

Where Are the Dead?

A Guide to Scriptural Truth and Teaching Concerning the Intermediate State

By E. M. Milligan, D.D.

209 Ninth Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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To the memory of my beloved son, James Richey Milligan, A.B., who, having served his generation, fell asleep in Jesus on November 20, 1918, in the twenty-second year of his age, this book is affectionately dedicated.

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PREFACE

THE view widely held today regarding the Intermediate State and the condition of the soul between death and the resurrection has no support in the Scriptures. Further, it is contrary to the belief held by the Apostolic Church, and to the teachings of a great majority of the early Church fathers, both Greek and Latin.

An honest investigation will be sufficient to convince the candid inquirer that much that is being written and proclaimed today from pulpit and platform on this interesting and important subject concerning the place and state of departed loved ones reflects, not the word of Divine truth but rather the mere speculations of ancient heathenism as found in the writings of their poets and philosophers.

Being without understanding or knowledge of the great doctrine of the resurrection; yet believing in the immortality of the soul, heathenism proclaimed the continued existence of departed spirits, who, although unclothed, entered immediately at death upon the reward or punishment due them on account of their deeds, and

who as mere shades or spooks were destined to an endless life either of happiness or misery in the world of spirits.

True, these heathen opinions have been today somewhat revised and clothed in Christian verbiage but the teachings remain and are accepted by Protestant theologians, who thus avoid the prejudice of the natural mind against the truth; while Catholic teachers employ them to convert the doctrine of the Intermediate State into a weapon by which the ignorant masses are more easily subjected to the domination of the hierarchy.

The aim of this book is to faithfully guide without fear or favour sincere inquirers to the correct understanding of the Scriptural doctrine as everywhere taught in the Bible and thus to afford true spiritual consolation to all who can say with the Psalmist: "Thy Word is my comfort."

With the sincere prayer of the author that by making it possible for his readers to ascertain for themselves what is taught in the Bible he may be used of God to lead them into the freedom which is the precious heritage of those who know the truth, this little volume is sent forth.

E. M. Milligan, D.D.
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SPECULATIVE THEORIES

MAN was created a little lower than the angels; he was crowned with glory and honour and is one of God's greatest handiworks. The work man has been able to accomplish and the knowledge he has acquired, concerning the material universe, are truly marvellous. But, however great his genius, nevertheless, as a created being, man has his limitations: the door to the knowledge and understanding of things spiritual is shut against him, so that his best efforts to ascertain the truth regarding matters spiritual, that lie wholly within the boundaries of the unseen world, are unavailing. For his knowledge of spiritual things man depends on a Divine revelation, and a Divine Teacher; he requires also to have restored to him, through the new birth, spiritual faculties that were lost by the Fall of the race; for, as natural, "man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged," 1 Corinthians 2:14.

There are, therefore, questions that awaken universal interest; that have been asked by multitudes in every past age; and these same questions are being asked by many today, because the answers given to them represent nothing of more worth than the vain speculations of men which fail to inspire confidence, and can settle nothing finally for any honest inquirer after spiritual truth.

Such questions are often raised by the multitudes whom Death has bereaved; they are heard on every side today and are familiar to all: Where is my loved one gone? Where is he? What is his condition as a spirit unclothed or apart from the body? These questions have been answered many times by men of no religion and of all religions: by heathen philosophers, agnostics, infidels, and also by Christian theologians and teachers. All these answers are generally known, yet none of them carry conviction, and so the questions still persist.

Some of the answers may be true in part, but they do not contain the whole truth and nothing less will ever satisfy. In the answers returned to these questions, by both heathen philosophers and Christian theologians, are to be found points of agreement; while, on the other hand, the views of Christian writers, who all profess to hold and to teach the Scriptural doctrine concerning the Intermediate State, frequently present a more or less wide divergence of views. This disagreement among religious teachers can have no other result than to awaken uncertainty and doubts in the minds of seekers after truth.

Belief in the existence of the soul, apart from the body, no doubt gave rise among the heathen to questions regarding the state or condition of their dead whom they understood to be in Hades or the underworld, the abode of departed spirits. This place was so named by the ancient Greeks to express their ignorance of the state of the soul after death. Later, however, according to all classical authorities, they came to regard Hades as a miserable and gloomy state allotted to the dead generally. They spoke of it also, although somewhat indistinctly, as being divided: the grossly wicked being banished to its lowest, darkest region, Tartarus, and subjected to perpetual

punishment; while those, distinguished for heroic deeds, were admitted into its brightest portions, the happy Elysian fields.

According to Homer, who is conjectured to have lived about the time of Solomon, Tartarus was a deep and sunless abyss, as far below Hades as earth is below heaven, and closed in with iron gates. Afterward the name was employed sometimes as synonymous with Hades or the underworld generally; but, more frequently, Tartarus denoted the place where the wicked were punished after death—the lowest Hell.

Further, among both Greeks and Romans, Elysium was the dwelling place assigned to happy souls after death: it was the place of future happiness in the infernal or lower regions. In the *Odyssey*, Homer describes it as a place where the souls of the departed lived in ease and abundance, among innocent pleasures, enjoying a mild and wholesome air. In the *Iliad*, however, he gives a more sombre view of the state of departed spirits. Achilles, although in Elysium, envied the life of the meanest kine on earth. By succeeding poets, the bliss of Elysium is drawn in much more lively colours. Besides the amenity and various delights of the place, diverse employments are found for the inhabitants according to the ruling passion of each while on earth. Some writers also represented Elysium as being in mid-air, others located it in the sun, or on the islands of the Blest in some unknown sea; but, by the greater number of writers, it was located at the centre of the earth and just above Tartarus.

While there was thus some difference of opinion, yet, among the ancient heathen nations, it was generally believed that the spirits of the dead all went to Hades which place was divided so that the wicked were banished to Tartarus, or the lowest Hades, and the place of punishment, while the good were assigned to Elysium, the place of happiness and reward. The Christian doctrine of the resurrection, and of the future judgment in the body, had no place in the religious beliefs of the heathen. Hence they taught nothing about an Intermediate State, but each class of persons, the good and the wicked, were, immediately after death, assigned to their own place, and entered at once upon their reward or punishment.

After the Jewish nation had made the Word of God of no effect by their traditions, and, in place of Divine revelation, had practically substituted the teachings of their doctors, contained in the Mishna and Gamara into which their Talmud was divided,—that this nation should conform its beliefs, in part at least, to heathen teachings was but natural, especially, when we consider how this people had been subjected by their heathen neighbours, and brought under the influence of their religious beliefs.

To prevent just such a departure from truth, God had required Israel to dwell apart, and to live separate from heathen nations lest Israel should learn of them their ways. On the other hand, also, it is not at all improbable that these heathen had learned such truth, as is to be found in their traditions concerning the place and state of departed spirits, from contact with the nation of Israel; and possibly also from the lips of Old Testament prophets. However the fact is to be explained, it is known that the pagan idea of Hades corresponds in many respects with the Jewish understanding of Sheol, and in part the belief of both Pagan and Jew is confirmed by the teachings of the Scriptures. (Vide, Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, Volume 3, page 717 ff.)

Since the first Christians were for the greater part Jews and then, later, converts from paganism constituted the membership of the New Testament Church, it is reasonable to expect that their views, concerning the state and condition of departed spirits, as in part moulded by the speculations of heathen philosophers, would not only find expression in the Christian Church, but further, to some extent, would influence, and even determine the teachings of some at least of the early Church Fathers. There is no question but that they did. Dr. Hodge says, "We all know that the great evil with which the apostles had to contend in the early church, and the great source of corruption in the church in after ages, was a Judaising spirit. Most of the early Christians were Jews, and most of the converts from the Gentiles were proselytes imbued with Jewish doctrines.....It is not wonderful therefore that these doctrines were transferred to the Christian church, and proved in it a permanently corrupting leaven." Volume 3, page 737.

All authorities admit that, among the early Church Fathers, there is not found agreement, in their teachings, concerning the Intermediate State. This fact led to controversy as to what is the nature of the state of believers after death and before the resurrection. Some few believed that the righteous dead were with Christ in the heavenly; that the souls of such had passed immediately into glory.

The many, in opposition to pagan views, taught however, that departed spirits were in a dreamy, semi-conscious state, neither happy nor miserable, and would so remain until the resurrection and the redemption of the body. Dr. Hodge gives the proof that this latter view was prevalent for a long while in the church: he quotes from

Daille who says, "The doctrine that heaven shall not be opened till the second coming of Christ,—that during that time the souls of all men, with few exceptions, are shut up in the underworld, was held by Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Augustine, Origen, Lactantius, Victorinus, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Oecumenius, Aretas, Prudentius, Theophylact, Bernard and many others, as is confessed by all."....."This doctrine is literally held by the whole Greek church at the present day; nor did any of the Latins expressly deny any part of it, until the Council of Florence, in the year of our Lord 1439." Volume 3, page 739.

Dr. Hodge further says: "Flugge admits that there was no uniformity of representation on this subject in the early church. The same general idea however, is constantly reproduced; the Latins agreeing substantially with the Greeks. Turtullian represents the underworld as the general receptacle of departed spirits who retain their consciousness and activity.....In this region there are two divisions: the one called "infernium," by way of eminence, or Gehenna; the other is the bosom of Abraham or Paradise. According to this mode of representation the Intermediate State was itself a state of reward and punishment: at other time, however, this was denied; all retribution being reserved to the day of judgment. In the early Greek church, this latter view was the more prevalent; but later, both the Greeks and the Latins agreed in regarding the state of the righteous after death as being far more favourable than that of the wicked."

Rome Papal, however, finally endorsed, with slight modifications, the views of paganism which some of the Church Fathers had received from tradition. After the time of Gregory, Papist theologians teach in agreement with heathen speculation that at death the soul enters into a state either of happiness or misery: the good either at once, or, after a longer or shorter stay in purgatory to secure their perfection, pass into heaven, their happiness is complete, their blessedness is perfect, they see God face to face and will eternally love Him and be loved by Him.

Others would have a varied experience of less or more suffering, either in Limbus, meaning a border, or in Hell the place of eternal punishment which was to be of such nature and degree as fallen angels and men, who die in a state of final impenitence, must suffer forever. Limbo or Limbus, however, is not Hell; it is a region supposed by some of the old scholastic theologians to lie on the edge or confines of Hell. And it is taught that here the souls of just men, not admitted into heaven or into purgatory, remain to await the general resurrection. Such were the patriarchs and other pious ancients who died before the birth of Christ. Hence the place was called also Limbus Patrum. There was also, according to some of the schoolmen, a Limbus Puerorum or Infantum, allotted to the souls of unbaptized infants who departed this life. To these were added, in popular opinion, a Limbus Fatuorum or Fool's Paradise, the receptacle of all vanity and nonsense. Milton made use of this superstition in Paradise Lost, Book 3, VVs. 440-497. Dante has fixed his Limbus, in which the distinguished spirits of antiquity are confined, as the outermost circle of his Hell.

These teachings of Rome Papal, concerning the Intermediate State, did not meet with acceptance among the Reformers nor yet were they all satisfied with the views of the early Church Fathers. Hence, the controversy was continued, and the many seemed to prefer to form their own theories, as to what ought to be the condition of departed spirits, rather than to search the Scriptures to ascertain the truth as God has revealed it.

Hodge says, however, "Eusebius mentions a small sect of Christians in Arabia who held that the soul remained unconscious from death to the resurrection. At the time of the Reformation there was such a revival of that doctrine that Calvin deemed it expedient to write an essay devoted to its refutation. Socinus also taught that the soul, after death, perceived and received nothing out of itself, although it remained self-conscious and self-contemplative." Volume 3, page 732.

In his Dogmatic Theology, Vol. 2, Dr. Shedd says of the subjects embraced in Eschatology, especially the Intermediate State: "Revelation does not give minute details upon these subjects, yet the principal features are strongly drawn and salient.....The representation of Christ in the parable of Dives and Lazarus has furnished the basis of the doctrine..... The substance of the Reformed view, then, is that the Intermediate State for the saved is heaven without the body, and the final state of the saved is heaven with the body; that the Intermediate State for the lost is Hell without the body, and the final state for the lost is Hell with the body. In the Reformed or Calvinistic eschatology there is no intermediate Hades between heaven and hell which the good and evil inhabit in common. When this earthly existence is ended, the only specific places and states are Heaven and Hell. Paradise is a part of Heaven; Hades is a part of Hell. A pagan underworld, containing both Paradise and Hades, both the happy and the miserable, like the pagan idol, is 'nothing in the world,' there is no such place." Pages 591-595.

The common Protestant doctrine on this subject, according to Dr. Hodge, is found in the answer of the Westminster Divines: "The souls of believers are at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." In support of the Protestant doctrine he argues:

First. That it is simply a question of fact. What do the Scriptures teach as to the state of the soul of a believer immediately after death?

Second. According to the Scriptures and the faith of the Church, the probation of man ends at death.

Third. There is no satisfaction to be rendered in the future life for the sins done in the body.

Fourth. There is nothing contrary to the Scriptures, or to analogy, in the assumption of a sudden and immediate change from imperfect to perfect holiness.

Fifth. That such is the doctrine of Scripture may be argued from the general drift of the sacred volume, so far as this subject is concerned.

Sixth. Besides these general considerations the doctrine in question is taught in many passages of Scripture with more or less distinctness. Revelation 14:3; Luke 16:22; 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:2; Philippians 1:23.

From this brief review of the subject, we learn that Pagans, Jews, some of the early Church Fathers, Papists, some of the Reformers and Protestants in general today hold in common:

1. That the souls of the departed are both conscious and active without the body.
2. That the good are in Paradise or Heaven, and the wicked are in Tartarus or Hell as soon as they leave the body.
3. That their souls enter at once upon the enjoyment of reward or the suffering of punishment of which they may be deserving. Such are the points of agreement.

On the other hand they disagree:

1. As to the location of Paradise or Heaven: among the Pagans, Elysium was a part of Hades, the underworld; while Jews, Papists and Protestants commonly believe that Heaven is the place of God's throne and is located above, not beneath.
2. As to an Intermediate State: Pagans had no doctrine of a resurrection which for Christians necessitates the view of a condition between death and the resurrection, or the difference between the state of a soul "unclothed" and one that is "clothed upon" with the resurrection body.
3. As to the degree of blessedness enjoyed or of misery suffered immediately after death: Pagans assumed that departed souls had already been judged and so entered at death upon the final state of happiness or wretchedness; while Papists teach the necessity of purgatorial fires, and other Christians generally believe that final judgment waits until after the resurrection; hence the full reward and punishment are also delayed until after these events.

Here then are the agreements and disagreements that have prevailed concerning this subject, although, as already observed, Pagans and Christians both have differed more or less among themselves; and the views of some of the Pagans, who supposed Elysium to be in mid-air or in the sun, came much nearer being in full agreement with the general Protestant belief today, than do the views of either agree with the beliefs which were very commonly held in the Christian church of the first three or four centuries.

A NATURAL DISLIKE FOR TRUTH

THAT Pagan and Christian belief should differ we might expect; but what explanation can be made for their agreements? If one compares the religious beliefs of both ancients and moderns, of heathen, Jews and Christians, he finds many subjects on which there is more or less agreement. These points of agreement or of similarity of religious beliefs, are an argument for the unity of our race and confirm the teaching of Scripture that, as originally created, man was endowed with knowledge and understanding of truth of which part must have been received, from the very beginning, through Divine revelation.

But the Scriptures also teach that “men became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless hearts were darkened.... professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.... they changed the truth of God into a lie.... and as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind.”

Romans 1: 21-28. The result was that the knowledge of truth, originally possessed by the race, became more and more corrupted and perverted until, at length, part of the truth, known to the ancients, was hopelessly lost, and the rest was so mixed with error that no one could have separated between the wheat and chaff had not God graciously given, through Moses and the prophets, a new revelation which was committed to writing, and is preserved for the race today in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Even among those who possess the Scriptures, and profess to accept the Bible as a Divine revelation, and the only infallible rule of faith, that there still prevail such diversity of views need not be marvelled at if it be remembered that some have not the education to read intelligently, and to understand what is written in the Bible for their learning; others carelessly neglect to read and to study the Bible as they might, should and would do if they were obedient to the command to “Search the Scriptures,” and yet others are still to be classed with those to whom Christ said: “O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” Satan tempts all to accept as truth only so much of God’s Word as is agreeable to our own thoughts and desires.

And it is a lamentable fact that our likes and dislikes continue to be a determining factor in what we are willing to receive and to cherish as the truth. We may not brazenly say to our religious teachers today, as of old the rebellious children of God said to their prophets: “Prophesy not unto us right things, prophecy deceits,” Isaiah 30:10; but, nevertheless, in many ways, frequently, opposition is shown by multitudes, who profess to accept the Bible revelation as the Word of God, to truth plainly taught therein, which they will not receive, because they do not like it, since it would deprive them of some of the satisfaction obtained by cherishing error. Hence it is easy to persuade themselves that their ways are better than God’s ways, and their thoughts than His thoughts. They conclude therefore that their own way must be right and their own thought the truth. Thus slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: for part of the Divine message does not please them, and, with many, that fact decides them to reject it, or to explain it to agree with their preconceptions of what they think ought to be right and truth.

The result of this practice greatly hinders growth in grace and in knowledge and so it is still necessary for “some, who should be teachers, to be themselves taught the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God: and they are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food,” Hebrews 5:12, or, even worse, they become false teachers, who wilfully pervert truth, and so cause many to err.

The Jews did not line the teachings that their promised Messiah must first suffer and enter into His glory, before He could come as their Deliverer. So they refused to believe the message of their prophets regarding the Servant of Jehovah who was to suffer, to be despised and rejected and to die that through His stripes they might be healed. This was the plain teaching of their Scriptures which they professed to believe; but they found teachers who could “spiritually interpret” all such displeasing truth, and who thus succeeded in making void the Word of God.

No more do Christians like the teaching that points to the latter days when the visible church will become corrupt, worldly and lukewarm, when the many will not endure sound doctrine, and will turn away from the truth unto fables, and so prepare for the great apostasy which will call forth Divine Judgments that will begin at the house of God. Such truth is not pleasing to contemplate, and so the call goes forth for “spiritual interpreters” whose more pleasing opinions and theories will be what people like to hear, and will therefore gladly receive as the truth even though, since these interpreters speak not according to the Law and the Testimony, the Bible declares: “There is no light in them.” “They are blind leaders of the blind, and both shall fall into the ditch.”

There need be no doubt, when the sentence of death was first passed upon our race as the penalty for sin, that the meaning was understood, and men realized also that death meant nothing less than destruction, “Whatsoever

soul it be that doeth any manner of work in that same day, that soul will I destroy from among his people,” Leviticus 23:30. “Thou turns man to destruction,” Psalm 90:3; “Who redeems thy life from destruction,” Psalm 103:4; “Whose end is perdition” (utter destruction), Philippians 3:19.

Along with this understanding of death they had also the promise and hope of a Redeemer, and the knowledge of a resurrection which afforded Job such precious consolation. That, however, was not sufficient for the many who thought to find greater comfort for themselves, in their bereavement, by changing the truth of God into a lie. This they did by making death, the wages of sin, to mean simply life in a higher and more enduring form. Death thus became merely a translation; it was not to be considered an enemy, but a friend, and in consequence sin, which incurred death as a penalty, soon ceased to be viewed as a hateful, accursed, abominable thing, and fools dared even to mock at sin since its fruit was merely translation into another world without any interruption of life.

This thought, regarding the nature of death, as merely a transition from earth to heaven without interruption of conscious life or of the activity of the soul, is entirely devoid of Scriptural support. But it is an inherited belief, to which many cling, and from which they seek to derive comfort for themselves and others in times of bereavement. Hence there are sacred songs that embody this thought, of which an example is supplied in the following lines:

This sentiment, however, is not the teaching of God’s Word, which declares plainly that death is destruction; and it is better to accept the truth of Divine revelation, and to seek the consolations that are by Jesus Christ, than by cherishing error to deceive ourselves and thereby also grieve the Holy Spirit, our Divine Teacher and only true Comforter.

That the knowledge of death and what it involved proved to be an unpleasing truth, which none liked to believe, and which the many therefore rejected, is abundantly evidenced by the teachings and cherished beliefs of our race, which are entirely contrary and opposed to the truth as revealed in the Scriptures, concerning the state and condition of disembodied spirits under the reign of death.

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

We too may find that what the Scriptures teach, on the subject of death and the Intermediate State, is very far from being according to our liking. But this truth is not to be classed with the “secret things that belong unto the Lord our God” concerning which it would be useless to inquire. It is not a profound mystery, nor yet a truth about which very little is taught in the Bible, as some would persuade men to believe. Rather the truth, regarding death and the state and condition of departed spirits, who for the present are unclothed, is included in “the things that have been revealed for our learning;” and it belongs unto us and to our children; for we have the Word of Divine revelation; its teachings on this subject only are authoritative, and they are true and final for those at least who reverence the Bible and are ready to receive its teachings, on every subject, as the truth of God.

And the rule by which the teaching of the Bible on every subject of Divine revelation may be correctly determined, and not merely guessed at is set forth in the Confession of Faith, chapter 1:9-10, as follows: “The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself.....The supreme Judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined..... and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other than the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.”

This rule of interpretation is also agreeable to the Scriptures: “Knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1:20-21. “For who among men knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him? even so the things of God none knows, save the Spirit of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:11. “Add thou not unto His Words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” Proverbs 30:6; Deuteronomy 4:2; Revelation 22:18-19.

If today doctrines, being taught by the Church as the teachings of God’s Word, have not been ascertained by this infallible rule, they are no more likely to be a contribution to our knowledge of truth than are the opinions and speculations of heathen philosophers; and the result for those who hear and accept them, will simply “make void the Word of God,” as did the teachings of the doctors of the Law, for the Jews. Matthew 15:6, 9.

It is therefore a Christian's duty and privilege to ascertain for himself, as far as possible, if doctrines, declared by the church to be Scriptural, are nothing other than the very Word of God. This is required of every intelligent believer: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world," 1 John 4:1. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," 1 Thessalonians 5:21. Those only whose love for and interest in Divine truth prompt them to investigate first, before accepting as conclusive and final the word of their religious teachers, are deserving of commendation; for, like the Bereans: "These are more noble.....in that they receive the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so," Acts 17:11.

To make such investigations for ourselves is not only a privilege, but it is obligatory; and all, who desire to know the truth, are encouraged to perform this duty: "Sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asks you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear," 1 Peter 3:15; "Search the Scriptures," John 5:39; "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," John 8:31-32; "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth," John 16:13.

Not only is there the possibility of even the best and most sincere of Christian Teachers being mistaken at times, and so turning aside to error; but there is also the certainty that the visible church will not always prove herself to be a safe teacher and a faithful guide. Consequently the warning is given, to which all do well to take heed, "The Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies," 1 Timothy 4:1; Be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished in the words of faith, and of the good doctrines.....but refuse profane and old wives' fables," verse 6. "The time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables," 2 Timothy 4:3.

WHAT GOD HATH SPOKEN

TURNING then to the Scriptures we learn by whom and how man was created: "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness," Genesis 1:26; "God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath (Hebrews Neshamah) of life: and man became a living soul" (Hebrews Nephesh), Genesis 2:7.

Man is therefore a composite being. God did not create man merely a body, nor yet merely a soul; neither the material nor the spiritual element, existing apart, is man as he was originally created. These elements were combined to constitute man just as water results from the combination of hydrogen and oxygen. Separate, in either case, these component parts and, while they may continue to exist as independent elements, nevertheless the product, formed by their combination, is destroyed, whether it be man or water.

The Bible everywhere presents man as a composite being and refers to him as possessing both a body and a soul. "When the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard.....that which.....had been done to Saul, all the valiant men arose.....and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons from the wall.....and they came to Jabesh and burnt them there," 1 Samuel 31:10-12. "These are the sons of Zilpah.....and these she bare to Jacob, even sixteen souls," Genesis 46:13. "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body (Hebrews betem) for the sin of my soul" (nephesh)? Micah 6:7. "Fear Him which is able to destroy both soul (Gr. Psyche) and body (Gr. soma) in hell" (Gehenna), Matthew 10:28.

Jesus Himself also teaches that the component parts of man each is capable of animate existence, so that the death of one of these component elements is possible without destroying the life of the other element: "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul," Matthew 10:23. Here we have a soul still possessing life although the body is dead. And when Jesus declared: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live," John 5:25, He revealed the spiritual truth that a living body and a dead soul united would constitute a man, since the dead, to whom He referred, were the very persons who heard His message, but who were spiritually dead. The soul of man whether living or dead is essential to the life of the body: for it is declared, "The body without the spirit (Gr. pneuma) is dead," James 2:26. "I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh,

wherein is the breath (Hebrews ruach, spirit) of life," Genesis 6:17. "Thou takes away their breath (ruach, spirit), they die, and return to their dust," Psalm 104:29.

On the other hand, it is revealed, that the soul life depends on its union with God and not on its union with the body. It is required therefore, "To love Jehovah thy God, to obey His voice, and to cleave unto Him: for He is thy life," Deuteronomy 20:30. "The soul of my lord (David) shall be bound in the bundle of life with Jehovah thy God, and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling," 1 Samuel 25:29. "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life," Psalm 36:8-9; "O bless our God ye peoples, and make the voice of His praise to be heard; who holds our soul in life," Psalm 66:8-9. "The Lord was gracious unto them (Israel), and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from His presence, as yet," 2 Kings 13:23.

It is of course the third person of the Blessed Trinity who represents the Godhead and whose abiding Presence with the soul is essential to its life,—the spirit-life as distinct from the mere animal life of man. "Hide not Thy face from me; put not thy servant away in anger.....Cast me not off, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation," Psalm 27:9; Deuteronomy 31:17-18. "Cast me not away from Thy Presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me," Psalm 51:11.

Those who have no sufficient knowledge of the nature of man, as revealed in the Scriptures, and who therefore do not know that man, as created, was possessed not only of physical life, but also of spiritual life, entirely fail to understand that the death penalty for sin, pronounced against Adam, was actually executed, and that too on the very day he ate of the forbidden tree. But the Bible explains that death, as the penalty for sin is executed on the soul and not on the body of man: "The soul that sins, it shall die," Ezekiel 18:4; and, although, as physical beings, both Adam and Eve continued to enjoy physical or mere animal life, they were nevertheless spiritually dead: for their sin had separated between them and God, the Source and Fountain of soul life, and they were at once banished from His Presence. "They heard the Voice of the Lord God walking in the garden.....and the man and his wife hid themselves from the Presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden," Genesis 3:8. Also verse 23, "The Lord God sent him forth from the garden.....So He drove out the man." That man was no longer permitted to remain in the Presence of God, is sufficient evidence of spiritual death.

Beyond its penalty, however, there are also certain consequences that follow upon sin, and that are not, for the present, to be escaped, even though sin may be pardoned and the sinner restored to Divine fellowship and favour. Toil and labour, disease and suffering, sorrow and the death of the body: none of these things is the penalty for sin, but each and all are among its inevitable consequences. Remission for sin was obtained by the first guilty pair through the shedding of blood, or the pouring out of the life of the animals, from the skins of which clothing was provided for Adam and his wife, Genesis 3:20. But, although pardoned and reconciled to God, our first parents were not permitted to escape the consequences of their sin. "Unto the woman God said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception: in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it all the days of thy life.....in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," Genesis 3:16-19.

Thus sin's penalty, which brings death to the soul, does not immediately dissolve the union of the soul and body and so the body continues to live, and the sinner is then described as dead while he lives.

In other words he is spiritually dead although physically alive. But death as a consequence of sin, or physical death, is the dissolution of the union of soul and body, and as a result man is destroyed. The statement: "It came to pass as her soul (Nephesh) was departing (for she died)," Genesis 35:13, declares the dissolution of the union of soul and body and, in consequence, the death of the body; while the soul that departs from the body may still live.

It can be learned further from the Scriptures that, when death physical occurred, in consequence of the dissolution of soul and body, a different receptacle was provided for each. God had decreed that the body of man should return unto the ground from whence it was taken. So from the first a burying place was secured in which to lay the bodies from which the souls had departed. These burying places are called in the Bible by various names, but by whatever name called it was never the soul, but always the body that was deposited in them to return to its kindred dust. "Abraham said: Give me a possession of a burying place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.....I will give the price of the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there,"

Genesis 23:13, 24. "He (Herod) sent and beheaded John in prison.....And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried him," Matthew 14:10, 12. "He made His grave (Hebrews qeber) with the wicked, and with the rich in His death," Isaiah 53:9. The same word also is translated frequently by the word sepulchre. "All that are in the graves (Gr. mnemeion) shall hear His voice, and shall come forth," John 5:28. "Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre" (Gr. telos), Matthew 27:61;

"Neither abode in any house, but in the tombs," (mnema), Luke 8:27. "His breath (Hebrews ruach, spirit) goes forth, he returns to his earth," Psalm 146:4; "Thou hides Thy face, they are troubled: Thou takes away their breath, (Hebrews ruach, spirit) they die, and return to their dust," Psalm 104:29. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it," Ecclesiastes 12:7. "The worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee," Isaiah 14:11. It is manifest that in each of these references it is the dead body of a man and not the soul that is mentioned.

However, it is not the body, but rather the soul of man that is the true seat of reason and intelligence, and therefore the personal element in man, the ego, the self. This is very clearly taught in Scripture which further locates the soul of man as residing in the blood: "The life (Hebrews Nephesh, the soul) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls," Leviticus 17:11.

The soul also rather than the body is always described as the personal agent and so responsible for every act: "If a soul sin:" "if a soul swear;" if a soul commit a trespass, and sin unwittingly:" "if a soul (nephesh, in each case) sin, and do any of these things which the Lord commanded not to be done: though he knew it not, yet is he guilty," Leviticus 5:1, 4, 15, 17. "Take as much as thy soul desires," 1 Samuel 2:16; "His soul within him mourned," Job 14:22; "Serve with all your soul," Deuteronomy 11:13; "Set your soul to seek the Lord," 1 Chronicles 22:19; "My soul waits upon God," Psalm 62:1; "Bless the Lord, O my soul," Psalm 103:1; "That the soul be without knowledge, is not good," Proverbs 19:2; "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul," Matthew 16:26? Such illustrations could be multiplied indefinitely.

There is, however, the trichotomic theory which claims that, as a composite being, man is constituted not merely of two parts, but rather of three distinct elements, namely: body, soul and spirit, but the distinction which this theory attempts to make between soul and spirit is merely imaginative and speculative; it has no foundation in Scripture rightly understood.

In the Bible the Hebrew word nephesh and the Greek word psyche are each translated into English by our word soul; while the Hebrew word ruach which generally means wind, or air or the breath of man and also of beasts is translated frequently by the English word spirit. This rendering of the word is perfectly correct, but it is a question whether the scholars who have given us our English Bible have always been correct in their conclusions that certain texts or the context required the word ruach to be translated as breath rather than spirit, or as spirit rather than breath. For example in such Scriptures as Genesis 6:17; Psalm 104:29; and 146:4, quoted above, we believe that the word, ruach, should have been rendered as spirit and not breath, since, in the article of death, the soul or spirit departs or is taken away, while the breath, like the circulation of the blood, merely ceases, and it is hardly correct to say of either the one or other that they depart or are taken away. On the other hand, in such Scriptures as Job 27:3 and Isaiah 40:7 we believe that ruach means breath and not spirit as rendered in the Authorized version. Such at least is our understanding of these Scriptures. In many cases, although not in all, the Revised version gives the correct rendering according to our understanding at least. Ecclesiastes 11:5.

But in any case the careful study of God's word reveals, whether the word employed is soul or spirit, nephesh or ruach, psyche or pneuma, that soul and spirit are identical, for in the Bible nothing more nor less nor other is mentioned of the one than of the other. The same mental conditions are described, the same moral qualities are attributed and the same personality, agency and responsibility are mentioned in Scripture as being possessed alike and equally by both soul and spirit. Hence, manifestly, these words refer to one and the same element and not to distinct elements that enter into the constitution of man. For example, in the following Scriptures, given in parallel columns, the words spirit and soul are always the translation of the Hebrew words ruach and nephesh respectively and the same thing is predicated of each:—

"His spirit was troubled,"
Genesis 41:8.

"My soul is full of trouble,"
Psalm 88:3.

"Anguish of spirit,"
Exodus 6:9.

"Anguish of soul,"
Genesis 42:21.

“A sorrowful spirit,” 1 Samuel 1:15.	“Every sorrowful soul,” Jeremiah 31:25.
“Why is thy spirit sad,” 1 Kings 21:5.	“My soul is cast down or sad within me,” Psalm 42:6.
“The proud in spirit,” Ecclesiastes 7:8.	“His soul is puffed up,” Habakkuk 2:4.
“The spirit of wisdom,” Isaiah 11:2.	“So shalt thou know wisdom to be unto thy soul,” Proverbs 24:14.
“With my spirit will I seek thee,” Isaiah 26:9.	“Set.....your soul to seek after the Lord,” 1 Chronicles 22:19.
“They also that err in spirit,” Isaiah 29:24.	“The soul that sins,” Ezekiel 18:4.
“Grieved in spirit,” Isaiah 54:6.	“His soul was grieved,” Judges 10:16.
“A contrite and humble spirit,” Isaiah 57:15.	“My soul shall weep in secret for your pride,” Jeremiah 13:17.
“Every spirit shall faint,” Ezekiel 21:7.	“My soul longs, yea, even faints,” Psalm 84:2.
“Take heed to your spirit,” Malachi 2:15.	“Keep thy soul diligently,” Deuteronomy 4:9.

These Scriptures do not by any mean exhaust the examples that might be cited from all parts of the Bible, but they are sufficient to confirm the fact that the words spirit (ruach) and soul (nephesh) of man, as employed by inspired penmen, are identical in meaning: consequently the distinction, as separate entities, which the theory of trichotomy attempts to establish, is without any support in the Word of God.

Man is a composite being; he is constituted with a body and a reasoning soul or spirit; the one is material, the other spiritual; the one was formed from the dust of the earth, the other came direct from the Creator; the one is impersonal, the other is personal. These two elements unite to constitute man, and the Bible gives no hint of any third element. The theory of trichotomy is a myth, built upon a foundation of sand. It cannot stand the acid test of truth; but, like any error, it will serve the purpose of those who choose to resist the truth.

The prayer, therefore, of the apostle: “May your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” 1 Thessalonians 5:23, is either an example of tautology, since spirit and soul have one and the same meaning, or else by spirit, the apostle referred to the temper or disposition of mind or, in general, to the mood exhibited by a person under any given circumstances. According to Webster the word, spirit, has this secondary meaning although, as generally used, it is to be understood as being synonymous with the word, soul.

And it is desired to know what becomes of the soul, the personal element, the ego, when, in the dissolution, that occasions the death of the body, the soul or spirit departs. The general answer is: “The spirit returns to God who gave it.” That is to say: It returns to God for His special care and keeping while it remains unclothed which was evidently the thought of Jesus when, just before He expired on the Cross, He said: “Father, into Thy hand I commit My spirit.”

But more particularly we may learn from the Scriptures the receptacle, place or abode of the unclothed or disembodied spirit or soul of man. Hezekiah declared: “In the noontide of my days I shall go into the gates of Sheol,” Isaiah 38:10; and the holy man of Uz prayed: “Oh that Thou would hide me in Sheol. That Thou would keep me in secret, until Thy wrath be past. That Thou would appoint me a set time, and remember me,” Job 14:13; Of the wicked also he declared: “They spend their days in prosperity, and in a moment they go down to Sheol,” Job 21:13.

By the word Sheol, or its Greek equivalent, Hades, many today understand that the reference is merely to the grave or place of burial for the body; but that is not correct according to the authority of the illustrious Hebrew and Greek scholars who prepared the Revised version of the Bible.

In the Preface to the English Revision they unite in the statement: "The Hebrew Sheol, signifies the abode of departed spirits, and corresponds to the Greek Hades, or the underworld.....It is so commonly understood of the place of torment (hell) that to employ it frequently would lead to inevitable misunderstanding. The revisers therefore in the historical narratives have left the rendering 'the grave' or the 'pit' in the text, with a marginal note 'Hebrews Sheol' to indicate that it does not signify 'the place of burial.'"

Further, in the Preface to the American Revision, we learn that our American scholars were opposed to retaining "the grave" or "the pit" in the text of Scripture as a rendering for the word Sheol. They decline, therefore, to follow the rule of the English scholars, but unite in the statement of the change they propose to make. They say: "The uniform substitution of Sheol for 'the grave' or 'pit' and 'hell' in places where these terms have been retained by the English Revision, has little need of justification. The English Revisers use 'Sheol' twenty-nine times out of the sixty-four in which it occurs in the original. No good reason has been given for such a discrimination. If the new term can be fitly used at all, it is clear it ought to be used uniformly."

Since both Sheol and Hades are words that have been incorporated into the English language it might puzzle one to learn any reason why they might not "be fitly used." Evidently, however, both the English and American scholars concluded that these words might "be fitly used" since they have employed them in their Revisions: the former inconsistently, since only in part, and the latter uniformly.

According then to these eminent authorities, and, also, the Dictionaries of our language, Sheol means, "The place of departed spirits; Hades; the underworld." This definition is certainly correct since it agrees with the description of Sheol or Hades which is given in the Scriptures. Without exception the Bible mentions the grave as the receptacle of the body and never once of the soul; while Sheol or Hades is referred to as the receptacle of the soul, and never once of the body.

The location of Sheol or Hades, as the under-world, is also plainly and repeatedly revealed in Scripture: "A fire is kindled in Mine anger, and burns down unto the lowest Sheol, and devours the earth with her increase, and setteth on fire the foundation of the mountains," Deuteronomy 32:22. "Deeper than Sheol," Psalm 88:10; "Let death come suddenly upon them, Let them go down alive into Sheol," Psalm 55:11; "Though they dig into Sheol, thence shall my hand take them; and though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down," Amos 9:2; "Thou shalt be brought down to Hades," Matthew 11:23.

And in Scripture this underworld is declared to be the place of all disembodied spirits without regard to their characters: "The wicked shall be turned back to Sheol," Psalm 9:17; Jacob declared: "I will go down to Sheol to my son mourning," Genesis 37:35. So even the Man Christ Jesus: "Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol," Psalm 16:10; "David, being a prophet, spake of the Christ, that neither was He left in Hades," Acts 2:31. However, as the place of departed souls, both good and evil, Sheol or Hades is divided, and the souls of the righteous and the wicked during the disembodied state, are not retained in the same part of the underworld: "Great is Thy mercy toward me; and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest Sheol," Psalm 88:10; "How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning!.....Thou shalt be brought down to Sheol, to the uttermost parts of the pit." (Hebrews Bor) Isaiah 14:12-15.

And the truth is revealed in Scripture that Paradise is not to be associated, according to the heathen conception, with that part of Sheol or Hades to which the soul of the redeemed goes, since Paradise is not located down or beneath. It is a heavenly place: one of the many mansions in the Father's House, and so it is referred to as being "up" and not "down": "I know a man in Christ.....(whether in the body or apart from the body, I know not; God knows), how that he was caught up into Paradise." 2 Corinthians 12:2.

Spiritual Death as the penalty for sin, is not escaped by any one: "In Adam all die," 1 Corinthians 15:22; But the soul of the righteous, which has been restored to life again, is not forsaken of God when, according to Divine appointment, Hebrews 9:27, and as a consequence of sin, the unclothed spirit or soul departs to Sheol or Hades; rather it is still in God's keeping: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold Thou art there," Psalm 139:7-8; "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me," Psalm 23:4; and Jesus declared..... "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die (as a physical being), yet shall he live (as a spiritual being): and whoso lives (or has soul life) and believeth

on me shall never die” (or know spiritual death), John 11:25. This being true the righteous are not separated from God even in Sheol for the soul still lives and its life depends on and requires its union with God the Source and Fountain of spiritual life.

What then is the condition of souls while they remain as unclothed spirits in the underworld? Are they active and conscious or inactive and unconscious or semi-conscious? The Bible answers this question: “Sheol cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate Thee: they that go down into the pit (bor) cannot hope for Thy truth,” Isaiah 38:18. “In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in Sheol who shall give Thee thanks?” Psalm 6:5. “Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead? shall they that are deceased arise and praise thee?” Psalm 88:10. The fact of a resurrection is here described as a “wonder,” but it is recognized that the deceased must arise in order to praise God. “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence,” Psalm 115:17; “The living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing,” Ecclesiastes 9:5; “Whatsoever thine hand finds to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol, whither thou goes,” Ecclesiastes 9:10; “Thou prevails for ever (for the age) against him, and he passes: thou changes his countenance, and sends him away. His sons come to honour and he knows it not: and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them,” Job. 14:20.

Such being the condition even of the souls of the righteous, while they abide in Sheol, it is not difficult to understand why they would not desire to dwell in such a place and condition for all eternity, and why the hope of the resurrection afforded them great joy. Their condition is very plainly declared: “None considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He enters into peace: they rest in their beds, each one that walks in his uprightness,” Isaiah 57:1; “If Christ hath not been raised from the dead, then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ have perished,” 1 Corinthians 15:17. With such knowledge, the hope of the righteous is in the resurrection: “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also shall dwell in safety. For Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption,” Psalm 16: 10. This hope, here expressed, of the flesh dwelling in safety is not general; it was merely a Messianic hope: “David 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: he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades (Sheol), neither His flesh did see corruption,” Acts 2:30-31.

Since Christ knew no sin His body of flesh had never been defiled. It is evident therefore that when Jesus arose from the dead His soul re-entered the very body of flesh from which it had departed, and which had been prepared for Him, Hebrews 10:5. In that same body He also ascended and was glorified, and He still inhabits that body, Daniel 7:13; Revelation 1:13; a body of “flesh and bones,” Luke 24:39, but in which the animating principle no longer requires the blood as a circulating medium, but depends wholly on the Spirit. Hence it is “a spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:44)—a body of “flesh and bones,” but not of “flesh and blood which cannot inherit the kingdom,” 1 Corinthians 15:50.

But, when on the Cross the Man Christ Jesus experienced the dissolution of soul and body, although His body escaped the consequences of sin, nevertheless His soul paid its penalty: for in that hour He was forsaken of God which means nothing less than that He suffered spiritual death: His soul died and departed to Sheol or (Gr. Hades). And that the condition of His soul, while it remained unclothed and abode in Sheol was not different from others, is evident from His declaration: “I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work,” John 9:4. Not even Christ could hope to accomplish any work so long as He continued under the power of death.

And note the word commonly used, both in the Old and New Testaments, to describe the condition of an unclothed spirit, during the Intermediate State, regardless of whether it be the soul of the righteous, or of the wicked: “David slept with his fathers, and was buried,” 1 Kings 2:10; “So Ahab slept with his fathers,” 1 Kings 22:40. “And he (Stephen) kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice; Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep,” Acts 7:60; “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,” 1 Corinthians 15:50.

But, while the condition of the unclothed spirit of good and evil alike is declared to be a sleep, it is also to be noted that sleep is not always of the same character. We all know this is true from experience, but the Scriptures confirm the fact: “In peace will I lay me down and sleep,” Psalm 4:8; “When thou lies down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet,” Proverbs 3:24; “There the wicked cease from troubling: and the weary are at rest,” Job 3:17; “I, Nebuchadnezzar, saw a dream which made me afraid; and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me,” Daniel 4:4; “There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked,” Isaiah 57:21.

It is thus evident that sleep may not be an altogether unconscious condition, and, it is possible that the thoughts which possess the mind, at the moment of dissolution, will remain either to comfort or to distract the soul until it be awakened by the voice of the Son of God. The Scriptures quoted, to illustrate how sleep may differ entirely in character, suggest at least such a possibility, but there has been found no sufficient revelation on the subject to warrant any positive affirmation, or to afford any ground for faith.

One thing however is certain: In sleep there is never any consciousness of time that may elapse so long as one sleeps. A thousand years would appear no longer than a moment; hence even to the souls that remain the longest in the Intermediate State the time element will not be an appreciable factor.

Between the Scriptural teaching of the sleep of disembodied spirits, and the human theories that death results in the annihilation or the extinction of being, which is thenceforth non-existent, there is fixed the great gulf that separates between truth and all human errors. True, the Bible teaches that in death man is destroyed, simply because the elements that constitute man have been dissolved or analysed into separate parts, neither of which is man as God created him. The soul is one of the constituent parts of man, and nowhere is it taught in Scripture that the soul, even of the wicked will ever cease to exist; while it is plainly revealed that the souls of the righteous not only still exist, but they even continue to live: "As touching the resurrection of the dead have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," Matthew 22:31. Regardless of any other state or condition, a soul is dead when it is separated from God, but, so long as the soul is united to God, it lives and can never die.

Even Old Testament saints therefore had an assured hope that their souls should not always remain in the abode of departed spirits: "Sing praise unto the Lord, O ye saints of His and give thanks to His Holy Name, For His anger is but for a moment: in His favour is life; weeping may tarry for the night (of death), but joy cometh in the morning" (of resurrection), Psalm 30:4; "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy: To deliver their soul from death," Psalm 33:18; "The Lord redeems the souls of His servants; and none of them that trust in Him shall be condemned," Psalm 34:22; "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand up at the last upon the earth, and though after my skin this body be destroyed, yet from (i. e. within) my flesh shall I see God," Job 19:25; "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness," Psalm 17:15; Jeremiah 26:19-21.

Further, the Old Testament reveals that the time would come when the righteous would be received to dwell with God in glory, but that event depended either on translation or the resurrection: there is nowhere to be found even a hint that at death the souls of believers pass immediately into glory. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not for God took him," Genesis 5:24; "And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal," 2 Kings 2:1; "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven, And Elisha saw it," vs. 11-12; "Thou wilt show me the path of life: In thy presence is fullness of joy: in Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore," Psalm 16:11; "Thou wilt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory," Psalm 73:24. Thus even the ordinary Old Testament saint expected, in due time, to be received into glory, but not only the method, but also the time of the reception into glory differed from the experience of those who were translated; that reception awaited the resurrection or else translation was not an exceptional experience.

The doctrine of the resurrection is plainly taught in the Scriptures, and no one who accepts the Bible as a Divine revelation will ever question that there "shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust." But the theory that at the dissolution of the soul and body, in the article of death, the soul immediately passes into glory, has made it necessary to limit the resurrection to the material body.

This theory is substituted for the Scriptural doctrine which teaches the resurrection of the soul, the personal element and the true seat of identity. By limiting the resurrection to the material body, the doctrine has involved all manner of difficulties, not to say absurdities, and has multiplied the number of sceptics who scoff at the teaching because there is no satisfactory solution offered for the difficulties which they see, and which they claim make impossible a material and bodily resurrection.

The key to the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection is found in the answer given by the apostle to the questions: "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" 1 Corinthians 15:35. Here are two questions, 1st, Concerning the raising up of the dead which refers to the resurrection of the soul; and 2nd, The body to be provided which is an inquiry concerning the body with which the soul is to be clothed at the resurrection.

In the preceding part of his discourse, the apostle had already proclaimed the fact of the resurrection of Christ, and submitted the evidence by which the fact was established, vs. 4-11; he had also shown the importance of Christ's resurrection, vs. 12-19, and given the order of the resurrection, vs. 20-34. Then he turns attention to the questions some one will raise. However, he gives no answer to the question:

How are the dead raised up? even as Jesus returned no direct reply to the question of Nicodemus: How can a man be born again? The method by which an Omnipotent God accomplishes His purposes, and fulfils His promises, is a matter that does not vitally concern man. It is enough for us to know that God will raise the dead, and that we must be born from above. If man is not willing to believe these great truths of Divine revelation he would not believe even were the methods of God, in accomplishing these wonders, made known to him.

But the apostle does answer the question: With what body will the souls be clothed, that are raised up? He teaches that there is an analogy existing between the resurrection body and the body of wheat or any other grain that springs from the seed that is sown in the earth. He points to the fact that the grain sown in the earth must:

1. Die, and so the material body of that grain perishes;
2. Only then is the germ or life principle quickened;
3. The body of the grain that was sown is not that body that shall appear.
4. It is another body that God gives as it hath pleased Him, and
5. God gives to every kind of seed its own body that will identify and distinguish it from every other kind of seed.

The apostle then argues that as all seed is not the same, so neither is all flesh the same, and there is a difference also between celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, and the glory of the one is not the glory of the other. And he further declares: "So is the resurrection of the dead." The conclusion to be drawn therefore from this teaching is clear and unmistakable: Man dies and his body is buried like the seed sown in the earth, and that material body perishes; but in due time the life principle, or the soul will be raised up again; then it will appear clothed upon not with the same material body that has perished, but with a body that God has been pleased to provide for the soul at the resurrection, and then every man and each class of persons whether celestial or terrestrial will have their own bodies that will make it possible to identify and distinguish each one from every other. And these resurrection bodies will differ also in glory even as sun, moon and stars differ in their glory. Here then is the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection which teaches the return again to life of man's soul clothed upon with a body which it has pleased God to provide,—a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens, and not the restoration to life of the material body which was buried in the earth and left to mingle with its kindred dust.

RELATED TEACHINGS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

IT is evident that the early Christians having no thought that their dead were already in heaven with Christ, mistakenly assumed that those of their number, who remained alive until Christ came to receive His own unto Himself, would ascend to heaven to enjoy Christ's fellowship before those who had fallen asleep in Jesus. The apostle desired that they should not remain ignorant of this mystery.

However, to correct their misunderstanding, he did not declare unto them in the language of the Westminster Catechisms, Qrs. 37 and 86: "At death, the souls of believers pass immediately into glory, to enjoy communion in glory with Christ, and are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies." Rather, the apostle wrote as follows:

"We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that have fallen asleep: that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him," i.e. when He comes again to reign with His saints on this earth. How this would be possible he further explains:

“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 (to receive His saints unto Himself) shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words,” 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. And these words of the Lord present a strange contrast to the words of the Catechisms.

At Christ’s second coming to this earth He will appear in His glory with His saints, but before that event He will descend from the highest heavens where He sits today on the right hand of His Father’s throne, to the prepared place, to receive His saints unto Himself. And the Bible declares that this reception will be simultaneous for all who are members of His body, the true Church, regardless of whether they have fallen asleep in Jesus or remain alive unto His coming.

When John also, the beloved disciple, wrote on the Isle of Patmos the revelation that was given him, near the close of the first century of the Christian era, it is evident that he did not understand the state of the dead previous to the time at which he wrote or even then, at that very time, to be a blessed condition. He did understand that at some time which was still future, the dead who died in the Lord would be blessed, but that time awaited the fulfilment of certain important events which John predicted were to occur in the future, and which even today await the future, according, at least, to the understanding of many eminent interpreters of the prophecy of the Revelation.

John writes: “I saw, and behold the Lamb standing on mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Name, and the Name of His Father, written on their foreheads.” At the same time he heard certain heavenly voices announcing other events that were about to occur, and, in connection with these scenes, he declares: “I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth,” Revelation 14:13. If then the dead were to be considered blessed only after the event described had become history, what was their condition at the time John received the Revelation, and even previous to that time? Scripture never so much as hints at death being a blessed state until after the time fixed by the expression “from hence-forth”; but it does very plainly reveal when the righteous dead will be blessed: “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,” Revelation 20:6. “When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall we also with Him be manifested in glory,” Colossians 3:4.

In John 14:2-3, we read of the promise and assurance given by Jesus to His beloved and faithful disciples, but His meaning is variously understood and explained by different interpreters. But, is it not possible to ascertain His true meaning, from other Scriptures which throw light on the subject? Some at least, believe this is possible:

1. John 7:35 makes clear what Jesus meant by His “going away”; “Jesus said, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, ye cannot come.” So also John 13:33-36, “Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come: so now I say unto you.....Peter saith unto Him, Lord, whither goes Thou? Jesus answered, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterward.”

2. It is also explained why they could not then follow Him: (1) They were not yet prepared: “Peter saith unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee even now? I will lay down my life for Thee. Jesus answered, Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice,” John 13:37. (2) The place was not yet prepared for them. “In my Father’s house are many mansions.....I go to prepare a place for you,” John 14:2.

3. Scripture also makes it clear that the death of Jesus on the Cross was not the occasion of His return to the Father: “Joseph of Arimathaeacame therefore, and took away His body.....Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb..... There then.....they laid Jesus,” John 19:38-42. Also Psalm 16:10 explained in Acts 2:31 which reveal that when Jesus died His soul went to Sheol or Hades even as Christ Himself declared that it would: “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,” Matthew 12:40. The tomb in which His body was laid was certainly not located in the heart of the earth; it was prepared by merely scratching the surface of the earth. Hence Jesus meant that, while under the power of death, His soul would be in Sheol, and since His soul was there, and His body rested in the tomb, to think of Him on that occasion as having returned to His Father would be a magnificent feat of the imagination, but not very commendable exegesis.

But further we have His own authority for the fact that He did not return to His Father when He died: "Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early.....unto the tomb.....Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weeps thou? Whom seeks thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him in Hebrew, Rabboni: which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father," John 20:1, 15. That statement is plain and definite and should end all controversy.

4. The occasion when He did go to the Father is also plainly revealed: "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up, after that He had given commandment unto the apostlesto whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.....And when He had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight," Acts 1:3-11.

5. Then further it is definitely declared how He will come to receive His disciples unto Himself: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven, with a shout.....and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive.....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," 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18.

Here then, according to the rule that Scripture must interpret Scripture, we learn what Jesus meant in John 14: 2-3. Shall we ignore this rule and explain that His promise to come again, to receive His friends unto Himself, means merely that Christ comes in judgments sent upon the wicked, and that He comes at death to receive His redeemed unto Himself? Any one who is thus minded to do, should read carefully again such Scriptures as these: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts," Isaiah 55:8-9. "Your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," 1 Corinthians 2:5; "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.....The Lord knows the reasoning of the wise, that they are vain. Wherefore let no man glory in man," 1 Corinthians 3:19-21.

The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that Divine judgments are sent forth by Christ, and that they will precede also His coming again; but that Christ comes in judgments is one of the many discoveries, made by some learned men, wholly apart from Divine revelation: "Our God shall come.....A fire shall devour before Him and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him," Psalm 50:3; "He sends forth judgment unto victory," Matthew 12:20; "Behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountain, and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire," 1 Kings. 19:11-12. The thought of Christ coming in judgment is taken from heathen pantheism, but is not found in Scripture.

In what sense also Jesus comes, to be with each believer at the hour of death, is further inexplicable to Bible students, in view of the fact that, according to Scripture, His spiritual Presence is never for a moment absent from believers; and he could not be present in His body with each believer at death, any more than He could be present in the body with the disciples of whom it is declared: "While He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven," Luke 24:51. Notwithstanding, according to His promise, His spiritual Presence continued with those disciples, and is assured to all true believers: "I am with you always, even unto the end of the age," Matthew 28:20; "Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee," Hebrews 13:5.

If then, according to the teaching of the Westminster Divines, redeemed mortals are today in the highest heaven, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, it is certain that such a claim cannot be confirmed from any revelation made in the New Testament more than in the Old. In the New Testament we read: "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man," John 3:13; "David ascended not into heaven," Acts 2:34; "David after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers," Acts 13:36.

To harmonize John 3:13 with what is elsewhere taught in Scripture concerning Enoch and Elisha it need only be kept in mind that the Bible make's mention of several different heavens. According to Jewish tradition, there are seven heavens of which four at least are designated in Scripture and described:—

1. As the earth's firmament in which the birds fly, Genesis 1:18; 7:23.

2. The starry firmament; “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven.....He made the stars also and set them in the firmament of the heaven,” Genesis 1:14, 17.

3. Paul mentions the fact that he was caught up to the third heaven, 2 Corinthians 12:2.

4. Then there is the highest heaven or the place of God’s throne, “Will God in very deed dwell on the earth? Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee,” 1 Kings. 8:27; “Glory to God in the highest” (heaven), Luke 2:14.

When, therefore, Jesus said to Nicodemus: “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven,” His reference evidently was to the highest heaven or the heaven of heavens; God’s dwelling place. In His statement Christ contradicted the teaching which, at that time, prevailed among the Jews, and which had been borrowed from heathen philosophy, namely, That the soul at death passed into the immediate Presence of God and beheld His face in light and glory, but it does not conflict with the teaching of Scripture that Enoch, Moses and Elijah were even at that very time in glory and occupying one of the many mansions in the Father’s House. Yet they certainly were none of them in the highest heaven,—the heaven of heavens; neither had they been privileged to behold the Father’s face since, it is written: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him,” John 1:18.

A SOUND EXEGESIS HARMONIZES ALL SCRIPTURE

NOW, since what the Scriptures teach plainly and uniformly on the subject of the Intermediate State has been set forth, it may be well to consider also the “proof texts” on which modern Christian theologians, exegetes and religious teachers in general depend in order to support what is generally understood to be “the common Protestant doctrine on this subject.” We will thus learn how important and necessary it is to search the Scriptures, if we desire to know the truth, rather than to depend for our knowledge, of the things that are revealed, on religious teachers, who come to us with a few “proof texts” which they employ to prove from the Bible some of the greatest absurdities that are in conflict with all that has been revealed for our learning.

The following are the “proof texts” commonly used to support the Protestant teaching concerning the Intermediate State: Luke 9:31; 16:19-31; 23:39-43; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9; Philippians 1:20-24. This list includes practically all the more important Scriptures that can be found in the Bible to support the teaching of Protestants generally that “at their death the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory.” And, for the greater part, these Scriptures require a laboured exegesis to make them serve the purpose without too greatly “wresting the Scriptures.” But for the explanation put upon the text, the unlearned would never have so understood these Scriptures at all, any more than they are satisfied today with the interpretation given to these “proof texts,” by students of the Bible, who claim that Revelation does not give minute details upon this subject.

However, these few Scriptures, which are explained to mean the very opposite of what is so generally taught in the Bible concerning the place and state of the soul between death and the resurrection, all easily admit of a sound exegesis that will bring them into perfect harmony with all that other Scriptures teach on this subject. But, before considering these “proof texts” two facts should be kept in mind that will hardly be disputed and, in any case, can easily be demonstrated:

1. It is impossible for any one to bring into agreement all that the Bible teaches on the Intermediate State with the explanation put upon these Scriptures today by those who appeal to them as “proof texts” in defence of the prevailing Protestant view concerning the present condition of departed and disembodied spirits.

2. Those, therefore, who teach that “at death the souls of believers pass immediately into glory” (1) generally ignore every Scripture that plainly contradicts their theory; or (2) they content themselves and think to satisfy inquirers with the remark: That other Scriptures represent only the unenlightened views that prevailed among the Jews before Christ came to teach the more spiritual doctrine. Such persons of course conveniently forget that these “other Scriptures” were “written by holy men of old who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Or again (3) Some interpreters adopt the device of making Sheol or Hades mean either “the grave” or “the pit” or “hell” according to which of these meanings best suits their purpose. Thus when the Bible declares of the righteous dead that they are in Sheol the claim is that Sheol means “the grave” and these interpreters would probably have made it mean “heaven,” but for the fact that the righteous desire to be delivered from that place. On the other hand when it is declared in the Bible that the wicked are in Sheol or Hades then the word means not “the grave,” but rather it means “hell” or the “pit.” In this way, by making Scripture mean any thing they please, the attempt is made to show a beautiful harmony between Divine revelation and all the absurdities they teach as Divine truth.

But notwithstanding all the wrong methods of interpretation employed by false teachers, and the contradictions and confusion thus introduced into Christian beliefs, nevertheless, sound principles of exegesis will harmonize all that the Scriptures reveal concerning the Intermediate State, and will further demonstrate that God is not the Author of confusion, 1 Corinthians 14:33. Consider then the “proof texts”:—

1. Luke 23:39-43. To harmonize Christ’s promise to the dying thief with the teachings of all other Scriptures concerning the Intermediate State notice; The request of the malefactor was “Lord remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee today, thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.” (1) It only requires to place the comma after instead of before the word “today,” and punctuation marks are modern inventions; they are no part of Divine revelation. (2) This reading preserves, according to the rules of Rhetoric, the antithesis indicated between the two sentences the first beginning with when and the second ending with to-day. The promise thus means that without waiting to remember this penitent until He came in His kingdom, Jesus assures him right then, on the very day his prayer was offered, of pardon and acceptance for his present comfort and so granted his request for a place in Paradise, to be enjoyed in due time. (3) It is for those who reject this reading to explain: (a) How Paradise was already prepared for the malefactor, but was not yet ready for the chosen apostles. (b) Why Jesus must needs go to prepare a place for His apostles when He could take the malefactor right along with Him. (c) What essential element of the Man Christ Jesus entered Paradise that day when, according to Scripture revelation, His body was in the tomb, and His soul descended to Sheol or Hades,” into the lower parts of the earth?” Ephesians 4:9. And (d) why Jesus told Mary that He had not yet ascended to the Father, even after He had risen from the dead, and why the Scriptures teach that He did not finally ascend until forty days after His resurrection, if, the very moment He died on the Cross, His soul passed into the highest heaven and was received into fellowship with the Father?

2. Luke 9:31. The appearance of Moses and Elijah with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration.

(a) Both Enoch and Elijah were prophets of unusual piety. The former served God during the ante-Diluvian age (Jude 14) and the latter during the Davidic age. Both of these men escaped death since they were translated as a special reward for the noble witness they bore for God and His truth in times of gravest peril. They were therefore exceptions in having never as yet tasted of death and thus they are types of those who, before the end of this present evil age, shall not sleep, but will be changed in a moment and be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

(b) And that Moses appeared also in glory or in a glorified state on the Mount with Elijah proves nothing more than that he was an exception in the time of his resurrection even as he was an exceptional man all his life. The great law-giver was certainly (1) a man of exceptional character: “The man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth,” Numbers 12:3; (2) He was an exception as a prophet: “There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face,” Deuteronomy 34:10; “If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make Myself known unto him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all Mine house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches: and the form of the Lord shall he behold,” Numbers 12:6-7. Further Moses was an exception (3) As the only man or prophet with whom the Son of God is compared: “I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee,” Deuteronomy 18:18; Acts 3:22. Further he was an exception (4) in the circumstances attending his birth and childhood: the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter, Exodus 2:9-10; (5) in his choice and decision as a young man: “Accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt,” Hebrews 11:23-28; (6) in the most unusual honour conferred on him in riper years: “Made as God to Aaron,” Exodus 4:16; also (7) in his death on Mount Nebo, and his burial in the land of Moab by the Lord Himself so that “no man knows of his sepulchre,” Deuteronomy 34:56; Once again of this remarkable man it is recorded how Michael the archangel contended and disputed with Satan “about the body of Moses” Jude 1:9.

It seems evident then that his body was not given up to Satan to be destroyed in the grave, and so it is not unreasonable to claim that Moses was an exception in the time of his resurrection and reception into the heavenly place provided for him in the House of Many Mansions. The facts revealed in Scripture fully explain the appearance of Moses in a glorified state on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ.

3. 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; Philippians 1:21-23. The language of Paul in his letters to the Corinthians and the Philippians can also be easily understood and reasonably interpreted in perfect harmony with all that the Bible teaches concerning the state of the soul without the body provided, in the one case, the context be duly considered, and provided, in the second case, one does not put more or other meaning into the apostle's words than they really mean or than the context requires.

(1) In writing to the Corinthians, Paul expresses (a) The confidence shared by all true believers that a celestial body will be provided for them at the appointed time: "We know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle (marg., bodily frame) be dissolved we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," verse 1. The Greek verb *kataluo* (to dissolve) does not signify the death of the body, nor the resultant corruption of the body in the grave and is never once so used in Scripture.

The apostle therefore did not mean nor refer to the death of the body; rather Paul evidently had in mind and here describes the process by which our bodies will be changed from terrestrial to celestial bodies at Christ's appearance for His saints, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Philippians 3:21. And (b) since, in our present sinful bodies we groan he declares our "longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven," verse 2.

Paul argues (c); that the longing to be clothed upon is the more ardent since in that event "we shall not be found naked," verse 3. The reference here evidently is to the spirit without the body and so unclothed or naked. From such an experience Paul, in common with all others, shrank and he hoped to escape death and the Intermediate State of the spirit unclothed or naked in the only possible way, according to Divine revelation, namely: by the Lord's return to receive them unto Himself before death claimed them as victims. In order that there might be no mistaking his meaning the apostle makes it clear and emphatic that (d) neither he nor other Christians have any desire for death or for being unclothed even as a means of "escape from this tabernacle in which we indeed groan, being burdened:" but (e) all do desire "to be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life," verse 4; 1 Corinthians 15:53-54. For this end, as an ultimate result, he claims that "they had been wrought of God, who also gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit." Since then the purpose of God was, that, ultimately, what is mortal may be swallowed up of life, therefore, for this reason, even though face to face with the possibility of death and the Intermediate State, or of being unclothed and found naked, nevertheless (f) they were of good courage even though they knew that while at home in the body they were absent from the Lord, still "they were of good courage, but they would very much prefer rather to be absent from the body,—the one in which we groan being burdened,—and to be at home with the Lord," verse 8.

It thus appears that the "proof text," "absent from the body, present with the Lord" is not Scripture at all nor even a fair interpretation of the apostle's teaching. If, instead of a few disconnected sentences to be used as "proof texts," we take all that Paul writes on the subject in this letter, it becomes at once very evident that the apostle understood the nature of death; he did not desire for himself the disembodied state, and he well knew the Christians of Corinth to whom he was writing desired no such experience either. But all these Christians including the apostle himself shared the hope of the speedy return of the Lord to receive them unto Himself. They would then be translated and so escape death and the unclothed state which none desired. But the only hope of avoiding this experience and of not being found naked was the speedy return of the Saviour for whom they looked to come and to change, in a moment, the body of their humiliation and to fashion it after His own glorified body, Philippians 3:20-21. The teaching of this Scripture is that when God's time comes Christians will gladly exchange earthly for heavenly conditions.

This is true of all Christians and so throughout Paul uses the pronoun *we*.

(2) To the Philippians, however, Paul did not write: For us to die is gain; nor that we have a desire to depart. If he had so written, and if by a "desire to depart" Paul had intended to be understood that all Christians desire to die,—that claim certainly would not have been true of those to whom he addressed this epistle, nor of any Christians who have since lived on the earth, including those who today believe that at death their souls will enter glory at once, without the body, to await the resurrection. Further, unless the resurrection body is to be provided at the moment death occurs, as some claim, although there is no Scriptural authority that it will be,—for Paul to have written: We desire to depart; and if, by this expression, he meant death, he would have contradicted what he wrote to the Corinthians:

We would not be unclothed, or we have no desire to be found naked. Certainly it is not and never was a Christian desire to be deprived of the body, and Paul nowhere hints that it is.

In what he wrote in this epistle to the Philippians Paul merely speaks of himself and his language includes no one else: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I.....desire to depart and to be with Christ; for it is very far better. But for me to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. Hence I know that I shall abide and continue with you for your furtherance and joy of faith." Is it possible for language to be more personal? Certainly the apostle did not intend to be understood as setting forth in this Scripture general truths which would be applicable to all Christians.

But what is the meaning of these claims which Paul makes concerning himself exclusively? It must be remembered that here again is a man who as a Jew and as a Christian, aye even as an apostle also was an illustrious exception. Read his challenge (1) to the Jew: "We have no confidence in the flesh: though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh; if any other man thinks to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless," Philippians 3:4-6. He here claims for himself that as a Jew he had kept inviolate the covenant God had made with that people, and that among the Jews he was an exception and had more reason to have confidence in the flesh than any of them. (2) And as a Christian, who ever suffered more or endured even half so much as Paul did cheerfully for the love of Christ and in His service, 2 Corinthians 11:24-31? But no danger, no deprivation, no opposition, no persecution could dampen his zeal, Acts 20; 24, or lessen his faithfulness, Philippians 3:13-14, in the service of the Master whose slave he delighted to call himself, and for whose sake Paul faced willingly and gladly a martyr's death: "I am already being offered (marginally, poured out as a drink-offering), and the time of my departure is come," 2 Timothy 4:6. (3) Among the apostles also Paul was "in nothing behind the very chief of them," 2 Corinthians 11:5; and who of them all, besides himself, was honoured by being "caught up to the third heaven, even to Paradise, to hear unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter," 2 Corinthians 12:4? Such was the man who wrote: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Why, in his case, death would be a gain is not plainly declared, yet the inference is clear: it was for him to go almost immediately to be with Christ which is very far better.

And is this inference unreasonable since Paul had already been caught up or translated to Paradise, and then had come back again to this earth to live Christ or, in other words, to have only Christ's thoughts and desires, to speak only His words, to do nothing but His will, to thus dwell among men as God, even as Moses had been made as God to Aaron; and since, as a chosen vessel unto Christ, Paul had come back to earth to finish the work that had been specially assigned to him,—is the inference unreasonable that, of such an exceptional man, an exception was made, as in the case of Enoch, Elijah and Moses, and that, although Paul died, yet he was not required to remain unclothed until the time of Christ's coming to receive His saints, but, instead, he was privileged to attain, as he so ardently longed to do, the "resurrection out from among the dead," Philippians 3:8-11, almost immediately after death had claimed him, even as the Christ, whom Paul lived, had risen from the dead on the third day? Be that as it may, the fact remains that never once in all his writings does Paul even hint, and much less declare, that to die was a gain to any one but himself, and sane exegesis will of necessity so limit the claim he made in this particular Scripture.

Paul declares death would be a gain to him, but he further says: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ: for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake." True, it may be claimed, that all Christians ought to be able to say: For me to live is Christ, and that all can make this claim if they are as faithful and diligent, as they might be, to use the means of grace, and to improve their opportunities. It may be further claimed by interpreters who wish to give Paul's words in this connection a general application, that, for the sake of their brethren, it is more needful that all Christians should abide in the flesh, than that any of them should depart and be with Christ, which would be so much better for themselves. But whether such claims are or would be true or false, the fact remains that the language of Paul, in this Scripture, certainly cannot be fairly interpreted to prove either of such claims when from other Scriptures there is no support for them.

The declarations: "For Me to live is Christ:" "to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake:" "to die is gain:" "having the desire to depart and be with Christ:" are all and each said here, by the apostle, to be true of none but himself. Hence, unless other Scriptures teach that all such claims are true of Christians in general, it is not interpreting Scripture fairly to give any of the claims, which Paul here makes for himself, a general application.

Beyond all controversy Paul does make claims for himself, in various Scriptures that no intelligent exegete would ever think to make applicable to all Christians; and what Paul writes in this Scripture, only of himself, neither proves nor disproves what may or may not be true of other Christians.

To tear texts from the context, and to explain them to mean what it may be necessary to have them teach as “proof texts,” of some theory or speculation that is nothing more than a human opinion, is not to follow the rule that Scripture must interpret Scripture. Let God’s Word be interpreted by this recognized principle of sound exegesis, and all that can be found to support the current Protestant dogma, concerning the Intermediate State, would not be a hindrance to a camel going through the eye of a needle.

Here then, in Scripture, are found four exceptional characters,—Enoch and Elijah, who were translated, and Moses and Paul, whose resurrection from among the dead apparently did not await the general order. These four men, therefore, have already been glorified and are today in heaven, although not in the highest heaven. May it not be possible that they are “the four living creatures” whom John saw occupying a prominent place near the judgment throne, Revelation 4: 6-8, and taking an important part in directing events both in heaven, Revelation 4:9-11; 5:8-10, and on earth, Revelation 6:1-7? This is merely a suggestion and is made because expositors of the Book of the Revelation have found great difficulty in identifying “the four living creatures.”

4. There remains then to be considered only the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, Luke 16:19-31. And this particular Scripture has been made to do yeomanly service in support of the common Protestant doctrine concerning the Intermediate State. Every authority who teaches that the souls of believers enter glory at the moment of their departure from the body appeals to this parable, and some theologians, Dr. Shedd in his theology for example, start with it as the foundation of that theory.

Dean Trench however, accepting the generally sound principle for the interpretation of parables, says: “They may not be made first sources of doctrine. Doctrines otherwise and already grounded may be illustrated, or indeed further confirmed by them; but it is not allowable to constitute doctrine first by their aid. They may be the outer ornamental fringe, but not the main texture, of the proof. For from the literal to the figurative, from the clearer to the more obscure, has ever been recognized as the law of Scripture interpretation.” Further, Dr. Trench declares: “This rule, however, has been often forgotten, and controversialists, looking round for arguments to sustain some weak position,—one for which they can find no other support in Scripture, often invent for themselves support in these parables.”

This statement from Dean Trench is suggestive and illuminating, in view of the fact, that all the teachers of the common Protestant doctrine, concerning the Intermediate State, make the parable of Lazarus and the rich man the central fortress, and the last ditch to be held in defence of the theory that the soul is glorified apart from the body. Aside, however, from other Scriptural proof to support such a theory, the interpretation put into this parable affords no support whatever to that theory since “it has ever been recognized as a law of Scripture interpretation that.....it is not allowable to constitute doctrine first by the aid of parables.”

But if this parable be interpreted, not according to the necessities of some theory, but according to the rule that Scripture must interpret Scripture, then its meaning is made perfectly plain, and its teachings do not conflict with any truth of Divine revelation.

As is well understood, the parables of Christ present some great moral truth which purposely was more or less hidden by the employment of language that, for the greater part, was symbolic or figurative, Matthew 13:10-15. For the correct interpretation, and right understanding of the truth taught in any parable, therefore, it is required to ascertain the meaning of the figures used, and this meaning must be substituted for the figures, or the truth will not be understood. This parable of the rich man and Lazarus is no exception and there are here many symbols employed the meaning of which must be carefully sought out.

According then to the parable there was:

(1) “A certain rich man.” Under this figure Jesus evidently represented the Jewish nation, the leaders of which, in the person of the Pharisees, were His hearers; but far from being receptive to the truth He spake, “they heard all these things and scoffed at Him,” Luke 16:14. Who were more rich in blessings and favours received from God than the Jews who were the chosen people, and, as the natural seed of Abraham, this nation was the rightful heir to the promises. “What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision? Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God,” Romans 3:1. “Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises;

whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever," Romans 9:4-5. That nation was rich indeed.

It included two of the tribes of which the chief was Judah, the royal tribe, and so "the rich man was clothed in purple." And since the leaders of this nation were "such as justified themselves in the sight of men," Luke 16:15; 18:9; Matthew 5:20, this rich man wore also "the fine linen significant of the righteousness of saints," Revelation 19:8.

It was to the representatives and leaders of this nation that Jesus spake His parable, and under this figure of speech, "a certain rich man," Jesus presented the truth that more immediately concerned the Jewish nation and its people.

(2) "A certain beggar named Lazarus (one without help) was laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table." And who at the very gate of the Jewish nation were more poor, despised and neglected than their own outcasts, the publicans and harlots, who heard Christ gladly, and so manifested a desire to be fed even with the crumbs of the abundant spiritual food supplied to this rich man.

And because Jesus ministered to these very outcasts who, as being defiled by their sins, were full of sores,—covered from head to foot with moral leprosy,—He had further aroused Jewish prejudice against Himself: "Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto Him to hear Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured saying: This man receives sinners, and eats with them," Luke 15:1. "Jesus saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," Matthew 21: 31. Attention is thus directed to this class of persons as fruitful soil for the gospel labourer. Such persons have always appreciated a little kindly attention; and thus many of them have been encouraged and persuaded to forsake their sins, and through the open door of repentance they have come into the kingdom and been saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

(3) "The dogs came and licked his sores." Among the Jews, dogs were very much despised animals and the name, dog, was given by them in contempt to all whom they despised which included their Gentile neighbours in general, Deuteronomy 23:18; 2 Samuel 16:9; Psalm 22:16, 20. And Jesus used this same term, although in a very different spirit, when to the woman who was a Greek, a Syrophenician by race, who came asking a favour at His hand, He replied: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs," Mark 7:27.

Moreover, like dogs that will naturally lick sores, so by nature the Gentiles showed a liking for the moral leprosy,—the very same sins that were the curse of the publicans and harlots who were Jewish outcasts: "Who, knowing the ordinance of God, that they which practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them," Romans 1:31; 1 Corinthians 16:11. Such then was the relation and friendship existing between the Gentiles and the outcasts of Jewry.

(4) "The beggar died." Every sinner who comes to Christ and truly repents of his sins by that very act at once dies to sin, dies by faith in Christ: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:1-11; 1 Peter 2:24; Further, such an one is dead to the Law: "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ," Romans 7:4; "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God," Galatians 2:19. However, such a death calls for no burial service, and Jesus gives no suggestion that the beggar was buried.

As a rule, the true convert does not at once pass away from the earth even though he die; rather he immediately rises to a new life with Christ, Col. 3:1, and thenceforth is a true child of Abraham, an heir of covenant blessings, and will be waited upon by "the angels who are sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation," Hebrews 1:14. Thus, in the parable, dies the beggar full of sores and impurities, but he rises again with Christ washed, sanctified and justified, and as a child of covenant, henceforth his place is the bosom of Abraham the father of the faithful: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham," Galatians 3:7.

(5) "Abraham's bosom." This also is symbolic, but never once in all Scripture is any such figure of speech employed to signify "heaven." To give the expression such a meaning, as is generally done by those who make use of this parable in support of an unscriptural theory, is nothing but pure invention. To rest in the bosom of any one does, however, denote a most intimate relationship and mutual friendship, esteem and love such as should ever exist between a husband and wife or between parents and children:

“The wife of thy bosom,” Deuteronomy 13:6; “The husband of her bosom,” Deuteronomy 28:56; “Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father bears the sucking child,” Numbers 11: 12. Jesus is mentioned as being “in the bosom of the Father,” John 1:18; and John, the beloved disciple, is presented as “leaning on Jesus’ bosom,” John 13:23. In this parable the figure of Abraham’s bosom to which Lazarus was received has no other nor different significance. To make it mean any thing other than that the one time beggar who died to sin thereby obtained the place and privileges of a beloved son of Abraham, the father of the faithful, would be fanciful indeed; while to explain that Abraham’s bosom means “heaven” is a kind of exegesis that is quite capable of changing the sense of any Scripture into the most drivelling nonsense.

(6) “Hades,” in this parable, does not refer to Hades or Sheol, the receptacle of the disembodied spirits of persons; rather it refers to the Hades of the spirits of dead nations and not of dead men. And the Bible mentions such a place as a national Hades or Sheol; “The wicked shall be turned back unto Sheol, even all the nations that forget God,” Psalm 9:17. In this Psalm which is literal truth, wicked nations are not said to be brought down to Sheol, but as being “turned back unto Sheol, even all the nations that forget God.” That means that godless nations will become disorganized; will be destroyed; will perish from the earth and will be no more reckoned among the nations of earth than will a person who is dead and buried be counted among the people of the earth.

However, when a nation loses its organization and its national existence thus ends, as in death, nevertheless the people, who are the spirit or soul of a nation, still survive as many of the peoples of ancient nations, and as the Jews do survive to this very day. There is no national life for them since the people, the nation’s soul or spirit, and the material organization, the nation’s body, have been separated, and hence the nation is dead; national power is gone; national institutions fall into decay and ruin, like any dead body from which the soul has departed. And thus the personal element of such a nation, the people, its soul, is at once turned back unto the national Sheol, which is located anywhere on the earth that the people exist and survive. And, wherever it may be, history reveals that it is a place of torment for the national soul, the people of any nation that has perished because they forgot God.

So in the parable: “The rich man died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and sees Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” How literally this prediction of Christ has been fulfilled! How perfectly the picture answers to the condition of the Jews throughout the world today, and, while they continue to abide under the wrath of God, there is the great gulf also that separates them from Christian Gentiles whom they behold as the spiritual children of Abraham, enjoying covenant blessings which they have forfeited, and whom they envy as occupying the place of children in the bosom of Abraham, the father of the faithful.

(7) There remain to be explained, “the five brethren” of the rich man. And since the one rich man represented the two tribes of the kingdom of Judah or the Jews, the five brethren would proportionately represent the ten tribes of the northern kingdom or the dispersed of Israel. These five brethren, the Israelites, had long since been banished from their land on account of their sins; but as they had received from God’s hand far less of spiritual privileges and opportunities than their Jewish brethren they were far less guilty than were the Jews. Hence their chastisement was less severe: for they have never been tormented and plagued under the just wrath and fiery indignation of God as the Jewish people have been and still are. This fact accords with the rule of Divine justice which, in due time, will be meted out to all: “To whom much has been given, of him shall much also be required:” “The servant who knew not his Lord’s will shall be beaten, but only with few stripes.”

There has ever been therefore a very marked contrast in God’s dealings with these two representatives of the natural seed of Abraham. Jesus directs attention to and acknowledges a commendable trait which has always been characteristic of the Jews in dealing with those of their own race and kindred whether Jews or Israelites. The Jews have ever shown a commendable interest in any one who is of the stock of Abraham. Hence, among the millions of Jews, it is safe to say that one cannot point to a single beggar belonging to that people, notwithstanding, that multitudes of them are in great poverty. These poor are however cared for by their own more fortunate brethren.

And because of this interest in each other’s welfare, which is a national trait, the rich man (Judah), in the midst of his sufferings, is pictured as pleading to have “Lazarus sent to his father’s house and to his five brethren to testify to them, lest they also should come into this place of torment.” Such a spirit is creditable to any one who possesses it, and it is a point in favour of the Jew that should not be forgotten by those who are willing to treat this people with fairness and justice. This particular request was denied for the reason stated: “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” This was true of the Israelites for, in their dispersion, they had taken their Scriptures with them; and this fact further identifies the five brethren for, at that time, Moses and the Prophets were possessed by no other people on earth outside of Jewry.

But the rich man's interest in his brethren was real and not a mere pretence; so he was not lightly to be put off with a first refusal. He pleads therefore: "If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." But a final refusal is given: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Than this statement no higher tribute could be paid to the Old Testament as a means of grace and of salvation. The Old Testament Scriptures testify of Christ and they will lead any one who believes these Scriptures to Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life,—the only Saviour from sin and its penalty.

For the present then the Jewish nation calls in vain to Father Abraham to have mercy; for on it the wrath of God abideth, John 3:36. Lazarus, who is no longer a beggar, but a child of covenant blessings, can and should minister to individual Jews and Israelites not less than to others, and seek to win them to Christ; but as a nation the Israelites not less than the Jews are beyond the reach of human help, and will so continue until God's time comes to renew covenant relations with them, Romans 11:25-32. This very necessity, for covenant relations with God, which the former beggar, Lazarus, and others, of like character, now enjoy served as "a great gulf" to separate all who enjoy it, from all who are outside of covenant relations. "The gulf is fixed, was Abraham's reply, aye unalterably fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

The present hopeless condition of Israel also, as distinct from the Jew, is plainly taught in the parable. Wherever the lost ten tribes may be today, still, when Jesus spake this parable, their place among the peoples of earth was well known; they had also Moses and the prophets and, so long as they continued to refuse to heed their own Scripture, it was useless for any one to attempt to bring them to repentance: for if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.

This parable as interpreted by the Scriptures themselves presents no difficulties and its teachings are in perfect accord or at least do not contradict any other truths of Divine revelation. Face to face then with what the Bible teaches concerning the Intermediate State, and the condition of disembodied or unclothed spirits, we should learn that sin is that abominable thing that God hates, that its wages is death, that since all have sinned it is appointed unto men once to die, and that it is something more than mere rhetoric when we read in the book of Job 18:14, concerning man: "He shall be brought to the king of Terrors."

The first Christians, and practically all of the early Church Fathers held the true Scriptural teachings which, from the beginning, some opposed since the truth was not to their liking. Then Rome Papal fixed the belief for the church, and substituted heathen speculations for the teachings of Divine Revelation.

Finally the Reformers got back to the truth, but it was not popular, and under the influence of Calvin the Reformed Church adopted and has ever since held teachings on the Intermediate State that follow the views of Papal theologians rather than the Revelation that God has given. Even though the Scriptural doctrine regarding the place and state of the dead is not to our liking, still we accept the teachings of God's Word on this as on all other subjects. We rejoice however that Jesus has already "conquered death because it was not possible that He should be held of it," Acts 2:24. We have faith also to believe the promise that even though our bodies die, yet we shall still live for Christ has redeemed our souls and will in due time deliver them from the prison house of death, even from Sheol or Hades. In the days of the apostle Peter, those, "to whom Christ by His Spirit had preached in the days of Noah, were still confined in this prison house of death," 1 Peter 3: 18-20; but Paul declares that "when Jesus ascended up on high, he led captivity (death and its prison house, Hades) captive," Ephesians 4:8; Psalm 68:18-20; and to His well-beloved disciple, John, Jesus Himself gave the assurance: "I have the keys of Hades and of death," Revelation 1:18.

In giving this assurance to John, the well-beloved disciple, the glorified Son of Man teaches first of all that the authority, power and control over Hades and death are absolutely in His hand. Such is the meaning of His having the keys. But further, it is also revealed, that the captivity of Hades and death was still continued; that the souls of many of His redeemed still remained in the prison house to which others, of like character, were yet to be brought; for if this were not true; if Hades and death were already abolished, then, it would matter little who had the keys, and there would be no significance whatever in the assurance Jesus gives when He said: "I have the keys of Hades and of death."

But when it is remembered that the enemies of Christ and of His people including the devil himself also, are still permitted within prescribed limits, to exercise their power and to hold sway; and that, of all these enemies, death is the last one that will be destroyed and forever abolished, 1 Corinthians 15:26, then the fact that even now Jesus holds the keys, that today these enemies are His captives and powerless to go beyond His sovereign

permission in any matter, makes the assurance that even now Jesus holds the keys, a matter of the greatest importance and significance, and is well calculated to fill with courage all true friends of Christ, even though they walk in the valley and shadow of death; and to inspire them with a hope, that makes not ashamed, that in due time they will be delivered from the power of these enemies, and will also have their place among the victors, and join with them in the shout of triumph: "O Hades, where is thy Victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin: and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Corinthians 15:55-57; Hosea 13:14.

But, since, with all others in every age, we would not be unclothed, if it is by any means possible to escape that terrible consequence of sin, we do the more earnestly desire the speedy coming of Christ and "our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies" that will at that time be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of Christ; for then we shall be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven. What a blessed hope that Jesus is coming again to receive us unto Himself, that we shall then be like Him and see Him as He is! for, at that time, we shall be prepared for the place in the House of many Mansions, which Jesus has gone to prepare for all who love Him, and the place will, at that day, be prepared for all who love His appearing. We must however wait God's due time: but we wait in the assured hope of the great salvation, resting confidently and peacefully in the promise of our blessed Saviour: "If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself that where I am, there ye may be also."

If persuaded that there has now been set before you by the Holy Spirit speaking through His own Word, the true nature and significance, of physical death, and the place and condition of the soul during the Intermediate State, between death and the resurrection, then: "Be not faithless, but believing."

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