that does not disprove the charges made against the doctrine. An error is not made truth, nor is its error lessened in the least, because it is held by good men. The fact that Luther believed in the Real Presence did not make that theory true, nor diminish the evil which must result from it.

While it is true that many good Christians have held the doctrine that the dead are conscious, let it not be forgotten that they held that doctrine in common with all the heathen. Moreover, that doctrine was at the very bottom of the heathenism. There has been this difference, however, namely, that comparatively few of the Christians who have believed it, have in time just carried it to its logical conclusion, and held that the dead could return and communicate with the living. But it is an alarming fact that of late years, a belief in spirit return and communication has greatly increased among professed Christians. It is in this feature that the greatest danger lies; but whatever results from this must be charged to the belief of consciousness in death, from which it springs.

The way has been prepared for the prevalence of vice in the last days, even as great as it was in the days of Noah. In connection with what has preceded, a few quotations will suffice to show how it will be brought about. A few years ago Dr. Curry, a leading Methodist divine, in a conversation with a visitor, as he lay on his death bed, said,

> I have perfect confidence in the truth of Christianity, although I expect my conceptions to be changed when I get over there.

Most people would doubtless consider that a very natural thing. It only serves to show that they are expecting to have their conceptions of Christianity changed after death. And that indicates a doubt as to the perfect truth of that which they now hold. But what we are concerned with is the effect that such ideas may have on the living. As a matter of fact, those who die have no consciousness of truth or error;

> **Ecclesiastes 9**
> [10] ...for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave.

When a man dies,

> **Psalm 146**
> [4] ...he returns to his earth; [and] in that very day his thoughts perish.

But it is a fact that many people have seen the appearance of their departed friends, and have talked with them. How was this? Why, simply that Satan, who originated the doctrine that the dead are alive, and who is able to transform himself into the appearance of even an angel of light,[198] is working to propagate the false doctrine which he started in Eden. All the appearances of the dead, and the communications from them, are in reality from the spirits of devils.

Now for another point. A few years ago a popular Baptist preacher in California became an avowed Spiritualist. He had, however, for a long time before he gave up his Baptist pulpit, been holding communications with spirits, whom he supposed to be the spirits of his dead friends. These spirits were familiar visitors to his family. Speaking of some of his experiences, he said:

> Nearly half a score of old Baptist preachers, with whom I have been associated in the past, have already come to our home, and

[198] *2 Corinthians* 11:14.

> explained wherein their former teaching was erroneous. The whole system of biblical interpretation is far away from the truth, as everyone will find when he enters the spiritual world.

At a great religious gathering held in London less than two years ago, at which there were leading Protestant ministers from all parts of the world, one of the most applauded remarks was by a member who said:

> We speak of holding fast to the faith of the fathers; how do we know what the faith of the fathers is now?

The idea was that the fathers may have made great changes in their faith since their departure from this life. Well, the spirits of devils will take care that all who are willing to be deceived in that way shall know what the faith of the "fathers" is now. These spirits will come with every appearance of those departed ministers, and will tell them, as they did the Baptist minister before referred to, that the Bible means a great deal differently from what it says. And those who believe that it does not mean what it says in regard to the condition of man in death, will be prepared to believe anything that these spirits tell them as to what it does mean.

This is an exact fulfillment of the words of inspiration by the apostle Paul:

> **1 Timothy 4**
> [1] Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;
> [2] Speaking lies in hypocrisy.

When men have thus cut themselves loose from the Bible, what is going to hold them? Manifestly nothing. The Bible is the only safeguard against sin.

> **Psalm 119**
> [11] Your word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

Psalm 37
[31] The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

John 15
[3] Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Man can live only by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.[199] So when men come to trust themselves into the hands of the devil, for an understanding of the Bible, what can follow except that he will lead them into the sins of which he is the author? And this he will do while he is flattering them with the belief that they are making advancement in truth and righteousness. Thus it was when he deceived Eve, and the apostle says to the members of the church of Christ,

2 Corinthians 11
[3] But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

It was even thus that the flood of error and superstition and immorality came into the church in the first centuries after Christ, resulting in the Dark Ages. As the result mainly of the influence of Origen, the mass of professed Christians came to believe that the Bible does not mean what it says. His teaching was that it means often directly contrary to what it reads, and can be understood only by a certain few. Of course the practical result of this was to take the Bible out of the hands of the people. For they would soon cease to read a book which they were told they could not understand, and which would be more apt to mislead them than to lead them right. Consequently they had nothing by which to test the truth of that which was given to them by their teachers, and so imbibed the grossest errors.

More than this, the teachers themselves soon ceased to read the word of God. For since when they did read the Bible, they put their own interpretation upon it, making it mean whatever they

[199] *Matthew* 4:4.

pleased, it naturally came to pass that they soon fell into the practice of manufacturing scripture without the formality of reading the Bible before giving it to the people. Since it was only their own ideas that they taught the people, it made no difference whether they read the Bible, and then gave out their opinions, or gave out their opinions without reading the Bible. And so the whole world was open to the reception of the grossest errors. The result was seen in the frightful immorality that prevailed everywhere, and nowhere more than among those who professed to be Christians.

When Moses went to Pharaoh to demand the release of the children of Israel, the magicians withstood him with their enchantments. These magicians were Spiritualist mediums, and their enchantments were by the power of their master, the devil. Now read the apostle's description of how it will be in the last days, even among those who profess godliness:

2 Timothy 3

[1] This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
[2] For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
[3] Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
[4] Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;
[5] Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.
[6] For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,
[7] Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.
[8] Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

There are many good people who do not believe that they could ever be thus deceived. They cannot if they hold fast to the truth of God. But as long as they hold to error, they have no safeguard. It

is the first step that contains all the rest. There are many who believe that the dead are conscious, who do not believe in Spirit return and communication. But when they see the exact images of their departed friends, and receive communications from them, they will believe errors in spite of themselves. Only those who are settled beforehand in the truth that the dead know not anything,[200] that life comes from Christ alone,[201] and that immortality is bestowed only at His coming,[202] and that all spiritual manifestations are from the devil,[203] will be able to stand. May the Lord help all the readers of this to cleave to Christ and His word.

[200] *Ecclesiastes* 9:5.
[201] *1 John* 5:11-12.
[202] *1 Corinthians* 15:51-55; *1 Thessalonians* 4:14-17.
[203] *Isaiah* 8:19-20.

5. A Revival of Spiritualism

Present Truth, March 23, 1893

WITHIN the past few weeks there have been several things that show that Spiritualism is by no means dead, and that it is exerting an influence in the world greater than ever before. This growing influence is seen no less in the comments of those who are skeptical upon the subject than in the words of those who make no difficulty in accepting everything.

First in order are the experiences of Mr. W. T. Stead, editor of the *Review of Reviews*. These experiences are related at length in the *Christian Commonwealth* of February 2 and 9, wherein two lengthy interviews with Mr. Stead are reported. We will state the leading features as briefly as possible, but it will be necessary to quote quite largely from Mr. Stead's own words. The interviewer began by asking Mr. Stead if he is a Spiritualist, to which he replied:

> I never call myself a Spiritualist. I am simply an investigator of phenomena which as a rule are ignored by the majority of busy people. Certain facts have come before me, the only explanation of which seems to lie in a certain direction, but I am quite open to be convinced that the truth may lie in any other direction. If anyone can bring me a better working hypothesis than that of spirit return, I am perfectly willing to receive it. But at present it seems to me no other explanation fits the facts, and until a better explanation is forthcoming, I hold to my working hypothesis.

To the question,

> "Are you sure of your facts?"

Mr. Stead replied:

> Yes, I think I may say that I am absolutely certain of my facts. But pray discriminate between facts which I know to be facts, and statements which may be true or may be false, but which are not yet absolutely verified.

And when asked what facts he is sure of, he said:

> To begin at the beginning, I may say I am absolutely certain, having verified it over and over again; that it is possible for some of my friends to use my hands as their own, they being at a distance from me. That is to say, a friend of mine at Newcastle is quite capable of using my hand here in London, and writing a message long or short, by the mere action of his mind upon my hand, without any telegraph or connecting wire.

Mr. Stead then gave several instances of this, and also of his using the hands of his friends. Said he,

> Some of my friends have written at distances of 300 miles, long narratives of journeys which they have taken, mentioning the trains by which they went and came, the money they paid for their tickets, the cost of their dinner at the hotel: in short, giving a multitude of minute details, which it was absolutely impossible for me to have divined.

Following are the details of one of the instances, which Mr. Stead gave at the request of the interviewer:

> Some months ago I was at Redcar, in the north of England. A foreign lady who does some work for the *Review*, had to meet me at Redcar railway station about three o'clock. I was staying with my brother, who lives about ten minutes' walk from the station. At twenty minutes to three it occurred to me that "about three," the phrase used in her letter might mean some time before three, and as I could not lay my hand upon a time-table, I simply asked her to use my hand and tell me what time the train was due; this, I may say, was without any previous communication with her upon the subject. She immediately wrote her name and said the train was due at Redcar station at ten minutes to three. I saw that I should have to leave at once, but before starting I asked her where she was at that moment. My hand wrote, "I am in the train at Middlesborough railway station, on my way from Hartlepool to Redcar." I then went off to the station. On arriving there I went up to the time-table to see what time the train was due. It was timed to arrive at 2:52. The train, however, was late; three o'clock

came, and it had not arrived. At five minutes past three, getting rather anxious, I took a slip of paper from my pocket, and taking a pencil in my hand asked her where she was. At that moment she wrote her name (they always write their names at the beginning and end of each communication), and said, "I am in the train, rounding the curve before you come to Redcar station; I will be with you in a minute." "Why the mischief have you been so late?" I mentally asked. My hand wrote, "We were detained at Middlesborough for so long; I do not know why." I put the paper in my pocket, walked to the end of the platform, and there was the train! The moment it stopped, I went up to my friend, and said to her, "How late you are; what on earth has been the matter?" "I do not know," she said: "the train stopped so long at Middleborough, it seemed as if we never would start." I then showed her what my hand had written.

The following, in reply to the question if the lady was conscious of having communicated with him in that mysterious manner, is worthy of careful note:

No, she had no knowledge whatever that she was writing with my hand, and she was considerably amazed at finding that she had done so. I had only seen her once before in my life. I give that instance because it is very simple and compact, and can be verified by reference to the lady in question, whose address I can give you if you like.

It seems that Mr. Stead had been a writing medium for some time before he learned of this new phenomenon. It was through the spirit that controlled his hand that he learned that he could receive communications from the living. He says:

I had no idea, nor, so far as I know, had anyone, either in the Psychical Research Society, or among the regular Spiritualists, that the mind of a living person could use the hand of another person at a distance, and write a message. But the Intelligence that controls my hand, while writing one day suddenly wrote, "Why do you think it strange that I should be able to write with your hand? Anyone can write with your hand." "What," said I, "do you mean that living people on this earth can do so?" "Try it;

you will find that any of your friends can use your hand to write messages which they wish to communicate to you." This seemed strange, almost incredible, but I promptly put it to the test, and found that the fact was exactly as she had said.

In the interview Mr. Stead gave several instances of communications from his familiar spirit, which professes to be the spirit of a young lady who died about two years ago. At one time the spirit gave him notice of the breaking of a printing machine which he was going to see tested, and thus saved him a useless journey.

In all this, with the exception of the supposed communications from the living, there is nothing new. We have referred to the matter thus at length, in order that we might call attention to the new phase of Spiritualism, and especially that we might show how this thing is regarded by the religious press generally. Before going further, let us see what is the object of these communications.

The Source of the Communications

In the first place, it is useless to attempt to impeach Mr. Stead's word. There can be no doubt but that everything has taken place just as he says it has. The question is,

"Whence do the communications come?"

To answer this is a very easy matter for one who depends wholly on the testimony of the Bible. They do not come in any instance from the spirits of the dead. That is certain, because…

Ecclesiastes 9
5 …the dead know not anything.

Of man it is said that…

Psalm 146
4 His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

To every man it is said,

Ecclesiastes 9
[10] There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither you go.

More than this, the Scriptures everywhere speak of the resurrection of the dead. To the question,

Job 14
[14] If a man die, shall he *live again?*

–the reply comes,

[14] ...all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.
[15] You shall call, and I will answer You: You will have a desire to the work of your hands.

The "change" mentioned by Job is thus described by the Apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 15
[51] We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
[52] 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.
[53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Notice that this change does not take place until the coming of the Lord, and that at that time the dead are raised. That is the time when Christ calls, and the dead answer. Then they "live again." And the apostle John, in prophetic vision, saw the result of this first resurrection, when the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God,

Revelation 20
[4] ...lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
[5] But the rest of the dead *lived not again* until the thousand years were finished.

Here is a living *again;* but that is impossible unless they once ceased living. And herein Spiritualism is directly in conflict with

the Bible, because it teaches that there is no such thing as death; that those who are called dead do not cease to live; and therefore it teaches that there is no such thing as living again. Whoever, therefore, gives any heed to Spiritualism in any of its phases, must first part company with the Bible.

The answer, then, to the inquiry whence these communications come, must be that they come from the spirits of devils. These devils are not the spirits of wicked men, but are…

Jude
[6] The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, [and who are] reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

This loss of their first estate was when…

Revelation 12
[7] There was war in heaven: Michael and His angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,
[8] And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.
[9] And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, which is called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The Devil, as also his angels, are able to transform themselves into angels of light.[204] Their work is to deceive, and this they are doing by making people believe that messages which come from them are from the spirits of departed friends. This is in full accord with the deception practiced upon Eve in the beginning. The serpent said to her,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

This was the way in which he compassed her fall; and the apostle says,

[204] *2 Corinthians* 11:14-15.

2 Corinthians 11

[3] I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

Mark how craftily he is working in this new development. For a long time the Devil has been at work sending messages by means of raps, writing, etc., purporting to come from the dead. These were for the purpose of getting people to believe more firmly the lie with which he deceived Eve, that there is no such thing as death. Now he gives similar messages, purporting to come from people who are still alive, so as to still more surely break down the idea that there is any difference between the living and the dead. The receipt of these messages, supposed to come from the living, will, more than anything that has ever been done before, serve to bring people to believe in the possibility of communicating with the dead. This is what they are for.

This is the only possible explanation of the messages which Mr. Stead has been receiving from his living friends, as he supposes. Indeed, it should be suggested to anyone who reads the account, for he says, as has been noted above, that these communications are received when the friends themselves are often entirely unconscious that Mr. Stead is receiving any communication purporting to come from them. Of course the Devil could use their names without informing them of the fact. Indeed it is quite unusual for a man to know when his name is being forged.

A New Champion

But when Mr. Stead has been pursuing his investigations, the cause of Spiritualism has received aid from another quarter. A book first published by T. Fisher Unwin, entitled, *Do the Dead Return?* gives the result of a Church of England clergyman's dealings with the spirits. The clergyman states that until three years ago he shared the generally received opinions respecting the phenomena of Spiritualism, and had ascribed them…

> …partly to self-delusions and subjective impressions of particular minds, partly to fraud and trickery.

A book fell into his hands, from which he learned that several well-known and eminent men of science had, after long and patient investigation, become converts, and he concluded that the subject was one of great importance, and worth "reverent and thoughtful examination."

His first difficulty was with the fact that the Bible forbids seeking to the spirits of the dead; but this difficulty was removed when he…

> …came in contact with a family in whose house the phenomena came *spontaneously*—unbidden and unasked for. Departed members of the family manifested their presence in an unmistakable manner. They gave clear proof of their identity, of the beneficent purpose of their return and communications.

Therefore he gave himself to the study of the subject, convinced that there was no longer any cause for hesitation on the ground of moral danger. He didn't *seek* the spirits, he simply let them come to him. The little book which he has written gives in a clear, straightforward manner his experiences in spirit communication. These experiences he classifies under four heads, namely, spirit knocks, spirit writing, spirit voices, and spirit forms. That indicates the growth of his experience. First he heard the rappings; then he got more satisfactory communications through writing; then he developed sufficiently to be able to converse with the spirits; and lastly they appeared to him.

It is unnecessary to quote his experiences, as it would require too much space. Suffice it to say that they are told with a candor and minuteness of detail that cannot fail to convince the reader that he is telling the exact truth as to what he heard and saw. The following, which is the closing paragraph of a full column notice of the book in the *Daily Chronicle*, shows the effect of the book upon the general reader:

> The Psychical Research people seem to think that they have disposed of the "miracles" of Spiritualism when they have found a conjurer who can imitate them. That, of course, is nonsense. The fact that a conjurer can do certain things by trickery is no proof that Spiritualists can *not* do them by other means. Hocus-pocus by a conjurer with a locked slate and a wisp of muslin has really not a great deal to do with the question whether Spiritualists can or cannot raise the dead. As well refuse to believe in a thunderstorm because they can produce first-rate lightning at the Lyceum.

The clergyman himself says:

> That the so-called dead return, and are able, under certain conditions, to hold intercourse with the living, I regard as a fact as well established and as undeniable as any fact in science.

In another place he says of his experience in spirit writing,

> If I were to doubt it, I cannot well see on what grounds I could reasonably credit the evidence of my senses respecting any other matter in life.

For our part, we cannot have the slightest doubt that he saw and heard all that he says he did. Those who think to combat Spiritualism by scouting the reality of its phenomena, are the very ones who will in the end be the most terribly deceived by it. There is a reality to them—the reality of the power of Satan.

The Object of the Manifestations

So much for the statement of the case. Now the question arises,

> "What is the object of these manifestations?"

The *Christian Commonwealth*, in which the interviews with Mr. Stead appears, says:

> But even allowing that Mr. Stead and all other mediums are not self-deceived, not victims of a delusion or deception, but are really dealing with occult forces or phenomena which cannot be

explained by any known laws, it is still true that we may properly enough ask the question, *cui bono?*[205]

To this Mr. Stead replied in his second interview as follows:

> I am surprised to see in the editorial of the *Christian Commonwealth* the inquiry, *"cui bono?"* I cannot understand how anyone could ask what good it is to know that your loved ones are living after death, and that they are still able to take an affectionate interest in your welfare. Those who can ask that are capable of asking *"cui bono?"* of the existence of love itself. But apart from human affection and the enormous boon that it would be to poor suffering human beings who are mourning the dead who seem to return no more, the fact of spirit-return is of theological value, to which I should have thought the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* would have been keenly alive. In the passage from the correspondence in the *Daily Chronicle*, which you quoted at the end of the interview last week, Robert Buchanan puts the thing in a nutshell: "When all is said and done, the question between Christ, or Christianity, and the world is this,—*Is there, or is there not, another life beyond this life we live?* Everything hangs or falls by that?" Now, clearly, if the spirit of one who has died can come back and communicate, as the Intelligence that guides my hand claims to have done, that question is solved, and solved once for all in the Christian sense.

Thus when it is asked,

> "What is the good of these phenomena?"

–the answer is, that they demonstrate that there is another life. This sort of demonstration is taken in all seriousness by another religious paper, the *Christian World*. In its issue of February 9, there was a leading editorial of some length, with the heading, "A Bridge to the Unseen World." It calls attention to the conflict between infidelity or agnosticism and Christianity, and quotes from two prominent skeptics, who claim that Christianity has up to

[205] *cui bono:* "who benefits?"

date furnished no evidence that there is a future life. The article then proceeds thus:

> The challenge to Christianity then is, if it would bring the world back to genuine belief in its supernatural histories, to produce corroborative evidence from contemporary phenomena. Mr. Stephen, in the essays just alluded to, declares that theology is unable to scientifically prove one single point of its connection about the supernatural. The remarkable feature of the present position is that exactly upon this crucial point a large and constantly increasing body of witnesses, whom it would be very difficult to convict either of fraud or of imbecility, are coming forward to declare impossible of production, is actually accessible. Our readers may remember a book by Florence Marryatt, to which we a short time ago drew attention, entitled, "There is no Death," in which the well-known authoress relates her experience of intercourse with departed friends, her dead daughter among them, on evidence which she declares as good as any which Stanley could produce of the truth of his assertions about his Central African forest.

Then follow references to Mr. Stead's revelations, and an enthusiastic notice of the book, "Do the Dead Return," to which we have already referred; and the article closes thus:

> We must leave these statements and the others of which this remarkable book is full, to make their own impression on the minds of our readers. Whatever theory may be formed of them, it is evident that the materialism and agnosticism which of late have so loudly claimed to represent the really cultured and sane mind of the age, and which flatly deny to man any knowledge of the unseen, are now being squarely challenged on their own ground. The agnostics must either explain these phenomena, or abate their own pretensions. The theme is ripe for a thoroughly scientific investigation and for a scientific verdict. The gainsayers and deniers of the age have a plainly-defined issue put before them. The New Testament is a record of spiritual phenomena and revelation. We are told that these things are incredible because nothing answering to them is produced now. It is time for materi-

alistic agnosticism, in the light of what is declared to be actually going on in our midst, to prove that statement.

We have quoted what others think is the object of these phenomena, and now we will point out their actual object. They are given for no other purpose than to throw discredit upon the Bible, and to lessen the dependence of people upon its testimony. Indeed, they are for the purpose of leading professed Christians to let the Bible go entirely, and to depend on something else. Do you ask how this can be? The answer is plain. The Bible is given for the sole object of revealing to men the fact that there is another life for them, and of showing them how to attain to it.

"Well then," says one, "I should think that these things are exactly in harmony with the Bible."

Not by any means, because they exactly coincide with the infidel objection that the Bible does not reveal a future life. And the lamentable fact is that professed believers in the Bible unconsciously agree with the doubters of the Bible, by admitting that communication with the spirits is necessary in order to prove that there is another life. Thus they virtually admit the charge of the skeptics, that the Bible does not teach the certainty of another life. This point alone should convince the thoughtful and reverent that the whole business of spirit communication is of the devil.

The Bible teaches that there is another life for men, if they will have it. It also teaches that the dead know not anything, and that there is no possibility of communicating with them. Spiritualism, and this embraces as we have seen many who are not called Spiritualists, says that the dead do return and communicate, and that this is the only sure evidence of another life. Here is a direct conflict. Both cannot be true. Whoever accepts Spiritualism must throw away the Bible; and he who does that throws away all the morality of the Bible. This seems like a severe charge to make; but it is not a charge, it is a simple statement of fact.

Life Promised in the Bible

That the Scriptures do promise a life altogether different from the natural life of men, must be plain to the ordinary reader. Speaking by the command of God to men alive in the flesh, Moses said:

Deuteronomy 30
[19] I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that you and your seed may live.

David, inspired by the Spirit of the Lord, said:

Psalm 16
[8] I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
[9] Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: my flesh also shall rest in hope.
[10] For You will not leave my soul in hell [the grave]; neither will You suffer your holy one to see corruption.
[11] You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

At the beginning of His earthly ministry, Jesus said:

John 3
[14] And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
[15] That whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.
[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

To the people He said:

John 10
[9] I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
[10] The thief comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

To the young men who came to Jesus saying,

Matthew 19
[16] What good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?

Jesus said,

[17] ...if you will enter into life, keep the commandments.

The apostle Paul declares himself to be...

Titus 1
[1] ...an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.

All these promises of life are spoken to living men. They are promises of a life that they are not in possession of; they are promises of another life, even of an endless life. They are promises of a life that is not natural to man, and which cannot be found except in the Gospel of Christ, for life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel.[206]

The Certainty of Another Life

Now the question comes,

> "Can we know positively that there is another life?"

Here is what the *Christian Commonwealth* has to say upon the subject:

> When Spiritualists can show to us that their new revelations have made them more active in doing the things which Christianity enjoins, we shall then be more inclined to look seriously at the claims they make.
>
> But we do not see that there is anything in these messages which is of any importance, except what Christians believed before on the testimony of the Scriptures. And this is precisely our difficulty with the question which Mr. Stead has raised. He talks about Mr. Robert Buchanan's desire to know that there is a future life. But this is precisely what Mr. Buchanan cannot *know*, neither

[206] *2 Timothy* 1:10.

can Mr. Stead *know* it. The doctrine of a future life is necessarily an appeal to faith, and not to knowledge.

Herein the *Christian Commonwealth* is opening the way for the full acceptance of Spiritualism, when it shall have become a little more pronounced, and popular. It claims that from the Bible man cannot positively *know* that there is another life. But Spiritualism claims to demonstrate the fact. Now when the writer of those words sees the exact representations of his dead friends, and grasps their hands, and talks with them, receiving messages from them, and reminders of events that happened long ago, he will be ready to say that he *knows*. Such a test is sure to come sooner or later.

The truth is that God wants us to *know* that there is another life. The apostle John writes:

1 John 5
[10] He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that believes not God has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son.
[11] And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
[12] He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.
[13] These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; *that you may know that you have eternal life.*

Christianity is not conjecture, nor a blind dependence upon uncertainty. It is positive knowledge. But how is it possible for men to know that there is another life? The answer is, *By faith*. We *know* it by faith. As shown in the text just quoted, those who believe, know that they have eternal life. Faith enables us to lay hold of that life, and know of it by actual experience. The apostle Paul exhorts us to…

1 Timothy 6
[12] …lay hold on eternal life.

A man is to know the fact of another life, because he lives it; for the Scriptures say that…

Romans 1
[17] The just shall live by faith.

The apostle John also says:

1 John 1
[1] That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;
[2] (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)
[3] That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Eternal life, even the life of God, dwelt in Christ. The disciples who were with Christ on earth, saw the manifestation of that life. They have declared it to us, that we may have the same fellowship that they had. And how can this be? Jesus says:

Revelation 3
[20] Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

And again:

John 14
[23] If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

This is how we may know the certainty of eternal life. Christ, in whom is that life, is to dwell, not simply in our houses, and to walk and talk with us, but to dwell within us. Our knowledge does not depend upon communications from spirits which con-

tradict the Bible, but on the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to His word.

Here is the experience of the Christian:

> **Galatians 2**
> [20] 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 anyone asks the real believer about another life, he can reply with positiveness that he knows that there is such a thing. If asked how he knows, he can point to the word of God, and can say that by believing he is now in actual possession of another life, even the life of Christ, and that is a "future life" too, continuing to all eternity, because Christ is alive for evermore.[207]

In what does this life consist? In righteousness. It is received through the Spirit, because…

> **Romans 8**
> [6] …to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

And the apostle says:

> [10] And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Righteousness and life are identical.

> **Galatians 3**
> [21] If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

But as righteousness cannot come by man's own acts, since it is entirely foreign to his natural life, there must be another life given, in order that he may have righteousness, and that life of righteousness is in Christ. He who has Christ has the life. The knowledge of another life, therefore, is simply the knowledge of righteousness through Christ. To say that a man cannot *know* that

[207] *Revelation* 1:18.

there is another life, is only to say that there is no such thing as actual, absolute righteousness. Or else it is to say that a man has righteousness in himself.

Denying the Gospel

When in the settlement of any question the Bible has less authority with people than something else has, they have virtually repudiated it as a whole. The evidence of the possibility of life after death is furnished in the Bible in the numerous cases of the raising of the dead, and by the resurrection of Christ himself, by means of which all other cases of resurrection were accomplished. Now when people require spirit communications in order that they may *know* that there is another life than this, it shows that they do not believe the Bible record concerning the miracles of Christ and of His own resurrection.

What then? Simply this, that as they have taken the communications of the spirits as better evidence of a future life than the statements of the Bible, they will most naturally take what the spirits say about any point of doctrine and practice, in preference to what the Scriptures say on the same point.

The apostle John says:

> **1 John 5**
> [10] He that believes not God has made Him a liar; because he believes not the record that God gave of His Son.
> [11] And this is the record, that *God has given* to us eternal life, and *this life is in His Son.*

Therefore whenever people claim that it is necessary to receive communications from spirits in order that they may be sure that there is another life for man, they show their disbelief of the record which God has given, and thus charge Him with lying. And when God has been thus charged with lying, the authority of His word is forever at an end with those people. Thus professed Christians are putting themselves on the same ground with professed infidels, in relation to the Bible.

Thus Spiritualism is from first to last against the Gospel. It is against it, in denying the plain statements of the Bible, and it is still further against it in claiming that man has life, and therefore righteousness in himself. It leads to trust in man instead of in Christ, since it exalts man to the place which God alone occupies. More and more people are resting their knowledge and hope of heaven upon their dead friends, and not upon Christ. Mr. Stead and also the Church of England clergyman speak of the comfort which these communications give to those who have lost friends. But when men depend upon such things for comfort, where is their dependence upon…

2 Corinthians 1
[3] …the God of all comfort, the Father of mercies?

Such comfort as that, is the comfort of the heathen. Comfort without Christ is perdition. This is why so much space is given to this matter. It is a vital one. Satan is preparing a snare for all the people on the earth, and unconsciously many are falling into it. There is only one way of escape, and that is the acceptance of Christ through His word. Christ dwells in the word, and thus it is that man is to live…

Matthew 4
[4] …by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

He who allows himself to depart in the slightest degree from the straight reading of the Scriptures, has no safeguard. Just to the extent that one does not take the Scriptures, does he not take Christ.

Now mark the inevitable result. The Inspired Word says that just before Christ's coming Satan will work…

2 Thessalonians 2
[9] …with all power and signs and lying wonders,
[10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

[11] And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
[12] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

When one rejects the truth there is nothing left for him but to believe a lie. And so the men who are fondly hoping that in Spirit communication they will be able to find that evidence which Christ alone can give, are unconsciously inviting every delusion that Satan can invent.

1 John 2
[21] No lie is of the truth.

Satan is the father of lies,[208] and is therefore the author of spirit communications, which deny the truth of the Bible.

Fortunately there is no need for anybody to be deceived.

Isaiah 59
[19] When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

God's word is the standard; it is the only safeguard. By it, and by it alone, man can live, not only now but eternally, for the word of the Lord endures for ever.

[208] *John* 8:44.

6. Man's Freedom

Present Truth, August 3, 1893

THERE is an important statement made by Mr. Stead in the first number of *Borderland*, in regard to the way that his hand is used to write communications, and the conditions under which it is done. In the first place he repeats the statement that the communications are given to him, without any conscious direction of his own mind, and without any knowledge on his part of what is written. He holds his pen in the ordinary way, resting the point of it lightly on the paper, and the rest is done by a power other than that of his own mind. Then comes this most important statement:

> These communications come to me at all times and places, but their arrival depends almost altogether upon my volition. That is to say, unless I take a pen or pencil, make my mind passive, and wait for the message, I do not receive any communication any more than I should receive a telephonic message if I never went to the telephone. The analogy between the method of communication and the telephone is very close, but with this difference—in this system it is always the recipient who rings up, so to speak, the transmitter at the other end of the line, possibly others may have a different experience. But I am never rung by the Invisibles. They do not seem to have any means of communicating with me when I am all alone unless I first place my hand at their disposal. They often complain, when I have been too busy to let them write for some time, that I have never given them an opportunity of addressing me.

This is not only important, but it is reassuring. It shows that every man has his destiny in his own hands, and may have whatever he chooses. Although…

> **1 Peter 5**
> [8] …the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour,

–he cannot control anyone who does not submit to him. The will of man has been for ever set free, unless man himself voluntarily puts it in subjection to another. God respects man's freedom of will, since He himself has given it to him, and He will not interfere with it; and Satan cannot control it without man's consent, although he tries to.

The very fact that a writing or other medium is obliged to put his will wholly under the control of another, should be sufficient to teach thoughtful men the evil of the whole business. God is free, and delights in freedom, and He wishes men to be free, and not slaves. We are to submit our wills to God, but in so doing we do not lose liberty, for we simply voluntarily take His will and make it our own, and then we have a better, stronger, and freer will than before. It is true that others have an experience different from that of Mr. Stead, but only because they have been longer in the business than he has. If he continues to yield his mind and body to the control of Satan, there will come a time when he cannot help himself,—when the devil will use him without his consent. Thus the soul is taken captive by the devil at his will.[209] The only way to avoid such a sad fate is to obey, from the very start, the Divine injunction,

James 4
[7] Resist the Devil,

–in which case we have the sure promise that he will flee. Let the sons of men rejoice in the fact that Satan cannot control them against their will. Even though through man's compliance he has secured partial control, the power of God can break the chains, for Christ came…

Isaiah 61
[1] …to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

[209] *2 Timothy* 2:26.

7. The Great Deceiver

Present Truth, November 9, 1893

THE second number of *Borderland* contains a report of some experiences with a writing medium, which is interesting as showing how readily people yield to delusion when they ignore the teachings of the Bible, the only source of truth. There are five letters that were obtained at one sitting, none of which are in any way remarkable. By this we do not mean that there was not more than human power involved in their production, but that the information contained in them is not remarkable. The gentleman who had the interview wrote his questions on slips of paper which were rolled up tightly, so that the medium did not see them, and the answers were written by the medium, in the usual manner. In some instances a very brief answer was written on the closed question paper, while the gentleman held it in his own hand.

There are five letters given. The first gave the gentleman the advice to study the phenomena of Spiritualism. This is what might have been expected. To ask the spirits if one shall study Spiritualism, is as if one should ask a land agent if he ought to invest his money in land.

The second letter expressed the opinion that a certain person referred to will do very well if he engages in business with a certain other person. The third letter gives the date of the gentleman's little daughter's birth. The fourth consists of some platitudes in answer to the question how he should spend his life so as to do the most good. The fifth letter is an answer to the request for a device with regard to his investments. Several banks are mentioned, which pay good interest, and which are said to be sound.

The gentleman says:

> I have no theory on which to account for these remarkable phenomena. The "trick" hypothesis seems to me to be precluded

by the conditions. The "devil" hypothesis is out of it, for the "father of lies" could not have said so many things that are good and true.

We have no hypothesis either, but we do know that all such communications can come from no other source than the father of lies. It is strange that anyone who has ever heard that there is such a thing as a hypocrite, should think it impossible that such communications can come from the devil.

It is true that the devil is the father of lies, but that does not show that he cannot state a simple matter of fact when it will better serve the purposes of his deception. Satan told Eve that if she should eat of the forbidden fruit, her eyes should be open, and so they were. Yet he deceived her. A statement that is true in itself, becomes a part of a lie, when it is told in order to lead a person into a deception beyond. A lie may be told when the form of the words in which it is uttered is true.

It should be borne in mind that Satan is a great deceiver. Now no one is deceived by that which is palpably false. That which successfully deceives, must have the appearance of the truth. The writer once knew a man who used to practice telling lies as a pastime, and would exert himself to see how preposterous a story he could tell. But he never deceived anybody, and never expected that anybody would be deceived by his yarns. It was of course a vicious habit, nevertheless. But there was another man in the same town, who practiced lying as a fine art. He would, with the most sober face, tell a lie that had every appearance of truth. His stories were always told in the most natural manner, and there was no improbability in them. Now although everybody knew of this man's habit, they would be deceived again and again. There was such an appearance of truth in all that he said, that even his most intimate acquaintances would be deceived.

How often does the seducer put on an air of respectability, and even piety, and give utterance to the most solemn truths, in order that he may win the confidence of his victim. But the very truths

which he utters become parts of a great lie, since the man's whole life is a lie. So it is with Satan. If he did not come in the guise of an angel of light, he would deceive nobody.

The Scriptures did not leave us without warning on this point. We are told that there shall come in the last days false christs and false prophets, who shall show great signs and wonders, so that they will all but deceive the very elect.[210] Immediately before the coming of the Lord,[211] Satan is to work…

2 Thessalonians 2
[10] …with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

The rapid growth of these deceptions, is one of the surest signs of the nearness of the end. There is but one sure way of escaping these delusions, and that is by receiving "the love of the truth,"[212] which is the word of God.

[210] *Matthew* 24:24.
[211] *2 Thessalonians* 2:9.
[212] *2 Thessalonians* 2:10.

8. Only a Conjurer

Present Truth, November 16, 1893

EVER since Spiritualism has been before the public attention, there have been men who have gained a livelihood by "exposing" it. There are two ways of exposing Spiritualism. One is by setting it forth in its true character, as the working of Satan, as is done in the *Present Truth*. Another is the more common way of professing to show that it is nothing but trickery and sleight-of-hand performance.

The last number of *Present Truth* contained an article entitled, "The Great Deceiver," in which attention was called to some writing that had been received by a gentleman, through a medium. The gentleman was a minister, and the medium was a "Professor" Baldwin. It now appears that Mr. Baldwin does not claim to be a Spiritualist, and announces himself as only a conjurer. Some of the daily papers are making merry over the manner in which Mr. Stead and the minister were duped, yet the doubt is expressed if either of them will be convinced, by Mr. Baldwin's confession, that there is nothing to Spiritualism. We see no reason why they should be, for even admitting that the phenomena exhibited were mere trickery, the fact remains that again and again, through the mediumship of avowed Spiritualists, phenomena have taken place that were manifestly supernatural, the most expert scientists and trained observers being witnesses.

Satan is a great deceiver, and the Bible warns against his deception. It tells us that in the last days he will work...

2 Thessalonians 2
9 ...with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,
10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.

He is the Destroyer, and his sole work is to destroy.[213] It is evident, therefore, that he would be very likely to seek to conceal all traces of himself, and to make it appear that he has nothing to do

[213] See *1 Peter* 5:8.

with that which is performed through his own power. This is evident, because if Satan's work were labeled with his own name, and men knew and realized that it was from him, they would shun it; few would deliberately walk into what they knew to be only the trap of destruction.

Consequently we are never surprised when we hear that some professed Spiritualist medium is proved to be only a trickster, nor when some professed conjurer or magician "exposes" Spiritualism, by seeming to do the same things, or by actually doing them. It is all in accordance with Satan's plan to get people accustomed to his work without detecting his agency. All this prepares the way for the time when Satan himself will appear in person, doing the same and even greater wonders, and will be received by the people, not however as the devil, but as a great benefactor, even as Christ himself.

It is not, however, by any means proved, in the present instance, that Mr. Baldwin is not a Spiritualist after all, the "explanation" that "An Amateur Magician" gives of the way in which the writing is done, is no explanation at all. Some years ago "slate-writing" was professedly exposed by a learned society, which published the statement that the slate always had to be in the hands of the medium, which is not the case. So in the case to which reference has been made. Writing was done on paper that never left the observer's hand.

But allow the claim that the supposed medium is only a conjurer, what then? The case is the same, for conjuring, the practice of magic, and Spiritualism are all of the same nature. Satan himself is a mighty conjurer or magician, his work being to make people see things that do not exist. He will make the sinner see safety in a course which leads directly to destruction; and when the sinner has repented and been forgiven, and his sins have been washed away, he will present the appearance of them before him, to make him believe that they are in existence to his condemna-

tion, when they are not. All the practice of magic and conjuration is from Satan.

Some will disbelieve this, thinking it to be a wild statement; but it is the truth. It will not be denied that in everything of that kind deception is practiced. There is always a successful attempt to bewilder the senses, and to deceive the judgment. Now nothing of that kind comes from God.

Titus 1
[2] [He] cannot lie.

James 1
[17] With [Him] is no variableness, neither shadow of turning,

–or as the *Revised Version* has it, "...neither shadow that is cast by turning." He is straightforward in all His ways. He is the truth, and...

1 John 2
[21] ...no lie is of the truth.

Therefore the practice of magic and all kindred arts, is of the devil, who is a liar from the beginning, and the Father of lies. Remember that the ones who opposed Moses and Aaron in Egypt were magicians. They performed miracles, but they were false miracles, wrought for the purpose of deceiving. The Apostle Paul speaks of the perils of last days, and says of some,

2 Timothy 3
[8] ...now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these resist the truth.

So it will be with the practice of magic, by professed conjurers, that will lead people astray in these last days. People will not admit that there is anything supernatural in these false miracles, until they are ready to go to the opposite extreme, and attribute them to the power of God. So we would utter an emphatic warning, that people may be on their guard, giving no heed to anything that is not the open truth, the standard of which is the Bible —the word of God.

9. "Evidence" in Spiritual Things

Present Truth, November 30, 1893

AN EXCHANGE, speaking of the growing tendency toward dabbling in the occult, of which Mr. Stead with his *Borderland* is perhaps the most conspicuous example, says,

> The man who nowadays makes up his mind to be deceived finds no obstacle to complete success. He has always the "evidence of his senses" to help him, and certainly could not find a more efficient ally.

This is true, and it is something which every person would pass unharmed through the midst of the dangerous delusions of our day, should bear in mind. But the evidence of the senses, but the evidence of faith, will be the safeguard against the deceptions which are now coming, and continue to come more and more, in the spiritual realm. The Bible speaks of some upon whom God should permit strong delusion to come, that they should believe a lie, because they received not the *love of the truth.*[214] Do you have the love of the truth? If you do, then you have the safeguard against these delusions sent by Satan to draw souls to perdition; for he is to deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.[215] And the elect are saved from the deceptions, not because they have keener intellects and finer reasoning powers than other men, but because they are the elect; that is, those who by the love of the truth, have made their…

2 Peter 1
[10] …calling and election sure.

The truth is the word of God.

John 17
[17] Your word is truth.

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[214] *2 Thessalonians* 2:10-11.
[215] *Matthew* 24:24.

To love the truth, is to love the word of God. The truth is unpopular; it is unpleasant (to the natural heart); it involves sacrifices and hardships. But if you have the "love of the truth," all this will make no difference in your attitude towards it. You will, like our Saviour,

Hebrews 12
[2] ...endure the cross, despising the shame,

–keeping in view...

[2] ...the joy that is set before you,

–and having...

Hebrews 11
[26] ...respect unto the recompense of reward.

And our joy, our reward, as Christians, is Christ himself. He is...

John 14
[6] ...the way, the *truth*, and the life.

If we have the "love of the truth," we will gladly give up all, that we may obtain Him.[216]

[216] *Luke* 18:22; *Matthew* 13:46.

10. The Delusion of Spiritualism

Present Truth, March 15, 1894

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Pall Mall Gazette* writes of spiritualistic seances and manifestations among the Chinese, and says that it may be generally alleged that Spiritualism is quite as common in China as it is in Europe or America.

Of course it is; for Spiritualism, as it is called in the West, is the characteristic of all heathen religions. The ancestral worship of Chinese is but one form of the worship of the supposed spirits of the dead, which dates from the earliest days when men refused to retain the knowledge of God, and were left to their own imaginings.

It is well known that the gods of the heathen were but the ancient dead, about whom mythology had woven tales of supernatural powers. Thus it was that when Israel forsook the Lord and…

> **Psalm 106**
> [28] …joined themselves to Baal-peor, [they] ate the sacrifices of the dead.

It is not at all unlikely that those giving themselves over to their own ways in this worship anciently had just as clear manifestations of supernatural power as the Spiritualists of our own time insist upon. The Lord repeatedly warned against the practice of enchantments and divination; and when Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses[217] they were able to work wonders and deceived Pharaoh by them.[218]

The devil was ready to supply manifestations in order to hold men in his deceptions. Instead of dealing with the spirits of the dead, therefore, they were paying their homage to and receiving manifestations from the spirits of devils. In the same *Psalm* from which we have quoted, the Lord says His people…

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[217] *2 Timothy* 3:8.
[218] *Exodus* 7:11, 22; 8:7.

Psalm 106

[35] ...mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.
[36] And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.
[37] Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.

The Apostle Paul says the same thing of the heathen in his day, those cultured Greeks and Romans who talked so beautifully of the divinity of man, and the life which he had in himself, and who lived such wicked and profligate lives because they did not recognize, even as one of their own poets had said, that their life and every power of their being were not of themselves but of God, and in Him only.

1 Corinthians 10

[20] But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils.

All through paganism this thread of evil runs, and the modern revival of Spiritualism, Theosophy, etc., in all countries only shows that the time has come when the enemy will try to cause all the world to...

1 Timothy 4

[1] ...give heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

Everything indicates that we are living in the last days, and just here it is, that...

2 Timothy 3

[8] ...as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses,

–by the power of the wonders they wrought—so now by the same means will men...

[8] ...resist the truth.
[9] But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.

The Lord is mightier than Satan. When the enemy magnifies himself to do great things, the Lord says,

Joel 2
[21] Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.

But a knowledge of the Lord and of the life and power of His word, is our only safeguard. It is no idle warning that is given to the world for such a time as we have entered upon.

Revelation 12
[12] Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has but a short time.

The Lord says that the devices of the devil, his signs and wonders, will be such as, if it were possible, would deceive the very elect.[219] We are in the beginning of these things, and multitudes are already being deceived by them.

The natural heart exalts self always, and the natural man likes to believe that he has life in himself, and immortality in his own nature. Therefore men refuse to come to Christ that they may have life indeed; and when Satan comes as an angel of light, professing to demonstrate the pleasing fable, they readily yield themselves to him. But to those who yield to the life of the Lord in everything, casting aside all human reasoning and holding fast the word of God, the promise is:

Revelation 3
[10] Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.
[11] Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which you have.

[219] *Matthew* 24:24.

11. The Sin of Witchcraft

Present Truth, April 5, 1894

WHEN the children of Israel were traveling from Egypt to Canaan, the Amalekites came out to oppose their progress by arms. This was nothing less than an act of armed rebellion against God, under whose guidance the Israelites were marching, and therefore God said,

> **Exodus 17** [margin]
> [16] Because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of the Lord, therefore the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

The Amalekites filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Lord chose the Israelites, in the days when Saul was king, to be the instruments by which He would execute judgment against them. Accordingly the prophet Samuel came to Saul with the following command from the Lord:

> **1 Samuel 15**
> [3] Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, cattle and ass.

So Saul departed on his mission, and smote the Amalekites;

> [9] But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good; but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

This, it will readily be seen, was in direct violation of the express command of the Lord; yet so deceived was Saul, that he thought that he had obeyed the Lord; for when Samuel came to meet him,

> [13] Saul said unto him, Blessed be you of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.

Samuel, however, was not deceived. The evidences of Saul's disobedience were too numerous; the cattle themselves proclaimed the fact. And so, to Saul's protestations of obedience, the prophet said,

1 Samuel 15
[14] What means then this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of oxen which I hear?

To this pertinent question Saul replied,

[15] They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord your God; and the rest we have to utterly destroyed.

It will be seen from this that Saul had so far recovered from his deception that he was willing to excuse himself from any connection with the disobedience, and to lay the entire blame upon the people. Yet he excused the act as a righteous one, inasmuch as they designed ultimately to kill all the cattle that they had taken. He seemed to think that so long as they were finally destroyed, it would make no difference how or when it was done. Indeed, he seemed to think that offering them as a sacrifice to the Lord, would more than make up for the disobedience; for upon Samuel's reproving him for his arrogant disregard of the Lord's commandment, Saul again replied:

[20] Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and utterly destroyed the Amalekites.
[21] But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord your God in Gilgal.

Even this did not make any difference; the disobedience was too evident, and the prophet of the Lord said,

[22] Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

[23] For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is says iniquity and idolatry.

The reader will notice that the words "is as" in the verse last quoted, are in Italic, indicating that they do not occur in the original Hebrew, but are supplied by the translators. The Hebrew language is brief, and a simple connective is often omitted when it would necessarily be understood. In reading,

> Rebellion, the sin of witchcraft; and stubbornness, iniquity and idolatry,

–it would be most natural to supply the copula "is," but there would be no necessity nor warrant for supplying "as." So that we may understand the prophet to say, as given in the Jewish rendering, that rebellion is indeed the sin of witchcraft, and that stubbornness is iniquity and image-worship. Wherever therefore we find rebellion, there we find the sin of witchcraft.

This idea is expressed by the Apostle Paul when writing to the Galatians, who were turning away from the purity of the Gospel, and disobeying the truth of God.[220] To them he exclaimed,

> **Galatians 3**
> [1] O foolish Galatians, who has *bewitched* you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among you?

A Parallel Instance

"The deceitfulness of sin"[221] is proverbial. There is a magic charm about sin that bewitches the senses, and leads one to think that he is doing right when he is openly transgressing a plain and well-known commandment. A most striking illustration is furnished in the case of Saul, and a perfect parallel to that case is found in the excuses which men give for observing Sunday instead of the Sabbath, in professed obedience to the fourth commandment. Let us briefly trace the parallel.

[220] *Galatians* 1:6-7; 5:7.
[221] *Hebrews* 3:13.

The Lord himself came down upon Mount Sinai, and said:

Exodus 20
[8] Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
[9] Six days shall you labor, and do all your work:
[10] But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son, nor your daughter, your manservant, nor your maidservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger that is within your gates:
[11] For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

This commandment is of universal obligation, for it is based upon creation, which concerns the whole human race.

Mark 1
[17] The Sabbath was made for man,

–without respect of nationality, or age of the world. It was made when there was but one man and one woman on earth. At the close of the six days of creation, immediately after the creation of Adam,

Genesis 2
[2] ...God...rested on the seventh day from all His work...
[3] And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.

Therefore this commandment is spoken to everyone who is descended from Adam.

It is very definite, requiring the observance of the seventh day of the week, because the women who saw Jesus crucified and buried,

Luke 23
[56] ...returned and prepared spices and ointments, and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment,

–and "when the Sabbath was past,"[222] they came to the sepulchre early on the first day of the week.[223] The day immediately before the first day of the week must be the seventh day of the week, and that is "the Sabbath day according to the commandment."

The commandment requiring the observance of the seventh day of the week is part of the law, of which Jesus said,

> **Luke 16**
> [17] It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

Heaven and earth have not passed away, therefore the law remains unchanged.

It is one of the commandments of the law, which Jesus said He came not to destroy, but to fulfill;[224] and it is one of those which He kept.[225]

> **1 John 2**
> [6] He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.

We are "saved by His life,"[226] and by that only.

The seventh day is the day that is always called "the Sabbath" throughout the Bible,—the New Testament as well as the Old,—showing that God designs that it shall always and everywhere be known by that name. It is never called anything else but the Sabbath, except in *Revelation* 1:10, where it is called simply "the Lord's day," which is what the fourth commandment declares it to be.

So much for the commandment. Yet, plain as it is, we find that it is very generally disregarded by professed Christians. That is,

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[222] *Mark* 16:1.
[223] *Luke* 24:1.
[224] *Matthew* 5:19.
[225] *John* 15:10.
[226] *Romans* 5:10.

they profess to keep the commandment, by keeping another day than that named in the commandment. No one claims that there is anywhere in the Bible any mention of a change in the commandment, or that the Bible says one word about the observance of Sunday; for it is admitted that the substitution of Sunday for the Sabbath did not occur until after the days of the apostles, and that…

> …the change from the seventh to the first appears to have been *gradually and silently introduced*, by example rather than by express precept.[227]

We have before us a tract written by a clergyman of the Church of England, in which it is stated that the change in the day was made…

> …when Christ's life on earth was ended, and He had ascended to heaven.

It is claimed that this change was made in obedience to the will of Christ, yet the writer adds that…

> …we are not told of any words of His in which He gave this direction.

Indeed we are not.

The excuse most commonly given for the change from the commandment, is that the people generally do it, and that since the first day is kept "in honor of Christ," it must be acceptable to the Lord; that the intent of the commandment is met, inasmuch as one day of the seven is observed. Precisely the way in which Saul persuaded himself that he had obeyed the commandment of the Lord. He said,

1 Samuel 15
15 …the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen.

[227] Dr. Scott.

It was as easy for Saul, as it is for men now, to imagine that whatever "the people" do is all right.

Moreover, the cattle which God had said should be "utterly destroyed" were saved to be sacrificed to the Lord. Surely the Lord ought to be satisfied with such a bribe as that! What difference did it make when the animals were killed, so long as they were sure to be killed sometime; Saul thought that it would honor the Lord more to slay them in sacrifice, than to slay them in any other way; just as people think that the Lord will be honored more by Sunday observance, than by the observance of the day which He has commanded.

There is not an excuse given for keeping Sunday instead of the Sabbath, which is not paralleled by Saul's excuse for not destroying the spoil of the Amalekites. But in the case of Saul the Lord said that it was rebellion, which is the same as the sin of witchcraft. Since the same God now lives, and changes not, what would He now say of the liberties that His professed followers had taken with His fourth commandment?

The Root of the Matter

Having seen that plain violation of one of God's commandments is the sin of witchcraft, no matter how specious is the excuse, let us now go to the root of the whole matter. Writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul said:

> **2 Corinthians 11**
> [3] I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

It is evident that in every attempt to beguile men from the truth as it is in Jesus, the devil has used the same arts with which he succeeded in deceiving Eve. Let us therefore see by what means she was deceived. Read the account in *Genesis* 3:1-6.

God had commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, saying,

Genesis 2
[17] In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die.

The serpent came with artful insinuations against God, intimating that God was unjust in giving such a commandment.

Genesis 3 [paraphrase]
[1] Is it so that God has said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Can it be possible that He would be so arbitrary as that?

This prepared the way for a bolder strike in response to Eve's statement that God had said that they might eat of every tree but one, but that they should die if they ate of that. The serpent said:

[4] You shall not surely die:
[5] For God knows that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods [literally, *like God*], knowing good and evil.

Then the record says that…

[6] When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

But the fact was that the tree was not one to be desired; neither, since God had prohibited it, was it good for food. It was poisonous, as has been amply demonstrated; for it was,

> …that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the World, and all our woe.[228]

How then did the woman see that the fruit of the tree was good for food, and to be desired? She saw it through the representations of the tempter. He caused her to see it by means of his magic arts. She was bewitched. She saw that which did not exist, just as has been the case with many people since, when they have been under the spell of the conjurer. It was witchcraft and magic

[228] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

that caused the sin from which all other sins have sprung. And thus we see why it is that rebellion is the sin of witchcraft.

But what was the magic by which the tempter induced Eve to transgress the express commandment of the Lord? It is all summed up in one sentence,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

It was the belief of this lie that caused the first sin and all the sins that have followed in its train. It is by the subtlety by which the serpent beguiled Eve, that our minds are in danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The false prophets and teachers are threatened with punishment by the Lord, because, as He says:

Ezekiel 13
[22] With lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.

The Spirit of Antichrist

This is the spirit of antichrist, for since Christ…

1 John 3
[5] …was manifested to take away our sins,

–it is evident that everything which tends to oppose His work, —to keep men in sin,—is the work of antichrist. It is the work of…

Revelation 12
[9] …that old serpent, called the devil and Satan.

Let us look a little more closely at this principle of evil. Satan induced Eve to sin by saying,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

He induced her to commit an act of open rebellion against God, —an act which would separate her from Him,—casting off entirely her allegiance to Him, and following her own way; and this he did by making her believe that it would not cut short or diminish her life. But the only ground on which one could expect to have life under those circumstances, that is, in separation from God, and rebellion against Him, would be that he already possessed life in himself, independently of God. The devil, therefore, caused Eve to believe that she had life in herself, so that she could not surely die, and be utterly destroyed, even though she utterly rejected God. He with lies induced her to sin, by promising her life; and false prophets and teachers have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that they should not return from their wicked way, by promising them life.

Nature of Man

The Scriptures give us in simple terms the nature of man. Let us read something of what they say.

Romans 5
[12] By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

The nature of man is sinful, and mortal because sinful.

Ezekiel 18
[4] The soul that sins, it shall die.

Mark 7
[21] From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,
[22] Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

Galatians 5
[19] The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness,
[20] Lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, seditions, heresies,
[21] Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.

And the same writer, after naming over the same things in *Romans* 1:29-31, says that the judgment of God is that…

Romans 1
[32] …they which commit such things are worthy of death.

All men have sinned, and so all men are mortal, because…

Romans 8
[6] To be carnally minded is death.

In sinning man lost life, just as God said he should.

Christ's Work

Christ came…

Luke 19
[10] …to seek and to save that which was lost.

This He does by supplying to man that which has been lost. And what does He supply? Life. Read the following texts:

John 3
[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 6
[57] As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eats me, even he shall live by me.

John 10
[10] The thief comes not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

John 17
[1] Father the hour is come; glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify You:
[2] As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.
[3] And this is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

Christ has…

2 Timothy 1
[10] …abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

He has abolished sin and death in His own flesh;[229] therefore it is abolished only in those in whom Christ dwells by faith. He has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel; therefore none can see life and immortality except those who accept Christ and the Gospel.

John 3
[36] He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life.

Life and Righteousness in Christ

It is in the Gospel that life and immortality are brought to light; because the Gospel is…

Romans 1
[16] …the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes;…
[17] For therein is the righteousness of God revealed.

It is by the Gospel that we are saved. But we are…

Romans 5
[10] …saved by His life,

–because His life is righteousness. Righteousness cannot be found except in the life of God. Jesus, who is the manifestation of God to men, said,

Luke 18
[19] None is good, save one, that is, God.

And God alone has life in himself.

Psalm 36
[9] With [Him] is the fountain of life.

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[229] *1 Peter* 2:24; *Galatians* 3:13; *Ephesians* 2:15.

So we find that life and righteousness, alone from God, are inseparable; because His life is righteousness. Christ is our righteousness, because He is our life.

The same thing may be shown in another way. Thus:

1 John 5
[17] All unrighteousness is sin.

1 John 3
[4] Sin is the transgression of the law.

Therefore all unrighteousness is the transgression of the law. But the law was, and is, the life of Christ, because out of the heart are the issues of life,[230] and Jesus said,

Psalm 40
[8] I delight to do your will, O my God: yea, your law is within my heart.

All unrighteousness, or transgression of the law, is therefore opposition to the life of God in Christ; for His life is the perfection of righteousness, or of obedience to the law.

This being the case, it is evident that whoever claims that life may be had apart from Christ, is claiming that righteousness may be had apart from Him. When the serpent told Eve that if she ate of the forbidden tree she should not die, but should be like God, he really assured her that it would be right to do what God had forbidden. In other words, he made her believe that her way was right, and that she was the proper judge of her own actions; in short, that she was essentially God.

It is evident, therefore, that the teaching that men will live to all eternity, even though they do not accept the Lord Jesus Christ, is the work of antichrist. It must be so, because it is a positive denial of the words of inspiration, that "he that has not the Son, has not life."[231] It is a denial of the work of Christ, which is solely to give

[230] *Proverbs* 4:23.
[231] *1 John* 5:12.

life, and to give righteousness through His life. Moreover, it is shown to be the work of antichrist, in that the devil himself, the great enemy of Christ, is the one who originated the teaching that even sinners cannot die.

Modern Spiritualism

This teaching is all summed up in what is known as Modern Spiritualism. Most people have a very vague and incorrect idea of what Spiritualism is. They think that it means simply rapping, table-tipping, and other more or less extravagant manifestations. But the whole of Spiritualism is summed up in the teaching that man has a conscious existence in death,—that, in fact, there is no death, because man has life in himself, regardless of his relation to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Let Spiritualists themselves tell us what Spiritualism really is. We quote from standard Spiritualist publications:

> The central idea of modern Spiritualism is the keystone of the religious arch. That is, a continued existence.[232]
>
> Spiritualism *per se* is a science; it is the demonstration of certain facts relative to the nature of man; it explains the psychical phenomena which have transpired in the past, and the mysteries which have surrounded us as spiritual beings. It demonstrates the fact of man's continued existence after death, and enlightens us in regard to the matter of that existence.[233]

The very central truth of Spiritualism is the power and possibility of spirit return, under certain conditions, to communicate with those in the material form.

The phenomena that accompany Spiritualism are simply the means by which it is sought to demonstrate the idea of man's continued existence. As Satan made Eve "see" that what he told her was so, although it was an infamous lie, so he still proceeds to cause people to "see" that there is no such thing as death, by giving them pretended communications from the departed, and by

[232] *Golden Gate.*
[233] *Ib.*

showing them their forms. For be it known that the devil and his angels, and not the spirits of the dead, are the authors of all the communications and phenomena of Spiritualism.

Man's Condition in Death

The Scriptures tell us man's condition in death, and assure us of the impossibility of anybody's taking any part in the affairs of this life, after he has died. Let us read a few texts:

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalm 115
[17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

Isaiah 38
[18] For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You: they that go down into the pit [grave] cannot hope for your truth.
[19] The living, the living, he shall praise You, as I do this day.

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] For 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.
[6] Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy is now perished.

Job 14
[1] Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.
[2] He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down: he flees as a shadow, and continues not.
[7] For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.
[8] Though the root thereof wax cold in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

[9] Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.
[10] But man dies, and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?
[11] As the waters fail from the sea, and as the flood decays and dries up:
[12] So man lies down, and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.
[21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

James 4
[14] For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little season, and then vanishes away.

From these texts it is evident that the phenomena of Spiritualism cannot be produced by departed men. That they are the production of demons is evident from the fact that they are wrought for the purpose of giving color to Satan's great falsehood,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die,

–and that both Satan and his angels are able to transform themselves into angels of light,[234] and therefore have the power to personate the dead. Modern Spiritualism is but ancient Paganism; and of that the Apostle Paul wrote,

1 Corinthians 10
[20] But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils.

Saul and the Witch

The truthfulness of the words of the prophet—"rebellion is the sin of witchcraft"[235]—was fully demonstrated by Saul himself before he died. He had rejected the Lord and therefore the Lord had of necessity rejected him.

[234] *2 Corinthians* 11:14.
[235] *1 Samuel* 15:23.

1 Samuel 28
[6] When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

How could He, when Saul had despised His word, and turned to Him now only through fear?

[7] Then Saul said unto his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.

To appeal to one that has a familiar spirit, is to appeal to the dead, as we learn from:

Isaiah 8 [RV]
[19] And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter: should not a nation seek unto their God? on behalf of the living should they seek unto the dead?

But to have professed dealings with the dead, is to have actual dealings with the devil, since the dead know not anything, and the devil personates them. This is witchcraft, and the beginning of it in Saul's case, as in every other, was in turning aside from the word of the Lord.

Now let us read the interview between Saul and the woman with the familiar spirit, or, as she would be called in these days, the Spiritualist medium. After her fears as to her safety had been calmed, she said:

1 Samuel 28
[11] Whom shall I bring up to you? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.
[12] And when the woman saw Samuel she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul.
[13] And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what did you see? And the woman said, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.
[14] And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man comes up…And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

Saul "perceived" that it was Samuel, just as Eve "saw" that the forbidden tree was good, and to be desired. He saw it through the representations of the devil. Whether or not Saul actually saw anything is uncertain, and is immaterial. In either case it was the devil who was deluding his senses.

Then followed the conversation, in which the spirit told him of his approaching doom. This the devil could easily do, as Saul was now entirely in his power. And this is the lesson to be learned from this narrative, that he who rejects the word of the Lord, rejects the Lord himself; and he who rejects the Lord, must of necessity put himself into the devil's power. Rebellion is the sin of witchcraft. Whoever rejects the word of the Lord in one particular, has no safeguard against believing any sort of error. All the wickedness of Spiritualism is wrapped up in rejection of God's word.

Denying the Atonement

We have seen from the Scriptures that to teach that man has life in himself is to teach that he has righteousness in himself,—that he himself is the standard of right,—and that he is, in fact, God. It was thus that the serpent beguiled Eve, saying,

> **Genesis 3**
> [4] You shall not surely die;
> [5] ...you shall be like God.

Now see how this is borne out in Spiritualism. In the *Banner of Light*, one of the leading Spiritualist journals of the world, we read:

> I believe that man is amenable to no law not written upon his own nature, no matter by whom it is written. . . . By his own nature must he be tried—by his own acts he must stand or fall. The, man must give an account to God for all his deeds; but how? Solely by giving account to his own nature—to himself.[236]

[236] Feb. 6, 1864.

In line with this is the following editorial statement in the *Golden Gate* of July 2, 1887, another leading Spiritualist journal:

> The spirits also teach us that there is no atonement or remission of sin except through growth; that as we sow, so also must we reap. They have not found God, and never will, except as they find Him in their own souls.

Once more we quote the words of another leading Spiritualist teacher:

> We believe that God does not pardon sin, as is represented in the Scriptures; and we also believe that *sin* is as much a necessity as *righteousness* so-termed; that *sin* in the evolution of Nature's (God's) laws is converted into *righteousness*.

Let the reader turn to the texts previously quoted, which showed the nature of the unregenerate man, and he will see that such teaching as this must inevitably tend, when believed, to all manner of wickedness. Since it is the teaching of the devil, it must produce deviltry. That it is anti-Christian it is evident from the fact that it contradicts both what the Scriptures say of man's nature, and what Christ says of His mission, and that it tends to sin. But it is the legitimate result of the doctrine that there really is no death.

But some will say that the Spiritualists are ungodly men who make a profession of belief in the Bible, and that their unchristian utterances are to be attributed to this, and not to their belief in continued existence in death. Let us then see how that doctrine affects those who profess to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and to revere His word.

The Dead as Saviours

We quote from a Sunday-school paper which, although edited by a Methodist Doctor of Divinity, is undenominational, circulating among all denominations. Although the paper had an "Open Letter" Department, in which correspondents were free to express their opinions, no word of dissent ever appeared, against the edi-

torial from which the following was taken, but, on the contrary, it was highly commended. Under the heading, "What Our Dead Do For Us," the editor wrote:

> Much of the best work of the world is done through the present, personal influence of the dead. And in our estimate of the forces which give us efficiency, we ought to assign a large place to the power over us, and in us, of loved ones whom we mourn as wholly removed from us. When death takes away one on whom we leaned. . . . the temptation to us is to feel that his work for *us* is done, and that henceforth, while we live on here, we must live on without his presence or aid. Yet, as a practical fact, and as a great spiritual truth, our dead do for us as constantly as they could do for us if they were still here in flesh; and they do for us very much that they could not do unless they were dead.
>
> Some of the saintly faces of fathers and mothers, which are a benediction to all who look at them, could never have shone as now with the reflected light of heaven, unless they had been summoned to frequent upward lookings through the clouds, and loving communion with their children in heaven. There are manly and womanly children, who are more serious and earnest and devoted in their young life struggles, because of the constant sense of the overwatching presence of their dead parents. . . . And so the dead live on here, for, and with, and in, those who mourn and remember them as gone hence for ever.
>
> Our living friends do much for us, but perhaps our dead friends do yet more.

The object of this extract is to show the natural result of the doctrine that the dead do not really die. Notice:

(1) that the dead are put in the place of Christ, as the agency that works in men for good; and

(2) that the glorification of saints is attributed to communion with the dead, and not to communion with Christ. When it is said that faces "could never have shown as now with the reflected light of heaven, unless they had been summoned to frequent up-

ward lookings through the clouds, and loving communion with their children in heaven," it is evident that the influence of Jesus Christ is discounted. The dead are exalted to His place. It is as much as to say that the dead do that which Christ himself ought to. And yet the man who wrote that would be shocked at the suggestion that he did not perfectly honor the Lord. It was by his subtlety that the devil beguiled Eve, and the words, "You shall not surely die," still undermine trust in Christ in the most subtle and unperceived matter.

Perhaps the following from a published sermon by a most prominent D.D. of the Presbyterian denomination may serve to indicate (since it is but one out of scores of similar utterances) how much trust is put in the dead for salvation, by many who would spurn with indignation the charge that they are Spiritualists, and who would in the strongest terms condemn Catholic saint-worship:

> Oh, may the dead ever be with us, walking by our side, taking us by the hand, smoothing the tears from the troubled brow, and pointing us upward to the regions of everlasting light and peace!

Faith in the Dead

The following extract from a story in another religious journal (Presbyterian) shows still more strikingly how the doctrine that the dead do not really die deposes Christ from His rightful place, and puts human beings in His stead. Whether the story professed to be a narrative of facts, or was simply imagined in order to illustrate a theory, makes no difference. The influence of the belief in the conscious existence of the dead is shown just the same in either case. The story opens with a conversation between a mother and her little daughter, and runs thus:

> "Mamma, are you thinking of Jessie?"
>
> "Yes, dear, she seems to be very near me tonight."

Bertha drew a low stool to the window by mamma's side, and asked in hushed tones,

"Do you indeed think that sister Jessie can sometimes be with us in this room?"

"I cannot doubt it," was the reply.

Mamma's hand was laid caressingly and soothingly upon the bowed head, for Bertha had not yet learned (alas, how few in this weary world do learn!) the quiet repose and steadfast hope of a perfect faith. After a moment's silence Mrs. Grey continued:

"I have been sitting here alone thinking of Jessie's life among the angels. How happy she must be in her beautiful home! I often wonder in just what way the hopes and aspirations, that made her earth life so pure and true, are finding their perfect realization in the unrestricted possibilities of spiritual life."

"But, mamma, what comfort do you find in that?" cried Bertha. "I want her here; she was older and so much wiser and better than I, and she would have helped me so much."

"But that is a selfish grief, dear Bertha; is it no comfort to know that Jessie is safe and happy? She knows how much you need help, and can guide you far more truly now in her perfect knowledge of the good and true, than she could have done in her earthly existence."

"But I cannot see her; I cannot hear her. How can she help me now?" and Bertha sobbed with the unreasoning abandon of a grief that would not be comforted.

"But quiet, my child; Jessie does not wish you to mourn for her in this rebellious way. It can be a help to you always to think what way your angel sister would rejoice to have you think, and speak, and act. If you seek to do those things that merit her approval, you would surely feel her guiding power. Jessie can both see and hear you; but her spirit is released from its earthly fetters, because the loving Father had need of her among the angels. We cannot hear her voice, but we may feel the holy influence of her angelic presence; we cannot see her face, but we may be cheered and comforted by the thought that her bright spirit is nearest, and that she loves us with a love that is purer and holier than earth-love, even as her life in its changed relations is purer and holier."

The story goes on to tell how Bertha was subdued and comforted by this talk, and how her heart was filled with an "unspeakable joy" by the thought that her dead sister…

> "…might always be unto her an invisible guardian, an intangible, loving presence."

Then follows an account of a dream which she had, in which Jessie appeared to her, and when she awoke,

> "…its calm influence entering into her heart, taught her that death is indeed life," etc.

Is it possible to read the above and not see that Jesus is entirely ignored, and His rightful place filled by a dead girl? The Bible tells us that Christ is the Author and Finisher of faith;[237] that is, that true faith centers in Him alone. But in this story "the quiet and steadfast hope of a *perfect faith"* is nothing else but belief in the presence of the dead. The Scriptures tell us that there is not salvation in any other than Jesus;[238] but this makes a dead friend the chief saving agency. Instead of seeking to…

> **Colossians 1**
> [10] …walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing,

–the little girl is taught to seek to do the things that merit the approval of her dead sister. Peter tells of…

> **1 Peter 1**
> [8] …joy unspeakable and full of glory,

–which comes to those who love and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; but the doctrine under consideration makes the unspeakable joy come from the belief in the presence of the dead. Instead of saying to the Lord,

> **Psalm 73**
> [25] Whom have I in heaven but You? and there is none on earth that I desire beside You,

[237] *Hebrews* 12:2.
[238] *Acts* 4:12.

–the belief in the continued existence of the dead relegates Jesus to the background, and deifies the dead.

The Dead as Judges

The next extract is from a Baptist paper. It is from a report of anniversary services held in memory of a Dr. Parker, at which the wife of the minister read a "tribute" to the departed. Following is a portion:

> Another soul has taken its place among the great cloud of witnesses, and today looks on with clearer, juster, kindlier vision than earth can know, at the battle you and I are still waging. Have you thought with what loving interest he is watching our work and lives? Not with the imperfect vision of men, and with the unjust judgments of earth, but with a clear and just discrimination of Heaven, we are seen by him today as we in turn shall see.
>
> There is for us who meet in Parker Chapel a new tie binding us to Heaven, and there is just as surely a new motive for more earnest, more worthy, more holy living and work on earth. If there be any incentive to worthy endeavor in the thought that the great and good of all ages are witnesses of our efforts, then the knowledge that he who so recently was with us, has taken his place in the great host of heavenly witnesses, should be a fresh motive for us to lay aside every weight, and run our race with patience.
>
> Do we indeed desire the dead
> Should still be near us at our side?
> Is there no baseness we would hide?
> No inner vileness that we dread?
>
> Shall he for whose applause I strove,
> I had such reverence for his blame,
> See with clear eye some hidden shame,
> And I be lessen'd in his love?
>
> I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
> Shall love be blamed for want of faith?

There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me through and through.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
You watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.[239]

When we read how the ancient Greeks and Romans deified their dead heroes, we call it Paganism. But thousands of men, including many preachers, have read these verses, and have applauded the author's clear grasp of "Christianity." But who can tell the difference? There is none. The serpent said to the woman,

Genesis 3
[5] In the day that you eat thereof, you shall be like God, knowing good and evil,

–and the inevitable result of believing the doctrine,

[4] You shall not surely die,

–is still to exalt the dead to the place of God, and make them the judges of mankind. Surely such teaching is none other than the work of antichrist, inasmuch as all judgment is committed to the only begotten Son of God.[240]

The Dead as Teachers

One of the most prominent ministers in the world,[241] who regularly preaches to congregations numbering several thousand, and whose name is known, and whose sermons are read throughout the world, has preached a published sermon entitled "The Employments of Heaven," in which he pictures dead physicians as still carrying on their work, and attributes to their unseen touch some of the mysterious recoveries of patients who have been given up to die. Then, speaking of himself, he said:

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[239] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Canto LI from *In Memoriam A. H. H.*
[240] *John* 5:22.
[241] T. DeWitt Talmage.

> When I get to heaven—as by the grace of God I am destined to go to that place—I will come and see you all. Yea, I will come to all the people to whom I have ministered the Gospel, and to the millions of souls to whom, through whom the kindness of the printing press, I am permitted to preach in this land, and in other lands. . . . I will visit them all. I give them fair notice. Our departed friends in the ministry are engaged in that delectable entertainment now.

Thus is the devil using his first falsehood—"You shall not surely die"—to pave the way for the reception of many others. For we know from the Scriptures that no man is able to know or do anything when he is dead, and that when they seem to come back, and to communicate, it is only the spirits of devils. Now see for what purpose he is getting the people accustomed to the idea that dead ministers can come back and teach. Some years ago a Baptist minister left his pulpit, and became an avowed Spiritualist. Writing of his experience, and of the spirits who were his familiar visitors, he said:

> Nearly half a score of old Baptist preachers, with whom I have been associated in the past, have already come to our home, and explained wherein their former preaching was erroneous. The whole system of Biblical interpretation is far away from the truth, as everyone will find when they enter the spiritual world.

Without attempting to defend anybody's "system of Biblical interpretation," we may learn this fact, namely, that when the devil personates dead ministers, and begins preaching, it is only for the purpose of undermining faith in the Bible. And those who have so far wandered from God's word as to believe Satan's fiction that there is no death, despite God's word to the contrary, will, if they do not forsake that error, fall easy victims to all the false doctrine with which the agents of Satan will flood the world.

A few years ago there was a representative gathering of the Congregationalists in London, from all parts of the world. Of course the new "criticism" came in for discussion. Some had

pleaded for holding to "the faith of the fathers," when one man said,

> "But who knows what the faith of the fathers is now?"

This was thought to be a particularly happy bit, and was the most applauded of any remark made during the convention. Thus the way is rapidly preparing for Satan to fill the minds of professed believers in Christ with all manner of false doctrines, and to fill the churches with wickedness. And then will the words go forth from heaven:

> **Revelation 18**
> [2] Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

And the preparation for this was made by Satan in Eden six thousand years ago, when he said, "You shall not surely die." How fearfully the Apostle Paul's forebodings have been realized, for as the serpent beguiled Eve, many thousands of minds have been corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

True Comfort

> "But are we not to be comforted with the thought of meeting our loved ones again? Are we to think of them when they die as lost for ever?"

No; the righteous dead are not lost, but the promise is that…

> **Jeremiah 31**
> [16] …they shall come again from the land of the enemy.
> [17] And there is hope in your end, says the Lord, that your children shall come again to their own border.

Read these soul-cheering words:

> **1 Thessalonians 4**
> [13] But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.
> [14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them

also which are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.
[15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them which are fallen asleep.
[16] 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:
[17] Then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and *so* shall we ever be with the Lord.
[18] Wherefore comfort one another with *these* words.

Yes; if we truly believe the Lord we shall meet the ones who have departed, for "together with them" we shall be "caught up"—*"to meet the Lord."* But even the joy of meeting friends and kindred will be overtopped by the joy of meeting with…

Song of Solomon 5
[10] …the chiefest among ten thousand,
[16] …[and the One] altogether lovely.

Isaiah 25
[8] He will swallow up death in victory.

To Him alone will every eye be turned, and will every tongue ascribe praise.

Revelation 1
[5] Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

–will all honor and glory be given. And since that will be the occupation of the redeemed in heaven, let the redeemed on earth beware of anything that tends to eclipse His glory now.

Colossians 2
[8] Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.
[9] For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.
[10] And YOU ARE COMPLETE IN HIM.

12. Spiritualism (1894a)

Present Truth, April 19, 1894

THOSE who are awakened to the progress of Spiritualism, or "Spiritism" as some call it, recognize the fact that it is an element that must be reckoned with in Christian work. A correspondent of the *Record* writes a long letter showing that it is making headway in Church of England circles. He says it…

> …seems to have received a fresh impulse and to be making most mischievous progress.

He speaks of a number of clergymen, who, to his personal knowledge, have fallen fully into the delusion.

13. No Immortal Sinner

Present Truth, July 5, 1894

AN IMMORTAL sinner is one of the myths of theology. The Bible nowhere states that any sinner has immortality or will live for ever, but declares that God only has immortality,[242] and that…

Ezekiel 18
[4] …the soul that sins it shall die.

Theology teaches that the soul of the sinner lives on for ever in the torment of hell; and, unfortunately, most people believe the teachings of theology and pay but little attention to the declarations of Scripture; or rather, they put theology in the place of the Bible, accepting its profession of being in harmony with and explanatory of the Bible, and trusting in those who "sit in Moses' seat" to make the teachings of both agree.

The Scriptures declare that…

Romans 6
[23] …the wages of sin is death;

–and that eternal life is…

[23] …the gift of God…through Jesus Christ,

–to be given only to those…

Romans 2
[7] …who by patient continuance in the well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality.

But theologians, in order to harmonize the Bible with theology, have invented a definition of death which makes it mean eternal conscious existence in hell; and accordingly they affirm that it is this, and not non-existence, that is meant by the many Scripture references to the death of the sinner. But the Scriptures them-

[242] *1 Timothy* 6:16.

selves leave no room for belief in such a theory. If we accept what they declare, we shall see that death has no special and peculiar meaning in the language of inspiration, but that it means cessation of life, and passing away into non-existence.

This is clearly shown in the record of man's fall and the consequences which attended his transgression. In the narrative in Genesis we read that…

Genesis 3
[22] The Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:
[23] Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.
[24] So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

This testimony is emphatic and unmistakable. God did not intend that a sinner should live for ever. That was what the devil wanted, but it was the very thing that the Lord especially guarded against. The devil wished to perpetuate sin, and thus put an eternal stain upon God's universe. But God, while allowing them free access to the tree of life before his fall, immediately took special precautions to shut him away from it as soon as he transgressed, lest, as a sinner, he should put forth his hand to the tree, and eat, and live for ever.

Thus has God testified that there will be no such thing in His universe as an immortal sinner. Not one of the sinful descendants of Adam has ever passed the fiery guard of cherubim and put forth his hand to the tree of life. And therefore not one of those descendants has ever had any power in himself which would enable him to live for ever.

Romans 6
[23] Eternal life is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It comes in no other way.

14. The Resurrection Literal

Present Truth, July 12, 1894

Old and New Testament Harmony

Job 19
[14] If a man die, shall he live again?

John 5
[25] The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Psalm 16
[10] You will not leave my soul in hell; neither will you suffer your Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 2
[32] This Jesus has God raised up.

Acts 13
[37] He whom God raised again saw no corruption.

Job 19
[25] I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.

Revelation 1
[18] I am He that lives and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore.

Revelation 14
[1] And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads.
[4] These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

Psalm 16
[9] My flesh also shall rest and hope.

Isaiah 26
[19] Your dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise.

Romans 8
[11] If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

Hosea 13
[14] I will ransom them from the power of the grave.

1 Timothy 2
[5] There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,
[6] Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Hosea 13
[14] I will redeem them from death.

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death.

1 John 3
[4] Sin is the transgression of the law.

Galatians 3
[13] 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 hangs on a tree.

Ezekiel 37
[12] Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves.

1 Corinthians 6
[11] God has both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power.

Psalm 49
[15] God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for He shall receive me.

John 14
[3] If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself.

Hosea 13
[14] O death, I will be your plagues; O grave, I will be your destruction.

Isaiah 25
[8] He will swallow up death in victory.

1 Corinthians 15
[53] This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
[54] 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.
[55] O death, where is your sting? O grave where is your victory?
[57] Thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

15. Explaining Spiritualism

Present Truth, August 2, 1894

IT SEEMS that science, so-called, has come forward in the person of Mr. F. W. H. Myers with another "explanation" of the phenomena of spiritualism. We are informed that this individual…

> …gave a most interesting and eloquent address before the Psychical Research Society at the Westminster Town Hall on Friday evening [July 13], in which he attempted to indicate a possible explanation of certain spiritualistic phenomena, particularly those vouched for by, or connected with, the late Mr. Stanton Moses, the well-known spiritualist.

Here is the "possible explanation," as summarized in *Public Opinion:*

> Mr. Myers then proceeded to suggest that as we acted on our hair or on any particular object by molecular action, and as we did the same on persons at a distance by means of telepathy, so it is at least conceivable that spirits have the power of acting on the molecules by some selective action at present unknown. He pointed out that this supposition of some unseen power being able to influence these molecules with something similar to the "soothing demons" postulated or imagined by the late Professor Clerk Maxwell in his statements of the molecular theory. The molecules might be varied either in speed or direction, and he thought that in this way there might be some explanation of the remarkable experiments with burning coals carried on by Mr. Hume. . . . Mr. Myers went on to say that he thought the great secret of life might possibly be found in the junction of biological and physical science, which must join somewhere, and he thought that the direction he indicated gave some slight augury of important discoveries in the years yet to be.

Here is the wisdom of man. Here is an illustration of the aid which "science" renders toward an understanding of spiritual truths. This is what we should have to take were it not for the word of God. But most fortunately we are not without that word.

And so while volumes of unintelligible nonsense have been written to enlighten man concerning the occult matters of the spiritual world, a single phrase from the book of God makes the whole subject of Spiritualism clear to us, so far as it is important for anyone to understand it.

Revelation 16
[14] The spirits of devils working miracles…

–these few plain words of Inspiration present the whole domain of spiritualistic phenomena before us in a moment, as a flash of lightning reveals the landscape hidden by the obscurity of night. But such is the blindness of unbelief that instead of taking the simple, plain statements which the Omniscient has given them on this subject, men prefer to take such "explanations" as the foregoing, and base their beliefs on "molecules" (which no man has ever seen), "telepathy" (which is simply a name given to something that no one understands), and other things equally beyond the ken of human faculties. Such is the credulity of unbelief.

16. The Soul, Resurrection, and Punishment

Present Truth, August 2, 1894

THE following statement and question has been sent in with a request for an answer:

> Man at his creation received a soul, or spirit, from God; in departing from God, man forfeited the life of God breathed into him. At the resurrection will that life, or spirit, or soul, be lent to him again, so that he can be punished, seeing that it was by the spirit or soul that he offended?

There seems to be a slight confusion in the mind of the questioner, as to the terms "soul" and "spirit," and in regard to the account of the creation of man. It may be sufficient to say of those terms that no definition can be given of them that will apply in every case. They are variously used in the Bible, and it is useless to attempt to define them. It is no more necessary that we should know just what portion of man is always referred to by the terms "soul" and "spirit," than that we should know the exact composition of our bodies in order to enjoy good health.

Living Souls

In the record of creation, however, and in many other places, the whole man is called a soul. This is perhaps the most common use of the word. As such it is by no means synonymous with "spirit." In *Genesis* 2:7 we read that...

> **Genesis 2**
> [7] 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.

Note well that it does not say that a soul was breathed in him, but that the man that God formed, himself *became a living soul* as soon as he received the breath of life from God.

The term "living soul" is not, however, distinctive. It is applied to the lower animals as well as to man. The same Hebrew words that in *Genesis* 2:7 are translated "living soul," are in *Genesis* 1:24 translated "living creature." If in *Genesis* 2:7 we had, "man became a living creature," it would be perfectly correct; so also would it be as proper to translate *Genesis* 1:24 thus,

> "And God said, let the earth bring forth the *living soul* after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth, after his kind."

Indeed, even in the English translation the fact appears that the lower animals are called *living souls*, as in:

> **Revelation 16**
> [3] And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

Breath of Life

Not only are the lower animals called living souls, but they are said to have the same breath of life that men have. In *Genesis* 7:21-22 we read of the flood:

> **Genesis 7**
> [21] And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth, and every man:
> [22] All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

So likewise we read in:

> **Ecclesiastes 3**
> [19] For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: as the one dies, so dies the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man has no pre-eminence above the beast: for all is vanity.
> [20] All go on to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

Of man we read,

Job 34
[14] If He set His heart upon men, if He gather unto himself His spirit and His breath;
[15] All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

But of beasts we read likewise:

Psalm 104
[29] You hide your face, they are troubled: You take away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.
[30] You send forth your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth.

The Difference

Someone may say,

> "You are making out that a man is no better than a beast."

Not so; there is a vast difference, and the Bible shall tell us what it is. Bear in mind that we are simply quoting the Scriptures, and not giving a theory of man's invention. The record of creation gives the relative position of man and all the lower animals.

Genesis 1
[26] And God said, Let Us make man in our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
[27] So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
[28] And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.

So the Psalmist says,

Psalm 8

5 For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor.
6 You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet:
7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the seas.

Man was made in the image of God, to be a companion for God and the angels. Yet he is as dependent upon God for life as are the beasts over which he was given dominion. There is no life but from God. In Christ all things were created, in heaven and on earth, and in Him all things consist.[243] His word gave existence to all in the beginning, and it is the same word that maintains their existence. Man has no more power in himself than the grass.

Isaiah 40

6 All flesh is grass...
7 ...Surely the people is grass.

1 Corinthians 15

39 All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.
40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.
41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differs from another star in glory.

And yet it is the glory of God that shines in the whole heavens. But God has made each star to be the bearer of a certain amount of light, and the star that gives comparatively little light is just as perfect as the star that gives ten times as much; because equally with the other it is just what God designed it to be.

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[243] *Colossians* 1:16-17.

The vine is just as perfect a plant as the oak, although much smaller and more frail. The life of God makes each one just what God designed it to be. Although there is the same life power in each, there is the greatest difference between them.

So although beasts have the same breath of life from God that men have, there is the greatest difference between them. God designed the beast to be only a beast, and His life makes it what it is. Excepting what the beasts suffer on account of man's sinfulness, they are perfect in their sphere, as God designed them to be.

But God made man alone in His own image. He was made to rule, and in that respect he was designed to be an associate of God, although inferior to and dependent upon Him. Man is capable of everlasting progression, providing he submits himself to the power of God's life.

Man's Fall

Things have changed since the creation.

Ecclesiastes 7
[29] God made man upright;

–but now…

Romans 3
[12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one.

God made man little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor; but now…

Psalm 39
[5] Every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

God made man to have dominion over the works of His hands; He put all things in subjection under his feet.

Hebrews 2
[8] For in that He put all in subjection under him…But now we see not yet all things put under him.

There is this difference between man and beasts, that man has been given the freedom of choosing for himself what he will be. The beast has no such choice. It is this freedom of will that gives to man the possibility of being a companion of God. The Creator has forever set man's will free, and He himself will not force it.

Now it is a sad fact that men have chosen evil instead of good. They have chosen their own way instead of the way of God; and consequently they have fallen as far below God's design for them as the earth is lower than the heavens.[244] Still they have the power to choose whom they will serve.[245] The Lord says,

Deuteronomy 30
15 See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil:
19 ...therefore choose life, that both you and your seed they live.

Revelation 22
17 Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

But if they refuse this gracious invitation, the word is,

Proverbs 1
29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:
30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.
31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.
32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

It is often said that certain vicious men, are making beasts of themselves. This is a striking expression to indicate how low they have fallen. But it is not a fanciful idea. Thus the scripture says of those who trust in themselves and their riches,

Psalm 49
12 Man being in honor abides not; he is like the beasts that perish.

[244] *Isaiah* 55:9.
[245] *Joshua* 24:15.

[13] This their way is their folly; yet their posterity approve their sayings.
[14] Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.
[20] Man that is in honor, and understands not, is like the beasts that perish.

What a fall this is! from the position of lords over the earth, to the level of the brute, so that they die like brutes, with no hope! How does it come to pass? By their not choosing the fear and knowledge of God.

Romans 1
[22] Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

Instead of allowing the life of Christ to work in them all that He has designed for them, and to perfect them in His Divine image so that they can be fit companions for Him, they allow the life to do for them only what it does for the beasts,—give them mere earthly life. And so the utter destruction which they will finally suffer will be simply that which they have chosen for themselves.

The Resurrection of Judgment

Jesus said,

John 5
[26] As the Father has life in himself; so has He given to the Son to have life in himself;
[27] And has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.
[28] Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,
[29] 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, [or "of judgment"].

There are two resurrections: one to life, the other to judgment and perdition. He who believes and obeys the Lord, shall not come into judgment or condemnation, but is passed out of death

into life.[246] Christ appears for them, because His life is their life. But all who reject Christ must come into judgment with no Advocate, and thus stand only in their own works; and as the way that they have chosen is the way of death, there will be nothing but death for them.

Only those who choose Christ, and abide in Him even unto death, so that they "sleep in Jesus,"[247] can be made alive in Christ. All others will be raised just as they went into the graves—

Ephesians 2
[12] ...having no hope, and without God in the world.

The mystery of life can never be fathomed by man. Only the Author of it can understand it. We cannot know how God keeps us alive in this world, neither can we understand how He gives to us eternal life. It is enough for us to believe the fact, and leave Him to do the wonder. So we cannot understand the difference between the life of the Christian and that of the sinner. Yet there is a difference, for one is passed out of death into life, and the other abides in death.[248]

The same mystery will exist in the resurrection, only the difference will be far more apparent. The righteous will be raised immortal. The glory that was before in them unseen by the world, will then be revealed,[249] and they shall...

Matthew 13
[43] ...shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

But the wicked will appear just as they were. As they lived and died without Christ, so will they be raised without Him.

If the question be asked,

> "How can the wicked have a resurrection, and not to life?"

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[246] *John* 5:24.
[247] *1 Thessalonians* 4:14.
[248] *1 John* 3:14.
[249] *Romans* 7:18.

–the answer must be that it will be the same with them then as now. They will receive life from the Lord, and to all appearance have the same life that the righteous do, yet it is not the same. They pervert the gift of life, so that it is only death for them. We cannot understand *how;* we can only know the fact which the Bible states. God who keeps them in existence now, in order that they may have an opportunity to choose immortality and eternal life, can bring them up from the graves in the same condition, in order that they may see and receive the result of their choice. It is virtually the same as though their time in the grave had not been, but their life had continued without break until the final judgment.

Thus the part of the question is answered, which asks if at the resurrection the life which God gave man in the beginning is lent to him again, so that he can be punished. That life is lent to men during his whole career; otherwise he would have no chance of choosing eternal life. God gives to every man eternal life for him to accept or reject, just as he may choose, and He gives to man the life by which he accepts or rejects that gift.

Why Raised to Judgment?

It may be asked,

> "Why should the wicked be raised at all, since it is only for death? When once they have gone into the grave, why not leave them there forever? Could not God's wrath be satisfied without bringing them up for the purpose of formally consigning them to eternal perdition?"

Such questions are common, and very natural, but they show a failure to comprehend the object of the last Judgment. A few words will suffice to make the subject clear.

God is just.[250]

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death.

[250] *Romans* 2:5.

Those who sin against the light that He gives them, are treasuring up unto themselves wrath…

Romans 2
[5] …against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

God's justice demands that He give them that for which they have labored. Let it also be remembered that the judgment of God is not retaliation. It is simply the giving to men of that which they have chosen. Moreover, the judgment is not simply for those who suffer the results of their own way, but for the benefit of all God's universe, that all His creatures may have the clearest evidence that He is just and true. This will be for their eternal comfort, because then there will be no shadow of a chance for anyone to doubt Him.

Thus: In the judgment God himself is on trial, as well as the people. We read,

Romans 3
[4] Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, that You might be justified in your sayings, and might overcome when You are judged.

Men, following the lead of Satan, have bitterly accused God of indifference to the needs of His creatures, and even of harshness and injustice. Many have died with that false charge upon their lips and in their hearts.

In the judgment everything will be set forth clearly before the eyes of all creatures. A panorama of the history of earth will be presented to them. It will not be such a history as men write, but everything will appear in its true colors. Now we see only a little of the ways of God and men, and only the surface of that. Then we shall see everything in one view, and the secret motives will appear. All the dealings of God will then be manifest, for it will be the…

Romans 2
[5] ...revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

And every secret act and thought of men will also appear.

There will then be opportunity for anyone to step forward if he chooses, to impeach God to His face before the multitude. Men may then repeat, if they can, their charges of injustice on the part of God. Surely this is but simple justice to the wicked, to the righteous, and to God himself.

But in all that vast multitude there will not be found one to repeat his accusations against God. They will then see that they have spoken evil of those things which they knew not, and *every mouth will be stopped.* Every knee shall bow to God, and every tongue shall...

Philippians 2
[11] ...confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Earth will join heaven in singing,

Revelation 16
[5] You are righteous, O Lord, which are, and was, and shall be, because You have judged thus:
[7] Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments.

17. The Spiritualist Family

Present Truth, September 6, 1894

A NEW Spiritualist journal called *The Unknown World*, has just made its appearance. In order that our readers may know from its adherents just what Spiritualism embraces, we make the following extract from the prospectus of the journal, most of the words of which we think they will be able to comprehend:

> The department of occult science embraced by the present editorial scheme are: White and Black Magic, Necromancy, Divination, Astrology, Alchemy, Witchcraft, Crystallomancy, Elementals and Elementaries, the Rosicrucians, the Illuminati, Esoteric, Freemasonry, the Mysteries, the Mystics, Hermetic Philosophy, the Archaeology of the Secret Sciences.

We do not know if the above is the whole of the Spiritualist family, but it is sufficiently large.

18. Is it "Pleasant"?

Present Truth, September 6, 1894

IN THE editorial columns of *Light*, a Spiritualist paper, we find the following paragraph:

> It is pleasant to know, on the high authority of M. Chatulets, that certain African tribes hitherto regarded barbarous idolaters, or fetish worshipers, are genuine Theists, with a very strong tinge of Spiritualism of a low order. Their supposed idols are really talismans or charms, usually believed to be vehicles of spirit-influence. They believe in minor deities just as the ancient Greeks or Romans did, though many of them are of a less poetic kind. The spirits are regarded as the representatives of natural forces, who act like men in the matter of likes and dislikes. They are open to entreaty, and can be propitiated with bribes in the form of sacrifices. Their priests or mediators are simply mediums, and their main act of worship is the attempt to secure the good-will of the spirits.

This is an admission from the parties themselves, of what we have often stated, namely, that Spiritualism is identical with heathenism. Some readers will say,

> "Well, what of that? we don't know anything about Spiritualism, and are not at all concerned with it."

Not so fast. There is something more to this which may not be so "pleasant" to the reader as to the editor of *Light*. We hope it will not be. It is this: On the authority of Spiritualists themselves,

> The whole of Spiritualism is summed up in the teaching that man has a conscious existence in death—that, in fact, there is no death, because man has life in himself.

This is Spiritualism, and Spiritualism is heathenism. We will not trace the line any further, but will commend it to our friends who think that men have by nature life in themselves, irrespective of their character or of their relation to Christ.

19. Spiritualism (1894b)

Present Truth, September 13, 1894

THE growth of Spiritualism, a term which may be taken to include all the family of correlated cults, is a fact which every Christian believer must reckon with. It is thus stated in a Spiritualistic paper:

> It is idle to deny that at the present moment, just at the close of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, there is a wave of Spiritualism over-spreading all lands of the known world, and increasing daily in intensity.

The whole subject of man's nature is involved in the claims of Spiritualism, and it behooves every Christian to study his Bible for himself if he would not be deceived by...

> **Matthew 24**
> [24] ...signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

20. Unquenchable Fire (1894)

Present Truth, September 20, 1894

THE most appalling conflagration ever known in America, in point of fatality to human life, swept over the pine forest region of Minnesota and Wisconsin, September 2-4. According to the accounts of survivors, the disaster came in the form of a veritable storm of fire, moving with the swiftness and fury of a tornado. The unfortunate inhabitants of the towns and villages in its path had no more opportunity of escape than had the citizens of ill-fated Pompeii when it was buried beneath the outburst from Vesuvius. To frail mortals who stood before its power, it must have seemed a type of that greater conflagration to come, when, the harvest of the world being ended, and the wheat to be gathered into the garner, the chaff will be burned up with unquenchable fire.[251]

The last great judgment of God upon the earth will have been preceded by many minor judgments. Some of these, sacred history has recorded. In times when the wickedness of man has risen up to most daring heights, His judgments have fallen to check the spread of people. Thus it was in the days of Noah. There was a flood of wickedness over the earth, and God sent upon it a flood of water. Of the two the latter was infinitely preferable. But His judgments have also come in the form of unquenchable fire. We read that…

> **Jude**
> 7 Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, in giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

The fire which God rained upon those wicked cities was unquenchable, though it has long since ceased to burn. And these

[251] *Matthew* 3:12.

cities are set forth as an example of the judgment which will finally overtake the ungodly.

2 Peter 2
[6] And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.

Luke 17
[28] Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;
[29] But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.
[30] Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

"Unquenchable fire" is fire which burns until it utterly consumes that upon which it feeds. Its unquenchable character is demonstrated by the fact that it does this, in spite of all efforts that may be made to prevent it. And this is the effect it will have in the Judgment day upon the wicked. It will consume them, one and all, so that they will be utterly destroyed, and become…

Obadiah
[16] …as though they had not been.

21. Which Will You Choose?

Present Truth, November 1, 1894

SOME of the present readers of *Present Truth* will remember that some months ago an article, or rather a combination of articles, appeared, with the general title, "The Sin of Witchcraft."[252] The matter was afterwards published in the form of a tract, which we commend to our readers for perusal and distribution.

The little pamphlet has attracted the attention of the editor of a leading Spiritualist paper, called *Light*, and he has given it an extended notice. The notice is so perfect an illustration of some of the things set forth in the pamphlet, that we quote a few extracts from it. We hope that it may cause serious thought on the part of many.

The reviewer accepts the definition that…

> The whole of Spiritualism is summed up in the belief that man has a conscious existence in death—that, in fact, there is no death, because man has life in himself.

We call special attention to this statement of what Spiritualism is, because there are thousands of people who think that they disbelieve Spiritualism, who nevertheless heartily believe the above statement.

That such people will sooner or later be obliged to revise their belief, or else openly to accept Spiritualism, is a fact clearly seen by Spiritualists. Our reviewer agrees with the statement of the pamphlet, that…

> Through the prevalence of the doctrine of the natural immortality of man…the churches are being permeated with Spiritualism.

He says,

[252] See Article 11 in this Section, "The Sin of Witchcraft."

> Once grant that the secret of human life is in the immortal spirit, all that we contend for must follow—in time.

Ancient Agnosticism

All that we are concerned with, in our dealing with the teaching of Spiritualism, is to show that it is in open and positive antagonism to the Bible. With those who reject the Bible we have no controversy. We have no burden to defend the Bible itself; it is its own defender. All that we wish to have made plain is the fact that nobody can believe both the Bible and Spiritualism. Whoever accepts the doctrine of Spiritualism must reject the Bible. They who cling to the Bible as the word of God must renounce Spiritualism from beginning to end.

This is sufficiently proved by the review itself. Some of the texts which teach that at death man really dies, that is, loses feeling, knowledge and thought, such as *Psalm* 146:3-4; 115:17; *Isaiah* 38:18-19; *Ecclesiastes* 9:5-6; *Job* 14:1-2, 7-12, 21; *James* 4:14, are cited from the pamphlet. Of some of them the application is denied, and of the others the writer says that they are…

> …the expressions of an ancient agnosticism which we surely ought to outgrow, and not to imitate.

The only way that Spiritualists can hold their position is by denying the Bible; and recollect that their position is simply this, that men at death enter upon a higher life than before. Our readers may decide for themselves whether they will stick to the Bible, or to the doctrine that the dead are conscious; but they must know that they cannot hold to both.

A Monstrous Superfluity

The reviewer has fully comprehended the teaching of the pamphlet, that…

> The devil's great original falsehood is the teaching of the doctrine of innate or natural immortality,

–and that in that lie Spiritualism is summed up. Of this he says:

> This may seem monstrous, but the whole pamphlet is built upon it, as we shall see. It may be thought that this is only one man's eccentricity, but we believe that the main thought of the pamphlet is very largely held,[253] and that, anyhow, it logically follows from the old doctrine of the general resurrection. At the present moment we are face to face with a huge inconsistency. The truly spiritual thought, that at death we pass into spirit life, in the full possession of more than our present powers, is rapidly taking possession of all the churches: it is in the air, and it is irresistible. And yet it co-exists with the doctrine of the resurrection of the body,—a monstrous superfluity. The crash is not yet; but it must come, and the writer of this pamphlet, with his grim logic, may, and we hope will help it on.

This is the way Spiritualism stands related to the doctrine of the resurrection. Spiritualists consider it "a monstrous superfluity." Now all who read the Bible know that the resurrection is set forth as the hope of the Gospel. The apostle tells us in the 15th of *1 Corinthians* that if there be no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not raised, and that if Christ be not raised, then there is no hope for any. Spiritualism, therefore, denies the resurrection of Christ, and so the entire Gospel.

Remember that Spiritualism is nothing more than the belief in natural immortality and that the dead have a conscious existence. Now if this were true, then indeed the resurrection would be a superfluity; for if the dead are alive, there is no possibility of a resurrection. We ask our readers to choose between the two things. Which shall it be,

1) the Bible and the resurrection, or

2) the theory that there is no death?

Life and Immortality

Since Spiritualism is from first to last a denial of the Bible and of the Gospel, it is not at all surprising that its adherents are in the dark as to Gospel truths. The misapprehension in the following

[253] Not so largely as it ought to be. –*Editor, Present Truth.*

paragraph, however, is so common that we quote it in order to point out the truth. Following the paragraph last quoted, the reviewer says:

> But if this writer does not believe in natural immortality, how does he bring immortality in? In some way which we do not understand, he (and he is one of many) believes in immortal life only for those who are "in Christ," whatever that may mean. He plainly says, "None can see life and immortality except those who accept Christ and the Gospel." He does not give any explanation, and we are left to assume that in some subtle way the believer is transformed. From being a mortal creature, he is changed into an immortal one, subject, we presume, to relapses—mortal in 1894, immortal in 1895, and mortal again in 1896.

Will the reader note the following points?

1. Immortality is bestowed at the coming of the Lord and the resurrection of the righteous dead, and then only.

> **1 Corinthians 15**
> [51] Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
> [52] 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.
> [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must *put on* immortality.

The believer in Christ is as mortal today as any sinner. Immortality is to be "put on," only when the Lord comes to raise the dead. But once possessed, it is never lost.

2. We do not presume to give any explanation of this change. It is "a mystery." To know the fact is sufficient; we could not understand the manner of its accomplishments, if it could be told us, because it is the product of infinite power. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes,

Philippians 3
[21] [He] will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

3. Eternal life and immortality are not identical. Although immortality is not conferred upon any until the resurrection of the just, eternal life is the possession of every believer.

1 John 5
[11] This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

John 17
[1] Glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify You:
[2] As You have given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You has given Him.
[3] And this is life eternal, that they might know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ who You have sent.

The life of Jesus is to be…

2 Corinthians 4
[11] …manifest in our mortal flesh.

4. This eternal life which is the possession of the believer in Christ, is simply the power of God working in him…

Philippians 2
[13] …both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

We are saved from sin by…

Hebrews 7
[16] …the power of an endless life.

This life is not inherent in the believer, but is *in Christ*, and is the possession of the believer only as his faith brings Christ to dwell in his heart.

1 John 5 [RV]
[12] He that has the Son has the life, and he that has not the Son of God, has not the life.

Here again we are obliged to say that we cannot explain. It is as subtle a mystery as is the way in which the sun and rain give life to plants, or the food that we eat enables us to think and act. But anyone who believes, is as conscious of the power of the life, as he is that he breathes. We can only say, Taste and see.[254]

Angels and Men

Another error which so many professed Christians hold in common with professed Spiritualists, is that there is no distinction between men and angels; that angels are simply dead man. Thus the reviewer says:

> What dismal infatuation is it that leads so many people to slam the door in the faces of those who come from the other side, or to see only "devil" when, surely, to say the least of it, a good God would let good angels go where devils are allowed to prowl! Is it possible to believe that God's human race is infested with demoniacal influences only, and that our Creator and Providence permits us to be the fools and victims of a conscious hellish fraud?

The good God does not leave men to the influence of the devil, without the help of good angels. But angels are beings far superior to man. Angels existed before the earth was created, and "shouted for joy" at its creation.[255] An angel never was a man, and no man can ever become an angel. The most that is promised to those who gain the world to come, is that they shall be…

Luke 20
[36] …equal unto the angels,

–in that they cannot die anymore. The human race is not "infested with demoniacal influences only," but God has sent to this earth legions of…

Hebrews 1
[14] …angels that excel in strength, [who are] sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

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[254] *Psalm* 34:8.
[255] *Job* 38:7.

Neither has He left men to be the victims of fraud.

Psalm 17
[4] By the word of your lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer.

The Lord has not left men to wander in the dark, but has given His word as a light. None will be deceived except those who…

2 Thessalonians 2
[10] …receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved thereby.

We write for the purpose of calling the attention of those who acknowledge the Bible to be the truth of God, to the light which it gives. The basis of Spiritualism is that man has life and immortality in himself. This is directly opposed to God's word which is the source of light; and therefore those who accept the doctrine of natural immortality, are turning from light to darkness, and inviting deception. And when men turn away from the truth of the Bible, they must necessarily turn away from the morality of the Bible. Which will you choose—the word of God, or the devices of men?

22. The Satanic Origin of Spiritualism

Present Truth, November 8, 1894

FROM the beginning in the garden to the present time Satan has tempted men by appealing to their pride, and holding out to them that great powers and virtues they might develop if they would only turn away from God's plan and allow the good that is in them to manifest itself. The history of the world of sin shows how much there is in man of himself, but the same old falsehood is cherished today. The Satanic origin of Spiritualism, and the real principle on which it is founded, is shown by the following from Mr. Hudson Tuttle:

> It takes man by the hand, and instead of telling him that he is a sinful worm of the dust, corrupt from the crown of the head to the sole of his feet, it assures him that he is a nobleman of nature, heir to the Godhead, owning all things, for whom all things exist, and is capable of understanding all.

"You shall be as gods,"[256] said the serpent, and the lie is still believed and taught.

[256] *Genesis* 3:5.

1895 – 1900

1. Hinduism and the Soul

Present Truth, February 14, 1895

IT IS announced that…

> …a pamphlet has just been written in English by a Madras Brahmin…which is intended to convey to Englishmen some of the leading teachings of Hinduism.

An examination of its teachings reveals that the leading one,—the doctrine upon which all the rest are based,—is that of the existence of a conscious undying spirit within but separate from the body. This doctrine is already accepted by the vast majority of the people for whose information this Brahmin pamphlet was written. The Brahmins are deep thinkers, and in a contest maintained by human reasoning and philosophy, can hold their ground against any people in the world. That they even have undertaken to do proselytizing work in lands called Christian, is not, from the human standpoint, an exhibition of ignorance or folly. There is no reason why it should not prove quite successful among many people, however enlightened, who are not willing to believe that the Bible means what it says when it declares that…

Ecclesiastes 9

[5] …the dead know not anything.

2. The Two Hopes

Present Truth, February 28, 1895

SPEAKING of Spiritualism, and its professed manifestations of the spirits of the dead to the living, Professor Barrett, of the Royal College of Science, Dublin, wrote:

> I know and rejoice in the blessing Spiritualism has been to my own faith, and to that of several dear friends of mine. Moreover, I cordially recognize the fact that in bereavement and deep distress numbers have been cheered and consoled by the hope that Spiritualism has set before them.

But how different the hope which Spiritualism professes to give from that set forth in the word of God!

1 Thessalonians 4

[13] 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.

[16] 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:

[17] 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.

[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

3. Hypnotism

Present Truth, March 28, 1895

HYPNOTISM is being widely discussed just now, and in view of its possibilities very many think it should be scientifically studied and its use regulated by law. Great things are predicted for it in the cure of certain forms of disease.

Some of its possibilities have been brought out in recent years in unsavory proceedings in European criminal courts. But this use of mysterious power, its defenders say, should be prevented. This is just where they miss the mark, because of the failure to see that what is inherently wicked cannot be turned to good account, and should be left alone.

It is a wicked thing, because whatever makes one person's will irresponsible, and wholly subject to the suggestions of another can only be of the evil one. It is the worst possible form of slavery; for it is servitude of mind and morals. It is Satan's own way of working; for He takes possession of the mind that yields itself to him and works to enfeeble the will, and destroy the power of resistance. He works his will in man, and...

Luke 23

[34] ...they know not what they do.

Then, too, hypnotism, or mesmerism is not a new thing. Its arts were known to the ancients, and the practice of mesmerism was connected with all the forms of witchcraft and sorcery against which the Lord warned Israel in all its history. Of course men who do not know the power with which they are allying themselves scoff at the notion that hypnotism is of the devil. In the *Humanitarian*, Dr. G. Kingsbury has an article advocating the use of hypnotism as a curative agent, and which he says, after speaking of those who a generation ago objected to it on the ground that it was of the devil:

> I consider it hopeless to suggest any means of answering the descendants of these unreasoning critics; but, for my own part, must say that if I could be cured of some obstinate ailment myself, or could relieve any of my patients, by a compact with their Prince of Darkness, I should not hesitate to form the alliance.

It is by no means an improbable suggestion that persons may be relieved of maladies by the power of Satan. He works with "all power and signs and lying wonders"[257] as the end draws near. The healing of maladies was one of the attractions of the old pagan shrine. It was Satan who had bound the woman whom Christ healed; and he it is who has the power to inflict pestilence and disease (note the case of Job[258]) where the Lord does not interfere with his workings; therefore, while he has not the power of life, it would be a small matter with him to relax the bands which he had power to bind about his victim.

Would you want to be healed by Satan's power? Would you ask who did it if only a physical infirmity was removed? Although Satan can appear as an angel of light,[259] it is well to remember that his works are works of darkness. Satan does not give a man increased strength to enable him to do good with it. He is not divided against himself; and the man who knowingly yields himself to Satan to get something has put his life in the hands of the evil one, and must pay the price by his service. Infinitely better is it to suffer patiently than to turn from the Lord to receive temporal gain and spiritual bondage from the great adversary.

[257] *2 Thessalonians* 2:9.
[258] *Job* 2:7.
[259] *2 Corinthians* 11:14.

4. The Evidence of a Future Life

Present Truth, May 30, 1895

AT A RECENT conference of Spiritualists held in London, the president of the London Spiritualist Alliance, who presided, stated that he had been visited by members of various churches, who had confessed to him that they were without evidence of a future life. He contrasted the disposition with that of Spiritualists, whose belief in a future life was based upon their experience in communicating with the dead.

It is not unlikely that such confessions have been made, even by church members; for the evidence of a future life is altogether a matter of faith, while church membership is not. The Word of God plainly declares that there is a life that is eternal; but whether this is evidence to us or not depends entirely upon our faith. If we believe it, then we have the evidence; for...

Hebrews 11

[1] Faith is...the evidence of things not seen.

If we do not believe it, it is, of course, no evidence to us whatever.

The Spiritualist's evidence is the evidence of the senses; and this is the real materialism which is contrary to true religion. "Spiritualism" is materialism, for it rests entirely upon the evidence of the material senses; there is nothing really spiritual about it. But true religion—the Gospel—while it deals with material things, has its evidence based entirely upon faith, and thus is truly spiritual. The future life is a thing not seen, and of such things faith, and that only, is the evidence.

The Scripture says,

John 3

[36] He that believes on the Son has everlasting life.

The same evidence which assures us that we have a thing, is proof that the thing exists. If we know that we have everlasting

life, we have the full evidence of a life to come. And we know this simply by believing God's Word.

1 John 5
[10] He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself.

The unbeliever may say, "I do not believe this;" but the believer knows that it is the truth. Faith is real evidence. How it is so we cannot say, for we cannot explain the power of God through which it operates; but that it is real—that it is a link which connects mortal man with the invisible God and with that life which comes from Him, no one who has it can doubt.

All real evidence of spiritual truths must come through faith. The scribes and Pharisees were with Jesus, and saw His miracles; but that was not evidence to them of His Divinity, else they would not have put Him to death. It was evidence only to those who believed, or whose hearts were open to the convicting power of the Spirit. The multitudes thronged Christ, but only the touch of faith given by the woman who sought to be healed of her infirmity, drew forth the physical evidence of His power. So there may be signs and manifestations from God in the physical world today, but only he who has faith will see in them evidence of the existence and power of God.

Without faith, all the evidence of the senses touching spiritual truths is unreal; and this is the kind of evidence which believers in communication with the dead have of a future life. For…

Romans 10
[17] Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word God,

–and the Word of God declares that no communication with the dead is possible, since they "know not anything"[260] and their thoughts have perished.[261] All that is not of faith is "gross materialism," and such is Spiritualism, with all that it puts forth as evidence of a life beyond the grave.

[260] *Ecclesiastes* 9:5.
[261] *Psalm* 146:3-4.

5. Spiritualism (1895)

Present Truth, September 5, 1895

WHEN Spiritualism first began its modern manifestations—the thing itself is as old as the demon worship of Nineveh and Babylon—it made no profession of Christianity, or even of common morality. It derided the Lord, scoffed at the Bible, and showed the cloven hoof generally. But lately a change has come in the attitude of the movement, and now it masks itself in the guise of religion, and is quietly taking possession of the outworks of the popular religions of Christendom. Canon Wilberforce is quoted as saying:

> Those who are following Spiritualism as a means and not an end, contended warmly that it does not seek to undermine religion or to render obsolete the teaching of Christ; that, on the other hand, it furnishes illustrations and rational proof of them such as can be gained from no other source; that its manifestations will supply deists and atheists with positive demonstration of a life after death, and that they have been instrumental in converting many secularists from skepticism to Christianity.

2 Corinthians 11

[14] Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

He must be so transformed, else he could not deceive the whole world,[262] as the Scriptures declare that he will just before the end, by signs and wonders;

Matthew 24

[24] ...insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

The knowledge of life and immortality is not to be found in Spiritualism.

[262] *Revelation* 13:14; 16:14.

2 Timothy 1
[10] [Christ] has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel,

–and only in the Gospel is it brought to light. The only way to know that life is to know its power now, in the forgiveness of sins and the life of faith. The Gospel reveals life to come by giving life now. Paul desired to know the power of the resurrection life[263] day by day, in order that he might…

Philippians 3
[11] …attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

The manifestations of spirit life in Spiritualism can be none other than those "spirits of devils, working miracles"[264] which the prophet declared would come in the last days. But the enemy has so cunningly perverted the truth, turning men from the Word and from the doctrine of the life and resurrection, that nearly all Christendom is ready to fall into the snare when the time comes for the great deceptions which are to crown Satan's final efforts.[265]

[263] *Philippians* 3:10.
[264] *Revelation* 16:14.
[265] *2 Thessalonians* 2:8-12.

6. Moses and Elias

Present Truth, October 31, 1895

A SPIRITUALIST organ asks, with the air of one who has an unanswerable argument,

> How can the appearance of Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration be accounted for, if there is a possibility of intercourse with the dead?

Very easily indeed. Elijah never died, but was translated. It is not remarkable that one who never died should be alive and appear on one occasion before the resurrection of the last day.

And as Moses died and was buried, we know that he must have been raised. That he did have a special resurrection is shown by *Jude*, who describes the controversy which Michael, the Archangel, had with Satan over the body of Moses.[266]

By the same Word of the Lord we know that Spiritualism is what it has always been since the earliest records of witchcraft, intercourse with—not the dead—but the "spirits of devils."[267] It is such a terrible deception, and is condemned by the Lord as so great an abomination in His sight, that it behooves those who know what it is, and the extent to which its principles are accepted in the religious world, to speak out plainly about it.

[266] *Jude* 9.
[267] *Revelation* 16:14.

7. The Facts and Hypotheses of Spiritualism

Present Truth, January 9, 1896

THE following paragraphs from a paper in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* stated very plainly the facts regarding the growth of the doctrines of Spiritualism. The writer does not overstate them, but rather otherwise; for the principles underlying the cult are well nigh universally received. We know that the wonder-working power of Satan will increase as the end draws near, until the "great signs and wonders"[268] will deceive all but the very elect, who know the keeping power of the Lord indeed, and know that His Word is true. When that Word declares that...

Ecclesiastes 9

[5] ...the dead know not anything,

–and that only in the resurrection is there life to those who sleep in death, it may be known that these manifestations can only come from Satan. But the writer says:

> Probably the generality of our readers are little aware of the magnitude of the actual and potential importance of the questions which arise in connection with the subject indicated by the above title. If the matter is mentioned in the circles in which we generally move, it is usually received with more or less of derision, and the scoffers are often disposed to pride themselves on a skepticism which they euphemistically describe as common sense. They will admit, however, that facts are stubborn things. In saying this I by no means intend to imply the admission that all or any of the alleged phenomena asserted by professed Spiritualists do really occur; I will leave that for the present.
>
> The stubborn fact to which I now refer is that millions of people in America and thousands around us at home do thoroughly believe in them, and, moreover, prove their faith, as all professed believers do not, by taking it with them as a factor in their practical life. Further, they not only believe in the occurrence of these phenomena as physical facts, but they fully accept the hypothesis

[268] *Matthew* 24:24.

which ascribes them to operation of discarnate spirits; or, rather, they do more than this—they regard this explanation as no longer of the nature of an hypothesis, and class it among the number of established facts.

Nor can it for a moment be said that those who entertain such convictions are gathered mainly from a class of less than average intelligence: quite the contrary is the case. You could easily fill the largest hall in London with holders of the faith of Spiritualism; and among them you would find Fellows of the Royal Society, university professors, literary men and women of the highest standing, and numerous members of every learned profession, not excluding the Church. For many years a Society has been growing and gathering strength in our midst, one of whose principal objects is to pursue and encourage the study of the whole subject. This Society, which though at first obstinately skeptical, has recently, in affect, endorsed many of the most astonishing assertions of the Spiritualists, numbers among its members scores of the most distinguished names of the day, and is represented in almost every civilized country.

It is true there are a few purists who profess to be exponents of the most rigid scientific orthodoxy, who persistently refuse to listen to or look at any evidence bearing on the question. On the other hand, after many years' acquaintance with the progress of this inquiry, I do not know of a single instance in which a man, of whatever capacity, has fairly faced the phenomena and honestly examined them, without being entirely convinced of their reality.

8. Among French Spiritualists

Present Truth, February 6, 1896

NOT long ago one of the London organs of Spiritualism, boasting of the power of the cult, said that Spiritualists never had apostasies from their ranks. It is a fact that Spiritualism has a powerful hold upon all who get fairly entangled in its meshes. Beginning by willingly, and perhaps curiously, tampering with it, ignorant of the fact that it is the Devil's manifest working, they end by being…

2 Timothy 2

[26] …taken captive by him at *his* will.

When one submits to God his will is set free and continues free; but when to Satan the will is enslaved, the great slave master does not willingly release it.

But the power of truth can save to the uttermost, and bring every honest soul out of the snare. We have known of more than one Spiritualist who, on learning that the manifestations which deceived him were Satanic, has turned to the truth. And one of our American papers just at hand contains the following report of the work of one of our French ministers in the West, whose meetings the Spiritualists had evidently thought to break up:

> One French Spiritualist family had already embraced the truth, which had greatly aroused the other members of the circle to which they had belonged for four years. Wonders had been performed among them, such as speaking in tongues and in trances, and healing the sick under the influence and through the power of pretended spirits of the departed. We knew of no alternative except either to let the enemy have the ground and still control those he had bound in darkness, or with love, prudence, the sword of the Spirit, and reliance on the mighty One, break into the Spiritualistic ring. The latter we decided to do. We have had three encounters with them, one of which held us one day and part of one night, the other two a half day each.

It was hard to keep unruly spirits at bay while we set forth man's nature, his state in death, the two kinds of angels, the Holy Spirit and its operations. But God gave us wonderful victories. At the close of our last interview, as we were giving the benediction, the Spirit of God came in with such power that one who had been a leading medium and speaker was overpowered, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, vindicated the truth before a room filled with Spiritualists, and in the presence of a trance speaker who had come from Green Bay to oppose us, and in the effort had barely managed to manifest a faint outburst of imprecations, and of self-laudation in the matter of healing the sick.

That one of their number should be thus overpowered, and vindicate the truth under such circumstances, was indeed wonderful. It remains to be seen what the outcome of all this will be. Some of the Spiritualists are turning away from us; a few are under conviction, and we pray that the spell of the enemy may be entirely broken, and that the captives may be wholly set free.

9. An "Easter Symposium"

Present Truth, April 30, 1896

IN ITS EASTER number the *New York Independent* publishes twenty-four columns from twelve different writers, prominent in religion, literature, and education, upon the subject of Easter day and immortality. This is a religious subject; the *Independent* is a religious paper, the majority of the writers contributing to this "Easter Symposium," belong to the ministerial profession. Thhe question is one upon which the Bible is the only sufficient authority,—yet, in the whole twenty-four columns, containing nearly twenty-seven thousand words, there are to be found but twelve references to Scripture texts, while even these are not all relevant to the subject,—certainly not as understood by the writer,—and all are to be found in three of the articles, leaving nine without even an attempt at Scriptural substantiation of the views presented, or expression of Biblical foundation for the thoughts they embody. The treatment accorded the subject of the day, Easter, and its celebration, is superficial and purely sentimental,—scarcely excepting, even, one historical article entitled, "Easter Holidays in Old England," in which the author in one of his first paragraphs destroys the religious significance of the festival, to those who profess Christianity, by the source from which he draws the origin of the day and its observance. He says:

> The celebration of Easter is of very ancient origin. Some authorities derive the name from the Saxon *Oster* (to rise). Others trace it to *Eoster*, or *Easter*, a Saxon goddess, whose rites were kept at the opening of spring. Sloane suggests that the Saxon *Eoster*, the English *Star* and the Hebrew *Ashtaroth*, all came from a long-forgotten original—perhaps Phoenician—signifying fire.
>
> A very old English Easter custom was the extinguishing of all the household fires toward the end of Passion Week, to be relit on Easter, even from consecrated flints preserved in the churches especially for the purpose; from regard to the popular belief that holy fire thus obtained would avert the evil effects of tempests, thunder-storms, etc.—the flint signifying Christ and the fire the

Holy Ghost. In this connection was the invariable custom of extinguishing the fires in the old baronial halls.

The Festival, a publication dating as far back as 1511, says of the latter domestic usage:

"This day [Easter] is called in many places *Goddes Sondaye;* you know well that it is the matter at this daye to the fyre out of the hall, and black Wynter brandes, and all thynges that is foul with fume and smoke shall be done awaye, and there the fyre was, shall be gayly arrayed with fayer flowers, and strewed with grene rysshes all aboute."

The article makes reference to various ancient customs more or less puerile and ridiculous and illustrates them by antiquarian excerpts from records in the Tower and writings of early English Churchmen, and closes with a reference to the poetry of Easter, giving several quotations from Dean Milman, Matthew Bridges, Mrs. Hemans, and others.

All this, from the standpoint of literary interest and curiosity is quite interesting and delightful. The same thing can be said of the columns of dissertation upon the subject of "Immortality" when viewed as an exhibition of able and subtle intellectual gymnastics, the futility of which is so well understood that there is no attempt on the part of the reader to take it seriously. Yet the thoughtful reader, who possesses a true Biblical intelligence upon the subject, cannot but be impressed with a profound sadness at so much earnest feeling, capacity of thought and expression, and mental ability dissipated upon things which, so far as the eternities are concerned, are more baseless than the fabric of a dream.

Is it not time to call a halt on such investigations in the realm of theory and philosophy so called, however beautifully rounded the phrases, and powerful the rhetoric in which they are embodied, when the result is nothing more reassuring than such statements as this:

On every side, from beginning to end, this subject is beset with difficulties; but altogether I am of the opinion that there is scien-

tific warrant for the assertion of post-mortem personal self-consciousness in identity with ante-mortem self-consciousness.

Or this from another article:

> There is no conclusive evidence of the truth of the doctrine of immortality. . . . There is no conclusive evidence that the doctrine of immortality is false. We must then deal with the doctrine as an unverified hypothesis.

Or this from yet another, which clearly expresses the error into which the religious mind must fall when it gives itself to the guidance of human philosophy on this subject.

> Death, then, is the transition from a life in God here to a better and purer life in God. It is birth rather than death.

So philosophy ever reverses Biblical teaching, continually reiterating in varied form that early falsehood of the father of lies,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

Through belief in this came sin, sorrow, and death into the world. An error which has been fraught with such results is not, then, likely to be harmless now.

A very few scriptures decide the question,—and decide it fully, definitely, without leaving room for quibble or question.

Immortality can only come from its possessor,

1 Timothy 6
[16] [Him] who only has immortality;

–it is the gift of God, and man can attain to it only through Christ:

1 John 5
[12] He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

1 Corinthians 15

[22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.
[23] But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.
[51] Behold I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed,
[52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:...
[54] 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.

10. Sudden Death

Present Truth, January 28, 1897

IT IS SAID that the petition in the *Book of Common Prayer*, "From sudden death, good Lord, deliver us," is not in these days a heart-felt prayer in the mouths of the thoughtful and intelligent, but that it is now felt that death comes in its most acceptable form when it instantly and almost unexpectedly removes its victim from amidst the customary surroundings and pursuits of daily life.

The prevalence, in these days, of sudden death while yet seemingly in the vigor of life, may perhaps account, partially, for this. Men have become accustomed to seeing noted persons, of great activity and renowned achievements, depart this life without even time to say farewell. So, as in more warlike days death on the battle-field was the only way by which a career could be nobly ended; now, a man must, to fittingly close a life of such strenuous effort as the spirit of the age demands, drop down and die in the harness. The battle-fields have changed, the spirit is the same. It is unnatural for man to die suddenly, without the progressive signs of the approach of age. Such death must always be the result of some contest against nature, carried so far that at last the life powers suddenly succumb without warning. Certainly this result should not be desired, because the means by which it is attained are not desirable.

A sudden end of life while in seeming strength is an evidence of unwise waste of physical resources somewhere. Both brain and body have been overdriven, overstimulated, by methods more or less mistaken, and for purposes more or less noble, or often too sadly ignoble. No! the desire to be delivered from sudden death, and to pass away at a ripe and peaceful old age, was the most calm, and sane, and reasonable wish. The lives and deaths of many of England's truly greatest men remind us that this is true.

11. Raratongan Superstition

Present Truth, February 4, 1897

THE power of superstitions about ghosts is a force that has frequently to be reckoned with at home. It is therefore not surprising that among more unenlightened peoples it is a more apparent evil. Ignorance of the Bible fosters these notions here, and is making the people an easy prey to the very real deceptions of Spiritualism. The same ignorance of what the Bible says of man's nature and of Satan's miracle-working power is responsible for the terrors that attend death in the minds of simple native tribes. The *Medical Missionary* gives the following account of common experiences which come to our Society's medical missionary in Raratonga, in the South Pacific Ocean:

> A boy was very sick, and the doctor was sent for in the afternoon. At bedtime he called again, and the doors were tightly closed as soon as he was admitted. The family, ten or twelve in number, were assembling to sleep on the floor of the boy's room, which was only about 12×14 feet. The doctor remonstrated with the father, and urged him to set at least one door open; but he would not consent, saying he was afraid of the *turuma* (ghost), and did not dare to open the doors. "Do you wonder," adds Dr. Caldwell, "that I want a house in which to care for the sick?"
>
> "This belief in and fear of evil spirits," he says further, "is not uncommon, even among church-members; though when they are questioned closely, and shown that faith in God excludes fear of devils, they seem ashamed of their fear of the *turumas*, and sometimes deny it.
>
> "When they bury their dead, they used to put into the graves the personal belongings of the deceased. I have known even the iron bedstead of the woven-wire springs to be buried in the grave with the dead. This seems to be a vestige of the heathen custom of providing for the future comfort of the spirit of the dead."

12. The Spread of a Great Delusion

Present Truth, November 25, 1897

SPIRITUALISM not only grows in the number of its avowed adherents, but its principles make way rapidly. All along Spiritualists have rightly claimed that nearly all Christendom is permeated with the principle; and now they are jubilant at the increasing disposition outside the ranks to apply the principle. They now claim General Booth, of the Salvation Army, as a clairvoyant, one of their organs quoting the following paragraph by Mr. Booth from the *War Cry* of Oct. 2:

> Through all my history my personal intercourse with the spirit-world has been but limited. I have not been favored with many visions, and it is but seldom that I dream dreams that impart either pleasure or profit, and yet I have a spiritual communion with the departed saints that is not without both satisfaction and service, and specially of late the memories of those with whom my heart has had the choicest communion in the past, if not the very beings themselves, have come in upon me as I have sat at my desk, or lain wakeful in the night season. Among these, one form, true to her mission, comes more frequently than all besides, assuring me of her continued partnership in my struggle for the temporal and eternal salvation of the multitudes—and that is my blessed, my beautiful wife!

God knows the need of comfort for hearts sore at the loss of loved ones. He says that we are not to sorrow for those who fall asleep in Jesus, even as others sorrow who have no hope.[269]

> **1 Thessalonians 4**
> [16] 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:
> [17] Then we which are alive and remain shall he caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever he with the Lord.

[269] *1 Thessalonians* 4:13.

[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Here is the comfort which the "God of all comfort"[270] gives. And so the "blessed hope"[271] of the coming of the Lord means not only meeting Him who has loved us and saved us, but the joyful meeting with those who "sleep in Jesus."[272]

But the truth of the doctrines of the second advent and the resurrection has been so thrust aside that people refuse to take God's comfort. This rejection of the comfort of God opens the way for the evil one to come with his "signs and lying wonders"[273] brought out from his armory in these last days to deceive the unwary.[274] He is cunningly laying his snares for the final deception of the world. The Word says of the departed that they have no…

Ecclesiastes 9
[6] …more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun,

–but the enemy persuades men that it is not so. Do they not see manifestations, and can they not believe the evidence of their eyes and senses? The manifestations are here right enough, but if they believe the evidence of their senses rather than the "more sure Word"[275] they will surely be deceived. The world has to deal with "the spirits of devils working miracles,"[276] and in Spiritualism Satan is manifesting His miracle-working power.

All the phenomena of Spiritualism, absolutely contradict what the Word says of the nature of man and the state of the dead, while they are absolutely in perfect accord with what the Word says of the deception of the last days. There can be no mistake in taking God at His Word; there can be nothing else than mistake and deception in following that which is contrary to the Word.

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[270] *2 Corinthians* 1:3.
[271] *Titus* 2:13.
[272] *1 Thessalonians* 4:14.
[273] *2 Thessalonians* 2:8-13.
[274] *Revelation* 12:12.
[275] *2 Peter* 1:19.
[276] *Revelation* 16:14.

13. A Question of Spiritualism

Present Truth, May 26, 1898

A CORRESPONDENT, who seems to be wavering on the verge of Spiritualism, sends us the following quotation from *2 Corinthians* 12:2-4, together with his opinion of it:

> Paul says: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body I cannot tell; God knows;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body or whether out of the body I cannot tell: God knows;) how that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."
>
> The above seems to prove (in my opinion) that Paul was used to holding converse with disembodied spirits, insomuch that he did not go to the trouble to ascertain in this instance as to whether this *man* were bodied or disembodied. –*J. E. B.*

In this case, as in every other, the exact statement of the text is worth any number of opinions about it. By noting the text carefully, we learn,

1. That the man to whom the apostle refers was none other than himself, for in verse 7 he drops the use of the third person, and says:

> **2 Corinthians 12**
> [7] Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

Therefore,

2. There is no hint in the text of any communication with disembodied spirits. Indeed, the text makes no mention of spirits of any kind. Paul, in the ecstasy of vision could not tell in what condition he was when he was given these revelations.

3. Here is not the returning of departed spirits to this earth. On the contrary, the *man*—not a dead man, but the living apostle—was himself caught up into paradise. This is as opposite to Spiritualism as anything could be.

Thus it appears that the text does not at all warrant our correspondent's opinion. In reading the Bible, it is necessary to keep our opinions out, for our opinions are as much inferior to the Bible as the earth is lower than the heavens.[277] If we propose to follow our opinions, it is not necessary to mix the Bible up with them, for we can form opinions enough without it. The Bible is not given us to help us in forming opinions, but to teach us truth. It is absolutely to take the place of our opinions. We are to forsake our thoughts, and allow the Lord to give us His thoughts instead; and in order to get His thoughts, we must adhere most closely to His Word.

[277] *Isaiah* 55:9.

14. A Great Delusion

Present Truth, June 30, 1898

THE jubilee of modern spiritualism is being celebrated this year. At the International Congress, which opened on the 22nd, the President is reported as saying that he confidently anticipated the enrollment in their ranks of the Society for Psychical Research at no distant date. In his experience he had seen material objects moved without any visible physical contact, and had also seen writing done by invisible intelligent beings—on one occasion over 900 words been written in six seconds. In addition to this he had seen materialized forms gradually built up in the middle of a well-lighted room, apparently out of the side of the medium, who was all the time distinctly visible. He had, moreover, scores of times seen, touched, and held converse with beings who were certainly not present in the flesh. Some people require palpable proofs of spiritualistic theories; but, to the convinced spiritualist, these phenomena constituted a mere A.B.C.

The fact that these wonders are wrought by Spiritualism, while it proves the existence of invisible beings, does not verify the common idea of consciousness in death. The Scripture speaks of the "spirits of devils working miracles"[278] which deceive the whole world, and warns us,

> **Isaiah 8**
> [19] And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits…should not a people seek unto their God?
> [20] To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

Judged by this test the "invisible, intelligent beings" above referred to are clearly seen to be spirits of darkness. If those who are now rejoicing in the spread of modern spiritualism would but seek to the law and to the testimony, they might know that they have…

[278] *Revelation* 16:14.

2 Corinthians 4
[4] ...the god of this world,

Ephesians 2
[2] ...the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

Instead of the success of the movement being an occasion for jubilee, it should rather lead to distress of mind on the part of those connected with it and prayerful watching in the case of all.

15. Immortality and Eternal Life

Present Truth, November 10, 1898
Original title: Back Page

"Immortality on God's Terms: Endless Life in Christ the Lord."

THIS is the title of a little book of about ninety pages, by George P. McKay, pastor of Devonshire Square Church, London. Published by H. R, Allinson, 30 Paternoster Row. The nature of the book is fully and accurately indicated by the title, and the subject is more comprehensively dealt with than one would expect to find in so small compass. We welcome it as a step in the direction of taking the Bible at just what it says, instead of "interpreting" it to make it agree with ideas borrowed from pagan philosophy.

There is one thing which the author does not make clear, and that is, the distinction between immortality and eternal life. Very few pay any heed to this distinction, taking it for granted that they are synonymous terms, and thereby the way for people to accept the truth is made more difficult. Whether these terms are regarded as the same by the author of this little book, we cannot say with certainty from reading it; but the mention of it gives opportunity for a brief statement that may help many in their reading of the Bible.

The terms "immortality" and "eternal life" indicate two entirely different things; and it is a matter of great practical importance, and not a mere theological quibble, to note the distinction. Mortality and immortality apply solely to the body, meaning corruptible and incorruptible, while eternal life is never essentially any part of man, but is the manifestation of the Divine Spirit.

All men are mortal. The Bible tells us this, and it is all too patent to our own senses. Mortal means corruptible, decaying, subject to death; immortal means of course just the opposite. Now that men are subject to decay and death, is amply demonstrated by every cemetery, by every physician's sign, and by ev-

ery man's own body. Immortality, incorruptibility, the condition of absolute immunity from death, so that the lapse of time will make no change in the body, is bestowed only at the coming of the Lord and the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15
51 We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
52 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.
53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
54 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.

This portion of Scripture alone is amply sufficient to show that all men, Christians as well as sinners, are now mortal. It is only at the resurrection of the just that men are made so that they cannot die any more,[279]...

Revelation 21
4 ...and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.

With eternal life, however, it is different.

1 John 5
11 This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
12 He that has the Son has life [RV: "the life"], and he that has not the Son has not life.

This record which God has given concerning His Son, is so plain and positive, that nobody can disbelieve it without charging God with lying.[280]

Christ is the life. He says,

[279] *Luke* 20:35-36.
[280] *1 John* 5:10.

John 14
[6] I am the way, the truth, and the life.

And His life is eternal;

1 John 1
[2] For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

This life is God's own life, and is superior to everything. Temptation cannot make any impression upon it, nor can it be in any way affected by sin or disease. It is this life, and this life only, that enables a person to resist temptation, and to live free from sin. The possession of it by faith is what makes a man a new creature.

This life is freely offered to all. Not only is it offered, it is given, but very few will…

1 Timothy 6
[12] …lay hold on eternal life.

Since it is the life of God, it cannot be had apart from God. God in Christ must dwell in the heart by faith, in order that the life may be there. This life, the life of Jesus, is manifested in the mortal flesh of those who are yielded to Him.[281] The Holy Spirit received in His fullness, bringing the personal presence of Christ into the soul, is eternal life.

John 17
[3] This is life eternal, that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent.

We can know God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent to reveal Him, only as He dwells in the heart.

This is the life of righteousness. Circumstances of life, or conditions of the body, have no effect on it, since it is Gods own life. Even death itself cannot affect it. The life, being hid with Christ in God, will continue the same even though the man die. The life

[281] *2 Corinthians* 4:11.

may be laid down, and taken again, as in the case of Jesus. So long as a man keeps the faith, he keeps the life, and if he dies in the faith, he sleeps in Jesus, and awakes in life. The life is his—held for him—while he is sleeping in the grave, just as surely as though he were awake. When the Lord comes, then the eternal life that we have possessed in our moral bodies, and which has been our righteousness, will be ours in our immortal bodies, and will be our righteousness to all eternity.

The trouble over this question has all arisen from people supposing that they were God. Men do not fear God, and give glory to Him,[282] but assume that they live and move by some inherent power. They think that they have life in themselves. Everything would be right if they would but remember that man is in himself nothing—

Isaiah 40
17 ...less than nothing, and vanity.

He is but dust, into which God has been pleased to breathe His own life. Man has sinned, but God has in mercy continued His life to us, that we may be saved from sin. If we appreciate the gift, and acknowledge it as a gift from God, so that He can exercise it in His own way, it will at last work out immortality for us; and the immortality and the life will always he held directly from Him.

Romans 11
36 For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

It is evident that the love of Christ does not warm our own hearts, if we have nothing to say to others of its power, if we do nothing to kindle in the hearts of others the love of God.

[282] *Revelation* 14:7.

16. Spirits of Devils

Present Truth, June 22, 1899

DR. HYSLOP, of the Columbia University, has announced that he expects in the course of a year to prove scientifically that there is a conscious existence, after death. He has been making experiments through a medium, and claims to have received a large number of *bona fide*[283] communications from departed spirits.

This is an illustration of the science, falsely so called, which leads men astray. To study this subject in a scientific manner, without relying on the guidance of the only book which is based on an accurate knowledge of the facts, is impossible. God tells us what is the condition of the dead. He created men that they might live, and therefore the tree of life was placed in the garden of Eden. The death, which comes by transgression, was never planned for by God. It is an absolute undoing of His work, and whoever becomes subject to death, returns to the dust from whence he came, while the breath by which God made him a living soul,[284] returns to its Giver.[285]

Thus we read of the state of the dead, that there is no consciousness nor existence about it, any more than there is in the death which befalls the beasts.[286]

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] The dead know not anything.

Their thoughts perish.[287] Yet there is an almost universal idea that men live in death, that the essential part of the life continues in unbroken and conscious existence, in spite of the scripture

[283] *Bona fide:* Latin, meaning "in good faith."
[284] *Genesis* 2:7.
[285] *Ecclesiastes* 12:7.
[286] *Ecclesiastes* 3:19-20.
[287] *Psalm* 146:4.

statements that death is a sleep, and, without a resurrection, those that sleep have perished.[288]

The receiving of communications from another world, which is neither peopled with angels nor departed dead, is no new thing. In the first recorded instance of such communication, we discover the secret source of the belief in a conscious existence after death, and learn also what manner of spirits these are which will help Dr. Hyslop to demonstrate that men live after death.

Genesis 3
[4] And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die.

Why should Satan seek to convince men that they cannot perish? Because he hates both God and men. He knows that God is the Fountain of life, and that there is blessedness for men in the recognition of the fact that it is in Him we live, and that apart from Him we can do absolutely nothing.[289]

Psalm 66
[9] [He] holds our soul in life, and suffers not our feet to be moved.

If men can be persuaded to forgot their dependence upon God, they will fall an easy prey to Satan's temptations, and so the wily enemy of souls set out by promising Eve that not only would she not perish, but by treading the path of disobedience to God's command, she would become as a god.

The same deception has taken a firm hold of men's minds to this present time, so that even Christians believe that death, which is the result of transgression, the wages of sin, opens to them a much fuller life than they can have on earth, and that by death they shall become as gods. Thus, being deceived into thinking that death is better than life, men feel that sin cannot be a very terrible thing. So the serpent gains his point. His fallen angels find means of communicating with those who live on the earth, and by their knowledge of secrets, pass themselves off as

[288] *1 Corinthians* 15:17-18.
[289] *Acts* 17:28.

the spirits of departed friends. The common teaching of the churches has prepared the way for just such a deception. Taking everything for gospel which is told them, by the spirits, men are led by Satan into every error that he presents to them, and in this way he is deceiving myriads, and carrying out his hellish purposes.

Spiritualism is one of the perils of the last days. By its wonder-working manifestations, and spurious communications, the spirits of devils unite the world against God, and thus prepare men to be destroyed at the appearing of Christ.[290] That day is hastening greatly, and Satan is fastening his deceptions upon all who will receive them. When it is scientifically proved that departed friends can communicate with their loved ones on earth, then many will be convinced, and will hail the discovery as a boon. Satan will take care that the communications are such as to please the carnal heart, and lead men on to perdition.

Let no one think that this matter is comparatively insignificant, and need not be taken seriously. Dr. Hyslop is not a man of no importance in the scientific world. It is said of him,

> The professor is not one of the common herd of spiritualists, but is regarded by his colleagues as a sound-minded, keen, scientific man. He is being helped in his investigations by other well-known psychologists.

The only safeguard is to believe the Word of God on every point, irrespective of what anyone else may do, and let it work our sanctification.

> **Isaiah 8**
> [19] And 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?
> [20] To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

[290] *Revelation* 13:13-17; 14:1; 16:13-15.

17. Investigating Spiritualism

Present Truth, July 6, 1899

THE *New York Independent*, which is one of the oldest and most influential religions journals in the United States, has announced its sympathy with Spiritualism. In an editorial entitled, "May Spiritualism be Investigated?" it boldly takes the position that it should be, and commends the labors of the Harvard professors, who have through their investigations become quite converted to Spiritualism. The editor, after stating the almost universal belief in…

> …the continued existence after death of the spirits of human beings,

–says:

> It no longer seems as absurd to imagine that we may possibly communicate with the spirits of the dead as it did twenty years ago.

The *Independent*, therefore, pronounces the investigation of Spiritualism not only legitimate, but necessary.

> "Well isn't it so? Isn't it lawful and necessary to investigate all things?"
>
> "Certainly not!"
>
> "But doesn't the Bible tell us to prove all things?"

Yes, it does; but that does not justify every man in drinking all the whiskey he caught hold of, to see if it is really intoxicating. It doesn't warrant a man in putting his hand in a viper's nest, to see if its bite is fatal. There are different ways of investigating things. A man may most thoroughly investigate Spiritualism without ever coming in contact with a medium; and that is the only safe way of investigating it.

God's word is light. It supplies the test by which everything is to be tried. It tells us to "try the spirits,"[291] but does not tell us to go and experiment with them.

Isaiah 8
[20] To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

The man who has never attended a Spiritualist meeting, nor conversed with a medium, but who knows God's Word, has a far better understanding of it than the wisest professor in the world can have, who goes into the midst of it to investigate it, without the Bible. The man who stands at the mouth of a cave and flashes a search light in, will learn far more of its interior than the man will who goes into its murky recesses without a light.

One thing is sufficient to condemn Spiritualism utterly, and that is that it denies the very foundation of the Gospel—life only in the cross of Christ. It not only denies that, but is itself a denial of it. The very foundation of Spiritualism is the teaching that every man has life in himself, regardless of Christ. In fact, Spiritualism is a repudiation of the atoning blood of Christ. So Christianity and Spiritualism are fundamentally opposed. They are as opposite as light and darkness. We can well understand how men of the world, who know not Christ, can talk about investigating Spiritualism; but for those who profess His name, and who have known something of His saving power; to recommend an investigation of it, indicates a terrible departure from the faith. They would be shocked at the proposal to investigate Paganism with a view to a possible acceptance of it, and yet a knowledge of the first principles of the Gospel is sufficient to teach anybody that Spiritualism is only Paganism.

Proverbs 4 [RV]
[14] Enter not into the path of the wicked, and walk not in the way of evil men.
[15] Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass on.

[291] *1 John* 4:1.

18. Prayers for the Dead Against the Gospel

Present Truth, May 3, 1900

IT IS a very striking sign of the Romeward tendency of the times, that one of the leading Protestant papers in England has editorially defended prayers for the dead. The *Christian World*, of April 5, says:

> When questions agitated by our forefathers come up again for review it is discovered that the old fight cannot be repeated, and for the reason that all the conditions have changed. This has happened to Protestants in their modern view of communion with the departed, including the question of Prayers for the Dead. The early Reformation and Puritan position was founded on opposition to the Roman doctrine of Purgatory.

It adds that this opposition was a necessity in former times, became the doctrine was used as a means of filling the coffers of the church, and then continues:

> Thoughtful minds are now asking whether the sixteenth century onslaught on Purgatory and priestcraft did not, in the rush, carry away with it some precious things that it is time now to restore. What is certain is, that in its zeal against a flagrant abuse, the Reformed churches left themselves with a somewhat bald idea of the communion of the dead. There is running through the literature of the early church a sense of fellowship with the departed, and a whole attitude and culture of the soul connected with it, that our later time has somehow lost. It is in the Greek Fathers as well as in the Latin.

Then after quoting some Protestant "divines" in favor of the practice, it asks:

> And why should we not pray for the dead? What is prayer, in the best conception of it, but the following of those we love with aspiration and affection, with desire for their highest good, with the whole best emotion of our soul? What barbarous infidelity has taught us that death interposes a limit to this out-going? The

notion that those who now rest in God are, because of that, beyond the reach or need of prayer is heathen and not Christian.

Passing by the positive Scripture statements that "the dead know not anything,"[292] and that they are all unconsciously sleeping in the dust of the earth,[293] waiting the Judgment decision upon their cases, which are irrevocably fixed at death,[294] we have only to read the reason that is given for prayers for the dead to see how utterly opposed it is to the Gospel of Christ. In a report of one of the Lenten sermons in Westminster Abbey, published in the *Church Times*, of March 30, we read this:

> Take that matter which is more or less exercising people's thoughts at the moment—prayers for the dead. They were associated with vast abuses in the Middle Ages; no doubt about it. The reaction was so strong that in our church the explicit mention of prayers for the dead was suppressed in the revision of the Prayer Book. But time has gone on; and it is found that this desire to pray for our dead lies deep-rooted in our spiritual instinct, in the heart of love in us. The more we think of what we know about the departed the more we realize that they must be imperfect, that they have not reached their consummation. Surely we must pray for their perfection.

That paragraph shows that prayers for the dead are used on utter ignorance of the Gospel, and of the nature of…

Romans 3
[24] …the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

It assumes that a certain amount of time, and a round of ceremonies and works are necessary to perfection, whereas the Gospel teaches that we have redemption through the blood of Christ,[295] that…

[292] *Ecclesiastes* 9:5.
[293] *Daniel* 12:2.
[294] *Hebrews* 9:27.
[295] *Ephesians* 1:7; *Colossians* 1:14; *Hebrews* 9:12.

1 John 1

[9] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

As soon as the person confesses his sin, he is cleansed from every trace of it. It is only through "the blood of the everlasting covenant"[296] that we are made perfect. There are many errors afloat, and the gross darkness of Egypt is spreading over the people; but whoever knows the Lord as his personal Saviour, and who continues in His Word, will be kept free from the belief and practice of falsehood.

[296] *Hebrews* 13:20.

1901

1. The Nature of Man

Present Truth, March 7, 14, 21, 28, 1901[297]
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. The Nature of Man

> I have heard a prayer by a minister, in reference to the death of our late Queen Victoria, in which he said that she is now reigning with Christ in heaven, in the highest sense of the term. I believe there is perfect harmony in Scripture, and although I have asked from a number of fellow-disciples an explanation of *Luke* 23:43; *Philippians* 1:21-23; *2 Corinthians* 5:6-8, in the light that the dead are in a state of unconscious sleep, I have not as yet had it explained clearly. Can you help to remove the darkness? I shall be obliged if you can give an explanation of these passages.

CHRIST is the Light of the world, and it is "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ,"[298] who is the image of God, which, shining in us, removes all darkness. It is not by any dogmatic statements as to the meaning of certain isolated texts that we have come to the knowledge of the truth, even as set forth in those texts, but by the revelation of Jesus himself. This is preeminently true as regards the subject before us, which is one of life and death, since the light which He gives is...

John 8
12 ...the light of life.

John 1
4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Therefore if you will kindly consent to defer the direct consideration of the texts referred to, until we have first had a little talk about the Gospel of life, I think you will be able to see the light in

[297] This is the first in a series of five articles which answer this one question, and deal with the topic of man's mortality. The five are titled: "The Nature of Man," "From Death to the Resurrection," "Departing and Being With Christ," "Absent From the Body, and Present With the Lord," and "The Evil of Spiritualism."
[298] *2 Corinthians* 4:4.

them yourself, when we come to them, without very much explanation.

The One Object of Christ's Coming

1 Timothy 1
[15] This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

This truth is worthy of "all acceptation;" that is, it is worthy of acceptation by all people, and not only so, but it is worthy of acceptation to the exclusion of everything else. Nothing else is worthy of acceptance; everything that is of any value is included in this. All men ought, with the Apostle Paul, to be content to know nothing,

1 Corinthians 2
[2] ...save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

The sole desire of each soul should be,

Philippians 3
[10] That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death.

Psalm 27
[4] One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple.

Jesus said that the work of the Comforter is to convince the world of sin and of righteousness.[299] Sin is in the world.

Romans 5
[12] By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Sin is a horrible thing in the world, and its presence means death and desolation. It separates man from God,[300] and heaven,

[299] *John* 16:8.
[300] *Isaiah* 59:2.

and turns the earth into a hell. The one grand problem of the ages is how to get rid of sin, and nothing else is worth the attention of any mortal.

Saved by His Life

James 1
[15] Sin when it is finished, brings forth death.

Death came into the world by sin, because it is in sin.

1 Corinthians 15
[56] The sting of death is sin.

This must not be forgotten, that sin and death are inseparable. Christ came into the world to save sinners, and He does it by giving life.

Romans 5
[10] If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

So although the sole thing for which Christ came into the world was to save sinners, it is likewise true that He came for no other purpose than to give life.

John 14
[6] I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

John 6
[48] I am the Bread of life.
[51] I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 10
[10] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

1 John 3
[5] You know that He was manifested to take away our sin; and in Him is no sin.

He takes away our sin by imparting to us continually His own sinless life.

1 John 1
[7] If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

The blood is life,

Hebrews 9
[22] ...and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Grace Antedates Sin

When the earth was new, when...

Genesis 1
[31] God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good,

–the Garden of Eden was the chief feature of the earth, and the central thing in the Garden was the tree of life.[301] So long as Adam remained obedient to the commandments of God, he had perfect life; but of the forbidden tree God said to him,

Genesis 2
[17] In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die.

Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and instantly the sentence of death was in them. But for the grace of God in Christ, which antedated the creation of the world, they would have died instantly, never to see life again; that would have put a summary and eternal end to their existence; but while their fall was a total fall, they fell into "the everlasting arms,"[302] and life was continued to them in order that they might have another trial of it, to see if they would choose it.

Sinful Means Mortal

If it now be asked,

[301] *Genesis* 2:8-9.
[302] *Deuteronomy* 33:27.

"What is the nature of man?"

–the reply must be,

"He is sinful by nature."

Since the fall of Adam all have been…

Galatians 4 [RV]
[4] …born under the law.

Mark 7
[21] From within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,
[22] Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:
[23] All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

In the flesh…

Romans 7
[18] …dwells no good thing,

–therefore "the flesh" is but a synonym for corruption. So because man is sinful by nature, he is by nature mortal.

The Incorruptible Life

In Christ is no sin, and therefore in Him is life.[303] He can lay down His life, and take it again. He swallows up death in His own life, just as He could take all the sins of the world upon himself, and yet never have the least trace of sin upon Him. His life is the light of men, and lights every man that comes into the world.[304]

Titus 2
[11] The grace of God that brings salvation to all men has appeared…

–in the life of Christ, so that whoever will accept the Son of God has the eternal life. Although…

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[303] *John* 1:4.
[304] *John* 1:4, 9.

Romans 5
[18] ...judgment passed upon all men to condemnation,...the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Acts 17
[28] In Him we live and move, and have our being;

–His life in us bears the curse that has come on us, and that is why we still have an existence although sin, and death as a consequence, is in us. The life of Jesus is to a degree manifested in the mortal flesh even of those who do not acknowledge Him.

No Life Apart from Christ

1 John 5
[11] This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.
[12] He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

James 4
[14] What is your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away.

The millions who go about their daily business, seemingly full of life, have no life in reality; the life of the Lord is lent them for a little season, to see if they appreciate it enough to lay hold on it; but if God should gather unto himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would turn again unto dust.[305] There are many who do not know the Lord, having never yet heard of Him; others have heard of Him, but have not yet seen the life that is manifested; many revile Him, and say that they want nothing from Him, yet He knows that they do not know what they are talking about, and waits the time when they will understand and know Him; and there are doubtless even now many who have definitely and finally rejected the Lord as their Master, yet even these are suffered to live, as monuments of the forbearance and longsuffering of the Lord. But the time will come

[305] *Job* 34:14.

when every person will have definitely and understandably decided either for or against the Lord, and then only those who have become one with Him will live; all others…

Obadiah 1
[16] …will be as though they had not been.

The Fountain of Life

Let us put the case in another way, and then the truth of this statement will be more apparent. Remember always that the great plague to be got rid of is sin, and that sin and death are one and inseparable, so that:

Ezekiel 18
[4] The soul that sins it shall die,

–or, which is the same thing, the *life* that sins, it shall cease to be. There is no way possible for sin to be exterminated except by death. This is set forth in the words already quoted:

Hebrews 9
[22] Without shedding of blood is no remission.

Now let the fact once and for ever fixed in your mind, that with God is…

Psalm 36
[9] …the fountain of life.

He is *the life*. His name is I AM. He is "the living God," the self-existent One, and this is that which distinguishes Him from all false gods.[306] The possession of life is a characteristic of the Godhead. The King of kings and Lord of lords is a one…

1 Timothy 6
[16] Who only has immortality.

He not only possesses life, but He *is* life. If there were in the universe any other being possessing life in himself, and not either directly or indirectly deriving it from God, then that other being

[306] *Jeremiah* 10:6-12.

would likewise be God, and not subject to God. There would be two Gods, and there would inevitably be a question between them as to the extent of their respective dominions, and which of them should be supreme. Such a state of things is an impossibility; but there is a being—Satan—who has claimed to be God, and who disputes God's right to rule, and denies that God has any authority over him.

Life the Attribute of God Only

I repeat, then, that life is the attribute of God, and whoever claims to have life in himself, claims to be a god.

Romans 8
[10] The Spirit is life because of righteousness,

–so that for one to claim to have life in himself is the same as the claim to have no sin, or to be able to free himself from sin. But no one has nor can have righteousness from himself, since no one has life of himself.

Every creature and every created thing springs from and depends upon God. Lucifer, now Satan, who originated sin, as well as men who have followed Satan in the sin, depend upon God for the life with which the sin is committed. The man who blasphemes God and denies His existence, does so with the breath of life which God breathes into his nostrils. God says,

Isaiah 43
[24] You have made me to serve with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities.

It was God's life that was perverted by Lucifer from its rightful use, and employed for sin and rebellion; and there has never been a single sin committed, except with the life of God.

It is for this reason that God, in His infinite mercy and goodness...

2 Corinthians 5
[19] ...was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imput-

ing their trespasses on to them.

Inasmuch as sin was committed with God's life, although through no fault of God's, He assumed the responsibility for it, and gave up His life in order to be freed from it, to demonstrate the fact that He has no complicity with it, and to save all who will consent to die with Him.

God can save those who die with Him, for He alone can die and yet live. He lays down His life solely to take it again, so that all who die with Him are sure to live with Him. The cross means the resurrection, so that…

[17] If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

But since God has given up His life, because of sin, it follows that whoever refuses to acknowledge absolute dependence on God for life and righteousness, cuts himself off from the resurrection life, and so perishes.

1 John 2
[17] The world passes away, and the lust thereof; but he that does the will of God abides for ever.

From all these things it is evident:

1) That life comes only from God, since righteousness comes from Him alone.
2) That sin must eventually cease to be, since God has laid down His life.

To claim immortality for the sinner, is to claim that God is defeated in His fight against sin.

1 John 3
[8] For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

To say that sin and sinners will continue to exist throughout eternity anywhere in God's universe, is to deny the efficacy of the

atonement; it is to say that God failed in that which He undertook. Outside of and away from God there is absolutely no life.

Next week we shall continue the consideration of the subject, coming direct to some of the texts which trouble our friend.

2. From Death to the Resurrection

Present Truth, March 14, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. From Death to the Resurrection

LAST week we learned from the Scriptures that sin is death, and that just as there is no righteousness apart from Christ, so there is no life apart from Him. To claim the possession of life, even for a single moment, other than that of Christ, is to claim to be sinless in one's self,—that one's own ways are perfect,—in short, that one is God.

No Immortality for Sinners

This makes it apparent that there is no immortality for any sinner. Christ came…

> **Hebrews 9**
> [26] …to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,

–and to say that sin will not be completely put away, out of the universe, is to say that the object of His coming to earth has failed, that His sacrifice of himself is insufficient. If the monstrous and diabolical doctrine of an ever-burning hell were true, where lost sinners are condemned to perpetual and never-ending tortures which only the ingenuity of a devil could invent, and the constantly multiplying blasphemies of the victims only augment the sentence to be executed upon them, that would not simply be a blot on God's universe, but would be a standing witness to the weakness of His Government, and the failure of His attempt to purge His kingdom of rebellion.

No ranting infidel ever conceived so positive a denial of the atonement as is the doctrine of hell, which is so jealously cherished by so many professed Christians. The Gospel demands the utter extinction of sin, not merely from some of the inhabitants of the earth, but from the earth itself, and from every part of God's creation, so that God can say,

Revelation 21
[5] Behold, I make all things new;

–and this means that every creature who will not allow sin to be taken away from him must be taken away and destroyed with it. In the Gospel,

Romans 1
[17] The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
[18] For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man.

Where Only Eternity Can Be Spent

Evidence might be multiplied, but this is sufficient to show that so far as the time after the Judgment is concerned, the wicked must cease to be.

Obadiah
[15] For the day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as you have done, it shall be done unto you; their reward shall return upon their own head.
[16] For as you have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

In mission halls we often see the question,

"Where will you spend eternity?"

–but there is only one place where it can be spent, and that is in the bosom of God. He only is…

Psalm 90
[1] …our dwelling place in all generations.

Psalm 37
[37] Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.

The word "end" here is from the Hebrew word meaning *future, after time*. The future of the upright shall be peace. But the next verse continues:

Psalm 37
[38] But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the future of the wicked shall be cut off.

It is only to the righteous, that God gives a future, and He gives it to them because they abide in Him, who is…

Psalm 90
[2] …from everlasting to everlasting.

Death Is Separation From God

Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews,

John 8
[21] I go away and you shall seek me, and shall die in your sins; whither I go you cannot come.

A little while afterwards He said to His believing disciples:

John 13
[33] Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, you cannot come; so now I say to you.

Death is separation from God; the withdrawal of His life; but although we should all die, and become…

2 Samuel 14
[14] …as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again,…yet does He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him.

What are the means that He has devised? Jesus has told us, in the words of comfort which He spoke to the disciples, who were sorrowing because He had told them that He was going away from them and that they could not go with Him.

John 14

[1] Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me.
[2] 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.
[3] 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.

This assurance is repeated by the Spirit through the Apostle Paul, in writing to those who were sorrowing for dead friends.

1 Thessalonians 4

[15] 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 go before them which are asleep.
[16] 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:
[17] 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.
[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

From these texts we see that death does not take us to be with the Lord, but that His coming and the resurrection is the only means by which we can be with Him.

Job said,

Job 14

[14] If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.
[15] You shall call, and I will answer You; You will have a desire to the work of your hands.

Job 17

[13] If I wait, the grave is my house; I have made my bed in the darkness.
[14] I have said to corruption, You are my father.

This testimony concerning waiting in the grave, in corruption, till the Lord calls and the change comes, exactly coincides with that by the Apostle Paul:

> **1 Corinthians 15**
> [51] Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
> [52] 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.
> [53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

Death Is Not Conscious Existence

It is evident that there is no being present with the Lord between death and the resurrection, even for the righteous; let us then consider the necessary condition of the dead during that interval. This ought not to call for any consideration, and it would not if pagan philosophy and papal theology had not put darkness for light, and light for darkness, and robbed plain words of their meaning.

Death is the opposite of life; it is opposed to life in every particular. Think of all the characteristics of life, all the signs that indicate it, and you have the statement of what death is. To speak of consciousness in death is a contradiction of terms, as much so as to speak of alert wakefulness in deep sleep. There may be life without consciousness, but there can be no consciousness without life. When it is said that a man is conscious, it is not necessary to say that he is alive. So to say that a man has a conscious existence between death and the resurrection, is equivalent to saying that between death and the resurrection he is not dead. In short, to talk about conscious existence in death is nonsense. There can be no possible contradiction of terms that has less meaning.

Christ's Coming in His Kingdom

Within three days of His crucifixion, Jesus said to His disciples:

Matthew 25
[31] When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory:
[32] And before Him shall be gathered all the nations.

That time has not yet come. We still look for the second coming of Christ…

Matthew 24
[30] …with power and great glory,

–when He returns,

Luke 19
[15] …having received the kingdom;

–because now He has gone…

[12] …into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

It was not until the day of Pentecost, however, fifty days after the resurrection, that the disciples grasped the correct idea of the kingdom of Christ. When He was betrayed, and they saw that He suffered himself to be bound and led away by a hand of armed men,

Mark 14
[50] They all forsook Him, and fled.

Even after they had heard of His resurrection, they did not believe it, and thought that all hope of His ever having a kingdom was destroyed, saying mournfully:

Luke 24
[21] We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.

The Crucified Thief's Request

Is it any wonder, then, that one strong expression of faith, breaking forth like a gleam of light amid this darkness of unbelief, should have a prominent place in the sacred narrative. This poor

Jew, condemned as a malefactor at the same time that Jesus was, saw the rejection of Jesus, and all the despiteful usage to which He was subjected. All this had been foretold in prophecy, but none of those whose business it was to teach the Scriptures, not even those who had been with Jesus, saw in it the fulfillment of God's word, and the proof that Jesus was the Christ. But to the heart of this poor outcast criminal the Holy Spirit spoke. The patience of Jesus when He was beaten and spit upon, His meekness under the grossest insult, His gentle, fervent prayer that His murderers might be forgiven, all revealed the presence of the King, and he cried out,

Luke 23
[43] Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom!

What Christ Promised

Greater faith than this is rarely seen. He did not believe that this was the end of all; his faith grew out of that which discouraged more favored ones. But what was it that he asked for? To be remembered at the second coming of Christ, when He shall come in His glory, sitting on the throne of His glory. And his faith was not in vain; hanging on the cross, which was for the time being His throne, the outcast King said, according to the reading in our version:

Luke 23
[43] Verily I say unto You, Today shall you be with me in Paradise.

Did the thief go to be with Jesus in Paradise that day? Assuredly not; for Jesus himself did not go there. The tree of life, before the throne of God,

Revelation 2 [also 22:1-2]
[7] ...is in the midst of the Paradise of God,

–so that whoever goes to Paradise goes into the presence of God. Yet the third day after the crucifixion, after Jesus had risen from the dead, He said to Mary:

John 20

[17] Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Later in that same day He allowed the disciples to touch Him, showing that in the meantime He had ascended to heaven, and received from the Father the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted, and had returned.

Did Jesus disappoint the penitent thief? Not by any means, for he did not ask to be received into heaven that day, neither did Jesus promise that he should be with Him that day. What Jesus did assure him was that he certainly should yet be with Him in Paradise, and we may be sure that this promise will he fulfilled at the very time to which the thief looked forward, namely at the coming of Christ in glory.

I hear you say,

> "But the text says that Jesus told him that he should be with Him that day."

To this I reply that Jesus cannot deny himself; and when He says that He did not go to Paradise that day, we are bound to believe Him; and the more so, that it is contrary to nature and the Scripture for anybody to enter Paradise at death.

These words of Jesus to the thief are the stronghold of the doctrine that men go to heaven at death; yet the whole argument hangs on the punctuation, which is not a matter of inspiration, and is of comparatively recent date. In the Greek text, as written, there was no punctuation whatever and when it was inserted it was according to men's idea of the sense. Believing the pagan doctrine that there is really no death, those who put the marks into the text of the Bible; inserted a comma between "you" and "today," so as to make it seem to agree with their notion. They did this, without doubt, in all sincerity, supposing that Jesus meant to tell the thief that he should meet Him in Paradise that day. But if

they had known the truth, they would rather have inserted it after "today," thus making the sentence harmonize with all the circumstances in the case.

Again you say,

> "But in that case it would make the words of Jesus a question, and not a promise; thus: 'Verily I say unto you today, Shall you be with me in Paradise?' and that would be nonsense."

I must remind you that in the Greek, as in other ancient languages, the subject of a verb, when it is a personal pronoun, is not usually expressed, but is indicated by the *form* of the verb. Jesus did not ask a question, but made a direct, emphatic statement, thus:

> "Verily I say unto you today, You shall be with me in Paradise."

When? At the very time that the thief asked to be remembered when Christ comes into His kingdom. This does not change a single letter of the text, and makes the Scriptures perfectly harmonious.

Do you ask why it was necessary for Jesus to use the adverb "today"? The answer is obvious, when we consider the situation. The priests were mocking and reviling Him. They taunted Him, saying,

Matthew 27
40 If You be the Christ, come down from the cross,
42 ...and we will believe on You;

Mark 15
31 He saved others, himself He cannot save.

The other thief joined in the railing and said,

Luke 23
39 If You be the Christ, save yourself and us.

There was "none so poor to do Him reverence;"[307] everything

[307] William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act 3, Scene 2.

seemed to indicate that He was an imposter, or at least self-deceived. It looked as though God himself had forsaken Jesus, yet He was not cast down, and did not lose faith in His mission. His sublime faith answered to that of the suppliant, and He declared,

> "Verily I say unto you today, even today, in spite of the seemingly hopeless outlook, you shall have your request, you shall be with me in Paradise."

If He had meant what people commonly suppose He meant, He would have said,

> "You shall be with me in Paradise today;"

–but He did not mean that, and so did not say that.

Just a moment, before we close, let us contemplate this wondrous assurance. It is a sad fact that it has been so perverted, and that people do not derive the comfort from it that it was designed to convey to us. Since Jesus, even when He hung on the arose, despised and disowned, could so confidently assure a penitent sinner that he should be saved, what surpassing confidence we may have, when we come to Him as He is "highly exalted," sitting at…

Hebrews 8
[1] …the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

We know beyond the shadow of the possibility of a doubt, that He will not cast out the poorest and most despised who comes to Him, and that…

Hebrews 7
[25] He is able to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by Him.

Next week, God willing, we shall consider one or both of the other texts referred to in the question last week. While on this subject, we shall also give some attention to the subject of Spiritualism.

3. Departing and Being with Christ

Present Truth, March 21, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Departing and Being with Christ

> I have heard a prayer by a minister, in reference to the death of our late Queen Victoria, in which he said that she is now reigning with Christ in heaven, and the highest sense of the term. I believe there is perfect harmony in Scripture, and although I have asked from a number of fellow-disciples an explanation of Luke 23:48; Philippians 1:21-23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, in the light that the dead are in a state of unconscious sleep, I have not as yet had it explained clearly. Can you help to remove the darkness? I shall be obliged if you can give an explanation of these passages.

THIS question was inserted in the article from March 7,[308] and in that and the following number the nature of man and the state of the dead were briefly considered.

Before we proceed to the consideration of *Philippians* 1:23, concerning which you asked, I hope you will carefully review the two talks that we have already had, on the nature of man, and the state of man between death and the resurrection. In them we have the principles which will enable anybody to understand the whole subject, and our further talk will be but a repetition of them.

The text now before us reads thus:

> **Philippians 1**
> [23] I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

If one had not from a previous teaching imbibed the idea that men must die, in order to be with Christ, it would be impossible to imagine such a thing from this text, because it teaches exactly the opposite. No language could be conceived, which would make it plainer that death is not the way by which men go to be with

[308] See Article 1 in this Section, "The Nature of Man."

Christ. This will appear, when we take into consideration the context.

The Apostle Paul was in Rome, in prison for the faith, but he had no complaints to make. After telling the Philippians how earnestly he prays for them, and how much he desires their welfare in everything, he refers to his bonds, but only to assure them that...

Philippians 1
[12] ...the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel.

The Gospel and its advancement is the burden of his thought. He said that his bondage had made others bold to preach Christ, and that while some preached Him of love, knowing that the apostle was set for the defense of the Gospel, others preached Him from envy and strife; but that in whatever way it might be, Christ was preached, and in that he rejoiced, and would continue to rejoice.

Still dwelling on the one theme, he said that his earnest expectation and desire was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether it was by life or by death.[309] In all this we see that Paul had no thought for himself, except as he might be a factor in carrying on the work of Christ.

Then comes the statement, so often quoted and misquoted:

[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Can you think for a moment, in view of the words immediately preceding, that Paul was here speaking of gain to himself? His sole desire was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life, or by death. What was life to him? A means of glorifying God. And what was death? It was gain. To whom? Why, to Christ, of course. How incongruous, and opposed to all that goes before, to make Paul suddenly begin to speak about

[309] *Philippians* 1:14-20.

gain to himself. He was not longing for death, as a time when trouble would end; his only desire was for the advancement of the cause of Christ. If he lived, he knew that it would not be he, but Christ living in him.[310] And if he died, he knew that death would also be a gain to the cause of Christ, as it indeed was; for Paul did not die of a lingering disease, by which he was unfit for labor, but by the axe of the executioner. He died as a martyr, a witness to the truth, and that was in accordance with his expectation and his hope.

What then were the two things by which Paul was oppressed? They were life and death. He did not know which of them he should choose, if the choice were given him, because he did not know by which one of them he could better glorify the Lord; but there was a thing which he knew was, according to the Greek idiom, "very much more better"[311] than either life or death. So much is very plain from the text. How anybody can think that the Apostle Paul could pen such nonsense as to say that he did not know which to choose, whether life or death, but that he chose death, is a marvel.

What to Long for

What is the thing which Paul declared to be for a much better than life on this earth, or death? It was the departing and being with Christ. And what is that? Paul himself has told us more about this, than any other writer. Read again:

> **1 Thessalonians 4**
> [16] 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:
> [17] 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.

Or take the words of Christ:

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[310] See *Galatians* 2:20.
[311] *Philippians* 1:23.

John 14

[3] 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.

These words, and many more that might be quoted, show that the departing and being with Christ is only at His coming. So it was for the coming of the Lord that the Apostle Paul longed.

Do you say that Paul knew that he could not live till the coming of Christ? We do not know whether he did or not; he certainly always classed himself with those who should be alive at the coming of the Lord; but in any case, it is no more strange that Paul should express a longing for the coming of the Lord, than for John, who wrote:

Revelation 20

[20] He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly, Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

The coming of the Lord has been the one blessed hope of the faithful in Christ in all ages, since the fall of man.

We see, therefore, that the words of Paul to the Philippians, instead of teaching that death takes man into the presence of the Lord, make it most emphatically that such is not the case. If it were as is popularly supposed, then we should have no ground for hope in anything, because the Scriptures would contradict themselves. But such is not the case. The words of Scripture are but one harmonious whole, and they are a sure foundation for our faith and hope.

All believers in Christ are kings and priests, and in the future life they will sit upon thrones, even though in this life they have been trodden upon. We may believe that Queen Victoria was a faithful servant of the Lord, according to all the light given to her, "ruling in the fear of God,"[312] and that therefore in the world to come she will occupy a throne infinitely higher than the throne of England; but for that honor she must wait till the coming of the

[312] *2 Samuel* 23:3.

Lord and the resurrection. We may not long for death, for we cannot tell whether or not it would glorify God, and it is cowardly to long for it as a release from earthly toil; but we may long for the coming of the Lord,

> **1 John 3**
> [2] [For] every man that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.

Our intelligent longing for the coming of the Lord does not lead to idle dreaming, but to earnest action, that others may know the blessed hope, and rejoice in anticipation of the great salvation to be revealed at the appearing of Christ.

4. Absent from the Body, and Present with the Lord

Present Truth, March 21, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Absent from the Body, and Present with the Lord

THESE words were also referred to in the question, and they fit so naturally with the text considered in the preceding article that we will give them a brief study in the same connection. As is always the case, the misunderstanding of them arises from not giving thought to the connection in which they stand. Let us avoid the mistake, and come to an understanding of the words, by reading what goes with them.

2 Corinthians 5

[1] For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
[2] For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;
[3] If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.
[4] For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.
[5] Now he that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.
[6] Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:
[7] (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)
[8] We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.
[9] Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

It is impossible fully to grasp the force of these words, and of the entire chapter in which they stand, without a study of the two preceding chapters; for this we have not time at present. Our work now is more negative, to show what they do not teach;

some other time we shall make a study of the grand truth, the statement which begins in the second chapter, and continues without a break in the sixth.

You will see that in the verses quoted three states are presented, namely,

1. Clothed,
2. Unclothed [or Naked], and
3. Clothed Upon.

These are three different conditions, and one of them is so plainly defined that from that we can know the meaning of the other two.

Clothed Upon: Mortality Swallowed Up of Life

In verse four we have learned that "clothed upon," is identical with…

2 Corinthians 5
[4] …mortality swallowed up of life.

This is called being…

[2] …clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

Therefore our…

[1] …building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,

–is the state of immortality, incorruptibility.

When is it that…

1 Corinthians 15
[53] This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality?

It is "at the last trump," when…

[52] …the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

[54] Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Thus we see that here, as in the first chapter of *Philippians*, the Apostle Paul talks of the coming of the Lord as the thing to be desired above all others.

Since being clothed upon with the house which is from heaven is the swallowing up of mortality by life, it is evident that…

2 Corinthians 5
[1] …our earthly house of this tabernacle…

–is mortality, our present mortal state. In it we groan, being burdened, for the whole creation groans under the weight of the curse;[313] and although…

Galatians 3
[13] Christ has redeemed us from the curse,

–we still have to bear the burden of mortality; the flesh is not redeemed, but power is given us over it, until Christ shall come and exchange our fleshly bodies for spiritual bodies.[314]

Unclothed: The State of Death

What then is the state of being "unclothed,"[315] "found naked,"[316] a condition which the Apostle Paul did not desire? Evidently it is death. He wished to be released from the burden of this present earthly tabernacle,—this mortal body, but only that he might immediately "be clothed upon"[317] with the heavenly house,

2 Corinthians 5
[4] …that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

He did not wish for any waiting in the grave, and no healthy mind can long for that place.

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[313] *Romans* 8:22.
[314] Read *1 Corinthians* 15:35-46.
[315] *2 Corinthians* 5:4.
[316] *2 Corinthians* 5:3.
[317] *2 Corinthians* 5:2.

In this mortal state we are absent from the Lord, because…

1 Corinthians 15
50 Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither does corruption inherent incorruption.

If we were "absent from the body,"[318] we should also be absent from the Lord, unless we were "clothed upon;" for death is corruption, and the seeming triumph of it. What the apostle desired, therefore, was to be…

2 Corinthians 5
8 …absent from the body,

–but only in such a way as to be…

8 …present with the Lord,

–that is, to have mortality immediately…

4 …swallowed up of life.

Made for Immortality

One thing more, in order that we may not, by this partly negative treatment of the text, lose the whole of the blessedness of it.

5 He that has wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also has given us the earnest of the Spirit.

What is the selfsame thing for which God has wrought us? The words immediately preceding show that it is…

4 …that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

That is, God has made us for immortality, and He has given us the assurance of it in the gift of His Spirit, by which even now the lusts and infirmities of mortal flesh are controlled. In this we are confident, and so we give ourselves to the one end, namely, that,

9 …whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him,

–that is, that whether we live or die, we may be the Lord's.[319]

[318] *2 Corinthians* 5:8.
[319] *Romans* 14:8.

5. The Evil of Spiritualism

Present Truth, March 28, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. The Evil of Spiritualism

VERY few of those who read and talk about Spiritualism realize what a terrible thing it is. Most people suppose that it is simply a foolish fad, not especially wicked, but exceedingly silly. They have heard so much about table tipping, rappings, etc., and there have been so many "exposures" of the tricks performed by professed spirit mediums, that it is quite commonly supposed that Spiritualism is a clumsy sort of fraud.

The Essence of Spiritualism

While there are very many adjuncts to Spiritualism, and it develops in many different forms, the thing itself consists always and only in this one teaching, namely, the conscious existence of the dead, and the possibility of their communicating with those still on earth. That is the whole of Spiritualism, or Spiritism, as it is more properly called, and everybody who holds to the unscriptural doctrine of the consciousness of the dead is essentially a spiritualist.

"Not a very dangerous thing," you say. Well, there is never any safety in falsehood, and we have seen in the three preceding studies in this "Corner" that there is no truth in that doctrine. The Scriptures of truth teach us that man is mortal by nature; that mortality is exchanged for immortality only at the coming of the Lord; and that between death and the coming of the Lord there is a period of absolute unconsciousness. Now let us see wherein the danger lies in the opposite view.

Ministering Angels

It is a fact that there are spirits that go about on earth, walking among men, unseen by them. These are not, however, the spirits of the dead. God sends His holy angels as ministering spirits, to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation. These angels

"excel in strength,"[320] and serve men in thousands of ways. We are indebted to their good offices for preservation from many dangers and accidents.

While they do their work in silence, and are content to do their duty, even though their ministration be not recognized, it is possible for them to appear to us, and angels have often been seen by men. The Bible contains numerous instances of such manifestations.

Fallen Angels

But these angels of God are not all the spirits that go about on this earth. There are…

2 Peter 2
[4] …angels that kept not their first estate,

Jude
[6] …angels that sinned,

–and left their habitation. Satan himself, their leader, was once the highest and most exalted created being in heaven, but now he spends his time…

Job 1
[7] …going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it,

1 Peter 5
[8] …as a roaring lion [walking about] seeking whom he may devour.

Though he and his host of fallen angels have lost all their goodness, they have not lost all their power, and their wisdom has degenerated into cunning. Fallen though they be, they are in every particular far more than a match for mere human beings.

Try the Spirits

It is for this reason that we are exhorted not to believe every spirit, but to…

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[320] *Psalm* 103:20.

1 John 4
[1] ...try the spirits, whether they are of God.

How are we to try them? Here is the rule:

Isaiah 8
[20] To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

Now there is not the slightest ground for doubt that men have had and do still have communications from these spirits, and that what has been done in this line in the past is but a small beginning. Can you not see that the truth concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead is not a matter of indifference? If it be held that the dead are conscious, there is no ground for denying their ability to communicate with those whom they have left behind.

True, very many who hold that doctrine do not believe that they can so communicate, but let them once receive a communication concerning something which no one ever knew anything about, except themselves and some one who is now dead, or, stronger still, let them see the form of the departed one, and let them talk with one who looks like him, and who reminds them of all the incidents of bygone days, and they will inevitably believe that the dead can communicate with men in the flesh. This has been the experience of thousands, and it will be the experience of many thousands more.

Not the Spirits of the Dead

But who are these pretended friends? We know for a certainty that they cannot be the spirits of the dead, for:

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] ...the dead know not anything.

The conclusion is evident, therefore, that they are naught but the sinful angels that kept not their first estate, and who have now nothing to look forward to but the day of destruction, and who find their delight in seducing to destruction as many human

beings as possible. Be assured that every time anybody receives a communication purporting to come from some dead friend, he is in direct communication with the devil or some of his host of fallen angels. Is it not terrible to contemplate?

I have known ministers of the Gospel who have fallen into Spiritualism through their belief in the conscious state of the dead. When the "evidence of their senses" was added to what they regarded as a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, they of course accepted it. And when Spiritualism has once been accepted by any person, the doctrines of the Bible, and the morality of the Bible, no longer are final authority to him. He is at the mercy of the enemy of all good, and…

Proverbs 12
[10] …the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

How many there are who depend for their belief wholly upon what their favorite minister says, or upon the traditions of men, even though they be contrary to the Bible! In fact, most people go to some man, to find out the meaning of whatever the Bible says. When they depend so much on what men still in the flesh say, is not to be expected that they would attach still more weight to the sayings of those who profess to have come direct from heaven? If a man gets his religion wholly from some learned clergyman, will he not depend still more upon a message purporting to come from that man after he has been dead and supposedly in heaven for many years? The only safety against the gross deceptions of Satan in the last days, is strict adherence to the Word of God.

And this emphasizes the fact that acceptance of the righteousness of God in Christ is the only hope of man. It matters not how correct the form of doctrine which one believes, if he does not believe unto righteousness,—if he cherishes any sins,—he is an easy prey to the deceptions of Satan, because he is already submitting to him. The devil must be stoutly resisted, "steadfastly in the

faith,"[321] and he will flee. The prince of this world will have no power over those in whom he finds nothing of his own.[322]

Life in Christ Only

So we end where we began, with absolute dependence on Christ for righteousness and life. Life and righteousness are inseparable, and both come only from God in Christ. Spiritualism denies the necessity for any atonement and this is the inevitable conclusion from the teaching that men have life in themselves, apart from Christ, for whoever has life in himself has righteousness also. The wrath of God comes upon the false prophets, because, He says,

> **Ezekiel 13**
> [22] With lies we have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not turn from his wicked way, by promising him life.

Do not be afraid to trust the Lord for everything, and in all your ways to acknowledge Him as the source of everything, and He will make your way right.[323]

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[321] *1 Peter* 5:9.
[322] *John* 14:30.
[323] *Proverbs* 3:6.

6. Changed in a Moment

Present Truth, April 25, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Changed in a Moment

SOME who have read the articles that recently appeared concerning death and the resurrection, have doubtless had in their minds a question that is frequently asked; and as the answer to it belongs with the matter already published, we give it here and now, without waiting for it to be formally put. We are often asked,

> How do you account for the statements of dying Christians, that they see Jesus coming, or standing with outstretched arms, to receive them? Is it all an illusion of the senses, or do they really see something which others cannot see? And if they do see the Lord, and expect to go at once to be with Him, would it not be a cruel disappointment to them to be obliged to lie in the grave for many years before entering heaven?

This question cannot be answered by a simple "yes" or "no." While there can be no doubt but that people's training and education often influence their imagination, and some may be deceived even in the hour of death as well as in their previous life, it is equally certain that there have been authentic cases of people actually seeing the Lord just as they were about to die. We need cite no more than the case of Stephen, who, but a few moments before he was put to death, and when he knew that his death was the next thing, said,

Acts 7
[56] I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

When Christ ascended on high, He *sat down* at the right hand of God, and is so represented in many places in the Scriptures; and when He has finished His work in the heavens, and has prepared a place for His people, He will *stand up* and come for them.

It was in this position that Stephen saw Him. He was standing not merely *as if* waiting to receive His faithful servant, but actually welcoming him to His arms; and yet Stephen did not ascend into the heavens, but is still in the dust of the earth.

Is Stephen then disappointed? or will he be disappointed at the coming of the Lord at the last day? By no means. He certainly has not been suffering disappointment through all the centuries, for he has been unconscious.

Acts 7
[60] He fell asleep,

–and they who sleep the sleep of death,

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] ...know not any thing.

Nor will he or any other saint who has died with the addition of Christ before his eyes ever know a moment's disappointment.

1 Thessalonians 4 [RV]
[15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.
[16] 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:
[17] Then we which are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.
[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

This is the truth with which mortals are to be comforted.

1 Corinthians 16
[51] Behold, I tell you of a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
[52] 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.

When Christ comes, it will be with all the glory of heaven. His glory will cover the heavens, and the light will be dazzling, above that of the sun.

Matthew 24
[27] For as lightning comes out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Now when there is a lightning flash everybody involuntarily closes his eyes for an instant. That is, it makes us blink. Even so will it be when Christ's glory bursts upon the world. The sudden blaze of light will cause every eye to blink involuntarily, and in that instant every righteous person will be changed from mortal to immortal.

Even so will it be with the dead in Christ. Time to the unconscious is as though it were not. There is no lapse of time to the dead. They close their eyes in death, and the next instant (to them) they open them in immortality. They are changed in the twinkling—the winking of their eye. Stephen saw Christ standing to receive him to himself; he fell asleep, but he will awake when the last trump sounds, and he will still see Christ standing to receive him, and will hear the words, which to him will be the same as those spoken when he stood in the midst of the murderous mob:

Matthew 25
[34] Come you blessed of my Father.

Although he has been asleep for nearly nineteen hundred years, it will all be included in that twinkling of an eye. He saw the Lord: he closed his eyes, he opens them as it were the next instant, and still sees the Lord; but meanwhile he has undergone a great change—the change from mortality to immortality.

Both dead and living undergo the same change. An age is compressed into the twinkling of an eye. The change from corruption to incorruption will be as great in the case of the living as in the case of those who have moldered in the grave for hundreds of

years, and the time will be to them just as long as to those that have been dead, and no longer. There is no lack and disappointment to them that fear and trust the Lord.

7. The Punishment of the Wicked

Present Truth, May 2, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. The Punishment of the Wicked

I cannot believe in hell, at least not the hell I very often hear preached. I can fully understand hell as a place of remedial punishment, but so an everlasting punishment, or even a punishment that ends in annihilation, I cannot accept. If Christ has died for the world, the ransom has been paid, and all are out of condemnation.

"Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday and today and for ever." *Hebrews* 13:8. Christ is the Saviour, and according to the foregoing text, is always the Saviour. Therefore if any soul in the future looks to Him, Christ must (I say it reverently) of necessity save him. Then Timothy[324] tells us of God "who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." *1 Timothy* 4:10. This statement makes believing not necessary to salvation. It makes it necessary to a knowledge of it, I admit, but that is not the point.

To my mind all Scripture, and reason seem to point to a restoration of all things, that Christ may be all and in all. The only point I cannot explain is the story of the rich man and Lazarus. Perhaps you can help me.

I CAN at least present some of the abundant testimony which the Scriptures give on this subject. It is most clear and explicit. In the first place, let me assure you that you are not specially required to believe in hell; you are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, for an intelligent faith in Him explains everything that we need to know.

In the second place, we are to remember that the Scriptures are for the purpose of enlightening our understanding, of giving us understanding. When we cannot understand a thing, we are to find out what the Bible says, and believe it, and then we shall have understanding. It is the easiest thing in the world to under-

[324] Not Timothy, but Paul writing to Timothy. *–Editor of Present Truth.*

stand, when we know and believe what the Bible says; and we have no right or reason to understand anything else. In fact, there is no understanding aside from the Word of God; everything else is but imagination and speculation.

Now there is a grave error that you have fallen into, and it is not strange that you have, because it is almost universal, and that is in confounding punishment with chastisement. They are two very distinct things. Chastisement is remedial, but punishment is not. God chastens us now, but punishment is not being administered now, and never will be to those who profit by chastisement. Even the angels that kept not their first estate,

Jude
[6] ...but left their own habitation,

–are not now being punished, but are...

[6] ...reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the Judgment of the great day.

And in like manner those who willfully and deliberately reject the mercy of God, have nothing left for them but...

Hebrews 10
[26] ...a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

Chastisement Not Punishment

Read *Hebrews* 12:5-11. There we learn that chastisement is a proof that we are sons of God, and that He loves us. He chastens us for a short time, for our profit,

Hebrews 12
[10] ...that we might be partakers of His holiness.
[11] Now no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

David said,

Psalm 119
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept your Word.
71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn your statutes.

But it is possible for people not to be "exercised" by chastisement; they will not profit by correction, and they despise and reject reproof. For them nothing but punishment remains.

Proverbs 1
29 For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:
30 They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof.
31 Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.
32 For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

Proverbs 29
1 He that, being often reproved, hardens his neck; shall be cut off, and that without remedy.

Here we see that there is a marked difference between chastisement and punishment. From the very nature of the case chastisement is only for a season, while punishment is as necessarily everlasting. Read the facts:

Matthew 25
46 These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

2 Thessalonians 1
7 The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
8 In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;

[10] When He shall come to be glorified in His saints.

Now for the evidence that this punishment of the wicked must from the very nature of the case be everlasting. We have already seen that those who despise the chastisement of the Lord, shall…

Proverbs 1
[31] …eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.
[32] For the turning away of the simple shall slay them.

From what do these foolish ones turn away? From God. They refuse to be subject to Him. They reject His life. They wish to live independently of Him, and will not acknowledge that He has any claims on them. They do not wish to be in His presence. But He fills all things, and Christ…

Colossians 3
[4] …who is, our life,

Ephesians 4
[10] …[has] ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.

Now when these people who wish to live by themselves, away from God, are given their own choice, what must necessarily become of them? It is evident that they must go out of the universe, out of existence; for there will be no place that Christ will not fill. So,

Psalm 37
[10] Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Cut off from God, the only source of life,—taken at last at their own word, that they do not wish to have anything to do with Him,—there is nothing left for the finally impenitent but death,—death with no hope of a resurrection, because the only salvation has been rejected.

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death,

–and it is the wages which the wicked work for and lay up for themselves.

Romans 2
[5] But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasure up unto yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

But this is not eternal torment, and torture to all eternity. To claim that men have in themselves a life which God himself cannot take away, and that the wicked will be kept in a place of torture, which will make them increase in wickedness, and thus increase their torment, is to deny the power of Christ's salvation. It is to deny that He is able to accomplish the purpose for which He ascended above all heavens, namely,

Ephesians 4
[10] ...that He might fill all things.

It is to say that there is a place that He will not fill.

Making an End of Sin

On the other hand, to say that God will not punish the ungodly, that He will not extirpate sin from the universe, together with those who refuse to be separated from it, is equally to deny the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ, who appeared...

Hebrews 9
[26] ...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

It is to say that He cannot do that which He came to do. The death of Christ means the death of all who will not accept His sacrifice, just as surely as it means everlasting life to those who believe, insomuch as it shows the fate of the guilty. It shows how God regards sin. Sin is so odious in God's sight, that He would not spare even His own Son when sin rested upon Him.

Christ is indeed the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe, but this does not show that the reprobate will not be punished.

Romans 5
[18] The free gift [has actually come] upon all men unto justification of life,

–but there are many who thrust it from them. Yea, all men are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, since…

2 Corinthians 5
[19] God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;

–but after that is done it still remains necessary for us to be…

Romans 5
[10] …saved by His life,

–which means the acceptance of His life in the place of ours. He gives all men life; but it is not enough that we take it and use it only to the extent that most people do; we must…

John 10
[10] …have it more abundantly.

The Judgment will show that God is clear, in that He has given His life to every man; but the fact that so many have rejected the precious gift will be their everlasting condemnation.

Jesus is able…

Hebrews 7
[25] …to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives;

–but when, as He himself says to some,

John 5
[40] You will not come to me, that you might have life,

–such refuse the salvation that is provided for them. He saves none against their will, but like the most indulgent Father that He is, He allows every one to have just what he desires.

With these facts before you, it will not be necessary to say anything about the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, for you can see that it is perfectly in harmony with the rest of the Scriptures. It simply shows that everybody will find his true place at the last.

Before closing, let us recur for a moment to the first thoughts, namely, the distinction between chastisement and punishment. It is most highly dishonoring to God, to conceive of Him as watching only for faults in men, and to consider that every affliction is a punishment from Him. How often we hear one say,

> "What have I done, that I should suffer in this way?"

They should rather say,

> "What has the Lord for me to do, seeing He is subjecting me to this discipline?"

Job suffered greatly, yet God was not punishing him, but fitting him for a much greater and better work than he had previously done. God is revealed only in the cross; it is impossible to know God, except as we see Him in the cross; therefore He brings us to the cross, in order that we may become acquainted with Him, and find fullness of joy in His presence.

The Restoration of All Things

There will be a restoration of all things to the original, Eden state, the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; but that will not be until the thorns and briers have been burned up.[325] Thorns never become fruits, neither do tares ever become wheat. When the distinction is clearly made, which will be in the harvest, when both kinds have fully developed, the final separation will be made.

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[325] See *Hebrews* 6:7-8; *Matthew* 13:37-43; *Malachi* 4:1-3.

Acts 2

[21] Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;

–but those who now reject and despise the name of the Lord would continue to blaspheme it if they should have their probation lengthened through thousands of years; for God has no greater power by which to save men than that which is revealed in the Gospel. Therefore,

Isaiah 55

[6] Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near:

[7] Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.

8. Asleep in Jesus

Present Truth, May 16, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Asleep in Jesus

> In your issue of the 25th[326] you have an article on "Death and the Resurrection," for which I thank you much. One cannot deny these truths you state from the Word, and as a brother seeking for light, and a clear conception of this wonderful event, may I ask you to help me? I feel sure what I ask will be of much benefit to my fellow-readers who are seeking after the truth.
>
> We know that the body lies in the grave until the resurrection, but where does the spirit dwell? *Matthew* 17:23: "And behold there appeared Moses and Elijah talking with Him," and yet Moses and Elijah had been dead for a long period. When a child dies before it has reached the age to discern right from wrong, is it unconscious? Does it not grow and develop in the heavenly land? Does not John in the *Revelation* tell us of the great host before the throne of God, serving Him day and night in His temple? He says that these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.
>
> I know that these bodies will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, but I am at a loss to know about the departed spirits: does not the soul live on in perpetual consciousness and development, until through the resurrection power, soul and body are again united?

THE article on "Death and the Resurrection,"[327] to which you refer, was one of a series contained in Nos. 10-18 in which you will find the answers to most of your questions. We will, however, consider briefly the points that you mentioned.

Reference to *2 Kings* 2 will remind you that Elijah, so far from having "been dead for a long period," was, like Enoch, translated without seeing death, and therefore his appearance with Christ

[326] Actually the 14th of March.
[327] This is Article 2 in this Section, "From Death to the Resurrection."

upon the amount of transfiguration proves nothing concerning the state of the dead.

Moses died upon Mount Nebo, and the Lord buried him, but the place of his sepulchre was unknown. Nevertheless, we have in *Jude* 9 the proof of the resurrection of his body, which accounts for his appearance also on the mountain. We have the evidence of the Scriptures that the body of neither of these men was in the grave. Elijah did not pass through the tomb, and Moses was raised from the dead by Christ, in spite of the opposition of Satan who had the power of death, and who sought to retain his hold upon his body.

On the other hand, contrast with the statement concerning Moses that…

Deuteronomy 34
[6] …no man knows of his sepulchre unto this day,

–the words of Peter concerning David,

Acts 2
[29] …that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

This he said as proof of the fact that…

[34] David is not ascended into the heavens,

–thus showing that man has no conscious existence apart from his body. The sepulchre containing David's ashes, was considered by Peter, speaking when he was filled with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, sufficient evidence that David had no conscious existence elsewhere.

The Gate of Death and the Gate of Life

The children to whom you refer are well represented by the babes that Herod slew in order to rid himself of the infant Christ.

Matthew 2 [RV]
[17] Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,
[18] A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
And she would not be comforted, because they are not.

If you turn to the prophecy in *Jeremiah* from which this is quoted, you will find the message of comfort that God sent to these mourning mothers:

Jeremiah 31
[16] Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears: for your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

This land of the enemy Satan, the adversary, is the grave, to which death is the gate of entrance. And the comfort that the Lord gives to mothers is, not that their little ones have already entered upon a higher and more glorious existence, but that they shall be brought back from the grave.

Christ, in His conflict with the enemy to recover His own, has "pressed the battle to the gate."[328] He has passed through the gate of death, and secured the key to the enemy's citadel. He has forced a way out of the enemy's prison-house by…

Hebrews 7
[16] …the power of His endless life.

Through the gate of death man enters the enemy's land; through the gate of life he is brought back again by Him who has…

Colossians 2
[15] …spoiled principalities and powers.

Having opened…

[328] *Isaiah* 28:6.

Psalm 118
[20] This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter,

Philippians 3
[10] ...[by] the power of His resurrection,

–Christ will, when the last enemy death is destroyed, conduct through it, by the resurrection, all those whom He has rescued from the hand of Satan. Then, and not till then, will the children come, with all the redeemed, from "the land of the enemy."[329]

Moreover, if, as you suggest, the children were growing and developing in heaven, would not the resurrection of their infant bodies be somewhat incongruous?

John certainly does, in the book of *Revelation*, speak of the host of the redeemed whom he saw standing before the throne of God. But you must bear in mind in reading this book that things that John saw in vision on the Isle of Patmos, and which he was told to write, were most of them...

Revelation 4 [RV] [also 1:19]
[1] ...the things that must come to pass hereafter.

The Spirit in Man

In order that you may the better comprehend the answer to your question about the dwelling-place of the departed spirits, we must consider for a moment the nature of the Spirit that animates man.

Job 32 [RV]
[8] There is a Spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.

The Spirit in man is the breath of God, as is evident from the account of man's creation:

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.

[329] *Jeremiah* 31:16.

Man was formed from the dust of the ground, to be a dwelling-place for the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 6
[19] What! know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?

In our mortal bodies dwells the eternal Spirit of Him,

1 Timothy 6
[16] ...who only has immortality.

It is this that gives organization, individuality and under-standing to the dust of which our bodies are composed. Man has not an immortal spirit of his own inhabiting his body; but he himself is the dwelling-place of the immortal Spirit of God. Therefore,

Job 34
[14] ...if He gather unto himself His Spirit and His breath;
[15] All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

The experience of death and the resurrection is summed up in two verses:

Psalm 104 [RV, margin]
[29] You gather in their breath, they die, and return to their dust.
[30] You send forth your Spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.

Our Everlasting Dwelling-Place

In the sublime 90th *Psalm*, Moses the man of God, speaking of the subject that we are considering, comforts himself with the following assurance:

Psalm 90
[1] Lord, *You* have been our dwelling-place in all generations.
[3] You turn man to dust, and say, Return [come again] you children of men.
[4] For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night.

"In all generations," from the beginning, God has been our dwelling-place, for:

Acts 19
[18] Known unto God are all His works from the beginning.

We existed in the Divine mind, and have our being in the thought of God, ages before we were brought into visible and conscious existence. All visible things in the universe are but the uttered thoughts of God, and…

Revelation 4 [RV]
[11] …because of His will they were created.

They were in Him, before they were created. Thus, "known unto God" only, we slept unconscious in the bosom of the Father, until, the fullness of time being come, He sent us forth and we awoke in this world, clothed with…

1 Corinthians 15
[38] …a body, as it has pleased Him.

Of David we are told that he,

Acts 13
[36] …having served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption.

And thus it is with every child of God: having accomplished the will of God in this world, God gathers to himself His Spirit, the body given to him turns to dust, and again he *sleeps in Jesus*, as in the beginning. But for the Cross of Christ it would not have been so, for it is this that has hallowed death into sleep, and changed the grave into a bed.

Those who are merely sleeping have not ceased to be. This…

Luke 20
[38] …Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.
[39] For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him.

These words were spoken by Jesus to prove to the Sadducees…

Luke 20
37 …that the dead are raised.

So long as God keeps us in mind, we dwell in Him and are safe, even though we have no separate, conscious existence. That which will finally blot out the wicked from the universe, will be the fact that God puts them from His mind, and they cease to be in His thought.

He who sent us forth into the flesh by His Spirit, giving us visible form and conscious life, will, when the time comes for those who sleep in Him to awaken, bring forth from the dust of the earth glorified, immortal bodies for His everlasting habitation. For,

Psalm 90 [NASB & Coverdale]
3 [He] turns man to dust, and says, Come again, you children of men.

And the space of time that intervenes between the turning into dust, and the return in response to His call, even though it be a thousand years, is in His sight…

4 …but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

What matter, then, though for a while we pass out of sight and consciousness, sleeping in Jesus, hidden in the bosom of God,

1 …our dwelling-place in all generations.

9. The God of the Living

Present Truth, August 8, 1901

> Why is it said that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, when just before He is declared to be the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob? I believe the text, but should be glad to have it made more plain through the pages of *Present Truth*.

HERE we must learn, as elsewhere, that the answer lies in the text itself. Of course other texts serve to make it plainer; but in every case the very text over which we stumble has within it the way out of the difficulty.

Plainly stated the case is this: God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are dead; yet God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Strange it is, indeed; yet there is no contradiction, and it is not a puzzle, but the statement of a glorious truth.

The first thing to do in the case of any difficult text is to find what is the subject of discourse. Here we find that it is the resurrection of the dead. Jesus was teaching the people, and the priests and scribes had tried by trickery to entangle Him, so that they could accuse Him, and had failed.

Luke 20

[27] Then came to Him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection;

–and they presented a hypothetical case, which they thought would either force Jesus to deny the resurrection or else would bring Him in conflict with the teachings of Moses.

But Jesus was equal to the occasion. He convicted His opponents of ignorance of that which they professed to know, and then proceeded to give positive Scripture proof of the resurrection of the dead, saying,

Luke 20
[37] Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.
[38] For He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him.

When it is said that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and is not the God of the dead, but of the living, there is no denial of the fact that the patriarchs are dead. That we know, because the Scriptures plainly tell us that they died. But they will live again; their life is hid with Christ in God,[330] and is as secure and sure to them as if they were now in possession of it.

Romans 4
[17] [God] quickens the dead, and calls those things that be not as though they were.

With Him the thing that is to be is the same as that which now is; for He inhabits eternity, and the future is present to Him.

Daniel 6
[26] [God] is the living God,

–and He gives life to all. That which is extinct has no connection with Him. There are people now on earth as there always have been, who do not claim Him as their God, and whom He does not acknowledge as His people. Those who know not God will at the last day be destroyed forever, with no hope or possibility of a resurrection. It is plain that He will not then be their God; they will have nothing to do with Him, and hence their destruction. It is practically the same with the wicked who now lie in their graves: they will certainly be raised, but not to life, and it is as though they were already extinct. When they lived they were…

Ephesians 2
[12] …without God in the world,

[330] *Colossians* 3:3.

–and, dying the same way, it is evident that He is not their God. But it is not so with the righteous. There is hope in their death. They "sleep in Jesus,"[331] and their life is just as sure as is the life of Jesus; for He himself is their life. Therefore God, who is the God only of the living, calls himself their God.

Hebrews 11
[16] [He is] not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city.

This is the ground of the Christian's hope.

1 Peter 1
[3] Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

This is the power that has overcome, and still overcomes, the world. The power of the resurrection of Jesus is the power of the Christian life—the secret of holiness. Being crucified with Him, we nevertheless live, because He lives. And just as the righteous who have been dead thousands of years, are alive in His thought, so that state of perfection which is designed for us is ours now in Christ.

This is the secret of calling those things that be not as though they were. It is the victory of faith. Faith is the substance of things hoped for,[332] and when we believe in the Lord with all our heart, the good thing longed for is ours. Heaven itself comes down to us, and imparting the power of its glory to us, lifts us up to its level, so that while still on earth, we sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.[333]

[331] *1 Thessalonians* 4:14.
[332] *Hebrews* 11:1.
[333] *Ephesians* 2:6.

10. What Is Faith?

Present Truth, September 12, 1901

THE American branch of the Society of Psychical Research has issued a circular for ascertaining the sentiment of people regarding a future life. Six questions are asked, and the last one is this:

> "Would you like to know for certain about the future life; or would you prefer to leave it a matter of faith?"

We call attention to this, because it indicates a very common idea of faith, and one which lies at the root of so many failures by professed believers. Very many who profess the faith have no conception of what faith really is, and as a natural consequence they fail to get the victory of faith. This same faulty view of faith causes so many to say,

> "I am so constituted that I cannot believe,"

–or,

> "It is very difficult for me to believe."

We would gladly say a word to help some to the real joy and peace that comes with the exercise of real faith.

Let us first, in order to keep clear of all speculation, read what the Bible says about faith.

> **Hebrews 11**
> [1] Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Or, as in the *Revised Version:*

> "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen."

Faith is reality, not fancy.

The too common idea, as indicated by the question that we have quoted, is that one does not *know* that which one accepts by faith. Faith is supposed to be imagination, and knowledge is supposed to put an end to it. The truth, however, is quite the contrary: Nobody can ever really *know* anything except by faith; and continuous knowledge means continuous exercise of faith. It is by faith that we understand and *know*. If there were a man who never had any faith in anything, he would know absolutely nothing.

Take, for example, so small a thing as learning the alphabet. The child, or even the adult who has never learned to read, must learn the letters by being told their names. He cannot know them without being told; and if he does not implicitly believe what is told him, he will never know. Having been told, he knows, and if he holds fast to his primitive faith in his teacher's word, all the treasures of human knowledge will be opened to him.

But it may be objected that this is not a fair illustration, since the names as well as the forms of the letters are somewhat arbitrary. Without stopping to discuss that point, we may take any one of thousands of things that the child, or the man either, learns, and we shall see that he knows them only because he is told. Take most people's knowledge of scientific facts; very few have made any original experiments, but thousands of people make use of them, having accepted the principle on trust.

The case may perhaps be clearly illustrated to many minds by a reference to the art of swimming. It is most certain that nobody can learn to swim except by faith. Why is it that one person boldly plunges into deep water, while another cannot be persuaded to let go of some solid support? It is because one has faith that the water will buoy him up, while the other have not. The instant one really accepts the truth that the specific gravity of the body is less than that of water, and that if he keeps perfectly still in a horizontal position in the water he can no more sink than a log of wood, he can swim with ease. After that, experience will so

accustom him to the truth of the principle, that he will act on it as a matter of course; yet it will still be true that he really swims by faith. If by any means he lost his confidence in the power of the water to support his body, he would sink.

It ought to be understood that true faith always rests upon a basis of solid fact. God never asks men to build on anything less than "a sure foundation"—one that has been "tried."

Romans 10
[17] Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God;

–and that Word upholds the universe. Whoever accepts that Word, and trusts it implicitly, builds upon certainty.

As before remarked, it is the false idea of faith that leads man to say,

> "It is difficult for me to believe,"

–or,

> "I am so constituted that I cannot believe."

What they mean is, that they find it difficult to believe without evidence, or to make a thing seem true that has no existence; for that is what they imagine faith to be. Now they do well not to try to believe what does not exist, and not to believe a thing without evidence; but surely no sane man will say that it is impossible or difficult to believe a thing on the best of evidence, and that is what faith is. Indeed, faith is the evidence itself, it knows nothing of uncertainties; it is that by which we know things that really exist.

Read the 11th chapter of *Hebrews* for a brief list of what faith accomplishes, and you will see that "to leave it as a matter of faith" is the only way that anyone can "know for certain about the future life." It made Noah know that the flood was coming, so that he could prepare for it, while others, not believing, were taken unawares and drowned. Faith delivered the children of Israel,

made a way through the Red Sea, and caused the walls of Jericho to fall down. Instances are innumerable of people…

Hebrews 11
[33] Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness,
obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,
[34] Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword,
out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight,
turned to flight the armies of the aliens.
[35] Women received their dead raised to life again.

Surely there is something very real about anything that can accomplish such wonders. And the last item mentioned settles the question of the future life.

[35] Women received their dead raised to life again.

What stronger proof of a future life can we have than that?

But someone says,

"I have never seen the dead raised to life."

No, but you yourself are alive; and your existence is only by the power of the future life. There is no life but that of God, and to know Him is life eternal.[334] Faith makes one acquainted with God, able to give sworn testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and effects changes in one's life identical with the raising of the dead to life. Whoever through faith believes on the name of Christ, receives power to become the son of God, and out of weakness is made strong to work righteousness, knows the certainly of the endless life and the power of it; and such ones are the only ones who ever can know it.

[334] *John* 17:3.

11. Prayers for the Dead

Present Truth, September 12, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Prayers for the Dead

I should like to ask a question which has engaged my attention for some time. It is this. A friend of mine holds the idea of prayers for the dead, and says he believes that such prayers are of avail. He quotes the following verses in support of his belief: *1 Peter* 4:6; 3:18-22. I fail to see any dead meant here, other than those who are dead in sin. I have told him so, but cannot convince him, so I told him I would ask the Editor of *Present Truth* about it.

WITHOUT stating any opinion about the matter, let us study it, and find the truth from the Bible itself. We will come at once to the very heart of the question, and consider the two texts to which you refer. Every text of Scripture means exactly what it says, but all texts do not say what many people, by a too hasty reading of them with preconceived ideas, think that they say. It is best to take the texts in their order, so we will first read:

1 Peter 3
[18] Christ also has once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
[19] By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
[20] Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

What Does the Text Say?

Read it again, read it a dozen times, and you will see that it says not a word about praying for the dead. Let us analyze it, taking each clause separately, and find out exactly what the text does say.

1. Christ once suffered for us, that He might bring us to God.

2. He was put to death in the flesh.
3. He was quickened [made alive] by the Spirit.
4. By this same Spirit He went and preached to the spirits in prison.
5. They were is prison—"kept under the law, shut up"[335] "when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."
6. It was in the days of Noah, while the ark was building, that Christ, by the Spirit, preached to the wicked spirits before the flood. God's longsuffering waited one hundred and twenty years, while His Spirit was working with that sinful generation; yet He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man."[336]

That is the sum of this text, so far as the present question is concerned; the instruction that we are to receive from it is this, that the preaching of the Gospel is by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. The public ministry began with these words:

> **Isaiah 61**
> [1] The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and *the opening of the prison* to them that are bound.

The captives in prison are the bondservants of sin,[337]

> **2 Peter 2**
> [19] ...the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Suffering and Living with Christ

Now let us read the next text referred to, which is but a continuation of the first one. We will read enough to get the full connection:

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[335] See *Galatians* 3:22-23.
[336] *Genesis* 6:3.
[337] *John* 8:34.

1 Peter 4
[1] Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin;
[2] That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.
[6] For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

Hebrews 9
[27] And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment:
[28] So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

John 5 [RV]
[24] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my Word, and believes Him that sent me, has eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

Christ's sufferings in the flesh were for us. How much He suffered cannot be put into words, but it is certain that He suffered all that the wicked will have to suffer in punishment for their sins. This may be learned from *Psalm* 22:1, and especially from:

Isaiah 53
[5] He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.
[6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Now we are to be armed with the same mind, sharing His sufferings. Joined to Him in…

Philippians 3
[10] …the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death,

–we live with Him; we have thus passed out of death into life, and so we do not come into Judgment. We enter with Christ into the heavenly places, experiencing the powers of the world to come and to us it is the same as though the Judgment were already past.

It was to this end that the Gospel was preached to them that are dead. Note well that the text does not say that the Gospel *was* preached to them that *were* dead, nor that it *is* preached to them that *are* dead, but that *was preached* to them that *are dead*. The reference is clearly to the time spoken of in *1 Peter* 3:19-20. The preaching was in the days of Noah, to those who were the captives of sin.

The latter part of *1 Peter* 4:6 itself shows most plainly that the preaching of the Gospel to them that are dead was while they were still living. The Gospel was preached to them, in order…

1 Peter 4
[6] …that they might be judged according to *men in the flesh*, but *live* according to God *in the Spirit*.

The Gospel was preached to them for the very same purpose that it is now preached to us,—that while still in the flesh they might pass out of death into life, and thus pass the Judgment, and henceforth live in the flesh as though their bodies were already made spiritual.

Romans 8
[9] You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Now we have before us exactly what the two texts say, and just what they mean. They say nothing whatever about preaching to dead men or about praying to or for them; and neither here nor anywhere else in the Bible is there the slightest hint of any such thing, The two texts referred to teach us a must precious lesson, however, as to the power of the Gospel when it is received into

the heart; and it is very sad indeed that so few who read them get this real, personal help and comfort from them.

We might leave the subject here, as the question is answered; but while we are about it we might as well see how utterly foreign to the Bible the thought or practice of praying for the dead is, and also what is involved in that teaching.

Prayers for the Dead and Purgatory

Have you ever thought what inevitably follows the teaching of prayers for or preaching to the dead? it means, of course, that they are on probation, the same as the living, and it is, in fact, nothing but the doctrine of purgatory. This is plain enough; for if we were to pray for the dead it could be only for their deliverance from some sad state. So purgatory is part of the doctrine of prayers for the dead.

Prayers to the Dead

Prayers for the dead leads also to prayers *to* them. Bear in mind that no intelligent Roman Catholic professes to pray to the dead as to God; the invocation of saints is the request for them to make supplication for us, just as we ask our friends here on earth to pray for us. We all know that…

> **James 5** [RV]
> [16] …the supplication of a righteous man avails much in its working,

–and we like to know that good people are praying for us. It is with the idea that the dead are able to do all that the living can do, that Roman Catholics pray to them, asking an interest in their prayers. Now if it were of any use to pray for the dead, it would just as certainly be profitable to ask some of them to pray for us; and so with prayers for the dead we have another Papal dogma.

Universal Salvation

But this is not all: If it were true that the dead are on probation, in a condition where prayers can benefit them, then we must come

to the conclusion that there will be probation for sinners until every one is saved, and that no sinner will ever be destroyed. In short, probation after death means universalism; for if the preaching of the Gospel in life has not been sufficient to decide a man's destiny, there is no assurance that it would be more efficacious after death. If God must continue probation to the impenitent, after death, in order that they may "have a fair chance," then He must continue it indefinitely.

We need not pursue this line any further, but if we should, we should find all manner of contradictions and absurdities; for when the truth of the Bible is once departed from, there is an end to all consistency.

A Denial of the Atonement

One other thing, however, must be mentioned, and that is that the idea so commonly misread into *1 Peter* 3:19, that between His crucifixion and His resurrection Christ went and preached to dead people, is subversive of the very foundation of the Gospel. The very statement of it is a denial of the death of Christ, a denial, in fact, that there is any such thing as death. That false idea would make everything to be a sham. It would have it that Christ did not really die, but only appeared to, and thus leave the world without any propitiation for sin. But then it really denies that there is any difference between the dead and the living, and so that there is any such thing as death, and consequently no need of salvation. And finally, it directly contradicts the Bible, and so makes havoc of everything.

The State of the Dead

What says the Bible?

> **Ecclesiastes 9**
> [5] The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything...
> [6] Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.

[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither you go.

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalm 115
[17] The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.

Hezekiah, rescued from death, said to the Lord:

Isaiah 38
[17] You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for You have put all my sins behind your back.
[18] For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You; they that go down into the pit [the grave] cannot hope for your truth.
[19] The living, the living, he shall praise You as I do this day.

Death is the opposite of life; but the idea that the dead are conscious and capable of being preached or prayed to, having the same thoughts and feelings that living people do, puts no difference between death and life, and makes nonsense of the distinction. Note, however, the marked contrast in the text last quoted.

That the dead are not alive, is shown by *Revelation* 20:4-6, where we read of the righteous dead that:

Revelation 20
[4] ...they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years.
[5] ...This is the first resurrection...But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

So we see that the dead cease to live, and then live again, which is consistent and reasonable.

Much more might be cited from the Scriptures, but this is sufficient to show that the idea that the dead need our prayers, or are in a condition to be benefited by them, is pagan superstition, transmitted to this generation through the Papacy, and wholly destitute of any scriptural basis. It is opposed to common sense, in that it makes the terms death and life meaningless, and it is opposed to the Gospel, in that it robs the sacrifice of Christ of its reality.

12. Unquenchable Fire (1901)

Present Truth, September 26, 1901

IN ONE of a series of articles on "A Visit to Palestine," in the *Baptist Times and Freeman*, the Rev. Frederic C. Spurr tells of a mill with modern machinery, at Ashdod. The owner, a German, had transplanted a bit of the new West into the midst of the ancient East; and the writer says,

> There is no waste anywhere. The chaff is, in his case too, burned up with unquenchable fire, for he uses it in his little furnace, under the boiler.

We cannot help wondering how many who read this have the idea that Herr Schmidt is piling up the chaff in his mill, and saving it. Of course not one. Every reader well knows that the chaff is speedily consumed when put into the furnace, and soon ceases to have any existence. Why, then, will they insist that when the Bible says that the wicked are to be burned up "with unquenchable fire,"[338] it means that they are to writhe in torment throughout eternity?

> "But the fire is unquenchable!"

Exactly; and that is just why the wicked are burned up in it—consumed utterly, so that they become...

Obadiah

16 ...as though they had not been.

If the fire could be quenched, there might be some hope of escape; but since it cannot be put out, it must consume that upon which it preys. And what then? It will go out of itself; for an unquenchable fire always dies as soon as it has burned up that which it was devouring. When everything has been reduced to ashes, then the unquenchable fire ceases to be. It is not quenched but it is no more. So we read of the last day—the day following

[338] *Matthew* 3:12.

the final judgment, when the difference between the righteous and the wicked shall have been discerned:

Malachi 4 [RV]
[1] Behold, the day comes, it burns as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
[2] But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings, and you shall go forth and gambol as calves in the stall.
[3] And you shall tread down wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I do make, says the Lord of hosts.

13. What Is Man?

Present Truth, September 26, 1901
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. What Is Man?

> The other day a letter of mine was inserted in one of our local papers, denying the assertion of a socialist lecturer, that man is an animal; and now I see it again asserted in paragraph 6, article by J. H. Kellogg, M.D., July 18th. Will you kindly inform us in your next issue if you approve of this teaching generally believed by all sorts of unbelievers as well as medical men?

WE MUST pay no attention to what somebody else believes or does not believe, but simply ask,

"What is truth?"

Many people are frightened away from a truth, because it is believed by somebody who is reputed to be an unbeliever, and who may indeed he skeptical about many things. We must not refuse to eat, drink, breathe, and sleep, because infidels do those things. If a thing is wrong or untrue, it is so because it is not in harmony with God's Word, and not because a wicked or unbelieving person does or believes it.

Let us therefore have a brief study of what the Scriptures teach about man, and that will be far better than to compare the beliefs of different classes of men. The weakness and the greatness of man are set forth in the following texts:

Genesis 1
[26] God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
[27] So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them.

Genesis 2
[7] 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.

Psalm 8
[3] When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained;
[4] What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man, that You visit him?
[5] For You have made him a little lower than God [literal Hebrew], and have crowned him with glory and honor.
[6] You made him to have dominion over the works of your hands; You have put all things under his feet:
[7] All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;
[8] The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the sea.

Psalm 31
[5] Behold, You have made my days as a hand-breadth; and my age is as nothing before You; verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

Psalm 103
[14] He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.
[15] As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
[16] For the wind passes over it, and it is gone.

Isaiah 40
[6] All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field;
[7] The grass withers, the flower fades; because the Spirit of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people is grass.

Psalm 104
[24] The earth is full of your riches.
[25] So to this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.
[27] These wait all upon You; that You may give them their meat in due season.

[28] That You give them, they gather; You open your hand, they are filled with good.
[29] You hide your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.
[30] You send forth your Spirit, they are created: and You renew the face of the earth.

Isaiah 2
[22] Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?

What then is man? He is "dust and ashes;" animated clay, made from the very same ground that all other living creatures on earth are made, and breathing the same breath that they breathe; yet made to have dominion over them all, because he alone of all living creatures is made in the image of God.

Man was made to share with God the dominion of the universe, yet he was not made to be God, and can never become God. His power is not inherent in himself, but God alone is his strength. The man who knows this, and who makes the Lord his trust, acknowledging that in comparison with God he is nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity, is elevated to a position of dominion and authority with God, and is in the place of God to all the creatures that were formed on this earth before he was; but, on the other hand,

Psalm 49
[20] Man that is in honor and understands not, is like the beasts that perish.

Now what is an animal? It is a creature that has *anima*, or breath. The primary meaning of the Latin word *anima* is, "*that which blows*, or *breathes*." It is a living creature having the breath of life, as distinguished from plants. Man, therefore, is most certainly an animal, although designed to be far above all other animals—their lord and master; but when he loses sight of his high calling, by forgetting how frail he is, and his absolute dependence

on God, he loses his dominion, and comes at last to be on a level with other animals, and even below them.

There is a mistaken idea that "animal" and "brute" are the same. All brutes are animals, but all animals are not brutes. Do you not remember the description which John gives of God's throne:

Revelation 4
[6] In the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts, full of eyes, before and behind.

This is an unfortunate translation, it is true, for "living creatures" is far better; but it shows that we need not be afraid of applying the term "animal" to man, when it is used even of the beings that help to compose God's throne.

Man is the crown of God's creation, God created him, that he might be the highest and most perfect expression of Divine power. But God's power is made perfect in weakness, and that shows that man is nothing of himself. Whatever is attributed to man, as inherent in him, is so much detracted from God. So many people have a horror of the term "conditional immortality," not recognizing that it simply means that man has no life except in Christ. Our boast is not in what we are, but in what the Lord by His loving power can make of us.

Psalm 113
[7] He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the dunghill;
[8] That He may set him with princes, even the princes of His people.

14. Eternal Fire

Present Truth, October 17, 1901

IN A PREVIOUS article[339] we have talked about "unquenchable fire," the fire which shall consume the worthless chaff of mankind. Because it cannot be quenched it will utterly consume and destroy all the wicked, so that…

Obadiah
16 …they shall be as though they had not been.

But someone asks,

> "What about eternal fire? if the fire into which the wicked will be cast is eternal, does not that indicate that they will continue to burn to all eternity?"

Not by any means, so we shall see from the Scriptures. Let us first read:

Jude
6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the Judgment of the great day.
7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Luke 17
29 The same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.
30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

We read that God,

2 Peter 2
6 …turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample

[339] See the previous article, *Unquenchable Fire (1901)*.

unto those that after should live ungodly.

And in *Lamentations* 4:6 we read:

Lamentations 4
[6] The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown *as in a moment*, and no hands stayed on her.

Thus we see that the result of suffering the judgment of eternal fire is instant destruction, turning to ashes. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were very soon reduced to ashes,—"as in a moment,"—and ceased to burn, so in the day that shall burn as an oven,

Malachi 4
[1] ...all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of host, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
[3] And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.

What will then become of the fire? Will it go out? Certainly not; for it is eternal. The fire that consumes the wicked is the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, and His own brightness.[340]

Hebrews 12
[29] Our God is a consuming fire,

–and He is from everlasting to everlasting.

Psalm 97
[3] A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.

But still He is the everlasting dwelling place of His people, who are able to dwell with the devouring fire, and with "everlasting burnings."[341] The same fire that destroys the wicked will be a protection to the righteous.

[340] *2 Thessalonians* 2:8.
[341] *Isaiah* 33:14.

When we understand that "the eternal Spirit"[342] of God is the "eternal fire" that consumes the wicked, we can see how it is that the righteous can dwell in the midst of it. They will live in it forever and it will be refreshing coolness to them, even the water of life; for the "Spirit of burning" is the "living water" that washes away the iniquity of all who believe in Christ.[343]

Righteousness is everlasting: it is indestructible. Fire cannot consume it. But everything that is not exactly right has in itself the element of decay. Now God will never destroy anything that is good. His work is to restore and build up and make new. So He sends His Spirit now to all men, to burn up and wash away all their impurity. Those who fully believe and yield wholly to the transforming power of the Spirit of God, are made perfectly pure. They are tried by fire…

Zechariah 13
[9] …as gold is tried;

–for the Lord…

Malachi 3
[2] …is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap:
[3] And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Then when the Lord…

2 Thessalonians 1
[7] …shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
[8] In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
[9] Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power,

–the righteous will be safe, for the fire will already have wrought its work in them. The object is only to purify, and they

[342] *Hebrews* 9:14.
[343] *Isaiah* 4:4.

will have been purified. And it will still be doing the work of purifying, blotting out sin; only in the case of the wicked who have resisted the previous working of the Spirit, and have become wholly permeated with sin, and one with it, the blotting out of their sin means the blotting out of themselves from existence.

Matthew 13
[43] Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,

–for the eternal Spirit of burning that has cleansed them and the earth, will be their everlasting glory.

15. Spiritism or Spiritualism

Present Truth, November 7, 1901

> Some have told me that spiritism and spiritualism are two different things. I was under the impression that they both meant the same. I shall be very glad if you will tell me through the *Private Corner*[344] which is correct.

PRACTICALLY, there is no difference, both words being used with reference to belief in communication with spirits of dead people.

It is true that the primary idea of the word "spiritualism," is the state of being spiritual; but its most common use is to indicate dealings with spirits. Indeed, it is very rarely used to indicate a condition of spirituality, while it is used almost to the exclusion of a "Spiritism," as the name of a false religion. For a man who repudiates professed dealings with the dead to declare himself "a spiritualist, but not a spiritist," savors of pedantry; and any man who should unqualifiedly declare himself a "spiritualist" would almost invariably be understood is meaning that he believed in communication with spirits. Of course we understand that there is really no such thing as communication with the dead, but that it is the spirits of demons who deceive people with that notion.

[344] PP Editor's note: "Private Corner" refers to a weekly column that E. J. Waggoner ran in the *Present Truth* for about 3 years (1900 to 1903). Some of these articles have been reproduced in this volume, but the full collection is available in the book, *Questions and Answers on the Bible*.

1902

1. Groping in the Dark

Present Truth, January 2, 1902

ONE who signs himself "Christian" writes thus to the *Daily Chronicle*, on what is called "Higher Spiritualism":

> A friend of mine has lately been investigating the subject with a view to ascertaining if Spiritualism is a reality or a fraud, and, if the former, if it is good or evil; he has been some months at this work, attending numerous séances, etc., but has not yet been able to arrive at any definite conclusion.

No; and he will never be able to arrive at any definite conclusion in that way, except that he is in danger of becoming wholly blind through groping in the dark. Spiritualism is a thing of darkness, its séances being conducted in the dark, and the only proper way to investigate it is to turn on it the search-light of God's Word. A man can learn more of the interior of a cave by standing outside and flashing a light inside for a minute, than he can by groping about in it for a week.

2. Beware of Them!

Present Truth, January 16, 1902

THE following bit of correspondence to the *Daily Chronicle*, on the subject of "Higher Spiritualism," as it is called, comes very close to a true view of the case:

> The question here is not whether the spirits of the departed can and do communicate—under certain conditions—with those who are still in the flesh, but whether the spirits with whom these people are in communication are spirits of the dead, or whether they may be evil spirits personating the dead. I have no doubt in my own mind as to the true answer. The fact that when we get into the inner rings we find the spirits all working towards one object—the discrediting of Christianity—is more than sufficient to make us hesitate to go further. We are told by the Holy Apostles that in the last days perilous times should come; men should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, and from what I know of spiritualism—or let us call it by its right name, necromancy—and spirit mongers, I warn people to beware of them.

Here is the true test:

> **Isaiah 8**
> [20] To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Now there was never yet a spiritualist who did not contradict the Bible, which shows that spiritualism is wholly darkness. And one of the primary things in which spiritualism contradicts the Bible is in the assertion that the spirits from which communications are received are the spirits of the dead, when the Bible declares that...

> **Ecclesiastes 9**
> [5] ...the dead know not anything.

The very fact, therefore, that a communicating spirit claims to be the spirit of some dead person is in itself evidence that the

spirit is one of Satan's host of evil angels. People do well to heed the warning—"Beware of them."[345]

[345] *Matthew* 7:15.

3. Where Will You Spend Eternity?

Present Truth, February 27, 1902

THIS common question is a very easy one to answer. If anybody spends eternity anywhere, it will most certainly be with God; for...

Isaiah 57
15 [He] inhabits eternity.

The righteous will dwell with God in eternity, while there will be no eternity for the wicked. In *Psalm* 37:37-38 we read:

Psalm 37
37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.
38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

The word "end" in this passage is from the Hebrew word meaning "future time" or "after time." Therefore the text, literally rendered, would read, that...

> "...the *after time* or *future time* of the upright is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the *future time* of the wicked shall be cut off.

The wicked will have no future at all, much less an eternity; they will cease to be; they will...

Obadiah
14 ...be as though they have not been.

Thus we see that there is really no place for the question at the beginning of this paragraph. Its form should be,

> "Will you have an eternity?"

Each one can answer this readily, by determining whether or not he will accept the life of God. What is your answer to it?

4. Everlasting Punishment and Eternal Life

Present Truth, March 13, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Everlasting Punishment and Eternal Life

> Will you kindly explain the last verse of the 25th chapter of *Matthew?* Are the words "everlasting" and "eternal" synonymous terms?

THEY are not synonymous, but identical. The first reads thus:

> **Matthew 25**
> 46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

The two words, "everlasting" and "eternal" are from one and the same Greek word, so that the verse is correctly rendered in the *Revised Version:*

> 46 And the shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into the eternal life.

There is absolutely no difference in the meaning of the two words, "everlasting" and "eternal;" and it is very evident that there cannot be in this instance, since, as just stated, the very same Greek word is used in each clause of the verse.

Does not this then prove that the punishment of the wicked will last as long as the reward of the righteous? Most assuredly it does; the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous are alike eternal. Then the wicked will be, after the Judgment, tormented to all eternity, will they? Not by any means. The verse affords no warrant for such a conclusion. Note well that it contains no hint of torment, and we have no right to substitute "torment" for "punishment."

The text before us says that the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; but let us now read another text, which tells what this punishment will be. *2 Thessalonians* 1:7-9 says that...

2 Thessalonians 1
[7] ...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
[8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
[9] Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

The punishment into which the wicked will go at Christ's second coming, will be destruction, and it will be everlasting, eternal. The wicked will be destroyed for as long a time as the righteous will live.

Let us have a few parallel texts. *Romans* 6:23 tells us:

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

Death then is the punishment of the wicked; and it will be eternal death, since the punishment is to be eternal. To say that the wicked will be conscious through all eternity, is to make nonsense of the Word; for they could not be conscious without being alive; and if they were alive to all eternity, no matter how deplorable their condition, they would have eternal life as surely as the righteous, and there would be no contrast.

It would be folly to say that the wages of sin is eternal life; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord; yet that is just what the text would really say, if "death" meant eternal life in misery or in any condition whatever. There is a sharp and decided contrast between death and life. The two terms have nothing in common. The punishment of the wicked will in every respect be the exact opposite of the reward of the righteous, but just as lasting.

Again: *2 Thessalonians* 1:9 says that the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. The destruction comes from the presence of God. Now read:

Psalm 97
[3] A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.

Also,

Psalm 68
[2] As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.

These text most clearly show what the punishment of the wicked will be.

It is true that the Scriptures say that the wicked shall be tormented, and shall suffer. It could not expected that they could be destroyed by fire without pain and suffering; and this torment will be proportionate to the guilt of each individual. But there will at last come an end, no matter how extended the period of torment may be; for we read:

Isaiah 10
[23] The Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined in the midst of all the land.
[25] For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and my anger in their destruction.

And again:

Obadiah
[15] The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as you have done, it shall be done unto you; your reward shall return upon your own head.
[16] For as you have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

All this is in the text first quoted; for the Greek word there rendered "punishment" means *to cut off; to prune*, as a branch from a vine. See *John* 15:1-6, where we read Christ's statement that the branch that does not bear fruit is cut off,

John 15
[6] ...and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

So we read that...

Psalm 37
[9] Evildoers shall be cut off.
[28] The seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
[38] The end of the wicked shall be cut off.

But in contrast to this, God saints...

[28] ...are preserved for ever.

This is not told for the purpose of frightening us into being good, much less that we should gloat over the threatened fate of the wicked. The keeping of the commandments is love, not fright. No person ever could be frightened into goodness; if he could be, he would be a cringing slave, and not a free child of God. But the sure destiny of the wicked is foretold for our comfort.

"What comfort can there possibly be in it?" you ask.

Just this, that it shows how completely God destroys sin. Sinners will be destroyed only because they are inseparably joined to sin, and sin must be rooted out of God's universe. So as sinners will be destroyed by the glory of the Lord's presence, against which they have rebelled, that same glory will also destroy our sins, if we delight in God's presence; and it will destroy them to all eternity, so that they will have no more existence, and will never rise up to plague us.

Is not that a blessed revelation?

5. Can the Soul of Man Die?

Present Truth, April 3, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Can the Soul of Man Die?

> On reading the article regarding the eternal punishment of the wicked, it struck me that as the soul of man is undying, how is it that death will be the punishment of the wicked, since although dead, the soul was yet alive and conscious? Please explain in your next issue, as it seems perplexing.

TRULY it does seem perplexing; but the difficulty will speedily disappear if we go about it in the right way. There is no difficulty whatever in the Scriptures; the difficulty comes in the attempt to reconcile the truth of the Bible with an impossible theory of human invention.

This question affords us an excellent opportunity to contrast the right and the wrong way of dealing with the Bible. The wrong way is to assume a certain thing, and then to become perplexed because the Bible does not agree with our assumption. Thus, the disciples had settled it in their minds that Christ would immediately overthrow the Roman dominion, and establish His own everlasting kingdom on this earth, and therefore when He spoke about His resurrection from the dead, they wondered what that expression could mean. They were perplexed, and were overwhelmed by the event; but they would have had no difficulty, and would not have been taken by surprise, if they had said:

> "He says that He is to die, and rise again the third day; therefore it is evident that we have not understood the Scriptures, and are mistaken in our ideas."

So in the question before us, the Bible says that...

Romans 6
[23] The wages of sin is death,

–and that the wicked...

2 Thessalonians 1
[9] ...shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

But you say,

> "How can this be, since the soul of man cannot die?"

That is the wrong way. The right way would be to say:

> "Since the punishment of the wicked is death, and is to be eternal, even 'everlasting destruction,' it is evident that I have been mistaken in supposing that man is an undying creature, and that there is really no such thing as death."

You say that "the soul of man is undying." God says:

Ezekiel 18
[4] The soul that sins, it shall die.

Psalm 89
[48] What man is he that lives and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?

The answer comes:

Psalm 49
[6] They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
[7] None of them can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him:
[8] For the redemption of their soul is precious [costly], and it ceases [must be let alone] for ever.
[15] But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me.

Here we have your question completely answered. The difficulty is solved, and the perplexity ought now to cease. The only trouble was, that you assumed something that is contrary to the truth.

How is it possible for anybody to say that there is no death? Surely one's own observation ought to convince him, even without the testimony of the Scriptures. That man is mortal, that

death has come into the world by sin, is declared throughout the Bible; and we see it everywhere on earth.

To say that there is no death, is to deny the necessity for Christ's sacrifice; for we are told that He partook of man's nature,

Hebrews 2
[14] ...that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;
[15] And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

He tasted death for every man;[346] and...

1 Corinthians 15
[26] The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

He says,

John 6
[33] The Bread of God is He which comes down from heaven, and gives life unto the world.

And again:

John 10
[10] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

To the unbelieving Jews He uttered this sorrowful reproach:

John 5 [RV]
[39] You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have the eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me;
[40] And you will not come to me that you might have life.

Christ did not come into this world for nothing. It was terrible need that called for so wondrous a sacrifice.

[346] *Hebrews* 2:9.

John 3

[16] God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Without Christ, all men would perish. The fact that He came for the sole purpose of giving life, shows that without Him there is nothing but death for man.

Death is not the same thing as life. To say that the dead are alive and conscious is as absurd as to say that the blind see, that the dumb speak, or that the deaf hear. It is even worse than absurd; it is wicked; for it is not only a direct contradiction of the Bible, but it virtually teaches that there is no such thing as death, and that what is called sin is really righteousness.

For it is declared that sin brought death.[347] Being sinners we were dead,[348] since death had passed upon all men: but if it were true that death is the same thing as life, it would be evident that what the Bible calls sin is really the same as righteousness. Thus we see that it is not a light thing to say that there is no death, since it really denies the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 25

[46] These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

The punishment we have already seen to be death—everlasting destruction. Now see how the statement that there is no death makes nonsense of the Scriptures: it would have Christ say that the wicked shall go away into everlasting life; but the righteous into everlasting life. It would make *Romans* 6:23 say that the wages of sin is life, but the gift of God is eternal life. Of course professed Christians never think of the consequences of the false ideas that they have imbibed concerning death; for they could have no respect for the Scriptures, if they really thought that they contain such absurdities.

[347] *Romans* 5:12.
[348] *Ephesians* 2:1.

What does the Bible say about death, and the condition of the dead? Let us read a few statements.

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything.
[10] Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave wither you go.

Psalm 146
[3] Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Psalm 6
[5] In death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who shall give you thanks.

Isaiah 38
[17] You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for You have cast all my sins behind your back.
[18] For the grave cannot praise You, death cannot celebrate You: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.
[19] The living, the living, he shall praise You, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known your truth.

The case is very simple.

Colossians 3
[4] Christ…is our life.

Acts 17
[28] In [God] we live, and move, and have our being.

John 14
[6] [Christ is] the way, the truth, and the life.

Colossians 1
[17] In Him all things consist.

In the beginning,

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.

So we read,

Job 33
[4] The Spirit of God has made me; and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

In Christ we live; without Him there is no existence. All mankind live by the same means by which the first man lived—by the breath of God. God is constantly doing for each one of us what He did for Adam in the beginning—breathing into our nostrils the breath of life; thus only is it that we are living souls.

In the things that God has made, and which are for our use, the everlasting power and Divinity of God are clearly seen;[349] and:

2 Peter 1
[3] His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that has called us to glory and virtue.

God gives himself to us in His gifts.

1 John 5
[11] God has given to us eternal life; and this life is in His Son.
[12] He that has the Son has life; and He that has not the Son of God has not life.

Now all men have the Son, the Word life, whether they know Him and accept Him, or not; for:

Romans 5
[18] ...the free gift has come upon all men unto justification of life,

–and the Word of life is in the mouth and heart of all men, in order that they may do it.[350] Thus all are without excuse; for they

[349] *Romans* 1:20.
[350] *Deuteronomy* 30:11-14; *Romans* 10:6-9.

have not to go in search of eternal life, but only to lay hold of and keep that which has been committed to them.

But not all will accept Christ, and yield to His control, even when they know Him. They say,

Luke 19
[14] We will not have this Man to rule over us.

Nevertheless He is longsuffering, not willing that any should perish,[351] and therefore He does not immediately take them at their word, and leave them to themselves. Patiently and long He suffers their manners, drawing them to himself by the cords of His everlasting love.[352] Still many are obdurate, and will resist the Holy Ghost unto the end. Then at the last, when all God's ways have been made plain to all mankind, and it still appears that men choose their own ways, instead of His, God gives them over wholly to their own choice. They choose to live apart from the Lord; but Christ…

Ephesians 4
[10] …ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things;

–and when that is accomplished there will be no place in the universe for those who have fully and finally rejected Him. They will not have God to dwell in them, nor are they willing to abide in Him; therefore they will be left to themselves, and the result will be that they will cease to be, and will…

Obadiah
[16] …be as though they had not been.

The breath that, joined to the body, made man a living soul, will depart, and then the soul will no longer live.

Can you not see that the Scriptural view shows the supremacy of God, while the idea that even the wicked who reject Him can

[351] *2 Peter* 3:9.
[352] *Hosea* 11:4.

have life independently of Him, makes them gods, self-existent beings the same as He is? But there is but one God,—the living God,—He alone is our dwelling place in all generations.[353] We must either live in Him, or else not live at all. Just as apart from Christ we can do nothing,[354] even so apart from Christ we cannot live. Righteousness is life,[355] and both come from God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

[353] *Psalm* 90:1.
[354] *John* 15:5.
[355] *Galatians* 3:21.

6. Between Death and the Resurrection

Present Truth, April 10, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Between Death and the Resurrection

A CORRESPONDENT writes:

> The condition of the soul between death and the resurrection is a thing which I have never been able to solve satisfactorily. I sometimes think we are not intended to solve the mystery.

If it were left to our wisdom to "solve," it would remain a mystery for ever; but "those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children;"[356] and the state of the dead is one concerning which God has taken pains to give us special information. In *1 Thessalonians* 4:13 we read:

> **1 Thessalonians 4**
> [13] 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.

Since God, who inspired the words of Paul, does not wish us to be ignorant on the subject, it is evident that we may understand it by simply giving heed to His Word. So we read further:

> [14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.
> [15] 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 ["precede" RV] them which are asleep.
> [16] 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:
> [17] 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.

[356] *Deuteronomy* 29:29.

Notice that "the dead in Christ" are said to be "asleep." When Stephen was stoned by the priestly mob,

Acts 7
[60] 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.

That leaves us in no doubt as to the condition of the dead. We well know that sound sleep is a condition of utter unconsciousness. The one who is asleep takes no note of the passing time. One may awake after half-an-hour's sleep, and think that he has slept hours; and on the other hand a night's sleep may seem but as a moment. The sleeper is totally unconscious of everything that is going on around him; and so a sleep, in which there is breath left in the body, is used as a perfect representation of death, in which the breath has departed.

What more need be said? It is evident that those who are asleep are not singing praises. They are not with the Lord; for it is not till the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, and the trump of God, that they are raised, and, with those who have remained alive until the Lord's coming, are taken to be with the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 4
[17] *So* shall we ever be with the Lord.

How? By the resurrection of the sleeping saints, and the translation of the living, at the second coming of Christ.

As a matter of fact there is no "mystery" whatever about the state of the dead. We are unfortunately too familiar with death not to have had ocular demonstration of the fact that the condition of the dead is in every respect the exact opposite of that of the living. But there is a mystery connected with them nevertheless, and that is the giving of life to them again. This is set forth in the following words, which further emphasize the fact that the dead are not now with the Lord, but are in the dust of the earth:

1 Corinthians 15
[51] Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
[52] 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.
[53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
[54] 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.

It may be asked,

> "What difference does it make what the condition of the dead is, or what we believe about it? How can our belief about this matter affect our lives as Christians?"

Whether we know what difference it makes, or not, it is evident that it is important for us to know the truth, else Inspiration would not express such solicitude that we should not remain ignorant. Only those things are unimportant, of which the Scripture says nothing; everything revealed in the Bible is of the utmost importance.

The reason given for telling us about those that are asleep, is that we should not sorrow as those who have no hope.

Proverbs 14
[32] The righteous has hope in his death,

–and this hope is the resurrection at the coming of Christ. Note that all depends upon the coming of the Lord. If He were not coming, there would be no hope for those who have fallen asleep, nor for the living either, for that matter.

1 Corinthians 15
[16] If the dead rise not,...
[18] Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

There is one reason why we should know the truth, and that is, in order that we may not be led astray by lying spirits. The spirits personate dead men, and come with messages to their friends. There is the most abundant and conclusive evidence that these Spiritualist manifestations are of a supernatural character; and those who believe that their dead friends are in heaven, or who are in doubt as to their condition, can easily be made to believe that the communications purporting to come from them are messages direct from heaven. It has often been the case that men have been led to abandon their faith in Christ, through giving heed to these "seducing spirits;"[357] for when men are in doubt on one item of revelation, it is easy to lead them to doubt others. But one who is instructed in the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us "wise unto salvation,"[358] and who holds to them, cannot be deceived by any pretended communications from the dead, no matter what "tests" the spirits may give. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable and necessary.[359]

One more item is worthy of special note in the comfort which the Apostle Paul gives to the sorrowing ones. They are not to sorrow as those that have no hope, because God will bring the sleeping ones from the grave. But when he comes to the grand climax, after stating that when the Lord descends the dead shall rise first, and then we shall be...

1 Thessalonians 4

17 ...caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air,

–it is *not* said,

"...and so shall we ever be together;"

–but,

17 ...so shall we ever be *with the Lord.*

[357] *1 Timothy* 4:1.
[358] *2 Timothy* 3:15.
[359] *2 Timothy* 3:16.

That is the "blessed hope"[360] above all others. It is the being with Him that makes it possible for friends to be united; for apart from Him there is nothing. There is no real friendship or relationship even in this world, except in Christ; there can be no perfect union except in Him. In Him all fullness dwells; in Him all relationship is summed up.

This is what makes the loss of all things, and even of friends, endurable; for He is the same, and His years do not fail.[361] Though we lose everything, yet in Him we have everything; and so, when in the world to come we rejoice at the meeting with friends, it will be known and recognized that the love of each is but a branch from the mighty stream flowing from the heart of Christ.

[360] *Titus* 2:13.
[361] *Hebrews* 1:12.

7. Spiritualistic Materialism

Present Truth, April 17, 1902

THERE has been much discussion of the subject of Spiritualism in the *Church Times* of late, and in the issue of April 4, "A Country Priest" writes thus:

> I have been most interested in reading the correspondence upon Spiritualism. To all objectors I would say that the intra-communion between friends and relations from the Spirit-world is not only a joy to myself and many others, but it is a cause of thankfulness that in this age of free thought, Materialists are being convinced of the life beyond the grave when they see the spirit forms of the departed can and do return, and thus it is a means of hastening God's kingdom.

This is a common argument, but those who employ it fail to see that dependence upon such supposed "evidence" is the grossest kind of materialism. It is not in the least a manifestation of faith, for the person will believe nothing but his own senses, ignoring God's Word. Upon such, "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie"[362] is sure to come; and the idea of communication with the dead is the lie that inevitably follows the ignoring of the Bible teaching concerning the state of the dead. It is sadly amusing to hear people declaim against "materialism," when they base all their hopes of immortality upon the *materialization* of certain spirits.

[362] *2 Thessalonians* 2:11.

8. Tormented Forever and Ever

Present Truth, April 24, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Tormented for Ever and Ever

IN THE issue of March 13 there was a short article in this department, in answer to a question on "Everlasting Punishment and Eternal Life."[363] It consisted mainly of Scripture statements to the effect that the punishment of the wicked is eternal, as lasting as the life of the righteous, but that it is *destruction*, *death*. Since then we have received a number of letters referring to, and asking for further explanation, especially of certain texts which speak of torment for ever and ever. One letter will suffice as a sample of all.

> A constant reader of your valuable paper, and a firm believer in the second death, has a great desire to be enlightened on *Revelation* 14:9-11, and also *Revelation* 20:10. Hoping to see your comments according to the Word, I remain, yours in His service.

The texts referred to read as follows:

Revelation 14

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb;

11 And the smoke of their torment ascends 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.

The next speaks of:

[363] See Article 5 in this section: "Everlasting Punishment and Eternal Life."

Revelation 20

[8] ...the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth,...the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,

–who are gathered by Satan after the second resurrection to do battle against the Lord, and says:

[9] And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.
[10] 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 for ever and ever.

In the first place let it be understood that the Scripture cannot contradict itself. In the article referred to there were no opinions or conclusions stated, but only plain texts of Scripture. Let us briefly recall a few of them.

Romans 6

[23] The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Death and life are opposites. As long as a man has existence, he is not dead; when one is dead, he has no life. Death does not mean a state of misery; for however greatly one may be suffering, he is not dead as long as the suffering continues. There are thousands of people in this world who are dragging out a miserable existence, but they are nevertheless alive. Many have no joy in life, and long for death to put an end to their misery; but no one would think of calling them dead. The terms "life" and "death" are so distinct, and so well understood, that it is past all comprehension how people can use them as though they meant virtually the same thing.

2 Thessalonians 1

[7] The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
[8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

[9] Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

The reward of the wicked, according to the Scripture, will be in every respect the opposite of the reward of the righteous. The righteous will have eternal life; the wicked will have eternal death.

Malachi 4
[1] The day comes, that shall burn as an oven, and the proud, yea, and all that to wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that shall leave them neither root nor branch.

Psalm 37
[20] 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.

Obadiah
[16] They shall be as though they had not been.

Nevertheless the statements concerning the torment for ever and ever still remain, and must be given attention. If this is done, it will be noticed that in *Revelation* 20:10, the only place where the expression "tormented day and night for ever and ever" occurs, it is not used with reference to the great body of the wicked. We read that…

Revelation 20
[9] …fire came down from God out of heaven, and *devoured them*,

–and then that the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Still if there were but one to suffer eternity of torment, the fact would remain. If we study a few parallel texts we shall get some light on these terms.

Some Uses of the Term "Forever"

In *Exodus* 21:1-6 we learn that a Hebrew slave was to be set free at the end of seven years; but that if he had a wife who must remain in servitude, and should refuse to leave her and his master,

> **Exodus 21**
> [6] Then his master shall bring him to the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him *forever.*

Jonah was in the whale's belly three days and three nights; but in his song of thanksgiving he said:

> **Jonah 2**
> [6] The earth with her bars was about me *forever:* yet have You brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.

Jeremiah said:

> **Lamentations 4**
> [4] The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown *as in a moment*, and no hands stayed on her;

–yet we read that Sodom and Gomorrah…

> **Jude**
> [7] …are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of the *eternal fire.*

They are not burning now, however.

Now we know full well that no devoted Hebrew servant has been living and serving his master from the days of Moses until now. It is evident, therefore, that the term "for ever and ever" may in some cases have a limit. The Hebrew servant who had his ear bored was to serve his master *forever*, that is, as long as he should live. He certainly cannot serve him longer than during his natural life.

In like manner we see that the term "forever" has a very narrow range in the case of Jonah, being limited to three days. With these

cases in mind, and remembering also that the Scriptures repeatedly states that the wicked are to be totally destroyed, as completely as though they had never been, and we have no difficulty with the statement that they, or some of them, are to be tormented day and night, for ever and ever. That may mean many days, or it may, as we have seen, not cover more than three days. But whether it be long or short, the period of torment will certainly have an end; for of those who drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured into the cup of His indignation, we read:

Isaiah 10
[25] For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and my anger in their destruction.

Take another pertinent example. In *Isaiah* 34 we have a description of God's Judgment on the earth.

Isaiah 34
[8] It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion,
[2] [When] the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon their armies.

It is the time when...

Revelation 6
[17] ...the great day of His wrath is come,

Isaiah 34
[4] And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down as a leaf falls from off the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.[364]

In that day it is said that the land shall be soaked with blood,

[364] Compare with *Revelation* 6:13-17.

Isaiah 34

[9] And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

[10] It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever and ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; and none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

Still further description of desolation follows, and the subject is continued to the next chapter, which says that:

Isaiah 35

[1] The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

[7] The parched ground [or "blowing sand"] shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.

So we see that the earth, which is to lie desolate "for ever and ever" is afterwards to blossom as the rose; for:

2 Peter 3

[13] We, according to His promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth; wherein dwells righteousness.

This settles the whole question. The wicked are to be recompensed in this earth which itself is to become a "lake of fire;" yet afterwards the whole earth is to be like Eden. It is very evident, therefore, that in the case of the torment of the wicked, as in that of the Hebrew servant, and others, the term "for ever and ever" is limited by the nature of thing to which it is applied. They will be tormented as long as they remain alive, but they will not have receive their punishment until they shall be dead, destroyed, reduced to smoke and ashes, as though they had not been. And their torment is only the preliminary part of their punishment, which is to be completed by death.

Someone will ask,

> "Since the term 'forever' may be limited, how do we know but that the death of the wicked may be only a short duration, and

that they may after a while be restored to life in the favor of God?"

We know that they will remain dead, with no possibility of a resurrection, because they will have deliberately and finally rejected the Lord Jesus, through whom alone there can be a resurrection. When they become…

Obadiah
[16] …as though they had not been,

–they will never be again; for we read that the end—the future time—of the wicked shall be cut off.

Psalm 37
[38] But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

The Assurance of Victory over Sin

But we must not leave the question here, as though it were only a matter of exegesis. If it were only a theoretical question, we might well leave its exposition alone, and wait until the end itself demonstrates the facts in the case; but it is not so. The right understanding of this matter has a decided bearing on our hope and courage in the contest against sin and Satan. This is why it is dealt with in the Bible; for nothing is there revealed for the mere purpose of satisfying curiosity.

It is simply a question of whether or not the Lord can conquer and root out sin. There was a time when there was no sin in the universe. There was once a time when there was no sin in this earth. Sin is distasteful to God, and utterly foreign to His nature.

Psalm 92
[15] [He] is upright, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

Sin is rebellion against Him and His kingdom. On His ability to put down all rebellion, and utterly to destroy every trace of transgression against His authority, depends the stability of His government. If there were a huge, seething mass of sin that He could

not extirpate, even though He had it shut up within certain limits, it would show that Satan had been successful, and that God's kingdom of righteousness had received an irreparable blow. To say that God *could* destroy sin, if He wished, but that He will not, is to charge Him with harboring and cherishing it.

Moreover, upon God's ability to root sin out of the universe, and the assurance that He will certainly do it, depends our confidence that He can utterly destroy sin in us.

1 John 3
[8] The Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.

If a host of blaspheming sinners were to occupy some corner of God's dominions to all eternity, continually adding sin to sin, then the object of Christ's manifestations to the world would have failed, and He would have died in vain. In that case there would be no hope of our complete deliverance from sin. To put the case sharply and clearly, we may say:

1. If willful and unrepentant sinners be not finally blotted out of existence, then sin will not be destroyed.
2. If sin—the works of the devil—be not destroyed, then Christ will have failed of accomplishing the object for which He was manifested.
3. If it were that Christ had failed of accomplishing the object for which He came to this earth, then not only we, but also all the inhabitants of the earth, could never be freed from sin; there would be no salvation for anybody.

But Christ has not failed. He has already triumphed gloriously. He has conquered the old serpent, and will soon crush his head. He is able to blot out from us the last trace of sin, so that we may be as pure in His sight as though we never had sin; and He will do the same for the universe, so that…

Revelation 22
[3] …there shall be no more curse;

Revelation 21

[4] ...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.

[5] And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, *I make all things new.* And He said unto me, Write, for these things are true and faithful.

This is our confidence and our rejoicing for present salvation, which we may hold steadfast unto the end.

9. A Comprehensive Question

Present Truth, May 1, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. A Comprehensive Question

I have read with pleasure your answers to correspondence on the soul's condition after death; but as there are so many passages which seem to favor the commonly-received idea that the soul enters either a state of happiness or misery, I should esteem it a favor to have further explanation of such statements of Scripture.

Jesus said to the thief, "Today shall you be with me in Paradise." The parable of the rich man and Lazarus seems to imply that the soul enters at once into a state of happiness or misery.

You give Paul's statement in Thessalonians (and also the case of Stephen), but Paul says also, to the Philippians, that he was in a strait betwixt two, "having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Now it seems to me that if Paul believed that his soul would go to sleep he would have preferred to live for the Master.

If Elijah was not taken to heaven, as the Scripture affirms, where did he go to? Evidently he was somewhere in a state of consciousness, as well as Moses; for they both appeared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration.

These, with other passages, prevent me from fully adopting your views, though I try to come to the truth with an open mind. I think you will see where I am, and will help to a right understanding of God's Word.

YOU have asked a comprehensive question, or rather, a series of questions, any one of which really demands an entire article by itself; for a question cannot be answered satisfactorily in a short space as it can be asked. You have been pleased with the answers hitherto given, simply because they were Scripture statements, and not speculations or expressions of personal opinion. To say "Yes," or "No," or even to summarize the Scripture evidence

in a short paragraph, is not a real answer to a question concerning anything mentioned in Scripture. A true answer to such questions puts the questioner in possession of the same data that the one questioned has, so that he can see the truth directly, and not through some other person's eyes; and this requires both time and space. Nevertheless we shall not risk dissipating the interest of your question by dividing it, but shall cover the entire ground as fully as the limits of one issue will allow.

You kindly say that you have read with pleasure the answers that have been given to questions on the soul's condition after death. As already stated, your pleasure in the answers is due solely to the fact that they were not the expressions of personal opinion, but were the very language of Scripture. Now that which is positively and plainly stated in the Scripture cannot be overthrown by anything else, no matter how much opposed it *seems*. That which is obscure is to be understood by that which is plain; the incidental allusion is to be compared with the direct positive statement; for the entire Scripture is one Word, and cannot contradict itself.

With Christ in Paradise

When Jesus hung on the cross,

Isaiah 53

[3] He was despised and rejected of men.

Matthew 27

[39] They that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads,
[40] And saying, You that destroy the temple, and build it in three days, save yourself. If you be the Son of God, come down from the cross.
[41] Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said,
[42] He saved others; himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, led Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.
[43] He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God.

[44] The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth.

It was the darkest hour in the life of Jesus. He had made some very strong, positive statements as to who He was and what He would do; but now it *seemed* as though they had been but the irresponsible utterances of a dreamer, a fanatic, or a hypocrite. His own loved disciples had turned their backs on Him, and fled. One who had been foremost in confessing that He was the Christ, the Son of God, had denied Him with fierce oaths. No wonder the thoughtless multitude…

Isaiah 53
[4] …did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted,

–when even He himself was so overwhelmed as to cry out in bitter anguish,

Mark 15
[34] My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?

Surely that was not a time when one would expect to hear a message of comfort and salvation from His lips.

But into the thick darkness a ray of light shines and pierces the mind of one of the thieves, so that he ceased reviling; and when…

Luke 23
[39] One of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If You be Christ, save yourself and us,

–he rebuked him, saying,

[40] Do you not fear God, seeing you are in the same condemnation?
[41] And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man has done nothing amiss.
[42] And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

What marvelous faith! A new disciple is gained by that which made all the old disciples doubt!

Romans 5
[1] Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

–and Jesus, who…

Colossians 1
[20] …made peace through the blood of His cross,

–because His death was His victory, spoke the message of peace to this poor believer, saying,

Luke 23
[43] Verily I say unto you, Today shall you be with me in Paradise.

Leaving this verse for a moment, let us note a few details which will help us to an understanding of it. The first item is as to Christ's entry into Paradise. On the morning of the third day, when He showed himself to Mary at the tomb in the garden, and she would have embraced at least His feet for joy, Jesus said to her,

John 20
[17] Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Later on He allowed them all to touch Him, and even asked Thomas to thrust his hand into the wound in His side; therefore we know that after He saw Mary, and before He met with the rest of the disciples, He ascended to the Father to receive from His own lips the assurance that His sacrifice was accepted. But the point is, that He did not ascend to the Father on the day of the crucifixion; for…

Revelation 2
[7] …in the midst of the Paradise of God…

–is the tree of Life; and the tree of life is by the side of the river of life, which flows from the throne of God.[365] God's throne is in

[365] *Revelation* 22:1.

Paradise; and as Jesus had not ascended to the Father on the morning of the third day after the crucifixion, it is evident that He did not go to Paradise that day, and therefore could not have met the thief there that day. The reason why He did not go, was that He died, and went to the grave.

The next point to be noticed is the thief's request:

Luke 23
[42] Lord, remember me when You come into your kingdom.

Did Jesus receive His kingdom that day? He himself had, but a few days before, spoken a parable to the disciples,

Luke 19
[11] ...because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear,

–in which He showed them that the case with Him and His kingdom was likened to...

[12] ...A certain nobleman [who] went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Christ has not gone to that far country; when He comes again He will have received the kingdom, and will set upon the throne of His glory, and all nations will be gathered before Him.[366] It is when the nations are angry, and His wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, the Christ takes to himself His great power, and reigns.[367] So the time for the fulfillment of the repentant thief's request has not yet come.

What then? was the thief disappointed? Not by any means, for he died, and has lain in the grave for hundreds of years, unconscious of the lapse of time. When he opens his eyes at the call of the Lord, and sees Him in His kingdom, it will be as though there had been but the blink of an eye since he saw Him on the cross, and he will be satisfied.

[366] *Matthew* 25:31-32.
[367] *Revelation* 11:17-18.

But did Jesus tell an untruth? Nay, verily, that is an impossibility. What is the inevitable conclusion, then? Just this, that Jesus did not tell the thief that they would meet in Paradise that day, and the thief had no such thought in his mind.

But does not the text say that Jesus promised the thief that he should be with Him in Paradise that day? No; what He declared was that He said to him *that day*, even then, as He hung on the cross, seemingly at the end of all His hopes, that he should have his desire, and should yet be with Him in Paradise.

You ask,

> "Does not the punctuation and the construction of the sentence contradict this view?"

Certainly not. In the first place, you must remember that punctuation is a comparatively modern thing. When the Bible was written, all the characters were run together without break or mark of the division in the sentences. Moreover, in the Greek, as in many other languages, the personal pronoun as the subject of a sentence is often unexpressed, being indicated by the verb; and so it is here; therefore the verb may be translated "you shall," as well as, "shall you." So we read the text, in harmony with all the testimony of Scripture,

> "Verily I say unto you today, you shall be with me in Paradise."

When will he be with Him? When He descends...

1 Thessalonians 4
[16] ...from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall arise,
[17] ...and *so* shall we ever be with the Lord.

For a parallel to this style of expression, read:

Zechariah 9
[11] As for you also, by the blood of your covenant I have sent forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

[12] Turn to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope; even today do I declare that I will render double unto you.

It is only when we read *Luke* 23:43 as we have given it, remembering the circumstances under which the words were uttered, that we can see the force and beauty of it. Then the sublime faith of both the thief and Christ shines forth, and we know that nothing is too hard for the Lord, and that no matter how everything may seem to be against us and Him, He is abundantly able to save. Thus we derive the comfort from the scripture that it was designed to give.

Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

Inasmuch as you recognize that this is a parable, we need not spend much time over it. The main thing with respect to a parable is to know what it was designed to teach. Some parables, like those in the 13th chapter of *Matthew*, concerning the kingdom of heaven, are so completely explained in every detail, that there is no chance for any misunderstanding. And there need be none in this instance, for it is plainly made known why it was given. Jesus had spoken a parable concerning the use and abuse of money, and had told the people that they could thus serve God and Mammon;

Luke 16 [RV]
[14] And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things: and they scoffed at Him.

Then He said to them,

[15] ...that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God,

–and then He spoke the parable, showing that a man's worldly prosperity or adversity did not indicate his standing with the Lord.

This parable is not meant to teach anything whatever as to the state of the dead, as a little examination will show. True, the Saviour represented dead people as talking, but that did not confuse His hearers, for they all knew the Scripture teaching on the

state of the dead. The fact that Christ spoke of them in His parable as active and talking was no more misleading than when Jotham told about the conversation among the trees when they went forth to seek a king,[368] or when God said to Cain,

> **Genesis 4**
> [10] The voice of the your brother's blood cries out unto me from the ground.

When we have it stated in the plainest possible language, that:

> **Ecclesiastes 9**
> [5] ...the dead know not anything,

–and that:

> [10] ...there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave,

–we know full well that when in a parable the dead are represented as talking, they are simply personified, as are the trees in Jotham's parable.

Now read a few words of the parable.

> **Luke 16**
> [22] The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

What! are the dead carried bodily and placed in Abraham's bosom?

> "Oh," I hear it said, "that is figurative; of course. 'Abraham's bosom' is but a figurative term for the place of happiness, and Lazarus was not carried there bodily, but only his soul."

Ah, then, the thing is figurative, is it? Very good; then we can at once let the parable drop, so far as our present subject is concerned.

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[368] *Judges* 9:7-15.

I think all will agree that this parable may be left out of the consideration of this question. If we learn from it not to trust to money, and not to be cast down by poverty, we shall do well.

In a Strait Betwixt Two

Speaking of life and death, the Apostle Paul said,

> **Philippians 1**
> [22] What I choose I wot not.
> [23] For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.

Read this thoughtfully, and you will see that it plainly teaches that it is not by death that we depart to be with Christ. It is impossible to charge upon the apostle the absurdities of saying that he was in a strait between two, namely, life and death, not knowing which to choose, but he chose to die! No; there were three things open before him:

1. To die;
2. "To abide in the flesh," that is to live;
3. "To depart and to be with Christ."

Which of the first two he would choose, if the choice were left to him, he did not know; but he had an intense longing for the third, namely, to depart and be with Christ.

Is it not clearly manifest that to depart and be with Christ is something far different from dying? Just what it is we learn from *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18, where we are told how people go to be with the Lord, and also *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54. Not all sleep in the grave, but some live and are changed. Now Paul's only desire was to magnify Christ in his body, and the reason why he did not know which to choose, whether life or death, was that he did not know which would be the greater gain to the cause of Christ: but he could long for translation; for if the Lord should come and take him from this earth, that would show that his work was finished on earth.

So we see that this scripture, instead of teaching that the Apostle Paul expected to be with Christ by dying, teaches just the opposite. His epistle to the Philippians does not contradict the one written to the Thessalonians.

To Die Is Gain

Philippians 1

[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

I cannot think that one who cites this as proving that Paul longed for death, can have read the chapter in which it is found. As we have just noted, the verse that immediately follows states that he did not know which was better, life or death. How can people be so thoughtless, even reckless, in their reading, as to make the apostle contradict his own words in one breath?

Now read the connection closely, and you will see that the apostle had not a single thought of self-interest. From his prison he wrote a courageous letter to cheer the Philippian brethren. He tells them not to be troubled over his afflictions, because all that has happened to him has been for the furtherance of the Gospel. Verse 12. His bonds were the occasion of Christ being made known throughout Caesar's palace. His only desire was, as he says, that:

> [20] Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.

Then he adds,

> [21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

How is it possible for anybody, in the face of the preceding verses, to think that Paul was speaking of personal gain? He had just said that he desired that Christ should be honored through him, whether by his life or his death, it mattered not to him which. If he lived, his life was devoted to the service of Christ, and if he died, the cause of Christ would gain by that. Do you not see how incongruous it is to think that after all that the apostle

has said, he should suddenly intimate that it would be a grand thing for him to die, and be out of trouble? Whoever thinks that has mistaken the character of the apostle, and does violence to his statements.

No; Paul's whole being was lost in Christ. It was not he that lived, but Christ that lived in him[369]; only one desire animated him, and that was to preach the Gospel of Christ, and to see it advanced; and he could laugh at the vain attempts of his persecutors to stop the good work, because even if they put him to death it would only be helping the cause of Christ along. What an unselfish, devoted, heroic soul he was! A grand old man indeed!

The Translation of Elijah

You ask,

> If Elijah was not taken to heaven, where did he go?

Why, he was taken to heaven. The Scripture says so. He was taken away bodily in a chariot of fire, without dying, and thus became a representative of those who shall be alive at the coming of Christ, and be changed to immortality, and taken to heaven without ever dying. Do you not see that Elijah's case is something entirely different from what takes place with the mass of people? Of course he went to heaven, for he never died; here his case does not come into a consideration of the condition and state of the dead.

Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration

But Moses died and was buried in the land of Moab, yet he was also on that mount with Elijah and Christ. Yes, he was; and thus he was a representative of the class who have died, and who will be raised to life at the coming of Christ in His kingdom with power and glory.[370]

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[369] *Galatians* 2:20.

[370] See *Matthew* 16:18; 17:1-8; *Mark* 9:1-8; *2 Peter* 1:14-18.

Moses died, it is true; but we read that Michael the Archangel—the same one whose voice will at the last day call the dead to life[371]:

Jude
9 ...when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses.

The devil is the one that had the power of death,[372] and Christ came to overcome and destroy him, and deliver those whom he has shut up in his prison house, the grave. Moses is one whom He has chosen as an example of what at the last He will do for all the faithful who have died, just as Elijah is the representative of the living who have never died.

Conclusion

Let no one suppose that I have devoted all this space to the discussion of a merely technical, theological question. The Bible was written to show people the way of salvation, and not to afford them something on which to exercise their argumentative powers. It is not a book of puzzles, or of theoretical problems, the solution of which is a purely academic matter, with no influence whatever upon human life and conduct. Whatever motive our friends may have in asking questions, the *Present Truth* has no other object in answering but to help the people in the way of life and salvation. We have no time or space to spare for controversy or the mere satisfying of curiosity.

Now what bearing does this question of the state of the dead have on our salvation? What difference does it make to us in our Christian life? It has just this bearing, that it makes us know the power of the Lord to save us now from sin.

Philippians 3 [RV]
20 For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

[371] *1 Thessalonians* 4:16.
[372] *Hebrews* 2:14.

[21] Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, *according to the working* whereby He is able to subject all things unto himself.

The power by which Christ will raise the dead and change our bodies *at His coming*, is the power by which He is now able to:

2 Corinthians 10
[5] Cast down every high thing [in us] that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

We are simply studying Christ's power to save. Salvation means life from the dead. The power of Christ's coming is His power to raise the dead; and this is the power by which we are now saved from the bondage of corruption.

Moreover, we are putting the readers of *Present Truth* on their guard against the deceptions of Satan. He is able to transform himself into an angel of light,[373] and it is no marvel if his angels can personate human beings, and from their knowledge of their past, tell many secrets that would seem to identify them as dead friends of some with whom they communicate. Now if people think that the dead are alive, it is but an easy matter for them to be led into Spiritualism when they receive strong messages from what purport to be their dead friends. And the history of the past demonstrates that when a Christian has been led into Spiritualism his faith in Christ and the atonement ceases.

It is not surprising that a Spiritualist should disbelieve what the Bible says about Christ's sacrifice, and our dependence on it, when he has to disbelieve what the Bible says about the state of the dead, in order to be a Spiritualist at all. It is utterly impossible for one who firmly believes the Scripture truth that we have life only in Christ, and that the dead are unconsciously sleeping, ever to become a Spiritualist; and the event will show that it is impossible for those who do not believe this, not to become Spiritual-

[373] *2 Corinthians* 11:14.

ists. So we have ample reason for devoting so much space to this subject.

We have in hand a question concerning the structure of man, asking for a statement of the distinction between body, and soul, and spirit, and the meaning of these terms, and if God will, we shall take this up next week.

10. Body, Soul, and Spirit

Present Truth, May 8, 1902

> I have been very much blessed by reading the last two numbers of *Present Truth*, on this whole question, and would like to have you explain what Paul means in *1 Thessalonians* 5:23, where he speaks of the "whole spirit and soul and body." Or, in other words, What is the soul? Is the soul distinct from other parts of the man? If you can give us a lesson on this subject, I shall esteem it a great favor.

THE text in question reads thus:

> **1 Thessalonians 5**
> [23] The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It may be well in this connection to have the next verse before us, as an assurance that this is no vain prayer:

> [24] Faithful is He that calls you, who also will do it.

It is a blessed assurance! What a pity that so few accept it.

In solving any problem we must always have recourse to first principles; and so it is with Scripture questions: everything must be referred to the beginning. We therefore turn to the account of the making of man:

> **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.

It is evident that we have here the body, soul, and spirit, as in *1 Thessalonians* 5:23. The body was formed of the dust; the spirit was breathed into the nostrils; and the living soul was the result. That is the making of man; let us now read the description of its

dissolution. In the 12th chapter of *Ecclesiastes* we have death set forth by a variety of figurative terms, closing with the words:

> **Ecclesiastes 12**
> 7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit return to God who gave it.

But what about the soul? It is not mentioned in the account of the resolving of man into his original elements. And why not? This question can best be answered by referring again to creation. Where was the soul of man before the breath of God came into the body of dust? Evidently it did not exist. We have the account of the union of the body and the breath of the spirit, but no mention is made of the soul until that union was effected. Then man, according to the literal rendering of the Hebrew, became a soul of life. It is plain, therefore, that the soul has no separate, independent existence, but is simply the union of the spirit and the body; and when these are separated, the soul ceases to exist. In death the dust returns to the earth, "as it was," the spirit returns to God who gave it, just *as it was* before He gave it, and the soul is likewise *as it was*, so to speak; that is, it is not; for it was not before.

This is a simple, Scriptural statement of the case. Of course there are many other texts of Scripture bearing on the subject, but we cannot now note them all, nor is it necessary. It should be stated, however, that the word "soul" is often used in other senses than the primary one here set forth. Thus the entire man is called the soul, and the body alone, even without the breath, is sometimes called the soul; but in whatever accommodated sense the term is used, every other use of it is derived from the one here brought to view.

To illustrate the union by which the soul comes into being, and its cessation of existence when that union ceases, let us take water. It is well known that it is composed of a fixed proportion of the two gases, oxygen and hydrogen—two molecules of hydrogen one of oxygen. It is possible, by various processes, to resolve water into its constituent elements; the hydrogen gas may be col-

lected in a receiver by itself, and likewise the oxygen gas in another by itself. Where is the water then? There is none. Nothing has been destroyed or annihilated, yet the water exists no more. The gases may again be united, and then we shall have water; but as soon as they are separated we look in vain for any trace of it.

Just as we ask,

> "Where is the water with the gases of which it is composed separated?"

–the Scripture asks,

> "Where is man when the breath has departed from his body."

Job 14
[10] Man dies and wastes away [the dust returns to the earth as it was]; yea, man gives up the ghost [the spirit returns to God who gave it], and where is he?

He is *not*. The weeping mothers of Bethlehem and vicinity mourned for their children, whom Herod slew, and refused to be comforted, because they were not.[374] The soul, which is the essential man, *is not*, as soon as the breath leaves the body.

But although the man dies, he shall live again. The Spirit that returns to God who gave it will again be sent forth to quicken the dust, and it will arise and sing.[375] God says:

Ezekiel 37
[13] You shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,
[14] And shall put my Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land.

Entire Sanctification

We can now leave this phase of the subject, to consider the more practical part, namely, sanctification. From *Genesis* 2:7, compared

[374] *Matthew* 2:17-18.
[375] *Isaiah* 26:19.

with *Genesis* 1:26-31, we find that a perfect man,—one formed fully by God's image,—is a body of dust animated by the life of God. There is no room for the idea that it is unmanly, or that it is slavery, for a man to allow God to control him; for without God there can be no complete man. It takes a union of God and a human body to make a complete, perfect man. Anything less than a full and complete union of the two is less than a man. God has demonstrated this for us by sending Christ, the second Adam, into the world.

John 1
[1] ...the Word was God,
[14] And the Word was made flesh.

There was a perfect union of a human body and the Divine Spirit, and the result was a perfect Man, the Pattern for all men.

[14] The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Literally,

"The Word became flesh and *tabernacled in us*."

Deuteronomy 30
[14] The Word is very near unto you, in your mouth, and in your heart.

Yea, more,

Hebrews 4 [RV]
[12] The Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.
[13] There is no creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

The Word of life penetrates to every ultimate fiber and cell of the body, so that all its activity is the result of the personal pres-

ence and working of the living God, the Divine Word that is Spirit and life. So intimate is the life connection between God and man.

Why is God so closely identified with man? In order that man may live.

Deuteronomy 30
[20] ...for He is your life.

But it is not God's pleasure to furnish life to be used in sin. Sin is the transgression of the law of life; it is opposition to God's life, the action of...

2 Corinthians 4
[4] ...the god of this world,

Ephesians 2
[2] ...the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.

This spirit...

2 Thessalonians 2
[4] ...opposes and exalts itself against all that is called God, or that is worshiped.

The lusts of the flesh that are according to it,

1 Peter 2
[11] ...war against the soul,

–producing corruption and death; but the Divine nature of which the knowledge of God (which is life eternal)[376] makes us partakers, it gives us deliverance from these lusts and the attendant corruption; for Christ has...

John 17
[2] ...power over all flesh,

–and He is stronger than the god of this world.

The difference between the sinner and the Christian is this:

[376] *John* 17:3.

- The sinner allows the flesh to control, and fulfills its desires, holding down the truth—Christ—in unrighteousness;
- The Christian yields himself to God, as one alive from the dead, and his members as instruments of righteousness.

Just to the extent that one yields to God, is he sanctified. To be sanctified wholly is to have every fiber of the being completely yielded to God, so as to be fully under His control. This takes place when one learns the ways of God through acquaintance with His works, so that one can definitely and intelligently yield to Him. Knowing what pleases God, one will in no particular oppose His working, but will allow Him to work His own will.

Deuteronomy 30
[14] The Word is very near unto you, in your mouth and in your heart, *that you may do it.*

God is in the flesh, the life of it, in order that the life may be perfect. Every man has the power residing in him, the life of His flesh, by which he may be preserved blameless, if he will but recognize it and yield to it. This is perfect rest. It is true Sabbath-keeping. We may rest, because the Word of God, which is in us, is living and active. We then know no life but that of Christ; His Spirit alone animates and controls the body, so that even though we are still in the flesh we are spiritual, living as though actually in the world to come, with the same power to live free from sin and disease that we shall have when we have spiritual instead of fleshly bodies. Truly our God is a great God!

What a blessed truth! What glorious possibilities it presents to everyone! The flesh itself is sinful and corruptible, but there is in it the power that can save it even from its own sinfulness and corruption; and there need be no question as to our ability to avail ourselves of this power, for it is the life of our bodies. It is by the gift of God's endless life that we live at all and so if we conscientiously and intelligently confess…

1 John 4
[2] …that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,

–we are indeed born of God.

2 Peter 1
[3] His Divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.

The life that gives us existence is sufficient for everything necessary for the world to come.

This is God's pure Spirit producing a sound body and a perfect soul. He says:

Proverbs 4
[20] My son, attend to my words; incline your ear unto my sayings.
[21] Let them not depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart.
[22] For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.

We see that whole sanctification means wholeness of body and soul. It means perfect soundness. Who can talk about the hardship of self-denial, with such a pleasant prospect before him? Self-denial means simply the rejection of that which destroys, for the full enjoyment of that which springs up into everlasting life.

11. The Resurrection of the Body

Present Truth, August 7, 1902[377]
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. The Resurrection of the Body

> It surprises me to find that you lay so much stress in your teaching, on the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead. It seems to me that neither of these events is of primary importance to Christians. Since we are "present with the Lord"[378] as soon as the body dies, it seems to me that to be reunited with this body of dust after experiencing the untrammeled freedom of existence without it, is not something to be looked forward to with pleasure.

WE LAY stress upon the coming of the Lord and resurrection, simply because the Bible does. Nothing else is so prominent in all God's Word. The coming of Christ is the bringing of…

Acts 3 [RV]
21 …the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began.

Even in Eden, before Adam had been driven forth because of sin, God told of the coming of the Seed of a woman, to bruise the serpent's head. The bruising, or crushing, of the serpent's head, is its destruction;

Revelation 12
9 …that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan,

–has not yet been destroyed; he still goes about like…

1 Peter 5
8 …a roaring lion,…seeking whom he may devour;

[377] PP Editor's note: This article is mistakenly dated as July 31, 1902 in the Adventist Pioneer Writings.
[378] *2 Corinthians* 5:8.

–consequently we have yet to look for the fulfillment of God's promise made in Eden. As it was the entrance of Satan into Eden that resulted in its withdrawal from the earth, so his destruction will be the restoration of it. Is not that a thing worthy of having stress laid upon it?

Peter, filled with…

Ephesians 1
[17] …the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God,

–said, as just quoted, that by the mouth of His prophets since the world began God has foretold the coming of Christ and the resurrection, which is the restoration. Let us take a very hasty view of their testimony.

Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning the wicked, standing by anticipation in eternity, and saying,

Jude
[14] Behold, the Lord came with ten thousands of His holy ones,
[15] To execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness.

Balaam, who wished to curse, but was forced to bless, prophesied of the latter days, saying:

Numbers 24 [RV]
[17] I see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not nigh:
There shall come forth a Star out of Jacob,
And a Scepter shall rise out of Israel,
And shall smite through the corners of Moab,
And break down all the sons of tumult.
[19] And out of Jacob shall One have dominion,
And shall destroy the remnant from the city.

Job, of whom God said that he had spoken the thing that was right concerning Him said:

Job 14

[14] If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.
[15] You shall call, and I will answer You: You will have a desire to the work of your hands.

Job 19

[25] For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:
[26] And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:
[27] Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

The Psalms are full of references to the coming of the Lord, and if we should try to print them all we should fill the paper with them. One or two specimens must suffice:

Psalm 50

[1] The mighty God, even the Lord, has spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.
[2] Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined.
[3] Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.
[4] He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people.
[5] Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.
[6] And the heavens shall declare His righteousness; for God is judge himself.

Again:

Psalm 96

[10] Say among the heathen that the Lord reigns; the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the people righteously.
[11] Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof.

[12] Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice
[13] Before the Lord: for He comes, for He comes to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth.

Psalm 97
[1] The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.
[2] Clouds and darkness are round about Him; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.
[3] A fire goes before Him, and burns up His enemies round about.
[4] His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.
[5] The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
[6] The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory.
[7] Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship Him, all you gods.
[8] Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of your judgments, O Lord.

Isaiah might be said to be devoted wholly to the coming of the Lord, the Judgment, and the restoration. The book is so full of it, that we cannot quote, but must be content to ask you to read certain chapters. Begin, for instance, with chapter 11, and read through the 14th. This does not mean that nothing is said about the coming of the Lord before the 11th chapter. Far from it. Read the 2nd, 3rd and 4th, especially. Then read the 24th, 25th and 26th. When you have done this, you will have only a beginning of what there is in *Isaiah* about this great theme. If you read the other prophets, you will find that it is the same.

The coming of Christ, and the end of the world, formed the burden of a great deal of Christ's own teaching. Note the parables recorded in the 13th of *Matthew:* nearly all of them are about the end. Chapters 24 and 25 are devoted to the same subject.

The apostles preached "Jesus, and the resurrection,"[379] and wrote of it. Every chapter of *Thessalonians*, for example, closes with reference to the coming of the Lord. It was with the promise that He would come again, that Jesus comforted His disciples, when He was about to leave them; and the words of comfort have been recorded for us.[380] The comfort is, that He will come again, and receive us unto himself, in order that where He is, there we may be also. That makes the coming of Lord the grand center of the Christian's hope, since we know from it that we cannot be with Him unless He comes, nor until He comes. This is emphasized in:

1 Thessalonians 4
[13] 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.
[14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.
[15] 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.
[16] 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:
[17] 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.
[18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Brought from the Dead with Christ

The apostle says,

[14] Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

From whence will He bring them? From the grave. God brought Jesus again from the dead, and as surely as He did that, will He bring them that sleep in Him. The resurrection of the dead in Christ is just as sure, and just as necessary, as His own resurrec-

[379] *Acts* 17:18.
[380] *John* 14:1-3.

tion. This is made very emphatic in the 15th chapter of *1 Corinthians:*

1 Corinthians 15

[12] Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?
[13] But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:
[14] And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.
[15] Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.
[16] For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised:
[17] And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.
[18] Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.
[20] But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

And still further:

[51] Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
[52] 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.
[53] For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
[54] 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.

The Resurrection Necessary to Future Existence

Now all these Scriptures set forth the resurrection at Christ's coming as a most necessary thing. It is the consummation of the Gospel. It is that which is set before us in the Lord's Supper, and in which we show our faith every time we celebrate that ordinance intelligently; for, we are told,

1 Corinthians 11 [RV]
[26] As often as you eat this bread, and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

And why is it so important? Simply because there is no being with Christ except by His coming to raise the dead, and take His people to himself.

It is wholly an assumption, unwarranted by the Scriptures, that we are present with the Lord as soon as the body dies. Such an idea is entirely opposed to the teaching of the Bible. This you can see by the Scriptures just cited. As a matter of fact, there is not, and cannot possibly be, any conscious existence for any man when the body is dead. It takes the body to make the man. If the body is dead, the man does not exist any more than water exists when the hydrogen has been separated from the oxygen.

You will doubtless remind me that consciousness depends upon the spirit. You will quote that:

James 2
[26] ...the body without the spirit is dead,

–and,

Job 32
[8] There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding.

You may also recall these words:

1 Corinthians 2
[11] For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?

–and will say:

"Since it is upon the spirit of man that the body depends for consciousness, how can it be dependent on the body for its consciousness? Why can it not retain all its knowledge when it is separated from the body?"

This is no new proposition. It is as old as Plato, who was consistent in his use of it; for he taught that the spirit had all its knowledge before it came into the body. Indeed, it was this theory that was the foundation of the other; for his argument was that since the spirit knew all things before it came into the body, it must retain its knowledge after it departed; and it was he that taught that the body is a clog, a hindrance to the spirit existence. Do you not see that you cannot possibly hold to the consciousness of the spirit apart from the body, without admitting its conscious preexistence? This is the basis of the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and of all the false theories that have blinded men to the truth of the Gospel that saves from sin.

It is true that at death the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God, who gave it; but it also returns *as it was.* The breathing of the spirit into the body makes man a living soul. The combination of body and spirit makes the soul—the man; and when the combination is broken up, the man ceases to be until he is restored.

The Spiritual Body Not a Clog

In a proper condition the body is no clog upon the spirit. At the resurrection,

1 Corinthians 13
[10] When that which is perfect is come,

–the body will be made spiritual,

Philippians 3
[21] ...fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.

His body is no clog. After His resurrection He ate and drank with His disciples, yet He passed quickly from place to place; entered the house when the doors were shut; became visible or invisible at will; and finally ascended to heaven, in that same body, where He now sits at the right hand of God. "This same Jesus" shall come again, just as He went into heaven; with the same

body.[381] That is our hope for the future, and our inspiration for the present.

It is by the power of the resurrection that we become sons of God, and overcomers. We are to be quickened even now by that power; and as the Spirit of God is given full control of us, we become spiritual even now, so that the flesh does not hinder us in our Christian life. It is true that while the flesh is yet mortal and corruptible, we are subject to certain limitations: and that is why we long for the redemption of our body, which will take place at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Then with bodies wholly spiritual, yet the very same bodies that we now possess, we shall know the fullness of joy that is in the presence of the Lord; and that is why we respond to His assurance, "Surely, I come quickly,"

Revelation 22
[20] ...Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

[381] *Acts* 1:11.

12. Salvation from Sin and Death

Present Truth, August 14, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Salvation from Sin and Death

> Being on my holidays, I have met with a few friends, who have given me certain numbers of *Present Truth* to read, in which, among other questions, you have answered a question concerning the nature and destiny of man. I am greatly interested in the subject, and as an earnest seeker for truth I humbly ask you to oblige me with answers to the following questions:
>
> Is natural death, or what we term the first death, the result of sin? If it is, why could not belief in Christ remove it, since it removes the second death, or what we term eternal death? I shall be obliged for help out of the difficulty.

YOUR question goes to the root of the matter, and touches the very heart of the Gospel, and I am glad to help you with the testimony of God's Word. Let us start with the apostle's statement that:

> **Romans 5**
> [12] By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

This is sufficient to establish the fact that death is indeed the fruit of sin. But for sin, there never would have been any death in the world.

Just here you may perhaps ask the question that so often is asked,

> "What kind of death is it that is the result of sin?"

The answer is simply, *death*. There are not two kinds of death, any more than there are two kinds of life. True, the Bible speaks of the first death, and the second death; but these are not two kinds of death, but death at two different times.

What is life? No answer can be given to this question, except the words of Christ, recorded in:

John 14
[6] I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

Or,

Romans 8
[10] The Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Life is the being of God, and is manifested through Christ the Son.

1 John 5 [RV]
[12] He that has the Son has the life; and he that has not the Son of God has not the life.

From *Romans* 8:10, just quoted, we might derive the definition that righteousness is life. So it is. There is no righteousness but God's righteousness; and His righteousness is everlasting. Perfect righteousness is invulnerable; from its very nature—perfect purity—it is incorruptible; it can never know anything of decay or death. It was because Christ maintained perfect integrity, absolute holiness, that no man could take His life from Him, and that He laid it down of His own free will[382]; and it was because of this that God raised Him up,

Acts 2
[24] ...having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that He should be held of it.

It was "according to the Spirit of holiness" that He was raised from the dead.[383]

The conclusion of the statement that...

Romans 5
[12] As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,

[382] *John* 5:17-18.
[383] *Romans* 1:4.

–is that…

Romans 5
[18] …even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.
[19] For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

This righteousness of One,—Christ,—by which we are made righteous, is the righteous life of Christ in us; for we are…

Romans 5
[8] …saved by His life.

Romans 8
[2] The law of the Spirit of life in Christ…

–is that which makes us…

[2] …free from the law of sin and death.

Hebrews 2
[17] [Christ is] a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people;

–and His priesthood is…

Hebrews 7
[14] …after the power of an endless life.

Thus we see that it is only by the power of an endless life,—a life that is endless because sinless,—that we are saved from sin.

Now there is but "one Lord," as there is but "one faith"[384]; and Christ is not divided.[385] He gives the whole of himself to everyone who receives Him.

Ephesians 4
[7] Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

[384] *Ephesians* 4:5.
[385] *1 Corinthians* 1:13.

Therefore it follows that, having received Christ for salvation from sin, which is accomplished by His life, we can just as well as not have the full benefit of His sacrifice, appropriating, if we will, all that there is in His life. He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us, in order…

2 Corinthians 5
[21] …that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Even so,

Matthew 8
[16] …himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses,

–in order that we might be delivered from them. The life of Jesus may be manifest…

2 Corinthians 4
[11] …in our *mortal* flesh,

–and that can be only by its power over mortality.

Let us now read a few passages bearing directly on this subject. The first will be the familiar call to bless the Lord,

Psalm 103
[3] Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases;
[4] Who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies;
[5] Who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Next let us compare *Acts* 3:26 and *Psalm* 133:3. The first tells us that God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless us, in turning away every one of us from his iniquities. The blessing of God is salvation from sin, and the blessing which He has commanded is…

Psalm 133
[3] …life for evermore.

John 12
[50] His commandment is life everlasting.

Lamentations 3
[22] It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.
[23] They are new every morning,

–and are…

Psalm 103
[17] …from everlasting to everlasting.

Psalm 33
[18] The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon, them that hope in His mercy;
[19] To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine;

–and we receive this mercy just to the extent that we hope in God, and appropriate it.

And now let us have some practical examples of this truth,—some illustrations of the working of it. The most noted is that of Enoch.

Hebrews 11
[5] By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.

Note that it was not by accident, but by faith. He was translated by faith, because He lived wholly by faith.

[5] …before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

Elijah also was taken to heaven without dying. Now God is no respecter of persons[386]; and what He did for those men, He is certainly willing to do for all who have their faith.

We know that there will be many who at the coming of Christ will be taken to heaven without dying.

1 Corinthians 15
[51] We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
[52] In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

[386] *Acts* 10:34.

Read also *1 Thessalonians* 4:15-17. There are no accidents in God's dealing with men. Those who are taken to heaven without dying, when Christ comes, will not be translated simply because they *happen* to be living at that time; but they will be living at that time simply because their faith in Christ, and their knowledge of His life, and so their appropriation of it, will be so great, disease or death will have no power over them. Thus we read of that terrible time of trouble, when "the seven last plagues" devastate the earth:

Psalm 91

[1] He that dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
[2] I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in Him will I trust.
[3] Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.
[4] He shall cover you with His feathers and under His wings shall you trust; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.
[5] You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day;
[6] Nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noon day.
[7] A thousand shall fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come nigh you.
[8] Only with your eyes shall you behold, and see the reward of the wicked.
[9] Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, your habitation,
[10] There shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come nigh your dwelling.

Nothing could be plainer than this. There is such a thing as victory over disease and death, through Christ. The flesh is corrupt and sinful; but Christ has "power over all flesh,"[387] so that His life

[387] *John* 17:2.

can repress sin even in "sinful flesh,"[388] and by the same power He can resist the encroachments of disease even in our mortal flesh.

But we must have a wide and deep and intelligent faith in Christ. We must have our eyes open to see the life, and give ourselves diligently to study its manifestations, and then yield to it in every particular. It is just for this reason that now, as we are approaching the time when the end cannot be delayed, God is giving a flood of light upon how to live.

> **Matthew 24**
> [14] This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

And it must not be overlooked nor forgotten that it was by the healing of all diseases and all weaknesses, that Christ demonstrated the kingdom of God at hand. This is the special message for this time and next week we shall, God willing, present a few additional thoughts, which may clear away some difficulties that will possibly present themselves to the mind of some readers.[389]

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[388] *Romans* 8:3.

[389] PP Editor's note: The next issue of *Present Truth*, which was August 21, 1902, did not contain this article. The edition after that, August 28, did have an article on the state of the dead, "Saul and the Witch of Endor" (which is the next article). As well, over the next year, there were a number of other articles dealing with the state of the dead. So perhaps one of these was the article Waggoner was referring to.

13. Saul and the Witch of Endor

Present Truth, August 28, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Saul and the Witch of Endor
Subtitle: A Spiritualist Medium

> Being a reader of *Present Truth*, and reading in it about the state of the dead, I do not understand about *1 Samuel* 28:3, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19. How could Samuel be brought back from the grave, or the dead?

2 Corinthians 11
[14] Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light

IF YOU remember this, it will help to remove the difficulty from your mind. Since he can transform himself into an angel of light, and even impersonating Christ himself, so as almost to deceive the very elect,[390] it is no marvel that he could assume the form of Samuel so successfully as to deceive Saul, who had forsaken God, and who was wholly given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind.

Let us take a view of the situation as set forth in the chapter referred to. Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, was dead and buried, so that Saul could no longer consult him. Indeed, long before Samuel died there had been no communication between him and Saul, because Saul had rejected his counsel from the Lord.

Moreover,

1 Samuel 28
[3] Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land,

–according to the commandment of the Lord:

Deuteronomy 8
[10] There shall not be found among you anyone that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

[390] *Matthew* 24:24.

[11] Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.
[12] For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord your God does drive them out from before you.

Exodus 22
[18] You shall not suffer a witch to live.

Exodus 19
[31] Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after them, to be defiled by them; I am the Lord your God.

But now Saul was in sore distress, and when he inquired of the Lord,

1 Samuel 28
[6] ...the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.
[7] Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor.

This woman was a spiritualist medium, and her "familiar spirit" was the demon with whom she was in constant communication. Thus Saul had rejected God, and had turned to the devil, applying to one of the mediums whom he had banished.

The woman practiced her incantations, and the familiar spirit assumed the appearance of Samuel, and talked with Saul. Now the question is,

"Was it really Samuel, or was it not?"

That it was not Samuel, is evident from the fact that God alone has power to raise the dead, and He had ceased to communicate with Saul. It is not consistent to suppose that when God had refused to answer Saul by His own appointed means, He would communicate with him through a way which He himself had forbidden.

2 Timothy 2
[13] [God] cannot deny himself,

–and therefore He had nothing to do with the woman with the familiar spirit; so it is evident that He did not raise up Samuel; and it is still more evident that the woman could not; therefore the real Samuel was not present at all, but only an evil spirit who is called Samuel because he pretended to be Samuel, and Saul thought that he was Samuel.

Note, however, that Saul himself did not see the apparition at all, but had only the woman's statement that she "saw gods coming out of the earth,"[391] and that his form was that of an old man covered with a mantle.

Thus the case is very easily disposed of. We might call attention to one other feature, for the benefit of any who think that the dead are in heaven, and that is that this being whom the woman saw came up out of the earth. He did not come from heaven, but from beneath. In the woe pronounced upon Ariel, we read:

Isaiah 29
[4] You shall be brought down, and shall speak out of the ground, and your speech shall be low out of the dust, and your voice shall be as of one that has a familiar spirit, of the ground, and your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

This tallies exactly with the case before us.

The sum of the matter is, therefore, that Saul, who had rejected God, and appealed to the devil, was led captive by him at his will,[392] and made to believe that which was not true, and which he ought to have known was not true, since truth is found only with God.

[391] *1 Samuel* 28:13.
[392] *2 Timothy* 2:26.

14. Are the Dead with Christ?

Present Truth, September 25, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Are the Dead With Christ?

I was rather shocked to see the following in your paper, the *Present Truth*, page 502, August 7th:[393]

"It is wholly an assumption, unwarranted by the Scriptures, that we are present with the Lord as soon as the body dies."

May I ask you to kindly look at the following scripture:

Job 14:10: "Man dies....and where is he?"

Acts 7:57-60: "Stephen calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Acts 8:2: "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial." His spirit went up to be with the Lord, and his body went to the grave.

Philippians 1:23-24: "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

2 Corinthians 5:5-8: "Absent from the body and present with the Lord."

2 Peter 1:13-14: "I must shortly put off this tabernacle."

Luke 16:19-31: "The rich man died, and was buried; and in hell,"—His body went to the grave, and his soul still lives. He could see, feel, remember, reason, and pray; but it was too late.

The second coming of Christ: *Acts* 1:9-11; *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18; *Revelation* 22:20: Soul and body reunited.

Believe me, yours faithfully.

OUR friend has imposed a large task on me; for to quote these texts in full, and so to open them up that each reader shall be able to see exactly what they say, and have his mind cleared of false conceptions concerning them, would take many hours' writing, and fill an entire number of the paper. Perhaps, however, he

[393] This is quoted from Article 11 in this Section, "The Resurrection of the Body."

means only that the editor shall read them for his own private benefit. I thank him for his kindly effort to instruct; but must in turn ask him to read the article again, in the *Present Truth* from which he quotes; for in it several of these texts are quoted, and treated of at some length. I have myself read them all many hundreds of times; and though no one can ever study any portion of the Bible so much that he can learn no more from it, I know from my study of these that I shall never be able to find any indication in them of a conscious existence of the spirit or soul of man apart from the body. Such an idea is opposed to the very nature of man.

May I be permitted to say in all kindness, that the way in which my friend has thrown these texts together, and the statements he interjects about some of them, are clear evidence that he has not given them much thought; and so, although I have not space for any extended study of the scriptures cited, any one of which would furnish sufficient matter for one number of the paper, I will briefly note at least a few of them, for the benefit both of my correspondent and of many others who are feeling after the truth. I wish, however, they would first read again the article referred to in the *Present Truth* of August 7. A habit of careful reading would often save much misunderstanding.

Man Dies, and Where Is He?

To begin with the first text cited:

> **Job 14**
> [10] Man dies and wastes away; yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?

Yes; where is he? He is not. It is a striking instance of the power of theology to bias a man's judgment and perception, that a person can think he sees in this verse any argument for the conscious existence of man in death. We refer to theology in its ordinary signification—the study of sacred things from the basis of philosophy, and not of the Bible.

The patriarch answers his own question, "Where is he?" Read:

Job 14
[14] If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.
[15] You shall call, and I will answer You: You will have a desire to the work of your hands.

Read *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54 for a statement as to what the "change" is, of which He speaks, and when it will take place. It is at His second coming that Christ will call, and the dead will answer Him.[394] And where will they "wait" till their "change" comes? Here is the answer:

Job 17
[13] If I wait, the grave is my house; I have made my bed in darkness.
[14] I have said to corruption, You are my father; to the worm, You are my mother, and my sister.

Let us go back to the beginning, and we shall be saved much confusion. The simple story of the creation of man helps us to unravel many a tangled web.

Genesis 2
[7] 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.

That is the making of man; here is his unmaking:

Ecclesiastes 12
[7] Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Or this, spoken of God:

Job 34
[14] ...if He gather to himself His Spirit and His breath;
[15] All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

[394] See *1 Thessalonians* 4:16-17; *John* 5:28-29.

It is impossible for anybody to find in these scriptures anything else than that at death man is resolved into his component parts, each in the same state as it was before it was used in building the man. Whatever is true of the elements composing a man, after his death, was true of them before his existence; and there can be no argument for the conscious existence of man in death that does not just as fully prove his pre-existence. Plato, to whom Christians are indebted for the doctrine of the so-called "immortality of the soul," taught its pre-existence. Indeed, his argument for man's natural immortality was based on his belief in the pre-existence of the soul. It is strange that men accept the structure that Plato built, and reject the foundation.

Let us proceed with our texts. We have the case of Stephen, calling on God, and saying,

Acts 7
[59] Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

But please notice that this intimates nothing as to the state of the spirit when the Lord receives it. The fact that the spirit returns to God, who gave it, is not in question. All that the *Present Truth* has taught is that when man dies, and the parts of which he is composed are dissolved, he no longer exists as man. The parts still exist just as they were before he was created; but *the man* has ceased to be. The Lord watches over the dust of His saints, to bring them forth from the grave; and He also keeps their spirit for them; for it came from Him, and was His all the time they had it. His receiving their spirit is simply the assurance that they shall live again.

Departing and Being with Christ Is Not Death

Philippians 1
[23] For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:
[24] Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

It is utterly impossible for anybody to understand these two verses without studying the connection. To snatch an expression here and there from the Bible, on the run, as it were, and then to build a theory upon it, from the mere sound of the words, is not Bible study. Reading the context, we find that Paul says that he does not know which he would choose—life or death—if the choice were given him. His only desire was that Christ might be magnified, by his life or by his death; but by which means Christ would receive the greater glory, he did not know, and so he had no choice. Now it is not crediting the apostle with good sense to say that he first says he does not know which he would choose, whether life or death, and that then in the very same breath he declares that he has an intense desire to die! That would be nonsense. What he actually says is this: he had no choice between life here on the earth and death; but he had an intense longing for something else, namely, to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better than either of the other two. And this shows us most clearly that departing and being with Christ is something entirely different from death. So the text which is commonly imagined to teach that men go to be with Christ in death, proves the exact opposite. If Paul continued on this earth, or if he died, he would not be with Christ, the thing for which he longed.

When We Are "Clothed" with Immortality

Now we must place by the side of this text two others that have been referred to. The first is *2 Corinthians* 5:1-8. Here three states are referred to, as in the one just considered. These three states are:

1. This present;
2. Unclothed; and
3. Clothed.

Let us read a portion:

2 Corinthians 5

[1] We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

[2] For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

[3] If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.

[4] For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

Noting the statements carefully, we see that to be "clothed," or "clothed upon," is to have mortality swallowed up of life. Between that and this present state there is a third condition possible, namely, "unclothed," which the apostle did not long for. The thing desired was the swallowing up of mortality. Now read *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54, and you will see that the swallowing up of death,—immortality,—and putting on of immortality is at the sounding of the last trumpet, when the Lord shall descend. Note the words:

1 Corinthians 15

[53] This corruptible must *put on incorruption*, and this mortal must *put on immortality*.

You see we have here an exact parallel to *2 Corinthians* 5:2-4. The clothing to be desired is immortality,—the immortal body. If we die,—put off this tabernacle,—we are naked; but if we receive immortality, then we are clothed, and are present with the Lord.

How plain it is from the scriptures that death, instead of bringing us into the presence of Christ, is the widest possible separation from Him. Now read *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18. where it is stated when the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, and with the trump of God, the dead in Christ shall rise first, incorruptible, and the living saints will then...

1 Thessalonians 4

[17] ...be caught up together with them,...to meet the Lord in the air: and *so* shall we ever be with the Lord.

When the Lord comes, and not till then, all the saints of God, both living and dead, are changed from mortality to immortality. Then, and only then, both those who are still in this tabernacle, and those who have put off this tabernacle, and are dead, "unclothed," will be "clothed upon" with immortality; and thus, not being naked, they will be fit for the presence of the King.

This covers the most of the texts referred to, and makes the subject under consideration very plain, and we will not take space for anything further at present. Remember, however, that there is no self-contradiction in the Scriptures, and every other portion exactly coincides with those that we have very briefly studied. They teach us that the Lord must come for us, if we are ever with Him, and that His coming is the one hope of the church.

The Truth That Saves

What difference does it make, anyhow, whether we believe that we go to be with Christ in death, or not? It makes all the difference between truth and error; and nobody is saved by error. God has chosen us...

> **2 Thessalonians 2** [KJV & RV]
> [13] ...to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the word.

The Word of truth is the Gospel of our salvation. The theory that men go to be with the Lord at death, makes of no effect a large portion of the Bible, and makes useless the most precious promises of Christ. It nullifies the teaching of the resurrection, and causes people to lose sight of the coming of Christ; for if the dead saints were already with Christ, there would be no use for Him to come for them. Thus this theory makes nonsense of all the promises concerning the coming of Christ and the resurrection. Surely this is reason enough for making the truth prominent.

Again: Those who believe that the dead are not dead at all, but are with Christ, alive and conscious, have absolutely no safeguard against the deception of Spiritualism. It is the fact that cannot be

controverted, that people have seen, and do see, bodies that exactly resemble their dead friends, and that profess to be such. Moreover these spirits, professing to come from the other world often show themselves accurately acquainted with the private life of those to whom they appear, telling things known only by the individual and the dead friend.

Now if a man believes that his friend is in heaven, conscious of all that is going on here below, such an appearance and communication would be sufficient to convince him that his departed friend had returned. And then, having gone that far, contrary to the Scriptures, it would be the most natural thing in the world for him to accept any statement that the spirit might make, however contrary to the Bible it might be.

But every one who adheres to the Bible statement that…

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] …the dead know not any thing,

–that…

Job 14
[21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them,

–cannot possibly be deceived by the false pretenses of Satan and his evil angels.

Still further: The doctrine of the resurrection is made a wholly unnecessary thing by the theory that men go to heaven at death. And when that is lost sight of, it is an easy step to lose sight of the power of the resurrection, by which we triumph over sin. And this is why Spiritualism inevitably tends to immorality. No man is able to save himself from sin; and so, no matter how well-meaning a person may be, if a person cut himself off from the truth that saves, he must sooner or later land in the pit of corruption.

15. The Gospel Preached to Them That Are Dead

Present Truth, October 9, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. The Gospel Preached to Them that Are Dead

> I have been very much interested in the line you take with regard to our departed friends,—that they are unconscious until the resurrection. I should like you to give an explanation of *1 Peter* 4:6, as I have been very much pleased with your answers in connection with other subjects in *Present Truth*.

THE text in question reads thus:

> **1 Peter 4**
> [6] For for this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

It is very evident that this is a conclusion from something that precedes, and that we must begin back a little way if we would understand what is here said. If we begin in the preceding chapter, verses 18-20, and get an understanding of them, we shall have no difficulty when we come to this. Let us read them:

> **1 Peter 3**
> [18] For Christ also has once suffered in the flesh, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
> [19] By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
> [20] Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.

Let us take each clause separately, and find out exactly what the text says.

1. Christ once suffered for us, that He might bring us to God.
2. He was put to death in the flesh.

3. He was quickened [made alive] by the Spirit.
4. By this same Spirit He went and preached to the spirits in prison.
5. They were in prison—"kept under the law, shut up"[395]—"when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing."
6. It was in the days of Noah, while the ark was building, that Christ, by the Spirit preached to the wicked spirits before the flood. God's long-suffering waited one hundred and twenty years, while His Spirit was working with that sinful generation; yet He said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." (*Genesis* 6:3)

The instruction that we are to receive from this text is this, that the preaching of the Gospel is by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. His public ministry began with these words:

Isaiah 61
[1] The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and *the opening of prison* to them that are bound.

The captives in prison are the bondservants of sin,[396]

2 Peter 2
[19] ...the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

Suffering and Living with Christ

Now let us read the next text referred to, which is but a continuation of this, and read enough to get the full connection:

1 Peter 4
[1] Forasmuch then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin;

[395] *Galatians* 3:22-23.
[396] *John* 8:34.

[2] That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.
[6] For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

Read also the following:

Hebrews 9
[27] As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment:
[28] So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

John 5 [RV]
[24] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my Word, and believes Him that sent me, has eternal life, and comes not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life.

Christ's sufferings in the flesh were for us. How much He suffered cannot be put into words, but it is certain that He suffered all that the wicked will have to suffer in punishment for their sins. This may be learned from *Psalm* 22:1, and especially from:

Isaiah 53
[5] He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.
[6] All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Now we are to be armed with the same mind, sharing His sufferings. Joined to Him in…

Philippians 3
[10] …the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death,

–we live with Him; we have thus passed out of death into life, and so we do not come into Judgment. We enter with Christ into the heavenly places, experiencing the powers of the world to

come; and to us it is the same as though the Judgment were already past. He appears for us.

It was to this end that the Gospel was preached to them that are dead. Note well that the text does not say that the Gospel was preached to them that *were* dead, nor that it is preached to them that are dead, but that is *was preached* to them that *are dead*. The reference is clearly to the time spoken of in *1 Peter* 3:19-20. The preaching was in the days of Noah, to those who were the captives of sin.

The latter part of *1 Peter* 4:6 itself shows most plainly that the preaching of the Gospel to them that are dead was while they were still living. The Gospel was preached to them, in order…

1 Peter 4
[6] …that they might be judged according to *men in the flesh*, but *live* according to God *in the Spirit*.

The Gospel was preached to them for the very same purpose that it is now preached to us,—that while still in the flesh they might pass out of death into life, and thus pass the Judgment, and henceforth live in the flesh as though their bodies were already made spiritual.

Romans 8
[9] You are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

The two texts together teach us a most precious lesson as to the power of the Gospel when it is received into the heart. They teach us to…

Colossians 1
[12] Give thanks to the Father,…
[13] Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son:
[14] In whom we have redemption.

16. Good and Bad Spirits

Present Truth, October 23, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Good and Bad Spirits

> I am a reader of your paper, and I see in the number dated September 25 the statement that Spiritualists communicate with Satan or his evil angels.[397] One thing alone will prove that you are wrong; and you will see that the spirits will communicate, and show themselves to their friends. In *1 Samuel* 28 you will see that Saul recognized Samuel, and the spirit of Samuel was not Satan or one of his angels. From the days of Moses until now, there have been communications with the spirits. In *1 John* 4:1 we are told to try the spirits, whether they are of God.

PRECISELY; that is what we have been writing about. The fact that we are told to "try the spirits, whether they be of God," is proof that there are spirits that are not of God; and whatever spirit is not of God is of Satan.

I have been struck with the fact that comparatively few people seem to understand the truth about angels,—that they are an entirely different order of beings from man. It is this confusion of ideas concerning the angels and the spirits of men, that makes so many an easy prey to Spiritualism. They read in the Bible about supernatural beings communicating with men, and straightway assume that the dead can and do communicate with their friends.

Some years ago I was talking with a very intelligent gentleman, the editor of an influential Spiritualist journal, who asked how it was that I, a believer in the Bible, denied spirit communication. Said he, wonderingly,

> "Do you not believe that there are any such things as spirits at all?"

To him I replied, just as I say now to our inquiring friend:

[397] See Article 14 in this Section, "Are the Dead With Christ?"

"Certainly I believe in spirits good and bad; and I believe that they can communicate with us. I believe this, because the Bible teaches it. They not only communicate with us, but good spirits have a great deal to do with us every day, and we are very dependent upon them. But these spirits are angels, and not men, and they never were men."

In the 1st chapter of *Hebrews* we are told that…

Hebrews 1
7 [God] makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire;

–and that they are all…

14 …ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

God gives His angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways[398]; and,

Psalm 34
7 The angel of the Lord encamps round about them that fear Him, and delivers them.

These angels, sons of God,[399] were in existence before there were any men; for when the foundations of the earth were laid they all…

Job 38
7 …shouted for joy.

They could not possibly be the spirits of dead men; for they were all created not only before any man died, but before there was any man.

But some of the angels…

Jude
6 …kept not their first estate,

---

398 *Psalm* 91:11.
399 *Job* 1:6, 2:1.

–and have given themselves up to try to thwart the purposes of God, and to lead men astray. This they do in various ways; but one of the boldest is to profess to be the spirits of good men who have died, and to have come direct from heaven with messages for men still on earth.

2 Corinthians 11
[14] ...Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.
[15] Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness.

Right here is where we need to heed the exhortation to...

1 John 4
[1] ...try the spirits, whether they are of God.

How shall we try them?

Isaiah 8
[20] To the law, and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

Now it need not take us long to prove them thoroughly by God's Word. Indeed we may know them at the very outset; for when they come professing to be the spirits of the dead, we know at once that they are lying spirits, and we should have no further words with them. We know they are lying spirits, because...

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] ...the dead know not anything.

A spirit's claim to be one of the dead returned, proves him to be of the devil.

But what about Saul and Samuel? That is easily answered. My friend says that...

> "...the spirit of Samuel was not Satan or one of his angels."

That is self-evident; but the spirit that talked with Saul on his night visit to the spiritualist medium was not the spirit of Samuel.

Read the account in *1 Samuel* 28. Verse 7 says that Saul said to his servants,

1 Samuel 28
[7] Seek me a woman that has a familiar spirit that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that has a familiar spirit at Endor.

Note particularly that this woman had "a familiar spirit;" not many, but one; there was one spirit with whom she was in constant communication. Now will anybody claim that the spirit of Samuel held itself subject to the beck and call of a woman, who by the command of God was an outlaw? The idea is too absurd and repulsive to be entertained even by those who believe that Samuel was conscious after death.

Note further that…

[6] When Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Because God would not answer Saul, he had recourse to the woman with a familiar spirit,—one who was…

Deuteronomy 18
[12] …an abomination unto the Lord.

This proves conclusively that God had nothing whatever to do with that interview. But since it was not of God, it was certainly of the devil; and we know that Samuel, who faithfully served the Lord all his lifetime, would not serve the devil when he was dead, even if he were conscious and able to serve anybody. Hence we know that neither God nor Samuel had anything to do with Saul's interview with the woman of Endor. The spirit with whom he talked was not the spirit of Samuel but the spirit of a demon personating Samuel.

Moreover, the Scripture does not say that Saul saw any spirit, but plainly indicates that he did not. When, as a result of the woman's incantations, the spirit appeared, Saul did not see it, but asked,

1 Samuel 28

[13] ...what did you see?

[14] ...An old man comes up; and he is covered with a mantle. Then Saul perceived that it was Samuel.

How did he perceive that it was Samuel? Solely by what the woman said. He wanted Samuel, and of course the evil spirit knew enough to personate him.

But it is thought that the fact that it is said that Saul perceived that it was Samuel proves that Samuel, although dead, was there. Not by any means. Read the account of the fall, in *Genesis* 3:1-6. God had said that death would surely follow eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan said,

Genesis 3

[4] ...You shall not surely die:

[5] For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Then follows the statement that...

[6] When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.

Are we to understand that the tree was really good for food, and to be desired to make one wise? Certainly not; It was deadly, and not at all good for food. The woman, hypnotized by the serpent,—Satan,—who is the author of all hypnotism, saw what was not so. Even so it was with Saul.

It is true that from the days of Moses, and long before his day, until now, there has been communication with spirits; and so there will be till the end. We are glad to know this, for so we know that we may be permitted, even as Abraham and Lot, to hold converse with angels who are sent forth to do service for us.

There is most certainly a reality to Spiritualism. Men do really communicate with real spirits; but never with the spirits of the

dead. And though the spirits of devils are continually on the watch to lure us to destruction, we need not fear them, so long as we hold fast to the shield of faith, and…

Ephesians 6

[17] …the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

17. Baptized for the Dead (1902)

Present Truth, December 4, 1902
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Baptized for the Dead

> A friend of mine is troubled over *1 Corinthians* 15:29. She has been reading the enclosed tract, and would like to know if they did really baptize another for the dead, or how should she understand the above passage. If it is not taking up too much of your valuable time to answer, I believe you can help her in this, as the remarks in the "Corner" have been a great help to her.

MY TIME is valuable only as I am doing just such work as this, and it is therefore never an intrusion or imposition, to ask such questions. It is my business to set forth the Scriptures in answer to them, and I am most happy when I have the privilege of so doing.

Perhaps I should first quote from the tract referred to. The following two paragraphs cover the item in question:

> The seeker after truth may properly inquire: "If it is necessary for men and women to be baptized, what will become of the good people who have died without that privilege?" To this the reply of the Scriptures is that the dead who died without hearing the Gospel will have it preached to them. They who obey it will be saved, but they who reject it will be condemned, as though they were in the flesh. "For this cause was the Gospel preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit."
>
> "But a dead person cannot be baptized," says one. Very true; but God is just. He who has provided a way in which the dead can be baptized for, by the living, as shown by the Apostle Paul in his questions: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not of all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" Paul referred to baptism for the dead as a proof of the resurrection, his questions showing plainly that baptism for the dead was both believed in and practiced by the early Christians.

A little study will suffice to show that this is altogether a fallacy; but we study the Scriptures, not for the purpose of disproving these unwarranted assertions, but in order to be strengthened by the truth that is in them.

In the first place we need to recall and hold to the fact that...

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] ...the dead know not anything.

Job 14
[21] His sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.

These are simple statements of a truth that involves the very heart of the Gospel, which teaches that there is no life apart from Christ; but we have not time or space at present to go further into a consideration of it. These two Scripture statements are certainly sufficient to show that the dead can be baptized just as easily as they can hear and believe, and no more.

Mark 16
[16] He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,

–not he that believes and has another baptized for him.

Having settled it by incontrovertible proof that might be multiplied indefinitely, that it is utterly impossible for the dead either to believe or to be baptized, we must consider the significance of baptism, for the answer to the question depends wholly on that. Whoever knows the real meaning of baptism can never have any trouble over baptism for the dead.

Galatians 3
[27] As many of you as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ.

It is only in Christ that we can be saved.

Acts 4
[12] Neither is there salvation in any other.

Therefore since we put on Christ, or come into Him, by baptism, it is easy to see how…

1 Peter 3
21 …baptism does now save us.

It is…

21 …not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.

But,

Romans 6
3 So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death.
4 Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.
6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

In His death Christ gives His life for us,—that eternal life which He could lay down and take again, and which He laid down that He might take it again,[400] and us with it. If we consent to die with Him, we shall surely live with Him. And this must take place now. The new life which believers live by the power of the resurrection of Jesus, is the proof of His resurrection, and the pledge of the final resurrection of all the righteous.

But this new life is wholly Christ's life.

Galatians 2
20 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.

[400] *John* 10:17-18.

Putting on Christ and abiding in Him, we are thenceforth wholly swallowed up, immersed, in His life; and it is of this reality that baptism in water is a figure.

Thus we have before us the meaning of being baptized for the dead. It is to be baptized into the crucified Christ; but the efficacy depends wholly on the resurrection of Jesus. It would be useless to be baptized for a dead Christ, or into His death, if He were not also raised from the dead. This is the significance of *1 Corinthians* 15:29.

Please take special notice that the baptism is to be *into Christ*. A person may be baptized, plunged, into water, a thousand times without having once being baptized into Christ. That means a new creature—a life as new as though it were wholly another person now living. Of this living wholly in Christ, the burial in water, and rising again, is but a figure. Now while the figure amounts to nothing without the fact, the thing itself, the real putting on of Christ by faith in His death and life, is valid without anything else. God is indeed just, and therefore although He gives us emblems, figures, setting forth Gospel truth, He does not make salvation dependent on those emblems. None can be saved without faith in Christ; but it is possible to be saved without having been baptized in water. Therefore it is that when Jesus said,

Mark 16
[16] He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,

–He added only,

[16] ...but he that *believes not* shall be damned,

–and did *not* say that he that is not baptized is damned.

The dead will never have the Gospel preached to them; and the Bible nowhere says that they will. It does indeed say that...

1 Peter 4
[6] ...the Gospel *was preached* to them that are dead;

–and that relieves God of all responsibility. All who have lived and died have heard the Gospel, and consequently they do not need to hear it any more. It was not preached to them that *were* dead, however. They were all alive when it was preached to them, but now they are dead. It was preached to them for the same reason that it is now preached to us,

1 Peter 4
[6] ...that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit;

–that is, that they might be delivered from the flesh, and live spiritual lives.

This is no disparagement of baptism in water. That is a most impressive and beautiful and solemn public declaration of one's acceptance of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ; and since Christ has instituted it, every one who knows and loves Him will be most glad to submit to it; but salvation is dependent on the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord, and not upon a new sign of it. There will be many in the kingdom of God from among the heathen, who have died without ever having heard of baptism, or even the name of Christ, but who have seen the life that was manifest,[401] and have accepted it; they have walked in that light...

John 1
[9] ...which lights every man that comes into the world,

–and have not held down the truth in unrighteousness;[402] and...

Acts 10
[35] In every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted with Him.

May we be as faithful with our greater measure of light.

[401] *1 John* 1:1-3.
[402] *Romans* 1:18.

1903

1. Ministering Spirits

Present Truth, January 15, 1903

> "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation?"[403]

THIS is asked concerning the angels, the question being the strongest sort of affirmation that they are. But what are they? What is their nature? and whence came they?

The minds of many people, even Christians, are very hazy on these points. It is more often than not taken for granted that they are the spirits of people who have lived on this earth, and who are now dead (as though people could be both dead and alive at the same time!); and it is quite frequently taken for granted that one's own departed friends naturally hover about, acting as his ministering spirits, so that each one is served by his own friends.

Now all these speculations are most unscriptural and contrary to fact, as a very superficial acquaintance with the Bible should be sufficient to show. One text alone settles this. When God would show Job how insignificant he was compared with the Creator, He said to him:

> **Job 38**
> [4] Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if you have understanding.
> [5] Who has laid the measures thereof, if you know? or who has stretched the line upon it?
> [6] Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or, who laid the corner stone thereof?
> [7] When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The angels were witnesses of the creation of the earth, before there was a man in existence. That is sufficient proof that they are not the spirits of dead men, but that they are beings entirely distinct from men.

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[403] Paraphrase of *Hebrews* 1:14.

We need not here go into consideration of the nature of man, and of the condition of man in death, to show that…

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] …the dead know not anything,

–but that they sleep until the resurrection, and that they therefore cannot possibly have anything whatever to do with the affairs of this earth. The truth that only angels are "ministering spirits," and that angels are not men, and never were, is sufficient for our present purpose.

What difference does it make if people do think that their dead friends are hovering near them, ministering to them? Is it not at the most only a pleasing and comforting delusion? Pleasing it may be to many; but no one ought to find pleasure in a delusion; and it is certain that no real comfort can be derived from a fancy, which has no foundation in truth. Surely all will agree that "solid comfort" cannot be manufactured out of emptiness.

And it does make a great deal of difference whether or not one believes the truth about this thing. If one believes that his departed friends are round about him, and that they come from heaven on errands of mercy to him, he is sure to be led astray; for when he gets communication from certain invisible beings, professing to be his friends, in whom he had the utmost confidence when they were on earth, because they were Christians, he will be quite likely to believe them, even though they say things at variance with the Bible. For if one believes that the dead are conscious, when the Bible says that they are not, what is to prevent him from believing anything also that is directly contrary to the Bible?

Now the devil has for his own purpose insidiously introduced the idea among men, that the ministering spirits are men who once lived on earth in the flesh; and he takes advantage of this belief to palm off his own deceptions upon people as the truth. Whoever believes his lie concerning dead men, is sure to be deceived by all that follows from the same source; but whoever

holds to God's Word cannot be led astray. Such a one knows that there are fallen angels…

Jude
[6] …that kept not their first estate,

–and were cast out of heaven,[404] and that there are angels who have remained loyal to God, and who…

Psalm 103
[20] …do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His Word;

–and whenever a communication comes from an invisible spirit, or from a visible spirit in the form of some departed acquaintance, every Bible believer will know at once from what source it comes.

Isaiah 8
[20] To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

God's ministering spirits speak according to His word;

Ephesians 6
[12] …the rulers of the darkness of this world,

–being in "chains of darkness,"[405] contradict the words of truth, the Gospel of our salvation.[406]

[404] *Revelation* 12:7-9.
[405] *2 Peter* 2:4; *Jude* 1:6.
[406] *Ephesians* 1:13.

2. A Multitude of Captives

Present Truth, January 22, 1903
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. A Multitude of Captives

> Being a constant reader of your valuable paper, and having derived great help and blessing from its "Private Corner," I should be glad if you would give me some information on the following:
>
> *Matthew* 27:51-53 says: "And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent and the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."
>
> Now, can you please tell me what became of them? Did they die, or did they take part in the ascension?

THE verses that you have quoted are all that the Bible contains directly on this subject. There is no other specific reference to those who were raised at the crucifixion of Christ. However, there is a very plain statement made in *Ephesians* 4:8, which enables us to come to a very clear understanding of the matter. The text reads that when Christ...

Ephesians 4
[8] ...ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

The margin has it, "a multitude of captives." Thus we know that when Christ ascended to heaven, He took with Him a multitude of captives redeemed from the grave as proofs of His power over death and the grave.

- That multitude, brought up from the graves and made immortal, and taken to heaven, stands as a demonstration of the fact that Christ has the keys of death and the grave.
- They are evidences that He died and rose again, not for himself, but for the world.

- In them is demonstrated the truth that the resurrection of Jesus means the resurrection and immortality of all the righteous.

Now while the record in the Gospel says nothing more concerning those who came from the grave at the crucifixion of Jesus than the mere fact that they appeared unto many, the fact that when He ascended on high, He took a multitude of captives with Him, makes it very evident that those mentioned by *Matthew* must have been among the number, for it is not reasonable to suppose that those saints were left to go back into the graves, and some others taken.

The item is of more than passing interest. It was not recorded merely as a matter of curiosity. Everything in the Bible is for practical use in everyday life; and this shows us what is the lively hope to which we are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It shows us that even now, before the coming of the Lord, and before this mortal puts on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption, it is possible for human flesh to be delivered from the…

Romans 8
[21] …bondage of corruption.

2 Corinthians 4
[11] The life of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh;

–for the Spirit that is given to dwell in us, is the Spirit which quickens our mortal bodies.[407] Therefore,

Ephesians 3
[20] Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, *according to the power that works in us*,
[21] Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

[407] *Romans* 8:10-11.

3. The Return from the Enemy's Land

Present Truth, February 12, 1903

> A little child
> That lightly draws its breath,
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death?[408]

IN THE early ages of earth's history, infant mortality, now so common, was a thing unknown. It is thought worthy of special mention, even after the flood, that…

Genesis 11
[28] Haran died before his father.

Death is an enemy, an unnatural and abnormal condition, and it was no part of God's plan that the race whom He made to have dominion should pass under its sway, and be confined in the land of the enemy—the grave.

But while there can in reality be no such thing as a "natural death," yet those who have passed the meridian,—whose lives have had opportunity fully to develop and ripen and bear fruit, who have served their own generation by the will of God, can fall asleep, sometimes even with relief, and their friends can with resignation bear the loss which they have been expecting.

But the death of a child is another matter. The nipping of the half opened bud in the early springtime, the unfulfilled promise of the expanding nature, brings a wail of anguish from the bereaved parents, and awakens the most painful feelings in the breasts of all who contemplate it. Some of the saddest scenes recorded in Scripture are in connection with the death of the young.

- The smiting of the firstborn of Egypt;
- David's mourning and agonizing for the life of Bathsheba's son;

[408] William Wordsworth, *We Are Seven*, 1798.

- Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted;
- The sorrowing household of Jairus at the death of his daughter;

–how different these accounts from the simple records of the deaths of the patriarchs; from the Lord's words to Abraham,

Genesis 15
[15] You shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age;

–and to Daniel,

Daniel 12
[13] Go your way...for you shall rest.

The comforting message given by God to weeping Rachel was:

Jeremiah 31
[16] Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for your work shall be rewarded: and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

The infants torn from the arms which had only just clasped them, for the sake of the Babe of Bethlehem, should by Him be brought back from the enemy's land and restored to their mother's bosoms; but not yet. Some tokens, some pledges of His power to empty the grave, and rob the monster Death of his spoils, were given during His life on earth. It is noticeable that all the recorded instances of resurrection were of those in childhood or youth.

1 Corinthians 15
[45] The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening [life-giving] spirit.

A Man among men, over whom death reigned,—the second Adam,—He yet defied and challenged death and forced it to yield up its prey. "A quickening Spirit," He was able to vitalize the dead, to breathe anew the breath of life into the form of clay from

which it had departed. He was the Resurrection, because He was the Life.[409]

But in this experience Christ is not unique; He stands not alone among men, the only One through whom the dead were raised. He was…

Hebrews 2
17 …made in all things like unto His brethren,

–that they might become in all things like unto Him. So in immediate connection with the statement that "the last Adam," who is "the Lord from heaven,"[410] is "a quickening Spirit," we read:

1 Corinthians 15
48 As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly.

That is, all the children of the Second Adam,—all the partakers of Christ,—become like Him life-giving spirits, whom God uses as channels to communicate life to others. This is evident from Christ's own words:

John 7
38 He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
39 But this spoke He of the Spirit.

So the disciples, believing on Him, wrought the works that He wrought, even to the raising and quickening of the dead.

But faith in Christ, with its full results, was not confined to any age. The miracles wrought by Christ had all, through faith in Him, been performed by the prophets and apostles of former ages: the cleansing of lepers; the multiplying of bread; controlling the waters; and even the raising of the dead. Christ said to the Jews,

---

[409] *John* 11:25.
[410] **1 Corinthians 15** 47 The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.

John 8
56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

That they understood that this statement was to be taken literally was shown by their derisive reply:

57 You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?

The Lord's answer emphasized His former statement:

58 Before Abraham was, I AM.

So the day of Christ, which by faith Abraham saw, extends from the fall to the restoration; it is any day which could at any time be called "today."

The prophets, all of whom witnessed of Christ,[411] saw something of His day, and rejoiced in it. Through the faith of both Elijah and Elisha in Christ's power over death,

Hebrews 11 [RV]
35 Women received their dead by a resurrection.

In the case of Elijah, the woman in whose house he was living having lost her son by a sickness so sore "that there was no breath left in him,"[412] appealed to the man of God. He laid the child on his own bed, and three times stretched himself upon the corpse, praying meanwhile that God would restore the child's soul, even as Jesus prayed on behalf of Lazarus. And by the vitalizing power of the Spirit working through Elijah, the breath of life was restored to the lifeless frame, and the joyful mother received the child again in the radiant beauty of fully restored health.

The result is interesting. During his sojourn with the widow, Elijah had doubtless often spoken to her of Israel's God by whom he had been sent to her dwelling, and by whom the cruise of oil was replenished, and the barrel of meal kept from wasting,—He

[411] See *Acts* 10:43.
[412] *1 Kings* 17:17.

by whose creative power they were daily fed and sustained. And she had listened, but had not been convinced. Something was lacking in the testimony, and this God supplied in the restoration of her son through His servant. When she saw that by contact with Elijah, by the breath of his mouth and the word of his lips the dead boy received life, she said:

1 Kings 17
[24] Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth;

–and her soul was satisfied.

The words of Christ recorded in *Luke* 4:25-26,

Luke 4 [RV]
[25] There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah;...
[26] And unto none of them was Elijah sent, but unto Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow,

–imply that this heathen woman was a sincere soul who was seeking the light of truth. With all such God communicates; and He did so in this instance through Elijah. He works with His servants,

Mark 16
[20] ...confirming the Word with signs following.

The death of the woman's son, which wrung her heart with anguish, was but the preparation for the crowning and convincing sign, which caused her to rest in the God of Israel.

4. Death and Judgment

Present Truth, February 12, 1903
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Death and Judgment

> A friend having shown me a number of your paper, I am very much taken up with it, and like the way in which you explain the Scriptures. My friend and I have long talks on the state of the dead, and we have got to your way of thinking.
>
> I may say that there has been some trouble between my friend and her parents over this subject, for they believe we are judged as soon as we die. Of course, the church teaches that belief, and in the *Confession of Faith* they explain it, by referring to *Ecclesiastes* 11:7, and *Luke* 23:43.
>
> My friend's father is an elder in the Congregational Church, and he says we are judged as soon as we die, and points out to us *Matthew* 17:3, "And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him," also in *Luke* 16, about the rich man and Lazarus.
>
> Now I am taking the liberty of asking you, if you will be so kind as to explain those verses, as I am not able to do so.

YOU have laid out a good deal of work for one small "corner," for it obviously takes much more space to give a clear exposition of a text than merely to refer to it, and say that it proves a certain thing; and here I have several texts to deal with. Moreover, the consideration of them must be to a certain extent negative, which is never so satisfactory as to deal with a subject from the foundation. However, we shall see what can be done in brief.

Both Scripture and our own observation teach us that the dead are unconscious. Nobody ever saw a dead man make a single voluntary movement, and nobody ever heard one utter a sound, no matter how earnestly he was addressed. The Bible also says that:

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] The dead know not anything,

–and that...

Ecclesiastes 9
[10] There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave.

It is plain, therefore, that, in the face of this evidence, whoever claims that the dead are actually alive and conscious, is bound in reason to offer positive proof of the fact. But that would be a thankless task; for if one could produce such evidence, it would prove the Bible untrue, which is impossible.

Let us first deal with the account of the transfiguration, as given in *Matthew* 17. Jesus was in the mount with His disciples,

Matthew 17
[3] And there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.

This, you say, is offered you as proof that men are judged as soon as they die; but it is no proof at all. For in the first place, Elijah never died, but was taken to heaven without dying.[413] It is strange, but I have noticed that most people seem never to have observed this fact.

Now as to Moses in the mount with Jesus. We know that Moses died, and that the Lord buried him.[414] What shall we then conclude? why, knowing that the Bible is the Word of God, we will show our confidence in it by believing it; and since it says that Moses died; that the dead know not anything; and yet that Moses was seen fifteen hundred years afterwards talking with the Lord, we shall draw the obvious conclusion that he had been raised from the dead.

That this is the case, is corroborated by two portions of Scripture. One is *Jude* 9, which says that Michael the Archangel, the one whose voice will call the dead to life at the last day,[415]

[413] See *2 Kings* 2.
[414] *Deuteronomy* 34.
[415] See *1 Thessalonians* 4:16; *John* 5:26-29.

Jude
[9] ...when contending with the devil, He disputed about the body of Moses.

Now the devil is the one...

Hebrews 2
[14] ...that had the power of death,

–and Christ is the one who has broken his power, and who has the keys of death and the grave.[416] The only thing which they could dispute about over the body of Moses, would be the right of Christ to take him from the grave, the devil's prison; for if Jesus did not intend to raise him, He would have no occasion of dispute with the devil; but since they did dispute, we may be sure that Christ gained His point. Thus we have one further evidence that Moses was raised from the dead.

Again, the Apostle Peter refers to the transfiguration scene as an illustration of...

2 Peter 1
[16] ...the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus also, just six days before the transfiguration, said,

Matthew 16
[28] Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

Now when Christ comes...

Matthew 24
[30] ...with power and great glory,

1 Thessalonians 4
[16] ...the dead in Christ shall rise first,

–and then the living saints will be changed to immortality, and

[416] *Revelation* 1:18.

caught up with the others, thus ever to be with the Lord.[417] Therefore, in order for the transfiguration to be a perfect representation of the coming of the Lord, there must have been present a representative of those who are raised from the dead, and also of those who are taken to be with Christ without dying. This last we have in the person of Elijah, and is it plain that Moses must have represented the other class. So much for that.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 is the conclusion of a series of figures indicating death, and if says,

Ecclesiastes 12
[7] Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

That is a simple description of the unmaking of man, just as *Genesis* 2:7 is of the making of man; but it affords not the remotest intimation that man is judged at death, or is conscious in death. Indeed, it teaches exactly the opposite, for it shows that in death, man's condition is the same as it was before he was created.

Luke 23:43 may be disposed of as easily as the case of Moses and Elijah. Jesus was on the cross, on which He died. He did not go to heaven that day, but, on the contrary, went into the grave. On the third day afterward, angels came from heaven, and rolled away the shone, and…

Acts 10
[41] …He rose from the dead.

Mark well, He "rose," and appeared unto His disciples. He did not come down from heaven and appear to them. Moreover He said to Mary, who would have embraced Him,

John 20
[17] Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father;

[417] *1 Thessalonians* 4:16-17.

–yet later the same day He allowed the disciples to touch Him, showing that immediately after appearing to Mary, on the morning of His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven, to the Father, and returned.

Thus we see that Jesus did not go to Paradise three days before; for Paradise is in the highest heaven. Therefore the thief could not possibly have been with Him in Paradise that day. The thief did not ask or expect to be in Paradise with Jesus on the day of the crucifixion, nor did Jesus say that he would be. What the thief asked was that Jesus should remember him when He came in His kingdom, and we know that He will; for He assured him even that day,

- although He was nailed to a cross, and mocked and derided;
- although all men had forsaken Him;
- although most thought He was a deceiver, and even His own disciples thought that He was deceived;
- although all appearances seemed to be against Him,

–yet even that day, in that darkest hour, Jesus declared with all confidence that the thief should be with Him in Paradise. One knows not which to wonder at most—the faith of Jesus, or that of the thief.

As to the comma before the word "today," instead of after it, it need only be said that the punctuation of the Bible is not a matter of inspiration. There were no marks of punctuation when the Bible was written. When punctuation marks were invented, and men punctuated the Bible, they naturally made it read according to their understanding of the text. All that is necessary is to think of the text without any punctuation, and then read it in the light of its surroundings and the rest of Scripture. *1 Thessalonians* 4:13-18 and *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54 show when and how those who believe in Christ, and die in faith in Him, will be with Him.

It might also be mentioned in this connection, that Jesus has not yet come in His kingdom. He has gone to heaven to receive it,

and when it is given to Him He will return, sitting on the throne of His glory.[418]

We have only the parable of the rich man and Lazarus[419] remaining, out of your list of texts; and inasmuch as that is a parable, we need not tarry long over it. It is not that we should treat parables slightingly; but unless a parable is explained by the One who gave it, as with most of those in *Matthew* 22, it is plain that no doctrine can be based on it; and this one has no explanation. However, the context plainly indicates that it was spoken for the special benefit of the Pharisees who were covetous, and who thought that riches were a sign of God's favor, and poverty of His displeasure; and by it Jesus teaches that a man's wealth or social position in this world does not indicate his position in the world to come. If it be claimed that the parable must nevertheless teach what is true about the state of death, note that Abraham is represented as telling the rich man what took place in his lifetime. Note, also, that Lazarus is said to have been carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. That shows that it is but a figure, unless one would have us believe that all good men are actually reposing in Abraham's bosom! *Judges* 9:7-15 is another instance of things personified in a parable. In the one in *Luke* we have dead men represented as speaking, just as in *Judges* the trees are holding a conversation.

And now I must leave you with the Bible, to meditate upon the great truth that life comes only through our Lord Jesus Christ, even as righteousness does, and that justification by faith is inseparably bound up with life only for the righteous.

[418] *Matthew* 21:31.
[419] *Luke* 16.

5. The Earth's Future

Present Truth, February 19, 1903
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. The Earth's Future

Allow me to thank you for the help *Present Truth* is to me. Will you kindly make more plain, with God's help, the following passage from *Man's True Dominion?*[420]

"When Satan has full control of all except the little flock who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, the Lord will come, the wicked will be destroyed by the brightness of His coming. The righteous will be taken to be with Him, and the earth will be left desolate, without cities and without men, for a thousand years."

In *Revelation* 20:3-4 we read that Satan is to be bound a thousand years, and when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, etc.

You also stated, a few weeks ago, that *this earth* would be purified by fire. We read in *Revelation* 20:11, "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them;" and in chapter 21, "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," etc., and the description of the New Jerusalem, verse 4, and onward, shows a city for God's people, entirely new.

Thanking you in anticipation, if you have the time to explain what may not appear difficult to you, but is to me as I now read God's word, believe me, yours sincerely.

YOUR difficulty arises very naturally from the fact that in the articles you refer to, the events of the last days were only in-

[420] PP Editor's note: The article mentioned, "Man's True Dominion," is from *Present Truth*, January 29, 1903. It is included in a collection of articles titled, *The Book of Hebrews,* to be released in the future.

cidentally mentioned, and the Scripture authority for the statements made was not given, although it has often been presented at length in *Present Truth*. A presentation of some of the principal portions of Scripture treating upon the coming of the Lord and the circumstances attending it will, I think, make the subject clear to your mind, and will certainly be profitable to all.

Promise of Restoration

In the first place we must remember that the earth is much changed from what it was when it was created, and that a restoration to its original condition has been promised by the Lord through His prophets throughout all the ages; and further that this restoration is connected with the second coming of Christ.[421] If you read the 3rd chapter of *2 Peter*, you will find the entire history of the world summarized in very small compass, and this will serve excellently as an outline.

There we find that the earth is spoken of at three different stages of its existence, as though it were three different worlds. Notice this carefully, and you will have the solution of a large part of your difficulty.

First, we have the earth at creation, a watery mass.

> **2 Peter 3**
> 5 ...by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water.

Then we are brought to the flood, which destroyed the earth that then was,

> 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished;
> 7 ...[leaving] the heaven and the earth, which are now,

–and which are reserved to be destroyed by fire by at the last day.

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[421] See *Acts* 3:20-21.

2 Peter 3

[10] 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 burned up.

[11] Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

[12] Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

[13] Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness.

Now, just "as the heavens and the earth which are now" since the flood, are not "the world that then was," but greatly modified in appearance, so the new heavens and new earth are but this present heaven and earth restored to their original condition.

Revelation 21

[5] He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.

The earth when first created was new, and so, when restored to its first condition, it will of course be new.

Having the subject before us in outline, we may now fill in the details.

The Scriptures mention in different places, many things that take place at the second advent of our Lord. What often leads to confusion concerning the order of these events is the failure to keep in mind that the second advent of Christ, like the first, is not an affair of but a moment, but covers a period of time.

Resurrection and Translation of the Righteous

In the 16th chapter of *Revelation* we have a description of "the seven last plagues" which will immediately precede the second coming of Christ. The circumstances attending the appearance of

Christ in the clouds of heaven, will be the most awful and terrible that the earth has ever experienced.[422]

To come more definitely to particulars, we may read what will happen to the righteous when Christ comes:

> **1 Thessalonians 4**
> [16] 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:
> [17] 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.

You might also read *1 Corinthians* 15:51-54 in this connection.

The Wicked Destroyed

But what about the wicked? The 20th chapter of *Revelation*, to which you have referred, is sufficient authority for the statement that the wicked will not receive their final doom at the moment of Christ's appearance in the clouds of heaven, to gather His saints. That chapter indeed, together with the one following, gives a very complete summary of the events from the coming of Christ and the resurrection to the final destruction of the wicked and the restoration of the earth.

In reading that chapter, note that there is a period of a thousand years between the resurrection of the just, and that of the unjust. Now we may go back to trace the story of the wicked and of the sin-cursed earth up to the close of the thousand years, when the second resurrection, the resurrection of the wicked, takes place.

The Brightness of His Coming

In *2 Thessalonians* 2:8 we read of…

> **2 Thessalonians 2**
> [8] …that Wicked…whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy by the brightness of His coming.

[422] See *Matthew* 24:29-30; *Revelation* 1:7. Read also the 2nd chapter of *Isaiah*, and the 3rd chapter of *Habakkuk*.

The coming of the Lord will be with such dazzling glory as the world has never known.[423] Therefore we can well understand that the wicked that are left after the plagues will be instantly destroyed by it. The righteous will be able to endure it, because of what is stated in:

> **2 Corinthians 3**
> [18] We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Having been accustomed to behold the glory of the Lord, the full revelation of it will but complete the change that has been taking place in them while they beheld, making their bodies immortal. Thus they are taken to be for ever with the Lord, and the earth will lie desolate, stripped of all its inhabitants for a thousand years, until the second resurrection.

The Binding of Satan

This desolation of the earth to which Satan will be confined, will constitute his binding. With none of the wicked left to work through, and none of the righteous to tempt or torture, his occupation will be gone. His hands will be bound. He will be left to his own meditations for a thousand years, to contemplate the ruin which he has wrought. Then the results of rebellion against God's government will be apparent.

The Bottomless Pit

But what about the condition of the earth during this time? It is described as "the bottomless pit," and it is interesting to know that the Greek word *abussos*, "abyss," corresponds to the Hebrew word rendered "deep" in *Genesis* 1:2, and is identical with the word in the Septuagint. This gives us an idea of the situation. The earth in the beginning was a liquid mass,

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[423] Compare *Psalm* 97:3-6; *Luke* 9:26; *Habakkuk* 3:3-4; *Matthew* 24:27.

Genesis 1
[2] ...without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

Compare this with:

Jeremiah 4
[20] Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains as in a moment.
[21] How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of a trumpet?
[23] I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was *without form and void;* and the heavens, and they had no light.
[24] I behold the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly.
[25] I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.
[26] I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down by the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.
[27] For thus has the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end.
[28] For thus shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

Effects of Satan's Rule

Thus it will be made plain to the universe that Satan's rule of the earth is the complete undoing of God's work. Where God builds up, Satan pulls down and destroys.

With the foregoing description of the earth "without form, and void" and covered with darkness, as it was before the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters, compare the Scriptures that speak about the melting of the earth. For example, *Psalm* 97:5; 46:6; *2 Peter* 3:10. This corroborates the statement that the earth will be reduced to a liquid state again, and will thus constitute the bottomless pit, or "the deep." *Isaiah*, chapters 34 and 35

may well be read in this connection. These are but a few of the many Scripture references to the events of the last days; but they sufficiently serve our purpose, which is to give only a connected outline.

The Loosing of Satan

And now for the closing scene. It is given in *Revelation* 20 and 21.

> **Revelation 20**
> [7] When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth.

The question in your mind is,

> "How will Satan be loosed from his prison, and how will he find any nations to deceive, if the earth has been stripped of all its inhabitants?"

The answer to this question is given in the preceding verses, and has perhaps already suggested itself to you. It will evidently be by the resurrection of the wicked, at the close of the thousand years. That the New Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven, and will rest upon the earth before it is renewed, is plainly indicated in *Zechariah* 14:1-9, and other scriptures. *Isaiah* 33:14-24; 54:11-17, combined with *Revelation* 20:9-10, show that the New Jerusalem, with the saints in it, will be on the earth when the fire melts it and consumes the wicked, and that it will ride in safety upon the lake of fire, even as the ark was safely borne by the waters of the flood that once destroyed the earth. This is further indicated in:

> **Malachi 4**
> [1] Behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

[3] And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I do this, says the Lord of hosts.

Plotting of the Wicked Against the Just

A moment's thought will enable us to see what the deception is by which Satan gathers the nations of earth to battle after the second resurrection. The holy city having descended to earth, he will make the nations believe that they can take it, and thus possess the land for ever. This will be an easy task, because they have been accustomed to follow his lead, and many of them will have been in the act of slaughtering, or attempting to slaughter, the righteous, when death overtook them. They will begin the work of persecution where they left off a thousand years before.

A Strong City

But inside the New Jerusalem the saints of God will rest as securely as did Noah in the ark tossed by the billows. No weapon that is formed against their citadel will prosper.[424]

Isaiah 26

[1] In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

Its walls will be Salvation, and its gates Praise.[425] And here is the practical point of the whole story for us. It will be a terrible, awe-inspiring sight when the mighty host,

Revelation 20

[8] ...the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,

–consisting of all the wicked who have ever lived on earth, in well-drilled and armed battalions, with Satan at their head, march up...

[9] ...on the breadth of the earth,

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[424] *Isaiah* 54:17.
[425] *Isaiah* 60:18.

–and surround the city. By all human calculation, the city, whose inhabitants they will out-number a hundred times, would fall an easy prey to Satan's army. But,

Psalm 46
[5] God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early.

The power that has kept the saints hitherto,—the power that has made them saints, will keep them still. No one in his senses can have the faintest shadow of doubt as to the outcome. But know that every person who trusts God is just as safe from the power of Satan now as the saints in the holy city will be then. The salvation which is ours now in Christ will be all that we can have then to depend on; and it will be ample, because it is all-powerful now. Therefore in anticipation of that day, we may each one apply to ourselves now the glorious exhortation:

Isaiah 12
[6] Cry out and shout, you inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel *in the midst of you*.

6. What Shall the End Be?

Present Truth, March 19, 1903
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. What Shall the End Be

> The popular theory respecting the fate of the wicked has always troubled me. I should be glad if you would show me from the Bible whether there is any foundation for supposing that they are to be everlastingly tormented. I cannot think that a God of love would create beings to condemn them to suffering throughout eternity.

Divine Love

NEITHER would He. God is not a cruel tyrant, delighting in human suffering; and the Scriptures give not the slightest warrant for thinking that He is.

1 John 4
[16] God is love.

He is not simply *loving*, but He is *love itself*.

[7] Love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God.
[8] He that loves not knows not God.

The highest human conceptions of love fall far short of Divine love. Whatever sense of tenderness and compassion and love there is in the world, is but a fragment, a breath, of the boundless, eternal love of God. Hence it is plain that God will never outrage the sense of justice which He himself has planted in the human breast.

Just Judgment

This is made plain by those words of God:

Isaiah 45
[23] I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

That this has reference to the time of general judgment, is evident from:

Romans 14
[10] Why do you judge your brother? or why do you set at naught your brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
[11] For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.
[12] So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

So we see that no man will be punished until he subscribes to his own judgment, and bears witness that God is just.

Judgment Committed to Man

Still further: So careful is God to insure that no man can have any cause of complaint against Him, and that all shall be satisfied that no advantage is being taken of them, that He has put the destiny of the world into the hands of men themselves.

John 5
[22] For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son.

This is no subterfuge, no device to seem to put judgment out of His own hands, while still holding it; for we read:

[26] For as the Father has life in himself, so has He given to the Son to have life in himself:
[27] And has given Him authority to execute judgment also, *because He is the Son of Man.*

In the beginning God gave man dominion over the earth, and He has never taken it from him.

Ecclesiastes 3
[14] Whatsoever God does, it shall be for ever.

Therefore Jesus, the second Adam, who as "the Son of man" stands for all mankind, says:

Revelation 2
[26] He that overcomes, and keeps my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
[27] And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Compare:

Psalm 2
[7] I will declare the decree: the Lord has said unto me, You are my Son; this day have I begotten You.
[8] Ask of me, and I shall give You the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.
[9] You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Read also:

Psalm 149
[5] Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.
[6] Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand;
[7] To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;
[8] To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;
[9] To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all His saints.

What possible chance is there to think that God has created beings for the purpose of torturing them eternally, when He turns the whole care over to them? Now since, according to God's word, even those who will finally be punished will confess that God is good, and their punishment just, let us examine that same Word, to see if we cannot discern both justice and mercy in the punishment of the wicked.

Everlasting Destruction

For the wicked will be punished. The testimony of all the Scriptures is to this effect. And there is no ambiguity; for the same passages that tell the fact of the punishment, also tell what it will be. Take, for instance, this:

> **2 Thessalonians 1**
> [6] Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
> [7] And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
> [8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:
> [9] Who shall be *punished with everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

"They shall be punished with everlasting destruction." It is true that…

> **Matthew 25**
> [46] These shall go away into everlasting punishment,

–but the punishment will be death,—cessation of existence,—not existence in torture.

> **Obadiah**
> [16] They shall be as though they had not been.

> **Psalm 37**
> [20] 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.

The language is not ambiguous; it is as plain as it can be.

The Effect of Everlasting Fire

But what about the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, into which the wicked are to be told to depart? That gives no hint of eternity of suffering, but quite the contrary. If the fire "never shall be quenched,"[426] it will certainly in time consume

[426] *Mark* 9:43, 45.

whatever of a combustible nature is put into it. Thus we read of Christ, that His fan is in His hand,

Matthew 3
[12] ...and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into the garner, but He will *burn up* the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Malachi 4
[1] For, behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
[3] And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.

The Consuming Fire

Surely there is no room here for eternal conscious existence in torment. But it will be asked how the fire can be everlasting, unless the wicked remain in existence for it to feed on. That is easily answered. It is the fire of God's own glory.

Hebrews 12
[29] Our God is a consuming fire.

By the fire of His Spirit He consumes sin out of the earth; and it remains with each person to choose how he will have his sin removed—whether *from* him, or *with* him. If the man desires to be for ever separated from his sins, the Spirit of God will consume them, completely freeing him from them, and purifying him; and this work will be performed now. But if the man loves his sins, and clings to them; if he prefers them to God, and would rather live in them than to abide in God;—then when the sin is consumed (as it must be; for God will have a clean universe), the man who has identified himself with the sin will necessarily be consumed with it; but the fire of God's glory will abide for ever, after the wicked have all been blotted from existence.

The Philosophy of Punishment

This brings us to the root of the matter—the explanation, the reason, the necessity, the philosophy, so to speak, of the punishment of the wicked. It is very simple when one once knows the simple science of salvation. We begin with the Scripture proposition that…

> **Hebrews 11**
> [6] …God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek after Him,

–rewarding them with himself.

> **Genesis 15**
> [1] I am…your exceeding great reward.

There is…

> **Ephesians 4**
> [6] One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

There can be no existence apart from Him; for He is our life.[427]

> **Acts 17**
> [25] He gives to all life, and breath, and all things.

In His hand is…

> **Job 12**
> [10] …the soul [or life] of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

> **Acts 17**
> [28] In Him we live, and move, and have our being;…for we are also His offspring.

Let us make this very clear, so that there can be no mistake about it. It is necessary, in order that we may see that righteousness is essential to our existence; for there are very many people who do not acknowledge the right of God to command them, and

[427] *Deuteronomy* 30:20.

to expect obedience from them. A little experiment will settle this matter much more positively than a long argument. Here is a man who does not acknowledge that God has any claim on him, nor that he owes anything to God. Of course, then, he will not think of accepting anything at God's hands; he will not be under obligation to Him for anything. But he is breathing air, which he certainly did not make, and which he does not pay for; no man on earth supplies it to him; it comes from above—the breath of heaven. It is God's air, God's breath, and as the man intends to be absolutely independent of God, he will of course no longer breathe God's air, but will provide his own supply.

But how shall he proceed, since the air is everywhere? It is evident that he must secure an air-tight room, and go inside and remain there, sealing up the entrance, so that not a breath of air can come in. There will be some air inside, which, in strict honesty, he ought to have pumped out; but since finding an air-pump large enough to exhaust the air will be attended with some difficulty, he can venture to trespass to the extent of the one or two thousand cubic feet that the room contains. Or, if he is very scrupulous, he can burn a little charcoal in the room, and the air will soon be exhausted. Now he can carry out his plan of living absolutely independent of God. Unfortunately, he will not live long enough to tell anybody how he enjoys it. His attempt to live by his own power, and his existence, will come to a very speedy end.

Will anybody charge God with injustice or unkindness for allowing that man to die? Will anybody wonder how a God of love could create a being to condemn him to such suffering as choking to death? You will say,

> "The man could have lived if he had not been so foolishly and stubbornly independent. There is abundance of air, if he had been willing to be dependent on God; he died self-condemned and self-executed; and while we pity his folly, we must absolve God from any responsibility for the result."

You see the point, do you not? It is utterly impossible for any being to exist on this earth independent of God. The man is dependent on God even for a place in which to attempt to carry out his purpose to live wholly on his own resources; and as soon as he makes the attempt, he dies. But he need not die; he may live, if he is but willing to be dependent upon the one Source of life, and to abide in the Life that upholds the universe.

Righteousness Essential to Life

We are not yet quite ready for the final application, although you doubtless have already made it. We must take our man as he stands at the door of the room that is to be his absolute and independent dominion and, foreseeing what the result of his experiment will be, turns back. He will breathe God's air; he will acknowledge his dependence. But that means that he will acknowledge God a right to command him, and to expect implicit obedience. Indeed, it is not fair to put it in that way, as though God were receiving something by the man's obedience. The truth is that the acceptance of God's life is man's only hope of life, and if man will not come into harmony with it, he must cease to be. But God's life is righteousness, and the man who comes fully into harmony with it is righteous, and has eternal life; for…

John 12
[50] His commandment is life everlasting.

The Science of Salvation

Here, then, is the science of salvation. God created all things for eternal life and happiness. He never created a single soul for destruction, much less for torture. But the inhabitants of this world have rebelled against His loving rule, and have chosen gods of their own. But God is…

2 Peter 3
[9] …long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Ezekiel 18
[23] Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?

Ezekiel 33
[11] As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.

So He has sent forth His Son, in whom is the fullness of His own life, to show the world that He cherishes no ill-will, but that He is anxious for them to be saved. He knows that they do not know what it means to cast off allegiance to Him, and set up their own rule, so He bears long with them, taking their guilt all on himself, so that they may be wholly freed from it.

2 Corinthians 5
[19] God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.

By the ease with which God keeps us alive, renewing our life moment by moment, He shows how easily He can save us; He shows that He is the Saviour, in that He is the Preserver.

The Fate of the Wicked

With such provision for man's salvation from the sin into which he has plunged himself, it is evident that there is no excuse for him to remain in it. There is therefore no reason for allowing sin to mar God's creation eternally; and so it must finally be brought to an end. That end will come only when it can be made apparent that nothing would be gained by further delay: all who can be inclined to righteousness will have accepted God's free and abundant provision, and only the defiantly depraved will remain. It is clear that then it will be perfectly just to cut off the sinners, and blot out sin. But even then there is nothing arbitrary in God's action. The Judgment fully demonstrates to all that…

Revelation 22
[11] He that is unjust, [will] be unjust still…

–and then God finally leaves them to that which they have persistently chosen, contrary to all His entreaties. He takes all creatures absolutely at their word:

- those who have professed to love life, and to love and accept Him as the Fountain of life, He takes to himself, to dwell for ever in Him; and
- those who have hated Him, and have said that they would not have Him to rule over them, He allows to go away by themselves, away from Him.

A Clean Universe

But where can they go where He is not?

> **Jeremiah 23**
> [24] Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? says the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? says the Lord.

Not in heaven, or earth, or sea, or in all space, can they find a place where they can live outside of God's hand.[428] Therefore there is nothing for them but to go out of existence; and this they do. In the process some suffering is involved, as in the case of the man in our experiment; but even though this seem in some cases to be drawn out to eternity, it will be comparatively but a moment,[429] and then the universe will once more be clean, the…

> **Acts 3** [RV]
> [21] …restoration of all things…

–will be completed, and…

> **Revelation 5**
> [13] Every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them,

–will with one accord unite in proclaiming:

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[428] *Psalm* 139:1-12.
[429] Compare *2 Peter* 2:6; *Jude* 7; and *Lamentations* 4:6.

Revelation 5
[13] Unto Him that sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.

7. Doctrines of Devils

Present Truth, March 26, 1903

IN A work of nearly 1,400 pages, Mr. Frederic Myers attempts to prove that the human personality survives bodily death. He has spent thirty years in investigating the subject, beginning by studying the details of postmortem apparitions, but he found that abundant information was offered by Spiritualism. He concluded that if the spirits of the dead were…

> …ready to hear and answer questions, and to tell us frankly of the fate of souls,

–it was unnecessary to go elsewhere. He thinks that the Scriptures are superseded by this greater revelation; that the resurrection of Christ showed that His Spirit was immortal, that Buddhism presents the truest and most inspiring faith, that there is not one Saviour, but every man is a saviour, and that prayers should be addressed to the dead. From such "doctrines of devils"[430] men can be saved only by believing the Word of God, against all the philosophic speculations of the heathen world, and also against the almost universal belief in the natural immortality of the soul. From that first lie in Eden,

> **Genesis 3**
> [4] You shall not surely die,

–diligently fostered by its author, have sprung hosts of delusions. The worship of the dead among the heathen, the false doctrines of purgatory, saint worship and idolatry of the Virgin Mary, grow out of this error. Their fruit has always been Anti-Christian, and the growing influence of Spiritualism, with its wicked teaching, allows that Satan is now preparing for men another deep-laid snare in which multitudes may perish. The significance of Mr. Myers' book is not that it presents any new point of the teaching of the "spirits," but that it shows that science and

[430] *1 Timothy* 4:1.

critical investigation, which claims to have overthrown the Scriptures, will not deliver any from this powerful delusion, but is being rather used to assist its development.

Isaiah 8
[19] And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits…should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

Revelation 16
[14] They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

8. The Personality of Satan

Australasian Signs of the Times, April 6 and 13, 1903

April 6, 1903

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE to read the numerous references to Satan and his angels, and what they did, believing the record, without knowing that they are real, personal beings, as real as men are. But that they are supernatural beings, and not man, is plainly declared in:

> **Ephesians 6**
> [11] Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.
> [12] For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [margin: "wicked spirits"] in high places.

"But they are bound," you say, "and so are harmless." Yes, they are bound to this world. They have not, as the unfallen angels have, the freedom of heaven, nor the privilege of visiting other parts of God's universe. They are in bonds, under darkness so dense that no ray of heavenly light ever pierces it.[431] This intense darkness they have plunged themselves into, through rejecting God, and so there is nothing for them to look forward to but "the blackness of darkness for ever"[432]—utter extinction.

The God of This World

The first ten verses in *Ezekiel* 28 are addressed to "the prince of Tyrus," and the languages such as could well apply to an earthly ruler having great riches, power, and wisdom. But from the eleventh verse to the nineteenth we have a "lamentation upon the king of Tyrus," in language that could not possibly apply to any human being. Read:

[431] *2 Peter* 2:4; *Jude* 1:6.
[432] *Jude* 1:13.

Ezekiel 28
[12] Thus says the Lord God; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
[13] You have been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was light covering, the sardius, topaz, and diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold [compare *Revelation* 21:10-21]: the workmanship of your tabrets and your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.
[14] You are the anointed cherub that covers [compare *Psalm* 80:1]; and I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God, you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.
[15] You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.
[16] By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, and from the midst of the stones of fire.

The reading of this is enough to show us that it never was true of any man on this earth; it applies to the highest being ever created in heaven—one of the cherubim overshadowing the throne of God in heaven. The question then comes,

> "How is it that he is called the king of Tyrus?"

The answer is easy. Satan,

Ephesians 2
[2] ...the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience,

2 Corinthians 4
[4] ...[is] the God of this world,

–the chief of...

Ephesians 6
[12] ...the rulers of the darkness of this world.

He is therefore the real ruler of every heathen nation that sets itself in opposition to God; while the nominal king is only his

agent. So the visible ruler of ancient Tyre, that proud and wicked city, was in reality only the prince; the real ruler was the wicked spirit to whose control he had yielded himself, and whose designs he was carrying out.

This also applies in the 14th chapter of *Isaiah*. That is indeed in connection with prophecies of the destruction of the city over which Nebuchadnezzar ruled. Satan, who first brought sin into God's universe, by seeking to make himself equal with God, was the real ruler of ancient Babylon when its nominal ruler exalted himself against the God of heaven. That the prophecies in *Isaiah* concerning Babylon embrace a great deal more than the city famed in history, and whose ancient site is noted in our maps, is evident when we read the New Testament. That city was utterly destroyed long before the days of the apostles; and the kingdom of Babylon had been succeeded by three other world powers; yet the book of *Revelation* abounds in references to Babylon, and prophecies of its fall. The very language of *Isaiah* is used by John. Compare *Isaiah* 47:8-9 and *Revelation* 18:7-8. Babylon and its king exist as really today as they ever did, although the city and king known to secular history have long since ceased to be. In the destruction of Babylon of the Chaldees we have the type and the assurance of the destruction of Satan and his kingdom.

April 13, 1903

Romans 5

[12] By one man sin entered into the world.

This is perfectly consistent with the statement that Satan sinned in heaven, and that he is the originator of sin; it must be so, since both statements are in Scripture. Satan introduced sin into the universe; but Adam introduced it into this world; for although Satan was permitted to come to earth after he sinned, Adam was the ruler of it, and nothing could be done here without his consent. Satan might have roamed up and down on this earth without having the power to blight a single flower, or to cause a moment's pain or suffering to any human being, if man willed it

to be so. Sin may crouch at the door, desiring to seize upon and ruin man; but it is powerless and harmless unless man consents; man may rule over it.

Necessity of Knowledge Concerning Satan

Someone may ask,

> "What difference does it make whether or not we believe that there is a personal devil? If we earnestly resist the devil that we find striving within us for the mastery, what difference does it make to us what its source is?"

It makes a great deal of difference whether we believe the Bible or not. The mere fact that the Bible tells us of a personal devil, and warns us against him, is sufficient evidence that it is a matter of vital importance for us to know the truth about him; for the Bible does not deal in trivialities.

Here is one all-sufficient reason for being well-informed concerning the devil and his devices: It is a sure safeguard against being led astray by that great delusion, Spiritualism. Without this knowledge, one is sure to fall into that horrible snare. If Satan can only persuade people that he and his host cannot exist, and that the Bible accounts of him are myths, then he has them at his mercy, which is cruel. Then when they get messages purporting to come from their dead friends, relating incidents that no other human beings could know; and when they even see and converse with and handle things that have every resemblance of those dead friends, they will certainly fall into the trap, and believe that their friends have surely returned to visit them. And when those supposed friends declare that they have just come from heaven, and that the things which they once learned from the scriptures they now know to be error, the poor dupes will inevitably throw away what hold they have on God and His Word. This is not fancy, for it has been done many times, and it will be done yet more.

Directly growing out of the fact that ignorance concerning Satan lays one open to the deception of Spiritualism, is the fact that this belief in his existence naturally tends to disbelief in Christ and the atonement. First of all, because Spiritualism itself is first and foremost of all a denial of Christ; and second, because that when a person believes that he has only himself to contend with, it is very natural for him to persuade himself that he can conquer by his own unaided power. Such a one will insensibly, no matter what his present belief in Christ, come to regard the power of the Lord working in him as proceeding only from himself; for that is a great temptation that continually besets all mankind. So from believing that he is his own tempter, he will come to believe that he is his own saviour.

Michael, the archangel, contended with the devil for the body of Moses. The mighty prince was not disputing with his "human nature unrestrained," but with a being as real as he himself. And this brings us to the close, with the blessed knowledge that the battle with the hosts of darkness is not ours, but the Lord's. The great controversy is between Christ and Satan, for the souls of men, and for the possession of the earth. Thank God, Christ has conquered at every turn, in every conflict, and we have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

9. The Rulers of the Darkness

Present Truth, April 16, 1903

A LADY missionary from China has stated that the planchette[433] is used there by the Chinese to obtain communications from evil spirits. She has lived in the province known as "Demonland," where the native idolatry was bound up with spiritualism. She had found there was a real power in this idolatry and necromancy, and had known cases of healing worked by the natives who professed power over the spirits.

> "There," she said, "you stand face to face with the unveiled powers of hell."

Her opinion about the planchette was that it only worked intelligibly with those who yielded to its influence and that its influence increased with repeated use. The missionary stated that the Boxer rising was prophesied by a planchette, and she believed the murderous Boxers were all possessed by devils. The testimony of this missionary agrees with the Scriptures, which state that fallen angels are the gods of the heathen. When Israel forsook the Lord,

> **Deuteronomy 32**
> [17] ...they sacrificed unto devils, not to God.

Paul also says:

> **1 Corinthians 10**
> [20] The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God.

Devils play a much larger part in the affairs of this world than most people suspect. And it is not only the missionary in heathen lands, but the Christian too in professedly Christian countries, who can say, with more truth than many realize,

[433] PP Editor's note: A planchette is a small, heart-shaped or teardrop-shaped board used in spiritualism and occult practices to spell messages or point to letters. The Ouija Board is a modern adaptation of this.

Ephesians 6

[12] We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits [margin] in high places.

10. Familiar Spirits and Modern Spiritualism

Present Truth, April 30, 1903
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Familiar Spirits and Modern Spiritualism

> Do you think that there is any connection between the "familiar spirits" mentioned in the Bible, and the Spiritualism of the present day? If so, is it not as sinful now to have any dealings with them as it was then? Will you tell us what is meant by "the sin of witchcraft"[434]?

What Is a Familiar Spirit?

A FAMILIAR SPIRIT, as the term as used in the Bible, is an evil spirit, supposed to attend at a call. In modern Spiritualism each Spiritualistic medium is generally supposed to have a spirit which comes whenever a "sitting" or "seance" is desired, and by which the medium is controlled, and under whose influence and inspiration the medium writes or performs. In other words, the medium has a familiar spirit. God gives His prophets revelations and dreams, not at *their* call or appointment, but when *He* desires and sees it would be best for them to have them; but the hosts of darkness, as a rule, come on demand. They are "familiar," too familiar and common altogether. They should never be called, but resisted always. He who trifles with them is treading on forbidden ground.

The Bible plainly reveals the fall of Satan as well as the fall of man.[435] It shows that many of the angels of heaven also transgressed and fell with him.

2 Peter 2
[4] God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.

Revelation 12
[9] And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the

[434] *1 Samuel* 15:23.
[435] *Ezekiel* 28:13-19; *Luke* 10:18; *John* 8:44.

devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

The last text shows to what place Satan and his angels were cast. It was to the earth. It also shows what has been his work since his banishment from heaven, deceiving the world: tempting man through the deceptions of lies, magic, witchery, cunning and craft, as he did Eve, to transgress against God, with whose law and government he is at war.

God, who knows his subtlety and cunning, and the thousands of ways by which he seeks to snare and enslave men, has ever sought to warn men against those deceptions. Thus, just before Israel entered into the land of Canaan, He gave them the following plain prohibition:

Deuteronomy 18
[9] When you are come into the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.
[10] There shall not be found among you anyone that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,
[11] Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.
[12] For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.

This is plain language, and is as much a command and prohibition against the practice of these things now as when first given. God does not change. Divination, witchery, and the consulting with familiar spirits are as much abominations to Him today as they were anciently. There is the same evil behind them now, and the same deception connected with them, as when…

Numbers 25
[1] …the daughters of Moab
[2] …called the people [of Israel] unto the sacrifice of their gods.

Fifteen hundred years later Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

1 Corinthians 10
[20] But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that you should have fellowship with devils.

And the nature of these things has not changed in the eighteen hundred years which have elapsed since Paul wrote. They are still abominations and from an evil source. They are still Satan's means of deceiving the world.

The Sin of Witchcraft

When the children of Israel were traveling from Egypt to Canaan, the Amalekites came out to oppose their progress by arms. This was nothing less than an act of armed rebellion against God, under whose guidance the Israelites were marching, and therefore God said,

Exodus 17 [margin]
[16] Because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of the Lord, therefore the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.

The Amalekites filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Lord chose the Israelites, in the days when Saul was king, to be the instruments by which He would execute judgment upon them. Accordingly the prophet Samuel came to Saul with the following command from the Lord:

1 Samuel 15
[3] Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

So Saul departed on his mission, and smote the Amalekites;

[9] But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

This, it will readily be seen, was in direct violation of the express command of the Lord; yet so deceived was Saul, that he thought that he had obeyed the Lord; for when Samuel came to seek him,

1 Samuel 15

[13] ...Saul said unto him, Blessed be you of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.

Samuel, however, was not deceived. The evidences of Saul's disobedience were too numerous; the cattle themselves proclaimed the fact. And so, to Saul's protestation of obedience, the prophet said,

[14] What means then this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

To this pertinent question Saul replied,

[15] They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

It will be seen from this that Saul had so far recovered from his deception that he was willing to excuse himself from any connection with the disobedience, and to lay the entire blame upon the people. Yet he excused the act as a righteous one, inasmuch as they designed ultimately to kill all the cattle that they had taken. He seemed to think that so long as the cattle were finally destroyed, it would make no difference how or when it was done. Indeed, he seemed to think that offering them as a sacrifice to the Lord, would more than make up for the disobedience; for upon Samuel's reproving him for his arrogant disregard of the Lord's commandment, Saul again replied:

[20] Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag, the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

[21] But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord your God in Gilgal.

Even this did not make any difference; the disobedience was too evident, and the prophet of the Lord said:

1 Samuel 15
[22] Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.
[23] For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.

The reader will notice that the words "is as" in the verse last quoted, are in italics in the Bible, indicating that they have no equivalent in the Hebrew, but are supplied by the translators. The Hebrew language is brief, and a simple connective is often omitted when it would necessarily be understood. In reading:

"Rebellion, the sin of witchcraft; and stubbornness, iniquity and idolatry,"

–it would be most natural to supply the copula "is," but there would be no necessity nor warrant for supplying "as." So that we may understand the prophet to say, as given in the Jewish rendering, that rebellion is indeed the sin of witchcraft, and that stubbornness is iniquity and image-worship. Wherever therefore we find rebellion, there we find the sin of witchcraft.

This idea is expressed by the Apostle Paul when writing to the Galatians, who were turning away from the purity of the Gospel, and were disobeying the truth of God.[436] To them he exclaimed:

Galatians 3
[1] O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among you?

[436] *Galatians* 1:6-7.

The Root of the Matter

Having seen that plain violation of one of God's commandments is the sin of witchcraft, no matter how specious the excuse, let us now go to the root of the whole matter. Writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul said:

> **2 Corinthians 11**
> [3] I fear; lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

It is evident that in every attempt to beguile men from the truth as it is in Jesus, the devil has used the same arts with which he succeeded in deceiving Eve. Let us, therefore, see by what means she was deceived. Read the account in *Genesis* 3:1-6.

God had commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, saying:

> **Genesis 2**
> [17] In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die.

The devil came with artful insinuations against God, intimating that God was unjust in giving such a commandment.

> "Is it so that God has said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Can it be possible that He would be so arbitrary as that?"

This prepared the way for a bolder strike in response to Eve's statement that God had said that they might eat of every tree but one, but that they should die if they ate of that. The serpent said:

> **Genesis 3**
> [4] You shall not surely die:
> [5] For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods [literally, like God], knowing good and evil.

Then the record says that…

> [6] When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one

wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

But the fact was that the tree was not one to be desired; neither, since God had prohibited it, was it good for food. It was poisonous for her, as has been amply demonstrated; for it was…

> —that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought Death into the World, and all our woe.[437]

How then did the woman see that the fruit of the tree was good for food, and to be desired? She saw it through the representations of the tempter. He caused her to see it by means of his magic arts. She was bewitched. She saw that which did not exist, just as has been the case with many people since, when they have been under the spell of the conjurer. It was witchcraft and magic that caused the sin from which all other sins have sprung. And thus we see why it was that rebellion is the sin of witchcraft.

But what was the magic by which the tempter induced Eve to transgress the express commandments of the, Lord? It is all summed up in one sentence,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die.

It was the belief of this lie that caused the first sin and all the sins that have followed in its train. It is by the subtlety by which the serpent beguiled Eve that our minds are in danger of being corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. False prophets and teachers are threatened with punishment by the Lord, because, as He says:

Ezekiel 13
[22] With lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.

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[437] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1.

Saul's disobedience finally led him to actually consult with a witch before he died. Read the record in *1 Samuel* 28 and *1 Chronicles* 10:13-14.

11. A Gloomy Doctrine

Present Truth, May 28, 1903[438]
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. A Gloomy Doctrine

> It seems to me that it is a far more comforting thought that our dear ones have gone to be with the Lord, than that they are sleeping, knowing nothing. Is not this a gloomy doctrine? I should be glad of any light that you can give me.

THERE is nothing gloomy about the Gospel. That is the "good news" of the:

Romans 1
[16] ...power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

It is all brightness and glory.[439]

1 John 1
[5] God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.

Therefore nothing but light can emanate from Him.

Psalm 119
[105] His word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.

When any doctrine set forth in that word is said to be gloomy, it simply shows that there are some persons whose spiritual eyesight does not enable them to distinguish light from darkness. They do not stand where they can see God in the light that proceeds from Him.

The Bible declares that the dead "sleep;" that they are unconscious, and...

Ecclesiastes 9
[5] ...know not anything;

[438] PP Editor's note: This article was first printed in *Present Truth*, October 25, 1894. This 1903 reprinting is exactly the same except that it includes a question at the beginning, whereas the 1894 version lacks the question.
[439] *2 Corinthians* 4:4.

–that their thoughts have perished.[440] Theology, on the other hand, declares that they are conscious and exist in heaven as disembodied spirits, having greater power and knowledge than before death. The majority of people choose to believe the latter doctrine, as being a bright and cheerful one, and reject the former as something too gloomy and dark to be entertained by any mind but one that repudiates Christianity. But an examination of the two doctrines in the light of Scripture shows that such a view is entirely superficial.

The teaching of theology upon this point is expressed in these words of the poet Longfellow,

> There is no death; what seems so in transition,
> This life of mortal breath
> Is but the suburb of the life Elysian,
> Whose portal we call death;[441]

–and again in the lines of the familiar hymn,

> Death is the gate to endless joy.[442]

But Christ himself said that He was the gate to endless joy, and the portals through which all men must enter into the life beyond. The record is found in the 10th chapter of *John*.

John 10
[7] Then said Jesus unto them [the Pharisees], Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.
[9] I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

To those who love the Lord, who see in Him the One…

Song of Solomon 5
[16] …altogether lovely,

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[440] *Psalm* 146:3-4.
[441] *Resignation*, 1848.
[442] Isaac Watts, Hymn 31, "Christ's presence makes death easy," or "Why should we start, and fear to die."

–the perfection of glory and beauty and majesty, the thought that He is the portal to the life beyond, is far brighter than the thought that that portal is death. Death is the "King of terrors;"[443] but Jesus Christ is the Lord of life, the Prince of Peace, the eternal fountain of love and joy. He is the most glorious portal to everlasting life that could possibly be provided or imagined. And no one who loves Him would be glad to believe He had not told the truth.

Theology declares that men go to their reward at death. But while this idea would place some amidst the joys of Heaven, it would consign the great majority who have died to a very different place; for we read that…

Matthew 7
13 …wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:
14 But strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.

And certainly, between the thought that some of our dead relatives and friends are in torment, and the thought that they are resting, quiet and unconscious, in their graves, there can be no hesitation in choosing.

The popular belief that "there is no death," but only a transition from one state of life to another, contains much that appeals to the natural desires and imaginations of mankind; but it is far surpassed in grandeur by the Bible doctrine of…

2 Timothy 1
10 …the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has *abolished death*, and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

This is no figure of speech, but a statement of actual fact. Our Saviour has abolished death, by passing through the grave him-

[443] *Job* 18:14.

self, and taking away with Him the keys of death.[444] So that to all those who believe in Him, the close of this earthly life is but the beginning of "a sleep," during which they…

Revelation 14
[13] …rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

Nor does the Bible use a figure of speech when it speaks of the death of the saints as a sleep. Sleep and death are two very different things. In the one case there is life, and the other there is no life. In sleep there is a quick awakening to a renewal of the activities of life, but in death there is no awakening.

So it is with those who…

1 Thessalonians 4
[14] …sleep in Jesus.

They have life, even that life which God has prepared for those that shall live and dwell with Him, and which has been brought to light in the Gospel.[445] Those who believe on His name have not to wait until death before they can enter the portal of eternal life, as would be necessary were death the gate to that life, but enter in the moment they have faith in Jesus as Redeemer. Jesus said,

John 11
[25] I am the resurrection, and the life.

Christ dwells in the heart of the believer by faith,[446] and wherever Christ is, there is the resurrection and the fountain of life.

John 3
[33] He that believes on the Son, has everlasting life.

John 5
[25] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that hears my word, and believes on Him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death until life.

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[444] *Revelation* 1:18.
[445] *2 Timothy* 1:10.
[446] *Ephesians* 3:17.

Such a one has already entered the portal to eternal life and happiness, and no power can draw him back, for there is nothing that is able to separate the soul from Him.[447]

In this doctrine there is no gloom, but the brightness of hope and comfort which sustains the soul in the hour of separation from those whom it loves. It is the doctrine of Jesus Christ as the Life-giver, without which power He would not be the Saviour of sinners. It exalts Him, and in this all those who love Him will rejoice. It is no misfortune to any person to "sleep in Jesus," any more than to sleep at night during his natural life. On the contrary, we read that...

Psalm 116
[15] Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,

–and that,

Revelation 14
[13] Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.

While theology may set forth our dead friends as teachers and comforters to us while we remain here, the word of God presents the far more glorious doctrine that our comfort is none other than...

2 Corinthians 1
[3] ...the God of all comfort;

–that Jesus is himself our Comforter,[448] and that we have "another Comforter," which is the Spirit,[449] and that the Spirit is our Teacher, who is able to guide us into all truth.[450] Every true Christian must infinitely prefer this comfort and guidance to all others.

Thus the Bible doctrine of eternal life through Christ far outshines the man-made doctrine of life through the portals of the tomb. That, and that alone, is the gloomy doctrine which inter-

[447] *Romans* 7:38-39.
[448] *John* 14:18.
[449] *John* 14:16-17.
[450] *John* 16:13.

poses the tomb between us and the life which we need, which Jesus Christ, through the Gospel, offers freely now to all, and bestows upon all them that believe on Him.

12. An Incorruptible Sacrifice

Present Truth, June 25, 1903
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. An Incorruptible Sacrifice

> Would you kindly explain *Mark* 9:48-49. In the *Twentieth Century New Testament* it reads,
>
> "Their worm dies not, and the fire is not put out. For it is by fire that everyone will be preserved, just as salt preserves."
>
> I have seen in the *Present Truth* that fire cannot burn without burning away; but that scripture that they are preserved by fire just as salt preserves, seems altogether contrary to your rendering.

THIS text is one that many stumble over. Yet a little thoughtful study of texts suggested by it will relieve all difficulty. Let us first read the verses in the *Common Version*. Christ is speaking of the time when the wicked shall be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched,

Mark 9
[48] Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.
[49] For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

In the *Revision* the last clause is omitted, but it is stated in the margin that "many ancient authorities contain it." It, however, is immaterial to the present study.

There is no doubt but that the reference here is to the custom commanded in…

Leviticus 2
[13] And every oblation of your meat offering shall you season with salt; neither shall you suffer the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your meat offering: with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

Note the expression "the salt of the covenant of your God." God's covenant is "an everlasting covenant," confirmed in Christ.

Every sacrifice and oblation offered to God by the Levitical priesthood symbolized Christ,

Hebrews 9
[14] ...who through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God.

He is the...

1 Peter 1
[19] ...lamb without blemish, and without spot.

Therefore, it was most necessary that there should be no taint of corruption in any of the sacrifices. Now it is well known that the one characteristic of salt is that of a preservative. So, although the sacrifices were offered immediately on being killed, salt was added to them, in order that the slightest taint of corruption might be avoided. For it is a fact that flesh begins to decay the very instant the life leaves it; although the decay may not be perceptible to the senses. It was God's purpose and declaration that His Holy One should not see corruption; and this fact was evidently kept before the minds of the priests and people by the salting of the sacrifices which they offered.

Now come to the case under consideration.

Mark 9
[49] Every one shall be salted with fire.

It is commonly assumed that this refers to the destruction of the wicked; but a little thought will show that it is just the opposite. It is not the wicked, but the righteous, who are to be salted with fire. For, first, that which is already corrupt is never salted. No one ever wishes to preserve such matter, and it could not be done if one did wish to. Salt does not restore matter that is already corrupt, but preserves that which is sound and wholesome. But the wicked who suffer the judgment of God are corrupt. Secondly, it must not be forgotten that it was the *sacrifice* that was salted. Now the wicked are not offered as a sacrifice; but God's people offer their bodies...

Romans 12
[1] ...a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God.

It is, therefore, highly fitting to speak of them as being salted with fire; for the same power which destroys the wicked as refuse matter, not fit to be offered in sacrifice, does really preserve the righteous who...

Isaiah 33
[14] ...dwell with the devouring fire,...amid everlasting burnings.

The righteous are to be preserved as an everlasting sacrifice to God, holy and incorruptible; while the wicked are to be preyed upon by the worm of corruption, and consumed by the devouring fire, which always destroys that which is corruptible.

In this connection it may not be out of place to say a word about the *Twentieth Century New Testament*, for I have frequently been asked about it. I can say that it is wholly unreliable as a translation, and not worth a place in anybody's library. Whoever depends upon it is leaning upon a broken stick. It is true that in the verse before us a correct *idea* is given; but it is a commentary, and not a translation. Nothing corresponding to the words,

> "For it is by fire that everyone will be preserved just as salt preserves,"

–can be found in the Greek text There is no trace of anything like that sentence.

It is a marvel how any lover of the word of God can ever bring himself to read that twentieth century perversion of it. Its light, slangy, loose, and irreverent language presents in many cases but a caricature of the sacred text, and cannot be other than repulsive to one who has fed upon the dignified and majestic language of the *Common Version.*

For instance, who that has ever read the simple and refined words of command at the raising of the daughter of Jairus:

Mark 5

[41] Damsel, I say unto you, Arise,

–can ever read the coarse rendering of the *Twentieth Century New Testament*,

> "Little girl, I am speaking to you, get up,"

–without feeling that the one who penned those words was either desirous of bringing the sacred narrative into contempt; or else utterly lacking in the sense of beauty and dignity of language?

Students of the Bible, who do not read the languages in which it was originally written, cannot be too careful about following so-called "new translations." In many cases these seem to be only the product of a desire to get something different from the old accepted translation; and, in most instances, these differences are at the expense of the integrity of the text. The *Common Version* is not, by any means, an absolutely perfect translation; for an absolutely perfect translation by man is impossible; but it is far more correct than most of the versions which are put forth as improvements. If it be read in connection with the *Revision* as a commentary on certain passages which modern scholarship and a better text has enabled the translators to make more clear, one will get, in the main, as correct an idea of the original language inspired by the Holy Ghost, as it is possible to get in English.

13. Souls Calling for Vengeance

Present Truth, July 9, 1903
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. Souls Calling for Vengeance

> Suppose we say the soul is not immortal till the resurrection, what can we say about *Revelation* 6:9-11? I should like to hear further on this subject.

YOU say, "Suppose we say the soul is not immortal till the resurrection," but it is not left for us to say, or to suppose. The Scripture tells us that...

> **1 Corinthians 15**
> 51 ...we shall all be changed,
> 52 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.
> 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.
> 54 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.

This is positive, and leaves no room for speculation. Now the fact being settled that immortality is obtained only at the coming of Christ, any text which seems to imply the contrary must be known to be exactly in harmony with this. That is to say, the Scriptures are never self-contradictory, and every portion of Scripture is true in itself; but some subjects are plainly and positively set forth in some portions, and are only incidentally referred to in others; or they are not referred to at all. It is evident that the passages that contain incidental reference must be in harmony with the positive statement. And, further, we are never warranted in drawing inferences from any text, in opposition to the plain statement of some other text.

Now knowing that immortality is not conferred until the resurrection, let us read:

> **Revelation 6**
> [9] And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held:
> [10] And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, do You not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?
> [11] And white robes were given unto every one of them: and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

This is one of a series of seven views given to the prophet John. John was in the Spirit, and was looking into heaven, seeing and hearing things that were to come to pass. In this particular line he saw a book held in the hand of God, sealed with seven seals; and as each seal was broken a scene was presented to him. As we read the description of the opening of those seals, we find that all the events portrayed take place on the earth. This is most clearly stated in connection with the second, third, fourth, and sixth seals.[451] The apostle, looking into heaven, was given a vision of things to come to pass on the earth. Now since the events of all the other seals pertain to the earth, it is certainly unwarranted to assume that the scenes of the fifth seal are in heaven. This assumption, which comes from the careless reading of the text, is the cause of all the misunderstanding concerning the "souls under the altar."

The altar spoken of is evidently the altar of sacrifice. The souls that cry out are represented as under the altar, just as they have fallen down slain; but nothing of that kind is in the heavens. It is only on earth that such things occur.

[451] See *Revelation* 6:3-8, 12.

It is evident that the word "altar" here is used in the figurative sense that is so common even now; as when it is said that such and such a one was sacrificed on the altar of his country. No one thinks that the man referred to was laid on a literal altar, and consumed. But the souls here spoken of had in their lifetime offered their bodies a living sacrifice to God;[452] and their death was but the consummation of the sacrifice by which they witnessed to the truth. This confirms the statement that an altar, such as that described in connection with the tabernacle of Moses, is not referred to. We are called upon to offer our bodies a living sacrifice. A sacrifice implies an altar. Paul said, in writing to the brethren:

Philippians 2
17 If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

And just before his death he writes:

2 Timothy 4
6 I am now ready to be offered.

The Apostle Paul was thus sacrificed, and he is one of the souls under the altar; yet his head was cut off by a Roman sword, and his blood and body fell upon the ground, as was the case with thousands of others.

The idea that the glorified saints occupy themselves continually with asking for vengeance is most repugnant; and it is strange that any Christian ever could have imagined such a thing. It is an illustration both of the careless way in which the Bible is read, and also of the desperate efforts to build up a theory that has once been accepted. The idea is handed down from generation to generation, and people exert themselves, not to investigate it, to see whether or not it is true, but to find something that will defend it. And so they impulsively and rashly seize upon any text of Scripture which sounds as though it might favor it, and press it into service. Christ's followers, even on earth, are commanded to

[452] *Romans* 12:1.

pray for them that despitefully use them and persecute them,[453] and therefore it is most certain that they will not begin to call for vengeance upon them as soon as they get into heaven.

Nevertheless, it is true that the souls of the saints—the lives that have been poured out—do cry to God for vengeance. He says,

Romans 12
[19] Vengeance is mine, I will repay.

He marks every act of injustice, every deed of oppression, every persecution, every drop of blood shed for the truth's sake, and will certainly bring the perpetrators of such offenses to justice.

When Cain killed Abel…

1 John 3
[12] …because his own deeds were evil and his brother's were righteous,

–God said,

Genesis 4
[10] The voice of your brother's blood cries unto me from the ground.

It is thus that the blood, in which is the life, the soul of every slaughtered saint cries to God for vengeance, which will be manifested,

2 Thessalonians 1
[7] …when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
[8] In flaming fire.

And this vengeance will not now be long delayed.

[453] *Matthew* 5:44.

14. What Shall Be the End of the Ungodly?

Present Truth, August 6, 1903
Original title: The Editor's Private Corner. What Shall Be the End of the Ungodly?

> A few weeks ago the *Christian* published a criticism of Mr. R. J. Campbell, on account of his unscriptural teaching that all men will ultimately be saved. The writer of the criticism, however, acknowledges that the doctrine that he himself is upholding,—everlasting torment,—is a "terrible one."
>
> Is there no escape from universalism on the one hand or eternal torment on the other? Must one of these doctrines necessarily be the truth? Or have we any scriptural ground for believing in the annihilation of those who will not receive salvation through the atonement?

THE best answer that can be given to this question is to give a plain, straightforward, although necessarily brief exposition of the Scripture teaching concerning the atonement. It is not by any means as complicated as theologians have made it, but is so simple that a child can understand it; and when we once understand it, all difficulty as to universalism and eternal torment will vanish.

Two Classes

Romans 3
[24] The redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

–is comprehensive enough to include the whole human race, as will presently be made plain; but God, who sees the end from the beginning, has made known to us the sad fact that many souls will go to destruction because they will not walk the way of life. Christ says:

Matthew 7
[13] Enter in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat;

[14] Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there be that find it.

These words occur in Christ's "sermon on the mount," which even infidels often profess to accept as a perfect standard; they require no explanation, for nobody can misunderstand their meaning; they are only to be believed or disbelieved; but whoever believes them cannot believe in universal salvation; and, on the other hand, whoever believes in universalism thereby shows that he does not accept the teaching of Christ.

Shall we have a few more texts before we take up the principles of the atonement? In the 24th and 25th chapters of *Matthew* we have one of the last talks that Christ had with His disciples before His crucifixion. It was but the week before He was betrayed. It is wholly concerning His second coming, and at the close He describes the two classes that will be on earth when He shall come:

1. Those who have served Him, and
2. Those who have not.

Matthew 25
[46] And these,

–He says, speaking of those who have not followed Him,

[46] ...shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.

Everlasting Punishment

Now we want to know what this everlasting punishment will be, and we read the words of the Apostle Paul, with reference to the second coming of Christ. He says that...

2 Thessalonians 1
[7] ...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels,
[8] In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

[9] Who shall be *punished with* everlasting *destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

The punishment is to be everlasting, it is true, but it will be destruction; and this is emphasized in *Romans* 6:23, where we read:

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

Ezekiel 18
[4] The soul that sins, it shall die.

Thus we see that the punishment is death; and since the punishment is to be everlasting, it will be everlasting death—death from which there will be no resurrection.

Bear in mind that this death, which is the wages of sin, is the direct opposite of life. It is not eternal life in torment, for life, no matter what its conditions, is not death in any sense. The righteous, who have the gift of life, often suffer grievous affliction; but they are alive, and not dead. Death means cessation of existence, even as God said through His prophet:

Obadiah
[16] All the heathen...shall be as though they had not been.

So we read again:

Psalm 37
[20] 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.
[9] For evil doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.
[10] For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.
[11] But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
[37] Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

[38] But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end [future] of the wicked shall be cut off.

We cannot suppose that men who stand as preachers are ignorant of these statements of Scripture, and many more like them; therefore we are obliged to suppose that they ignore them. But if one is to follow one's own mind, regardless of what the Bible says, one should announce that fact, and not preface one's sermons with texts of Scripture. The texts that we have quoted make it very plain that there is a middle ground between universalism on the one hand, and eternal torment on the other. We will now turn our attention to the foundation principles which make all these statements plain.

Man Not Immortal

It should not be overlooked, that the root of all this difficulty is the unscriptural idea that man is by nature deathless,—that God, having once given him life, cannot withdraw it. Many sincere Christians hold this idea, seemingly wholly unconscious of the fact that it was the serpent who said to Eve,

Genesis 3
[4] You shall not surely die,

–in direct contradiction of God's declaration that they should surely die if they disregarded His commandment. To say that man cannot die, is to say that God spoke falsely, and that the devil told the truth. It is this grave error that has led to all others. Believing it, one is forced to accept either universalism or eternal torment. Believing the Word of God, one is not involved in any difficulty whatever.

An expression that occurs several times in the 37th *Psalm* will give us a starting point.

Psalm 37
[9] Evildoers shall be cut off;
[22] ...they that be cursed of Him shall be out off;
[38] ...the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

The question is,

"From what shall they be cut off?"

It is evident that they will be cut off from that with which they have been connected; and one needs only to use the faculties that God has given him, to know that all men, whether good or bad, exist solely because of their connection with the life of God, given them in Christ.

Acts 17
[28] For in Him we live, and move, and have our being;...for we are also His offspring.

No one can keep himself alive for a single minute. If God thought only of himself,

Job 34
[14] ...if He gather unto himself His Spirit and His breath;
[15] All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

In the beginning,

Genesis 2
[7] 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.

Job 33
[4] The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life.

The Spirit of God in our nostrils[454] is what alone keeps us from returning to the condition of non-existence; that is, to the condition that was when we were not. Recall the statement in *Obadiah*, that those who know not God...

Obadiah
[16] ...shall be as though they had not been.

[454] *Job* 27:3.

Jesus Christ is the living bread that came down from heaven, to give life to the world.[455] He is…

John 14
[6] …the way, the truth, and the life.

There is no life in the universe except the life of God in Christ. God is our dwelling place, as He has been in all generations.[456]

Job 12
[10] In His hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

God is; that is His name, His distinctive title; He is the only one of whom it can be absolutely said that *He is;* all others have existence only by being in Him. Although God gave man dominion over the earth, he had that dominion only as he acknowledged his absolute dependence on God. Assuming himself able to live and reign alone, he fell, and lost the dominion.

Ephesians 4
[6] [God is] above all, and through all, and in all;

–but in the fall, man cast off his allegiance to God, asserting his right and power to live independently. This is what constituted the fall.

If God had at once taken man at his word, and had allowed him to go his own way from the beginning of the rebellion on earth, man would at once have ceased to be.

God Is Longsuffering

But God…

2 Peter 3
[9] …is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

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[455] *John* 6:51.
[456] *Psalm* 90:1.

He is literally *long-suffering:* He is love, and love suffers long, and is kind. God bears the earth, and all its inhabitants, with all their sins and sicknesses. Thus He actually suffers in the sins and sorrows of mankind.[457] The cross on Calvary is a demonstration of this; it shows what God has suffered ever since sin entered into the world.

Although men believe not, yet God abides faithful;

2 Timothy 2
[13] He cannot deny himself.

So although men have cast off allegiance to Him, denying that they live by Him, or owe Him anything; some even denying that there is a God; He patiently waits and supplies them with His own life, in order that they may repent of their rebellion, and return to their allegiance to Him. He forces none to come into subjection to Him, but gently and quietly draws all by the power of His love.

The Extinction of the Wicked

But there comes a time at last when it is useless to wait longer. Christ comes the second time to earth, not as before in humiliation, but in power and great glory.

Revelation 1
[7] Every eye shall see Him,

–and nobody will need any proof that He is Lord of all. Every knee will bow to Him, and every tongue will confess that God is, and that Jesus Christ is Lord.[458] But even then the wicked will continue to do wickedly. Still they will say,

Luke 19
[14] We will not have this man to reign over us.

They acknowledge that God is just; but they hate justice. They still desire to have nothing to do with Him, and insist that they

[457] *Isaiah* 43:24; 53:4-5.
[458] *Romans* 14:2; *Philippians* 2:10-11.

are competent to manage their own affairs. So presumptuous are they,—so blinded by the Deceiver,—that they will undertake even to cast God down from His throne, and to seize upon His place.[459] Then at last God will take them at their own word, and will allow them to try their idea of existing wholly separate from Him. There can be but one result, namely, extinction; for in the first place it is impossible for any creature to live a moment without God's sustaining power, and in the second place, there is no place where men can go away from God. God fills all space, so that the wicked must go into nothingness, where there is no place, in order to set up their independent kingdom. Literally, their place shall not be.

Now it must be apparent to all that there is no injustice in this, and that it is also perfectly consistent with everlasting love; because it is only giving to men what they have worked for, and what they have persisted in having. It certainly would be no kindness to rebellious haters of God, to compel them to live with Him. If there were a place in the universe where God is not, the wicked, who hate His presence, might be sent there to live if they could; but there is no such place, and they can have their hearts' desire only by going out of existence. God's mercy endures for ever, even in the complete destruction of the wicked.

Thus it appears that the extinction of the incorrigibly wicked is a necessary part of the atonement. For the atonement contemplates the extermination, the blotting out of sin; and when sin is completely blotted from God's universe, those who have so fully identified themselves with sin that they are nothing but sin, must be blotted out with it.

Nor does this fact that there will be incorrigibly wicked men at the last, indicate the least defect in the atonement; it does not show any weakness on God's part. On the contrary, it shows how firmly God has maintained His original purpose of having an earth filled with righteousness, and ruled over by absolutely free

[459] *Psalm* 2:1-6; *Revelation* 20:7-9.

men. Man has his choice, either to reign with God in life, or to ally himself with Satan in death; and in the Judgment every lost sinner will acknowledge that God is clear of his blood, since He has made ample provision for the salvation of all. The wicked will fall by their own counsel; they will be self-condemned and self-destroyed.

Isaiah 1 [RV]
[31] The strong shall be as tow, and his work as a spark; and they shall both burn together;

Proverbs 1
[32] For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.

And then when sin and sinners shall have been blotted from God's creation, from every part of it only one song will be heard, of…

Revelation 5
[13] Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

15. Forever and Ever (1903)

Present Truth, August 20, 1903
Original title: For Ever and Ever

> I believe that the wages of sin is death, but certain texts of Scripture have confused me for a long time; and I should be thankful if you would take the trouble to enlighten me. They are *Revelation* 14:11; *Revelation* 20:10; *Revelation* 19:3; and *Isaiah* 34:10.

THE Scriptures themselves contain the enlightenment that you desire, and it is a pleasure and not a trouble to me to bring it to you. First, however, we must have the words of the texts themselves before us. Here they are in the order given above:

Revelation 14
[11] And the smoke of their torment ascends 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 20
[10] 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 with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.

The next one refers to the great harlot, Babylon, saying,

Revelation 19
[3] And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

The fourth is concerning…

Isaiah 34
[6] …a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.
[8] [In] the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion,
[9] [When] the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

[10] It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall be waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

You cannot fail to notice that all of these texts have reference to the same event—the punishment of the wicked; and before paying any attention to the use of the term "for ever," or "for ever and ever" the proper thing to do is to have clearly in mind some of the explicit Scripture statements as to the fate of the wicked. Here are a few:

Psalm 37
[20] 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.

Malachi 4
[1] The day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.
[3] And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, says the Lord of hosts.

Matthew 3
[11] He that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire;
[12] Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into His garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Obadiah
[16] And they shall be as though they had not been.

Psalm 37
[9] For evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.
[10] For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Many more of the same nature might be added, but these are sufficient, especially since you already believe that the end of the wicked is death. The question then resolves itself into this:

> "Since the wicked are to be cut off, and be as though they had not been, how can it be said that they shall be tormented for ever and ever, and that the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever?"

Of one thing we are sure, and that is that the Bible does not contradict itself. Every word is sure. This being fixed, goes a long way toward settling the question. Then we are shut up to the conclusion that "for ever and ever" must sometimes mean less than endless; and this we shall find to be the case.

In the 21st chapter of *Exodus* we find certain regulations for the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, and the first is concerning servants. The rule was that a Hebrew servant should serve six years, and in the seventh year he should go out free, for nothing. But if the servant had been given a wife by his master, he could not take her with him when he received his freedom, but must go out by himself. If, however, the servant should say,

> **Exodus 21**
> [5] I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,

–then the rule was this:

> [6] His master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.

Here we have the same term applied to the time of service by a servant. Under certain conditions the servant was to serve his master for ever; yet we know that he could not serve him longer than the term of his natural life. Nobody who began to serve in the days of Moses is still in service. So we see that while "for ever" may, and commonly does, mean without end, it often is lim-

ited, meaning only as long as the person or thing spoken of could naturally exist.

We have but to note the context of *Isaiah* 34:10, to see that this is the case in the judgment upon the wicked. Read the first portion of the chapter, and you will see that the judgment spoken of is upon the whole earth. Idumea is used to represent the earth. It is the judgment of the last day. Now we have to read no further than the next chapter, to find that there will come a time when the land will be inhabited again:

Isaiah 36
[1] The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.
[2] It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.
[6] Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.
[7] And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.

We also read of the new earth, when God says,

Revelation 21
[5] Behold, I make all things new.
[1] 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.
[2] And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
[3] 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.

[4] 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.

The wicked are to be cast into…

Matthew 3
[12] …unquenchable fire,

–into fire…

Mark 9
[43] …that never shall be quenched.

Now what's the natural, inevitable result to any person or thing when cast into the fire, if left there, and the fire is not put out? You have no hesitation in saying,

"To be burned up—utterly consumed."

That is just what the Bible says of the wicked. The fire into which they will be cast will not be quenched, and since they are but chaff and stubble, they "burn up," and are as though they had not been. Then when there is nothing more for the devouring flames to feed on, they will go out of themselves. This often happens in the case of houses that take fire, and the flames cannot be quenched by the firemen. When the firemen see that they cannot save the building, they turn their attention to saving surrounding buildings, knowing full well that the fire will go out when the house is consumed. So though the destruction of the wicked will undoubtedly cover a long period, the time will at last certainly come when the last sinner, and finally even the devil himself, will be consumed, and then the fire will give place to the reviving, healing beams of…

Malachi 4
[2] …the Sun of righteousness.

16. The Great Deception

Present Truth, September 24, 1903

THE harvest of this earth will be fully ripe when Christ comes to thrust in His sickle and reap.[460] Affairs will have reached a crisis that will demand His intervention. The crisis is not apparent now, but an element is at work which will produce it before long.

A superhuman agency is seeking to influence men, and when that shall gain possession of human minds, they will soon be involved in Satan's warfare against God. The prophet saw...

> **Revelation 16**
> [14] ...the spirits of devils, working miracles, go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

We read of that same time that Satan will work...

> **2 Thessalonians 2**
> [9] ...with all power and signs and lying wonders,
> [10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.

These need not have been victimized by the delusion; for the love of the truth would have saved them, but they took pleasure in unrighteousness.[461]

How will Satan get such sway over the minds of men? We do not have far to look for an answer. Men and women are even now eagerly abandoning their minds to the control of spirits in the hope of receiving communications from the dead.

The unscriptural belief that the spirits of the dead have a separate existence, and can talk with living men, has blossomed into modern Spiritualism, and will yet bear deadly fruit. Rejecting the light thrown by God's Word on man's condition in death, careful investigators have studied the phenomena of Spiritualism and

[460] *Revelation* 14:14-16.
[461] *2 Thessalonians* 2:10-12.

have concluded that it is possible to hold communion with departed spirits, and receive from them information on matters beyond burden. As one writer says,

> "Such a discovery opens the door to revelation."

In this lies the peril. Satan has conducted a skillful attack on the Scriptures, and has succeeded very largely in discrediting them, not only in the world but in the church. Now he comes forward with another revelation, and this men are receiving. Under the belief that they are conversing with the spirits of good men, who are now in heaven and able to speak with authority, the inquirers place implicit confidence in that which is told them by the spirits.

In the last issue of a monthly magazine, its editor gives an account of communications he has received from the spirits. These have convinced him that it is possible to converse with the departed. We do not give the name of the paper or the editor, because we do not take up the matter as a personal one at all, but simply to show the progress that is being made in this work of deception. We give only a few extracts from the article.

> I have been permitted to hold prolonged conversation with human souls who are now discarnate, and to receive from them each communications, such evidences of their personal identity, each utterances concerning mundane and spiritual facts, as prove conclusively to me the reality of their post-mortem existence and the retention of their individual mentality. . . .
>
> During several long interviews (one of which lasted for more than an hour, and took place in the presence of a reliable eye-witness) I presented to this friend many searching questions. They could only have been answered in the manner in which he answered them, by one who not only knew all about his earthly life, his work, and his ideals, but who also possessed his own distinctly defined personality and manner of speech, and his unique comprehensive understanding of spiritual law and the highest forms of esoteric truth. Yet I did not ask to receive an immediate and perfectly relevant, masterly and satisfactory response to every one of them.

Many of these responses revealed the most profound knowledge concerning transcendental phenomena, and spiritual illumination of a high degree.

The medium through whom he spoke (a woman aged seventy-four) was altogether ignorant concerning him; she possessed no knowledge of the subjects about which we conversed, or of my own identity.

But she is so constituted as to be able to surrender her physical organism and her consciousness so completely, while in a state of trance, that she can be used with great facility as a medium for spiritual communication.

He said to me at the time: I can control the body of this medium with almost as much ease as I could my own when I was in the flesh.

Other spirits came to him, one of them professing to be his mother, and another claimed to be the spirit of one who had been burned at the stake as a martyr in this life.

They told me many things that I wanted to know, and said much that was calculated to help and encourage me in my life work. They also gave me certain valuable advice, which revealed intimate knowledge concerning my personal ideals.

And they promised me their aid in the future, and assured me that I and my co-workers were being used as instruments for the accomplishment of the divine purpose.

The writer of this article is a gentleman who is highly respected by a large circle of friends as an earnest worker for humanity. He states that he has long been studying the subject of communion with spirits, and now rejoices in the clear evidence he has received. He feels that it opens up vast possibilities before the human race.

Set side by side with such an experience as this the Scriptures that speak of the dead.

Ecclesiastes 9

[5] The dead know not anything.

[6] Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished.

Psalm 146
[4] His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

The word *breath* in this passage is the same word in the original that is translated "spirit" about 240 times.

Ecclesiastes 12
[7] Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit [breath] shall return unto God who gave it.

The time when God gave the spirit, or breath, was at man's creation, of which we read,

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.

At the resurrection God will breathe again into the dead and they will live.[462] But for this resurrection, death would be an unbroken sleep, and even those who have fallen asleep in Christ would have perished.[463]

It is quite clear then that when communications are received, purporting to come from the spirits of the dead, they come from lying spirits, impersonating the dead for some evil purpose. These evil spirits have always sought to gain control of men. The results have been terrible when they have succeeded, and if we would know what Spiritualism finally results in, we have only to read the Gospels. There we see what it means to be possessed by a demon. The history of modern Spiritualism bears witness that the results are still the same.

At present Satan is working as much as possible under the semblance of an angel of light, and by doing this, he is enlisting the cooperation of many who have high motives. The writer whom we have quoted was assured by the spirits that his work was re-

[462] See *Psalm* 104:29-30; *Ezekiel* 37:9-10.
[463] *1 Corinthians* 15:16-18.

garded with approval in the place from which they come. The more he can persuade men of influence to resort to the spirits, the better pleased will be the great deceiver, and the more quickly will come the time when he can carry out his schemes. The Scriptures are the only safeguard against the deception. Scientific minds that have rejected the Word of God cannot escape the delusion when it appeals to their own senses, but the Christian will be instructed as to the character of these manifestations. He expects that there will…

Matthew 24
[24] …arise false Christs and false prophets, that will show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.

The Word of God gives decided instruction to those who will hear:

Isaiah 8
[19] And 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?
[20] To THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

