



# What Happens When We Die?

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# Introduction

Signs of the Times, November 11, 1886

**I**N THE thoughts of man there are a great many questions which arise concerning himself. Some of these are highly important. So important indeed are they that the Word of God itself has recorded them.

Nor is that all. This Word has not only recorded the questions, but it has also recorded the answers to the questions. And when the Word of God asks a question and answers it, then in the answer we have the absolute truth on that question, and there is an end of all dispute. There is left no room for controversy; for:

## **Isaiah 48**

<sup>17</sup> Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord your God which teaches you to profit, which leads you by the way that you should go.

Therefore, whatever the Lord teaches is profitable teaching. Whether we believe it, or whether we like it or not, makes no difference so far as the teaching is concerned. The teaching is profitable, and everything that conflicts with it is unprofitable.

The way the Lord leads is the way that we should go, and to follow any other leading is to go in the way that we should not.

# 1. Is Man Mortal or Immortal?

Signs of the Times, November 11, 1886

IN THE 8<sup>th</sup> *Psalm* and the fourth verse is this question,

## **Psalm 8**

<sup>4</sup> What is man, that You are mindful of him?

Of course there are more ways than one in which this question can be referred to man, but the thing about man upon which we wish now to bring it to bear is that of immortality. “What is man?” Is he mortal or immortal? We have not far to go for an answer.

## **Job 4**

<sup>17</sup> Shall *mortal man* be more just than God?

## **2 Chronicles 14** [margin]

<sup>11</sup> O Lord, You are our God: let not *mortal man* prevail against You.

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

Says this word in 1 Timothy:

## **1 Timothy 1**

<sup>17</sup> Now unto the King eternal, *immortal*, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Here it is shown that immortality is an attribute of God, equally with eternity, wisdom, honor, glory, etc. None of these belong to man as he is.

Again, speaking of the appearing of Jesus Christ, the word says,

## **1 Timothy 6**

<sup>15</sup> In His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, the Lord of lords;

<sup>16</sup> *Who only has immortality*, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see.

Christ has brought this immortality to light. Says the word, the purpose and grace of God...

## 2 Timothy 1

<sup>10</sup> ...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*.

What the gospel is, in a few words, is shown by *1 Corinthians* 15:1-4:

### 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>1</sup> I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you...

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

<sup>4</sup> And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

Thus, then, in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is summed up the gospel; and “through the gospel” it is said Christ...

## 2 Timothy 1

<sup>10</sup> ...brought life and immortality to light.

Certainly it was not by dying nor being buried that either life or immortality was brought to light, for both these things were familiar to all men; but to rise again from the dead, and bring with Him a multitude of the dead, who also appeared unto many,<sup>1</sup> that was to bring to light something that had never been seen before; that was to bring life and immortality to light indeed. Therefore it is through the resurrection that Christ has brought immortality to light.

Again, the Scripture says that God will render eternal life...

### Romans 2

<sup>7</sup> To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor *and immortality*.

Now as immortality is to be sought for, and as God is the only one who has it, and as Christ is the only one who has brought it to light, it follows that immortality must be sought of God, *through Christ*. Even so says the Scripture,

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<sup>1</sup> *Matthew* 27:52-53.

## Romans 6

<sup>23</sup> The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## 1 John 5

<sup>11</sup> This is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

<sup>12</sup> He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

Having then sought and found that immortality in Christ, when is it bestowed upon us as our own?

## 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all be changed*,

<sup>52</sup> 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.

<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this *mortal* must *put on* immortality.

<sup>54</sup> 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.

<sup>57</sup> But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus the story which the word of God tells about immortality is this:

- Man, being mortal, has it not;
- God has it;
- Christ has brought it to light through the Gospel;
- Man is to seek for it of God, through Christ, and will obtain it at the resurrection of the dead; for *then* it is that this *mortal* puts on *immortality*; then it is that death is swallowed up in victory.
- This comes “at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible,” and the living shall be changed.

But when is it that the last trump sounds? It is when the Lord Jesus comes in His glory.

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>16</sup> 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;

<sup>17</sup> 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.

Immortality is obtained of God, though Christ, at the resurrection of the dead. It is the sound of the last trump that awakes the dead. That trump is sounded at the coming of the Lord. Therefore without the second coming of the Lord Jesus we shall never receive immortality. For this reason we long for His glorious appearing. We watch, we wait for Him,

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>21</sup> Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body,

### **1 John 3**

<sup>2</sup> [For] we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

*“Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”*

*Revelation 22:20*

## 2. Where Do Men Go When They Die?

Signs of the Times, November 18, 1886

**A**NOTHER important question concerning man, one which has, no doubt, been asked by every person that ever lived long enough to think at all upon the subject, is,

“When a man dies, where does he go? what is his condition? etc., etc.”

This question the Bible asks:

### **Job 14**

<sup>10</sup> Man dies, and wastes away; yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?

There have been many answers given to this question; and there are yet many, even in this land where Bibles are scattered everywhere.

- Some say that if he die wicked, he is in hell; if he die righteous, he is in Heaven.
- Others say that he is in neither hell nor Heaven, but in purgatory;
- And yet others, that he is in none of these, but has passed to the “spheres,” and still associates and communicates with those who still live.

All these answers cannot be the right ones; and, as a matter of fact, not one of them is the right one. The Bible alone is that which gives the right answer to this, its own question. And as it is alone the Bible answers to Bible questions that we are now studying, that alone shall be what we shall seek on this question of where is man when he has died.

### **Job 14**

<sup>10</sup> Man dies, and wastes away; yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?

Answer:

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>3</sup> The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that *they go to the dead*.

To good king Josiah, God said:

### **2 Kings 22**

<sup>20</sup> You shall be gathered into your grave in peace.

Of the wicked He also says,

### **Job 21**

<sup>32</sup> Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.

Jacob said,

### **Genesis 37**

<sup>35</sup> I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning.

We shall not multiply texts on this point, but simply show that this is confirmed by the word of Christ. When He comes to give reward to His people, and when He calls for them, they, all that are dead, are found in the grave:

### **John 5**

<sup>28</sup> The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,

<sup>29</sup> 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.

Therefore the Bible answer to this question is plainly that he is in the grave. But what is his condition there? Let us read a verse from *Job* again:

### **Job 14**

<sup>10</sup> Man gives up the ghost, and where is he?

<sup>11</sup> As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up;

<sup>12</sup> So man lies down, and rises not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not *awake*, nor be raised out of their *sleep*.

This shows that man, when he dies, is asleep. Again, Job says that if he had died when he was an infant,

### **Job 3**

<sup>13</sup> Now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have *slept*; then had I been at rest,

<sup>14</sup> With kings and counselors of the earth...

<sup>17</sup> There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

<sup>18</sup> There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

<sup>19</sup> The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

In the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, *twenty-five* times is the record made of their deaths,

“He *slept* with his fathers.”

Not to multiply texts we turn at once, again, to the word of Christ. Lazarus was sick. Jesus and His disciples were some distance away, and Lazarus died. Jesus said,

### **John 11**

<sup>11</sup> Our friend Lazarus *sleeps*; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

<sup>12</sup> Then said the disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

<sup>13</sup> However *Jesus spoke of his death*; but they thought that He had spoken of taking rest in sleep.

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus said unto them plainly, *Lazarus is dead*.

Here are the words of Christ: “Lazarus sleeps;” “Lazarus is dead.” Therefore the plain word of Christ is that when a man is dead he is asleep.

Paul says that,

### **Acts 13**

<sup>36</sup> David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on *sleep*, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

And Peter says of him,

### **Acts 2**

<sup>34</sup> David is not ascended into the heavens.

And the reason is, that...

### **1 Kings 2**

<sup>10</sup> David *slept* with his fathers and was *buried*.

Of Stephen it is recorded,

### **Acts 7**

<sup>60</sup> 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*.

It is certain, therefore, that the Bible plainly teaches that when man dies he falls asleep. The Word of God plainly teaches the sleep of the dead.

And it is wholly an unconscious sleep, as, in the very nature of the case, it must be when the place of sleep is in the grave. But here is the proof:

### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.

<sup>10</sup> 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*.

### **Psalms 146**

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

<sup>4</sup> His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

When men's love, and hatred, and envy, and their very *thoughts*, have perished, and their memory is gone, there can be nothing else but unconsciousness. And that is precisely what death is, and that is the condition into which men go when they die—a long, silent, dreamless sleep.

But the Bible story on this subject does not stop here. For,

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>20</sup> Now is Christ *risen from the dead*, and become the first-fruits of them that *slept*.

### **Matthew 27**

<sup>52</sup> And many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

<sup>53</sup> And came out of the graves after His resurrection.

And as God...

### **Hebrews 13**

<sup>20</sup> ...brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus...

—so also...

### **1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>14</sup> ...them which *sleep* in Jesus will God bring with Him.

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> 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;

<sup>17</sup> Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> We shall not all *sleep*, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

Then it is that,

### **Daniel 12**

<sup>2</sup> Many of them that *sleep* in the dust of the earth shall *awake*.

Then is the time to which David looked when he fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers:

### **Psalms 17**

<sup>15</sup> As for me, I will behold your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I *awake*, with your likeness.

This is the time to which Job looked when he said,

## **Job 14**

<sup>12</sup> So man lies down, and rises not: *till the heavens be no more*, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

For it is at the coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead that the heavens roll away.

## **Revelation 6**

<sup>14</sup> The heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places,

<sup>16</sup> [and men cried] to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

<sup>17</sup> For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

The Bible answer to the Bible question,

“When man gives up the ghost, where is he?”

–is this, therefore: He is asleep in the grave until the trump of God awakes the dead, and the voice of the glorious Son of God calls, and all that are in the graves hear His voice. For it is God who gives victory over death, through our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

Reader, this is profitable teaching, for it is the teaching of the word of God, and:

## **Isaiah 48**

<sup>17</sup> Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord your God which teaches you to profit, which leads you by the way that you should go.

This is the way that the Lord Jesus leads us.

*Will you follow?*

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:57.

### 3. Do the Dead Praise the Lord?

Signs of the Times, November 25, 1886

ANOTHER question is,

“Do the dead praise the Lord?”

Nowadays it is held, as a matter of course, that if a person be righteous, or even professedly so, when he dies, it follows, as a matter of course, that he has gone to Heaven, and has joined the angelic hosts in their holy songs of praise to the Creator of all. But in the Scriptures this question is asked, in connection with certain others, in a manner and in a tone which of themselves admit only of “no” for an answer.

Says the Psalmist,

#### **Psalm 88**

<sup>10</sup> Will You show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You?

<sup>11</sup> Shall your loving-kindness be declared in the grave? or your faithfulness in destruction?

<sup>12</sup> Shall your wonders be known in the dark? and your righteousness in *the land of forgetfulness*?

Here the grave, the place of the dead, is called “the land of forgetfulness.” This is strictly in accord with that which we read under our last question, that...

#### **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>5</sup> ...the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them *is forgotten*.

They are in the land of “forgetfulness.”

<sup>6</sup> Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished;

—and,

#### **Psalm 146**

<sup>4</sup> ...in that very day his thoughts perish;

—and,

## **Ecclesiastes 9**

<sup>10</sup> There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go.

In this respect, therefore, no single expression could better describe the place of the dead than does this one,

“The land of forgetfulness.”

The Psalmist also speaks of it as “the dark.” On this Job says:

## **Job 10**

<sup>21</sup> I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;

<sup>22</sup> A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

Those that have been long dead, David says,

## **Psalms 143**

<sup>3</sup> ...dwell in darkness.

Now it is of those who dwell in this place, the place of the dead, that the question is asked,

“Do they praise the Lord?”

And here is the direct answer:

## **Psalms 115**

<sup>17</sup> *The dead praise not the Lord*, neither any that go down into silence.

And again,

## **Psalms 6**

<sup>5</sup> In death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who shall give You thanks?

These words are the words of God. They are the truth. Therefore the idea that people go to Heaven, or anywhere else but this place of the dead, when they die, cannot be the truth. The Lord who speaks to us in the Bible made man. He knows what was before us. He knows what will be after us. He knows our thoughts afar off. He it is who says:

- “The dead know not anything.”
- “The dead praise not the Lord.”
- The place of the dead is “the land of forgetfulness.”

We implicitly believe this word, for He alone knows. He teaches us to profit, and though we may have to pass through this land of darkness, this...

### **Psalms 23**

<sup>4</sup> ...valley of the shadow of death,

—if our trust is in Him,

<sup>4</sup> ...His rod and His staff will comfort us,

—for He has gone this way before us. He died and lives again. If our hope is in Him, even though we may have to go to the place of the dead, yet we shall come again from it and live by Him.

King Hezekiah was one of the few good kings that Judah ever had. He fell “sick unto death.” The Lord, by the prophet, sent this message to him:

### **Isaiah 38**

<sup>1</sup> Set your house in order; for you shall die, and not live.

Yet, although this word of the Lord says positively, “You shall die, and *not* live,” now it is believed by the great majority of people that when a man dies he *does* live, and that he lives more fully, more really, than ever before. It is now held that when a person dies he knows vastly more than he ever knew before, or than he ever could have known if he had not died; but from what we have set forth in these articles, there can be nothing more certain than that such is not the teaching of the Bible.

In this theory of the consciousness of the dead is the promise and potency, the whole sum and substance, of Spiritualism, purgatory, prayers for the dead, worship and invocation of saints, etc. But bring Spiritualism, with all these other things, to the test of these scriptures, and where will it appear? It will appear just where it rightly belongs, that is, in the train of...

## Revelation 12

<sup>9</sup> ...that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan,

—who said to innocent Eve,

## Genesis 3

<sup>4</sup> You shall not surely die.

People now think it very strange that Eve should have believed the word of Satan. Yet with the example of Eve before them, and its fearful fruits of these thousands of years, and the word of God with its line upon line and precept upon precept<sup>3</sup>—with all this before them, multitudes of these same people, instead of believing the word of God, will yet believe the same story that Satan told Eve.

When the prophet went to King Hezekiah with the message that he should die and not live, Hezekiah was greatly grieved, and turned his face to the wall and prayed, and said,

## Isaiah 38

<sup>10</sup> I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years.

<sup>11</sup> I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living.

This, with much more, he said in his prayer, and the Lord sent Isaiah again to the king, saying,

## Isaiah 38

<sup>5</sup> I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add unto your days fifteen years.

Then Hezekiah praised the Lord and said:

<sup>17</sup> You have in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption...

<sup>18</sup> For the grave *cannot praise You*, death cannot celebrate You; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth.

<sup>19</sup> *The living, the living, he shall praise You*, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known your truth.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Isaiah* 28:13.

<sup>4</sup> See *Isaiah* 38 throughout.

Take this plain, express statement of the word of God:

**Isaiah 38**

<sup>18</sup> ...they that go down into the pit cannot hope for your truth,

—and by it test the New Theology,—probation after death—which is just now being discussed throughout the land, and the utter worthlessness of the New Theology will be seen at a glance. When a man dies, his opportunity to learn the truth is gone. He is dead. He is gone to the “land of forgetfulness,” to the grave, and they that go there cannot hope for the truth of God. If they have not learned it, and loved it, before they go there, they will never learn it at all.

**2 Corinthians 6**

<sup>2</sup> Now is the accepted time...*now* is the day of salvation.

**Hebrews 3**

<sup>15</sup> *Today* if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

The living, the living it is, not the dead, who praise the Lord.

Therefore, the Bible answer to this Bible question is:

*“The dead praise not the Lord,  
neither any that go down into silence.”*

*Psalm 115:17*

## 4. If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?

Signs of the Times, December 2, 1886

ANOTHER important question is,

“If a man die, shall he live again?”

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

“Shall he live *again*?”

But, as we have abundantly shown, the Bible considers this subject from the standpoint of the fact that man *does* die; that when he is dead he is wholly unconscious, and that all prospect of future existence depends upon an affirmative answer, from the word of God, to the question as to whether he shall live again. In *Job* 14:14 is written the question to which we have here referred:

### **Job 14**

<sup>4</sup> If a man die, shall he live again?

And in *Isaiah* 26:19 we have the direct answer to the question:

### **Isaiah 26**

<sup>19</sup> Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in the dust; for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

The only hope of future life which the word of God presents is in the resurrection of the dead. This is the hope of the righteous; it is the Christian’s hope. Paul, in discussing this subject of the resurrection of the dead, proves first that Christ is risen, and then says:

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>12</sup> Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

<sup>13</sup> But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen;

<sup>14</sup> And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

It is evident that there were some at Corinth, even as there are some now, who professed to believe in Christ, and at the same time believed *not* in the resurrection of the dead. But Paul settles that at once by saying,

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead,...

<sup>14</sup> ...your faith in Christ is vain.

This proves plainly that our hope and faith in Christ meet their fruition only at and by the resurrection of the dead.

This is so important that the Spirit of God, by the apostle, repeats it. Again he says:

<sup>16</sup> If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised;

<sup>17</sup> And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; you are yet in your sins.

Here it is declared that to deny the resurrection of the dead is to deny the resurrection of Christ, is to leave the professed believer yet in his sins, and so is to subvert the gospel and the salvation of Christ. This is followed by another most important conclusion, and that is,

<sup>16</sup> If the dead rise not...

<sup>18</sup> Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ *are perished*.

It would be impossible to more forcibly show that all hope of future life depends upon the resurrection of the dead. If there be no resurrection of the dead, then the dead are perished. And this is stated, not of the wicked dead, but of the righteous dead,

<sup>18</sup> They also which are fallen asleep *in Christ*,

—even these have perished if there be no resurrection of the dead. In verse 32, this is repeated in another form:

## 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>32</sup> If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantages it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

Such argument as that is very seldom heard in these our days. Now the argument is,

“What advantage is it for us to practice the life of Christian self-denial if the soul be not immortal? What advantage is it for us to do these things if we do not go to heaven when we die?”

And so it is even sung:

Oh, you must be a lover of the Lord,  
Or you can't go to heaven when you die!<sup>5</sup>

The truth is that, even though you *be* a lover of the Lord, you can't go to heaven *when you die*; but you *can* go *at the resurrection* of the dead. And that is at the coming of the Lord. For so it is written:

## 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>22</sup> As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

<sup>23</sup> But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; *afterward* they that are Christ's *at His coming*.

## 1 Thessalonians 4

<sup>16</sup> 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;

<sup>17</sup> 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.

“So” means “in this manner.” In this manner it is that we go to heaven. In this manner we meet the Lord.

The hope of life by Christ, at the resurrection of the dead, is the hope in which Paul lived, the hope in which he exercised himself,

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Wesley, Hymn: *Jesus, Thou All Redeeming Lord*, from the book *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1749.

the hope which he preached. When he stood before the council, he said:

### **Acts 23**

<sup>6</sup> I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

And afterward, when he answered his accusers before Felix, he said:

### **Acts 24**

<sup>15</sup> [I] have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

<sup>20</sup> ...let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

<sup>21</sup> Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

Again, when he stood before Agrippa, he said:

### **Acts 26**

<sup>6</sup> And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers;

<sup>7</sup> Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

<sup>8</sup> Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

Now put these things together:

- (a) He stood and was judged for the hope of the promise made of God.
- (b) This was the promise made unto the fathers.
- (c) Unto this promise the twelve tribes—all Israel—hope to come.
- (d) For this hope he was accused of the Jews.
- (e) But he was accused—called in question—of the Jews, “touching the resurrection of the dead.”

- (f) Therefore the hope of the promise of God, made unto the fathers, *is the hope of the promise of the resurrection of the dead.*
- (g) This is made emphatic by his question to Agrippa, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, *that God should raise the dead?*” When Paul was at Athens, “he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection.”<sup>6</sup>

Therefore it is plainly proved that the hope which God has set before us in Christ and His blessed gospel, is the hope of the resurrection from the dead unto everlasting life and eternal glory. And as this resurrection all depends upon the glorious appearing of our Saviour, therefore the second coming of our Saviour is inseparably connected with this, the Christian’s “blessed hope.” Thus says the Lord:

### **Titus 2**

<sup>11</sup> The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

<sup>12</sup> *Teaching us that*, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

<sup>13</sup> *Looking for that blessed hope*, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is that for which Job looked. He said,

### **Job 14**

<sup>14</sup> All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

This change is at the resurrection, for says Paul,

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

<sup>52</sup> In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

Again says Job:

### **Job 17**

<sup>13</sup> If I wait, the grave is my house; I have made my bed in the darkness.

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<sup>6</sup> Acts 17:18.

<sup>15</sup> And where is now my hope?

Here it is:

**Job 19** [margin]

<sup>25</sup> I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth;

<sup>26</sup> And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God,

<sup>27</sup> Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not a stranger. My reins within me are consumed with earnest desire for that day.

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

**Revelation 22**

<sup>20</sup> Surely I come quickly,

—our hearts reply:

<sup>20</sup> ...*Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

## 5. How Are the Dead Raised Up?

Signs of the Times, December 23, 1886

OUR last question under this heading was,

### **Job 14**

<sup>14</sup> If a man die, shall he live again?

And we presented the direct Bible answer by Isaiah:

### **Isaiah 26**

<sup>19</sup> Your dead men shall live;

—and by the Lord Jesus,

### **John 5**

<sup>25</sup> The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

We presented abundant Scripture proof that it is at the second coming of the Lord that the dead hear His voice, that the trumpet of God sounds, and that the dead are raised. We presented proofs of Holy Writ that the hope of the gospel is the resurrection of the dead; that this is the hope of the promise made of God unto the fathers; that in this hope:

- they all lived;
- they died; and
- they still sleep in the dust, awaiting the glorious sound of the voice of the Son of God to call them from the dead to life and immortality.

We proved by Paul's repeated argument in *1 Corinthians* 15 and other places that in assurance of the resurrection of the dead alone, lies the assurance of a future life; and that if there be no resurrection of the dead there is no future life for either righteous or wicked.

In connection with this, there now comes in a question that has perplexed men for ages, and does yet perplex many; and although the Bible both asks and answers the question, there is yet much perplexity about it even among those who profess to believe the Bible. That question is:

## **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>35</sup> How are the dead raised up?

The answer is, in substance, The dead are raised up by...

## **Matthew 22**

<sup>29</sup> ...the power of God.

This is shown by the Saviour's words to the Sadducees. The Sadducees, who...

## **Mark 12**

<sup>18</sup> ...say that there is no resurrection,

—once came to Jesus and in favor of their unbelief presented what they deemed an insuperable objection to the idea of there being such a thing as a resurrection of the dead. They said:

## **Matthew 22**

<sup>24</sup> Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

<sup>25</sup> Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother;

<sup>26</sup> Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

<sup>27</sup> And last of all the woman died also.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered and said unto them, You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

All the difficulty that has ever arisen in men's minds upon this question,

“How are the dead raised up?”

—has been from these causes. At the foundation of all the difficulty lies the lack of knowledge of the Scriptures, and the accompanying, if not the consequent, lack of knowledge of the power of God. Without the Scriptures we can know nothing about the resurrection of the dead; and without the power of God there can be no resurrection of the dead; and so to leave out either consideration, is only to be at sea on the question before us—not only at

sea, but at sea with neither rudder nor compass nor pole-star. It was only giving expression to this same thought of the Saviour's when Paul, speaking of this hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers, appealed to Agrippa in these earnest and thrilling words:

### **Acts 26**

<sup>8</sup> Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

Sure enough! Why should it be thought a thing incredible with anyone that God should raise the dead? God made a man once from the dust of the ground; He states in his word that many have arisen from the dead, and He has given us the most abundant testimony that he raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead. And that He was seen of witnesses chosen before—witnesses, too, to the number of above five hundred at once. Most, if not all of these witnesses were acquainted with Him both before His death and after His resurrection. Some of them sat with Him, talked with Him, and handled Him, after they had seen Him dead and buried and risen again. And yet if men leave out the Scriptures and the power of God, to them it still remains incredible that God should raise the dead.

Even in this our duty, and among those who profess to firmly believe the Scriptures and the power of God, there are those to whom it is incredible that God should raise the dead. Nor is this confined to what are sometimes called the “ignorant multitudes.” It is found, and in fact is prevalent, among the “divines,” the “great scholars,” and the “leaders of thought.” But yet in all this, the difficulty lies in the fact shown by the Saviour that they...

### **Matthew 22**

<sup>29</sup> ...do err, not knowing the Scriptures.

For the one thing which logically and reasonably leads these eminent scholars, as well as others, to doubt the resurrection of the dead, is their fixed belief in the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Beside the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, there is nothing more destructive of belief in the resurrection of the

dead, and nothing more subversive of the Bible doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. In fact the two doctrines cannot possibly be consistently held in the same mind. Now for the proof.

The Scripture says:

**1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>36</sup> That which you sow is not quickened, except it die.

This is spoken in answer to the question that is the subject of this article, and is therefore spoken with direct reference to the subject of how the dead are raised up. To *quicken* is “to make alive.” What Paul says therefore is,

“That which you sow is not *made alive* except it die.”

That this is spoken directly of man and his resurrection, is plain by verses 42-44, “It is sown a natural body,” etc. Now the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is, that the body properly has no life, that it is not the real man; but that the soul is the real, living sentient man; that it is the soul about man which alone possesses real life. In other words, the body is only the house in which the real man lives; *i.e.*, the real “I” dwells within the “me;” and death is simply the separation of the soul from the body. Death breaks down the house, and lets the real occupant free.

According to this doctrine, there is no such thing as real death; because the body properly has no life, consequently it does not die; and the soul—the real man—is immortal and it cannot die; therefore there is in reality no such thing as death. If this be true, there is not only no such thing as death, but there is, likewise, no such thing as a resurrection of the dead. For, upon the apostle’s premise that...

**1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>36</sup> That which you sow is not quickened [made alive], *except it die*,

—it follows that, as the body, having no life, does not die, it cannot be quickened (raised from the dead); and as the soul does not die, it cannot be raised from the dead; consequently there is no such thing as a resurrection of the dead.

Therefore it stands proved to a demonstration that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is utterly subversive of the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. But the resurrection of the dead is a Bible doctrine; it is the very truth of God. And it is because of the wide-spread belief of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul that there is so much doubt and misunderstanding of the Scripture on the subject of the resurrection of the dead.

As we have already shown in these articles that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is contrary to the Scriptures throughout; and as it is now shown that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul leads to disbelief in the resurrection of the dead, the Saviour's words are distinctly applicable to all who now doubt the resurrection.

### **Matthew 22**

<sup>29</sup> You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

To all with whom there is any difficulty in understand the question,

“How are the dead raised up?”

—we say, Get an understanding of the Scriptures as to the nature of man, and his condition in death, and all connected subjects, then allow the power of God a place, and all your doubts will be removed, and the subject will be all plain and easily understood.

For a view of the actual process of bringing the dead from the graves to real living existence again, *Ezekiel 37:1-14* may be read with profit. Read it carefully, and as you read, do so in view of the “power of God”:

### **Ezekiel 37**

<sup>1</sup> The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,

<sup>2</sup> And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.

<sup>3</sup> And He said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord God, You know.

<sup>4</sup> Again He said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

<sup>5</sup> Thus says the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live:

<sup>6</sup> And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord.

<sup>7</sup> So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

<sup>8</sup> And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.

<sup>9</sup> Then He said unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus says the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

<sup>10</sup> So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

<sup>11</sup> Then He said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus says the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

<sup>13</sup> And 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,

<sup>14</sup> And shall put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, says the Lord.

## 6. With What Body Do They Come?

Signs of the Times, December 30, 1886

**I**N THE last chapter the Bible question which we noticed was, “How are the dead raised up?” To that question we gave the Bible answer. In immediate connection with that question is this one,

“With what body do they come?”

The whole verse reads:

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>35</sup> But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?

This is an important question or the Bible would not ask it. It is one which we have a right to study or it would not be presented thus in the Bible. And the Bible having asked the question, we believe that the Bible answers it, because God does not trifle with men. The Bible is His revelation to man, and in it God has laid before us that which it is important and for our good to know.

We have yet found no question asked in the Bible which is not answered by the Bible, unless it be of those questions which carry the answers in themselves. This question is not an exception. The Bible answers the question as to with what body the dead come when they are raised up. And, like all the other questions which we have examined, the Bible is the only place where the correct answer to this question can be found. And what the Bible says on the subject must settle the matter at once, for that is the truth, and nothing contrary to it can be.

Remember that the subject of the whole chapter in which this question is found is the resurrection of the dead. In verse 20, we read,

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>20</sup> Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

The first-fruits was the sample, and of the best of the great harvest that was to follow. There is to be a harvest of the earth. Of those who shall be gathered from the earth into the everlasting garner of God, Christ is the same. His glorious resurrection body is the sample, the pattern of all that shall be received by Him from the earth. For says the Scripture,

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>21</sup> [He] shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.

### **1 John 3**

<sup>2</sup> [And] we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

But Christ says,

### **Revelation 1**

<sup>18</sup> I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell, the grave, and of death.

And that same body that died on the cross; that same body that was pierced with the Roman spear; and that was laid in Joseph's new tomb; that same body came forth from the tomb and lived again. That same body that died came forth from the dead. And so really was it so that He could say to them who had been with Him before His death,

### **Luke 24**

<sup>39</sup> Handle me and see that it is I myself.

### **John 20**

<sup>27</sup> Reach here your finger and behold my hands; and reach here your hand and thrust it into my side.

And when He came forth from the dead, the napkins which had enwrapped His sacred head, and the linen clothes that had been about His holy form, were laid in places by themselves, while every vestige of the body was gone from the sepulcher. Thus the Saviour rose from the dead with the same body that died. He,

says the Scripture, is “the first-fruits,”<sup>7</sup> the sample, of those who shall come from the dead. Therefore, the dead come from the dead with the body that died, only that in the case of those who are Christ’s, the body will be immortal as His glorious body instead of the mortal body that was laid in the grave.

This is clearly stated by the scripture in *Isaiah 26:19*:

### **Isaiah 26**

<sup>19</sup> Your dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, you that dwell in dust; for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Now, how could it be possible for the “dead body” of any person to arise unless it be the body that died? Yet bear in mind that when the dead body—the body that died—arises, if it be the body of a righteous person, it arises immortal instead of mortal as it died. For says the Scripture,

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>51</sup> Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but *we shall all be changed*,

<sup>52</sup> 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.

<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

<sup>54</sup> 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.

Next the Scripture uses a simile to illustrate this. Death and burial are likened to the sowing of grain. And so we read,

<sup>36</sup> That which you sow is not quickened, except it die;

<sup>37</sup> And that which you sow, you sow not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain;

<sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as it has pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.

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<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:23.

As, therefore, death and burial are likened to the sowing of seed, and as God gives to every seed his own body, it is plain by this word that when the one who has died is quickened, is made to live again,—to every one is given *his own body*; not the body of someone else nor some other body, but “his own body.” When Christ was brought again from the dead He came with “His own body.” As He was the sample of all the harvest, so every one who shall be brought from the dead will come as He did, and as the Scripture declares, with “his own body.”

But the Scripture carries the subject yet farther,

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>39</sup> 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.

And as God gives to every seed—every person—his own body, it follows that when men’s flesh is sown, it will be men’s flesh and not beasts’, nor birds’, nor fishes’ flesh, that will be raised at the resurrection of the dead.

Again says the Scripture:

<sup>40</sup> There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.

Every person will have his own body, but it will be immortalized and glorified so that its nature and capabilities will as far transcend our bodies at present as the glory of Heaven transcends the earth. For:

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> *So also is the resurrection of the dead.* It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption;

<sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

<sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

Notice in all this that it is the same thing that is sown that is raised. “*It is sown,...it is raised.*” The man who died is raised from the dead. The body that is sown, that body is raised, for God gives to every seed “his own body.” Yet it is a changed body; changed from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible, from weakness to power, from natural to spiritual, from dishonor to glory, for Christ...

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...shall 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.

We know that many attempt to apply scientific tests to the resurrection of the dead, as nowadays they do to every phase of revelation, and in the application of these scientific tests they cannot see how the dead can be raised, they cannot see how the body can be brought again from the dust. But it is not a scientific question at all. It is not susceptible of scientific tests. It is solely a question of the power of God, and science cannot touch it.

Yet it is said that though it be not itself a question of science, it must be according to science, for God cannot violate His own laws. It is not becoming for anyone to say that what God says He will do, would be contrary to science. It may be indeed that it would be contrary to what *man knows* of science; it might be against man’s ideas of philosophy. But does it follow that therefore it must be contrary to the science or the philosophy of the universe as known to God? We think not, for of a truth there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. We do not believe that God is obliged to raise the dead according to men’s ideas of science or philosophy. Jevons justly says:

We perpetually find ourselves in the position of finite minds attempting infinite problems, and can we be sure that where we see contradiction an Infinite Intelligence might not discover perfect logical harmony?<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> William Stanley Jevons, *Principles of Science*, vol. II, p. 468.

As for the idea that “God cannot violate his own laws,” we put the thing just the other way, that as God is the source of all law, it is impossible that anything which He should do *could* be a violation of law.

We know that a piece of lead, or any other metal except gold or silver, can be transformed by heat in contact with air, into a powder or species of ashes or lime. Those ashes can then be taken and heated in a crucible *with some grains of wheat*, and the metal will be seen rising from its ashes and reassuming its original form and properties. If chemistry can do this, *faith* says that though the human body be reduced to ashes or to the dust of earth, the power of God can cause the body to arise from its ashes, and to re-assume its original form; and that this renewed form will be immortal, spiritual, and glorious, according to the working whereby the Christ-God...

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>21</sup> ...is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The Bible question is:

### **1 Corinthians 15**

<sup>35</sup> With what body do they come?

The Bible answer is,

<sup>38</sup> *God gives it a body as pleases Him,  
and to every seed [every person] his own body.*

## 7. The End of the Unrighteous

Signs of the Times, January 6, 1887

ANOTHER question which we wish to notice is this:

### **1 Peter 4**

<sup>17</sup> What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

The Bible answer to this, its own question, is:

### **Philippians 3**

<sup>18</sup> They are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

<sup>19</sup> *Whose end is destruction.*

### **2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>8</sup> ...them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

<sup>9</sup> ...shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

Peter also tells of the...

### **2 Peter 3**

<sup>7</sup> ...perdition of ungodly men.

Perdition is defined to be “*utter* destruction.” There would not be space in an article of reasonable length to quote the bare texts without note or comment, that destruction is the end of them that obey not the gospel of God. We can only give some indication of the evidence on this point by a summary.

- 19 times the word of God says they shall be “destroyed;”
- 7 times it says they shall go to “perdition;”
- 34 times it says they shall “die,” and this with reference alone to the second death;
- 20 times it says they shall “perish;”
- 8 times it says they shall be “consumed;”
- 4 times it says they shall be “devoured;”
- 7 times it says they shall come to an end;
- 10 times it says they shall be burned up or “utterly burned;”
- 3 times it says they shall be as nothing;

Once it says:

**Psalm 37**

<sup>10</sup> The wicked shall not be; yea you shall diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Now when the Scripture says so plainly and so repeatedly that the wicked shall be destroyed, and utterly destroyed; that they shall die, perish, be consumed, devoured, come to an end, be burned up, shall come to nothing, and shall not be, and that there will be no place for him if he should be; then how *can* the idea of eternal torment be true? If those words of the Scripture do not show that the wicked shall perish, that he shall come cease to exist, then what do they mean? If these Scriptures do not show that the wicked shall cease to exist, then how could God make known such a thing if He wanted to tell to men that the wicked should perish and should not be?

Then in the face of scores of passages of Scripture that show that the wicked shall be destroyed, etc., how can it be that, in the almost universal doctrine of Christians, eternal life is given to the wicked. True, by this doctrine they are to remain in misery eternally without dying; but if the wicked live eternally, that is eternal life, and the fact that they are in misery, does not in the least affect the duration of their existence. But against such doctrine there stands the word of God that...

**Romans 6**

<sup>23</sup> The wages of sin is death,

—and if the wicked live eternally even in torment, then there can be no such thing as death. Again the Scripture speaks of a time when there shall be no more pain:

**Revelation 21**

<sup>4</sup> 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.

But if the wicked are tormented eternally there never *can* be a time when there shall be no more pain.

Again we ask,

“How then can it be that in the beliefs of men eternal life is given to the wicked? How is it that, in spite of the plain Bible answer to the question as to what the end shall be of them that obey not the gospel of God, so many are perplexed upon the question?”

The perplexity on this question arises from the same source that it does on all the other questions which we have examined, that is, from the doctrine which we have examined, that is, from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. As a Doctor of Divinity once said,

“If we believe in the immortality of the soul we *must* believe in the eternal torment of the wicked.”

Immortal means:

“exempt from death,” “exempt from liability to die.”

It is the doctrine of the unconditional immortality of man, therefore, which gives eternal life to the wicked. But such a view cannot be held consistently with the Bible. This is plain from the few texts cited, and the Bible terms referred to above. And that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul may be still held, the language of the Bible has to be, and is, forced into channels where that of no other book would be allowed to go. Words when found in the Bible are made to mean exactly contrary to what they mean when found in any other place in human language. And all to sustain the dogma of the immortality of the soul.

But that is just where this method of interpretation belongs. It was the introduction of this doctrine into the Christian church, that created the necessity for this scheme of interpretation. The one man who, more than any other, is responsible for it was Origen, who lived from 185 to 253 AD. Says Mosheim:

The Christian doctors who had applied themselves to the study of letters and philosophy, soon abandoned the frequented paths, and wandered in the devious wilds of fancy. The Egyptians [Alexandrians] distinguished themselves in this new method of

explaining the truth....Origen was at the head of this speculative tribe.

This great man, enchanted by the charms of the Platonic philosophy, set it up as the test of all religion, and imagined that the reasons of each doctrine were to be found in that favorite philosophy, and their nature and extent to be determined by it....

He alleged that it was not in their literal force and import that the true meanings of the sacred writers were to be sought, but in a mysterious and hidden sense...In this devious path he displays the most ingenious strokes of fancy, though generally *at the expense of truth*, whose divine simplicity is rarely discernible through the cobweb of allegory. Origen expresses himself in the following manner:

“The source of many evils lies in adhering to the carnal or external part of Scripture. Those who do so shall not attain to the kingdom of God. The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they are written.”

But the philosophy which this great man embraced with such zeal was one of the sources of his delusion. He could not find in the Bible the opinions he had adopted, as long as he interpreted that sacred book according to its literal sense.<sup>9</sup>

There is exposed the secret of the whole matter.

He could not find in the Bible the opinions he had adopted.

What were those opinions? He was...

...enchanted by the charms of the Platonic philosophy.

And *that* was the immortality of the soul. Now in Plato's discussion of the nature of the soul, he maintains that it is imperishable, indestructible, immortal, deathless, etc., etc. But the Bible, speaking of wicked men, says they shall “die,”<sup>10</sup> “they shall utterly perish,”<sup>11</sup> their “end is destruction,”<sup>12</sup> that man is “mortal,” etc. It is not at all strange, therefore, that Origen could not find in the

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<sup>9</sup> *Church History*, century 2, part 2, chap. 3, paragraphs 1, 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ezekiel* 18:20.

<sup>11</sup> *2 Peter* 2:12.

<sup>12</sup> *Philippians* 3:19.

Bible the opinions he had adopted, because those opinions, and the statements of the Bible, are as entirely opposites as it is possible for things to be. And so, not finding any support in the Scriptures for this doctrine, he invented a scheme by which he could find not only that, but whatever he wanted. That is, to give a meaning to the Bible language directly opposite to what it says. And Origen's method of interpretation is perpetuated to this day by those who attempt to maintain, by the Scriptures, the immortality of the soul, and the consequent eternal life of the wicked. However, this is not strange, because, as the doctrine was dependent wholly upon this scheme of interpretation for its birth into the Christian church, so, without that scheme, it could not live there for a day.

The Bible taken as it is, therefore, is clear on the question,

**1 Peter 4**

<sup>17</sup> What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

The word of God says, their “end is destruction.”<sup>13</sup> That word says,

**2 Thessalonians 1**

<sup>9</sup> [They] shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;

—and...

**Revelation 21**

<sup>4</sup> ...neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

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<sup>13</sup> *Philippians* 3:19.

## 8. The Reward of the Righteous

Signs of the Times, January 13, 1887

**T**HE last question which we shall notice in this connection is that one which was put by Peter to the Lord Jesus:

### **Matthew 19**

<sup>27</sup> Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed You; what shall we have therefore?

To this question the Lord gave two answers. The first one was to the twelve direct, and concerned them alone:

<sup>28</sup> 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.

The other answer is to all people:

<sup>29</sup> And everyone that has forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold,...

### **Mark 10**

<sup>30</sup> ...now in this time,...and in the world to come eternal life.

Eternal life is that which they shall have who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **John 3**

<sup>16</sup> 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.

### **1 John 5**

<sup>11</sup> And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

<sup>12</sup> He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

With eternal life to those who believe on the Son of God, there is also given eternal glory.

## **1 Peter 5**

<sup>10</sup> The God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>18</sup> For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

## **2 Corinthians 4**

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

They shall stand in the presence of the throne of God and of His glory.

## **Revelation 7**

<sup>9</sup> I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

<sup>10</sup> And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

## **Jude**

<sup>24</sup> Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

<sup>25</sup> To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.

Of some other of the glories of the reward which shall be to those who have left all and followed Christ, we will let another tell, in tones that charm as though attuned to the symphonies of the other world:

## **Ellen White, The Great Controversy, p. 674-678:**

The fire that consumes the wicked purifies the earth. Every trace of the curse is swept away. No eternally burning hell will keep before the ransomed the fearful consequences of sin. One reminder alone remains: our Redeemer will ever bear the marks of his crucifixion. Upon his wounded head, upon his side, his

hands and feet, are the only traces of the cruel work that sin has wrought.

#### **Micah 4**

<sup>8</sup> O Tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto you shall it come, even the first dominion.

The kingdom forfeited by sin, Christ has regained, and the redeemed are to possess it with Him.

#### **Psalm 37**

<sup>29</sup> The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever.

A fear of making the saints' inheritance seem too material has led many to spiritualize away the very truths which lead us to look upon the new earth as our home. Christ assured his disciples that he went to prepare mansions for them. Those who accept the teachings of God's word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode.

And yet the apostle Paul declares:

#### **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>9</sup> Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.

In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called a country. There the great Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.

There is the New Jerusalem, "having the glory of God," her light "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." Says the Lord,

## **Isaiah 65**

<sup>19</sup> I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.

## **Revelation 21**

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

In the city of God “there shall be no night.” None will need or desire repose. There will be no weariness in doing the will of God and offering praise to his name. We shall ever feel the freshness of the morning, and shall ever be far from its close.

## **Revelation 22**

<sup>5</sup> And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light.

The light of the sun will be superseded by a radiance which is not painfully dazzling, yet which immeasurably surpasses the brightness of our noontide. The glory of God and the Lamb floods the holy city with unfading light. The redeemed walk in the sunless glory of perpetual day.

## **Revelation 21**

<sup>22</sup> I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The people of God are privileged to hold open communion with the Father and the Son. Now we “see through a glass, darkly.” We behold the image of God reflected, as in a mirror, in the works of nature and in His dealings with men; but then we shall see Him face to face, without a dimming veil between. We shall stand in His presence, and gaze upon the glory of His countenance.

There, immortal minds will study with never-failing delight the wonders of creative power, the mysteries of redeeming love. There is no cruel, deceiving foe to tempt to forgetfulness of God. Every faculty will be developed, every capacity increased. The acquirement of knowledge will not weary the mind or exhaust the energies. There the grandest enterprises may be carried forward, the loftiest aspirations reached, the highest ambitions realized; and still there will arise new heights to surmount, new wonders

to admire, new truths to comprehend, fresh objects to call forth the powers of mind and soul and body.


And as the years of eternity roll, they will bring richer and more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption, and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed beat with a stronger devotion, and they sweep the harps of gold with a firmer hand; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.

### **Revelation 5**

<sup>13</sup> And every creature which is in Heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sits upon the throne and unto the Lamb forever and ever.

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.





Basilio Calafati  
Plafmirenmester  
1800 - 1878