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Guy N. Woods

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WHERE ARE THE DEAD?



*A Discussion of
Hades—The Spirit Realm
Are The Dead Conscious?
Shall We Know Each Other In Heaven?*



by

GUY N. WOODS

Where Are The Dead?

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Guy N. Woods

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FOREWORD

The themes of Life and of Death are of the most vital import to man. The questions, Where Did I Come From? What is My Mission And Purpose In This Life? and, Where Am I Going When I Pass From This Vale of Tears? have, throughout the years, occasioned the most profound concern from the wisest of the race. Atheists, Modernists, Skeptics, and all others in the realm of infidelity, when confronted with them, are mute in their ignorance; while on them the dim light of philosophy casts but flickering shadows. The only credible information thereon available to mankind is to be found in the Scriptures. There all is clear and plain; the Whence, Where and Whither of man is clearly delineated; and our Origin, Mission and Destiny definitely set forth.

With the last of these, our Destiny, does this booklet deal at length. It presumes to lift the curtain of the future insofar as it has been done by inspiration and suggest some of the things characteristic of the realm beyond the sunset of life. It is to be hoped that we have not presumed to speak where the Scriptures do not speak; our aim has been to set such limits as were set by the Holy Spirit, and to shun all matters purely speculative. Whether we have succeeded in this or not, the reader will judge.

We cannot conclude this foreword without first calling the reader's attention to the fact that the matters dealt with herein derive their importance from others not directly discussed in this booklet. We allude to the Scheme of Redemption, the Plan of Salvation which one must obey, in order to discover for himself the blessing available to the faithful after this life. To be a Christian, one must Believe (Mark 16:16; Heb. 11:6) Repent (Luke 13:3; 2 Pet. 3:9) Confess Christ (Rom. 10:10) be baptized into Him (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3,4). Those who thus do, the Lord "adds" to the church (Acts 2:47) This church, in New Testament times, was called "the church of Christ" (Rom. 16:16); its members were called "Christians" (Acts 11:26) and it met regularly on the "first day of the week" to break bread (1 Cor. 16:2; Acts 20:7) Has the reader complied with these divine requirements? Only those who thus do many claim the blessings hereafter mentioned.

—GUY N. WOODS

CHAPTER ONE

Where Are the Dead?

Where are the dead? This is, indeed, a question of absorbing interest. The mind of man instinctively leaps forward to the hour of passing and demands information concerning that land where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." It is a question that intrigues the young; the middle-aged ponder it in all seriousness; and the old daily wonder about that journey which they surely soon must take. And those whose loved ones have silently slipped away and have launched out into the unfathomed depths, have a definite and tangible interest in the spirit realm. Where are the dead?

It is obvious that the Bible is our only source of information touching the matter. It not only reveals God to man—it reveals man to himself. Were it not for the Divine Volume we would know nothing of where we came from; we would be wholly uninformed regarding our purpose and mission in this life; and we would have no inkling of our destination when we have passed from this vale of tears. The Bible therefore, informs us of our origin, it tells us of our mission in life; and it lifts the curtain of the future and enables us to know something of what it is like when we have shuffled off this mortal coil. A child can learn more in five minutes from the first chapter of Genesis about man's origin, than earth's wisest philosophers have been able to learn in six thousand years without it.

In matters pertaining to our mission in life philosophy has spoken feebly and with great uncertainty, while in the Scriptures all is definite and clear, and with regard to our destiny when we pass hence, only from its sacred pages may any information be gleaned thereon.

What then, do the Scriptures teach on this vital and interesting question? Involving as it does man in all of his parts, an intelligent understanding of man is essential to a proper investigation of this matter. It has been said that "a proper study of mankind is man," but with more truth it might be said that "a proper study of mankind is the Bible," for here do we find the only reliable discussion of man in all of his parts. The Scriptures reveal that man is triune being; he is composed of "body," "soul," and "spirit." "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5:23). It is foreign to our purpose here to enter into a detailed examination of these terms other than to point out that "body" has reference of course to the tabernacle of clay; "soul" is a generic term used in the Scriptures in the following senses: (1) The whole person; (2) the animal life that man possesses in common with beasts; (3) the spirit; while "spirit" always refers to that part of man that survives the death of the individual and lives on in the spirit realm after the body has returned to the dust. For our present purpose we shall consider man as possessed of a body made from the dust, and of a spirit formed in him by the Lord himself. Daniel said: "I, Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body" (Dan. 7:15). Of the

origin of these parts of man, the Scriptures speak plainly, clearly, decisively: "And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7). Our bodies then, are products of the dust. The prophet Zechariah said, "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which . . . formeth the spirit of man within him" Zech. 12:1).

It is clear from the foregoing that man is a composite being; he is composed of "body" made from the dust of the ground, and he has in him a "spirit" placed there by the Lord himself. A union of these composite parts or elements constitutes man; their separation is death. This, indeed, is what death is, simply the separation of the body and spirit. Where then, do these several parts of man go when death ensues? Of the destination of the body, we have sensible evidence; too often do processions silently wend their way to the quiet cities of the dead and there solemnly consign their precious burden to the dust, to need any proof of that fact here. Out of the dust the body was made; and back to the dust does it return when the spirit has taken its flight into the unseen realm. We need therefore pursue our inquiry concerning the body no further; we have traced it to the tomb where it must sleep in solemn silence until the trump of God shall sound, and the Lord makes his appearance in the skies.

Where does the spirit go at death? (1) We have shown conclusively that it does not go into the tomb. Since death is simply the state that results from separation of body and spirit, it must follow that the spirit is no part of that which is placed in the tomb.

The body is merely a house of clay and when death ensues the person living there departs and abides there no longer. Reader: be consoled by the fact that your loved ones are not in the grave! The real person is not there; but is gone; gone from the tabernacle of clay, gone from a world of wickedness and woe; gone to be in the care and keeping of the Lord.

Gone where? (2) Not into heaven, a multitude of funeral speakers to the contrary notwithstanding. And this is true, regardless of how faithful and devoted the one who has passed may have been. On no point do the Scriptures speak more decisively than on this. The evidence is abundant, and we propose a detailed examination thereof. First, let attention be directed to the fact that the future home of the righteous is now in a state of preparation. Said the Lord to his disciples when they mourned his going away: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). Be it observed that the Lord expressly declared his intention of going away to "prepare" a place. More, let it be noted that he assured the disciples that he would come again "and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Question: when were they to be where he is? When he comes again! No other conclusion is possible. Though these disciples have been dead for hundreds of years they are not with the Lord in the sense intended here; that event awaits his return! In the fair im-

port of these words those disciples will have entered into the promise here vouchsafed them only when the Lord has returned and then borne them to those mansions he is now preparing.

We are not unmindful of the fact that Paul expressly asserted that to be "absent from the body" is to "be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). But it seems certain that he meant simply by this that the one departing goes into the care and keeping of the Lord. The same idea is suggested by Solomon in Ecc. 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." If the reader is constrained to feel that this is sufficient evidence to conclude that the spirit wings its way into heaven at the moment of death, let him carefully consider Peter's allusion to David on Pentecost: "For David is not yet ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). Dead for hundreds of years, yet David, in Peter's view, had not yet ascended. It follows therefore, that one may go to be with the Lord, i. e. into his care and keeping (Ecc. 12:7; 2 Cor. 5:8), and yet not have entered into those mansions now being prepared.

If the foregoing argument does not strike the reader as entirely conclusive of the point in issue, we make bold to assert that the following will. It will be recalled that in response to the penitent thief's plea on the cross our Lord declared, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). The following points are fairly deductible from this passage (1) The Savior and the thief were together somewhere that day. (2) But they were never together in the tomb. (3) allusion therefore, is not to the tomb. (4) But if they were never together in

the tomb, our Savior's reference to Paradise involved only their spirits. (5) It follows therefore, that the thief and the Savior in spirit journeyed to Paradise that day! Yet, three days later, and following the resurrection, he forbade the woman to touch him, declaring: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Three days in Paradise, yet he had not ascended to his Father! God's dwelling place is in heaven (2 Chron. 6:33). Therefore, if he had not yet ascended to his Father; not yet had he returned to heaven. This we deem entirely conclusive of the point in issue.

Our next point of inquiry then, has to do with Paradise. We have seen thus far that death is a separation of body and spirit; the body returns to the dust; and the spirit, in the case of the Savior and the Penitent Thief went into Paradise. What is Paradise? The word "paradise" is of Persian origin; and its primary import is simply that of "a garden" or "park." It signifies a place of rest. It is used in the Scriptures in the following senses: (1) The Garden of Eden; (2) Abraham's bosom (a proverbial expression of common currency among the Jews, denoting a place of rest); (3) The third heaven; (4) The place where God is. Space does not permit, nor is it pertinent to our present inquiry to establish by proof the foregoing instances, but they are there. We shall, however, engage to show that "Abraham's bosom" is synonymous with "paradise" before we are done. The word "paradise," then, signifies a condition, rather than a place. True, a place is implied in any condition; but the word itself suggests merely a condition; and the place where the condition exists must be learned, if at

all, from the context. Where then, is that place of rest signified by the word "paradise"? Again, we appeal to the words of Peter on Pentecost. Recounting a prophecy of David, Peter asserted that he was speaking of the resurrection of Christ when he said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption" (Acts 2:27). Two things, pertinent to our present inquiry, follow from this: (1) The body of Christ was not to be left in the tomb until it decayed; (2) His soul was not to be left in Hades. Christ, therefore, went to Hades. But he went to Paradise. Paradise, therefore is in Hades. Yet, while gone, he did not ascend into heaven. Hades then is not in heaven. Where is it? This we shall discuss at length in chapters to follow.

CHAPTER TWO

Hades—The Spirit Realm

In our former effort to elicit light on this question of such absorbing interest, we concluded with an observation drawn from Peter's reference to the prophecy of David, that the soul of Christ was in Hades during the interval his body lay in the tomb. There, too, was the Paradise promised the dying thief. But that our Lord did not ascend to the Father is certain from the fact that he asserted that he had "not yet ascended" on his return from the Hadean realm. It follows therefore, that Hades, at least in the case of our Savior, did not comprise heaven, and is no part of the final abode of the righteous. What then, is it?

Etymologically, the word Hades means "The Unseen." It is compounded from the Greek "idein" to see; and "a" privative; hence, literally "The Unseen." Its New Testament usage, is, uniformly "The Unseen Abode of Disembodied spirits," i. e. the place where spirits abide between death and the resurrection. What is the nature of that place?

Fortunately, we have a description of Hades from the lips of the Lord himself. Let the reader examine it carefully: "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed

with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all of this between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, Father, that thou wouldst send him to my Father's house for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, Father Abraham; but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:19-31).

We have followed the rendering of the King James Version in transcribing the foregoing, except in verse 23, where we have substituted "Hades" the word used in this passage by the translators of the Revised Version. As a matter of fact, the word rendered thus in this passage does not mean "hell" in the present day import of the word. Had the Lord

intended by this to describe the realm of eternal, future punishment of the wicked, he would have used the Greek word, "Gehenna," which signifies such a place. It was not in Gehenna (the future abode of the wicked where they will be tormented forever and ever) that the rich man lifted up his eyes; but in Hades (the abode of disembodied spirits).

A few observations are in order regarding this interesting passage, before we enter into an investigation of its import touching the matter of the dead. There is a great deal of skepticism in the world to-day concerning this portion of the holy writ. There are those who openly deny its obvious import, and who do not hesitate to question its authenticity. Some of these, we are pained to say, are members of the body of Christ. Not infrequently, when the case of the rich man and Lazarus is offered in evidence touching the state of the dead, there are those who attempt to discount it, saying, "That's nothing but a parable!" Do they mean by this that it is false? No other conclusion seems possible. We are not so sure that it is a parable. It bears no similarity to the parables in the New Testament. (1) If it is a parable, it is the only one known to this writer in which proper names are introduced. "And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus." Was there? (2) It does not commence in the form commonly characteristic of the parables. They usually begin thus: "And he spake a parable unto them, saying . . ." This, however, begins: "There was a certain rich man . . ." Was there??? But waiving, for the moment, the question of whether this is a parable or not, we ask, What is a parable? We think the following is a good definition: "A parable is an

illustration designed to make clear some obscure truth." It follows therefore, that the case of the rich man and Lazarus is either a parable, or it is not. This much is certain. If it is a parable, it teaches that which could be; if it is not a parable, it teaches that which really is; and in either case, it teaches the truth! What does it teach?

(1) It teaches us that the spirit survives the dissolution of the body and lives on after it has returned to the dust. Be it remembered that we are considering here disembodied spirits—spirits that have abandoned their tabernacles of clay and entered the spirit realm. (2) More, it informs us that the condition of the spirits in that realm is wholly dependent on the life lived while in the body. "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom." Of the rich man it is said, "The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." It follows therefore, that Hades, the realm of departed spirits, has within it a place of comfort to which the righteous go and a place of torment into which the wicked are plunged. Between these places there is an impassable gulf fixed there by an Almighty God himself, beyond which neither are able to pass to the other side. There the righteous enter Abraham's bosom, a proverbial expression of rest of current usage among the Jews. There, too, the wicked obtain a foretaste of the doom that is to be theirs while eternal years roll endlessly on.

We are now ready for a conclusion drawn from the foregoing premises. Summarizing, we have seen that man is composed of "body" and "spirit." At death the body returns to the dust, and the spirit

passes into Hades, the unseen abode of departed spirits. If righteous, the spirit is borne by the angels into Abraham's bosom; but if wicked, it is plunged into torment. Here the spirits remain until the resurrection morn. Then when the trump of God sounds the bodies will come forth from the graves, their spirits will come out of Hades, and all will stand in Judgment. Those who have been righteous here will be bidden to enter heaven's happy home, while the wicked will be plunged into the Gehenna of Fire where the smoke of their torment will ascend up for ever and ever (Rev. 14:10-11).

We are not unmindful of the fact that certain objections have been offered to this position; and it is our purpose now to reply to them as fully as possible. Some years ago, an ingenious theory was advanced by Brother F. G. Allen, in "Old Path Guide," and later incorporated in his sermon on "The State of the Dead," in the "Old Path Pulpit," in which he argued that the foregoing conclusion was true only until the Cross; that, following this event, the Lord removed that compartment of Hades designated as Abraham's bosom to heaven; and that henceforth all faithful ones pass immediately into their eternal home when death ensues. While shrinking from even the suggestion of sitting in judgment on such an eminent character as Brother Allen, it is nevertheless a fact his position is wholly unsupported, being simply a theory based upon inferences only. We think there is one passage of Scripture that completely refutes it. Ten days after the ascension of Christ (and therefore after the time the theory asserts Christ moved the righteous spirits from Hades to Heaven) Peter said on Pentecost: "For David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts

2:34). Brother Allen felt the force of this, but sought to avoid the conclusion by arguing that Peter was not considering the spirit of David apart from his body. Said he, "His argument includes the body of David. He is showing why the language of David concerning his soul not being in Hades, and the body not seeing corruption, did not apply to him, but to Christ." This is, of course, true; but we think that the force of Peter's argument depends upon the fact that David "is not ascended," either in body or spirit. Peter's argument runs thus: God, on oath, declared to David that one of his seed should sit upon his throne. In speaking of this, David asserted that in order to the fulfillment of this promise the soul of Christ would not remain in Hades, and his body would not see corruption in the tomb. This he said in anticipation of the resurrection of Christ. Hence, one was to sit upon David's throne. This could not be David himself; for "he is not ascended into the heaven." Therefore, the prophecy has reference to Christ. But concede that Peter did not deny that David had ascended in spirit, and his argument falls short of the premises and fails to prove that for which it was advanced. This objection, were there no others, effectively disposes of the theory.

A second objection to the position we are advocating is that such a conclusion obviates the necessity of the judgment, since it presupposes that men are at death dealt with accordingly as they have lived in this life. Why, it is asked, is there any need for a judgment, if, when one dies, he passes immediately into rest or torment, in harmony with the manner of life he has lived on earth? We must not suppose that it will be necessary for the

Lord to hold court and hear testimony to determine those that are his at the last day. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." The judgment will not be for the purpose of determining guilt or innocence. The following will illustrate the purpose of the judgment: A man commits a crime against the peace and dignity of the state, is arrested by the duly constituted authority, brought into court and tried before a jury of his peers. What is the function of the jury? To hear the evidence touching the man's guilt and render a verdict in harmony with the law and evidence. Then, sometimes days later, this prisoner is brought before the Bar, and Judgment is pronounced against him. What is the procedure? It is not the function of the Judge to hear evidence, but simply to make formal declaration of sentence. And so it will be at the last day. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels . . . And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:31-46).

CHAPTER THREE

Are the Dead Conscious?

By arguments we think are entirely conclusive of the point in issue, it has been shown that there is an entity in man not subject to death—an immortal principle unaffected by dissolution of the body—a spirit that maintains an existence of its own in the spirit realm after the body has returned to the dust. We now begin an inquiry into the nature of that existence. Is it an intelligent existence? Or, as it is contended by some, does the spirit pass in death into a state of dreamless sleep thus to await the trump of God and the Resurrection of the dead?

These are truly questions of far-reaching significance; and on their proper solution depend matters of great import. Do the Scriptures teach that at the moment of death the soul, or spirit of man passes at once into a state of unconsciousness, “becomes as if it had never been”; or is there evidence assuring us that the converse is true, and that the spirit is, indeed, a conscious entity; and continues thus in the spirit realm throughout the period between death and the resurrection of the body? These are questions which arise again and again in the mind of the earnest inquirer, and all mankind feels an interest in the state of affairs toward which all are so rapidly passing. Since the Scriptures contain the sum of our information on such matters, to them we now appeal.

The first passage we shall offer is introduced for the purpose of showing that the dead are alive in the spirit world. Though this may seem paradoxical, it is nevertheless true. In controversy with the Sadducees, a sect which denied the existence of spirits apart from the body—the forerunner of modern materialists—our Lord declared, “Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him” (Luke 20:37-38). The argument runs thus: (1) God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; but (2) He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; therefore, (3) Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive! Not, of course, in body, but in spirit. But if these ancient Worthies are alive in the spirit realm so are all the dead. This argument, were there no others, we think conclusively decides the matter.

Allusion has already been made to the case of the rich man and Lazarus. Its teaching is simple and clear; and may be summarized thus: (1) There is life after death. (2) That life is lived in a conscious condition. (3). Those who inhabit the spirit world are not only conscious of their own existence, but also retain memories of their earthly experience. These are facts that can be discounted only by discrediting the passage from which they are deduced, a thing some do not scruple to do. A position that must depend for its support on repudiation of some portion of the Bible is unworthy of our consideration here. Let the passage stand, and the facts are as we have presented them. No other conclusion is possible.

Another passage, equally conclusive, is found in Rev. 6:9-11: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" This, be it observed, is a discussion not of bodies but of spirits. The incident involves those who have died, and are now in the spirit world. The following facts are fairly deducible: (1) Though in a disembodied state they are conscious. (2) They are aware of the means by which they were killed, and knew that their blood had not yet been avenged.

Paul's experience in Paradise is likewise confirmatory of the point in issue. Assuming that he was speaking of his own experience we invite the reader's attention to these words: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth: such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth. How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:2-4). It is not assumed that Paul was out of the body when the events here mentioned occurred; of this he was uncertain himself. But, he did concede the possibility of it. Hence, in Paul's view, it is possible for the spirit of man to exist in a conscious state apart from the body. If this be denied, Paul's language in this passage becomes unintelligible. If the spirit cannot exist apart from the body, but ceases to exist so soon

as the death ensues, so that the whole of man goes into the grave, then Paul simply assumed an utter impossibility. Either the apostle implied what is not true, or else the spirit may, and does, maintain a separate, conscious existence out of the body. This passage therefore, bears unmistakable evidence of the conscious existence of the spirit in the unseen realm.

“And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Verily, I say to thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:43). The penitent thief and the Lord journeyed to paradise on the day of their crucifixion. It is certain that reference is here made to the spirits and not their bodies. Their bodies were never together in any place; hence, it is certain that this is an allusion to spirits only. Let this be conceded, and it follows that the spirit of the Lord and that of the thief departed from their bodies in their death on the cross, and went into a place called paradise. This is such an obvious conclusion, and the reference is so patently an illusion to the spirit, that materialists in debate do not attempt to evade this by insisting that the Lord promised to be with the thief in body only the day of their death. Mr. F. J. Crosswell, Adventist debater, sought to evade the obvious significance of this passage by an attempt at repunctuation of the sentence, “Verily, I say to thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” In our several discussions with Mr. Crosswell, he always insists that the comma before “Today” in the foregoing passage should be placed after “Today,” thus making the sentence read: “Verily, I say unto you today, shalt thou be with me in Paradise.” In other words, “I am saying this to you to-

day that at some future time you shall be with me in Paradise." But such an arrangement makes the Lord's statement ridiculous. Note that the words "I say" are present tense. Following Mr. Crosswell's arrangement of punctuation, our Lord is made to say: "I am not saying this to you yesterday, nor am I saying this to you tomorrow, I am saying this to you today!" Mr. Alford, one of the Revisers, in his Greek Testament with notes, refers to this attempt to repunctuate, and says that aside from doing violence to the words of our Lord, "It is something more than downright silly!"

Much more might be offered but surely sufficient has been presented to establish the following points: (1) Man is possessed of a conscious entity, an immortal principle not subject to death. (2) This entity, properly styled the "spirit" of man is capable of maintaining an existence apart from the body. (3) At death, the spirit departs from the body and passes into the spirit realm. (4) It there is possessed of a consciousness, both of its own existence, and also of the existence of other spirits in the same place. (5) It is in a place of comfort, or a place of torment, accordingly as the individual has conducted himself in this life. (6) Neither place is the ultimate heaven of the righteous, nor the ultimate hell of the wicked. (7) In this state the spirits remain until the resurrection, at which time they are united with their bodies, stand in judgment and are there consigned to their eternal destiny.

One other question remains for our consideration. Shall we know each other in heaven?

CHAPTER FOUR

Shall We Know Each Other In Heaven?

We now conclude our inquiry into the State of the Dead by an examination of the Scriptures bearing on the question of Future Recognition. However much men may differ with regard to our condition between death and the resurrection, all are agreed that the Bible describes a state of happiness and bliss for the faithful in a land where shadows never come. In contemplation of that eventuality the mind instinctively leaps forward to the hour of death and longs for some information of what it will be like when the Pale Horse and His Rider have borne us hence. What do the Scriptures teach regarding the nature of that eternal abode? Shall we know each other there? Is future recognition fact or fancy? These, truly, are questions of such unspeakable moment as to make all others seem comparatively unimportant.

Here, too, our appeal is solely to the Scriptures. The light of nature can never scatter the darkness that obtains on these, as well as on all other questions pertaining to the future life. It is a noteworthy fact that "Life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel." It is as true today as when Paul penned his epistles to the church in Corinth that "The world by wisdom" knows "not God." Earth's wisest philosophers have sought vainly for assurances that satisfy, touching the destiny of the soul; and their noblest efforts to prove that man is pos-

sessed of an immortal entity that survives the wreck of the body and lives on, fall far short of convincing the mind. Cicero, the ablest exponent of the soul's immortality, among the heathens, admitted that after all the arguments he was able to offer had been advanced, his own mind was satisfied only when directly contemplating the arguments thus adduced. At all other times he was beset by doubt, and darkness hovered about him on all matters associated with the future state. It is also known that the arguments Socrates advanced in support of the immortality of the soul will not bear the test of critical examination. He reasoned, for example, that we shall always exist, because we have always existed; and that our present acquisitions of knowledge are just so many reminiscences of what we must have learned in some former state. How exceedingly happy we should be that our hope of the future does not rest on supports so frail and fragile as these.

We have yet to meet an individual who did not feel a lively interest in the future state, or who was not concerned about the question of future recognition. Those whose loved ones have slipped away and have gone into the unseen realm earnestly seek for some assurance that some happy day there will be a glad reunion on golden shores, where with full remembrance of this life they will be permitted to gather up the sundered threads broken by death, and live forevermore in a land where parting is no more. Is this a vain fancy; a pitiful delusion under which we labor; a hope that will be rudely blasted when we have gone hence? We do not believe it. Take from us the hope of a glad reunion on the other shore with loved ones and brethren we have known

here; tell us this, and you deprive heaven of its most glorious aspect and holiest joys. Indeed, we are at a loss to understand how heaven could hold any promise to us at all, if there be no consciousness of a former life in the next. How can there be a future life if there is not a past life? Of what promise is the next life to me, if you convince me that I will sustain no connection with this, if I have no recollection of my life here? If, in the next life, I have lost all connection with this, then so far as I am concerned, my destiny ends in death; the "I" of this life is no more; sustaining no connection with this life, the being that is resurrected will be to me, at least, but another person. No, the Scriptures teach no such cheerless doctrine. On this point, the contrary is true. Consider the following:

The Apostle Paul, in that matchless sermon on the Resurrection, (1 Cor. 15) represents the saints as standing on the verge of their empty graves and lifting up their voices in the grand shout of victory: "O, Death, where now is thy sting: O, Grave, where now is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." How will this be possible if, in the next life, there is no remembrance of this? How will the saints be able to shout victory over the grave, and thank God for that victory, if they are unable to remember having lived on the earth, having been confined in the grave, and that it was through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that they have at length been able to triumph over all? The Song of Redeeming Love the saints will sing throughout eternity requires a consciousness of this life. "Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and

hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (Rev. 1:5,6). Only redeemed humanity can sing this song, and they will be able to sing it only if they are able to remember that they lived on the earth, and that through the merits of Christ's blood they have now entered into rest. We are at a loss to understand how we shall be able to honor Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer if we are unable to recall the fact that we were once sinners. The honor and praise of Christ and of our Father through all eternity depend on the truth of the proposition we are seeking to establish in this book.

The case of the rich man and Lazarus bears unmistakable evidence of the certainty of future recognition. In Hades, the rich man lifted up his eyes in torment. Consciousness is an essential element of torment. Only those who are conscious can be tormented. The rich man, therefore, was conscious. Abraham conversed with him; and this, too, establishes the fact of consciousness in the spirit world. More, the Patriarch, though dead for thousands of years, was cognizant of events on the earth; knew that Lazarus had lived a life of faithfulness while here; and that the rich man had conducted himself so as to deserve the torment he was suffering. We repeat: The obvious conclusion of this incident can be evaded only by repudiation. Let it stand as a portion of the word of God and the conclusion inevitably follows.

Because space will not permit, we must pass by, for the time being, the arguments for future recognition that follow logically from the Transfiguration when Moses and Elijah, dead for hundreds of

years, appeared and talked with the Savior about the tragedy soon to come to pass; Paul's experience in paradise when he was caught up into the third heaven and saw things impossible to describe and unlawful for him to utter; the case of those who remonstrate with the Lord in judgment by reminding him that they have prophesied in his name; the matter of rewards and punishments; and a hundred other arguments bearing indirectly on this momentous question. It is surprising how much of the New Testament is rendered unintelligible, if the question of future recognition be denied.

We are not unmindful that objections are raised, and our treatment of the question would not be complete without a careful examination of these objections. We have never been confronted with but three objections, and we shall examine each one of them in detail. (1) Some see in our Lord's refutation of the Sadduceean dilemma of a wife with seven husbands evidence against the matter of future recognition. Their query, "Whose will she be in the resurrection" was designed to render impossible, or at least absurd, the idea of a resurrection. The Savior effectively disposed of their objection by asserting that in that world they neither marry nor are given in marriage, i. e., the marriage state will not obtain in that life. There is nothing in this to suggest that there will be no recognition of those we have known here, but simply that the marriage state will be no more. Rightly understood, there is nothing in that incident to oppose the fact of recognition.

(2) Others have experienced difficulty in ac-

cepting the fact of future recognition because of their conception of the state in which the righteous will be in the next life. Believing that we will be simply spirit beings, it is to them a matter of difficulty how such beings could possess the distinguishing characteristics in that life by which we are known in this. But where did the idea arise that we will be spirit beings in that next life? Certainly not from the Scriptures. On this point they speak clearly, plainly, decisively. Paul, in his treatment of the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 describes at length the change that will occur when this mortal body shall have put on immortality, and when this corruptible body shall have put on incorruption. Sown in weakness, it is to be raised in power; sown in natural body, it will be raised a spiritual body—but a body will be raised nevertheless. It follows therefore, that this objection is based on an erroneous view of the resurrection and is, therefore, without foundation.

(3) Finally remains to be considered the most common, and certainly the most plausible objection offered against the possibility of future recognition. It runs thus: If recognition in the next life is a certainty, it means that we shall know our loved ones there. It means also that we shall be cognizant of the fact that some of them are not there. Then, in the event some come short of the glory of God and fail to reach heaven, how could we be happy throughout eternity with the realization that some we have known and loved here are forevermore shut out of the bliss we there enjoy? This possesses some plausibility, and we shall therefore examine it in detail.

A few questions are in order: For whom did

Christ die? He died for all men. Will all men be saved? No. Why will not all men be saved? Because they do not choose to be saved. Will some then, for whom Christ died, be lost? Yes. Will he be unhappy throughout eternity? We think not. If some are not there for whom he died, it will be because they did not desire to be there; and since God does not interfere with the freedom of the will, he will acquiesce in their decision not to come where he is. And since we will then be the better able to see and appreciate the righteous judgment of God, we, too, will also acquiesce in the will of him who doeth all things well.

Let the reader carefully consider the following: Most people have loved ones who are not members of the church. They want them to obey the gospel; they are anxious about their lost condition; and they desire their fellowship in the body of Christ. Of course, it is impossible, but would the reader be willing to say to some loved one who thus far has wilfully refused to obey the gospel this, "We will make an exception in your case. You are at liberty to come right along and enjoy our fellowship, in spite of the fact that you have not obeyed the gospel!" I am sure that not any of us would be willing to make such a concession. Why? We understand that only those who have obeyed the gospel have the right to our fellowship in the church. If therefore, we are unwilling to enjoy their fellowship here while they remain in rebellion to the commands of the Lord, would we expect less there?

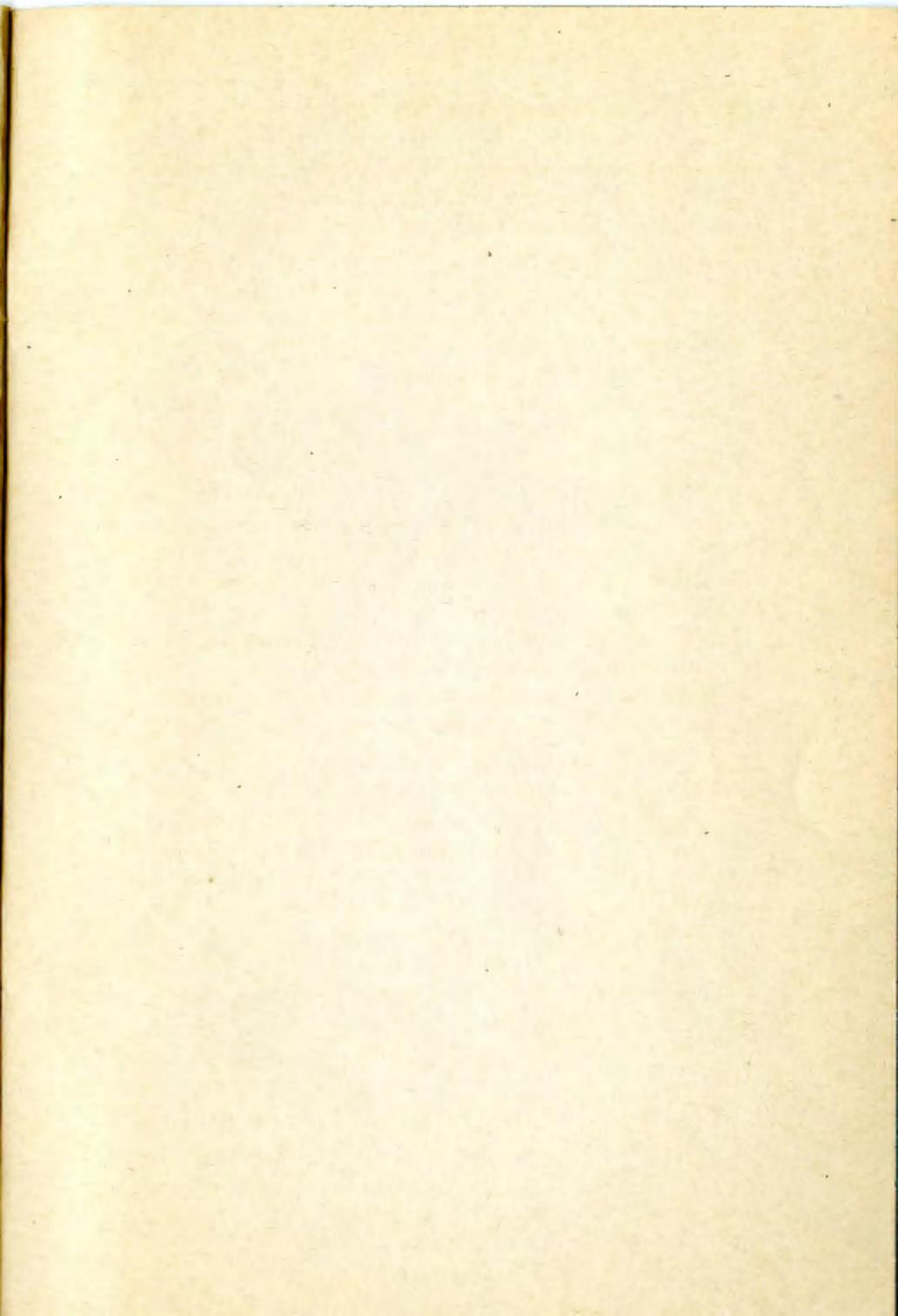
This much, however, is certain. If our loved ones come short of the glory of God and find themselves condemned in the next life, they will not desire our company there. Let the reader recall the plaintive

plea of the doomed Dives that his five brothers be warned not to come to the place of torment!

Does the mind still shrink from the consequences of future recognition? Then consider carefully the following: Suppose some one approaches you with this proposition: "Here is a million dollars in cash. It is yours and is to be enjoyed by you with one exception. You are to take this money and go to some distant place upon the earth and there spend the remnant of your days—you must never look upon the countenance of anyone you know, or love. Of course, you may make new friends there, but you must never see again any one with whom you are now acquainted." Such a proposition would not interest us. And yet, this is precisely a picture of heaven, if there is no recognition there! Would not the reader prefer that only a part of his loved ones be there, and know them, rather than for all of them to be there, and not be able to recognize a single one of them?

Thus far we have considered only those who are among the redeemed in this matter of future recognition. Duty demands that attention be drawn to another class not contemplated in the foregoing. These, too, are in a conscious state. However, for them there is no paradise, no happiness, no heaven. Instead for them is the bleak and awful fate of that place of outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. It has always been true that the brightest light casts the deepest shadow. In the light of the happiness and glory of the redeemed in Christ we are able to see the blackness of the darkness of those who have died outside of his grace. When the rich man lifted up his

eyes in torment and prayed to Abraham for relief, the Patriarch simply said, "Son, Remember." These are the two most bleak and awful words in the Scriptures. Whether the fires of hell will be figurative or literal, we may not say, but we can be sure that its torture will be unbearable and insufferable should the only fire be the fire of memory. "Son, Remember!" Remember your sins, your wrong doing, your wasted life. Remember your selfishness and greed that shut the door of heaven in your face. Remember the times gospel preachers patiently plead with you to bow in humble submission to the will of the Lord, and how you contemptuously trampled their entreaties under your feet. Remember the times you rejected the gospel and quenched the pleading of the Spirit in your heart. Remember that insofar as you were concerned Christ died in vain; so great was the obstinacy of your heart that you could and did contemplate his tragic death on the cross for you unmoved. "Son, Remember," will echo down the corridors of eternity and ring in the ears of the damned unto the ages of the ages. May God in his grace permit the reader to be spared until he has made his calling and election sure. And may we in view of these awful consequences, so order our days and conduct our lives that at last we may stand with that great number who are before the throne of God, serving him forever, because "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."



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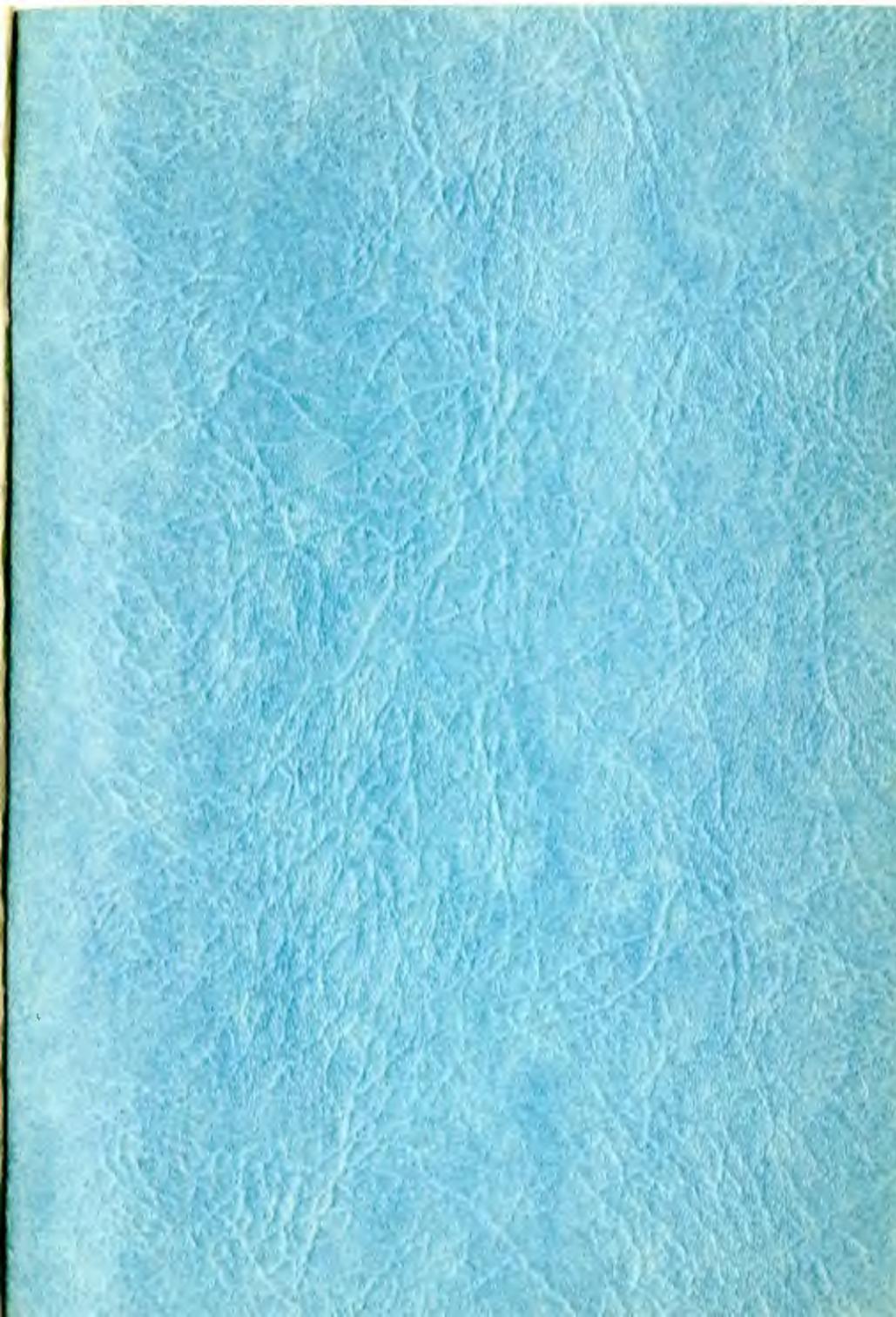
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